Views of Judaism and Jewish People in Jordan: Political, Social, Historical, and Religious Considerations

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Views of Judaism and Jewish People in Jordan: Political, Social, Historical, and Religious Considerations

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Jordan: Geopolitics, International Relations, and the Future of the Middle East

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# Table of Contents

Acknowledgements ........................................................................................................2  
Abstract .........................................................................................................................3  
  Key Words ....................................................................................................................3  
Introduction ...................................................................................................................4  
Research Questions ........................................................................................................6  
Literature Review ..........................................................................................................6  
  Conservative Islamism, Judaism, and Israel .............................................................6  
  The Role of Jewish People in How They are Perceived by Others ......................7  
  Arab Jews ....................................................................................................................8  
  Jewish People as the People of the Book .................................................................9  
  Efforts for Peace and Communication ..................................................................10  
Methodology ..................................................................................................................11  
  Theoretical Framework .............................................................................................11  
  Ethics ..........................................................................................................................13  
Data and Results ............................................................................................................13  
  Interviews ...................................................................................................................13  
  Survey .........................................................................................................................17  
Conclusions ....................................................................................................................27  
Discussion .....................................................................................................................29  
  Limitations ...................................................................................................................29  
  Recommendations for Future Research .................................................................32  
References .....................................................................................................................33  
Appendices ....................................................................................................................36
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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to find out what the general view of Judaism and Jewish people is within Jordan and what factors play into these views. There were a few aspects of this topic that were specifically focused on in this study. The impact of Israel on the way that Jewish people are perceived was one of the main topics explored. Part of this was looking at the history of Judaism and Jewish people in the Arab World and how the relationship between them and their non-Jewish neighbors changed after the creation of Israel. As a majority Muslim country, the interplay between Judaism and Islam and the way this influences the views of Jordanians was also a main theme in the research with a focus on the status of Jews as “the People of the Book”. Data was mainly gathered through a survey that was given to university students in Amman, Jordan. Three interviews were also conducted, two with professors at universities in Amman, and one with one of the survey participants.

Key Words
Religion, Judaism, Islam, Zionism, People of the Book, Israel-Palestine conflict, People of the Book, History, Political Science, Regional Studies: Middle East
Introduction

This research focused on views and opinions held by Jordanians about the Jewish religion and people. Specifically, the research looked at how Israel has impacted these views and if there is any separation between the state of Israel and Jewish people in the minds of Jordanians. Another focus was how Judaism as a religion specifically is regarded within Jordan. Jewish people are considered “People of the Book” by the Quran and as such are afforded a certain level of regard and respect within Islam. This topic is of particular interest because there are many assumptions made in the US about how Jewish people are viewed in the Arab World as a whole and it is difficult to find unbiased information about the true feelings of Arabs towards Judaism and Jewish people.

In the United States, Arab people are likely to be framed as antisemitic because of the long standing and ongoing Arab Israeli conflict. It is undeniable that the US specifically stands to gain by allowing this perception to continue. Portraying Israel as the victim of Arab antisemitism seeks to justify the actions of the Israeli government and military which the US supports monetarily and politically. Despite this, the violent and discriminatory actions of Israel are in no way justified by the Arab World’s perceived antisemitism, whether this antisemitism truly exists or not.

A 2015 article by Avi Lewis in The Times of Israel describes the feeling of being Jewish in Jordan. As most interviewees in the article agree, there is not any sort of imminent threat to Jewish people in Jordan, but there is a constant awareness of the undercurrent of antisemitism that is publicly displayed. Lewis mentions the copies of Mein Kampf and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion that are sold in both English and Arabic at most book stalls in Amman, as well as the pervasive presence of swastikas, and Stars of David painted onto the sides of trash cans, seeming to imply that Israel, Jewish people, or both, are trash. In Lewis’ article, many people mention the experience of disclosing their Jewish identity to Jordanian friends. Many say they faced no trouble when this information came out, but others recounted stories in which their friends would seem to imply that they are one of the “good Jews, it's the other ones that are bad.”

Israel has become a sort of refuge behind which people can hide their biases and hate. The antisemitism that is rampant within the US government is explained away by their support for Israel, as if Jewishness and Israel are indecipherable from each other. In reality, Western countries supported the creation of Israel, so they did not have to take in the refugees of the
Holocaust, not because of actual concern for the future of the world’s Jewish population. As Galtung put it “conceding to Jewish demands, and at the same time getting rid of the Jews” (1972). This was also done without considering the impact it would have on the Palestinians that already lived on the land that Israel now inhabits. Like with any radical political group, there are people who blindly support the actions of the Israeli government, seeing any violence as justified in the name of the cause. For these people, any critique of Israel may be considered a direct criticism of Jewishness and the right of Jewish people to live freely. Criticizing the existence of Israel and the actions of the government and settlers is not an attack on Judaism and taking it as such is counterproductive to creating a positive relationship between Arabs and Jews.

There are two sides to this coin though. While criticism of Israel is not antisemitic, the conflation of Israel and Judaism as mutually exclusive is based in antisemitism and is often used as an excuse for people to express purely antisemitic beliefs. The propensity of social media users to make blatantly antisemitic comments on the posts of Jewish users under the guise of supporting Palestine highlights this point. It is not uncommon to see comments praising Hitler and calling for the murder of Jewish people framed in the terms of “look what they are doing in Palestine, they deserve this.” The people receiving these comments are largely Jewish people who do not live in Israel and have never said anything to indicate they support the state. Jews who do not live in Israel have no more control over the actions of the government there than anyone else. Comments like these are not actually pro Palestine, they are just thinly veiled antisemitism. In a 2021 article on this topic, Joshua Zitser exemplifies the hypocrisy that is present on all sides of this discourse. The article is titled "TikTokers wished a 97-year-old Auschwitz survivor a 'happy Holocaust' as some 'Free Palestine' supporters target Jewish social media users with antisemitic abuse”. Zitser’s use of the phrase “Free Palestine supporters' creates the assumption that the problem is with the Free Palestine movement, not antisemitic people who are trying to co-opt a movement.

Another component to take into consideration when looking at views of Judaism and Jewish people and how Israel plays into these, is exposure. While there were historically Jewish populations in many Arab countries, most of these populations have shrunk significantly or completely disappeared with migration to Israel. Because of this, the only exposure to Judaism and Jewish people that Arabs have had is in the context of Israel. In Jordan people have been directly impacted by the state of Israel, and if that is their only interaction with Jewish people, it
is unsurprising that the opinions they have formed are negative. Furthermore, there is a lack of education about Judaism that is prevalent in Jordan. Things that are considered fringe conspiracy theories in the US seem to be accepted in Jordan. For example, the Protocols, appear to be widely unquestioned by Jordanians based on their widespread circulation at bookstores and newsstands. This does not excuse antisemitism, but it is vital to understanding how antisemitism may manifest. If Israel is presented as inextricable from Judaism and people assume that all Jews support the actions of Israel, it is not surprising that this leads to anger and hatred.

Jordan is an ideal place to conduct this research for multiple reasons. Jordan is considered one of the more open and liberal Arab countries so research participants may be more comfortable and willing to answer questions about this topic. Jordan was also one of the first Arab states to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Lastly, the population of Jordanian is 40-60% Palestinian. This Palestinian population is largely made up of refugees from the 1948 and 1967 wars between Arab countries and Israel and the experience of these refugees and their descendants will impact on how they view Judaism.

**Research Question**

1. Do Jordanians hold an overall positive or negative view of Judaism and Jewish people?
   a. What is the basis for these positive or negative views?
   b. Is there separation between Judaism, Zionism, and the state of Israel, or are they considered synonymous?
2. What factors play into individuals' views of Judaism (age, gender, religion, country of origin, amount of education)?
3. How is Judaism as a religion viewed in the context of the idea of the “People of the Book”?
   a. Is there a difference in how Christian and Muslim Jordanians feel about this?

