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The Resilience of Arab Monarchies during the Uprisings of 2011 and 2012:
The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

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اتبعني على تويتر

This storm will pass.

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SUMMARY

On January 2013, the Kingdom of Jordan had its first elections according to the new electoral law implemented at the end of the rush of protests that shook Jordan and the Middle East during the two previous years. The new electoral law, together with other constitutional reforms, and government reshuffles represent a significant change in the relation between the Parliament and the crown giving to Jordanian domestic politics a more democratic nuance. The push provided by the Arab Awakenings represented for Arab countries, on one side, an opportunity to reshape the balance of power between the state and its people with reforms and resilience. Indeed, on the other hand, it represented a threat determined to change the political situation by revolting against the leaders to fight against the resistance to reforms opposed by the regime. At the end of those two years of revolts that regarded fourteen countries, it is curious to note that among them, out of six presidential autocracies, only one (Algeria) managed to implement some reforms while the other five (Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Libya, and Syria) saw their leaders being violently deposed and, in two cases, even the beginning of a civil war. At the same time, among the other eight monarchies, besides the case of Bahrain, whose royal house is indeed still governing, all the kings, emir or sultan managed to maintain power during the revolts and pass them by strengthening their relation with their citizens.

This Master thesis precisely aims at unveiling those reasons that guaranteed to Arab monarchies immunity to the so-called Arab Spring, with the ambition to understand what allowed monarchs to survive where colonels and presidents failed. Not being able to furnish a detailed analysis of every single Arab monarchy due to the vastness of the argument, the case of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will accompany this research being a yardstick in the analysis of the distribution of power within the decision-making level of these countries. We are going to see which are the fundamental elements that are granting to the Monarchs their throne. This thesis consider legitimacy and stability as the primary criteria to judge the success of a reign and therefore, after a first chapter that will provide a complete historical background until the end of the Arab protest, the research will deepen with a presentation of a justification for the legitimacy of the monarchical system and, specifically, the case of King Abdullah II of Jordan. Consequently, once the concept of legitimacy is duly explored through his religious, political and economic expression, the focus will move to the ability of monarchs to exploit this legitimacy to maintain a stable country domestically and internationally. Again the case of Jordan will be investigated through three corresponding political levels: domestic politics, the so-called intermestic level, and foreign policies. This analytical choice, therefore, will enable us to get a more comprehensive insight of the reasons and elements that allowed the Hashemite monarchy to survive the last wave or revolts, while, at the same time,

enabling us to broaden the scope of the analysis to the other cases of monarchical success. Bearing that in mind, the starting hypothesis of this essay is that Arab monarchies, through the period of revolts between 2011 and 2012, managed, despite their Republican counterparts, to be resilient and grant stability to their countries in a non-violent way without losing any degree of legitimacy toward their population and the international scenario.

Figure 1: Summary of Arab Spring regions

Source: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
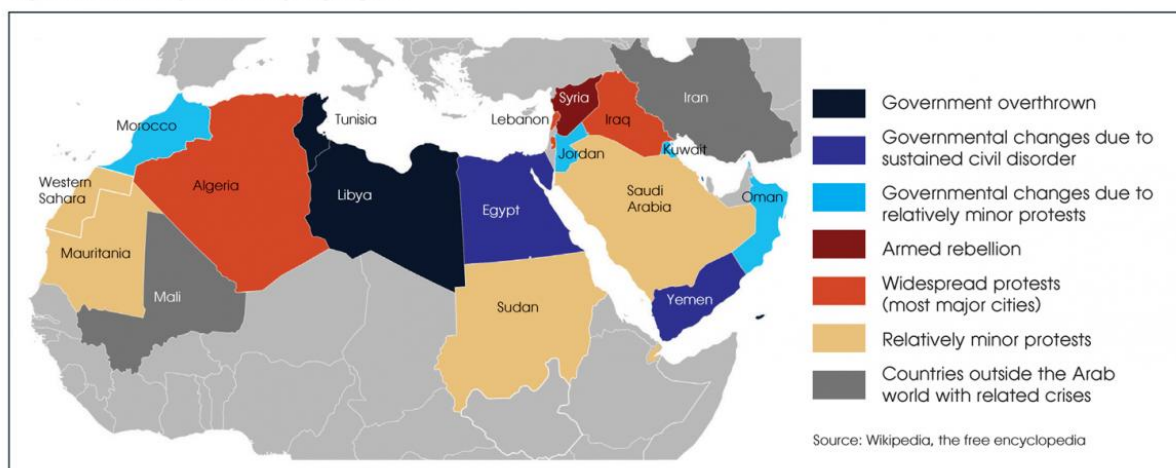
INTRODUCTION

The Arab world is once again in turmoil. Since the end of World War II, it has regularly been crossed by coups, wars, ethnic conflicts, terrorism, popular uprisings, in an endless river of blood. The experience of colonization is not enough to explain this tragic scenario. Most independent countries emerging from colonial empires has set out for the open way of western civilization, and many have now reached successful achievements by entering modernity, bringing with it the valuable contributions of their ancient cultures. At the forefront, there are the countries of Asia, but also in Africa, there are examples of progress. The Arab world, prisoner of an ill-digested past, seems to be screwed for more than half a century on itself in the search for his place in the modern world.

The riots that have rocked some Arab countries, although triggered by youth claims, have different connotations: only in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco protests were born from a Democratic motion. In Libya, the demands for autonomy from Cyrenaica degenerated into a civil war that, after shot down the despot, exploded in tribal conflicts which no end in sight. In Syria, we are witnessing the revolt of the Sunni majority against a small Shia Alawite minority (12% of the population in 2012) that violently dominates the country since 1970. Conversely, the Shiite majority in Bahrain has turned against the Saudi-sponsored king and against the Sunni minority that holds the government. As for last, the fall of the despot Saleh in Yemen reopened deep tribal conflicts later complicated by the terrorist sect al-Qaeda who took control of two cities in the south of the country [Castaldo, 2012].

Within this very challenging context, the peculiar case of the Arab monarchies has evoked some equally surprising reactions. The exceptionality, indeed, lies in the fact that no Arab monarchy has fallen during the Arab uprisings and only Bahrain faced a regime-shaking climax. These regimes, painted for decades as old-fashioned, "weathered the storms much better than their Republican neighbors [Gause, 2013]", where four leaders lost power (Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, and Yemen) and one is holding on by his fingernails (Syria).

The American professor Gregory Gause (2013) describes those surprising reactions illustrating the two forms that they could take. He argues against the justification that "a monarchy as a regime type gives rulers unique cultural and institutional tools for holding on to power [Gause, 2013]." He also states that the other strange reaction "to monarchical stability is the "just wait a minute" argument, that the monarchies are on the verge of falling anyway and thus their survival does not really need to be explained at all [Gause, 2013]". If in the first case the explanations ignore the checkered history of monarchies in the Arab world and misinterpret the political approaches that have enabled these rulers to survive, the second reaction at least has the virtue of not relying on monarchical propaganda concerning the regime type's legitimacy or cultural authenticity. However, predictions of imminent collapse are considered bizarre, given how many crises the remaining monarchies have navigated in the past [Boukhars, 2011]. It is startling how "the success of a monarchy can be taken as proof of its impending failure. In this regard, the prophets of monarchical doom join a long line of analysts who have incorrectly predicted the fall of the Jordanian, Saudi, and other monarchs [Gause, 2013]".

Among the Arab crowns, Jordan and the Hashemite family are the prime suspects while facing this argument and one can easily assume the reasons; "it is a country that has been perpetually unable to fund itself and is reliant on outside patrons to make ends meet. It lost a significant part of its territory in a spectacularly botched war in 1967; it experienced a bitter civil war in 1970-71; and it has been buffeted by regional events for decades, absorbing waves of refugees from Palestine, Iraq, and now Syria. One British ambassador, as early as 1956, described the situation of the monarchy as "hopeless [1]." King Hussein himself titled his autobiography Uneasy Lies the Head [Gause, 2013]". Even now, after demonstrating its resilience through numerous crises, analysts with in-depth knowledge of the case well frequently invoke the prospect of its instability to urge the international community to send resources to Amman [Schenker, 2013]. "The Jordanian monarchy's political longevity has been called into question so many times over the

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[1] Ambassador Charles Johnson, quoted by Philip Robins (2004), A History of Jordan.

decades that academic experts on the country have started treating such predictions as an inside joke [Lynch, 2012][2]."

The aim of this thesis is to identify and analyze the different elements that guarantee specific Arab monarchs this certificate of immunity [Melamed, 2016] when governing their countries. The work investigates the primary reasons for this resilience shown among monarchies in the Middle East.

Resilience is a concept originally coming from material's engineering and serve to describe the ability of materials to regain their shape after being mashed. Regarding human beings and, *latu sensu*, societies, resilience is identified as the capacity to survive through political crises exploiting your weaknesses rather than fighting them, to protect and adapt your original position. To understand the role played by the concept of resilience in Arab monarchies, the analysis focuses on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan because, as previously stated, it managed to survive every wave of protest that shook the country, including the last one in 2011-2012. Although considered as one of the most fragile thrones in the region, Jordan consistently demonstrates this resilience in its political, social and economic decisions [Boukhars, 2011]. The two connected elements that characterize the royal house of the former emirate of Transjordan are legitimacy and stability; both of these characteristics build its resilience being respectively cause and consequence of this ability to adapt.

This thesis first presents a historical background of the history of the Hashemite family on the throne of Jordan from the Arab revolt of Aqaba in 1916 until the years following the coronation of King Abdullah II. Next, the main reasons and events that characterized the Arab Awakenings are reconstructed by firstly comparing Arab nations and consequently focusing on the evolution of the protest in Jordan. This Chapter will contextualize the role of the Hashemite Kingdom to correctly understand how resilience accompanied Jordan through many moments of tensions in its history.

After the historical perspective in chapter one, the thesis examines the ground for the legitimacy of the Arab monarchies. The differences among the types of

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[2] It must be noted that the authors of the citation overwhelmingly do not think that the Jordanian monarchy is about to fall.

monarchies, individual or dynastic, are introduced, and a further discussion investigates the elements at the base of their legitimacy. As stated above, the study focuses on the case of Jordan with a detailed presentation on the person of King Abdullah II and an evaluation of the perception of the King by ordinary citizens. The argumentation of this chapter is also enriched by a series of interviews carried out by the author during a research trip to Jordan. The ambition is to present the opinion of ordinary Jordanians toward their King to understand how the real country sees Abdullah II as their leader. Legitimacy represents the cause of the kingdom ability to survive. The reputation of the King and the lack of serious threat against his position as monarch are identified by this thesis as the reasons that allow Abdullah to govern his country maintaining a certain degree of stability.

The second chapter, motivating the resiliency of monarchy thanks to legitimacy, is followed by its logic consequence: the degree of stability that the King is able to maintain. If, as in the previous case, the ability of a monarchy to survive derives from the legitimacy of the ruling house, then its power its the tool that creates stability. The third chapter presents a detailed consideration of how the Hashemite Kingdom avoided popular uprising internally and afterward investigate Jordan's government's actions within the international scene to see how the same resilient behavior present within the country are proposed again in the Kingdom international conduct. The King's approach towards the development of the Syrian crisis and the multipolar net of alliances built by Abdullah II demonstrate the resiliency of the crown. Finally, to support his position as the legitimate monarch of a stable country, the ability of the King to cope with the adverse impacts of political, social and economic shocks and stresses, to recover from them and to bring about transformational change is discussed.

To conclude the reader should bear in mind this Chinese proverb [Potter, 2012]: "When the wind of change blows, some build walls, while others build windmills."

And what this study wants to demonstrate is that if this allegorical representation would be the reality, Jordan, under the leadership of its King, would be the Netherlands.

Enjoy the reading!

CHAPTER 1

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter will provide a historical background that will help to contextualize the arguments of the thesis.

In the first section is presented a brief description of the key events that led to the birth and evolution of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan as we know it today. The goal is to raise awareness of the main events that led to the coronation of Abdullah II and the history of a country that, even if small and economically unstable, has played and continues to play a pivotal role in the Middle East. I deliberately omitted the entire period of Hussein's reign, even if eventful. This because I preferred to concentrate on the current situation (reign of Abdullah II) rather than on events that have undoubtedly affected Jordanian history such as the relation with Palestine during the second half of last century, which would require alone an entire thesis.

The historical background will start with the Arab Revolt and the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan to end with the description of the first decade of the reign of Abdullah II.

After this analysis, necessary to understand the actual reality of Jordan, the focus will move to a synchronic analysis of the 2011 turbulences between Arab countries. The second section of this chapter will describe the main events from their beginning with the "Jasmine Revolution" in Tunisia to its consequences toward both monarchies and republics in the region of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Besides a historical description of the protest, a sociological analysis will try to identify what have been among Arab people the causes of this phenomenon and why regimes that demonstrated to be apparently stable collapsed in few months.

This section will help to ponder and understand the consequences of the 2011-2012 revolts in Jordan. The third section, in fact, will consider the Arab Awakenings focusing exclusively on their developments within the Hashemite

Kingdom. A detailed chronological analysis of the facts will be supported by a description of the primary political strategy used both by the King and by the Muslim Brotherhood that represented the main actor against the internal stability of the country and the legitimacy of its ruler.

THE BIRTH AND EVOLUTION OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

Jordan is a recently young country, which sees its origins in the twentieth century. The territory, called Transjordan in 1919, was born from the rubble of the Ottoman Empire following the defeat of the latter in the First World War. Transjordan included a portion of land stretched between the Jordan River and an arbitrary line that ran through the Arabian Desert, a result of the balances that have occurred as consequences of the Arab Revolt of 1917 between France and Great Britain victorious powers of the Great War and already owners of vast colonial empires. Among the reasons that motivated the interest of those countries in the area there is, *in primis*, the protection of national's interest over the Suez Canal

Creator and proponent of the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman rule was the Sharif of Mecca Hussein ibn Ali Al Hashimi, whose family played a decisive role in the Middle East for over twenty years. Following the Arab Revolt, in fact, it was him, with the help of his sons Abdullah and Faisal, the person appointed to represent the Arabs towards international diplomacy. The Middle Eastern populations themselves to acclaimed the name of Hussein as their guide, and it was a project of the Sharif the creation of a vast Arab kingdom that included all the Middle Eastern territories with members of the Hashemite family in the leading roles. This project, however, will never take place and this is due to decisions made by the victorious force of the war (primarily Britain and France) which, not without a discrete amount of confusion, divided the vast territory into spheres of influence. It is in this context that the Emirate of Transjordan was born.

Transjordan, however, was not the real ambition of Hussein. When he reached for the first time the Transjordan territory, he announced his intention to march to Syria and to annex it to the Hashemite rule. From his perspective, the Arab revolt was fought to establish an Arab kingdom in a vast area under a Hashemite leadership, Hashemites that were the only ones qualified to that role as direct descendants of the prophet Muhammad. At the same time, or at least initially, the British felt indebted to Hussein for the fundamental role played during the world war, but a series of secret agreements (Sykes-Picot Treaty) and diplomatic documents (Balfour Declaration), made the realization of this project impossible.

The story of the birth of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, therefore, was not simply the result of different diplomatic agreements between the various imperial powers engaged in the area. It appears evident just considering the strategic importance of its territory especially for the former British Empire which, at that time, was still heavily depending on the contribution guaranteed by the economic control of the Suez Canal (not far from the territory in question). The entire area, assigned with a mandate by the League of Nations to Britain, which also included Palestine and Iraq, allowed London to connect the Indian colony to the areas surrounding the Suez Canal.

Jordan had (and still has) both a significant diplomatic importance as well as a strategic one. Starting with a remark on the tolerance of both Hussein and Abdullah demonstrated to the Jewish immigrants that slowly colonized the entire Palestinian territory (the Hashemites were the only ones to accept the birth of a Jewish state immediately) arriving at the role that still today the Jordanian diplomacy plays in the Middle Eastern crisis.

OTTOMAN RULE

Until 1921 Jordan has had a very vague history without owning their own territory or its own political identity. Therefore, to understand the history of this country, the focus should be put on the period before this year which is characterized by the struggles between the various colonial empires that fought within the Middle Eastern territories (areas also including Jordan).

During the sixteenth century, the Jordanian territory became part of the Ottoman Empire, that divided it into two vast regions, one belonging to the Syrian emirate; the other was an emirate in the Arabian Peninsula. This division was due to the Ottoman administrative system: the imperial territory, in fact, was divided, for ease of administration, into provinces (*vilayets*) at the head of which was appointed a governor (*pasha*); every governor was carrying its own a political philosophy but had to respect the will of the Turkish sultan. Furthermore, a pasha directly ruled the city of Jerusalem that was administered as an autonomous province.

Between 1831 and 1839 the Ottoman rule over the Middle East faced crises caused by the advance of an Egyptian army commanded by Muhammad , which, in the end, has been pushed back through the intervention of British and Russian

diplomats that allowed the various Ottoman rulers to regain power over the region. This Army had the ambition to unify the Arab speaking region under the lead of Egypt.

However, the central government of Constantinople was forced to make concessions to the non-Muslim populations in the area accepting the French and Russian intervention for the protection, respectively, of Catholic and Orthodox communities. Despite the many concessions made by the Sultan to the Arab population, the latter continued to see the Ottoman soldiers as foreign oppressors. This sentiment led to numerous Bedouin revolts; the most famous of which were those of 1905 and that of 1910, both sedate with considerable effort.

An important event that characterized this period of history, possible thanks to a substantial financial aid from Germany, was the construction of a railway linking Damascus to the holy city of Medina [Robins, 2004].

CONFLICTING IDEOLOGIES: ARAB NATIONALISM AND ZIONISM

In the last two decades of the nineteenth century in the Middle East, two ideological movements developed aiming to the formation of autonomous national territories: Arab nationalism and Zionism. The two movements proved to be incompatible as soon as they rose and the consequences of this contrasts are evident in the current Middle East situation. Since 1875, a small group of intellectuals on Arab culture (both Christians and Muslims) gathered in Beirut began to study their culture in all fields: history, literature, and language. The goal of these studies was the redefinition of the Arab cultural identity. Through some secret publications, this group of intellectuals tried to expose the oppressive nature of Ottoman rule to the Arab population hoping in the formation of nationalist revolutionary movements which might have helped the Arabs to get more autonomy or, best case scenario, a great "Arab nation." Among them, a Christian philosopher from Damascus, Ibrahim al-Yazigi was among the first to encourage the Arabs to "recover their lost ancient vitality and throw off the yoke of the Turks" in 1868 [Yazigi 1992] introducing at the same time a simplification of the Arab alphabet. Later, at the beginning of 1870, Syrian writer Francis Marrash separated the notion of fatherland from that of nation; in the case of Greater Syria, he highlighted the role played by language, besides

customs and belief in common interests, in the definition the *Al-Nahda*: the Arab Cultural Renaissance [Yasir, 2003].

In the same period in Europe, some newly formed Jewish Brotherhoods started preaching for the return of the Jewish people in their historic homeland: Palestine. This sanctioned the birth of the early Zionist movements, whose basic ideology had been theorized by Moses Hess and Theodor Herzl [Goldberg, 2009] thinkers in Wien of the late nineteenth century. The impulse and development of Zionism, therefore, came predominantly from Europe and the efforts of Jews in Europe. The result of these ideological movements in Europe was the convening in 1897 in Basel (Switzerland) of the First Zionist Congress, with which the birth of the Zionist Organization has been officialized. This organization was aimed at the formation of a Jewish state and, few decades after, it will play a fundamental role in the formation of the state of Israel.

In the aftermath of these events, the dramatic increase of the Jewish population in the Middle East, and the new mores of these people awakened in Arab nations a strong anti-Semitic feeling; these tensions, however, did not lead to the affirmation of the Arab nationalist movement. The concept of nationalism, in fact, was not seen by the Arabs as their own, but as an ideology typical of the Western world and therefore alien to their culture. It was precisely for this reason that in this period rose a profound political imbalance between Jewish emigrants, who were politically very well organized, and the Arab populations, yet not tied to any ideology.

In 1908 various event destabilized the political balance of the Ottoman Empire. Among them, the act of a group of armed nationalist reformist, known as the "Young Turks" [Formigoni, 2006], forced the Sultan Abdul Hamid II to re-enact the constitution of 1876. This event has a significant importance because the claimed document contained inside an article stating that the various provinces of the empire had to be represented in the imperial parliament by delegates elected directly by the people. In a first moment, this aroused considerable interest in the non-Turkish peoples of the empire that saw in this concession a sort of self-government. It soon became apparent, however, that the Young Turks were planning a "turkicization" of the various people part of the Empire aiming to the creation of a highly centralized state. The consequence of this attitude was the birth, within the cultural elites of the

major cities in the Middle East (first of all Cairo, Beirut, and Damascus), of a movement that aimed to the formation of nationalist revolts to oppose the policies of the Turkish sultan.

After 1908, despite the takeover of a new sultan, Turkish nationalism became more and more eradicated trying to assimilate the non-Turkish peoples of the empire to give them less and less autonomy. In response to this policy, Arab intellectuals gave birth to real political parties, the most notable of which was the Party for the Ottoman Decentralization based in Cairo [Tauber, 1990].

A more traditional form of opposition developed among the tribes of the desert between Jordan and the Arabian Peninsula; these populations, although politically unprepared, decided to gain independence from the domination of the Turks. The figure who acted as an intermediary between the Bedouin inhabitants of the desert, and the elites of the city, was Hussein ibn Ali Al Hashimi. Hussein, the tribal chief of the Hashemites and the guardian of the holy sites of Mecca, managed, helped by his social position together with his sons Abdullah and Faisal, to get in touch with the administrative heads of the Ottomans in Constantinople, where he lived between 1893 and 1908. In the same period the sons of Hussein established intensive contacts with Arab nationalists in Damascus; such contacts brought to the drafting of the Damascus Protocol in May of 1915 [Robins, 2004] with which the Arabs secret societies al-Fatat and Al-'Ahd asked Hussein to free them from the Ottoman oppression and to give them the possibility to form an independent Arab state at the head of which they were ready to accept the Hashemites. The same demands were simultaneously posed by Faisal to Herbert Kitchener that at the time was the British Governor General for Egypt and Sudan. These were the first real diplomatic contacts between Arabs and British.

Below the translated text of the Damascus Protocol [Antonius, 1938] describes the borders of the to-be Arab states and its relation with Great Britain:

"The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers:

North: The Line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37N. and thence along the line Birejek-Urga-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat (Ibn 'Unear)-Amadia to the Persian frontier;

East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;

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South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained).

West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.

The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to foreigners under the capitulations.

The conclusion of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the future independent Arab State.

The grant of economic preference to Great Britain."

THE FIRST WORLD WAR: THE ROLE OF DIPLOMACY

On the eve of World War I, the anticipated collapse of the already weak Ottoman Empire raised new hopes among the exponents of Arab nationalism. With the break-up of the Turkish imperial power, Arabs expected to finally win autonomy on a single vast state that would include all the Arab territories included in the Damascus Protocol.

The British power, that was controlling the Suez Canal already in 1875 [Formigoni, 2006] and that was playing a dominant role in India and Egypt, began to look to the Middle East as a region of greater strategic importance. The policy pursued by the British in this area, however, exposed goals that were strongly contrasting between them. Proof of this came in the early '900 when London was involved in three negotiations, in direct opposition to each other, which concerned the fate of the region. In February 1914, Abdullah visited Cairo and met the senior British Official Lord Kitchener to whom he asked support for a possible Arab revolt against the Turks (the uprising led by his father Hussein). Kitchener denied the aid because England was considering the Ottoman Empire as friendly power against which the British would not have fought. But when in the November of that year, following the outbreak of World War I, the Ottomans allied themselves with the Germans then declaring war on Britain, Kitchener, just appointed as secretary of state for war, decided to grant military support to Arab rioters opening a second front to the Turks [Robins, 2004]. In July 1915, in a letter to the British high commissioner in Egypt McMahon, Hussein listed the areas that should have been part of the new "Arab state." They were: the entire Arabian Peninsula (except the port of Aden, then a British colony), Palestine, Lebanon, Syria (including the territory of modern Jordan) and Iraq. On behalf of the British government, McMahon confirmed British

support to the creation, after the war, of an independent Arab territory, but excluded the possibility of annexing to the future "Arab state" all the areas without Arab majority as well as the territories that fell within the French sphere of interest. McMahon's words did not result entirely clear to the Arabs who indeed considered that the Palestinian territory would have been recognized in favor of the Arab. In June 1916 Hussein launched the Arab revolt against the Turks self-proclaiming himself as "King of the Arabs." The revolt was successful thanks to the contribution brought by the British who, in addition to providing arms and money, sent to the Middle East military advisors that instructed the Arabs with the best war techniques; the most famous, and perhaps most important of these consultants, was Thomas Edward Lawrence, better known as Lawrence of Arabia.

In 1915, following the British defeat in the Dardanelles, the British Foreign Office thought of a new offensive against the Turks in the Middle East. To initiate the actions, though, the British were forced to enter into contracts with allies to disclose their interests in the region. Consequently, in February 1916, the Sykes-Picot secret agreement (Anglo-French) was signed [Robins, 2004]. Better known as Asia Minor Agreement the agreement was ignoring what had been decided in the dialogues between McMahon and Hussein; it was planning a division of the Middle Eastern country into two blocks: one to be handled by British forces and the other from the French ones. With the same treaty, it was also determined that Palestine would be administered by an international condominium consisting of Britain, France, and Russia and that the territory of Transjordan would be part of the British sphere of influence.

Finally, in 1917, it was issued a document in which Britain formally declared its support to the Zionist movement: the Balfour Declaration[3]. In this document the British Empire declared itself favorable to the "establishment in Palestine of a national reality for the Jews":

> *"His Majesty's government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and*

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[3] The document takes its name from the British Minister of Foreign Affairs in office at the time, who hoped, with the enactment of such a document, to get the support of the newborn Zionist movement.

religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.[4]"

The new strategic vision of Britain, originated from the ideas of the progressive political Lloyd George, saw the Zionists as a potential ally who would have been able to safeguard British interests in the region; it was this vision of the British government that transformed the Zionist project from a mere utopia to real legitimate and achievable goal. For this reason, the Balfour Declaration was opposed by the entire Arab world (especially from those who lived in Palestine) as it went against the agreements reached by McMahon and Hussein three years before.

Also in that document, there were two conflicting concepts: on the one hand the stabilization in Palestine of a Jewish nation and, on the other, the preservation of the rights of existing non-Jewish populations in the area. The incompatibility of these two objectives sharpened further in the following years until it made the Palestinian situation irreconcilable.

In 1917 Hussein succeeded to expel the Turkish garrison from Mecca: this event sanctioned the beginning of the real revolutionary Arab offensive. In July of the same year Faisal captured the Turkish *Pasha* Al-Aqabah and, in December, the British forces entered Jerusalem led by General Edmund Allenby. Following these events, Faisal accepted to subordinate his army to the British still thinking about the ongoing war as a struggle for the liberation of the Arabs to which the British had to participate with the same goal actively. In September 1918 the British Army finally defeated the Turkish forces in the Middle East with the battle of Megiddo (a town in the modern Israel) and an Arab armed force, led by Lawrence of Arabia, captured the *Pasha* Daraa thus opening the road for the advancing of Arab troops in Syria. Faisal entered Damascus October 2, 1918, and at the end of the same month, the Ottoman government granted an armistice that marked the end of hostilities in the Middle East [Robins, 2004].

