

“Jordan First”: Tribalism, Nationalism and Legitimacy of Power in Jordan

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Abstract: The significance of tribal identity in Jordan can be seen in the special relationship of traditional institutions with the state, which shows both the fluctuation in the concept of tribalism and how tribalism can be better understood by viewing it through the perspective of “Jordanian nationalism”. This relationship has created confusion on the local and national levels about how the state system should work through its institutions. Furthermore, the process of democratization is only a façade; Jordan is supposedly a constitutional monarchy, but in fact the king holds absolute power. The parliament’s autonomy has been minimal, in other words, the parliament is a symbol of democracy but is widely perceived as non-representative. This paper examines the regime security strategy “Jordan First” and the particularity of Jordanian identity through its relationship to the concept of a Jordanian national consensus.

Keywords: “Jordan First”, nationalism, tribalism, legitimacy, identity

Jordanian nationalism is different from Western nationalism and other Arab nationalism. Here, tribal identity is important. It is a fact that tribal belief is a constructed reality which has created an idealised vision of the past to justify present patterns of power and influence within the political system. The importance of joining groups in alliance today shows that the ‘*ashīrah*’ in Jordanian society has

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managed to maintain its integrity and importance. This is because of the fact that it was never related to the importance of the nation-state. In Jordan, the existence of traditional political authority and a state system of political authority has created a situation of incompatibility; the regime promotes loyalties based on the desire to defend both the honour of the tribes and the institution of the monarchy rather than to defend the notion of the nation-state. Thus, a state of indistinctness as to where the power lies has resulted, along with a form of loyalty that is set against rewards or economic security, and which, accordingly, does not include a notion of the Jordanian nation. Despite the national campaign of “Jordan First,” the political development in Jordan shows that the problem of political legitimacy is tied to an unfulfilled process of nation-building. This paper aims to examine the regime security strategy “Jordan First” and the distinctiveness of Jordanian identity via its relationship to the concept of a Jordanian national consensus.

The Primary Perspectives of Jordanian Nationalism

Jordan had never existed as a separate political entity. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Jordan was created through the support of the European powers. One of the problems as the new country gradually proceeded from total control by the British colonial administration to self-government was proclaiming and maintaining a national identity. The British Mandate and the confused plan for what they called ‘Transjordan,’ the unclear vision of the first king, Abdullah I, of the situation in the region and the ambition of founding a pan-Arab nation all hindered the development of a national Jordanian consciousness. The father of Abdullah I, King Hussein of *Hijaz* (Shariff Hussein), was, as the generally accepted leader of the pan-Arab uprising, not only the King of *Hijaz*, but also the King of all Arab countries, as he had actually been acclaimed in 1916 (Salibi, 1993). His son, Emir Abdullah, made his opinion on the matter of the unity of the Arabs very clear in his speech to Arabs of different regional origins in Ma’an:

I do not wish to see any among you identify themselves by geographical region. I wish to see everyone rather trace his descent to the Arabian Peninsula, from which we all originate. All the Arab countries are the country of every Arab (Salibi, 1993, p.93).

In his speech, the Emir emphasised an important point that he considered should be taken as a rule. For Britain, Transjordan was the fulfilment of a wartime obligation to the Arab people; for Abdullah, the satisfaction of dynastic ambitions. The Emir, who grafted his dynasty on a reluctant population, had to face the task of state-building, a structural problem relating to penetration and integration. New institutions had to be found where none had existed, and attitudes of obedience had to be developed among people unaccustomed to abide by law and order (Aruri, 1972, p.3).

Transjordan came under British domination in the course of the new political formation of the region in 1916 according to the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This new formation caused a change in the existing loyalties; 'parochial loyalties' were made even more complicated by a new loyalty to the centralised political authority and by the growing seeds of nationalism (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p. 8). Moreover, the extent of Transjordan's territory had been decided before it was declared an independent nation-state. Lord Curzon (the British Foreign Secretary) described the declaration of Transjordan as a territory to Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner in Palestine, as follows: "Our policy is for this area [i.e. Transjordan] to be independent but in closest relation with Palestine" (Dann, 1984, p.18).

Curzon's declaration was taken to mean that the territory of Transjordan was to become an independent nation-state. It also was considered the fact which made the state and not the country through the "anticipation [of] the concept of the role of Transjordan as a location [that] preceded the concept of Transjordan as [an] independent nation-state" (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.14). Thus, the seeds of Transjordanian nationalism were sowed before 1923 when, in the Um Qays Conference of 1921, the formation of an independent national Arab government under the leadership of Emir Abdullah was demanded. There is no evidence that the idea of Transjordanian nationalism was ever of any concern for Emir Abdullah. The Emir's pan-Arab conventions and ambitions in pursuit of his dream of a united Greater Syria did not allow him to define himself as a Transjordanian nationalist (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.19). The establishment of Transjordan was very much connected to the political developments in other Arab countries, such as in Iraq, Syria,

Palestine and Saudi Arabia, and was conditioned by the strategic interests of the British and the French in the region. These interests were divided between real-political imperatives and strategic considerations. Abdullah was made the Emir of Transjordan (*‘Imārāt Sharq al-Urdun*) in 1921, partly in order to persuade him to give up his plan for a united Greater Syria (Transjordanian’s National Status, 1924). This recognition, however, did not erase Britain’s role in preventing the early emergence of Transjordanian nationalism. British colonial power was one of the peculiar challenges confronting Jordan in its quest for a national identity. The British were opposed to the emergence of a distinct regional nationalism in Transjordan, because such national sentiments established in the area of Transjordan would “automatically have led to mass repudiation of, and a possible uprising against the British presence and interference in the country, and the British were not ready to deal with this, especially when they were fully occupied with the seething unrest in Palestine” (Abu-Odeh, 1999, pp.19-20). Another peculiar challenge that impeded the growth of Transjordanian nationalism was “Emir Abdullah’s policy throughout his thirty-year rule of excluding Transjordanians from the highest post in the government—the head of the Council of Consultants or, later, prime minister” (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.20).

Emir Abdullah organised his first government in Amman in April, 1921, shortly after Winston Churchill’s “six-months” offer, according to which Abdullah was to assume the rule of the unallocated parts of mandatory Palestine, east of the Jordan River. The Emir had accepted the six-months agreement because “it suggested better things in the near future, namely, a move to Damascus” (Wilson, 1987, p.60). The possibility of moving to Damascus grew less distinct as the Emir secured his position in Transjordan, gradually distanced himself from the nationalist group that had supported and encouraged his first move to the area of Transjordan, and became closer to the British (Salibi, 1993, Wilson, 1987). This development eventually had a dramatic effect on Abdullah’s illusionary regional ambitions; he resigned himself in pragmatic fashion to consolidate his rule in Transjordan. Indeed, he was faced with a great task in forming Transjordan into a political unit while at the same time establishing the social legitimacy of his reign. In a land in which tribes loathed central authority, and where confrontation with Bedouins and

peasants was one of the major obstacles Abdullah faced in the first years of his reign, it was essential to establish some sort of supra-tribal structure if a nation was to be built. Of course, the Emir was himself an important supra-tribal structure, although he based his legitimacy only on those socially legitimising elements which he considered important in constructing a national consciousness. The Emir stressed tribal and Islamic identity, emphasising the important role of tribes and tribal allegiances in Transjordan. He also determined the room for interpretation of what it means to be of tribal origin (*The Jordan Times*, 1985, January 28).