**Literature Review**

*Conservative Islamism, Judaism, and Israel*

There has been relatively little research done on how Judaism and Jewish people are viewed by Arab countries and how Israel has impacted these views. Most of the research on this topic is in reference to the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), and Hamas, both of which are on the extreme end of the spectrum politically and religiously and cannot be assumed to represent all or even most Arab and Muslim views. Al-Khazendar (1999), and Spoerl (2020) take
similar positions on the topic. Spoerl goes so far as to liken “Islamist Anti Semitism " to Nazism. He says that both the Nazis and Islamist within the MB and Hamas believe in a Jewish conspiracy to rule the world and eradicate the religion of Islam, similar to Hitler’s fears about the “Aryan race” being swept away by European Jews. This is hardly a unique view held by Nazis or the MB and Hamas; people from any background who harbor antisemitism likely believe the same thing. It is more interesting to look at how the MB and Hamas have separated the religion of Judaism from Zionism. Both claim that they have no argument with the religion itself, only with Zionism and the actions of Zionists in Israel. The MB even claims to accept the Jewish minority that was present in Palestine prior to 1918 and support the right of their descendants to stay in the area if Israel is dissolved (Al Khazendar 1999). In practice though, MB and Hamas doctrines do not separate between Judaism, Zionism, and Israel and both groups want to win in the battle between Jews and Muslims which they see as inevitable (Al-Khazendar 1999, Spoerl 2020).

The Role of Jewish People in How They are Perceived by Others

An interesting case study is the Jordan Pavilion and American-Israel Pavilion at the New York World’s Fair in 1964. While this incident is not recent, it can serve as a comparison for how views may or may not have changed in the nearly sixty years that have passed. When the Fair was opened there was an uproar caused by the idealistic view of Israeli life presented in the American-Israel Pavilion and accusations of anti-Israel propaganda in response to a poem about Palestinian refugees posted in the Jordan Pavilion. Angry letters were sent to the Fair organizer by both sides and there were many attempts to picket the pavilions. The supporters of the Jordan Pavilion said they were not anti-Jew; they were anti-Israel. Many Jewish Americans took this as a direct attack though, which raises the question of how plausible it is for non-Jews to separate Judaism from Israel if some Jewish people cannot do so themselves. Interestingly, the man in charge of organizing the pavilions at the Fair, Robert Moses, was of Jewish descent himself, but he refused to take a stand in favor of either side (Katz 2003). A lot can be learned from this about the role that Jews play in the way that they are viewed by Arabs. When Jewish voices call any criticism of Israel as antisemitism it makes it hard for non-Jewish people to separate Jewishness from Israel, resulting in opinions of Judaism and Jewish people to be clouded by opinions of the state of Israel itself. When Jewish people and Judaism are viewed as synonymous with Israel the
people who have lost their homes and lives at the hands of Israel form negative feelings about Jewry.

The relationship between Jews, Israelis, and Arabs is a two-way street and it is important to see how Jewish people both inside and outside Israel have contributed to the current state of this relationship. Zionism is not a shared value between all Jewish people, and it can mean different things to different people, but the development of political Zionism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century leading to the creation of Israel as a Jewish homeland has irrevocably influenced the state of the modern world. Prior to World War II there was a rejection of political Zionism among many reform Jewish groups, but in the aftermath of the Holocaust opinions started to shift in support of the creation of Israel (Aronson 2003). Ultranationalist Israelis throughout history have found ways to make their claim to the land of Israel appear more legitimate. One method used was the creation of sacred places by Shmuel Kahana when the state of Israel was still young. While there are many sacred sites in Judaism that are located in Israel, Kahana promoted sites that had never been of particular significance in the past. By doing this, there were more opportunities for Israelis to develop and crowd areas that were also significant to Islam and Christianity. The land that these sites were on was usually owned by Palestinian Muslims and Christians and would be bought by settlers with a specific interest in acquiring sites owned by Muslims (Bar 2008). While the creation of holy sites is no longer common, Israel continues to find ways to interfere with the sacred spaces of Muslims and Christian Palestinians. Year after year, especially during the holy month of Ramadan, Israeli forces crackdown on Muslim worshippers at the Al-Aqsa Mosque. These incidents are usually violent, involving armed Israeli Defense Force (IDF) soldiers and unarmed Palestinians (Abdulrahim 2023). Recently more limitations have been put on the Christian population of Palestine. During Easter of 2023 Israel restricted the number of people that could worship at the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and a new proposed law could make sharing any material relating to Christianity online punishable by one year in prison (Israeli Occupation 2023).

**Arab Jews**

Another case study which shows the complex intersection of religion and identity are the Arab Jews. Throughout history there have been Jewish populations of various sizes present in Arab countries, especially after the expulsion of Jews from Spain and other places in Europe in the late fifteenth century. Some Arab countries with historically significant Jewish populations
include Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Morocco. By the early twentieth century the Jewish populations in the Arab World were starting to be threatened and after the creation of Israel, treatment worsened, leading many Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews to leave the countries they had lived in for centuries and move to Israel (Aboodi 2023). Living in Israel was not an instant solution to the plight of Arab Jews though. Many of them were met with hostility and racism from Israeli Jews of European origins, they were given jobs that no one else wanted to do, and there are allegations that babies of Arab Jews were stolen from their parents in Israeli hospitals and given to Ashkenazi families (Bar-On 1987, Burack 2019). When Israel occupied the Palestinian territories, the jobs that had been forced upon Arab Jews were then given to Palestinians. Because of this, many Arab Jews have historically been against any sort of land return or compromises because they fear a return to the place in society that they occupied before it was forced on Palestinians. The three Haim sisters of the band A-Wa are an example of the constant negotiation that takes place in the identity of Arab Jews. The Israeli sisters make music celebrating their Yemeni roots. Their songs are sung in Yemeni colloquial Arabic, and one of their albums tells the story of their great grandmother's experience coming to Israel from Yemen with “Operation Magic Carpet”. Upon her arrival in the promised land, she had to live in a camp with multiple families squeezed into each tent, at the same time she was learning Hebrew in order to get a job (Burack 2019). This highlights the question that Aboodi asks; where do Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews fit into the past and present of Arab history, especially if they do not find refuge in Israel either (Aboodi 2023, Burack 2019, Bar-On 1987). The mistreatment of Arab Jews by the countries they called home for centuries created a stronger allegiance to Israel despite the discrimination they face there. This unwavering support for Israel continues to turn the opinions of many Arabs against Jews.

**Jewish People as the People of the Book**

A vital lens through which to study the relationship of Jews and Arabs, specifically Muslims, is the status of Jews as “People of the Book” within the Quran. The concept of the People of the Book is somewhat fluid and has different interpretations. Generally, the People of the Book as mentioned in the Quran (by that or other related names) are those who are part of religions that follow revelations from God previous to the ones given to Prophet Mohammed (Bowman 1963, Albayrak 2008, Yaman 2011, Wahyudi MH 1998). According to some scholars, Jews, Christians, Sabeans, and Zoroastrians are mentioned in the Quran as following the same
God as Muslims, but not necessarily correctly since they do not accept the word of Prophet Mohammed (Albayrak 2008, Bowman 1963). Other interpretations disagree about whether the People of the Book refers to Christians, Jews, or both, and whether all People of the Book are equal to each other. However, the People of the Book are defined though, they are given a place above that of the pagans present in the Arabian Peninsula during the time of Prophet Mohammed, but they are not of equal religious status to Muslims (Bowman 1963, Yaman 2011, Wahyudi 1998). The relationship between Mohammed and the Jewish populations of Mecca and Medina is reflected in the Quran, especially after the Hijra when there was tension between Muslims and Jews in Medina leading to harsher criticisms of the People of the Book. Despite this, the Quran instructs that Muslims should not fight the People of the Book because they all worship the same god, indeed, Muslims are allowed to eat food prepared by and marry the People of the Book (Albayrak 2008, Yaman 2011). Asani puts forward an interesting theory about the tolerance and pluralism that he sees as inherent to the Quran. He claims that because of the Quran’s acceptance of multi religiosity this “explain[s] why the violent forms of anti-Semitism generated by exclusivist Christian theology in medieval and modern Europe, and the associated harsh treatment of Jewish populations that eventually culminated in the Holocaust, never occurred in regions under Muslim rule” (Asani 2002). This view glosses over the milder antisemitism that was undeniably present in the Arab World before the creation of the state of Israel, exemplified in incidents like the Damascus Affair in 1840. It is true though that many Islamic empires were known for being relatively tolerant of religious minorities and the Jews who were expelled from Spain and Portugal in the fifteenth century were able to find refuge in Morocco and the Ottoman Empire.