Between January 1919 and the same month of the following year, the Allied forces met in Paris to negotiate a peace treaty with the defeated powers of Central

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[4] "The Balfour Declaration". Israeli Minister of Foreign Affairs, 2013.

Europe[5]. The conference was also attended by Faisal, as a representative of the Arabs, and by Chaim Weizmann, representing the Zionists. Both exhibited their cases and, January 3, 1919, they signed two separate agreements with the Allied powers in the hope to establish, sooner or later, to cooperation between the two sides. The agreement reached by Faisal, however, was bound by the same emir to the obtaining of what was promised by the British during the conflict, in other words, the independence of a broader "Arab state" whose territories had been already granted by his father Hussein and McMahon. Given the failure on the British side to ensure independence after the end of the conflict, the Arabs considered the agreement reached by Faisal and Weizmann as void [Paris, 1998].

Given the intricate situation that was being created in the Middle East, US President Woodrow Wilson invented, and later financed, the formation of a special investigation commission, the King-Crane Commission, which had the task of supervising the arrangement of territories of the former Ottoman empire and to decide subsequently, who to grant the mandate of the different regions. After performing accurate investigations in Palestine and Syria, the commission reported a profound opposition of the Arabs to the Balfour Declaration, especially within the Arab majority in Palestine, such as to discourage the implementation of the project for the construction of a Jewish autonomous state in that area. The results of the survey obtained in August 1919, however, were not taken into account by the Paris Conference and were not made public before 1922 [Paris, 1998].

The Paris conference, then, continued unabated its work by appointing the UK as agent for the Palestinian territories (including the current Jordan) and Iraq, and France as mandatory power in Lebanon and Syria; such mandates were confirmed in 1920 in San Remo where the Supreme Allied Council met in April. In the Italian conference the rules for the mandate on the Palestinian region were also explicitly dictated: according to the Supreme Allied Council, in fact, Britain had the task of reaffirming in that territory what was stipulated by the Balfour Declaration [Paris, 1998]; in other words, he had the duty to protect and allow the formation of a Jewish state in Palestine.

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[5] The Paris Conference was held between January and June 1919. It came to the conclusion on June 28th at Versailles with the signing of the Peace Treaty among the powers that took part in the just finished World War. At the conference the fate of Middle East was also decided.

Later on, Hussein and his son actively opposed the British mandate that underlay the rules imposed by Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations adopted at Versailles, because they felt that that article (and consequently the mandate) went against the Wilsonian principle of self-determination [Anghie, 2001]. For this reason, Hussein and his men decided to support the interests of the Arab majority in Palestine. Three different conceptions were born regarding the future of the Palestinian territory: the British, Arabs and Zionist. For the British government, the ambition of their mandate was to enable the peaceful development of the region, on the other hand, both for the Arabs and consequently for the Jews, the area was supposed to stay respectively under their control. For Hussein, however, cooperation with the Jews meant to give them a refuge in what he considered the "kingdom." Finally, for Zionist leaders, the British Mandate was nothing more than the first step towards the formation of an independent Jewish state. The different conceptions of the mandate soon created deep conflicts of interest between Arabs and Zionists, and between the two parties and the British; these conflicts became increasingly dark throughout the period of the mandate.

TRANSJORDAN

When the Emirate of Transjordan was founded in 1921, it had just over 400,000 inhabitants, 20% of whom lived in four cities. The finances of this emirate were based mainly on economic aid from Britain, which consisted of subsidies paid directly into the Transjordan coffers (this marked the birth of a "rental state" system). A local civil service was gradually introduced in the territory thanks to the British efforts, even though the not very articulate government of the country was exercised directly by Abdullah, who resorted to the help of a little council. The British officers, however, were concerned directly with everything related to defense, financial policies, and foreign policies, leaving domestic policy entirely in the hands of the local king (this was the classic form of native administration used by the British in their colonies) [Gentili, 2008].

In support of the original police force on the territory, in 1921, under the British officer's supervision F.G. Peake, a new Arab armed force was organized which was engaged in operations against banditry, and which became indispensable to oust the rebels coming from the Wahhabi's territory. In 1923 this new body was fused to the existing police force to give life to the Arab Legion [Robins, 2004]; this

entity was recognized as the Army of State of Transjordan and at whose command the same Peake was appointed. In the same year, the British government recognized Transjordan as a nation state in the process of achieving the total independence. The new state, under the English guide, made significant progress in the modernization process: the streets, the roads, educational equipment, and other public services were developed consistently. This development, however, did not happen as quickly as in Palestine, which was under direct British administration. The discontent of the tribal people indeed remained a huge problem and, in 1926, reached enormous proportions in the Wadi Musa-Petra region (southeast of the country). In the same year, Britain put experienced legal advisers alongside the Transjordanian government of Abdullah and also gave way to the formation of the Transjordan Frontier Force. This body, distinct from the Arab Legion, was in effect a unit of the British army formed by locally recruited individuals and had the task of guarding the frontiers of the country.

Britain and Transjordan made a further step towards self-government in 1928. In this year, in fact, the two countries reached a new agreement in which the British were engaged in loosening their controls on the region, maintaining only the control on finances and foreign policies from the government of Abdullah. A few months later, the two countries agreed to the promulgation of a constitutional document, the Organic law, and in 1929 they decided, by mutual agreement, to replace the old executive council with a new legislative council. In 1934 a new arrangement with Britain allowed Abdullah to arrange a consular Transjordan office in other Arab countries, and in 1939 the legislative council, born ten years before, officially became the Cabinet of the emir (Council of Ministers).

Aided by British support in 1930, Transjordan managed to launch an offensive against the Bedouin revolts, which were quickly quelled. Meanwhile, a British officer, John Bagot Glubb[6], was appointed second in command of the Arab Legion, which at the time was still led by its founder Peake. Shortly after his arrival, Glubb organized a new special body formed by Bedouins, which was deployed in mobile detachments located at strategic points of the desert, and was equipped with excellent communication means. When, in 1939, Peake gave up his position as head

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[6] Glubb was one of the most important characters in the history of Jordan, enough to obtain the honorary title of "*Pasha*" and to join the list of national heroes, alongside of the famous Lawrence of Arabia. He was jokingly dubbed by the Bedouins *Abu-Hunaik* or "father of the small jaw," because of its small mouth and the fact that he was known for his actions and not for what he said; he was in fact a man of few worlds but surely many facts.

of the Arab Legion, he was replaced by the same Glubb who integrated the fledgling body to the old Bedouin state army (the Arab Legion).

During the second world war Abdullah was a staunch ally of the British: units of the Arab Legion fought valiantly alongside the British Army since 1941, when they found themselves faced with the pro-Nazi government of the Rashid Ali regime that had taken power in Iraq; later the same soldiers of the Arab Legion were used by the British to monitor their strategic locations in Egypt. Abdullah during the war took part in the meetings between the leaders of the new Arab states. These sessions gave birth in 1945 in Cairo, to the League of Arab States, better known as the Arab League. Initially, the Member States that formed this organization were only six (Transjordan, Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Yemen), but soon they were joined by other realities.

In March 1946, Transjordan and Britain concluded the Treaty of London, with which was made a further step towards the total sovereignty of the Arab state; Transjordan was proclaimed a kingdom, and a new constitution replaced the obsolete Organic Law (1928). In the same year King Abdullah called for the international community to be able to join the UN, but an absolute veto by the Soviet Union, which considered the Arab country still insufficiently independent of British control, did not allow this accession. In 1948, with the signature of an additional treaty between Great Britain and Transjordan that removed all remaining restrictions of sovereignty imposed by previous treaties. Despite that, the British retained the right to have some military bases on the territory and continued to move freely on the territory of Transjordan. In exchange for this, however, London agreed to continue to support the Arab Legion through economic subsidies that were paid directly into the state coffers.

In 1947, Palestine became the territory of the British Empire that caused the most problems for the government in London; just consider that for the maintenance of peace on the land, the British Army were forced to employ 10,000 armed troops causing enormous expense to maintaining the colony [Joyce, 2008]. It was precisely for this reason that, February 18th, 1947, the British Minister of Foreign Affairs presented to the House of Commons a request to disclose to the UN the Palestinian problem. In May of the same year, a special session of the UN General Assembly decided to create an ad hoc commission, the United Nations Special Committee on

Palestine (UNSCOP) [Robins, 2004], where the 11 members had the duty to find a solution to the problem that plagued the territory of the Near East. On August 31st of the same year, the majority of UNSCOP members approved the project of a division of the British Mandate territory into three zones: an Arab state, a Jewish one and a special international status for the city of Jerusalem. These three entities would still have to maintain, as reported by the commission, a unified economic system. The project, supported by both the United States and the Soviet Union, was also endorsed by the General Assembly in November 1947. Among the Arab rulers, however, Abdullah was the only one to accept the project; the Arab League, in fact, that reunited a month after the announcement of the plan, declared that it would have strongly opposed the proposals of UNSCOP, threatening the use of any means to avoid such a resolution. The Zionists, on their part, declared themselves to be in favor with the rest of the international community.

On May 14th, 1948 the British withdrew from Palestine, leaving the fate of the land in the hands of its inhabitants. On the same day in Jerusalem the birth of the State of Israel was proclaimed; Palestinians, however, refused categorically to declare an autonomous state within their borders decided by the UNSCOP project. Following these events, the Arab armies from Egypt, Transjordan, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, came in rapid succession in what, a few days before, was officially declared as Israeli territory. Given the inexperience of the different armies on the field (except the Arab Legion, trained by the British), the command of the operation was entrusted by the Arab League to King Abdullah of Transjordan who accepted it but declared that the sole purpose of the war was to regain, and subsequently protect the territories entrusted by the UN to the Arabs with the resolution of 1947 [Joyce, 2008].

Therefore, May 15th, 1948, the Arab armed forces crossed the Jordan River and quickly reached the city of Jerusalem; this event sanctioned the beginning of a protracted conflict. The first dialogue between Israelis and Arabs occurred only in 1949 and led to an armistice between all the forces in the field (Egypt on February 24th, Lebanon on March 23rd, April 3rd for Transjordan and Syria on July 20th). The only exception was the case of Iraq, which did not reach an official armistice but was forced to withdraw its army following a request of King Abdullah of Transjordan (which was, as we saw, at the head of the operations).

THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

In December of 1948 Abdullah obtained the title of King of Jordan, and some months later (April 1949) decided to formalize the new name of the country, which would no longer be Transjordan but "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." This name was already mentioned in the Constitution of 1946, but until the moment of its official announcement (in April of 1949) it was not commonly used. In April of 1950, exactly one year later, the first elections were held in the Jordanian territories both east and west of the Jordan River (Actual Jordan and the West Bank). King Abdullah, considering the favorable results of these elections to his vision of the country, formally decided to annex the territories of the "West Bank" to the kingdom, even if those lands were entrusted to the Palestinian Arabs by the international community. This was a step of great importance. However, only two governments in the international community recognized it: Britain and Pakistan. Between the Arab League member states, in fact, the annexation of these territories was not approved, and both the traditionalists and the modernists condemned this act as an extension of the dynastic ambitions of the Hashemite family.

Abdullah, nevertheless, continued in his political project starting from the search for a long-term peace deal with what he recognized as the State of Israel; both for religious and safety reasons, however, he did not favor the immediate internationalization of Jerusalem (which was in the West Bank area) [Metz, 1989]. This behavior was strongly condemned in the Arab sector, especially in Egypt and Syria where an intense nationalist propaganda portrayed Abdullah as the fundamental instrument of British imperialism in the Middle Eastern territories. The residues relationships that bound Britain and Jordan, however, helped Abdullah to maintain the East Bank free enough from the external noise.

Although not yet a member of the United Nations, Jordan supported the intervention of the latter in the Korean War and, in March of 1951, it became part of the beneficiary states of the economic aid provided by the fourth point of the program of US President Harry Truman [Giordano, 1999].

On July 20th, 1951 King Abdullah was assassinated in the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem, under the eyes of his nephew Hussein (heir to the throne). Due to the young age of the future king, the throne of Jordan was temporarily entrusted to Talal.

During his brief tenure, he promulgated (January 1952) a new constitution and joined the Pact for Collective Security issued by the Arab League.

After studying in England, at the British Royal Military Academy, Hussein returned to Jordan and in May 1953, and once he reached the age of majority, after the abdication of Talal, he was crowned king. His reign will last 46 years, and it will be monarch that will shape the kingdom until it becomes what we know today. Following his death in February of 1999, the crown will be entrusted to Abdullah II, the eldest son of Hussein, who will be tasked to carry out the kingdom created by his father.

THE CORONATION

After forty-six years of reign, February 7th, 1999, King Hussein of Jordan passed away following a long battle with cancer. With no little surprise from the West and the rest of the observer countries, January 24th, 1999, just days before his death, with royal decree, Hussein raised his brother Hassan by the role of crown prince's handing the kingdom in the hands of his eldest son Abdullah, who, following the forty days of mourning canons, fully assumed the position of ruler.

Past the moment of shock due to the death of the beloved Hussein, this event was welcomed by the crowds with enthusiasm for both a kind of transfer of respect to the former sovereign and because the public saw in the young king a way to improve the situation of the country. The start-up of an anti-corruption campaign, more vigor in handling the economic crisis, and lawmaking in respect for human rights were the three aspects on which the hopes of the population were based [Robins, 2004].

King Abdullah II immediately gave new vitality to the reform process started by his father. His determination in accelerating the economic transition of the country manifested itself between 1999 and 2000 when a series of challenging projects were launched, including a new legislation in various sectors [Joffè, 2002]. From the first days of his reign, King Abdullah has given top priority to economic policies to the point that the reform process pursued reached a speed that probably no Arab country has yet experienced.

However, to understand the policies followed by the new sovereign, is fundamental to observe the inherited situation because since 1989 the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has gone through a long period of reform, mainly due to the economic problems that the country faced following the disruption of the status quo due to the new international order created following the collapse of the Soviet bloc. Jordan, in fact, has been characterized, since its independence in 1946, as a "semi rentals state," i.e., a country whose economy is based mainly on subsidies from abroad. Leveraging its geostrategic position, the kingdom has had the opportunity to receive substantial subsidies from both Western powers (the United Kingdom and the United States) and neighboring countries (especially Iraq and Saudi Arabia) [Metz, 1989]. This had enabled the country to build its particular economic system that allowed the sovereign to achieve legitimacy by providing essential services to the population without being forced to tax. With the upheavals that took place in 1989, the entire economic system slowly collapsed, and King Hussein was forced to enlist the help of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. The austerity measures proposed by the IMF forced the king to review the entire tax system and to introduce new charges levied entirely on the subjects [Joffè, 2002]. To avert destabilization, following the dictates of "no taxation without representation," the sovereign was forced to ensure greater freedom to the people and to restore fundamental democratic rights, first and foremost the right to vote, which was withdrawn in 1957 with the introduction of martial law [Robins, 2004]. The reforms undertaken since 1989 are the basis of the transformation projects followed by the new ruler.

LEGITIMACY OF THE REGIME

The Hashemite family sees its origins in the Hijaz region, currently part of the Saudi kingdom. Their territorial belonging, therefore, has little to do with the current Jordan. The break-up of the Ottoman Empire and the new geopolitical order that the victorious powers of World War I (especially the UK and France) gave to the region placed a Hashemite, Abdullah ibn Hussein al-Hashimi at the head of the then British protectorate of Transjordan. The person that become the first ruler of the Kingdom of Transjordan (from 1946 Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan) gained the hearts of the Bedouin tribes in the south of the country and in particular the one of the defense apparatus which still are among the strongest supporters of the royal family. The

people's confidence towards the Hashemites grew over the years, letting the rulers face and overcome threats such as the Republican waves that crossed the Middle East as well as the confrontation with the Palestinian population in the country that culminated in the famous "Black September" of 1970.

The legitimacy of the regime, therefore, did not face particular obstacles until 1989, when, following the beginning of a severe economic crisis, the king had to engage in a substantial liberalization process and to allow greater participation of the people to the country's political life [Robins, 2004]. 1989 can therefore be seen as a turning point, a sort of watershed between the authoritarian period and the start of the democratization process.

The last ten years of the reign of Hussein (1989-1999), however, met many difficulties precisely because of this process of political and economic liberalization.

It all started in 1989 when in April there was a popular uprising in the city of Ma'an, located in the south of the country. The thing that most worried the regime were not the violent clashes, but the fact that such a protest was held in a community that the administration considered as the hard core of their supporters. This urged Hussein to adopt a "defensive democratization policy" [Joffè, 2002] and to hold the first free elections after twenty-two years. Those took place in November of the same year. The importance of this event also helps us to understand the reasons that led the king to keep a neutral position during the Second Gulf War in 1991. In fact, with the deep economic crisis, the austerity policies introduced, a pro-Iraqi public opinion and with Iraq as a major trading partner of the country, King Hussein only choice was to support the regime in Baghdad. In doing so, he regained the support of the population and found a sort of scapegoat for the economic difficulties that the country was going through and the one that it would have crossed in the following years [Giordano, 1999]. The support of the Jordanian population for the cause of Iraq grew even more when Saddam attacked Israel; the dictator was considered as a hero of the Arabs. The more the crisis dragged on in time, the more Hussein was moving towards the positions dictated by its people. This cost him a lot regarding economic benefits but enabled him to reach an unimaginable level of popularity. Furthermore, the king was officially able to maintain a neutral position on the international scenario, thus retaining almost intact those channels of economic aid and support that were vital for him. Simultaneously he kept a sufficiently pro-Iraqi and anti-Western

tone at home, satisfying de facto the requirements of the people [Ryan, 2000]. As can be seen from the Gulf crisis the task of Jordanian rulers is not among the simplest. To maintain a healthy level of legitimacy, in fact, in a time when the "rental model" were going through a deep crisis, it is necessary to support policies to improve public awareness of the king and at the same time not to deteriorate relations with other countries in order to better address the economic crisis and not to lose the confidence of the people.

King Abdullah II is continuing in this arduous task. He is, in fact, maintaining the economic and political liberalization policies initiated by his father and at the same time, he is cultivating great relationships internationally. It must be said that unlike his father, Abdullah made almost half of his studies abroad (Oxford University in the United Kingdom and Georgetown University in the United States) gaining the image of a ruler that is strongly westernized and particularly attentive to the economic problems of the country.

There are three reasons why the succession to the Jordanian throne took place so smoothly. First, the Jordanian population saw Abdullah II sequence as legitimate. This was because, despite the decision by Hussein to change the crown prince a few days before his death, Abdullah II appeared as the choice of the former sovereign. Most Jordanians, in fact, conceived this decision as understandable also for the natural tendency of a sovereign to leave the throne to a son rather than a brother. On the same floor, there is what is written on the constitution, which provides for the investiture of the firstborn of the sovereign in case of death of the monarch himself.

Second, the entourage of the ruling house remained compact around the figure of the new ruler. In this case, a key role was played by the army and by the intelligence [Robins, 2004]. The military background of the new sovereign, who had also been in charge of a special army unit, meant that Abdullah II succeeded in obtaining the support of the apparatus with ease security.

Finally, the same figure of the young sovereign, despite the initial distrust of a large part of the population, was soon welcomed in the best way by the entire kingdom. He was well known by the new generation of rulers of the Arab monarchies (especially those of the Gulf), he developed good relations with the United States, and he married a young Palestinian woman, Rania. This last element

also made possible the reconciliation with a good part of the Palestinian population of the kingdom who had partially lost faith in the ruling house following the peace treaty with Israel.

After securing himself a stable succession, King Abdullah II vigorously entered the political scene of the country holding numerous speeches around the kingdom showing to be the sovereign. Abdullah II behaved immediately in a very decided way, especially in foreign policies where he demonstrated the ambition to improve all the international relations of the kingdom [Joffè, 2002]. In the first months after the coronation, the sovereign had a series of visits, starting with the Gulf countries and the United States, which gave the king an enormous international visibility. Abdullah II also managed to mend relations with Syria of the new president Bashar al-Assad. Following to the numerous difficulties in international politics that characterized the last ten years of the reign of Hussein, the young Abdullah managed to patch up relations through the creation of real alliances. At the same time, however, the king knew that the process of normalization with Israel appeared to be a "peace within the palaces and not a peace of the people" [Robins, 2004]. He was conscious of what partially froze the peace process; the first visit of the new ruler in Israel came only 14 months after his accession to the throne.

Despite initial criticism for the lack of interest in the internal politics of the country, Abdullah II, accompanied by his wife Rania, was quickly able to gain the reputation of a charitable sovereign, especially as a result of his many visits to hospitals to inspect the conditions. He spent constant efforts following the creation of bodies capable of the recollection of funds for humanitarian purposes. As the case of the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization, which was created to raise money to help the Palestinian population of the occupied territories, or the Plan of socioeconomic Transformation (PSET), whose sum was turned to support the poorest communities of the kingdom. The initiative of the PSET mainly aims to channel some of the funds coming from the privatization and the foreign economic aid in areas such as education, public health and the creation of jobs for the poor. Those measures exponentially grow the popularity of the new royal couple both at home and abroad.

The early years of the reign of Abdullah II, therefore, have been characterized both by continuity with his father's policies, and by strong reformist tendencies. The

young king, in fact, has continued the liberalization process started by his father, but at the same time initiated a liberal reform campaign that aims to create an entirely new realm (Jordan First project). Knowing that the kingdom and its survival depend heavily on the regional scenario, it's hard to say with certainty what the future of Jordan could be. First the distortion of the Baghdad regime and the instability of neighboring countries, make the Jordan situation somewhat unpredictable. Added to this is the spread of international terrorism. Finally, the uncertainty about the fate of Syria and the "war on terror" launched by the United States, add even more uncertain regional balance. A positive note could be represented by the signature of the Sharm El Sheikh Memorandum on September 4th, 1999, in which Israel and the Palestinian Authority have restarted peace talks. This event could allow Abdullah II to resume the process of normalization with Israel without unduly be affected regarding internal stability. The only thing that appears to be certain is that to date, with such a precarious international situation, the future of the Hashemite kingdom it is also very uncertain. We shall have to see, in the coming years, what will be the moves of the young Jordanian monarch, who, once again, cannot take autonomous decisions by what the international situation will do. Moreover, its total openness towards the West today does not allow reverse gears. The development of the "war on terrorism" will mark the final state of the kingdom of Abdullah II.

After this diachronic analysis of the history of Jordan until the moment antecedent the beginning of the Arab Revolts, the focus will move to the turmoil that shacked the Pan-Arab word. To better comprehend the role and the impact that this phenomenon had on the monarchy's role and on the country itself, a synchronic analysis of the 2011 turbulences between Arab countries will help to ponder and understand the consequences on Jordan.

With the expression "Arab Spring" we refer to the onset of those riots in the Arab world that since 2011, with a domino effect, have destabilized the entire area.

The "Arab Spring" expression can appear misleading and is certainly the result of an easy adaptation to the circumstances of an expression created to describe an occurrence substantially different, the Prague Spring of 1968. Rightly, most of the Anglo-Saxon literature has preferred to describe the phenomenon in less figurative terms, like Arab uprising, the Arab rebellion, or insurrection [Wuite, 2012].

These events have prompted to the question of the role played by the guilty connivance with authoritarian regimes that have held up for decades the fate of the states of the south shore of the Mediterranean. Although there is no doubt that the awakening of the people is the result of the increasing role of cultural osmosis dialogue between societies and in general of the globalization of communications processes (which find their most expressive example with social networks), the reasons are to be found internally to the countries concerned, rooted in their different socio-economic realities.

Indeed, the current situation has brought into the light the Mediterranean partners of the European Union, allowing a reflection on them. The Western world realized that the Arab countries, often perceived as a single block, are far from being homogeneous between themselves[7] even if they influence each other as if they were a single conductive fabric. Invisible threads (not only of a religious nature) connect

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[7]There are 21 states, the majority of which Arabic-speaking and Muslim, definitely identified by a common history, but also from literature and a set of other cultural unifying elements (from movies to Television programs). They are indeed split by profound differences, first of all the one between Shiites and Sunnis, which dates back to the period immediately following the death of the Prophet. Only two countries, Iraq and Bahrain have Shiites majority, then there are many conspicuous minorities, still Islamic (the Alawis, mainly Syria), Christian (Maronites in Lebanon, the Copts in Egypt, Orthodox throughout the region), but also Berbers in North Africa, the Kurds in the Middle East, all characterized by their language and subject to severe discrimination.

different realities, such as the remnants of Pan-Arab nationalism of the fifties or the widespread intolerance towards the United States. The cultural and relevant social phenomena result in episodes of contagion and emulation between them, neither more nor less than the case among European countries. The profound differences observed, from state to state, in the claims and methods should anyway not be underestimated.

The gesture of despair committed by Mohamed Bouazizi, the street vendor who set himself on fire in front of the palace of the Governor in the Tunisian town of Sidi Bouzid on December 17th, 2010 is considered the beginning the Arab revolts. This event represents the lighting of the fuse of an explosion that, in a relatively short time, escalated from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Syria and - a little further - in Bahrain and Yemen, with varying success. At the same time, the European cliché according to which countries of the southern shore were culturally disinclined to democracy has suffered a jolt[8]. The Arab Spring of origins, in its secularism and non-violence started an unexpected and unpredictable process.

The use of the IT infrastructure like access to the Internet, the use of social media and, *in primis*, of television cover a significant role in justifying the speed and the ability in the self-organization of little spontaneous movements, as well as the rapidity of the contagion from one country to the other. The first action taken by the majority of the various government concerned was done with the aim to control and limit ad hoc network access to technologies, creating or reinforcing the censorship mechanisms [Wagner, 2012].

Nevertheless, in the space of a month, dictators who ruled their respective countries for a long time, like Ben Ali in Tunisia and Mubarak in Egypt, were deposed by mass demonstrations (the first seen in the region). Even the most seemingly stable regimes could not avoid taking note of the change and start to implement the reforms, as was the case in Morocco or later in Jordan.

The countries involved in the riots are Syria, Libya, Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Algeria, Iraq, Bahrain, Jordan and Djibouti, in Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Sudan, Somalia, Morocco and Kuwait while there were minor protests. The turmoil

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[8] About the Arab revolts for clarity and completeness refer to C. Wuite, A.H. Siddique (2012); L. Noueihed, A. Warren (2012); M. Lynch (2013) cf. bibliography.

generated by the events is still having consequences in some regions of the Middle East, the Near East and North Africa such as in Syria where those protest led the explosion of a civil war. Since the outbreak of the Arab Awakenings, the scenario appears to be radically changed. The spontaneity of the rebellion, the largest youth participation, the grandeur of the street demonstrations and of the nonviolence movement, which had marked the high point of this revolutionary wave, now seems hopelessly turned into a power struggles by Islamic terrorists disguised as moderate rebels and supported by the West and Arab countries involved in the conflict for political reasons. After the victory in the streets in Tunisia and Egypt, the uprising has turned into civil war in Libya that, in the near future, might devote some unpleasant surprises. If initially common features were prevailing (between the Tunisian revolution, the Egyptian one and the first manifestations of revolt in Syria and Yemen), with the passing of the months and years radical differences have emerged between countries.

The two key players against governments as a consequence of the protest were, on one side, traditional opposition parties that have regained strength (even if they were not formed by locals or their residence was abroad) pushed by the vehemence of the youth and by the spontaneous protest. Islamist forces came back on the political scene, foremost the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt with dark omens for the future. On the other, a starring role have been played by the military that had to carry an antithetical choices that differ from country to country: in Egypt the army leadership have been able to ride the wave of protests without being overwhelmed and still appears in a strong and privileged position; in Libya and Yemen, the army split between the loyal to the regime and those who supported the revolt; finally, in Syria, military and police forces have closed ranks around Assad against the Sunni-led revolts [Glass, 2015].

