

Citizenship in a Hybrid State: Civic Curriculum in Jordan's Education Reform for Knowledge Economy Era

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Abstract

Jordan, a small and less affluent economy in the Middle East, has recently engaged in a comprehensive educational reform effort to prepare learners for the knowledge economy. This article examines some of the challenges faced by the Jordanian government as it simultaneously navigates liberalization and traditional markers of citizen identity. The literature review reveals that both tradition and modernity are promoted in a hybridized school curriculum. Interviews with teachers who instruct from the *National and Civic Curriculum* illustrate how Jordan is being influenced by the global-local interplay of political, economic, and sociocultural forces. The construction of citizenship promoted is one of tentativeness toward "becoming modern" while adhering to a prescribed morality. The concept of 'hybrid sovereignty' advanced by Gökhan Bacik is the main theoretical perspective applied in our analysis of citizen identity in civic curriculum in Jordan. The article concludes with some influences of the Arab Spring on the nation and its educational reform processes.

Keywords

Civic Education; Citizen Identity; Citizenship Curriculum; Jordan; Hybridity

Introduction and Purpose

This paper explores the constructions of Jordanian identity promoted by the government through its recent educational reform project called Education Reform for Knowledge Economy (ER/KE). The overall aim of ER/KE is to equip students with knowledge and technical skills for adaptability in an unpredictable labor market. Investment in its human capital, namely its youth, through formal education is seen as crucial to national development, given Jordan's scarcity of natural resources. ER/KE's first phase (2003-2007) witnessed the revision and modernization of curriculum to develop students' technical knowledge and creativity. The reform's second phase (2008-2013) focused on updating teacher pedagogy and stimulating greater community involvement in schooling. Of particular interest in the ER/KE movement is how notions of civic identity are reflected in the national civic curriculum. Although knowledge production does not occur solely through schooling, the formal curriculum is a contextual and cultural space that exposes children and youth to particular conceptions of citizen identity promoted by the state.

This article draws on relevant literature, as well as teacher perspectives, to consider how the ongoing education reform, within a broader process of liberalization, influences national civic curriculum in Jordan. Our analysis reveals the state's emphasis on teaching a conception of "good citizenship" to young Jordanians, while also navigating a global-local interplay of economic, political, and sociocultural factors that shape Jordan's national narrative. The school curriculum serves as a vehicle to examine political liberalizing tendencies alongside traditional cultural markers of identity. As such, a hybridized school curriculum, one that features the traditional and the modern, characterizes Jordan's national civic education. The concept of 'hybrid sovereignty' developed by Gökhan Bacik is the main theoretical perspective applied in our analysis of citizen identity in Jordan. According to Bacik (2008), the clash between Western and traditional patterns has led to a hybrid form of sovereignty in Jordan whereby tradition is infused into a "colonially-injected" Western state. Neither solely traditional nor Western, Jordanian identity, we argue, is composed of a complex set of identity markers, and efforts to indigenize the national civic curriculum has exposed teachers and students to a hybrid citizen identity.

Literature Review

Jordan is an epicenter of policy interest and cultural interaction. The long-standing Palestinian question, the Iraqi and Syrian refugee situation, Jordan's status as an ally of the West, and its dependence on international aid for national development positions Jordan geographically and ideologically at the center of policy debate, implicating its educational response with respect to citizenship education. Jordan, therefore, presents an interesting policy-scape for inquiry into citizen identity through its official civic school curriculum. To aid in this discussion, we draw upon the concept of hybrid sovereignty, which is defined as "the condition in which the modern and the traditional coexist behind the formal appearance of statehood" (Bacik, 2008, p. 9). Jordan, a creation

of British colonialism in the early 20th century, provides a case in point of hybrid sovereignty and constitutes a cultural space in which to examine the constructions of nation and citizen promoted by the state's schools.

Constructing Nation and Citizen in a Hybrid State

TransJordan was formed in 1921 after Arabs cooperated with the British government against the Ottomans. The Hashemites who came to rule over the entity known as TransJordan were the erstwhile rulers of the Hijaz (located in present day Saudi Arabia) and were removed from power when the Saud family established rule over the Hijaz and much of the Arabian Peninsula. After independence, TransJordan was named the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. An army was created in the Kingdom to strengthen the role of the Amir in a patriarchal political system that emphasized the monarchy, whereby the king was introduced to the people as the only legitimate national leader (Layne, 1994). The Bedouin, who compose the majority of Jordan's military, are the major supporters of the country's monarchy and help maintain the legitimacy of the Hashemite Kingdom (Layne, 1994). National identity in Jordan, therefore, is based in "the tribes," and the tribes are dependent on the state for employment and patronage (Nanes, 2008, p. 89). The Jordanian government has sought to respect and preserve tribal identity and, in return, the Hashemite regime has been maintained. As Layne (1994) explains, the King bans any disrespect to the tribe and its traditions, and any insult to the identities and traditions of the tribe is an insult to the identity of Jordanian society. In recent years, more attention has been given to building a civil society, though tradition and religion influence the nation-building process.

