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AUTOCRACY AFTER THE WELFARE STATE: YOUTH GOVERNANCE AND AUTHORITARIAN DURABILITY IN THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

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Abstract

For decades, autocracy and state distribution of jobs and welfare were closely intertwined. However, in recent decades, many autocracies—whether austerity-stricken, hydrocarbon-reliant, or post-communist—have scaled back distributive commitments by shrinking public sector employment schemes, subsidies, and welfare provisions. In the place of distributive state institutions, a new set of political entities called Government-Operated NGOs (GONGOs) have emerged in a wide range of autocracies: in Russia, China, Egypt, UAE, Malaysia, Kazakhstan, and Ethiopia, to name a few. Often funded by regimes, GONGOs operate semi-independently and ostensibly in civil society. With their hybridity and elusiveness, GONGOs challenge how scholars think about autocracies as typically seeking to dominate the public sphere and assert citizen dependence on formal state institutions.

Through an analysis of youth GONGOs in Jordan, this dissertation addresses the puzzle of why authoritarian regimes clothe themselves in the garb of GONGOs. Existing explanations highlight either coercion—that GONGOs' hybridity allows regimes to operate in civil society and crowd out independent actors—or legitimacy—that GONGOs help project a veneer of pluralism to both international and national audiences. In contrast, I argue that GONGOs are key institutional mechanisms helping to insulate the monarchy from the demise of the distributive state while managing citizens' changing expectations of the state in the context of autocracies' abandonment of distribution and welfare. Because distributive state institutions (consisting of formal government institutions) are increasingly producing tragic outcomes (youth unemployment, rising living costs through subsidies removal), GONGOs shift the locus of interpellation—the site of the regime's address of citizens—away from the distributive state which has historically addressed citizens at the site of their subsistence needs and aspirations to economic security. Instead, GONGOs circumvent the distributive state to directly foster attachments to the monarchy while encouraging citizens to extract themselves from state dependence and to care for themselves. Moreover, GONGOs help protect the regime from citizens' claims-making by displacing the state as a unitary object of grievances. The kind of acquiescence that GONGOs produce rests not on legitimacy or coercion but on persuading citizens not to regard the state as an irredeemable stumbling block to individual flourishing, even amidst extreme economic uncertainty.

In making these arguments, this dissertation focuses particularly on Jordanian youth whose growing frustrations amid unemployment and economic immiseration are particularly threatening to regime stability. This dissertation builds on immersive fieldwork—interviews and ethnography—in Jordanian youth GONGOs in addition to archival research on historical youth governance. The dissertation seeks to contribute to bridging the literatures on autocratic institutions, on the one hand, and neoliberalism, as a macroeconomic policy program and an ideology that seeks to install competition and enterprise into almost every facet of life, on the other hand. GONGOs provide an ideal vantage point through which to explore evolving modes of state-making and unmaking and the way in which citizens experience, adapt to, and occasionally resist autocracies' evolving strategies in the post-welfare era.

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Chapter 1. Introduction

On a Monday morning in November 2019, I visited the University of Jordan's Faculty of Physical Education. The college is detached from the university's main campus and located among many of Jordan's major sports facilities in the Al-Hussein Sports City on Queen Rania Street, one of Amman's major thoroughfares. After explaining the purpose of my visit to the distrustful security personnel at the entrance, a guard called a nearby male student and asked him to escort me to my destination. The student took me to the college's main assembly hall, which quickly filled with students chatting or looking at their phones. The students were waiting for an event titled "Exploring Careers Options in Entrepreneurship." It was organized in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week, an annual week-long program of events and workshops organized by the Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship, a so-called Government Operated-NGO (GONGO), a type of organization which is connected to the regime but operates semi-independently and ostensibly in civil society.

The Faculty of Physical Education campus is run down, which demonstrates a lack of funding for public higher education. The assembly hall has brown wall panels, and blinking fluorescent lighting irregularly beams from wall fixtures. The stage, which is located in front of a tiered seating arrangement, was covered in a ripped red carpet. A dated picture of a young King Abdullah with an illegible quotation adorned one side of the wall, while a contemporaneous image of Queen Rania covered the other. There were two pulpits, each covered in old, frayed stickers.

With a few minutes of lateness, the vice dean, a formally dressed middle-aged woman, ascended the stage and introduced the session. To put the audience in the right spirit, she played a YouTube video titled "20 Principles You Should Live By To Get Everything You Want In Life!" It was a standard inspirational film like the ones I have seen many times when attending similar workshops and talks. The visuals included stock images; suit-clad, well-groomed men looking out of glass-and-steel office towers in Manhattan; students working late and alone in an Ivy League library; and close-ups of slim, perspiring athletes. The voiceover included lines such as “There are no reasonable limits relating to what you can achieve other than those that exist in your own mind”; “Successful people don’t make excuses or blame others…everyone carries our own baggage in life, some let go of it and push forward without the weight of excuses on their backs”; “If your life doesn’t feel like a blessing, learn how to shift your focus”; and “Successful people think about what they are going to get at the end of the process. They are happy to sacrifice now, knowing they will be rewarded later.”

Halfway through the video, the vice dean paused it and introduced the session’s speakers. A group of people entered the hall, and walked along the path between the stage and the first row. The vice dean opened a different window in the web browser and pressed play on a music video to provide upbeat music for the group to walk to the stage. The guests were two successful gym owners and alumni of the college, Nasr al-Sheikh and Alaa Badr; both are widely known for presenting exercise videos on national television. The presence of al-Sheikh was particularly noteworthy. He had the charisma and presence of an actor in his casual but expensive clothing. Against the background of the dilapidated and dark assembly hall, he seemed as though he had emerged from another world. Al-Sheikh and Badr spoke about their humble beginnings and described their long hours working as personal trainers and gym receptionists every day after college. “Anyone can make it in business if you work hard enough,” said Al-Sheikh.

The Puzzle of GONGOs

This scene from the College of Physical Education exemplifies a contradiction facing youth in Jordan and beyond. On the one hand, young people experience economic hardship, austerity, and unemployment, partly because the state no longer provides sufficient life chances for young citizens through education, welfare, and public sector employment. On the other hand, youth are encouraged to dream big and adopt an aspirational consciousness, a message typically mediated by GONGOs like the Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship, seemingly in contradiction with tragic economic outcomes that the state produces. Through a study of Jordanian youth GONGOs, this dissertation asks why authoritarian regimes clothe themselves in the garb of GONGOs? Why do authoritarian regimes construct hybrid institutions that simultaneously identify as regime and civil society actors and whose activities are often at odds with state policy?

Beyond the almost laughable oxymoron, scholars must seriously consider GONGOs as critical nodes in evolving authoritarian state-society relations. In their most general form, GONGOs are hybrid civil society organizations established by regime actors; however, they operate outside of or on the fringes of states, ruling parties, or monarchies.[1] The activities of GONGOs are often similar to those of regular NGOs, such as promoting skills and worldviews to enable participants to more actively engage in communities or markets. GONGOs typically tap into the languages of regular NGOs (including international NGOs [INGOs]), languages of human rights, market efficiency, best practices, and empowerment and mobilize it to serve the regime's goals.[2] Some GONGOs implement projects tailored to certain social groups, such as youth or women (e.g., the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation and the Russian youth group Nashi), while others undertake specific governmental tasks (e.g., the China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation).

It is important to analyze GONGOs as a standalone critical phenomenon but also as instances of a broader decentering of authoritarian governance away from certain state institutions. Such decentering may result in the devolution of governance to hybrid actors such as GONGOs or relying on proxies such as citizen success stories and influencers to address citizens rather than regime speeches, laws, or decrees. Recognizing that citizens are now increasingly embedded in global circuits of labor, migration, and media, regimes may also rely on deterritorialized entities such as the global market to address citizens as subjects of spatially diffused economic forces. Thus, this inquiry into why GONGOs operate as semi-official, hybrid organizations provides a vantage point from which to analyze these broader landscapes of shifting governance among contemporary authoritarian regimes.

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[1] Moises Naim, "What Is a GONGO? How Government-sponsored Groups Masquerade as Civil Society," *Foreign Policy,* October 13, 2009, accessed May 3, 2018, http://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/13/what-is-a-gongo/.

[2] As many scholars have pointed out, "NGOization" and the "will to improve" often render political problems technical and thereby depoliticize social and political issues (e.g., Murray Li 2007, Ferguson 1994).

Traditionally, scholars have understood authoritarian regimes as naturally inclined to present themselves as unitary by papering over all their inherent contradictions and fragmentations. Researchers have argued that creating the appearance of the state's unity communicates that it has the resources to dominate individuals while generating an aura of invincibility.[3] As Joel Migdal remarked, "The more the state seems all-powerful, the more likely are subjects to accept it in their ordinary lives and, in the process, reduce the burden of enforcing all its dictates."[4] The logic is that, by conveying their power and cohesion, regimes may foster "passivity" and "a sense of resignation to the regime's rule."[5] More than anything, as Andreas Schedler has argued, communicating regime cohesion undermines potential challenges from below or within a regime.[6]

Due to their hybridity and semi-informality, GONGOs confound this conventional wisdom of authoritarian politics about the centrality of projecting regime cohesion. Moreover, they challenge how we approach the state not only as a coercive apparatus but also as a provider and distributor of livelihoods. In many autocracies, the provision of welfare through regular state institutions has both induced acquiescence to authoritarian rule and contributed to the naturalization of the administrative state's presence in citizens' lives. Jordan is a case in point. Through state employment and subsidies, the regime has fueled citizens' dependence on the state, thus overcoming credible commitment problems while asserting the state in the quotidian experience of being Jordanian. However, in recent decades, Jordan and autocracies around the world have abandoned state distribution and welfare policies, and GONGOs have emerged in its wake. In this context, I bring the analysis of GONGOs to bear on thinking about the redrawing of state power and citizenship in 21st-century autocracies.

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[3] Andreas Schedler and Bert Hoffmann, "Communicating Authoritarian Elite Cohesion," *Democratization* 23, no. 1 (January 2016): 93–117, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2015.1095181.

[4] Joel S. Migdal, *State in Society: Studying How States and Societies Transform and Constitute One Another* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 114.

[5] Alexander Dukalskis & Johannes Gerschewskis, "What Autocracies Say (and What Citizens Hear): Proposing Four Mechanisms of Autocratic Legitimation," *Contemporary Politics* 23, no. 3 (March 2017): 251-268, 255, 259, https://doi.org/10.1080/13569775.2017.1304320.

[6] Andreas Schedler, *The Politics of Uncertainty: Sustaining and Subverting Electoral Authoritarianism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013): 47–49.

In Jordan, GONGOs have assumed leadership of the regime's youth governance in particular.[7] As a group, youth are at the heart of renegotiating expectations of the autocratic welfare state. On the one hand, youth are uniquely vulnerable to neoliberal economic shifts. In periods of shrinking government spending, recruitment freezes in the public sector affect younger people the hardest. In contrast to youth, older generations may have saved money during more prosperous times or invested in real estate before the market boomed. On the other hand, because they have not yet formed rigid expectations of the state, youth may be a more willing party to renegotiate the terms of the social contract. Jordanian youth GONGOs recruit youth to various programs and initiatives and often promote entrepreneurialism, civic activism, and youth empowerment. By sometimes relying on foreign aid and other times on regime resources, GONGOs operate across the kingdom. They frequently call upon businessmen and former ministers who are trusted by the regime to serve on their board of directors, and they recruit well-educated staff to run its day-to-day operations.

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[7] There are different definitions of youth. The UN refers to youth as people aged between 15 and 24. However, the Jordanian government adopts a wider definition, as those aged between 12 and 30. In the Arabic World, the term for "youth" – *shabab* – is often used for people older than 30. I will define youth as citizens between 18 and 30.

Far from being a soft issue, youth governance has become integral to regime security. At nearly 40 percent, Jordan has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world.[8] This is partly due to a youth bulge, whereby over two-thirds of the population was of working age in 2020 compared to only half of the population 40 years ago,[9] and partly due to the regime's reluctance and inability to provide livelihoods. Despite shrinking opportunities, Jordanian youth have continued to pursue higher education and a transition to adulthood characterized by longer schooling, a search for formal wage employment, and later marriage.[10]

Today, as the gap between aspirations and economic realities widens, Jordanian youth face the threat of becoming surplus population in relation to the state and capital, as they are needed by neither the private sector nor the public sector. When youth are unable to reproduce culturally expected forms of adulthood, the ambiguous phase between childhood and adulthood expands and young people are stuck in an extended period of youthhood, which some scholars have called "waithood."[11] In Jordan, "sitting at home" (*Gāʿid fil-Bayt*) is a common way to describe unemployed friends and family. Stories of depression and hopelessness abound, and youth are marrying later. Many young people emigrate, and nearly every young person with a university degree, especially young men, at least consider emigration or actively report daydreaming about it.[12]

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[8] Among 15-24-year-olds. Jordan is surpassed only by seven among the 262 countries of the world. "Unemployment, youth total (percent of the total labor force ages 15-24)," *World Bank*, accessed May 15, 2023, https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS.

[9] World Bank, "Resolving Jordan's Labor Market Paradox of Concurrent Economic Growth and High Unemployment," *Social and Economic Development Group Middle East and North Africa Region,* (December 23, 2008): 2, https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/pt/297601468273320614/text/392011JO0ESW0P11PUBLIC10Box334128B0.txt.

[10] Ragui Assaad, Caroline Krafft, and Colette Salemi, "Socioeconomic Status and The Changing Nature of School-To-Work Transitions in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia," *The Economic Research Forum,* Working Paper No. 1287 (February 2019). The number of students attending Jordanian universities increased from around 30.000 in 1986 to over 100.000 in 1999. Willy Jansen, "Gender and the Expansion of University Education in Jordan," *Gender and Education* 18, no.5 (November 2006): 473-490, 475, DOI: 10.1080/09540250600881600. Meanwhile, unemployment continued to grow far beyond the absorptive capacity of the shrinking public sector. In 1995, Minister of Higher Education, Ratib al-Saud, said in an interview with a newspaper that in the past academic degrees were a ticket to a respectable position and that today they are a ticket to the unemployment supply." Yitzhak Reiter, "Higher Education and Sociopolitical Transformation in Jordan," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 2 (November 2002): 137-164, 143, 10.1080/1353019022000012641

[11] Alcinda Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change and Politics in Africa* (Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press. 2012); Craig Jeffrey, *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2010).

Aspiring youth with limited prospects typically spell trouble for authoritarian regimes. A substantial body of academic literature has illustrated the connection between discontented youth and political upheaval.[13] Indeed, the political economy of youth economic redundancy (in relation to state and capital) was a pivotal antecedent to the youth-led social movements of the Arab Uprisings, which emerged as a restless young generation with rising expectations saw its aspirations crushed by entrenched systems of corruption and nepotism, combined with elites' looting of national economies in the name of neoliberal reforms.[14] The threat that youth pose to the status quo was also raised by United Nation's Development Program's Arab Human Development Report, which noted that the rise of the "most well-educated" generation in the Arab region's history may "constitute a destabilizing force," "an overwhelming power for destruction," and a threat that will reshape "the region's security landscape."[15]

Thus, given the political gravity of contemporary youth governance, it is puzzling that the Jordanian regime outsources this to a set of GONGOs rather than the tried and tested apparatuses of ministries and public sector entities. The devolution of youth governance to institutions autonomous from the state's distributive and coercive arms to GONGOS is particularly surprising, given the security risks posed by a massive, largely unemployed youth population to autocracies that survived the Arab Uprisings, such as Jordan. In contrast, in the past, youth governance was monopolized by the Jordanian Ministry of Youth and its forebears (the Youth Care Foundation and the Higher Council for Youth.) Run in a scientific-bureaucratic mode, these institutions established youth centers throughout the kingdom providing youth with meaningful spare-time activities while inculcating a sense of loyalty and patriotism. However, over the past few decades, the regime has increasingly circumvented the Ministry of Youth, preferring to rely on a growing number of GONGOs. In other autocracies, many regimes have also abandoned the youth wings of ruling parties and Ministries of Youth in favor of networks of NGOs, GONGOs, international organizations, foundations, and private sector entities.[16] This dissertation asks why. Why do authoritarian regimes outsource governance to GONGOs? What kind of political work does GONGOs' do? What does GONGOs reveal about shifting state-society relations in autocracies in an era when expectations on state and citizens are in flux?

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[12] According to one survey, 59 percent of all Jordanian youth are considering emigrating. Only in 2013-2019 did the number of Jordanians reporting a wish to emigrate shoot up from 22 percent to 45 percent. Michael Robbins, "Migration in the Middle East and North Africa" *Arab Barometer* (June 2019) https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV_Migration_Report_Public-Opinion_Arab-Barometer_2019.pdf.

[13] Scholars have registered a statistical relationship between youthful societies and political instability. For example, youth bulges are related to increased state repression (Nordås and Davenport 2012), revolutions (Goldstone 1991), civil conflict (Mesquida and Weiner 1999), and "domestic armed conflict, terrorism, and riots/violent demonstrations" (Urdal 2006). As Jack Goldstone notes in his comprehensive work on the history of revolutions, "it has typically been the case that revolutionary youth movements have been preceded by a vast expansion in secondary or higher education that exceeds the expansion in opportunities for further upward career mobility."[13] This is particularly likely among the educated classes.

[14] See e.g., Gilbert Achcar, *The People Want: A Radical Exploration of the Arab Uprising* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013); Walter Armbrust "Egypt: A revolution against neoliberalism? If rebellion results in a retrenchment of neoliberalism, millions will feel cheated," *Al-Jazeera*, February 24, 2011, accessed May 15, 2023, https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2011/2/24/egypt-a-revolution-against-neoliberalism; Asef Bayat, "A New Arab Street in post-Islamist Times," *Foreign Policy*, January 26, 2011, accessed May 15, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2011/01/26/a-new-arab-street-in-post-islamist-times/; Diane Singerman, "Youth, Gender, and Dignity in the Egyptian Uprising," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 9, no. 3 (2013); 1-27; Adam Hanieh, *Lineages of Revolt: Issues of Contemporary Capitalism in the Middle East* (Chicago, Il: Haymarket Books, 2013).

[15] Cited from Mayssoun Sukarieh, "The Rise of the Arab Youth Paradigm and the AHDR 2016," *Middle East – Topics & Arguments* 9 (2017): 78-79.

Explaining GONGOs

The literature on GONGOs has advanced three major explanatory frameworks for understanding the political work that GONGOs do coercion, legitimacy, and service provision. First, GONGOs' elusiveness can do coercive work. Some GONGOs are themselves coercive organizations, such as the Syrian Electronic Army, a group of hackers that targets political opposition groups and other actors for purposes of digital sabotage.[17] While it is not a traditional NGO, the Syrian Electronic Army gains strength by upholding murky relations with the regime that it serves.[18] Other GONGOs coerce independent civil society actors. In particular, by masquerading as NGOs and operating in similar spaces, GONGOs crowd out the activities, voices, and funding sources of regular NGOs.[19] In Jordan, as Wiktorowicz showed, GONGOs crowd out and capture funding that might otherwise be awarded to independent organizations, which keeps NGOs anemic.[20] Mopping up foreign aid earmarked for social development is compounded by international donors' tendency to favor well-organized GONGOs over smaller NGOs with questionable efficiency and reliability.[21]

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[16] See, e.g., Sukarieh and Tannock (2015) for an excellent exposition of the institutional landscape of global youth governance.

[17] Dara Conduit (2023) "Digital Authoritarianism and The Devolution of Authoritarian Rule: Examining Syria's Patriotic Hackers," *Democratization* (Published online March 2023) 10.1080/13510347.2023.2187781

Aside from coercion, GONGOs—or "Potemkin NGOs"[22]— and their elusive nature can help autocracies legitimize their rule. In Turkey, GONGOs have allowed the government to create a pluralist veneer, "building an impression of a vibrant community in which individuals are autonomously mobilizing."[23] Some GONGOs explicitly support authoritarian incumbents. For example, in Kyrgyzstan, the Association of Non-commercial and Non-governmental Organizations ran a national campaign in 2004 to ask the sitting autocrat, Askar Akayev, to run for reelection.[24] Moreover, to legitimize elections, authoritarian governments often invite ostensibly independent elections observers known as "zombie observers" to monitor undemocratic elections "in order to generate the appearance of a level electoral playing field."[25] For example, the Russian GONGO Commonwealth of Independent States sent zombie observers to lend credence to the noncompetitive 2006 presidential elections in Belarus, and the Chinese GONGO Shanghai Cooperation Organization sent zombie observers to the 2018 Cambodian general elections.[26]

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[18] Ibid.

[19] In a study of Chinese GONGOs, Hasmath et al. (2019) note that in "the organizational ecology in the civil society sector," GONGOs "are more likely to be those that thrive." Edward Schatz (2006) has observed the same tendency in Central Asian autocracies.

[20] Quintan Wiktorowicz, "The Political Limits to Nongovernmental Organizations in Jordan," *World Development* 30, No. 1 (2002): 77-93, 85, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0305-750X(01)00092-4.

[21] Alisher Ilkhamov, "The Thorny Path of Civil Society in Uzbekistan," *Central Asian Survey* 24, no.3. (September 2005); 297–317. Vincent Durac and Francesco Cavatorta, "Strengthening authoritarian rule through democracy promotion? Examining the paradox of the US and EU security strategies. The case of Bin Ali's Tunisia," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no 1. (2009); 3–19. For example, in Jordan, the EU used the National Center for Human Rights (NCHR) as the leading implementing partner in one of its democracy-promotion initiatives. The only problem is that the NCHR is a GONGO, established by royal decree and previously headed by a former director of the intelligence agency (GID). Schuetze 2019

[22] Julie Hemment, "Nashi, Youth Voluntarism, and Potemkin NGOs: Making Sense of Civil Society in Post-Soviet Russia," *Slavic Review* 71, no. 2 (2012): 234-260, 10.1017/S0037677900013607.

[23] Bilge Yabancı, "Civil Society and Latent Mobilisation Under Authoritarian Neoliberal Governance," in *Authoritarian Neoliberalism and Resistance in Turkey*, ed. Borsuk, İ., Dinç, P., Kavak, S., Sayan, P.. Palgrave Macmillan, Singapore, 2021. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-4213-5_10

[24] Moises Naim, "What Is a GONGO? How government-sponsored groups masquerade as civil society," *Foreign Policy,* October 13, 2009, accessed May 15, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/13/what-is-a-gongo/. Similarly, the Myanmar Women's Affairs Federation, run by army wives, is a critic of the opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

According to some scholars, GONGOs also help legitimize regimes in the international community. As Lewis has observed, GONGOs "[ensure] that the state [conform] to a global discourse of civil society that helps to define the state as a legitimate member of international society."[27] In the case of Jordan, GONGOs and the attendant pluralist veneer that they lend to the regime have helped the regime sustain a narrative of democratization, which, as Schuetze showed, has been critical to sustaining global acclaim and maintaining the inflow of aid. Moreover, some GONGOs have resorted to stealth to gain international access the United Nations (UN) and other international institutions for lobbying purposes, often by posing as representatives of civil society actors.[28] In Jordan, one critical purpose of GONGOs is to channel aid resources into regime-controlled projects and initiatives.

Finally, aside from coercion and legitimacy, scholars have claimed that GONGOs may use their hybridity to make authoritarian regimes work better. Some GONGOs deliver social services,[29] while others make the entire state apparatus function more smoothly. For example,

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[25] As Bush and Prather notes, "autocrats believe zombie monitors will increase citizens' trust in elections (52)… distract the public's attention from the efforts of more credible observers." Sarah Sunn Bush & Lauren Prather, Monitors and Meddlers: Monitors and Meddlers How Foreign Actors Influence Local Trust in Elections (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), 102.

[26] Bush and Prather, *Monitors and Meddlers*, 101-102.

[27] David Lewis, "Civil Society and the Authoritarian State: Cooperation, Contestation and Discourse," *Journal of Civil Society* 9, no. 3 (2013): 325-340, 329, 10.1080/17448689.2013.818767. See Ziegler, C. E., "Civil society, political stability, and state power in Central Asia: Cooperation and contestation." Democratization,17(5) (2010) 795–825.

[28] Moises Naim, "What Is a GONGO? How government-sponsored groups masquerade as civil society," *Foreign Policy,* October 13, 2009, accessed May 15, 2023, https://foreignpolicy.com/2009/10/13/what-is-a-gongo/.

[29] Mine Eder, "Retreating state? Political economy of welfare regime change in Turkey," *Middle East Law and Governance 2,* no.2. (January 2010): 152–184. Salam Kawakibi, "The paradox of government-organized civil activism in Syria," in *Civil society in Syria and Iran: Activism in Authoritarian Contexts,* ed. P Aarts & F. Cavatorta (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013), 169–187.

Hsu et al. conceived of Chinese GONGOs as "transmission belts" between the state, party, and citizenry.[30] Sometimes, GONGOs offer avenues for testing and experimenting with social and economic policy before introducing them to broader populations. In China, GONGOs have been used to implement experimental social policies and served as "lightning rods." As Hasamath et al. noted, "the *perceived* distance between the government and a GONGO can insulate the state from negative consequences when such policies go wrong…when GONGOs do well their ties to it can be used to credit the government; when they fail, their distance can be used to insulate the government from criticism."[31]

Protecting the Regime from the Demise of State Distribution

Jordanian youth GONGOs partly map onto all of the aforementioned theoretical frameworks. However, beyond coercion, legitimation, and service provision, I argue that GONGOs are key institutional mechanisms helping to insulate the monarchy from the demise of the distributive state while managing citizens' changing expectations of the state in the context of autocracies' abandonment of distribution and welfare. Because the distributive state is increasingly producing tragic outcomes (youth unemployment, rising living costs through subsidies removal, etc.), GONGOs shift the locus of interpellation—the site of the regime's address of citizens—away from distributive state institutions (consisting of formal government institutions) which have historically addressed citizens at the site of their subsistence needs and aspirations to economic security.[32] Instead, GONGOs circumvent the distributive state to directly foster attachments to the monarchy while encouraging citizens to care for themselves.

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[30] Jennifer Hsu, Carolyn Hsu, & Reza Hasmath, "NGO Strategies in an Authoritarian Context, and Their Implications for Citizenship: The Case of the People's Republic of China," *Voluntas* 28 (2016): 1157–1179, https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9806-0.

[31] Reza Hasmath, Timothy Hildebrandt, and Jennifer YJ Hsu, "Conceptualizing Government-Organized Non-Governmental Organizations," *Journal of Civil Society* 15, no.3 (2019): 267-284.

[32] By interpellation, I mean, following Althusser (2014), how "ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects." By recognizing the "hailing," of responding when called, the subject comes into being as a subject of ideology. By studying the politics of address, I draw on Althusser's claim that "all ideology hails or interpellates concrete individuals as concrete subjects." (264) Through the practice of

Shifting interpellation away from the distributive state and towards GONGOs does a range of political work. First, GONGOs help shift the site of hope away from the state and towards individuals themselves. As I show in Chapter 2, youth governance in Jordan used to be concerned with reminding youth of the indispensable role of Hashemite leadership in Jordanian nation-state-building while reasserting state presence in youth lives by organizing their time. Based on a scientific-bureaucratic mode of governance, the Ministry of Youth and its forebears opened youth centers throughout the kingdom and invited youth to perform meaningful leisure time activities while inculcating Jordanian patriotism. With the neoliberalization of the economy and the regime's gradual abandonment of state distribution, the narratives that dominated youth governance in the past of the caring, shepherding, and benevolent state began to chafe against youth's lived experience of increasingly being left to fend for themselves. Previously a reminder of its munificence, the state's presence in youth lives became a constant reminder of betrayal and circumscribed horizons. Instead, rather than emphasizing the state's role in caring for its citizens, youth governance began to emphasize youth's self-care; it began to privatize hope. Youth governance was devolved to powerful GONGOs that began promoting self-reliance as a source of optimism. Today, GONGOs produce individualized forms of hope through entrepreneurialism, as I analyze in Chapter 5, and civic engagement, as I explore in Chapter 6.

