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# “I am Bedu”:
# The Changing Bedouin in a Changing World

# “I am Bedu”: the Changing Bedouin in a Changing World

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Anthropology

By

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University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Art in Anthropology, 2011

December 2013
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# ABSTRACT

Change occurs throughout the world on a daily basis, and as a result, its inhabitants are encouraged to change as well. The population learns to adapt in various ways in order to survive, often times causing traditional practices to be forced aside in order to make way for more modern methods. Today, the Bedouin lifestyle is no longer limited to the classification of a pastoral nomad, located in the desert living in goat-hair tents, and herding camels. While there are several factors that could be taken into consideration in order to unpack what it means to be a Bedouin in a modern world, the development of nation-states within the Middle East and the consequences of these formations have had a significant influence on Bedouin tribal identity and lifestyle. In Jordan, the process of deconstructing Bedouin identity and lifestyle can largely be contributed to detribalization, sedentarization, and nationalization. While these governmental projects have contributed to the decline of nomadic traditional culture, Bedouin have not completely disappeared in Jordan. Rather than ask “where have the Bedouin gone?” the better question is “where are the Bedouin going?” particularly in a changing world.

# DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to

My parents for their love and support

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المنـــارة للاستشارات

# PREFACE

From a young age, I was captivated by the Bedouin culture and desert life. I spent the first sixteen years of my life living in the northern governorate of Ajloun, Jordan, so the concept and reality of the nomadic people in the country was not foreign to me. I can still remember the first time I, personally, interacted with the nomadic Bedouin from the south. I was about eight years old when my family and a few others went on a camping trip to the well-known desert, Wadi Rum. It took four hours of driving from the capital city of Amman to reach our destination - a beautiful sand and rock desert terrain surrounded by jagged mountains.

Long before my trip there in the 1990s, Wadi Rum had been established as a favorite tourist site for the more rugged adventurers, although it had not received as much attention as some of other tourist sites, such as Petra and Jerash. Many of the Bedouin in the wadi had already been settled by governmental relocation project in a little village compound on the outskirts of the wadi. The community that sprouted there had a government sponsored school, a few small one-room “dakkakiin” (grocery stores), and several poorly constructed concrete houses. Yet, the main attraction of this village was the visitors’ center that had been built to offer tourists the conveniences of western culture (showers, bottled water, hot meals), and the opportunity just beyond to experience first-hand the “Bedouin life.” For tourists, this generally involved riding for a half hour or more in the back of a Land Cruiser with slatted benches lining each side of the truck bed, arriving at a large goat hair Bedouin tent, enjoying a specially prepared Bedouin meal (generally eaten with the hands), drinking syrupy sweet Bedouin tea, and sleeping under the stars on a thin mattress with a wool blanket as cover against the cool desert night air. If daylight lingered, eager Bedouin children would come from nowhere to offer the tourists a ride on their camel, for a price of course.

We were considered local tourists. We had lived in Jordan for years, and traveled in our own four-wheel drive truck, loaded with our own tents and supplies, and were guided through the deep sand tracks by our trusted guide, a young Bedouin boy named Khalid, who helped keep us from getting lost in the desert. After we had set up our tents, curious local boys began milling around our site to watch my brothers and their friends pitching soft balls to one another. Before long, the camels were parked and a half dozen Bedouin boys were hiking up their dish-dashes, slipping baseball gloves over their tanned hands and putting to use their years of rock throwing to skillfully plant those baseballs right where they intended. They played until it was too dark to see the ball, politely declined our offers of our American picnic food and waved as they trotted off. But, early the next day, Khalid was back. After giving us free camel rides, he hoisted my brother (who was about his age) on the back of his camel and off they went. By the time they returned a couple of hours later, my brother looked as dusty and dirty as Khalid, and had many adventures to relate. The baseball players returned again late that afternoon, along with a few others, and the games continued – this time with a bat and bases and just a modicum of rules to the game.

That was the beginning of a friendship with many of the Bedouin in Wadi Rum that continued for years. Khalid often went with us into the desert. While we slept in tents or in sleeping bags on boulders, he slept in the back of the pickup truck. At one point, my parents were able to go to the local boys' school in Wadi Rum with a duffle bag full of ball gloves and another full of bats and balls to leave for the students' use. We were invited into their homes and they were invited to ours. Imagine our surprise when, even though we lived four hours to the north, we were visited by some of those Bedouin school teachers when they had business in our area.

Through all of this and other encounters, we saw how the Bedouin lived, shared meals with them, heard their stories, and empathized with their frustrations. In the 1980s, my parents' work had been primarily in administration of schools and a hospital in the north. But, in the 1990s, their focus shifted to the Bedouin. As a child, I was able to tag along with them at times as they worked with both settled and nomadic tribes. It was a world very different from the northern part of the country where we lived.

Wadi Rum wasn’t the only place I encountered Bedouin people during my years in Jordan. There were a few tent-dwelling Bedouin in the north, but they were not of a true nomadic nature since they stayed in one place. Later, while living in the capital city of Amman as a high school student, I spent time in the south working on summer archeological digs that put me in contact with both settled and nomadic tribes. Finally, as a college student, I was able to spend parts of my summers working both with my parents and with various organizations that worked directly with Bedouin – settled, semi-nomadic, and nomadic alike. By this time, I went to these tents equipped with a notepad and pencil, jotting down observations, listening intensely to conversations that were going on, helping with surveys related to health and nutrition issues, and paying extra attention to governmental – Bedouin relationships. Through this experience, I became more aware of how Bedouin culture was undergoing changes, partly due to various governmental projects and regulations and partly due to the normal processes that come with education and modernization. I saw first-hand some of the struggles of Bedouin who had been forced to leave behind their traditional lifestyles and move into community living with substandard housing and services. (Um Sayhoon near Petra is just one example). Many times, these moves were forced upon the Bedouin in order to remove them from areas of tourism development, but sometimes it was to control tribalism, or even, as some argued, the government wanted Bedouin grazing lands for the valuable resources they held and for government-sponsored development. Needless to say, this has not been a culture I have been able to forget, and it has inspired my studies through my academic career. Certain nagging questions kept returning: “What does it mean to be a true Bedouin?”; “What happens to the Bedouin when circumstances cause encroachment on their traditional way of life?”; and finally, “As part of a nation, but also part of a distinct cultural entity, where do the loyalties of the Bedouin lie?”

# Chapter One: Introduction

## Bedouin in a Changing World

*"My father rode a camel, I shall ride a pick- up, and my son will drive a Cadillac; however, my grandson will drive a donkey." - Anonymous*

For several decades, anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and members of other disciplines have studied the Bedouin, over a broad geographical span in the Middle East, from the Negev to Yemen. Their poetry and songs, tourism endeavors, tribal connections, marriage practices, and other Bedouin traditions, have all drawn attention to this unique people group (Lavie 1990, Abu-Lughod 1986, Chatty 1986, 1996, Lancaster 1981).

As daily changes occur throughout the world, due to factors such as new technologies and new governmental regimes the world's inhabitants are forced to change as well. As populations learn to adapt to change in order to survive, traditional practices are often forced aside to make way for more modern modes.

Bedouin are no exception. Over the years, anthropological studies and literary resources have documented that Bedouin are not only changing, but are also adapting simultaneously to the developing world around them (Lavie 1990; Lancaster 1981; Eloul 2010; Dinero 2010; Chatty 1986, 1996; Abu-Lughod 1986, Abu Jaber 1987). Anthropologists have examined multiple factors, such as transportation and technology, influence of tourism, military occupation, governmental regulations and relationships, in order to make sense of the level of adaptation that has taken place in the last few decades (particularly in the early 1980's) as nation-states began to conceptualize the Bedouin identity.

But, these same influences and factors have caused the Bedouin identity to become problematic to define throughout the years. Attempting to conceptualize what it means to be Bedouin has caused more confusion than clarity. Additionally, Bedouin in Jordan have, in more recent years, been viewed as the "national" problem, perhaps hindering Jordan's aspirations regarding modernity.

*“I am Bedu”*

As stated above, the first way Bedouin identity has become problematic is through its definition. Romanticized imagery of the Bedouin culture prevailed in westerner’s mind, and piqued their interest long before the movie depiction of Lawrence of Arabia and his adventures. For many, the Hollywood imagery of these desert dwellers created scenes of people with flowing robes, leisurely riding camels as the sun faded below the horizon of flat desert sand. While such a scene might exist in a captured moment in time, it fails to fully account for the true tribal identity of nomadic people residing in the desert regions of the Middle East.

The term “Bedouin” finds its root in the Arabic word “Bedu” which takes *its* root from the word “Badiya” (desert or steppe). A literal translation of the word “Bedu” is “desert dweller” (Layne 1994:13). Unfortunately, the meaning of the term Bedouin is not that simple. The term Bedouin is quite ambiguous, and claiming the distinction of being “Bedouin” involves much more than simply declaring oneself to be a “desert dweller.”

Regardless of its elusiveness, social scientists, including anthropologists, have attempted to establish a definition for Bedouin, while apparently agreeing to disagree. In her book *Home and Homeland,* Linda Layne defined Bedouin based on particular characteristics: Pastoral nomads, located in the desert living in goat-hair tents, and herders of camels (1994:13). Peter Gubser agreed with this definition, stating that “true” Bedouin relied primarily on camels rather than goats and sheep as their source of livelihood (1983:24). However, if Bedouin identity relied solely on these criteria, there would be very few (if any) “true” Bedouin remaining in the deserts of the Middle East today (Day 1986:61).

Halim Barakat noted three distinct types of Bedouin. He said the most “nomadic” of the Bedouin are those who still secure their source of livelihood by raising predominately camel herds and roaming deep into the desert. A second classification of Bedouin includes those who raise sheep and goats as well as camels, but might move around less often and don’t go as deeply into the desert. In most cases, this type of Bedouin might move locations according to the seasons. For instance, in Jordan, Bedouin move into the Wadi (dried river bed) regions during the winter seasons, but move to the cooler mountains during the warm summer months. However, their migration goes little beyond this (1993:50). The third type of Bedouin includes nomads who supplement their livelihood by incorporating cultivation into their pastoral way of life. This type of Bedouin is much more inclined to settle down either in a permanent location, living in their tents or in a constructed dwelling (1993:50).

As can be seen, Layne’s definition of a “true” Bedouin not only fails to recognize the multiple dynamics involved in the actual Bedouin way of life, but it also fails to recognize the variables that inevitably change the cultural perceptions of what it means to be “Bedu.” As different tribes over broader geographic areas are asked to define what it means to be “Bedouin,” the responses would surely create more confusion than resolution in any attempt to categorize these people. But, one common response would emerge – the Bedouin people are “one” with their environment and its elements, and they are fiercely loyal to their tribal roots.

When considering the modern Bedouin, s/he is no longer limited to the classification of a nomad residing in a tent in a desert environment. To clarify this identity, several factors must be taken into account, including the style and material of their dwelling structure, their source of livelihood, the type of herd they maintain, the way they dress, and even access to education. Additionally, geographical location of a tribe (whether the Sahara desert, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, etc.), social context, government and political regulations, climate influences and changes, technological advances that coincide with modernity, and even migration influences should also be taken into consideration. These distinctions can vary greatly even within a single tribal grouping.