Despite the very ambitious onset of the movements, the push for change and the aspirations for freedom soon appear frustrated. This happened not only in those countries where the revolt stalled but also in those where the collapse of the "regimes," or rather governments elected by the people, has not dragged along with it all the old centers of power. This overall failure revealed once again the inherent weakness and fragility of the oppositions and confirmed the essential weight of the tribal clans, military oligarchies and especially of religion, Islam, in all its social and

political facets. Furthermore, another event that influenced both the beginning of protest and their evolution has been the economic crisis, which has brought a further deterioration in the revolutionary situation and exacerbated social cleavages generating new drifts of political antagonisms.

Such political instability hit different countries both linked to the Arabic universe as well as non-Arab ones as in the case of the Islamic Republic of Iran (who in a certain sense anticipated the Arab Spring with the post-election protests in 2009-2010). All these turbulences have in common the use of civil resistance techniques, including strikes, demonstrations, marches and parades, reaching the peak with extreme acts such as suicide (now known in the media as a "self-immolation") or self-harm, as well as the strategic use of social networks like Facebook and Twitter in order to organize, communicate and disclose events against the attempts of state repression. The spirit of the Arab spring is to carry or bring the traditions of the Arab world in power. Social networks, however, are not to be considered the real engine of the uprising; some observers stated: "the network of the mosque, or the bazaar, has far more to say than Facebook, Google or emails" [Wagner, 2012]. Some of these movements, in particular in Tunisia and Egypt, have led to a change of government, and revolutions were called. The factors that led to the protests are numerous and include, among the major causes, corruption, the lack of individual freedoms, the violation of human rights and of living conditions, which in many cases border on extreme poverty. Even the rising price of food and hunger are among the main reasons for the discontent: according to Abdolreza Abbassian, FAO chief economist, among the causes of rising costs there are the "drought in Russia and Kazakhstan accompanied by the floods in Europe, Canada and Australia, coupled with uncertainty about production in Argentina [Johnstone 2011]", due to which governments in the Maghreb countries, forced to import edible products, have chosen to raise the prices to the detriment of food consumer. Other analysts have highlighted the role of financial speculation in determining the rising price of food around the world. Higher prices were also recorded in Asia, in India there have been increases of 18%, while in China by 11.7% in a year [Werrel 2013].

To date, four heads of state were forced to resign or to flee: Tunisian Zine El-Abidine Ben Ali on January 14th, 2011; Hosni Mubarak in Egypt on February 11th, 2011; Libyan Muammar Gaddafi who, after a long escape from Tripoli to Sirte, was

captured and killed by rebels on October 20th, 2011 and, in Yemen, the regime of Ali Abdullah Saleh came to an end on February 27th, 2012. The turmoil compelled President Ben Ali, at the end of 25 years of dictatorship, to flee to Saudi Arabia. In Egypt, after three decades in power, the massive protests that began January 25th, 2011 forced the resignation of President Mubarak with 18 days of continuous demonstrations accompanied by various episodes of violence. In the same period, Jordan's King Abdullah carried a cabinet reshuffle and appointed a new prime minister, with the task of preparing a "true political reform plan [Muasher, 2011]." At this point the instability brought by the protests in the Middle East and North Africa and their profound geopolitical implications attracted great attention and concern around the world.

2010 is the year when the Arab world began to witness the disintegration of authoritarian regimes' structure thanks to popular uprisings that began in Tunisia and Egypt and consequently spilled in Libya, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen, Iraq, and Oman. Whatever the name of the squares of the protests was (Tahrir Square, Circle Pearl or Avenue Habib Bourguiba) the goal was and is the same: the fall of authoritarian regimes, both through a change of the system as a whole, or its limitation through the introduction of some political and economic reforms.

Despite the substantial differences between Arab regimes, be them monarchists or republicans, oil producers or labor exporters countries, these systems have very similar characteristics and policies, and therefore the demands of the rebel forces are analogous to a large extent. These demands have focused on political freedom, democracy, and social justice. Even the answers of the Arab regimes to these revolutions are similar; all have accused the rebels as traitors, using intimidation, violence, and terror and emphasizing that every Arab country has its specificity. The main exception to the republic's revolutionary trend can be identified with Algeria as highlighted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Murad Medelci, which stated that "Algeria is not Tunisia, and Algeria is not Egypt [Benakcha, 2011]." Saif al-Islam Gaddafi had confirmed that also Libya as is not like Egypt or Tunisia. Former Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Abul-Gheit pointed out as well that Egypt is not Tunisia [Bahaa, 2011]. As a matter of facts, what happened in Tunisia largely repeated in Egypt, and the same in Libya and Yemen giving the impression of a beginning of democratic change, freedom and social justice.

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Moreover, even some countries of the Persian Gulf, such as Oman and Bahrain, saw the growing pressure of a broad social movement that wants the fall of the regimes in power.

In this framework, this section of the thesis hopes to highlight the primary motivations of the various political and social forces of the Revolution. Below, a description of the most significant forces that participated in the protests will be presented taking into account the extreme variety of the population that took part in these riots.

Several factors have contributed to the emergence of popular uprisings and revolutions in the Arab world. A key indicator of the situation is the fact that protests were mostly led by young people (aged between 15 and 29 years old) which means that they never experienced their country if not under the regime they wanted to overthrow. Furthermore, the many episodes of exclusion and discrimination have led the protestants to be furious about this situation. Despite the human and natural wealth enjoyed by the Arab region, the same area has seen in recent decades a strong imbalance in the wealth distribution system, since the main sources of richness have been monopolized by a small elite closely linked to power marginalizing large segments of Arab societies have been. This phenomenon has significantly increased in recent years, inspired by the new economic spirit in favor of market mechanisms, free trade and the decline of the economic and social role of the state [Malik, 2011]. The Arab region is also a victim of repression, tyranny, lack of rights and freedoms, and massive violations of human rights, often with the concentration of power in the hands of a narrow elite tied to the ruling party or family [Guazzone, 2012].

The situation of political choking in the Arab region has led to the rise of a vast number of protest movements: some of political or social nature, and other with a religious or ethnic background. It is not a case that almost all the Arab countries failed in achieving national integration among ethnic groups and different religious groups. Furthermore, most of the minorities (or marginalized majorities) have suffered religious, cultural, and social exclusion and discrimination. In recent years, the increasing manifestations of political and social oppression in many Arab countries, found support in the growing regional and international forces that began to push these groups to seek their cultural and political rights. Finally, the increasing level of interference of local and international players in the internal affairs of the

Arab region has aggravated the state of weakness and division in the area. We will discuss these factors in detail below.

THE BOOM OF YOUNG PEOPLE

In the Arab region, the population is mostly young, the age group between 15 and 29 years, in fact, represents more than a third of the people [USAID, 2011]. The majority of the members of those generations suffer from economic, social and political exclusion; it is due to these causes that youth took the forefront to be the guide and the engine for this demands of change. Unemployment is the most significant problem experienced by young people in the Arab world, with levels that reach 25% compared to the global average of 14.4% [Hoffman, 2012]. Young people also suffer from low wages and poor working condition: about 72% of them is working without a regular contract [USAID, 2011]. The impact of all this has negatively affected the social conditions of young people in the Arab world, where celibacy is becoming rampant and the age of marriage is sliding more and more. According to international reports, more than 50% of males in the age group 25-29 have never been married, which is the highest rate among developing countries [Bajoria, 2011]. A primary cause of this negative situation is the political exclusion that young people are suffering due to the absence of political and civil liberties, and due to the weakness of political parties and civil society organizations. This allows constant violations of human rights that push the youth to abandon political participation through legal channels [Salehi-Isfahani, 2008].

The turning point to this infelicitous situation came in recent years with the proliferation of alternative media and modern communication tools: from the broadcasting of satellite Pan-Arab channels such as Al-Jazeera to the exponential rise in access to mobile phones and the internet [Wagner, 2012]. Thanks to these tools, young Arabs have begun to build new models of participation that allowed them to bypass many of the constraints imposed by the regimes on freedom of expression and association. Social networks and blogs finally represented a chance to connect with others, to express dissatisfaction with the existing conditions, to organize protests and be able to break the barrier of fear and censorship imposed by Arab regimes to their people for decades.

Although human and material wealth enjoyed by countries in the region are high, Arab governments have failed to achieve sustainable development and social justice. There still is a vast segment of the Arab people suffering extensive illiteracy, unemployment, low-income levels, lack of services and facilities, not to mention how the gap between social classes and regions is widening internally to states. These factors led to a worsening of economic and social problems and a rampant widespread of corruption. The monopoly of a small, powerful elite on development gains evolved from a growing political and social unrest to the emergence of large-scale protest movements in many Arab countries. In recent years, the decision taken by some of those countries to switch to economic liberalization policies and market economy led to the significant decline of the economic and social role of the state, affecting negatively broad sectors that were heavily dependent on state aid [Malik, 2011]. Those policies not only increased poverty and marginalization but also led the gap between wealthy and poor become very significant. The pace of workers' protests, the demand for higher wages, the fight against corruption and inflation, and the need for improving the living conditions of workers became day-by-day stronger, growing with a constant rhythm [Campante, 2012].

In a regional paper made by IMF's staff (2015) are presented the three most important factors that occurred simultaneously exacerbating the already severe economic conditions. Those causes, often omitted, are higher unemployment, a growing gap between wealthy and poor, and the economy's greater exposure to changing world conditions hence creating its greater vulnerability to fluctuations that take place abroad. The results was that in Tunisia, after more than twenty years implementing IMF policies, gross domestic products (GDP) rose by more than 5 percent a year, about a fifth more than in Egypt, but the unemployment rate also rose sharply, to a level about 50 percent higher than the rate in Egypt (14 percent of the workforce in Tunisia, compared with 9 percent in Egypt, according to the official statistics, which probably greatly underestimate the real level of unemployment in both countries) (IMF, 2015). The gap between the rich and the poor also widened significantly, negatives becoming greater than how it was in Egypt: the richest 10 percent of Egyptians earn eight times what the poorest 10 percent earn, compared with thirteen times in Tunisia [IMF, 2015].

In this regards, Galal Amin9 stated that: "in Tunisia and Libya there was an improvement in the indicators to which the International Monetary Fund attaches importance and by which it measures success and failure." Then he continues commenting that: "these improvements occurred along with a deterioration in the indicators the IMF avoid talking about and doesn't pay much attention to when doling out praise or criticism" [Amin, 2013]. In effects, IMF prefers to notice that the growth rate of GDP was higher, along with that of average incomes, and foreign investment increased (that has happened in Tunisia for the past twenty years and started to occur in Egypt in 2005) focusing on the countries as a whole rather than presenting the alarming social conditions of the states observed. Furthermore, while reading United Nations' economic data on the region [UN-ESCWA, 2011], Galal Amin (2013) comments that: "the reality is probably much worst here as well, since much of what the rich earn is invisible and cannot be calculated."

THE ABSENCE OF POLITICAL FREEDOM

Since the end of the Cold War and especially after the US occupation of Iraq, Arab countries have faced the growing internal and external pressure to adopt real democratic political reforms. The spirit of those reforms was the reaching of the 'liberation' of political and civil liberties, the setting up of political parties and associations or unions, and the development of safeguards measures to ensure fair elections and freedom of the press. However, Arab countries did not respond to these pressures but limited themselves to add some cosmetic reforms that do not change the content of the authoritarian system [Hess, 2013]. Even countries that allowed greater political pluralism, such as Morocco, Kuwait, and Egypt, have relied on a vast arsenal of legal, administrative and security measures to limit and control freedoms, political parties, the media, and civil society organizations. The failure of Arab states in implementing those reforms has brought to a real reluctance of the citizens to participate in the political process, and thus to the weakness, if not inconsistency, of political parties and civil society organizations [Howard, 2013].

The result of this political closure to those interested in public affairs, particularly among the educated middle class, forced them to participate through alternative channels, especially through religious, ethnic, and regional movements,

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[9] Galal Amin (born 1935) is an Egyptian economist and commentator, professor of economics at the American University in Cairo. He has criticized the economic and cultural dependency of Egypt upon the West.

which transformed into key political actors concurring with the authoritarian regimes in most Arab countries [Howard, 2013]. About this hidden political debates that were evolving out of the Parliaments, a contemporary Arab proverb states: "Arab dictators do not like Friday" [Filiu, 2011]. In recent years many of the protest movements shown to have a political base, making requests outside of the institutional framework and on the border of the legal framework created by the regime to contain them. Another sharp weapon of opponents has been the refusal to participate in the political system imposed by the State; they have adopted dialogue and the rejection of progressive cosmetic reform, asking for a total change with all the available mean, first of all mobilizing in the streets to fight against the ruling class [Pearlman, 2013]. They also focused on the use of cyberspace and social networking sites to establish a youth movement of protest and become a major engine for change.

Jean-Pierre Filiu, professor of Middle East Studies at Science Po in Paris, identifies two main types of change in the region. The first category is based on the success of ethnic, sectarian, or religious movements against the authority of the central state that is entirely separate. This situation can be observed in the case of Sudan, Somalia, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, and Palestine with the creation of autonomous regions not submitted to the rule of the central government. The second model is based on the success of the non-central horizontal protest movement that brings together different groups and political communities aiming to overthrow the ruling class through public popular mobilizations. We saw this scenario both in Egypt and Tunisia that consequently inspired a number of other Arab countries including Morocco, Algeria, and some Gulf states such as Bahrain. It seems that the scenario of a gradual transition to democracy, which many analysts have argued as possible in previous years, it was no longer feasible; therefore, scenarios of change through revolution or secession are now being replicated [Filiu, 2011].

REGRESS OF NATIONAL INTEGRATION FACTORS

In recent years some Arab countries have seen the constant growth of sub-identities at the expense of national identity, especially in those countries where there is a high degree of ethnic and religious background [Bormann, 2012]. In a paper titled "The Arab Spring and the Forgotten Demos" Bormann and other researcher investigate the causes of this phenomenon. In primis, they present the suffocation of cultural and religious freedom, as well as, the deprivation of the right to freely

express their identity, culture, and ideology for different groups; two examples are the cases of the Amazigh (the so-called Berbers) in North Africa or the Kurds and Shiites in Iraq. Some of the ruling elites in the Arab world has also tried to impose the "Sunni cultural identity" to other Arab groups through the educational system and the mainstream media [Wuite, 2012]. Ethnic and religious minorities in the Arab world have often been victims of discriminatory practices with effects that concern not only in their culture, but also on the political and economic situation, as in the case of Christians of southern Sudan, or the Shiites in Iraq, in the Gulf and in Lebanon [Bormann, 2012]. Recalling the case of the Amazigh is interesting to note that the Article 5 of the newly reformed Moroccan Constitution of 2011 recognizes, for the first time, the Amazigh[10] language as an official national language along with Arabic [Morocco's Constitution, 2011].

Finally, the closure of political participation channels and the narrowing of political and civil liberties have prevented these groups to express their demands in a legitimate and legal ways. The cultural political and economic discrimination phenomena have prompted a series of sub-identities in many Arab countries to freeze relations with the national community and to gather around their distinct identity [Bormann, 2012]. This tendency to break away from the central state already finds its ambition in giving birth to new countries, as in the case of the secession of South Sudan, or autonomous regions, for which Kurds are currently fighting in Iraq. This tendency to independence should indeed be considerate remembering that the borders of many MENA countries were set by former colonial empires. The disintegration of some existing states and the creation of new states that reflect the aspirations of groups and communities that have suffered marginalization and exclusion for decades could in facts become more like a trend for the future than a phenomenon of last years.

THE GROWING ROLE OF FOREIGN AND REGIONAL FORCES

As often happened in Arab history, the main engine of change and turbulence on the stability of authoritarian regimes is linked to the growing role of international and regional actors in the internal politics [Little, 2008]. Recalling the concept of Orientalism originally introduced by Edward Said, Douglas Little (2008), a literature

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[10] The Amazigh is a standardized version of the three native Berber languages of Morocco: Tachelhit, Central Atlas Tamazight, and Tarifit.

professor at Columbia University, highlights that external intervention is not a new phenomenon to the Arab region since the signing of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The main difference between the past and the last wave of revolts is that in previous periods it has been mainly due to the consolidation of the regional system set up by the colonial powers, with the consent of authoritarian regimes and with a loyal support to the West. In recent years, indeed, international support and regional initiatives acted with the ambition to substantially destabilize authoritarian Arab regimes trying to force them to introduce *ex machina* democratic reforms, particularly in the case of countries that have adopted positions against the United States [Little, 2008]. The concrete manifestation of this trend is found in the context of the US intervention in Somalia, in the American occupation of Iraq, in the support provided to southern Sudan's secession initiatives or in the attempt to isolate Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Even 'moderate regimes' were subject to ever increasing external pressure after the events of September 11th, merely as a consequence of the presumed causal relationship between lack of freedom, the non-intention to introduce new political reforms and civil liberties, and the phenomenon of terrorism.

The recent period has also seen an increase in the influence of new regional powers like Iran and Turkey, which has started to significantly affect the course of events in the Arab world. Iran, took over the leadership of the 'anti-American policy philosophy' in the region, supporting radical movements such as the Assad regime in Syria, Hezbollah in Lebanon or Hamas in Palestine [Wuite, 2012]. Moreover, they sponsored the rebellion in Yemen, at the point that some considered it as the beginning of a new regional cold war between the radical block led by Iran and Syria, and the moderate one led by Egypt and Saudi Arabia helped by the support of the United States of America [Amelot, 2015][11]. The struggle between the conservative and the radical pole is reinforced by two non-national players such as Hamas and Hezbollah in Lebanon and other groups in the case of the rebellion in Yemen [Amelot, 2015]. Thanks to their ability to challenge the central authority and to establish organized armed commandos with a very high degree of autonomy their ambition of setting up a state within a state appears almost evident.

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[11] The distinction between moderate and radical states is based on documents [Esposito, 2012] related to the United States Foreign Policy. Therefore this classification should be considered keeping in mind Washington views on the region. For further information view the section dedicated to U. S.- Jordanian relations in Chapter 3.

A COMPARATIVE OVERVIEW

Those presented in the last pages shall be identified as the main causes that led to the explosion of protests from 2011 onwards. With the ambition to provide a general view on how those protest evolved a table will be presented. Scott Williamson is a fellow researcher at the University of Indian and, after a period of research in coordination with the Center for Strategic Studies of the University of Jordan in Amman, he wrote a research paper comparatively addressing the effects of the Arab Uprisings on the involved states. The Table summarizes the events and outcomes in each of the region's fourteen autocratic regimes easily allowing a comparison between Monarchies and Presidential Autocracies. The table also presents actions and reactions took by governments (repress protests; introduce reforms) and by the people (Protest; stay home; escalate protests)

In the monarchies of Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait, initial protests were met by offers of reform from the regime, and the opposition activists generally accepted these dialogues. In Saudi Arabia, security forces dispersed small protests by the Shi'ite minority before preempting any additional unrest with an extensive package of economic reforms. Similarly, Oman also experienced protests, and despite heavier handed repression than that which occurred in Jordan, Morocco, and Kuwait, the monarch chose to deal with the protestors primarily by offering a series of political and economic reforms. In the UAE and Qatar, the combination of institutional effects with the regimes' wealth meant that the activists and publics overwhelmingly favored the status quo, so protests never happened at all. Despite this, the UAE still implemented electoral reforms to stave off future unrest. On the other hand, rulers in Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, and Yemen, repressed protests, only to face an escalation by activists, who started to call for regime change. The rulers responded by offering mild reforms, but the public brushed these offers aside and took to the streets. In Libya, Qaddahfi adhered to a strategy of repression throughout, but he still found himself facing escalation and then a mass uprising in a matter of days.

Only Bahrain and Algeria offered possible contradictions to the republic-monarchy relation. After the Bahraini monarchy responded to protests with harsh repression rather than offers of reforms, Bahrain experienced a partial escalation, in that major opposition groups and activists split on whether to escalate their goals to regime change. Despite this escalation, the activists could not get the public into the streets in large enough numbers to reach a mass uprising, and the regime's later offers of reforms were tepidly accepted. In Algeria, small protests occurred, and the regime initially repressed these protests. However, escalation by activists could not bring the people into the street, and the regime's later offer of reforms was enough to preempt major unrest. However, these outcomes of reforms after repression, while diverging from the outcomes in other monarchies and presidential autocracies, can be explained by the unique political and historical circumstances of these two countries. In Algeria, memories of the recent civil war likely make the public less willing to tolerate protests. In Bahrain, the country's location at the intersection of the sectarian conflict between Saudi Arabia and Iran meant that the country experienced heavy pressure from the Saudis to quickly crush the Shi'ite protests."

Source: Williamson, 2012

Table 1: Summary of the Arab Spring Outcomes

Regime	Regime Type	Summary of Events	Sequence of Strategies	Outcome
Algeria	Presidential Autocracy	Protests repressed, hardcore activists escalate, public accepts regime's reforms	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Stay Home	Reforms After Repression
Egypt	Presidential Autocracy	Protests escalate and overthrow dictator	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Join	Mass Uprising
Libya	Presidential Autocracy	Protests escalate and lead to civil war, death of Qaddahfi	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Join	Mass Uprising
Syria	Presidential Autocracy	Protests escalate and lead to civil war, ongoing	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Join	Mass Uprising
Tunisia	Presidential Autocracy	Protests escalate and overthrow dictator	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Join	Mass Uprising
Yemen	Presidential Autocracy	Protests escalate into mix of uprising and civil war, dictator eventually leaves	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Join	Mass Uprising
Bahrain	Monarchy	Protests repressed, split in opposition leads to partial escalation, the public accepts regime's reforms	Protest, Repress, Escalate, Offer Reforms, Stay Home	Reforms After Repression
Jordan	Monarchy	Protests met with offers of reform	Protest, Offer Reform, Accept	Reforms
Kuwait	Monarchy	Protests met with offers of reform	Protest, Offer Reform, Accept	Reforms
Morocco	Monarchy	Protests met with offers of reform	Protest, Offer Reform, Accept	Reforms
Oman	Monarchy	Minor protests, reforms accepted	Protest, Repress, Stay Home	Reforms After Repression
Qatar	Monarchy	No notable unrest experienced	Stay Home	Status Quo
Saudi Arabia	Monarchy	Minor protests, reforms accepted	Protest, Offer Reforms	Reforms After Repression
UAE	Monarchy	No notable unrest experienced	Stay Home	Status Quo

Source: Williamson, 2012

With the first two sections, this thesis aims to set a historical and geopolitical background that should provide the necessary information to understand how the Arab Spring developed in Jordan. The argument analyzed below will be a detailed overview on how all the above-mentioned factors influenced Jordanian society and how the monarchy decided to anticipate, fight, or accept them.

As revolution swept through the Middle East, it was unclear whether Jordan would escape the spring unscathed. Unlike the fabulously wealthy monarchies of the Gulf, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan shares many of the economic and social problems found in the region's poorer countries. At $5,200, Jordan's GDP per capita stands at comparable levels to Egypt and Syria; of the monarchies, only Morocco features a comparably small number [IMF, 2015]. The country is poor in natural resources, and its economy is perpetually struggling as the government strives to encourage employment and investment while running up massive public debts. As with so many of the region's countries, Jordan's demographic situation is explosive. More than half of the country's population is under 25, a number that is again comparable to Egypt and Syria and higher than any of those in the other monarchies. The combination of a perpetually weak economy and challenging demographic trends suggests that Jordan is ripe for political instability. In fact, the country did experience a significant protest movement, though King Abdullah II continues to hold onto power. These conditions make Jordan a particularly useful case for comparing the dynamics of protest movements in the monarchies and presidential autocracies of the Middle East.

Why did protests in Jordan not escalate to call for the overthrow of the ruler, as they did in Egypt, Tunisia, Yemen, Libya, and Syria? Jordan hardly escaped unscathed.

In the Hashemite Kingdom protests started from penniless villages of the country until they spread in Amman and other urban centers, therefore they did not know a strong popular participation. The Kingdom of Jordan, passed the turmoil as one of the most stable in the region and a loyal ally of the West, even if appeared to be slowed down on the road of modernization called for by King Abdullah II due to

the attitude of the traditional religious spheres and tribal and clan structures of society.

The king, unlike almost every people of the country, grew close to the American neo-liberal school, and this strengthens his ambition to change the country. A first step has been the wild privatization of state structures [Alianak, 2014]. The population of Transjordan in the south of the country, which was accustomed to massive state support, suddenly seen its primary source of income undermined. The adverse effects of the new government's line have been exacerbated when the consequences of the global economic crisis arrived forcing the state to borrow more and increase public debt. Widespread discontent began to take shape towards the end of 2009 through a strike by port workers in Aqaba. In 2010 has been the turn of state teachers. The protests multiplied until in May of that year a new impetus came with the publication of a manifesto by a group of retired military officers calling themselves the "National Committee of Veterans." The report openly criticizes the king for allowing the queen (the famous Rania of Jordan) to sell off the country to Jordanians businesspeople of Palestinian origin. Meanwhile, in Tunisia, the suicide of Mohammed Bouazizi triggered a series of uprisings in the Arab world. The beginning of the Arab Spring gives a new impetus to the demonstrators' demands in Jordan.

Two things have most riled the population who took part in the protests. First, the change of skin of the royal palace: from being the beating heart of a powerful patronage system it has become the center of operations of foreign multinationals. According to one of the participants in the protests, "Jordan has become a privatized state careless of the welfare of its citizens [Ryan, 2011]." To this, we must add a generalized dislike for Rania. The queen, so beloved by Western magazines, does not receive the same consensus at home where she is more or less explicitly accused of embezzlement, of corruption and, because of its origins, to give priority to citizens of Palestinian descent [Adely, 2012].

The protest reached its peak in Karak, on November 16th, 2013. The markedly anti-Hashemite character of the event was evident. In previous protests, a milder version of what is known to history as the slogan of the Arab Spring saw the replacement of "*isqat*" with "*islah*": "*ash-Sha'b yurid islah an-nizam*" (The people want to reform the regime) [Al Jazeera, April 2011]. In Karak, thousands of

protesters demonstrated on the streets shouting "*ash-shab yurid isqat an-nizam*" (the people want to overthrow the regime) and "*el-diaretna urdunie kabel al-thawra al-abriya*" (Jordan is our home since before the Jewish revolution[12]). Now, this last slogan deserves a closer analysis. The meaning is ambiguous and refers to the fact that part of Transjordan population claims its belonging to the territory in a period before the 1916 Arab Revolt (*al-thawra al-Arabiya*) which is before the arrival of the Hashemites. In this case, the word pun is on the similarity of the word "*al-abriya*" (Jewish) with "*al-Arabiya*" (Arabic) [Achilli, 2014]. The events that followed the Arab Revolt, in fact, not only will lead to the construction of the state of Jordan but also to that of Israel. The slogan not only delegitimizes the presence of the Hashemites in the territory but it doubts of their good faith, making them look as accomplices of the Zionist project.

In Karak, the idea of many demonstrators articulates clearly: they think that King Abdullah II is a traitor who is selling off the country and that national identity is independent of the Hashemite royal family [Al Jazeera, April 2011]. After Karak, however, the driving force of the movement will fade away and shortly after cease. Among the causes of this, an important role is played by the end of the euphoria for the Arab Spring after the acknowledgment of the atrocities committed in Syria in the wake of the revolutionary impulse and the fear that the fall of a regime does not necessarily lead to a better one as in Egypt. Also, the intelligence agency (the *Mukhabarat*) and the Jordanian security forces play "very well" their work, containing the protest without suffocating them in the blood [Helfont, 2012]. To this should be added the almost total absence of political commitment by the majority of the Jordanian of Palestinian origin which (with some exceptions) did not take part in the protests [Beck, 2016].