Aside from privatizing hope, in a country such as Jordan, where there are intense conflicts over the state's role in providing for the population, GONGOs contribute to decentering the state as the unitary object of grievances and claims-making. By prying open a gap between state and regime, GONGOs foster attachment to the regime and thereby insulate

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recognizing the "hailing" (i.e., of responding when called), the subject comes into being as a subject of ideology. Interpellation is effective when citizens recognize themselves in certain forms of address and when, as Mazzarella (2017, 28) explained, they "become the selves that (they) are in moments of encounter such that we experience that becoming as 'fated.'"

the regime from grievances arising from the increasingly neglectful distributive state. Moreover, by promoting self-reliance and extraction from state dependence, GONGOs help youth exercise agency by seeking to recover a sense of useful citizenship amid the threat of becoming a surplus population in relation to public and private sector needs.

As a mode of acquiescence, self-reliance rests not on legitimacy or coercion but also on persuading citizens to stop regarding the distributive state as an irredeemable stumbling block to individual development. To this end, GONGOs' decentering of state power amplifies the spaces in which citizens can look after themselves. As Aradhana Sharma illustrates in her work on Indian GONGOs, these organizations "[reconfigure] its [the state's] identity and role as a facilitator of self-actualization and self-development, rather than simply a provider and caretaker."[33]

This argument builds on a key distinction between the state and regime. In reality, the monarchy (regime) and the state are closely intertwined and difficult to distinguish. The king appoints the prime minister who forms the government, the king signs or vetoes all laws that emerge from the parliament, appoints judges, can amend the constitution, and dissolve the parliament; moreover, the king unilaterally appoints the heads of the armed forces, the intelligence service, and the gendarmerie. Moreover, a political and economic elite—which also constitutes the regime—with intimate ties to the monarchy also operates in the state, including MPs, businessmen consulting on economic policy, ministers appointed from the private sector, etc. However, despite this deep entanglement between regime and state, when it suits its purposes, the monarchy sometimes looks after its own reproduction by distancing itself from the broader state.[34] The king regularly put forward a narrative of standing above the petty politicking of parliament and government. The king often deals with national crises by blaming the government and replacing the prime minister. A favorite strategy of the Jordanian regime has been to proclaim the importance of—and even willingness to devolve powers to—representative bodies like the parliament while at the same time carefully designing the electoral system to deliver unresponsive and corrupt legislative bodies. The king also regularly talks of stamping out corruption and nepotism within state institutions while at the same time fostering rent-seeking behaviors of bureaucrats.

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[33] Aradhana Sharma, *Logics of Empowerment: Development, Gender, and Governance in Neoliberal India* (University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 59.

[34] As Ziad Abu Rish argued, "political discourse in Jordan has represented contemporary politics (whether the government, the formal opposition, or any of the state institutions) in the kingdom as separate from the role of the monarchy." *Ziad Abu-Rish*, "The Political Status Quo, Economic Development, and Protests in Jordan," in *The Dawn of the Arab Uprisings: End of an Old Order?* , ed. in Bassam Haddad, Rosie Bsheer, and Ziad Abu-

For analytical purposes, therefore, I will make a critical distinction between the regime and the state. The regime consists of the Hashemite monarchy and closely-connected economic and political elites. The regime is the locus of power and agency that is being discussed when talking of authoritarian durability or authoritarian resilience. Such durability has historically been reproduced by imbricating citizens in dependence on the state. In contrast, the state consists of the formal institutions of the government and the broader public sector. The state is formally run by a government consisting of the prime minister and the council of ministers (cabinet) that he appoints. The government is officially answerable to the bicameral legislature (parliament) and judiciary. Ministries run the public sector including governorates and municipalities.[35] The Jordanian state is heavily centralized and has withstood efforts to decentralize it. Centralization ensures that the regime retains power to distribute resources unequally to the regime's social base (Transjordanians) even amidst neoliberalization.[36]

Like any state, the Jordanian state has several functions: distribution, extraction, and coercion. Yet, this dissertation will focus primarily on the distributive aspects of the state, and

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Rish (Pluto Press, 2012), 238. Detaching the monarchy from "politics" allows the king to blame social and economic problems on the government and enables social movements to vent grievances towards the government without attacking the autocratic regime.

[35] The Ministry of the Interior is responsible for the twelve governorates which run security and local economic development. The around 100 Municipalities come under the jurisdiction of Ministry of Municipal Affairs (with the exception of supercharged Greater Amman Municipality, which comes directly under the Prime Minister's office.

[36] Janine A. Clark, *Local Politics in Jordan and Morocco: Strategies of Centralization and Decentralization* (Columbia Studies in Middle East Politics, 2018).

I will regularly discuss the *distributive state*.[37] With regards to the broader population—elites have informal channels of rent-seeking—the distributive state has enmeshed citizens in state dependence primarily through public sector employment, which has benefited the Transjordanian population disproportionately, and welfare (particularly subsidies) which has benefitted the broader population including the more urban, Palestinian-dominated population.[38]

With the autocratic welfare state, citizens were interpellated at the site of their subsistence and economic needs.[39] However, with the demise of autocratic distribution, the regime has had to find alternative ways of interpellating citizens as independent of the state. This is where GONGOs enter the fray. GONGOs allow the regime to circumvent regular state institutions to shift political interpellation away from state institutions such as ministries, governorates, municipalities, outlets of subsidies such as bakeries, and (increasingly privatized) public sector companies. GONGOs instead address citizens at the site of their independence as entrepreneurs, civic activists, and empowered citizens. GONGOs provide the monarchy with channels of direct citizen address that go beyond the traditional monarchical symbolic production of regalia and officialness to cultivate a more informal connection to the population, thereby cultivating attachments directly to the monarchy while insulating regime reproduction from the distributive state.

While GONGOs and elusive governance may do important political work for regimes, this strategy comes with risks. As I show in Chapter 3, GONGOs produce empowered and autonomous citizens with the skills needed to organize and get things done. Moreover, abandoning the regime's symbolic cohesion may allow challengers to operate in symbolic voids, and social movements may find opportunities to demask regime power, revealing its coercive and parochial nature in the process.

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[37] Historically a semi-rentier state that is fiscally dependent on external resources like aid and remittances, the Jordanian regime has engaged more in distribution (and, indeed, coercion) than extraction (even though recent fiscal pressures have forced the state to raise unpopular taxes).

[38] Of course, aside from…, the state also distribute in a different sense… state Informal distribution occurs through networks of *wasta* and clientelism which also permeates the state. Neoliberalization…

[39] For the political effects of subsidies, see e.g. José Ciro Martínez, *States of Subsistence: The Politics of Bread in Contemporary Jordan* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022).

Studying the Elusive State

To make the argument for the centrality of GONGOs, I both draw on and depart in critical ways from thinking about the state as a "state effect." The literature on the state effect is based on Timothy Mitchell's work, which in turn grapples with Foucault's claim that "the state is no more than a composite reality and a mythicized abstraction."[40] Rather than thinking about the state as an a priori constituted object, Mitchell developed the notion of the state as an effect "which arises from techniques that enable mundane material practices to take on the appearance of an abstract, nonmaterial form [here, the state]."[41] For Mitchell, the state appears to exist autonomously from the structure in which it is, in fact, embedded. Producing and maintaining the appearance of a distinction between state and society "is itself a mechanism that generates resources of power."[42]

Studying the state as a "structural effect" means investigating both the image of the state (which is generated by techniques of representation) and the actual practices of the sprawling institutional apparatus that we call the state.[43] Practices and representations constitute the material force—the state—that people experience, perceive, and occasionally resist as a unitary object of power.[44] Rather than asking how the state, as a preconfigured unitary object, maintains power over the society that it seeks to rule, we must ask different questions: How does the state come to appear as something greater than its individual parts or localized manifestations, as situated at the apex of society? What kind of political work does the image of social life as vertically integrated into the state-society edifice do? A number of scholars have studied the state as a state effect and advanced our understanding of how the state is generated in citizens' quotidian encounters of state images, representatives, and practices.[45]

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[40] Timothy J. Mitchell, "The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics," *American Political Science Review* 85, no. 1 (March 1991); 77–96. https://doi.org/10.2307/1962879.

[41] Timothy Mitchell, "Society, Economy, and the State Effect," in Sharma, Aradhana, and Akhil Gupta. *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 169-86, 170.

[42] Mitchell, "The Limits of the State", p. 90. Thus, the state, Mitchell contends, is elusive but not an illusion. As Bourdieu notes, "A social fiction is not fictitious…Despite the official being never more than official, despite the commission not being what it would like to have people believe it is, it produces an effect none the less" (2014, 28).

[43] As Abrams illustrates in his work on the state's elusiveness, "(t)here *is* a state system…a palpable nexus of practice and institutional structure centered in government…There *is,* too, a state-idea, projected, purveyed and variously believed in different societies at different times. And its modes, effects and variations are also susceptible to research." Philip Abrams, "Notes on the Difficulty of Studying the State." *Journal of Historical Sociology* 1, no.1. (March 1988), 82, emphasis in original).

While the literature on the state effect informed this study, I depart from some of its key premises. The literature on the state effect assumes that the state gains power by appearing as a unitary and coherent object that obscures the contradictions and ambiguities that it consists of. As Bourdieu noted, "In order to obtain th(e) effect of de-particularization, this set of institutions that we call 'the state' must theatricalize the official and the universal."[46] Specific representational techniques "theatricalize the official." For example, Blom and Hansen mentioned "languages of stateness":

> the materialization of the state in series of permanent signs and rituals: buildings, monuments, letterheads, uniforms, road signs, fence…. the rhetoric of state officials, the nicely crafted white papers and policy documents, the ostensibly scientific forms of governance, the grand schemes and organizational efforts of governments, with all their paraphernalia of vehicles, tides, and little rituals.[47]

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[44] This way of thinking about the state as hybridized has also been developed by Joel Migdal, who suggests the state should be studied in "dual terms" (2001, 22). In his "state-in-society model," he suggests the state is, on the one hand, "as the powerful image of a clearly bounded, unified organization that can be spoken of in singular terms…as if it were a single, centrally motivated actor performing in an integrated manner to rule a clearly defined territory." On the other hand, Migdal suggests, the state should be studied "as the practices of a heap of loosely connected parts or fragments, frequently with ill-defined boundaries between them and other groupings inside and outside the official state borders and often promoting conflicting sets of rules with one another and with 'official' Law." (2001, 22).

[45] Noah Salomon, *For Love of the Prophet: An Ethnography of Sudan's Islamic State* (Princeton University Press, 2016), Haugbolle, Sune, and Mark Levine. *Altered States: The Remaking of the Political in the Arab World* (Routledge, 2022), Blom Hansen, Thomas and Finn Stepputat ed. *States of Imagination: Ethnographic Explorations of the Postcolonial State* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001), Sharma, Aradhana, and Akhil Gupta. *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), Natalie Koch, *The Geopolitics of Spectacle: Space, Synecdoche, and the New Capitals of Asia* (Cornell University Press, 2018).

[46] Pierre Bourdieu, *On the State: Lectures at the College de France, 1989-1992* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 11.

[47] Blom Hansen and Stepputat ed. *States of Imagination,* 37. Gupta and Sharma add to this list: "official letter-heads, seals, memos, photographs of official buildings, special uniforms, spatial arrangements of offices, monitoring and surveillance visits by senior officials, cars with government license plates and official motorcades, personnel files and procedures for promotion, and organizational charts." Aradhana Sharma and

As a stable system of signs, images, and markers, these representational techniques generate an image of coherence, reflecting not some bounded core but concealing the state's inherently fragmentary, contested nature.

By contrast, through my analysis of GONGOs that partly identify as civil society actors, I argue that states may also de-emphasize such "languages of stateness." By operating in civil society separately from the state, GONGOs help the regime to manage multiple—and often contradicting—policy goals. For example, in Chapter 6, I argue that GONGOs help the regime manage contradictory goals regarding youth's role in civil society. On the one hand, the regime needs youth to act civically to assuage the generational suffering resulting from the collapse of the welfare state and its attendant viable paths to stable, salaried work and smooth transitions to adulthood. At the same time, the regime must restrict certain types of civic activism deemed politically dangerous. GONGOs allow the regime to manage these contradicting policy goals in order to strike a balance between civil resistance and total resignation among citizens, two outcomes that the regime fear. Indeed, by operating in civil society—and through the more informal modes of address—GONGOs help to mitigate, displace, or overcome the contradiction between living in a country characterized by repression, corruption, and a lack of state care on the one hand and aspirations for individual development on the other hand. Throughout the dissertation, I demonstrate that, in lieu of consent, the regime must often settle for fueling ambivalences, whereby the generation of surplus youth (in relation to capital and the state) co-exists with the production of ambitious, entrepreneurial, and autonomous young people.[48]

Akhil Gupta, "Introduction: Rethinking Theories of the State in an Age of Globalization" in *The Anthropology of the State: A Reader*, ed. Sharma, Aradhana, and Akhil Gupta (Wiley-Blackwell, 2006), 18.

[48] Here, I follow Lisa Wedeen who has analyzed the importance of ambiguities and ambivalences as central to authoritarian governance. Lisa Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria.* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

From the regime's perspective, there are clear advantages of distancing itself from the distributive state.[49] As Hayek has highlighted, when states cultivate citizens' material dependence on itself (which Hayek called "the Social Justice state"), it cannot avoid becoming the primary object of claims-making and grievances. When governments espouse redistribution, Hayek noted that they "cannot refuse responsibility for anything…[because]...it possesses authority to arrange everything…There will be no particular grievance which it will not be regarded as capable of removing."[50] Complaints about unjust distributive outcomes "*do not really assert that somebody has been unjust*…There is no individual and no cooperating group of people against which the sufferer would have a just complaint…we will protest against such a fate although *we do not know anyone who is to blame for it*, or any way in which such disappointments can be prevented."[51] By contrast, to avoid the erosion of authority, GONGOs help the regime distancing itself from the distributive state in order precisely to eschew "authority to arrange everything."

In making the case for the centrality of GONGOs in reconfiguring authoritarian state-society relations, I build on the work of scholars who have noted the symbolic and institutional devolution of authoritarian regimes. They have observed that ruling families appear in familial, intimate settings rather than as official state representatives[52] and charted the de-stating of ruling parties[53] and the systematic reordering of urban space for consumption and cosmopolitanism at the expense of aggrandizing regime iconography.[54] Others have examined how regimes address citizens in novel ways under neoliberal globalization by engendering new forms of detachment and attachment to state and nation in which citizens, following Ahiwa Ong, are expected to "excel at self-management and to be globally competitive and politically compliant."[55] I contribute to this body of scholarship by investigating the type of political work that diffused stateness performs in the renegotiating of expectations on the state and citizens for generations coming of age with radically different prospects to realize aspirations.

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[49] GONGOs and elusive governance entail a kind of self-limitation of governance. As Foucault has noted in his discussion on neoliberal governance, "modern governmental reason consists in establishing a principle of limitation that will no longer be extrinsic to the art of government, as was law in the seventeenth century, [but] intrinsic to it: an internal regulation of governmental rationality…The principle of this limitation is not to be sought in what is external to government, but in what is internal to governmental practice, that is to say, in the objectives of government." Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the College De France, 1978-1979* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 10.

[50] Hayek, F.A. *Law, Legislation and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy. Vol 2.: The Mirage of Social Justice* (London: Routledge, 1976; 2013), 136.

[51] Ibid. 232-233, emphasis added). As Biebricher notes in a comment on neoliberal thinkers like Hayek, "the Social Justice state cannot plausibly refuse societal demands for state action. Inevitably it will fail at some of the problems it has been called on to solve, thus leading to a continuous corrosion of state authority because nothing is more undermining to the state than not being able to solve problems it has claimed responsibility for." (71)

Buying into Self-Reliance? Agency, Meaning, and Global Citizenship

How can we gauge the efficaciousness of GONGOs in generating more self-reliant citizens? Can regimes truly influence citizens to absolve the state from providing life chances and socioeconomic goods? A small number of studies have directly addressed these questions. In a notable recent study, Calvert Jones analyzed a campaign by autocrats in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to foster a "lessened dependence on the state, into the fabric of citizenship"[56] that "[aims] to reduce dependence on government jobs and other forms of state largesse, and inculcate a stronger spirit of entrepreneurialism and self-reliance."[57] Jones concluded that these efforts are fruitless and even have the perverse effect of increasing youth's expectations of regime distribution.[58] Other studies have also argued that similar projects usually fail to achieve their goals.[59]

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[54] Jillian Schwedler, "Amman Cosmopolitan: Spaces and Practices of Aspiration and Consumption." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30. No 3. (2010): 547-562. Christopher Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses and Minarets of Capitalism: Amman as Neoliberal Assemblage." *Political Geography* 28. (2009): 110–120. Ahmed Kanna, *Dubai, the City as Corporation* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011). Yasser Elsheshtawy, *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development* (Routledge, 2008)

[55] Aihwa Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception: Mutations in Citizenship and Sovereignty* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 194. See also, Susan Greenhalgh, *Cultivating Global Citizens Population in the Rise of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010).

[56] Calvert W. Jones, "New Approaches to Citizen-Building: Shifting Needs, Goals, and Outcomes," Comparative Political Studies 50, no. 1. (2017), 5.

[57] Ibid, 9.

These studies largely conceive of self-reliance as an ideological message and thus measure its impact on intended addressees. Indeed, self-reliance is sometimes a straightforward appeal from the government. In a graduation speech at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Ma'an, crown prince Hussein expressed the message of self-reliance in plain terms. He told students and faculty, "We live in an era of self-reliance (*ʿitmād ʿala al-nafs*). Today, there are no public sector jobs ready to absorb this generation." He added, "Opportunities today are created by entrepreneurs. In the future, there will be no waiting lines for job seekers."[60] Similarly, the 2005–2009 National Youth Strategy states that youth must make "the shift from being recipients of society's care and services, to becoming contributors to society's growth and development." In addition, it is necessary to "[increase] the productivity of young people, and [motivate] them to be self-reliant."[61]

However, rather than an ideological message that addressees buy into or reject, I analyze the state and regime's broader institutional and symbolic reconfigurations. I examine how youth recruited to GONGOs re-envision their role in society and the economy and how they make decisions around career choices, social engagement, and how to act as citizens within these broader institutional and symbolic reconfigurations of regime and state. When initiating my fieldwork, I wanted to understand how youth embraced and took up the regime's promotion of aspirational citizenship. Before arriving to the field, I researched the myriad ways that the regime promoted these values. I examined speeches, government documents, and the Ministry of Youth's activities and developed a sense of the GONGO landscape. However, to my initial dismay, I mainly received hesitant answers from young interlocutors when I asked them about the "political leadership's" role in promoting entrepreneurship and its reasons for doing so. This was not (at least not primarily) because they were afraid of discussing the regime since the topic is not sensitive in itself. To avoid this scenario, I also adopted techniques such as not recording interviews. More than anything else, there was a refusal to truly recognize that the regime was, in fact, performing the promotional work that my preliminary research concluded they did. Even GONGO recruits would be hesitant to give the government or the regime any recognition in this regard. "Yes, the king and queen *talk* a lot about entrepreneurship, but aside from OASIS500 (a startup incubator), there are not a lot of efforts," one interlocutor said.[62] I even encountered a sense of pity towards the regime. One interviewee said, "Aw, you know, they're trying, they're doing their best. They want to support us as much as they can… I think the king does a good job, they are trying, but Jordan has few resources."[63]

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[58] Specifically, in her difference-in-difference survey study, Jones (2017) compares a regular high school with a "treatment" high school that has implemented a particular market-oriented and self-reliance-inducing curriculum. Jones concluded that those students exposed to entrepreneurship training are not more likely to engage in profitable market ventures; however, they tend to be more loyal to the regime. She notes that "Treated students did not show lessened belief in the right to a government job, relative to students in regular government schools"… and that "the data suggest that treatment schools did not inculcate a stronger spirit of entrepreneurialism; rather, the data show a negative treatment effect on interest in starting a business, which seems consistent with their heightened convictions surrounding the right to a government job." (22)

[59] In a recent study of the Jordanian regime-run youth empowerment sector, Yom and al-Khatib (2018, 42) note that "the Jordanian state remains extremely unsuccessful at inducing young citizens to buy into its messaging ."

[60] Kalimat Sumū Al-Amīr Al-Husayn bin Aʿbdallah Al-Thāni, Wali Al-Aʿhd, Khilāl Ziārat Jāmiʿat Al-Husayn bin Ṭlāl fi Maʿ ān (Speech of His Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince, during a visit to Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Maan). July 2nd, 2018. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd_xJu1NKG8. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

[61] The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Higher Council for Youth. 2004. "National Youth Strategy for Jordan 2005- 2009." Amman, December 2004. 61.

After some time, I realized that adopting an attitude of self-reliance and recognizing the regime's promotion of this attitude was, in fact, at odds. It made more sense for individuals to take credit for any aspirations and achievements that they hold rather than to acknowledge the regime's possible role in inspiring these ambitions. Thus, I learned that my interlocutors' sense of responsibility for themselves partly explained their unburdening of the distributive state from some of this responsibility.

GONGOs are designed to cultivate such sense of self-reliance. For example, in Chapter 3, I illustrate how the GONGO Haqiq is devised to appear youth-run. Haqiq is designed in such a way that instructors play a backstage role, and youth are elected to councils that design outreach activities, which creates the impression of Haqiq as a youth movement rather than a hierarchical and authoritarian youth organization. Generally, I find that youth do not want to act on behalf of the government, which would defeat the purpose of redeeming themselves as worthy citizens amid economic uncertainty.

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[62] Ahmad, Interview with author, Sahab, May 3rd, 2019.
[63] Interview with author, Amman, March 14th 2019.

In general, Jordanians have few illusions about how politics function in the kingdom, who the central wielders of power are, and by which mechanisms they rule. Moreover, as many scholars have shown, Jordanian youth are challenging a state that is increasingly abandoning its commitment to provide for them.[64] Indeed, many Jordanian youth have directed their economic grievances towards a state that they believe should be a vehicle for social justice. However, resistance towards the state—or even thinking of economic grievances as having to do with the state—is only one of a range of responses to the economic exclusion of youth. Most of the time, the latter's frustrations and anxieties not only boil over and are directed towards the government but also alternative ways to redeem themselves as worthy citizens amid uncertainty, such as through volunteering and entrepreneurialism. In analyzing Jordanian youth and their shifting relationship to the state and regime, I adopt an expansive view of agency; I draw on Saba Mahmood's call to "detach the notion of agency from the goals of progressive politics"[65] and to analyze agency as "capacity to action" rather than "resistance to domination."[66]

In particular, in the face of economic superfluity (in relation to state and capital), I foreground how Jordanian youth are motivated by a will to belong.[67] As Jordanna Matlon argued in her study of economically excluded young men in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, when facing economic exploitation, one may resist; when facing economic exclusion, it is more obvious for many to assert belonging. Matlon's interlocutors, who were unable to realize breadwinner ideals of respectable masculinity, responded to exclusion not only with defiance but also by adopting entrepreneurial or consumerist identities that nevertheless related them "back" to the economy, thereby "assert(ing) economic participation as alternatives to the producer-provider ideal."[68] The value of Matlon's work is that it brings attention to what she called the "puzzle of exclusion and consent"—how the objectively excluded are re-absorbed into relations of domination.[69] Similarly, in Jordan, in the context of youth's becoming surplus in relation to the state and capital, self-reliance becomes an alternative avenue for asserting utility and re-establishing one's being in the world. In the face of economic redundancy, Jordanian youth precisely articulate self-reliance (i.e., detachment from the state) to reassert a sense of valorized citizenship and belonging to a productive and responsible young generation.

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[64] Sean L. Yom "Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan: The Case of the Hirak Movement." *Middle East Journal* 68, no. 2 (April 15, 2014): 229–47. https://doi.org/10.3751/68.2.13; Curtis R. Ryan *Jordan and the Arab Uprisings: Regime Survival and Politics Beyond the State*. Columbia Studies in Middle East Politics, 2018.

[65] Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton University Press, 2012), 14.

[66] Ibid, 14.

[67] In making these arguments, I try to pay close attention to the work that meaning does. In his study of generational conflicts in Germany, Norbert Elias's notes that what matter is not simply youth's exclusion from traditional political and economic institutions but the meanings that youth attribute to such exclusion. Elias notes that youth's grievances and disappointments that were at the root of their politicization: "did not stem only from economic class contradictions… (but also from) …the search for meaning, the search for a personally

GONGOs expertly exploit such will to belong. For example, in an analysis of entrepreneurship-promoting GONGOs, Chapter 5 illustrate how Jordanian youth invest in future promises of entrepreneurial success despite minimal opportunities to derive income from such projects. By acting as entrepreneurs, youth reclaim a sense of worth and economic utility

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fulfilling purpose which can be experienced as meaningful. Accordingly, one of the recurring complaints (among youth) is about the emptiness and meaninglessness of existing society." From Elias's analysis, we learn that when thinking about young people's life chances, what is important is not only actual channels of opportunity, i.e., purely economic opportunities, but how youth experience and attribute meaning to such channels – "the feeling of being trapped in a social system which made it very hard for the younger generations to find chances for a meaningful future." (237) In other words, for Elias, youth requires not only objective chances to a prosperous life, but such channels are related to what youth at any given time consider a meaningful life. Elias, a student of Mannheim, is much less known than his teacher for theoretical developments on the politics of generations and more recognized for work in other areas, most notably his monumental work on the civilizing process. Like Mannheim, Elias did see large-scale socio-historical processes and events such as war and peace as significant in stimulating unique youth identities to the generations whose youthhoods intersected with these events. However, for Elias, such events and processes were primarily important because they led to the opening or narrowing of channels of opportunity and "chances to meaning." Norbert Elias, *The Germans* (New York: Columbia University Press 1996 [1989]).

[68] Jordanna Matlon, "Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity." *American Sociological Review* 81, no. 5 (September 2, 2016): 1014–38, 1014. https://doi.org/10.1177/0003122416658294.

even amidst uncertainty and poor economic conditions for entrepreneurs. Moreover, in Chapter 4, I demonstrate how this will to belong and redeem oneself as worthy becomes entangled in what I call a moral economy of self-reliance. I study how most Jordanian youth today navigate moral claims not only about what they should expect from the government but also why it is wrong to overly rely on the government. Such a moral economy is vehemently promoted by GONGOs but also works independently of state discourse in notions of Jordanian culture.

GONGOs' address of youth as self-reliant market participants is aided by Jordan's deep integration into global circuits of migration, media, and labor. First, many young people dream of migration, which leads them to pay greater attention to developing the skills and outlook needed to individually flourish in a globalized world than to corrupt regime politics. Aside from hoping for life elsewhere, Jordanian youth are more urbanized, integrated, and connected to global informational circuits than their parents. In making a case for self-reliance and detachment from the distributive state, GONGOs can tap into existing global scripts about the virtues of self-reliance, entrepreneurialism, and individualism, which further shifts attention away from how authoritarian politics prevent citizens from thriving.

