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The End of Postcolonialism? Postcolonial Critiques seen through the Political Imaginary of

Sub-Groups in Jordan: Identity, Colonial Legacies, and Constructs for a Peaceful,

Postcolonial Future

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Abstract

The aim of the present research is to discover the various components of postcolonial studies to the Jordanian and Middle Eastern context through a pseudo-ethnographic study of the political imaginaries of various sub-groups in Jordan—the youth, urban refugees, general citizenry, and tribal sheikhs. In so doing, this study will apply a recognition of the politics of knowledge production (fundamental to postcolonialism) and of the worth of understanding cultures on their own terms (fundamental to anthropology) to uncover the understandings Jordanians and their neighbors have of the political circumstances which affect them. Based on key themes of the *Geopolitics, International Relations, and the Future of the Middle East* seminar and of literature here reviewed, this study suggests several political parameters with which to map the political imaginaries of these sub-groups—the import of the Arab Spring, condition of postcoloniality, the nature of the "State" and the international system, the nature of present conflicts, strategies for the resolution of these conflicts, and constructs for the future. By mapping the political imaginary of my participants, how can we *witness* the condition of postcoloniality and argue against a key piece of literature which declares the end of postcolonialism, *discover* the way in which the political imaginary of these subgroups in Jordan might make us *rethink* what is Known about the Middle East and our world, and activate a future oriented political imagination which *constructs* a new Middle East? A critic of postcolonial studies is critiqued himself. The "stateness" of the international system is called into question. A discovery of "politically correct war is made, while considering the effect of the *state stability dialectic* on conflict in the Middle East. Recommended strategies of peacebuilding are solicited and shared for peacemakers to consider. An Arab or global union is imagined.

KEY WORDS: Political Imagination, Alterity, Subaltern Studies, Postcolonialism, Decolonization, Colonialism, Cosmopolitanism, Orientalism, Knowledge, Arab Spring, Arab Nationalism, Ideology, Stateness, Imagined Communities, International Relations, Conflict Theory, Sectarianism, Political Islam, Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding, Middle Eastern Studies, Sociocultural Anthropology, Future

Acknowledgements

No paper—and indeed, no person—is complete without its relation to others; that is, just as no person can sustain herself fully without a community of reciprocity and mutual support, so too can no paper sustain a legitimate argument without existing in conversation with reality (through historical or personal accounts) and the academic works that came before it. This conversation—the fundamental vehicle of advancing our understanding of the human condition—is unavoidable, for every scholar has had to ride on the backs of her predecessors, and necessary, to ensure that a treatise is not dogmatic. So, I would like to thank all those to whom I am in debt for my aptitude to compose the present study. I first would like to thank my parents, who ensured for me an upbringing which has facilitated my being an undergraduate student. I would also like to thank the English teachers I had during high school for showing me how to analyze either literature, or the world, critically. Their inspiration has propelled me. I would like to thank all the professors at Austin College who heretofore have relentlessly been dedicated to growing the minds of my classmates and myself; in particular, I would like to thank the social sciences division for laying a strong foundation for the interdisciplinary study here present, and, especially, the sociology and anthropology department for being the most crucial catalysts in helping me see the world through different lenses. This anthropology faculty and the anthropological method and theory which they have taught me informs a large part of the volition of this pseudo-ethnographic study. Of course, I cannot forget to thank Austin College as an institution for maintaining the emphasis on global learning which made it so easy for me to study abroad this past semester, and I thank SIT World Learning for granting me this opportunity. I thank Dr. Raed, Dr, Ashraf, Rania, and Riham—our dedicated program leaders— for providing consistent support to us in Jordan, and in the U.S. during the pandemic, academically and logistically. I thank those who translated documents for me during this study. I thank all of the guest lecturers we had throughout the semester, who helped open my eyes to the study of the Middle East. I thank my peers with SIT Jordan who gave me constructive feedback on my early ISP topic. I give a hearty thanks to Dr. Bader for his advice and direction throughout this study. Finally, and most importantly, I would like to send a hearty thanks to the participants of this study, whose names will go forever unknown to history and academia, but whose wisdom and imagination is indispensable for my ability to write this report and, Insha'Allah, who will be remembered for their contribution to how we understand the world at present.

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Prerequisites

In order to construct the present inquiry, its parts, its theoretical base, its relevance, and define the outline of the paper and research question, I first had to overcome some prerequisites. Hereupon the beginning, it is useful to note that though this is an academic paper, I concord with the anthropological tradition which inspires me by using the first person singular pronouns when relevant to show that there is no academic paper without the scholar, whose positionality, despite their best efforts, can never be fully veiled.

Meditations

I believe that only once we form a more perfect global union, with a lesser degree of hegemony, and the removal of ultimate sovereignty, can we ever achieve full respect for human rights and international law, eradicate global inequalities and poverty, successfully combat the climate crisis, resolve refugee crises, and establish peace on earth. Prerequisite to this project, I presume, are the study of historical forms of political union, but also the exploitation of our plural, political imaginations with regard to our identities, our political realities and futures, hypothetical forms of union, and, therefore, cosmopolitanism—"the idea that all human beings, regardless of their political affiliation, are (or can and should be) citizens in a single community" (Kleingeld and Brown, 2019). In this frame, I was thinking that we needed to learn how to restructure the UN into a global federalism which represented the interest of all human groups, large or small, and it was my intent to activate the political imaginations of Jordanians, in contemplation of this new system (Nye and Welch, 2017). I was expecting to receive the invaluable cultural wisdom of sub-groups in Jordan regarding how to structure this new system.

The story of my interest in the above inquiry can be traced scrupulously through my life experiences; however, a good starting point is when, as a senior in high school, I told one of my teachers, that I had figured out what I was going to do with my life—I said, "I want to end war." Coming out the other end a three-year long tunnel since then, I realize that there was an element of blindness to such an imagination. Not only can it seem to ignore that I could never possibly succeed single-handedly, it may also seem naïve; though, I promise that it came from a position of an unbending hope in the future, or at least a faith in my determination to make a difference in it. For example, in my Common App application for my current undergraduate studies, I wrote, after summarizing the world's problems and the direness of the situation, "I identify myself as a member of…[a generation which has] been bestowed with a great responsibility to the future,

and I have heeded its call to action." Going into college, I had a strong desire to learn how to make the world a more peaceful place. At my home institution, I have taken courses which have helped me come to understand our global predicament and potential solutions therefore; namely, in American Constitutional Law, I realized how the story of the union of the States parallels the experience, and potential future, of the United Nations (UN) today and can be taken as a microcosm of experience from which to learn how to restructure the UN; in Native North America, I learned about the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, whose inception story appeared to me also to parallel the attempt at global union made by the UN. As a student interested in anthropology, then, I instantly devised for myself the project to perform a meta-analysis of historic forms of union in order to take the respective wisdoms from their experiences and apply them to the global scale. In this frame, I devised an ISP topic where I would ask sub-groups in Jordan to imagine a future global union and any challenges they would find in the way.

However, a conversation with an anonymous Jordanian prior to my ISP period led me to radically change directions, and assumptions. When asked whether they thought Jordan should join a global federalism they responded: "I am not sure who Jordan would form a union with, all the countries around it are in chaos. Also, how could one be expected to join a union with someone who has wrought injustice?" When asked whether they thought King Abdullah should give up some of his power to a global federalism if it meant more peace, security, and justice, this Jordanian responded to the tune of: "What sovereignty does he have to give up?" The implications of these statements did not dawn upon me until much later. I continued on, framing an ISP project centered around imagining a global federalism, eventually submitting my proposal to the Local Review Board as such. I continued with skeptical doubt that something was missing, or that there was some misdirection. On that topic I consulted thoroughly with my professors, classmates, and even casually with Jordanians; however, something was unclear. The last consultation I had was with a dear professor at my home institution—whose wisdom has always had the effect of helping me see things more clearly. They pointed me in the direction of "postcolonialism;" though, I was contemplating the direction of "cosmopolitanism." It got me thinking. For a length of time—however long as was necessary for me—I deliberated.

I already knew the definition of cosmopolitanism as cited above and after a brief, definitional search I found that postcolonialism meant something near to a "theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath,…devoted to the academic task of revisiting,

remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past"—and the condition it connotes is "best conveyed through the notion of 'postcoloniality'" (Gandhi 1998, loc. 168-169, 179-181). The only example of postcolonial studies of which I was aware was *Orientalism (1979)* by Edward Said, where he explains:

> Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient (p. 3).

In other words, Said goes on to explain Orientalism as a production of knowledge "based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between 'the Orient' and (most of the time) 'the Occident,'" whereby the West make an Other of the East, and defines itself positively in juxtaposition therewith. (1979, p. 2). After establishing this definitional basis, and consulting a couple other pieces of material culture,[1] I deliberated potential directions.

During my deliberations, I recalled the Middle East history I learned through a course with the same name at my home institution: Britain and Russia divided the oil fields in Iran; Britain's colonial interests (the Arab Revolt, Husayn-McMahon Correspondence, Sykes-Picot Agreement, Balfour Declaration, and the support of Zionism in general); the CIA coup of Mohammed Mossadegh in 1953; the United States (US) role in forming Al-Qaeda; that is, the CIA trained Osama and his group in the fight against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan; the inception of the "War on Terror" constructed an Orientalist representation of the Middle East; and the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the subsequent fall of the state meant that, by 2014, most of the ex-Ba'ath party members were active members of ISIS (Goldschmidt and Boum 2015). Furthermore, lecturers throughout the semester with SIT Jordan made remarks akin to the topic of postcolonialism; for example, (in other words) "the West doesn't want an Arab Union, it would be too strong and counter their interests;" "the U.S. dominates the Middle East…it values human rights within its borders, but not outside of them;" "in the wake of the Sykes-Picot agreement the colonial powers tried to provoke subnational divisions, for it is in the interest of the colonial power to provoke sectarianism;" "a lot of the regimes in the Middle East have

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[1] Adam Shatz, *'Orientalism,' Then and Now*, NYR Daily, https://www.nybooks.com/daily/2019/05/20/orientalism-then-and-now/. Accessed 27 April 2019; Abdennebi Ben Beya, *Mimicry, Ambivalence, and Hybridity,* https://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/21/mimicry-ambivalence-and-hybridity/. Accessed 27 April 2019.

external legitimacy—the support of powers from outside—for if they had internal legitimacy, per the power of a self-determinant citizenry, it would conflict with the interests of the West in the Middle East;" and, lastly, "non-state actors in the Middle East are used and abused by superpowers to achieve their interests." It finally dawned on me.

I realized that "those who wrought injustice" implied the colonial forces who left their mark and the neocolonial forces who continue to occupy. I realized the reason why "all the countries around it are in chaos" must be understood in terms of those colonial legacies. I presumed the injustice wrought must first be addressed before a union could be formed. I realized that the misdirection of my original topic was that I was trying to extract information from the Jordanian context which applied too directly to my ultimate goal and overlooked the opportunity of the local context. I need to learn lessons from the local which can be applied to the global, not to jump to the latter stage of global transformation without first dealing with the prerequisites. *Thus, I concluded that understanding the legacies and effects of colonialism and neocolonialism, postcolonial critiques thereof, and the establishment of a more just post-colonial system are all rough* **prerequisites** *to establishing a more cosmopolitan global society.*

Assumptions

Having reached the above, fundamental assumption, the topic of this study began to take a different course. Within this larger assumption are sub-elements: (a) I assume that it is possible and necessary to analyze the Middle East through a postcolonial lens in order to find the legacies of colonialism; (b) I assume that we need to thoroughly study the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East and potential resolutions thereof; (c) I assume that we need to study the nature of the injustices referred to and the experience that people have with them; (d) I assume that we need to resolve elements (a), (b), and (c) before it is possible to contemplate a global federalism that includes Middle Eastern states and those who have wrought injustice in them. In some way, then, I am assuming that we need to build stability, states, and peaceful, civil societies within them before we can structure an international level of governance; that is, before the international can be strong and effective, all the local parts must first be strong and effective; (e) I assume also that not only does there exist an imbalance of power internationally, but that there also exists an imbalance of sovereignty—which questions the very core of international relations theory and therefore requests that we reconsider the nature of the international system.