**Efforts for Peace and Communication**

Despite the complex history of the relationship between Jordan and Israel and Arabs and Jews, there have been many efforts throughout history to establish and mend the relationship. One example of this is the work of John Wallach, a Jewish journalist and activist who created a summer camp called Seeds of Peace in the 1990s. The camp is located in the US state of Maine and originally hosted small groups of Palestinian, Israeli, and Egyptian youth each summer to create dialogue and understanding between the groups. The camp has since expanded to host students of other backgrounds that have historical conflicts. As a result of his work towards peace and understanding Wallach was awarded the Legion of Honor by King Hussein of Jordan.
in 1997 (Obituaries 2002, Abu-Nimer and Seidel 2018). In 1998 HRH Prince Hussein bin Talal of Jordan received the Interfaith Award from Leo Baeck College, a rabbinical seminary in London. In his speech accepting the award Prince Talal talked about the history of peace and coexistence between Muslims and Jews as well as the need to recognize the cultural pain that both Arabs and Jews have been subject to in order to create a successful and lasting peace (His Royal Highness 1998). Both of these instances show the ability of people to make genuine and real efforts to cross the lines that have been drawn in the sand between Jordanians and Jews. These are just two examples though and do not necessarily mean that the wider population of Jordan holds the same values of interfaith understanding and discussion as a means to achieve peace.

**Methodology**

For this research people within Jordanian society were studied, specifically students at the University of Jordan, and scholars in political science and the history of Palestine and Israel. Survey takers were located by contacting professors and asking them to share the survey with their classes. Interviewees were contacted with the help of the research advisor. The online survey was used to gain a general understanding of students’ opinions on Judaism and what the main influences on these opinions are. An online survey gives the takers a better sense of privacy than an in-person survey, hopefully allowing participants to be comfortable answering more truthfully. This also gave participants a chance to take more time in considering their answers because the questionnaire could be left open on a phone or computer and completed at any time. The issue of personal opinion, especially on a sensitive topic like this, cannot be boiled down neatly into data points so interviews were used to gain a more nuanced understanding of the issue. Interviews with experts gave a different perspective from the survey data because the interviewees were older, had more education, and had also studied outside of Jordan so they have different influences. Interviews were conducted face to face so interviewees may have been uncomfortable answering all the questions truthfully if they felt they may be judged.

**Theoretical Framework**

The main theoretical framework that was used for this research is conflict theory. According to conflict theory, inequalities in society lead to competition and conflict (Conflict Theory). In situations with more dramatic power imbalances there is more conflict produced and people are less able to work together, even for a shared, mutually beneficial goal. Power is not
necessarily bound to lead to conflict in every instance because there is a need for leaders with a degree of power to act as representatives, but the context and use of power is essential to the outcome (Greer et al. 2017). By using a conflict theory perspective for this research, the impacts of the power imbalance between Israelis and Palestinians can be examined.

The basis for conflict theory is that power imbalances create conflicts. The power imbalance between Israel and Palestine is rooted in more than just the military strength and foreign support that Israel has and Palestine lacks. From the very beginning there has been a fundamental imbalance between the parties because Palestinians have never had their own state. Prior to the creation of Israel, Palestine was a mandate of Britain and instead of being allowed the right to self-determination, Palestinians were subjected to yet another occupying power. States such as Egypt and Jordan are on more even ground with Israel because they have the experience of being independent states and know how to operate in the regional and international sphere as such (Galtung 1972). According to Galtung (1972), there are two ways that conflicts can be solved through the lens of conflict theory, the first is dissociative, and the second is associative.

Dissociative strategy entails separating the two conflicting groups so that they no longer have a chance to inflict physical or social violence on each other. This could look like using natural barriers such as rivers or mountain ranges to separate people or creating barriers by building walls and moderating the situation with the presence of United Nations Peacekeepers. There are many flaws with trying to implement a dissociative peace strategy in the case of Israel and Palestine. First of all, this strategy requires that successive leaders all agree to follow the agreement that established peace in the first place. Because the conflict has historically been framed as not just between Palestine and Israel, but between the whole of the Arab World, specifically Egypt and Jordan, against Israel. It is unlikely that the leaders of a free Palestinian state as well as leaders of neighboring countries would all be satisfied following a dissociative peace plan. It is also true that by nature, dissociative peace leads to structural violence in the future. The only aspect of dissociative strategy that could lead to true and sustainable peace is the exhaustion that comes from this set up. If total separation is maintained the aspect of attrition may lead one or both sides to compromise some of their original goals which could be the catalyst for a lasting peace outside of the state of dissociation.
An associative peace strategy is not a perfect solution either. In an associative strategy both sides would be kept together with an effort to make interactions increasingly positive. For this to happen there needs to be an incentive for both sides to make genuine efforts to create peace. However, the conflict has been going on for so long without resolution there are no clear incentives that could be used to tempt both sides. The real issue lies with the increasingly right wing and extremist Israeli government and the perception of superiority that Israel has towards its Arab neighbors. Associative peace has to be built very carefully to avoid new aspects of conflict being built into the peace. There needs to be a basis of equity between both sides and that is not plausible with the current status of the conflict (Galtung 1972). This research is helpful for understanding the current status and future options. Peace needs to be accepted by both a country’s citizens and government, not just one or the other. How exactly Jordanians view Judaism and the role that Israel plays in these opinions can reveal whether there is a chance for acceptance of peace with Israel if it is offered. The outcome of the peace effort needs to consider the opinions of Palestinians who are living in the occupied territories and the opinions of Jordanians, as one of Israel’s neighbors and the country hosting the most Palestinian refugees.

**Ethics**

There should be very little possibility of harm resulting from this research. Participants may be uncomfortable about answering questions on this topic, especially if they have been directly impacted by the Israel-Palestine conflict. In order to minimize this issue, interviewees and survey takers were allowed to skip answering any question; interviewees could leave the interview at any point, and survey takers could decide not to turn in their survey.

It is important to consider how the outcomes of this research will be perceived by people both in Jordan and the US. This study is dealing with a topic that can be very divisive and inflammatory. It is important to note that these are just the opinions of a relatively small number of people with limited backgrounds. The data that is collected through interviews and survey questions should not be used to justify any actions that may harm others. The results in no way represent the opinions of all Jordanians or all Arabs. There is much more research that needs to be done on this topic from many different angles.

**Data and Results**

**Interviews**
The first interview conducted was with a professor of international relations at the University of Jordan named Dr. Hasan. This interview offered an interesting perspective on the way that Judaism and Jewish people are viewed in Jordan. The main point that Dr. Hasan emphasized throughout the interview was the place that the religion of Judaism holds within Jordanian society. He mentioned that an important part of believing in Islam is believing in the Jewish and Christian canons, and because of this there is great respect for Judaism within the majority Muslim population of Jordan. The other point that Dr. Hasan highlighted is the political aspect of the relationship between Jews and Arabs. He said that historically Arabs and Jews have coexisted very peacefully and the animosity that exists now is a result of the conflict with Israel and the subsequent politicization of Jewish people. When pushed to talk about dislike of Jewish people or Judaism in Jordan, Dr. Hasan said that in his opinion it was the worst during the peak of the conflict in the 1960s and 1970s, and since the peace process of the 1990s opinions have greatly improved. Based on this analysis it is relevant to think about the future of Jordanian’s opinions. The current Israeli government is being called one of the most right wing governments in the country's history, and as the Israeli occupation continues to perpetuate violence against Palestinians one has to wonder if this will lead to a back slide in any perceived progress that has been made since the 1990s. Dr. Hasan did not seem to think so, saying that opinions are less ruled by the conflict then they have been in the past.