Restricting Bedouin identity to the romanticized imagery of a pastoral desert nomad, dwelling in goat-hair tents, and herding goats, sheep, and/or camels, misrepresents the profile of Bedouins in the modern world (Layne 1994:13). To state that the classification of any people group remains static according to predetermined criteria is to say that the terms by which a culture is defined at one point in time remains constant. However, culture is not static, but is constantly adapting and expanding.

Although Bedouin are classified as Arabs (Barakat 1993:51), the most accurate definition of who they are as individuals can be found in the people themselves and their all-encompassing declaration of their rich heritage in their simple declaration, “I am Bedu!” For them, any person who can trace his roots back to an original desert dwelling tribal grouping, past or present, is considered to be Bedouin, and gains their respect. [1]

### *Bedouin as the “National” Problem*

*“I against my brother; I and my brother against our cousin. My brother and our cousin against the neighbors; all of us against the foreigner.” - Bedouin Proverb*

Despite rooting its identity in Bedouin tribalism, Jordan nationhood continuously remains vague and problematic. This is largely due to the deconstruction of Bedouin identity that has taken place (Layne 1994:21). This addresses the second factor that has caused Bedouin identity to become problematic: Bedouin have increasingly been viewed by Jordan as the “national” problem by the Jordanian government.

The nation-state borders of Jordan established by European powers disregarded any ethnic or tribal identity. As a result, kinship ties among Bedouin often crossed national borders, causing a disparity within the tribes. Jordanians primary concern was that the Bedouin would remain loyal to their tribal affiliation - even across borders separating them – rather than pledge their loyalty to the state government (Layne 1994:98).

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[1] While some scholars believe that Bedouin should be classified as a lifestyle choice, I believe they should been seen as a distinct social group rather than an ethnic group, and will, therefore, capitalize the word “Bedouin” throughout this research.

Tribal loyalty has been viewed by some as a “threat to national security” (Layne 1989:26; 1996:98; Massad 2001:111), with the nation-state attitude that Bedouin identity could not be compatible with a modern nation-state, since they were unwilling to let go of their tribal loyalty (Massad 2001:111). This fear prompted a move toward debedouinization as a means to solving the “national” problem.”

The late kings of Jordan (King Abdullah I and King Hussein) attempted to preserve the Bedouin traditions and cultural identity, recognizing their importance on the national identity. However, they also could not fully ignore the consequences Bedouin allegiance to tribe and kin over national affiliation could have on the nation-state. As a result, the kings of Jordan sought to push the Bedouin toward a national consciousness, incorporating them into various national institutions, including governmental offices (Jureidini 1984:53).

## Where are the Bedouin going?

For several scholars, the question has become “Where have the Bedouin gone?” To the untrained eye, it might appear that Bedouin have disappeared. Others believe Bedouin have become incorporated into the collective identity of the nation-state, and no longer identify themselves as Bedouin, but rather “Jordanian,” “Arab,” or by another ethnic or national identity marker. After all, Bedouin only make up one percent of the total Middle Eastern population.

When researching and studying the Bedouin people, it is vital to address tribal identity, not only historically, but also within a present day context – within the framework of a nation-state. The development of nation-states within the Middle East and the consequences these formations have had on Bedouin tribal identity and lifestyle appeared to be mostly disregarded by several social scientists. While my research takes an in-depth look at the historical relationship between both nationalistic and tribalistic identities in Jordan, I will primarily focus on the influence that the nation-state and nationalism have had on Bedouin lifestyle, particularly in regard to governmental “debedouinization,” nationalization, and sedentarization attempts. Rather than answer the question “where have the Bedouin gone?”, I will examine issues from the standpoint of “where are the Bedouin going in a changing world?” This question gives hope that modern Bedouin do, in fact, exist and recognize their identity, even if they do not live exactly like generations before them.

Chapter two provides a historical overview of the Bedouin’s role in the region, leading up from the Ottoman Empire to the formation of the Nation-state of Transjordan paying particularly attention to the relationship of Bedouin tribes with the Ottoman Empire up to World War I. I also examine the role Bedouin played in the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the formation of the nation-state of Transjordan under the mandate control of the British, and the establishment of an independent state under King Abdullah I. In Chapter Three I argue that the formation of Jordan’s national identity rests on two major issues: the support of Bedouin tribes for the Hashemite monarchy, and secondly as a response to the growing Palestinian population in Jordan. Through these two issues, I further argue that a new Bedouin identity had been constructed in order to contribute to the construction of Jordanian nationalism. However, as a national identity was being constructed on Bedouin cultural symbolism, deconstruction of Bedouin lifestyle was taken place, particularly through the processes of debedouinization, sedentarization, and nationalism.

In Chapter Four, I expand further on the deconstruction of Bedouin lifestyle through debedouinization, sedentarization, and nationalism throughout the Jordan’s history, arguing that these three processes have resulted in the decline and change of Bedouin lifestyle, culture, and identity. The final chapter re-addresses the question, “Where are the Bedouin going?” examining the socio-economic and socio-political factors that contribute to the on-going changes occurring among the Bedouin, particularly for those who still practice nomadic pastoralism.

## Chapter 2: Bedouin and Nations States

Bedouin, throughout the history of Jordan, have played an influential role in the formation of the nation-states, from the fall of the Ottoman Empire to the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. For centuries, the Bedouin roamed the desolate deserts of the Middle East, living as nomadic pastoralists, while kingdoms and empires came and went. Before discussing the role Bedouin tribes have played in the history of modern Jordan, it is important to understand the impact that geography played in the development of the region that was previously dubbed "Transjordan," and which played an important role in the development and maintenance of the various settlements scattered over the area for over 2,000 years (Mostyn 1988:214). The land known as Jordan occupies a little over 35,000 square miles, consisting of three natural, yet varied, regions that all converge in the south at the port of Aqaba: the Great Rift Valley, the highlands, and the plateau (Salibi 1993:3-4).

The natural region of the Great Rift Valley consists of two major geographic features: the Ghor and Wadi Araba. The Ghor outlines the course of the Jordan River, which provides a source of irrigation for the rich, fertile soil of the valley, culminating at the Dead Sea – the lowest point on earth. Despite its arability, the hot-house effect in the valley created by its position (sandwiched between the highland regions) has historically limited the residential population to mostly farmers and the peasants who work the land (Salibi 1993:4).

Bordering the Great Rift Valley to the east are the highlands, a region that has remained relatively populated throughout Jordan's history by farmers and settled communities. These highlands begin in the north, slowly tapering off in the south as they approach the country's only sea outlet at Aqaba. While Jordan does contain scattered plateaus and a few mountainous and forest areas (primarily in the north), below these highlands lie the final natural region, which encompasses three quarters of the total land mass of modern Jordan - the great Syrian Desert (Batanouny 2001:6; Salibi 1993: 5-6). As in most desert climates, rainfall here is minimal, averaging no more than 100-250mm per year (approximately 4 to 9 inches) (Batanouny 2001:6).

Due to the lack of rainfall, this region is ill-suited for agriculture, and is only able to support the pastoral lifestyle of Bedouin tribes scattered throughout the "desolate, parched and bleached" sands of southern Jordan (Mostyn 1988:214; Salibi 1993:6).

### The Ungovernable: Bedouin without Borders

The region has had a rather long history dating back to over 2,000 years ago. Very little is known about the region prior to the third century B.C. What has been deduced about the period prior to the Ottoman Empire is largely based on archaeological research and various passages from ancient Egyptian and Mesopotamian records – interpreted and compared with biblical records - which provide some insight into the historical context of the region (Salibi 1993: Chapter 1).

In addition, prior to the modern period, accounts of this region were mostly confined to the documentation of tribes and kingdoms that written down throughout the pages of history. Although historical records are sketchy, they indicate that society in this region was built around Bedouin tribal identity and structure. From the Bronze Age most people – if not all - organized themselves into tribes and tribal affiliations (van der Steen 2006: 32). Prior to World War I, there was little potential for a state to emerge or develop in this region. There was little urban concentration, and what there was no central location to serve as the political and economic center or capital (Robins 2004:5).

Historical records dealing with the period before the Ottoman Empire reveal that, over the centuries, prominent settlements were established at various points in time in the different regions, from the plateaus and mountains of the north to the rock and sand deserts of the south (Mostyn 1988:214). The region, for much of its history, was for the most part an "untamed" wilderness, supporting a population of approximately 350,000 people who either cultivated the arable land of the Ghor and agricultural sites in the highlands, or roamed the southern desert of Jordan as pastoral nomads (Mackey 1992:187). Despite the settled populace found in the north, over half of Transjordan's overall population was primarily composed of tribal Bedouin (Held 2000:288).

All this is not to say that the varied population never experienced, encountered, or considered the fact of "stateness" (Robins 2003:5; Held 2000:9). Throughout its history, this region was under the direct and/or indirect control of several kingdoms and empires. For example, the Nabetaeans (168 BC -106 BC), protected by the mountains of Wadi Arabia in Petra (Salibi 1993:Chapter 1) established control over a large portion of the regional and international trade routes of the ancient world that passed through Jordan. Empires, such as that of Alexander the Great, the Persian Empire, the Roman Empire, and several Islamic Empires took particular interest in the area because of these trade routes. Despite the intervention of various states, the southern Syrian Desert was mostly viewed as desolate, filled with uncontrollable desert nomads who abided by their own laws and customs, regardless of which imperial power governed them (Salibi 1993: Chapter 1).

When the Romans arrived after defeating the Nabateans, the region was a land of sharp social contrasts. On the one hand, urban centers were established in the north, such as Ajloun, where the native upper class shared cultural tastes, language, and traditions with the Greek and Roman colonists. At the other end of the spectrum, scattered throughout the rest of the region, were settled agriculturalists who primarily retained the spoken Aramaic or Arabic dialects. On the outskirts of these settled villages resided the Bedouin tribes who considered their proper home to be the desert (Salibi 1993: Chapter 1).

A priority of the Roman Empire was to grant the already established urban areas "chartered freedom," which allowed each city a considerable degree of autonomy while still remaining direct subjects under the regional Roman governor. This arrangement allowed many of these towns, known as the Decapolis, to prosper during the Roman period. As for the nomadic pastoralists, they were deemed to be ungovernable, and as posing a threat not only to the Roman Empire, but to subsequent empires that governed the region (Salibi 1993: Chapter 1).

While under the nominal control of various empires and kingdoms, and multiple tribal groups in the Syrian Desert rose and fell. , Details about these various tribes, however, are sketchy, due to fact that the tribes themselves did not keep written documents. Yet their existence is mentioned in various state accounts, such as records from the Roman Empire. It is known, for instance, that these tribes exercised a degree of informal control and jurisdiction over their nomadic tribes and others that accepted their leadership, but they lacked fixed territories or boundaries. While practicing nomadic pastoralism, these desert tribes still remained near the settled villages (Salibi 1993: Chapter 1).

Despite intermittent periods of colonization, Jordan was never fully governed by any state or government which had the intention of creating a movement or uniting the territory under one communal identity (Alon 2007:40; Massad 2001:11). The dominant and persistent form of social organization remained the tribe, and this was particularly so for nomadic Bedouin tribes, who were only loosely controlled by centralized authority (Jureidini 1984: Chapter 2).