A limitation of the above assumptions which I do concede is that it is akin to the old adage: which comes first, the chicken or the egg? That is, I am presenting a teleology that regional stability must come before a cosmopolitan future. I pondered early on one doubt: perhaps one is not required to precede the other, but that instead they are an interrelated process, one tending to the other. In the reverse, what if a cosmopolitan system is a prerequisite for regional stability in the Middle East? All of the aforementioned generalizations and assumptions inspire the structure of this study, which I shall define in clearer terms now.

The aim of the present research is to discover the various components of postcolonial studies to the Jordanian and Middle Eastern context through a pseudo-ethnographic study of the political imaginaries of various sub-groups in Jordan—the youth, urban refugees, general citizenry, and tribal sheikhs. In so doing, this study will apply a recognition of the politics of knowledge production (fundamental to postcolonialism) and of the worth of understanding cultures on their own terms (fundamental to anthropology) to uncover the understandings Jordanians and their neighbors have of the political circumstances which affect them. Based on key themes of the *Geopolitics, International Relations, and the Future of the Middle East* seminar (GEO seminar) and of literature here reviewed, this study suggests several political parameters with which to map the political imaginaries of these sub-groups—the import of the Arab Spring, condition of postcoloniality, the nature of the "State" and the international system, the nature of present conflicts, strategies for the resolution of these conflicts, and constructs for the future. By mapping the political imaginary of my participants, how can we *witness* the condition of postcoloniality and argue against a key piece of literature which declares the end of postcolonialism, *discover* the way in which the political imaginary of these subgroups in Jordan might make us *rethink* what is Known about the Middle East and our world, and activate a future oriented political imagination which *constructs* a new Middle East?

Though the normative assumptions above are made, and though it is anticipated that the perspectives of the participants will differ from what is Known, no formal hypotheses as to the answers expected from the participants will be made in order to preserve the aim to understand these political parameters in the terms of the participants only.

Theoretical Frames

The overarching theory, postcolonialism, which binds this research together has been described as hard to define, with some of its most important essays hard to understand; moreover, the field "intersects with that of critical or literary theory in general, which is also regarded as full of jargon, confusing, and removed from daily reality" (Loomba, 1998, xii). Loomba (1998) tell us that a particularly confounding aspect of the field is that the prefix "post" implies an "after" which is not supposed to comprehend "coming literally after colonialism and signifying its demise, but more flexibly as *the contestation of colonial domination and the legacies of colonialism*" (emphasis added, p. 12). Another scholar delineates that the theory is called "postcolonialism"—the "theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath,…devoted to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and, crucially, interrogating the colonial past"—and the condition it connotes is "best conveyed through the notion of 'postcoloniality'" (Gandhi 1998, loc. 168-169, 179-181). Thus, a solid theoretical understanding of postcolonialism can be based on three parts: (a) studying the forms which came into being after the formal end of colonialism (or, as in the present case, imagining what forms are to come); (b) understanding how the "social formations and sub-groups that follow colonialism are shaped, haunted or suffused by the preceding colonial era, practices, processes, arrangements;" and (c) understanding how colonialism "shaped the Western concepts through which a purportedly universal (social) science claimed to produce knowledge of the (non-Western) world during the colonial epoch or may continue to do so in postcolonial periods that are still structured and haunted by the colonial past" (*Orientalism,* for example) (cited in Niazi, n.d., p. 168-169). Furthermore, postcolonial studies indicts the humanities for their "compulsion to claim a spurious universality and also to disguise its political investment in the production of 'major' or 'dominant' knowledges;" otherwise described as "dominant discourse" or "dominant ideologies" [referred to here as the Known](Gandhi, 1998, loc. 833-835; Loomba, 1998, 66, 178). A fourth aspect may be understood as anti-colonial resistance (Loomba, 1998). The definition of postcolonial studies thus established; its proponents leave use with some muses.

Scholars concord that the field currently focuses too much on culture and sub-group, not on locations, institutions, or politics, thus rendering "[p]ostcoloniality…a vague condition of people anywhere and everywhere" (Loomba, 1998, 17; Niazi, n.d.). As such, one scholar encourages the field to look more into the study of politics and, noting also that the field has had

an almost exclusive focus on South Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, suggests a future study of Latin America (Niazi, n.d.). I intend to heed these muses by focusing on the postcolonial political circumstances of Jordan and the Middle East. Another muse comes from an understanding of the "subaltern." Not a term meant to degrade or describe any inherent characteristics of the group in question, "subalternity" refers to those who are subject to the domination of colonial power or knowledge (Gandhi, 1998; Loomba, 1998). As such, "'subaltern studies' defined itself as an attempt to *allow the 'people' finally to speak within the jealous pages of elitist historiography and, in so doing,....to sound the muted voices of...the truly oppressed*" (emphasis added, Gandhi, 1998, loc. 134-136). Hereby, the spirit of the postcolonial perspective is "one that recognizes, refuses or replaces such colonial forms of thinking and bodies of knowledge" (cited in Niazi, n.d. p. 168). The methodology of this study follows this muse. However, Orientalism is not the only body of knowledge which needs replacement; two scholars, in separate articles, call for the decolonization of the fields of international relations (IR) and conflict resolution. Picq (2013) demonstrates how international relations theory (IR) is hegemonic: 58% of readings assigned to undergraduates worldwide come from US authors, "Europe is the most studied region," Realism is the most widely taught school of thought, and the approach of the field remains positivist (p. 445). IR is further critiqued as being *unworldly*, depriving a "multiplicity of ways of being in the world" through its "*obsession with stateness and sovereignty*"(emphasis) and perpetuation of "the imaginary of the state system as modern and global;" furthermore, "the postcolonial critique remains largely unaddressed" (pp. 446, 452). Asserting that "indigenous [seemingly equated with "non-core"] politics are intrinsically international, and they are meaningful to IR because they depart from Westphalian, state-centric practices," Picq also calls for the validation of "the non-core as a critical producer of knowledge" (2013, pp. 447, 452). Such will be one of the aims of this paper.

The second scholar argues that Westernization, in this case within the field of conflict resolution, exacts an "ontological violence" on "Indigenous ways of conceptualizing and experiencing the world" and thereby upholds a universal binary which Loomba (2009) cautions against (Walker, 2004, p. 527). However, the argument is still useful so long as the proponent does not make a universal binary between Western modes of resolution and indigenous modes. For this reason, I maintain it as a muse. All these insistences to see from another perspective are congruent with everything I have been taught about anthropology at my home institution. A final

scholar insists on multiple occasions that the Arab Spring would have the effect of making new worlds possible and that these new worlds would be imagined outside the frame of colonial knowledge production (Dabashi, 2012). Thus, it is to the topic of imagination which this paper will now turn.

I have said that I aim to "activate the political imagination of sub-groups in Jordan," and thus it is necessary for me to define this term theoretically; when I began to use the phrase I did not know that it existed in theory, but instead used the phrase as a natural consequence of my aims. First, the notion of the political imagination relies on the notion of the social imaginary defined by Taylor (2007) as:

> the way ordinary people "imagine" their social surroundings, and this is often not expressed in theoretical terms, it is carried in images, stories, legends, etc….[T]heory is often the possession of a small minority, whereas what is interesting in the social imaginary is that it is shared by large groups of people, if not the whole society (pp. 171-172).

Furthermore, he calls *the imaginary* "that common understanding which makes possible common practices, and a widely shared sense of legitimacy" (Taylor, 2007, p. 172; Browne and Diehl, 2019, p. 394). Thus, two scholars, building on Taylor's argument, advocate the utility of on the concept of the imaginary in understanding political culture—that is, the way "the political is constituted" and transformed and "how principles are shared or how institutions are legitimized" (Browne and Diehl, 2019, pp. 393-394). Paralleling the nature of the imaginary, then, *the political imaginary* is "a collective structure that organizes the imagination and the symbolism of the political, and therefore organizes the instituting process of the political as well" (p. 394). With this theory in mind, I have set out in the present study to map that "collective structure" of the political imaginary along the lines of important parameters of the political life of ordinary Jordanians, thereby also answering to the theories of knowledge production and the calls to decolonize academic fields. Aside from decolonizing IR and conflict resolution, I have extrapolated the same notion to apply to discourse on the import of the Arab Spring, postcolonialism in Jordan and the Middle East, stateness in the international system, and constructs for the future. When performing interviews I took heed to the note that the political imagination is usually expressed in "images, stories, legends, etc." and prompted the participants of this study to demonstrate their answers with such examples.

Finally, when I structured my interview questions around three themes—defining the self with relation to others, colonial legacies, and solutions for the conflicts and visions for a postcolonial future—it was based on my general understanding of the contours of the field and can be further supported by the following scholars. For example, Clifford argues that "*postcolonial* does describe real, if incomplete, ruptures with past structures of domination[colonial legacies], sites of current struggle[the ideological, discursive, or epistemic contestation exhibited in defining the self with relation to others] and imagined futures[solutions for the conflicts and visions for a postcolonial future]" (Clifford, 1994, p. 328; Loomba, 1998; Gandhi, 1998). Reiterating the delineation made earlier in this section, *postcolonial* understands: (a) the way the postcolonial contemporary is shaped by the colonial past; (b) the nature of knowledge production in colonial contexts; and (c) the "formal end of colonialism" (Niazi, n.d., pp. 168-169).

Relevance

By all means possible this topic is relevant. Colonialism and foreign intervention have played a large role in shaping the Middle East as we see it today; therefore, to understand the current Middle East and disorders, its is impossible to fully do so without considering this history. Furthermore, anthropology has always taught me the importance of taking things we think we know and rethinking them. It is important that we understand how coloniality is being understood and experienced today by those living in the Middle East. Furthermore, it is relevant to study the way in which the Kingdom of Jordan carries colonial remnants in order to better understand the way it operates. Lastly, the study hopes to produce different understandings of the world and thereby redefine its boundaries and clarify a direction for the future of the Middle East and for humanity.

Dominant Knowledge in Review—Refuted first by other knowledge
The Knowledge

Dominant knowledges are referred to in this paper via capitalization. The selection of dominant literature in this section was founded either in the authority presumed by the author, their inclusion in the GEO seminar readings, or their prominence in instruction in other educational institutions. Throughout the readings assigned as part of our thematic seminars, and indeed during the search for literature for this review, it is hard not to recognize two political circumstances of the Middle East always being discussed, either directly or indirectly; that is, the

Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and the Arab Spring—the former as the impasse in the region and the latter as the watershed. Thus, considering the importance of the Arab Spring to understanding the region today, and considering that one author argues the import of the Arab Spring in a way which *threatens to delegitimize the entire present inquiry*, it is to the legacy of the Arab Spring on the utility of postcolonial studies that the present review first turns. Subsequently, theories of international relations, stateness, and of conflict in the Middle East, will be reviewed. Reviewing these various treatises, the following section will attempt to paint a representative "dominant" view of the political circumstances in Jordan and the Middle East.