When Dr. Hasan was asked about what assumptions he thinks the West has about the views of Jordanians on Judaism he said something very interesting. According to Hasan, since September 11, 2001, and the rise of the Evangelical right, Christians in the US do not have connection or understanding of Islam. American Jews on the other hand feel closer to Islam than to Christianity and still hold an affinity for the Arab World.

A second interview was conducted with a professor of literature who studies Orientalism and postcolonialism. This professor asked to remain anonymous so he will be referred to with the pseudonym Dr. Saleh. The interview with Dr. Saleh showed a different analysis of the way that Jewish people and Judaism are viewed in Jordan than the interview with Dr. Hasan. Saleh’s insights, while not dire, painted a less harmonious picture than those of Hasan. According to Saleh, among most highly educated Jordanians there is an understanding that there is a difference between Jewish people and Judaism, and Zionism, but for lay people this distinction is not as common. The main reason for this is the portrayal of Judaism and Jewish people within the
media. Beyond coverage of Israeli actions, when Jews are shown in Arab cinema they are portrayed as evil and deceitful. One thing both Hasan and Saleh agreed upon is the politicalization of Judaism and Jewish people as a result of Israel and the negative way this impacts the depictions of Jewish people across media.

Dr. Saleh also had a different take on how the concept of the People of the Book influences the way that Judaism is perceived. He pointed out three important factors that influence the way that the Jewish religion is perceived in Jordan. First, in his interpretation of where the Torah stands within Islam, if someone accepts the Quran as the true religion, this undoes the legitimacy of the Torah. While the prophets of the Torah are accepted to be prophets of the same god as Muhammed in Islam, by the existence of Islam, the way the followers of Jewish prophets practice religion are incorrect. Second, he pointed out that the Torah has been purposely mistranslated or misinterpreted in order to support the state of Israel, leading some Islamic scholars to say that the entire Torah is false. Third, and finally, there is not just one Islam. There are many sects within Islam, each of which may have different interpretations of the place of Judaism and the Torah within Islam and what it means to be part of the People of the Book. Even within the same sect of Islam there may be different opinions between scholars.

When looking specifically at the way that Jewish people are viewed by Jordanians, Saleh seemed to think that the main influence on opinions is history. He said that before the First Nekba there was no debate about the place of Judaism and Jewish people in the Arab World, but with the creation of Israel, Jewish people took on the role of colonizers and have been viewed as such since then. Jordanian children grow up learning about the history of Israel and when they are adults they continue to hear about the actions of Israel in the news or on social media. Because of the geographical location of Jordan, the history of the kingdom is inextricably linked to Israel and will continue to be so.

One thing that came up throughout the interview with Dr. Saleh was the role of orientalism and colonialism in the creation of Israel and the relationship between Jewish people and Arabs. Saleh brought up two narratives that are often used to justify the existence of the state of Israel. The first being that Palestine was “a land without people, given to a people without land”. This idea is inherently colonialist in nature in the way that it ignores the already established population of an area, echoing the “discovery” of the Americas by Christopher Columbus as if there had not been people living there for centuries. Saleh discussed the way that
this erasure of Palestinians has manifested in the narrative of Israel through the poetry of Yehuda Amichai. Amichai was born in Germany in the 1920s and moved with his family to Palestine in 1936 before the state of Israel had officially been established and he later served in the IDF and became a celebrated poet. In all of his poetry he never mentions Palestinians in any way other than to occasionally refer to them as ghosts. The second narrative carries strains of both colonialism and orientalism. Saleh says that this narrative portrays the land of Palestine as a desert that was given to Western Jews to cultivate and create a “New Rome”. In this narrative Arab culture and Islam are portrayed as backwards. This narrative also circles back around to the place that Arab Jews hold in this situation. They were lumped in with the orientalist view of Arab people as backwards by European Jews, but they were still invited to be a part of this supposedly utopian society at the cost of giving up aspects of their culture and traditions. Another way in which orientalism has been used to validate Israel is the portrayal of Arabs and Palestinians as violent. The idea that Israel is imposing peace on Palestinians is a bit of an oxymoron. The very phrasing of “imposing” peace shows that it is in reality less than peaceful. Furthermore, the violence that does exist is nearly always self-defense and is not inherent to Palestinian people.

The third interview was the only one done with a survey participant. It was relatively short, serving to gain more details about the answers that the interviewee, Rashed, gave in the survey. When asked about the biggest influence on his opinions about Judaism and Jewish people Rashed mentioned multiple factors. He said that because of the geographical location of Jordan, the conflict with Israel is always something that people are aware of. Even now with peace between Jordan and Israel, the history of war is never forgotten, and the experiences of those wars are passed down through the generations. Rashed said that in regard to Judaism specifically he was always taught about them as the People of the Book which helped shape his beliefs and views. On the survey question that asked about participants' general view of Judaism, Rashed indicated that he had no opinion. When asked what he meant when he said he did not have an opinion and what factors contributed to this stance, Rashed admitted that he did not feel that he knew enough about the difference between Judaism and Zionism to give a different answer. This supports the theory that there is a general lack of education or understanding about Judaism within Jordan with people only being exposed to the topic through the context of Israel or the references to the People of the Book in the Quran.
Rashed gave fascinating insight into the role of news media and social media in the way that Israel and Judaism are viewed by Jordanians. He said that the first thing that comes to mind when he thinks about Israel in the news is images of settlers antagonizing and harassing Palestinians while the IDF either stands by and watches or prevents the Palestinians from protecting themselves. Alternatively, Rashed’s experiences on social media had exposed him to a different side of Judaism and Jewish people. When asked about the things that have influenced his answer about whether he believes all Jewish people support Israel, he mentioned seeing a picture online of a Jewish man in New York holding a sign that said something along the lines of “I am Jewish, but I do not support Israel”. When questioned further on this topic he said that he does not see posts relating to the Israel-Palestine conflict very often because they are usually censored. When asked if this represented a missed opportunity for Jordanians to learn about Judaism and Jewish people outside of the context of Israel and vice versa, Rashed decisively said no. He explained that there has been too much damage done by both sides for minds to be changed through social media or other campaigns to raise awareness.

Because the survey was limited, this interview offered an opportunity to see if Rashed thought his views were unique or shared by most of his peers. Rashed’s answer to this was again no. He said that he thinks that most people believe that all Jewish people support Israel, and that many people do not make a distinction between Judaism, Jewish people, Zionism, and Israel. At the end of the interview Rashed said something surprising, he said that he thinks that Jewish people have a place in Palestine because it is mentioned in the Quran that there were Jewish people in that area of the world.

Survey

The survey data adds an interesting dimension to the opinions that were shared in the interviews. There was a total of 47 people who took the survey, although not all participants answered every question because only the first question regarding consent to participate in the study was required. Of the 47 survey takers, 68% were women which is not representative of the gender distribution within Jordan. According to the CIA World Factbook entry for Jordan, in the 15-64 years old population there is a 1.13 male to female ratio and all the survey participants were between the ages of 20 and 30. The reason for this gender difference is not known. All except for one survey takers were tourism management majors, with the one outlier being a mechanical engineering major. As for religion, 93.6% were Muslim, one person identified
themselves as Christian, and two people said they would prefer not to say. Another demographic of note is the proportion of participants who have direct connections to Palestine. In answer to the question “are you or any of your family members of Palestinian origin?” 59.6% of the people surveyed said yes. This question was broad and did not define what constituted “Palestinian origin” or how close a family member would count and because of this some people may have answered “no” where others said “yes”, but the percentage reflects general data on the number of Palestinians who live in Jordan. All of the above factors may have impacted how survey participants answered the questions they were given, and this will be explored minimally, but a much more extensive study would have to be conducted to see if gender, age, religion, connection to Palestine, or other personal factors definitively impact people’s views of Judaism. Further analysis of the limitations of this survey is outlined in the discussion section of this paper.