In thinking about self-reliance as an emerging mechanism of acquiescence, I follow scholars who have studied how modern regimes operate in novel registers when seeking to solicit consent. Within the framework of what Wedeen called "neoliberal autocracy," scholars have investigated how autocracies fuel people's affective investments in neoliberal ideals of the "good life," such as aspirations of consumer pleasures.[70] Others have examined the meritocratic ideals of upward mobility that keep citizens tied to hopes that do little affirmative work. These scholars have explained how individuals conduct the affective labor of maintaining attachments to objects of the good life amid precarity and obstacles to achieving it.[71] Others have argued that new urban landscapes of elitism and consumption have occasioned new ways of being in the world.[72] This dissertation builds on and moves beyond these studies. By focusing less on consumer culture, lifestyle choices, and class distinction and more on the production of livelihoods, I bring to bear the analysis of GONGOs as a means of understanding the management of youth's economic redundancy and waithood as exemplary conditions of neoliberal globalization. As both political actors and citizens grapple with new political-economic realities, GONGOs are ideal sites for tracing the webs of shifting governance styles and citizen modes of being.

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[70] Timothy J. Mitchell "No Factories, No Problems: The Logic of Neo-liberalism in Egypt." *Review of African Political Economy* 26, no. 82 (December 1, 1999): 455–68. https://doi.org/10.1080/03056249908704412; Lisa Wedeen, "Ideology and Humor in Dark Times: Notes from Syria." *Critical Inquiry* 39, no. 4: (2013) 841-73. Mona Abaza, "Shopping Malls, Consumer Culture and the Reshaping of Public Space in Egypt," *Theory, Culture & Society* 18, no. 5 (October 1, 2001): 97–122. https://doi.org/10.1177/02632760122051986. For Wedeen (2013, 843), "Neoliberal autocracy" is a form of governance that is "cultivating an aspirational consciousness for freedom, upward mobility, and consumer pleasure, on the one hand, while continuing to tether possibilities for advancement to citizen obedience and coercive control, on the other."

Finally, far from representing a watertight governing arrangement, governing through GONGOs also entail significant political risks for the regime. Indeed, it is known that state practices rarely succeed in achieving the intended social effects,[73] and governing at a distance through semi-governmental arrangements, such as GONGOs, may produce unintended consequences. In a volume on Timothy Mitchell's work on the state effect and its impact on the study of Arab politics, LeVine and Haugbolle explicate that oppositional elements may take advantage of the state's more informalized governing arrangements to subvert it:

> as the explosion of the Arab Uprisings beginning in late 2010 made clear, sometimes the (state) effect wears off. Sometimes the fire of desperation burns through the regimes and dispositifs through which power is wielded by political elites, laying bare and raw

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[71] Harry Pettit, "The Cruelty of Hope: Emotional Cultures of Precarity in Neoliberal Cairo," *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 37, no. 4 (January 2019.): 722–739. Roozbeh Shirazi, "Being Late, Going with the Flow, Always Doing More: The Cruel Optimism of Higher Education in Jordan," *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 33, no. 3 (September 3, 2019): 293-310. https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1659444.

[72] Jillian Schwedler, "Amman Cosmopolitan: Spaces and Practices of Aspiration and Consumption," *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30. No 3. (2010) 547-562. Christopher Parker, "Tunnel-Bypasses and Minarets of Capitalism: Amman as Neoliberal Assemblage." *Political Geography* 28. (2009); 110–120. Ahmed Kanna, *Dubai, the City as Corporation.* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011). Yasser Elsheshtawy, *The Evolving Arab City: Tradition, Modernity and Urban Development* (Routledge, 2008)

[73] James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999).

> what often turns out to be the mundanely criminal networks through which politics is managed and wealth concentrated and (re)circulated through society.[74]

For instance, as Almqvist showed in a study on subversive tactics in the Syrian protest movement, activists often successfully exploit "the fissures between the regime's techniques of self-representation and its everyday manifestations."[75] GONGOs may well prove to provide insufficient incentives to wean citizens off state dependence. In Chapter 3, I demonstrate how GONGOs traffic in the language of youth empowerment which acknowledges the Arab Uprisings and attendant youth movements' strong expressions of youth identity, appeal to freedom, and the valorization of youth as a central actor of historical change. As I show throughout the dissertation, this is indicative of how the regime must often settle for fueling ambivalences—arguably a thinner form of acquiescence than consent—rather than consent.

Scholarly Contributions

This dissertation aims to spur a rethinking of how autocracies produce acquiescence in the neoliberal era. GONGOs elusive governance and the way that it shifts the site of citizen hope away from the state do not map onto any of the major ways of thinking about how governance may generate citizen acquiescence either through belief (legitimacy)[76] or coercion (fear, resignation, or occasioning public compliance despite private disbelief).[77] In particular, making sense of GONGOs and elusive governance contributes to a better understanding of autocracy after autocratic welfarism. Autocracies around the world are reducing public sector employment schemes, eschewing universal welfare systems in favor of means-tested welfare systems, while phasing out subsidy regimes. After abandoning distribution, the dependence that many autocracies have cultivated for decades through distribution becomes a liability. This burden primarily consists of citizens' enduring expectations of what the state should be able to provide. In this context, urging citizens to extract themselves from dependence will be vital to building stable state-society relations over the coming decades, and GONGOs have become essential nodes in managing this shifting social contract.

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[74] Sune Haugbolle and Mark Levine. *Altered States: The Remaking of the Political in the Arab World* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2022), 2

[75] Adam Almqvist, "Pour une nouvelle conception de la Syrie : le renversement de l'image de l'État et du régime" (Towards a New Conception of Syria: the Reversal of the Image of State and Regime) *Maghreb-Machrek* 213*,* (Autumn 2012), 37-50. Activists dubbed the Syrian armed forces "the Asad Army," associating the repressive elements of the state with the Asad family to emphasize how the image of the state has been reduced to its coercive manifestations. Moreover, activists trivialized and ridiculed regime power, exposing and revealing the incongruity between the manufactured image of the state and the actual practices of the regime, its sublime and profane qualities, thereby belittling and denigrating it.

[76] Scholars have argued that autocracies can legitimate their rule in a number of ways (Dukalskis & Gerschewski 2017, Nathan 2020, Kailitz 2013). For Wedeen, legitimacy is bedeviled by conceptual, methodological, and epistemological problems. See Lisa Wedeen, "Authoritarianism and the Problem of Democratic Distinction," *APSA: Comparative Democratization* 13, No. 2 (June 2015), Available at: https://static1.squarespace.com/static/61262d136150f73ea116bb37/t/6127f148aecbcc73a7c913ec/1630007625249/comparative+democratisation.pdf.

[77] Andreas Schedler and Bert Hoffmann, "Communicating Authoritarian Elite Cohesion, *Democratization* 23, no. 1 (January 2016): 93–117, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2015.1095181. Sarah Sunn Bush, Aaron Erlich, Lauren Prather, and Yael Zeira, "The Effects of Authoritarian Iconography: An Experimental Test,"

Addressing autocracy after the welfare state fills a significant gap in the literature. While it is known that distribution has been central to autocracies' durability, little is known about how they renew state-society relations after abandoning distribution. Through the case of Jordan, this dissertation examines how regimes manage the decline of the autocratic welfare state and how citizens adapt, resist, and conform to the novel expectation that they start relying on themselves. This dissertation contributes to the production of knowledge on the ongoing renegotiation of the rights and duties of citizens and states in the neoliberal era, the outcomes of which will significantly impact autocracies' ability to survive and prosper.

For centuries, distribution was integral to co-opting the broader populace in autocracies. There are several reasons why autocracies engage in distribution. The first is to buy support by appealing to citizens' economic interests.[78] Scholars of Arab autocracies have imagined a metaphorical contract in which regimes provide livelihoods to citizens who abandon claims on

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Comparative Political Studies 49, No. 13. (November 2016): 1704–1738, https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414016633228.

[78] As Han notes, when the regime is "delivering a robust economic outcome, citizens will prefer to support the incumbent dictator and maintain the status quo rather than face the uncertainty of a new leader." Kangwook Han, "Autocratic Welfare Programs, Economic Perceptions, and Support for the Dictator: Evidence from African Autocracies." *International Political Science Review* 42, no. 3 (June 1, 2021): 416–29, 2. https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512119897387.

political representation.[79] Moreover, distribution is key to resolving credible commitment problems,[80] ensuring the compliance of politically salient middle classes,[81] and bolstering hegemonic parties that dominate autocratic polities.[82]

Not only does autocratic distribution appeal to citizens' economic interests, but it also works through logics of coercion. Through concepts such as "repressive assistance" and "coercive distribution," distribution facilitates social control and suppresses alternative service providers that could threaten the regime's dominance.[83] Albertus, Fenner, and Slater noted that distribution has the

> great authoritarian virtue of cultivating dependence and curtailing subjects' exit options. When ordinary citizens depend upon an authoritarian-run state rather than rival, non-state providers for their basic material necessities, their ability to individually defy or collectively mobilize against their rulers is severely compromised. Broad distribution, then, can help authoritarian regimes sideline rival elites and facilitate mass control. It contributes to regime stability not by "buying off" threatening actors or rewarding staunch supporters but by undercutting rivals and enmeshing citizens in relationships of dependence.[84]

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[79] Whether it is called a contract, pact, or bargain, most scholars mean more or less the same thing. See e.g. Heydemann (2007), Kamrava (2014), Meijer (2017), Waterbury (1994).

[80] In contrast with discretionary distribution – when an autocrat irregularly hands out goods to buy support – welfare programs and public sector employment schemes provide stability and predictability to distribution and may thereby solve critical credible commitment problems. For example, Knutsen and Rasmussen (2018) note that pension programs in autocracies "reduce the probability of autocratic regime breakdown, and of democratization more in particular." Albertus et al. note that "if an authoritarian regime is to enmesh its citizenry in deeply dependent relationships over the long haul, it must not only build up state infrastructure for public provision. It must also commit to the upkeep of that infrastructure over time, including the relatively generous financing of spending programs as both populations and neoliberal pressures for balanced budgets inexorably increase." Michael Albertus, Sofia Fenner, and Dan Slater, *Coercive Distribution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 4.

[81] Bryn Rosenfeld, *The Autocratic Middle Class: How State Dependency Reduces the Demand for Democracy* (Princeton University Press, 2020).

[82] As Magaloni notes in her study of the Mexican ruling party PRI, "long before the 1980s, when elections first became competitive, the PRI flooded districts at election time with generous amounts of government spending. The distribution of government spoils was central to mobilize voter turnout; to buy off powerful interest groups, such as the party's labor and peasant organizations; and to dissuade party politicians from splitting." Beatriz Magaloni, *Voting for Autocracy: Hegemonic Party Survival and Its Demise in Mexico* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 18

[83] Jennifer Pan has studied how selective assistance to various groups that the Chinese state regards as problematic "serves to make the recipients (of welfare) more legible to the state, more amenable to manipulation, and ultimately not only less willing but *less able* to engage in the activities the regime wants to suppress." Jennifer Pan, *Welfare for Autocrats: How Social Assistance in China Cares for Its Rulers* (Oxford University Press, 2020), 16.

[84] Albertus et al., *Coercive Distribution,* 2-3.

However, while much is known about why autocracies engage in distribution, little is known about what happens when they cease to do so. This is a salient question because regardless of *why* autocracies have historically provided public goods, most no longer engage in distribution. Indeed, as Albertus, Fenner, and Slater acknowledged in their comprehensive study of autocracy and distribution, "(o)ur cases suggest…that sustained upkeep (of autocratic distribution) is probably the exception."[85] Whether they are post-communist, hydrocarbon-reliant, or beset by austerity, autocracies have been forced to reduce the public sector, dismantle welfare systems, and phase out subsidies. According to theories of autocratic distribution, the rollback of distribution should entail a politically dangerous unmaking of critical relations of dependence, as popular acquiescence erodes and rival service providers may resurface, which challenges social control and threatens the regime's power.

However, despite the apparent political repercussions of ending distribution on previously materially co-opted populations, the literature has almost exclusively focused on how regimes manage elites and ruling coalitions amid political-economic change.[86] Scholars have suggested that, even in the face of economic shocks, structural adjustment, and changing sources of patronage, autocracies largely manage to maintain power by rearranging ruling coalitions.[87] This focus on elites has been bolstered by statistical evidence showing that most authoritarian leaders are deposed by figures from within their own ruling coalition.[88]

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[85] Ibid, 94.

[86] The elite focus follows a broad literature on the material co-optation of key elites as the key variable explaining autocratic endurance (Gandhi & Przeworski 2007, Svolik 2012, Blaydes 2011). As Schedler (2013, 57) notes, "According to a near-consensus in the discipline, the key to authoritarian survival lies in the creation and reproduction of political alliances through the distribution of material resources. Broad strands of comparative regime analysis share common ground in assuming the instrumental primacy of cooptation over both repression and legitimation." Specifically, scholars have focused on the role of institutions such as elections, parliaments, and ruling parties in distributing resources and sustaining stable elite coalitions (Lust-Okar 2006, Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, Blaydes 2011, Schedler 2013).

Thus, the literature has tended to favor what Milan Svolik called the first problem of authoritarian governance (i.e., power sharing) at the expense of the second problem (i.e., authoritarian control), which concerns the conflict between the authoritarian elites in power and the population excluded from power.[89] Yet, keeping populations quiescent is a serious problem for dictators, as recent scholarship on the relative success of nonviolent resistance to authoritarianism has suggested.[90] Moreover, popular uproar can unexpectedly occur. As Al-Ghobashy observes regarding the Egyptian revolution, "the system that Mubarak (the incumbent) had steered for three decades showed none of the telltale signs of instability: military defeat, elite schisms, or fiscal crisis."[91] Indeed, many Arab dictators learned—to their detriment—of the sudden potency of social movements. For those who survived, such as the Jordanian Hashemite monarchy, this lesson spurred operations to avoid a similar fate, which constitute the object of analysis in this dissertation.

Jordan as a Case Study

As a case within a universe of cases, Jordan is representative of a large number of autocracies that have departed from authoritarian social contracts based on state distribution. Dictatorships worldwide have reduced government spending and public sector employment schemes, which increases the need to wean citizens off state dependence. These autocracies can be divided into three primary categories: austerity-stricken, hydrocarbon-reliant, and post-communist. Jordan mostly corresponds to the first category, but, as a semi-rentier state, it has also been historically resource-reliant.

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[87] See, e.g., Victor C. Shih ed., *Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Stability: Duration, Financial Control, and Institutions* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020). By integrating the winners and ostracizing the losers of economic reform, scholars of Arab autocracies suggest that regimes have successfully maintained stable ruling coalitions throughout economic transitions, a development also seen in Jordan (Bank & Schlumberger 2004, Carroll 2001, Peters & Moore 2009, Piro 1998, Haddad 2011, Heydemann 2007a).

[88] One study found that out of the removal of 303 autocrats between 1946 and 2008, only 32 were deposed by popular uprisings and another thirty under public pressure to democratize. Milan Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4. See also see Ezrow & Frantz (2011)

[89] Milan Svolik, *The Politics of Authoritarian Rule* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 9.

[90] Erica Chenoweth and Maria J. Stephan, *Why Civil Resistance Works: The Strategic Logic of Nonviolent Conflict* (Columbia University Press, 2011). Sharon Erickson Nepstad, *Nonviolent Revolutions: Civil Resistance in the Late 20th-Century* (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2011).

[91] Mona El-Ghobashy, *Bread and Freedom: Egypt's Revolutionary Situation* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2021), 3.

Austerity-stricken autocracies are those subject to insecure economic sources. By utilizing rising government debt, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank instituted structural adjustment programs around the world in the 1980s and 90s, which forced many autocratic regimes to drastically reduce government spending on subsidies, public employment, and welfare.[92] Today, autocrats have learned to nimbly adapt to new global governance norms and voluntarily reproduce neoliberal macroeconomic policies, which are often diffused through policy learning.[93]

In many of these countries, austerity has caused immiseration for youth in particular. Today, on a global scale, capital and labor are increasingly spatially concentrated, circuits of capital and finance are increasingly internationalized, and global markets are allowed to determine national economic priorities. Within these conditions, many economies struggle to generate sufficient employment opportunities for national populations. The inability to provide jobs is particularly pronounced in economies that fail to compete in either high-wage or low-wage exportable products. Youth unemployment has reached 30 percent in Africa as a whole, 25 percent in the Arab states, 28.8 percent in North Africa, and 19.8 percent in Latin America and the Caribbean.[94] While it has occasionally delivered impressive economic growth rates, austerity capitalism has often failed to generate sufficient employment opportunities and led to processes of "jobless growth."[95]

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[92] Mark Blyth, *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea* (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2013), Laura Bear, Navigating Austerity: Currents of Debt along a South Asian River (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2015)

[93] Steven Heydemann, “Upgrading Authoritarianism in The Arab World,” Brookings Institute Center For Middle East Policy Analysis Papers 13, no. 13. (October 2007).

[94] International Labour Organization, “Unemployment up for 3rd consecutive year, expected to drop in 2018,” in *Labour Overview of Latin America and the Caribbean* (December 18, 2017), https://www.ilo.org/global/about-the-ilo/newsroom/news/WCMS_614165/lang--en/index.htm.

In the Arab world, young unemployed men in Egypt have faced repeated disappointment in the gap between aspirations and a punishing job market,[96] and there is a mismatch between graduates' skills and job market requirements in Tunisia.[97] Even in Saudi Arabia, which is undergoing austerity despite its fabulous wealth, youth speak of "*tufush*," a feeling that captures "the incommensurable distance between the economic opportunities…and their own condition of unemployment or low income, … a mismatch between subjective hopes and objective chances."[98] In response, the Saudi regime has instated massive investments to diversify its economy, educate its population, and create new urban infrastructure projects that can help realize young Saudis hopes and aspirations.

Many autocracies that are facing lower distributive capacity turn to measures that aim to persuade youth to extricate themselves from state dependence. For example, in Ethiopia, where the regime gradually reduced broad distributive measures in the 1990s, the ruling party, EPRDF, is increasingly promoting self-reliance and entrepreneurship among youth, in line with its reduced commitment to public provisions. Interestingly, EPRDF introduced these youth governance strategies following an intense political conflict, namely the 2005 post-election riots, which served its interest "in winning back the support of urban groups, particularly the youth, which the ruling party had lost to the opposition parties." These measures largely succeeded in "expand(ing) (the regime's) structures of political mobilization and control at the bottom of urban society."[99] Likewise, in Uzbekistan, the regime faced weakening distributive capacity following declining revenues from international aid and the cotton industry. After youth mobilized against the government in the Andijan Uprising, the Karimov regime, as McGlinchly laid out, "initiated a new strategy of youth politics so as to pre-empt its declining power in the regions while, at the same time, to persuade younger generations of the ills of colour revolutions."[100] Part of this strategy was a youth organization called Kamalot that engaged in activities such as job fairs and entrepreneurship support.

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[95] The Economist, "Jobless growth: The economy is doing nicely—but at least one person in three is out of work," A Special Report on South Africa. June 3, 2010; Sonia, R. Bhalotra, "The Puzzle of Jobless Growth in Indian Manufacturing," *Journal of the Asia Pacific Economy* 18, no. 4. (December 2001): 5-32.

[96] Harry Pettit, 'Without hope there is no life' Class, affect, and meritocracy in middle-class Cairo" (Ph.D. Thesis, London School of Economics, 2017).

[97] Isabel Schaefer, *Political Revolt and Youth Unemployment in Tunisia: Exploring the Education-Employment Mismatch* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2017).

[98] Pascal Menoret, *Joyriding in Riyadh: Oil, Urbanism, and Road Revolt* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 58.

Carbon-reliant autocracies are another category of autocracies that must renegotiate social contracts, particularly towards youth. Given the decarbonization of the global economy, these autocracies (e.g., the Arab Gulf states but also to some extent Russia) must diversify their economies. For example, in the UAE, the regime has only marginally reduced state beneficence, and citizens continue to be abundantly rewarded for their political acquiescence. Facing future reductions in its ability to distribute following lower oil prices, Emirati policymakers are concerned that the culture of idleness and entitlement resulting from this largesse will become a future political liability.[101] Therefore, the Emirati regime has initiated massive campaigns to convince youth to be self-reliant and entrepreneurial and to extricate themselves from state dependence.[102]

Finally, the third category of autocracies that seek to foster more self-reliant citizens is post-communist autocracies. Like austerity-stricken and carbon-reliant autocracies, Russia, China, Vietnam, and other post-communist dictatorships that used to preside over extensive social policy programs must contend with young generations of citizens who have inherited certain expectations of the state, which it can no longer honor. Therefore, as Greenhalgh has illustrated about China, they have devised new forms of governance to, generate the "self-interested, 'self-regulating' subject whose desires, preferences, and interests align with those of a gradually neoliberalizing market and state that have largely shaped those desires, preferences, and interests to their own ends."[103] Also in China, Hoffman examined the novel ways in which young professionals are integrated into national labor markets. She noted that "college graduates learn they have to extricate themselves from the legacy of state dependence" and that "this autonomy should be handled responsibly."[104] This new regime of professionalism and self-reliance within the orbit of regime patronage "suggests a self-enterprising subject that is at once autonomous from state planning agencies and still tied to the nation through strategic expressions of patriotism."[105] In Russia, the regime has also devised strategies to address youth. For example, the Seliger youth camp, which is run by the GONGO Nashi, promotes attachment to the nation through the language of business and entrepreneurship in projects which "bore the contradictory hallmark of the neoliberal moment they responded to: letting the state off the hook as they 'empowered' people to seek individualized solutions, inculcating hierarchies as they claimed to equalize."[106]

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[99] Marco Di Nunzio, "What Is the Alternative? Youth, Entrepreneurship and the Developmental State in Urban Ethiopia," *Development and Change* 46, no. 5 (September 1, 2015): 1179–1200, 1178-1180, https://doi.org/10.1111/dech.12187.

[100] Eric McGlinchey, "Searching for Kamalot: Political Patronage and Youth Politics in Uzbekistan," *Europe-Asia Studies* 61, no. 7 (August 25, 2009): 1137–50, 144, https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130903068665.

[101] For example, the ruler of Abu Dhabi has stated that he " cannot understand how physically fit young men can sit idle and accept the humiliation of depending on others for their livelihood." (Davidson 2015, 118)

[102] Calvert W. Jones, "New Approaches to Citizen-Building: Shifting Needs, Goals, and Outcomes." *Comparative Political Studies* 50, no. 1. (2017)

Method

Drawing inspiration from ethnographies of the state, this thesis is an ethnography of a state in flux.[107] The difficulty in studying the decentering of the state and the diffusion of politics is that there are no protests, elections, or political rallies to attend. In this endeavor, GONGOs offer an ideal site of inquiry precisely because they are located in the intersection of state and society and traverse symbolic boundaries of what is citizen-led and state-run. According to Elyachar, GONGOs are “nodal points of research where the state appears ‘fuzzy’ and categories are blurred,” which makes these sites particularly fruitful for producing knowledge on the political work of ambiguities.[108] By promoting synergies between state control and responsibilized citizenship, GONGOs are also organizations in which the resonances between authoritarianism and neoliberalization clearly emerge.

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[103] Susan Greenhalgh, *Cultivating Global Citizens Population in the Rise of China* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 64

[104] Lisa M. Hoffman, "Autonomous Choices and Patriotic Professionalism: On Governmentality in Late-Socialist China," *Economy and Society* 35, no. 4 (November, 2006): 550–70, https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140600960815, (565-566).

[105] Ibid, 565-566.

[106] Julie Hemment, *Youth Politics in Putin's Russia: Producing Patriots and Entrepreneurs* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2015), 11

[107] Sharma and Gupta, *The Anthropology of the State*, Blom Hansen and Stepputat ed. *States of Imagination*.

In focusing on GONGOs, I combine ethnography (observations, hanging out, and participant observations) with interviews (primarily with GONGO recruits) and archival research. I study the meanings that people attribute to the world that they inhabit in the context of the particular institutional setting in which this process takes place and how participants themselves amalgamate contradictions into coherent stories about themselves and society. In Appendix 1, I describe my sampling strategies and why it made sense to focus on urban, educated youth. I also explain why I adhered to an interpretive methodology and the types of observable implications and political effects that I examined in the field. Finally, I detail the research design, different data collection methods, and the various roles that these played in the construction of my arguments.

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[108] Julia Elyachar, *Markets of Dispossession: NGOs, Economic Development, and the State in Cairo* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007), 95.

Chapter 2. From Guaranteeing Life to Privatizing Hope: The Historical Development of Jordanian Youth Governance

In June 2019, I attended the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of King Abdullah's reign, *Let the March Continue* (*Wa Tastamir Al-Masīra)*, held in Amman's 6,000-seat Roman Theater. Dignitaries, such as the director of Amman's municipality and representatives of the Armed Forces, delivered speeches. The Jordanian Armed Forces Band played its bagpipe marching music, the folkloric band, Society for Arts and Heritage, performed songs, and there were patriotic poetry readings. After a flyby by the Royal Air Force that drew cheers from the crowd, the event culminated in a speech by Prime Minister Omar Razzas. The ceremony touted a familiar vision of Jordan, where each element—the armed forces, politicians, and cultural and religious institutions—formed a unified body under the wise and benevolent leadership of King Abdullah II.

However, the organizers had added a less familiar element to the mix. Midway through the event, the host introduced a "citizen success story," and Alaa Alsallal took the stage. Alsallal is the founder of Jamalon.com, a successful IT company often referred to as the "Amazon of the Middle East." Alsallal received applause and addressed the audience:

> I grew up in Jordan. After graduating from Philadelphia University (north of Amman), I applied for a scholarship to complete my master's degree in Greece. I received a scholarship from the Queen Rania Foundation. I moved to Greece and completed a master's degree in information sciences. When I finished my master's, I came back to the country (Jordan) and tried to open a business. Honestly, I didn't have any capital to start a company. I saw that the local and regional markets were suffering …when they wanted to get hold of books in English or Arabic. So, I started from home; I have four brothers, two sisters, and my mother. We started Jamalon at home; we got 10 books from downtown (the budget shopping area); we set up a website and called it jamalon.com; and in time, we got some investments. And month by month, year by year, today Jamalon has 70 employees; we have offices in Amman, Beirut, London, and Riyad, and we sell books in 100 countries.

Al-Sallal then advised struggling youth directly:

> So, I wanted to tell you. When you graduate from university and look for work, perhaps you can start an entrepreneurial project; you can find a gap in the market, you can solve a problem in the local or international market. When you graduate, you can start working for a company to gain experience. I always advise youth: when you finish university, try to train in any company. When you have experience, you can open a company. And there are a lot of organizations that support entrepreneurs in Jordan, like Queen Rania Entrepreneurship Centre and Oasis500…Let the march continue.[1]

The following day, the state-run newspaper *Al-Ra'I* reported on similar celebrations of King Abdullah's 20-year reign throughout Jordan. Almost all of these events involved similar stories of civic success. For example, *Al-Ra'i* reported in the Jerash governorate that the festivities featured "the presentation of two success stories of a young man and a young woman from the province (Jerash), who presented a bright image of the ambitious Jordanian youth who seeks to serve their country and society by doing volunteer work and other activities."[2] In As-Salt, in the Balqa governorate, the youth success story was a young man named Ahmad Abu-Rumman, who had launched a tourism adventure project. After describing his entrepreneurial project, Abu Rumman encouraged other youth to follow his lead in becoming "producers instead of consumers" (*al-muntagīn wa la al-mustahalikīn*).

