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THE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY IN CAIRO

UNGENDERING POWER RELATIONS: STATESWOMEN, AGENCY AND FOREIGN  
POLICY IN JORDAN

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTERS OF ART

DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

BY

CATHERINE A. GUZZI

CAIRO, EGYPT

JULY, 2012

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## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Over the last several decades, authors associated with the so-called Feminist school of International Relations have raised the issue of gender as a force in world politics. Specifically, Feminist International Relations (IR) identifies the subordination of women by the state, society, and men along public/private lines of separation as oppressive to women, giving them a unique perspective from which to re-envision security, cooperation, and power. Women's marginalization, it is argued, both results from and is sustained by a gendering of international relations in which the norms of power, aggression, and self-help typically associated with masculinity dominate IR theory and practice.

This thesis will examine these themes in the context of the Middle Eastern state of Jordan, in order to better understand the relevance of gender within IR. While gender has become an accepted topic within international relations, a coherent argument for how gendered relationships of power exist within and outside states and how they affect international relations has yet to be made. More to the point, little effort has been made to move beyond theory, and examine the ways in which gender affects particular cases and issues. This study seeks to do just that. It focuses on the role of women in the foreign policy process of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and uses this as a vehicle for testing the validity of feminist theory to contemporary IR.

Unlike most of the social sciences, the theoretical advancement of international relations from its origins in realism remains relatively undeveloped, especially in its attempts to incorporate gender into its theoretical fold. In its application to the region of the Middle East, IR analysis falls short of moving beyond examination of traditional realist interpretations of power

politics at the state level or liberal institutional explanations of Middle Eastern international relations and foreign policy decision-making. The literature on gender in the region avoids international relations all together, focusing instead on the “softer” issues of women and development, women and Islam, family law and the personal status of women, women and labor, women’s roles in civil society, NGOs, and the so-called women’s movements. However, in a part of the world where international relations literature often addresses politics of exceptionalism and which feminists and gender scholars identify as patriarchy’s biggest stronghold, women of the Middle East appear to play an active role in international and domestic politics.

Applying feminist theories of international relations to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan presents a particularly insightful case study since women at various levels of Jordanian society hold positions of power. In the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, women make up a substantial percentage of the total foreign service workers as compared to the much lower percentages of women working in other ministries. In the realm of civil society, many former parliamentarian women direct prominent NGOs related to women’s rights, health, and/or education. Some women’s NGOs play a strong role in the Palestinian question as it relates to Jordan. Female members of the royal family can be seen in leadership positions at all levels of society. Her Majesty (HM) Queen Rania boasts international popularity and notoriety due to her role in Jordanian-Palestinian relations, her national movement to improve the Jordanian educational system, and also for her celebrity status as the ideal image of a queen—charming and fashionable. The diversity of powerful public roles of Jordanian women suggests that gendered relationships of power vary within the kingdom as well. Within different roles, women may exploit “softer” outlets for power typical of traditional, patriarchal norms of female behavior.

However, women may also challenge hegemonic definitions of female power choosing to exploit “harder” outlets for power associated with patriarchal norms of male behavior and akin to realist notions of international relations. In order to evaluate whether or not women are pushing the boundaries of patriarchal power relations and acting as independent agents, a study of women’s agency in the Jordanian foreign policy-making process is valuable as the realm of foreign policy and international relations has traditionally advocated for “hard” power.

The Jordanian case study of gendered relationships of power within the kingdom’s foreign policy-making process raises the following questions which are the central research questions for this thesis:

- 1) Do stateswomen have enough agency to play a significant role in the foreign policy processes of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan?
- 2) What are their views on issues of security, or high politics, such as the Israeli-Palestinian issue?
- 3) (a) Do they bring a different set of ideas/values to the table than men? Or,  
(b) Are they simply embodying the masculine values of the patriarchal state?

In order to address these questions, a theoretical framework that incorporates the perspectives from the feminist school of international relations as well as a perspective which accounts for the domestic influences on foreign policy is necessary. The post-modern feminist perspective on IR helps to explain gendered constructions of power at the international level with hegemonic norms of foreign policy as well as hegemonic norms of masculinity and femininity. The feminist standpoint perspective on IR locates sites where women have power at the

international level in spite of their relative marginalization. In addition to the feminist school of IR, the IR literature that explains the influences of domestic factors on foreign policy supplements the theoretical framework of the thesis. It enhances feminist IR perspectives because it explores sites of domestic power that influence a state's foreign policy. For Jordan, this multi-dimensional framework should prove useful in examining female agency in positions of power not typically associated with women. Furthermore, it can contribute to the overall body of IR theory literature by showing how gender affects international relations through empirical research.

The hypotheses to the above research questions reflect the multi-dimensional theoretical framework of the thesis. They are:

- 1) The role of women in international processes is greater than typically assumed. Women are involved in migration, development and any number of other issues. They are also key actors in social movements and within the political policy-making process even when bound in some kind of gendered state. Their contributions can even be seen in the formation of foreign policy and the conduct of international relations, realms typically associated with patriarchal dominance.
- 2) The boundaries of public and private may cause women's influence and their strategies to be informal and less visible. Moreover, women do not bring a uniform set of values to political action; hence, it is important to examine particular individuals and particular issues to better understand the influence of gender in the policy making process.



The main objective of this research is to analyze the dynamism of female political actors regardless of gendered barriers to public power and/or access to channels of decision-making. Gender in international relations is a much more complex relationship of power than that of dominance and victimization. Moreover, women do not react to or engage with the state in a uniform manner. A secondary objective of this thesis is to widen the perception of foreign policy making and international relations in the Middle East. The literature on foreign policy in the region often focuses on state leaders and realist interpretations of power relations without exploring other factors that affect Middle Eastern states' foreign policy processes.

This research uses empirical evidence from Jordan to add clarity to the perspective of feminist international relations. It is largely based on the combination of primary source information mostly from semi-structured interviews and secondary source information from books, academic articles, and edited works. No information provided by the interviews is used without consent of the interviewees.

The empirical chapters of this thesis derive most of their data from eleven interviews conducted by the author during two trips to Amman, Jordan from Cairo, Egypt in the spring of 2010. All of the interviews were arranged by the author through contacts she made on her trips to Amman. Although the interviews were guided by a set of questions written by the author with AUC's IRB approval, they were largely semi-structured in that natural conversations between the interviewees and the author were more appropriate to the often intimate settings chosen by the participants and/or their interest in the topics of the thesis. Interviews conducted in more formal settings such as participants' places of employment tended to follow the order of the written questions more closely usually due to time constraints. Both arranging the interviews and conducting them posed unexpected challenges and benefits to the research.

Prior to traveling to Amman the first time, the author researched organizations and individuals who might have been potential sources or leads; however, all interviews were established in person or over the phone in Amman. Initially, the author stayed at the American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR), where fellow researchers shared their contacts with the author. Participants were primarily women who contribute to some aspect of the Jordanian women's movement as a domestic force or contribute to Jordanian foreign policy making as part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and/or through their research. One male was interviewed. Telephone calls for appointments were made primarily in Arabic, presenting the first challenge and benefit. If the language barrier was too great, the author would either make a personal visit to the institution such as the University of Jordan or would simply forgo the interview opportunity if a personal visit was not an option. When the language barrier was not insurmountable, the interviewee would often pass along contact information for other potential interviewees in addition to contributing his/her own perspective. In spite of the formidable language barrier, arranging the interviews in person in Amman seemed to add credibility to the author's research purpose as well as allow for a degree of spontaneity and flexibility in scheduling interviews that likely would not have been possible had the appointments and research been conducted from abroad.

As stated, a list of questions provided the framework for the interviews around which organic dialogue grew. The interview questions aimed to gather the participants' opinions and experiences related to the core research questions of thesis. Lists of the questions and of the interviewees are in the Appendices. While these free-flowing dialogues acquainted the author with participants in a much closer way, ensuring that enough information specific to the thesis was shared without sacrificing the ease of the conversation was a challenge. Furthermore, at

several interviews where the author met not only the participant but also her family since the interviews were conducted in the participant's home, the profound hospitality shown to the author slightly distracted her from her main goal of the meeting—the interview. The benefits of this type of intimate interview were greater than the challenges. Not only did they provide a breadth of empirical data which informs the majority of this thesis, but they also gave an authentic view into the lives of the participants giving their perspectives more credibility.

The thesis has six chapters including the Introduction and Conclusion. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical framework for the research with a review of the feminist theories of IR literature, a review of the literature on domestic influences on foreign policy, a review of the literature that discusses the role of the family in the Middle East, and a section which combines the three perspectives. Chapter 3, “Setting the Stage: Feminist Domestic Politics in Jordan,” looks at the domestic sites of Jordanian female power in terms of the kingdom's women's organizations and its royal non-governmental organizations (RNGOs). Chapter 4, “Women of the Royal Family: Hegemonic Femininity,” looks at the unique roles of Jordanian female royalty and how they affect the overall norms of femininity in the kingdom. Chapter 5, “Jordanian Women in Foreign Policy,” analyzes the roles of women directly involved in Jordan's foreign policy apparatus. The Conclusion evaluates the results of this research in terms of the questions asked and its contribution to the field of IR.

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

#### **Feminist International Relations Literature**

Most of the literature on gender and international relations addresses the relationship between the two from a feminist perspective. More recent literature on gender in IR, however, does raise the issue of methodological coherence and how to examine gender from a non-feminist perspective. The feminist perspective nonetheless remains predominant, and is defined by its effort to examine the relationship between gender and IR largely in terms of women's experiences—what special insight women have on security and cooperation and how and why women have been politically marginalized by men, society, and the state. Within the feminist perspective, moreover, there are two distinct approaches: the “standpoint” writings of women, and a second approach that concentrates on the oppressive structure of the state. The standpoint perspective argues that women's experiences as an oppressed, marginalized group have enabled them with a greater propensity for cooperation, a different prioritization of security interests based on an ethic of care, and a stronger inclination to non-violent behavior. The perspective that focuses on the gendered, oppressive nature of the state tends to examine the origins of the gendered public/private and the ways in which women and men continue to be segregated by these realms.

Scholars from the feminist standpoint of international relations tend to agree that the qualities typically ascribed to women derive predominantly from their marginal standpoint. Hence, these views or traits are a product of social construction and are not due to biological or natural causes. This social construction of women's and men's biological differences is

embedded in the common perception that international relations primarily consists of the “high” politics of war and power.<sup>1</sup> Since men’s experiences shaped and continue to shape international relations, what is masculine has become equated with what is human.<sup>2</sup> J. Ann Tickner labels this masculinist gendering of the field as “hegemonic masculinity” which not only subordinates femininity but also other masculinities.<sup>3</sup> In the edited work, *Gender and International Relations*, the editors argue that women and men have always participated in “international processes” including migration, development, and the international division of labor.<sup>4</sup> They do not, however, include foreign policy on the list although women’s roles in those international processes must have implications for states’ foreign policy decision-making.

Scholars often identify the international process of development as one in which women’s roles prove economically and socially vital. Caroline O.N. Moser writes about gender planning in the Third World and how international development policies must consider the complex relationships between men and women since their roles and corresponding needs differ.<sup>5</sup> As a gender issue, the argument for gender planning holds, yet neither the influence that gender planning has on international politics nor the roles women play in bringing gender planning to the policy table are explored in the standpoint literature.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Ann Tickner, *Gender in International Relations Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992), 4; Tickner sheds light on this concept in two of her more recent articles in which she directly responds to the ideas that women are inherently peaceful or that masculine behavior the only form of power in international politics. J. Ann Tickner, “Why Women Can’t Run the World: International Politics According to Francis Fukuyama,” *International Studies Review* 1, no. 3 (Autumn, 1999): 3; J. Ann Tickner, “You Just Don’t Understand: Troubled Engagements Between Feminists and IR Theorists,” *International Studies Quarterly* 41, no. 4 (Dec. 1997): 614-615.

<sup>2</sup> Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*, 5.

<sup>3</sup> Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland, introduction to *Gender and International Relations*, ed. by Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 6.

<sup>5</sup> Caroline O.N. Moser, “From transnational relationships to international relations: Women in Development and the International Decade for Women,” in *Gender and International Relations*, ed. Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 85.

Another international process that standpoint feminist international relations critiques is that of security. This discussion rests on two main premises. First, women's peripheral vantage point in society leads them to define security in terms other than military or economic. Because women have traditionally held the responsibility for caring for others in addition to themselves, they are inclined to pursue cooperation more than men who may pursue acts of self-help or extreme individualism when faced with conflict.<sup>6</sup> Female or feminine power, then, resembles more one's ability to act in concert. This reflects Hanna Arendt's definition of power which depends on people's ability to "act in concert."<sup>7</sup> Tickner is similarly concerned more with collective forms of security when she posits that security from the standpoint of women would encompass a preoccupation with ecological security that transcends state boundaries, an economic security that takes into account gender planning, and heterogeneity of the military.<sup>8</sup> The integration of women in the military provides a second example. If and when women and men are fully integrated in all levels of the military from combat to administration, then, it is argued, the military itself would become less aggressive, more inclined to promote peace, and generally a "softer" institution. However, the performance of American women in combat has shown, as noted by Elshtain, that female soldiers are not any different than male soldiers.<sup>9</sup> It is in this context that the standpoint feminist perspective on international relations reveals its weakness by assuming that women's pursuit and definition of security on all levels is uniform.

This assumed uniformity of women's standpoints provides the basis for feminist post-modernist writings on international relations. Feminist post-modernism does not subscribe to

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<sup>6</sup> Robert O. Keohane (a), "International relations theory: contributions of a feminist standpoint," in *Gender and International Relations*, ed. Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991), 44, and (b) Christine Sylvester, 158, and (c) J. Ann Tickner, 6-24.

<sup>7</sup> Hannah Arendt, *The Promise of Politics*, Ed. and with an Introduction by Jerome Kohn (New York: Schocken Books, 2005), 147; Robert O. Keohane, 42.

<sup>8</sup> Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*, 22.

<sup>9</sup> Jean Bethke Elshtain, "Woman, the State, and War," *International Relations* 23 (2009): 298.

‘one true story’ of women’s experiences and standpoint let alone ‘one true story’ of international relations. Infinite epistemologies exist and, therefore, to assert the exclusive validity of one knowledge claim, and to give such claims priority over all others is to impose hegemonic and destructive authority on epistemology. Like the standpoint feminist perspective, the feminist post-modern perspective criticizes the representation of men’s experience as human experience, particularly in the development of international relations theory.<sup>10</sup> The gender biases produced by this epistemological privilege become apparent upon the deconstruction of the state, sovereignty, security, citizenship and embedded dualisms such as public-private, culture-nature, rational-irrational, order-anarchy, self-help-cooperation.<sup>11</sup> This body of literature traces gender bias in IR back to the Athenian state in which the public sphere of politics and war was relegated to men and the private sphere of family and the home was relegated to women. While the feminist post-modernist perspective aptly identifies gender within international relations, it often emphasizes the repression of women by the patriarchal state rather than exploring women as actors within the patriarchal state and/or other systems.

The feminist standpoint and the feminist post-modernist perspectives on international relations seem to explore gender within the field from two opposite positions, yet both fall short of shedding light onto the multiplicity of women’s experiences. Not all states are equally patriarchal and not all women are equally oppressed. As Keohane points out, the reality that women are marginalized in the state and inter-state politics is well known.<sup>12</sup> Identifying women’s victimization by gender bias and generalizing women’s propensity for cooperation,

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<sup>10</sup> V. Spike Peterson, "Introduction," in *Gendered States Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory*, ed. V. Spike Peterson (Boulder and London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc., 1992), 6.

<sup>11</sup> V. Spike Peterson, "Introduction," 7; V. Spike Peterson, "Interactive and Intersectional Analytics of Globalization," *Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies* 30, no.1 (2009): 34-35. Although Peterson does not specifically discuss IR epistemologies in this article, the article does discuss diverse and overlapping hierarchies within society and global political economy literature which supports this general idea of infinite epistemologies and epistemological privilege.

<sup>12</sup> Robert O. Keohane, 45.

peace and an ethic of care turns a critical eye away from how gendered relationships actually affect the state and its foreign policy.

The methodological debate within feminist IR and between feminist IR scholars and conventional IR scholars revolves around the issue of how to incorporate gender into the greater international relations theory such that state behavior may be better explained. The foundational authors on standpoint and post-modern feminist IR argue that gender cannot simply be added to IR as another variable in world politics. The complexity of gender as a system of oppression and the absence of female lenses in classical IR theory indicates that the entire field rests on a hierarchy of knowledge. Gender cannot just be put into the mix and stirred.<sup>13</sup> In other words, integrating women into institutions traditionally dominated by men does not mean that their presence will necessarily change the identity and/or policies of the institutions. The authors that argue this from a feminist perspective continue to cite the masculine underpinnings of the various components of current IR—the military, governments, and economic systems. Before gender can be elevated as a variable, the masculine nature of these institutions that oppress women must be acknowledged by the mainstream or the ‘male-stream.’<sup>14</sup> In this way, security definitions can be broadened to include women’s interests as well as men’s.

Although the ongoing methodological debate feminist theorists and conventional IR theorists often detracts from feminist theory’s substantive advancement, scholars have revived the key substantive issue of masculinity as a dominant form of behavior.<sup>15</sup> Gillian Youngs provides an overview of the development of feminist IR theory in an attempt to justify why and how gender should become part of IR theory. She credits the literature with adequately

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<sup>13</sup> Tickner, *Gender in International Relations*; Peterson, *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory*.

<sup>14</sup> Bernedette Muthien, “Human Security Paradigms through a Gendered Lens,” *Agenda*, no. 43 (2000): 50.

<sup>15</sup> Tickner first discussed the term “hegemonic masculinity” in her foundational, ground-breaking book *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security*.



explaining the masculinist framing of politics and economics through the institutions of the state, the military, the government, and institutional discourse.<sup>16</sup> Youngs asserts the masculinist partial view of the world has been exposed by feminists through primarily socio-historical accounts.<sup>17</sup> Andrew Linklater applauds Youngs's discussion of hegemonic masculinity as progressive due to its focus on a hegemonic and gendered form of societal behavior that permeates international relations.<sup>18</sup> Both Youngs and Linklater, however, fail to credit Tickner with the term that she introduced over a decade earlier. This reveals the ambiguity in much of feminist IR in its definition of men, women, masculinity, and femininity. Continuing this discussion, Charlotte Hooper claims that international relations does not just reflect masculinity and men, but that it reproduces and constructs hegemonic notions of masculinity and men. Hooper argues that analysis of different gender identities in different groups can lead to patterns of predictable behavior, suggesting that the links between foreign policy and identity be examined further.<sup>19</sup> The relationship between masculinity, identity and foreign policy particularly reorients the study of gender in IR to an explanatory framework for understanding state behavior.

In addition to the general methodological and theoretical debate between prominent feminist IR scholars such as Tickner and Peterson and conventional IR scholars there is a growing branch of literature of quantitative studies of how to incorporate gender in IR. This quantitative feminist IR literature criticizes the direction in which the subfield has gone as well as offering empirical studies of gender in IR. Mary Caprioli writes a critical analysis of the merits of quantitative methodology when studying gender in IR. She writes this article in

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<sup>16</sup> Gillian Youngs, "Feminist International Relations: a contradiction in terms? Or: why women and gender are essential to understanding the world 'we' live in," *International Affairs* 80, no. 1 (Jan. 2004): 76.

<sup>17</sup> Youngs, 76.

<sup>18</sup> Andrew Linklater, "Three commentaries on Gillian Youngs' 'Feminist International Relations'," *International Affairs* 80, no. 1 (Jan. 2004): 90.

<sup>19</sup> Charlotte Hooper, "Masculinities, IR and the 'gender variable': a cost-benefit analysis for (sympathetic) gender skeptics," *Review of International Studies* 23, no. 3 (Jul. 1999): 485-486.

response to those feminists who claim quantitative work does not qualify as feminist. These conventional feminists, in Caprioli's terms, are creating hierarchies within a field that seeks to deconstruct them.<sup>20</sup> Caprioli criticizes feminist IR for not only excluding quantitative methodology, but also for its continued focus on the study of the oppression of women in IR as opposed to the study of how women's oppression affects state behavior.<sup>21</sup> As feminists accuse quantitative feminists of adding gender and stirring, Caprioli reiterates the non-feminist notion that gender is an important component to IR for its explanatory and predictive component, yet it is not the only one.<sup>22</sup> The major contribution of Caprioli's defense of quantitative methodology is evidenced in her extensive citations of quantitative studies of various examples of gender and its affect on state behavior.<sup>23</sup> These examples provide what conventional IR feminists have thus far lacked—empirical research on gender and IR.