After questions concerning the demographics, participants were asked about their general view of Judaism, the results of this question are shown in Figure 1. Nearly 50% of surveyed people said they had a very negative view of Judaism and 17% said they had a negative view of Judaism. This strong majority with negative or very negative views of Judaism seems to be in direct opposition to what Dr. Hasan said concerning the views of Jordanians. There are a few reasons that this disparity between Hasan’s analysis and the survey data may have arisen. Participants had to confine their answers to fit into the options given to them and could not

![Pie chart showing answers to "what is your general view of Judaism?"

Figure 1. Pie chart showing answers to "what is your general view of Judaism?"
further explain their thinking at this point in the survey, which could have limited the accuracy of their responses. Hasan may have also been offering a more positive view of the situation for a foreign researcher. On the other hand, Hasan’s main reasoning for why Judaism and Jewish people are not disliked in Jordan is the place of Judaism within Islam. While there was a majority of negative views of Judaism, 10.5% of people said they have a positive view of it, and 10.6% said they have no opinion either way. This shows not only that there is a wide range of opinions, but also that there is at least a certain level of regard held for Judaism within Jordan. One thing of note within the data from this question was the gender distribution between answers. Of the five people who said that they had a positive view of Judaism, one was female while the other four were men. This data is far too limited to make any conclusions about how gender influences Jordanians views of Judaism, but it offers an interesting avenue for further study. As Figure 2 shows, there was a different distribution of answers given when people were asked about how they view Jewish people specifically. Just over 50% of respondents said that they have a very negative view of Jewish people with another nearly 30% saying they had a negative view. Only one person (2.1%) said that they have a positive view of Jewish people. There were also fewer people who answered with “prefer not to say” to this question than in the one about Judaism in general. This may indicate that participants were not as comfortable stating their opinions on a religion, especially one of the three Abrahamic religions, but feel more comfortable criticizing a people. This could also be a reflection of what Dr. Saleh said regarding the place that Judaism

![Figure 2. Pie chart showing answers to "do you have a positive or negative view of Jewish people?"](image)
holds within Islam, specifically about parts of the Torah purposefully being mistranslated or misrepresented in order to justify the state of Israel. Some people may see Judaism as a true religion, but Jewish people as corruptors of the word of God. One of the important components of the relationship between Judaism and Islam is the idea of the People of the Book, which was discussed at length in the literature review.

There were two questions about the People of the Book in the survey. The first one asked if participants were familiar with the concept of the People of the Book and the second asked if Jewish people are included in the designation of the People of the Book, this data is displayed in Figure 3 and Figure 4. Over 70% of participants answered yes to both of these questions. As was noted in the literature review, there are many different interpretations of who exactly is included in the People of the Book, and what that means for how they are viewed by Muslims. By comparing the two questions about the People of the Book and the two questions about participants' views of Judaism and Jewish people, one can see how the status of Jewish people as People of the Book actually impacts how they are viewed. While being part of the People of the Book affords someone a certain degree of respect, they are still criticized in many parts of the Quran and have received judgment from Islamic scholars throughout history (Albayrak 2008,

![Figure 3. Pie chart showing answers to "Do you know about the concept of the People of the Book?"
](image-url)
This assessment does differ from the one that Asani (2002) and Dr Hasan gave. According to them, the Quran is inherently tolerant and encourages a positive view of the People of the Book. Given that nearly a quarter of participants said that Jewish people are People of the Book, but less than a quarter of survey takers said that they have either a positive or even no opinion on Judaism and Jewish people, it is clear that being part of the People of the Book does not automatically guarantee a favorable view. Because Judaism being an Abrahamic religion and Jewish people being People of the Book does not seem to be a significant factor on Jordanian’s views of Judaism, the next factor to look at is Israel.

Israel is usually the assumed cause of any antisemitism or anger towards Jewish people that is present in the Arab World, and this can be seen in Figure 5 with over 60% of participants saying that their views are influenced by Israel. Of the six people (12.8%) who said that their views were not influenced by Israel, all of them said that they had a negative, or very negative view of Judaism and all but one said they had a negative or very negative view of Jewish people. This raises the question of where these negative views come from if they are not related to the
actions of Israel. These opinions could be a result of conspiracy theories and fear of the “other” that fuel antisemitism in the US and Europe. Another explanation is that participants were uncomfortable admitting that they are influenced by Israel, or not even realizing that this is something that impacts their views. The next survey question was “do you think that all Jewish people support Israel?” This data is displayed in Figure 6. If survey takers do not believe that all Jewish people support Israel but still hold a negative view of Judaism and/or Jewish people, there
is a dissonance in where these views are coming from and how they are being applied. Only 10.6% of people said that they believe that all Jewish people support Israel, while nearly 70% said they did not believe that. But of the 31 people who answered no, 54% said that they had a negative or very negative view of Judaism and 81% said they had a negative or very negative view of Jewish people. This creates a dilemma when trying to understand the reasons for participants' opinions. Israeli government actions and treatment of Palestinians is the obvious answer to why Jordanians would have negative views of Jewish people, but if they do not believe that all Jewish people support Israel, any negative opinions they hold are either subconsciously impacted by Israel or based on something else. 58% of survey takers who said they do not believe that all Jewish people support Israel said that their opinion of Judaism and Jewish people is impacted by Israel. This shows that to a certain degree they are making a distinction between Jewish people as a whole and the state of Israel and Zionist ideology, but based on the high percentage of participants who said that they have a negative or very negative view of Judaism, they are not able to fully separate these things.

In order to gain a better understanding of the influences on the opinions of survey participants, they were asked in what context they come across Judaism or Jewish people in their daily lives. For this question participants were allowed to select multiple answers so the data would show all contexts in which they encounter Judaism and Jewish people, the options they were given are shown in Figure 7. The results from this question are interesting and may show a misunderstanding of the question or answer options given. “News not relating to Israel” had the highest number of selections with 18 people picking this option. In the category of “news relating to Israel” only one person said that they encountered Judaism and Jewish people this way. This is surprising and a little confusing as it seems unlikely that so few of the participants encounter Judaism through news about Israel. It is possible that the question was misunderstood or that participants were separating news about the political actions of Israel and news about Israel that highlights religion. The next biggest category was “discussion with friends” with 15 selections followed by “discussion with family” and “don’t encounter Judaism in any way” both with 14 selections. It would be very valuable to know what the nature of these discussions with friends and family are, but these categories were not expected to have such a high number of selections so there was no place that asked participants to share this information. It is still valuable to know that this is a topic that is discussed with enough frequency for survey takers to
mention it. This means that the topic is not totally taboo and there is a chance that continued discussion could lead to increasingly positive or negative views in the future. The categories relating to social media had fewer selections than expected given the amount of time that people within the age range surveyed spend online. The internet has bloomed as a place where people can find new ideas and spread their own, leading to opportunities for both education and fast-tracked pipelines to politically and socially extremist views. As was mentioned during the analysis of Rashed’s interview, social media provides a chance for dialogue to be opened, but there is only so much that can be achieved through social media campaigns to create better understanding given the history of violence between Israel and Palestine.

One question that showed surprising insight into the feelings of survey participants asked if they support a one state or two state solution for Palestine. The data from this question is displayed in Figure 8. The majority of responses were in support of a one state solution (just under 50%) which is not surprising. 10% of people said that they support a two-state solution.