Today there are no longer traces of the Hirak, but is undeniable that in Jordan there has been a revolution, although much less bloody than elsewhere. It will be interesting to understand how shortly Jordan will react to the changes that the Arab Spring has irretrievably triggered.

The chapter will now focus more on the specific measures taken by the monarchy to face the protests. To answer the question aiming this thesis about the

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[12] For Jewish Revolution refer to the foundation of the Zionist movement (Cap. 1, sec. 1).

role of the royal family is crucial to understand how the decision-making process in Amman managed to react to the turbulences.

Among the others governments in the region, it can, therefore, be stated that the Arab Revolts only marginally touched Jordan [Helfont, 2012]. The first protest on January 14th, 2011, with the first series of street demonstrations in Amman and other cities of the Hashemite Kingdom, happened under the guide of the left parties complaining about the price increase of some products, such as bread, which price is subject to government subsidies. The demonstrations were repeated more numerous in the following days and started being more targeted against the government of Prime Minister Samir Rifai. The main political group sustaining the protests was the Muslim Brotherhood that was one of the main opposition groups in Jordan. It is interesting to note that the demonstrators never challenged the king directly and, on the other side, no clashes injured or riots were reported. Ali Habashnah, one of the former general asking for reforms, said that the unrest also reached rural areas where mainly Bedouins are living [Al Jazeera, January 2011]. This turmoil coming from the tribes that traditionally support the monarchy, not only represented the first time for Bedouins to join other groups in demand for change, but also represented an alarm bell for the king that concretely realized the arrival of the protests also in Jordan.

February 1st, 2011, King Abdallah bowed to the protests and replaced the Premier with the former General Marouf Bakhit. The concession anyway did not put an end to the demonstrations, which changed objective and started to request more political freedom and effective shifts in the economic system of the country. Between March and April 2011, the state of tension led to clashes between protesters and loyal to the monarchy [Melamed, 2016].

The next day the King invited the leaders of the opposition to discuss trying to end tensions in Jordan. On 4th February, a very numerous group of people, coordinated and motivated principally by the Muslim Brotherhood, demanded economic and political reforms as well as the dissolution of parliament in a march to the prime minister's office. In sustain anti-government factions the march then diverted to the Egyptian embassy. On 18th February, some clashes occurred to protesters manifesting when they confronted a small group of government supporters [BBC, February 2011].

During the weeks that follow about 7,000–10,000 protesters demonstrated in the streets of Amman, in what Al Jazeera defined the largest protests so far [Al Jazeera, January 2011]. The Islamic Action Front, along with 19 other political parties were anti-government protesters. The demand was to have a level of political freedoms comparable to a constitutional monarchy.

Al Jazeera reported that on 4th March other events had collected the adhesion of other thousands of Jordanians, about three thousand people took to the streets in Amman after the Friday prayers, calling for the government to implement policy reforms and the dissolution of the lower house. Demonstrators turn slogans against the government of the new Prime Minister Marouf Bakhit, who hardly had won the confidence of parliament the day before. Other slogans blame the parliament, for beeing too docile, accuse the intelligence department, attack Queen Rania for spending too much, and request greater powers to the people, beginning with a new, more proportional, election law. A key request on the side of Jordan's opposition was directed to limit some of the powers owned by the monarchy: the main demand was to have the premier directly elected by a popular vote instead of having it appointed by the king [De Franceschi, May 2011].

The day after, clashes occurred between supporters of the king and more than 2000 protesters camped in Gamal Abdel Nasser Circle. Some witnesses said the police stood by as government supporters moved into the square and began throwing stones [BBC, February 2011]. At the end of the protests, as many as 100 people were reported wounded, the majority of head injuries, while two people died. Lieutenant General Hussein Al-Majali, the chief of public security, later confirmed that there was one death, 62 injured civilians, and 58 injured policemen [Wikipedia December 2016]. Forensic Medicine report indeed highlights that the patient died of circulatory collapse secondary to chronic ischemic heart disease. This information is relevant because the victims represent one of the only violent death during all the period of the protest [Roberts, 2016]. It is, however, important to remark that while counter-regime protests were happening, thousands gathered in the capital's Al-Hussein Gardens to express loyalty and allegiance to the king, celebrating with national songs, waving large Jordanian flags as well as pictures of the monarch [Wikipedia, December 2016].

On June 12th, 2011, on the twelfth anniversary of the ascent to the throne, King Abdullah announced to relinquish his right to appoint the Prime Minister and governments passing the role to the parliament. He also promised for more reforms in the future, including new election and party laws as well as new electoral laws and on parties. Few days after, on June 15th, 2011, the royal motorcade has been pelted by stones while crossing the city of Tafileh. On July 29th, the Muslim Brotherhood took part in the protests with a demonstration of about 30,000 activists still demanding for political reforms [Roberts, 2016].

In August, clashes and injuries occurred in Karak while a Committee for the reforms was proposing constitutional amendment considered inadequate by the protesters. Among the reforms also a restriction of the competence of military tribunals solely to crimes of espionage and terrorism. In October, clashes between loyalists and reformists were not giving signs of decline [Varulkar, December 2011]. The protesters, backed by 70 of the 120 deputies of the Parliament, asked once again to replace the Prime Minister that the king has granted on October 17 appointing Awn Shawkat Khasaweneh instead of Al-Bakhit [Helfont, 2012].

From this moment the internal situation of the Kingdom eclipsed to make way to the crisis in Syria. November 14th, 2011, King Abdullah has publicly called Bashar al-Assad to step down in the name of the popular revolt. Few days after, the Hashemite sovereign went to the West Bank to offer its support to the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas.

Despite the Syrian issues protests and incidents against Amman's Palace continued, but with less momentum. The Islamic Action Front (IAF), the party representing the Muslim Brotherhood in the Parliament, called for a demonstration in December, trying to force the Prime Minister out of office. This time the clashes were a confront between loyalists and Islamists because the latter apparently wanted to steal the leadership of the popular discontent and the reformist demands as happened in Egypt [Roberts, 2016].

After those main turbulences, the protests have tended to wane also due to the 'solidarity' shown by the sovereign to the Syrian people against the Alawite regime and in support of the Palestinian cause in an attempt to reactivate the dialogue with Israel. In January 2012 in Amman was held one of the first meetings between the

Israeli Yitzhak Molcho and Palestinian Saeb Erekat with the presence of envoys from the US, UN, EU and Russia. Those decisions taken by the king let him take away from the local Muslim Brotherhood several arguments proposed against the Hashemite monarchy [Haaretz, January 2012]. The Jordanian monarchy also had a crucial advantage to gain legitimacy from his people: the descent from the tribe of Bani Hashem to whom belonged the Prophet Mohammed: a key element that will duly be analyzed in the next chapter.

In April 2012, the Premier Khasawneh presented his resignation, being replaced by Fayez Tarawneh having the fourth change to the executive in little more than one year. The following month an "Independent Electoral Commission" was put into operation to drive the next elections that were scheduled originally for the end of the year, but then slipped in January 2013 because of delays in the voter registration [Roberts, 2016].

Arguably the biggest success for King Abdullah and his particular political reform process "from above" was the electoral turnout of 56.6%. However, only about one-fifth of the general population went to vote representing 70% of the eligible electorate due to the very young population of the country. International election observers have so far not found larger indications of electoral fraud or vote-buying, even though the Jordanian opposition which boycotted the elections argues to the contrary [Tucker, January 2013]. Of the 150 available chairs, 15 positions were reserved for women, 9 for Christians, 9 for Bedouins, 3 for Chechen or Circassian candidates. A further 27 Representatives were chosen on the national level, rather than on a constituency basis. The outcome of the elections was announced on 28 January 2013. More than 90 of the 150 chosen Representatives were new to the House of Representatives. Among the 150 new politicians, a total of 37 Representatives is perceived to be Islamist or critical of the government [Jordan Times, January 2013].

With such a democratic outcome, the Jordanian protest could be considered finished. After two years of clashes caused by starvation and the increase in fuel prices, the population reached a compromise with the king that brought back the country to stability with a stronger political establishment. While analyzing the period is also fundamental to consider the development in neighboring countries, in Egypt and Syria two different kinds of revolts were bringing the countries to a crisis

not only of political nature but also on the social one. While in Jordan the position of the king has never been discussed, if not regarding a limitation of his powers, in some neighboring countries the revolts aimed to revolt the regime creating a general chaos that was dragging those nations to a complete lack of control [Roberts, 2016]. The few achievement of Muslim Brotherhood or other factions in the revolt outside Jordan were often followed by the inability to rule the country when necessary at the point that sometimes few regrets the decision to change the original status quo [Williamson, 2012].

When these gains are compared with the potentially significant costs associated with the chaos of revolution, it makes sense that the opposition would prefer reform to escalation.

The series of events in Jordan between January 2011 and January 2012 appear to fit the concept described in this thesis. As revolution spread throughout the Arab world, activists in Jordan chose to voice their economic and political grievances to the regime. King Abdullah had the opportunity to repress the protestors violently or to offer reforms. He picked reform almost immediately, firing the prime minister, consulting with Jordanian notables and activists, and announcing the creation of the National Dialogue Committee. Of course, real world events occurred somewhere between these two choices. Repression did happen in Jordan, with police or government-aligned thugs occasionally attacking peaceful protests. However, for the most part, the opposition was allowed to protest legally, with little interference from the police. The army was never called to disperse demonstrators violently.

After the King had responded by offering reforms, the opposition had the choice to escalate or accept the changes. Much of the opposition accepted the invitation to participate in the national dialogue and asked their supporters to refrain from protesting in the streets. Other organizations, including the IAF, Jordan's largest opposition organization, complicated the picture by rejecting the invitation and continuing to mobilize in the streets. However, this outcome does not unduly deviate from the theory. At no point did the IAF attempt to involve the wider public or to escalate their demands for reform to the overthrow of the monarchy. Their decision to continue protesting should be viewed as an attempt to shape the reforms from the outside. The IAF had unofficial representation on the National Dialogue Committee through the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, and their protests have

maintained a disciplined focus on the reform process. Occasionally during the past year, more radical opposition emerged to directly target the king, usually from Salafi and youth groups. However, these activists lacked sustainable organizations, and at no point did they come close to drawing substantial public support for their actions [Roberts, 2016]. We can, therefore, conclude that the situation in Jordan has reached equilibrium in the reform process, uneasy as it may be.

CONCLUSIONARY REMARKS

In this chapter, I described the main events in the history of Jordan highlighting how resilience has always been one the primary "weapon" of its ruler. The ability to adapt to what was happening outside the borders of the kingdom and, at the same time to rule its population considering ad respecting its people has been for Jordan a successful strategy that helped its monarchy to survive even to this last wave of protests.

The second section of the chapter focused on the events that during 2011 and 2012 shook the stability of many Arab countries. This section focused on the main events and reason that created what we journalistically use to call "Arab Spring" with specific attention to its consequences toward the monarchies and republics concerned by this phenomenon. At the end of the second section, a table showed the main ambition of the thesis that is the evident resilience of monarchies during the revolts. As can be seen from the table, despite the case of Bahrain and the one of Algeria, all the other Arab states respected the tendency to survive, in the case of monarchies, or collapse, in the case of republics.

The third section, explicitly dedicated to the case of Jordan, wanted to explain and analyze the events that led to the success of the kingdom to face the revolts.

This first descriptive chapter is fundamental to move to the one that follows which will analyze the legitimacy of the monarchical system, generally among Arab countries and specifically related to the case of the Hashemite crown.

CAPITOLO 2

LEGITIMACY

This second chapter discusses the concept of legitimacy and how it is related to the main argument of the thesis. The first chapter highlighted that one of the main reasons for the failure of authoritarian republics during the Arab Revolts was the end of dictator's legitimacy in the eyes of his people. From the moment a population stops believing in its leader and fearing him, and at the same time understands that he will not be able to implement the demanded reforms, the despot effectively loses his legitimacy. This condition inevitably gives rise to a certain degree of chaotic anarchy, which may sometimes be controlled, such as it was in Egypt, or can lead to a full-blown civil war, as was the case in Libya.

It is, therefore, fundamental for a government to appear legitimate to justify its rule in the view of its people. This chapter seeks to identify which key features enabled the Arab monarchs, and more specifically Abdullah II, to establish and maintain this mutual respect between the crown and its subjects.

The first section of the chapter describes the current situation of monarchies worldwide, with a particular focus on the eight Arab monarchies. A general distinction is established between individual and dynastical monarchies, demonstrating how this difference influenced their reactions to the 2011-2012 protests.

The analysis then focuses on the particular case of the Hashemite monarchy, and on Jordan's distinguishing features amongst the other Arab monarchies. There follows a brief description of the education and personality of King Abdullah II, allowing us to compare him to other monarchical figures, from his late father King Hussein to European monarchs such as Philippe, King of Belgium. Finally, the public opinion of the Jordanian king is examined through interviews conducted with a cross-section of Jordanian society in April 2016. The views presented by this broad range of individuals, from Bedouins to diplomats, allow us to construct a clearer image of the popular perception of King Abdullah II.

MONARCHIES TODAY

From a formal point of view, more or less a quarter of the approximately two hundred countries worldwide have a sovereign as head of state. These are widespread around the globe, from the eleven European crowns to the kingdom of Tonga, and are all characterized by different structures and degrees of freedom and democracy. The British monarchy is a very peculiar case since 16 out of the 53 countries are included in the Commonwealth and recognize the ruler of the United Kingdom as their head of state [Middleton, 2005].

After the glorious nineteenth century during which most of the world was ruled by a king or a queen, today less than thirty independent monarchies can be accurately recognized. Only one of these still boasts an "Emperor" at its head, in three cases the ruler is elected, and a few are still absolute monarchies. All retain a certain old-world charm.

A fundamental difference in modern monarchies resides in the actual role of the sovereign, that is, whether he/she merely reigns or also rules the country. This is the difference, for instance, between Queen Elisabeth II of the United Kingdom, whose role is merely symbolic, and Mswati III King of Swaziland. For example, the latter can nominate the prime minister simply with the consensus of the Queen mother, and his extensive powers even enabled him to impose a four years (2001-2005) ban on all sexual activity for Swaziland's inhabitants of less than 18 years of age in order to limit the HIV epidemic [Tarallo, 2001].

The Table in Annex II (p. 123) will provide an overall view on which are the actual monarchies, who is their current sovereign, how is the monarchies considered (Constitutional, Mixed or Absolute), and which is the method or pattern of succession in the ruling dynasty.

There are valid reasons to consider monarchies as a separate type of institutional structure, independent from a nebulous categorization of personalist regimes. Monarchies were formerly the most prevalent form of government of world's societies, from which derive almost all other political forms of governing a country. Therefore, their conversion into new political experiences holds valuable lessons for understanding the political change in authoritarian regimes that, in some

cases such as Libya or Egypt, exists as consequences of a Monarchy itself. Though nowadays monarchies are less common, their permanence in the Middle East proves their continued significance. To contextualize the role of monarchies in modern times, the definition presented by Axel Hadenius and Jan Teorell (2006) will be useful. The two professors apply Geddes' interest in regime durability to an expanded typology that includes competitive authoritarian regimes and monarchies. They identify their typology from the three broad source of legitimacy that supported governments since the beginning of human history: election (single and multi-party authoritarian regimes), force (military regimes), and birth (monarchies) [Williamson, 2012].

As to their peculiarity, monarchies operate on the institutionalization of hereditary rule, with legitimacy derived from dynastic birth. The power of birth becomes a justification to rule, therefore, creating a unique type of institution. This represents the fundamental difference among monarchies and personalist regimes such as North Korea or Syria: in the latter cases even if power is transferred from father to son, legitimacy still comes from the party. If we divide the above-mentioned typologies of political legitimization in democratic or elected and non-democratic or authoritarian, we should indeed consider monarchies as part of the second group. However, in opposition to the predictions of Huntington (1968) and other political scientists, so far monarchies could be considered the most durable form of authoritarian regimes. The competition is not even close; on average, monarchies survive 22 years, which is eight years longer than their closer contender: single-party regimes [Williamson, 2012].

THE LEGITIMACY OF ARAB MONARCHIES

The Arab countries that have a monarchical form of government are Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Jordan, Oman, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Morocco, Jordan and Saudi Arabia are ruled by a king, while the rest are ruled by emirs or, in the case of Oman, a sultan. In all of these countries the monarchs both reign and rule[13].

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[13] However, if we disaggregate the federal UAE into seven constituent kingships, then effectively there are fourteen royal families that enjoy legally recognized claims to rule over some territory in the Middle East.

The strength of the monarchs' position in the Middle East represents the particularity of the eight Arab Kingdoms, whose power is not subject to political contestation but preserved outside the political scenario. We note significant differences, however, between their political classes. In Jordan, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Morocco, while the monarch rules the country, there is nonetheless a considerable political competition between politicians vying for appointments in the Parliament [Cordesman, 2011]. In Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar, on the other hand, advisory bodies to Kings are very limited, although they are entitled to increase the powers of these councils without weakening their position and inciting competition against their rule. Finally, the UAE is a federation containing seven emirates, each of which is governed by a hereditary monarch. The head of the UAE government is held by a president elected by the seven rulers of the Emirates, among the same emirs.

The only monarchical Arab countries that have experienced activities inspired by the Arab Awakening – such as mass demonstrations, ongoing political violence, social unrest, political instability, or fierce public debates in the media or political or academic circles – have been Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, and Morocco. This political unrest, however, was not sufficient in caliber to jeopardize the stability of their monarchical regimes.

The monarchies in the Arab world have so far survived the aftershocks of the upheaval while presidents and colonels have been more vulnerable to social turmoil, but this is by no means due to a lack of challenges. Indeed, significant social and economic distress prevails in most Arab monarchies [Amderson, 1991]. In fact, the precursor to the Arab Awakening occurred in Jordan, where a monarchy has been in power since 1921. In the summer of 2010, a few months before Bouazizi set himself on fire, extravagant and ostentatious celebrations were held to mark the fortieth birthday of Jordanian Queen Rania al-'Abdullah. These provoked angry reactions and led to violent demonstrations, chiefly in the southern cities of Jordan which were suffering from high unemployment and poverty [New York Times, November 2012]. King Abdullah II had to send in the Jordanian Army to subdue the riots.

Times are indeed changing, and the Arab monarchies are well aware that the upheaval that shook the foundations of the Arab world is equally likely to reach them. Most of the monarchies have therefore been taking preventive measures and promoting reforms in a gradual manner.

This chapter seeks to identify the source of the legitimacy of these regimes and thereby explain why protests have so far requested reforms without mentioning a switch to a republican system.

The resilience of monarchies in the midst of all this political and popular turmoil is indeed impressive. In front of internal threats, we experienced both successful solutions such as Qatar's velvet revolution, as well as the challenge to the legitimacy of the king's power posed by small radical organizations backed by the political opposition of the concerned country. Further, we rarely witnessed a mass popular uprising demanding the removal of the king in the Middle East: this only occurred in Iran where the Shah was overthrown by a popular revolution. It appears that most monarchs in the region maintain the support of their people, even when we simultaneously witness widespread dissatisfaction and a call for political reform within the government [Ottaway, 2011]. "It would indeed be ingenuous to state that autocratic presidents are substantially worse politicians than their kingly counterparts. Rather, institutional structure likely explains the success of monarchs in avoiding or diffusing widespread popular unrest in addition to internal challenges to the regime [Williamson, 2012]."

Once analyzing the reactions of monarchies to revolts, we can indeed identify different patterns depending on the geopolitical context that surrounds the kingdoms. In the Gulf countries protest movements were quickly stifled and consequently frozen in with the usual pacifying boon due to oil revenues. The redistribution of economic benefits and the timid facade openings that accompanied the demands for reform have so far prevented the destruction of the regime, but the exhaustibility of their wealth recall that time is nevertheless still ticking away [Herb, 1999]. Bahrain presents a different case, as protests for the implementation of political reforms in the country were bloodily suppressed, requiring a direct intervention by the Saudis and the Gulf Cooperation Council, and ended with dozens of deaths [Dalacoura, 2012][14].

Amongst Arab monarchies, as described in the previous chapters, Jordanian presents an exception. We can only really draw a parallel between Jordan and Morocco, as the Moroccan crown equally experienced less instability throughout the turmoil in the region. One of the key features of these kingdoms is legitimacy. These

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[14] For a deeper analysis of the Uprisings in Bahrain refer to: "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VIII): Bahrain's Rocky Road to Reform", Middle East Report N. 111, July 28, 2011; International Crisis Group.

countries "lack the resources of the Gulf, and they share many of the same economic and social challenges that caused so many problems for dictators in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Yemen [Williamson, 2012]." Indeed, both states are self-proclaimed monarchies whose king is descendent of the Prophet, and both represent the last instance of unity and national identity for a population otherwise fragmented by various political, ethnic, and social issues. The stability of the countries analyzed is inevitably linked to the figure of the sovereign, who is politically untouchable. Political responsibility is therefore discharged on governments, even if the kings themselves control their government. Thus, the protesters in both countries railed against the political system and the regime as a whole, but never attacked the monarchical institution directly [Boukhars, 2011]. Nevertheless, the current growing awareness of the actual political responsibility of the kings, who perpetrated the systematic pillaging of resources through the actions of their entourage, effectively privatizing the two states, was an alarm bell of a possible precarious future. In the absence of a profound structural reform of the political systems regarding a devolution of some of the executive power from the king, there was a risk that the rulers themselves could become the future target of discontent.

For now, in the face of the growing street protests, Mohammed VI and Abdullah II implemented similar strategies, managing to grant far-reaching constitutional reforms [Boukhars, 2011].

In the referendum of July 1st, 2011, the Moroccan sovereign, placed certain constitutional amendments under popular review: if on the one hand, this served to improve the civil rights of the citizens, on the other it left intact the powers of the king and his total control over the executive body. In fact, the demands for political reform loudly requested by the movement that started on February 20th of that year were widely ignored [Silverstein, 2011].

Similarly, King Abdullah of Jordan set up a number of committees to debate the reforms that were deemed more compelling; then he appointed a group of ten wise men to discuss the constitutional reforms requested by the protests. The most ambitious of these reforms were the review of the electoral law and the law on freedom of expression and association. The movement for reform, which was divided into various traditional opposition groups - including the Islamic Action Front, the political arm of the Muslim Brotherhood - and new political actors born in the

aftermath of the protests - including Jayeen, which brings together the Social Left, teachers, trade unionists, military retirees – reunited in late May in a National Front for Reform, led by the former Prime Minister Ahmed Obeydat, a prominent Jordanian opposition figure [Ryan, 2011]. The movement, in its various divisions, focused on the demand that the government should represent a parliamentary elected majority, and that executive's predominance might reduce in favor of a greater balance of power. The result of these reforms should have been a de facto change of the Jordanian government into a *malakyia dusturia* (constitutional monarchy), with the ambition to tone down the necessary amendments to the 1952's constitution that produced the alleged distortions.

The Committee for Constitutional reforms made its views known at the end of August. Even though before entering into force the modification should follow the parliamentary process, at first glance the amendments seemed to be an important step towards the improvement of civil and political rights through, for example, the establishment of a Constitutional Court and an independent Committee controlling the elections. However, just as in the case of Morocco, the powers of the king were not affected, nor the representativeness of Parliament and the arbitrariness of the sovereign to appoint and dissolve governments. In fact, as written by Sean Yom (2011) in his analysis, the *Malakia Dusturyia* or its surrogates have been reduced to mere *islah dusturi* (constitutional reform). However, echoing the analysis of Marwan Muasher of Carnegie (2011), these steps surely are necessary if considered part of a broader agenda, a road map leading to the actual formation of governments both elected and accountable to the Parliament.

While analyzing the role of Parliaments among monarchies and republics Herb (1999) writes:

"One of the most important liberalizing steps in any authoritarian regime is the holding of free and fair elections. Elections, however, are very threatening for most authoritarian ruling groups – if a ruling group loses an election it also loses any semblance of legitimacy it may have previously enjoyed. Monarchs, by contrast, are born to their positions, not elected. Monarchs can hold elections and still be monarchs…Once a parliament is in place, the monarch and his challengers can negotiate a sharing of power between palace and parliament…This capacity to liberalize in small steps that

have predictable outcomes lowers the cost of liberalizing moves…and thus, other things equal, makes it more likely that monarchical elites will take these steps"

Herb's theory seems to be contradicted only by few particular event that happened in the Middle East, that is the Iranian revolution and its game-changing outcome as well as the revolutions that occurred in Libya against King Idris in 1969 or Egypt against King Farouk in 1952. Upon closer examination, however, certain precursory actions mitigate this contradiction. In the case of Persia, indeed, throughout the 1970s, the Shah had recklessly forfeited most of the advantages held by a monarch to limit the risk of a popular uprising. By placing himself at the center of his government, the Shah effectively became the figurehead for its unpopular modernization plans. He went on to create the Hizb-I Rastakhiz, a single political party, governing Iran in the style of single-party regimes favored by presidential autocrats [Herb 1999]. These initiatives focused the people's resentment on the figure of the Shah, as the government's figurehead, since he no longer stood above political contestation. Consequently, all efforts by both activists and the general public focused on overthrowing the Shah rather than trying to effectively reform the system from within. In this light, the outcome of the Iranian Revolution does in fact back up the logic of the aforementioned theory of escalation in the field of political contestation [Williamson, 2012]. This example constitutes a valuable lesson for monarchs in the Middle East today.

Returning to the central question of why the monarchic regimes in the Arab world have survived at a time when some Arab countries are experiencing enormous upheavals, and others are in the process of disintegration, it appears that certain factors are still granting them – at least at this stage – a certificate of immunity, albeit one that's not unlimited [Melamed, 2016].

In one if his books, the Israeli writer Avi Melamed (2016) try to analyze and present the core gridlocks of the Middle East. While addressing the remarkable resilience of monarchies, he identifies three main factors that could justify and explain this invulnerability.

The first relevant factor is the make-up of societies in the majority of these monarchical states (to a slightly lesser degree in Morocco and Jordan), prevalently

composed of tribes. All these various tribes are granted political representation in order to be able to uphold the rights of their respective communities by participating to the power buffet of their king. This is a matter of fragile equilibrium, and it is therefore in the interest of all political and social leaders to preserve the stability of the nation's socio-political-economic system, including the monarchies cementing that very system. The stabilizing effect of the monarchy appeared clearly during the recent succession in Saudi Arabia. As soon as King Abdullah's funeral ended, the whole Saudi government and leadership gathered in the presidential palace to swear allegiance to the new king, Salman [Al Jazeera, January 2015]. The swift and supported ascent of the new monarch signaled a seamless transition of leadership from one king to the next, highlighting the role of the monarchy in preserving stability and power.

A second influential factor in maintaining these monarchies is the enormous wealth of the Arab Gulf states (this does not include Jordan but only the so-called petro-monarchies). "This consistent richness allows them to provide their people with a high quality of life, considerable education and healthcare, and a guaranteed income. According to the Arab World's Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)[15], the gross domestic product of the Arab Gulf States – all of which are monarchical except Iraq – is $1.60 trillion. This constitutes approximately 40 percent of the $2.853 trillion gross domestic product of the Arab world in 2013 [World Bank, 2016], [Melamed, 2016]." In this case, the monarchy is, in the eyes of the subjects the guarantor of the ongoing wealth, and consequently, its removal is not contemplated because it appears as a threat to the people's wealthy standard of living. At the end of this section Table 2 will provide an overall view on the relation of the eight Arab monarchies with Oil dependency.