Thus, the 20-year commemoration of King Abdullah's reign encompassed two sometimes conflicting visions of state-society relations: one where citizens are continuously subject to the caring and wise leadership of the Hashemite leadership (mediated by state representatives) and the other where citizens rely on and fend for themselves (mediated by a successful young entrepreneur). These two visions epitomize two sides of a fundamental shift that has taken place in Jordanian youth governance since independence in 1946. In the early decades of Jordanian nation-state building, the focus was on getting citizens to materially depend on the expansion of state institutions and state distribution. In this era, youth governance reminded the youth of the indispensable role of Hashemite leadership in Jordanian nation-state building while reasserting state presence in their lives by organizing their time (through sports and other recreational activities in youth centers throughout the country).

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[1] Fieldnotes, Amman, June 9, 2019. A rendition filmed by Jordan TV (state television) is available on *YouTube*, "Iḥtifāl Amāna Aʿmān bi-Munāsba Aʿīd Al-Julūs Al-Malaki" (The Amman Municipality Celebrations on the Occasion of the King's Tenure), June 11, 2019. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TkDR9jLRj9Q. Accessed April 11, 2020.

[2] "Al-Iḥtifāl bi-Aʿshrīnīyya Al-Julūs Ybraz Al-Injāzāt wa-Yuḥākī Al-Taṭlaʿāt" ("Celebrating the 20th Year of Tenure Highlights Achievements and Showcases Aspirations"), *Al-Rai,* June 10, 2019, http://alrai.com/article/10487800/محليات/الاحتفال-بعشرينية-الجلوس-يبرز-الانجازات-ويحاكي-التطلعات. Accessed April 11, 2020.

With the neoliberalization of the economy and the regime's gradual shift away from state distribution, the image that youth governance had cultivated of the caring and benevolent state began to ring false among youth encountering an increasingly callous and neglectful state. Previously a reminder of its generosity, the state's presence in youth lives became a constant reminder of betrayal and circumscribed horizons. Instead of emphasizing the state's role in caring for its citizens, youth governance began to emphasize youth's self-care; it began to privatize hope. Youth governance was turned over to powerful GONGOs, which, as neither state nor non-state actors, started to promote self-reliance. In essence, this chapter argues that by allowing Al-Sallal to address youth rather than its own representatives, the regime has recognized that the distributive state increasingly struggle as a site of hope. Instead, hope has been devolved to non-state actors such as successful individuals like Al-Sallal, a devolution that has also been driven by hybrid actors like GONGOs.

Cultivating Dependence, Making the Nation

Before 1921, there was little sense of a shared national identity among the people occupying the geographical area that is Jordan today, nor was there a centralized state monopolizing rule. Instead, the lands were ruled by a network of tribes and imperial powers. As a young nation in the making, with the British-installed Hashemite monarchy at its helm, Jordanian nation-state building rested on the interpellation of Jordanian subjects over whom the state sought to rule. As Joseph Massad has shown, state expansion—particularly in the form of the judiciary and the military—went hand in hand with the emergence of a national identity. Massad contends that the law in Jordan "*produces* the juridical subjects over whom its power is distributed."[3] Moreover, the military normalized "citizens within the military—as nationalist agents defending the nation" while providing a disciplinary model for "schools, universities, hospitals, sports clubs, and the family."[4] The process of building a Jordanian nation-state was long, fraught, and involved recalcitrance and rebellion. Yet, according to Massad, by recognizing the Jordanian nation-state as its point of departure, opposition parties and anti-colonial revolts also recognize their interpellative hailing as Jordanians.[5]

In addition to interpellation by the military and the law, Hashemite rule was also naturalized by the fact that the people who occupied the land developed new forms of material dependence on the state. As early as the Mandate period (1921–1946) before independence, as Tariq Tell observes, "the British harnessed the tribes and clans of Trans-Jordan to the imperial purpose, and forged a 'collaborating elite' of bureaucrats, merchants, and tribal notables that has remained at the pinnacles of Hashemite rule ever since."[6] In the nation's early decades, state distribution cultivated an interdependence between the state and the Transjordanian population over which it sought to rule. Rebellious tribes were settled and made materially dependent on the new government.[7] The military created livelihood dependency for recruits by providing them employment and related welfare benefits, such as state-subsidized higher education and early retirement (around age 30).[8] As Anne-Marie Baylouny describes, with time, "initially somewhat mercenary in origin, with some hailing from outside Jordan, military personnel became regime supporters."[9]

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[3] Joseph Massad, *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan* (Columbia University Press, 2001), 20

[4] Ibid, 8.

[5] Ibid, 32-33.

[6] Tariq Tell, *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 132

[7] Anne Marie Baylouny, "Militarizing Welfare: Neo-liberalism and Jordanian Policy," *Middle East Journal 62,* no. 2 (Spring 2008): 277-303, 287.

[8] Ibid.

[9] Baylouny, "Militarizing Welfare," 287.

The economic boom of the 1970s enabled the regime to expand the state bureaucracy beyond the military.[10] With government spending accounting for more than 68 percent of GDP,[11] the state bureaucracy became the primary employment destination for the expanding middle class, which also benefited from the expansion of national mass education with the establishment of the University of Jordan in 1962 and Yarmouk University in 1976.[12] By 1986, nearly half the entire labor force worked for the state in some capacity,[13] as the Jordanian civil service increased its ranks by over 300 percent between 1970 and 1985.[14] In addition to a steady wage, public employment also meant social security, adequate health care, and access to emergency loans. At the time, consumer protection was organized within the framework of employment associations, which provided state employees with access to subsidized goods.

The military and the expanding civilian bureaucracy created a persistent dependency, especially among the East Bank population. By the 1980s, about three-quarters of East Bankers nationwide worked for the government in some capacity. In rural towns, almost the entire employed population worked for the state. In contrast, state employment was much less common among Palestinian refugees who began to settle in Jordan after 1948; most ended up in the private sector.[15]

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[10] Benefitting Jordan via aid from the oil-producing Arab states and from expatriate labor remittances, the regional oil boom led to Jordanian GDP growth of 10 percent annually between 1973 and 1983. And per capita income shot up from JD 185 to JD 630. Timothy Piro, *The Political Economy of Market Reform in Jordan* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998, 141)

[11] Rex Brynen, "Economic Crisis and Post-Rentier Democratization in the Arab World: The Case of Jordan." *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 25, No 1. (1992) 69-98, 79.

[12] During 1972-2002, the number of students in Jordan increased 23-fold; the proportion of students aged 18–23 in 1996 was 28 percent, the highest in the Middle East and comparable to the rate in advanced economies in the Global North. Yitzhak Reiter, "Higher Education and Sociopolitical Transformation in Jordan." *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 2 (November 1, 2002): 137–64, 137, https://doi.org/10.1080/1353019022000012641.

[13] Ragui Assaad, *The Jordanian Labor Market in the New Millennium* (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2014).

[14] Timothy Piro, *The Political Economy of Market Reform in Jordan,* 146). The nature of Jordan's bureaucratic expansion was highly political, as the regime attempted to extend political patronage to its social base, consisting primarily of Transjordanian East Bankers, rather than the large Palestinian population that had settled in the country following their expulsion from Israel starting in 1948. In governorates dominated by Transjordanians, government employment among the employed population sometimes reached 90 percent. Assaad, *The Jordanian Labor Market* 186-187, 238.

[15] The central areas of Palestinian concentration, 'Amman, Zarqa', and Balqa, had 58 percent, 56 percent, and 58 percent public employment, respectively. Baylouny, "Militarizing Welfare."

However, even though many urban Palestinians were not employed in the public sector, the state began to universalize welfare by subsidizing many essential goods. In 1974, the Ministry of Supply was established to oversee subsidies for wheat, sugar, tea, powdered milk, rice, and poultry.[16] The subsidization of basic commodities—and the administrative apparatus that went with it—reified and naturalized the presence of the state—and citizens' dependence on it—in the lives of the urban masses that populated the kingdom. Although originally intended only for members of the bureaucracy and the armed forces, most subsidies and price controls eventually became general consumer support.[17] As José Ciro Martínez has shown, the state subsidized essential goods to "address citizens in sites crucial to their subsistence, all while cementing popular dependence on monarchical munificence," while it "index(ed) the Hashemite regime's commitment and capacity to care for its subjects."[18] While many state jobs were reserved for Transjordanians, the subsidies "could conjure attachments that would span the Hashemite Kingdom" in a country "where most citizens had strong identifications with either North or South, urban or rural, settled or nomadic, descent from the East Bank or West Bank."[19] As Marwan Al-Qasim, the former Minister of Supply, told Martínez about the subsidy scheme for bread, "Yes, we wanted to tie people to the bakery, and via the bakery to the state…We knew it might create a form of dependence but, for many of us, that was all right."[20]

Youth Governance in the Age of Dependence

At the same time the state was expanding institutions and practices to cultivate citizen dependency, youth was emerging as a central category of governance for several reasons. First, the state sought to assume a paternalistic role that was formerly the exclusive domain of the family or clan. Since, as Massad notes, the emerging nation-state was "hostile to kinship ties that cross the newly established national territory," youth were included in the realm of state governance, effectively superseding blood ties.[21] Second, citizens' dependence on the state was previously tied to labor in the military or public sector. The presence of the state in citizens' lives could not wait until adulthood, especially as more youth spent more years in higher education.[22] Third, Jordanian nation-state building coincided with intellectual and political upheaval in the Arab world. The anti-colonial and Arab nationalist currents, often spearheaded by restless youth, swept the region. Meanwhile, the process of nation-state-building brought the youth of the entire kingdom into closer mental proximity, generating new imagined communities.[23] As a result, a monarchy with a tenuous connection to the land and colonial ties, like the Hashemite monarchy, risked getting caught in the crosshairs.

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[16] José Ciro Martínez, *States of Subsistence: The Politics of Bread in Contemporary Jordan* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 2022).

[17] José Ciro Martínez, "Leavened Apprehensions: Bread Subsidies and Moral Economies in Hashemite Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies 50.* No. 2 (May . 2018): 173-93. 178.

[18] Martínez, *States of Subsistence*, 63.

[19] Ibid, 64.

[20] Ibid, 62.

These factors—the new state paternalism, the need for state presence in the lives of young people, and the influence of regional radical intellectual currents—led many bureaucrats, reformers, and scholars to worry that young Jordanians would be led astray. In the 1970s and 1980s, writers of Jordanian youth imagined them existing in a void between inadequate family care and the absence of meaningful, state-led activities. In *The Problem of Youth,* a 1985 Jordanian academic study on population growth and youth governance, Ahmad Jamal-Taher identifies "Emptiness and how to get rid of it is one of the problems that developing societies suffer from." "The youth category," he continues, "is the most affected group in society. In fact, failure to exploit leisure leads to several social problems, and some of them may lead to deviation and anomaly."[24] Jamal-Taher further notes that "the occurrence of deviations among young people is caused by the fatal void that young people suffer from, especially since youth have strength and energy that must be channeled into good deeds; otherwise, the matter will be turned on its head."[25] Scholar Ali al-Zaghal writes in his 1994 study *Youth in Jordan* (part of the *Jordan History Committee* led by Crown Prince Hassan): "There (is a) problem of intellectual, political and emotional emptiness [al-farāgh], as most of our Jordanian youth lack a clear vision of national, social and psychological goals. They often feel that they are strangers to their society."[26]

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[21] Massad, *Colonial Effects*.

[22] Scholars have noted that the extended period during which young people are embedded in age-segregated schools breaks the hold of the family and community and offers abundant opportunity for a cohort to identify as a generation "in actuality." Ryder, "The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change." These findings are in line with Bryn Rosenfeld's recent study on how the middle classes relate to authoritarian incumbents. Rosenfeld shows that the middle classes support regimes when they are provided with sufficient economic opportunities. She notes that "as autocratic countries promote tertiary education in pursuit of development, they will likely need to balance these policies with good jobs, good benefits, and other perks that keep educated groups satisfied." Rosenfeld, *The Autocratic Middle Class*, 15.

[23] As Mannheim noted about youth radicalism, a generation becomes aware of each other when they "participate in the characteristic social and intellectual currents of their society and period, and in so far as they have an active or passive experience of the interactions of forces which made up the new situation." Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," 303-304

According to these scholars and reformers, the sense of emptiness among youth could be remedied only by the strong presence and clear vision of the state. They argued that the state needed to assert itself and take responsibility for guiding and caring for young people in at least two ways. First, the state must remind the youth of the Hashemite regime's integral role in building the Jordanian nation-state. As Awad Khleifat, Minister of Youth in 1989, said:

> Introducing young people to their history and the development of their country's path, and their awareness of the role of their leadership in consolidating the rules of justice, security, and growth, is a necessary and basic process which makes young people able to possess a distinct cultural awareness that protects them from the dangers of foreign intellectual currents that oppose our nation's history, values, and traditions.[27]

Moreover, according to Khleifat, it was the state's role to "provide them (the youth) with basic information on the historical, political, social and cultural development of our country, and on the role of our glorious Arab nation in global culture."[28]

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[24] Ahmed Jamal Taher, *Mushkilāt Al-Shabāb: Dirāsa Maydāniyya Lil-Shabāb Al-Urduni* (*The Problem of Youth: A Field Study of Jordanian Youth*), (Zarqa: Dar Al-Aṣlak, 1985). 97.

[25] Jamal Taher, *Mushkilāt Al-Shabāb*, 101.

[26] Ali Zaghal, *Al-Shabāb fil-Urdun (Youth in Jordan),* Silsila Al-Kitāb Al-Āma fi-Tārīkh Al-Urdun (General Book Series on Jordanian History), published by *Lajna Tārīkh Al-Urdun* (*Jordanian History Committee*) Amman *1994.* 48.

[27] Cited in Mahmoud Saud Qizam, *Al-Shabāb fi-Fikrat Al-Hussein* (Youth in the Taught of [King] Hussein), Published by the Ministry of Youth. Part of *Silsila Al-Tathqīf Al-Shabābi* (Series on Youth Cultivation, no 5.) 1988, 10.

[28] Ibid, 10.

Second, scholars and state representatives suggested that the state had to implant itself and engage youth in their daily lives, between school and home, in extracurricular and recreational activities. As Jamal Taher claims:

> The state, through its social institutions, is concerned with the exploitation of leisure time, and therefore it encourages the opening of libraries, sports and scouting associations, intellectual clubs, recreational parks, etc. This contributes to a large extent in *eliminating the void* that is generated by nothing but distress and boredom (*al-ḍīq wa-al-ḍajar*) and so that youth people don't occupy themselves with other side issues that may lead them to get lost.[29]

The need for the state arose in part from the conviction that youth guidance could not be left to indifferent families and communities. As Jamal-Taher reflects, "It is generally observed in Arab societies that these types of hobbies (physical activities and the arts) are not encouraged, but (society) rather stand in the way of achieving them. Who dares in many Arab villages to practice jogging and walking in shorts?"[30] He continues, "Many children cannot convince their parents of the need to develop their musical abilities for fear of being rejected. Parents believe that these are matters considered a waste of time."[31] It was argued that the state had to act decisively to insert itself into the lives of young people to combat this docility and passivity of Jordanian society, organizing their time for their own good and that of the nation. According to the National Charter (of 1991), "the state must set national policies and programs to mobilize their (youth) energies and qualify them to assume responsibility… and strive to protect them from deviation, address its causes, and direct their creative abilities toward building and development.'"[32]

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[29] Jamal-Taher, The Problem of Youth, 97. Emphasis added.

[30] Ibid, 100.

[31] Ibid, 105

[32] Zaghal, *Al-Shabāb fil-Urdun (Youth in Jordan),* 48.

The Emerging Institutional Infrastructures of Youth Governance

To fill the dangerous void attributed to youth, the Jordanian government assembled an institutional infrastructure to establish a firm state presence in their lives. This effort was based on the central concept of youth care (*riʿāya*)—etymologically related to herding and tending a flock of animals, meaning care and protection, patronage, and supervision.

In Jordan, youth governance was almost nonexistent in the first half of the twentieth century. During the mandate period before 1946, only the Ministry of Education focused on youth by providing educational staff for government schools. In 1921, the education budget was no more than £6,000 sterling,[33] and in the 1922–1923 school year, there were 44 schools in the kingdom.[34] In 1939, Education Law No. 2 (*Al-Qanūn Al-Maʿrifa*) established a more centralized educational system and expanded the state's mandate to care for youth. Under the 1939 law, the state now assumed responsibility for "combating illiteracy and spreading culture among all individuals throughout the country…Promoting sports movements, military training, and scouting activities … supporting the efforts made by individuals and groups in the service of science, literature and morals."[35] The law also gave the Ministry of Education the right to force parents to send their children to school.[36] At this point in the 1940s and 1950s, however, there were few organized efforts to support sports and social clubs beyond education. Officially, the supervision of youth came under the auspices of the Ministry of Social Affairs, whose capabilities were, according to contemporary reports at the time, "a sham."[37]

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[33] Ibid, 21

[34] Ratib Al-Saud, *Al-Nizām Al-Taʿlīmī Al-Urduni fi-ẓul Al-Miʾawyyia* ("The Education System in Light of the Centennial"), *Addustour*, February 21, 202, https://www.addustour.com/articles/1196408--النظام-التعليمي-الأردني-في-ظل-المئوية

[35] *Al-Qanūn Al-Maʿrifa (The Knowledge/Education Law),* Law No. 20 of 1955. April 16, 1955. Available at http://site.eastlaws.com/GeneralSearch/Home/ArticlesTDetails?MasterID=217532

[36] *Ibid,* Article (48). The article states that "The Minister of Education has the right to punish the guardian of a student or a student who refrains from education at the age of compulsory education with a fine not exceeding ten dinars and obligate the student to education until his illiteracy is gone and he can read and write easily."

[37] Zaghal, *Al-Shabāb fil-Urdun* (Youth in Jordan), 25.

As the population grew and more people moved to the cities and entered the non-agricultural labor market, the existing institutional infrastructure of youth governance no longer sufficed. In 1966, King Hussein ordered the establishment of the Youth Care Foundation (*Mūʿasasa Riʿāya Al-Shabāb*) to "undertake the care, protection and guidance of youth culturally, athletically and socially."[38] In a speech in December of the same that year, King Hussein spoke of the government's prioritization of youth, saying that "caring for young people and making way for their sporting activities, and creating a high-spirit in them, (will) attract special attention and effort from the government, as an independent body was established to deal with their activities, which is the Youth Welfare Foundation."[39]

Above all else, the Youth Care Foundation centralized Jordan's youth governance. The head of government, the Prime Minister, was officially in command of the foundation,[40] and its director was appointed by a combination of the cabinet ("Council of Ministers") and "royal will."[41] The development of centralized youth administration meant that youth, like the rest of the state apparatus, was detached and governed scientifically. As the then Minister of Youth, Awad Khleifat, stated in 1989, "It was imperative that the distribution of these activities and programs be according to a well-studied scientific basis…directing their energies and abilities towards effective participation in the comprehensive national development process."[42]

To further centralize youth governance, the Youth Welfare Foundation, such as the Al-Hussein Youth City Authority, brought several corollary youth institutions under its supervision. Sometimes referred to as the Sports City, Al-Hussein Youth City was built starting in 1964 and included sports facilities and youth and cultural centers on 90 hectares in the northeastern part of Amman along Queen Rania Street.[43] In 1977, the Martyrs' Memorial Museum was added to the Youth City, inscribing in its topography the typical coupling of celebrating the Hashemite family's heroics during the 1916 Arab Revolt and organizing young people's free time. In addition to the Youth City, the Jordanian Olympic Committee (established in 1957) and a number of other sports and scouting bodies were also placed under the supervision of the Youth Care Foundation. The Youth Welfare Foundation was later subsumed under the Ministry of Youth and Culture, established in 1977 and followed by the Ministry of Youth in 1984.

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[38] *Qānūn Mūʿasasa Riʿāya Al-Shabāb Mūʿaqat* (Youth Welfare Institution Temporary Law) No. (70) of 1966. Available at https://maqam.najah.edu/legislation/144/.

[39] Qizam, *Al-Shabāb fi-Fikrat Al-Hussein* (Youth in the Taught of [King] Hussein), 13. Quote from King Hussein's speech at the fourth regular session of the eighth parliament.

[40] According to Article 13 of the Youth Welfare Institution Temporary Law No. (70) of 1966, "The Prime Minister is the head of the institution and supervises all their work. He may delegate all or part of the powers conferred upon him under this law to any minister by virtue of a written letter issued by him."

[41] Article (14), Youth Welfare Institution Temporary Law No. (70) of 1966.

[42] Cited in Qizam, *Al-Shabāb fi-Fikrat Al-Hussein* (Youth in the Taught of [King] Hussein), 13.

As demanded by scholars and reformers, the emerging institutions of youth care focused on two pillars: securing youth's attachment to the regime and establishing the presence of the state in their lives. Youth governance relied on "loyalty and belonging" (*al-wala' w alintima'*) as an organizing principle To ensure the youth's attachment to the regime. This concept served to orient youth toward the past, tying them to a set of events and traditions while circumscribing alternative visions for the future. The Youth Care Law No. 8 of 1987 mandated that the philosophy of youth welfare be based on "raising young people who (are) aware of their nation's heritage…deepening the youth's loyalty to the homeland and the king, and emphasizing in their upbringing to respect for the Constitution and the law.[44] As one Ministry of Youth staff manual described, "There is no substitute for the consolidation of the values of loyalty and national belonging in the hearts (*nfus)* of our youth."[45] In a section titled "What the Consequences are in the Absence of Loyalty and Belonging," the text warns of "growing tendencies for rebellion, disobedience and violent and aggressive behavior. Assault on public property and possessions. Individual interests trump public interests (selfishness instead of altruism). Feelings of Isolation. Feelings of marginalization."[46]

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[43] "Al-Hussein Youth City," *The Center for the Study of the Built Environment*, 2021, https://www.csbe.org/al-hussein-youth-city-the-sports-city

[44] *Qānūn Riʿāya Al-Shabā (Youth Care/Welfare Law),* Law No. 8 of 1987. January 2, 1987. Available at http://site.eastlaws.com/GeneralSearch/Home/ArticlesTDetails?MasterID=74844

[45] Mahmoud Qizam Al-Sarhan, *Al-Shabāb wa-Al-Iʿtizāz Al-Waṭani (Youth and National Pride) Silsila Al-Tathqīf Al-Shabābi 52,* Series on Youth Cultivation, no. 52. Published by the Higher Council of Youth (Amman 2004, 73).

The Great Arab Revolt of 1916 (in which the ruling Hashemite family played a key role) functioned as a key event around which the state in the 1980s reproduced national identity and continuity. For example, the Ministry of Youth organized the Great Arab Revolt Scout Camp, inviting youth from across the Arab world. Prizes were awarded to prominent youth who "offered a meaningful contribution to the Kingdom's celebrations of the Great Arab Revolt."[47] One report on youth governance from the 1990s commented, "Recently, the ministry has published 15 educational booklets about Jordan and the Great Arab Revolution…that reinforce the sense of belonging of the youth to their country and immunize them from wrong thinking."[48] The ministry published books on the Arab Revolt and the role of the Hashemites, including 1981 titles such as *Freedom: The Story of the Great Arab Revolt* by Suleiman Musa, who was later awarded the State Prize in Social Sciences in 1990.[49] In addition, youth governance established youth centers in towns and villages to organize leisure time for young people.[50] As detailed by Youth Care Law No. 8 of 1987, youth care "encourages young people to practice sports as an activity based on hobby or professionalism with the aim of developing physical fitness and self-discipline and achieving financial returns for clubs, players, coaches, administrators, and referees."[51]

The End of State Care

The expansion of state-led youth governance went hand in hand with the development of the caring state, which looked after the material needs of its population through public sector employment and state subsidies. However, economic expansion was followed by an economic crisis, neoliberal structural adjustments, and an almost uninterrupted regime of austerity. It started with a fiscal crisis. In the 1980s, international oil markets collapsed, and Jordan could no longer finance its economic expansion through the regional hydrocarbon-fueled economic circuits of aid and remittances. From 1982 to 1984, aid from rich Arab neighbors fell from $1.2 billion to $550 million. Labor remittances also dried up as former expatriates began to return, with 35,000 returning in 1987 alone. As a result, Jordan had to borrow heavily from international capital markets to keep employing Jordanians in the public sector and to subsidize essential consumer goods. Eventually, the economy collapsed in 1989. That year, Jordan experienced negative GDP growth of 14 percent.[52] Unable to service its debts, the IMF extended loans on the condition that Jordan undertake a major structural adjustment, primarily targeting the growing bureaucracy and government spending.

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[46] Ibid.

[47] Lina Edward Khamis, *Cultural Policy in Jordan: System, Process, and Policy* (Springer, 2018), 53-54.

[48] Zaghal, *Al-Shabāb fil-Urdun (Youth in Jordan),* 27.

[49] Khamis, *Cultural Policy in Jordan*, 53-54

[50] Ibid, 53-54

[51] *Qānūn Riʿāya Al-Shabā (Youth Care/Welfare Law),* Law No. 8 of 1987.

Since the economic crisis, Jordan has implemented comprehensive market-oriented reforms, which accelerated after the ascension of King Abdullah II in 1999. For example, the monarch oversaw the privatization of all major government enterprises and a reduction in the public sector, the country's main employer.[53] Jordan was also integrated into global circuits of finance and trade by joining the WTO in 2000 and entering into free trade agreements with the United States and the European Union in 2001 and 2002, with the local private sector suffering from exposure to global competition. While the IMF dubbed Jordan a "success story," market reforms exacerbated class divisions and led to mass unemployment.[54]

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[52] Anne Mariel Peters and Pete Moore, "Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." *Studies in Comparative International Development* 44, No.3 (September 2009): 256-285, 274)

[53] See e.g., Rami Daher, "Welfare Genocide: Rentierism, Neoliberalism and Corporatization of the Public Sector in Jordan" in Neoliberal Governmentality and the Future of the State in Middle East and North Africa, ed. Emel Akcali (Basingstoke: Palgrave MacMillan, 2016)

[54] Oliver Schlumberger, "Patrimonial Capitalism: Economic Reform and Economic Order in the Arab World," Ph.D. Thesis. Eberhard-Karls University, Tubingen, 2004, 133.

The first pillar of the welfare state, public sector employment, became the subject of far-reaching interventions that affected the younger generations entering the labor market. Only between the mid-1980s and the mid-1990s did the percentage of university graduates that went into government employment halve from 60 percent to 30 percent.[55] The private sector did not manage to replace the jobs lost in the public sector, let alone create new jobs for growing youth cohorts. The privatization of public companies negatively impacted many rural Transjordanian communities, while the public sector could no longer absorb the growing cohorts of Transjordanian labor. Furthermore, as Yom observes, "military service, long a birthright of many tribal communities, became privileges reserved only for well-connected applicants."[56] With nearly 40 percent of 15- to 24-year-olds now unemployed, Jordan now has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world.[57] Apart from unemployment, educated youth also suffer from the flexibilization and precarious conditions of the labor market, a far cry from the former stable conditions in the public sector.[58]

The second pillar of the autocratic welfare state—state subsidies—was also targeted. According to Yom, subsidies underwent "cyclical withdrawals during budgetary crunches, as planners began replacing blanket protections for bread, petrol, and other commodity prices with means-tested assistance and income-based programs."[59] In 2018, the regime began eliminating the all-important bread subsidy, after which the price of a kilo of white pita bread rose by 60 percent. Thus, the universal ambitions of the blanket bread subsidy were replaced with a cheaper cash transfer system targeting poor Jordanian nationals.