Figure 7. Bar graph showing answers to "in what context do you come across Judaism and Jewish people in your daily life?"
and 12% said they do not know. The responses that give the most interesting insight though are the ones that selected “other” and elaborated on what they meant by that. Many of these explanations echoed the sentiments of a single state solution, but with a more personal and political tone. The main theme that seemed to be the reason why respondents had not selected “one state” for their answer is the implication that one state would still include aspects of Israel in some way. When specifying “other” many people wrote something about one Palestinian state, and four people specifically mentioned the expulsion of Zionism and the Israeli occupation. These sentiments are contradictory to what Rashed said about Jewish people having a place in Palestine. Some of the comments specifically said that they wanted the end of Israeli occupation and expulsion of Zionists, but it is not clear if they were considering all Jews as part of either Israel or Zionist ideology, and one comment called for the expulsion of Israelis and Jews. One particularly interesting comment seemed to be saying that Jews and Israelis should be removed from Palestine, and the US, as Israel's biggest supporter, should give them a new homeland on US soil. This suggestion does not consider the thinly veiled antisemitism of the US or the fact that land within the US is not the governments to give away with no regard for the indigenous people who the land was stolen from. This is not to critique the person who suggested this solution, but it highlights a misconception about the place that Jewish people hold in the world outside of Israel.

Figure 8. Pie chart showing answers to "what solution do you support for the Palestinian cause?"
At the end of the survey participants were asked if they had any other thoughts on Judaism or Jewish people that they wanted to share. While most people left this question blank or answered with a simple ‘no’ the three answers that were given are worth highlighting. The English translation of these responses are below:

We cannot be certain that everyone who belongs to Judaism supports Israel because some of them live in peace and only follow his religion and belief, as it is at the end of a previous heavenly message. With the ten commandments of our master Moses, all religions call for peace and mercy, and most of Israel are Zionists and followers of the Jewish religion, but they do not represent it.

This person clearly shows that religion has played an important role in their opinions. Not all the survey participants exhibited this religious influence, but one of the other people who left a comment in this section expressed a similar sentiment, “Religion in and of itself must be respected, and I love discovering and hearing the stories they circulate about the stories of their messengers and others.” Both of these participants show a genuine interest in the history of Judaism and seem to feel that no matter the actions of its followers, religion should be held in high esteem. The third comment left by a participant shows a very different tone and emphasizes some of the contradictions that seemed to be present in many people’s responses, “They are the most capable and racist people on this earth.” This answer reflects the anger that many people feel at the way Israel has treated Palestinians, surprisingly though this participant was part of the

![Figure 9. Pie chart showing answers to "do you know any Jewish movements against Israel?"]
23.4% of people who said that they know about Jewish movements against Israel (Figure 9), and they said that they do not believe that all Jewish people support the State of Israel. The statement does not specify who “they” is, but it is implied that it is talking about Jewish people as a whole. This again shows a disconnect between the understanding of Jewish people and Judaism as separate from Zionism and Israel and the ability to actually apply that understanding.

Conclusions

The relationship between the Arab world and Judaism goes back thousands of years and has taken on many different forms. Jews found a space where they were allowed to live and worship with relative freedom within the Islamic empires that existed from the seventh century until the fall of the Ottomans. When the Jewish populations of Spain and Portugal were banished from Europe in the fifteenth century many of them went to North Africa and the Levant. The Jewish populations of Iraq, Syria, and Yemen were present in those areas from Roman times. While there was not perfect harmony between Jewish people and other local populations for the entirety of this history, the creation of Israel marks a unique turning point in the relationship between Jews, Muslims, and the Arab World as a whole. Since the creation of Israel Jews have taken on the role of colonial oppressors which they had never held before. The already established Jewish populations of the Arab World faced a sharp increase in the hostility that had already been growing towards them, leading the majority of these populations to move to Israel. Those who stayed after the first wave left in the 1950s have now almost completely disappeared too.

Jordan offers an interesting case study for the way that Arabs view Judaism and Jewish people in the present day. While Jordan is a relatively liberal state and was one of the first Arab countries to introduce diplomatic relations with Israel, as a neighbor with Israel it has been involved in direct combat and taken in more Palestinian refugees than any other country. The views of Jordan’s citizens can be an important place to start when trying to understand the influence that Israel has had on the opinions of Arabs.

The results of this research showed two very important things about the views of Jordanians, and where Israel fits into this issue, helping to answer the first research question. Unsurprisingly the data showed that Israel has undeniably influenced people’s views of Judaism and Jewish people, but also that there is a basic level of understanding among Jordanians about the separation between Judaism as a religion, Jewish people as individuals, and the concept of
Zionism. A majority of survey participants indicated that they had overall negative views of Judaism and Jewish people. Despite this, these opinions did not represent 100% of the responses. Like with any political or personal issue there is a wide range of views, and many factors that influence people. It is important that this is shown in the research because the topic of Israel and Palestine can be painted as black and white by both sides which is counterproductive to finding a long-term peace solution. Over half of the survey takers said that their views of Judaism and Jewish people are influenced by Israel and in the section where they were asked about what solution they support for Palestine many left comments showing that they deeply care about this issue and want the Israeli occupation and presence to end. Again though, a majority of participants indicated that they do not believe that all Jewish people support the state of Israel, and nearly 25% said that they know about Jewish movements against Israel.

This data shows that there is an understanding of the difference between Judaism and Zionism, but participants were not able to fully separate the concepts when it came down to the basic question of how they view Judaism and Jewish people. This conclusion can be echoed in the things that interviewees said too. All of them acknowledged the past of Judaism in the region and the importance of depoliticizing it to create a better understanding of the differences between Judaism and Zionism. But Dr Saleh said that he does not think that this is something that all Jordanians understand, and Rashed said he does not think that his peers view the topic with the same objectivity that he does.

The research did not have a large enough scope to find what personal demographic factors may impact individuals' opinions about Judaism and Jewish people, but some interesting trends were displayed. Most significantly the fact that only one female participant said that she had a positive view of Judaism, as opposed to the four male participants who gave this answer. While there was a range of opinions displayed in the survey, most of the questions had one answer with a strong majority. This could indicate that people of similar ages or with similar levels of education share similar views, but more research with participants of different ages and educational backgrounds needs to be conducted to determine this.

One thing that did seem to carry through the survey was that religion does not have a significant influence on views. While a majority of participants indicated that they are familiar with the People of the Book and believe that Jewish people belong to the People of the Book, this did not influence their views on Judaism significantly and seemed to play an almost non-
existent role in their opinions about Jewish people. All three interviewees had slightly different opinions about the significance of religion. Dr Hasan based his belief in the positive relationship between Jewish people and Jordanians on the religious kinship between them. On the other hand, Dr Saleh said that every religious scholar and individual will have a different interpretation of the place that Judaism is given within the Quran, and because of this it can hold no real influence over the majority of opinions. Rashed said that he grew up being told that Jewish people are part of the People of the Book, but that did not seem to have an influence on his opinion as much as it was just one of the contexts in which he has come across Judaism in his life. Since there was only one Christian participant no data can be analyzed on any differences between the views of Muslim and Christian Jordanians.

From a conflict theory perspective, the current situation is not conducive for peace. Inequality between Palestinians and Israelis remains high and may increase under the current government, and this will inevitably lead to worsening opinions among Jordanians. The problems that Galtung brought up in 1972 remain true today. A dissociative peace strategy would just lead to the continuation of negative perceptions between Jews and Arabs and would not be sustainable in the long term. There is not enough understanding or motivation to understand the other from either side for an associative peace to be effective.