Even at the time of the establishment of the Arab Legion, or the Arab Army, Transjordanian nationalism had not yet taken shape. After Britain recognised Transjordan as an autonomous principality in 1923, the public security force was merged with a “Mobile Force” to form the Arab Legion under the command of a British officer. The officers of this security force were for the most part not Transjordanian, and even among the “commanders of the various security units, not one was a native Transjordanian” (Salibi, 1993, p.94). The initial function of this force was mainly to extend and impose the authority of Emir Abdullah over the divided groups in the area of Transjordan and to contend with traditional tribal raids and inter-tribal conflicts. Therefore, the establishment of the Arab Army provided the Emir with a security force to meet his domestic requirements – an army on which he could rely in fulfilling his regional ambitions.

Thus, the Arab Army constituted a second, very effective, supra-tribal structure, which incorporated the tribes into the state structure. Later, to the dismay of Arab nationalists and of the army’s Syrian officers, the composition of the Arab Army was changed to include a higher proportion of indigenous Transjordanians. The establishment of the Desert Patrol, which played an important role in strengthening internal security, helped bind the tribes to the state by creating job opportunities for tribe members. In addition, the Desert Patrol was important in “satisfying the natural bedouin [sic] perception of himself as a warrior and appealing to traditional tribal values, such as valor and courage” (Fathi, 1994, p.96). Viewed practically, the Emir’s support of the institution of the army as a means of

transforming the way of life of the Transjordanian tribes by strengthening the loyalty of all tribes to the monarchy raised him to the status of a super-tribal leader in Transjordan.

The 'Bedouin' entered the Arab Army with the mentality of the primacy of "collective security and responsibility in the tribe, clan and family" (Batikiotes, 1967, p.20), and their sense of Tribal cooperation carried over into their army lives and careers. There, their loyalty was not to the state, but to the king. That is, the relation of the military to the state was sustained by the precedence of the monarch-commander, not of the nation-state (Batikiotes, 1967). Thus, the state-centred Transjordanian nationalism resulted from a lack of alternative national leaders. The two supra-tribal institutions, the army and the Emir, working together for their mutual benefit, established a patriarchal political system in which no other national leaders had a place: Through co-optation, other national institutions "withered away as soon as they emerged...in a ruling monarchy, the only national leader is the monarch himself " (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.238).

From Tribalism to Nationalism

Tribes are always connected with the monarch in Jordanian society. This connection stems from the key role of the tribes in supporting the Hashemite monarchy. The Bedouin tribes are identified with the Hashemites, because the king's social legitimacy derives from traditional claims of kinship, religion and historical performance. Moreover, the tribes enjoy institutional legitimacy in the legal processes because kings work closely with the tribes and they are, in a certain manner, considered tribal leaders. The loyalty of a tribesman grows from a desire to defend the honour of family, tribe and king, and not to some abstract notion of Jordanian patriotism. Tribesmen accepted the "king's right to rule, based on his religious claims, which double as tribal claims, and his personal qualifications as a tribal leader" (Satloff, 1986, p.60). Equality strongly characterises the tribes in Jordan; the strong authority of tribal leaders rests not on their economic power but on a quality indicative of particular characteristics. One example often cited to underline this quality is that king "Hussein is addressed simply by his first name

when he visits Bedouin encampments; he is treated as the first among equals rather than as royalty" (Gubser, 1983, p. 26).

As Jordan formally gained its independence in 1946, the state was merely an extension of the assumed identity and the character of the king. During his rule, Hussein has worked in the direction of trying to create a sense of Jordanian history and nationality which helps to appreciate Jordan as a nation-state (Satloff, 1986, p.64). In addition, the regime has recognised the importance of transcending tribalism, parochialism and communalism in order to "foment a national identity, it appears reluctant to withdraw its support from the last vestiges of tribal identification" (Fathi, 1994, p.207). The Bedouins in Jordan have enjoyed a strong political and socio-cultural role. Politically, the regime gained control over the tribes and relied on their loyalty and support. Socio-culturally, the East Jordanian peasants often idealised different aspects of Bedouin life and practices from which the Jordanian social patterns are derived. Many Palestinians have similar traditions regarding Palestinian Bedouins. Indeed, in Jordan this coincides with the trend towards the cultural tribalisation of society. For example, the Circassians and Chechens, who had few cultural similarities with the Bedouins, hoping to gain from the emphasis on tribal affiliations, set up a "Circassian-Chechen Tribal Council" to represent their tribal interests in Jordanian society. The Jordanians of settled backgrounds saw themselves as belonging to tribes but they did not see themselves as Bedouins.

The creation of the institutions of a 'modern' state depended mainly on the support of the tribes and the expansion of a national army. At the same time, state-building proceeded under the designed notion of Jordan as a personalised monarchy in which loyalty is due to the king, not to the state; Jordan is a Hashemite Kingdom in name but Hussein's kingdom in the minds of Jordanians (Jureidini & McLaurin, 1984, p.56). This illustrates the tribal mentality in which loyalty is centred on a personality (in this case, the person of the king) as opposed to formal institutions. Nevertheless, the tribes provide the foundation on which the Jordanian government is grounded and form the fundamental part of the Jordanian army, guaranteeing its stability. However, such tribal loyalties in Jordan's political culture also create a degree of uncertainty regarding these

stabilising functions. Furthermore, Jordan's tribal cultural heritage has been deprived as symbol of Jordan's distinctive national identity, in which the membership and allegiance to tribe is not contradictory to the allegiance to the state.

The tribes have, as political interest groups, always been supported and sponsored by the state in what has always been a symbiotic relationship. The monarchy depends on tribal support during difficult times. Indeed, since the founding of the kingdom, the Bedouins have constituted one of the king's most loyal constituencies. In addition, the tribal dominance of the army has contributed to the survival of the regime and ensured stability. After the consolidation of the state in the early years following its founding, however, this relationship between the monarchy and the 'Jordanian Bedouins' came to stand in the way of developing a mentality favourable to formal institutions, political participation and balanced representation. Thus, Jordan's political reform almost never led to popular representation; rather, they increasingly integrated the traditional basis of patriarchal control. As a result, political participation does not include those individuals who might promote ideas that would provide a basis for belief in nation-building and formal institutions. Rather, the political system depends on those with the ability to strengthen the traditional bases of alliances, family ties, personal loyalties and custom-dominated public behaviour. Indeed, the effect of custom-dominated public behaviour on power structures creates a random distribution of power that causes a state of confusion.