Strong governments, such as the Roman Empire, carefully controlled and monitored the movements of Bedouin from the desert to grazing lands in order to ensure they did not encroach on the settled villages and imperial cities. Otherwise, the tribes were left largely to themselves (Alon 2009:19). In periods when strong government was absent, the Bedouin tribes often pressed into the settled regions, raiding agricultural communities, and demanding payment from local villages and towns to ensure their protection from raiding (Alon 2009:17).

### The Ottoman Empire

Probably the most significant period of long-standing control over Jordan was the Ottoman Empire. The four-centuries of Ottoman rule (1516 – 1922) were marked by a significant increase in the number of Bedouin tribes from Syria and other regions who migrated to the Syrian Desert in order to avoid the high taxes forced upon by administrators within their governate (Salibi 1993:27).

The Ottomans themselves never colonized Jordan in the sense of planting a large number of their own settlements there (Mackey 1992:101). Much like previous empires, they were mostly concerned with the populated villages and urban areas and the lucrative trade routes that ran through the region. While the residents of Jordan were not necessarily enthusiastic supporters of the empire, their relationship with the Ottomans was one of cooperation. The empire established administrative districts were formed, and governors acted as tax extractors and resource distributors, providing some security to the settled areas (Robins 2004:6; Salibi 1993:26).

Because the Ottomans viewed the Bedouin as a threat to the state's control and security, when they first took control of the region in 1516, the government attempted to restrict the Bedouin tribes. During the first two centuries of Ottoman rule, the relationship between the Bedouin and the administrative government was largely amicable and mutually rewarding. The Empire accommodated the Bedouin by providing them with the means to acquire a livelihood, with the understanding that, in return, they would remain peaceful. For instance, the Bedouin were paid to protect the caravans and pilgrims from raiders as they moved through the desert and along the trade routes. Eventually, the Bedouin benefited from the increased trade in the region, and often took part in regional commerce themselves. During this period, therefore, he Bedouin rarely engaged in hostility against the empire. But because the Ottomans didn't occupy the region directly, the tribes never identified themselves fully as subjects of the Empire, and the Bedouin maintained their own hierarchical structures and systems of authority in the same manner that they had for hundreds of years (van der Steen 2006:36; Robins 2004:5).

During the second half of the nineteenth century, the Empire attempted to impose greater state control over the region, and decreed laws aimed at establishing greater social control over the Bedouin tribes. They accomplished this primarily by incorporating them into the larger security apparatus, utilizing the Bedouin as a form of military protection in the army, particularly against tribal raids. This approach would be repeated during the establishment of Transjordan under the British mandate, and would be carried forward into the creation of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Robins 2004:10).

### *Fall of the Ottoman Empire*

Toward the end of the nineteenth century, as the Empire was attempting to modernize state and society and to impose additional administrative controls in Transjordan (Dale 2010:248), relations with the tribes became strained. The new administrative systems were not warmly received by the village leaders and tribal sheiks, and they resulted in revolts and riots (Salibi 1993:38). By the turn of the twentieth century, Ottoman administrative control over the area was weakening.

In 1914, when World War I broke out, the last of the Ottoman administrative stability began to weaken. The Empire pledged allegiance to the Central Powers, thereby providing the British the pretext to challenge Ottoman Empire's sovereignty in the Middle East. The strained relations between the Bedouin and the Turks, and the growing discontent of Arabs in general, provided the British the support it needed to bring the Ottoman regime to an end. Many of Jordan's tribes participated in an Arab-based revolt against the Ottomans, contributing to the collapse of the Empire by the end of World War I (Layne 1987:20; Salibi 1993: 28; Wilson 1987:20).

Through an exchange of letters, Sir Henry McMahon, a British imperial representative, and Sharif Hussein, a prominent Arabian Peninsula tribal leader, negotiated an alliance between the British and several Bedouin tribes, with the aim of bringing an end to Ottoman control in the Fertile Crescent (Held 2000:201). Although McMahon initiated the first contact with Sharif Hussein, it was ultimately relations between Hussein and Colonel T.E. Lawrence, a Levant specialist with the British army, that confirmed pacts which promised the establishment of an independent Arab state in the lands under the Ottoman control, stretching south from Turkey to the Arabian peninsula, and west from Iran to the Mediterranean Sea (Salibi 1993:73). In exchange, the Arab tribes, under the leadership of Sharif Hussein, would form an alliance with the British in a revolt against the Ottomans (Held 2000:201). Sharif Hussein, with the aid of the British and T.E. Lawrence, launched the so-called Arab Revolt in June, 1916.

Unbeknownst to Sharif Hussein, the British simultaneously were defining "spheres of influence" with their French and Russian allies (Layne 2004:21; Held 2000:201; Mackey 1992:84). These negotiations proposed the division of the land originally promised to the Arabs between the allies, placing Syria and Lebanon under French control, while granting Palestine and Iraq (including modern day Jordan) to the British (George 2005:13). The Sykes-Picot agreement was officially signed by all three parties in May, 1916, a month before the start of the Arab Revolt. The already strained relations between the British and the Bedouin was further heightened by Britain's Balfour Declaration which promised British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine (Al Oudat 2010:67; Robins 2004; Salibi 1993:27; Alon 2007:20; Held 2000:202; Mackey 1992:84).

While the Arab revolt succeeded in freeing the Bedouin tribes of Transjordan from the yoke of the Ottoman Empire, the end result was that the region was divided into smaller units, and the Ottoman masters replace by European ones (Mackey 1993:89, Held 2000:202).

## Bedouin with Borders

Faysal bin Husayn, son of Sherif Hussein of Saudi Arabia, established an Arab kingdom in Damascus in1919, which encompassed the northern part of Transjordan, including Amman (Alon 2009:15; Salibi 1993:73). Faysal's administration seemed to promise national independence for the Arabs of the region, and so it, gained a great deal of support from nomadic as well as settled Arabs in northern Jordan.

But Sherif Faysal's success was short lived. By the end of 1919, the administration was weakening, and the once cooperative nomadic tribes no longer felt any sense of loyalty to Faysal, his governmental system, or any government for that matter (Alon 2009:16; Salibi 1993:78). Nomadic tribes attempted to gain authority over the settled regions, to establish the sorts of controls they had maintained prior to the Ottoman Empire, demanding payment from local villages and towns as compensation for their protection against raiders (Alon 2009:17). The period following Faysal’s defeat by the French was marked by considerable political reorganization in Jordan. The new British authorities were not interested in establishing a direct control of the lands under their jurisdiction, and never took steps to occupy or colonize the land (Robins 2004:13).

Unsure, when they first took over the territory in the 1917, exactly what to do with their new mandate, the British attempted to control Jordan by recognizing three separate governments and appointing a British adviser in each governorate (Robins 2004:14). The purpose was to maintain an indirect influence over the region while allowing the tribes to believe they were developing a form of autonomous rule (Robins 2004:16). However, the Bedouin no longer trusted the British, particularly due to the perception that the Sykes-Picot agreement of 1916 violated promises made to the Arabs. Given opposition from the tribes, British initial efforts to establish order in the region were unsuccessful.

### *Establishing a Kingdom*

Given Bedouin opposition, the absence of a capital city and a lack of natural resources, the establishment of a viable mandate government in Transjordan appeared to be a hopeless cause (George 2005:13; Alon 2009:17). In the eyes of the British administration, the region remained “ungovernable” (Ellis 1999:50; George 2005:15)

In 1918, Abdullah, Sharif Hussein’s second son (Salibi 1993:73), arrived in Ma’an, a southern tribal village, just as Transjordan was teetering on the edge of chaos. Abdullah hoped ultimately to regain control of Syria, nurturing his father’s dream of creating a united Arab state. But aware that Britain would not support his attempts to reclaim Syria, his priority turned to claiming Transjordan (Ellis 1999:51). Although the British were initially reluctant to support Abdullah’s claims to Transjordan, his presence presented a possible solution to the British, who were still trying to decide what they would do with the mandated territory (George 2005:14; Alon 2009:20).

In addition, Abdullah's goals for Transjordan were attractive to many of its inhabitants. Settled communities welcomed him with open arms as he provided the only military protection from raids. His Bedouin-style encampments on the outskirts of urbanized sections won the Bedouin's favor, as he endorsed their way of life and initiated tribal court systems (Ellis 1999:52). In addition, Emir Abdullah encouraged tribal sheikhs to attend national council meetings, granting them a political voice and influence in Transjordan (Held 2000:288). Within a very short time, Abdullah managed to restore order to the region.

Noting the success of Abdullah, the British government established the Emirate of Transjordan in 1922, making him Emir. The establishment of the new country, however, was based on the understanding that Transjordan and the newly appointed Emir would remain under close supervision by the British administration for the coming six months.

The years between the appointing of Abdullah as Emir of Transjordan in 1922 and World War II were characterized by agreements and changes in Transjordan's borders, which had been established during the Skyes-Picot agreement (Abu Nuwar 2006:10). For instance, the 1928 Treaty signed between the British and Emir Abdullah assured Transjordan's protection against the Zionist movement (discussed in the Balfour agreement) from encroaching on the Emirate's borders, further securing the future of Abdullah's government (Abu Nuwar 2006:11).

Additionally Abdullah, from the beginning of his Emirate through the Second World War, was negotiating with the British to end mandate control over the region, and to officially recognize Transjordan as an independent nation-state. This finally occurred in 1946 when Abdullah was proclaimed King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (Salibi 1993; Robins 2004).

### *Legitimizing the Monarchy*

What encouraged the Bedouin tribes to consider the King Abdullah as a legitimate ruler, and to recognize him as their king? The legitimacy of King Abdullah's reign stemmed from the fact that Abdullah's family originated from the Prophet Mohammad's tribal lineage (Alon 2007:41; Al Oudat 2010:69). But probably the most important factor was that in his effort to secure tribal support, even before he became emir, Abdullah had immersed himself in tribal politics, (Alon 2007:37). During the period of the British mandate, Emir Abdullah forged strong personal ties and relationships with each tribal sheikh. Abdullah recognized that in order to legitimize his authority, he would need to rally Bedouin support, especially since, at that time, nearly 50% of the inhabitants of Transjordan were organized along tribal line (Alon 2007:40-41). While organizing the administration of Jordan, the Emir took several elements of tribal life into account, while continuing to allow each tribal sheikh to maintain a certain amount of autonomous control, encouraging tribes to adhere to their tribal laws (Alon 2007:66; Al Oudat 2010:66).

The support given by the tribes to Abdullah's regime played a very significant role in integrating the Bedouin into the modern state, ensuring their support and acceptance of a political order (Alon 2007:1). The role of the monarch was to ensure a careful balance between the tribes and the government (Alon 2007:154). The concept of nationalism took on a very different form in Jordan than it did in most western nation-states. Within the monarchial government of Jordan, tribal identity became an influential determining factor when creating a national identity (Al Oudat 2010:65; Alon 2007:37). This was a strategic move, since the political role of tribalism was so vital that it still resonates throughout the government of Jordan, particularly the tribal practices of resolving conflict, regulating social relations, and even suggested legal procedures (Alon 2007:154-155).

While this chapter has provided an overview of Jordan's history, paying attention to the presence of Bedouin during the era leading to the Ottoman Empire and throughout the formation of the nation-state of Jordan post World War I, chapter three will expand further on the contribution tribalism and Bedouin identity had in the formation of Jordan's national identity.