In the Arab world, 'citizen' (*muwatin*) is linked to the root word *watan*, which has been used by Arabs since pre-Islam days to refer "to one's permanent place of residence, or homeland" (Abul-Basal, 2011, cited in Faour & Muasher, 2011, p. 8). Moreover, as Frisch (2002) explains, "the term 'Arab' does not denote the imagined impersonal collective identity identified by Benedict Anderson [1983] but rather the genealogical cultural sense of what it means in Bedouin [sic] culture — *nasb* and *fad'il*: lineage and virile virtues" (p. 93, italics added). Mohammad Abu Hassan (1984) distinguishes Bedouin tribes from non-Bedouin tribes due to their desert habitation, source of livelihood, tribal mobility, and provision of the law. In Jordan, tribal identity is very important and does not necessarily fit with the Western concept of nationalism (Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010). Because tribal identity helps to legitimate and maintain the monarchy (and in return is granted patronage and influence), the modern nation-state, as Al Oudat and Alshboul (2010) argue, does not have full influence on society.

The late King Hussein and now his son, King Abdullah II, have sought to form an Arab nation under the laws of the Hashemite family. The ruling family is a descendent of the prophet Mohammad, and the Hashemite family played an important role in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Thus, Jordan has always defended the Arab national movement. Having arrived from the Hijaz as recently as World War I, the Jordanian government's commitment to Arabism as opposed to tribal identity alone is an appeal to the many citizens in the Kingdom who, like themselves, are not from the East Bank.

Jordan's population is composed of Palestinians and TransJordanians. Laurie Brand (2010) has studied the relationship between emigration and state experience in Jordan and the positioning of emigrants in the national narrative, especially the large Palestinian immigration after 1948 and the second wave after 1967 as the result of Israel's occupation of the West Bank. After the 1970 Civil War, the Jordanian government created a policy to allow TransJordanians to obtain civil sector positions, thereby excluding Palestinians from jobs in the state bureaucracy and military. Because

Jordan's economy is vulnerable, with limited natural resources and dependence on other Arab countries for oil, this has resulted in prolonged absences from Jordan for the sake of securing employment elsewhere. Fargues (2011) found that "twenty million nationals from Arab states currently live outside their countries of origin. Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen are major senders, with between 5 and 20 percent of their nationals currently living abroad" (p. 3).

Thus, forced migration and labor migration have posed challenges to the development of communal identities in Jordan (Brand, 2010). The Jordanian government tries to downplay controversies surrounding Palestinian identity. For example, school textbooks give less attention to the historical period prior to Islam and increased attention to the early years of Islam, highlighting the Hashemite Kingdom and its ruling family as descendants of Muhammad. History textbooks give scant attention to the Ottoman period, emphasizing rather Jordan's history from World War I and the role of Shariff Hussein Bin Ali of Mecca (the great- great- grandfather of the king of Jordan) in the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. School textbooks emphasize Jordan's history as core to national identity, with attention given to maintenance of an Arab identity and the relationship of the king with Prophet Muhammad. The profound influence of population movement in Jordan, however, is given scant attention in official school curricula, considering its effects on the country's economic, political, and social development (Brand, 2010). As Brand (2010) explains,

"when dealing with specific historical examples, such as refugee movements caused by wars, the narrative as read through these schoolbooks' treatment is at best thin even for labor migration, which is much less sensitive from the point of view of regime legitimacy, the texts address the phenomenon in a largely decontextualized way, with the Jordanian experience in effect subsumed into discussion of a large Arab societal experience, long on generalities and short on case specific." (p. 106)

Hybridization, Citizenship Influences, and the Nationalist-Pluralist Debate

Tribal patterns and cultural identities coexist with political conceptions of citizenship within Jordan's Western-like borders, resulting in "a hybrid strain of sovereignty that is neither completely Western nor traditional" (Bacik, 2008, p. 7). Extending this argument to formal education, we argue that the constructions of citizen promoted in the official national civic curriculum reflect a hybrid identity as well, due to the injection of Western-like forms and practices alongside traditional forms. Hybrid sovereignty "accepts the coexistence of tribal (or communitarian) networks and ethno-religious loyalties and the modern state format" (p. 5). After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, many countries in the Middle East had no homogeneity, fake borders, and weak internal unity and have tried to solve this problem with authority or religion (Kumaraswamy, 2006). The public expression of religion is a central facet of life in contemporary Arab society, as "religion has been deeply intertwined with both culture and politics throughout Islamic history" (Abu-Rabi', 2004, p. 127). The role that Islam has played in the historical and contemporary period is that of the vanguard of tradition and the counter-balance to Western modernity. To illustrate, King Abdullah II of Jordan was recently named as the custodian of holy sites in Al Quds in an agreement signed between his Majesty and the Palestinian president to safeguard the holy sites from Judaization (*The News*, 2013). This example illuminates the historic role of Jordan's Hashemite royal family in preserving the holy sites in Palestine and their involvement in the Palestinians' conflict with Israel.