The end of Abdullah's I reign could have threatened the existence of the state of Transjordan, had it not been for the Bedouin element which, comprising the majority of the Arab Army, formed the backbone of the Jordanian state, guaranteeing the legitimacy and the security of the new king. In May 1953, following the brief reign of King Talal (which ended in September 1952), Hussein was proclaimed the new king of Jordan. From the beginning, King Hussein showed a deep awareness of the situation of the Hashemite legacy. He clearly gave up Hashemite ambitions in the region, neither making use of his grandfather's Greater Syria plan nor striving to rule Iraq. Hussein did, however, reproduce a form of unity between

the West and East Banks, describing the two Banks as one country (*al-balad al-wāḥid*) and one family (*al-'ā'ilah al-wāḥidah*) to emphasise their natural linkage. He tried to subsume the separate Palestinian identity into a larger Transjordanian framework in order to achieve the unity of the two Banks.

The revival of 'Jordanian nationalism' under King Hussein took on a somewhat different form than the earlier 'nationalism' in the matter of winning different groups for the national cause. As soon as he became king, Hussein adopted the strategy of developing the precursor of the well-known Jordanian (not Transjordanian) nationalism based on a hybrid (pan-Jordanian) identity. The king, in particular, as the symbol of Jordan, has been an indispensable factor in the state's efforts to create a hybrid identity and to "promote that unquantifiable commodity known as 'legitimacy'" (Brand, 1995, p.50). Moreover, Jordanian nationalism appears to be the convergence of like-minded people in Jordan and from the 'nationalist' camp of Arab states who, with the termination of the alliance with Britain, were not admitted to the Baghdad Pact in 1955. Despite the atmosphere of strong Arab nationalism, however, King Hussein was weak, both internally and externally, not only because of the continued presence of the British troops stationed on Jordanian soil under the auspices of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty, but also [because] the command of the Arab Legion was in British hands. The very fact of the British presence undermined the king, but more important, it had the potential of undermining the legitimacy of the Arab Legion as a national force...and the ultimate protector of the Hashemite throne (Gubser, 1983, p.92).

The King had, in 1957, dismissed the British officers in the Arab Army; while this dismissal was a concession Hussein had been forced to make to the opposition, at the same time, it supported his position as king and as a national hero. The institution of the monarchy and its domination over parliament was complete, and party freedom greatly restricted. The severe measures against political parties taken by King Hussein in 1957 opened the way for him to fill in the "resulting vacuum with an all-encompassing Jordanian nationalism (Transjordanians and Palestinian-Jordanians together) in which the king would be at the center, rather than at the other pole as he was during the upsurge of opposition-centered nationalism" (Abu-Odeh,

1999, p.239). Meanwhile, King Hussein led a popular nationalism more or less linked to the army, which is considered an essential ingredient of Transjordanian identity. The king's popular nationalism stressed the Jordanian army as the defender of the holy shrines in Jerusalem, with Jordan holding the longest line of confrontation with Israel, and the unification of the two Banks as a good example for future thoughts of Arab unity. These were the foundations of the Transjordanian nationalism that brought together Transjordanians and Palestinians.

Particularity of the Topic of Jordanian Identity

Jordan is a country in which the majority of the population is Arab, with a considerable diversity within the Arab population. The Jordanian community is sharply divided into a series of partially overlapping groupings of mixed national, cultural, social and economic nature. The influx of Palestinians into the East Bank has sparked a wide debate in Jordanian domestic politics concerning Jordanian identity. Indeed, it was precisely this influx of Palestinians that created and strengthened the Jordanian national identity. Developing and representing a separate Jordanian national identity while at the same time trying to find the right balance in the sensitive process of incorporating Palestinian refugees has always been considered as one of the main tasks of the Jordanian regime. From the founding of the Jordanian state, the regime has used the Palestinian component in the society to emphasise Jordan's distinctive framework. The distinction between the West Bank Palestinians and the East Bank Jordanians is characterised with a high degree of sensitivity in the history of Jordanian national identity. The British were not the only ones to include Transjordan in the territory of the Palestine Mandate: later, King Abdullah I was to do the same in pursuing his pan-Arab goals. The king's interest in adding the West Bank to the East Bank was the result of his unsuccessful attempt at founding a united Greater Syria. The king succeeded in expanding his kingdom westward despite the fact that he could not unify the West Bank with his kingdom without making the "Palestinian inhabitants Jordanian citizens" (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.260); this is the legacy which the Hashemites have to face. In order to further legitimise his role in the West Bank, Abdullah I had to build a network of notable Palestinians whom he always included in the government,

especially those who had supported his initiative of unifying the two Banks.

In April, 1950, a general parliamentary election was held on both the East and West Banks of the kingdom to choose a new lower house for the Jordanian Parliament that would represent the Palestinians, including the refugees, who had been given the right to vote. Abdullah I had accomplished his goal: "Jordan had irrevocably become a part of the Palestine problem" (Day, 1986, p.21). However, unlike the other Arab states that found themselves with Palestinian refugees on their lands, King Abdullah I bestowed Jordanian citizenship on the Palestinians in the West Bank. Moreover, in an effort to promote a single Jordanian identity following the unification of the two Banks, King Abdullah I had to prevent any political institution from specifically separating Transjordanian and Palestinian issues.

The severe reaction of the various Arab countries to the unification of the two Banks created a new problem of legitimacy and regime security, and an increased need for the institutionalisation of power emerged. The Jordanian political system is characterised by a patriarchal approach; Abdullah I had always "fancied himself in the role of the charitable father to his people" (Kikbride, 1976, p.119). The king's disregard for democratic institutions and his close relationship with Britain aroused opposition. The transformation of Transjordan by King Abdullah I was conditioned by the human dimension and political identity of the Palestinians: it heightened the need for institutions and increased the challenge to the authority of King Abdullah I.