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[55] Assaad, *The Jordanian Labor Market,* 15.

[56] Sean Yom, "Bread, Fear, and Coalitional Politics in Jordan" in *Economic Shocks and Authoritarian Stability: Duration, Financial Control, and Institutions*, ed. Victor Shih, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2020), 227.

[57] The even worse-off countries are Bosnia, South Africa, Greece, the West Bank, Namibia, Libya, and Mozambique https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?year_high_desc=true

[58] For the youth lucky enough to land a private sector job, there are no employment protections for permanent employees, no priority rule, no required severance pay, redundancies require no retraining, and the required notice period is one month. Valentina Barcucci and Nader Mryyan, "Labour market transitions of young women and men in Jordan," *ILO, Work4Youth Publication Series No. 14*, June 2014. Moreover, the tendency to have temporary jobs as your first job has risen from around 4 percent in 1987 to 13 percent in the early 2000s and is likely a lot higher today Assaad, *The Jordanian Labor Market,* 21.

[59] Yom, "Bread, Fear, and Coalitional Politics in Jordan," 227.

Throughout the economic shift, the regime strove to maintain the material dependence of East Bankers, in particular, even amid fiscal pressures. The regime continued public employment and the selective provision of welfare benefits in the 1990s and early 2000s using proceeds from privatized public companies, even in defiance of IMF demands. However, this policy merely bought time. Reduced fiscal capacity eventually caught up with the regime, and, as Yom remarks, "tribal communities faced creeping dislocation starting in the 2000s on multiple fronts."[60]

Managing Despair, Privatizing Hope: Youth Governance in the Age of Austerity

Coupled with the neoliberalization of the economy was the regime's need to abandon its commitments to youth livelihoods. The dominant narrative of the caring, shepherding, and benevolent state began to chafe against the youth's lived experience of increasingly being left to fend for themselves. The void that state reformers had sought to fill with caring and guiding state institutions now had to be approached differently; at this point, the state itself had become the void—the thing that was absent. More than anything, with the abandonment of distribution, it became clear that the regime and the state could no longer function as sites of hope. Previously a reminder of its generosity, the state's presence in the lives of young people became a constant reminder of betrayal and limited horizons. Instead of emphasizing the state's role in caring for its citizens, youth governance began to emphasize youth self-care, privatizing hope.

Even before the Arab uprisings, as youth frustrations became manifest in the Arab political arena, the regime designed campaigns to combat the violent manifestations of the political, social, and economic malaise that had beset Jordanian society in the wake of neoliberalization. These campaigns, focusing on violence, terrorism, and security issues, recognized hopelessness as detrimental to peace and peaceful existence. In 2009, Queen Rania launched the "Culture of Hope" campaign, which explicitly sought to reject the culture of despair that she argued was at the root of violence and terrorism in the Arab world. In the aftermath of the terrorist bombings in Amman in 2005, a culture of hope, according to Queen Rania, could begin to bridge "the gulf between those who grow up nourished by the promise of peace with justice, equal opportunity, and tolerance for others, and those who do grow up without this advantage. Children growing up with this gulf are likely to be more vulnerable to the despair and violence that perpetuates age-old conflicts and limits their sense of what is possible."[61]

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[60] Ibid, 227.

Crown Prince Hussein later took up the issue of combating the violent manifestations of hopelessness among youth. As soon as Hussein was old enough to represent the monarchy in an official capacity, he began addressing fellow youth. As a 20-year-old in 2015, the crown prince became the youngest world leader to chair a U.N. Security Council meeting. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon commended the prince, saying that he is "not yet 21 years old, but he is already a leader in the 21st century."[62] At the time, Jordan held the temporary presidency of the Security Council and opted to focus its work on youth issues. A palace official was quoted in Al-Arabiya, explaining that the theme of youth was chosen because "the issue of youth empowerment is dear and close to him (the crown prince)."[63]

The crown prince explicitly connected political violence and extremism to youth's lack of opportunities: "We have to fill this vacuum being exploited by enemies of humanity by building on the potential of youth and empowering them to achieve their ambitions."[64] After the Security Council placed youth on its agenda, Jordan hosted an international conference in August 2015, the Global Forum on Youth, Peace, and Security, attended by youth and policymakers from around the world. The forum led to the "Amman Declaration on Youth, Peace, and Security," a document containing a roadmap for increasing youth involvement in peace-making efforts.

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[61] Mayssoun Sukarieh, "The Hope Crusades: Culturalism and Reform in the Arab World." *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 35, No. 1. (May 2012) 115-134.

[62] Al Arabiya English, "Jordan Prince Youngest Person to Chair U.N. Meet," *Al Arabiya English*, May 20, 2020, https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2015/04/24/Prince-20-youngest-to-chair-U-N-Security-Council-meeting.

[63] Al Arabiya English, "Jordan's Young Crown Prince Makes Global Debut in UN Speech," *Al Arabiya English*, May 20, 2020, https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2017/09/22/Jordan-s-young-crown-prince-makes-global-debut-in-UN-speech.

The Amman Declaration came just a few years after the Arab uprisings, sparked by a young Tunisian man who set himself on fire out of economic and political frustration. At the time, around the mid-2010s, neighboring Syria was descending into civil war, and Jordanians were shocked by the images and news of a captured Jordanian fighter pilot being burned alive by Islamic State (IS) fighters.[65] Yet, at the same time, many young Jordanians were being recruited by IS.[66] There were also significant tensions on Jordanian campuses, where tribal violence was increasing.[67] As Jordan's National Youth Strategy noted, "On one side, we see the involvement of the rising generation in political and social movements that demand reform; on the other side, we see another segment of the younger generation caught up in the movements of extremism, terrorism, and religious intolerance."[68]

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[64] Al-Arabiya English, "Jordan Prince Youngest Person to Chair U.N. Meet," *Al Arabiya English*, May 20, 2020, https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2015/04/24/Prince-20-youngest-to-chair-U-N-Security-Council-meeting.

[65] Asa Fitch, Maria Abi-Habib, Suha Ma'ayeh, and Maria Abi-Habib. "Islamic State Releases Video Purportedly Showing Captured Jordanian Pilot Burned Alive." *WSJ*, February 4, 2015. https://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-releases-video-showing-captured-jordanian-pilot-purportedly-burned-alive-1422984371?mod=WSJ_hp_LEFTTopStories.

[66] Saba Abu Farha, "Stay in University or Join the Islamic State?," *Al-Fanar Media,* February 12, 2015. Available at: https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/02/stay-university-join-islamic-state/. Accessed September 8, 2020.

[67] Rasha Faek, "Tribal Violence Plagues Jordanian Public Universities," *Al-Fanar Media,* July 23, 2013. Available at https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2013/07/tribal-violence-plagues-jordanian-public-universities/. Accessed September 8, 2020. In his book, Developing Political Awareness at Universities, Jordanian author Hussein al-Amoush argues that a "political vacuum" among students "pushes them to break the law, enhances the tendency of violence and threatens the educational process." Esraa Mohareb and Esraa Mohareb, "Students' Lack of Political Engagement Is Cause for Concern, Author Says," *Al-Fanar Media*, May 28, 2022, https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2017/12/students-lack-political-engagement-cause-concern-author-says/.

[68] "National Youth Strategy 2019-2025," *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Youth,* Available at https://moy.gov.jo/sites/default/files/jordan_national_youth_strategy_2019-2025_english_compressed_1.pdf

While the emphasis on violence aimed to address the most immediate manifestations of youth despair, the threat of IS subsided over time, and the generation of the Arab uprisings reached adulthood. From the perspective of the regime, a more sustainable source of hope had to be found that did not put the onus on the distributive state. Here, the concept of entrepreneurship held the promise of creating a longer-term source of hope for future generations in the absence of state care.[69] As early as 1999, King Abdullah had already seen the potential in IT entrepreneurship and established REACH, an organization charged with promoting the growth of the country's IT sector. At this point, in the first decade of the new millennium, few people were familiar with the term "entrepreneurship."[70] The Arabic word for entrepreneurship, *Rīādī* or *Rīādat Al-Āʿmāl*, also means pioneer or prospector/explorer. According to a professional with extensive experience working in the youth empowerment sector, entrepreneurship in Jordan took on its contemporary meaning in the first decade of the new millennium. "Before this time," he remarked, "people would say, 'What do you mean *rīādī*? Should we go and be pioneers and discover new lands or what?'"[71]

In 2007, the kingdom spelled out its first national strategy for information and communication technology. A few years later, the economic case for Jordanian IT entrepreneurship received a boost when Maktoob, a Jordanian start-up providing email services to Arabic-speaking internet users, was acquired by Yahoo! for $164 million. When Maktoob was sold, the government's investment in the IT sector appeared to pay off. Along with Maktoob, other Jordanian start-ups such as Jamaloon, an online bookselling website, and Maoodo3, a Wikipedia-style website, seemed to be leading the Arab world in the internet revolution. According to one oft-repeated statistic, at one point, 75 percent of all Arabic internet content was produced in Jordan. Although I have not been able to verify the source of this claim, it may well reflect the situation around 2010–2012, when much internet content was produced solely through Maktoob because they were the first website to offer webmail (like Gmail or Hotmail) and other web services in Arabic. Regardless, Jordan's supposed IT dominance of 75 percent of all internet content, while long gone, was still cited at every conference and workshop on youth and the economy that I attended as evidence of the enduring viability of having Jordanian youth pursue entrepreneurial ventures.

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[69] As Sukarieh notes, the Culture of Hope campaign was linked ... entrepreneurship training…The USAID-funded Injaz, the Save the Children's Najah, and the private sector-funded Arab Foundation for Sustainable Development (AFSD) — were all geared to train young Jordanians to be committed and disciplined neoliberal subjects by offering courses on financial literacy, free market economics, entrepreneurship, leadership, life skills, and work ethics." Sukarieh, "The Hope Crusades," 122.

[70] Of course, Jordanians were familiar with centuries of trade, commerce, and enterprise. However, entrepreneurship was associated with new forms of commerce, as Chapter 4 explains.

[71] Muhammad, Interview with Author, Amman, Jordan, June 23, 2019.

Maktoob remains one of the greatest IT successes in the Arab world. Founders Hussam Khoury and Samih Toukan were awarded the "Al-Hussein Medal for Distinguished Performance of the First Order" by the king himself. In fact, King Abdullah became personally involved in the "exit" from the Maktoob market "[72] At a party celebrating the Yahoo sale, the king famously exclaimed, "500!"—meaning that Maktoob should be the first of 500 Jordanian IT start-up successes. To achieve this, the king helped found Oasis500, an ambitious start-up accelerator backed up by serious capital and expertise.

Thus, around 2010, IT entrepreneurship seemed like a viable way to alleviate youth unemployment and provide hope for the country's youth. The economic argument for entrepreneurship in Jordan was made more credible by the often repeated comment by Jordanian royals and politicians that Jordan's most valuable resource was its skilled population. Without a large domestic market, the argument goes, these talented people should invent profitable businesses, especially scalable IT businesses that can easily access a larger regional market. The World Bank and IMF have often corroborated this economic argument for Jordanian entrepreneurship in their reports.[73]

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[72] "Exit" is entrepreneurship lingo for being acquired. Tamara Pupic, "What pushes Jordanian entrepreneurs to succeed?" *Arabian Business.* May 24, 2016. Accessed November 2, 2018. https://www.arabianbusiness.com/what-pushes-jordanian-entrepreneurs-succeed--632670.html.

But reality caught up, and the anticipated comprehensive IT entrepreneurial boom failed to materialize. In part, Jordan's early successes resulted from a briefly unsaturated market for Arabic-language communications technology. During this period, MENA-based start-ups imitated major global tech companies' business models (Uber, Yahoo, and Amazon) to deliver similar products and services in the Arabic language. Once those business ideas had been mimicked, the window of opportunity closed. Moreover, Maktoob's success could not be solely attributed to the particular Jordanian conditions. The founders, while Jordanian citizens, had strong ties to the United States, having earned advanced degrees from John Hopkins and Stanford. And although Jordan got off to a good start, other Arab countries eventually caught up. For example, the United Arab Emirates began to invest heavily in its bountiful state coffers to incentivize Arab IT entrepreneurs to operate from that country. Two other major Arab ICT successes—Careem (ridesharing, bought by Uber) and Souq.com (online retailing, bought by Amazon)—emerged from the UAE. In Jordan today, while institutions such as Oasis 500 continue to provide seed capital and support to Jordanian entrepreneurs with viable business plans, very few IT entrepreneurial successes have gained a foothold outside Jordan's borders. Most Jordanian IT start-ups offer mobile applications for Jordanian consumer markets, such as Bilforon, which connects consumers with local home cooks, or Madfooat, a payment system that connects consumers and banks.

As the limits of Jordan's IT entrepreneurship became evident, the entrepreneurship sector (and its attendant entrepreneurship "ecosystem") could have continued to operate at the margins of the Jordanian economy. But in stark contrast, IT entrepreneurship was suddenly everywhere in politicians' speeches, economic growth plans, and youth programs. Instead of the entrepreneurship craze taking a back seat in the context of Maktoob's exit, the excitement, potential, sense of promise, and new beginnings associated with entrepreneurship were brought into the foreground of narratives about Jordan's economic future. The concept of entrepreneurship also expanded in scope from economic activity to civic ideal.

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[73] However, these institutions also argue that whether Jordan's youth bulge and skilled youth cohort will turn out to be a blessing or curse will depend on the government's willingness to undertake necessary liberalizing reforms.

In the noughties, entrepreneurship was still an abstract, embryonic idea in government documents. The National Youth Strategy for Jordan 2005–2009 stated that the government should "motivat(e) them (youth) to be self-reliant" so that youth could make "the shift from being recipients of society's care and services, to becoming contributors to society's growth and development."[74] By the second decade of the new millennium, however, the concrete concept of entrepreneurship began to organize the disparate ideas and governing strategies around shifting the production of hope away from the state and toward the youth themselves. According to the *Vision of Jordan 2025*, government authorities should work with youth to "promot(e) a spirit of entrepreneurship." The *Jordan Economic Catalyzing Growth Plans* states that a key goal is "(s)preading a culture of self-employment and entrepreneurship, and self-reliance through self-employment programs." According to the *National Strategy for Human Resource Development 2016-2025*, the government should "pave the way for (youth) to enter the world of entrepreneurship."[75]

The royal family, the center of authoritarian power in Jordan, spearheaded the entrepreneurship revolution. Its three senior members—King Abdullah II, Queen Rania, and Crown Prince Hussein—have been personally instrumental in promoting entrepreneurship, not least through GONGOs bearing their names. King Abdullah's *King Abdullah Fund for Development* supports entrepreneurial activities and often talks about entrepreneurship as the future of the Jordanian economy.[76] Queen Rania, meanwhile, officially presides over the *Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship* and functions as a custodian for the GONGO sector as a whole, with ties to critical entrepreneurship-promoting organizations such as the Jordan River Foundation and INJAZ.[77] The crown prince, whose profile is on the rise as he is groomed to ascend the throne, heads the increasingly powerful *Crown Prince Foundation*, which runs the Jordanian chapter of the Hult Prize and other entrepreneurial initiatives.

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[74] "National Youth Strategy for Jordan 2005- 2009." *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Higher Council for Youth*, Amman, (December 2004), 6-18.

[75] Cited in "National Youth Strategy 2019-2025," 26-28.

Eventually, the Ministry of Youth, traditionally focused on sports and patriotic education, also became the subject of reform initiatives that increasingly oriented it toward entrepreneurial youth governance. According to the National Youth Strategy 2019–2025, the ministry should be "empowering young people…with entrepreneurship concepts and skills" by holding workshops, organizing field visits, and generating "success stories."[78] Today, the gospel of entrepreneurship is also disseminated through public universities (most of which now host entrepreneurship centers), speeches by politicians and representatives of the royal court, and the constant public parade of successful young entrepreneurs as citizen success stories.

Entrepreneurship in general—and the concept of social entrepreneurship (*rīādī ijtima'iyya*) in particular—has become a terrain on which the welfare state is criticized as retrograde and incapable of solving social problems.[79] Indeed, according to Day, "the problematisation of the welfare state is the discursive register upon which 'social entrepreneurship' is built and to which it lends support and legitimacy"[80] For example, the

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[76] King Abdullah II Official News, "Al-Malak Yūʾakid Ḍurūrat Tawfīr kul Ashkāl Al-Daʿm Li-Qiṭāʿ Riādat Al-Āʿmāl fī Al-Urdun" (The King Confirms the Necessity to Provide Multiple Forms of Support to the Entrepreneurship Sector in Jordan). April 22, 2019.

[77] Queen Rania regularly meets with groups of entrepreneurs. "Queen Rania Visits Technology Startup Mixed Dimensions," *Office of Her Majesty Queen Rania Press Department,* May 28, 2018.

[78] "National Youth Strategy 2019-2025," *The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Youth*, 55.

[79] Social entrepreneurship takes the notion of self-enterprise beyond the immediate concern of economic sustenance to address social problems by having individuals themselves innovate to solve problems in their communities.

[80] Pascal Dey, "Governing the social through 'social entrepreneurship': A Foucauldian view of 'the art of governing' in advanced liberalism" in *Social entrepreneurship and enterprise: Concepts in context* , ed. Douglas, H., & Grant, S. (Melbourne: Tilde University Press, 2013), 4.

Jordanian entrepreneur Fadi Ghandour, who has helped found the private sector-run NGO Ruwwad, which preaches self-entrepreneurship in low-income Amman neighborhoods, argues that "even the most well-intentioned public servants" cannot deal with "widespread unemployment, chronic poverty, environmental corrosions, food insecurity, water scarcity, and disenfranchised populations." Rather, Ghandour argues, we need to replace "old, depleted development paradigms" with "a method that is grassroots and community-driven [social entrepreneurship]."[81]

Youth Institutions in Post-Welfare Jordan

In June 2019, the Ministry of Youth organized the launch of Jordan's National Youth Strategy 2019–2025. The ceremony took place at Amman's Al-Hussein Youth City and was attended by Minister of Youth Mohammad Abu Rumman, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz, and youth from around the Kingdom. The National Youth Strategy was launched with speeches and presentations suffused with familiar platitudes about empowering youth's capabilities and supporting their efforts. The highlight of the gathering was the Ministry of Youth Choir's performance of an anthem written for the special occasion called *Naḥno Shabāb* (We are the Youth). With digital Jordanian flags waving in the background, about 30–40 young people dressed in various attire entered the stage in three rows. Marching music resembling both a military march and a national anthem began to play. The choir's entire back row comprised youth in military uniforms, symbolizing the military's role as the backbone of the nation and an employer of new generations of Jordanians. The middle and front rows consisted of youth in a variety of garb, some with academic regalia such as gowns, hoods, and caps, others with construction workers' overalls and hard hats, and still others with doctors' uniforms.

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[81] "Introduction" in Dima Jamali and Alessandro Lanteri, *Social Entrepreneurship in the Middle East: Volume 2* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015). As Bill Drayton, one of the global pioneers of the social entrepreneurship concept, argued, "The old model was: Give people a skill which they repeat for life in a world with a lot of walls…That system is dying. And it's dying faster and faster as more and more of its groups and individuals fail. And others adapt and move into the new reality of an everything-changing world where everyone has to be a changemaker to be able to contribute." William F. Meehan III, "Bill Drayton and Social Entrepreneurship: How a Social Movement Is Changing the World...and Launching Another: EVERYONE A CHANGEMAKER," *Forbes*, November 22, 2019, https://www.forbes.com/sites/williammeehan/2019/11/22/bill-drayton-and-social-entrepreneurship-how-a-social-movement-is-changing-the-worldand-launching-another-everyone-a-changemaker/#7346612745de.

The performance was a blast from the past, dramatizing the old corporatist vision of the nation-state, where every citizen was assigned a role within the body politic, and the army was the nation's ultimate protector. The marching-style music and regimented movements sought to symbolize the state's steadfast commitment to encompass—and provide for—the people. This was the state speaking with a single, unified voice, telling the people what to do and how to act while looking after their wellbeing.

The problem with the performance was not a lack of ambition but that these enduring aesthetics misconstrued the ethos of contemporary Jordanian youth governance. The ministry's theatricalization of the role of youth in society is at odds with a regime that wants to renounce distributive responsibility in favor of casting everyone in a useful role in the national economy. Instead, according to the new vision, citizens must create meaningful employment for themselves and find adequate subsistence. Thus, the *Naḥno Shabāb* performance was out of step with the regime's overarching youth policy advocated by the GONGOs and members of the royal family, which was to make youth responsible and relieve the state of the burden of creating life opportunities. The *Naḥno Shabāb* performance was thereby illustrative of why the regime has preferred devolving youth governance to GONGOs in favor the Ministry of Youth in recent decades.

In Jordan, early nation-state building went hand in hand with the creation of citizens who depended on the state to provide jobs and cheap goods. Youth governance during this period of state largesse aligned with this goal by dramatizing the regime's presence in the lives of youth and reminding them of the greatness of the country's leadership. At the same time, youth centers were established throughout the kingdom where young people could play sports and pursue their hobbies, turning young Jordanians into national subjects outside the family and school. This was a sensible approach when the state guaranteed decent life chances through employment and consumer protection programs. The state's commitment to secure people's livelihoods allowed the ministry the luxury of focusing on loyalty to the leadership and related activities such as sports.

However, after the demise of state care, the dependent subject that the regime had cultivated for decades had become, in its view, a liability. Youth governance emphasizing state beneficence became incompatible with the economic reality of young people. Against the backdrop of youth unemployment, stagnation, youth's sense of lack of direction, and, at times, desperation, the Ministry of Youth and its youth centers ran the risk of becoming part of the terrain of hopelessness and disengagement, where youth hung out, played some basketball or soccer, and "waste(ed) time" (*ḍīāiʿa waqt*). As a result, many of my interlocutors, GONGO recruits and evangelists of the modern, globally oriented young generation, typically viewed the ministry's youth centers with suspicion. The centralization and institutionalization of youth governance that King Hussein had pioneered with the Youth Welfare Institution in 1966 had run its course and become a liability. Centralization had also become a problem, both because of bureaucratic inertia and because the regime suspected that youth no longer wanted to be told what to do by state representatives. Instead, in the more diffuse landscape of youth empowerment led by GONGOs, youth could respond to the promise of doing things beyond the government's purview.

The dissonances between traditional youth governance and youth's lived experiences unraveled within the Ministry of Youth itself. As part of the cumbersome state bureaucracy, with its inertia, corruption, and slow pace, the Ministry of Youth simply lacked the capacity to harmonize with the regime's youth governance style. First, the ministry draws its staff from a state bureaucracy that is partly a container for salaried citizens, partly a conduit for the distribution of patronage, and only then a social services provider. Needless to say, the staff is not always the most competent or qualified. Like all ministers, the actual ministers of youth are quickly removed and reshuffled. Ministers are therefore unlikely to embark on ambitious reform programs because they know they will soon move on.[82] Instead, it is widely recognized that the ministries are led by the more stationary secretaries-general.

Recently, the regime has identified the Ministry of Youth as a problem. A 2017 study of the Ministry of Youth's more than 200 youth centers revealed "structural problems" and low attendance.[83] Jordan's National Youth Strategy explicitly states that the Ministry of Youth must adapt to new "transformations and challenges." For example, the document indicates that youth governance is dealing with "a rising generation in political and social movements that demand reform… high rates of unemployment…feelings of frustration, disappointment, anxiety and uncertainty that have become noticeable features in social media and in the relationship between governments and citizens."[84] The National Youth Strategy 2019–2025 further details the regime's shifting priorities, to which the ministry must adapt:

> (There has been) a significant change in the content of official speeches and the state's mission towards the young generation. Official pronouncements on youth are no longer exclusively related to sport and physical activities…attention is now also given to other issues that are linked with the interests and priorities of young people in political, economic and cultural aspects. In addition, there is a new focus on encouraging and fostering innovation, creativity, skills and self-development…[85]

This passage points to a more indirect role for the ministry, which is to provide opportunities and activities that youth themselves are allowed to design and fill with meaning ("new focus on encouraging and fostering”). In line with this desire to foster youth ambitions, the ministry has reconceptualized youth centers as “youth spaces” (*Masāḥāt al-Shabābiyya*), that “provide young people with the circumstances and conditions for creativity and allowing them to play an active role in interaction with the local community.”[86]

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[82] One interlocutor, Wasim, a young man deeply involved in the regime-run youth empowerment sector, mentioned that he had met with the Minister of Youth once when the minister visited a debate club that Wasim was running at his university. According to Wasim, in a private meeting, the minister suggested several topics that the debating club should discuss. "You can discuss the environment," the minister allegedly said. "We've already done that," Wasim said. "You can discuss hidden unemployment" (the tendency whereby some organizations have a lot of staff but not enough needs to employ all their staff in meaningful work.) The minister said, "Just in my ministry, we have a lot of hidden unemployment!" i.e., people are mainly hanging around. Wasim thought to himself, "Why don't you do anything about it!." Fieldnotes, Amman, February 2, 2020.

[83] National Youth Strategy 2019-2025, 8.

[84] National Youth Strategy, 2019-2025, 6.

[85] Ibid.

Even more crucial than efforts to reforming the ministry is the regime’s bypassing of the ministry in governing youth through GONGOs. Running GONGOs separately from the state bureaucracy has many advantages. GONGOs can easily adopt youth policies unencumbered by the particular inertia of state institutions. Rather than recruiting from the regular pool of candidates waiting in the centralized state employment queue, they can handpick well-educated and ambitious personnel. The Crown Prince Foundation is a case in point. Because the CPF is independent of the distributive state, it can free itself from some of the debilitating *wasta* (favoritism) practices that pervade the public sector, whereby the most qualified candidate rarely ends up in the most significant leadership positions. Instead, a GONGO is run more like a private business. The CPF has its plush offices in the King Hussein Business Park alongside international and local tech and media companies. They recruit Western-educated staffers and are run by an MIT-educated CEO. This is not to say that GONGOs are havens of meritocracy and transparency. Quite the opposite. Yet, being run independently of regular state institutions allow for greater flexibility in implementing regime directives.

In other respects, the simultaneous proximity to the regime also carries benefits. For example, the Crown Prince Foundation’s board of directors has been run by trusted crony capitalists such as Fawaz Hatim Zu’bi, a former cabinet minister, and Ghassan Elia Nuqul, a key figure in King Abdullah’s Economic Consultative Council, a group of business figures who have helped the monarchy drive the kingdom’s neoliberal reforms. In addition, Law 37, which was rushed through parliament in 2015 to establish the CPF, stipulates that the organization "shall be exempted from duties, taxes and any governmental or municipal revenues of all kinds including sales tax."[87] GONGOs are also exempt from the Association's Law (which regulates civil society actors) and from the requirement to obtain approval for their funding and activities.

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[86] “National Youth Strategy”, 2019-2025, 8.