Two conceptions of citizenship exist in Jordan: one that is cultural and another that is contractual (Nanes, 2008). Nationalists believe that a person must hold one national identity and that is to Jordan. TransJordanians are concerned that many Palestinians in Jordan do not hold loyalty to the

nation as do TransJordanians and view Palestinians as a problem for Jordanian identity (Nanes, 2008). In contrast, pluralists view Jordanian identity as being held by a wide range of different groups and that Palestinian Jordanians are a part of the multicultural society. For pluralists, a person can hold multiple identities and loyalties, and one can choose both Palestinian and Jordanian identities without it being problematic for Jordan (Nanes, 2008). Pluralists believe that diverse groups can maintain their identities without assimilation into one vision for Jordan. A study of national identity conducted by The Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, however, found that there is no consensus about Jordanian identity among people in the country (Frisch, 2002).

Frisch (2002) asserts that fears about security from within and outside Jordan are "at the root of this fuzziness about nationalism" (p. 100). Jordan's "fuzzy nationalism" is the result of what Frisch views as four disparate elements, namely lineage and family, civic identity, pan-Arab identity, and religion. Hybridity, however, may more accurately describe the cultural flows and interactions between nationalism and pluralism and tradition and modernity in Jordan. Homi Bhabha (2006), a prominent theorist of hybridity, argues that cultural difference is the construction of systems of cultural identification in which 'the cultural' holds distinct meanings and values and also signifies the boundaries of cultures. According to Bhabha, "Cultural difference is a process of signification through which statements *of* culture or *on* culture differentiate, discriminate, and authorize the production of fields of force, reference, applicability, and capacity" (p. 155, italics in original).

Hybridity, therefore, is a way to interpret then King Hussein's efforts to advocate for pan-Arabism alongside a territorial state identity (Dann, 1989). As the Hashemite monarchy has navigated a complex political terrain, its promotion of citizen identity is necessarily fluid. The monarchy has invented tradition along the way (Anderson, 1991), which accounts for why neither tribal identity nor King Hussein's pan-Arabism aligns with an institutionalized or fixed collective identity as the West has used to imagine the nation-state. As Frisch contends, the application of Eurocentric models to institutionalize a fixed collective identity in a country, such as Jordan, where people adhere to kinship and religion rather than national spatial identities, is unlikely to be successful. A more fruitful inquiry into citizen identity is to explore "how, in signifying the present, something comes to be repeated, relocated, and translated in the name of tradition, in the guise of a pastness that is not necessarily a faithful sign of historical memory but a strategy of representing authority in terms of the artifice of the archaic" (Bhabha, 2006, p. 155). It is toward this discussion of Arab modernization and educational reform in Jordan that we now turn.

Arab Modernization and Educational Reform in Jordan

As a postcolonial nation, Jordan mainly depends on external resources and international aid to secure its survival. The economic liberalization program launched in 1989 was an important historical move to create a modern civil society through emphasizing political participation and democracy and modifying governmental control (Bacik, 2008). National, regional, and geopolitical agendas of different actors are revealed in the current economic development and educational reforms in the Arab region (Georg Eckert Institut, 2009). Recent policies, such as ER/KE in Jordan, have received significant financial support from the West, including a 120 million dollar loan from the World Bank (2009), the largest loan the Bank has given to an educational development project. Underlying the Bank's aid is the belief in the free market enterprise, the emphasis on global competition, and the notion that schools should produce productive workers (Joshee, 2012).

ER/KE is an example of a nation-building project that is meant to align Jordan with a Western model (Bacik, 2008). Because Western donors sponsor Jordan's government-mandated education reform,

the state is concerned about the public's view of foreign involvement in the education of their children (Al-Dakkah, 2010). There is fear among parents that foreign involvement in the reform efforts will lead to undesirable changes to the national curriculum (interview with Abu Al Rageb in Al-Dakkah, 2010). Jordanians refuse any interference in their national educational system that would reinterpret the representation of the Jordanian national experience or its religious beliefs and social values that are a central part of the curricula (Kubow et al., 2009).

Although the educational system has integrated concepts of liberalization into its school curriculum, traditional, religious, and patriarchal forms of authority continue to shape students' views of their society and to socialize them in their homes and schools. In the case of Jordan, the maintenance of these cultural markers of citizen identity are also the result of resistance by the Muslim Brotherhood and other members of society to guard against imperialist impulses from the West and from the Jordanian government to modernize the Kingdom. Schools, therefore, play a central role in reform efforts because they are cultural sites where citizen identity is learned and reproduced.

Contemporary Arab thought in school curriculum is grounded in Islam, which is both theological in its concern with divine mystery and rational in its concern with historical conditions (Abu-Rabi', 2004). Islam and the education systems in Islamic states have been influenced by the anti-colonial, anti-imperial struggle. Thus, the articulation of a Muslim self is often positioned in contrast to the Other (i.e., the non-Muslim self and the West). With the advent of Western colonialism and modernity, followed by the present era of neoliberal policy borrowing, Muslim leadership has sought to balance modernity and tradition by offering new religious and legal formulations emphasizing "the compatibility of reason and revelation" (Abu-Rabi', 2004, p. 129). This effort to balance modernity-tradition and reason-revelation is manifested in civic education curriculum in Jordan.