In Jordan "national as well as subnational identities are in a state of continuous adjustment, if not reconstruction" (Brand, 1995, p.47). The attempt of the Hashemites to Jordanise the West Bankers and Palestinian refugees distinguished the period from 1948 to 1967 and has been regarded as an attempt to 'de-Palestinise' the West Bank. The process of 'Jordanisation' was cut short by the 1967 war, after which the question of Jordanian national identity took on a new form and dimension. The occupation of the West Bank (through the Israelis) set off a massive exodus of Palestinians out of the occupied territories to the East Bank, affecting the definition of the

Palestinian Jordanian notion. At the same time, the situation cemented the power and independence of a separate Palestinian movement, represented by the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. This action provided a real legitimising framework for Transjordanian national identity and a clear separation between the Jordanian and Palestinian identities. Through many different means, the Palestinians living in Jordan, however, were in many ways faced with the choice between their Palestinian identity and Jordanian nationality (Fathi, 1994, p.214) as Jordanian citizenship came to demand complete integration. In pursuance of this goal, the king declared a new political formation. A period followed in which there existed a certain mentality in favour of putting Jordan's East Bank in order. A small proportion of Transjordanians adhered openly to the idea of "Jordan for Jordanians" (*al-Urdun lil-Urdunyyin*), and there were also thoughts of putting an end to the dual identity of the Palestinians (Day, 1986, p.61). The formal reaction in 1976, when the government replaced the Prime Minister of Palestinian origin with an East Banker, was considered a vigorous move promoting the idea of "Jordanians first," and it helped shape a stronger sense of a Jordanian national identity. Meanwhile, the Palestinians increasingly sensed their separation and their Palestinian identity. Thus, the official disengagement of the Rebat Resolution in 1974 was an act clarifying the vagueness concerning the twofold representation between the West and East Banks. At the same time, the disengagement and the following parliamentary elections further contributed to the formation of a Jordanian national identity. Whereas the Jordanian national identity was, if it existed at all, a reactive or passive delineation against other Arab national identities and was interpreted politically as an endorsement of the regime policies, "national identification with Jordan is developing towards a positive recognition of its institutions, including the institution of the monarchy, and the system" (Fathi, 1994, p.238). Therefore, the peculiar challenges confronting Jordan in its pursuit for a national identity and democratisation initiatives continue to be problematic. On the one hand, Jordan is a relatively new, young and impoverished state, and being sandwiched between Iraq, Syria, Israel and West Bank, gives the Jordanian state and its leadership a sense of siege mentality. On the other hand, it bonds the Jordanians to the regime,

creating a special relation between the regime and the population, and raising the need for a strategy to safeguard the survival of the regime.

From Jordanian Nationalism to “Jordan First”

The character of the relationship between Jordan and Palestine over the years has affected the process of separation between the Jordanian national identity and the Palestinian identity. At the same time, dealing with the challenge of the future role of Palestinian Jordanians in Jordanian national life required a delicate balancing act on the part of the Jordanian regime. The process of separation finally led to Jordan’s administrative and legal disengagement (*fakk al-irtibāt*) from the West Bank on July 31, 1988, which deprived West Bankers of their citizenship. It should be noted that in adhering to the Rebat Resolution, the King had said only that the PLO represents the Palestinians; he did not renounce his claim to sovereignty over the West Bank. “To exclude the West Bank would have meant giving in completely to the Rabat [sic] decision, and implying forfeiture of Jordan’s sovereign claim to the territory” (Gubser, 1983, p.110). Due to the disengagement of Jordan from the West Bank, Jordanian citizenship was revoked and renewable two-year passports intended strictly as travel documents were issued to the West Bank Palestinians. The disengagement was a new stage in clarifying the Palestinian-Jordanian relationships within Jordan, which had been destabilised by Jordanian policy towards the PLO and the Jordanian political concern for a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. The struggle between Hussein and the leadership of PLO at the end of the 1970s over the final status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip provided a suitable solution to the problem through the advantage and influence of the Jordanian regime. The PLO worked to gain both “Arab and international support for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state – this meant that in addition to the PLO’s ambition to embody the Palestinian identity on Palestinian national soil, also included was the separation of the West Bank from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Jordan is not Palestine, and the independent Palestinian state will be established on the occupied Palestinian land after its liberation (Shemesh, 1996).

When the Likud party returned to power following the Israeli elections held in June, 1981, the most dramatic new development was the appointment of Ariel Sharon as Minister of Defence. Sharon had adopted the position that Jordan, with its Palestinian majority, was *de facto* a Palestinian state; the slogan “Jordan is Palestine” began to receive a good deal of attention in Israel and in international spheres (Layne 1994, p.25). According to the Likud political ideology, the East Bank was originally part of Palestine and had been arbitrarily carved out by the British to form Transjordan. Thus, the Likuds were a factor that fed the divisiveness, exacerbating Jordanian fears about the existence of Palestinians in Jordan. The concerns of Transjordanians had been fed by three other events before the Likud came into power in Israel. The first event was “a statement made on July 6, 1973 by Tunisia’s President Bourguiba who proposed a Palestinian state to replace the Hashemite regime in Jordan” (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.213). The second event was “triggered by an article authored by Isam Saknini, a PLO activist with the Palestinian Research Centre, whose article called for the establishment of a ‘Palestinian East Jordan’ as a ‘substitute entity’ that embodies the present and historical characteristics of Palestinians and East Jordanians” (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.213). The third event was triggered by Farouk Kaddumi, head of the PLO’s political department. Around the time when Saknini’s article was published, Zaid al-Rifā’ī (at that time the Jordanian Prime Minister) and Kaddumi discussed how to coordinate their efforts in view of the Rabat Resolution. “During these discussions, Kaddumi wanted to know about the number of Palestinian-Jordanians and their geographical distribution in the refugee camps and outside. The request irritated al-Rifā’ī, who said that the PLO had nothing to do with the Palestinians in Jordan simply because they were Jordanians under Jordanian jurisdiction” (Abu-Odeh, 1999, p.213). Moreover, the Likud party position was seen in Jordan as a serious threat, raising “the spectre of Jordan being transformed into Palestine” (Layne 1994, p. 25). Implicit in the Likud position is the “assertion that Jordan was a country without a people or a history of its own...Proponents of this position not only denied the legitimacy of the restoration of Jordanian authority in the West Bank but also called for the expulsion of an additional one million Palestinians into Jordan from the West

Bank, a move that would greatly diminish the demographic importance of 'indigenous Jordanians'" (Layne, 1994, p.25).

The disengagement was considered a necessary move that recognised both the impossibility of maintaining twofold representation and the position of the Israeli government. The transfer of the West Bankers to Jordan was seen in Israel as an action that would allow the democratic and Jewish nature of Israeli society to be maintained (Layne, 1994). The radical change in the shape and strength of Palestinian nationalism that came with the uprising on the West Bank, whose independence was declared in November 1988, and, simultaneously, the growing anti-Hussein sentiment, created a new and serious internal threat to King Hussein's security and legitimacy, as well as to the stability and cohesion of Jordanian society.