**Discussion**

**Limitations**

In order to get a better understanding of the views of Jordanians from diverse backgrounds it would be ideal to survey as many random people within the population of the country as possible. Unfortunately, this was not possible with the time and resources of this study, so participants were limited to University of Jordan students in order to establish a baseline within this subset of the population. Because of this the results only show the average opinions of a very small demographic within the population. Most of the participants are likely from Amman or nearby communities since it is less common for people in Jordan to go far from home for university. University students are also more likely to come from a higher socio-economic background. A large majority of respondents were women which is not representative of the actual gender distribution of Jordan. This could potentially be due to the major of study of the students who were surveyed, which was Tourism Management. If this field is female dominated then it is unsurprising that most respondents were women, or this could be
representative of a slightly higher rate of female enrollment than male enrollment in university. Tourism Management students were the only ones surveyed because the survey had to be distributed by a professor at the university and the contact used for this research is a professor in the field of Tourism Management. The only engineering student surveyed is a relative of the professor who distributed the survey. Finally, the survey research is further restricted because of the ages of participants who were all between 20 and 30 years old. All of these factors mean that the research results are limited in who they represent and how other demographics might differ in opinion or reasoning.

Language is a very important factor to consider in the limitations of this research, especially for the survey portion. The survey questions were written in English by the researcher and then translated into Arabic by a native speaker and reviewed by another native speaker before being sent to participants. Both the translators were familiar with the topic of research but there is always a chance that the way some questions were translated may have slightly changed the context or other aspects of the question that could impact how people answered. While most of the survey questions gave specific options for takers to choose from, some of them offered the chance to write a short answer in response. These short answer responses were written in Arabic and had to be translated into English to be used for this paper. The interviews were conducted in English and all the interviewees were fluent in English. Because of this it is unlikely that meaning was lost between translations. Interviewees were able to ask for clarification if they were confused about any question and all of their answers made sense in the context of the question but there is a chance that something may have been misunderstood because their first language is not English.

The timing of this research is also important to take into consideration. The interviews and surveys were conducted during and directly after the holy month of Ramadan. As referenced in the literature review, during Ramadan violence towards Palestinians at al-Aqsa Mosque tends to increase. This remained true during the time this research was conducted. Because of this the topic of Israeli violence was fresh in the minds of participants and may have impacted their answers. It was also difficult to organize interviews and collect an acceptable number of survey participants due to the Eid holiday, and Easter both falling in the middle of the research period.

The personal background of the researcher is another important limiting factor to look at. As an American the researcher does not have experience living with the reality of the Israel-
Palestine conflict right next door. In Jordan many people have been directly affected by the conflict in some way and this will impact how they react to the survey and interview questions. Basic interview questions were pre-determined and evaluated by the research advisor to be as sensitive as possible, but because the interviews were semi structured the researcher had to be aware of their personal background when asking follow up, or interviewee specific questions. Being American may have also impacted how truthful research participants were when answering questions. The United States is a notoriously strong supporter of Israel so participants may have assumed that an American researcher would share the same values as the US government. People may have also been concerned about how their responses would be viewed by an American audience. The survey did minimize this concern because it was anonymous and online, so participants were not face-to-face with an American when they answered the questions. One of the final questions on the survey asked if participants had answered all of the questions so far truthfully. This was meant to help gauge whether participants were trying to answer in a way they thought would look best without making them reveal which questions, if any, they had been untruthful in answering. Only one survey taker indicated that they had not been truthful in all their answers, while a few participants did not answer the question. The interviewees were more influenced by the fact that the researcher is American because they were face-to-face. Interviewees could request to remain anonymous and have any identifiable information removed, but they were still known to the researcher while the identities of survey participants were not known by anyone.

The Jewish heritage of the researcher is also important to take into account during this research. The point of this research is not to portray the views of Jordanians on Judaism through rose colored glasses, nor is to villainize or misrepresent them. The goal was to get honest data on a topic that has not been studied to the fullest extent. While the researcher was always mindful of their personal identities when writing and conducting interviews and surveys, the research advisor helped make sure that the research was truly objective. The researchers' American identity was not hidden from interviewees, and it was disclosed to survey takers, so they understood who was using the data that they were sharing. The researcher’s Jewish heritage was not disclosed to interviewees or survey takers as it was decided that this would have too much of an impact on how willing people would be to participate and how honest they would be when answering questions.
Recommendations for future research

There are many more aspects of this topic that need to be researched more. Firstly, this study was very limited in its scope and the results would benefit from a broader study. Ideally including a much larger pool of survey participants of various backgrounds in order to get a better understanding of general opinion. Including participants of more varied backgrounds would also highlight how much of a role personal background and circumstances play in a person’s opinions on Judaism and Jewish people. Another research tactic that could yield interesting results is keeping the survey among university students but expanding it to include students from all academic disciplines to see if area of study impacts opinions.

For future research there should be some slight alterations to the survey questions. Specifically, there should be a question added that directly asks what factor influences the survey takers’ opinions about Judaism the most. While there are questions about where participants get information about Judaism, and whether their opinions are influenced by Israel these factors may not be the primary influences in their beliefs.

It would be valuable to do a similar study from the other side, looking at how Jewish people view Arabs. This could show the ways in which the conflict over Israel influences not just Arab people, but Jewish people too. Comparing and contrasting the results between this study and a similar one about the views of Jewish people could offer insight into what steps need to be taken to reach a successful peace. As is a central point of this study, it is important to again acknowledge that not all Jewish people support Israel, but Israel is a vein of tension that runs through the whole world, and it is key to understand the effect this has on the opinions of Jewish people who live both in Israel and in other parts of the world.
References


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**Interviews**

Dr. Hasan. In conversation with the author. April 2023.

Dr. Saleh. In conversation with the author. April 2023.

Appendices

Appendix 1a: Survey Questions in English

Research statement: I am a student from the United States of America, and I am conducting an independent research project on how Jordanians view Judaism and the Jewish people. The purpose of this survey is to get a general idea of what people think and what the basis for those opinions is. You are completely free to answer any question except for the first question that will ask you to read this section that explains the purpose of the study and understand your rights as a participant. At the end you will be asked if you are interested in an interview on this topic. If you wish to be interviewed, you will need to provide an email or phone number so that I can contact you. Please answer the questions transparently so that I can get the best results.

1. Consent to participate in research:
   I have read the above statement about the purpose of this research.
   I understand that I can leave any question unanswered.
   I understand that I can stop participating in the survey at any time.
   I understand that the data collected in this survey will be used in a paper that may be available online.
   I understand that I will not be compensated in any way for participating in this survey.
   a. Yes
   b. No

2. How old are you?
   a. Less than 20
   b. 20-30
   c. 31-40
   d. 41-50
   e. Older than 50

3. What major are you studying?

4. Sex?
   a. Male
   b. Women
   c. Prefer not to say

5. Place of birth?
   a. Jordan
   b. Outside Jordan
   c. Prefer not to say

6. Are you or any of your family members of Palestinian origin?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Prefer not to say
   d. Don’t know
7. What is your religion?
   a. Christian
   b. Muslim
   c. Prefer not to say
8. What is your General view of Judaism?
   a. Very positive
   b. Positive
   c. No opinion
   d. Negative
   e. Very negative
   f. Prefer not to say
9. Do you know the concept of the People of the Book?
   a. Yes
   b. No
   c. Maybe
   d. Prefer not to say
10. Do you think that Jewish people are included in the People of the Book?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
    d. Prefer not to say
11. Do you have a positive or negative general view of the Jewish people?
    a. Very positive
    b. Positive
    c. No opinion
    d. Negative
    e. Very negative
    f. Prefer not to say
12. Is your opinion of the Jewish people and the Jewish religion influenced by Israel?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
    d. Prefer not to say
13. Do you think all people support the state of Israel?
    a. Yes
    b. No
    c. Maybe
    d. Prefer not to say
14. Do you think there were Jewish people who lived in relative peace in the Arab World for centuries before the establishment of the state of Israel?
a. Yes  
b. No  
c. Maybe  
d. Don’t know  
e. Prefer not to say  
15. What solution do you support for the Palestinian cause?  
   a. One state  
   b. Two state  
   c. Neither  
   d. Don’t know  
   e. Other  
16. Do you know any Jewish movements against Israel?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
   c. Maybe  
   d. Prefer not to say  
17. What is the context in which you come across Judaism or Jewish people in your daily life? (select all that apply)  
   a. Discussion with friends  
   b. Discussion with family  
   c. News not relating to Israel  
   d. News relating to Israel  
   e. Non-Jewish people on social media discussing Judaism/Jewish people  
   f. Jewish people on social media talking about their religion and identity  
   g. Jewish people on social media who identify themselves as Jewish but do not speak about their religion or identity  
   h. Jewish friends  
   i. Jewish family members  
   j. Don’t come into contact with them at all  
18. Do you have more thoughts about Judaism or Jewish people that you want to mention?  
19. Did you truthfully answer all of the above questions?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
20. Are you interested in doing an interview on this topic?  
   a. Yes  
   b. No  
21. Please include an email or phone number below so that you can be contacted to set up an interview time and place.  