A Hybrid Civic Education Curriculum

'Hybridity' commonly refers to the creation of new transcultural forms produced by colonial contact (Ashcroft et al., 2007). The concept of hybridity, signifying mixture, is applied here to a discussion of citizen identity and civic education in post-colonial Jordan. "A nation's history and cultural and socio-political structures significantly affect the context in which citizenship [is] conceptualized and incorporated into an education curriculum" (Faour & Muasher, 2011, p. 16). The Jordanian government and its education officials have assumed a position of hybridity that is reflected in the civic school curriculum. A particular national narrative premised on cultural markers of identity (e.g., tribe, nation, and religion) is promoted while also being imbedded in a liberal discourse of modernization, pluralism, and democracy.

Considering the large number of youths in Jordan, namely 60% under the age of 24 (Steityeh, 2010), the government desires to empower them to effectively build the nation. Lustick (1993) has argued that governmental regimes and elites construct a hegemonic belief that aligns identity with political purpose to form the ethos of the state as a bounded system or community. On the one hand, the monarchy fosters an image of a paternal relationship with its society, promoting tribe, family, and lineage in an effort to neutralize revolutionary elements (Frisch, 2002). On the other hand, the monarchy seeks to modernize Jordan, as a reliance on foreign assistance from the West comes with a legal conception of the state as a grantor of political and liberal rights (Frisch, 2002).

An example of this hegemonic discourse manifested in the educational system is the 'Jordan First' (*al Urdun Awalan*) initiative. Launched in 2002, the aim of Jordan First, which has continued in the ER/KE era, was to orient students away from regional affairs, such as concerns regarding Palestine,

toward building a modern Jordan (Adely, 2007). As articulated by King Abdullah II in 2008 on his official website (2013):

“Jordan First emphasizes the supremacy of Jordan’s interests over all other considerations and reformulates the individual’s relationship with the State...It targets a generation of young Jordanians, who pride themselves in their Homeland and their Monarch’s throne and who beam with their democracy and effective, responsible participation in shaping their parliamentary institutions to be both accountable for, and loyal to Jordan.”

The Jordan First national initiative has sought to promote pride in the homeland, to unite the country, and to foster the building of a civil society along the principles of freedom, opportunity, and democracy (Bacik, 2008). The intention is to unify “all Jordanians behind a national goal,” to encourage “modernization,” and to “improve the active role of formal institutions,” as a main problem of political development in Jordan is the lack of mass participation in governance (Al Oudat & Alshboul, 2010, pp. 81-82). As a part of ER/KE, school curriculum was updated with the aim of providing students with new scientific knowledge in various subjects and stimulating innovation and critical thinking skills based on a philosophy of education identified by the Ministry of Education as originating from Jordan’s Constitution, the Islamic Arab heritage, the Great Arab Revolt, and the national experience of Jordanians.

The national civic textbooks show how the construction of Jordanian identity is promoted via ER/KE. The textbooks aim to develop good citizenship among students and to strengthen the sense of loyalty and belonging to their country and to the Arabic and Islamic nation (Touqan, 2005). Civic education is taught once a week to Grades 5-10 students, and new national textbooks have been written as a result of reform initiatives to teach different issues stemming from geography, history, and civics (Touqan, 2005). Civic education was previously integrated with other school subjects such as social studies. The civics textbooks focus on civic and cultural heritage, citizen roles and responsibilities, and different political, economic, social, and environmental concepts and issues.

Environmental, demographic, health, and traffic awareness are four new guiding concepts introduced in Jordan’s civic education textbooks as a result of educational reforms (The Ministry of Education, 2004). The vision of the Ministry of Education is to introduce youths to issues tied to socioeconomic plans of countries (e.g., population explosion, ecological imbalance, health problems, and traffic accidents) and to develop students’ awareness of themselves as citizens. According to the Ministry of Education (2004), this curricular direction provides learners with knowledge and skills to help address societal problems. Students have also been encouraged to connect with their society through volunteerism as a way to practice service and to connect with their communities (Touqan, 2005).

A study by Khaled Alazzi (2012), however, revealed that middle and high school students related citizenship to civic engagement and obligation but did not equate citizenship with political aspects such as voting. The reasons the students cited for dismissing the political nature of citizenship is that the education system emphasizes morality and virtue, as well as individuality and social relations. For example, ninth graders equated citizenship with “being good.” When asked about citizen participation in national development, secondary students focused on the importance of keeping their country clean and obeying the law. These findings are consistent with our review of the new curriculum, which emphasizes obedience as opposed to helping young Jordanians understand deeper meanings of citizenship. The textbooks depict a modern, democratic Jordanian society (e.g., respect for human rights) but do not necessarily encourage critical thinking about and engagement in national and international affairs.

To illustrate, *The National and Civic Education Textbook for 10th Grade Students* (The Ministry of Education, 2005) addresses the following areas: 1) the concepts of citizenship and citizens' rights and duties; 2) the principles of democracy in general and the Jordanian democratic experience; 3) the rights of women and children in society; 4) the role of political parties and political freedom in the Constitution; 5) tolerance and respect and their effect on human relations; 6) management and leadership (dictatorship vs. democratic); 7) human motivation theories; and, 8) an introduction to active institutions and their functions in the country (e.g., the Control and Inspection Bureau, the armed force, and national security). A concept introduced to 10th grade students is 'active citizenship' and the features of good citizens, which entails believing in God and his messengers, respecting the law and regulations, respecting other opinions, taking responsibility, paying taxes to the government, showing loyalty to the country, and participating in problem solving. The assignment asks learners to identify features of the "good" student and to share those characteristics with their peers.