Moreover, as I will explore in other chapters, GONGOs' symbolic separation of state institutions allows GONGOs to cultivate an image of being business-like, globalized, and modern. For example, many young people that I met aspired to work for GONGOs, youth who rarely aspire to public-sector employment. This business-like image of GONGOs can inspire youth to take more meaningful action by appearing as semi-separate organizations. In contrast the Ministry of Youth, youth in GONGOs do not learn about the nation and its leadership, nor do they pursue the hobbies assigned to them in youth centers. In GONGOs, recruits are meant to experience the organization as a vessel for *their* ideas, hopes, and aspirations. In her ethnography of private youth volunteering programs in the United States, Nina Eliasoph observes that volunteers and organizers "revile anything that smells of…inflexible government, rigid rules, and rigid roles, people who are trapped in the past. Instead, they want open-ended, spontaneous voluntary participation…they want intimacy and exploration."[88]

Based on GONGO methods, the regime has begun to reform the Ministry of Youth. For example, in 2018, one of the architects of the CPF's GONGO initiative, Haqiq, Thabit Al-Nabulsi, was appointed the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Youth. Al-Nabulsi is a youth empowerment professional who runs a private firm, one of Haqiq's implementing partners. According to another manager at that firm, "With the new Secretary-General there (Al-Nabulsi), things are better; he is one of us; he comes from us."[89] Haqiq has also influenced the Ministry of Youth in other ways. In June 2019, I attended a session in Aqaba hosted at the local offices of the Ministry of Youth. There, one of Haqiq's workshop leaders, a university lecturer, trained Ministry of Youth staff from Jordan's southern governorates.[90] Staff training is part of a comprehensive program in which the CPF is working with the ministry to transform its more than 200 youth centers into "idea factories" tasked with developing entrepreneurial "solutions" for local communities.[91] In the first phase, the Crown Prince Foundation updated three youth centers in Theban, Liwā' al Wasaţīyah in Irbid, and Moab in Karak. These centers received a major facelift and now look more like Crown Prince Foundation mini-outlets, with computer labs boasting 3D printers and workshops run by start-up accelerator OASIS 500.

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[87] *Qānūn Mūʿasasa Walī al-ʿAhd* (The Crown Prince Foundation Law) no. 37 of 2015. https://www.cpf.jo/sites/default/files/crown_prince_foundation_special_law_2015.pdf Article 5.

[88] Nina Eliasoph, *Making Volunteers: Civic Life After Welfare's End* (Princeton University Press, 2013), 9-10.

[89] Fieldnotes, Amman, June 29, 2019.

In addition to efforts to modernize the ministry through GONGOs such as CPF, youth centers are also increasingly being used for GONGO activities and programs. Under a cooperation agreement between the ministry and CPF, CPF's Haqiq initiative can use the ministry's youth centers (where local Haqiq teams have small offices and run volunteering activities). In return, Haqiq has committed to encouraging youth to spend more time in poorly attended youth centers.[92] According to a Haqiq representative, "The youth centers have gotten a real boost from cooperating with Haqiq. Haqiq is the engine of these centers nowadays."[93] Another GONGO, the Jordan River Foundation, runs a UNICEF-funded program called Social Innovation Labs in the ministry's youth centers.[94] Thus, the Ministry of Youth is no longer the primary source of youth policy and programs but is now part of a broader network of youth policy actors. In this context, it often plays a subordinate role. Ministry of Youth staff are trained by GONGOs and the ministry is subject of GONGO-led reform efforts, not *vice versa.*

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[90] Fieldnotes, Aqaba, June 13, 2019.

[91] Petra National News Service, "Walī Al-ʿAhd Yaftatiḥ Markaz Al-Shabāb Dhībān Bʿad Taḥdīthuh Li-Tlbīa Iḥtīājāt wa Mutaṭalabāt Al-Shabāb"(The Crown Prince Inaugurates the Dhiban Youth Centre after its Modernization to Meet the Needs and Requirements of Youth) June 27, 2019 accessed September 1, 2021, https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=105201&lang=ar&name=news.

[92] Fieldnotes, Aqaba, June 13, 2019.

[93] Hussein, Interview with Author, Amman, June 25, 2019.

[94] Fieldnotes, Irbid, May 5, 2019. The Social Innovation Labs target youth between 14-25 to encourage them to create social entrepreneurship projects.

Youth “Success Stories”

In the spring of 2019, I attended Jordan World Youth Forum. Inspired by the Egypt’s World Youth Forum, the conference was held at a resort on the Dead Sea, an hour west of Amman. Initiated by a number of enterprising youth, several government ministers and policymakers attended the forum, and a recorded greeting from the crown prince opened the proceedings. The first plenary session to set the tone for the event featured four young people sharing their “success stories” (*Qiṣaṣ Al-Najaḥ*). First up was Mahmoud Abdeen, a professional basketball player representing Jordan’s national team. He began by talking about his passion for basketball and what it was like to grow up playing the sport. He told the audience about a career-threatening injury he had sustained a few years ago. Abdeen said, “People told me I would never get back to playing again. I wanted to prove them wrong. I fought hard. And last month, I played with the national team when we qualified for the World Cup.”

Next up was Jarah Al-Hawamdeh, a cancer survivor and mountaineer. Al-Hawamdeh suffered from bone cancer as a teenager. He told the audience that he was once declared clinically dead, and his death certificate was issued. Miraculously, he survived but had to have one of his legs amputated. Despite these adversities, he decided to pursue his dream of mountaineering. After becoming a certified mountaineer, he succeeded in climbing Kilimanjaro, during which he reportedly nearly suffered a heart attack. Al-Hawamdeh told the audience, “Don’t forget, you are the role model; people depend on you…When Trump defunded UNWRA, I decided to climb the base camp at Mount Everest. For this, I raised $125,000 for UNWRA. If we believe in ourselves, we can do anything; it’s all up here (pointing to his head). There are many summits out there; perhaps you have a summit to climb!” Third in line was Jood Mobideen, an award-winning novelist born in 2004, who has given readings for the king at a national celebration and similar events. Mobindeen shared with the audience that “you need to be the change that you wish to see in the world. If you want change, start with yourself. I failed in my life, but then I came first!" The final speaker was Omar Raman, a film director. Raman narrated the story of a problematic film shoot: "We didn't know whether we would finish it." In the end, his film was accepted into 25 film festivals and won four awards for best documentary. He encouraged the audience to "invest your energies" carefully, and patience will reward your success.[95]

Although the event began with a welcome from the crown prince, it was primarily other successful youth who delivered the critical message that youth should adopt an independent and aspirational attitude. Instead of having government representatives declare what the youth should and should not do, the regime spoke through intermediaries. This is not to say that regime agents paid, cajoled, or coerced the four successful young people to perform at the World Youth Forum. Far from being an epiphenomenon, this form of addressing youth through intermediaries is, in fact, central to Jordan's overall mode of youth governance and the decentering of regime power that is key to privatizing hope. Rather than embedding youth in "languages of stateness," GONGOs interpellation aims to decenter the state and responsibilize citizens.

The regime manufactures, encourages, and produces youth success stories in multiple ways. Youth success stories, far from being unique to the World Youth Forum, have become a frequent feature at other national events, celebrations, or commemorations (as illustrated by the vignette in this chapter). While most success stories are about business entrepreneurs, some are about volunteers or NGO founders. Yet, the youth success stories are invariably about project or business founders—never, say, about youth who have demonstrated loyalty by pursuing careers in the armed forces or the public sector. Thus, the message is clear: those who do not cling to the state to get ahead are ideal citizens for others to emulate.

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[95] Fieldnotes, Jordan World Youth Forum, Dead Sea/Sweimeh., March 16, 2019.

The king and crown prince regularly meet with groups of successful entrepreneurs and civically-minded youth in mediatized get-togethers to celebrate their exemplary citizenship for others to imitate. At one such meeting, the king praised youth entrepreneurs as “role models for other young people.”[96] During the World Economic Forum, Crown Prince Hussein paid tribute to 21 Jordanian start-ups that were named among the 100 best in the MENA region: “You represent the best for the future of our youth through your perseverance, ambition, and determination,” adding that they need to be supported, morally and financially, so that they can unleash their potential and create an impact.[97]

In addition to celebrating citizen success stories in regime spectacles and informal meetings, youth success stories are commemorated through awards, prizes, and medals. For example, the King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement (KAAYIA) was launched in 2007 at the World Economic Forum Middle East and North Africa (WEF-MENA) to support young social entrepreneurs in the MENA region. As İşleyen and Kreitmeyr illustrate in their study of KAAYIA, the competition was carefully designed to create success stories that could be widely circulated. Accordingly, the KAAYIA finale, in which 10 finalists pitched their entrepreneurial ideas to a panel of judges, was a carefully orchestrated affair directed by a media production company. According to İşleyen and Kreitmeyr, “the producer would direct the proceedings, by directing when and how each finalist entered the room where the pitch would take place. Reminiscent of TV talent shows, when the finalist emerged from pitching to the panel of judges, they were welcomed with applause by the other contestants and asked to give a brief comment to the camera.”[98] The carefully curated nature of the KAAYIA finale demonstrates how these awards are engineered, first and foremost, to disseminate certain civic ideals to wider audiences.

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[96] “Tech Entrepreneurs ‘Future of Jordan’ – King Abdullah,” *The Jordan Times*, March 19, 2017. Available at https://jordantimes.com/news/local/tech-entrepreneurs-future-jordan’-–-king-abdullah . Accessed September 8 2020.

[97] Georg Schmitt, “Focus on Youth: Jordan’s Crown Prince Opens World Economic Forum on the Middle East and North Africa,” *World Economic Forum,* May 20, 2017, https://www.weforum.org/press/2017/05/focus-on-youth-jordan-s-crown-prince-opens-world-economic-forum-on-the-middle-east-and-north-africa/. Accessed April 11, 2020.

[98] Beste İşleyen & Nadine Kreitmeyr, “Authoritarian Neoliberalism’ and Youth Empowerment in Jordan,” *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 15, No. 2 (2021), 244-263, 244-245.

Aside from awards like the KAAYIA, King Abdullah uses his more ceremonial *King Abdullah II Ibn Al-Hussein Order for Distinction* to call attention to youth success stories. This King's Order of Distinction is an official royal award given to civilians and civic institutions on Jordan's annual Independence Day in May. When reviewing the list of medal recipients for 2016–2019, it was revealed that a surprising number of young people received a medal. Since these medals are awarded to Jordanians "in appreciation for their contributions to Jordan's prosperity and progress," most medals would presumably be given to older individuals who have had long and distinguished careers in various fields.[99] Yet a surprising number of individual medals went to youth. For example, in 2017, medals were awarded to a talented young molecular geneticist, a young opera singer and winner of the show "Arabs Got Talent," a young founder of a charity, and a young novelist. In addition, many of the institutions receiving the King's medals are NGOs that engage youth in various ways and help them become active citizens, such as the Nashmi Center for Youth Empowerment and the Jordan Volunteers Initiative.

GONGOs not only celebrate but also manufacture youth success stories. When I interviewed Hussein, an enthusiastic Haqiq participant, one evening at an upscale café in West Amman, two young teenagers came up to our table halfway through the conversation and addressed him. They were about 16–17 years old and were among the patrons of the posh café, which was bustling with a mix of young upper-class Ammanis and middle-class youth who had made the trip to the neighborhood for the evening. The two boys shook Hussein's hand, offered a few polite words, and said some things that I did not register. I naturally assumed that the boys were Hussein's friends or relatives, especially since Hussein had already greeted several people he knew in the café. He was a neighborhood resident and had picked the spot for the interview. After they left, however, Hussein told me that they were his fans. They had never met and wanted to pay their respects to him. "What do you mean 'fans'?" I asked.

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[99] 2016; "King honours pioneers on 70th Independence Day," *Jordan Times*, May 26, 2016, https://jordantimes.com/news/local/king-honours-pioneers-70th-independence-day. Accessed April 11, 2020. 2017: "King attends ceremony marking Jordan's 71st Independence Day," *Kingabdullah.jo Press Room,* May, 25, 2027. https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-attends-ceremony-marking-jordan's-71st-independence-day; 2018: "Jordan marks 72nd independence anniversary," May 25, 2018. https://jordantimes.com/news/local/jordan-marks-72nd-independence-anniversary. Accessed April 11, 2020. 2019: "King bestows medals on leading Jordanian institutions, individuals on occasion of 73rd Independence Day," *Kingabdullah.jo Press Room, May 25, 2019.* https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-bestows-medals-leading-jordanian-institutions-individuals-occasion-73rd-independence-day

It turned out that Hussein had over 25,000 followers on Instagram and a popular YouTube video log (VLOG).[100] Many videos on Hussein's vlog featured footage of Haqiq trips or volunteer events. In addition, Hussein's Instagram consists in part of a selection of images from his Haqiq engagement, images of him meeting the crown prince, an image of him participating in a nature cleanup with the CP, and another that shows him with the CP on an official trip representing Jordan in Bahrain together with the CP. These images are interspersed with private occasions such as vacations, shopping sprees, and motivational captions such as "Be strong, be fearless, be beautiful" and "Believe that anything is possible." Part of the appeal of Hussein's social media content was his connection to Haqiq. He commented, "I have over 200 messages on FB and Insta asking me how to join Haqiq." According to Hussein, the appeal stems from the fun, engaging, and action-packed life that his social media presence portrays and the contrast that this presents to the ordinary lives of most youth:

> For example, my friend that I know who didn't have the chance to go to things like Haqiq doesn't do anything; they do nothing in society; they do nothing with themselves. With what I've gained, I can put on a big event, influence people, old and young, and have a positive impact on society. Because, you know, for young people, there's nothing to do. And that's why, for every event we put on, for instance, there are loads of youth that show up because there's nothing to do.[101]

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[100] Hussein. Interview with Author, Amman, June 25, 2019.

[101] Hussein. Interview with Author, Amman, June 25, 2019. In Jordan, like in the rest of the world, social media influencers have become major celebrities. Revenues from influencer marketing have become so significant that the Ministry of Finance's Income and Sales Tax Department released a statement reminding influencers that income generated on social media is taxable according to Jordanian law. "Abu ʿAlī Yūḍaḥ Ḥawl al- Ḍarība ʿAlā

Thus, like Hussein, many Haqiq youth become role models and success stories; they become bearers of messages of self-reliance to others. According to one of the coordinators of Haqiq:

> Especially in the smaller communities, when they (Haqiq recruits) started going back and forth, the other kids in the community started to make fun of them, but after a couple of months, when they saw pictures of them next to the crown prince, when they saw them in media channels, and when they saw them having an impact in the community, they were like, 'Ah, can we be friends? Can we join Haqiq?'[102]

As one Haqiq participant remarked, "Haqiq is unique because it focuses on the individual. Whereas some initiatives might positively impact themselves, such as cleaning a forest, Haqiq is different because it builds initiators, Haqiq builds characters who can then go on and create change." [103]

Indeed, many success stories are first launched and supported with the help of GONGOs, which then base their success on the recognition of other GONGOs. These stories are then showcased and shared with the general population. An example of this is the young man Abedalrahman al-Zaghoul and his social enterprise, "Bread for Education." Bread for Education recycles stale bread from restaurants, schools, hotels, and individuals. The bread is then processed into animal feed and sold, and the proceeds are used to fund scholarships for underprivileged children. Running an initiatives that can also benefit others is the gold standard of youth success stories. Not only does it align with the regime goal of releasing citizens from dependence on the state, but they can also allow others to do so. These can be regular businesses like Alaa Al-Sallal's Jamaloon from the vignette, which bring job opportunities and growth to the private sector. However, since such successes are rare, these initiatives are often so-called

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Nushaṭāʾ Mawāqʿ al-Tawāṣul al-Ijtimāʿī" (Abu Ali Makes Clarifications Around Taxes for Activities on Social Media Sites), *Roya News*, September 29, 2022.https://royanews.tv/news/286009. Accessed November 11, 2022.

[102] Wisaam. Interview with author. Amman. July 18, 2019.

[103] Nada. Interview with Author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

social entrepreneurship projects, which means that they are run to improve social goals rather than to make a profit.

Al-Zghoul developed the idea for the Bread for Education project as part of a youth program of the King Abdullah II Fund for Development. Bread for Education has also signed a cooperation agreement with the Nahno (Naua) platform, a Crown Prince Foundation initiative that helps organizations like Bread for Education connect with volunteers. At the same time, Bread for Education's success is very much built on recognition from the very GONGOs that originally made the project possible. This recognition recently culminated in the award of the King Abdullah II Medal for Excellence, third degree, on the 71st Independence Day of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.[104] Al-Zaghoul also received a special award from the Ministry of Youth. In what appeared to be an opportunistic move to jump on the Bread-for-Education bandwagon, Al-Zaghoul was presented with the one-time award by Muhammed Abu Rumman, the Minister of Youth, who posed for pictures next to Al-Zaghoul, pointing out that "the ministry, with its action plan, prioritizes youth initiatives and their establishment in the ministry's youth centers by supporting them with the necessary spaces and logistical, technical and financial support."[105] Al-Zaghoul praised the ministry's efforts to support pioneers and entrepreneurs among Jordanian youth.[106] When a British newspaper published an article about Bread for Education, Al-Zaghoul was interviewed by the government-owned newspaper al-Ra'i. Al-Zaghoul was quoted as saying, "I am very proud to represent my country, since it is a story of youth's role in development and the role of His Majesty the King in supporting Jordanian youth."[107] In this way, Al-Zaghoul is both a product and a vehicle of Jordanian youth policy. Although enterprising and ambitious, he is showcased by GONGOs to manufacture the stories that make leaving state dependency a viable path of engagement for other youth.

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[104] "King attends ceremony marking Jordan's 71st Independence Day," *Kingabdullah.jo Press Room,* May, 25, 2027. https://kingabdullah.jo/en/news/king-attends-ceremony-marking-jordan's-71st-independence-day. Accessed April 11, 2020.

[105] Wasīr Al-Shabāb Yukarim Ṣāhib Mubādara Al-Khubz min ajl Al-Taʿlīm (The Minister of Youth Honors the Founder of the Bread for Education Initiative), *Petra: Jordan News Agency*, October 12th, 2019. https://www.petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=114902&lang=en&name=news Accessed April 11th, 2020.

[106] In international contexts, too, has Bread for Education has been lifted as a major success story. It has won a whole host of international prizes, like the UAE-based Mohammed Bin Rashid Award for Young Business Leaders in the Community Entrepreneurship Initiative Category, the International Excellence Award at the World Summit in Las Vegas, USA, Best Entrepreneurial Project Award from the International Youth Organization, the Kuwait-based Voluntary and Humanitarian Initiatives Award for Youth, and the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Creativity Award in the Community Sector. Bread for Education has also been chosen as a success story in the global campaign for education launched by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon in the United States.

By placing individuals like Al-Zaghoul at the center of youth governance, the regime is shifting the site of hope from state institutions to individual enterprise and self-reliance. As this chapter has demonstrated, the project of nationalizing and centralizing youth governance ran aground in the 1950s after the state abandoned distribution. During the last two to three decades, accelerating after the Arab uprisings, the Jordanian regime has moved youth governance away from state institutions like the Ministry of Youth to GONGOs and youth success stories, thereby privatizing hope while containing youth expectations in a post-welfare autocracy.

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[107] "Saḥīfa Brīṭāniyya Tunshur Qiṣa Najāḥ Urduniyya" (British Newspaper Publishes Jordanian Success Story), *Al-Rai,* February 14, 2018, https://alrai.com/article/10425090/شباب-وجامعات/صحيفة-بريطانية-تنشر-قصة-نجاح-أردنية. Accessed April 11, 2020.

Chapter 3. The Struggle over the Generational Cleavage: Flexible Interpellation and the Ambiguities of Empowerment

As part of Safwa's recruitment to Haqiq, she was asked to speak into a microphone onstage. After ascending the stage, she and other aspiring recruits were asked to share their dreams and goals with the audience. The young woman was taken aback by this unusual request. The question perplexed her because she had never considered it before; no one had ever asked her about (or even expected her to possess) dreams and goals. As Safwa stood onstage, she did not know what to say and ended up mumbling some remarks that she could not later recall.[1] For Safwa and many young Haqiq recruits, being addressed as an individual who should possess personal dreams and goals is a profound experience. As she narrated the incident in past tense, Safwa implied that she had undergone a personal transformation and that, in contrast to the past, she had since learned how to formulate her dreams and goals. Safwa's experience exemplifies how Haqiq, a youth organization with links to the Crown Prince Foundation, addresses youth. One recruit said, "In Haqiq, you are taught that you have unique value and that you have something unique about you that you can contribute with and that you have valuable things to say."[2]

Against the broader investigation of Jordanian youth GONGOs, this chapter focuses on the type of youth empowerment and emancipation that Safwa experienced, whereby the regime promotes not only emancipated individuals but also an emancipated generation through GONGOs. At first sight, this kind of empowerment appears puzzling. It may seem surprising that autocrats, who are normally focused on producing submission and discipline, promote autonomy and independence to the young generation. Indeed, it may seem counterintuitive that autocrats, as Calvert Jones notes in her book on UAE youth governance, "require their own subjects to display greater creativity, civic-mindedness, and independence of spirit," when "in fact, Arab autocrats are far more often suspected of preferring blind obedience and mass conformism from their citizens."[3]

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[1] Safwa, Interview with author, Amman, June 19, 2019.
[2] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

However, when taking a closer look, youth empowerment makes sense even for an authoritarian regime. I argue that this mode of interpellation exemplifies how the regime seeks to manage the existing generational cleavage across the political, economic, technological, and cultural divides through GONGOs. Radical political actors have sought to mobilize youth movements around this generational cleavage by using the state's betrayal of youth as a rallying cry. However, rather than passively adjusting to radicalized visions of youthhood or relying exclusively on repression, the regime forcefully intervenes to shape what it means to be young.

Through the analysis of Haqiq, this chapter argues that GONGO-led youth empowerment reckons with the strong expressions of youth identity, appeal to freedom, and valorization of youth as central actors of historical change that emerged from the Arab Uprisings and attendant youth movements. In this endeavor, GONGOs' disconnection from the distributive state enables a flexible interpellation of youth, one that departs from old methods of youth governance that sought to paper over generational differences and expressions of youth agency analyzed in Chapter 2. Instead of inculcating loyalty and disciplining the expressions of youth agency emerging out of the Arab uprisings, the goals of youth governance are more modest: to sanction a youthful will to independence away from radical visions that pit youth against political elites and the privileges of older generations, while associating such youth empowerment directedly with the monarchy (rather than the state). Haqiq's appeal to freedom and emancipation significantly resonates with a young generation whose downward social mobility has made its members morally and financially dependent on their parents. Thus, on the one hand, Haqiq produces a kind of empowerment that is real, that helps youth navigate challenges in their lives. On the other hand, such empowerment must be seen in the broader context of the regime's de-mobilization and containment of independent youth movements.

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[3] Calvert Jones, *Bedouins to Bourgeois: Remaking Citizens for Globalization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 37.

The Struggle Over Jordan's Generational Cleavage

During interviews, I asked GONGO recruits what it was like to be young in Jordan today compared to what they imagined that it was like for their parents. Although participants attributed different meanings to the generational cleavage, there was a consensus that the unique conditions in which they grew up set them apart from older generations. Some expressed that conditions for youth were more favorable today. For example, Rahma, who is studying finance at the University of Jordan, claimed, "A lot has changed, girls' education for example. Things are opening up. There is media now, before there was only one very boring government TV channel. Now we have social media. We can express ourselves on social media…We have hope, the young people…we feel a lot of hope, we don't feel hope in government, but we feel hope in ourselves."[4] Another interviewee, Nabeel, argued that the regime is improving conditions for youth by embracing progressive values. He noted, "In Jordan, we are stuck in the old ways of doing things. For example, education is only memorization and so on, and religion is sometimes holding us back; but like the crown prince said in his speech to the Security Council—and, by the way, he was the youngest speaker ever in the UN Security Council—he said that globalization needs to be adopted by us and we need to change."[5]

Others were more apprehensive and said that their generation has been dealt a bad hand. They often articulated a sense of nostalgia over how easy life appeared to be for their parents when they were growing up. One interviewee, Suleiman, said,

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[4] Rahma, Interview with author, Amman, March 14, 2019.

[5] Nabeel, Interview with author, Amman, July 14, 2019. I probed Nabeel to elaborate on what he meant by the "old ways of doing things." He said, "Sometimes this is connected to religion or gender equality. And education; professors, especially the old ones, say that you have only to study this page or memorize this thing."

> There was less competition (for the older generation), they could travel, they could do PhDs, not many people were starting businesses. They had little resources, but a lot of opportunities, we have all the resources—the phones, Google, everything is right here—but there are no opportunities. Back then, you had to go to a library to find anything, now it is right there. However, now, everyone wants to travel, everyone wants to create an app.[6]

Another interviewee, Salim, said, "My dad he had his education paid, went to his uncles to borrow a little money, opened his dentist clinic. It cost him JD 3,000 to get married; today, it's like JD 20,000. Back in the days, we had oil from Iraq, vegetables form Syria, and gas from Egypt."[7] However, even the participants who lamented the unfavorable conditions in present-day Jordan accepted the basic premise of a generational cleavage and that present conditions set youth apart from older generations.

The generational cleavage is rooted in political-economic conditions. Because political-economic transformations occur over time, they simultaneously affect members of a generation. Young Jordanians are coming of age in the context of austerity and the dismantlement of the welfare state, which has resulted in generational downward social mobility. Following decades of structural adjustment, Jordan has one of the highest youth unemployment rates in the world. At nearly 40 percent among 15- to 24-year-olds, Jordan is surpassed only by seven of the world's 262 countries.[8] In contrast to youth, older age groups face much lower unemployment rates because they continue to dominate the shrinking public sector and anemic private sector. Moreover, older generations often keep their public sector jobs while youth suffer recruitment freezes; they may have saved resources during good times or invested in real estate when house prices were lower. Therefore, 15- to 34-year-olds represent 77 percent of the total number of unemployed people.[9] In modern Jordan, young women have increasingly withdrawn from the labor market altogether. Among youth, "sitting at home" (*Gāʿid fil-Bayt*) is often spoken of in Jordan; stories of depression and hopelessness abound. Some have even attributed an increase in violence at universities and the large number of young ISIS volunteers from Jordan to this general social and economic malaise. [10] Because it is generally expected that youth establish financial security before marrying, many young people are delaying marriage, which is a central aspect of adulthood in Jordan. The average age of marriage continues to rise.[11] In Jordan, it makes little difference whether one is a Jordanian of Palestinian descent who was raised in Amman by university-educated parents or a Transjordanian youth from the rural south whose parents work in the military or the public sector; either way, the country's political-economic transformation and abandonment of a semi-rentier social contract and the attendant neoliberalization of the economy have strongly affected young people's life chances, albeit in different ways.[12]

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[6] Suleiman, Interview with author, Amman, February 20, 2020.

[7] Salim, Interview with author, Amman, February 20, 2020 and May 1, 2020.

[8] The even worse-off countries are Bosnia, South Africa, Greece, the West Bank, Namibia, Libya, and Mozambique. World Bank Youth Unemployment Statistics. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.1524.ZS?year_high_desc=true. Accessed September 8, 2020.

The generational cleavage also has consequences for the regime's ability to govern the population. Generational transitions often result in instability for state-society relations. From the perspective of autocratic incumbents, they are a perennial threat because they represent a perpetual opening and closing of fissures in the citizenry; new subjects must be socialized and co-opted into functioning state-society relations.[13] As claimed by Karl Mannheim, the great sociologist of generational change, each new generation experiences “fresh contact” with their accumulated shared socio-cultural material. As people are born and die, the rolling transmission of sociocultural data generates opportunities for their reevaluation.[14] Given the perennial threat that generational cleavages pose to regimes, autocracies often pay close attention to youth and generational transitions, such as by devising special organizations that integrate young people into stable state-society relations.[15]

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[9] Mona Amer, "The School-To-Work Transition of Jordanian Youth," in *The Jordanian Labor Market in the New Millennium*, ed. Ragui Assaad (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2014), 64-104, 70.