The third factor granting monarchies this certificate of immunity is the people's emotional solidarity and ongoing support for their monarch, whose origins are threefold.

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[15] The Gulf Cooperation Council was established in 1981 in an agreement between Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and UAE to confront their security challenges collectively. Jordan and Morocco are in the negotiations prior to the admission since 2011.

Melamed (2016) presents three different aspects to explain and justify the reasons for emotional sympathy that is the less present in the Western political tradition among the three factors that are protecting monarchies.

The first aspect is the perceived legitimacy of the royal dynasties from a religious perspective. Indeed, the Arabian Peninsula is the birthplace of Islam and Arab culture, and as such the Gulf monarchies are steeped in a religious and cultural aura. "The Saudi king's title, for example, is *Hadim al-Haramayn as-Sarifayn*, meaning "Servant of the Two Noble Holy Sites," an explicit reference to his leadership over the Saudi cities of Mecca and Medina, two of Islam's three holy sites. Islam's third holy site is Jerusalem, or *al-Quds* as it is called in Arabic, "the holy." It too confers legitimacy to a monarch, as one of the Jordanian king's titles is *Abid al-Quds*, "Servant and Defender of *al-Quds*." This title was conferred to the monarch as Jordan ruled the east part of Jerusalem from 1948 to 1967, and the Jordanian king still enjoys the gravitas it bestows upon him nowadays [Melamed, 2016]".

A second facet of the royal dynasties' legitimacy rests on the familial lineage to the Prophet Muhammad. The Hashimite Dynasty of Jordan traces its origins back to the grandfather of Muhammad the Prophet, while the royal dynasty in Morocco traces its roots to the daughter of Muhammad. This distinguished lineage undoubtedly lends the monarchies a strong sense of legitimacy in the face of their people that are in both cases composed of a Muslim majority [Owen, 1992].

The third element is the people's open admiration and even affection for their monarch. Emotional connections are of considerable value in the Arab world: Arab culture and society are essentially tribal, and the principles of loyalty, devotion, and obedience to a leader is deeply rooted. Traditional ceremonies such as the bay'ah, an oath of allegiance, signal this commitment and are, as well, important customs of these populations. Where monarchs have managed to maintain the admiration and respect of their people, they have therefore also secured their loyalty [Melamed, 2016]. A popular video posted on Youtube in December 2013 displays the feelings of ordinary Jordanian citizens toward their king. The video shows a group of men striving to free a car stuck in the snow and soon reveals that one of these men is King Abdullah II. Whether he happened upon them by chance or not, the monarch is intent

on helping his fellow citizen out and showing his support. His actions are answered with spontaneous cries of support: "Long live the king, long live the king![16]"

These reasons become key features when the concept of legitimacy has to be identified in Arab monarchies. As we saw the abilities of monarchs to make their subject perceive them as entitled to rule are various and differ among countries. Despite this, the family history, their holy genealogy as for Morocco or Jordan, or the welfare structure of the state in the Gulf are fundamental elements in maintaining the necessary respect and dependency among monarchs and subject in the Middle East.

The table that follows aim to present the relation among Coalitions, Oil and Geopolitics within the eight Arab Monarchies. The first column (cross-cutting coalition) highlights who, despite the Royal Family, are the actors in the political scenario of the country; the second column (Hydrocarbon Rents) present the degree of influence that "petro-money" have in the national economies; the last column (foreign patron) shows who are the main foreign actors that influence more internal politics decisions.

Table 2: Coalitions, Oil, and Geopolitics   **Source: Gause, 2010**

	Cross-cutting Coalition	Hydrocarbon Rents	Foreign Patron
Morocco	Yes (business class, religious authorities, agricultural elites)	None (but offered GCC economic aid)	Yes (U.S., France)
Jordan	Yes (East Bank minorities, Palestinian business, tribal communities)	None (but offered GCC economic aid)	Yes (U.S., Saudi Arabia)
Saudi Arabia	Yes (ruling family, regional business elites, religious establishment)	High	Yes (U.S.)
Kuwait	Yes (ruling family, Sunni merchants, Shi'a minority, tribal communities)	High	Yes (U.S.)
Bahrain	No (ruling family, Sunni minority)	Moderate (but offered GCC economic aid)	Yes (Saudi Arabia)
Qatar	No (not necessary due to small homogenous population)	High	Yes (U.S.)
UAE	Yes (seven ruling families)	High	Yes (U.S., Saudi Arabia)
Oman	Yes (ruling family, regional elites from Muscat, Inner Oman, and Dhufar; tribal communities)	Moderate (but offered GCC economic aid)	Yes (U.S., Saudi Arabia)

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[16]The mentioned video can be found at: "Petranews Jordan (2013)": [www.YouTube.com/watch?v=URZINR63L2E]

THE HASHEMITE KING

The previous section assessed the perceived cultural and historical legitimacy of the Arab monarchies and the weight that this lends to their claim to power. It explained how the wealthy petro-monarchies were equally able to assuage the popular demand for reform by distributing some of their wealth. Furthermore, "each Arab monarchy has maintained a powerful supporting coalition of domestic interest groups, regional allies, and (typically Western) foreign patrons to buttress regime stability [Gause, 2010]." In the case of the comparatively resource-poor monarchies, such as Jordan for example, these appear to have been suitably propped up by their wealthy allies. Nonetheless, these factors do not suffice to explain the resilience of the monarchies throughout the Arab revolts, and a further explanation for this remarkable monarchical longevity must be sought in the strategies that these regimes utilized to stay in power.

This research wants to understand how the decisions made by Abdullah II allowed his regime to survive the political turmoil. To adequately address the argument, it will be useful to compare his case with the ones of other monarchies.

Arab monarchies differ from one another in various respects, therefore their political strategies are elaborated according to the characteristics of each nation, and as such are manifold. These eight monarchies can be distinguished into two main institutional types: on the one hand, the monarchies where the kings rule as individuals, such as Jordan and Morocco, and on the other, the dynastic monarchies governed by extended families, where the monarch integrates a larger corporate ruling body, such as the Gulf states. This categorization justifies the differences between the monarchies' responses to the uprisings and the possibilities for reform: for example, dynastic monarchies are based on a strong network of family ties, this could complicate the sacking of the Prime Minister if he is the cousin of the King like in Saudi Arabia [Gause, 2013]. Conversely, as we are going to see, in Jordan, the reshuffling of power appears as a customary habit in the rule of the country.

Observing individual monarchies at the beginning of 2011 protests we see that Jordan's King Abdullah II reacted more cautiously than his counterpart in Morocco that instead promoted reforms right at the start of the revolts. As the time-honored Jordanian royal tradition of crisis management suggests, the prime

minister was used by the King as a scapegoat for political dissatisfaction. "Abdullah II first reacted by firing his prime minister in February 2011, followed by his replacement in October 2011. The third appointed prime minister, the international jurist Awn al-Khasawneh, resigned his position in April 2012 to mark his frustration at being unable to effectively achieve political reform, and his successor was then himself replaced in October 2012. Consequently, in the span of two and a half years of protests, Jordan witnessed a succession of five different prime ministers and six governments [Al Jazeera, April 2012], [New York Times, July 2012]". While this hardly projects an image of political stability, the monarchy was able to address popular demands for reform through changes in government, while the King himself remained in power as a stabilizing presence [Gause, 2013].

In Jordan, although the king rules the country as an authoritative individual figure, he was seen to successfully create a relationship with the so-called "real state," to foster links with the inhabitants of the monarchy. Following a demographical analysis of the population, this section will observe the perception of King Abdullah II by ordinary Jordanian people through interviews conducted in 2016 with individuals from different social strata met during a research personally made throughout the country. This cross-section will allow us to construe an idea of how Jordanian citizens perceive their monarch and the incidence this might have on the longevity of his reign.

When the political turmoil of the Arab awakening spread like wildfire throughout the Middle East, the Jordanian monarchy did not seem in a strong position to maintain its hold on power. While as we saw the Gulf monarchies relied on their fabulous wealth to appease demands for reform, Jordan's GDP of $5,200 per capita put it on a par with Syria and Egypt, second-lowest amongst the Arab monarchies [World Bank, 2016]. As such, Jordan experienced many of the same social and economic problems as the region's poorer countries. "The country is poor in natural resources, and its economy is perpetually struggling as the government strives to encourage employment and investment while running up massive public debts. As with so many of the region's countries, Jordan's demographic situation is explosive. More than half of the country's population is under 25, a number that is again comparable to Egypt and Syria and higher than any of those in the other monarchies [Williamson, 2012]". Jordan's explosive association of a continuously

weak economy and a complicated demographic situation appeared as a sure recipe for political instability. In the event, despite a wave of protest that ran throughout the country, this did not escalate, and the king managed to maintain his hold on power. This does not mean that the country was untouched by the conflict: as described in chapter one there were frequent violent clashes between loyalists and opposition protestors, the relationship between the monarchy and its opposition indeed appears to have deteriorated, and the demographic and economic instabilities have only increased. Undeniably, the Hashemite monarchy and its ruler escaped the fate of Egypt, Libya, Syria, Yemen, and Tunisia.

During 2011, despite the violence in revolutionary demonstrations around the Middle East, the marches in Jordan limited to follow a pattern of politics comparable to the one established during the country's democratic opening initiated by King Hussein in the late 1980s and early 1990s [Freer, 2010].

The answer to this ability to survive resides in the person of the king and his perceived legitimacy in the eyes of his subjects. Legitimacy is a complex issue, and it can be difficult to evaluate whether a regime is perceived as legitimate by its people. Democratic governments establish their legitimacy through regular elections cementing their right to rule, and authoritarian regimes assert their legitimacy through fake referenda or populist manifestations. Monarchies, however, cannot rely on the popular will to confirm their legitimacy [Gause, 2013].

The first popular opinion on King Abdullah II that we will examine is that of Marwan Muasher (2012), former Foreign Minister and deputy prime minister of Jordan. The one-time politician is now vice president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and he describes what he defines as the monarch's ability to promote "reform from above, a successful model that is yet to fully materialize [Muasher, 2012]". A particular focus is dedicated to the royal family's support of liberal social policies towards its citizens, including Christians and women. The little competition in political affairs allowed by the system is balanced by the avoidance of brutal practices against its opponent, by a relative openness to political debate, and by the avoidance of the exercise of repression. As we saw, "the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to operate legally and as a result, the Islamists adopted more moderate policies than they did in other Arab countries.

Nevertheless, the former foreign minister still considers Jordan as a country that promised far more reforms than it actually delivered [Muasher, 2012]". The amendments to the constitution that were requested by the protests were indeed only partially satisfied. While the king lost his ability to postpone elections indefinitely, all other powers were left intact, and very little changed on the key issue of the election law. Throughout more than a year of deliberations on the matter, the election law was amended time and again, resulting in the end in a formula that would have 82 percent of parliament elected according to the same old unpopular formula. According to Muasher (2012), "if reform from above has any real chance to succeed, it will be in Jordan. But it will require a dramatic shift in priorities by a system that has been so far resilient to serious change, a shift that can be led only by the king".

ABDULLAH II BIN AL-HUSSEIN

A brief biography of the king will help to understand how he came to be the monarch that he is today. Abdullah II of the Hashemite dynasty was born in Amman on January 20, 1962, the son of King Hussein and Antoinette Avril Gardiner, the daughter of a British soldier who participated in the occupation of the country [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017].

The King attended the Islamic school in the Jordanian capital for his primary education, and later moved to Surrey, England, to study at the St. Edmund's School. He continued his studies at the Eaglebrook School and Deerfield Academy in the United States of America, without however obtaining a degree. In 1980 he entered the Navy (Royal Military Academy Sandhurst), as a cadet in the Army of His Majesty the Queen of England. This fact was a source of discontent in Jordan, which was at the time under British rule. In a short period, he reached the rank of colonel. In 1982, he attended Pembroke College, Oxford University, following a special course on Middle East policy. He also completed a Masters in International Relations at Georgetown University in 1987 in Washington D.C. a move that could be considered as a strong sign of interest and friendship toward the United States. It is not a case that few months ago in May 2016, even Prince Hussein, the heir to the Hashemite throne, graduated from the same university in Washington.

Abdullah ascended to the throne on February 7, 1999 after the death of his father, King Hussein. Although Hussein had initially chosen his brother Prince

Hassan as heir to the throne, he changed his mind shortly before his death, entrusting the command of the kingdom to Abdullah instead, who became King Abdullah II [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017].

Abdullah II married the Palestinian Rania Al-Yasin, a woman much praised for her campaigning for Muslim women and against gender discrimination, but at the same time criticized by the most fundamentalist Muslims for her close ties with Western culture. The couple has four children: Prince Hussein (born 1994), Princess Iman (born in 1996), Princess Salma (born in 2000), and Prince Hashem (born January 30, 2005). On 28 November 2006, King Abdullah II designated his eldest son, Prince Hussein, as heir to the throne [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2017].

In the seventeen years of his reign, the young Abdullah II of Jordan has demonstrated a desire to engage directly with his subjects, from his visits to all the schools in the country to his weekly trips to the beach in Aqaba. The monarch does not surround himself with security personnel; conversely, he enjoys to mix effortlessly with his people and shaking hands with all, be they children, farmers, urban taxi drivers or camel trainers in the desert.

Abdullah II has also often been seen donning a disguise to better mingle with his people. The king was reportedly spotted in various disguises, posing as a reporter, a patient in a public hospital, a taxi driver or even an Israeli tourist. These masks allowed him to approach and secretly interview his people on their views and standards of living. Using fake beards, long galabieh, folksy accessories, and a masked English accent, the king enjoys observing his people up close. Many other monarchs have already done the same in the past, most notably his father, King Hussein [Ryan, 2002]. This unusual habit of the king, although not properly political, nonetheless holds certain implications, that is to say, that all citizens have had the opportunity to shake hands with their king. From a group of Bedouins living in the remote Wadi Rum to the Italian nun seated next to me during my flight to Amman, all the people I interviewed had personally met the king at least one in their lifetime.

On the other hand, from his educational background, we can see that Abdullah II has developed a broad international experience, which allows him to maintain strong relations with all the countries supporting him with foreign aid [Sowell, 2016]. This dependence on external assistance has also been confirmed to

me by the Italian diplomats that I met in Amman and Washington that served in Jordan in different moments: before, during and after the uprisings. At the end of this section a table will illustrate the subjects and the context of my interview that were essentials in order to comprehend how the King is associated with daily life events rather than crisis management. The brief conversation I had with different individuals helped me to mature an opinion related to the reputation that the King hold with his people and diplomats serving in his country.

While talking with old locals indeed the discussion unavoidably end in a comparison among the King and his father that show how Abdullah is much more western-oriented than his predecessor: an old man in Petra compared the late King Hussein to Abdullah II remarking how the Arabic accent of the latter was not the one of a local but rather the one of a foreigner. Thus, while he makes a clear effort to appear close to his people, the king also has to maintain a strong presence on the international political scene in order to secure the support and economic aid that are essential to the Jordanian GDP, as explained by Marco Salaris, *Primo Segretario* at the Italian Embassy in Amman.

The king's endeavor is, therefore, to establish as many contacts as possible with all elements of the Jordanian society, whether having lunch in a tent with Bedouins complaining about all the freedom granted in the country or meeting an Israeli politician to discuss subtle political issues [Goldberg, 2013].

Inevitably, a certain dichotomy has arisen between the king's international image and his national presence. This recently came to a head when a discussion held between the King and Jeffrey Goldberg (2013) was broadcast on online media sources available to all. In this interview the King described the tribal leaders as conservative elements, calling them "old dinosaurs," and stated that for the Turkish leader Erdogan, democracy was a "bus ride[17]". A firestorm subsequently emerged on Twitter and in online media sources[18], and demonstrations were held throughout Jordan over these allegations. The Jordanian press was quick to limit the damage,

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[17] For further information, please refer to the articles by Nabil al Sharif, Osama Tulaylan, and Fahid al-Khitan. Many more journalists have written about the interview. Some defended the king's interview by laying blame on Goldberg, by arguing that the interview was off the record, and the comments taken out of context. Others have said that the king is only conveying what needs to be said.

[18] For further information on the media reaction please refer to: [http://www.filmirsad.com/opinions/العضايلة- الأزمات-يصنع-النظام-أن-على-مؤشر-أتلاننتك-ذي-في-جاء-ما-المرصاد-لفي; or: http://www.watnnews.net/NewsDetails.aspx?PageID=54&NewsID=77092]

with several prominent journalists moving to minimize the significance of the king's interview. Various tribes made public statements to confirm their support of the king in the wake of this unrest. "This particular event was indicative of a new era in which the Jordanian monarchy can no longer produce one image and discourse for the West while enacting policies that go against that image and discourse on the ground.

The bigger question is how this disjuncture between image and reality plays out in the very complex political realm that currently exists in Jordan [Jadaliyya, March 2013]." In the same way that Jordan may be considered as a buffer state absorbing the tensions of its very turbulent neighbors, the king can be perceived as playing an essential unifying role for the country, thereby appearing as a reference of national integrity for his people. The king must, therefore, strive to maintain a position that, even if does not satisfy everybody, at least does not overly provoke anybody.

The table that follows illustrate the relevant interviews that I personally did in the last year in order to strengthen my knowledge of Jordan, of its people and of the position of Italy toward the eye of the Middle Eastern cyclone.

Name interviewee	Venue and Date of the interview
Relation among Jordan and the interviewee	
Main points touched during the interview	
Relevant argument in favor or against the hypothesis of the thesis (Monarchical resilience)	

Italian Nun   **Flight from Rome to Amman; April 7th, 2016**

Franciscan Nun at the Franciscan Sisters School in Amman since more than thirty years.

During my flight to Amman a nun was seated next to me and it was unavoidable for me not to engage in a conversation. The Italian nun told me her story that saw her migrating from Italy to the Holy Land more around 1980 where she supported various humanitarian projects mainly related to children and education. She illustrated to me the Franciscan Sisters School of Amman where she was currently working and living.

The nun pointed out the high level of religious toleration present in Jordan emphasizing mainly on the Muslim-Christian cooperation that is specifically strong in matter such as education or archeology. She also told me that every year the King attend the graduation ceremony of the Franciscan Sister School of Amman and confirmed me that this is an habit for almost every school in the country.

Najeh al-Hasanat   **Petra, Wadi Musa; April 9ᵗʰ, 2016**

Lieutenant for the Royal Jordanian Navy working in Aqaba. Najeh studied at the Accademia Militare of Livorno during his University formation with a joint training program sponsored by Jordan and Italy.

The interview with Lieutenant Hasanat occurred in Petra in a very Jordanian atmosphere of "chai and shisha". We discussed various point focusing specifically in the very strong and loyal relation among the Army, the Mukhabarat, and the King. His arguments, very likely influenced by his position, defended the King rare violation of Western's Standard of Democracy in face of the governability of the country. He suggested me to read "Uneasy Lies The Head; The Autobiograhy of His Majesty King Hussein I of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" (1962) where the personality of the King is presented together with many anecdotes about his disguises among his people.

Najeh confirmed me the hypothesis of monarchical resilience by emphasizing the resourceful role of the King in creating international alliances with strategic partners in order to receive economic aid and to be guaranteed support in case of degeneration of the precarious equilibrium of the region.

Ahmet al-Hasanat   **Wadi Musa; April 10ᵗʰ, 2016**

Father of Najeh, he is one of the old wise men of Wadi Musa.

As the very hospitable Bedouin tradition want, the day after my interview with Najeh I have been invited to eat *Mansaf* with his family (brothers and father) at his family house in Wadi Musa. Despite the delicious lunch the core of the meal has been the endless flow of tales and anecdotes told by his old father Ahmet. Ahmet lived the majority of his life under the reign of Hussein allowing me to investigate more on the figure of the Late King that should be considered as the illuminated monarch that brought to Jordan the stability that enjoys today.

The main concepts extrapolated from the conversation were related to the great humanity and spirit of King Hussein. Ahmed talked about the many times he had the chance to meet the King starting with the remembering one of the flash flood of Petra in the seventies when the King presented himself few hours after the inundation in order to help in first line all the Jordanians and foreigners injured in the event. The passion and the nostalgia that he had while talking about the late King Hussein has indeed been the real value of the interview because it transmitted to me the deep sign of respect and unity that the father of Abdullah II managed to leave to his subject. Regarding the actual King the principal comment was related to the fact that his English is better than his Arabic.

Ashraf Saad   **Aqaba, Moon Beach Hotel; April 11ᵗʰ, 2016**

Owner of the Moon Beach Hotel on Aqaba's seafront.

The conversation with Ashraf happened on the seafront of Aqaba where Jordan holds its tiny coast line. The hotel owner always lived in Aqaba and told me about the many times, almost every Friday, when the King was going to the beach without massive amounts of security shaking hands to everybody wishing to do it.

This witness is useful to confirm the very close ties among the monarch and his population. Even if it could be considered as mere propaganda in favor of the royal dynasty, still the King is perceived by his subject as an accessible person ready to listen and help his people.

Abdulkareem Abu Aseel Zawaideh   **Wadi Rum; April 12ᵗʰ, 2016**

Wadi Rum nomad he is a camel trainer for camels' races.

Going to Jordan without passing through the Wadi Rum Desert whose sand is still perfuming of Arab Revolution would be like to go to Rome without see the Colosseum! After the typical dose of Arab bargaining I managed to find a Bedouin wishing to pass the day alone with me for a 24 hour camel ride across the desert. Beside the discrete dose of Orientalism present in that moment, he managed to give me an enchanting glimpse of the daily life of a Bedouin showing to me his life in the desert and his career as Camel Trainer. Abu showed me his herd of camels that he trains for the annual Sheikh Zayed Camels Race: one of the most important sports event for Bedouins.

The conversation with Abu was clearly complicated by the linguistic barrier. My Arabic did not allowed me to broadly discuss the arguments of my thesis but, nevertheless, he confirmed me that he saw both King Hussein and King Abdullah when they come to Wadi Rum to participate in the Camel Race. An interesting and somehow worrying moment occurred when during the dinner his nephew passed to our tent and showed me some pictures from his phone: the majority of them were nostalgic pictures of the former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein. Even if probably misinformed it was for me interesting to see how young Jordanians see Saddam as a victim of American Politics rather than the terrorist that we tend to describe.

Marco Salaris   **Embassy of Italy in Amman; April 13ᵗʰ, 2016**

Primo Segretario at the Embassy of Italy from 2015

In the context of my research trip around Jordan I had the opportunity to meet the number two of the Embassy of Italy in Jordan. The meeting was held in the Embassy and was a useful illustration of the many ties that link the Kingdom to Italy and vice-versa. The *Primo Segretario* mentioned the various agreement of archeological and sanitary cooperation thanks to which Italy is one of the main partner of Jordan regarding the evaluation of the precious heritage of the country, the preservation of the many sites related to the Holy Land as well as the substantial support both in term of economic aid and expertise that Italy devolve to Jordan in order to develop the sanitary structure. i.e. the Italian Hospital of Amman or the Italian Hospital of Cnewa where the Comboni Sisters are offering precious help giving cures both to Jordanians and Refugees displaced in the region.

The conversation with the *Primo Segretario* than moved to the main concern of this research. The discussion analyzed the complicated role of the King as guarantor of national unity and security; the more dangerous thematic at the time of the discussion was the control of the solitary "foreign fighters phenomenon" that put Jordan in a complex situation regarding the vast border that share with Syria, the emergency caused by the refugee stream, and the danger of the opposite stream of radical Jordanian that desire to join the "holy war of Daesh" (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, one of the main leaders of al-Qaeda was a Jordanian citizen). In this regard Marco Salaris praised the King behavior even recognizing the lack of some basic freedoms such as the freedom of press. The main talent of the monarch in this case is the ability to exploit negative situations such as the widespread of Daesh and the refugee stream, as a useful tool to receive foreign aids in the Jordanian coffer.

Alaa al-Zoubi   **University of Trieste; October 12ᵗʰ, 2016**

Jordanian student of Naval Engineering at the University of Trieste.

Alaa is a student of the University of Trieste who is studying in Italy thanks to an exchange program. The interview with him has been resourceful and interesting even if his position was manifestly in support of the thesis and of the person of the King. Among the details I have been

informed that his father Ahmed was the Chief of Staff of the Royal Jordan Army and is currently personal Councilor of the King. He suggested me to read the book: "Our Last Best Chance: A Story of War and Peace" written by King Abdullah II (2011) where the King make a call for peace pushing for a solution for the Arab-Israeli crisis also commenting the volatile underpinnings of the new Arab awakenings.

Regarding the hypothesis of the thesis he presented the Hashemites as a dynasty that is carrying the responsibility that they received of maintaining stability and, somehow, prosperity in the territory of Jordan since 1921. Since the Arab Revolt every monarch managed to develop and exploit every resource in order to develop the Kingdom still recognizing the hard context, sometimes hostile, that they are facing. Regarding the King's tradition of firing Prime Ministers and dissolve the Parliament he stated that, even if undemocratic in the eyes of western spectators, it is a useful tool for the King to correct problems *ex machina* guaranteeing the overall interest of the nation. He praised as well the positive attitude of the monarch in facing the 2011 revolts both regarding the political inclusivity towards the Muslim Brotherhood and the behavior of the guards present at the revolts that apparently were bringing water to the protester. He also emphasized the ability of the King in creating strong international relations: Jordan is one of the few countries maintaining excellent relations both with Russia and the United States.

Maurizio Greganti   **Embassy of Italy in Washington D.C.; January 12th, 2017**
<u>*Primo Segretario* at the Embassy of Italy in Amman from 1999 to 2002</u>

During my permanence in Washington I had the honor of working for the Deputy Chief of Mission at the Embassy of Italy in the American Capital. During a discussion with the *Ministro Plenipotenziario* I discovered that he previously served in Jordan as *Primo Segretario* from 1999 to 2002 experiencing in first row the transition of Power from King Hussein to his son Abdullah. He remembered the very special moment of the funerals of the Late King Hussein where the whole world gathered to pay the last tribute including four US Presidents, the Russian leader Elstin and many other world dignitaries (Assad and Netanyahu met there for the first time).

Moving the discussion to the argument of the thesis he wanted to reflect on the ability for the King to maintain the Bedouin Minority still in control of the public sector and of a unproportioned majority in the Parliament (as explained in Chapter 1 the electoral reform was one of the main requests of the 2011 protests). This issue, even if might appear as another undemocratic liabilities of the country, should indeed be recognized as the ability of the King to maintain an equilibrium and a stability in a country that is showing an uncommon openness to the vast streams of refugee that keep on crossing Jordanian's border.

Giovanni Parigi   **Università Statale, Milano; January 26th, 2017**
<u>Professor of Arab Cultural and Linguistic Mediation, Università Statale di Milano</u>

Professor Parigi gave me a general comment on the Jordanian situation compared to its neighbors. His discussion has been mainly a pragmatic description of the Hashemite Kingdom where the professor focused on the homogeneity of the Bedouin population (even if the original population of Jordan is composed by different tribes they still share a very high degree of traditions which facilitate them in the nation-building process). Another asset of Jordan is identified in the relative youngness of the country that allowed the monarchy to build a nation exploiting the advantages of the land without having to face with pre-existing populations. He then moved the discussion to the so-called "useful Jordan" a concept that aim to remember that only 3/5 of the Jordanian territory is actually actively participating to the economic life of the country while the rest is simply arid

desert. Another Asset, that could be considered a liabilities, is the absence of natural resources such as oil which, in the neighbors case, give a disproportionate richness to the Royal Families allowing them to somehow "pay to solve every problem". The absence of such richness always forced the king to find a compromise with his population allowing Jordan to find a *modus vivendi* which is the origin of the delicate alchemy that today are the relations among the royal palace and the rest of the country. At the same time the Professor Parigi recognized that for Jordan this is also a liabilities since the risk of an economic crackdown could mean the real escalation of the protest that in 2011 were appeased.