Another concept introduced is democracy, and the curriculum addresses the Jordanian democratic experience and the challenges to implementing democracy in a society with high unemployment and poverty. In these civic lessons, the difference between the democratic experience in Jordan as an Arab Islamic country and the democratic experience of Western countries is briefly addressed. Students are asked to think and give examples of the peculiarities of the Jordanian context. For example, Lesson Three in the 10th grade civic education textbook asks students to compare principles (articles) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights with Islamic law and to consider the merits of the latter. The national internal narrative of identity and heritage, loyalty to the monarchy, Islamic values in the society, and the distinctiveness of being Jordanian as opposed to an Arab from another nation, are integral elements of the curriculum and uphold the Ministry's educational philosophy and mission (Georg Eckert Institut, 2009). Compared to the old curriculum, the new curriculum seeks to integrate technology into classroom teaching and encourages students to broaden their knowledge through searching for information on a given subject (Georg Eckert Institut, 2009).

To examine factors influencing curriculum reform efforts in Jordan, Al-Dakkah (2011) conducted a large qualitative study involving interviews with diverse educational stakeholders. Despite the government's stated objective of developing students' critical thinking skills, the high stakes exam (i.e., *Tawjihi*) focuses on rote memorization and undermines some of the reform's more democratic aims. For example, Al-Anati (2010) found that only 20% of the questions on the *Tawjihi* require critical thinking. Thus, for university admittance, students need not focus on skills associated with the knowledge economy (e.g., critical thinking and problem solving); rather, students have learned that memorizing content as opposed to understanding and applying skills is the path to their educational and economic future (Al-Dakkah, 2011). Because the exam content is drawn practically verbatim from the official school textbooks, "teachers need to teach exactly what the textbooks contain, not skills or applications" (p. 3).

In their *Citizenship in the Arab World* report, Faour and Muasher (2011) asserted that ERfKE, which heavily emphasizes technical aspects such as building and equipping schools with computers to improve test scores especially in mathematics and science, has missed the basic element of schooling, namely "what it means to be citizens who learn how to think, seek and produce knowledge, question, and innovate rather than be subjects of the state who are taught what to think and how to behave" (p. 1). Because the Jordanian government seeks to have its version of history, values, and religion imparted to the next generation, national civic curriculum in Jordan's public

schools focuses on state ideology and moral and religious norms and values. This heavy emphasis has contributed to limited opportunities for students to engage in social critique and assessment. According to the United Nations Development Programme (2003), Jordanian schools, not unlike other Arab countries, “instill obedience and submission to a regime rather than freedom of thought and critical thinking” (p. 11).

Although ER/KE acquainted some educators with modern teaching methods and technology, the project did not formally address citizenship education or ensure that active participatory techniques were implemented (Faour & Muasher, 2011). Moreover, Jordanians have challenged the curricula’s emphasis on science and technology because they want to ensure that the centrality of Islam and the family unit, with gender-specific roles, are reinforced in the school’s curriculum. The Georg Eckert Institut (2009) found that secondary level history textbooks do not portray the roles that women play in Jordanian society past or present. When women are featured, they are spoken of in terms of their family roles or as fulfilling particular “gender appropriate” positions in textiles, teaching, and nursing. Although equal to men in the area of educational attainment, women largely do not obtain jobs in the private sector, which pays more and is occupied by men.

A recent comparative study of national civic curricula in Jordan and Malaysia revealed different experiences in relation to national identity development and nation building. According to Khader (2012), Jordanian curricula address allegiance to the regime and the nation with no attention given to social conflicts among various groups in the society and their causes. Malaysia, however, has experienced success in addressing concepts such as multiculturalism and tolerance, which are viewed as central to Malaysian national identity development (Khader, 2012). Despite the Ministry of Education’s efforts, the failure of teachers in Jordan to participate effectively in the current education reform process is attributed to a lack of awareness of their new roles brought by the reform and the lack of appropriate skills and tools to perform their new tasks (Al-Dakkah, 2011).

Data Collection: Method and Participants

To investigate teacher perspectives of the national civic curriculum, individual interviews were conducted with a total of 24 teachers (14 females and 10 males) from 16 different schools in the Ma’an Governorate who teach the civic curriculum in Grades 4-12. The teachers were chosen from Ma’an, a conservative region of the country, and the largest governorate (province) in Jordan. The city of Ma’an is located on the main road linking Syria with Saudi Arabia and is a rest area for pilgrims traveling to Mecca from other countries. Compared to culturally diverse Amman (e.g., home to Circassians, Chechens, Iraqis, Lebanese, Palestinians, Syrians, and East Jordanians), Ma’an is composed mainly of East Jordanians (those not of Palestinian origin). Ma’an is also considered one of the underprivileged areas in the southern part of Jordan due to the relative lack of social services in the area.