While the quantitative branch of feminist IR is simultaneously feminist and critical of the current state of conventional feminist IR literature, a growing body of non-feminist literature on gender in international relations exists. The difference between feminist and non-feminist IR literature is that the former maintains an agenda geared toward improving the status of women whereas the latter does not share this agenda. R. Charli Carpenter critiques J. Ann Tickner's 2001 text, *Gendering World Politics*, because it, like many other standpoint and post-modern feminist IR texts, locates gender within feminism.<sup>24</sup> This not only ascribes a feminist agenda to gender studies, but it also reduces incentives for those who do not identify with feminism to

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<sup>20</sup> Mary Caprioli, "Feminist IR Theory and Quantitative Methodology: A Critical Analysis," *International Studies Review* 6, no. 2 (Jun. 2004): 254.

<sup>21</sup> Caprioli, 256.

<sup>22</sup> Caprioli, 259.

<sup>23</sup> Caprioli, 256-263.

<sup>24</sup> Charli R. Carpenter, "Gender Theory in World Politics: Contributions of a Nonfeminist Standpoint?" *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (Autumn, 2002): 155.

engage with feminist IR, or to “take gender seriously” in Peterson’s words.<sup>25</sup> Carpenter cleverly renames feminist IR as IR feminism such that the feminist agenda is made explicit. In his review of *Victims, Perpetrators or Actors? Gender, Armed Conflict and Political Violence*, Carpenter highlights the problematic conflation of women and gender. The editors of this volume outline a conceptual framework that aims to move beyond this confusion in terms by moving beyond the essentialization of women as victims and men as perpetrators of violence because they write that it denies women’s agency and obscures the reality of gender roles in armed conflict.<sup>26</sup> *War and Gender* by Joshua Goldstein attempts to open the debate between conventional IR theorists and gender theorists by evaluating the effect of gender on state behavior with a specific agenda of better understanding international politics.<sup>27</sup> In one non-feminist quantitative study testing the women and peace hypothesis in six different middle eastern states including Jordan, Tessler, Nachtwey and Grant find no correlation between women and their preference to peace.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, they found insignificant difference between men’s and women’s opinions on the foreign policy issue of war.<sup>29</sup> If the basic difference between feminist and non-feminist gender studies of IR resides in their agendas, then much of the feminist quantitative literature can be considered non-feminist while the conventional feminists would more appropriately fall under the title of IR feminism.

### **Domestic Forces in International Relations Literature**

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<sup>25</sup> Carpenter, 156.

<sup>26</sup> Carpenter, 159.

<sup>27</sup> Joshua S. Goldstein, *War and Gender: How Gender Shapes the War System and Vice Versa* (:Cambridge University Press,).

<sup>28</sup> Mark Tessler, Jodi Nachtwey and Audra Grant, “Further Tests of the Women and Peace Hypothesis: Evidence from Cross-National Survey Research in the Middle East,” *International Studies Quarterly* 43 (1999): 519, 528.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, 528-531. Tessler, Nachtwey and Grant attribute the lack of attitudinal difference between men and women in these middle eastern countries regarding war to the overwhelming salience of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the region as “Most Arabs and Israelis have grown u with this conflict, which is a, and in most cases *the*, primary foreign policy issue for both individuals and states.”

In addition to the feminist IR literature, other theoretical approaches to IR address the linkages between the domestic sphere and the international realm. This connection between the domestic and the international is critical for understanding gender in foreign policy and is useful for explaining how gender affects the Jordanian case study. Although, with the exception of realism and neo-realism, most IR schools of thought attempt to deal with domestic influences on foreign policy. However, there is little agreement on what constitutes domestic non-state actors, what kinds of influence these actors have on foreign policy, if individuals or institutions can be part of both domestic and international politics, and if states are the ultimate agents of decision-making and influence. Realism and neo-realism claim that states are the main actors in international relations, and that domestic forces have no influence on state decision-making. The IR literature that most elaborately addresses the relationship between the domestic and the international includes the liberal and constructivist approaches which take into account institutions, societal norms, and values. The English school of international relations offers insight into these linkages with its relational explanation of the international system, international society, and world society. While these major areas of inquiry shed light on the intricacy of international and domestic politics, they are limited in that the range and definitions of influential domestic forces has expanded little beyond institutions. Furthermore, practical explanatory frameworks for how actors project their norms and values on to the foreign policy decision-making apparatus directly or indirectly are lacking. Whether or not the domestic affects the international or, the directional nature of the relationships between international and domestic politics is also vague.

Much of the literature on institutions developed from scholarly work associated with neo-liberalism, and tended to focus on international political economy. As such, financial institutions

and domestic economic forces dominated the conversations on how the domestic and the international are linked. Scholars were inspired by European integration during the Cold War period, a time in which realist power politics tended to dominate both governance and academia. Theories of economic interdependence among states and/or institutions were developed to explain international cooperation. On the one hand, this positively advanced the field of international relations by showing that domestic forces do influence state policies; however, the emphasis on economic domestic forces overshadowed the other domestic forces and/or actors that could be influential as well. Departing from this prioritization of economic factors in the relationship between the domestic and the international, constructivism seeks to describe how norms, values, and intersubjective interpretations of them affect international politics.<sup>30</sup>

Constructivism, like realism and liberalism, embodies a broad array of theoretical schools of thought. The common premise among the varying schools of constructivism is that historically constructed norms, ideas, and discourses must be analyzed before political structures, actors, policies, change and/or maintenance of the status-quo can be understood.<sup>31</sup> In other words, states and institutions cannot be treated as individual actors as they are composites of individuals with different interests, identities and relationships to other political communities that constrain and influence institutional outcomes. In this way, institutions cannot be expected to act rationally or consistently. Constructivist research is sometimes labeled as sociological and cultural as it borrows theoretically, methodologically, and empirically from non-traditional political science fields such as critical theory, geography, anthropology, etc. Its theoretical contribution to IR is that the ways in which actors cooperate with and interpret one another facilitates a broader understanding of how the domestic and the international are linked, yet constructivism's ability

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<sup>30</sup> Katzenstein, Peter J., Robert O. Keohane, and Stephen D. Krasner. "International Organization and the Study of World Politics," *International Organization* 52, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998): 645-685.

<sup>31</sup> Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner, 672-677.

to operationalize this is weak.<sup>32</sup> Because constructivists tend to take a non-exclusionary approach to studying world politics, theoretical consistency on what variables indicate different kinds of relationships between domestic and international actors and their normative interpretations of one another is lacking.

The English School of international relations provides a framework for analyzing and identifying the domestic-international link with its notions of international society and world society. Similar to constructivism, the English School utilizes methodological pluralism, historicism, and evaluation of norms and values but also needs a more coherent research agenda which operationalizes the analysis of international and world society.<sup>33</sup> Much of the English School literature focuses on the international society which is classically defined as a group of states or a group of independent political communities.<sup>34</sup> When these independent state political communities share common identity, language, religion, norms and values, then their behavior will be conditioned by their commonalities and will form the boundaries of a socio-political system.<sup>35</sup> Barry Buzan writes, “The basic idea of international society is thus quite simple: just as human beings as individuals live in societies which they both shape and are shaped by, so also states live in an international society which they shape and are shaped by.”<sup>36</sup> International society is perhaps the most familiar concept to traditional IR theorists in that it uses the state as its unit of analysis. Also, it reifies the state albeit under the terms of society, norms and values and not individuals.

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<sup>32</sup> Katzenstein, Keohane, and Krasner, 681-682.

<sup>33</sup> Barry Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” *Review of International Studies* 27, no. 3 (Jul, 2001): 471.

<sup>34</sup> Buzan, “The English School: an underexploited resource in IR,” 476.

<sup>35</sup> Buzan, 477.

<sup>36</sup> Buzan, 477.

World society embodies the shared norms and values at the individual, non-state level that transcend the state. Although the difference between international society and world society is demarcated by the former's distinction of a society of states, the definitional boundaries of world society are more ambiguous. World society could simultaneously be composed of communities of domestic institutions with shared identities and/or a community of individuals from different nationalities that share a common identity and system of values. Furthermore, these different components of world society could simultaneously be parts of the state apparatus and non-state actors. The complexity of how to locate world society hinders scholars' evaluation of its relationship with international society. If a member of world society were identified, then one could assess its influence on the state or the influence of the state on it, or the cooperation and common values among them. The English School's concepts of international and world societies provide an opportunity to better operationalize the link between domestic and international politics even though the relationship between the English School's international society and world society lacks clarity.

This thesis utilizes the English School's terms of international society and world society to help explain and identify the specific ways in which gender affects foreign policy. Buzan clarifies that international society is not just a community of states but it is one in which an institutionalization of shared interests and identity exists.<sup>37</sup> It is imperative that this community is identified, what interests and identity are shared, and from where these interests and identity are derived. If world society, as Buzan describes, is individuals, non-state organizations and the global population as a whole which share a global societal identity and arrangement that transcend the state, it is possible that world society influences international society and visa versa. Furthermore, such organizations and individuals that are domestic actors within a state

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<sup>37</sup> Buzan, 475.

might share a globalized identity with other similar actors elsewhere in the world without necessarily being conscious of it.<sup>38</sup> In this way, a domestic women's movement can be part of world society because it may share globalized norms of equal rights for women and a gender empowerment platform, for example, as a women's movement in another state and other international non-state actors. Individual members of international society such as foreign service workers or others working directly for the state can be influenced by world society, possibly affecting their performance in international society. Lastly, individuals can simultaneously be members of world society and international society as, for example, a female diplomat might represent the state but share feminist values reflective of a domestic women's movement.

Hobden's analysis of Michael Mann's definitions of social power is helpful in understanding the overlap between international and world societies since "different types of power are interrelated in different circumstances."<sup>39</sup> Moreover, social relationships consolidate into different forms of organized power which can become institutionalized as a dominant configuration with other power relationships coalescing outside the configuration with the potential to reorganize social life.<sup>40</sup> Although Hobden critiques Mann for omitting gender relations from his discussion because Mann viewed them as constant in the form of patriarchy and not part of the male dominated public sphere of power relations, the contemporary societal deconstruction of the male public and female private spheres can enhance his ideas particularly for this thesis.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> The term civil society is often associated with individuals and non-state actors; however, world society only exists if there is a shared global identity as Buzan writes. Certainly, the two overlap but civil society is not always synonymous with world society. Buzan, 477.

<sup>39</sup> Stephen Hobden, "Geopolitical Space or Civilization? The International System in the Work of Michael Mann," *International Relations* 12 (1995): 80.

<sup>40</sup> Hobden, 82.

<sup>41</sup> Hobden, 88.



The very term international relations implies that the interaction between states merits its own field of study. History and current events, however, show that international politics have become much more complicated than inter-state relations. Conflict and cooperation between states and non-state actors or institutional coalitions of states and/or non-state actors are the stuff of international relations today. For this reason, a useful framework for analyzing domestic or non-state forces and the state is necessary. The IR literature on institutions, the international political economy, constructivism, and the English School concepts provide insightful direction for issue areas and theoretical frameworks for this, but operational terms and an agreed upon set of indicators that can transcend issue areas and regions must be developed. The English School's international and world societies could provide the foundations for such a development.

### **The Family as State Organization**

In order to study the connections between a state's domestic political forces and its foreign policy, it is necessary to comprehend the structural composition of the state and its society. This structure is the framework within which state-society relations, decision-making and politics occur. It indicates how actors navigate through the system and how power relations are developed. In the Middle East, the family is the most basic unit of society.<sup>42</sup> The nature of the Middle Eastern family unit is not uniform even though much of the region valorizes the nuclear family; however, the family--not the individual--remains the most basic societal unit. The importance of the family can be seen in the projection of familial style relations in business, politics, and the public in the Middle East.<sup>43</sup> What has often been labeled as informal, patron-

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<sup>42</sup> Hisham Shirabi, *Neopatriarchy: a theory of distorted change in Arab society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), 30-31.

<sup>43</sup> Lisa Anderson, "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East," *Political Science Quarterly* 1991: 1-15, 12-13.; Michael C. Hudson, "The Middle East," *PS: Political Science and Politics* 34, no. 4 (2001), 801.

client societal relations reflects the style of relations within and among Middle Eastern families. Because Middle Eastern society is structured around the family unit, the Middle Eastern monarchy as state governance and organization is especially powerful. The monarchy not only enjoys stable political legitimacy as its ‘family rule’ is communicable and respectable to its subjects, but it also wields much more power to influence society without force and play an active role in state policy-making. The importance of the family structure of governance through monarchy in the Middle East and in Jordan, specifically, can be seen on three different yet overlapping levels: the individual family unit, the tribe, and religion.

At the level of the family unit, state-society relations are defined. The ruling family has a direct effect on the most basic composition of society since it rules by example.<sup>44</sup> Shryock and Howell observe that much of the literature on the Hashemite ruling family of Jordan simply acknowledges that they rule instead of that they rule “as a family.”<sup>45</sup> Monarchic rule by example can be both a destabilizing and stabilizing political force depending upon the quality of rule.<sup>46</sup> If the ruling family treats its family members unfairly and engages in intra-family competition and deceit, then this kind of familial relations will transpose onto the national family unit. The individual family mimics the most powerful family unit because any other kind of behavior could be seen as threatening and disloyal. Concurrently, if conflict within society and contempt for the state by society grows, then instability and the state’s exertion of power through force are more likely. When the ruling family appears benevolent, healthy, happy and cooperative, the society will reflect this balance and also lay a more stable foundation of legitimacy beneath the

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<sup>44</sup> Andrew Shryock and Sally Howell, “Ever a Guest in Our House: The Emir Abdullah, Shaykh Majid Al-Adwan, and the Widow of Majid,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 33, no. 2 (May, 2001): 247.

<sup>45</sup> Shryock and Howell, 247.

<sup>46</sup> This concept is similar to Russell E. Lucas’s discussion of how the Jordanian monarchy’s survival strategy works. Lucas writes that the survival strategy of “divide and rule” among the opposition succeeds when institutional manipulation does not impose costs on the regime coalition. The regime coalition is understood as the ruling family, tribes, and members of government. Russell E. Lucas, Chapter 1 “Institutions and the Politics of Survival,” *Institutions and the Politics of Survival: Domestic Responses to External Challenges, 1988-2001* (2005), 7-9.

monarchy. The Jordanian ruling family seems to realize this as, "...they express their dominance in a patriarchal rhetoric brimming with kinship metaphors, and that they preside over a body politic in which households and their influential heads are of far greater significance than electoral constituencies, public opinion, or (least of all) individual citizens and their rights."<sup>47</sup>

In terms of societal norms of gender relations, the ways in which gendered roles are expressed in the royal family are crucial. If patriarchy, or a relationship in which women are subordinate to men, exists in the monarchy, then society will impose patriarchal relations as well, creating disparity of opportunity for women in the workforce, education, the family, etc. Monarchic patriarchy can also threaten stability as it is structurally based on competition, not cooperation. However, gender egalitarianism-equality in the value of men's and women's roles and not necessarily practical equality of their roles-within the ruling family can help to build a strong nation-state. This seems to be the case in Jordan. Societal relations will valorize cooperation when husbands, wives, and children cooperate with one another and equally value their roles in the family unit. A cooperative society allows for the monarchy to play more of a supervisory role as the state's leader rather than an authoritarian role. The Hashemite Kingdom speaks to this as the royal family is not equated with the government, judiciary and the other arms of the state.

The tribal unit functions similarly to the family unit in the Middle Eastern monarchy as it is a magnified version of the family. However, the tribe is neither the ruling family of the monarchy nor the individual family as subject. Rather, the tribe acts as a kind of intermediary actor between state and society. The tribal structure provides a network of individuals that collectively represent a sort of state interest group embodied in the identity of the tribe, much akin to the role of the political party. In Jordan, a monarchy in which the ruling family can play a

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<sup>47</sup> Shyrock and Howell, 247.

supervisory role in governance, tribes gain more political leadership and impose checks and balances on the different bodies of government in the kingdom, including the royal family.<sup>48</sup>

Without the political support of the tribes, the ruling family cannot maintain a supervisory role in the kingdom and without the political support of the ruling family, tribes cannot maintain their regional power and protect their interests. Because the structure of the tribe is based on kinship and tribal custom, within a legitimate monarchy, it too gains social order and legitimacy as a political actor.

The third level at which the importance of the family in the Middle Eastern monarchy can be seen is that of religion. Islam provides a common identity between state and most of society in the Middle East. Anderson notes that, since the dispersion of Islam in the Middle East, political authority has been based on religious grounds and not family or property.<sup>49</sup> She adds that after ‘modernization’ began, an effective way of resolving the religious obligation of the leader was to combine religious and political authority as in Jordan and Morocco whose rulers are descendents of the Prophet Mohammed.<sup>50</sup> Through a common Islamic identity, the ruling family and subjects can think of one another as relatives since they are all Muslim children of the same faith. Furthermore, under monarchic governance, Islam gives state and society a common set of values and criteria with which to judge and measure the behavior of the other. Because the ruling family and its subjects are all members of the same family in the adoptive, religious sense, everyone in the kingdom has a familial right to hold one another to account as well as a duty to respect them. The Hashemites’ descentance from the Prophet Mohammed and their active commitment to Islam helps to create both a unification of state and society and a regulatory mechanism between them. As long as religion exists as the most common thread between state and society in the

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<sup>48</sup> Russell E. Lucas, Chapter 1 “Institutions and the Politics of Survival,” 7.

<sup>49</sup> Anderson, 1-15, 7.

<sup>50</sup> Anderson, 11.

Jordanian monarchy, collapse of national governing structures such as the parliament cannot fully destabilize and delegitimize monarchic rule.

At the levels of the individual family unit, the tribe, and Islam, the governing importance and role of the family in the Middle Eastern monarchy are clear. The structure and roles of members of the family unit including those of the ruling family lay the foundations for state-society relations. The monarchic family leads by example and the family as subject reflects the roles exemplified by the ruling family, establishing opportunities for stability and instability depending on the quality of family relationships. The tribe acts as an intermediary between state and society, imposing checks and balances and legitimacy on the monarchy. Islam, while not an actor like the family and the tribe, helps to stabilize and legitimate the monarchy as it simultaneously provides a common identity between the citizen and the ruling family as well as a societal system of accountability separate from any formal governing structure. It provides a “religious rules of the game” for state and society. At all levels of society, the family is the basis for both structuring society and legitimating leadership in the Middle Eastern monarchy.

### **Theoretical Framework: Comprehending the Linkages between Domestic Forces, Gender, and Foreign Policy**

Feminist IR literature is responsible for bringing gender into the study of international relations, making it the theoretical foundation of this thesis. Perhaps the most important contributions the literature has made to the study of global affairs include expanding the definition and identification of actors in international politics to include women as either those enacting policy, those most affected by policy, or those responding to policy through civil society or social movements. Furthermore, the structural implications for the international

system of patriarchy discussed in feminist IR pose a great challenge to the field. Traditional realist explanations of power distribution cannot account for patriarchal distributions of power without incorporating gender into their analytical framework. Despite these positive contributions, however, feminist IR theory still tends to view women as either victims or agents of patriarchy in international processes, ignoring the diversity of women's policy preferences as well as their decision-making agency. The linkages between gendered hegemonic norms of behavior and states' foreign policies are also understudied. This thesis builds upon feminist IR theory by positing that gender in IR exists in two distinct ways. They are the theoretical division between the feminist study of women in IR and the normative study of the gendering of states' foreign policies as displaying more characteristics associated with traditional masculinity or femininity. It offers a methodological framework for evaluating the degree to which these two manifestations of gender in IR affect one another by looking at the relationship between a state's international society and world society, the institutional identity of that state's foreign policy apparatus, the relationship between domestic forces, the monarchy and foreign policy, and the role of the state's international image/identity.

The two distinct ways in which gender exists in the study and processes of international relations are the roles and positions of women in global affairs and the behavioral observations of a state's foreign policy reflecting norms of hegemonic masculinity, hegemonic femininity or a hybrid combination of the two. The study of women in IR is feminist because it focuses on just women and how women are either underrepresented in foreign policy decision-making and/or being oppressed by certain international processes such as structural adjustment for states' economies or development of political institutions according to the preferences of external actors. Herein exists the space for discussion of women's victimization and/or empowerment

without ignoring women's agency and capacity for action. The gendering of states' foreign policy does not depend on the study of women or men but rather identifies similarities between hegemonic gender norms. This is useful to international relations because it offers new variables with which to analyze and predict state behavior that may be more reliable than the classic labeling of weak, strong, soft, hard, unilateral, multilateral, aggressive, peaceful adjectives that IR literature applies to nations or their foreign policies. Using gender as an analytical framework for state behavior is more fluid and case by case appropriate. In both feminist IR literature and international politics, the puzzle, then, is how and if the two ways in which gender fits in IR affect one another.