[10] Saba Abu Farha, "Stay in University or Join the Islamic State?," *Al-Fanar Media,* February 12, 2015. Available at: https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2015/02/stay-university-join-islamic-state/. Accessed September 8th, 2020; Rasha Faek, "Tribal Violence Plagues Jordanian Public Universities," *Al-Fanar Media,* July 23, 2013. Available at https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2013/07/tribal-violence-plagues-jordanian-public-universities/. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

[11] The average age of marriage keeps rising. Since 1979 the average age of marriage for men has risen from 26 to 29. Mona Said, "Wage Formation and Earnings Inequality in the Jordanian Labor Market" in The Jordanian Labor Market in the New Millennium, ed. Ragui Assaad (Oxon: Oxford University Press, 2014), 144-171, 161.

[12] What is more, these categories are less and less relevant as these groups are converging via rapid urbanization, rural displacement, and intermarriages.

[13] Scholars have registered a statistical relationship between youthful societies and political instability. For example, youth bulges are related to increased state repression, revolutions, civil conflict, and "domestic armed conflict, terrorism, and riots/violent demonstrations" (Urdal 2006, 609). See, e.g., Ragnhild Nordås and Christian Davenport, "Fight the Youth: Youth Bulges and State Repression." *American Journal of Political*

While generational transitions often entail challenges for incumbents, generational cohorts sometimes engage in wholescale reevaluations of social contracts. For Mannheim, such heightened youth agency emerges when a youth cohort constitutes itself “in actuality,” which happens when similarly located contemporaries “participate in a common destiny and in the

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Science 57, No.4. (2012), 926-940; Jack Goldstone, *Revolution and Rebellion in the Early Modern World.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1991); Christian G. Mesquida and Neil I. Weiner, "Male Age Composition and Severity of Conflicts," *Politics and the Life Sciences* 18. (1999), 113-117. Henrik Urdal, “A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence,” *International Studies Quarterly* 50, (2006) 607–629.

[14] Mannheim notes that generational transitions **“**results in some loss of accumulated cultural possessions; but, on the other hand, it alone makes a fresh selection possible when it becomes necessary; it facilitates re-evaluation of our inventory” Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations” in *Karl Mannheim: Essays*, Paul Kesckemeti ed. (London: Routledge, 1952), 294. Fresh contact means that young people are particularly impressionable and form political identities that they carry with them throughout life. Mannheim noted that “In youth…where life is new, formative forces are just coming into being, and basic attitudes in the process of development can take advantage of the molding power of new situations.” Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations,” 297. As Rebecca Klatch notes in her work on youth generations in the post-war United States, “work of developmental psychologists…all indicate that youth is a crucial time period for the development of critical thinking skills, the formation of moral beliefs, and the resolution of the identity crisis, conditions necessary to the formation of political ideology.” Rebecca Klatch, *A Generation Divided: The New Left, the New Right, and the 1960s* (University of California Press, 1999), 4.

[15] For example, in Iraq under Saddam Hussein, regime-organized youth groups were considered so important that they were supervised directly by the powerful Intelligence Services. James Arnold, *Saddam Hussein’s Iraq* (Minneapolis, MN: First Century Books, 2008), 94. Youth organizations have typically served two purposes. First, as part of corporatist state structures, youth organizations have tied young citizens to institutional channels of mobility that privilege loyalty and compliance. For example, in Baathist Iraq and Syria, there was a network of organizations – children’s organizations, organizations for older youth, and student associations – all of which were tied to the ruling party and engineered to reward allegiance. For example, in Iraq, the organization Al-Tali’a (the Vanguards) targeted children aged ten to fifteen, later replaced with Ashbal Saddam (Saddam’s Cubs). For those aged fifteen to twenty, there was the futuwa (Youth). Joseph Sassoon, *Saddam Hussein's* Ba'th Party: Inside an Authoritarian Regime (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 181. Similarly, in Syria there were the Revolutionary Youth Union of the Ba’ath Party and the National Union of Syrian Students. The second purpose of youth organizations was to expose youth to regime ideology. For example, Italian and German fascist youth organizations were “totalitarian experiments in political and physical education aimed at creating a ‘new man’.” Alessio Ponzio, Shaping the New Man: Youth Training Regimes in Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2017), 88

ideas and concepts which are in some way bound up with its unfolding."[16] A shared youth identity is formed by straddling class and geographic divides to find a shared consciousness.

Drawing on Mannheim, scholars have empirically studied how generations engender social and political change when realizing themselves "in actuality."[17] Many have examined how this process works in authoritarian states. For example, Asef Bayat argued that oppositional youth movements in Iran and the broader Middle East sprang from generations "claiming youthfulness…a series of dispositions, ways of being, feeling, and carrying oneself (e.g., a greater tendency for experimentation, adventurism, idealism, autonomy, mobility, and securing their future) that are associated with the sociological fact of 'being young.'"[18] When claiming youthfulness, youth "can and do act as a harbinger of social change and democratic transformation under those doctrinal regimes with legitimizing ideologies that are too narrow to accommodate youthful claims."[19] In particular, Bayat used the example of Iran and the Green Movement, where "the assertion of youthful aspirations, the defense of their [youths'] habitus, lay at the heart of their conflict with moral and political authority."[20]

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[16] Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," 306.

[17] June Edmunds and Bryan Turner, "Global Generations: Social Change in the Twentieth Century," *The British Journal of Sociology* 56, No. 4 (December 2005), 559–577. .doi:10.1111/j.1468-4446.2005.00083.x; Jack Goldstone and Doug McAdam, "Contention in Demographic and Life-course Context," in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics,* eds. Ronald R. Aminzade, Jack A. Goldstone, Doug McAdam, Elizabeth J. Perry, William H. Sewell, Sidney Tarrow, Charles Tilly (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 195 – 221. According to Edmunds and Turner, "Generations shift from being a passive cohort ('generation in itself') into a politically active and self-conscious cohort ('generation for itself') when they are able to exploit resources (political/educational/economic) to innovate in cultural, intellectual or political spheres. In our theory, resources, opportunity and strategic leadership combine to constitute active generations (p. 562.)

[18] Asef Bayat, *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2010), 118

[19] Asef Bayat, "Muslim Youth and the Claim of Youthfulness" in *Being Young and Muslim: New Cultural Politic and the Global South and North* eds. Linda Herrera and Asef Bayat (Oxford: Oxford Universty Press, 2010), 27-48, 32.

[20] Asef Bayat, "Muslim Youth and the Claim of Youthfulness" 32. In a similar study, Nikolayenko uses a Mannheimian framework to analyze the anti-authoritarian color revolutions in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine in the early 2000s. Specific socio-historical events – the collapse of communism and the subsequent social transformations – constituted a stimulus that left a mark on the post-Soviet generations. These unique generational experiences allowed this generation to form "in actuality" and subsequently created cleavages between young and old such as differential integration into the new market economy (where youth took advantage of new opportunities) and a differential relationship to national vs. Soviet culture (where young people sought to revive national cultural buried under the Russification of the Soviet period). Olena Nikolayenko, "The Revolt of the Post-Soviet Generation: Youth Movements in Serbia, Georgia, and Ukraine," *Comparative Politics* 39, no.2. (January 2007), 169-188.

This generational reevaluation is particularly risky to regimes when youth suffer from downward mobility, like in Jordan today, when youth bear the brunt of neoliberalization and austerity. In his study of two 20th-century German youth movements, Norbert Elias argued that youth radicalism is typically a product of when a generation's flow of access to social and economic positions "have become dried up or narrowed."[21] By studying right-wing Weimar-era paramilitary groups and post-war left-wing terrorist groups, Elias posited that independent and radical youth movements arise as a response to blocked opportunities for youth in established societal institutions (whether in the military, economy, or political systems).[22] Thus, a lack of opportunities for upward mobility leads to stronger potential for generational conflict.

In the Arab Uprisings in Jordan and beyond, youth successfully politicized generational cleavages. Multiple political-economic processes combined to delineate the young generation *vis-á-vis* older generations. Emma Murphy described these stimuli as "the political, economic and social failures of authoritarian regimes," which includes "repressive and stagnant political structures, economies with ever-wider disparities in income and wealth and restricted access to the social benefits of adulthood have combined into a collective experience of frustration, marginalization and alienation."[23] Consequently, youth "set themselves in opposition to an older generation, the generation of authoritarian rulers and those who brought them to power."[24]

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[21] Norbert Elias, *The Germans: Power Struggles and the Development of Habitus in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press 1996[1989]), 247. Elias, a student of Mannheim, is much less known than his teacher for theoretical developments on the politics of generations and more recognized for work in other areas, most notably his monumental work on the civilizing process.

[22] For example, Elias notes that when Germany demobilized following the First World War, reducing its army from 400.000 to 100.000 men, many young aspiring officers saw their opportunities to advance through the ranks blocked. Most of these officers had no other ambitions but to stay in the army, because military service for them was "the only meaningful job, a profession they understood and which gave them pleasure." (189). Instead of abandoning a military career for a civil career, these young men banded together and formed the so-called Freikorps, paramilitary volunteer units who fought both communist insurrections and actively sought to undermine the Weimar Republic itself through assassinations and other irregular methods. Known for their violent excesses and strong nationalism, many ex-members were later recruited as Nazi street thugs. Elias's other case is the Marxist and socialist youth movements of the 1960s and 70s, the extreme factions of which turned into terrorist cells. Also in this case, generational tensions were a product of blocked life chances and the way that youth attributed meaning to generational differences. Whereas the German economy was sufficiently dynamic for young people to acquire reasonably prosperous lives, from the perspective of many young people, politically meaningful institutions such as universities and parliamentary parties appeared as entirely monopolized by older generations. Through Marxist teachings, leftist youth interpreted these blocked channels as inhibiting German society from emerging from fascism. Norbert Elias, The Germans.

In Jordan, youth-led social movements have politically exploited the generational cleavage by pitting youth against political elites and the privileges of older generations. The cartoonist Emad Hajjaj captured this in his satirical cartoons. Figure 1 shows a cartoon that comments on the "Unemployment Marches" of 2019; in it, unemployed youth who are demanding jobs and holding protest signs march past an older man who is occupying five chairs labeled "Seats 1–5." The old man, whose sheer size symbolizes unequal resources, beckons to one of the protestors while holding a sixth chair towards him and says, "Come over here…You made my very sad…and I've decided to donate to you one of my seats…Thankfully, I am still able to be generous."

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[23] Emma Murphy, "Problematizing Arab Youth: Generational Narratives of Systemic Failure," Mediterranean Politics 17, no.1. (February 2012), 5-22, 7.

[24] Emma Murphy, "Problematizing Arab Youth: Generational Narratives of Systemic Failure," Mediterranean Politics 17, no.1. (February 2012), 5-22, 15. Other scholars have noted that new forms of media were also constitutive of shaping a generational consciousness. For example, Herrera has argued that "Young people have been developing awareness of their common grievances—the consciousness to which Mannheim refers—and forming solidarities and strategies along generational lines with the aid of mobile and digital communication tools." Linda Herrera, "Youth and Citizenship in the Digital Age: A View from Egypt." *Harvard Educational Review* 82, No. 3 (Fall 2012), 333-352, 338.

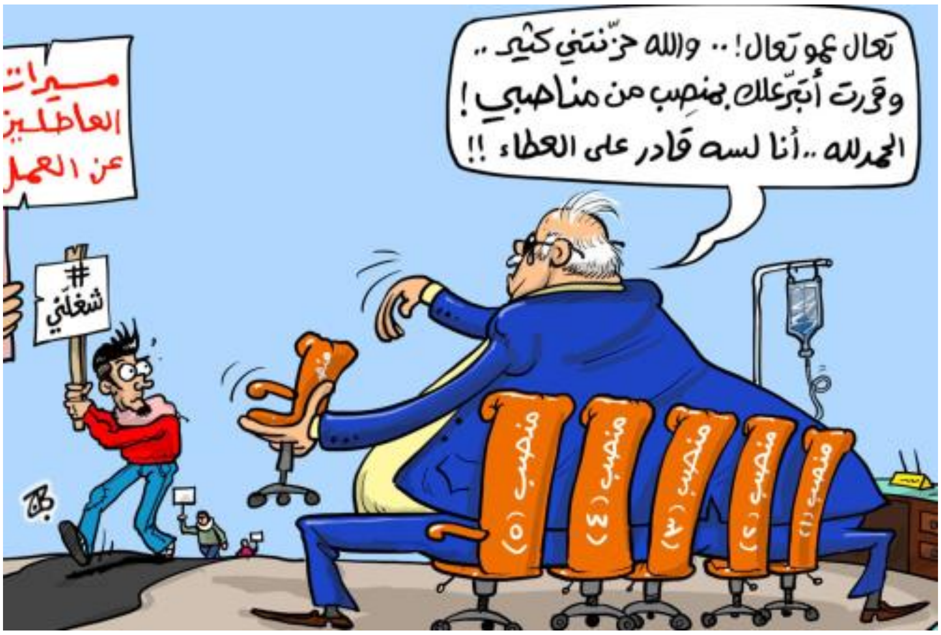
تعال عمو تعال! .. والله حزّنتني كثير ..
وقررت أتبرّعلك بمنصب من مناصبي!
الحمدلله .. أنا لسه قادر على العطاء !!
مسيرات العاطلين عن العمل
# شغلني
منصب (١)
منصب (٢)
منصب (٣)
منصب (٤)
منصب (٥)

Figure 1. Emad Hajjaj Cartoon, "The Unemployment Marches."[25]

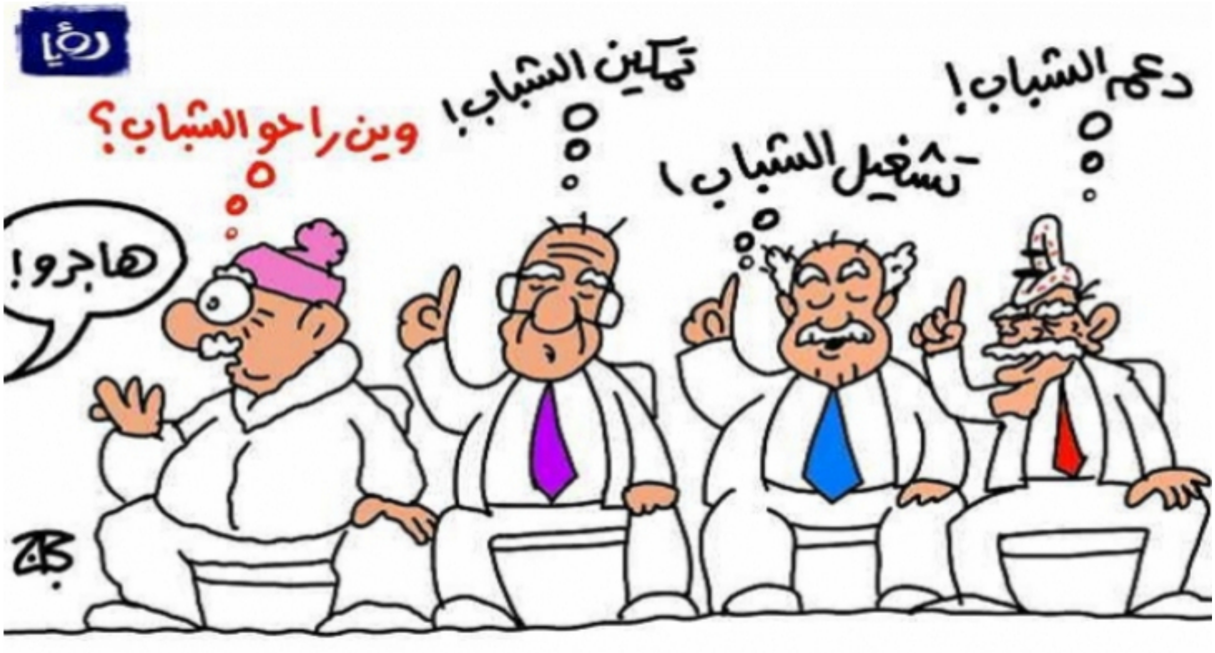
رؤيا
دعم الشباب!
تشغيل الشباب!
تمكين الشباب!
وين راحو الشباب؟
هاجرو!

Figure 2. Emad Hajjaj Cartoon About Generations.[26]

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[25] Emad Hajjaj, *Masīrāt Al-ʿĀṭilīn ʿan Al-ʿAmal* (The Unemployment Marches),*Facebook*, January 26, 2019, Accessed March 7, 2022. https://www.facebook.com/AbuMahjoobNews/photos/a.327453017293610/2285825918122967/?type=3

[26] "Al-Iḥṣāʾāt: Muʿdal Al-Baṭāla 19 percent fil-Urdun" ("Statistics: The Unemployment Rate Is 19 percent in Jordan"), *Roya News,* March 8, 2020. https://royanews.tv/news/207887. Accessed March 7, 2022.

In another of Hijjaj's cartoons, which was published by Roya News, four men sit next to each other(see Figure 2). The first three men are exclaiming "Support youth," "Employ youth," and "Empower youth," while the fourth man is saying "Where did the youth go? They emigrated!" In a similar vein as Hijjaj, the columnist Hisham Al-Habishan defied multiple red lines in an unusually frank op-ed, arguing that that generational inequalities constitute a grave injustice:

> Jordanian youth today live in a state of alienation (*Al-Ightirāb*) in their society and in their mother country… and it is all about the current policies practiced by certain elements around the ruling authority in Jordan versus the oppressed and defeated youth. The unemployment crisis, the poverty, the taxes, the overbearing government, foreign powers' conspiracies outside of the country, and corruption inside the country… makes youth unable to provide for themselves, to acquire housing, to get married, or at least to pay for his daily bread. This is sufficient reason to increase the feeling of alienation inside the homeland.[27]

In the above quotation, Al-Habishan expresses a radical view of the generational cleavage and connects the alienation of youth to regime policies and elite actors' privileges.

Views like those expressed by Al-Habishan is indicative of how youth movements have mobilized the generational cleavage by interpreting their political-economic situation ("stuckedness" and generational downward social mobility) in terms of generational conflicts. For example, the Hirak movement, which consisted of people in their 20s and early 30s, mobilized the generational cleavage by defying tribal generational hierarchies. Younger tribesmen were typically skeptical of the clientelist politics that characterized regime-society relationships in tribal areas; they refused to see politics as a means of obtaining payoffs (*makruma*), such as jobs and welfare, focusing instead on political and economic rights.[28] Educated tribal youth had long complained about SNTV in the Jordanian voting system, which allows rural tribal areas to accrue disproportional representative power in parliament and use it to exhort favors and jobs. Tribal elders effectively used SNTV to block younger tribal candidates from running on substantive issues such as anti-corruption, which further inflamed generational grievances.[29]

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[27] Hisham Al-Habishan, *"Al-Shabāb Al-Urduni wa Al-Mustaqbal.. ʿAn ay Shabāb wa Mustaqbal Tataḥdathūn?!"* ("Jordanian Youth and The Future..Which Youth and which Future are You Talking About?!"), *Jafra News*, February 1st, 2018, https://jfranews.com.jo/article/194321, Accessed March 7, 2022.

[28] Sean L. Yom, "Tribal Politics in Contemporary Jordan: The Case of the Hirak Movement," Middle East Journal 68, no. 2 (April 15, 2014): 229–47, 243 https://doi.org/10.3751/68.2.13.

In Yazan Doughan's examination of Hirak activists, he noted that Hirak youth sought to re-narrate tribal history from their generational perspective: "In the youth's narratives, their ancestors often featured, if at all, not as exemplary heroes to be emulated, but as thieves and country bumpkins driven by petty interests, unable to understand the larger historical significance of the events they lived."[30] By narrating the generational cleavage in this way, the youth sought to "constitute themselves as autonomous political actors unencumbered by the narratives of their elders' generation and the latter's relation to the monarchy." Instead, "young activists position themselves as 'the youth' vis-à-vis their elders in order to construe a different relation to the state and the monarchy."[31]

Thus, the generational cleavage was understood by the Hirak movement as an impetus to defy the acquiescence that elders had come to accept as part of the state-centered social contract. Hirak activists implied that, due to the lack of state care for their generation, state provisions were no longer sufficient to buy their loyalty. Unsurprisingly, this made the regime very anxious. The Hirak movement provoked forceful repressive measures from the regime in general and the intelligence services in particular. While the leftist and Islamist challenge during Jordan's Arab Spring period constituted the kind of "routine protests" that were familiar to the regime, Hirak not only crossed multiple established lines in its claims-making but also exposed the potential to mobilize along generational lines, which posed a novel and dangerous threat to the regime.[32] In response, the intelligence services infiltrated the movement in various ways to sow discord and undermine its organizational efforts.

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[29] Ibid, 244.

[30] Yazan Doughan, "The Reckoning of History: Young Activists, Tribal Elders, and the Uses of the Past in Jordan," *Youth Politics in the Middle East and North Africa*, *POMEPS STUDIES* 36 (November 2019), 61

[31] Ibid, 60-63.

Radical visions of Jordan's generational cleavage have also manifested in relation to Jordan's royal succession. The current monarch, King Abdullah, continues to cultivate an image of himself as a consensus-seeking figure who seeks to reconcile the outlooks—and attachments to state provisions—of the tribal base, on the one hand, and global-facing, neoliberal Jordan on the other. Even though King Abdullah was viewed with skepticism by many Transjordanian communities when he unexpectedly assumed the throne in 2000, today he is seen as a guarantor for Transjordanian privileges within the royal family. By contrast, Crown Prince Hussein is much more modern, globally oriented, and focused on generating self-reliant future citizens. While he attended the Royal Academy of Sandhurst like his father and has connection to the military (he was promoted to captain in 2021),[33] he has completed internships in global IT companies and regularly speaks at Tech Wadi, a Silicon Valley-based nonprofit that aims to build bridges between U.S.- and MENA-based tech companies. Although the crown prince often pronounces the Arabic letter Qaf as "g" while addressing Jordanians, as is particularly customary in tribal areas, he also socializes with global elite figures, which makes him seem detached from the realities of ordinary Jordanians.

Serving as a figurehead of responsibilized and self-reliant citizenship ideals has made Crown Prince Hussein a divisive figure. While he is revered among youth who embrace self-reliance and globalization, he is viewed with suspicion in communities with the most to lose as Jordan abandons a welfare-statist social contract. In such communities, the crown prince has become a symbol of the state's betrayal of the statist welfare state. Therefore, among oppositional movements, the line of succession has become a central topic of contention. This became especially clear during the Arab Uprisings, when Hirak youth movement activists openly challenged the line of succession and called for Crown Prince Hussein to be stripped of his title in favor of Prince Hamzah, King Abdullah's half-brother, who was the crown prince until King Abdullah stripped him of the title in 2004 and gave it to his own son.[34] By questioning the line of succession, the members of Hirak crossed a key political red line.

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[32] On routine protests, see Jillian Schwedler *Protesting Jordan: Geographies of Power and Dissent* (Stanford University Press, 2022)

[33] Khale Yacoub Oweis, "Jordan's Crown Prince Hussein Promoted to Military Captain," *The National News,* Nov 11, 2021. https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/jordan/2021/11/11/jordans-crown-prince-hussein-promoted-to-military-captain/. Accessed November 11, 2022.

The issue of royal succession emerged again when Prince Hamzah visited a hospital in the city of Al-Salt March 2021 to console those who had lost loved ones to COVID-19 after the hospital ran out of oxygen, a major scandal that caused uproar throughout the kingdom. Prince Hamzah traveled to the hospital to console grieving relatives only six days before Crown Prince Hussein visited Al-Salt to do the same. This event triggered a major crisis in the royal family. Subsequently, Hamza was placed under house arrest and accused of participating in actions aimed at destabilizing the country.

Nevertheless, efforts to smear Prince Hamzah backfired. For example, senate speaker Faisal Al-Fayez suggested that Jared Kushner was somehow involved in the Prince Hamzah-affair in a bid to link Prince Hamzah (and his alleged co-conspirators) to a foreign plot to destabilize the kingdom.[35] Kushner enjoys a particularly poor reputation in Jordan due to his role in launching the so-called “deal of the century” (Trump’s peace plan), in which Jordan was pressured into accepting what was perceived as humiliating conditions. On Twitter, many users who were incensed by Al-Fayez’s comments linking Hamzah to Kushner published a picture that had already made the rounds on social media a few years earlier, which depicted Crown Prince Hussein with Joshua Kushner, Jared Kushner’s brother, at the latter’s wedding in summer 2019. This connection highlighted Crown Prince Hussein’s allegedly unscrupulous global lifestyle and lack of care for authentic Jordanian values.

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[34] Curtis R. Ryan *Jordan and the Arab Uprisings: Regime Survival and Politics Beyond the State* (Columbia Studies in Middle East Politics, 2018), 71-72. In some of these constituencies, Hamza appears as an alternative to the current regime's austerity-fueled politics and do-it-yourself citizenship. Hamza is also a natural candidate since he was initially intended to succeed King Abdullah. When the previous monarch, King Hussein, died in 1999 and was succeeded by King Abdullah II, the newly minted king agreed, per his father's wish, that his half-brother Prince Hamzah be named Crown Prince. King Abdullah II then removed Hamzah from this position and, later in 2004, named his son, Prince Hussein, as Crown Prince instead. In recent years, Prince Hamzah has been nurturing close ties with Jordanian tribal society by making regular visits, learning tribal dialects, and listening to disaffected tribal leaders complaining about the lack of jobs and economic support from the government. Hamza's popularity began to concern King Abdullah II, who ordered the security services to keep a close eye on Hamzah's undertakings, as the regime suspected him of fishing for sympathy among the disaffected layers of society who cling to the statist-welfare social contract. Of course, the more the Crown Prince is styled to push young Jordanians to be self-sufficient and not expect anything from the state, the more Prince Hamzah appears to symbolize state support and dignity instead of the unemployment and poverty many experiences in Jordan's new economy.

[35] "Al-Fāīz Yataḥdath ʿan Daūr li-Kūshnar bi-Qaḍyyia 'Al-Fitna'" (Al-Fayez Discusses the Role of Kushner in the "Sedition" Case) *Ammon News*, April 18, 2021. https://www.ammonnews.net/article/605612. Accessed July 18, 2023.

Haqiq and the Regime’s Management of the Generational Cleavage

It is within the context of the generational cleavage—both as an objective political-economic condition and as a rallying cry used by social movements to defy politics as usual—that the regime has intervened to give meaning to contemporary youthhood. By exploiting the generational cleavage to subvert existing political arrangements, the Arab youth movements in general and the Jordanian youth movements in particular have arguably forced regimes to reckon with the generational cleavage and to seek to contain rather than repress it.

Therefore, we do not see regimes such as in Jordan pushing back against the generational cleavage as such. Instead, regimes and elites work with existing discursive material. As Muehlebach indicated, dominant discourses such as neoliberalization are typically “wrought out of existing cultural materials… thus allowing those uneasy or explicitly critical of neoliberalization to render these novel practices of citizenship meaningful and graspable in their own terms.”[36] For Muehlebach, the neoliberal language of citizen responsibility in Italy trafficked in “existing cultural materials such as Catholicism and Socialism.” Similarly, in Nguyen’s analysis of the language of self-reliance in Vietnam, regime efforts to shape a “moral subject occupied with self-optimization and private responsibility and yet possessed of a heightened sense of duty to community and society…draws on cultural and socialist repertoires of meanings."[37] In Vietnam, a language of "socialization" derived from the socialist past came to assume a different meaning by focusing on how citizens serve the country by looking after themselves.

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[36] Muehlebach, *The Moral Neoliberal*, 26.