Each teacher interview was conducted in Arabic (and later translated into English) and lasted between 45-60 minutes. The participants’ teaching experiences ranged from 3-20 years. At each school, there were one or two teachers who taught the national and civic education curriculum at more than one grade level. Teachers were asked the following research questions: 1) What do you identify in students’ civic education curriculum as being imported from the West?; 2) What do you identify in students’ civic education curriculum as being more cultural, national, and Jordanian?; 3) Do you see tensions or a clash between cultural markers of identity and democratic aims?; 4) In

what ways do you work to make your curriculum culturally-relevant to the Jordanian context?; and, 5) How is citizenship presented and taught in the curriculum?

Findings: Teacher Perspectives of Civic Curriculum

In relation to the first research question, the majority of teacher participants did not perceive any topics in Jordan's civic curriculum as being imported from the West except, importantly, the concept of democracy, which they viewed as a new topic. One female teacher at School 16, who teaches Grades 4-10, asserted that the Jordanian civic curriculum fights any Western cultural influence. However, a male teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 6-8 & 10) at School 14 asserted that "there are many topics from the West, but all of them do not contradict with the Islamic Sharia (law). In reality, democracy is not applied in our society." Similarly, female teacher 1, who teaches Grades 8, 10, and 12 at School 4, emphasized that topics imported from the West such as "democracy and human rights do not contradict with our values because our religion gave us these rights [a] long time ago." In contrast, a Grades 6-10 male teacher at School 7 stated that the subject of birth control that appears in the Grade 6 curriculum is taken from the West. Several teachers also mentioned that 'globalization' is related to the West. A Grades 8-10 male teacher from School 9 suggested that a lesson on human rights for Grade 8 "aims to convince students that [the] civil rights set out in the United Nations declaration are the only solution to the world problems."

Some teachers reported that students find that their social reality contradicts with the principles of human rights, so the students are not convinced that what they study in school can change things in Jordan. In addition, a male teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 6-10, School 7) stated that democracy is presented only briefly to students, and thus more information should be taught about democracy and how it works in Jordanian society. A Grade 9 female teacher (Teacher 2, School 4) stated that some English terms used in the civic curriculum, such as 'ideology' and 'social change', are difficult for teachers and students to understand.

Regarding what the teachers identified in the civic education curriculum as being more cultural, national, and Jordanian, the majority of teachers reported that topics related to citizenship, loyalty to the King, and belonging to the country are emphasized. The Grade 4 and 5 curricula focus on agriculture, environment, the early battles of Islam, and initiatives of the royal family. In reference to the Grade 5 curriculum, one female teacher for Grades 4-7 at School 2 commented that, "it [the civic textbook] is a religious historical textbook." The civic curriculum in Grade 6 focuses on the Jordanian constitution, citizenship, human rights in Islam, and family. In Grade 7, topics such as good and bad behaviors in Jordanian culture, social security, social and economic problems, and scientific thinking are presented. The Grade 8 civic curriculum focuses on Jordanian peace troops, the rights of citizens, cultural values, Jordanian traditions, and issues related to youths. A male teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 6-8 & 10) from School 14 pointed out that Jordanian traditional values and the importance of family are also addressed in the Grade 8 curriculum.

In the ninth grade, the civic curriculum deals with topics such as tolerance, cooperation, social change, economic security, administrative and educational institutions in Jordan, "authenticity and contemporaneity" (focused on family disintegration and technology use), and cultural shock as the result of people moving from villages to larger cities. A female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 4-6 & 9-10, School 1) stated, "There is reference to Islamic history and Caliph when topics related to ministries and their functions are discussed in the ninth grade." The civic curriculum for Grade 9 also includes the history of different sites and tourism in Jordan.

The *Amman Message* is one of the topics discussed in Grade 10. Released by King Abdullah II in 2004, the message represents an effort, as stated in the document, to present “the true image of Islam to the world.” In reference to the King’s ‘Jordan First’ Initiative, which seeks to instill national pride, unity, and an Islamic citizen identity, a female teacher (Teacher 2), who teaches Grades 10 and 12 at School 3, said that, “‘Jordan First’ is introduced to students in the 10th grade...I think it should be introduced to the primary national and civic education curriculums.” The concept of democracy is introduced in the Grade 10 and 12 curriculums. Yet, as the same teacher argued, there is no new information presented to 12th grade students with regards to the issue of democracy, and it is merely a repetition of the sections covered in the 10th grade. She added that, “I would prefer if it [democracy] was presented in a different way.” Another female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 9-10 & 12, School 6) mentioned that the history textbooks focus on the history of Jordan, but, despite this emphasis, students do not know much about the history of their country. The national royal anthem and the country’s security maintenance are topics used to emphasize national loyalty and belonging in Grade 10. In Grade 12, the role of the Hashemite family is presented in detail, as well as the historical relationship with neighboring countries such as Iraq and Saudi Arabia. As one female teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 4, 7-9, & 12, School 2) expressed, the curriculum book contains only condensed information about Jordan’s neighbors.