The key variables to examine when solving this puzzle are the closeness of a state's international society to its world society and the institutional identity of the state's foreign policy apparatus. International society is the group of actors within a state that directly participate in its international affairs. Diplomats, international businessmen, and the media are all examples of actors that officially represent the state or whose interests are the same as the state's. Most importantly, these actors are primarily occupied with representing the state externally rather than working internally in domestic affairs. World society is composed of those domestic actors who advocate for an ideology or cause shared throughout the world with other civil societies without working together internationally. Many of the ideologies or causes shared by world societies deal with women's rights, human rights, anti-globalization, and environmental security, for example. Because these societies tend to be dominated by movements that are generally inclined toward peaceful, cooperative, and humanitarian actions, they are more inclined to support the advancement of women in positions of decision-making and values associated with femininity if they do not already do so directly. If international and world societies overlap and work together

within their states, then it is likely that women will gain more access to decision-making channels no matter the institutional identity of the group of actors. Also, the degree of international autonomy a state enjoys affects the closeness of its international and world societies as well as how domestic forces can affect foreign policy.

The specific role domestic forces play in linking international and world societies and affecting foreign policy cannot be discussed without first understanding the importance of a state's international political image or identity. Control of its international image is, perhaps, the most prominent political tool used by states that do not enjoy a high level of autonomy as it helps them to become more attractive for aid and it can promote trust. In states that are somewhat image dependent, domestic civil/political society activities that challenge the status-quo and are visible to the international arena can affect the state's foreign policy. A state's failure to respond peacefully to these activities or to respond at all could taint its international image. For example, if a state needs to project a kind of "democratic identity" to the international community the state must consider very carefully how it accommodates domestic demonstrations. Conditions for economic aid often include political liberalization. Violent crackdowns on demonstrators that the world can witness through advanced technology could ruin a state's "democratic" or "benevolent" international identity and jeopardize its access to aid. A state's need to maintain its international image/identity helps to blur the lines between domestic and foreign policy.

In states where the difference between domestic and foreign policy is unclear, the difference between state and non-state actors can be equally opaque. It is here that the English School's international and world societies are particularly useful concepts. Individuals can simultaneously participate in civil society activities as well as state activities as they are able to navigate between both realms. These points of interaction between civil society/political society



or international/world societies provide a platform on which ideas are shared and norms of behavior traditional to one institution or another can shift. When actors do not confine their activities to either the state or non-state, they demonstrate their preference for finding a common or middle ground. In this type of culture, cooperation and change can flourish.

This interaction between international and world societies generally allows domestic forces to affect foreign policy; however, this influence is not always direct. There are cases where domestic interest groups or social movements rally strongly enough against a particular policy and the state's foreign policy decision-makers change the policy according to the demands of the domestic forces. This is often due to the state's fear of a loss of legitimacy that could potentially threaten its existence. This kind of direct influence, while clearly an influence of domestic forces on foreign policy, requires an incredible degree of accountability on the part of the government to its people. This accountability can derive from the normalized democratic values within the state or simply a state's existential fear. On the other hand, the domestic sphere is not always directly affected by state decisions/actions in the international arena. In a relatively autonomous state, these types of foreign policies are unlikely to be affected by domestic forces. The exceptions to this are, of course, with issues of conflict and war among neighboring countries or economic agreements that allow foreign companies to act freely within that state's borders. Even in democratic states where more domestic influence might be expected, demonstrations are often in vain.

In a state that does not boast international autonomy or domestic legitimacy, domestic forces cannot just be ignored no matter how directly or indirectly the foreign policy affects the domestic sphere. Instead of directly responding to these influences, the state can negotiate and divert political attention away from the policy and toward another issue area that perhaps it

perceives as more tractable. With certain social movements that have both a unified demographic identity and aim to influence foreign policy, the state can create domestic space for the empowerment of that demographic short of endorsing its stated preferences. Women's movements are the best example of this. Women represent such a domestic force yet the policy preferences they seek may not directly relate to their personal status. Moreover, the foreign policy they contest may be one which the state perceives as necessary. To appease the demographic while preserving its policy, the state can craft a domestic space dedicated to the empowerment of women, effectively diverting their political focus and fragmenting the voices within the movement.

While the greatest social division of power breaks down through women's empowerment, competition for public roles doubles and conflict between men and women and masculinity and femininity is inevitable. At this point, and perhaps before, the government as the mediating power domestically and internationally, is compelled to assuage this transformation. A monarchy such as Jordan provides an excellent mechanism for doing this—the composition of the royal family. By quite literally intermarrying public and private, the disempowered gender with the traditionally empowered gender, the royal family can peacefully guide this transition by providing a modern, hybridized nuclear family model to encourage change from the grassroots, private level of the family.

The monarchy's role extends beyond mediating domestic forces as it both protects and projects the image of the state domestically and internationally. At the international level, as long as the monarchy portrays a relationship of equals between husband and wife whereby both have a public role even if they are separate roles, criticism is unlikely as the projected image is positive. Domestically, the implications of this new kind of family based on equally important

and public, yet substantially different roles are more complex. First, the new public role of the wife-queen encourages women to join the workforce or the public. This opening is justified for the betterment of both their families and their nation.

For the family, women and men become equals in the unit because both share public power. Although the royal family and the government attempted to reorient the women's movement to a specific and segregated space for women's issues, some women will enter the more 'masculine spheres' as well. Women interested in these spheres usually associated with high politics enter these spaces for two main reasons. First, they feel a new sense of public empowerment. Second, no matter how 'feminine' or 'masculine' their new public role, it can be justified as a service to their family and to their country. Since this reasoning falls in line with the royal family's model, women's access to traditionally male spaces cannot be easily rejected.

For the nation, gender integration in the public sphere helps to build nationalism if the royal family endorses these changes. People develop a sense that their rulers care about improving society and the well-being of its subjects. Love and respect for one's king and queen become a foundation for nationalism. With more nationalist sentiment, regime survival rests more on state legitimacy than on force. Since the family and the nation almost become synonymous in the discussion of integrating women into public life, women also become a new source of nationalism and popular support for the regime. Ultimately, the nation benefits from the skills and values women add to the public sphere as well as the unifying element of greater nationalist sentiment.

Women's increased access to the public does not automatically imply that institutions of high politics such as foreign policy will fully accept feminine values if their institutional identities do not hold those values of cooperation, ethic of care, and peace. This is because the

gendering of institutions is not dependent upon the ratio of men to women. Both sexes may subscribe to a variety of femininities and masculinities. In states such as the United States and Great Britain where women have relatively freer access to channels of decision-making, powerful women in their foreign affairs have been labeled as “manly” due to their aggressive preferences. Following this line of reasoning, Margaret Thatcher and Condoleeza Rice, for example, pursued relatively hawkish, warring policies in spite of their womanhood or perceived femininity because the identities of their countries’ foreign policies were much more masculine than feminine. Whether or not these women were exercising their agency according to their true preferences or according to “the man’s game,” is somewhat of a non-issue because ultimately they made the decision to carry out such policy. Their agency is witnessed in both their actions and the responsibility they take for them.

What is important is the impact, if any, that actors with counter-institutional policy preferences have on the identity of the foreign policy for which they work. Except under circumstances whereby a “critical mass” of actors within the foreign policy apparatus advocates for their oppositional preferences, it is unlikely that individuals can change the institution’s identity. Additionally, it is unlikely that these individuals would be inclined to participate in an institution with policies of which they disapprove. When a state’s international and world societies have a close relationship, if the institutional identity of that state’s foreign policy apparatus is “feminine” then it is more apt to grant equal access to women and if the identity is “masculine” then it is more apt to grant conditional access to women, i.e. women are expected to act as men.

By making a theoretical distinction between the two main forms of gender in international relations, the relationship between a state’s international and world societies and the

institutional gendered identity of its foreign policy can serve as variables to measure the effects that the various examples of oppression of women and the gendering of states' foreign policies have on one another. This is useful because, contrary to much of the feminist IR literature, just adding women and stirring to traditionally masculine institutions does not necessarily change the policy of that institution. A state may also "act feminine" with male-dominated institutions. The underlying question that may be raised here is whether or not all actors marginalized from powerful channels of decision-making and leadership, be they women or states, develop the same behavior in response to their marginalization. In other words, less powerful, less autonomous states, like many women throughout history, seem likely to support cooperation, peace, humanitarian issues than powerful states and men who are typically more inclined towards self-help, aggression, and hard-line security. If the effects of marginalization are non-gender specific, then the gendered labels of femininity and masculinity to states and to people are perhaps misleading terms for the relational adaptation of marginalized actors in general.

## Chapter 3

### Setting the Stage: Feminist Domestic Politics in Jordan

#### *Introduction*

Women and gender in Jordanian foreign policy merits analysis because in the Hashemite Kingdom, gender roles on the domestic level have transformed from being traditional or patriarchal to being more open, egalitarian, and modern or non-patriarchal. Women who were marginalized from certain societal institutions traditionally occupied by men such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other arenas of “high politics” are now competing on equal ground as men for these positions. Given the rise of female politicians, activists, and members of the foreign policy apparatus in Jordan, the Hashemite Kingdom is a good case study on which to apply feminist IR through the theoretical framework of this thesis. It would not be prudent to assume that all Jordanian women incorporated into to the public sphere are marginalized and that they all share the same ethic of care associated with hegemonic interpretations of femininity. The breadth and diversity of female political agents in the kingdom particularly in domestic politics is the focus of this chapter. Jordan’s women’s movement and its strong female presence in civil and political society indicate that the societal norms that accept women in the public sphere and in politics have become entrenched in Jordan. Also, this suggests that Jordan’s feminist domestic forces collectively improve women’s access to other institutions like the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and simultaneously condition Jordanian foreign policy to new ideas that may reflect more ‘feminine’ values. Even within a traditional, patriarchally-bound society, Jordanian women have become active political agents hardly marginalized.

Although the rise in female political actors in Jordan merits an analysis from the feminist IR perspective, a framework that accommodates the role of Jordanian state-society relations in granting women access to high politics is necessary. In Jordan, domestic political forces as well as the role of the family unit in the kingdom as societal and governmental organization work independently and interactively to create space for women in foreign policy. The IR literature which argues that domestic forces influence a state's international relations and foreign policy tends to highlight more direct causal links than the Jordanian case study indicates; however, the English School's theoretical description of an interdependent and overlapping international and world society suits this thesis. In the Hashemite Kingdom, the domestic political forces that contribute to the expansion of women's rights and gender equality in society yet are not directly affiliated with the state's foreign policy apparatus can be interpreted as part of Jordan's world society. At the same time, Jordanian women and men who are affected by Jordanian world society which advances a feminist agenda and who are directly part of the kingdom's foreign policy apparatus via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for example, can be understood as members of Jordan's international society. Individuals can be members of world and international societies, yet for practical purposes, in this chapter the analytical distinction shall be made.

### **History of the Jordanian Women's Movement**

Unlike other Arab states, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan did not have a territorial nor ethnic identity prior to its formation in 1921.<sup>51</sup> Transjordan formed a boundary between the

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<sup>51</sup> In Lisa Anderson's article, "Absolutism and the Resilience of Monarchy in the Middle East," she mentions how the elite Middle Eastern families are not much more than a century old as part of her argument, "the monarch risks little in an alliance of convenience with the rural notables while presumably laying the groundwork for the growth of bourgeois capitalism (14)." While her point is that the monarch can create political security by fostering closer relations with the elite families because they are relatively young, in Jordan, their power was created at the same as their monarch and their country. Lisa Anderson, 14.

Arabian peninsula, Egypt, Iraq and the countries of the Levant—Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine.<sup>52</sup> The geopolitical importance of the new Transjordan was great because its borders and King Abdullah I's leadership established a political buffer between the other Arab states as a means of maintaining regional stability. Because of Jordan's young life as a territory and state, all social and political movements within the Kingdom share mostly the same timeline. Additionally, the ruling family's efforts to maintain power and legitimate its existence nationally and internationally through shows of political liberalization, economic development, promotion of the Jordanian identity and "family," moderate support for the Palestinian cause and other movements, and occasional use of military force, have developed with the same chronology as Jordan's social and political movements.

Although the Jordanian state has legally existed for nearly a century, various forces throughout the kingdom including the ruling elite have contributed to a constant negotiation of Jordanian state formation. Reflecting Jordan's "living history," discussions of the development of Jordanian women and the Jordanian women's movement do not focus on particular periods. Rather, they tend to focus on different themes related to Jordanian women that can be traced throughout Jordan's history. As such, for this background, a brief summary of the evolution of the status of women and the women's movement in Jordan will be provided, followed by a thematic literature review. The literature traces the three themes of Jordanian women and labor, political liberalization and its effects on Jordanian women, and Islam and Jordanian women.

The Jordanian women's movement can be roughly divided into three main phases: 1) the early King Hussein era when women's organizations were mostly independent and associated with the oppositional Left, 2) the middle King Hussein era when government supported women's organizations under the direction of HRH Princess Basma were created to challenge the

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<sup>52</sup> Russell E. Lucas, Chapter 1 "Institutions and the Politics of Survival," 14.



politicized organizations, and, 3) the late King Hussein/King Abdullah II era in which Islamist women joined the women's movement and state feminist groups and independent feminist groups are in competition. In the period before King Hussein assumed the throne, from 1944-1959, only two women's organizations existed which concentrated on motherhood and childhood. In 1954 and in the wake of the 1948 Palestine War and the assassination of King Abdullah I in 1951, the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) was founded.<sup>53</sup> The JWU aimed to attain women's political rights; however, members also sought equality in all areas of life and in Jordanian society as well as actively supporting nationalist causes such as the Palestine issue.<sup>54</sup> The JWU's championing of Palestinian rights led to clashing with the government, periodic closures, and overall governmental suspicion of the union's activities.<sup>55</sup> The JWU did manage to gain women's right to vote in parliamentary elections even though parliament was often suspended until the late 1980s.<sup>56</sup>

The early 1980s marked the end of the first era with JWU leaders deciding to freeze union activity and the beginning of the second era with the rise of government backed women's organizations. Under the ministerial leadership of the first female Jordanian minister, In'am Mufti, the Ministry of Social Development helped to create the pro-government General Federation of Jordanian Women (GFJW) which dominated women's politics until the early 90s.<sup>57</sup> The late 80s and early 90s is the beginning of the third era as high rates of female Islamist membership in the GFJW triggered the government to strictly keep the federation as an umbrella organization for all women's groups and to redefine the terms of membership. The government's

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<sup>53</sup> Sherry R. Lowrence, "After Beijing: Political Liberalization and the Women's Movement in Jordan," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 3 (Jul., 1998): 90.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid*, 90.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid*, 91.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid*, 92.

attempt to control the influence of female Islamists in women's organizations occurred simultaneously with the kingdom's political liberalization. This allowed for the re-opening of independent feminist groups. The third and present era is characterized by competition between independent women's organizations and government supported women's organizations often headed and created by HRH Princess Basma.<sup>58</sup>

The two biggest effects of political liberalization on the Jordanian women's movement are the empowerment of government backed NGOs and the weakening of independent women's organizations. Women's organizations such as the GFJW that are legally defined as non-governmental although they enjoy significant support and supervision by state officials grew in number during the period of political opening.<sup>59</sup> Prior to the kingdom's brief period of political liberalization in the early 90s, the GFJW had been the only women's organization to push a women's rights agenda throughout the 80s, independent or not.<sup>60</sup> Since the JWU had halted its activities due to constant government suspicion of its political views, the GFJW was able to institutionalize state feminism. This dominance could not last, however, with the revival of independent feminist groups unless more quasi governmental NGOs were created. The National Committee for Women's Affairs (NCWA) was established in 1992 by HRH Princess Basma, bringing together heads of the ministries concerned with women's affairs, representatives from the private sector, and development agencies supported by the government such as the Queen Alia Fund.<sup>61</sup> The NCWA drafted the National Strategy for Women in Jordan which has become the guidelines for all women's organizations in the kingdom.<sup>62</sup> Additionally, HRH Princess Basma worked to initiate small committees in the localities of Jordan according to the national

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, 92-97.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, 93.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 92-97.

strategy.<sup>63</sup> An alliance of these committees was formed and called the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), also supervised by HRH Princess Basma. The endorsement of the GFJW, the NCWA, the JNFW and the national strategy by the Queen Alia Fund, supported by the state, puts the state feminist institutions in a better position to attract funding from international donors than the independent groups. By maintaining a monopoly on international funding, positive relations with the government, and supervision by HRH Princess Basma, the government backed NGOs have become more powerful than the independent organizations, allowing the state to dominate the agenda of the women's movement.<sup>64</sup>

While political liberalization in Jordan gave the independent feminist organizations such as the JWU a new opportunity to function, their influence weakened during this time as the state feminist groups became more empowered. Gaining funding has been much more difficult for them since they do not have access to governmental and/or royal patronage nor can they as easily attract international donors. Another aspect of their relative weakening comes from member disagreement about the role of state feminist institutions. Some members do not see them as a threat, but rather as another positive force for the women's movement. Many distrust the institutions as they accuse them of having a narrow interpretation of what kinds of rights women should gain and how they should express their political rights. Much of these disagreements are found in opinions on the personal status laws for women. Some women advocate openly for women's political rights but do not contest women's legal inequality within the family unit.

Many members of independent feminist groups view the growth of these organizations as the state's way of silencing their oppositional views of certain women's issues such as the personal status laws, the lack of legislation criminalizing honor crimes, and the Palestinian issue.

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Russell E. Lucas, Chapter 1 "Institutions and the Politics of Survival," 8.

One major example of the transition of a member to the government-backed women's groups is that of Ms. Asma. Ms. Asma occupied the post of president of the Jordanian Women's Union, was then appointed Speaker of the Ministry and now works for the NCWA. In spite of renewed access to civil society, the experiences of Jordan's independent feminist groups have been more challenging than emancipatory during a time of political liberalization. Donno and Russett explore the linkages between women's rights, democracy, and Islam and measure the effects of women's rights on democracy in Arab states. They find that, overall, women's rights have an insignificant effect on democracy, yet when percentages of women in government are measured there is a positive correlation.<sup>65</sup> As Donno and Russett suggest, however, perhaps women in government and legal women's rights do not necessarily lead to democracy. In Jordan, an increase in women in politics and/or women involved in quasi-governmental women's institutions may not necessarily indicate a higher degree of freedom for all women's groups in civil society. In terms of women's empowerment, Elizabeth Fernea argues that although patriarchy still exists in Middle Eastern leaders, the idea of shared leadership for all citizens has been institutionalized through elected parliaments and can be a point of access to policy decision-making for women.<sup>66</sup> In Jordan, the parliament can be one of these sites for women's empowerment in spite of the competition between women's organizations.

In addition to the effects of political liberalization on the Jordanian women's movement, the topic of women and labor in terms of economic liberalization, Islam and its perspectives on women's work, composes another major part of the literature on the status of Jordanian women and the women's movement. Economic liberalization, or the opening of a state's economy to

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<sup>65</sup> Daniela Donno and Bruce Russett, "Islam, Authoritarianism, and Female Empowerment: What are the Linkages?," *World Politics* 56, no. 4 (2004) 582-607, 592-593.

<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Fernea, "The Challenges for Middle Eastern Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," *Middle East Journal* 54, no.2 (Spring, 2000): 185-193, 186.

other economies, companies, and the global market, often occurs in tandem with states' promises to other states and/or lending institutions to liberalize politically as well. It is one major aspect of globalization.<sup>67</sup> Women are expected to receive both political and economic benefits from economic liberalization as they will have more opportunities to work, thereby giving them more financial independence with which they should be able to develop their own political identities. Baylouny discusses Jordan's attempt to employ rural women in foreign textile factories. The government's newly created Ministry of Political Development and Parliamentary Affairs aimed to help improve the lives of these women by providing bus service to and from their homes to the factories as well as on-site dormitories where they would reside for two-week periods and then return home for a one-day visit.<sup>68</sup> As many women did not return to work after their breaks, the program proved problematic and the factories' brief time commitment to stay in Jordan made the Ministry's effort to emancipate women by giving them more labor opportunities appear temporary and weak.<sup>69</sup> Inconsistent, temporary employment of women through globalization processes hinders society's ability to improve their status through women's financial independence since women's employment is less sustainable and Jordanian women must also have permission from their husbands or male guardians to work.

Another aspect of globalization in Jordan that affects women is the increase in job insecurity for labor typically occupied by women. Posusney and Doumato note that, in the Middle East, the public sector has been the preference of female labor as it has been the most hospitable to them in terms of maternity and child-care benefits.<sup>70</sup> The economic demands of globalization entail a shrinking of the public sector, putting working women at greater risk of job

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<sup>67</sup>Marsha Pripstein Posusney and Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Introduction," *Women and Globalization in the Arab Middle East: Gender, Economy, and Society* (Boulder, London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003), 5.