On the Legacy of the Arab Spring and Postcolonialism

The argument made by Hamid Dabashi in his *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (2012) goes as follows: thinking of the many binary oppositions such as "the West and the Rest," "Islam and the West," which form the basis of colonial mechanisms of knowledge production about the other (Gandhi 1998; Dabashi, pp. 2, 9, 14), Dabashi insists that because "the West" itself had disintegrated after the fall of the Soviet union, the unification of Europe, and the simultaneous distancing between the US and Europe; and because the utility of anticolonial ideologies—Third World Socialism, anticolonial nationalism, and militant jihadism—had depleted; the Arab Spring represents a post-ideological movement which inaugurates the end of postcoloniality as a condition and, at the same time, the recovery of a "cosmopolitan worldliness" always present in Arab cultures. In this sense, post-ideological means post-colonial-mechanisms-of-knowledge-production-and-resistance-thereto, evidenced for Dabashi through such slogans of the Spring as "People Demand the Overthrow of the Regime"(which meant the regime, literally, and the regime of knowledge production, figuratively) and this is what he meant by "the end of postcolonialism." However simple the above summary may seem, Dabashi does not make it easy for his readers to understand. Instead, Dabashi, as a professor of Comparative Literature at Columbia University and "internationally renowned cultural critic"(About the author), represents a prime example of what Loomba explains as the predicament of the unintelligibility of postcolonial studies exacerbated by its intersection "with that of critical or literary theory in general, which is also regarded as full of jargon, confusing, and removed from daily reality" (1998, xii). For perfect example, consider the following excerpt from Dabashi:

The master code of European post/colonial modernity had very much determined the master narrative of political modernity, while the mimetic absolutism of this modernity, predicated on Hegelian transcendence, was entirely incongruent with the post/ colonial condition of intransigent mimesis that was the conditio sine qua non of anticolonial aesthetics. (2012, p. 165)

Within Dabashi's (2012) encrypted messages were a few other critical points which he made about the Arab Spring and postcolonialism. First, the Arab Spring is an example of "*delayed defiance* of both European colonialism and its extended shadow and postcolonial aftermath;" that is, "the sustained course of liberation movements that are no longer trapped within postcolonial terms of engagement and are thus able to navigate uncharted revolutionary territories" (p. 2). On the topic of revolution, Dabashi called the Arab Spring "transnational uprisings," describing them as "vastly consequential and yet inconclusive" because they did not acutely change an element of society as most revolutions but instead "unfold [without any iconic leader figure] like an open-ended novel rather as a monological epic" (pp. 4-6, 9). Relatedly, he said these transnational uprisings had neither an ideological nor a power center, but instead existed transnationally through a dialectic where national uprisings would impact the character of the transnational and vice versa. In the long run, Dabashi predicts that the uprisings would thoroughly change "the geopolitics of their region and thus beyond into the global configuration of power," leading us "towards the discovery of a new world;" a concept he named liberation geography (pp. 6, 9). The crucial consequence of all these considerations, and namely the uprisings themselves, in Dabashi's eyes, is the "retrieval [by these cultures] of a cosmopolitan worldliness that was always already there but repressed under the duress of a dialectic sustained between domestic tyranny and globalized imperialism" (p. 11). Dabashi contrasts this cosmopolitan worldliness with the Kantian type, saying that *this* cosmopolitanism is not an "imaginative wishing for," but the "factual existence of," historically speaking, cosmopolitan civilizations in the region (pp. 115-116).

Therefore, Dabashi's (2012) argument can best be summarized as the following: because the Arab uprisings did not confront the "regime" with the anti-colonial ideologies of the past, they had become free from the postcolonial—making postcolonialism therefore no longer relevant—while also changing the definition of "revolution" and the contours of our world, and recovering their late cosmopolitanism. We, the readers, have the advantage of history with which

to qualify Dabashi's argument; as will be seen later, it was not his only mistake to write a history of the Arab Spring, just one year after it had sprung.

On Stateness and International Relations Theory

International Relations theory would have us believe that we currently live in a global Westphalian system of states, conceived in 1648 with the Peace of Westphalia, within which "the state is the normal and prevailing mode of political organization,…state-to-state interaction is the cornerstone of international relations,"(Hislope and Mughan, 2012, p.2) each state that has formal recognition as such is sovereign "within its territorial boundaries," and, by the principle of nonintervention, all states are legally equal and immune to intervention (Hislope and Mughan, 2012, p. 11; Nye and Welch, 2017 ; Picq, 2013). Realism, the dominant paradigm within the field, would have you believe that the most important actor is the state, whose chief interest is security, and whose chief instrument is force (Nye and Welch, 2017). Though liberalists will debate realists arguing there is evidence of some degree of international community, there are important non-state actors to consider, and that diplomacy is a viable instrument; and though constructivists will debate the realists arguing that there may be other interests than security and insisting that a study of the mechanisms through which these interests are constructed is worthwhile; nevertheless, it is still the *sovereign state* who contemplates its interests and, were there any international community, it exists *between* states (Nye and Welch, 2017). Furthermore, crucial elements of the state, as classically defined by Max Weber, are "community, legitimacy, monopoly of force, and territory," where community is such a necessary cause that "[w]ithout a sense of collective identity…a state cannot exist" (Hislope and Mughan, 2012, p. 8). For this reason, the state often works to forge a common identity and loyalty thereto (Hislope and Mughan, 2012). Those criteria for the state resemble another very dominant understanding of the nation, so dominant that the treatise was the fifth most cited piece in the social sciences as of May 2016 (Breuilly, 2016).

Benedict Anderson in his *Imagined Communities* (2006) concurs that "nation-ness is the most universally legitimate value in the political life of our time" and defines the nation as "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (pp. 3, 6). The nation is imagined, he says, because one can never have direct relations with *all* of its members, limited, because "no nation imagines itself as coterminous with mankind" (p.7), sovereign, in the same sense as in international relations, and is a community, because there is

felt a "deep, horizontal comradeship" (p. 7). Anderson explains that, historically, the formation of national consciousness was made possible through the commodification of print, which allowed for more comprehensive information sharing within groups; yet, other mechanisms, such as the museum, are shown to help the state forge a common identity (Hislope and Mughan, 2012). Other, present-day estimations look at the way that social organizations form their own identities which dialectically become compelling to the members, or at the formation of societal beliefs which are "shared cognitions…of special concern to the society…organized around themes and consisting of such contents as collective memories, ideologies, goals, myths, and so on" (Kelman, 2012; Gayer et al., 2009, p. 972). A final aspect of the dominant nation is that once the first successful example of a nation existed, its imaginings became "modular" and were replicated around the world, sometimes through planned revolutions (Anderson, 2006, p. 4). Such is the nature of the nation, state, or nation-state today, pictured most fundamentally on the world map as we know it; however, theories about the Arab State, more specifically, have emerged.

One such theory, which refutes the argument made by realists that only the superpowers matter because they can have an influence on the system, supports the recognition of a category of states that would be called neither "weak" nor "passive" but "small" (Ponížilová, 2013, pp. 1-2). These small states, deficient in material capabilities, territorial reach, and power range, can be seen as focusing, less actively, on regional politics through soft power engagements (i.e. diplomacy) (Ponížilová, 2013). Though they "lack required (material and human) resources to make a significant change in international politics, to pursue international issues by itself or to be able to deal with all international affairs and problems they are confronted by," Ponížilová notes that through membership in international organization they have been able to exercise influence (2013, p. 2). Jordan is placed into this category by the scholar. The preceding argument reiterates the state-centric nature of IR and maintains a distinction between the regional and the extra-regional.

On Conflict in the Middle East
Upon that world map of states, which includes those in the Middle East, can we cast the dominant knowledge of the gameplays which theorize and explain the nature of the present conflicts; most of the articles cited here are considered dominant per their use for instruction in this semester's GEO seminar. To begin, IR theory makes the claim that since the fall of the

Soviet Union, the nature of war has changed from being predominantly interstate to predominantly intrastate, which is relevant when thinking about present conflicts such as the war in Syria (Nye and Welch, 2017). When explaining the conflict in the Middle East in particular, Cleary (2016) starts by arguing that to be a citizen of a state in the Middle East is *not* to have loyalty to that state, but, instead, one's real identity "related to communal, ethnic and/or sectarian subgroups, each within its own local culture;" as such, some conflict results from *weak state formation* in contexts where sectarian identities could erupt (p. 34; Salloukh, 2017). Other causes are authoritarian regimes, "Muslim revolutionary ambitions" such as Iran, the Taliban, and Islamism, or the bipolar politics which surround Iran and KSA (p. 35). On the other hand, Peteet (2008) argues that every society has internal sectarian divisions, thus an explanation of Middle East conflict solely along the lines of sect would be tautologic—indeed the most popular sect to exist today is the nation-state—and advocates that we historicize sectarianism to understand why the present rifts exist as they do. Following this suggestion, Peteet traces back to the "colonial reifications" which, from the depths of the colonial imaginary, forged categories of people—of uses versus thems—just as often as they forged the boundaries of their protectorates and mandates (p. 550). For example, "formerly latent social formations and affiliations became tangible," when the US "structured political representation along sectarian lines" in Iraq (p. 551). This dynamic of forging sect is central, then, to understanding the conflict in the Middle East.

Del Sarto et al. (2019) help us understand how this sectarian forgery works in the present day. They argue "the institutionalization of sectarianism" in Iraq effectively "transnationalized sectarian conflict and stimulated a new sectarianized discourse" throughout the region, as though it were a point source for the pollution of politics (pp. 17-18). Despite a taboo which used to mean that regional leaders would avoid overt use of sectarianism, before the Arab Spring and increasingly so since then, regimes have sown sectarian strife in pursuit of strengthening their grip on power or countering popular movement (Del Sarto et al., 2019). Calling this process of sowing sectarian strife "ethno-sectarian securitization," Del Sarto et al. proceed to demonstrate the way that these deliberately imagined social sects—imagined, that is, either by colonial powers or local regimes—are consequentially reified into "hard social facts" reinforced by "self-fulfilling prophecies" and "self-perpetuating in-out group dynamics" (pp. 17-18). For example, the Assad regime labelled the Arab Spring demonstrators in Syria as "Sunni sectarian Islamists and terrorists" and inspired fear in the Alawite minority, thereby fueling a self-fulfilling

prophecy of civil strife that affects it until today (p. 18). Counter-productive to the expressed goal of maintaining the power of the regime, "sectarian-based intervention and transnational mobilization" undermine the legitimacy of the state apparatus by organizing loyalties, not around the "nation," but around an ethnic or religious sect that exists transnationally; hereby blurring "the boundaries between the domestic and regional spheres" (pp. 19, 25). It is in that spirit that one scholar claims the "success of sectarian organizations is a mark of the weakness of the state" (Peteet, 2008, p. 551). Thus, arguments which attempt to explain the cause of Middle Eastern conflicts as *either* the result of a weak state *or* sectarian identity politics fail to realize that *both* causes are dialectically interrelated in a process I would like to call the *state stability dialectic*; that is, the stability of the state, and thus the prevention of conflict, is predicated upon the *stability of identity* at both the regime and grassroots level; should the regime sow sectarian strife from the top-down, or should inter-group cleavages be conceived independently at the grassroots level, both causes undermine the stability of the other level and simultaneously harms its own level through a dialectic reverberation (Peteet, 2008; Del Sarto et al., 2019; Heydemann and Chace-Donahue, 2018; Cleary, 2016). Del Sarto et al. (2019) also demonstrate how the conflict dynamic of sectarian circumstances is distinct from materially informed *realpolitik* and involves instead a much more passionate conflict of identity, rather than just conflict in interest. Furthermore, advocating a sort of "theoretical eclecticism," they caution an understanding Middle East conflict solely on terms of the bi-polar rivalries of Sunni and Shia, or KSA and Iran and note how both sect and realist power distributional concerns direct conflict in the Middle East (Salloukh, 2017, p. 660).