With regard to aspects presented in the civic curriculum, one female teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 10 & 12, School 3) stated, “Every topic that covers the history of the Jordanian country to the present time reinforces the cultural and Jordanian identity.” As a male teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 4-7) from School 12 explained, “curriculums of the sixth, seventh, and tenth grades give more attention to loyalty and belonging to the Jordanian culture...they also focus on the Arabic traditions.” A female teacher at School 4 (Teacher 1, Grades 8-10 & 12) offered a particularly interesting observation that reinforces how factors outside school may yield more influence than modest modernizing aims within schools:

“A lesson about political parties in Jordan is presented to students in the tenth grade curriculum...My students refuse to talk about parties in the class. Parents ask their daughters not to give opinions about political parties...People do not understand the meaning of belonging to a political party because they think parties work against the country.”

A female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 9 & 12) from School 3 stated that there are “no examples on the political parties and their trends mentioned in the curriculum. Students do not see [the] link between concepts and real life.” In general, the interviews revealed that many topics are repeated in the curriculum of all grades. Moreover, most teachers commented that civic education curricula do not focus on national and international issues. Only one teacher (Female Teacher 2, Grades 4, 7-9, School 1) asserted that students need to know more about the articles of the Jordanian Constitution.

As to whether teachers see any tensions or a clash between cultural markers of identity and democratic aims, some viewed all of the topics and concepts in the civic education curriculum as relevant to Jordanian culture and Islamic values. However, some teachers expressed that democracy does clash with cultural markers of identity. As a male respondent who teaches Grades 6-10 at School 7 explained, students confuse democracy and *shura* in Islam, suggesting that students think any concept imported from the West is something negative. Another male teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 6-8 & 10, School 14) commented that intellectual trends and totalitarianism are new topics for his students.

All of the 24 teachers who were interviewed did not see a clash between culture and the application of different (more democratic-oriented) learning styles, such as discussion, critical thinking, and role-play. Some teachers commented that the new educational reform trends are focused on student-centered learning. As a female teacher from School 6 explained, "I supervise my students in the class. All my students should [take] part in the class discussion. My role is to give them some instruction and direct them" (Teacher 1, Grades 9-10 & 12).

Those interviewed reported that their students have become more active participants in light of recent educational reform. Some teachers, however, mentioned that some topics are boring to students and that students participate in class discussion only if the topics are culturally relevant to them. Other teachers have noticed the application of critical thinking as students discuss issues such as social change, university education, and drug smuggling and trafficking. A Grade 10 male teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 6-8 & 10, School 14) asserted that due to brief elaborations in the textbook, the curriculum necessarily encourages students to think about concepts. However, a female teacher from School 1 (Teacher 1, Grades 4-6 & 9-10) disagreed: "Critical thinking skills are not used in my class. My students do not take seriously if lesson activities and questions require applying these skills. They think this [critical] question is not part of the curriculum."

In terms of how teachers make their curriculum culturally relevant to the Jordanian context, a female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 4-10, School 10) uses real-life examples and classroom discussion on topics that relate to students' lives. When she talked about Jordan's parliamentary elections, she also made reference to the student council elections:

"Candidates in the parliamentary elections are elected based on their tribal and familial affiliations...this is similar to [the] student council election in our school. Students are not elected based on their personal characteristics and performance.

Students are elected because they are from certain tribes. When elections in Jordan are discussed, my students make reference to real-life examples."

Another female teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 4 & 7-9, School 1) said, "I display information in a simple way because information and concepts covered in the curriculum introduced to my students are higher than their present level." For one educator (Teacher 1, Grades 8, 10, & 12) at School 4, she refers to Islam to make topics relevant to her students' real lives. For instance, when talking with her students about the value of education, she makes reference to Islam, explaining how Islam encourages people to learn, to get an education, and to know about other cultures. In contrast, some teachers reported that they look to external sources such as the Internet and books to explain concepts presented in the curriculum.

When asked how citizenship is presented and taught in the civic curriculum, the interviewees provided examples based on the grades they teach. As a female respondent (Teacher 1, Grades 4-7, School 2) explained, "The concept of citizenship is introduced to the sixth grade students. It has been defined briefly. Students are only asked to answer the following question: What is your role towards your country? It is our role [as teachers] to explain to students this term with examples." Another female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 9-10 & 12, School 6) mentioned that she tries to reinforce loyalty in her class by referring to certain behaviors such as cleaning the classroom, engaging in school, maintaining and keeping their school facilities and services, and giving relevant illustrations (e.g., election rights) to her students. In Grade 10, a female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 8-10, School 8) asks students to think about their societal role by giving real-life examples such as, "What do you do about a leaky pipe in the street?" A Grade 10 male teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 8-10, School 9) commented that citizenship in the curriculum focuses on "some values that students need to know

about how to be good citizens in their country, such as respect for laws and regulations, apply critical thinking without extremism, and loyalty to the ruler.” In Grade 12, citizenship as a concept is presented with reference to religion through Qur’anic verse. A female teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 10 & 12, School 3) stated that her Grade 12 students were surprised to hear there is an international day for tolerance. The same teacher thought that being aware of these concepts is a part of being a good citizen. Most teachers reported that they reinforce with students the notion of belonging to the classroom, school, family, and country.