The disengagement from the West Bank, when the king finally renounced his claim to the loyalty of the West Bank Palestinians, opened the way for the foundation of a Palestinian political entity (Brand, 1995, p.54). In Jordan, the severance of legal and administrative links with the West Bank forced Palestinians to clarify their situation and decide on their identity. This development helped produce a Jordanian nation that conformed more closely to the modern, Western model of nation by clarifying and confirming the Jordanian 'self' and the Palestinian 'other' (Layne, 1994, p.26). The disengagement certainly emphasised the separation between the two Banks and clarified the ambiguity concerning the status and boundaries of Jordan versus Palestine. In his speech on July 31, 1988, explaining his decision, King Hussein proclaimed that Jordan is not Palestine. "Similarly, Marwan al-Kasim, chief of the royal court at the time, is quoted as saying 'From now on Jordan is Jordan and Palestine is Palestine' (*New York Times*, 1998, October 10). Indeed, asserting Jordan's distinctiveness from Palestine and delineating its separate boundaries have been a major theme for the Hashemite regime, since ambiguity on this issue threatens its legitimacy, emphasising, as it does, the fact that the dynamics of Jordanian-Palestinian unity have always been complicated, involving as much conflict as convergence.

Historically, the interaction of the Jordanian leadership with Palestine had a great effect in establishing a distinctive Jordanian national identity. The growth of this identity coincided with the gradual development of a sense of Transjordanian reminiscence, symbolised by the slogan “East Bankers first,” which emerged in the wake of the civil war from 1970-71 (Black September). This emerging sentiment most often takes the form of opposition to the role of Palestinians and Palestinian institutions in Jordanian affairs, thus emphasising a particular Transjordanian identity. The development of the notion “Jordan First” is also to be found in the radical school of thought in Jordanian society concerning the Palestinian-Jordanian issue. These ultra-national lines focus on negating all arguments that the Palestinian factor is essential for Jordan in an effort to prove that Jordan would be better off without the Palestinians. Other trends participated in the march of Transjordanian nationalism: the pragmatists, who grew within the boundaries of the state, and the clan/tribe trend, which grew within the boundaries of the tribal system, and in the army. Both trends supported the Hashemites. According to the pragmatic group, the Hashemite monarchy is an indispensable component of the Jordanian identity. Both the clans and the army are considered central to the Transjordanian identity. This trend’s take on the issue of Palestinian-Jordanians is that the Transjordanians have given the Palestinian-Jordanians land, economy, identity and security, while the Palestinian-Jordanians have given nothing in return. The pragmatists require a clear decision: the Jordanians (i.e., Transjordanians) are Jordanian and the Palestinians (i.e., Palestinian-Jordanians) are Palestinian. Therefore, they believe in the withdrawing of Jordanian passports from the Palestinians and giving them instead a different travel document (Abu-Odeh, 1999, pp.241-248).

Throughout its existence, the regional situation has always had a profound impact on Jordan’s domestic affairs. However, the demographic and socio-economic crisis during the Gulf War in 1991 heightened divisive trends in Jordanian society. These developments strengthened the perception among many Jordanians that they were gradually losing control of their country to successive waves of returnees. These returnees were seen as possessing the kingdom’s wealth and therefore as poised to acquire more power.

The increase of anxiety and the worsening economic situation since the mid-1990s increased the need and the pressure on the system to rationalise political authority and to reactivate the functions of the formal institutions of a civil society. Such reforms usually discourage the function of traditional institutions, reduce the power of traditional groupings in society and increase transparency. It, therefore, remains to enhance civil liberties and promote related values, such as political participation and freedom of public opinion – areas in which the internal situation in Jordan has always been plagued by problems. Since the beginning of the second *intifada* in 2001, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has indirectly affected Jordan by worsening its economic situation, creating new instability and, above all, increased the anxiety among Jordanians about a possible new influx of Palestinians. Israel's right-wingers have never made any secret of their plans for Jordan (Blanche, 2002), and Sharon's position has always been that Jordan is the homeland for Palestinians. At the same time, the escalation of the situation in the region and the fear of a new Iraq war (expected to bring in too many Iraqi refugees) have further increased the anxiety of the Jordanian people and their regime. Moreover, the particular challenge of Jordan's highly risky and costly peace treaty with Israel in 1994, and the consequent discomfort, if not anger, from both the Arab World, and from the Jordanian masses themselves, endanger regime security.

All these developments and circumstances make the situation a challenge for the regime, which is faced with demands from a multitude of social forces representing a variety of affiliations. The only way to counter the divisiveness of these pressures was to come out in favour of a liberalisation process. The notion of "Jordan First" (*al-Urdun awwalan*), the name of a nation-building campaign promoting a social pact according to which authorities and citizens recognise each other's rights and duties and agree on common principles, was enshrined in the political, administrative and economic system. King Abdullah II formulated a national campaign with the slogan "Jordan First," propagating the principles of equality, rule of law, transparency, accountability, human rights, pluralism, and democracy (Sawalha, 2002), as a means of unifying all Jordanians behind a national goal and encouraging modernisation. This campaign aims to prepare Jordanians to face the rapid social change

and the challenges of economic development and political modernisation and to improve the active role of the formal institutions. In other words, it is a matter of assuring some degree of cohesion and establishing the ‘political legitimacy’ necessary for the gradual change to a modern nation-state. The king initiated this new national campaign in a letter to Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb on October 29, 2002, in which he stressed that “Jordan First” is a campaign conceived not in order to reflect an isolationistic trend but to enhance patriotism and uphold the country’s unity in its diversity (Sawalha, 2002).

In order to successfully implement the “Jordan First” regime slogan, a review of some of the arguments put forward by representatives of the various groups of the Jordanian people, and by the political parties and trade unions, is required. This review should be conducted in such a manner as to make the interests of Jordan, as far as all Jordanians are concerned, come before any other interests or issues. For example, the opposition’s role should serve the causes and interests of the Jordanian people and strive to build Jordanian capacities, before defending other interests and objectives. Furthermore, the Jordanian press should devote its largest spaces to addressing internal Jordanian affairs, as well as the citizens’ concerns and issues, before highlighting external issues. Therefore, adopting the slogan “Jordan First” requires Jordanians to face the negative probabilities and to mobilise all the positive capabilities of the Jordanian civil society.

The notion of “Jordan First”

In a letter to Prime Minister Ali Abul Ragheb on October 29, 2002, King Abdullah II stressed the importance of the national “Jordan First” campaign:

Conditions in our region, coupled with challenges dictated by the situation in the world around us, which both affects, and is affected by us, have made it incumbent upon us to focus most of our official and popular efforts on issues pertaining to our people and the priorities and interests of our homeland (Abdullah II, 2002).