The Knowledge in Review

The picture painted by the above review of the Knowledge on the Arab Spring, postcoloniality, stateness, and conflict, would have us see the Middle East as a *region* where the contestation of the *Arab state* is based on non-ideological concerns, freeing the Arab thereby of their postcoloniality; however, disorder still exists in the form of multi-layered sectarian strife and realist power politics.

Refuting The Knowledge

Before challenging the assumptions made by The Knowledge above with the responses of the participants of this study, they will be contested here academically. Only Dabashi's claim as to the usefulness of postcolonialism is taken up here; it will be left to the participants to challenge the other political parameters. Dabashi's argument that postcolonialism has reached its

end will be refuted as "removed from daily reality" (Loomba, 1998, xii), evidenced not least by the highness of his vocabulary, but also because of his unbending focus on the *philosophical* consequences of the depleted, "*philosophical* poverty" (Anderson, 2006, p. 5) of anti-colonial ideologies and a sort of *philosophical recollection* of the cosmopolitan worldliness of Arab cultures, while neglecting to pay much mind to non-ideological colonial legacies (Dabashi, 2012). His was a study of discourse and not necessarily reality.

On Postcolonialism

A reading of Dabashi's *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (2012) would lead readers to believe that "postcolonialism" refers almost exclusively to the knowledge production of the West about the Rest and the anti-colonial ideologies which confronts this Knowledge, and that, wherewith the Arab uprisings taking a post-ideological character, the postcolonial prison door has been loosed and thereby signals the preclusion of the utility of the entire field. Though knowledge production about some Other and the anti-colonial ideologies which confront it is a main component of postcolonialism, Loomba (1998) informs us that the field also investigates the effects that colonial pasts and neocolonial presents have on the way people forge their racial or cultural identities; and other scholars demonstrate the relevance of studying the legacies, memories, and cultural or institutional forms of the present which exhibit the remains of the colonial past (Jansen and Osterhammel, 2017; Young, 2012). As a student and the author of this study, I would like to contest that postcolonialism has, in fact, not ended, and, through the answers of the participants of this study, demonstrate the concrete, material, or otherwise real ways in which the condition of postcoloniality is still observable.

As said above, postcolonialism pertains, in part, to the way in which the discourse, literature, and rhetoric of the colonial power represents and constructs their "other," often as uncivilized, backward, premodern, or otherwise barbaric, in opposition to the way they define themselves: civilized, wise, modern, and otherwise Enlightened (Loomba, 1998; Gandhi, 1998; Dabashi, 2012). To present another dialectic, "knowledge about and power over colonised lands are related enterprises" (Loomba, 1998, 44). What this means is that the power which the colonizer exercised over the colonized inspired a knowledge about the colonized which in turn reinforced the colonial power by validating its higher qualities and justifying the control exercised (Loomba, 1998; Gandhi 1998; Dabashi, 2012). In a similar vein as knowledge production, representation, and perception of the Other is the concept of ambivalence; that is,

studying the "colonial scene discloses a relationship of reciprocal antagonism and desire between coloniser and colonised" (Gandhi, 1998, loc. 183-184; Loomba, 1998). Thus, if the postcolonial subject is to remember the oppression of the colonizer, "it must also be theoretically urged to recollect the compelling seductions of colonial power" to which it succumbed (Gandhi, 1998, loc. 183-184). Succumbing as such, the colonized may be complicit in the colonial scheme, but may at present, by way of an amnesia, be unaware or have forgotten (Gandhi, 1998). In other words, from the perspective of the once colonized, there may be some strange appreciation for the colonizer, while simultaneous feelings of contempt may exist; the recognition of a double-edged sword, if you will. This study aims particularly to find these ambivalent feelings toward the colonial past and postcolonial, or neocolonial, present.

A second meta-category of postcolonial studies is the way in which colonialism, as a vehicle of contact between people and their societies, may produce new forms of being in the world, politically, culturally, or economically (Loomba, 1998; Gandhi, 1998; Jansen and Osterhammel, 2017; Young, 2012). For example, hybridity is a concept which denotes all mannerisms of "in-betweenness" which result from the contact of peoples, analytically not meant to reify racial categories, but instead investigate new cultural or epistemic forms which result from contact (Gandhi, 1998, Loomba, 1998, p. 173). Another, related term is diaspora, which is "invoked as a theoretical device for the interrogation of ethnic identity and cultural nationalism" contingent on the movement of people (Gandhi, 1998, loc. 2252-2253; Loomba, 1998). Both terms are meant to refer to "processes of 'cultural mutation and restless (dis)continuity that exceed racial discourse and avoid capture by its agents'" (Gandhi, 1998, loc. 2254-2255). Relatedly, it is also useful to study the forgery of national identity in post-colonial states (Loomba, 1998). Finally, though decolonization was a specific historical moment, the legacies and remains of colonialism can be seen in arena such as education, culture, institutions, and economics, long after the occupation has ended (Jansen and Osterhammel, 2017; Young, 2012). In fact, one scholar suggests "postcolonialism can be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath;" therefore, examples of the amnesia of apparent colonial leftovers in participants answers will be looked for (Gandhi, 1998, 179-181). The same scholar also talks about investigating the complicity of the colonized for their colonial condition and so examples of such will be looked for.

Activating the Political Imagination: Methods for Rethinking the Knowledge

The Plan

The plan with this study was to undertake a pseudo-ethnography (due to its short timeframe and limited number of interviews it could not be considered ethnography), performing semi-structured interviews with Jordanians through Skype. Due to the Coronavirus pandemic, students on this SIT program had to repatriate to the US; our academic directors advised us how we would go about performing interviews electronically and, given extenuating circumstances, even helped with interviewing. Recalling all that was said about the spirit of postcolonialism and the various muses which spurred this research—namely, the desire to uncover other forms of knowledge that would be considered less dominant—I aimed not to interview anyone with a Ph.D. presuming that many in Jordan would have either been educated in Western universities, or at least been taught the Knowledge per consequence of its dominance in the field of IR. Relatedly, there is a sort of disdain for the "expert" in postcolonial studies (Gandhi, 1998, loc. 1356). Having made this judgement, I aimed to interviewed with four sub-groups in Jordan: the youth, urban refugees, general citizenry, and tribal sheikhs. The plan was to perform three interviewees with members of each group, except that one of the interviews with the youth would comprise a mini focus group.

I chose to interview the youth for this study because of the call made to the world through the Amman Youth Declaration of 2015 and the subsequent UN Security Council Resolution 2250 (2015) on Youth, Peace, and Security. Both advocate for the positive role of the youth in achieving peace and call for the involvement of youth in policy dialogues and future peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, the youth form a large portion of the population of Jordan and will be those who shape and inhabit our future world. The "youth" were defined by the resolution as those 18-29 years old. So the parameters I developed for choosing the youth were age and status as a student or peace facilitator. I chose to interview urban refugees, as opposed to camp refugees, to begin, in part because of circumstance and in other part because of an ethical concern. Not only were we not allowed to visit any camps in Jordan per SIT rules, but also, I considered that camp refugees would have other, more immediate concerns to tend to than to contribute to an academic study. I aimed to interview one Palestinian, one Iraqi, and one Syrian refugee for geographic dispersion. I chose to interview tribal sheikhs not only because I learned early on in my time in Jordan that colonial Britain smoothly integrated the tribal functions into the early state of Jordan, but also because I have learned of tribal and the 'atwa (truce) and sulh.

(reconciliation) aspects of past tribal dispute settlement practices in Jordan and I wished to see how these and any other tribal principles might be applied to our understanding of conflict and their resolution in the Middle East (Alon, 2009; Watkins, 2014). I aimed to interview with one sheikh from each of the North, Middle, and Southern Badia districts in order to achieve geographic dispersion. Finally, I decided to interview the general citizenry in order to increase the number interviews performed and to contrast the perspectives of the other three sub-groups.

Acting on the Method

Throughout the research process modification were made to the original method plan. First, instead of having three interviews with the youth I had four; instead of three with urban refugees, I had two, exempting a Palestinian refugee due to contact availability and my circumstance of not being present in Jordan; no sheikh from the Middle Badia district was interviewed; and one participant did possess a Ph.D. In the end, eleven interviews were conducted, three of which were performed, per circumstance, by my professors in Jordan. A concern arose with some potential participants over the activation of the Defense Law in Jordan in March this year, a policy pursued by Jordan to manage the coronavirus pandemic; namely, they were concerned about the potential of heightened surveillance of electronic communications and were therefore weary of performing a Skype interview. This, of course, informed my method. I considered performing written interviews with all participants in protection of their privacy, but decided after thorough consideration of the concern and a consultation with a professor that I would interview the participant via Skype should they feel comfortable to and perform written interviews for the rest.

With regard to the actual performance of interviews, all interview questions were translated to Arabic, which aided the three interviews performed by professors, and which facilitated another element of my method. Because this study aims to activate the political imagination, I was asking that participants demonstrate their answers with cultural knowledge in the form of symbols, metaphors, sayings, slogans, personal experiences/memories, principles, examples of laws, or examples of practices. For this reason, I sent all participants who I interviewed an email with the interview questions in advance, in both English and Arabic, and asked that they consider the questions and potential examples briefly in advance of the interview. I hoped that this would increase the quality and depth of answers given.

Related to the quality and depth of answers given, I worked to maintain the integrity of the answers, and avoid any misinterpretation of them, by taking thorough written notes during the interview, clarifying often, and reviewing all interviews either immediately post-interview or as soon as possible in order to fill in the notes.

A final note about my research experience regards the switch in topic that I noted earlier which I felt was necessary in order to perform a well-founded academic study based in the Jordanian context. I was informed that my original IRB approval still applied to the new topic.

Mapping the Political Imagination of Various Sub-Groups in Jordan—Findings

The following section details the qualitative findings of the present study, first from the political imaginary of the youth, and then from urban refugees, general citizenry, and tribal sheikhs, in that order. Noting that there are only about three participants in each group it will be hard to establish a representative pattern; though, because eleven interviews were conducted in total, it will be easier to establish a pattern at that level. In general, the data collected does not conflict with the original aim of this study. This is an expectable result. Considering that my central theoretical framework focused on how individuals from different groups may have different perspectives that are worthwhile to share, and that my central argument is that postcolonial studies *is* still useful and is applicable to the Middle East, not many restrictive assumptions were made. However responses were received which converse with my original assumption about prerequisites and the dilemma of weather regional order must proceed a global federalism.

The Youth

On the Legacy of the Spring

Between the four interviews performed with the youth, an image of the Arab Spring is painted. The uprisings were unexpected and not so much transnational, in their eyes, but consisted of countries dealing with their own, unique circumstances or fighting dictatorial regimes. Most had a positive view and concurred that the biggest victory of the Arab Spring is what they learned about themselves. However, a few points made suggest there may have been elements of ideology present in the uprisings, conflicting with the claims of Dabashi.