## Chapter 3: Constructing Nationalism - Deconstructing Tribalism

Nation states, generally speaking are formed when a nationalistic and collective identity has given birth to the development of a nation-state, not the reverse (Anderson 1987:6, Massad 2001:27). In the case of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, however, there was no coherent territory, people, or nationalistic movement to unite the nation-state prior to the establishment of Transjordan (Massad 2001:27). Instead, the boundaries of Jordan were established before the concept of Jordanian identity came into existence.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Jordan was created when the European powers divided the conquered territory among themselves. Yet, as the newly defined nation-state underwent a transition from complete control by the British administration to self-government (with substantial British control under the terms of the mandate), one of the issues the country faced was the government's inability to construct a unifying national identity (Al Oudat 2010:66). Multiple factors contributed to the delay in the development of a national Jordanian consciousness, including the dominant role the British played during their mandate control of Transjordan. Throughout his reign, Emir/King Abdullah never established a clear idea of what he hoped would come from the development of Jordan. He was largely been driven by his father's desire and ambition to become the founder and ruler of a great Arab nation – an ideal promised by the British to his father during World War I (Al Oudat 2010:66; Alon 2007:1).

One of the most significant obstacles to the development of Jordanian national identity lay in the fact that the newly formed country was composed of inhabitants whose identities had historically been tied to their tribal and kinship groups, as well as a long history of resistance to any form of central authority (Al Oudat 2010:68-69). For a sense of nationalism to develop in Transjordan, a new identity had to be developed and become a reality, ultimately replacing an identity based in tribal relations (Massad 2001:34).

This chapter discusses and examines the various elements that went into the formation of Jordanian national identity. The two major issues to be considered are these: first, from 1922 to

1948, highlighted the support the tribes offered to the Hashemite Kingdom, particularly in response to the King/Emir Abdullah I and King Hussein maintaining allegiance with the nomadic tribes, emphasizing Bedouin identity and the their role in Transjordan, particularly within the political sphere.

After 1948, the Arab-Israeli War introduced an influx of Palestinians into the Kingdom. However, it wasn't until after the Six Day War in 1967 that the struggle between the original inhabitants of Jordan (namely, nomadic tribes) and the Palestinian began to develop. In the 1970s, the Israeli proclamation that Jordan was for the Palestinians, and the development of a Palestinian nationalism prompted King Hussein to focus on development a Jordanian nationalism and identity separate from a Palestinian identity (Al Oudat 2010:71; Kumaraswamy 2006:67).

The concepts of nationalism and tribalism have increasingly become topics of interest for several scientists over the past few decades, specifically for anthropologists. Regardless of their increasing popularity, these concepts can be ambiguous or abstract in meaning, even changing definitions depending on the cultural settings and contexts in which they are being examined. What might be a representation of nationalism or tribalism in one "imagined" community, will not necessarily be the same in another. Additionally, the two terms are regularly examined as different entities, despite the fact that they are often found simultaneously existing within the same spatial and temporal setting.

## Nationalism

*"Nationalism invents nations where they do not exist" – Benedict Anderson*

Nationalism and nation states began to emerge in the eighteenth century during the age of Enlightenment, and its greatest expression was found during the French Revolution. Since then, the model of national identity has spread to the "farthest corners of the earth" (Anderson 1987:7; Kohn 1944: vii – 3).

Although a number of anthropologists, including Marcel Mauss and Clifford Geertz, wrote about nationalism prior to the 1980s, it did not emerge as an important focus of anthropological concern until then. Ernest Gellner's book *Nations and Nationalism* (1983) offered a sociological model relating nationalism to modernity. The same year, Benedict Anderson published his book, *Imagined Communities,* which turned the focus of nationalism toward the realm of politics, but followed Gellner's lead by emphasizing it as a modern phenomenon.

The impact of Gellner and Anderson's works on the anthropological construction of nationalism since the 1980s is considerable. Nevertheless, anthropologists have generally been cautious about responding to this concept as a political and/or modern phenomenon as a whole, but has instead concentrated on the rituals and symbolisms behind nationalism (i.e. language, military) (Anderson 1983; Massad 2001).

Gellner and Anderson were conscious that not only was nationalism difficult to define, but it was nearly impossible to analyze in a way that could incorporate its multiple facets in different societal and cultural contexts. The definitions anthropologists have attempted to provide for nationalism, nationality, and nations over the past few decades have fluctuated significantly from one ethnographic study to another, particularly since the construction of these terms is culturally determined and defined. Hugh Seton-Watson, in his vast text on nationalistic ideology, concluded that "no scientific definition of the nation can be devised, despite other's attempts to do so (Anderson 1987:3). Despite the conclusion reach by Seton-Watson, Anderson developed a definition that was ambiguous enough to be applied in seemingly all scenarios. He defined a nation as "an imagined political community," agreeing with previous scholars that it was a conscious state of mind that was both limited as well as sovereign (Anderson 1987:6; Kohn 1944:10, 18). Nations, Anderson argued, are imagined because they enable individuals to view themselves within a collective community, even without being able to meet the entire population. Nations are limited because each nation has "finite, elastic boundaries" beyond which are even more nations. Sovereignty exists because "nations" emerged during the era when Enlightenment was replacing the legacy of the "divinely-ordained" (Anderson 1983:7).

Due to its vagueness, Anderson’s definition of “nation” could be applied cross-culturally. Anthropologists, it seems, agree nationalism is not necessarily a by-product of nation-states, but rather, the reverse. Anderson, states, “it [nationalism] *invents* nations where they do not exist” (1987:6, emphasis added). During the French Revolution – the forbearer of nationalism – the collective consciousness of the movement encouraged the formation of the nation-state, and a movement away from a divinely ordained monarchy. As nationalism began to shape human thought, it consequentially began to shape the society according to the image being reflected within these thoughts (Kohn 1944: vii).

While this definition has proven to be accurate in the case of most nation-state formations, there are still exceptions that do not fit within this neat model. Multiple Middle Eastern countries have been faced with construction of national identity *after* a nation-state was already created. Many countries in the region have suffered from an inability to recognize and effectively integrate ethno-cultural diversity within their borders. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is no exception.

After World War I, European powers swept into the region, creating artificial nation-state borders, and disregarded many ethnic or tribal identities (Kumaraswamy 2006:63). This project was intended to encourage the establishment of nations and national identities whose inhabitants would unite under a collective, communal identity - one which did not exist prior to the establishment of the new borders. In the case of Jordan, the basis for the construction of a communal national identity for was an ethnic tribal identity that had existed within the region for generations – that of the Bedouin (Layne 1994:21).

## The Notion of Tribalism

The concept of “tribe” is a powerful word, carrying depth and breadth of meaning, especially within the field of anthropology. Despite its importance, anthropologists cannot decide on a single encompassing definition for the term (Marx 1977:343; van der Steen 2006:29) Yet, it is often used freely by not only anthropologists, but by the natives of the locality as well, who share a common bond. In the book *The Notion of the Tribe*, Morton Fried (1975) provided numerous examples of various tribes. Throughout his research, Fried concluded that “tribe” is not necessarily fixed, but rather should be considered as fluid, constantly changing. When defining what classifies a tribe, factors such as culture, language, customs, and political/economic features should all be taken into consideration. What many tribes have in common, particularly in the Middle East, has been the fact they are structured around kinship affiliation, with a leadership that is partly ascribed partly ascribed and partly achieved.

In the Middle East, tribes have spread across the varied terrain, developing a majority of the laws that helped govern the region in the early years. Some larger, more powerful tribes often became known as tribal kingdoms, subjecting the smaller tribes to their authority (van der Steen 2006:29). While the kinship based structure was very real, it was often manipulated or made adaptable in order to create a large tribal kingdom unit which helped establish alliances. Yet, the imagery of “tribe” still fluctuated from one region to another in Jordan (van der Steen 2006:28-29).

While distinctions have been made among Bedouin based on their herding and residential practices, the most significant factors through which tribes organized themselves are those based on kinship and family alliances (Layne 1994:15; Alon 2007:65). In most cases, a tribe was constructed around a patrilineal family line that could at times be traced back several generations. Each tribe had its own leader form within its ranks – a Sheikh - who maintained political alliances with others. Such affiliations for Bedouin determined practically every aspect of their tribal life. The forging of political alliances between tribes determined land and water usage, patterns of migration, maintaining of security, and resolution of conflicts (Alon 2007:13). In the eyes of the Bedouin, there was no economical or other advantage to controlling territory or to having a central authority figure dictating their lives and demanding tax payments (Marx 1977:349).

There is no denying that the impact of tribalism has been a central influence in the development of Jordan as a nation (Alon 2007:37), and has been of great value in the development of Jordan’s culture and identity. In fact, the Bedouin are dubbed the “symbols” of Jordan’s national identity. In modern Jordan, tribalism and nationalism are not contradictory phenomena on the surface. Ideally, they enlighten and enhance one another, encouraging the majority of the population hailing from a Transjordanian heritage to identity with the state in an intimate way (Alon 2007:156)

### Constructing National Identity

The early interactions between Emir Abdullah and the Bedouin helped to ensure that a careful balance between the different tribes was maintained, all the while securing their support of his rule. As Emir, however, Abdullah was not *only* concerned with securing his rule based on Bedouin support, but also on emphasizing the importance of tribal identity and its role in Transjordan, particularly in the political sphere when it came to creating the governmental administrative and political structure (Alon 2007:65; Al Oudat 010:69). The political role of Bedouin tribalism was a central importance for the Jordanian government, specifically in regard to the tribal practice of resolving conflict and regulating social relations, as well as the practice and codification of Bedouin customary laws (Alon 2008:154-155; Jureidini 1984: Chapter 3; Held 2000:288).

Although the nation-state of Jordan was established in 1921, it wasn’t until the establishment of the Nationality Law in 1928 that Jordanian identity began to be addressed. Even at this point, however, what it meant to be Jordanian was not clearly defined. A Jordanian, according to the Nationality Law of 1928, encompassed “all individuals” residing in Jordan, including the previous Ottoman subjects who acquired British-issued Jordanian citizenship. Yet, the identity was largely tied to either paternity (one who was father was naturalized or born Jordanian), or determined by the number of years one had resided within Jordan (Massad 2001:32). Yet, the Jordanian identity was produced through juridical order established by the British government, yet failed to really define what a Jordanian identity actually entailed.

It was not until the reign of King Abdullah I's grandson, Hussein (1952- 1999), that the state began to officially define Jordanian national identity (Layne 1989:24), mostly as a response to the growing Palestinian population taking up residency in Jordan. This project proved to be daunting. Jordan is composed of three main demographic groups, the Bedouin, settled agricultural villages (which like the Bedouin have claims to long residence in the region), and families who moved to the young country from surrounding lands and countries during the early half of the twentieth century (Layne 1994:97). In creating a sense of Jordanian history and nationality, King Hussein hoped this would allow the various segments of the population to feel united, providing them with the appreciation of Jordan as a nation-state, and at the same time it sustain their support for the national cause, specifically among the Bedouin communities (Al Oudat 2010:71-73).

Within the monarchial government of Jordan, tribal identity became a crucial element in the creation of a national identity (Al Oudat 2010:65; Alon 2007:37). As a result, the kingdom relied heavily on the loyalty and support of the various tribes, specifically in laying the foundations ion which the Jordanian government was formed (Al Oudat 2010:71).