<sup>68</sup>Anne Marie Baylouny, "Jordan's New 'Political Development' Strategy," *Middle East Report* 236(Fall 2005): 40.

<sup>69</sup> Baylouny, 43.

<sup>70</sup> Pripstein Posusney and Doumato, 6.

loss than men.<sup>71</sup> Not only has the public sector provided employment for women, it has also provided childcare and maternity benefits for them, making the loss of their jobs a double burden of financial hardship as well as extra familial responsibility.<sup>72</sup> Some of the government's attempts to remedy this situation described by Baylouny have not worked well because of Jordan's tendency to view women's work as temporary in order to better support their families in times of need.

The topic of Islam and women's labor is another recurrent theme throughout the literature on Jordanian women and the women's movement. In her book, *Women of Jordan: Islam, Labor, & the Law*, Amira el-Azhary Sonbol evaluates the ways in which Jordanian women's lives are shaped by societal and clerical interpretations of Islamic views of women and work. Sonbol evaluates the arguments of different Islamic scholars and Islamic feminists that range from the most conservative opinion in which women should never work to the more liberal opinions which argue that women are better suited for certain occupations. Interestingly, no matter to what extreme the opinions lean, most are based around the preservation and the sanctity of the family. Either women should not work at all because their role is to protect and maintain the home and the family or they should work only in such capacities that directly benefit the family, require the motherly ethic of care, and/or promote the values of Islam to other women. Women should not work in mixed gender settings so as not to disrupt the social order with their sexuality. Sonbol does cite several Islamic opinions that disagree with these arguments. These opinions argue that men and women cannot be reduced to their natural states, of which women's are widely assumed to be sinful, because Islam does not believe in original sin.<sup>73</sup> In general, women's political work

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<sup>71</sup> Pripstein Posusney and Doumato, "Introduction," 5.

<sup>72</sup> Pripstein Posusney and Doumato, "Introduction," 6.

<sup>73</sup> Amira el-Azhary Sonbol, "Chapter 8 Regarding Work and the Modern Jordanian Woman," In *Women of Jordan: Islam, Labor & the Law* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 221.

is not highly regarded among Islamic opinions if women step outside of their familial roles by advocating for values other than those traditionally associated with positive interpretations of womanhood or if they are working closely with men. In society, women's political work is largely unaccepted because women are not seen as sound decision-makers.

Given the history of Jordan and its geopolitical significance, the women's movement has had an impressive lifespan and has continued to develop in spite of growing competition between state feminist groups and independent feminist organizations. As compared with other Arab countries, the status of women has greatly improved since Jordan's inception. However, political and economic liberalization still does not translate into gender equality in the kingdom as the main tenets of patriarchy have yet to be fully dismantled and women have yet to be fully incorporated into decision-making circles. In Jordan, independent women's groups are considered threatening because they are oppositional although they compose an important part of what any democratic state would call civil society. As with all groups considered oppositional, the Jordanian government is trying to establish acceptable boundaries for the women's movement, outside of which those in opposition will be delegitimized.<sup>74</sup> The competition they face with state feminist institutions and social forces is perhaps not as much an indicator of society's resistance to gender equality, but rather the result of the Hashemite Kingdom's strategy of incorporating all forms of oppositional and potentially destabilizing political forces into its folds. At the societal level, women are becoming powerful leaders in their own families as many of their men work abroad, effectively diminishing male power.<sup>75</sup>

### **Locating Feminist Domestic Politics in Jordan**

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<sup>74</sup> Russell E. Lucas, Chapter 3 "Democratization and Political Power in Jordan," *Institutions and the Politics of Survival: Domestic Responses to External Challenges, 1988-2001*, 123.

<sup>75</sup> Elizabeth Fernea, "The Challenges for Middle Eastern Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," 187.

In Jordan, much of civil society is dedicated to the advancement of women and/or gender equality. These groups and individuals pertain to what is commonly called the Jordanian women's movement. In general, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and royal non-governmental organizations (RNGOs) tackle issues related to the legal status of women, the economic advancement of women, educational and political opportunities for women. NGOs and RNGOs work with members of government and the royal family to pursue these issues. For this thesis, five women from different areas of the Jordanian women's movement were interviewed about their work, their roles in Jordanian society, and their opinions on the status of women in Jordanian foreign policy. The information gathered through their interviews provides most of the content for the rest of this chapter. In Jordan, the different actors of the women's movement can be divided into three major areas—women in civil society, women in government, and women in both civil society and government. The rest of this section describes the locations and roles of these women in Jordan.

Of the women classified here as part of civil society, varying degrees of non-governmental affiliation can be ascribed to them. They fall into the civil society category because they do not directly work for the Jordanian government. Some of these women occasionally play advisory roles to the government or their organizations are endorsed by the royal family. Ms. Leila works for the Arab Women Organization of Jordan (AWO) under the title of Director of Programmes.<sup>76</sup> The AWO sponsors several programs for the promotion of women's awareness of their legal rights, female political participation at the local levels, and environmental security.<sup>77</sup> Ms. Leila's organization is the civil society NGO most autonomous

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<sup>76</sup> Ms. Leila, interview by author, April 11, 2010.

<sup>77</sup> *Arab Women Organization of Jordan* (Amman, Jordan: brochure from Arab Women Organization of Jordan, April 2010).



from the Jordanian government, although it adheres to Jordanian law regarding NGO conduct.<sup>78</sup> Dr. Hanan is a gender studies professor at the University of Jordan as well as the director of several women's organizations.<sup>79</sup> She has advised the Jordanian senate or Upper House on legislation related to women.<sup>80</sup> The third woman in this category is H.E. Ms. May who has also advised the Upper House on legislation related to women and also directs the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW).<sup>81</sup> The JNFW is what is considered a royal non-governmental organization (RNGO) because its president is Her Royal Highness Princess Basma.

In contrast to the three examples of Jordanian women in civil society, only one woman interviewed can fit into the group of Jordanian women in government. Senator Amal F. is a senator in the Jordanian Upper House.<sup>82</sup> Senator Amal also advises the government and HM King Abdullah II on women's issues and legislation but she believes that her main role is to act as a politician for all Jordanians.<sup>83</sup> Prior to working as a senator, she taught Management and Economics at the University of Jordan, where she was appointed Dean of the School of Business.<sup>84</sup> While Senator Amal's previous occupations would classify her as part of civil society, her current position as senator and the committees on which she serves are governmental.

The remaining two interviewees, Ms. Asma and Judge Ihssan, are women who work in both civil society and the government. It is possible to argue that Ms. Asma could be classified as part of civil society because at the present time she works for a RNGO and is not directly employed by the Jordanian government. However, her curriculum vitae includes several

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<sup>78</sup> Ms. Leila, interview.

<sup>79</sup> Dr. Hanan, interview by author, Amman, Jordan, June 4, 2010.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Her Excellency Ms. May, e-mail message to author, June 2, 2010.

<sup>82</sup> Senator Amal, interview by author, Amman, Jordan, June 4, 2010.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

leadership and founder positions in prominent Jordanian NGOs as well as ministerial positions. Ministerial positions are high governmental posts and Ms. Asma served as Speaker of the Ministry for several years.<sup>85</sup> As Speaker, Ms. Asma represented the Jordanian cabinet in televised speeches informing the public of cabinet decisions and business.<sup>86</sup> Ms. Asma is now the Secretary General of the Jordanian National Commission for Women (JNCW) also under the auspices of HRH Princess Basma.<sup>87</sup> As implied by her title, Judge Ihssan served as a Jordanian judge at the time of the interview. She served as the Chief of the 1<sup>st</sup> Instance Court of Appeals of West Amman.<sup>88</sup> She is the first female Jordanian to hold such a high position in the judicial system of the kingdom.<sup>89</sup> Since her interview, Judge Ihssan also became the first Jordanian woman to act as Amman's chief district attorney.<sup>90</sup> Simultaneously, Judge Ihssan ran and continues to run the Arab Women's Legal Network (AWLN), an NGO that she founded.<sup>91</sup> The AWLN seeks to inform Jordanian women of their legal rights, particularly regarding their personal status.<sup>92</sup>

All five of the above-mentioned women are members of the Jordanian women's movement yet in different capacities. Their locations can be roughly divided into three sites: civil society, government, and both civil society and government. Their different locations and roles within them give each of these women a unique perspective on female agency and Jordanian

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<sup>85</sup> Ms. Asma, interview by author, Amman, Jordan, June 3, 2010.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Judge Ihssan, interview by author, Amman, Jordan, June 2, 2010

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> "Ihsan Barakat," *ABCNews online*, December 9, 2010, accessed July 5, 2012, <http://abcnews.go.com/meta/search/imageDetail?format=plain&source=http://abcnews.go.com/images/International/48224ec4c3d544e8b547540081d470eb>; "Jordan Names First Woman Chief District Attorney," *FoxNews.com*, December 9, 2010, accessed July 5, 2012, <http://www.foxnews.com/world/2010/12/09/jordan-names-woman-chief-district-attorney/>; "NYIT Amman Discusses Women's Role in Social, Political Change," New York Institute of Technology Amman, March 23, 2011, accessed July 5, 2012, [http://www.nyit.edu/index.php/jordan/announcements/nyit-amman\\_discusses\\_womens\\_role\\_in\\_social\\_political\\_change/](http://www.nyit.edu/index.php/jordan/announcements/nyit-amman_discusses_womens_role_in_social_political_change/).

<sup>91</sup> Judge Ihssan, interview.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

state-society relations. The following two sections will discuss these women's opinions on gender as a primary or secondary issue in their work and their views on the roles of men and women in the Hashemite Kingdom.

### **Gender in Perspective: A Primary or Secondary Issue for Jordanian Women?**

As described above, the women of the Jordanian women's movement are not a homogeneous group. Just as they hold different occupations and work on different issues related to women, their opinions on whether or not gender ought to be their first priority differ too. For some, issues related to gender in Jordanian society are the most important and urgent issues in the kingdom. For others, gendered issues come secondary or in addition to societal problems related to the Jordanian economy or political structure, for example. In this section, the perspectives of Jordanian women whose work has affected the overall status of females in the kingdom on the primacy gender in their work will be discussed.

Those women who believe that issues related to gender are most important for improving Jordan's politics and society can be divided into two camps—those who focus on women and women's issues specifically and those who believe feminism is an epistemology that should be the ideological support for their work on women. Judge Ihssan, Ms. Asma, and H.E. Ms. May best match the former. All three share the opinion that Jordanian women do not have equal rights and social status as Jordanian men. They also believe that their work in specific areas of women's empowerment will alleviate this inequality. Judge Ihssan incorporates this idea even into her public service position in the judicial system. Since accepting her position in the 1<sup>st</sup> Instance Court of Appeals of West Amman, Judge Ihssan has given female employees of the

court rights to maternity leave and she has appointed the first female prosecutor who will mostly work on family cases.<sup>93</sup>

In addition to her service as Speaker of the Ministry, Ms. Asma has spent much of her career as a lawyer and advocate for women's legal rights. In addition to her private practice, Ms. Asma founded the Jordanian branch of the Sisterhood is Global Network.<sup>94</sup> Furthermore, Ms. Asma has found that her ministerial work has inspired many girls to become members of government and to take on leadership roles.<sup>95</sup> Ms. Asma follows a piecemeal strategy of women's empowerment whereby the status of women in Jordan will improve gradually as more and more women take on leadership positions and become aware of their legal rights.<sup>96</sup> Judge Ihssan agrees with her in that women should occupy decision-making positions at all levels of society from management to government.<sup>97</sup> Also, both Judge Ihssan and Ms. Asma believe that women have different needs than men that should be met through appropriate law and different skills that should be utilized in the Jordanian social and governmental structure.<sup>98</sup>

As secretary general of the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW), H.E. Ms. May coordinates the work and strategies of many of the country's NGOs for women's rights. Her professional background began in teaching and then, with an MA in Administration, developed into administrative positions in secondary schools.<sup>99</sup> In contrast to the backgrounds of Judge Ihssan and Ms. Asma in the legal field, Ms. Amal's background in education reflects traditionally accepted notions of what women's work should be. Her self-identification as a

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ms. Asma, interview.

<sup>95</sup> Ms. Asma recalled an experience when she travelled to a rural area of Jordan while she was working as Speaker of the Ministry to meet with schoolchildren at a local school. When she asked a girl what she wanted to be when she grew up, the girl replied that she wanted to join politics just like Ms. Asma.; Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

<sup>97</sup> Judge Ihssan, Interview.

<sup>98</sup> Judge Ihssan, Interview; Ms. Asma, interview.

<sup>99</sup> H.E. Ms. May, interview.

women's rights activist and her natural interest in politics propelled her into the secretary general position at the JNFW.<sup>100</sup> The differences in backgrounds between these three women show that, in Jordan, a woman's professional identity as either traditional or non-traditional does not qualify her as "feminist."

Rather, it is women's interest in working towards women's empowerment beyond and outside of their careers that qualifies them as Jordanian feminists. Judge Ihssan, Ms. Asma, and H.E. Ms. May are feminist in the sense that they seek to empower women by improving their societal roles and by educating them about their rights. However, they do not seek to alter the structure of Jordanian society unlike those who believe that feminism is an epistemology.

Dr. Hanan also views issues of gender as primary in her work but she does so according to the ideological standpoint that feminism is an epistemology. This means that, in order to actually address issues of gender in society, not only the status of women should be improved, but the system that normalizes the association of femininity with women and masculinity with men must also be overhauled. Beyond placing women in positions of leadership traditionally occupied by men, society must not measure women's successes in these new positions based on how manly they act.<sup>101</sup> Dr. Hanan observed that many Jordanian women with political aspirations think that they must become 'like men' in order to be good at what they do.<sup>102</sup> From her perspective, this does not substantially empower women because it subordinates femininity to masculinity. Feminism as an epistemology seeks gender equality by breaking down masculinity as an ideal as well as the expectations of masculinity and femininity for both men and women.<sup>103</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> Dr. Hanan, interview.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

In contrast to the primacy the first camp accords to issues related to women, gender, and feminism as an epistemology, the second camp of women view gender issues as secondary to other societal problems or symptoms of bad governance. In the opinion of Senator Amal, Jordanian society and the culture of Jordanian institutions pose the biggest challenge to the advancement of the kingdom.<sup>104</sup> For her, the ruling family and the Senate advocate a rather progressive political program both in terms of good governance, democracy, and women's rights.<sup>105</sup> The parliament, or the Lower Commons, she says, maintains a conservative and stunting outlook on policy and governance.<sup>106</sup> Although members of parliament are elected by Jordanian citizens, they often uphold unjust tribal and religious law and practice even if it goes against citizens' interests.<sup>107</sup> For example, parliament has not criminalized honor killings in which a woman is killed by a family member because she has somehow dishonored the family because of its tribal roots.<sup>108</sup>

Senator Amal also believes that the identities and cultures of certain Jordanian institutions inhibit progressive change, particularly the empowerment of women. Politics in general has traditionally been "a man's game" in Jordan. To join parliament, women must first overcome societal resistance to female representation and then, once an MP, they must overcome the disapproval of their male colleagues in working with women due to the patriarchal culture of the institution.<sup>109</sup> Change in institutional identity and culture must come from within, but this requires an enormous amount of determination and stamina from those who seek change.<sup>110</sup> From this perspective, institutional identity change seems nearly impossible.

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<sup>104</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

Ms. Leila and Toujin Al-Faisal, the first female elected to the Jordanian parliament, with whom the author did not speak, have a similar view as Senator Amal. They believe that patriarchy describes the culture of parliament and that it must be deconstructed before true gender equality and women's empowerment may occur.<sup>111</sup> However, in contrast to Senator Amal, Ms. Leila and Ms. Al-Faisal believe that patriarchy plagues all of Jordanian governance.<sup>112</sup> They combat this by educating women about their legal rights and by encouraging them to participate in politics by running for local office and voting.<sup>113</sup> In this way, patriarchy in governance can be dismantled from the bottom up.

Having the shared experiences of careers in politics, Senator Amal and Ms. Al-Faisal both view their primary roles not as advocates for gender equality and women's empowerment, but as politicians.<sup>114</sup> They reject the common misconception that because they are female politicians they must first and foremost prioritize women's issues.<sup>115</sup> In this sense, by example, they contribute to changing the patriarchal identity and culture of Jordanian governmental institutions because both their colleagues and society will associate their professionalism with their womanhood.

Jordanian female activists, politicians, and scholars differ in their views of gender and women's issues as a primary or secondary issue in their work, yet all compose the kingdom's women's movement and contribute to the opening of access to women in institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or parliament. It is important to observe the differences in approaches among these women to notice the diversity of actors in the movement. But, these

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<sup>111</sup> Ms. Leila, Interview.

<sup>112</sup> Ms. Leila, interview.

<sup>113</sup> Ms. Leila, interview.

<sup>114</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

<sup>115</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

differences do not seem to weaken the overall outcome of the movement—to establish gender equality and empower women in Jordan.

### *Conclusion*

The history and evolution of the Jordanian women's movement and the present diversity of issues and actors within the movement reveal that Jordanian women are at the forefront of civil society and have been for almost as long as the kingdom has existed. To overlook the role of these female domestic forces would be a gross misreading of Jordanian politics. Although much of the data collected in this chapter does not speak specifically to Jordanian foreign policy, it does illustrate a domestic political scene in which state-society relations are such that a new set of norms tolerant of women participating in domestic politics and other public leadership positions exists. Although patriarchy still exists, the idea of shared leadership between men and women has been institutionalized.<sup>116</sup> The patriarchal system is a contentious issue for the women interviewed in this thesis. This can perhaps shed some light on the stronghold of hegemonic femininity and masculinity within Jordan today. The shifting parameters of Jordanian patriarchy affect the maneuverability of female actors in politics as well as the limitations in their agency to advance their interests.

Independent women's groups, women in government, and women in civil society and government must all operate within government approved boundaries. Because the first womens groups in Jordan were also affiliated with the opposition and whose politics supported Palestinian empowerment at a time when the Palestinian movement was threatening the stability of the monarchy, the state became involved in the womens movement. It restricted the freedom of the independent womens groups and created state feminism. However, in the last two decades,

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<sup>116</sup> Fernea, "The Challenges for Middle Eastern Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," 186.



women groups have diversified once again due to the kingdom's attempts at political liberalization.

The Jordanian women interviewed represented the three divisions of the women's movement previously mentioned. While all considered themselves part of the women's movement, they disagreed on whether or not gender is a primary or secondary issue in their professional roles. Those who found gender to be a primary issue for them had slightly different motivations for it. Some took a pragmatic stance on gender as a primary issue. Immediate advancement of women's empowerment through greater access to healthcare, education and employment would allow them to take better care of themselves and their families. The pragmatism is that women's standard of living must be improved before they can even begin to think about patriarchy, unfair personal status laws and equal access to decision-making positions. On the other hand, some interviewees believed that gender is a primary issue from a systemic or ideologically feminist perspective. In their opinions, the overarching system that values men and masculinity more than women and femininity must be dismantled if there is to be any substantial and lasting change in society.

It is this concern for the systemic rules of the game that those interviewees who view gender as a primary issue find common ground with those who view gender as a secondary issue. The interviewees who believe issues of gender are not primary to their interests think that overall Jordan suffers from a greater political crisis in which empowered actors resist liberalization and power-sharing in general. However, this camp divides between those who believe the crisis is with parliament specifically and not the royal family and those who believe the crisis is systemic plaguing the entire Jordanian state. The solutions proposed by the former include a closer partnership with the royal family and leadership by example. In other words, if women and men

in positions of power advocate for liberalization and resist corruption, then, by example, the political culture will eventually change. The solutions proposed by the latter include political participation from the ground up coupled with education that teaches citizens about their rights. Additionally, this last group combines the pragmatic approach of tackling the immediate, tangible needs of citizens/women with the overall goal of addressing the systemic flaws of the state.

In a country with such a strong history of a women's movement that has both affected the state and been affected by it, ultimately growing into a multidimensional domestic force, judging which approach to gender empowerment and political liberalization is best seems impossible. In fact, singling out one strategy might even be futile. The competition between independent women's groups in civil society, women's groups and individuals supported by the Jordanian government, and those actors who cross over between civil society and government provides the dynamism and the strength to the women's movement needed to actually affect the status-quo. The negotiation between these groups not only disperses new ideas and norms throughout the domestic political sphere, but it actually provides female actors with ample political exposure and practice. This transfer of ideas and norms teaches actors that some give and take benefits and does not weaken society. Partnered with this norm that welcomes some degree of change, those women who become experienced political actors serve as role models to other women interested in joining institutions traditionally dominated by men or masculine norms. Overall, the Jordanian women's movement as a domestic force has taken advantage of its political space to address issues of gender empowerment and greater political liberalization. It has effectively set the stage for women to participate in the foreign policy apparatus—an institute of high politics—and to deconstruct hegemonic norms of femininity and masculinity in the kingdom.