Another key asset of the King is the Royal Jordan Army which is one of the best one among the Middle Eastern one. The Army, created on the base of the British one, is a valuable hand for the King which can control, spy and influence what he deem necessary within his country. An episode that deserve attention (Chaper 3 will analyse it in the framework of the Jordan-Da'esh relation) is the brutal murder of Muad Kasabeah a Jordanian Pilot that was burned alive by the terrorist group in a video later broadcasted to the world on February 3rd, 2015. This episode could be considered as an own goal for ISIS because united and strengthened the Hashemite Kingdom against an enemy that was not fully considered so at the time.

While discussing the future challenges that Jordan could face he identify three delicate issues: the hypothetic political emptiness in Iraq consequent to the elimination of the threat of Da'esh that might represent a sudden flow of "unemployed terrorist" around the Middle East; the addressing of the Arab-Israeli conflict and specifically the Palestinian issue and all the consequences that this could have on almost half of the current Jordanian population; the formation and organization of the succession: it has so far been essential for Jordan to have wise and loved Kings.

Conclusionary remarks

To understand how the Jordanian monarchy survived the recent wave of revolts that swept through the Arab world, this thesis focuses on the two pillars of its resilience: legitimacy which is the cause of the resilience and stability that is the consequence. This chapter has explored the concept of legitimacy in all its nuances. The reasons for King Abdullah II's perceived legitimacy are manifold and deeply-engrained, which explains how in the midst of the political turmoil that shook the Jordanian government, there was never any true popular call to transfer legitimacy and power to another individual.

A close observation of the eight Arab monarchies reveals their differences and how these influenced their reactions to the uprisings. While their individual or dynastic setup allowed for more or less flexibility in the reshuffling of political appointments, it appears obvious that the monarchies' resilience drew upon their perceived legitimacy as a stabilizing and unifying power. Legitimacy is a complex issue which cannot be properly grasped through its rather vague definition. Rather, it is here examined from different angles. The notion of legitimacy through culture and religion is illustrated by the Jordanian monarch's direct descent from the prophet Mohamed and his emblematic role as a protector of Islamic heritage. Besides this cultural facet, legitimacy undeniably takes on a personal aspect, as it is closely linked to the people's perception of their monarch. This leads us to examine how Abdullah II has constructed his image as a benevolent and unifying Middle Eastern ruler through his education and personal endeavors. Nonetheless, it is increasingly evident that the king struggles to reconcile the images he presents to his various interlocutors, from the Bedouin tribes to his international allies. This indeed could jeopardize his popularity and perceived sincerity. The successive prime ministers and governments have so far borne the brunt of the political dissatisfaction and demands for reform, but the king will apparently have to strive to maintain this delicate balance to cement his legitimacy from both a domestic and international point of view. There remains a certain discomfort in the acceptance of King Abdullah's legitimate rule, in that his government is demonstrably not in line with Western democratic criteria.

A reflection on Rawls' conception of Benevolent Absolutism (1997) offers an answer to this interrogation, as it presents enlightened despotism as an exception of sorts. Despite its non-compliance with certain principles, benevolent absolutism, through its very nature, cannot be sanctioned, as it cannot be considered ruler of an outlaw state, nor does it violate its people's rights. Eric Posner (2008) adds an interesting angle to this discussion, by suggesting that the focus is shifted to human welfare rather than strict human rights. Although enlightened despots may not respect certain intrinsic human rights, they are seen to focus on promoting the welfare of their people. Since the people's welfare is the general objective of human rights, Posner suggests that the strict guidelines set by human rights treaties might in certain cases be justifiably waived when the incumbent regime is actively focused on advancing the welfare of its population. Accordingly, while Jordan's regime certainly lacks some democratic process and fails to uphold certain human rights, such as the freedom of the press, it appears justified to support its monarch's legitimate rule in light of his rational and welfare-oriented policies.

Having thus examined legitimacy, both foreign and domestic, as a cause of the Jordanian monarchy's resilience, the following section addresses stability as its consequences that grant fundamental safeguard.

CAPITOLO 3

STABILITY

At present, the integrity of Jordan's Hashemite monarchy seems intact. Nevertheless, Jordan faces significant economic, social, and political challenges and, concomitantly, deals with the repercussions of the war in Syria, its neighbor to the north, as well as the anarchy in Iraq, its neighbor to the east. This chapter analyzes the concept of stability, focusing on the ability of the Hashemite Kingdom to be the stable eye of the Middle Eastern storm [Eran, 2014].

After the exposition of the cardinal points of the Kingdom legitimacy, which is considered as the cause of the resilience of Jordan, this chapter will provide an in-depth analysis of the consequence of such legitimacy: stability. Only thanks to the complex coexistence of the factor that grant legitimacy to the King, Abdullah is able to reign and rule his country maintaining a sufficient degree of stability. After an overall analysis of the political context of the Middle East this chapter will present its first section: the physical changes in the domestic politics of Jordan after the protests. Consequently, the analysis of Jordan's stability will concern at the situation of the country in the international scenario, the first section is dedicated to the domaine réservé of the monarchy and it explains the current conditions of the monarchy after the resilient reforms undertaken by the King in reaction to the protests.

The second section leaves domestic politics and focuses on the two primary issues in the current Jordanian policy making system: refugees and Da'esh. Those two topics deserve a particular section because they are part of both domestic politics and of foreign policy: this section will be called intermestic. In addition to a general consideration of the influence of the refugee crises in Jordanian history, from the Palestinian to the Iraqi one, the current refugee crisis caused by the Syrian war is examined. During this considerations, it is inevitable not to investigate the influence of the ISIS takeover in two of Jordan's neighbor countries. A careful reflection on the recent development of the terrorist organization is necessary to understand Jordan's ability to adapt and avoid another crisis.

The last part is dedicated to the foreign policy of the country and analyzes the monarchy's behavior toward the international community. Firstly the relations of Jordan with its neighbor countries from Israel to Saudi Arabia, including Jordan's increasing participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council, are examined. The focus then moves to the relations of the Kingdom with the United States. The evidently important role played by United States of America (US) in the Middle East scenario, and the support that the US gives to stable regimes in the Middle East are the most important points in the explanation of this alliance.

In conclusion, general remarks coming from the international community are discussed dedicating a reflection to the ability of the kingdom to maintain alliances with many different nations, despite their own conflicts with each other; an example of which could be the conflict between Israel and Saudi Arabia: both allied to Jordan but sharing extremely tense relations among them. This will then answer the question: Why is the Jordanian monarchy able to maintain stability in what is generally considered to be a difficult geopolitical situation?

THE EYE OF THE CYCLONE

The Hashemite Kingdom can be considered the buffer state that absorbs tensions to avoid an ultimate implosion of the Middle East. Today its function seems to be similar to the 1921 design by Churchill, then the Colonial Secretary, who entrusted Transjordan to the son of al-Husayn, head of the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

This small state, stretching from the Jordan Valley to the plateau of Transjordan to the Iraqi desert, has a geopolitical weight much larger than its real economic and military capabilities, securing its importance in reducing tensions in the Arab magma [Nerguizian, 2014]. Also, it was the second Arab country, after Sadat's Egypt, to sign a peace treaty with Israel in 1994 to regain Western sympathies after its support given to Saddam in the Gulf War [Ryan, 2000]. Furthermore, among the most significant agreement with Israel, there is undoubtedly the deal related to the sharing of the Jordan water resources with Israel and the Palestinian National Authority [Susskind, 2012].

Good relations with both Israel, although more formal than substantive, and the US are, however, factors of social and regional vulnerability. This transfers to the

Kingdom the burden of Washington's actions in Iraq and those of Tel Aviv in Gaza and within the occupied territories. The weight of unpopularity, however, when compared to the benefits that the state has obtained from the United States regarding the economy and national security, seemed preferable to the King. With the recognition of the Syrian crisis as an international conflict and the growing pressure of the Islamic State, the US Congress in 2014 allocated approximately $1 billion in aid to Jordan[19]. Moreover, from 2012 there has been an increased military presence in the country to defend the borders with Syria, not counting the proceeds of the Fund Partnership against Terrorism to which the country is part [Sharp, 2014].

For a country that survives in part thanks to international aid and who is facing perhaps the most destabilizing time since the Black September crisis in 1970, agreements and concessions are vitally strategic. According to the UN, the total number of Syrian refugees arrived in Jordan amounted to approximately 650 thousand units to which must be added the Palestinians surveyed by UNRWA (2 million) and the Iraqis (58,000) [Wieser, 2016]; this is in addition to its 8 million inhabitants. Jordan is the first country in the world where indigenous and refugee populations are almost the same amount and still maintain a stable relationship [UNHCR, 2017].

However, Amman's strategy does not forget the importance of connecting with their Sunni neighbors, especially after the fall of Saddam in 2003 and the removal of favorable oil imports by the Ba'ath regime. The Kingdom, along with Morocco, is moving towards the membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council. This is also pushed by the fear of the House of Saud that the destabilizing effects caused by the "Arab Spring" could jeopardize the Sunni order of the Gulf. Effectively, a greater Iranian influence on the Hashemite monarchy would thus complete a control line that from Tehran goes to Baghdad, Damascus, and Beirut putting the Saud in need of active cooperation with Jordan [Nerguizian, 2014]. On the one hand, this approach to petromonarchies assures economic benefits and, on the other, creates numerous embarrassments. Examples include the diplomatic crisis with Doha in 2014 or the escalation of the Yemeni crisis when Abdullah II was forced to divert

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[19] For example, in 2008 the U.S. and Jordanian governments reached an agreement whereby the United States agreed to provide a total of $660 million in annual foreign assistance to Jordan over a five-year period.

military resources in the south of the Arabian peninsula for partnership obligations rather than strategic needs [Gause, 2013].

The Table that follows describes the eight foreign policy variables that Andrew Tabler (2016) identifies as the key elements of Jordan's survival in the region. This effective approaches are extrapolated from a broad reflection of the author on the consideration following the hundred years' anniversary of the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

Table 3: Productive Approaches that helped the Palace to overcome adversities.

RELATIVELY BETTER GOVERNANCE   According to Freedom House, Jordan is "not free." By regional standards, however, Jordan employs comparatively mild repression. Its monarchs do not employ torture to the same degree as other regional states.
LESS KILLING   Smart crowd control is a hallmark of Jordanian policing. When demonstrations do occur, the police and gendarme, known as the *derak*, do not fire on crowds, even when this means officers sustain casualties.
MEDIATION OF SOCIETAL CONFLICT   Over the years, the palace has served as the traditional arbiter between the estimated 40 percent tribal-origin and 60 percent Palestinian-origin population. Much resentment prevails on both sides—social, economic, and political—but the regime has found a formula to defuse tensions and reduce violence. An intermarriage rate of about 30 percent, which includes the king himself, is likely helping matter.
SMART HANDLING OF ISLAMISTS   The palace has been judicious in its dealings with the kingdom's Islamists. Through a combination of cajoling, cooptation, and, periodically, intimidation and repression, Jordanian authorities have adeptly managed what could have been a significant threat to the regime and the kingdom's pro-West orientation.
TOP-NOTCH FUNDRAISING   Jordan has been a debtor state since 1946 but has obtained funding from the Gulf, Saddam's Iraq, the United States, Europe, and Japan. The palace has elevated fundraising to an art, leveraging its strategic location and its moderation to extract consistently high rents from the United States, which is now contributing nearly 10 percent of Jordan's budget annually.
ACCEPTING REFUGEES   Jordan has allowed more refugees per capita to enter than perhaps any other country. These refugees have been a real strain on the kingdom, both economically and socially. But the refugees have also been a consistent profit center, bringing revenues, financial assistance, and at times new capital into the kingdom.

Source: Schenker, 2016

THE EFFECTS OF THE ARAB AWAKENINGS IN THE STABILITY OF THE COUNTRY

In 2011, with the outbreak of the first civil unrest in the city of Deraa, Jordan unwittingly became involved in the Syrian civil war; it became the primary destination of those who fled the country [Wieser, 2016]. With the militarization of the conflict in Syria, the emergence of the Islamic State that caused Western and Russian intervention, the country became a vent valve of the migratory pressure as an alternative to the Mediterranean route. The vast numbers of Syrian moving to Jordan forced the Kingdom to open other refugee camps such as al Mragib Fahud, al-Azraq, and Zaatari. The UN data cited previously [UNHCR, 2017] paints a picture that illustrates how the absorption capacity of refugees is close to collapse. This problem joins other structured internal problems, such as scarcity of water resources, jeopardizing the Jordanian economy [IMF, 2016].

In fact, the war in Syria and Iraq resulted in a drastic reduction in trade, particularly with the closing of the Gabar/Nasib border which blocked the main road connecting Damascus to Amman and the rest of the GCC countries. According to Nabil Rumman, the President of the Commission of Investors Jordan, the closing reduced the volume of trade by $1.5 billion to just 400 million in 2014 and a negligible amount in 2015. The losses for the public and private sector amount to almost $30 million a day [Wieser, 2016].

As a result, rents are tripled in some cities, and both the education and the health systems are under increasing pressure. As consequence of the worsening of the economic condition, Jordan enjoyed a rise in corruption, *wasta* in Arabic which already was an endemic problem in Jordanian society causing a continuous decline in

social mobility. This, in turn, exacerbates inter-ethnic divisions, strengthens the radical movements mainly in the communities of Ma'an, Zarqa (where Abu Musab al-Zarqawi came from), and Salt and helps propagate the political appeal of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Jordanian society is in fact traditionally divided into two main groups [Ryan, 2011]: on one side there are the native Jordanians who mainly belong to the Bedouin tribes of Transjordan and are prevalently integrated into the public system and the civil service. On the other side, there are the west-bankers who are the descendants of Palestinians of the West Bank, and they mainly work within the private entrepreneurial and craftsman sectors [IMF, 2016]. Considering this set of issues, it seems surprising that the Arab turmoil did not produce a significant seismic effect on the Hashemite monarchy.

Zayd Eyadat, the Director of the School of International Studies of Amman [Eran, 2014], argues that, due to structural reasons, the Uprisings did not cause long-term consequences. As stated in the first chapter, the demonstrations of 2011 caused an almost immediate dissolution of the Government and the replacement of the Prime Minister. His Majesty tentatively accepted some of the demands of the protesters: promoting constitutional amendments, creating a Constitutional Court, strengthening of parliamentary rights and enacting some laws on the protection of human rights. These reforms avoided a dangerous radicalization of the protest. Moreover, the moderate forces, interested in maintaining internal stability were involuntarily aided by the militarization of the Syrian conflict: the threat of a war on the borders of the country made Jordanians reevaluate their priorities and desire for reform [Alianak, 2014]. Another key factor is that unlike in Egypt during the government of Nasser and Sadat, Jordan never outlawed the Muslim Brotherhood, and always resisted the calls from Saudi Arabia to do so [Helfont, 2012]. The positive relationship between the Brotherhood leaders and the Jordanian establishment softened the tone of the revolutionary propaganda moving the debate to more democratic forms of opposition, as the Islamic Action Front or newly formed trade unions [Phenix, 2012], and limited the requests to economic and political representation rather than to ideological and religious issues [Alianak, 2014]. This behavior proved to be even wiser after the seizure of power of Mohammed Morsi in

Egypt in 2012; this could have caused a dangerous contagion effect before the "good news" of the al-Sisi coup d'état in July 2013 [Amin, 2013].

In addition, the sociocultural characteristics of the Hashemite Kingdom helped to prevent the destabilization of Jordan in 2011. Even if the Sunni population is homogeneous, the division in the Jordanian society between the Jordanians and the west bankers guarantees that the events of the 1970 crackdown are still etched into people's memories. The monarchy carefully manipulates this division to take advantage of it in times of need; in 2011, the west bankers did not participate in the protests for fear that the King's fall would put their stay in Jordan at risk [Helfont, 2012].

In contrast, the criticism of the former Transjordans, mainly tribal clans, is cross-sectional and seems to complicate the positive relationship with the monarchy, also due to the indefinite postponement of the implementation of significant reforms by the Government.

A turning point in uniting the country happened in February 2015: the barbaric murder of the twenty-six year old pilot Kasasbeh, a member of the influential tribe of Bararsheh, by the Islamic State. This had the unexpected effect of improving the partnership between the Crown and the tribes who welcomed the strong reaction of His Majesty Abdullah II whose legitimacy depends on the support of these tribes [Rothe, 2015]. From the beginning, the strategy of the Crown, which not only requires legitimacy but especially loyalty, was to co-opt members of these tribes in the Armed Forces and within the powerful security apparatus, thus giving these families appointments in the public administration. Abdallah II demonstrates such a political sensitivity to this issue that when Transjordanians protested in the neighborhood of the Royal Palace, no order was given to evacuate the area or repress the dissent [Goldberg, 2013].

The words of the father of al-Kasasbeh addressed to the King, "You are a wise monarch" [Branca, 2015], highlight the renewed partnership between the royal family and its political backbone guaranteed by the tribes; all united in the fight against the Islamic State. From a military point of view, apart from the retaliatory bombing of Raqqa, the young pilot's death did not change the actual tactical commitment of Jordan, but catalyzes popular sentiment in regards to the war. This

change was necessary for the Crown as it led Jordan to become a reliable ally in the eyes of the United States and the European Union, thus allowing Abdullah II to exploit the situation and to seek for an increase in financial aid. Furthermore, the King called for a greater commitment from the EU because, in the absence of a stable Jordan, the flow of refugees ultimately will push further towards the Mediterranean route.

Regarding terrorism, the commitment of the royal family in fighting the radical ideology on the cultural level became a priority. Since the attacks of September 11th 2001, His Majesty is deeply committed to the promotion of the values of tolerance, of respect and peaceful coexistence. He accomplishes this effort with the Amman message, a cultural platform composed of scholars, writers, students, and politicians with the aim to demolish fundamentalist propaganda [Amman, 2004]. This commitment is particularly dear to the King who always refused to call the terrorists of Da'es as "Muslim" terrorist fighters but rather identify them as *Kharijites* (outlaws) [Branca, 2015].

Gause (2013) argues that "A line of argument in the recent literature on monarchical stability is that the monarchs are just better at governing." Despite the tautological appearance, this argument has two elements. The lesser emphasized part contends that monarchies produce better results for their citizens than do their Republican counterparts economically. The more prevalent part argues "that monarchies are better able to credibly and effectively institute political reform in the face of mobilized opposition, and thus defuse it. While there are interesting insights generated from both strands of the functional superiority argument, neither in the end is a convincing argument for monarchical stability [Gause, 2013]".

Therefore, the element of strength resides in the person of the king and in his political choices. Only a country-by-country reporting can precisely explain the reasons for the success or failure of a state. Therefore in the next section, the domestic politics of King Abdullah II are described and illustrated to understand what saved the country from the turmoil that shook the MENA region from 2011 to 2012.

DOMESTIC LEVEL

Following the events that caused the protests and the riots in 2011, Abdullah put into operation two institutions: a "Committee for National Dialogue", created on March 14th, 2011, consisting of politicians, journalists, activists and lawyers and headed by Taher Masri[20], a loyal subject of the king, to draft a new electoral law and to control political parties and a "Royal Commission for the Revision of the Constitution" created on April 27th, 2011 [Susser, 2011].

As for the political parties and the electoral system, the new law ensures better functionality of a multiparty system. It dictates that the parties should not be based on ethnic, religious, or racial criteria. They should not discuss politics regarding the judicial or the military system and, above all, must not accept funding from abroad; instead, they receive subsidies from the state. Art. 33 of the law states that penalties or imprisonment could occur to members who commit the crime of accepting foreign aid as it is clear that Saudi, Iranian or other Gulf monarchies' money could destabilize Jordan's social and political systems. The approved reform also provides additional safeguards such as the inviolability of the headquarters of political parties as well as the communications made in exercising their functions [Law on Political Parties, 2015].

The Chamber of Deputies (*Majlis al-Nuwaab*), the elected chamber of the National Assembly (*Majlis al-Humma*), changed from 120 to 130 members (113 of which elected from the twelve governorate, *muhafazat*, and 17 at a national one) with a quorum of guaranteed seats for female representation (15 seats in comparison to the 12 of the past) [Valbjørn, 2013].

Theoretically the new law gives more space to political representation and seems to damage the discretionary of the royal prerogatives; in reality, Abdullah substantially manages to block the aspirations of more dangerous political movement, as represented by the IAF. In fact, the district vote favors tribal candidates who are those more favorable to the monarchy, therefore preventing the

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[20] Taher Nashat al-Masri is a Jordanian of Palestinian origin who served as Prime Minister of Jordan from 19 June 1991 to 21 November 1991. He opposed the invasion of Iraq but reportedly wanted the Americans to stay in Iraq and keep it "out of the hands of the fundamentalists." He served on the Council on Foreign Relations since 2002 and is the league's commissioner for civil society. While Prime Minister, he pressed for changes to the election law.

Muslim Brotherhood from operating at the national level where it is more influential [Amin, 2013].

Moreover, the sovereign introduces a new element in its favor; the new law now grants the right to vote to the security forces who account for ten percent of the population and whose sympathies are fairly oriented with the royal house. The constitution also states that no member of the Parliament can have any financial dealings with the government, and also states that no member of the royal family can be part of the government [Law on Political Parties, 2015]. The proof of the effectiveness of this strategy is demonstrated by the fact that the IAF boycotted the recent parliamentary elections. Contrary to the expectations of the Muslim Brotherhood, the voting had a turnout of more than 56.6 percent. This is even higher than the 2010 turnout when the IAF participated [Amin, 2013].

Today the Jordanian monarch works with a parliament full of conservative and of tribal leaders. The most qualified Islamic representation is made up of the 17 seats won by the Muslim Center Party Hizb Al-Wasat Al-Islamiya, which is a dissident faction of the Muslim Brotherhood. The Brotherhood has tried to stir up demonstrations in the squares around the country. However, this attempted show of force turned into a demonstration of weakness.

Other small concessions, such as the press law stating that journalists will not be imprisoned because of what they write, but they will only face monetary fines (excluding those crimes considered against state security), definitely increase the level of civil freedom and demotivating actions destabilizing the monarchy.

Even on the level of constitutional reforms (41 amendments were proposed and approved), the ruler moves with expertise: the one hand giving and the other controlling. The control is determined by the creation of a Constitutional Court that replaces a previous High Court for the Interpretation of the Constitution. Thanks to Art. 58 of the renewed Constitution, this court has the task of verifying the constitutionality of laws proposed by the government or approved by Parliament. The ability of the king in maintaining the status quo is evident in the fact that the nine members of the Court, holding the non-renewable office for six years, are all of royal nomination [Jordan's Constitution, 2014]. Thus, the king gives but also controls.

Furthermore, it is necessary to highlight that the Jordanian legal system is bicameral and in the Senate (*Majlis al-Aayan*) all of its 75 members are of royal appointment and can be removed by a "vote of no confidence." Every law must be approved by both Houses of Parliament and then ratified by the sovereign. Indeed this procedure, in comparison with other facade changes, has not changed.

According to Jordan's former Foreign Minister, Marwan Muasher (2011), "…efforts to open up the political system have been thwarted by a resilient class of political elites and bureaucrats who feared that such efforts would move the country away from an old rentier system to a merit based one."

INTERMESTIC LEVEL

This section analyzes the so-called intermestic situation of Jordan. For the purpose of this thesis, the word intermestic includes all the domestic issues directly dependent on international affairs. In the case of Jordan, the intermestic situation is dominated by the consequences of the Syrian issue that is destabilizing the Hashemite Kingdom with the continuous stream of Syrian refugees fleeing the civil war across the northern border of Jordan. To understand the ability of the monarchy to maintain stability in this framework, a discussion of the relation with Da'esh is fundamental to examine how the quick development of the terrorist organization tries to destabilize the country through the radicalization of Islam and a destabilizing amount of refugees [Natta, 2014].

REFUGEES AND JORDAN

"Occupying the calm eye of the storm in the Middle East, Jordan has a long tradition of absorbing the displaced people of its troubled neighbors [Walker, 2015]. Currently, Jordan is coping with its fourth influx of refugees in fifty years; it has the region's largest population of Syrian refugees. With each new flood of asylum seekers, Jordan's resources and the patience of its citizens are stretched to breaking point [Walker, 2015].

Avi Melamed (2016) describes the enormous stream of refugees from Syria as "a heavy burden on the already severely distressed Jordanian economy that is plunging the kingdom into debt [Kaplan, 2015]. As of October 2015, the Zaatari refugee camp in northern Jordan, along the Syrian border, the biggest camp for Syrian refugees in Jordan, had a population of some eighty-one thousand people [Al Jazeera, October 2015], reportedly turning it into the fourth largest city in Jordan. In a report of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) is presented the situation of December 2015, in the kingdom were living more than 632,228 Syrian refugees. The actual number is likely much higher. Jordanian officials estimate it to be double that number [Kaplan, 2015] because UNHCR numbers only reflect people who have registered as refugees with the United Nations. Imad Fakhoury, the Jordanian minister of planning and international cooperation, said in October 2015 that the cost of hosting the Syrian refugees in Jordan since the crisis began in 2011 is $6.6 billion [Kaplan, 2015]".

Right now the country is experiencing overcrowding. The presence of over a million refugees is seriously challenging the forbearance limit of Jordanians. This level of uncertainty is scaring people, and it is causing enormous repercussions on the delicate issue of water supply. Forced also from previous waves of refugees, Jordanians are looking for employment and often end up on the black market, thus destabilizing the normal equilibrium of the country.

Currently, the sectors suffering the most are schools and hospitals, while the labor market is also slowly collapsing. To avert a complete crisis, the European Union calls on the Amman government to create employment and social opportunities for the refugees; this is a direct exception to international law as the refugee status does not allow employment. Indeed the situation is complicated and requires investment funds benefiting both the local population and the refugees. Only 1.5 percent have work permits, and the situation does not seem to be improving [Weiser, 2016].

In addition to the rise in the cost of living, the biggest problems concern water and housing. To this needs, it should be added heating, which in winter becomes a necessity. It is a difficult challenge to provide refugees and citizens the basic necessities [Wieser, 2016]. Despite Jordan's best efforts, there is a physiological need to help Amman that cannot handle alone the umpteenth humanitarian crisis. This lack of essential resources increases the threat of destabilization and creates considerable uncertainty about the future. Indeed longer-term planning in how to manage the situation is lacking in a country that is still hosting refugees that escaped Iraq after the first Gulf War in 1991 [Kaplan, 2015].

The London Conference in February 2016 brought together world leaders to raise the nine billion dollars in order to meet the needs of the Syrian refugees. The United Nations estimated it was necessary to raise $7.73 billion in aid for Syria; this is in addition to the $1.23 billion for the states involved in the crisis [UNHCR, 2017]. It is hard indeed to be able to provide solution solely based on funding Middle Eastern partners. The main problem, as we saw, is the lack of "long-term" projects. The refugees first look forward to be able to return to their homeland, where they lost homes, assets, and property. Wherever they come from, Homs, Damascus, or Aleppo, their ambition is to return [Wieser, 2016].