### *Jordanians as Bedouin*

In Jordan under the reign of King Hussein, Bedouin values and culture became a central theme in the construction of nationalism, becoming a determining factor in creating the Jordanian national identity, particularly in response to the influx of Palestinians into Jordan between 1948 and 1970 (Al Oudat 2010:72). As a result Bedouin became viewed as the "carriers" of what it meant to be "true" Jordanian.

The relationship between Jordan and Palestine has encouraged a separation between what is classified as Jordanian national identity and what encompasses a Palestinian ethnic identity (Al Oudat 2010:77). The Palestinians are an Arab people who resided in the region encompassing the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel – the land west of the Jordan River –for several centuries. The inhabitants of modern Jordan have also resided with the region east of the

Jordan River for centuries. While both entities had historical claims to the region, the decision made through the Balfour Declaration created a Jewish Nation out of Palestine, officially declaring the nation of Israel in 1948. The devastating loss for the Arabs in the 1948 and 1967 wars with Israel resulted in thousands of Palestinians refugees flooding into Jordan's borders, searching for a new homeland. While Jordan did grant Palestinians citizenship it was only if they would relinquish their Palestinian identity. However, the large influx of Palestine into Jordan from 1948 to 1967 sparked a wide range of debates, particularly bringing into question the development of a nationalized Jordanian identity. Additionally, the events of Black September in 1970 played a significant role in reinforcing the need to separate these two distinct identities – Palestinian versus Jordanian - further encouraging the official development of Jordanian nationalism (Al Oudat 2010:74; Layne 1989:24).

Black September (the name used to refer to the Jordanian Civil War), was in some senses was about whether Jordan would become Palestinian or Jordanian state. The Palestinian guerrillas under the leadership of Yaser Arafat had claimed the city of Irbid in northern Jordan as Palestinian territory. The King regarded this as an unacceptable challenge to his authority (George 2005:65-66). When the bitter dispute came to an end in July of 1971, the outcome encouraged the Hashemite Kingdom to develop a national identity that would ultimately distinguish Jordanians from Palestinians residing within Jordan's borders.

During his reign, King Hussein had sought to develop a sense of pride and unity among the citizens of Jordan, in part through establishing the concept of a "true" Jordanian – a concept that could easily be defined and recognized (Al Oudat 2010:71; (Layne 1989:28). At the same time, this involved asserting that Jordan's identity was separate from Palestine's. This was the main reason that the Kingdom sought to build their national identity on the roots of tribalism, employing the Bedouin as a national signifier (Al Oudat 2010:74; Layne 1989:24; Alon 2008:157).

The adoption of this national signifier served several purposes. First, it provided the Hashemite Kingdom the ability to challenge the Israeli government's declaration that Jordan was for the Palestinians by reinforcing the statement that Jordan was for the “Jordanians.” [2] Second, linking the Bedouin to the development of the kingdom allowed Jordan to also become a representation of "true" Arab, mixing the noble “quintessential living culture” of the Bedouin with the image of a modern culture that all Arabs might identify with (Massad 2001:74; Al-Mahadin 2007:93). Developing a national identity around tribalism created the “evolutionary implication” that all who presently identified themselves as “Jordanians” had ancestral ties with a Bedouin tribe (Massad 2001:77). This was a very clear statement in opposition to claims that Jordan was Palestine.

Although it claimed roots in Bedouin tribalism, the concept of Jordan nationhood was still vague and problematic, not only because of the various circumstances surrounding the Palestine-Jordan relationship, but also due to the deconstruction of Bedouin identity (Layne 1994:21). Although the establishment of tribal culture as a key component seemed like a good solution in the development of a Jordanian national identity, it ultimately resulted in the redefining of that very same Bedouin culture, particularly on the basis of nation-state criteria.

### Deconstructing Identity

Over the past few decades, debates have taken place among scholars, as well as within the local news media in Jordan. These debates have been concerned with the meaning of Bedouin tribalism and whether it “compliments or contradicts” the collective national identity goal Jordan is attempting to achieve (Layne 1989:26; Layne 1994:98). There are two sides to the argument - those for tribalism and those opposed (Layne 1994:96)

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[2] Israel’s “Jordan for Palestinians” slogan was established around 1973 in order to undermine Palestine’s demands for a separate Palestinian state alongside the Israeli state in the West Bank and Gaza. Israel proclaimed the Palestinians did not need a separate state when they already had one in Jordan, which had historically been a part of Palestine in the past.

Those in opposition were concerned with the role Bedouin played within the governmental administration. In the eyes of several critics, the Bedouin lifestyle had not changed much since the eleventh century B.C. (Layne 1994:100), and, as a result should no longer be a representation of the Jordanian cultural identity, since, due to its traditional nature, it was no longer compatible with a modern nation-state. In addition, several newspaper columnists in Jordan have condemned the influence of tribal tradition in connection with government, strongly encouraging its complete elimination when it comes to matters of the state. One basic argument proposed that Bedouin loyalty to their tribe over the nation-state would pose a “threat to national security” (Layne 1989:26; Massad 2001:58, 69).

King Hussein quickly reprimanded the newspapers and others who publicly criticized the influence of tribal traditions on government . Claiming pride in his own Hashim tribal heritage, he added that any criticism of the tribes or their traditions(publicly or not) reflected negatively on the King and the royal family (Massad 2001:70). Others in favor of tribalism felt Jordanians should take pride in their Bedouin origins and ideals (Layne 1989:27), not just those who still practice the nomadic way of life, but those who still trace their lineage to the Bedouin. (In fact, segments of Jordan’s population still do so, mainly those whose family line had resided within Jordan for several generations).

Although Jordanian identity is acknowledged to have roots in Bedouin tribalism, the government began, in its statements, to modify definitions of Bedouin in order to make them fit with the desired image of Jordan nationalism. This modification required a rewriting of the history as well as values that had been attached to the Bedouin identity for centuries. For instance, as stated previously the Bedouin had once been feared, not only by locals, but also by the Ottoman and British empires, who saw them as a continuous threat to the security and safety of local villages and towns (Al-Mahadin 2007:96).

Yet if one were to flip through the pages of a Jordanian tourism book or skim the pages of an encyclopedia, the depiction of the Bedouin as warriors and raiders has essentially been erased from the pages of history, and replaced with more docile depictions of Bedouin and tribalism, and particularly with the assertion that they are traditionally hospitable and warm (Al-Mahadin 2007:96).

*"Bedouin are most famous for their hospitality, and it is part of their creed- rooted in the harshness of desert life – that no traveler is turned away."*

*(*(http://www.kinghuseein.gov.jo/people1.html).

In the 1980s, the Jordanian government continued campaigns that idealized images of Bedouin hospitality (Massad 2001:74; Layne 1994:101). The Lawrence of Arabia Hollywood imagery of a Bedouin riding off into the sunset on the back of his camel, with his long white thobe and head dress blowing in the wind, or of Bedouin leisurely sipping hot sweet tea in their tents on a sweltering summer day, was capitalized on by the Jordanian government as a representation of "true" Bedouin. (Massad 2001:75). But, at the same time, the Jordanian government was presenting itself as a modern country, with "modern infrastructure," that would be suitable to host and welcome modernized European and western tourists (Massad 2001:74). Such sometimes conflicting notions about Bedouin and modernity began to have concrete effects on the tribes in Jordan, particularly in relation to the development of tourism (Jureidini 1984:4).

Even today, for the individual Bedouin identity remains first and foremost a matter of loyalty to tribal affiliation (Barakat 1993:54). Although, many Jordanians today are very far removed from the traditional life style of the Bedouin, many still define themselves based on their tribal roots. For instance, our family's landlord in Amman (2003-2011), a highly educated and respected pulmonary doctor in the capital city, maintained a strong sense of Bedouin identity. Our home, which he had previously lived, had many features that were characteristic of Bedouin culture, such as separate entrance for males and females - an infrastructural set up not typically found in such a modernized area of the Amman. Additionally, several of our close neighbors belonged to his immediate family, and the older ladies wore the traditional Bedouin garb, even though they lived in the largely westernized part of the city, where virtually no one wore Bedouin style dress. One of these families even constructed a large covered area in front of their modern stone house where they could receive visitors in a fashion much like they would have done in a large goat hair tent in the past. When asked about his roots, our landlord proudly stated, “I am Bedu”, a response we encountered all over the country.

As discussed in chapter one, the Bedouin identity remains ambiguous. If this identity is to be defined as camel herding, nomadism, and tent dwelling, then that identity is quickly fading. But if Bedouin identity is determined by the ability to trace ones actual lineage to a specific Bedouin tribe and kinship affiliation, then it is still richly present in nearly every Jordanian’s heritage.

The romantic symbolism of the Bedouin, not only as the carriers of Jordanian identity, but also as a symbol of a traditional past, now clashes with the reality that tribes are made up of living members who participate in a very real and very non-traditional lifestyle (Layne 1989:25). The remodeling of the Bedouin identity and culture into something that would be deemed “acceptable” in a modern world has forced the creation of an almost entirely “new Bedouin.”

The deconstruction of Bedouin lifestyle can be attributed to several different events and circumstances, but there are three aspects to government and Bedouin relationships that I will focus on. These circumstances have contributed to the changing of Bedouin identity, culture, and lifestyle over the past decade, and are still important today. The debedouinization” efforts of the Jordanian government have encouraged a national move away from an embracing traditional tribal lifestyle, and have further encouraged the view of Bedouin as *only* a national symbol and signifier, and not necessarily the concrete embodiment of Jordanian national identity. In addition, the nation has redefined its relation to its territory and its land and water access and outlets. These, which previously had been considered “common property” and accessible to Bedouin in the past now fell under direct governmental control. Regulations on land usage and control over movement across nation-state borders served to greatly restrict traditional Bedouin lifestyles Bedouin, accelerating processes of sedentarization. Together with debedouinization and sedentarization, the government also began a process of nationalization, of incorporating Bedouin into the collective Jordanian identity.

## Chapter 4: The Changing Bedouin in a Changing World

*"If we're not Bedu, who is?"* - Alan George

The terms "nomads" and "pastoralists" conjure up images of a backward life and opposition to any form of progress or modernization, a common attitude found among urban Jordanians as well. Bedouin, however, have in fact been more than willing to make changes – especially of the technological or economic variety.– In the southern deserts of Jordan today, one will see Bedouin utilizing modern technology such as cell phones, pick-up trucks, television, and generators powered by trucks and taking advantage of modern amenities, particularly in the form of free education and healthcare, while still living as nomadic pastoralists. There is ample evidence that they are, in fact, not fearful of change, nor do they avoid adapting to a changing world (Lancaster 1981:162).

When the Bedouin *do,* in some instances, express their resistance toward change, this is not necessarily due to their inability or lack of desire to adapt or progress, but rather due to their discontent with the type of change being forced upon them by an outside source. One of the chief cases of Bedouin opposition has been against the various governmental projects and regulations forced upon them over the years. These will be discussed further in this chapter (Lancaster 1981:162).