One youth said, "we opened our eyes on the Arab Spring." Literally, and figuratively, they did. For him, no one thought that Syria would rise against Assad. For another, they thought it was unusual that it started in Tunisia; however, "what Egypt does the other countries will do."

The other two interviews made no mention of expectedness. One youth claimed that the biggest victory of the spring was that they destroyed the image of the unbeatable dictator and thereby learned the power they had. Another explained it changed the view that they had of themselves and of the elites—he said that their parents would teach them to have unquestionable loyalty to the monarchy; such that they would see them as "gods" or "sacred people." But when they saw how Mubarak fell quick, and how Syrians would attack the statue of the great Hafiz Assad Dara,' this dismantled the myth. They realized that they had more power than the government and that they should not praise the leaders anymore. they realized that they are not the slaves of the elite, but that instead "they work for us." Others add, and the general view becomes, the Spring showed that the youth, and Arabs in general, can do something remarkable when they unite. However, one youth felt that Arabs regret what they did.

When asked whether there was a collective character to the uprisings they responded similarly: the Arab Spring was not the same as Arab nationalism, it was about fighting their own circumstances; however, the end goal may have been Arab nationalism and it may have showed that all Arabs are brothers who share the same burden. Another youth saw the big impact that leftist socialism had on the outcome of the uprisings. *Could it be that what the youth were missing was review of the transnational dialectic which Dabashi proposed? Could it be that Dabashi missed the grassroots perspective that ideology was involved?* The answer to these questions will be taken up in the conclusion.

On Postcolonialism

Having done four interviews with the youth, asking questions which would spur postcolonial critiques, has provided me with a plethora of examples which indeed prove the continued utility of postcolonialism. In general, the youth are aware of the way that the West represents them as uncivilized, uneducated, or backwards, and even cite examples of American literature, such as Bernard Lewis' *Islam in History,* which they protested as "unfair" and uninformed. One hijabi shared an anecdote of an experience she had in France where she was asked about Islam; though, those who asked seemed not to be open minded, but instead had preconceived notions. Another youth told the story of the time when he was at a cultural exchange in Germany where, when people asked him about Islam, it felt like the "white, European, western looking from up" trying to tell him how to live. However, one youth, who was admittedly non-Arab and received some education in Europe, *seemed to uphold an*

Orientalist perspective of his Arab neighbors. He said that Arabs and Muslims especially are aggressive to the idea of the West. He framed it as a problem that when some Arabs go to Europe to get educated, they "go and they never change." He says that "Arabs are easily fooled," the people in the cities are locked in the past with tribal mentalities, and that their morality is "silly" and "superficial" because it revolves around sex and sexual orientation. On the other hand, He has a favorable view of the West and its installments. Regarding Israel, he said that they had been fooled in school into believing there existed a "Zionist enemy," noting that Israel stifles corruption, has good education, is second in tech production only to Silicon Valley, and the Arabs who live there have their rights. He says he is one of the 0.01% of people who wished that Britain never left Jordan. He called the western model "excellent" because he sees how people there live in dignity and without corruption. His peers however caution that there are different cultures between The Middle East and the West and therefore as a model it should not be copy and pasted, but, instead, *they advocate a sort of hybridity between the two models*.

With regard to the material legacies of colonialism in Jordan in the Middle East those who had an opinion had a lot to share. One youth noted how Britain used to convince the Jordanians that it was better for them not to choose their government—a tradition which was handed down to the present secret police in Jordan (mukhabarat) who continue to tell them that they are better off not choosing who is in power. Two youths concur on a legacy: the ruling elites in Jordan and the greater Middle East are only there because past or present colonial powers allow them to be. Interestingly, the same two youth, when asked for examples of legacies, cited corruption or the rigging of elections; *I postulate that they associate corruption to colonialism because of the lack of self-determination that each condition renders*.

Another legacy of colonialism is the way in which their school curriculum erased the fact that Britain had occupied Jordan, producing the historical amnesia which woke up only at the point where the last British soldier no longer was part of the Jordanian army in the 40s or 50s. Fortunately, the focus group I had, gave feminist critiques of colonial legacies. one noted that the sexist laws that exist in Jordan come from the French; more specifically, the law which states if you kill a cheating wife and your sentence is lessened comes from France, while the law which states that nationality cannot be passed by the mother is a British law. The same youth comparing the religious traditions of Christianity and Islam, remarks how in Islam the story of

Adam and Eve involves both of them eating and both of them suffering guilt; however, the Christian version shows an Eve who deceives Adam and gets punished for it.

On Stateness and International Relations Theory

It is important to recall at the beginning of this section the remark made by that anonymous Jordanian when asked if King Abdullah should give up some power to a global federalism: "What sovereignty does he have to give?" We should also recall the crucial elements of the state, which is supposed to form the base of our international system, are "community, legitimacy, monopoly of force, and territory." Regarding the first element of community, multiple youth doubt that Jordan attains to this description. One stated very solemnly that the question "Who is a Jordanian," is an "existential" one with no clear answer, and that the Hashemite regime does not talk about identity. The focus group I interviewed claimed that Jordan suffers a lack of identity which is troubling for the country. Multiple youth note that the government tries to say that Jordan is a Bedouin country, but say that cannot be because of the diversity of people there. The focus group explained that there are three layers of self in Jordan: east bank v. west bank is the most abstract layer, loyalty to a city, village, or district is a middle layer, and tribe is the third, most granular identity. *Upon this estimation, then, Jordan fails to forge community coterminal with its territorial boundary; thus, it fails that element of the state. But even worse Jordan is not sovereign.*

One youth paints this picture for us very strongly. He begins by explaining that the "deep state" of the US, UK and Israel has its people inside the government of Jordan and otherwise throughout the Middle East. He explains that the question of Jordanian sovereignty can be considered after World War Two with the rise of the US as a global superpower. King Abdullah *is* sovereign enough that he recently did not extend the contract to Israel of the lands in North Jordan. However, Jordan is not sovereign with regard to its natural resources—he tells the tale by which Jordan is currently trapped as a resource poor state who relies on foreign aid and who must have a gas deal with Israel, due to the lack of better options. Such a story sounds like nothing new. Yet, so he explains, when you consider the reason why Jordan has no better options for gas is because Israel either overtly or covertly bombed the gas lines from Egypt, and will not allow a pipeline to go from Lebanon to Jordan, you see how Jordan is coerced. Jordan does not need a gas deal, he asserts… Jordan has the second biggest amount of crude oil reserves and Shell has been providing evidence for this since the 1990s. The reason why this oil field has not

been developed is because of US pressure—were Jordan to be rich and powerful, with happy Palestinian refugees, the US and Israel would be concerned for the security and stability of the latter. *Thus, for this reason, Jordan fails the sovereignty test*.

On Conflict in the Middle East

Due to the semi structured nature of the interviews to use participants did not provide an answer for this section; however, the one that is given provides interesting answers. The authoritative youth on this topic begins by saying that in the small picture the conflict in the Middle East looks *complex*–indeed, the only peer of his who also answered this section spent his answer focusing on the complexities of sect as they exist throughout the region. However, in the big picture, all the conflict in the Middle East is a historic conflict between The West and the East. For example, the Hellenistic period shows the West insisting on changing the East. More recently, contemporary conflict between Libya and Egypt cannot be considered without noting that Egypt, Greece, and Israel all have oil interests in Libya. In the grand scheme, then, he argues, *these are not Middle Eastern conflicts.* Deconstructing the history of ISIS, he shows how the US and the UK said Wahhabism was good upon its inception because it met their interests. Then, of course, KSA sent Wahhabis to Afghanistan to aid the US against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. At present, *he sees colonialism as facilitating these militant groups in various countries in order to achieve their interests; that is, constructing the terrorist gives them "cause" to be in the Middle East in pursuit of its ulterior motives*. We will see how this youth is not the only individual to hold this perspective; however, one of his peers refutes this perspective, saying that Arabs may suggest that the US created ISIS, without doing a critical investigation of history. Tracing the ISIS we know today back to the ISIS sisters, he argues that because the sisters existed before the founding of the US, it cannot possibly be true.

I discovered two other important imaginations of conflict in the eyes of the youth. First, the Palestinian Israeli conflict has always been a compass for understanding conflict in the Middle East—no one political act is unrelated to the Palestinian Israeli conflict. For example, if you ask an Arab about Saddam Hussein, he claims that they will reply "oh, he's the one that shot the missiles at Israel." Lastly, the focus group notes how civil conflict only exists at the time when elections come around, the people being otherwise coexistent during other seasons.

On Conflict Resolution Strategies

A list of conflict resolution strategies produced by all for youth interviews follows here. I chose not the analyze the suggestions, letting them speak for themselves. Later, in the

conclusion, a note will be made about political imagination and these suggestions. The same method will be followed for all other participant groups. I also did not try to put the suggestions in my own words.

1. Fight Corruption extremely hard.

2. Try to create a collective identity and shut down any institutional ethnic or religious divides

3. Create a secular constitution to protect the rights of people that is separate religion from politics

4. Education produces a big potential for change. We need to rebuild an "independent" education system. "Instead of occupying and controlling those minds," help them grow.

5. We need a different mind leading the United States and therefore Trump should not be president again.

6. As the compass, a Palestinian peace is a prerequisite for Peace in the Middle East.

7. War with Israel. Unfortunately, one of the youths saw that the situation as coming to a point of last resort, suggesting war might be due soon. Another suggested forming an Arab union to confront Israel and free Palestine.

8. Limit interfering in other countries because the peace in the Middle East is about how long foreign interests exist within the region

9. Peace for Palestine and for the Middle East cannot be achieved only by way of a change in the Middle East but is a global effort. Two reasons why the conflict with Israel is unstoppable is because (a) there is such a huge difference in power between the two parties and (b) because the Palestinian people by nature will not give up to occupation. Therefore, we need to form a very powerful international community, taking example from the structure of the European Union, with enough authority that when you make suggestions to Israel for peace they actually have to listen.

10. A united world—though, not a homogenous global culture—can be accomplished by real work and not just theories and talks about human rights.

11. Negotiations, and the agreements they produce, must show concern for the dignity of the parties involved.

12. We need to find the same set of values that everyone agrees about.

13. We need to have a new campaign on the meaning of words abroad; for example, "civilized" or "equality."

On the Future
Each interview produced a distinct response; thus, the numbers below refer to the response of each interviewee. To avoid distorting the images produced, I will not combine then together. Participants were asked to "envision a future, postcolonial Middle East that is secure, peaceful, and just." Each subsequent "*On Future*" section will follow the same format.

1. The future should have a Middle East that is more interacted with the globe.

2. All Arabs aim to have a United Arab Democracy one day—maybe not 30 or 40 years from now, but eventually. They said, "something like the EU would be perfect," within which there is no need to travel with a visa because all Arabs are the same.

3. The end goal is to have an Arab union. First, she recommends that each country work on its own and then build stronger multilateral relations with their neighbors, eventually becoming like the European Union. In this union, each state would work on their own issues, but they would also work together on trade, with "limitations" in regard to their conduct with each other. In this system, each state can share their opinion but have no right to intervene in the others' affairs. In this system, Islam is not politicized.

4. We need a very strong international community with substantive authority, a set of universal values; one that is more humanitarian and less sectarian; where religion exists as a lifestyle; and where it is, ultimately "not about nations, not about names, but about the value of justice." This participant simultaneously imagined a diverse Arab union with "no borders," economic cooperation between the countries, and self-determination. This participant wished for the system to be like the European Union because they "dream about it as a model." Lastly, The US would not be allowed to intervene in this union.