To face a crisis of this dimensions projects and initiatives must be supported by a united front; it must be not only the local government's concern but also that of Europe, the US, and the wider international community. Christina Wieser (2016) transcribes the words of a Jordanian regarding the refugee crisis: "Because we are facing a world closed where you feel a silent fanaticism, which for now remains under control. But it is a breeding ground that, one day, could flare up."

Including the southern governorates of Jordan, where there are at least 10 thousand Syrian refugees, refugees are continuing to be welcomed, especially pregnant women and children with severe need and malnutrition [Wieser, 2016]. One of the few equipped centers of the region is the Italian Hospital of Cnewa[21], close to Karak. In the city of 170 thousand inhabitants and 150 km south of Amman, the staff work with a common mission and without discrimination. Despite the difficulties, episodes of solidarity occur, such as the services of the Comboni Missionary Sisters. They keep the doors open, welcoming Christians, and Muslims without discrimination and promoting mutual communion [Francis, 2015]. However, all of this aid warns the financial difficulties affecting the whole country, making clear that their work is not a solution to the problem but just a way to procrastinate emergency.

THE THREAT OF DA'ESH

The primary cause for the extraordinary inflow of refugees corresponds to a dangerous and imminent threat to Jordan's monarchy: Militant Islamist organizations. Groups such as ISIS or Jabhat al-Nusra (the Syrian branch of al-Qaeda), are relentlessly approaching the northern limits of the Kingdom. In the vision of this radical paramilitary groups the Jordanian royal house, together with many other Arab rulers and governments, are identified as an illegitimate entity because they "don't believe it rules in accordance with the pure virtues and values established in the early days of Islam [Melamed, 2016]." This is a sufficient justification for the militant Islamist organization to fight in order to overthrown these leaders. "In a booklet allegedly published by ISIS in April 2015 and titled "The allegiance to the Caliphate and Not to the National State", the writer claimed that all Arab territory – other than the areas of Syria and Iraq controlled by ISIS – is ruled by

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[21] Please refer to the Interview with *Primo Segretario* Marco Salaris; Amman, April 13th 2016.

kafirun, infidels, who do not obey the rules of Allah – their God - and Islam [Melamed, 2016]".

The geographic position of Jordan, at the intersection between Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt deliver great strategic importance to the country making its stability a shared interest of his neighbors that are still untouched by Daesh. Furthermore, the 307 Kilometers that divide the Kingdom from Israel represent the longest border of the Jewish country [CIA, 2017] – "a fact that attracts militant Islamist groups who call for the destruction of Israel. From their perspective, control over Jordan would provide a perfect base to achieve this goal [Melamed, 2016]." In June 2014 indeed, following the last consideration Ynet, an Israeli news website, Ynet, reported that Israeli diplomats informed the United States that Israel would engage war against Daesh if the Syrian radical terrorist threatens Jordan [Kais, 2014].

The threat posed to the Hashemite kingdom by militant Islamist groups concern several fronts: its borders against physical invasion and its population against the influence of radical ideologies. "Externally, in April 2014, the Jordanian air force destroyed combat vehicles in the Ruwaished area of eastern Jordan that belonged to either ISIS or smugglers who had infiltrated Jordan from Iraq or Syria. The incident highlighted the sensitive security issues that face Jordan on its borders with Iraq and Syria. For example, in April 2015, ISIS claimed responsibility for an attack on Jordan launched from the border crossing between Iraq and Jordan [Melamed, 2016]."

Internally, many hundreds of Jordanians, possibly as many as two thousand[22], have left the country to join militant Islamist groups in Iraq and Syria [May'ayeh, 2015]. According to Jordanian laws, any Jordanian caught joining or having acceded to a terrorist faction will be subject to a sentence of five years in jail - yet this punishment has not proved to be an adequate deterrent, as the number are increasing [Soufan, 2015].

"Radical and sadistic in its methods, ISIL is making rational moves according to organizational opportunities and constraints; its military exploits have been reactions to voids in state power and authority [Spath, 2014]." The escalation of the

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[22] Number confirmed by the interview with *Primo Segretario* Marco Salaris; Amman, April 13th 2016.

internal conflict in Syria represented a precious occasion to regain the strength that Daesh lost during the 2006-2008 counterinsurgency campaign in Iraq. As Andrea Spath (2014) an American researcher specialized in Middle Eastern Studies explain "sectarian and autocratic politics in Iraq delegitimized the government in predominantly Sunni areas and facilitated ISIL's return to its erstwhile eastern base, no matter the organization's rhetoric, a direct incursion in Jordan would defy its current territorial logic, especially as it presently focuses on consolidating gains [Spath, 2014]." However, the resourcefulness of Da'esh already impressed his opponents due to their ability to organize and extend its territory strategically and, critically, to seduce young solitary Muslim exploiting every possible communication channel. "The U.S. recognizes Jordan's geostrategic value and longstanding cooperation on diplomatic and security matters; as such it should guarantee unqualified and immediate support in the event of such a hostile contingency [Sharp, 2014]."

A reconsideration of the internal balance of power in favor of a higher degree of representativeness could discourage the radicalization process that is spreading across the Middle East and specifically Jordan in the same way as military and political action influence against this phenomenon.

As yet, "parochial interest and reluctance to share power continue to stand in the way. Continual failure to bring to fruition more inclusive development and reform initiatives undercuts confidence in government and strengthen subversive element of society. Laws and practices that repress political activity and expression might create hostility exactly when the government should be conciliatory to legitimate voices of dissent. Without this domestic progress, the government will risk marginalizing itself more than the radical factions it needs to marginalize [Spath, 2014]". The last quotation of Spath arguments linking political closeness to the development of radicalization among young Jordanians has been added to the thesis with the ambition to follow as many different visions regarding the relation between the Royal Palace in Amman and its more radical subjects around the Kingdom. However, still recognizing this perspective as a valid one, it is relevant to consider that the presence of radical terrorist that claim affiliation with ISIS is a phenomenon that is also threatening the most open societies such as France or Germany. This

suggests to move the attention more to the effectiveness of ISIS propaganda rather than the context where it is acknowledged.

After this consideration on the role that ISIS holds towards the threat of radicalization and the migration of refugees, it appears evident that intermestic factors are the largest threat to the stability of the country. Thus, it can be argued that these issues are the most important for the kingdom and, resiliently, remain strong arguments used to gain visibility and international support. Therefore the last section of this chapter is dedicated to examining Jordan's international relations.

INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

The monarchy of Jordan has the role of policy-maker for what concerns its domestic policy; however, while analyzing the kingdom's foreign relations, we see that the decisions of the country are deeply influenced by the events of the region. The stability of the realm on the global scenario is granted by the king's ability to maintain positive relationships with all his international partners, starting with the United States of America and the European Union. If it is true that is relatively easy for a peaceful country with the most turbulent and unpredictable neighbors to have positive relationships with other nations thanks to the certainty of stability that it grants; it is also true that the resilience and the generosity of Jordan are a remarkable results achieved only through the clever behavior of its monarch within the international community.

In this analysis of Jordanian's foreign policy, the focus is on the principal actors in the alliance game. While considering the international point of view, no longer the intermestic one and with the Syrian conflict, the analysis will begin with the neighboring countries. The relations with Israel, Iraq and Saudi Arabia form part of the reflection to understand the position of Jordan as in the eye of the storm. To further understand the links between the Hashemite and the al-Saud family, a brief analysis is dedicated to Amman's relation with the Gulf Cooperation Council.

After this regional perspective, the thesis discusses the alliance between Washington, D.C., and Amman. The United States (US) always proves to be an indispensable actor on the international scene, either seen as attacking or supporting. In the case of the Hashemite monarchy, the US shows great support and maintains a strong alliance that promotes stability and protection to Amman. Indeed, to satisfy Washington D.C.'s ambition, the US are working to create a responsible partner/buffer state in a strategic geopolitical position. It is indeed a confirmation of the ability to transport of the King the fact the Jordan is one of the few countries that share positive relations both with Russia and the United States.

Another important international actor is the European Union. Historically, the 28 nations included in the European Union always had positive bilateral relations with Jordan. However with the recent opening of the Mediterranean route that allows refugees to escape from Syria through Turkey and then Europe brought the Kingdom

to the special attention of the Foreign Affairs Council in Brussels. The extraordinary permission for refugees to work or the beginning of the cultural diplomacy project are only a few of the recent steps that High Representatives of the EU Mogherini and Abdullah II are having together.

NEIGHBORS

Regarding foreign policy, the analysis starts with the neighboring countries of Jordan. The kingdom claims borders with Syria torn by civil war, with Israel and its interventionist aspirations and, finally, on the east the still-unstable Iraq and its precarious political structures. It should, moreover, be noted that Jordan is still socially involved and is still physically contiguous to the unresolved Palestinian affairs. On the other side of the Red Sea, Jordan's territorial waters are contiguous with those of Egypt, and the current political instability of the Al-Sisi regime does not present Amman with a stable commercial partner even if that government presents a reliable ally in the limitation of the Muslim Brotherhood ambitions. This troubled position creates concerns to the southern neighbor of Jordan: Saudi Arabia and consequently the various monarchies of the Gulf that will indeed be observed later in the section dedicated to the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The above situations potentially endanger the stability of the Hashemite Kingdom and his dependency on subsidies from international observers and Saudi oil. Its location in the epicenter of a social storm, with unpredictable political and military developments, is both a limit and a point of strength for the country.

Currently, as seen in the previous section, the most imminent problem is related to Syria. The massive amount of refugees camped on Jordanian territory and of the risk that the Syrian conflict can go beyond the state's borders are further multiplied if the risk of widespread of terrorism is considered.

An alarm bell regarding this issue can be seen as Benjamin Netanyahu's recent visit to Amman to meet King Abdullah and discuss the above matters [Eran, 2014]. Indeed Israel had already requested authorization to cross Jordanian airspace to hit some of the supposed chemical deposits of Assad. On the Syrian issue, Abdullah II maintains an equidistant attitude that, while not very pleasing to Qatar and Saudi Arabia, is necessary if considering the approximately 380 km of common border between Syria and Jordan. However, at the same time, the government allows

the US government to secretly train Syrian rebels on its soil [Al Jazeera, November 2016].

If these circumstances quantify the danger circulating in the region, they also give substance to the role of Jordan and its ruler as a partner and a negotiating party in each regional affair. And here lies the strength of King Abdullah; in his quest for dialogue, he acts as an intermediary and a contact between Israel (with which he signed a peace agreement in 1994) and the Arab world. Despite the pro-American political trend, which traditionally is part of the foreign policy of the country, the country has good relations with almost all the regimes in the region and has settled fibrillation on the internal ground. Thus Jordan looks like an island of peace in the middle of a stormy sea.

To a careful observer, it seems clear that both internally and internationally Abdullah has done nothing more than following his father's footsteps [Ryan, 2002]. The late King Hussein solved the internal ferments using the succession of prime ministers or facade concessions and, on the external level, he maintained open relations with everyone, including Israel when it was considered the number one enemy of the Arab world. It seems that this approach still works.

From a regional perspective, the role of Jordan can, therefore, be considered limited by the consequence of the disputes between its neighbors. Jordan has indeed regained its moderate central role and, above all, maintained its position as a stable country in the Middle East. The role of moderate nation that Abdullah inherited from his father Hussein, and that he continues to exercise, is, in fact, the guarantee of the survival of the Hashemite monarchy because it allows Jordan to be, in this configuration, the only credible interlocutor in the long-standing Israeli-Palestinian issue. Furthermore, the country is identified as the point of contact for all those crises that periodically emerge in the Middle East and the Arabian Peninsula [Helfont, 2012].

Stability has always been to Jordan a complex factor to achieve when considering relations inside and outside the country. This small nation with no particular palatable natural resources (except phosphates), surrounded by turbulence (Syria), bullies (Israel), instability (Iraq) or religious and financial danger (Saudi Arabia with his petrodollars and Wahhabism as well as the historic rivalry dividing

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the Saudi monarchy from the Hashemite) sharpened the sense of political circumspection that allowed the country to transform into its role as a buffer state, moving from a weak geographical position to become an indispensable negotiating partner.

Internally, however, the population's heterogeneous composition created situations of vulnerability in the past; simply consider the Black September of 1970 that saw conflicts between the opposing Palestinian militias and the Arab Legion of Hussein. However, this situation can be considered as resolved since the Palestinian Authority, personified by a moderate as Abu Mazen, finds more points of contact with the politics of dialogue of Abdullah [Eran, 2014]. Furthermore, the time has amalgamated some of the social differences between Bedouins and Palestinians with the last considering Jordan more and more as a real home and not as a transit country.

THE PULL OF THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL

Another reason why Jordan has, for the most part, avoided the most destabilizing aspects of the Arab Spring is the fact that a significant segment of Jordanian society found alternative requests rather than reform, *in primis*, the economic development associated with membership in the Gulf Cooperation Council. Samuel Helfont (2012), a Princeton University Ph.D. Student, analyze this thematic and confirmed that "this is a widely held sentiment. As the recent CSS poll shows, a full 79 percent of Jordanians favor economic reforms before political and democratic reforms. To those ends, 95 percent of the population supports Jordan's accession into the GCC [Al Bakhit, 2011]. Of course, not all Jordanians who support Jordan's entry into the GCC see the issue as linked to the political situation [Helfont, 2012]." Naseem Tarawnah, a Jordan political activist, stated in an interview[23], "For most people, the GCC simply means money; there is neither a political nor a military component."

This condition within the Jordanian society recalls the ancient Roman way of saying: *panem et circenses*. With this proverb, the ancient Roman wanted to state

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23 Interview by Samuel Helfont with Naseem Tarawnah, activist, author of The Black Iris Blog and contributor to 7iber.com, Amman, Jordan, July 17, 2011.

that if the people are granted food and some forms of public entertainment, they will likely not care about the political situation. Jordanians policymakers seem to understand this dictum, and therefore they know that the best way to survive this moment of political instability is by granting a stable and prosperous economic environment. Helfont (2012) confirms this vision by citing the words of Ambassador Kawar[24], former Jordanian diplomats to the USA, that "made clear to believe that the biggest threat to Jordan's national security is young, unemployed Jordanians. This, he continued, is why Jordan is interested in the GCC. Membership in the GCC is predicted not only to be a catalyst for investment in Jordan but also to provide jobs for Jordan's unemployed young people. An increasingly politicized and militarized GCC will stoke a large demand for man-power, which the Gulf States are unable, or unwilling to meet [Helfont, 2012]."

For example, the GCC's military force also known as "The Peninsula Shield," will indeed require more soldiers if the multilateral organization will also include the Hashemite Kingdom. At the same time, Jordan's army is considered as a professional and well-trained force since the old times of Pash Glubb. Conversely, the citizens of the Gulf States are not familiar with serving in the army, and the rentier nature of their government always prefer not to ask its citizens such an efforts [Al-Rawashdeh, 2015]. For Jordan, it would be a win-win situation: a beefed-up Peninsula Shield would provide a significant number of well-remunerated jobs for the many Jordanians youth with almost all of the salaries paid by the Gulf States [Al Sharif, 2011].

Similar scenarios could be imagined in other sectors as well. As Curtis Ryan (2010) of Appalachian State University has argued, "Jordan's leading resource has been and remains its people. Jordanians tend to have very high levels of education and have therefore been able to take advantage of skilled labor and service sector job opportunities in other countries in the region, and especially in the Gulf. Worker remittances are thus a major component of the Jordanian economy." With the Hashemite membership of the Gulf Council, those payments represent a strategic political and economic advantage.

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24 Interview by the authors with Ambassador Karim Kawar, former Jordanian Ambassador to the United States, Amman, Jordan. July 4, 2011.

As the polling data and Ambassador Kawar's comments make clear, for many citizens of Jordan, this type of economic advancement is perceived as a priority on political or democratic reform. "Ambassador Kawar, while expressing his support for democracy, also underscored that he did not believe democracy is the key to economic success and that its implementation will not necessarily solve the unemployment and wage problems plaguing Jordan. He referenced Greece, which, though a democracy, is also in economic disarray [Helfont, 2012]". Walid M. Alkatib, the head of polling at the University of Jordan's Center for Strategic Studies is of the same advice[25]. "He highlighted how the lowest voter turnout has been in Kuwait, proving that "if the economy is doing well, nobody cares about politics [Helfont, 2012]."

The role of Riyadh is particularly interesting: the project enlarging the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to include Morocco and Jordan served, beyond its dubious chances of accomplishment, to seal the front of monarchy during the riots, making available liquidity to appease the mood of the squares immediately in addition to a five-year plan for development [Helfont, 2012]. The Saudi financial support in Amman is entwined with the foreign policy choices of the Hashemite Kingdom. The suspension of aid, which occurred in late 2012, coincides with the missing military supplies to Syrian rebels from King Abdullah II; the Riyadh financial loans resumed in the spring of 2013, when Jordan began to actively support the opposition to Assad's regime and to host US military bases for the Free Syrian Army training [Al Rawashdeh, 2015].

As for last, another relevant factor regarding the admission of Jordan in the GCC is pushed by the always stronger role that coalitions play in the world balance of power. Nations are coming together even if they are missing geographical and cultural ties. "Brazil, Russia, India and Turkey, China and most African countries, the majority of South Asian countries and most of the European ones are finding ways to streamline their differences and enhance what they have in common [Al Sharif, 2011]".

The wise move by King Abdullah to join the GCC helps to maintain stability through economic benefits. After this description of Jordan's behaviors towards its

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[25] Interview by Samuel Helfont with Dr. Walid M. AlKhatib, a Researcher and Head of the Polling Unit at the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, July 21, 2011.

neighboring countries, the attention of this thesis moves to the other side of the Atlantic to understand more about Amman's relation with the US.

WASHINGTON, AMMAN… AND RABAT

"Of course, America's rhetorical commitment to democracy in the region opens Washington up to accusations of hypocrisy over its cozy relations with its royal allies [Gause 2013]". The American Professor, currently working in Qatar for the Washingtonian think thank Brookings, highlight this paradox of the relation among the White House and the Arab Crowns; it should be precise that this conundrum is indeed more present with dynastic monarchies rather than with the individual ones. "When Washington talks to the kings of Morocco and Jordan about democracy, - Gause continues - it is not fundamentally threatening. These kings can make, and have made, concessions to elected parliaments without substantially changing the nature of their regimes. The same cannot be said of the dynastic monarchies. When the United States talks about democracy with the kings of Saudi Arabia and Bahrain or the emir of Kuwait, it implicitly states that they should abandon their primary constituency, their own extended families, and transfer power to elected commoners [Gause, 2013]." Clearly, it is not surprising that those same familiars strongly oppose this sort of radical change.

Since Washington has set the stabilization of Middle East as a priority, the Oval Office has tried to implement as many democratic upgrades in the region even if, in some cases such as Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya, this approach did not prove to be effective [Sharp, 2014]. "Moreover, in each of these countries, Washington has an agenda that goes beyond domestic political reform; real interests related to oil, Arab-Israeli peace, military cooperation, and intelligence-sharing are all at stake. And as America's Iraq experience teaches, American intentions can differ radically from the actual results of U.S. action. As America works to promote political reform in the Middle East, then, the facts argue for a very cautious and humble country-by-country approach with America's Arab monarchical allies [Gause, 2013]."

After the 2011-2012 turbulences, Morocco and Jordan became two key partners in the US alliance system in the Arab world. The first reason is geopolitical. On one side, Rabat has been an uninterruptible bulwark in North Africa during partly violent institutional transitions (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia), as well as a security operator

concerning the West African crises and their effects regarding migratory flows and terrorist threats. On the other side of Suez, Amman is the last frontier of stability in the Middle East in the vortex of sectarianism (Syria, Iraq, and the constant suspense of Lebanon) [Ardemagni, 2014]. The two monarchies at the two geographical extremes of the Arabic-speaking space seem strengthened from the impact of the Arab uprisings. This is due to the synergy between the three political and, in this case, complementary levels: the interior, the so-called intermestics, and the international. On the domestic level, we saw that the sovereigns cleverly mixed subsidies and "defensive" reforms oriented to the preservation of the existing power system, rather than a genuine liberalization of the political and of the economic arenas. The package of constitutional amendments implemented was drawn up by groups of officials directly appointed by the two kings. The actors who inspired the protests (youth movements and trade union left, and only later the Islamists) therefore are excluded from the reform process, which proves to be nothing more than a minimum renegotiation of power relations between institutions [Yom, 2011].

In terms of intermestic politics, the regional arrest of political Islam worsens with the deposition of President Morsi in Egypt. Moreover, the specter of jihadist violence weakens, as previously analyzed, Moroccan and Jordanian Islamist parties, with a decline in the popular mobilization capacity. In Morocco, the Islamist Parti de la Justice et du Développement (PJD), is the head of the coalition that governed during the deep economic crisis with, after the entrance of a new partner after a long executive impasse, the National Rally of Independents (RNI), the closest party to the king. This party assists apparently as a referee but actually holds an important control role: to experience attrition of political Islam rule in the country [Yom, 2011].

Internationally, the United States, Saudi Arabia, and some European countries (Great Britain and France in particular) continue to strengthen the two monarchies with loans and military cooperation.

The kings of Morocco and Jordan, therefore, turn their foreign policies into an internal stabilization tool, in thanks to their partnerships with the White House. The relationship between Washington and the two Arab monarchies, however, is of mutual need. Rabat, with its well-structured armed forces, is an ally in the security of sub-Saharan Africa where it participates in, for example, the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Côte d'Ivoire. Beyond the military commitments, the

Moroccan diplomacy in Africa moves along the economic and cultural-religious carriers, competing with its eternal rival Algeria. 80 percent of Morocco's FDI goes to countries in the central and western end of the continent, while two-thirds of the national exports reach the sub-Saharan area [Sharp, 2014]. Furthermore, to stem the terrorist phenomenon often mixed with migratory flows from the heart of Africa that reach the Moroccan coast on their ways to Europe is, in fact, a convergent lens between Rabat and Washington; it is no accident that the CIA has a base for drones in Guelmim, in the south of the country. In return, the United States maintains an attitude of non-interference in the issue of the status of Western Sahara (occupied by Morocco in 1975), which was the first issue of national interest for the Rabat monarchy [Sharp, 2014].

In the case of Jordan, the alliance with the US is vital. Amman possesses weaker armed forces in comparison to those of some of its neighbors, which moreover have an aggressive foreign projection; simply think of Assad's Syria or Saddam Hussein's Iraq. Jordanian society is homogeneous from the confessional point of view but very sensitive in comparison to what happens in the region, such as in the case of the dense Palestinian communities. Washington needs a buffer state in the dial, and the Hashemite sovereign is the only element capable of holding together a nation built around the unsolved cleavage between the former Transjordanians (or East Bankers) and the Palestinians [Ardemagni, 2014]. The United States is the first military donor to the Jordanian Kingdom (300 million dollars for the year 2014). This is in addition to the surplus of aid allocated by the White House in order to manage the migration of Syrian refugee [Wieser, 2016].

Morocco and Jordan, poor countries in natural resources, suggest that the energy yield is a major factor, but not a necessary one, in the resilience of the Arab monarchies. Faced with the events of 2011, the two monarchs attempt to broaden the social base of their systems of power by co-opting the main Islamist political actors (the PJD, in the case of Morocco) and neglect segments of society, such as the Palestinian private sector (in the Hashemite Kingdom). The ambition is to avoid the formation of transverse and post-ideological protest movements, which call into question the foundations of their monarchies' contracts. So far, in this delicate game, Washington effectively sides with the two kingdoms on the edge of the Arab uprisings [Ardemagni, 2014].

It is not a case that February 2nd, 2017, ten days after the inauguration of Donald Trump as 45th President of the United States, King Abdullah was sitting in the Oval Office in order to renew the strong history of alliance that the two countries share [White House, February 2017]. Despite the comments and the actions implemented by the US President against some Muslim countries, the monarch was the first Arab world's leaders to meet with Mr. Trump since he sworn in to office. With this behavior the King confirms what the foreign policy section of this thesis wants to emphasize: Abdullah II is a King that exploit every possible momentum that could strengthen the stability of his country[26].

Schenker (2016) identify four main actions that the United States could or should implement to help Jordan to pass the regional storm that is living since many years. These actions are briefly illustrated in the table below.

Table 4: What should the United States do to Help?

INCREASE HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE   In 2016, the United States will provide Jordan with more than \$1.6 billion in military and economic assistance. In 2015, Washington also gave the kingdom \$180 million in additional funding for refugee relief, or about half of what the United States gave to Lebanon. Given Jordan's strategic import, Washington should do more. In 2015, Washington donated \$533 million in support to Syrian refugees 43 in other Middle East countries. Some of this funding could be reallocated to Jordan. Washington should also press European and Arab allies (e.g., Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait) to add an annual budget support component of \$1 billion to its existing infrastructure investment projects, committed in 2013, in the Jordanian kingdom.
SUPPORT EMPLOYMENT FOR SYRIAN REFUGEES   High unemployment, insufficient job creation, and controlled immigration appear to be driving the migration of Syrian men to Europe. To entice Syrians to remain in the region, if not in Syria itself, will require providing a degree of economic opportunity. Washington should encourage European states to invest in job-creation initiatives in Jordan once the kingdom provides more Syrian refugees with work permits. Local refugee employment was identified as a European priority during the February 2016 Syria donor conference in London. In exchange for World Bank loans and European grants, Jordan committed in mid-2016 to allow Syrians to work in the kingdom. It is important that Amman follow through on this commitment.

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[26] As further prove of this ability of the King to resiliently exploit every ally despite its internal policy please consider that this thesis was almost entirely written before the election of Donald Trump. However, without losing any time, Abdullah II has been the first Arab Leader to fly to Washington in order to cement his alliance with United States despite the opinions expressed so far by its President.

INCREASE DEFENSE AND INTELLIGENCE COOPERATION

Intelligence sharing and security cooperation between Washington and Amman are already exceptionally strong. To further strengthen the relationship and improve Jordan's intelligence-gathering capabilities over southern Syria, the Obama administration should provide the kingdom with an advanced armed- and surveillance drone capability.

ESTABLISH A GENUINE SAFE ZONE

Although Jordan has implemented some under-the-radar efforts to support communities on the Syrian side of the border, those efforts lack the imprimatur and staying power of a fully supported humanitarian safe zone, where U.S.-led coalition forces provide security for the sheltering and feeding of internally displaced Syrians. Establishing such a zone with partners in the counter-IS coalition would serve both U.S. strategic interests in safeguarding Jordan and humanitarian concerns by protecting civilians.

Source: Schenker, 2016

إن شـاء الله...

CONCLUSIONARY REMARKS

This chapter highlights the ability of the Hashemite Kingdom to maintain stability both internally and externally through his resilient behavior to issues faced in the region. The country, created on a table by Winston Churchill almost a century ago, continues to perform its function as a moderate bulwark in the Middle Eastern instability; it absorbs the tensions in neighboring states while still maintaining domestic stability. Despite the several challenges that the Hashemite monarchy is facing, Jordan remains one of the few Arab countries immune to endemic regional instability.

Domestically, as discussed in the first part of the chapter, the elements that granted the regime stability during the Arab turmoil are the inclusion of the opposition in its political discussions and its ability to enact certain reforms at the appropriate moments. Despite other authoritarian Arab heads of state, Abdullah II does not consider the Muslim Brotherhood [Amin, 2013] as an outlaw group but instead includes them in the parliamentary process through the creation of the Islamic Action Front. Moreover, he bargains with the opposition to avoid escalations in the squares.