In chapter three, I discussed how the development of Jordanian national identity has resulted in the deconstruction of Bedouinism. I argued that although Jordanian national ideology positioned Bedouin culture as the root/basis of Jordanian identity, the government at the same time transformed the reality of Bedouin life in order to make it fit with what were seen as the contemporary needs of the nation, thereby creating a new kind of Bedouin. This was accomplished through debedouinization, sedentarization, and nationalization, which often prompted resistance and resentment among the Bedouin. The resistance was not based, however, on a generalized fear of change, but rather on the fact that the government was forcibly "encouraging" them to make changes without allowing them any voice in decisions about their future. Government actions reflected a sentiment on the part of officials that the Bedouin were inferior to the countries settled and urbanized populations (Lancaster 1981:162).

In this chapter I delve deeper into these three government plans, and examine how each has caused changes in Bedouin life patterns. While I discuss debedouinization, sedentarization, and nationalization as discrete processes, these in fact often overlap with one another, and are interdependent In addition, I will discuss Bedouin opposition to these processes.

### Debedouinization

Many of the technological and economic changes and advancements associated with global modernity have had an undeniable impact on the debedouinization of Bedouin life patterns. In particular, regulations and projects imposed by the Jordanian government have played a significant role in the diminishing of "traditional" nomadic pastoralists' lifestyles and culture (Lancaster 1981:139). To some observers, certain policies implemented by the government seemed to spell the immediate death of the Bedouin way of life (Chatty 1986:xviii). The first set of government policies I investigate is debedouinization, or the processes of the decline of Bedouin patterns of living (Jureidini 1984:4).

This process in fact began during the years of the British Mandate. One of the key figures in the early processes of debedouinization was a British officer named, John Bagot Glubb, known locally as Glubb Pasha. Glubb was an officer posted to the Transjordan's Arab Legion in 1930, under the command of Major-General Frederick Peake. Glubb was charged with creating the Desert Patrol, and successfully recruited Bedouin to the force, and thereby established British control over the tribes of southern Transjordan (Alon 2009:5, 95; Layne 1994:10). While the purpose of this move was to allow the government to keep a watch over the desert tribes, it had long-lasting consequences on the Bedouin identity, culture, and lifestyle.

During the process of incorporating Bedouin into the Desert Patrol, Glubb developed a particular version of Bedouin identity - a new “traditional” identity which involved discarding elements of Bedouin culture he deemed to be harmful to the interest of the new “Arab,” and recoding Bedouin ideals so as to strengthen the construction of a Transjordanian national identity, particularly highlighting the traditional belief that Bedouin are a hospitable and warm people group intimately tied to their surroundings (Massad 2001:149). In addition, the British authorities attempted to integrate the large Bedouin population into the nation-state by means of implementing a number of settlement and agrarian schemes (Chatty 1996:20). This process began a slow transformation of Bedouin culture, lifestyle, and identity, and the development of a new "Bedouin" that would become largely dependent on the state (Massad 2001:59; Alon 2009:108). The process, therefore, was a paradoxical one. Whereas Glubb promoted a new Bedouin identity in congruence with the British efforts to "Bedouinize" Transjordan, by encouraging all Jordanians to identify with "traditional" Bedouin roots, he simultaneously was trying to de-Bedouinize the Bedouin in order to fit them into national framework (Massad 2001:144-149; Robins 2004:42).

By the time Transjordan gained its independence from Britain in 1946, Glubb had left an undeniable mark on nearly every facet of life in the country, altering the lives of its inhabitants specifically redefining what it meant to be Bedouin (Massad 2001:160-162). As noted in chapter two, King Abdullah I worked to fortify tribal allegiance to his regime by incorporating the tribal sheikhs and Bedouin laws into the political framework of government, focusing largely on Bedouinizing the government rather than the debedouinization of the nomads (Alon 2007:65; Al Oudat 2010:69).

King Hussein, who succeeded Abdullah in 1952, realized that in order to continue the process of merging tribal identity with national identity, he too would need to proceed with the process of Bedouinization while simultaneously de-Bedouinizing the tribes. The process behind Bedouinization involved a strategic and elaborate promotion of tribal imagery and values as emphasized through Glubb's "new" Bedouin (Al- Mahadin 2007:96).

Beginning in the 1960s, the government launched projects of settling the Bedouin. This involved either depriving them of their livestock (their traditional source of livelihood) or limiting access to grazing land. It also deprived them of the freedom to choose whether or not to settle (Chatty 1996:2). But after years of experience with government schemes, Bedouin had become suspicious of any proposed projects. In the 1970s, the Jordanian government began to implement measures to restrict the nomads in their practice of "traditional" ways of life, and the Bedouin responded with strong resistance, refusing to adhere to the new laws. As a result, the government had to resort to a sort of disguised debedouinization (Lancaster 1981:162). For instance, the government often described settlement projects as "urbanization" or the "upgrading" of low income slum areas as it provided of basic infrastructure such as running water or sewerage, or it sometimes labeled them as "humanitarian" projects to improve Bedouin life. [3]

### Sedentarization: Life under Construction

While several scholars have discussed the contribution Bedouin have made in the formation and development of the Jordanian nation-state and national identity, there is a relative lack of written material on the concrete effects government that debedouinization projects have had on the tribes. Similarly, governmental and non-governmental organizations which have offered humanitarian relief to rural communities have published overviews of the programs they have implemented, but they have recorded little detail regarding how the projects have affected the Bedouin themselves. If the effects of modernization on Bedouin life and culture are discussed at all, it is primarily in relation to the tourism industry in Petra or Wadi Rum. Thus little has been written about a relatively large percentage of Bedouin who still maintain a nomadic or semi-nomadic lifestyle, and are not directly influenced by tourism.

Here I have supplemented the available written materials with my own first-hand experiences and interactions with nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settled Bedouin. My contact stemmed from visits in numerous settings, involvement in medical assessment projects, teaching

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[3] http://web.mit.edu/urbanupgrading/upgrading/case-examples/ce-JO-jor.html

English, and basic friendships between the years of 2003 and 2011 In addition, in summer 2010, along with other students from the United States, I participated in a month long archeological dig in southern Jordan. Our housing for the month was in tents at a Bedouin tourist camp. While the mornings were spent at the dig site, the afternoons were reserved for visiting the Bedouin in the area who were living in black goat-hair tents. Naturally, women and men were separated during the visits, and the Bedouin women and girls were eager to talk about the basic aspects of their lives with us. Through these visits, I was able to gain further insights into the challenges of the nomadic lifestyle.

Later in the summer of 2010 and also in 2011, I interned with Jordan Baptist Society (JBS), a non-government organization that has worked in social and community development in Jordan for over fifty years. In the course of this internship, I helped develop and conduct English classes and assisted in conducting medical assessment days for rural communities in northern and southern Jordan. I also helped develop and conduct surveys that JBS utilized during visits to Bedouin tents in order to gain an understanding of medical needs, access to healthcare, estimated monthly income, modes of acquiring income, daily diet, access to potable water, and other questions in regard to Bedouin well-being.

"Tawtin" is the Arabic word for sedentarization. Its literally meaning is "to give a homeland/nation," and it describes the attempt of the Jordanian government to nationalize the Bedouin, encouraging them to view Jordan as their very own "watan" (homeland/nation), and to abandon their traditional view of the tribal territory as the "homeland" (Massad 2001: 72).

Although Bedouin tribes claimed seasonal rights to specific areas of land, during most of Jordan's history the desert had no official owners. The establishment of the Emirate of Transjordan placed the unclaimed land of the desert under the direct control of the British mandate (Fischbach 2000:64). It was under British rule that the region was first surveyed and national boundaries established and village and city limits delineated as well. During the mandate period, the regime established that all land was to be either under state or private ownership, and all land was required to be registered and documented, so that taxes could be collected (Fischbach 2000:3-4). The concept of “no-man’s land," and the seasonal rights Bedouin once had enjoyed over the land no longer existed, according to the government. The British attempted to integrate the nomadic population into the nation through settlements, agricultural development efforts, and recruiting young men into the Arab Legion and Desert Patrol (Chatty 1996:20).

After the end of World War II, international organizations such as the United Nations and World Health Organization began to strongly urge the settling of the nomadic pastoralist population in Jordan, in order to turn them into agriculturalists. The intention was that the movement of Bedouin from a nomadic lifestyle to a more settled existence would increase their overall standard of living, create a diversity of agricultural skills, improve their health, and reduce the spread of diseases, not only for the nomads, but for the entire country – a modernization plan typical during the post-World War II era (Chatty 1996:16; Lancaster 1999:259; Jureidini 184: Chapter 2). For the next thirty years, Jordan continued to employ the same strategies established by the British (settlements, army recruitment and agricultural development), assuming that by doing so they would efficiently and effectively be able to merge tribal nomads into the collective identity (Chatty 1996:2; 20).

Between the years of 1960 and 1980, projects were developed and implemented by the Jordanian government in accordance with their detribalization campaign, with the intention to settle tribal families (Chatty 1996:21; Galaty, eds 1981:298). The efforts started with a test project in the eastern desert, and these formed the framework of national development plans for Bedouin throughout the 1970s and 1980s. After the events that unfolded with the conflict between government forces and the Palestinian resistance movement in 1970-71, the government further saw the dire need to establish a collection national identity, and actively pursued policies to settle the nomadic tribes in order to incorporate them into Jordan’s nationalism. Three-year and five-year plans were drafted as a means of assessing and reassessing their successes in integrating the Bedouin into the nation and modern economy (Massad 2001:72; Jureidini 1984:4-5).

According to one written sources, these settlement projects were either fully or partially funded by the government. They built housing that averaged 60 square meters, and contained one or two rooms, complete with a kitchen, a toilet, and access to clean drinking water (Galaty, eds 1981:299). Most of these settlements had access to clinics, schools, and other government facilities. Based on my first hand observation of these settlement projects, it would appear that the housing and promised "livelihoods" were far from ideal. In response to the inadequate provision of services in government settlement projects, in the 1990s, JBS purchased supplies for and built approximately 150 outhouses for in southern Jordan government housing project that lacked this basic accommodation. Sedentarization therefore often reduced Bedouin to a more impoverished and socioeconomically backward condition than they enjoyed while wandering the desert as nomads (Sueyoshi and Ryutaro 2007:13). The housing provided was often primitive, with a middle wall separating the male section from the female section (similar to the setup of a traditional Bedouin tent), but lacking other facilities, such as an indoor restroom, kitchen, or even in some cases proper windows and doors

Although the government claimed to provide Bedouin with the necessarily skills to become agriculturalists, for the most part, they were settled without the provision of any alternative form of livelihood. In some settlements, Bedouin practiced a semi-nomadic lifestyle, continuing to herd sheep, goats or camels during the daytime, and living in tents during the summer months, returning to their government housing only during the rainy, winter season. It was not uncommon to see government housing for Bedouin with a tent pitched right beside it, which the men used to host guests.

These various governmental settlement mentioned have caused a drastic change in the traditional lives of Bedouin, and gravely affected pastoralists who wish to maintain a traditional nomadic way of life (Al Mahadin 2007:88). Such drastic changes in nomadic lifestyle that are related to permanent settlement have often been plagued by problems, most notably an increase in unemployment and dire poverty. [4] A national census conducted in 2004 revealed unemployment and poverty rates within rural areas, particularly in village consisting of a large number of settled and nomadic Bedouin, were significantly higher than the rates found in urban areas. At the same time, there the settlement programs have also had some positive effects, in particular, access to better healthcare and education. They also helped to move them toward the modern economy, only if they were employed, however.