Appendix 1b: Survey Questions in Arabic
 بيان البحوث: أنا طالبة من الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية وأقوم بإجراء مشروع بحثي مستقل حول نظرية الأردنيين إلى اليهودية والشعب اليهودي. الغرض من هذا الاستطلاع هو الحصول على فكرة عامة عن أراء الناس وما هي أسس تلك الأراء. لك كاملا الحرية بالإجابة على أي سؤال باستثناء السؤال الأول الذي سيطلب منك قراءة هذا الاسم الذي يوضح الغرض من الدراسة وفهم حقوقك كمشارك. في النهاية سيتم سؤالك عما إذا كنت مهتما بإجراء مقابلة حول هذا الموضوع. إذا كنت ترغب في إجراء مقابلة، فستحتاج إلى تقديم بريد إلكتروني أو رقم هاتف حتى أتمكن من الاتصال بك أرجوا الاجابة على الاستمارة بكل شفافية حتى أتمكن من الحصول على أفضل النتائج.

الموافقة على المشاركة:
لقد قرأت البيان الوارد أعلاه حول الغرض من هذا البحث. أدرك أنه يمكنني ترك أي سؤال دون إجابة. أدرك أنه يمكنني التوقف عن المشاركة في الاستطلاع في أي وقت. أفهم أن البيانات التي تم جمعها في هذا الاستطلاع ستستخدم في ورقة قد تكون متاحة عبر الإنترنت. أفهم أنه لن يتم تعويضي بأي شكل من الأشكال عن المشاركة في هذا الاستطلاع.
1. الموافقة على المشاركة: 
   a. نعم
   b. لا
   2. كم عمرك؟
   a. أقل من 20
   b. 20-30
   c. 31-40
   d. 41-50
   e. أكبر من 50 عاماً
   3. ما التخصص الذي تدرس؟
   a. ذكر
   b. أنثى
   4. الجنس
   c. أفضل عدم القول
   5. مكان الوالدة؟
   a. الأردن
   b. خارج الأردن
   c. أفضل عدم القول
   6. هل انت أو أي من أفراد عائلتك من أصل فلسطيني؟
   a. نعم
   b. لا
   c. لا تفضل قول ذلك
   d. لا أعرف
   7. ما دينك؟
   a. النصرانية
   b. الإسلام
   c. أخرى
   d. أفضل عدم القول
   8. ما هي وجهة نظرك العامة عن اليهودية؟
   a. إيجابي جداً
9. هل تعرف مفهوم أهل الكتاب؟
   a. نعم
   b. لا
   c. ربما
   d. أفضل عدم القول

10. هل تعتقد أن اليهود مشمولون في أهل الكتاب؟
    a. نعم
    b. لا
    c. ربما
    d. أفضل عدم القول

11. هل لديك نظرة عامة إيجابية أو سلبية عن الشعب اليهودي؟
    a. إيجابي جدا
    b. إيجابي
    c. ليس عندي رأي
    d. سلبي
    e. سلبي جدا
    f. أفضل عدم القول

12. هل رأيك في الشعب اليهودي والدين اليهودي متأثر بإسرائيل؟
    a. نعم
    b. لا
    c. ربما
    d. أفضل عدم القول

13. هل تعتقد أن كل الشعب اليهودي يدعم دولة إسرائيل؟
    a. نعم
    b. لا
    c. ربما
    d. أفضل عدم القول

14. هل تعتقد أنه كان مناطق شعب يهودي عاش بسلام نسبي في العالم العربي لعدة قرون قبل قيام دولة إسرائيل؟
    a. نعم
    b. لا
    c. ربما
    d. لا أعرف
    e. أفضل عدم القول

15. ما الحل الذي توده للقضية فلسطين؟
    a. دولي واحد
Appendix 2a: Interview Questions Dr. Hasan

1. What do you think is the general view of Judaism in Jordan?
   a. What factors do you think influence these views?
2. Do Jordanians have contact with or exposure to Judaism and/or Jewish people outside the context of Israel?
3. How has the relationship with Judaism and Jewish people changed in the past and how might it change in the future?
4. Do you think that Jordanian’s views differ on this topic from those of people who live in other Arab states?
5. How do you think that outsiders, specifically in the US and Europe view this topic?

Appendix 2b: Interview Questions Dr. Saleh

1. What do you think is the general view of Judaism in Jordan?
   a. What factors do you think influence these views?
2. Is there a difference between how Judaism as a religion and Jewish people are viewed?
3. Do Jordanians have contact with or exposure to Judaism and/or Jewish people outside the context of Israel?
   a. Is Israel the biggest influence on the opinions of Jordanians?
4. What role does the colonial past and present of the US and Europe play in the relationship between Arabs and Jews?
5. What role does orientalism play in the way Israel treats Palestinians and more broadly Arabs?
6. Do you think that Jordanian’s views differ on this topic from those of people who live in other Arab states?
7. How do you think that outsiders, specifically in the US and Europe view this topic?

Appendix 2c: Interview Questions Rashed

1. What is the biggest influence on your opinions about Jews?
2. Why did you select “no opinion” when asked your view of Judaism?
   a. Did its religious status impact this answer or do you not know enough to make a decision?
3. Why do you believe that all Jews support Israel?
   a. Would you change your mind about this?
4. What kind of news do you see that discusses Judaism that is not relating to Israel?
5. Why do you think your view of Judaism and Jewish people is important?

Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form

Title: Views on Judaism and Jewish People within Jordanian Society
The purpose of this study is to understand the reasons and influences that contribute to how Jordanians view Judaism and Jewish people.

2. Rights Notice
If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

a. Privacy - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.

b. Anonymity - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.

c. Confidentiality - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

3. Instructions:
Please read the following statements carefully and mark your preferences where indicated. Signing below indicates your agreement with all statements and your voluntary participation in the study. Signing below while failing to mark a preference where indicated will be interpreted as an affirmative preference. Please ask the researcher if you have any questions regarding this consent form.

I am aware that this interview is conducted by an independent undergraduate researcher with the goal of producing a descriptive case study on the effects of refugee migration on Jordan’s foreign policy on issues regarding Jordan’s water crisis and counterterrorism policy.

I am aware that the information I provide is for research purposes only. I understand that my responses will be confidential and that my name will not be associated with any results of this study.

I am aware that I have the right to full anonymity upon request, and that upon request the researcher will omit all identifying information from both notes and drafts.

I am aware that I have the right to refuse to answer any question and to terminate my participation at any time, and that the researcher will answer any questions I have about the study.

I am aware of and take full responsibility for any risk, physical, psychological, legal, or social, associated with participation in this study.

I am aware that I will not receive monetary compensation for participation in this study, but a copy of the final study will be made available to me upon request.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use my name and position in the final study.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use my organizational affiliation in the final study.

I [ do / do not ] give the researcher permission to use data collected in this interview in a later study.

Date:                                    Participant’s Signature:

Participant’s Printed Name: ________________________ Researcher’s Signature:

Thank you for participating!

Questions, comments, complaints, and requests for the final written study can be directed to:
Dr. Raed AlTabini, SIT Jordan Academic Director Email: raed.altabini@sit.edu