## Chapter 4

### International Women of the Royal Family: Hegemonic Femininity

#### *Introduction*

Many feminist scholars attribute the dominant characteristics of international relations in theory and practice of aggression, power, mistrust and self-help to the prevalence of hegemonic masculinity as the most powerful gender identity throughout the world. The term does not imply that all masculinities possess the same characteristics but it does imply that it is the ruling behavior that men and women should strive to emulate if they wish to achieve power. Just as this form of behavior determines the hegemonic masculine gender, hegemonic femininity also exists as the most powerful form of the feminine gender. The hegemonic femininity associated with the above-mentioned masculinity is passive, peaceful, cooperative and dependent. This reflects the binary relationship between men and women in a system of patriarchy whereby the two exist in opposition to one another. A binary relationship between hegemonic gender norms is not necessary, however, and the case of Jordan seems to support this with its hegemonic femininity embodied in female members of the royal family, particularly in Her Royal Highness (HRH) Princess Basma and Her Majesty (HM) Queen Rania. The actions, interests, work and images of these women project an ideal Jordanian femininity that is assertive, caring and familial, intelligent, cooperative, and independent.

This chapter examines these Jordanian norms of femininity as they are personified in HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania. The first section discusses the background, interests, and image of HRH Princess Basma. This section describes how she contributes to Jordan's hegemonic femininity, especially since she has lived and worked in the kingdom in

different capacities for longer than Queen Rania. The second section discusses HM Queen Rania's background, interests, and image and how they contribute to dominant norms of Jordanian femininity. The final section concludes the chapter by comparing the two women and qualifying their personal traits that compose the kingdom's hegemonic femininity. Although this chapter could be a section in the previous chapter on domestic Jordanian feminist politics, it deserves a separate discussion as the hegemonic femininity of Jordan is expressed through the ruling family as it is the leader of Jordan's nation-building. Moreover, these royal women play both international and domestic roles, working with state (non-royal) and non-state actors in a variety of forums giving them dual membership of world and international societies.

### **Her Royal Highness Princess Basma**

As discussed in Chapter 2, the women's or feminist movement in Jordan dates back to the creation of Jordan as a state, yet the movement was led by independent feminist groups, often in opposition to Hashemite policy, particularly regarding the Palestinian issue. Also, during Jordan's first decades of statehood, there lacked prominent female role models from the royal family who could have counterbalanced the influence of the independent feminists. Since the Jordanian women's movement proved powerful, King Hussein arguably needed a female member of the royal family to take on women's issues in the kingdom to usurp power from the independent feminists and to address issues important to the citizens of Jordan. Her Royal Highness Princess Basma served as the figurehead and leader of the kingdom's state feminist efforts. Princess Basma's experience as a public servant and her status as an independent member of the Hashemite ruling family has not only helped to legitimate women's issues in politics through state feminism, it has also helped to define the hegemonic norms of Jordanian

feminism. Within this, HRH Basma's work has also helped to establish the acceptable roles for Jordanian women, or Jordanian hegemonic femininity.

Princess Basma's personal background is particularly important for understanding how she affected the growth of Jordanian hegemonic femininity as it shows how she became the royal family's model for Jordanian women. As sister of the late His Majesty King Hussein, HRH Basma was born and raised in Jordan.<sup>117</sup> The princess's local upbringing contrasts with those of King Hussein's four wives who were either sent outside of Jordan for educational purposes or were foreigners from elite family backgrounds.<sup>118</sup> Furthermore, none of King Hussein's wives were granted the title of Her Majesty the Queen, causing Jordan's present King Abdullah II to lack a Queen Mother.<sup>119</sup> Until HM Queen Rania becomes Queen Mother, Queen Zein al-Sharaf, King Hussein and Princess Basma's mother, is the most recent Queen Mother of Jordan.<sup>120</sup> Princess Basma received her primary education in Jordan, her secondary education at Benenden School in England, and went to university at Oxford where she studied languages.<sup>121</sup> In May 2001, HRH Basma earned her PhD from Oxford University for which her thesis is entitled "Contextualising Development in Jordan: the arena of donors, state and NGOs."<sup>122</sup> She has four children, Farah and Ghazi from her first marriage, and Saad and Zein al Sharaf from her second marriage.<sup>123</sup> Princess Basma's indisputable Jordanian identity, her lifelong pursuit of academic excellence, and her clear valorization of motherhood in spite of being a divorcee make her a

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<sup>117</sup> Official Website of Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal, [www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page\\_type=pages&page\\_id+449](http://www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page_type=pages&page_id+449), "About Her Royal Highness"

<sup>118</sup> Martin Asser, "Battle of the Wives," *BBC Online Middle East*, 9 February 1999.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid.

<sup>120</sup> Queen Zain al-Sharaf passed away in 1994.

<sup>121</sup> HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal Official Website, [www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page\\_type=pages&page\\_id+449](http://www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page_type=pages&page_id+449), "About Her Royal Highness"

<sup>122</sup> HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal Official Website, [http://www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page\\_type=pages&page\\_id=461](http://www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page_type=pages&page_id=461), "The Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development."

<sup>123</sup> HRH Princess Basma Bint Talal Official Website, [www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page\\_type=pages&page\\_id+449](http://www.princessbasma.jo/index.php?page_type=pages&page_id+449), "About Her Royal Highness"

relatable and respected female Jordanian, as she maintains a balance between modern and traditional notions of femininity.

Since the early 1980s, Princess Basma's work on women's issues in Jordan has evolved from establishing the "rules of the game" of feminism and women's issues in Jordanian policy-making to cooperation and coordination with state-run women's organizations, royal NGOs (RNGOs), and independent NGOs within the kingdom. With the growth of the Jordanian National Council for Women (JNCW) to the expansion of state-run institutions such as the Jordanian National Forum for Women (JNFW) to the reincarnation of independent feminist groups such as the Jordanian Women's Union (JWU) in the early 1990s, Princess Basma's work has successfully institutionalized a Jordanian women's movement in which the state defines the boundaries within which all women's groups independent or otherwise can legally operate.

Princess Basma's firm belief in this connection is summed up on the home page of her website:

"As an advocate and believer in human-centered, sustainable development, I am firmly committed to trying to promote the role of women, young people, and local communities—all of whom have an essential role to play in shaping our world and our future."<sup>124</sup> The association of women's issues and development that Princess Basma and many of the state's women's groups and RNGOs have made has linked Jordan's women's movement with the global women's movement. The global women's movement tends to focus on the connections between gender and development, taking a sort of moderate stance on how to reconcile the redefinition of gender roles and the simultaneous expansion of women's rights.

Another way in which HRH Basma's institutionalization of Jordanian feminism can be seen is through her daughter, Farah Daghestani, who participated in the women's movement as

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<sup>124</sup> HRH Princess Basma Official Website, [www.princessbasma.jo](http://www.princessbasma.jo), Homepage.

director of the Princess Basma Women's Resource Center in Jordan.<sup>125</sup> This center was established in 1996 to enhance effective policies on women's issues in the kingdom by gathering and analyzing information on them.<sup>126</sup> During her tenure at the Women's Resource Center, Daghestani spoke out against such pertinent women's issues in Jordan as crimes of honor and the negative international attention they bring to Jordan.<sup>127</sup> In 2002, the center was changed to the Princess Basma Youth Resource Centre (PBYRC).<sup>128</sup> While this superficially seems like nepotism, Princess Basma's daughter's following in her footsteps can also be seen as HRH Basma's passing on Jordanian feminist ideals as family values. Princess Basma's work has kept women's issues in Jordanian politics while at the same time helping to secure Hashemite legitimacy by showing that the royal family advocates for women's empowerment.

In addition to Princess Basma's background and the legacy of her work, the international scholarly recognition the princess has received for her publications on development contributes to how her image has helped define acceptable Jordanian female roles. In addition to two honorary Doctor of Laws degrees that the princess holds from Smith College and the University of Reading, HRH Basma earned her Doctor of Philosophy degree (PhD) from Oxford University. Her thesis, "Contextualising development in Jordan: the arena of donors, state and NGOs," is now published in book form under the title of *Rethinking an NGO: Development, Donors, and Civil Society in Jordan*. This book is powerful for two main reasons. First, it is one of few books written about Jordanian development and civil society. Secondly, the princess's book highlights the role of the Jordanian Hashemite Fund for Human Development (JOHUD) formerly the

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<sup>125</sup> Sherry R. Lowrance, "After Beijing: Political Liberalization and the Women's Movement in Jordan," *Middle Eastern Studies* 34, no. 3 (Jul., 1998): 94.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid*, 93.

<sup>127</sup> Lynn Welchman and Sara Hossain, "Naming the Crime: 'Honour', Rights and Wrongs," *Review of Women's Studies* (Autumn, 2005), accessed July 6, 2012, [home.birzeit.edu/ws/images/stories/The\\_review/3rd\\_vol\\_E\\_4th\\_article.pdf](http://home.birzeit.edu/ws/images/stories/The_review/3rd_vol_E_4th_article.pdf).

<sup>128</sup> The Queen Zein Al Sharaf Institute for Development (ZENID) website, [www.zenid.org.jo/pbyrc.htm](http://www.zenid.org.jo/pbyrc.htm).

Queen Alia Fund (QAF). Her emphasis on JOHUD reinforces her own experiences working in development in the kingdom as she established QAF—now JOHUD--in 1977 and has since presided over the fund's programs.<sup>129</sup> Because so little has been written about the Jordanian development process, HRH Basma's bias toward her own work quietly asserts intellectual authority on the topic of development in Jordan. Regardless of this authority, however, Princess Basma's academic excellence shows that Jordanian women can be assertive and independent through thought and education. Also, HRH Basma's continuous advancement of her education suggests that her work on women's issues and development may not be so easily attributed to her contribution to regime survival as she independently pursued these topics in academia. Even though Princess Basma cannot be reduced to a tool for Hashemite survival, her leadership by example serves to indirectly secure legitimacy for the ruling family as well as women's issues in Jordan because of her benevolence, intelligence, and exemplary motherhood.

Princess Basma's life and work have placed the state in the leadership role for addressing women's issues, effectively giving herself the responsibility of defining the rules of the game for feminism in Jordan. Because HRH Basma is the first authentic royal Jordanian female role model for citizens, she concurrently defines Jordanian femininity through her version of feminism. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the princess's effect on defining the acceptable roles of Jordanian femininity is that Jordanian notions of hegemonic femininity and hegemonic feminism as defined by the state were cultivated as one entity engendered in the royal figure of HRH Basma herself. In Jordan, femininity and feminism are not necessarily contradictory terms as they often are in Western cultures and scholarly work.

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<sup>129</sup> Her Royal Highness Princess Basma Bint Talal Official Website, [www.princessbasma.jo](http://www.princessbasma.jo), 'Promoting Sustainable Human Development' page.



### **Her Majesty Queen Rania**

Although the monarchy as a form of state governance is fairly obsolete nowadays except for in many Middle Eastern states such as Jordan, the concept of influential queens is fairly widespread throughout the world. Some queens have ruled their countries as heads of state without kings such as Queen Elizabeth of England and Egyptian pharaonic queens such as Queen Nefertari. Queen mothers are commonly understood as powerful influences on their sons' (the kings) decisions. As wives and mothers of kings or princes, queens of Jordan have long been public figures, active in the Jordanian community and seemingly influential in their husbands' and sons' decision-making. Queen Noor, the fourth wife of the late King Hussein, negotiated with King Hussein for her son, Hamzah, to become Crown Prince of Jordan once Abdullah, King Hussein's eldest son and present monarch, was crowned king.<sup>130</sup> Jordan's present queen, HM Queen Rania al-Abdullah, appears to be an influential force with King Abdullah, her immediate family, and within her kingdom. Queen Rania's background, her interests in improving education, addressing cross-cultural divides between the East and the West, as well as her public image paint a family portrait of the royal family in which her role appears to be equal in importance to King Abdullah's, yet not entirely equal in substance.

HM Queen Rania's background is particularly interesting and seems to have a direct impact on her work. She was born and raised in Kuwait to a family of Palestinian origin.<sup>131</sup> In Kuwait, she attended an international school where, from a young age, she was exposed to children of different cultural and religious backgrounds. Queen Rania went to college at the American University in Cairo, where she graduated with a Bachelors degree in business

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<sup>130</sup> Martin Asser, "Battle of the Wives."

<sup>131</sup> Randa Habib, "Queen Rania: Touching base with her childhood," *Jordan Times*, 6 September 1999, <[www.Jordanembassyus.org/090699004.htm](http://www.Jordanembassyus.org/090699004.htm)>.

administration.<sup>132</sup> In 1991, she returned to Jordan where she pursued a career in banking and information technology. Queen Rania, then Rania al-Yasin, met then Prince Abdullah at a dinner party in 1993. They married in June of the same year and now have four children: HRH Crown Prince Hussein, HRH Princess Iman, HRH Princess Salma, and HRH Prince Hashem.<sup>133</sup> In 1999, shortly after the coronation of Abdullah II as King of Jordan, Queen Rania became Her Majesty the Queen of Jordan when King Abdullah proclaimed her queen, elevating her title from princess.<sup>134</sup> In June 2009, King Abdullah officially named their eldest son, Hussein, Crown Prince of Jordan.<sup>135</sup> Queen Rania will become the first Jordanian Queen Mother since HM Queen Zain, Queen Mother of King Hussein, if and when her son succeeds King Abdullah as ruler of the Hashemite Kingdom.

Because Queen Rania's background is similar to those of many Jordanians who are of Palestinian descent, who either grew up in the Gulf or had family members who worked in the Gulf, and who are well educated from the universities within the Arab region, this new infusion to the royal family's bloodline is a symbolic change in Hashemite leadership style. Unlike Jordan's previous queens and princesses, Queen Rania's background makes her very personable and able to relate to Jordanian citizens, important for deepening the legitimacy of Hashemite rule as well as the kingdom's hegemonic femininity. Furthermore, King Abdullah's naming his eldest son Crown Prince is a show of political acceptance of Hashemite and Palestinian heritage in the royal family. HM King Abdullah II's marriage to Queen Rania—a woman balanced between tradition and modernity—is not only a symbolic marrying of the empowered gender to the

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<sup>132</sup> "Her Majesty Queen Rania al-Abdullah," <[www.jordanembassy.ro/queenrania.htm](http://www.jordanembassy.ro/queenrania.htm)>.

<sup>133</sup> Official Website of Her Majesty Queen Rania, <[www.queenrania.jo/rania/bio](http://www.queenrania.jo/rania/bio)>.

<sup>134</sup> "Queen Rania: Royal Appeal," *Vogue Magazine*, <[www.vogue.com/magazine/article/queen-rania-royal-appeal/](http://www.vogue.com/magazine/article/queen-rania-royal-appeal/)>.

<sup>135</sup> Jumana Al Tamimi, "Jordan's king names eldest son crown prince," *Gulf News*, <[www.gulfnews.com/news/region/jordan/jordan-s-king-names-eldest-son-crown-prince-1.499757](http://www.gulfnews.com/news/region/jordan/jordan-s-king-names-eldest-son-crown-prince-1.499757)>.

disempowered, marginalized gender, but also a marriage of tribal Hashemite ruling heritage with marginalized, disempowered Palestinian heritage. What better symbol for the peace process domestically and internationally than this arrangement?

The importance of Queen Rania's background in terms of her common ground with ordinary Jordanians carries over into her interests, the primary of which being education. Queen Rania's most prominent cause is improving the availability and the quality of education for Jordanians domestically and for all other children throughout the world. In Jordan, Queen Rania has created several organizations designed to expand educational opportunities for citizens, particularly for children in rural areas of the kingdom and girls.<sup>136</sup> Perhaps the most unique aspect of her education campaign is that Queen Rania works to not only provide more education, but to overhaul the kind of education and the dominant teaching methodologies in schools from being mainly based on memorization/rote learning to becoming an active, participatory experience in which students learn to think critically.<sup>137</sup> Her reasoning for implementing a "holistic" approach to learning and teaching reflects Queen Rania's own background in business. Queen Rania argues that if children are encouraged from a young age to explore their imaginations through critical thought, then they are more likely to grow into active, entrepreneurial citizens, bringing new developmental ideas and enthusiasm to their countries.<sup>138</sup> Nurturing an entrepreneurial society through improved education makes a country less dependent on foreign ideas and products. Queen Rania's vision for improving the quality of education domestically and internationally and her energetic effort to institutionalize these

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<sup>136</sup> Official Website of Her Majesty Queen Rania al-Abdullah, [www.queenrania.jo](http://www.queenrania.jo). Madrasati and OneGoal are some of Queen Rania's local and global initiatives to improve childrens' education.

<sup>137</sup> Queen Rania in "The Situation Room" with Wolf Blitzer, [www.youtube.com/watch?v+6DAbWQcliXE&NR+1](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v+6DAbWQcliXE&NR+1), 26 October 2007; "Queen Rania in the Situation Room, Her Majesty talks peace in the Middle East," Official Website of Her Majesty Queen Rania al-Abdullah, [www.queenrania.jo/media/interviews/friday-october-26-2007-wolf-blitzer-cnn](http://www.queenrania.jo/media/interviews/friday-october-26-2007-wolf-blitzer-cnn).

<sup>138</sup> "Queen Rania Fights for Education," [www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/business/2010/02/04/quest.queen.rania.jordan.cnn.html](http://www.cnn.com/video/data/2.0/video/business/2010/02/04/quest.queen.rania.jordan.cnn.html), Interview.

changes differentiate her from other first ladies' or queens' symbolic support for education often associated with the global female elite.

Although Queen Rania's main issue of concern in Jordan is education in general, she also advocates a feminist policy of improving the rights and well-being of Jordanian women and girls. Her Majesty expresses her feminist beliefs either directly through organizations and projects designed specifically for the betterment of women and/or within her platform on education. Queen Rania established the Jordan River Foundation (JRF) in 1995 while still a princess with the initial intention of training impoverished women how to produce and sell handicrafts, in an effort to achieve financial independence and improve the quality of their lives and those of their families.<sup>139</sup> Her Majesty often speaks of how much girls can gain from an improved educational system as educated girls are more able to make informed decisions for themselves, pursue tertiary education, join the workforce, marry at a later age, and know their rights as Jordanian women.<sup>140</sup>

On women's political rights and personal status, Queen Rania has made a number of statements advocating for developing women's positions of decision-making in all areas of society but especially within the family unit. For her, an empowered mother-wife will raise a healthier generation of children who accept women in decision-making positions throughout society.<sup>141</sup> While targeting women's empowerment within the family indirectly addresses women's rights issues, the social and political delicacy of speaking directly about the legal and personal status of women in Jordan has limited the space for Queen Rania to urge women to take advantage of their political rights of voting and running for office. Her Majesty has utilized such platforms as calling upon the media to help break down stereotypes about Arab women that exist

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<sup>139</sup> The Jordan River Foundation Official Website, [www.jordanriver.jo/index.aspx?Language+E](http://www.jordanriver.jo/index.aspx?Language+E).

<sup>140</sup> Queen Rania's full Oprah Interview, [www.video.google.com/videoplay?docid+4057220760334335567#](http://www.video.google.com/videoplay?docid+4057220760334335567#).

<sup>141</sup> Queen Rania's Official Website, [www.queenrania.jo](http://www.queenrania.jo).

within and outside of the region.<sup>142</sup> Among the specific issues that affect women, Queen Rania has championed the Jordanian effort to promote awareness and prevention of domestic abuse of women and children in the kingdom.<sup>143</sup> Regarding the issue of honor killings, a sensitive social issue in Jordan, both she and King Abdullah have spoken out against them in spite of the Jordanian parliament's failure to criminalize this kind of domestic violence against women.<sup>144</sup> Queen Rania's support for women's organizations, women's rights, and her interest in girls' education as a crucial tool for improving the lives of women and families, show her own feminist policy as well her capacity as an agent of state feminism in Jordan.

In addition to education and the status of women, Queen Rania is also outspoken about cultural, religious, and political misperceptions between the East and the West. In many of her major interviews with hosts such as Oprah and Diane Sawyer and in her speeches Queen Rania articulates the need for more cross-cultural dialogue between Arabs and non-Arabs. Furthermore, she became the first monarch to open her own YouTube channel specifically for dispelling stereotypes of the East and Islam. When speaking in front of a predominantly Western audience, Queen Rania commonly discusses the Arab tradition of hospitality, Arab cuisine and the importance of the family in Arab and Muslim culture. By doing this, she calls on people to look for and embrace the positive qualities of the "other" culture so that they can focus on the similarities between one another and not the differences which often fuels fear of the unknown.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Dale Gavlak, "Arab women stereotypes tackled," 3 March 2004, *BBC News*, Amman, online edition, <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle\_east/3530223.stm>.