Today many Bedouin in fact do actively desire the benefits offered by modern society, even if it means letting go of their traditions and lifestyle (Chatty 1996:24). Over the past two decades, urbanizations projects were still being implemented either by the government or by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Beginning in the 1990s, NGO and government projects have been advertised as humanitarian projects, but they now are not forced upon the Bedouin by the government as they were in the past, in order to avoid resistance. Additionally, these modernization efforts by the government and NGOs are providing rural villages and nomadic communities with various social facilities (Jureidini 1984:4-5).

It is important to note that at the same time as the government has settled a significant number of Bedouin by force, in the past some Bedouin have voluntarily opted for settled life, particularly during times of economically and financial insecurity. During the 1950s and early 1960s, drought ravaged the region and encouraged many Bedouin to seek alternative forms of livelihood (Lancaster 1999:259). It was at this point that many became involved in the growing tourist industry in Petra and Wadi Rum as tour guides, guards , or proprietors of Bedouin tourist camps or restaurants. Other Bedouin joined the military, became police, or obtained employment in local government. Bedouin women wove traditional Bedouin rugs, stitched local dresses, or made jewelry to sell. Many came to appreciate permanent housing. A number of Bedouin I met in southern Jordan, whether they were settled, semi-nomadic and tent-dwellers, expressed their preference for a “bayt hajar” (stone house) over a tent. One young woman told me that she had informed her husband she no longer wanted to live in a tent, but in a house. Despite his preference for the nomadic lifestyle, he provided a house for his wife, while still often opting to reside in his tent in the desert.

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[4] According to surveys conducted by Jordan’s Ministry of Planning and Department of Statistics, the national unemployment rate has decreased from 15% in 2000 to 12.3% in 2011. The national census conducted in 2004 revealed that 20.5.% of the urban population was unemployed, compared to 31% of the rural population. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Poverty Report of 2006 conducted by the Department of Statistics and the World Bank noted that poverty rates in these rural regions were significantly higher than urban centers, particularly Amman and Irbid.

Nearly every Bedouin child, regardless of how far removed they might be from tourist attractions that draw foreigners are at least able to say “hi, how are you?” in English, as a result of public education that has been provided in rural areas (Chatty 1986:xviii). Women have been particular beneficiaries. I met two young Bedouin women who were completing degrees at a local university, on scholarships paid for by the government. They stressed that education was very important for them, so that they willingly walked over two miles each day to reach the main road, where they took a one-hour bus ride to the university. Previously, this sort of education was not available for Bedouin, and especially to females.

## Nationalization

While the Jordanian government attempted to remove Bedouin from their traditional tribal lifestyle through its debedouinzation efforts the, at the same time the Hashemites encouraged the view of Bedouin as *only* a symbol and signifier of national identity, recreating their identity in order to effectively incorporate them into the nation-state agenda. Nationalizing of the Bedouin began with the establishment of the British Mandate in Transjordan, in response to the fact that Bedouin kinship ties and tribal affiliations transcended the newly drawn national borders, and that they lacked incentives to pledge loyalty to the new national entity (Massad 2001:111).

In chapter three, I examined the role Bedouinization played in creating an ideology of unified Jordanian national identity. Here I elaborate on the incorporation of the Bedouin into the larger collective identity of nation.

The British authorities, in their efforts to control the Transjordanian Bedouin, proclaimed the Law of Supervising the Bedouin in 1929. This law which did not apply to other Transjordanian citizens, represented one of the first government steps toward integrating the Bedouin within the national framework (Massad 2001: 52). The law restricted Bedouin traditional seasonal migration, which had historically taken them into the lands of the newly established neighboring countries, including Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Syria, where they maintained tribal and kinship affiliations. The law further ensured that they would not be viewed as "international" entities, but rather identified them with the nation-state in which they resided. The law also aimed to nationalize the Bedouin by shifting their loyalties from the tribe to the military, which was symbolic of nationalism and the nation-state (Massad 2001:59,111; Hiatt 1984:5).

As discussed earlier, the development of the Arab Legion and Desert Patrol played a significant role in the debedouinization of the Bedouin, and consequently, their nationalization. The very act and idea of nationalism is brought alive, as Massad notes, through rituals, practices, and performances. Therefore, the role of the military as an institution functions to produce an identity that becomes the national culture in itself (Massad 2001:101). The flag, anthem, songs, and even the dress of military personnel (the very essences of the military) are not only nationally defined, but define nationality (Massad 2001:100-102).

John Glubb's military projects in Transjordan were established in order to integrate Bedouin into the nation-state (Massad 2001:102), and, as discussed earlier, required the complete remolding of Bedouin. The very essence of Bedouin identity (mind, body, and soul) became the national embodiment of Jordan. The military man (the new Bedouin), trained, educated and dressed under Glubb's supervision, became the iconic and symbolic representation of Jordanian nationality (Massad 2001:118). By doing this, Glubb also hoped to ensure that the military

Bedouin would no longer be viewed as a threat to the establishment of the nation-state, that raiding would come to an end, and that tribal loyalties would be transferred to the nation-state, guaranteeing Bedouin would protect the state against all threats (Massad 2001:102, 110). The active participation of the Bedouin in the national military continued to be a governmental strategy to nationalize the Bedouin for several decades to come.

The decade of the 1970's witnessed events, such as Black September, which played a major role in continual government efforts to foreground Bedouin culture as an embodiment of Jordanian national identity. In 1976, the government issued a law canceling all laws pertaining specifically to the Bedouin, including the Law of Supervising the Bedouin. By continuing to incorporate the Bedouin culture into the military, and abolishing laws restricting Bedouin, the government hoped to unify the entire kingdom under a single Jordanian national identity (Massad 2001:63). The 1980s saw further efforts on the part of the government to bedouinize the nation, with the promotion of the slogan "Jordan for Jordanians," a formulation which incorporated both Bedouin and non-Bedouin under the identity "Jordanian." (Massad 2001:68-73).

**King Abdullah II and the Bedouin**

Toward the end of King Hussein's reign, governmental policies regarding debedouinization, sedentarization, and nationalization of Bedouin seem to have become less important governmental priorities. When King Abdullah II, King Hussein's eldest son, inherited the throne in 1999 after the death of his father, Bedouin seemed to be of little interested to the new King.

It has become challenging to locate contemporary studies of Jordanian Bedouin and the transformation of their lifestyle and culture in the changing national context. It difficult to say whether this is due to the lack of interest in the Bedouin culture on the part of scholars and other writers, or whether issues have taken precedence in recent years. It is apparent that the government's attempt to shift nomads into settled communities was primarily accomplished during the first seventy years of the nation-state's existence, particularly from 1921 until the early 1990s. Based on my research, it appears that the last time the government even suggested the settlement of Bedouin was during the economic downturn of 2009, but this was merely a passing effort to provide a solution for Bedouin tribes experiencing difficulty finding pastures to graze their herds, and was never carried through (BBC 2009).

This is not to suggest that relations between the government and Bedouin communities have improved under the rule of King Abdullah II (1999 to present). Quite the contrary, relations have deteriorated over the past ten years. Unrest among the Jordanian tribes has been reported a number of times, particularly as the King has struggled to maintain the relationship and respect his father enjoyed among the Bedouin (World Tribune, 2012). Perhaps the decline in policies regarding the Bedouin is a result of the King's inability to maintain a stable Jordanian government in the mist of protests, poor economic situations, and political unrest in neighboring countries (World Tribune, 2012).

*"The king's weakness is mentioned frequently [in social media], and puts pressure on the Trans-Jordanian tribal leaders who openly express their dissatisfaction with the king's performance."* – World Tribune 2012

While several attacks (verbal and physical) (Zahran 2011; Al Jazeera 2013)) have been made against the King, the frustration among the Bedouin – nomadic and settled alike – is their dissatisfaction with the King's inability to follow through with the promises he has made since he ascended the throne; promises of reform and employment opportunities for the Bedouin (Zahran 2011; World Tribune, 2012).

The Jordanian state seems to have exaggerated elements of what they believe to be "traditional" Bedouin culture, by elaborating on Bedouin values such as hospitality and expounding on their cultural products, such as "Bedouin" rugs or dress [5] (Massad 2001:99).

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[5] The Bani Hamida Women's Weaving Project, launched in 1987, provides impoverished regions a marketable opportunity to advance their economic situation. The projects, however, accentuated the traditional Bedouin weaving practices through the production of rugs and dresses.

Bedouin who are willing to maintain the traditional way of life, participating as pastoral nomads in the desert, are often exploited as "tourist attractions," neatly packaged as representations of Jordan's living past (Massad 2001:77). The Bedouin Heritage Project (BHP) in Wadi Rum has made it their goal to safeguard main features of traditional Bedu life, but in doing so, have made Bedouin a tourist attraction through the establishment of Bedouin style camps, and reenacting traditional camel races for spectators (Bedouin Heritage Project Site).

As we have seen, the nomadic pastoralist way of life has been on the decline for years, and particularly among the younger generations (Jureidini 1984: Chapter 4). In 1922, at the dawn of the formation of the nation-state, nomadic Bedouin constituted nearly half of the population of Transjordan, totaling over 100,000 people. By 1943, those still practicing nomadic pastoralism had decreased to 35% of the country's population (Massad 2001:56; Sueyoshi and Ryutaro 2007:13; Held 200:288). In 1994, a national census was conducted throughout Jordan, assessing population distribution, social characteristics, and households. This detailed census revealed how many persons lived in conventional housing and "hair tents/tents" [6] among other housing accommodations. Of the overall population, one percent were found to be living in "hair tents/tents." Ten years later, another national census was conducted assessing the same categories, and the percentage of those residing in "hair tents/ tents" had dropped to .5% of the overall population.

The decrease in the percentage of nomadic pastoralists throughout the years can be the product of multiple events and circumstances. For instance, within the ten-year span between the two censuses, the population of Jordan has increased 81% from 4.1 million to 5.1 million inhabitants (Department of Statics). This population increase has largely been a product of refugees from neighboring countries pouring into Jordan's borders (The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan). In 2003, the Iraqi War brought an influx of Iraqi refugees, increasing Jordan's population by 17% (World Directory of Minority and Indigenous People). The 2004 census revealed the two largest non-Jordanian people groups were the Palestinians and Iraqi. In fact, estimates suggest that between 55-70% of Jordanians are of Palestinian origin (Sharp 2013:3), none of which practice nomadic pastoralism. [7]

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[6] Hair tent typically refers to goat hair – the material traditional Bedouin tents are made from. It is important to note this number also includes the gypsy population whose tents are typically made from burlap, pieces of clothing, or granary bags. In this case, the implication tent dwellers denote the idea of nomadism.

Although the influx of refugees is one factor explaining why the nomadic population (those considered tent dwellers in the two censuses) has decreased in relationship to the overall population growth, it does not entirely explain why those residing in tents decreased 62% from 1994 to 2004. Due to the lack of written sources that discuss governmental plans, projects, and strategies to settle and the debedouinization of the nomadic population Bedouin, it is difficult to evaluate the causes for the decrease in the nomadic population. But based on my own personal observations and conversations, it is clear that the Bedouin incorporation into the nation-state has played a major role, whether due to active government de-Bedouinization and nationalization policies or because of the economic instability afflicting the region (Lancaster 1999:259).