Another factor that profoundly influences the development of the situation is the Syrian civil war. The escalation of the conflict against the Assad regime and the consequent appearance of ISIS on the international political scene plays a significant role in the devolution of the turmoil in Jordan [Wieser, 2016]. The influence of the events in the neighboring country concerned develops Jordan's intermestic sphere, in which domestic politics are firmly connected to the international events.

Despite the negotiating abilities of the monarch, the escalation of such a violent and uncertain conflict in Syria encourages the opposition movement to reconsider their requests and moderate their ambition. Also, the influx of refugees allows the monarch to distract the population while helping to solve a humanitarian crisis, and gives the king a strong argument when requesting foreign aid [Eran, 2014]. It should not be forgotten that the Hashemite country is the first in the world for the integration rate among indigenous and the refugee population.

Other events such as the brutal assassination of the Jordanian pilot al-Kasasibah played a significant role to have a sharp change in Jordanian public opinion. In facts, The majority of the population was initially opposed to the support provided to the coalition for fighting the Islamic State that at the time was not considered a priority issue, by virtue of the fact that no jihadist attack had ever taken place in the kingdom.

However, the threat of Is fighters gaining ground in Anbar governorate in the Southwest of Iraq moved the population's attention toward the protection of the country rather than the continuance of protests. This resulted in the further evolution of the fight against the formation of the "Caliphate" and also meant the rapprochement between Iraq and Jordan after the tensions that characterized the al-Maliki government [Eran, 2014].

The Jordanian population, at the same time, understands the precarious situation and faces head on the new issues brought by the Syrian conflict [Natta, 2014]; this includes the reduction in public spending and the substantial limitations in trade caused by the profound crisis in two of the four countries that share borders with Jordan.

Fundamentally, the Syrian crisis can be seen as an important step toward the Jordanian's unity. If resilience is the ability to create and to exploit opportunities from every challenge, the Hashemite monarchy continues to demonstrate this characteristic and thus guarantee themselves the throne of Jordan. The Syrian crisis and the advance of the Islamic State in the neighboring countries focus the world's attention on the role that the Kingdom of Abdullah II plays in the regional context.

Jordan, from the period before the so-called Arab Spring, is inserted into the "moderate" block of Middle Eastern countries. Along with Saudi Arabia, UAE, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Egypt, it is set in opposition to the "resistance bloc" (*muqawama*) composed of Iran, Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas. Developments after 2011 led to a consolidation of this alliance [Natta, 2014].

According to Zaid Eyadat, director of the department of political science at the School of International Studies at the University of Amman, the Arab turmoil has not led to systemic consequences in Jordan for contingent and structural reasons.

First, the demonstrations resulted in the dissolution of the government and the replacement of the prime minister. Following the protests, the regime attempted to accommodate relatively moderate requests from the protesters; the king responded with a series of reforms and constitutional amendments, strengthened the parliamentary process, established a Constitutional Court and enacted laws protecting human rights. In this way, the protests did not radicalize Jordan. This result was the success of the king's strategy to moderate forces and maintain internal stability. Furthermore, the militarization of the revolution in Syria, with the subsequent arrival of refugees in Jordan, formed a strong deterrent to the protests.

Jordanian society, although apparently homogeneous (Arab, Sunni Muslim), is deeply divided. The primary fracture exists between Jordanians and Jordanian-Palestinian. Between these two segments of the population, there are suspicions and fears; the 1970 war is still present in the collective memory of both communities. The government is very careful in its dealings with this delicate situation and uses its successes to maintain stability in other circumstances. For example, in 2011 the Jordanian-Palestinians did not take part in the protests against the king because a fall of the monarchy could put their permanence within the state at risk.

As we saw in the first chapter, with the electoral victories in Tunisia and Egypt, the expression of the Muslim Brotherhood parties worried King Abdullah II. He feared a strengthening of the Islamic Action Party, the former star of the demonstrations held in Amman in spring 2011. The coup in July 2013 in Egypt, led by al-Sisi, was greeted with enthusiasm by the Jordanian monarchy, as well as the Gulf States, and fostered relations in the name of the shared opposition to the Brotherhood. The advance of the Islamic State has further contributed to the strengthening of the alliance. The goal Abdullah II in the formation of an Arab-Islamic coalition is to provide a solution to the problem and to avoid other Western interferences that could potentially be a lifeline for jihadists right to exist [Wieser, 2016].

Furthermore, when asked about Iran's role in the region, the Hashemite monarch emphasizes the regional power status of the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose influence extends from Iraq to Syria, from Lebanon to Yemen to the Horn of Africa, but also to Afghanistan and Pakistan. As a result, he argues that any attempt to mitigate the instability of the Middle East is not possible without Iran, whose

isolation would be counterproductive. Abdullah II believes that the Ayatollahs' regime is a key player in the Syrian game, both for the political support in favor of Bashar al-Asad and for the actual Iranian presence on the ground.

The contribution provided by Jordan to the resolution of the Middle East crisis does not end at the regional level but indeed has significant consequences internationally. In fact, the Hashemite kingdom is presented as the only reliable actor to fight the proxy war against the Islamic State, since a Western ground intervention could complicate rather than resolve the conflicts. Consequently, the US and Europe focus on Abdullah II to hold out against the Jihadist threat and the king, conscious of his role, uses the situation to ask for an increase in financial aid [Sharp, 2014].

However, as suggested by the monarch himself, the financial aid from the West is considered insufficient, especially in the light of the refugee situation. In his speech to the European Parliament, Abdullah II affirms that his country needs more support from the EU [EU Parliament, March 2015]. In fact, Jordan is an important outlet for the refugees. Failing to appropriately manage the situation within Jordan brings it to European shores, leading to a worsening humanitarian crisis.

The match against the Islamic State, however, does not end at the political and military level but also extends to the ideological and cultural. Since September 11th, 2001, Abdullah II promotes the values of tolerance, respect, and peaceful coexistence. This effort is reflected in the so-called Amman Message, a cultural platform composed of scholars, intellectuals, and politicians that aims at two objectives. Firstly, it seeks "to clarify to the modern world the nature of true Islam", to offset misinformation propagated by ideologues such as bin Laden and al-Zawahiri. Secondly, it aims to de-legitimize the terrorists who exploit Islam [Amman, 2004].

The ideological-cultural element in the war against ISIS is the main point on which the Hashemite monarchy concentrates its attentions. Firstly, Abdullah II refuses to call "Muslim extremists" the organization's fighters, instead labeling them as *Kharijites* (*hawarig*), or outlawed; to call them Muslims would imply a legitimization from the religious point of view. Also, both Abdullah II, in his speech to the European Parliament and the heir to the throne Prince Hussein bin Abdullah II,

in the intervention to the UN Security Council [Al Hussein, May 2015], stress the importance of educating young people to prevent the affiliation with terrorist groups.

Thus Jordan is determined to play an active role in addressing regional challenges. The cultural, political, and military tools that the small state possesses, together with the considerable diplomatic skills of the ruling house, make the country a major player in the game of progress in the Middle East.

CONCLUSION

This essay set out to explore the resilience of the Arab monarchies throughout the period of revolts that lasted from 2011 to 2012, seeking to explain how these regimes, unlike their Republican counterparts, emerged relatively unscathed from a series of severe popular uprisings. Though the revolts obviously shook the monarchies, reform was often slow and gradual as the governments bore the brunt of the demands for change. Prime ministers were sacked, political appointments reshuffled, and the monarchs successfully rerouted direct opposition toward a discussion concerning the extent of monarchical power, rather than its validity per se.

The longevity of the Jordanian monarchy, in particular, is analyzed from a historical, social, and political point of view. These investigations identify legitimacy and stability as the cause and the consequence of the resilience of the Kingdom, namely its perceived legitimacy - both by Jordanians and by the international community - and the degree of stability offered by the enduring reign of Abdullah II. The person of the king is highly relevant to the matter: besides the cultural and historical validation of his rule, it is his personal endeavor what secure him the ongoing support of his people and the international community. Despite the intricacy of reconciling domestic and international expectations, and the economic challenges faced by the country (exacerbated of late by the influx of hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees), the Jordanian monarch has so far successfully maintained his control over the country and, above all, upheld domestic stability.

Thanks to the institutional advantages afforded by this particular type of monarchy, King Abdullah can deflect and redirect public resentment in ways that his dynastic monarchical colleagues cannot, such as firing four prime ministers and presiding over the formation of six successive governments. He has organized parliamentary elections and offered the people specific, limited elements of political reform, whilst minding to keep ultimate power in his own hands. These political operations have effectively deflected enough of the protesters' energies to ward off whatever risk there might have been for more profound regime challenges.

International observers, specifically western ones, praise the reforming steps adopted by Abdullah II, even if these have not so far turned Jordan into an Arab version of a European constitutional monarchy. "There is nonetheless a move in

these countries toward constitutional monarchy as we know it, a consistent process of change, albeit controlled, gradual, and moderate. It boils down, essentially, to reducing the absolute political power of the royal families and dynasties [Melamed, 2016]" and increasing the parliamentary and non-parliamentary sources of power, including that of individual citizens, civil society, and non-governmental organizations and political parties.

We note that the Arab monarchies are cleverly using diplomatic strategies in the communications with their people and their neighbors and this, together with their ability to adapt and evolve with the evolution of their context, is what has granted their resilience during the last wave of revolts. Furthermore, it appears as, though in the short and medium term, stability in the region will, in fact, be fostered by the Arab monarchies. In response to the growing chaos and instability in the region resulting from the Arab Awakening and the momentum of militant Islamist groups, the Arab monarchies exploiting their wealth, political influence, and advanced military capabilities proved to be united in liaising and developing regional policies showing a sense of coordination and mutual support still unseen among Republican regimes. This has been exemplified by the Arab military coalition against ISIS in Syria and the Houtis in Yemen, the massive support in funds and arms of rebel groups in Syria, and the substantial financial support that the Arab Gulf monarchies, especially Saudi Arabia, provide to its partners such as Jordan [Molamed, 2016]. Thus, in the immediate and distant future, Arab monarchies are likely to not only survive the popular uprisings but also to increasingly shape the Middle East.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT AND FURTHER STUDY

As with most empirical analyses on social scientific subjects, this study is severely restricted by its scope. First and foremost, the length of the paper reduced the desired scope of the inquiry to focus on only one of the Arab monarchies, to afford sufficient details. Another shortcoming is the lack of availability of a counterexample, a scenario describing the failure of a monarchy, which might have allowed for interesting comparisons and predictions. Although the Arab monarchies presently seem set to hold on power in the foreseeable future, several potential threatening scenarios spring to mind, such as the risk of losing control after granting

reforms that transfer too much power away from the monarch, the natural end of oil revenues, or complications arising during the dynastic transition of power.

Furthermore, when studying observations of social scientific phenomena, the quantification of integrally qualitative topic material offer an irregular measurement. The vastness of the argument and the relativeness of data signified a big challenge while choosing the subject and the point of view of this thesis. In the end, only overall comment could be made, since the primary focus of this thesis has been the analysis of numerous earlier presumed factors of patterns of state political conduct or populations' perceptions. Despite the empirical shortcomings experienced in this study, however, the trend of the results and relative meaning connected with them grant this research at least marginal descriptive value.

Considering the scope of this thesis, there is, of course, ample opportunity to further this analysis of monarchical resilience, and it would certainly prove highly relevant in understanding the shifting of social political patterns in the Arab world. Indeed, expanding the spatial and temporal scope of this analysis to include a greater sampling of Arab countries would no doubt significantly strengthen the universality of the theories developed so far. King Abdullah II of Jordan has implemented political reforms, including gradually increasing freedoms of political and personal expression and improved civil rights while striving to maintain political and authoritative stability. Consequently, Jordan's political parties are gaining in strength and non-governmental organizations are taking on more responsibilities. In effect, both the heightened activity of organizations in the civil sector and the growing influence of the Internet and social media are undeniably fueling the development of the political power of individuals, civil society, and non-governmental organizations, at the expense of the traditional centers of political power. It is certainly a lengthy and gradual process, but the relationship between monarchs and their people are undeniably set to change the character of society and progressively shift the internal balance of power, thereby profoundly affecting the political landscape of the Middle East.

As last, to whom will consider this elaborate too optimistic in favor of the work of the degree of Sovereignty implemented by the King a last quote from Gokhan Bacik (2008) will serve in order to extend our reflection on the subject.

"…domestic sovereignty can be named as an essential pillar of modern state. For that reason, any movement that challenges the existing government is against the domestic sovereignty of government. If government fails in having full control in all parts of the country, this is a clear sign against its domestic sovereignty. In this vein, how Palestinian problem turned to be a crisis of domestic sovereignty is a suitable case to study how state building project faced different obstacles in Jordan."

This quote aims to remember that when the degree of control and sovereignty over a country is too high it is more a negative than a positive symptom. The lack of effective freedom in the leading of a country, even if useful to reign, does not create the positive and stimulating environment that is needed to peacefully develop a sense of national unity and cooperation instilled in the people despite their origins. Therefore, it should be recognized that the governments mentioned in this study are not good example for political inclusivity or social cohesion; on the other side, all the remaining Arab states that decided to evolve to a more free and democratic state structure did not faced a relatively positive experience so far.

With this spark for continuing investigations regarding the relation among Monarchies and Arab countries, this thesis reaches its conclusion hoping to leave in the reader a new perspective to observe more accurately the future forecasts of Middle Eastern weather.

ANNEX I: GENERAL TIMELINE

570   Birth of Muhammad in Mecca.

632   Muhammad dies. Frictions start among the Arab factions.

778   Charlemagne is repulsed at Cordoba by the Arabs.

1204   Byzantine Empire is broken up after the fall of Constantinople.

1453   The Turks capture Constantinople and make it the Ottoman capital Istanbul.

1534   The Ottoman Empire controls Iraq from Turkey.

18th century   Begins Wahhabism, a very conservative Islamic movement – its aims were to purify the Islamic faith - united the Arabian tribes and forged an alliance with the Sauds, rulers of present day Saudi Arabia.

1908   First Pan-Arab newspapers are published in Jaffa and Jordan.

1914   World War l- collapse of the Ottoman Empire-world dependency on oil begins.

1916   Sykes-Picot agreement, dismantles the Ottoman Empire - Britain gains control over Palestine and France controls Syria and Lebanon – the Arab revolts starts in Aqaba.

1917   Balfour Declaration - the British Home Secretary wants to see a homeland created for the Jews in Palestine. The Middle East is carved up into Nation States that suit British and French interests.

1918   The Bedouin army of Faisal, leader of the Arab Revolt against the Turks, enters Damascus and the Ottoman Empire is gone.

1919   Paris Peace Conference.

1921   Britain creates the Emirate of Transjordan by putting Abdullah bin Hussein, on the throne.

1922   Egypt is formally independent.

1928	Hasan al-Banna found the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.
1932	Proclamation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.
1932	Independence of Lebanon, French troupes leave Beirut.
1945	On March 22 birth of the Arab League.
1946	On 25 May, the Emirate of Transjordan became the "Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan," achieving full independence on June 17th.
1948	State of Israel created in British mandate Palestine; Thousands of Palestinians flee Arab-Israeli fighting to West Bank and Jordan; King Abdullah annex West Bank to Jordan.
1950	On April 13 there is the signature of the treaty for common defense and economic cooperation as part of the Statute of the Arab League.
1951	July, King Abdullah assassinated by Palestinian gunman angry at his apparent collusion with Israel in the carve-up of Palestine.
1952	August, Hussein proclaimed king after his father, Talal, is declared mentally unfit to rule.
1956	Independence of Tunisia, Morocco and Sudan.
1957	British troops complete their withdrawal from Jordan.
1961	Independence of Kuwait from Great Britain.
1962	Independence of Algeria.
1964	Birth of the Organization for the Liberation of Palestine.
1966	Nasser's government sentence to death Sayyid Qutb the ideologist of Muslim Brotherhood.
1967	Israel takes control of Jerusalem and West Bank during Six-Day War, major influx of refugee into Jordan.
1969	Libya: deposition of King Idris, Gheddafi ascent to power.

1970   "Black September" in Jordan: major clashes break out between government forces and Palestinian guerrillas resulting in thousands of casualties in an almost civil war – Hafez al Assad ascent to power in Syria.

1974   King Hussein recognizes PLO as sole legitimate representative of Palestinian people.

1979   Persia become the Islamic Republic of Iran after a revolution.

1981   Hosni Mubarak becomes the President of Egypt after Sadat is assassinated – The Gulf Cooperation Council is funded between UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar.

1986   Hussein severs political links with the PLO and orders its main offices to shut.

1988   Hussein of Jordan publicly backs the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, against the Israel rule.

1989   Political success for many Islamic parties in Morocco, Jordan and Tunisia – Protest in several cities of Jordan over a prices increase; first general elections since 1967, contested only by independent candidates because of the ban on political parties in 1963.

1991   First Gulf War against Iraq under U.S. lead – Jordan comes under severe economic and diplomatic strains as a result of the Gulf Crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

1994   Jordan and Israel sign a Peace treaty ending 46 years official state of war.

1996   Arafat is elected president of the Palestinian Authority – Afghanistan falls under the control of Talibans.

1997   Parliamentary elections boycotted by several parties, associations, and leading figures.

1999   Feb. King Hussein dies. More than 50 head of states attend his funeral. His eldest son Crown Prince Abdullah succeeds to the throne. - Hasan II King of Morocco dies, the throne will go to his son Mohammed VI.

2000   Hafez al-Asad President of Syria dies, presidency will go to his son Bashar.

2002   Tayyip Erdogan wins presidential elections in Turkey with the Party for Justice and Development – Israel starts to build the "apartheid wall" – in Tunisia all the limits to presidential re-election are abolished – Bahrain becomes a Constitutional monarchy, women can have public positions – Sept. Jordan and Israel agree on a plan to pipe water from the Red Sea to the shrinking Dead Sea. The project, costing $800m, is the two nations' biggest joint venture to date.

2003   Second Gulf War, Saddam Hussein's regime falls in Iraq – June, first parliamentary elections under King Abdullah II. Independent candidates loyal to the king win two-thirds of the seats.

2007   Bashar al-Assad is confirmed President of Syria for other 7 years.

2008   Obama become President of the U.S.

2009   Tunisian President Ben Ali is elected for the 4th time with 94,48% of votes – In Jordan, the king dissolves parliament half-way through its four-year term and appoints new premier to push through economic reform.

2010   Mubarak's party obtain parliament majority (more than 90%) – In Jordan is introduced a new electoral law introduced. Pro-reform campaigners say it does little to make system more representational; in November the Parliamentary elections are boycotted by the opposition Islamic Action Front. Riots break out after it is announced that pro-government candidates have won a sweeping victory.

2011   January 4th Bouazizi and the Jasmine revolution begin in Tunisia, 8 days after Ben Ali will flee to Saudi Arabia – Feb. 1st more than a million people march to Tahrir square to protest – Feb. 11th a civil war between Gheddafi's forces and rebels starts in Libya; after 8 months of hiding the leader will be captured and killed by rebels in Sirte – March 15th the Dar'a revolt in Syria is brutally repressed – Protests also in Morocco and Bahrain – In Jordan in February Against a background of large-scale street protests, King Abdullah appoints a new prime minister, former army general Marouf Bakhit, and

charges him with carrying out political reforms. Protests continue through the summer, albeit on a smaller scale, prompting King Abdullah to replace Prime Minister Bakhit with Awn al-Khasawneh, a judge at the International Court of Justice.

2012   Muslim Brotherhood wins presidential elections in Egypt with Morsi – In Jordan, unable to satisfy either demands for reform or establishment fears of empowering the Islamist opposition prime Minister Awn al-Khasawneh resigns abruptly. King Abdullah appoints former prime minister Fayez al-Tarawneh to succeed him. In October King Abdullah calls early parliamentary elections for January. The Muslim Brotherhood's political wing, the Islamic Action Front, decides to continue to boycott them in protest at unequal constituency sizes and lack of real parliamentary power. The King appoints Abdullah Ensour, a former minister and vocal advocate of democratic reform, as prime minister. In November Clashes between protesters and supporters of the king follow mass demonstrations in Amman against the lifting of fuel subsidies, at which calls for the end of the monarchy are heard. Three people are killed.

2013   General Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, becomes president after a Coup d'Etat – In Jordan in January's elections, pro-government candidates are victorious in parliamentary elections that were boycotted by the main opposition Islamic Action Front. In March a new government sworn in, with incumbent Abdullah Ensour reinstalled as prime minister following unprecedented consultation between the king and parliament.

2014   In September Jordan is one of four Arab states to take part, together with the US, in air strikes on Islamic State militants in Syria; in November Jordanian authorities arrest the deputy head of the country's Muslim Brotherhood organization, in the first arrest of a major opposition figure in Jordan for several years; in December Jordan executes eleven men convicted of murder, ending a moratorium on the death penalty.

2015   In February the Islamic State (IS) publishes a video purporting to show captured Jordanian pilot Muath Kasasbeh being burned alive. Jordan responds by stepping up its anti-IS air campaign, and executing prisoners;

European Union says it is providing 100 million euros ($113 million) in loans to Jordan to help it deal with the fallout from crises in Syria and Iraq; in March Jordan takes part in Saudi-led air strikes on Houthi rebels in Yemen.

2016   In February, King Abdullah says Jordan has reached saturation point in its ability to take in more Syrian refugees. In May King Abdullah dissolve the Parliament and nominate an interim Prime Minister. In June, following a suicide attack that killed six people, Jordan closed its northern border with Syria an call for election to be held September 20th. In September, following elections, the Islamic Action Front and women win more seats than the ones owned previously for a total of 16 out of the 130 of the Lower House of the Parliament. In November three US soldiers are killed during a training in a US air base. In December ISIS claims an attack that killed 10 people in Karak, Jordan.

2017   In February, right after the election of Donald Trump, King Abdullah flies to Washington to meet him and cement US-Jordanian Alliance.

Source: Corrao, 2015; BBC 2016

"The Arab World is writing a new future;

the pen is in our hands."

Abdullah II of Jordan in Georgetown University

Washington DC, March 21st 2005

ANNEX II: LIST OF CURRENT SOVEREIGN MONARCHS

The Table below illustrate all countries governed with a monarchical form of government existing today. They are 44 among the 206 existing states. The 206 states are the total of three categories: 193 UN member states, two observer states (Palestine and the Holy See), and 11 other states.

Table 5: List of Current Sovereign Monarchs

Realm	Monarch (Birth)	Since	House	Type	Succession
Principality of Andorra	HE Co-Prince François Hollande (b. 1954)	15 May 2012		Constitutional	Ex officio
	HE Co-Prince Archbishop Joan Enric (b. 1949)	12 May 2003			
Antigua and Barbuda	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	1 November 1981		Constitutional	
Commonwealth of Australia	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	6 February 1952		Constitutional	
Commonwealth of the Bahamas	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	10 July 1973		Constitutional	
Barbados	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	30 November 1966	Windsor	Constitutional	Hereditary
Canada	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	6 February 1952		Constitutional	
Belize	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	21 September 1981		Constitutional	
Grenada	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	7 February 1974		Constitutional	

🇯🇲 Jamaica	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	6 August 1962		Constitutional	
🇳🇿 New Zealand	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	6 February 1952		Constitutional	
🇵🇬 Independent State of Papua New Guinea	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	16 September 1975		Constitutional	
🇰🇳 Federation of Saint Kitts and Nevis	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	19 September 1983		Constitutional	
🇱🇨 Saint Lucia	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	22 February 1979		Constitutional	
🇻🇨 Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	27 October 1979		Constitutional	
🇸🇧 Solomon Islands	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	7 July 1978		Constitutional	
🇹🇻 Tuvalu	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	1 October 1978		Constitutional	
🇬🇧 United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	HM Queen Elizabeth II (b. 1926)	6 February 1952		Constitutional	
🇧🇭 Kingdom of Bahrain	HM King Hamad ibn Isa (b. 1950)	6 March 1999	Al Khalifah	Mixed	Hereditary
🇧🇪 Kingdom of Belgium	HM King Philippe (b. 1960)	21 July 2013	Saxe-Coburg and Gotha	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇧🇹 Kingdom of Bhutan	HM King Jigme Khesar Namgyel (b. 1980)	14 December 2006	Wangchuck	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇧🇳 Brunei Darussalam	HM Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah (b. 1946)	4 October 1967	Bolkiah	Absolute	Hereditary

Kingdom of Cambodia	HM King Norodom Sihamoni (b. 1953)	14 October 2004	Norodom	Constitutional	Hereditary and elective
Kingdom of Denmark	HM Queen Margrethe II (b. 1940)	14 January 1972	Glücksburg	Constitutional	Hereditary
Japan	HIM Emperor Akihito (b. 1933)	7 January 1989	Yamato	Constitutional	Hereditary
Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan	HM King Abdullah II (b. 1962)	7 February 1999	Hāshim	Constitutional	Hereditary and elective
State of Kuwait	HH Emir Sabah al-Ahmad (b. 1929)	29 January 2006	Al Sabah	Constitutional	Hereditary and elective
Kingdom of Lesotho	HM King Letsie III (b. 1963)	7 February 1996	Moshesh	Constitutional	Hereditary and elective
Principality of Liechtenstein	HSH Sovereign Prince Hans-Adam II (b. 1945) (Regent: HSH The Hereditary Prince Alois)	13 November 1989	Liechtenstein	Constitutional	Hereditary
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg	HRH Grand Duke Henri (b. 1955)	7 October 2000	Luxembourg-Nassau	Constitutional	Hereditary
Malaysia	HM Yang di-Pertuan Agong Muhammad V (b. 1969)	13 December 2016	Kelantan	Constitutional	Elective
Principality of Monaco	HSH Sovereign Prince Albert II (b. 1958)	6 April 2005	Grimaldi	Constitutional	Hereditary
Kingdom of Morocco	HM King Mohammed VI (b. 1963)	23 July 1999	Alawi	Constitutional	Hereditary
Kingdom of the Netherlands	HM King Willem-Alexander (b. 1967)	30 April 2013	Orange-Nassau	Constitutional	Hereditary
Kingdom of Norway	HM King Harald V (b. 1937)	17 January 1991	Glücksburg	Constitutional	Hereditary

🇴🇲 Sultanate of Oman	HM Sultan Qaboos bin Said (b. 1940)	23 July 1970	Al Said	Absolute	Hereditary
🇶🇦 State of Qatar	HH Emir Tamim bin Hamad (b. 1980)	25 June 2013	Al Thani	Mixed	Hereditary
🇸🇦 Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	CTHM King Salman bin Abdul'aziz (b. 1935)	23 January 2015	Al Saud	Absolute	Hereditary and elective
🇪🇸 Kingdom of Spain	HM King Felipe VI (b. 1968)	19 June 2014	Bourbon	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇸🇿 Kingdom of Swaziland	HM King Mswati III (b. 1968)	25 April 1986	Dlamini	Absolute	Hereditary and elective
🇸🇪 Kingdom of Sweden	HM King Carl XVI Gustaf (b. 1946)	15 September 1973	Bernadotte	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇹🇭 Kingdom of Thailand	HM King Vajiralongkorn (b. 1952)	13 October 2016	Chakri	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇹🇴 Kingdom of Tonga	HM King Tupou VI (b. 1959)	18 March 2012	Tupou	Constitutional	Hereditary
🇦🇪 United Arab Emirates	HH President Khalifa bin Zayed (b. 1948)	3 November 2004	Al Nahyan	Mixed	Elective and hereditary
🇻🇦 Vatican City State	HH Pope Francis (b. 1936)	13 March 2013	N/A	Absolute	Elective

Source: Wikipedia, 2017

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