<sup>143</sup> Claudia Hudson, "Woman Hero: Queen Rania of Jordan," *My Hero Project*, [www.myhero.com/go/hero.asp?hero=queen\\_rania\\_07](http://www.myhero.com/go/hero.asp?hero=queen_rania_07).

<sup>144</sup> Stefanie Eileen Nanes, "Fighting Honor Crimes: Evidence of Civil Society in Jordan," *Middle East Journal* 57, no. 1 (Winter, 2003): 119.

<sup>145</sup> HM Queen Rania's Official Website, [www.queenrania.jo](http://www.queenrania.jo).

While Queen Rania usually speaks in general about the conflict between the East and the West, she has also spoken specifically about the Palestinian conflict, alluding to her peaceful solidarity with the cause. In 2006, she led a demonstration of 2,000 women against the Israeli military aggression in Lebanon. Many analysts view this demonstration as a public relations opportunity for the royal family. Nonetheless, her demonstration as both queen and a Palestinian-Jordanian implicitly communicated Jordan's foreign policy of promoting peaceful conflict resolution of the Palestinian issue and solidarity with Palestinians. The recent publication of Queen Rania's children's book, *The Sandwich Swap*, combines her holistic approach to education, women's rights, and East-West understanding as it tells the story of two young girls, one Arab and one non-Arab, who learn to find similarities in their differences and admiration for the other by trading their sandwiches.<sup>146</sup>

Queen Rania's multi-faceted approach to her position as queen through her education campaign, her moderate feminism, and her advocacy for cross-cultural dialogue and understanding between the East and the West, are supported by her public image. In international and domestic circles, Her Majesty is characterized as modern, fashionable, conservative, and beautiful in her personal appearance. Queen Rania's image is marketable throughout the world among men and women alike, elevating her to celebrity status. This superficial analysis of Queen Rania's image is important because it seems to facilitate the breadth of international platforms on which she may speak on behalf of her interests. Because her image is attractive, people are more eager to pay attention to what she says. In a sense, Queen Rania embodies several different and traditionally contradictory qualities: beauty and intelligence, feminine independence and family values, modern/fashionable and Arab-Muslim, humility and royalty. This image engenders and defines Jordanian hegemonic femininity as something different from traditional Arab and

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

Western notions of femininity, possibly making it more attractive and applicable to Jordanian society than one extreme or the other.

Queen Rania's background, interests, and image alone cannot institutionalize a distinctly Jordanian notion of femininity; however, her title as queen places her in a position of power, albeit implicit power. Her promotion of education initially appears to fall in line with the patriarchal expectation that all women naturally care about education because of their ethic of care due to their motherly instincts. When closely examined, though, Queen Rania's interest in improving education comes from a perspective that embraces critical thinking, national development, and women's rights. Likewise, her advocacy for peace between the East and West and in the Middle East directly reflects Jordanian foreign policy. Perhaps, she is making more of a political statement due to her own Palestinian heritage and her being a woman with opinions on politics and expressing them. Lastly, Queen Rania's image makes her more able to gain support for and attention to her causes. It also thrusts Jordan into the international media, making it commonly known throughout the world. HM Queen Rania is redefining the dominant norms of femininity in her country as she herself is a new kind of holistic woman, mother, and leader in her actions as queen.

### *Conclusion*

Hegemonic norms of femininity and masculinity are widely discussed in feminist IR literature as they stipulate which actors can play which roles and how they must play them. The traditional norms of cooperation, passivity, peacefulness and dependence compose this hegemonic femininity. Under these norms women are expected to become mothers and wives first and foremost. Then, if they take on roles outside of the home their motherly ethic of care is

expected to place them in positions compatible with it such as teaching or nursing for example. Hegemonic femininity would not expect women to pursue public roles as foreign policy decision-makers as that is more often associated with the hegemonic norms of masculinity of aggression, self-help, power, and mistrust. In Jordan, a hybrid form of hegemonic femininity has been established primarily through the roles of HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania. Under Jordanian hegemonic femininity women play public roles equally important and participatory as men's, yet they are not equal in substance. Jordanian hegemonic femininity values women's motherly ethic of care but applies it to the nation as well as to the family, demands equal rights for men and women, encourages the advancement of education for all, and supports political demonstrations that are non-confrontational and concerned mostly with the human rights of the affected groups.

HRH Basma, sister of the late King Hussein and aunt to the current King Abdullah II, spearheaded state feminism after the falling out of the independent women's groups in the 1980s. At the time, Princess Basma's leadership was an attempt by the royal family to assert authority over the women's movement in Jordan. However, over time the princess's personal dedication to advancing the status of Jordanian women through her own lifelong pursuit of higher education, her commitment to development and the coordination and expansion of women's NGOs in Jordan signals a sincere effort to empower women. While her role cannot easily be reduced to regime control of the women's movement, neither can the role of her daughter be simply called nepotism. In a monarchic system in a state where the family is the most valuable unit of society, inspiring her daughter to follow in her footsteps represents Princess Basma's successful mothering and family values.



The generational gap between HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania makes for differences in each woman's experiences and specific contribution to the women's movement. While Princess Basma was born into the royal family, Queen Rania married into it as an adult. Also, Princess Basma matured into adulthood and her professional life in the 1980s more than a decade before Queen Rania. After Princess Basma developed state feminism in Jordan and the kingdom experienced general liberalization in the 1990s, allowing independent women's groups to return, Queen Rania became part of the Hashemite family. As princess she joined the women's movement once the rules of the game had already been established. Through her Jordan River Foundation, Queen Rania practiced a developmental approach to women's empowerment very similar to that demonstrated by the NGOs/RNGOs coordinated by Princess Basma. Once coronated Queen, Rania's role expanded. Queen Rania's work to improve education, empower women and girls, promote cross-cultural dialogue between the East and the West, and to take a political stand on the Palestinian issue compliment the work of Princess Basma. Moreover, her role as queen has expanded the rules of the game of hegemonic femininity in Jordan.

Royal female leadership in Jordan primarily through the roles of HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania has not only redirected the Jordanian women's movement but it has also cultivated a national image of ideal femininity or a new Jordanian hegemonic femininity. Under this gender rubric, traditional and modern notions of femininity are espoused. Qualities like simultaneous familial and national loyalty through public service, expressing the legacy of family values publicly, advancing one's education and career while also promoting the ethic of care, cooperation and peace, and sharing power within the family unit and publicly in the nation contribute to Jordanian hegemonic femininity. In the Hashemite Kingdom, the royal women are

charged with upholding this hegemonic femininity, effectively defining the rules of the game for female citizens within the system of the family and the women's movement.

## Chapter 5

### Jordanian Women in Foreign Policy

#### *Introduction*

Domestic forces and the role of the royal family in Jordan affect society in a way that Jordanian foreign policy cannot be an isolated institution of the state. As the boundaries between domestic and foreign policies are blurred in Jordan due to its geographic constraints and nation-building efforts, an honest assessment of the effects of hegemonic femininity and masculinity on Jordanian foreign policy cannot be made without the direct observations of the kingdom's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Although the opinions of the women interviewed from Jordan's women's movement are crucial as they offer an informed third party perspective on the subject, the experiences and perspectives of actual men and women working within the various arms of Jordan's foreign policy apparatus is necessary to this thesis.

This chapter explores the ways in which gender affects the agency of women in Jordanian foreign policy, how and if a female perspective alters Jordanian foreign policy, and if evaluating gender in foreign policy can shed light on international relations in general. A discussion of women's roles in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs based on the work of the female interviewees from the Jordanian women's movement begins this chapter. The second section of the chapter looks at gender within the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy (JID) from the perspectives of two women working at the JID. The third section analyzes gender in Jordanian foreign policy and female agency within the MFA from the first-hand experiences of three of the kingdom's diplomats—two females and one male. Jordanian foreign policy faces many constraints, limiting the range of its policy options and also making an evaluation of the agency of women or men

difficult as the institutional identity of the MFA conforms to these constraints as well. However, this chapter reveals the ways in which female agency is particularly empowered and constrained and how the work of feminist domestic forces contributes to this experience.

### **Gender and Foreign Policy: Opinions from the Feminist Domestic Forces in Jordan**

The women interviewed for this thesis shared their observations of women and their roles in the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in addition to discussing their own work and opinions of the kingdom's domestic politics. Most women agreed that women can play a unique role in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs because they have a different skill set than men that is often better suited for diplomacy. There was disagreement, however, on whether or not the women in the MFA are playing this unique role. Some opinions were positive and others, which hypothetically expect women to play a unique role, saw the situation as negative because of structural constraints on women that limit their ability to work such as issues related to marriage and maternity. Others stated that females in the MFA could never play a unique role even if they wished to because of the embedded patriarchy in the institution. Furthermore, the women currently working in the MFA are "acting like men" rather than according to their personal beliefs, values, and womanhood, essentially reifying the status-quo nature of the MFA.

Most women discussed in the previous sections believe that women can play a unique role in Jordanian foreign policy because, as women, they boast a unique skill set well-suited for the work of international diplomacy. The most important quality that women possess is their strong work ethic. This is not attributed to any part of their biology necessarily, but rather to their experience as people marginalized from professional fields such as international politics. Not only must women work hard to prove their abilities, but they must simultaneously keep up their

family roles as mothers, spouses, daughters, etc. Women's traditional roles as caretakers have taught them how to think and act more cooperatively than individually, cooperation being a crucial component of diplomacy. Additionally, this has given women the ability to multi-task and work well under pressure. Reflective of another traditional notion of what is feminine, Senator Amal argued that women are well suited for the MFA because of their supreme skills of information-gathering due to their ability to seduce men.<sup>147</sup> She noted that the most successful spies have been female. Other opinions were similar to this in that women are more able to gather information because they are much less assuming than men. Women are not expected to be aggressors or threatening in the same way that men are and are, therefore, more trustworthy. Lastly, because of their relative marginalization, women are more informed and aware of the actual needs of their state so they can make more prudent foreign policy decisions.

While most women agreed that females can play a unique role in Jordanian foreign policy, only several opined that women currently working in the Ministry are playing a unique role. This positive view referenced the Jordanian ambassadors of France, Belgium, and Italy who make up the first female Jordanians to hold international ambassadorial posts. These posts are considered important because of their relevance to Europe and the world. The three female ambassadors were not appointed symbolically as the first Jordanian women to be ambassadors abroad. Since Jordanian political and economic relations with the three countries remain positive, these women seem to be playing a unique role.

The observations made by the interviewees regarding these ambassadors as well as the European locations of all of their posts supports one theory that Senator Amal mentioned. She explained that, in Jordan, women will first become empowered economically, then politically,

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<sup>147</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

and finally socially.<sup>148</sup> This is not due to women's inability or disinterest in any of the three categories. Instead, men will protect the status quo most strongly in the reverse order—socially, politically, and then economically.<sup>149</sup> The social is the most intimate realm of interpersonal relations and if social gender relations change then men will lose power and the status quo will be altered. Since women can most easily access the economic sphere of society due to education, more women are found in Jordanian business and economic ventures. Women can also access the political through education but must also rely on their families and social connections. This is an essential aspect of politics in general. Men are used to participating and know how to market themselves politically whereas women are handicapped because their historical exclusion from politics has not allowed them to politicize. It is not surprising, then, that the first Jordanian women ambassadors hold posts in states that enjoy mostly economic relations with the kingdom. Furthermore, the social order accepts foreign affairs as a space for women even though it is political because it is a service to the country and does not tamper with domestic politics.

Echoing the perspective of Senator Amal, H.E. Ms. May believes that the qualified women working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would not perform a unique role but an equal role.<sup>150</sup> This is because the role of the Jordanian MFA, in her opinion, is to “deliver the voice of Jordan” on international issues with particular regard to the Palestinian issue.<sup>151</sup> Senator Amal explained that the Palestinian issue is perceived to be the most pressing topic in the kingdom's foreign policy by Jordanians and the foreign policy apparatus because its resolution is somewhat of an existential matter for the kingdom.<sup>152</sup> Jordanian foreign policy is gender neutral since men and women, as humans, have an equal interest in interpreting Jordanian security through the

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<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> H.E. Ms. May, interview.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

issue of the Palestinian conflict. H.E. Ms. May summarized her opinion on the roles of men and women in the Jordanian ministry as follows: “There is no difference in the roles since the employee in the ministry whether male or female will be required to do the same assignments, and this applies to other positions in leadership...such as the counselor and the ambassador.”<sup>153</sup> Senator Amal and H.E. Ms. May expect women and men to have equal roles in the Jordanian MFA because its institutional identity is relatively fixed and Jordanian foreign policy with particular regard to the Palestinian issue equally concerns all Jordanians no matter their differences.

Contrary to this positive evaluation of women’s performance in the Jordanian MFA, some who expect women to play a unique role think that they have failed to do so because of structural constraints within the ministry. Ms. Asma recounted a case she made against a ministry policy in the 1990s.<sup>154</sup> She found an advertisement in the newspaper calling for female applicants to the MFA. Instead of targeting all women interested in working for the foreign affairs ministry, the advertisement specifically targeted unmarried young women. The implication was that married women were unsuitable for diplomatic work. Ms. Asma took this case to court to have the eligibility requirement changed; however, the court upheld the existing rule.<sup>155</sup> Another story told by one of the interviewees described a female friend who had worked for the MFA and quit because, when posted abroad, her husband did not receive the same benefits of a female spouse of an MFA employee.

Both of these stories took place many years ago and, since then, the policies favoring unmarried women have changed yet some women in the MFA still face constraints related to their marriages and their working environments. One woman described in passing the experience

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<sup>153</sup> H.E. Ms. May, e-mail.

<sup>154</sup> Ms. Asma, interview.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid.

of her friend who had been posted abroad by the MFA. Her husband remained in Jordan to run his family's business and she took their children abroad with her. While abroad, she struggled to make ends meet for her family as she had become a temporary single mother and struggled to afford childcare. In the end, she left her post early and returned to Jordan because she could not single-handedly manage the high demands of working in the MFA and the high demands of young children and their childcare services. Upon reassignment of her posting, she was not given a choice to travel abroad or not as the ministry automatically gave her a position in Jordan. Had childcare been covered by the ministry for families such as hers, she would have likely performed her job well and not left her post prematurely. Additionally, the MFA's decision to keep her from traveling abroad without speaking to her first overlooks the double burden she faced as an MFA employee and mother.

The opposing perspective on women's roles in the Jordanian MFA is pessimistic compared to that which expects women to be able to play a unique role in the ministry. This perspective argues that women would never play a unique role in the MFA because the institution itself demands conformity to its culture and policies. Ms. Leila identifies this obstacle as 'the patriarchy.'<sup>156</sup> According to her, the patriarchy of the MFA inhibits all qualitative change in the institution, especially that which involves gender. For her, adding women and stirring, so to speak, is insufficient for change in the MFA's treatment of women and its foreign policy.<sup>157</sup> She believes that many of the young women who aspire to join the MFA today, like many of their male counterparts, are inspired to work in diplomacy because of the prestige associated

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<sup>156</sup> Ms. Leila, interview.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.



with the field.<sup>158</sup> The MFA's attractiveness as a status symbol supersedes individuals' political interests in working in this part of the Jordanian foreign policy apparatus.

Like Ms. Leila, Senator Amal is skeptical that integrating women into the MFA, alone, is enough to change the outcome of the policies of the institution. She observes that many women who work for the MFA likely do not join with a conscious political agenda related to improving their status as women or to changing Jordanian foreign policy.<sup>159</sup> Institutional change related to gender and policy outcomes must come from a strong, determined coalition of individuals if it is to come from within the ministry.<sup>160</sup> Perhaps these kinds of changes would more probably come about from some kind of cooperative effort by domestic forces outside the MFA as well as by women and men within it.

According to some of the interviewees, within the patriarchy of the MFA, the women who are there are "acting like men." These women are acting in their own self interests and not cooperatively. Cooperation is a trait that many of the interviewees and much of the standpoint feminist literature assumes all women possess. As such, when women in Jordan's MFA act individually and for their own self-interests, they seem to be mimicking the behavior of the men who have traditionally dominated the ministry and institutionalized the norms associated with it. On the one hand, they are doing just what other men trying to get ahead in the Jordanian diplomatic core do; however, on the other hand men grow up socialized into the institutional behavior of the ministry as the social segregation of the sexes teaches men how to market themselves politically.<sup>161</sup> Women have fewer role models in the MFA and also have the disadvantage of little experience marketing themselves in politics, especially within a male-

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Senator Amal, interview.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

dominated community unaccustomed to female members. Dr. Hanan spoke of several female women directly involved in Jordanian politics who claimed that they felt like they had to prove themselves to their male colleagues before they would be accepted on equal terms.<sup>162</sup> For her, their participation in politics does not really signify an advancement of the status of women and gender equality because their “acting like men” reinforces the status-quo patriarchy of political culture.<sup>163</sup>

The insight on women in the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs provided by the interviewees present several important observations of women’s roles in the kingdom’s foreign policy decision-making. Some view women’s roles as theoretically and practically unique in the ministry. Women are bringing cooperative, more diplomatic representation of the Hashemite Kingdom to the table as embodied in the female Jordanian ambassadors in Europe. Others’ opinions assert that women can theoretically bring unique roles to the MFA but, in reality, they will not due to the intrinsic patriarchal identity of the institution which resists internal normative change. Lastly, others argue that women can neither theoretically nor practically play a unique role in Jordanian foreign policy because the institutionalization of patriarchy in the MFA is so strong that any women who join must conform to what they associate with male behavior. The underlying theme from these observations is that normative change in the way the primary diplomatic Jordanian institution—the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—conducts foreign policy is desirable. Women, as newcomers to the ministry, become either the beacons of change or the enforcers of the status quo. This dilemma supports the idea that gendered norms of behavior at the level of international relations transcend men and women and the hegemonic femininity and masculinity associated with them.

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<sup>162</sup> Dr. Hanan, interview.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid.

### **The Jordan Institute of Diplomacy**

In Jordan, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs created an institution for the training of future Jordanian diplomats and other foreign service employees. The Jordan Institute of Diplomacy (JID) was established in the 1994 by royal decree to “upgrade the performance and effectiveness of Jordanian diplomats and other personnel involved in the conduct of international relations and external communications.”<sup>164</sup> Training courses mid-level, senior, and newly appointed personnel are offered.<sup>165</sup> Prior to working for the MFA, future diplomats must spend one year in training at the JID, taking courses related to international law, diplomatic etiquette, etc.<sup>166</sup> Prior to that, these students must be fully accepted into the MFA, having undergone and passed a rigorous multi-step application process.<sup>167</sup> The JID and those working for it have now seen several generations of students and have witnessed changes in gender dynamics throughout the years. For these reasons and also because the JID is the first point of access to a core part of Jordan’s foreign policy apparatus for new diplomats, perspectives from two employees at the JID provide insight on the interworking of gender in the Jordanian MFA.

Madam Suzan works as the Director of Conferences and as the Diplomatic Etiquette instructor at the JID. She has worked for the JID since 1994, prior to which time she spent many years working in different capacities as an event organizer. Madam Suzan noted that, when she began working at the JID, very few to no women were students. This was the case up to about ten years ago. Gradually, women began joining the new body of Jordanian diplomatic students. At the present time, Madam Suzan estimates that for every twelve students, three to four are

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<sup>164</sup> *Jordan Institute of Diplomacy*, (Amman, Jordan, brochure from the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy, 2010).

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> *Ibid.*; Madam Suzan, interview by author, April 11, 2010.

<sup>167</sup> His Excellency Dr. Nawaf, interview by author, June 8, 2010.

female. For her, this increase in female students signifies a positive change in Jordanian society as well as for the ministry.<sup>168</sup>

The growth of female participation at the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy from zero to nearly twenty-five percent in a ten year span is quite rapid. This quick increase begs the question of why Jordanian women are joining the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in such high numbers. Perhaps it is not coincidental that during this ten year period, the Hashemite Kingdom not only witnessed the rise of Her Majesty Queen Rania as an internationally public figure voicing her views on social and political issues but also the rise of female occupation of important Jordanian domestic political posts such as that of Ms. Asma as Speaker of the Ministry. Madam Suzan speculates that young Jordanian women see HM Queen Rania as a role model.<sup>169</sup> Growing up with Her Majesty serving her kingdom by internationally speaking on behalf of Jordan, autonomously voicing her opinions on such critical issues as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and spearheading a number of social programs for the advancement of Jordanians, could have a great effect on young women in the kingdom. Additionally, Ms. Asma recalled the experience of a young girl in rural Jordan telling her that, when she grows up, she wants to become a politician like Ms. Asma.<sup>170</sup> The last decade provided Jordanian women with many prominent role models of women in positions of power from HM Queen Rania to Ms. Asma to even Madam Suzan herself, whose ‘insider’ position in the MFA’s JID has put her in direct contact with many female and male students.