Urban Refugees
Considering that only two urban refugees were interviewed, this section of their responses will be sparser than the answers given by the youth. In general, their responses were also less lengthy.

On the Legacy of the Spring
From the eyes of The Syrian refugee, the message of the Arab Spring is that the world was able to intervene and spoil the Arab Spring to the benefit of intellectual and economic

colonialism. Such an account bears further testament to the remoteness of the argument made by Dabashi. Instead of telling of new boundaries of the world, *this account tells instead of the continued domination of the Middle East*. On the other hand, The Iraqi refugee believes the message conveyed by the Arab Spring is that Arabs refuse to submit to injustice, slavery, and corruption, and are always seeking self-determination. However, like their peer, this refugee saw the Arab Spring as spoiled by the interference of the West. *Though these statements by urban refugees do not represent any ideology, they do entertain the binary opposite of the West and the East which Dabashi claimed had collapsed.*

On Postcolonialism

Along the lines of knowledge production, the Syrian refugee argues that foreign colonialism takes Islamic thought and culture and distorts it, thereby pitting Muslims against it. They elect the media as one vehicle through which the West conducts colonialism today. *Therefore instead of a treatise in a library like the old orientalism, the new type is circulated much more visibly through the media*. Instead of ambivalence this refugee seems to reject the western system when they say that the West tries to make sects of their society and implement its values and ideas there. Thus, the sects currently written about are understood as the legacies of colonialism. The goal of colonialism has been described as keeping the Middle East divided and both economically and politically dependent on colonial powers. Finally they explained that their social identity remained the same after displacement.

The Iraqi refugee sees the West describing the Middle East as violent and backward with cultures that are against the West and which must be changed. Hereby, they confirm the field of postcolonialism on this point and concur with earlier responses of the youth. On the other hand, this refugee describes the western model as one which focuses not on human value but on the monetary value things; furthermore, it is an individualistic society with a limited conception of community and weak social communication. *So, this refugee is not ambivalent about the West*. Finally, this refugee demonstrates the continuity of Arab identity by saying that when moving from Iraq to Jordan their social identity did not change. In their eyes, Iraq and Jordan share the same culture and religion.

On Stateness and International Relations Theory

Related to the fundamental unit of the state in international relations, the Syrian refugee explained that *the will of the states in the Middle East are stolen in favor of the West due to continued colonialism of intellectual, economic, and political forms. In contrast with The*

Knowledge, then, none of the states in the Middle East are sovereign, but instead are as tangible as their silhouettes drawn on the world map. On the other hand, the Iraqi refugee does not make any direct mention indicating the value of the state in the Middle East, but their central focus on the omnipresent power of colonialism in the Middle East would serve also to undermine the principle of sovereignty.

On Conflict in the Middle East

Casting the Middle East as a playground for the West, the Syrian refugee explained that the cause for the conflict in the Middle East is the colonial power's role in forging sects and in maintaining conflicts in order to preserve its interests. Seeming to describe this as a proxy method, they further explain that the colonial power will intervene *if* there are not enough parties to the conflict. They say that this is all because a strong Middle East counters the interests of the colonizer. Supporting the argument made by Peteet (2008), the Iraqi refugee adds that the nature of the conflict in the Middle East relies on the sectarianism nurtured by colonial history. Furthermore, another element of the nature of these conflicts is that they are in fact not conflicts between the people of the Middle East but instead proxies for international powers wherein religion is used as a tool for strife.

On Conflict Resolution Strategies

1. Arguing that no peace in the Middle East or in the rest of the world can be permanent, the Syrian refugee presented the following as a solitary method for resolving conflict in the Middle East: Peace exists when there are normative or otherwise formal rules and agreements which govern the behavior of states towards each other. *In my eyes, this means that international peace requires the international rule of law.*

2. The Iraqi refugee proposed the idea of a mediation team composed of the United States, Russia, China, and the European Union in order to avoid unilateral interest and ensure the interests of the people are given priority. Nevertheless, their method for solving conflict in the Middle East relies on an intervention.

3. The Iraqi refugee also proposes that peace in the Middle East could not be achieved without a strong force emerging within the region as a leader of peace.

On the Future

1. Though not directly forming a future world, the Syrian refugee implied that the current world order would have to change for there to be peace in the Middle East. Because of the pervasive role of religion currently in the region, a future Middle East would be a

society structured on religion; alongside this characteristic, the states would be sovereign, and the United States would not have a role except for mediation. *It is important to note that if sovereignty is suggested as a future condition, then it does not currently exist in reality.*

2. The Iraqi refugees similarly implies that a peaceful Middle East in the future is contingent upon a different regional and global order. In this future order they imagine the United States withdrawn from the region, not only to keep it from instigating conflict but also because it needs to pay attention to its problems at home—in their eyes, the US is on the verge of federal collapse.

General Citizenry

On the Legacy of the Spring

All general citizens who participated in this study look upon the legacy of the Arab Spring as something which was inconclusive, counterproductive, and without organization. Instead of a transnational movement, as Dabashi refers to it, they see it as something which starts as a trend but deals mainly with internal affairs. One participant has a particularly interesting view of the effect of the Arab Spring. Though an Arab himself, *he seems to make an Oriental representation of the Arab during the Arab Spring*. It is useful at this point to note but he was the was the most educated (Ph.D.) individual I interviewed, having gotten a degree in the UK. *Could this mean that in the course of his education he encountered, entertained, and learned Oriental discourse?* In his eyes, the Arab Spring proved the Arab identity was still incapable of overcoming its deficiencies, to wit, its premature political self. He adds that what it revealed deficiencies in the Arab identity to the world. Were this true, the argument made by Dabashi (2012) that the Arab was thusly freed from the prison of postcoloniality is erroneous in the least because a scholar is describing Arabs in terms yet again Oriental.

On Postcolonialism

Regarding colonial legacies or remnants all three participants first responded that they did not believe that there were any, hereby giving a common example of colonial amnesia. *Could it be that all the legacies noted heretofore by other participants are not real? Is it possible, by the mechanisms of colonial memory and discourse, that the examples are perhaps not at the front of their mind?* After discussing other political parameters, two of the three participants recollected some remnants. One talked about the borders set by colonial powers in the Middle East. The other talked about the same honor killing law noted in the youth section, in depth.

Expressing her hope that 90% of the legal system of Jordan can be changed, one participant relayed that Egypt's legal system is a direct copy from France, and that the civil legal system of Jordan comes then byway of Egypt and institutionalizes itself in confrontation with Islamic culture. Meanwhile, British law makes up a large part of Jordanian criminal law. (Unrelated to law, but related to other elements of cultural colonialism, is that most of the school curriculum in Jordan is British.) She explains how this *hybrid* system conflicts with the values of Islam. Thus, in the adjudication of the murder of a wife, per this British leftover, the husband will only go to jail for a maximum of six months and the investigation will last for only three, if he or some other man, related to the woman in some manner, evidence that she had been cheating. Now, this related man can be any relative as far removed as a cousin, of a cousin, of a cousin, and this evidence can take the form of speculation. Yet, should a woman murder a husband who she finds, not speculatively, but literally, in their own bed with another women, she will go to prison for the rest of her life. *It is ironic then that the West describes the East as backward when, alas, it was a backwardness which they themselves exported.*

On Stateness and International Relations Theory

Two participants, through their denial of the remnants of colonialism present in Jordan, maintain the argument that Jordan is now an independent state, disengaged colonially from Britain, but who continues to take advantage of good relationships with Britain, and who leverages diplomatic soft power in pursuit of its interests. Whether this is a fair estimation of the stateness of Jordan, shall be considered against the backdrop of findings heretofore delivered and in the coming conclusion. However, one of the participants simultaneously makes the argument that in an era of globalization, noted by one scholar as one of the forces which challenges the legitimacy of the state today (Hislope and Mughan, 2012), the states in the Middle East do not believe they have an influence over global affairs. Instead, they are "a recipient of events," according to said participant. because of this power domination, he says that Arabs still feel inferior to the West. He goes further to say *the Middle East is cast as by nature a sphere for superpowers.*

On Conflict in the Middle East

The same participant who casted the Middle East as "a recipient of events," goes further to explain he thinks the conflict in the Middle East by nature resembles all of The Knowledge reviewed above about sectarianism and the *state stability dialectic*. He argues that sectarianism in the Middle East is the result of the deficiencies of the state; namely, the failure of the state to

forge a common identity within its boundaries leads to civil strife. He says that the state has the power to both provoke and mitigate these sectarian tendencies which are "always everywhere." No region and no state is exempt from the ruptures of the sectarian; however, if a state manages to form a common identity there will be the peace or vice versa.

Another participant seconded the argument that the Palestinian Israeli conflict is, on the country level, *a compass*—"that it will guide us." However, also of note is their argument *that ISIS is a strategy of the United States in the Middle East*. At first it was not clear what she meant. However, she began to ask these rhetorical questions. "Why do we suddenly hear about ISIS, a very strong and well-trained militant group, with a strong financial system, sprout up in countries under war and occupation? Why is it in Jordan, Syria, and Iraq but you do not hear about it in Palestine and Israel? Moreover how could it be in Jordan when it has one of the strongest intelligence operations in the world? Lastly, why does the video which showed the killing of a Jordanian pilot in 2016 resemble the videography of the best American movies? When I asked her to clarify what she was implying, she returned yet another question: how can you think that the US has fought ISIS?

The third participant in this group, makes two relevant points about conflict in the Middle East. First, she states firmly *the war in Syria is not a civil war*. Instead, it has resulted from something planted before, and big superpowers are finishing their business on other lands. Second, in theorizing about the nature of the conflict in the Middle East she says that the sects we see today are the results of a colonial method of divide and conquer.

On Conflict Resolution Strategies

1. A greater role for the youth
2. Media representation of real voices and good communication channels through all layers, be they local, international organizational, or international.
3. Honesty
4. Give support to those who need help.
5. Be more human. We are all brothers and sisters in humanity, and we need to stop focusing on race, ethnicity, or whatever else divides us.
6. As the global superpower we need to see the United States change, because, when it changes so the world will change.

7. Pursue economic development encourage internal investments instead of migrating capital.

8. Punish corrupt people.

9. Education

10. Political conflicts need political agents for resolve. Therefore, applying alternative or indigenous modes would be ineffective to international conflict situations. Thus, if the conflict is caused by the sectarianism, which results from the state with a weak identity, then the solution is to refer to the following:

11. The solution to political conflict is to build a mature and robust political regime or state.

12. Arabs are incapable of managing their own affairs and therefore they need a just, wise intervention, either regional or international, which can help build this mature regime. An external player is needed who is more understanding of the region's needs. The US is by far much better than any other candidate to lead the change in the Middle East, not least because it has power over all the players in the region, but also because it has experience since World War II, it has military and economic power, it rebuilt the European countries with Marshall Plan, and it fought communism successfully.

13. Solving conflict is not that hard, you only need to exercise political will.

14. Increased international cooperation can lead to peace not only for Jordan but for the world.

On the Future

1. One participant imagined a future Arab Union principally between Balad As-Shams. While remembering a time when Jordanians used to shop for groceries, or get ice cream in Damascus, she dreams of a future where she can eat mansaf for lunch in Jordan, go to Palestine to get kanafeh for something sweet (and if that's too sweet, go to Syria instead for the good fruits it's known for), head to Lebanon for the nightlife, and then return to Jordan at the end of the night to rest. There would be no borders put between Balad As-Shams. Palestine will, of course, be at peace. Pumps of water will go from Palestine and Syria into Jordan. One would not have to use a visa in order to travel to other Arab countries and even into the US; instead, she hopes that one day you have an ID card was only a name, neglecting to care about any other identifying information. Eventually, the world will become one unity.