Two teachers, however, felt that scant attention was being paid to citizenship, even when conceived primarily as that of belonging. For example, a male teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 6-8, School 13) said that “the concept of citizenship is not presented in the eighth grade curriculum, so I give examples on loyalty and human rights in Jordan.” A female teacher (Teacher 1, School 10) who has taught the curriculum in Grades 4-10 mentioned that citizenship as a concept is presented in one or two paragraphs in the curriculum, but teachers seek to elaborate on the concept in class and via the school radio. Another female teacher (Teacher 1, Grades 8, 10, & 12, School 4) reported that students have a weak sense of belonging to the country, explaining that students are not aware of how their engagement at school informs their role in the society at large. A Grade 9 female teacher (Teacher 2, Grades 5-10, School 5) mentioned that some activities in the civic curriculum require the Internet for technology-based activities, but there are no computers in her classrooms to use. In conclusion, two teachers—one female (Teacher 1, Grades 4-10, School 16) and one male (Teacher 1, Grades 6-10, School 7)—asserted that the curriculum should address the changing events in Jordanian society.

In general, the interview findings with teachers suggest that more attention in school is being given to the notion of belonging to family and country with only limited attention to helping students consider what Jordan is becoming as a result of political dissent, economic challenges, and human rights assertions associated with the Arab Spring and contemporary developments in the region. Although the teachers did not find difficulty with democracy as pedagogical practice, asserting that curricular reform has stimulated more active student participation in the classroom, the findings do suggest that teachers, and those they teach, wrestle with democracy as a concept. In fact, our findings suggest that conceptual thinking is an area that is challenging for educators and students, as teachers reported that there is difficulty in understanding concepts such as democracy, globalization, tolerance, and totalitarianism.

The degree to which critical questioning is made a part of the learning experience for students in Jordanian schools is an area that needs further research. Teachers did note that their students find a disconnect between democracy and their lived experiences in Jordan; moreover, school council elections, much like the elections in the society at large, are based on decisions about the *ethnie* (tribal and cultural affiliation, and attendant power and social arrangements in more localized settings), as opposed to conceiving the citizen as an abstract political subject and making judgments based upon personal characteristics and performance (Kubow, 2007). In summary, a hybrid curriculum in schools seems to accompany the hybrid sovereignty of the nation-state; that is, while teaching pedagogy in Jordan is being democratized, there is the upholding of more traditional and nationalistic features and a prescribed morality as manifested in the national civic curriculum in the primary and secondary grades.

Conclusion

The recent revolts in Arab countries, referred to as the “Arab Spring,” revolve around citizens’ grievances about their rulers, their nations’ declining economies, rising unemployment, and stagnant politics after long periods of mounting frustration and calls for political and economic reforms (Lynch, 2012). In 2011, a wave of protests influenced by the Arab Spring movement in the region began and are on-going in most of the Jordanian governorates. Led by trade unionists, leftist parties, and the Muslim Brotherhood, the protests in Jordan have not been like the protests in Tunisia and Egypt because the demonstrations in Jordan have not been against the monarchy. Rather, public demonstrations have been constructed on the grounds of necessity for more political freedom such as electoral law modification in favor of free and fair elections for a representative government (Köprülü, 2012) and economic reforms (e.g., lowering food and fuel prices and addressing the rising unemployment issue). Despite the establishment of a constitutional court and an independent election commission, most Jordanians are not convinced of “the seriousness—and the sustainability—of the reform process” (Muasher, 2013, p. 2). While Jordanians desire that reform processes be led by the monarchy, they are also no longer willing to live without more say and change in their country (Muasher, 2013).

Despite civic education reform efforts, a unified national identity has not been formed in Jordan. The development of civic culture in Jordan has been largely unsuccessful, and Jordanians generally perceive existing political parties to be weak and unrepresentative of most citizens’ needs and interests. Although Jordanians are asserting their desire for an elected government and not one appointed by the king, official school curriculum promotes a citizen identity and national narrative based on specific historical events such as the Arab Revolt, its Bedouin desert roots, and the Arab Islamic experience (Kubow, 2010). It seems unlikely, therefore, that “a new or reformed government will emerge that shows a diminished reliance upon tribes, and equally unlikely that tribes will agree to less representation and influence” (*Philosophy and Polity*, 2011, p. 5).

What seems to have emerged in Jordan is a hybridized citizen identity shaped by cultural markers such as tribal and religious identity alongside liberalization and some rights-oriented discussion. This study confirms what Jan Nederveen Pieterse (2004) suggests, namely that globalization as hybridization counters the viewpoint that globalization necessarily homogenizes, modernizes, and westernizes societies. A Western model of the liberal state is unlikely to emerge despite governmental and international pressures for ER/KE to help build a modern society. Jordan, as an artificially constructed and dependent nation, is entangled in nation-state survival, a pan-Arab commitment, and security concerns. These global-local forces compete with nation-building efforts and complicate the task of preparing students for citizenship in a knowledge economy.

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