An increase in female diplomatic students at the JID does not necessarily correlate with high performance. When asked about womens’ performance at the JID, Madam Suzan observed

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<sup>168</sup> Madam Suzan, interview.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid.

<sup>170</sup> Ms. Asma, interview.

that females often outnumber males in terms of excellence.<sup>171</sup> Contrary to a potential expectation that pioneering female diplomatic students may be less outspoken and more hesitant to display leadership among their male colleagues, many female students at the JID are more outspoken and display a higher level of expertise in diplomatic affairs than their male counterparts.<sup>172</sup> Whether outstanding female performance in the JID is due to their drive to prove themselves to their peers as some feminists would expect or rather to their unique skills is unclear as no female students were interviewed for this thesis. However, the reasons for excellent diplomatic performance might be inconsequential as these women make positive impressions on their peers, instructors and the ministry, effectively creating space for more female participation.

In addition to the training program for young diplomats at the JID, the institute also houses a research center called the Regional Center on Conflict Prevention (RCCP).<sup>173</sup> The RCCP functions as one of Jordan's budding think tanks with the potential to consult the ministry on key international issues in which the kingdom is involved. One of the leading researchers for the RCCP, Dr. Ruba, is a young Jordanian woman with a PhD in Political Science.<sup>174</sup> Dr. Ruba's perspective on women's roles and gender as well as her own research contributions to the ministry by way of the JID qualify her as an influential female within the Jordanian foreign policy apparatus.

Although not a diplomat herself, Dr. Ruba's research interest in Jordanian international relations as well as her personal experience growing up in a diplomatic family, give her a unique perspective on foreign affairs.<sup>175</sup> Dr. Ruba's research focuses on Euro-Med relations and security, but she does maintain an opinion on women's roles in international relations. She

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<sup>171</sup> Madam Suzan, interview.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> *Jordan Institute of Diplomacy*, brochure.

<sup>174</sup> Dr. Ruba, interview by author, April 11, 2010.

<sup>175</sup> Dr. Ruba, interview.

rejects some of the feminist academics' assertions that women are marginalized subjects with implications that they do not share the same kind of agency as men or that their perspective necessarily instills in them an ethic of care.<sup>176</sup> To her, this evokes female weakness, a stereotype typical in patriarchal societies, and also unrealistic especially given her own experiences.<sup>177</sup> Society should neither label women as weak for the purpose of oppressing them nor should feminists for the sake of proving their victimization.

Dr. Ruba's research examines the Mediterranean region's security in terms of Euro-Med agreements. She argues that the current agreements will not bring peace to the part of the Mediterranean in conflict—mostly Israel and the Palestinian Territories.<sup>178</sup> For Dr. Ruba, Israel's inclusion in the Euro-Med regional agreements alone blocks the region from resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.<sup>179</sup> She believes this not because she finds that Israel should not be a Euro-Med member but rather, when evaluating the peace process, Israel should not be a member without discretion as it is one of the major players in the issue.<sup>180</sup> Israel's unrestricted membership does not just affect matters of security. In Dr. Ruba's research, she has found that Israel's economic relations with Europe according to the Euro-Med agreements inhibit the peace process as well.<sup>181</sup> Instead of simply concluding that the resolution to this conflict is the exclusion of Israel from Euro-Med agreements as it is party to the most threatening conflict of the region, Dr. Ruba's conclusion is more complex. She concludes that, more than just excluding Israel, the member states of the region must seek to understand the nature of the conflict from a cultural perspective.<sup>182</sup> The cultures of the Mediterranean are very diverse and the differences

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<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

between the wealthier, European states and those of the Middle East are vast. Dr. Ruba believes that if there were more invested in Euro-Med cultural exchange, than a viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict could be developed.<sup>183</sup>

Since the time of her research, Dr. Ruba has begun new research on other conflicts outside the Mediterranean region which involve Jordan; however, she maintains that mutual cultural understanding is the underpinning to a durable solution to any conflict.<sup>184</sup> If states understood one another's cultures, religions, and languages, then the world would see much less conflict because security dilemmas would be eliminated and fears would be reduced.<sup>185</sup> Moreover, cooperation is both demanded and produced when states seek this kind of cultural competency.<sup>186</sup> In international relations, cooperation between states signifies the absence of conflict. Even though Dr. Ruba's work does not specifically address issues of gender, her perspectives on peace and conflict resolution suggest an alternate interpretation of security to that which is dominant in current international affairs. Her emphasis on culture, cooperation and human security reflects feminist definitions of global security which value an ethic of care, power through cooperation, and cultural socialization/familiarity at the international level. It may seem that because Dr. Ruba is a woman, these values are likely to appear in her work; however, to categorize her as such would feed the discourse on traditional hegemonic femininity. This excludes men and other femininities. Perhaps Dr. Ruba's experience as a woman is only one component of many that influence her foreign policy preferences.

Both Dr. Ruba's and Madam Suzan's perspectives on gender and foreign policy in Jordan contribute to this discussion as they each hold different and important positions in the Jordanian

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<sup>183</sup> Ibid.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

Institute of Diplomacy. Since the JID houses a training program for young diplomats as well as a research institute for the study of peace and conflict in the region—the RCCP—it is an insightful location to learn about gender and foreign policy in Jordan. Madam Suzan’s account of the increase in female diplomats in the last ten years and their relatively strong performance as compared to their male peers implies that many women are interested in participating in international politics and diplomacy. Furthermore, they show high aptitude in the field regardless of Jordanian women’s inexperience in politics. As one of the leading researchers at the JID’s RCCP, Dr. Ruba brings a confident and unique perspective to international security. In both cases, women’s agency as students or individual researchers cannot be conclusively attributed to their womanhood or their drive to prove themselves as competent as men. While this data is inconclusive in terms of women’s foreign policy preferences and the degree to which they influence foreign policy outcomes, it does show that women do not share universal preferences in politics and international relations. Like men and other communities, women must not be analyzed under the assumptions that they have mostly the same interests and experiences.

The following section describes three case studies, the first female Jordanian diplomat, one of the kingdom’s most important negotiators in the Middle East peace process, and the experience of a present Jordanian female diplomat. A comparison of their experiences sheds light on gender dynamics in Jordanian foreign policy.

### **Jordanian Ambassadorial Perspectives on Stateswomen**

Her Excellency Ambassador Laurice

The first woman to become an ambassador for Jordan is Her Excellency Ms. Laurice. She has worked as a Jordanian diplomat in various capacities for nearly five decades. Her



Excellency Laurice has been decorated various posts and awards for her efforts to improve the situations of refugees, women and children throughout the world. Her focus on the status and rights of refugees was inspired by her own history as a refugee from her hometown in Jaffa, Palestine. In 1948, she was exiled from Palestine by Israeli forces and witnessed many of her family members murdered in the process. Upon fleeing to Amman, HE Laurice earned scholarships to study in the United States where she earned her BA from the University of North Carolina in Economics, Education & Sociology, her MS from Columbia University in Social Work-Community Organization, and was enrolled in the doctoral program at Columbia University. For much of her career, HE Laurice worked closely with His Majesty King Hussein, earning the Jordan Decoration of Alistiklal for excellent work from HM King of Jordan. During an interview HE Laurice fit in to her busy schedule, she shared her extensive CV, a piece featuring her in *1000 PeaceWomen Across the Globe*, as well as many of her experiences as a woman representing her kingdom abroad and in Jordan. HE Laurice noted quickly that even today, “It’s a man’s world.” With this phrase as the overarching theme for her experiences, HE Laurice explained how women have a stronger work ethic than men because they must prove themselves equal to men, how she had to dispel stereotypes of Middle Eastern women at home and also abroad, and how her gender aided her in the international diplomatic world.<sup>187</sup>

Like some of the opinions of the members of the Jordanian women’s movement, HE Laurice believes that in order for women to achieve the same degree of success as men especially in diplomacy, they must work much harder than men to first prove their abilities.<sup>188</sup> Unlike women, men do not have to prove themselves since they are already expected by their institution to possess the qualities necessary for good work. HE Laurice recalled an experience that

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<sup>187</sup> Her Excellency Ms. Laurice, interview by author, June 8, 2010.

<sup>188</sup> H.E. Laurice, interview.

exemplifies this early in her career when she was still working in Amman. She and her colleagues faced a deadline the following morning and by the time the workday was over, all of those on her team left to go home while their project remained unfinished.<sup>189</sup> In spite of being unfairly abandoned by her co-workers, HE Laurice stayed alone in the office to complete the project by the deadline.<sup>190</sup> The only assistance her team gave her was a small sandwich to keep her from going hungry throughout the evening.<sup>191</sup> HE Laurice described that around midnight, she was the only person left in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and HM King Hussein happened to pass by the building on his way home.<sup>192</sup> Concerned for MFA security, he checked in to see who was in the office where the light was left on.<sup>193</sup> Upon discovering that HE Laurice was spending the night at the MFA to complete a project with no help from her colleagues, HM King Hussein was shocked.<sup>194</sup> He made a personal appearance at the MFA the following morning to chastise her male colleagues and to commend the strong work ethic of HE Laurice, the only woman working as a diplomat in the MFA at that time.<sup>195</sup> From that point on, HE Laurice maintained a strong relationship with HM King Hussein as he trusted her commitment to Jordan and to her occupation.<sup>196</sup>

In addition to proving herself among her Jordanian colleagues and to her king, HE Laurice also faced inaccurate stereotypes of Middle Eastern women abroad. While working in Dallas, Texas as the assistant director of the Arab Information Centre, HE Laurice was asked to speak on behalf of Middle Eastern women at a local Rotary Club meeting. When she arrived early to the site of the meeting, she waited outside for someone to greet her. Many men walked

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<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid.

into the building to attend the meeting without noticing her. Fifteen minutes later, HE Laurice asked the security guard if she was in the right location for the Rotary Club. He confirmed and explained to her that the members were waiting for the “Arab woman” to arrive. Surprised to find out that HE Laurice was, in fact, the “Arab woman” the guard apologized for not recognizing her as he and the others expected a woman fully covered and dressed in ethnic clothing rather than in a business suit. The expectation of what an Arab woman should have been was exotic, modest, and traditional. HE Laurice found that, as a Jordanian diplomat, she was not only charged with representing her kingdom, but also with dispelling the stereotype that all Arab women were traditional, conservative and unfamiliar with modern attire. Part of her diplomatic work was to show the world that not all Arab women dressed and acted the same by using herself as an example. They could be modern and professional as well.<sup>197</sup>

Beyond proving herself to her colleagues in Jordan and abroad, HE Laurice found that being a woman gave her more agency with which to conduct diplomatic relations. As compared with her colleagues, HE Laurice seldom faced aggression or resistance to cooperation from other diplomats because her gender made her more approachable.<sup>198</sup> According to HE Laurice, in a room full of mostly men, people are much more eager to approach the woman because she is seemingly less threatening, more pleasant, and a better speaker.<sup>199</sup> Therefore, when conducting business, HE Laurice never experienced more difficulty in doing her job because she was a woman.<sup>200</sup> On the contrary, her being female facilitated dialogue and diplomacy. Although HE Laurice did not say this in her interview, her success as a female diplomat due to her gender

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<sup>197</sup> Ibid.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

finds parallels with Senator Amal's observation that women's power of seduction makes them more powerful statespeople.

HE Laurice faced the challenge of having to prove herself to her colleagues as some of the Jordanian feminist opinions speculated. However, she did not desire to prove herself to her colleagues by displaying how well she could mimic them.<sup>201</sup> Rather than strive to "act like a man" in her profession which was almost completely male, HE Laurice acted how she believed she should conduct diplomacy for her country.<sup>202</sup> In this way, she pursued the issues that interested her the most. Because so few female Jordanian ambassadors currently exist as many female diplomats are still young, the experiences of HE Laurice are invaluable to this thesis. By examining the development of her career, her agency becomes apparent in her ability to create space for herself and for her policy preferences. HE Laurice proved her ability to be herself and to be a Jordanian ambassador, addressing the status of refugees and human rights throughout the world as well as pre-conceived stereotypes of Arab women.

#### Diplomatic Attache Eman

Following in the footsteps of Ambassador Laurice, Diplomatic Attache Eman H. shared her perspective as a younger employee of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, having worked there since 2006. Her personal identification with politics, her opinion about Jordanian domestic and international politics, and her view of Jordanian foreign policy are informative of both her interpretation of gender in Jordanian foreign policy and society but also of her representation of women in the Minister of Foreign Affairs today. Ms. Eman's experiences and beliefs differ from those of HE Laurice's in that she has been raised with a clear political consciousness of her own

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<sup>201</sup> Ibid.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

role in Jordan, her relationship to her royal family, and Jordan's primary foreign policy interest in the Palestinian issue. With this political consciousness, she has entered her studies and her career in the ministry with a clear understanding of what her role is as diplomatic attaché, likely facing fewer obstacles imposed by having "to prove herself" because she is a woman. Ms. Eman shares HE Laurice's observation that women in the ministry tend to be more associated with human rights issues.<sup>203</sup> Representative of the younger generation of Jordanian women in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Eman acknowledges the advancements of Jordanian women as well as the remaining social constraints, she views her relationship to politics as natural on account of her Jordanian citizenship just as the Palestinian issue is the "natural" focus of its foreign policy, and she believes that men and women share mostly similar roles in Jordanian foreign policy with the exception that women's preferences may be more inclined toward human rights issues.<sup>204</sup>

On gender roles in politics, Ms. Eman believes that any person, man or woman, who believes strongly in something will advocate for it if s/he has an outgoing personality because, "being outspoken is a personal trait not necessarily gender related."<sup>205</sup> However, Ms. Eman notes that in the Middle East, women are reserved on most issues and on politics in particular.<sup>206</sup> This, she says, is due to the association of politics with power by most people in the Middle East.<sup>207</sup> The implication here is that power is also associated with men, making it more challenging for women to express their passion for politics than it is for men. In Ms. Eman's opinion, the government and especially the royal family are the most accepting of women in politics.<sup>208</sup> Even

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<sup>203</sup> Diplomatic Attache Ms. Eman H., e-mail message to author, 2010.

<sup>204</sup> Ms. Eman, e-mail.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

with its diverse standpoints, society is also more accepting of women in politics in Jordan according to the experiences of Ms. Eman.<sup>209</sup>

When asked to describe how she relates to politics, Ms. Eman replied, “I am deeply passionate about politics, you can say that political analysis runs through my blood. As far as I’m concerned, proper historical and political knowledge is the ultimate weapon if one is to make a difference.”<sup>210</sup> In this response, Ms. Eman is simultaneously saying that her passion for politics is part of her being and that it is the strongest agent of change when used appropriately. In Jordan, she believes that all citizens are brought up to serve their country by supporting its moderate policies, essentially raising all Jordanians to be politically active and aware.<sup>211</sup> She states: “...having been nurtured as children to serve our nation makes ‘being politically active’ extremely simple as if it were second nature.”<sup>212</sup> For her, all Jordanians share an interest in politics no matter their gender. This natural affinity to politics that Ms. Eman describes is closely related to her view that Jordanian foreign policy’s prioritization of the Palestinian issue and soft diplomacy is widely supported by everyone in the kingdom.

This common opinion that soft diplomacy and the Palestinian issue should compose the core of Jordanian foreign policy as if it were the only option would make it easier for any Jordanian passionate about his/her country’s international relations to have agency in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Because this is the common political opinion among Jordanians and in spite of the “cross-cutting” of domestic and international politics, the foreign ministry is “the most pleasant” site for Jordanian females who wish to participate in politics. Besides diplomacy being “captivating for most,” this pleasantness is another reason why women join the Ministry of

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<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

Foreign Affairs. Because the MFA is a kinder place for women and thus, grants them more access to it, Ms. Eman believes that women's international role in Jordan exceeds their domestic role.<sup>213</sup>

Ms. Eman shared that overall men and women play similar roles within the ministry and have similar policy preferences; however, she noted that women seem to be more inclined toward the humanitarian aspect of policy-making. Since Jordanians support soft diplomacy, the men and women who enter the MFA fit in with the institution's identity and few differences among employees are likely to be found. Although an interest in humanitarian policy is easily associated with soft diplomacy, Ms. Eman found that women in positions of leadership in the ministry are involved with Jordan's policies on human rights. Ms. Eman stated that, "...women might resort to focusing more on the humanitarian aspect in general. I think this is currently represented at [the] MoFA as the only female director happens to be the Director of the Human Rights Department."<sup>214</sup> The career path of Ambassador Laurice also reflects this preference for the humanitarian aspect of diplomacy as she spent many years working on human rights issues. With HE Laurice, her policy preferences were clearly supported by her agency within the ministry, but other women may face restraints on their agency.

Ms. Eman mentioned certain restraints that women have which men do not, even when their roles and duties are the same. In spite of the gender neutrality of the MFA entry exam as well as the tasks assigned to MFA employees, women's agency is challenged because of their familial responsibilities. She stated, "The fact that women are bound by their families and children though, definitely inflicts self-imposed restraints on women when it comes to carrying out their roles and attempting to fulfill them. This applies [e]specially when it comes to serving

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<sup>213</sup> Ibid.

<sup>214</sup> Ibid.

abroad.”<sup>215</sup> This observation is particularly interesting because Ms. Eman acknowledges that women’s family roles constrain their agency but that these limitations are “self-imposed.” Women do have a choice to let their duties to their families restrain their work in the MFA regardless of how societal gender norms bind them. Women negotiate this tension by compromising their opportunities to work abroad in order to remain close to their families in Jordan while still maintaining their employment in the MFA.

Ms. Eman’s younger perspective on gender in the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlighted similarities and differences between her experiences and those of HE Laurice’s. In general, the ministry and society accept women as qualified members of Jordanian foreign policy as long as they meet the entry requirements. Furthermore, their roles, duties and agency are superficially similar to those of their male counterparts. However, women’s preferences toward humanitarian diplomacy are noticeable and women generally face self-imposed restraints on their agency within the ministry due to the responsibilities they feel to their families. Women’s agency in the ministry whether carried out in policy or in their decision to develop their careers within Jordan is apparent in their freedom to choose their professional paths at the MFA. Contrary to the expectations of much of the IR feminist literature, female Jordanian diplomats are not as restrained by the foreign policy apparatus and its embedded patriarchy as they are by their self-perceived conflict between family duties and their careers.

#### His Excellency Ambassador Nawaf

One of HE Laurice’s colleagues, HE Nawaf, provides a complementary account of gender and Jordanian foreign policy. Although his career is younger than HE Laurice’s, HE Nawaf’s experiences working as an advisor for the Middle East peace process, taking part in the

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<sup>215</sup> Ibid.



selection process of new Jordanian diplomats, and as Director of the Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) in Amman, make him a credible source for this research. HE Nawaf's description of Jordanian foreign policy and his observations of his female colleagues at the Middle East advisory group and in the MFA application process illustrate a male perspective on gender and women in Jordanian international affairs.

HE Nawaf's description of Jordanian foreign policy is important for understanding his observations of gender dynamics because it explains why he thinks that the ministry cannot afford to discriminate along gender lines. For him, "In Jordan, foreign policy is easy."<sup>216</sup> This means that Jordan's geography makes it incapable of carrying an initiative due to its location in the middle of all the major Middle Eastern conflicts—Israel and the Palestinian Territories, and Iraq.<sup>217</sup> Jordan must prioritize the Middle East peace process as its first, second and third foreign policy concern.<sup>218</sup> The kingdom is not only constrained by what foreign policy it can have, but also by how it can enforce that foreign policy. HE Nawaf gave the example of the Road Map which was originally a Jordanian initiative but gained momentum in Cairo.<sup>219</sup> In order for Jordan to not polarize itself from the United States and to concurrently secure its borders, it must remain active but "shy" in regional foreign policy said HE Nawaf.<sup>220</sup> When analyzing foreign policy with a gendered lens, the Jordanian case is difficult since the limitations on its foreign policy options are so great that it seems void of a gendered identity. Keeping peace and security for the kingdom from external conflict through military aggression, refugees, etc. and internal conflict is not inherent to either a masculine or feminine foreign policy. However, these limits reflect a

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<sup>216</sup> HE Nawaf, interview.