2. Another participant imagines a future Arab union Without Borders between the states. This union would not be dominated by anyone. Rather, the person with authority is the one with better values and not the one who is wealthier or has more military power. She insists that this type of union is possible, recollecting images of the Arab empire, characterizing it as a place with no hunger, no wars, no famine or pandemics, good education, access to welfare, and justice and equality.

3. This last participant wishes to see a less dominated Middle East; however, they expect that it will forever remain part of the world because of its strategic importance. For this reason, it would always be subject to the influence and the interests of an outside power, be it unipolar, bipolar, or multi polar, and the Middle East will remain in need of such relationship. What we really need, they suggest, is an international system which has respect for international law, fair, just, and real globalization, and international institutions. They stress the importance of international institutions, because without them there would be just one superpower and "might would make right." They do not think an Arab union is possible or necessary. They think that reform in the Middle East is not possible without the intervention of The United States.

Tribal Sheikhs

On the Legacy of the Spring

The sheikh from the southern badia, along with all the others above, see the Arab Spring in a negative light. Although he remarks how Jordan managed to take example from the countries around them by not going into revolt, he laments that the Arab Spring even started, for after it, the Middle East lost its security and stability. A later development of the Arab Spring is it negatively affected their economic situation and natural resources across the region. Now, they spend their days thinking how they will live that day, and that day only. *It is useful to point out, that neither this Sheikh, nor any of the others above, speak of the recovery of a cosmopolitan worldliness.* Instead, it has been spoken of as a failed revolt. The sheikh from the northern Badia did not give his opinion here.

On Postcolonialism

The sheikh from the southern badia notes that there are indeed leftovers of colonialism in Jordan. Calling it a "cultural colonialism," he explained how their educational culture is colonial and how the strong reliance of their economy on other once-colonial (or currently so) countries affects the way the government acts. His counterpart in the north, recollects on colonial history

instead. He said that the British were "so smart" and that it was easy for them to get involved because they were entitled to learn the culture and participate in order to have an influence. In this way, they were smarter than the Americans because when the US came, they did not come to learn.

On Stateness and International Relations Theory

Something which came up in the interviews of participants cited earlier in this paper was the way in which the Jordanian system has been called Bedouin, but what was not yet discussed was the way the tribes were themselves integrated into the state of Jordan, having control over the army apparatus. Both sheikhs explain this reality clearly for us. Recalling the criteria for a state, the reason why this discussion is necessary in the present section is because, *for a state to exist as such, it must have a monopoly of force*. The sheikh from the southern badia says that the tribes inherited a strong existence in the state of Jordan due to their acceptance, respect, and loyalty to the Hashemite regime—defining this "strong existence" as a sort of symbiotic relationship. As an interlude to the other sheikhs opinion it is useful to note what another participant told me: the northern and southern badia districts control the army, because they are the districts which touched the outer boundaries of Jordan, while the Middle Badia involves itself more within internal politics. The sheikh from the northern badia, calls Jordan a Bedouin state because it absolutely relies on the loyalty of the Bedouin tribes. The story of their integration was a special case among regimes which incorporated tribes—the elements of these tribes in Jordan were included into the functions of the state smoothly. He says that the Hashemites knew there was more strength and stability in Jordan if they included the tribes. Thus, Jordan could be considered Bedouin because of the power that the Bedouins have relative to other internal groups. However, when substate entities such as a tribe maintains so much control over the army *does this undermine the Hashemite's monopoly of force?*

Another element of Jordan's political circumstance Which threatens the power of the state—specifically, its sovereignty—is how one sheikh describes INGOs. In his eyes, INGOs work to execute the interests of superpowers in Jordan without seizing territory. Calling these INGOs the "arms" of colonial operatives, he adds that the leaders in the Arab world do not maintain their power without relying on the support of superpowers from outside. An interesting

finding, then, is that INGOs are symbolized as arms of foreign powers within the political imaginary of this sheikh, despite their non-governmentality suggested by their name.

On Conflict in the Middle East
Only the shake from the southern badia commented on the nature of conflict in the Middle East and his answer was simple: they are natural resource conflicts.

On Conflict Resolution Strategies
Instead of making a numbered list here as I have done with other participant groups. Instead, I am conveniently left to describe what both sheikhs recommended: tribal principles and practices are based on the acceptance, or right, of the other to exist so long as what they do does not harm others. Thusly, both sheikhs recommend that this can be applied to international conflict situations.

On the Future
The Sheikh from the southern badia described the future Middle East more figuratively than other participants. Saying the regime who will lead the world in the future will be the one which understands the needs of people and the true meaning of peace, he posits Islam as that system, and suggests that, even though the US is the strongest country right now, it does not mean that it will be that way forever. For each beginning there is an end. He ended his interview by describing the point at which he would define the Middle East as postcolonial. That point, in his eyes, is when the Arab has not only his rights *but* performs his duties. I struggled for some time over what this was supposed to mean and have come to understand it *as the call for self-determination and civil society*. Lastly, the sheikh from the northern badia describes the future as one in which the US, as superpower, devises a new democratic, economic, and developmental model for a world cooperative relationship. We need this cooperative relationship, he says, because, at this time, there is no state that can live by itself without the help of others and presents coronavirus as a symbol thereof.

Conclusion: An Image Painted of the World
The Legacy of the Spring, Postcolonial Critiques, and Refuting Dabashi
Besides the youth, the image cast above of the Arab Spring and its import to the region is one of a failed, thwarted, aimless, and largely local revolution, contrary to the theoretical valorization of the Arab Spring performed by Dabashi. Though I witnessed many examples of cosmopolitanism in the answers given by the participants (many of which were unable to be reported above), the ring of Dabashi's argument is not heard through the participants. Thus, I

pose again the questions I posed before: Could it be that what the youth were missing was a view of the transnational dialectic which Dabashi possessed? Could it be that Dabashi missed the grassroots perspective that ideology was involved? It is safe to say that there was a transnational element to the Arab uprisings, existing perhaps, through the dialectic proposed by Dabashi; however, that may be the only argument we can make. Recalling from before Taylor (2007) did say that theory is often possessed by a minority in that ordinary people would describe things based on concrete example, perhaps the participants, existing as they did at the grassroots level, saw a more granular view the effects of the Arab Spring. Similarly, it is possible that Dabashi, as a literary theorist and acclaimed cultural critic, existed too far in the realm of the theoretical and not within that of the practical. Verily, not only did he claim the end of postcolonialism, but he also declared the end of National Geographic—the magazine (2012). Following a thorough review of the tenants and elements of postcolonial studies and a thorough investigation of the political imaginary of various subgroups within Jordan, it is safe to say that the field of postcolonialism proves its continued worth in studying discourse, history, and cultural form. Therefore, the first, and perhaps primary conclusion of this paper, is the validation of the continued merit of the field of postcolonialism and a refutation of the theoretical grandeur of Dabashi's conclusions. How then can we relegate that book *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* back to the bookshelf? I propose we consider it the production of the arrogant comfort of a philosophical ivory tower which, "removed from daily reality," places judgments on consequences perhaps *not yet relevant* to the material world.

Reimagining Stateness, International Relations, and Conflict in the Middle East

Everything said by the participants in the above finding sections would have us conclude that there is no sovereignty, neither for the Arab state nor Jordan. A sense of community in Jordan is undermined by its current lack of a common identity. Legitimacy, or sovereignty, is undermined, to the utmost, when the Kingdom is kept from developing itself economically, due to the security interests of its more powerful neighbor. Lastly, because the tribe plays as large a role as it does in maintaining the security apparatus, the monopoly on the use of force may not be held as tightly by the Hashemite regime as it could. All that is left, then, is the territory of Jordan; however, this too appears threatened by the fact that it cannot prevent the regional disorders which send through its gates 100,000s of refugees. Thus, all we make of the state of Jordan, and perhaps for its neighbors, is the silhouette of it, as recognized by the international community on

the world map. Furthermore, none of the other Middle Eastern states are described by the participants as being independent or sovereign but instead are in a predicament where they continue to be dominated politically, economically, and even through the humanitarian aims of INGOs. In a world of power imbalances, sovereignty, and thus the state, exists only as a normative disposition, not as a descriptive reality. Conversely, one might argue because superpowers like the United States are sovereign over their internal affairs, the state is still relevant as far as they are concerned. However, it would be prudent for us to realize that if the power of the United States extends so far outside of its territorial boundaries, then the perimeter of the state is violated—making it thusly an empire.

The persistent reach, then, of the "outside" power into the internal affairs of the Arab State, blurs the lines not only between state and state but also between region and region. For what happens internally, then, relies so heavily on the influence of regional or external interveners, that it disproves the idea of "internal politics" and trades it for what should be understood as a transnational dialectic (Dabashi, 2012). This dialectical relationship exists between the internal and the transnational. It is no longer a system of state *and* globe, it is state *in* globe. Furthermore, any idea of regionality works no more, or is in the least diminished. There are only levels of abstraction to the same political game. Only, to study *the region* as such, without a focus on the peddling of other powers and their interests in the locales, is to sustain an illusion of the way things work and to give the peddlers the privilege of being hidden from the eye of scrutiny. In any sense, it is to sustain the myth that the region or any of the independent states operates on its own terms. Perhaps nothing can be explained in the Middle East without thinking about how the tendrils of global powers infiltrate the soil, the cabinets, and the minds of region. What we have, then, seems to be a world system.

The Nature of Conflict in the Middle East and International Relations Theory

I will begin this conclusion on the nature of the conflict in the Middle East by repeating something that was remarked by several participants; that is, *these are not Middle Eastern conflicts.* One participant, herself a Syrian, said that the war there was not a civil war. By extrapolation neither would the crisis in Yemen be a civil war. However, they are popularly considered either civil wars, internationalized civil wars, or proxy wars. Such labels are merely disguises for their true nature and provide Western powers with the alibi that the war of the 21st century is of a largely civil character. As a substitute, and in reflection of the participants

responses, I would like to propose a new understanding of conflicts in 21st century: these conflicts could be called "politically correct." Words such as "proxy" or "crisis," and phrases such as "the War on Terror" or "humanitarian intervention" are examples of this new language of war. In the eyes of the Syrian, what is happening right now in her country, is a war between the United States and Russia.

Many participants also talked about the idea of "divide and conquer." For them, the sectarian rifts which characterize the region are the result of either the colonial past or recent political gaming by foreign powers. Recalling that one participant spoke of the role of the state in maintaining a common identity and thereby preventing conflict, I can remark that if the West has control over the leaders in the Middle East, then it must be, to some degree, complicit in their weakness; and this could be the vehicle by which "divide and conquer" is achieved. From the position of *my own* political imagination, I see this scenario as one where The Middle East is some sort of perverse playground for outside powers.

While some participants strongly believed that the United States is responsible for creating and utilizing ISIS for its interests, others argue this cannot be the case. Considering the political imagination, could it be, as product of the knowledge of other, verified injustices wrought by the West in the East, a conspiracy of the US as the creator of ISIS fits within the collective structure of the Jordanian political imagination?

An important symbol which came from this study is to see the Palestinian Israeli conflict as a compass—a tool which directs our gaze and perhaps choreographs our future. Before talking about the images designed for the future of the Middle East, recommendations for conflict resolution will be reviewed.