Today, in the eyes of the government, all Bedouin are citizens of the state, are obligated to carry national identity cards, and are allowed to vote in elections. There is no longer any official distinction between the "nomads" and the settled citizens (Cole 2003:258). Bedouin and people of Bedouin background today have been largely absorbed into the society and economy of the nation-state, as was the original goal of the nation-state through the debedouinization process of this population.  Most have settled completely, and can be found in cities, towns and villages throughout Jordan, but especially in the south.

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[7] From 1948 to the 1970s, refugees from the Arab- Israeli wars accounted for a large percentage of Jordan's population growth. Refugees during this time were granted Jordan nationalism, but had to revoke their Palestinian nationality. As a result, a large percentage of "Jordanians" are originally from Palestinian decent. (Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Website)

## Chapter Five: Conclusion

The early days in the establishment of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan held the promise of maintaining a healthy relationship between the governmental system and the Bedouin, particularly during the reigns of King Abdullah I and King Hussein. In chapter two, a brief historical overview of the interaction between Transjordan after World War I and the Bedouin tribes within the region revealed the undeniable impact the formation of a nation-state had on the Bedouin identity, culture, and lifestyle.

In addition, a complicated political relationship between the government and the Bedouin led to efforts toward deconstruction of Bedouin lifestyle, identity and culture, resting on the paradox introduced by John Glubb. In this, the recreation of a Bedouin identity was utilized in order to promote a foundation for a national identity – one that would include Bedouin and non-Bedouin alike. At the same time, the Bedouin identity was deconstructed in order to nationalize them within the Jordanian identity (Massad 2001:144; Robins 2004:42).

The deconstruction of the Bedouin way of life was attributed to three main processes associated with government projects and policies: debedouinization, nationalization, and sedentarization. These processes often overlapped with one another, and, at times, one was the result of the other. Debedouinization encouraged the movement of Bedouin away from traditional tribal lifestyles, and further strengthened the view of Bedouin as a national symbol and signifier. The process of de-Bedouinizing tribal communities encouraged by the government, involved the implementation of various assimilation platforms, whose purpose was to nationalize Bedouin. The goal was to boost the Bedouin's overall adoption of the Jordanian national identity rather than continue to place their loyalties within tribes and kinship boundaries. Additionally, in an attempt to further control the Bedouin population within the nation-state, the Jordan government began pushing for a mass shift of Bedouin from nomadic pastoralists to agriculturalists.

Changes and advancements that have taken place worldwide, particularly since the end of World War II, have had an undeniable impact on Bedouin life patterns . As globalization and modernization filtered into Jordan and spread throughout the country, many believed that the nomadic traditions would quickly be replaced by urbanized patterns of life (Cole 2003:236). And, in some cases, this did happen.

Some argue today that the true Bedouin who maintains a completely nomadic lifestyle has completely died away. And in fact, if one is looking for the traditional Arab written about during the days of Lawrence of Arabia, or the historical accounts of desert wanderers maintaining a simple life unaffected by the changes of the world, then this Bedouin is much harder to find in modern times. (But a few do still exist). There is no denying that Bedouin have changed significantly from the traditional lifestyle of the past. Previously, the term Bedouin suggested a specific way of life revolving solely around nomadic pastoralism (Cole 2003:236). When one drives through the countryside of modern Jordan, it is evident that nomadic Bedouin have neither completely vanished, nor are disconnected to the modern world. This can be seen through their modern modes of transportation, their use of generators, tractors, and cell phones, their dependence on modern medicine and education, and so forth (Jureidini 1984: Chapter 4). Today, the term “Bedouin” conjures up an image of a person more readily than a culture or way of life. Technological, economical, and political adaptations have been conceded by the Bedouin - some willingly, others forced.

Instead of asking the question “where have the Bedouin gone?” which suggests that they have completely disappeared into the void of modernization, the appropriate question is to instead examine, “Where are the Bedouin going?” This final chapter will reflect on this question, examining the future of the nomadic pastoralists lifestyle in a changing world, particularly in regard to socio-economic and socio-political changes and relationships between the Bedouin and the Jordanian government (Cole 2003:236).

## Socio-Economic Changes

Economic changes that have occurred throughout the region, as far back as the era of the Ottoman Empire, have directly influenced the stability of the nomadic population in Jordan. In the earlier years of Bedouin history, socio-economic changes occurring around them might have not had as much of an impact. Bedouin had relied heavily on the processing of animal products as their source of livelihood, utilizing the hair of goats, camels, or sheep to make their tents, blankets, and other woven items, while milk and meat and their by-products were consumed as a major source of nutrition. As the nation-state began to develop, modern economic challenges began filtering into the nomadic communities, as they became incorporated into it through trade, the Desert Patrol created by John Glubb, and the market.

These were not the only socio-economic factors affected the Bedouin. The relationship between the Bedouin and the government became intrinsically intertwined. The government's reliance on the tribes in the early years of the Hashemite Kingdom and the various projects to debedouinize, nationalize, and settle the Bedouin, have all had significant consequences on the nomadic way of life. For example, whereas it was common in the past for Bedouin to utilize products from their livestock for their own consumption and barter, they now began to sell products on the market or to the government, and some even became involved in trading across national borders. In addition, whenever Jordan's economy dipped into decline, it also affected the Bedouin economy.

The Bedouin community has also been considerably impacted by wider social and economic processes in recent years. Over the past five years, Jordan has witnessed a high unemployment rate (currently estimated to be between 11% to 22%) increased poverty, a decrease in tourism (a primary revenue source for Jordan), and an overwhelming public debt (Al Jazeera 2012, Fahed Fanek 2013, Jordan Times 2010, BBC 2011). These have had a direct and often dire effect on Bedouin, particularly those who had experienced the forced sedentarization of the government from the 1980s to 1980s.

While there is not substantial documentation on the specific effects of Jordan's economic difficulties on the Bedouin, (due in part to the fact that the Bedouin are still often viewed as a separate entity, unaffected by government regulations), much information can be gleaned by sitting down with Bedouin over a cup of tea. They are guaranteed to willingly discuss the economic distress they are experiencing .

For those few Bedouin that practice a nomadic lifestyle, occupations that provide a steady flow of income are few and far between. Many Bedouin young men join the Jordanian army after completing their basic education, but that is usually only for a few years, as enlistees, and their income is minimal. Many Bedouin I met with lived on an about 150 Jordanian Dinars a month ($225.00). With rising gas prices (as most Bedouin have abandoned the usage of camels as a source of transportation and now resort to pickup trucks), the increase price of basic food staples such as rice, tea, sugar, and flour , and the necessity of purchasing water directly from the Jordanian government, that income is quickly is depleted.

Semi-nomadic and settled Bedouin have also experienced a crisis in their socio-economic situation. Those Bedouin who rely heavily on the market to sell their animal products (such as milk, meat, and wool), have particularly felt the effects in the declining economy. Some herders have had to sell a large percentage of their herd at relatively low prices in order to make ends meet, because they are not able to keep up with increasing prices for feed for their livestock (BBC 2009). Others, such as the Bedouin residing in Wadi Musa and Wadi Rum, have experienced a decline in income as a result of a decline in tourism – a by-product of the instability associated with the Arab Spring (Jordan Times 2012).

## Socio-Political Changes

Political factors have also had a significant impact on the Bedouin – nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settled alike (Cole 2003:250). During the early years of the nation-state development, Bedouin maintained a healthy respect and admiration for the Hashemite monarchy. Even in the wake of various governmental projects designed to settle and debedouinize them, the Bedouin viewed the monarchy as separate from the government administrative that was impacting their culture. In addition, the efforts of King Abdullah I and King Hussein to integrate Bedouin ideals within the court system helped maintain a healthy relationship between monarch and nomad.

During the reign of King Abdullah II, who acceded to the throne in 1999, unrest among Bedouin tribes has increased substantially (World Tribute 2012). Signs have indicated that the Bedouin no longer routinely express their loyalty to the Hashemites (Zahran 2011). The unrest is fueled to some extent by the revolutionary turmoil occurring in neighboring countries in the course of the so-called Arab Spring. Greater pressure has been placed on the King to make much needed political and economic reforms. However, despite the promise of reform in welfare and creation of jobs for the growing numbers unemployed youth – including Bedouin – these promises have remained unfulfilled (BBC 2011; Al Jazeera 2013; Zahran 2011). Rather than simply blaming the government and remaining loyal to the King as they had done in the past, the Bedouin are now aiming their protests directly at the King, openly expressing dissatisfaction with his leadership (World Tribune 2012). Several Bedouin leaders are demanding the return of the agreement they once had under King Abdullah II, which granted them certain positions within the government and a voice in national affairs and decisions (Zahran 2011; World Tribune 2012).

The growing expression of dissatisfaction with the current King has also led Bedouin to suggest, through public protests or direct letters to the King, that he appoint his uncle, Prince Hassan Ibn Talal (the brother of the late King Hussein) to the position of Prime Minister. In the eyes of the Bedouin, Prince Hassan has promised more substantial reform than the acting King, who has not fulfilled his promises of economic and political reform. For instance, in 2009, during a period of growing economic distress for Bedouin who were forced to sell off large numbers of livestock, or were experiencing a decrease in purchasing power, Prince Hassan proposed a plan that not only would improve the health of the livestock, and provide the nomadic pastoralists with a stable income, but would also would allow them to remain freely nomadic or semi-nomadic as they wished. His plans however were not implemented. The government's proposal to "deal with" the situation was to re-implement settlement projects (BBC 2009).

## Where are the Bedouin Going?

*My father rode a camel, I shall ride a pick up and my son will drive a Cadillac; however, my grandson will drive a donkey. – Unknown*

To the untrained eye, it may appear that Bedouin have disappeared. After all, nomadic pastoralists only make up tiny percentage of the overall Middle Eastern population. In addition, those who choose to continue in the life of the nomadic pastoralists are often hidden in the desert, well off the beaten path. As a result, many believe that Bedouin have been incorporated into the collective identity of the nation-state and are largely settled in villages and rural communities, and that they now refer to themselves as Arabs or Jordanians, not Bedouin.

There is today an unfortunate dearth of published accounts on the effects of nation-states and modernity on the Bedouin in Jordan. In addition, there is a general lack of published resource information on the social and cultural changes the Bedouin of Jordan have undergone. Existing sources focus largely on the history of Jordan and only note in passing the contribution Bedouin might have made in the development of the nation-state. In addition, existing accounts are now outdated, focusing largely on Bedouin communities in between the 1960s and 1980s. The few contemporary sources provide only superficial information about sedentarization projects in Jordan and rarely discuss how these "humanitarian" projects have affected Bedouin lifestyle, and culture, or what this could mean for the future of the Bedouin.

While it is apparent that the Bedouin traditional culture has declined significantly, particularly among the younger generation which is often quick to embrace new technology and progress, the nomadic Bedouin have not completely disappeared. But given the current economic and political unrest in Jordan as well as neighboring countries, it is difficult to know exactly where the Bedouin are heading in the future. More ethnographic research needs to be conducted, and specifically among those still involved in nomadic pastoralism.

In the final analysis, it is safe to say that, despite years of efforts, the nationalization of the Bedouin has not totally been accomplished. Even among those far removed from the traditional lifestyle, there are many who still define themselves by their tribal roots. When you ask any Bedouin, regardless of whether he or she is nomadic or settled, regardless of educational level, regardless of socio-economic status, most of them, without any hesitation, proudly exclaim “I am Bedu!”

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