<sup>217</sup> These interviews were conducted prior to the events of the Arab Spring. As such, HE Nawaf's comments do not include the current conflict in Syria.

<sup>218</sup> HE Nawaf, interview.

<sup>219</sup> Ibid.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid.

position of marginalization in which traits of cooperation are developed—giving it more of a traditionally hegemonic feminine identity.

HE Nawaf's simple definition of Jordanian foreign policy contributes to his comments about his female colleagues. In his experience with Jordanian foreign policy making, he had fewer female colleagues than male colleagues. There was no discrepancy between the status and importance of both; however, HE Nawaf noted that the females who were outstanding colleagues were very outstanding.<sup>221</sup> For example, in the Private Council to the Office of the Minister, there are two females working.<sup>222</sup> This is one of the highest-ranking and most influential areas of Jordanian foreign policy.<sup>223</sup> In general, the MFA gives no consideration to gender. Its diplomatic core is relatively small but there are no differences in performance or tasks given between men and women who make up this core.<sup>224</sup> Within the ministry, the one gender issue Dr. Nugud described as problematic dealt with marriage.<sup>225</sup> When two diplomats are married, problems tend to arise when the ministry must decide where to post them since they prefer to be posted in the same location.<sup>226</sup> Because two vacant posts in the same location are uncommon, one of the two often sacrifices their posting for the other.<sup>227</sup> As compared with the accounts of the previous section, gender problems in the kingdom's MFA tend to revolve around marriage—diplomatic couples face difficulties in finding common sites in which to work and married female diplomats face problems related to family benefits.

The experiences HE Nawaf had on the committee to select new diplomats provided him with an interesting perspective on women entering the MFA, similar to those of Madam Suzan in

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<sup>221</sup> Ibid.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Ibid.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid.

<sup>225</sup> Ibid.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy. Due to the timing of women's entrance into formal Jordanian diplomacy through the MFA in the middle 1990s, many female diplomats occupy lower-medium level positions in the ministry as they have not had enough time to join high levels. Of the final nineteen applicants from when HE Nawaf served on the selection committee, four were female.<sup>228</sup> The final ratio of females to males was much higher than that of the initial applicant pool of about ten percent females of 450 total applicants.<sup>229</sup> The women in the final applicant group were better equipped to work for the MFA than the males mostly because their foreign language skills were superb to those of the men's.<sup>230</sup> HE Nawaf found that most of the females had majored in English literature in college, making them more competent in English and giving them less of a language barrier to diplomacy.<sup>231</sup> Since Jordanian diplomats in general use their posts to pursue post-graduate education, said HE Nawaf, diplomacy is an attractive field to women who seem to take their educations very seriously. Also, it is more acceptable for them to work abroad if they also pursue an education while abroad.<sup>232</sup> Women's education seems to have a lot to do with their MFA application success.

HE Nawaf, HE Laurice, and Ms. Eman have different professional experiences, but each are informative on gender roles in Jordanian foreign policy. The observations of HE Nawaf are particularly insightful as he can judge the roles and performances of the women with whom he has worked without speculation of how men regard women in diplomacy because he is a man. From his perspective, Jordanian foreign policy is not and cannot be associated with a gender—masculinity or femininity—nor can it be considered as if the kingdom has many options for the character of its foreign policy. This is because Jordan's location in the center of the Middle East

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<sup>228</sup> Ibid.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

<sup>231</sup> Ibid.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid.

conflicts determines that its foreign policy prioritization will be the peace process. That said, women or any other marginalized actor new to Jordanian foreign policy making and/or the MFA cannot be expected to change the nature of the kingdom's foreign policy. However, HE Nawaf's experiences have shown him that women are equally competent as men in their diplomatic positions and are setting a high standard of excellence in the application process to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This suggests that men and women share a similar degree of agency in Jordanian foreign policy processes, yet neither enjoy much of it beyond addressing the kingdom's established interests.

### *Conclusion*

Upon examining the relationship between gender and foreign policy in Jordan through the perspectives of third party female domestic forces, women working in the Jordanian Institute of Diplomacy and female and male ambassadors, two main themes emerged that have various implications for this thesis. First, women's collective, historical experience of marginalization affects female performance in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Second, women in the MFA play a positive role that is not so unique in substance but it is unique in terms of its excellence. The implications for this thesis are threefold; the female skill set brought to the table seems like a better match for carrying out the policies of the MFA than men's current skill set, female heads of missions in European states with mostly economic relations with Jordan is a sign of feminine strength, and a female inspired influx of 'new' foreign policy ideas according to cultural/human rights diplomacy suggests that women with different policy preferences have enough agency within the Ministry to express them.

Women's historical and collective experience of marginalization has an effect on their performance in the Jordanian foreign policy apparatus. Because marginalization is a fundamental aspect of the feminist standpoint IR literature, this is particularly interesting as it simultaneously challenges and supports some of the standpoint observations. In accordance with the standpoint literature, marginalized women have a more acute sense of cooperation, care, a strong work ethic and problem solving ability through dialogue. Unlike the standpoint perspective which assumes this marginalization and these characteristics confine women to a position of weakness and disempowerment, the data from this chapter suggests the opposite. These 'feminine' characteristics were described by some of the interviewees as a 'skill set' or a positive and useful group of traits. Cooperation, excellent communication skills, and a strong work ethic are some of the most valuable attributes of Jordanian diplomats, making women particularly suited for the Jordanian MFA.

Although the female characteristics associated with marginalization do not constrain women in Jordan's foreign policy apparatus, women in the MFA do face constraints. The actual constraints facing these women have more to do with their personal status in the kingdom, marriage and children. Because MFA policies do not yet reflect the needs of Jordanian women who typically are responsible for their children's childcare and education and are not considered financial heads of the household, many female MFA employees with families have had to sacrifice their careers because they cannot afford to pay for their husband and their children to move abroad with them. In the past, as Ms. Asma noted, the MFA discriminantly employed unmarried women without children so as not to deal with the complications of family responsibilities. While the MFA has not yet adapted its policies to the needs of married women, women have also perhaps inflicted these restraints to their careers upon themselves. Women

could be assuming all responsibility for their children's childcare and education without considering the potential contribution of their husbands. Furthermore, they perhaps have not considered negotiating for childcare upon being accepted into the MFA. Both MFA policies and social expectations of women hinder women's actual physical agency in Jordanian foreign policy. It is this issue that illuminates the importance of the 'pragmatic' work of Jordan's women's movement as it advocates for the legal empowerment of women and their socioeconomic advancement. This is a clear way in which domestic forces can affect Jordanian foreign policy, albeit indirectly.

The second theme of this chapter is that women play a positive role in the MFA that is not exactly unique in substance but it is unique in its excellence. In other words, women outperform men from the application process to the MFA and throughout their careers. Both Madam Suzan from the JID and HE Nawaf noticed that female applicants were more outspoken, had better foreign language skills, and earned higher test scores than their male counterparts. This is not simply due to their desire to prove themselves or to act like men. Female applicants to the MFA, as HE Nawaf suggested, have broader and somewhat different motivations for joining the MFA as they aim to use their posts to pursue graduate studies. This dual purpose of becoming diplomats and advancing their education reflects part of the hegemonic femininity exemplified in HRH Princess Basma's simultaneous commitment to state feminism and her doctoral studies. Also, her example is grounds for familial permission for all Jordanian stateswomen to travel abroad.

The implications of these findings for this thesis shed light on gender and foreign policy in several ways. First, women's skill set seems to be a well-suited match for representing the MFA and carrying out its policies. The MFA's preference for cooperation and diplomacy

through dialogue shows that outspoken assertiveness and self-help are not always the most favorable characteristics of a state's international relations, especially those of the Hashemite Kingdom. Jordan must maintain a liberal international image and cannot afford to tarnish it because of its lack of international autonomy. Secondly, the fact that the Jordanian female heads of missions in states with mostly economic relations with Jordan is indicative of the kingdom's strategic placement of its most valued skills. Since the states do not have extensive military relations with Jordan, feminist IR scholars might assume women were given the 'easiest' posts. However, since Jordan's economic foreign relations are just as existentially important as the regional peace process, these posts become extremely important. Senator Amal's theory that women first become empowered economically seems to be true in this case. And, lastly, Jordanian international relations show signs of an 'influx' of new concepts of foreign policy that focus more on cultural understanding and the protection of human rights. The work of Dr. Ruba, HE Laurice and the women mentioned by HE Eman support this. This trend, while still in gestation, signals that women whose policy preferences differ from those of their colleagues possess enough agency within the ministry to act on those preferences.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

This thesis sought to explore how gender and gendered relationships of power affect foreign policy in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in order to better understand gender in international relations theory. The research questions were answered with varying degrees of correlation to the hypotheses. Stateswomen in Jordan do have enough agency to play a significant role in the foreign policy processes of Jordan. But, at the same time, their agency and that of everyone else in the kingdom is limited because the King, HM Abdullah II, has ultimate authority over Jordan's foreign policy and diplomacy. The women's views on security—defined here as the high politics of war and conflict—were not as varied as expected in the hypothesis. Women's views on the Palestinian issue, Jordan's biggest example of high politics, generally reflected the status-quo of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the royal family with slight differences with regards to human rights. Opinions were stronger and more varied among the feminist women of Jordan's domestic forces. Female Jordanians in foreign policy bring a different 'skill set' to the table than men although their ideas and values of foreign policy are similar. These women do embody the masculine values of the patriarchal state inasmuch as their agency is constrained by self-imposed obligations to be the primary caretakers in their families no matter how demanding their occupations. However, they do not embody masculine values when it comes to the actual policies of Jordan even when their preferences are the same as those of their male counterparts. The recurring theme regarding agency, policy preferences, and ideas/values is that Jordanians perceive their foreign policy options as fixed. Securing their borders with peaceful relations with their neighbors and particular emphasis on the



Palestinian/Israeli peace process is universally agreed upon as Jordan's foreign policy priority by men and women. The data also leads to two other points. First, the influence of gender on Jordan's economic foreign policy could shed light on gender and foreign policy. Second, the Arab Spring's propulsion of Jordan to chief negotiating position in the Arab-Israeli conflict could affect the relationship between gender and foreign policy in Jordan.

Jordanian stateswomen enjoy freedom and constraints when it comes to their agency within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Chapter 5, the female diplomats described their agency. While HE Laurice, the first female Jordanian diplomat, enjoys considerable agency, she described the main obstacle to expressing her agency as the pressure to herself to the men with whom she worked. A younger diplomat, HE Eman, felt that there was no barrier to her agency within the MFA. Within the hegemonic femininity cultivated by HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania described in Ch. 4, female participation and cooperation in the ministry fits nicely. In addition to this 'royal permission' given to women's agency in foreign policy, the collective effect of the Jordanian women's movement (Ch. 3) has been to create women's access to the MFA by empowering women to become more educated and independent but to also negotiate societal norms such that women and feminine values are viewed positively in the kingdom.

Although women's agency in the MFA is strong, it is limited by the fixed nature of Jordanian foreign policy options and by the monarchic system under which King Abdullah II is the most important player in Jordanian international relations. Under these constraints, no one, male or female, within the Jordanian foreign policy apparatus can play a significant role other than HM King Abdullah II. Since both the literature and most of the data from the interviewees perceived Jordanian foreign policy to be inflexible with the Palestinian-Israeli peace process

being the “...first, second, and third<sup>233</sup>” foreign policy issue for the kingdom, any markedly different foreign policy opinions from diplomats are likely to be heard from neither men nor women. If this perception of intractability changes, however, new voices might speak up. Furthermore, the royal family and not just the king himself are legally protected from any criticism by Jordanians. Under that protection, it is foreseeable that a figure such as HM Queen Rania takes on a more substantial foreign policy role.

Because of this general Jordanian sense that foreign policy is fixed, it was difficult to adequately evaluate women’s specific views on security, high politics and the Palestinian issue. Most responses reflected the Jordanian status-quo opinions that the peace process is Jordan’s most pressing security issue. HE Eman even described this sense as a natural part of every Jordanian’s thinking. Regarding the Palestinian issue, the feminist domestic forces in the domestic political sphere had the strongest opinions. In a subtler way, Dr. Ruba of the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy theorized that diplomatic promotion of cultural understanding prior to enacting political agreements among countries in conflict is the most effective way to ensure security. Likewise, HE Laurice channeled much of her energy and agency toward the protection of refugees and human rights. Queen Rania shares this platform with HE Laurice.

Even though women have similar perspectives on ‘high security’ and the Palestinian issue as men, Jordanian women do seem to bring a different set of ideas/values to the table than men. Both Madam Suzan and HE Nawaf noticed a superior ‘skill set’ that female MFA applicants brought. This skill set includes better communication skills, a stronger work/study ethic, and a more outspoken or assertive nature. HE Nawaf also described women’s important role in the economic foreign policy of the kingdom. Echoing this are the first female ambassadors as heads of missions in European states such as France with which Jordan enjoys

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<sup>233</sup> HE Nawaf, interview.

mostly economic relations. The emphasis on cultural understanding and human rights protection as a means to achieve security mentioned above as well as this awareness of the importance of economic foreign policy indicates women's propensity to envision long term, preventative security.

Since women do have significant agency in the MFA, their policy preferences are generally similar to men's, they bring a more professionalized skill set to the table than men, and some have a more progressive vision for peace and security, the question is whether or not they are simply embodying masculine values of the patriarchal state. Some of the interviewees from Jordan's feminist movement assumed that women's stronger work ethic and outperforming of men is attributed to their urge to prove themselves to their male-dominated institutions and/or to act like men to get ahead. While this certainly could be the trend in domestic politics and other local institutions, at the MFA the degree of women's agency described in Ch. 5 suggests that, in professional regards, women are not just merely embodying masculine values to get ahead. Since the scope of Jordanian foreign policy is limited, one could argue that everyone in the ministry is playing the 'man's game' so to speak. These values are not necessarily masculine values of the patriarchal state but rather monarchic values of a semi-autonomous marginalized state in the international system. In the institution of foreign policy, gendered power divisions matter less.

While stateswomen do not appear to be acting as men in their professional spheres, they do embody masculine values of the patriarchal state in their roles as mothers and wives. This is a surprising, unexpected result of this research. The biggest restraints women in Jordan's MFA face are self-imposed and society-imposed. The data from Ch. 5 revealed that many Jordanian women's roles as wives and primary caretakers for their children inhibited their ability to perform at work. These women are assuming responsibilities that could be shared with their

husbands and for which the MFA could provide some support. However, this norm of division of labor within the family unit has not yet taken hold in Jordan. Women's double-burden of working and taking care of the family embodies masculine values of the patriarchal state in that in traditional patriarchal families women care for the family and the home as their sole responsibility while men navigate the public and are the breadwinners for the family. Jordanian women have joined the workforce but as added roles to their caretaker roles. In this way, stateswomen of the Hashemite Kingdom are simultaneously embodying norms of traditional hegemonic femininity as well as norms of Jordan's new, hybrid hegemonic femininity.

This thesis examines the agency of women in the most traditional realm of 'high politics,' foreign policy and international relations with an emphasis on security. Feminist international relations does not expect women to have agency or have agency that reflects their true policy preferences in high politics as it embodies the most realist or patriarchal interpretations of power. As the results show, Jordanian stateswomen do have authentic agency in foreign policy; however, they do face patriarchal constraints with their dual roles as stateswomen and mothers/wives. Although not the focal point of this research, economic foreign policy in Jordan is another realm in which women participate in Jordan. A realist perspective might not consider economic foreign policy as the most powerful of 'high politics' and a feminist perspective might assume women to 'naturally' enjoy more influence in this realm because it is less associated with power and force. In Jordan, though, economic foreign policy is as existentially important as the peace process due to its lack of natural resources and subsequent dependence on international trade, aid and foreign direct investment. Because of the urgency of economic foreign policy in Jordan and stateswomen's contribution to it, future research could look at this trend in terms of re-envisioning state security and the role or influence of women and femininity on it.

Finally, the events of the Arab Spring as they pertain to this thesis were not studied as the research was conducted just less than a year before. However, the monumental shifts in Arab politics and society that they have brought about suggest that the Arab Spring in Jordan might have affected or been affected by gender. Although the effects of the Arab Spring on stateswomen's agency and policy preferences in Jordan are unclear some observations can be made. Some speculate that the fall of former Egyptian president, Hosni Mubarak, has propelled Jordan into the chief mediating position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. It is possible that now the kingdom does not perceive its foreign policy options as fixed due to its increased negotiating power. This moment could be an opportunity for different and maybe 'uncharacteristic' policy to be enacted. New policies could look 'feminine,' 'masculine,' or otherwise regardless of which actors—men or women—are influencing them. The question is if women see more alternative foreign policy options for Jordan than men. There is no answer at this point but HM Queen Rania's spearheaded use of social media in Jordan prior to the Arab Spring provides some insight into this. In the pre-Arab Spring era, when most of this research was conducted, Queen Rania's YouTube channel for dialogue about East-West stereotypes, her Twitter and Facebook accounts, as well as her personal website were so prominent and popular in Jordan that they can almost be perceived as monopolizing the direction and use of social media in the kingdom. While social media were the instruments of revolutions in other Arab Spring countries, their effect on internal Jordanian affairs was much more limited. Whether or not her motivations were preventative, Queen Rania's championing use of social media in Jordan appears to have prevented more destabilizing political events in the kingdom than in other states.

Feminist international relations theory has brought gender into the discourse of the field yet its tendency to assume women's victimization, marginalization, and uniform reactions to

them does not reflect women's actual contributions to foreign policy, agency, and constraints. Furthermore, hegemonic notions of femininity and masculinity are flexible and change depending on the configuration of domestic and international political forces in a state. The English School's international and world societies are particularly useful in framing how gender and the Jordanian women's movement affect foreign policy in the kingdom. The degree to which a state is autonomous in the international arena can affect how much it depends upon its domestic legitimacy and international identity for survival. In a state like Jordan, where dependence is high, opportunities for dialogue and compromise among domestic forces abound. A women's movement in this situation has great strength as it has the ability to empower half of the population of the state with potential for political instability. As in Jordan, the state and domestic forces have grappled with control of women's issues and NGOs, ultimately leading to a rather dynamic cluster of institutions. Collectively and along with the role of the royal family's female figureheads, HRH Princess Basma and HM Queen Rania, these forces have altered social norms for women's participation in the public and political spheres, effectively creating a hybridized Jordanian hegemonic femininity. Jordanian stateswomen do play roles in foreign policy and in changing traditional societal norms which separate men and women. Jordan's interactive world and international societies have created an environment conducive to change at the domestic and external levels in a non-democratic, authoritarian yet benevolent Middle Eastern state.

## Appendix A

### Interview Questionnaire

Catherine Guzzi  
M.A. Candidate Political Science  
The American University in Cairo  
Tentative Interview Questions

- 1) Would you please say a little about yourself and the history of your career?
- 2) Would you please describe how you relate to politics?
- 3) Would you consider yourself politically active? Why or why not?
- 4) Do you think that men and women have different roles in politics? Why or why not?
- 5) Do you think Jordanian international politics are different from Jordanian domestic politics or is there a connection between them? Please explain.
- 6) Do you think Jordanian women play a more important role in domestic politics or international politics? Please explain.
- 7) How do you think the Jordanian women's movement has affected society? Please explain. Are society, the government, and the royal family more accepting of women in politics and/or political women?
- 8) How would you describe the role of Her Majesty Queen Rania? Do you think that her role helps to change society's perception of women's roles?
- 9) Do Her Majesty Queen Rania and/or other female members of the royal family have international roles? Please explain.
- 10) What do you think the role of Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is?
- 11) Do you view women and men as having different roles in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs? Why or why not?
- 12) Do you think that women could play an important role in shaping the foreign policy of the kingdom? Why or why not?
- 13) Why do you think women join the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs?
- 14) Do you think that they have as much of a say in foreign policy decision-making as men? Why or why not?
- 15) Do you think that women's policy preferences differ from those of men? Why or why not?

16) Do you think women might have different policy preferences on foreign policy issues of great importance such as the Palestinian issue? Why or why not?

17) If women and men have different foreign policy preferences on issues like the Palestinian question, how might they advocate for them in the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

18) How would you describe Jordanian foreign policy? Do you think it could be described as having masculine values, feminine values, or neither? Please explain.

19) What are the most pressing international issues for the kingdom? Has Jordanian foreign policy changed over time? Please explain?

20) Have Jordanian male and female roles changed over time? Please explain.



## Appendix B

### Interview Participants

Listed in chronological order of interviews:

Ms. Leila

Madam Suzan

Dr. Roba

H.E. May

Judge Ihssan

Senator Amal

Dr. Hanan

Ms. Asma

H.E. Nawaf

H.E. Laurice

Ms. Eman

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