The critical situation in the region has caused severe regional instability, and has led to severe economic, social and political problems in Jordan. The context of these problems in domestic politics and the political economy of regime security is important to understand the regime's stand from the national “Jordan First” campaign. That means Abdullah's II personal political socialisation was affected by the regional conflict. However, he was not influenced or personally affected by the regional ideological conflicts and especially the philosophy of the Arab revolt when he claimed that he is only the king of Jordan, and not the king of all Arabs. Following the succession in the monarchy in 1999, King Abdullah II clarified in his first speech in parliament, and later in a Royal letter, an end to this philosophy, and underlined his concern with Jordan's economic development and improving bilateral relations with the Arab neighbours:

Jordan is proud of its Islamic identity and Arab allegiance. It will...indefatigably strive to protect the right of the Nation, raise Arab unity, construction and solidarity...Nobody should take the “Jordan First” call as a bid for introversion, but rather as a deep conviction that Jordan's economic and political strength, as well as its social security, are prerequisites that need to be safeguarded in order to strengthen our Arab surrounding and support our Arab brethren (Abdullah II, 2002).

The king initiated a new philosophy through the national “Jordan First” campaign which is a philosophy of governance, as well as an approach to leadership. This philosophy does not fall back on issues of concern to the Arab Nations but considers it imperative to place Jordan's national interest in the forefront of all considerations.

The importance of this change in relations with the Arab neighbours is first among all considerations, i.e., the political economy of Hashemite regime security. Therefore, Abdullah II as well as his father King Hussein have not neglected this policy, which is based entirely on concerns for regime legitimacy, security and survival. In the beginning, Abdullah II chose to be a good ally to the Americans in the war against Iraq, in this way he was seeking the same goal, regime security, which was always pursued by his father, but by different means and with different implications. That

is, officially, Abdullah is working for a diplomatic solution to the critical situation in the region of the US-Iraqi conflict, while, unofficially, he is holding a steady balance with the United States in order to avoid any political and economic isolation. Such a stance, while at the same time launching the political strategy “Jordan First,” reveals a hidden agenda.

Moreover, the political economy of regime security is the most important factor in understanding the change in Jordan’s bilateral relations policy in the region. This priority concern continues to force Jordanian foreign policy to re-establish relations with the Arab States and to take a clear position during the crisis in the region. The attempt of King Abdullah II to increase the domestic productive capabilities of the Jordanian economy has led to a focus on private and foreign investments as the key factors in Jordan’s economic development. Focussing on domestic issues, particularly on socio-economic development, rather than regional issues, is considered the most effective way to strengthen Jordan’s support for the causes and interests of the Arab Nations. The king emphasised this position in an interview on November 21, 2002, under the headline “*binā’ Urdun qawiyy da’m li-kull al ‘Arab*” (A stronger Jordan is support for all Arabs, especially to the Palestinian suffering from the occupation and to the Iraqi people from the possible war (*Al-Dustur*, 2002, November 21). In fact, the “Jordan First” campaign is simply a further tool of the new liberal course in response to the domestic difficulties caused by regional developments.

The aim of this campaign was not only to provide strong incentives for the king to strengthen bilateral relations but also to repair the gap between Jordan and its main sponsors or ‘economic partners’. According to the Emir of Kuwait, the emphasis on the importance of economic development is now more important to King Abdullah II than before (*Al-Dustur*, 2000, July 20). However, this policy of economic relations and security interests is at the expense of the domestic political liberalisation process.

Interestingly, in the era of Hussein, the de-liberalisation process was the immediate concern at a time of domestic, regional and international crisis. Even the security concerns in the regional and international spheres did not change the course of the domestic

political liberalisation process. King Abdullah II has emphasised on the balance between the domestic, regional and even international constraints, increasing the need to reinforce the domestic implication of the regime's own slogan "Jordan First." By the same token, the political economy of regime security takes priority over all other considerations.

The need for a national campaign increases when domestic opposition continues to challenge the regime decisions in both its domestic and foreign policies. To reduce the level of popular dissatisfaction, the regime promoted the national "Jordan First" campaign as a patriotic act to justify their decisions. There is the notion that no Jordanian could oppose this campaign without appearing unpatriotic. The "Jordan First" campaign, corresponding with the regime's dominating consensus 'Jordanians belong only to Jordan and their loyalty should only be to the Hashemite,' is aimed to silence anyone who dares to oppose the regime's policy (Schwedler, 2003).

The regime security strategy under the "Jordan First" campaign did not bring stability; rather, it encouraged more voices opposing the policy together with more radical opposition movements. It also reflected the severe economic, social and political situation of the country and led the regime to the implementation of the International Monetary Fund programme which made clear the vulnerability of the domestic and economic policy of the regime and its decisions in the political economic sphere. Yet, in this context, the gap between the regime and the society became wider, emphasising the need to waive loyalty and support to the regime to avoid severe potential domestic problems (Rayn, 2004, p.8).

The notion of "Jordan First" (*al-Urdun awwlan*) has been variously described as a new basis for a comprehensive national effort to rediscover and reinvent the principles and values for which Jordan stands (*The Jordan Times*, 2002, November 9). This initiative vigorously aims to create a new relationship between the state and its citizens by setting the parameters for a successful process of democratisation and the establishment of a free and independent public voice as steps towards strengthening the national consensus. In this sense, "Jordan First," as grasped by King Abdullah II, refers

to the problems of domestic and foreign policy of the Jordanian regime. While this slogan recommends a strong national consensus approach, it is also used to emphasise and to direct attention to the foreign influences within Jordanian domestic politics. The king has criticised the weakness of the relations between people and formal institutions, especially the international ties of many Jordanian opposition parties and their programmes which should be purely Jordanian, with their first priority to national interests. In addition, the nationalist resonance applies in the first place to domestic politics; however, most of the political opposition in Jordanian society does not defend Jordan's national interests.

The "Jordan First" campaign comes at a time when the regime signalled the limits of criticism on its actions through silencing different ways of thinking and arresting political party activists, professional association officials and journalists. The regime ordered the office of the television station Al-Jazeera in Amman to be shut down – because it broadcast an interview with an American scholar who criticised the regime politics – under the excuse that the station had intended to cause damage to the Jordanian national stands in order to create chaos and incite the masses (*Al-Ra'ī*, 2002, August 7). The serious political repression in the country and the government's rhetoric justifying the action has to be seen as the imposition of a regime of fear in anticipation of the coming war on Iraq and the potential spread of the *intifada* into Jordan, or the rise of Islamist extremism (Schwedler, 2002).

The unstable situation in the region and the possible anxiety that the US-Iraqi conflict may cause has led the government to take steps to stop any opposition from appearing. While the "Jordan First" campaign is one of the strategies to undermine a potential popular anxiety, the government is rounding up suspected militants in case of an outbreak of war. This action was taken during *Aḥdāth Ma'an* (the Actions of Ma'an) in November 2002, in the southern city of Ma'an where there was a strong opposition, and which has always been seen as the fundamental base of traditional Hashemite support, – a breeding place of Islamic activity, and also a place for the pro-Iraqi Ba'ṯist activity (Schwedler, 2002). The regime believes that this kind of opposition is not only an internal matter of Islamic and Ba'ṯ activities but rather of outside influence. The wave of terrorism

and the instability in the region has allowed the regime to adopt a tendency to deflect the priority of the political liberalisation process. In any case, the slogan of “Jordan First” means regime first. A well-known fact is that regime security cannot be achieved through external alliances, financial aid, and encouraging private and foreign investment. Regime security can only be achieved if the process of political development is based on open participation and political representation – crucial for the stability, domestic political economy and security of the people.