Conflict Resolution Strategies

What appears to be a representative list of the conflict resolution strategies proposed follows here:

1. The stability of the community is dependent upon the stability of its collective identity. Therefore, a strategy for the resolution to conflict in the Middle East is the construction of a collective identity while simultaneously building up its dialectical companion: the state.

2. Flowing from the fundaments of tribal principles, conflict resolution must begin with the acceptance of the others right to exist.

3. Education.

4. A number of suggestions were made saying that solving conflict in the Middle East is not hard, all that is needed is political will from those who have the power.

5. Two solutions for the Palestinian conflict were discovered:

   a. Construct an Arab union which can confront Israel in the effort to free Palestine.

   b. Build an international system with substantive enough authority to make suggestions to, and demands of, Israel which it must obey.

6. A few participants, ambivalently, called for an intervention of an outside power or, specifically, the United States, to help build mature states, mediate conflicts, and exercise political will.

The Future

Aside from the two urban refugees, all other participants explicitly imagined a future that is more unified, either with an Arab union which resembles the European "model," or a more interconnected, robust, and authoritative international system, perhaps devised by the United States. To not detract from each participant's construction of the future by making an amalgamation of them, this section will be brief. I wish only to remark that through such requests for a future without visas, with ID cards that have nothing on them but a name, where it is "not about nations, not about names, but about the value of justice," with an Arab union containing no borders and/or (or "eventually") a stronger international community, we find ourselves imagining a cosmopolitan future.

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Discussion: The End of Postcolonialism?

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In the above summary of the findings of this paper, I managed to demonstrate two of the meanings intended by the main title of this paper; that is, in the first place, "The End of Postcolonialism?" is meant to express doubt and incredulity at Dabashi's (2012) main argument that given the depletion of the usefulness of anti-colonial ideologies, postcolonial knowledge production ceases to be relevant, which I have refuted as a conclusion sourced from the arrogant comfort of his philosophical ivory tower and as an unfounded preclusion of an entire field of its utility; in the second place, "The End of Postcolonialism?" refers to the participant's constructs for "a future, postcolonial Middle East that is secure, peaceful, and just" (see Appendix). However, there is one last meaning that I intend to impart to the title. Recollecting all of the examples of cosmopolitan thinking granted to me by my participants—cited above, or not, or

present in their constructs of the future—it appears that cosmopolitanism and postcolonialism occupy similar theoretical zones. Whereas I supposed that the establishment of stable states and stable regions in a post-colonial future that is just, peaceful, and secure must precede the establishment of a global union, some of the participants think in the reverse—a robust international system must first exist before the disorders of the Middle East can be resolved. Thus, the final meaning I intend to impart to the title question, is to ask whether the end—that is, in terms of purpose or pursuit—of postcolonialism is the ultimate establishment of a cosmopolitan world order, or, in the least, an understanding of a world which is much more connected than we currently theorize or perceive. Could it be suggested as well that neither regional stability nor global federalism must precede the other in a unidirectional chronology, but that postcolonialism tends to cosmopolitanism as the end of winter melts into the spring—the wilting of one is the blossoming of the other, as part of the same process.

Future Visions

I have already made plans to extend this study into an Honors Thesis in Anthropology at my home institution: Austin College. Continuing the theoretical considerations entertained above, I am compelled to focus on the relationship between postcolonialism and cosmopolitanism, to establish a theoretical direction or to establish, like the state stability dialectic, a theory which posits that anything which tends to dehegemonize knowledge or power tends to promote cosmopolitanism, which in turn tends to more dehegemonization. On the other hand, a study of world systems can arise from the present study, further challenging the principle of the state. I have also thought during the course of this study about a potential project which could be titled *The Myth of the Savage Oriental* which studies the way in which the West discursively forgets its role in imagining and producing the so-called "Arab backwardness" evidenced by sectarian conflict or honor killings, when these sects and honor killings can be traced back to Western influence.

Blinders…or Limitations

My study may possess some weaknesses. One limitation was my delayed topic switch which meant that I began learning about postcolonialism more in depth only once the ISP period began. As a plural field with many angles, it was a challenge to grip the contours of the field in such a short time. Edward Said, the author of *Orientalism*, has suggested that "[w]hen one uses categories like Oriental and Western as both the starting and the end points of…research…the

result is usually to polarize the distinction—the Oriental becomes more Oriental, the Westerner more Western—and limit the human encounter between different cultures, traditions, and societies" (cited in Loomba, 1998, p. 45). I hope not to have polarized the distinction. Furthermore, Said also argued that "knowledge of the East could never be innocent or 'objective' because it was produced by human beings who were necessarily embedded in colonial history and relationships" (Loomba, 1998, p. 46). As such, despite my attempts to find new knowledge from the eyes of sub-groups in Jordan, I am still a citizen of the US, the present purveyor of Orientalism.

<div align="center">**Bibliography**</div>

Human Resources:

This study uses data collected through eleven interviews with individuals located in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The identities and affiliations of all individuals will be kept confidential. Their responses comprise the primary data analyzed in the findings and conclusion sections of this paper.

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<p style="text-align:center">Appendices</p>

Interview Questions

A1: QUESTIONS FOR YOUTH:

Theme 1: Defining the Self with Relation to Others

1. How do you describe your social/political identity or sense of self? How might colonial history, continued foreign intervention in the Middle East, and the way the West represents the Middle East in the media, affect the way you see yourself or the way your elders saw/see themselves?
2. What did the Arab Spring mean to Arab identity? In other words, how did it affect Arab identity? How would you describe the worldview produced by the Arab Spring?
3. What are your thoughts on Jordanians and other Arabs who go to get educated in the West? Why? What effect does that have on Jordan and/or the Middle East?
4. Is the Western model a good model for society?

Theme 2: Colonial Legacies?

1. In ways both noticeable and less visible, how might the Government of Jordan represent the continuation of colonial processes? In other words, can you see any leftovers of colonialism in the way in which the Government operates?
2. What is the relationship between the history of colonialism and foreign intervention and the rise of Political Islam (Salafism, Daesh, ISIS, etc.)?
3. What is your opinion on how the history of colonialism and foreign intervention has affected the conflicts in the Middle East in general? What do you think is the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East? Share other thoughts that you might have in general about the conflicts.

Theme 3: Solutions for the Conflicts and Visions for a Postcolonial Future

1. Using the wisdom of your position in the Middle East, how would you build a lasting peace in the Middle East? Considering current peacebuilding efforts, what is lacking? Activating your political imagination as a younger person, what new theories of peacemaking might you have? Please make a small list of recommendations.
2. How do you envision a future, postcolonial Middle East that is secure, peaceful, and just? How is society organized? What political actors are involved? Who is allowed to intervene? What role should the U.S. have? At what point would you say the Middle east has become postcolonial and by what method do we get there? All questions and anything related is eligible for this answer. Please make a small list of characteristics for the future Middle East.

A2: QUESTIONS FOR URBAN REFUGEES

Theme 1: Defining the Self with Relation to Others

5. How do you describe your social/political identity or sense of self? How might colonial history, continued foreign intervention in the Middle East, and the way the West represents the Middle East in the media, affect the way you see yourself, or the way your elders saw/see themselves?

6. What did the Arab Spring mean to Arab identity? In other words, how did it affect Arab identity? How would you describe the worldview produced by the Arab Spring?

7. After being displaced, has your national/social identity changed any?

8. Is the Western model a good model for society?

Theme 2: Colonial Legacies?

4. What is the relationship between the history of colonialism and foreign intervention and the rise of Political Islam (Salafism, Daesh, ISIS, etc.)?

5. What is your opinion on how the history of colonialism and foreign intervention has affected the conflicts in the Middle East in general? What do you think is the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East? Share other thoughts that you might have in general about the conflicts.

Theme 3: Solutions for the Conflicts and Visions for a Postcolonial Future

3. Using the wisdom of your position in the Middle East, how would you build a lasting peace in the Middle East? Considering current peacebuilding efforts, what is lacking?

4. How do you envision a future, postcolonial Middle East that is secure, peaceful, and just? How is society organized? What political actors are involved? Who is allowed to intervene? What role should the U.S. have? At what point would you say the Middle east has become postcolonial and by what method do we get there? All questions and anything related is eligible for this answer.

A3: QUESTIONS FOR GENERAL POPULATION:

Theme 1: Defining the Self with Relation to Others

9. How do you describe your social/political identity or sense of self? How might colonial history, continued foreign intervention in the Middle East, and the way the West represents the Middle East in the media, affect the way you see yourself or the way your elders saw/see themsleves?

10. What did the Arab Spring mean to Arab identity? In other words, how did it affect Arab identity? How would you describe the worldview produced by the Arab Spring?

11. What are your thoughts on Jordanians and other Arabs who go to get educated in the West? Why? What effect does that have on Jordan and/or the Middle East?

12. Is the Western model a good model for society?

Theme 2: Colonial Legacies?

6. In ways both noticeable and less visible, how might the Government of Jordan represent the continuation of colonial processes? In other words, can you see any leftovers of colonialism in the way in which the Government operates?

7. What is the relationship between the history of colonialism and foreign intervention and the rise of Political Islam (Salafism, Daesh, ISIS, etc.)?

8. What is your opinion on how the history of colonialism and foreign intervention has affected the conflicts in the Middle East in general? What do you think is the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East? Share other thoughts that you might have in general about the conflicts.

Theme 3: Solutions for the Conflicts and Visions for a Postcolonial Future

5. Using the wisdom of your position in the Middle East, how would you build a lasting peace in the Middle East? Considering current peacebuilding efforts, what is lacking? Please make a small list of recommendations.

6. How do you envision a future, postcolonial Middle East (suppose 30 years from now) that is secure, peaceful, and just? How is society organized? What political actors are involved? Who is allowed to intervene? What role should the U.S. have? At what point would you say the Middle east has become postcolonial and by what method do we get there? All questions and anything related is eligible for this answer. Please make a small list of characteristics for the future Middle East

A4: QUESTIONS FOR TRIBAL LEADERS:

Theme 1: Defining the Self with Relation to Others

13. How do you describe your social/political identity or sense of self? How might colonial history, continued foreign intervention in the Middle East, and the way the West represents the Middle East in the media, affect the way you see yourself, or the way your elders saw/see themselves? Tell the story of the encounter of tribal identity with that of the British.

14. What did the Arab Spring mean to Arab identity? In other words, how did it affect Arab identity? How would you describe the worldview produced by the Arab Spring?

15. Is the Western model a good model for society?

Theme 2: Colonial Legacies?

9. In ways both noticeable and less visible, how might the Government of Jordan represent the continuation of colonial processes? In other words, can you see any leftovers of colonialism in the way in which the Government operates? Considering the tribes were integrated into the Kingdom of Jordan, do the tribes now feel dominated in power by Jordan?

10. What is your opinion on how the history of colonialism and foreign intervention has affected the conflicts in the Middle East in general? What do you think is the nature of the conflicts in the Middle East? Share other thoughts that you might have in general about the conflicts.

Theme 3: Solutions for the Conflicts and Visions for a Postcolonial Future

7. Using the wisdom of your position in the Middle East, how would you build a lasting peace in the Middle East? Considering current peacebuilding efforts, what is lacking? How could tribal dispute settlement practices, notions of justice, peace, unity, or any other tribal custom be applied to international conflict situations?

8. How do you envision a future, postcolonial Middle East that is secure, peaceful, and just? How is society organized? What political actors are involved? Who is allowed to intervene? What role should the U.S. have? At what point would you say the Middle east has become postcolonial and by what method do we get there? All questions and anything related is eligible for this answer. Please make a small list of characteristics for the future Middle East.