Nation State and “Jordan First”

The analyses have kept close to the development of the concept of “Jordan First” through clarifying the meaning of state power and the regime’s survival strategy. It presumes a new meaning of the concept of “Jordan First” as a regime strategy that provides a new outlook on the concept of national identity. The development of the notion of “Jordan First” as a national slogan is considered to be one of the main factors that has weakened traditional power and is a new beginning for the political liberalisation process. The underlying assumption is that individuals will begin to define themselves according to their personal achievement and not as members of a tribe. In other words, “Jordan First” as the regime’s national slogan is an instrument of modernisation that heightens popular demand for the principle of personal achievement.

The predominant role in Jordanian society is supported by the belief that kinship needs to establish “...binding personal relations with those with whom one has common interests; kinship turns relationships of daily life and common interests into warm affective and moral bonds” (Khoury & Kostiner, 1990, p.303). Further, the association between state formal institutions and traditional institutions demonstrates, through the interaction of the state and the traditional political dynamics, a situation where each is integrated by a range of concepts – among them ‘honour,’ ‘respect,’ ‘mediation,’ ‘connectivity,’ and ‘patriarchy’ (Saud, 1996). This engagement of traditional political dynamics and state politics might be a form of understanding the terms kinship and state as:

institutional forms which have a relative structural autonomy
and often competitive...patriarchal structure, idioms and

moralties are embedded and privileged in public spheres (governmental and non-governmental)...Public spheres are previous to familial processes and also create support, and reproduce structures, processes, and idioms which re-inscribe patriarchal familial dynamics. That is, patriarchal structures, idioms, and moralities are not determining the state, but become embedded in state processes. The state becomes the site in which patriarchal structures, idioms, and moralities are produced, reinforcing the kinship dynamics (Saud, 1996, p.126).

The intention of this remark is to show how the role of tribalism and its practices in Jordanian public life are woven into the state processes that affect domestic politics and public life. In accordance with this formulation, the particular case of the politics of kinship that appeared in the form as *al-usrah al-urduniyyah* (the Jordanian family) or *al-akh al-kabir* (the elder brother) is intended to invoke an image of authorised model of political exchange that distinguishes the Jordanian policy. This policy cements the central role and power of the king, especially King Abdullah II who, ever since his ascendancy in 1999, has based his claims of legitimacy on being descended from the Prophet Muhammad's Hashemite clan: he hires and fires the cabinet ministers; all cabinet rulings are issued under his name. There is the pervasive symbolisation of the subjects' loyalty to him via the numerous photos and flags bearing his face that are seen over the country, and his additional authoritative asset as a senior army officer (Major General), where the army remains as an instrument of rule in the king's hands, cementing the core tribal military power. Furthermore, in the decision-making process, the cabinet is one of the institutions which forms the inner executive group in the Jordanian political system but it plays only a relatively minor role in reaching important decisions on the national level, and has a limited function in the domain of international affairs. It is the king who takes the leading role in the process of formulating Jordanian policy. Instead of being "accountable to parliament as it was envisioned in the constitution" (Faith, 1994, p.147), the cabinet is an important tool in the hand of the king, who personally selects cabinet members based on the tradition of demonstrated absolute loyalty to the throne. The appointment of these members, however, has always had to maintain a balance in the representation of tribal,

ethnic and religious forces. The regional factor must also be taken into account, so that all areas are represented in the cabinet in order to avoid the impression of favouring one over the others.

Moreover, the monarchy claims to be direct descendants of Prophet Muhammad, and they have declared adherence to the ethics of Islam by allowing for patriarchal consultative procedures of tribal decision-making through the institution of the Royal Court (*dīwān*); the institution has been under, and continues to display, the absolute power of the king. In this sense, the institution of the monarchy is distinguished from the person of the monarch, whose manner of ruling, along with his personal identity, determines his legitimacy. However, these claims have failed to provide the Hashemites with legitimacy in the region as a whole.

The term "Jordan First" is used as a national campaign to evoke national consciousness and secure the regime's power (still supported through the interchangeable role of traditional and formal institutions), hence, the regime's 'legitimacy.' However, the way the regime creates its legitimacy has caused a situation of incompatibility between the formal system of political authority and the system of tribal political authority.

The state as an entity has a recognised authority, claiming legitimate and exclusive power. Through this special character, the state rules with a principle of centralised power in the form of a political institution that imposes authority and establishes a sense of legitimacy. By contrast, traditional tribal political authority practices its power in the form of traditional political institutions conforming to its cultural traits, values and beliefs. The existence of traditional political authority and a state system of political authority that characterise the situation in Jordan has created a situation of incompatibility: the regime promotes loyalties based on the desire to defend both the honour of the tribes and the institution of the monarchy, rather than to defend the notion of the nation-state.

Furthermore, instead of attempting to implement the programme of domestic political liberalisation and "Jordan First", the regime continues to instil loyalties through a traditional mechanism, where the practices of making appointments to office and favouritism still

create a form of 'bureaucratic traditional leader' or 'bureaucratic *shaykh*' – the bedrock of traditional Hashemite support. At the same time, the image of a modernised form of an authorised leader is lacking due to the fact that the formal political institution is still working together with the traditional tribal institution. Under such circumstances, informal networks, such as those utilised and practiced in a tribal context, offer an institutional alternative that undermines the role and authority of the formal institutions.

Such a situation in Jordanian politics also leads to a state of indistinctness as to where authority is supposed to lie, and a disability to develop a consensus to legitimise the role of the representative institutions and their functions. Further, the cooperation between the regime and the traditional leaders is seen as an attempt by the former to absorb the traditional authority of the latter and to turn it into legitimacy – by requesting an expression of solidarity and delegating some authority to the tribal leaders, and demanding support. Simultaneously, these traditional leaders emerge within the boundaries of the tribal system without a certain political orientation but invoking an unwritten pact (*al-bay'ah*) between the regime and the Jordanian tribes. Thus, there is a state of indistinctness as to where power lies, and a form of loyalty in exchange for economic security, which is contrary to the notion of the Jordanian nation.

The people do not determine the legitimacy of a political system. Political legitimacy is usually obtained through political interactions which are oriented towards authoritative allocation of values for the society, "an allocation is authoritative when the persons oriented to it consider that they are bound by it" (Easton, 1965, p.50). Additionally, the criteria of authority includes personal legitimacy, as in the Weberian term of legitimacy, where in traditional and legal-rational terms obligations and loyalty are to a person – the traditional chieftain or the heroic or messianic leader. In the charismatic type of legitimacy, obligation is to the legally established impersonal network of institutions (Weber, 1947, pp.325-328).

Political legitimacy conveys the process of political development and invests in the political system in developing loyalties and fulfilment of the demands of popular participation which seeks the creation of a political infrastructure (Almond & Powell, 1966, p.46).

Therefore, a “political system must[...]provide for effective government and popular participation if it is to be accorded legitimacy,” (Aruri 1972, p. 2) the state as an institution is “accorded the function of settling disputes by virtue of its monopoly of the instruments of violence” (Aruri, 1972, p. 2). In the case of Jordan, the regime has no monopoly on the instruments of power; the traditional tribal institution still has considerable influence through the system of tribal political authority in settling disputes, in the form of *ḥaqq al-dawlah* (the right of state) and *al-ḥaqq al-‘ashā‘irī* (the tribal right).

Thus, the “necessity of the loyal participation of the populace in the affairs of the nation-state is implied by the term ‘acceptance’” (Aruri 1972, p.2). The state power used to “settle disputes and allocate goods, services and other values, is a consensual power” (Aruri, 1972, p.2). Moreover, in light of the emergence of the notion of ‘nation’ in the Arab world, where the multiplicity of primordial identifications, which include kin group, sect, and the universal religious community, are frequently closely related to a national identity (Hudson, 1977, p.34), thus the national identity of Jordanians is coloured with tribalism. The existence of such a fact in Jordan creates a situation where the state cannot act independently and hold absolute power because it is devoted to the regime and a leader who searches only for personal legitimacy and who does not support the loyalty due to the ‘nation.’ Despite the variety of legitimising ideologies such as socialism, nationalism, pan-Arabism, Islam and currently “Jordan First” to justify the right of the regime to rule, the political developments show that the problem of political legitimacy is tied to the unfulfilled political process, and has affected the process of nation-building in Jordan. Nation-building is understood as the creation of a set of political structures called a nation-state; it proceeds very often from the institutionalisation of commitment to common political symbols. It is not merely that the symbol represents the nation but that the creation of the symbols is coterminous with the creation of the nation (Verba, 1965, p.530).

However, nationalism as the state of mind is, as Hans Kohn says, “permeating the large majority of people and claiming to permeate all its members; it recognizes the nation-state, as a form of

political organization and nationality as the source of all creative cultural energy and of economic well-being” (Kohn, 1961, p.16). In addition, the supreme loyalty of man is felt to be due to his nationality or nation-state, and that to be superior to the “parochial and the sub-cultural, and stimulates feelings of national identity effecting a transfer of loyalties from the tribe and the clan to a centralized legitimate political authority” (Aruri, 1972, p.1).

Therefore, the problem in the process of political development in Jordan is the lack of political legitimacy based on mass-participation through political representation for the stability of the political order and regime security (Dawisha, 1988, p.262). The political leaders in Jordan have made efforts to create an image of themselves as meritorious and successful leaders but they have achieved only partial acceptance by the population, instead of popular participation that legitimises the political system and engenders loyalty to the notion of ‘nation.’ Moreover, political legitimacy, built through mutual political interactions and activities, provides support to the idea of the nation based on the predominant function of the formal political institutions where legitimacy “involves the capacity of the system to engender and maintain the belief that existing political institutions are the most appropriate ones for the society” (Lipset, 1960, p.77). Nationalism, as a political manifestation of social change (Halpern, 1963, p.1), involves the fulfilment of demands of the process of political development and the demands of social change through popular participation in the political system as a productive force. Such involvement should diminish the gap between the regime and its citizens through the creation of political institutions. Thus, the existence of popular participation allows all people to participate in the body politics, and these political institutions become the symbol of system legitimacy and acceptance of the political system. Political legitimacy then conveys the process of political development in the form of “Jordan First” that invests in the political system and not in the leader.

Nevertheless, the initial considerations are that King Abdullah II will continue to use survival strategies (such as “Jordan First”) to maintain his hold on power, binding the Hashemite monarchy with the people. The decent use of survival strategies in a context of

regime-led nation-building can make people more accepting of the authoritarian regime in Jordan. Perhaps, when compared to the otherwise more authoritarian rule of the majority of the other Arab states, Jordan has made great steps in its political and economic liberalisation. The “Jordan First” campaign, despite its weaknesses, has created committees drawn from key figures in the society to examine issues such as enhancing the roles of political parties, strengthening civil society and creating a quota for women’s representation. The greater transparency and accountability of the bureaucracy in fighting corruption at all levels in the community has made a great difference to other countries in the Arab world. Also, the ending of Martial Law in 1999 and increasingly freer parliamentary elections, which enables even the Islamic Action Front (banned in many other Arab states) to be elected into parliament albeit with fewer members in the 110-member National Assembly, and including a new quota of six seats to guarantee minimal representation for women, as well as the potential decentralisation of regional powers, have made Jordan’s political liberalisations process the most comprehensive among all the Arab states. In this sense, compared to the other Arab states, Jordan’s traditional conservatism is still more liberal and civil and more attuned to the Western, modern model. However, the modern institutions – where the tribal element in Jordanian politics is seen as the major characteristic of the regime – might turn out to be a refined façade covering a political structure that is deeply rooted in tribalism.

Conclusion

In Jordan, despite the variety of legitimising ideologies that have been used to justify the right of the regime to rule, such as socialism, nationalism, pan-Arabism, Islam and “Jordan First”, the political development shows that the problem of political legitimacy is tied to the unfulfilled process of nation-building. Political legitimacy as a process is able to provide a meaningful institutionalised participation to achieve a legitimate political order, and provides the basis of some consensus of national identity. The implementation of a general agreement would clear the boundaries for a political community and the bases of a common understanding of the priority of the nation-state. Thus, in Jordan the internal stability is tied to the idea of ‘citizenship’, which presupposes the transformation of tribal

and paternal ties into a national identity. The nation-state is based on the concept of internal sovereignty, which refers to a general recognition of the boundaries of civil society that form a systemic framework of interaction that is expected to achieve a state of mind: the nation-state. The 'civil' leaders will have the institutionalised power and sufficient legitimacy to overcome the role of traditional institutions. This will help to establish the basis of effective 'civil society,' where general interests will receive a more thorough implementation. At the same time, the 'traditional' leaders, who function as arbitrators between the *'ashīrah* (tribe) and the state, will help to fuse the *'ashīrah* into a kind of polity; the traditional leaders support and provide security to the regime and help to provide the fundamentals of appropriate legitimacy.

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