Similarly, in Jordan, regime language today draws on discourses unthinkable 30 years ago when youth governance contained tried and tested languages of "Loyalty and Belonging" (*al-wala' w alintima'*) was the organizing principle of youth governance. In the past, youth governance simply sought to paper over generational cleavages. By emphasizing generational continuity, youth governance sought to embed youth in established infrastructures of patronage and symbolic and discursive models of national citizenship (see Chapter 2). To reinforce this sense of generational continuity, the regime emphasized strong links to the past. and youth governance focused on exposing youth to the same socio-cultural material as previous generations, which allowed the regime to safely manage what Mannheim has called "fresh contact," to minimize the likelihood of youth interpreting it in unintended and autonomous ways.[38]

In contrast, in its youth governance, the regime has had to work with rather than against ever more vociferous social discourses that emphasize youth's emancipation from old ideas and conventions. In 2017 while addressing the General Assembly, Crown Prince Hussein said, "We (as youth) are proud of our past and our heritage, and we owe a lot to our parents and grandparents. However, if our generation is trapped in a struggle between the tradition and mindset of the past, on the one hand, and the ways and technologies of the present, on the other, we will never move forward." In the same speech, he asserted, "Like other generations, we (the youth) have inherited the collective wisdom and values of our elders, and like others before we must often struggle to reconcile them with our reality today. What that reality is unprecedented. Our is a world at an epic intersection driven by the confluence of deepened globalization and disruptive technologies."[39] In other words, the crown prince implied that the past, while important, remains an object of commemoration and pride; to move forward, youth cannot excessively draw from past generations. In a different speech, Crown Prince Hussein told youth, "For it is your turn now to build, to increase Jordan's progress and prosperity. However, in your own ways, and with the tools of your age, because *every generation has its own identity, opportunities, and challenges*."[40]

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[37] Minh Tho Nguyen, "Vietnam's 'Socialization' Policy and the Moral Subject in a Privatizing Economy," *Economy and Society* 47, no. 4 (November 27, 2018): 627–47, 629 https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2018.1544397.

[38] According to Mannheim, when new generations come into contact with their inherited social-cultural material, they experience "fresh contact."

Beyond regime speeches, GONGOs such as Haqiq provide the regime with the flexibility to depart from the tried-and-tested discourses and practices of the past and operate in new discursive territories. For example, Haqiq, which is a distillation of the regime's efforts to address youth in Jordan today,[41] is intimately connected to Jordan's authoritarian politics.[42] While the organization is clearly influenced by international development organizations, it is conceived, run, and funded by the governmental Crown Prince Foundation and its local partners.[43] In addition, through its close association to the Crown Prince Foundation and the crown prince himself, Haqiq is intimately connected to the very notion of authoritarian continuity.[44] The crown prince regularly visits Haqiq activities, and most of the more senior Haqiq recruits have met and interacted with him on several occasions; many showed me "selfies" taken with the crown prince, and some used these images as profile pictures on their social media accounts. When I sat down with one of the founders and main architects of Haqiq, he directly linked the idea of Haqiq to the stability of the regime transition:

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[39] MAAP Film Productions, "HRH Crown Prince Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II Delivers @ United Nation General Assembly," September 30, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhQiCqfkyfQ.

[40] Kalimat Sumū Al-Amīr Al-Husayn bin Aʿbdallah Al-Thāni, Wali Al-Aʿhd, Khilāl Ziārat Jāmiʿat Al-Husayn bin Ṭlāl fi Maʿ ān (Speech of His Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince, during a visit to Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Maan). July 2nd, 2018. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd_xJu1NKG8. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

[41] Haqiq is one of the most important, wide-ranging, and far-reaching youth empowerment organizations in Jordan. Since its inception in 2012, according to their own estimates, 194.000 youth have been involved in Haqiq's programming. Around 1200 recruits complete all four stages of the program each year. The popularity of Haqiq became evident when the organization's leadership decided to try to open up recruitment for anyone to apply via their Facebook site. When they received 3000 applications in a matter of days, half of which qualified according to the criteria they had set up, they had to close the experiment and return to the regular recruitment method. "Cpf, Education Ministry Ink Deal to Sustain Haqiq Initiative," *Crown Prince Foundation*, October 4th, 2020, https://www.cpf.jo/en/media/cpf-education-ministry-ink-deal-sustain-haqiq-initiative. Wisaam, interview with author, Amman, July 18th, 2019.

[42] Much of the sector consists of a plethora of international, private, and governmental organizations, funding sources, and program designs/curriculums. For example, a youth initiative may be run by a Jordanian organization that may or may not be connected to the government, with Jordanian staff, while the funding and even the curriculum may originate from an international NGO.

> His Majesty (King Abdullah II) wasn't the first in line to become king. If it wasn't for his military background, he wouldn't have been able to maneuver through the transition. Now we have a golden opportunity to invest in the future, and to leverage the crown prince to become, *inshallah*, the next king after a long life for his majesty; but that's life, that's going to happen (the succession). So, no one knows the crown prince. We need to build a youth base around him, and, more importantly, we must give an opportunity for youth to be linked to decision makers. And give them 21st century-compatible skills. This is the whole idea.[45]

The importance that the regime assigns to Haqiq explains why the Crown Prince Foundation, in contrast to many other GONGOs, which often work with foreign funding, appears to have significant state resources available to it, with an ever-expanding set of youth programs and initiatives under the foundation's auspices and plush offices in the King Hussein Business Park. Moreover, Haqiq's recruitment strategies means that its participants provide a relatively representative sample of Jordanian youth. The organization operates all over Jordan and recruits youth in each one of the country's twelve governorates.[46] Aside from its geographical reach,

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[43] Haqiq was even found before the establishment of the CPF, at which time it was connected to the less pompous Office of the Crown Prince. Around 2016, it was transferred to the newly-formed Crown Prince Foundation.

[44] The Crown Prince's profile is on the rise as he is groomed to eventually ascend the throne. Underlining the direction of the succession, the prince's literal image has started popping up all over Jordan next to the compulsory pictures of the king in offices, schools, universities, and shops.

[45] Interview with author, Amman, June 29, 2019. In this quote, he refers to the hasty, unexpected, and potentially destabilizing succession of the incumbent of the throne. Two weeks before the death of King Abdullah's father King Hussein in January 1999, King Hussein replaced his younger brother Hassan with his eldest son Abdullah as heir apparent. The unexpected change of succession was a vulnerable interlude for the monarchy until Abdullah consolidated his rule aided by background and connections in the military.

[46] The organization, with its connection to the monarchy, has developed a partnership with the Ministry of Education. Every year, the Ministry helps Haqiq to select two schools in every governorate, where Haqiq's selection process then takes place.

Haqiq also uses a conscription-like model rather than relying on youth to apply.[47] When Haqiq visits a school to search for recruits, it even conceals the purpose of its visits; students are not informed that they are, in fact, being evaluated throughout the day.[48]

In Haqiq, recruits first learn about the Haqiq value system, then practice them in a closely supervised environment through physical and mental exercises. Subsequently, they go out into the world and deploy these skills by teaching other youth about Haqiq's values and organizing outreach events. Haqiq uses a mix of ideational materials, activities, spectacles, recruitment strategies, and languages. It blends familiar repertoires of Jordanian nationalism, such as instilling a "belonging to the homeland" (*Mintum li-Waṭanhu*) and "loyalty and belonging" (*Al-Walāʾ Wa-l-Intimāʾ*) with NGO-style empowerment training that draws on human resource management models such as emotional intelligence, project management, and even career guidance.[49] Recruits conduct physical training called "military training" (*Tadrīb ʿAskarī*) in obstacle courses, wear matching camouflaged army cargo pants and tops featuring the Haqiq colors and emblems, and regularly march in military formation. However, instructors are generally not domineering and, of the nine core values that comprise Haqiq's ideational core, "commitment" and "hard work" are combined with the more liberal-sounding "self-confidence" and "thinking outside the box." In the post-graduation phase of the program, some

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[47] Recruitment takes place during a full day's activities as a group of Haqiq leaders visit the school and run a series of activities, interviews, and tests. During this day, they do activities like trust exercises, and each individual is interviewed on topics such as hobbies and interests. There is a mental test which could be things like word association tests.

[48] This is not to say that Haqiq youth are fully representative of Jordanian youth. For example, Haqiq only recruits from public schools, and they tend to pick up the most academically successful students. I heard many cases where teachers or principals would select some good students in their class who would then spend a day with Haqiq for further recruitment tests. Haqiq's conscription-like model reduces the risk of self-selection biases. Conducting research with youth recruited in this conscription-like model allowed me to interrogate how previously demobilized youth – many of whom were embedded in family networks and struggled with transmitted expectations and with establishing themselves as respected adults – experienced being exposed to Haqiq's ideational and practical.

[49] Or "EQ," which Haqiq borrows from the California-based non-profit SixSeconds. Out of this mishmash of knowledges and expertise, Haqiq has distilled nine values that constitute its ideational foundation. These nine values are taught both to new recruits and by Haqiq recruits themselves to other community youths during Youth Camps and other events. The nine values are: 1) Thinking Outside the Box. 2) Taking Responsibility. 3) Confidence. 4) Strong Will. 5) Commitment. 6) Focusing. 7) Hard Work. 8) Honesty. 9) Learning from Experience.

Haqiq graduates are elected to administrative councils organizing local youth while representing Haqiq in state-organized youth summer camps.

The Empowered Subject?

Haqiq is designed to engage youth first as autonomous individuals (as part of an autonomous generation) whose value as citizens does not solely depend on parental or communal approval. My analysis shows that this message gained traction with youth who routinely fail to live up to parental and communal expectations in Jordan's austerity economy. In this sense, Haqiq mobilizes the generational cleavage to empower youth and thus detach them from older generations, which releases them from the expectations that parents harbor, expectations rooted in moral economies of state provision.

When recognizing the hail of being a Haqiq (and, in turn, Jordanian) youth, young people can extract themselves from the isolating experience of embodying the failed modern transition to adulthood. When recruits act in the name of collective goals, they express relief from the stress of having only to think about themselves. As one recruit said, Haqiq "has made me feel the needs of the community. Before, I was only thinking about myself, focus on school, then get into university. Now I have started to think more about community."[50] By open up new avenues of solidarity, Haqiq turns many recruits into ardent Haqiq disciples. "It's our life," one of them said. "Sure, we have some hobbies, we play some football, we drive around, but really, this is our life, Haqiq is our life. Haqiq has filled my empty world."[51] After emerging from deep entanglement in vertical family ties, youth begin to gain perspective on their previously more atomized lives. Many informants express their experience of life as a kind of floating, without a sense of direction. One male recruit said, "Life was boring, there was no plan (*ma kān fī*

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[50] Muhammed, Interview with author, Irbid, July 14, 2019.
[51] Ashraf, Interview with author, Zarqa, June 18, 2019.

khaṭa). We slept a lot."[52] Others compared their transformed lives to those of non-Haqiq youth. Two female recruits mentioned that most of their old friends "have a lot of spare time, they lack a sense of direction in life. They go to college and then go home…then they sleep through the afternoon."[53]

Strengthening participants' sense of individual responsibility is key to Haqiq's modus operandi. Many recruits compared Haqiq's addressing of youth—as subjects who are able to exercise judgment—to how they were addressed at school. One recruit said, "Usually, teachers, they come in, give the lesson, then go out. In Haqiq, we were asked to express what we want. Our own feelings are important."[54] Another participant said, "In school, you are a receiver, there is no dialogue, there is fear, you are afraid to make the wrong answers, you only sit there and count the minutes until lunch, or whatever. In Haqiq, lectures are short, you as a participant get to interact and be part of the sessions…They really teach you to be yourself and you learn that you have potential."[55] By interpellating youth as unique and capable individuals, Haqiq initiates processes of self-exploration, which participants often experience as overcoming the inhibitions, fears, and anxieties that previously prevented them from realizing their potential. One recruit said that Haqiq "has helped us to face our fears. For example, I was afraid of heights, now I'm not. The experience of Haqiq helped me break the walls of fear."[56] Many recruits claimed to have conquered a fear of public speaking. One recruit said, "My friend, for example, literately didn't speak if there were five or more people around, no matter the context. Today, she runs her own trainings and her own lectures."[57]

Often, empowering youth to be responsible for their own lives and choices puts them in conflict with parental authority. Strengthening participants' sense of self-worth chafes against established expectations of how they should feel and act. By recognizing the hail to be more independent and less attached to generationally transmitted expectations, many Haqiq youth have begun to assert their wishes within their families and communities. When I asked about Haqiq's impact on the participants' relationship with their parents, one recruit answered, "You must understand, here in Jordan there are two career paths for kids, according to their parents: either you go into the army or the government, or you become an engineer or doctor, that's it. With Haqiq, the youth broaden their minds, maybe they want to study something else, they go to their parents and say this."[58] Aside from being encouraged to formulate their independent wishes and desires, youth in Haqiq also learn specific skills that help them to assert themselves within their families and communities, such as arguing their case and convincing and influencing others. "With Haqiq," one recruit said, "we began to think of ourselves as people who have impact and potential. You learn how to convince people around you that you know."[59]

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[52] Khalid, Interview with author, Amman, June 25, 2019.
[53] Hiba, Interview with author, Amman, June 19, 2019.
[54] Abdullah, Interview with author, Kerak, July 17, 2019.
[55] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.
[56] Ashraf, Interview with author, Zarqa, June 18, 2019.
[57] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

When one interlocutor, Muhannad, had to select a university major, he found himself in disagreement with his father, a police officer who worked in Badia, a region adjacent to Muhannad's hometown of Mafraq. His father expected him to study *sharīʿa* (Islamic law) to become an imam. While Muhannad was not averse to the idea, he preferred to major in English literature and become an English professor. Ultimately, he did both by studying English at Al-Bayt University in Mafraq and *sharīʿa* at a small local college. In the English department at Al-Bayt, he was one of 10 students from Mafraq (out of 120 students in total); most students came from the urban regions of Amman or Zarqa. Of the 10 students from Mafraq, Muhannad was one of only three male students, which was a testament to the unusualness of this decision given his social circumstances. He said, "Before Haqiq, I would not have insisted that I should be allowed to study English. Haqiq has taught me to fight for my dreams. Before, I would maybe stop and give up, now I convinced my dad. Before, I was afraid of my dad; now, I was brave enough, because of Haqiq."[60]

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[58] Wisaam, Interview with author, Amman, July 18, 2019.
[59] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

Naturally, the subtle challenges to parental authority that Haqiq engenders make the organization more popular among youth than their parents. Many Haqiq youth are told by parents and peers that their investment in Haqiq is a "waste of time" (*Qaṭʿa Al-Waqt*). One recruit said,

> They (parents) think it is a waste of time. Their generation worked hard for money. This is their thinking, only work for money; in Haqiq we work for free to develop our country. Especially when we go to camps, they say "why do you waste your time?" I say Haqiq gives me more than university. In university, I sit and listen to boring lectures and fall asleep, in Haqiq I develop my person.[61]

Usually, in nearly every aspect in life, young people are expected to respect their elders and social status hierarchies; it is only after working hard and achieving a position that they deserve respect. As one Haqiq recruit expressed, "most youth in Jordan accept their parents' wishes. They sit at home and do what they are told. Parents want you to study hard, then university, then get a job, buy a car and a house, that's it."[62] In interviews, the participants constantly mentioned this string of demands: "study hard, get a job, marry, buy a house"—the only acceptable sequence for a respectable life. By contrast, Haqiq generates a form of insubordination among recruits. Like radical youth movements, Haqiq pits youth against other generations, but in a subtle way that does not apportion blame to older generations' privileges and emphasizes that youth must adapt to the requirements of their age.

Perhaps the main issue that pits Haqiq youth against their parents is the organization's recruitment of girls. Female participation is an issue that Haqiq continuously, subtly, and delicately attempts to address, especially in more culturally conservative rural governorates.

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[60] Muhannad, Interview with author, Mafraq, July 13, 2019.
[61] Abdullah, Interview with author, Kerak, July 17, 2019.
[62] Muhammad, Interview with author, Kerak, July 17, 2019.

During its first years of operation, Haqiq's recruits in rural governorates were all boys and only 20 percent of its recruits in the urban regions of Amman, Madaba, Zarqa, and Balqaa were girls. In 2019, the number of boys and girls recruited from urban regions was evenly balanced, and Haqiq had begun to recruit girls in all governorates. For example, when I visited Haqiq in Kerak in 2019, only boys were recruited, but the organization began to recruit girls the following year; the same was true when I visited Mafraq. Many female recruits testified that it was difficult to convince their parents to let them participate in Haqiq programming. One participant mentioned how the skills acquired in Haqiq, specifically training in emotional intelligence, helped her convince her father to allow her continued involvement with the organization. She told him, "You have to trust me, you've raised me well, I am not going to do anything bad, this was the point of raising me well, that I can go off and do this." In another case, Haqiq captains helped a recruit to convince her parents to allow her to go to camp by calling them and reassuring them that everything would be supervised and safe.[63] In addition, Haqiq's royal sanction through its connection to the Crown Prince Foundation and the crown prince himself helps mitigate some parents' apprehensions. With all its royal connection, Haqiq communicates to parents and youth that their way is the way forward. In the process, it drives a wedge between generations in families by addressing young people as already valuable (even before acquiring the traditional goods of adulthood like a stable job and money); it communicates to parents that the state judges youth according to different metrics.

The ways in which Haqiq detaches youth from their parents also partly releases them from the oppressiveness of being unable to live up to parents' expectations, a type of oppression that may play into the hands of youthful social movements, that blame the regime for generational injustices. In many ways, parents are custodians of the expectations that constitute the old state-centered moral economies. In their role as guardians of the old social contract, parents transmit the expectation that youth should reproduce what demographers call the “modern transition to adulthood,” which is characterized by longer education and later marriage after the establishment of stable wage employment.[64] The ways in which parents safeguard the social contract are expressed through their exercise of authority: withholding independence and valorization before youth acquire the goods of adulthood. Naturally, parents push youth to achieve according to the metrics that are familiar to them. As Mannheim explained, “the older generations cling to the re-orientation that had been the drama of *their* youth.”[65] Many parents grew up at a time when the higher education system was expanding and when the public sector absorbed most graduates.[66] Thus, parents are simply transmitting the recipe for success—diligence, application to study, and patience—that formerly guaranteed the modern transition to adulthood under the old social contract to their sons and daughters.

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[63] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019. After being selected, her most immediate concern was to convince her parents to allow her to go. One of the first activities of Haqiq is a camp which involves spending one night away. So she had to do some work convincing her parents.

However, youth today suffer from a failed modern transition as they struggle to secure stable employment, marriage, a house, or other goods that constitute local forms of accepted adulthood. Consequently, the transition between childhood and adulthood is suspended, and youth are stuck in extended periods of youthhood or “waithood.”[67] Therefore, modern youth experience the expectation that they should achieve a modern transition as a heavy burden.

The generational transmission of expectations ties youth to a sense of failure and prevents them from nimbly adjusting to new economic realities as they continue to cultivate a dependency on the state that the regime wishes to wean them from. For example, Jordanian youth continue to register for the public sector job queue (which yielded a job and a stable income in the past) in response to the generational transmission of expectations, despite the fact that it is common to wait for seven years before acquiring a public sector job. Moreover, youth continue to pursue life paths and careers based on inherited expectations rather than labor market needs. As in many countries, parents in Jordan exercise authority over their children's university major and qualifications when they apply for higher education, which approximately one third of Jordanian youth pursue. According to middle-class cultural norms, young people select a major primarily based on their high school exam scores (*Tawjīhī*). Those who perform well are usually expected to choose either medicine or engineering. Because admission to medical school is highly competitive, many high-achieving youth ultimately pursue engineering degrees. In fact, there is a running joke in Jordan that, if one were to throw a rock, it would hit an engineer (*Idhi Ramaīt Ḥajar Rāh Yīgi Bi-Muhandis*).[68] However, well-paid engineering jobs are scarce. Many large Jordanian export markets, such as Iraq and Syria, have collapsed in recent decades. Having opened up to the world market, in Jordan cheap imports have replaced much of Jordanian manufacturing. Among engineering graduates, unemployment or working at other jobs is common. Anyone who has used ride-sharing services such as Uber or Careem in Amman can observe the large number of drivers who are young male engineers. In addition, parents sometimes knowingly push youth to pursue unrealizable paths because pursuing a certain university degree can itself be a meaningful marker of status, irrespective of outcome. Unemployed engineers are still engineers, which may be preferable to, for example, being an employed human resources professional or graphic designer.[69]

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[64] Ragui Assaad, Caroline Krafft, and Colette Salemi. “Socioeconomic Status and The Changing Nature of School-To-Work Transitions in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia,” *The Economic Research Forum,* Working Paper No. 1287 (February 2019)i

[65] Karl Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations” in Kesckemeti ed. *Karl Mannheim: Essays* (Routledge, 1952), 301.

[66] Although many Palestinian-Jordanians also found opportunities in the private sector as well as in other countries, primarily in the Gulf.

[67] See e.g., Alcinda Honwana, *The Time of Youth: Work, Social Change and Politics in Africa*. (Hartford, CT: Kumarian Press. 2012); Craig Jeffrey, *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. 2010)

Haqiq puts forward a vision of youth as unencumbered by parental expectations. The organization re-signifies what it means to be young in Jordan today by telling youth that they are defined by opportunities that they themselves create. In a speech to students and faculty at a graduation ceremony at Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Ma´an in 2018, the crown prince said the following:

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[68] Amal, Interview with author, Amman, June 17, 2019.

[69] Yet, economic necessity often trumps cultural norms. According to many, as the cost of living rises, it becomes more acceptable for women to work outside the home. Today, for example, you can see women working in gas stations in Amman, apparently unseen a decade of so ago.

> We must nurture in our youth the values of change and renewal, not subordination; openness, not closed-mindedness; freedom of choice and creativity, not dependence. This is why my father, his majesty, has … never told me, “This is non-permissible” (*mā bṣīr*), and he has never made me feel that my hands are tied by saying “you must” (*lāzim*). He has given me space to experiment and choose. Whenever I am hesitant or unsure, he urges me to “try” or “experiment,” realizing that the lessons I would learn from failure are far more valuable than the ones I would learn from success. He has taught me, like he has said many times before, don’t take “no” for an answer.[70]

In this speech, the crown prince, as a representative of the political leadership, is telling the professors and teachers in the room that they must release youth from “subordination” and “dependence.” Instead, he says that they must be allowed to take responsibility for the challenges of their age. To make this point, the crown prince draws on his own family; he describes his father, the king, as a modern parent who does not cultivate dependence and unthinking devotion in his children. Rather, the king encourages independence and exploration. If the king himself is this type of parent, then perhaps the students in the auditorium can act more freely and flexibly under the guidance of this supra-paternal authority. They learn that, if the king were their father, he would grant them the space to experiment and the patience to fail and that he would support them if they wanted to explore and be more autonomous than they may have previously considered possible.

Haqiq’s Administrative Councils

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[70] *“Kalimat Sumū Al-Amīr Al-Husayn bin Aʿbdallah Al-Thāni, Wali Al-Aʿhd, Khilāl Ziārat Jāmiʿat Al-Husayn bin Ṭlāl fi Maʿ ān,”* (Speech of His Highness Prince Al-Hussein bin Abdullah II, Crown Prince, during a visit to Al-Hussein Bin Talal University in Maan). July 2nd, 2018. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nd_xJu1NKG8. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

Haqiq's administrative councils organize youth in volunteering initiatives. During fieldwork, I spent considerable time with Haqiq's administrative councils in Zarqa, Mafraq, Kerak, and Amman. The administrative councils are comprised of Haqiq graduates, usually youth around the ages of 18–21, who are elected to their positions. The councils organize local youth through "volunteering activities" based on quarterly themes that Haqiq centrally decides. Themes are often based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as health, volunteerism, water, and education. Sometimes, themes are more locally focused, such as "getting to know your country" or promoting local tourism. Based on the quarterly theme, the administrative councils organize volunteer events and invite youth from outside of Haqiq to attend. In addition to the quarterly volunteering events, the council members represent Haqiq at the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Youth's yearly youth summer camps.

During the spring and summer of 2019, I spent two busy weeks with members of the Amman administrative council as they conducted their duties. The current section contains an ethnographic exploration of three volunteering activities that the Amman administrative council organized, which I observed and participated in. During the first quarter of 2019, administrative councils all over Jordan were tasked with organizing volunteer activities around the theme of promoting good health, one of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. Amman's administrative council, which consists of seven young men and women, decided to first host an educational workshop for themselves and other Haqiq "knights" (*fursaan*, Haqiq graduates), followed by a more interactive event in which they invited non-Haqiq youth to a health-promoting "fair." The first event occurred at Beit Shabab (Youth House) in Amman, which is located in the Al-Hussein Youth City, a vast multiplex of sports and culture that covers 90 hectares of space in central Amman along Queen Rania Street, serves as the epicenter of youth governance in Jordan, and houses the offices of the Ministry of Youth. The council had invited representatives from a local chapter of the International Federation of Medical Student

Associations (IFMSA) to conduct workshops on first aid and public health. The atmosphere was quite buoyant, and the hall quickly filled with Haqiq knights in colorful polo shirts. Council members ran around to unfurl roll-up banners of the Haqiq logo next to the IFMSA banners. A Haqiq captain hovered in the background to oversee the proceedings. The invited medical students held a PowerPoint presentation on first aid and promoting public health, after which lunch was served in the cafeteria.

The training event was the precursor to a large-scale outreach event held the following week at the Teachers' Club in central Amman. The club was slightly dilapidated, as most such places are (unless they are connected to the monarchy or paid for by foreign funding).[71] The event took place at a large gym hall at the heart of the building. As it was about to start, the atmosphere was lively; organizers from the Amman administrative council were running around and bumping into each other as everyone appeared to arrange everything at the same time. Loud pop music blared from poor-quality speakers. Multi-colored disco lights were flashing, although the main ceiling light was turned on, which dimmed their festive impact. Multiple roll-up banners were set up and showed the logos of Haqiq and participating organizations. One person checked the mic: "testing, testing." It was very hot, and no air conditioning appeared to be on. Pearls of sweat beaded on everyone's foreheads.

For the health fair, the Amman administrative council partnered with several health-related organizations and businesses, including the Association of Medical Students, Olympic Day Jordan, Low Carb Health, Fit Jordan, Cambridge Weight Plan, Dental Care People. These organizations set up exhibition tables along the walls of the rectangular hall. Some Haqiq youth served freshly squeezed orange juice at one of the tables. Hundreds of young, non-Haqiq teenagers begin pouring into the gym hall. They mostly gathered in small groups and mingled; many arrived with friends and appeared to be dressed up for the occasion. The music went on and off due to technical issues. Ultimately, one of the Haqiq council members relieved attendees of the erratic music and delivered a welcome address. He introduced the special guests, a delegation from Jordan's Olympic youth team. They ascended the stage and took pictures with the Haqiq council members. After the welcome address, the youth tentatively began to visit some of the exhibitors; however, most seemed content to continue chatting and mingling.

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[71] Like, for example, the Beit Shabab in Al-Hussein Youth City, on which a placard hangs stating that the building is a gift from the Chinese government.

Two weeks after the health-themed volunteering events, I once again visited the Amman administrative council when they trained youth participants in Amman's so-called Hussein youth camp. The camp's full name is Hussein Camp for Work and Construction (*Muʿskarāt Al-Ḥusayn lil-Aʿmal w Ālbināʾ*) and is run by the Ministry of Youth. In 2018, over 8,000 youth participated in the camps. In 2019, this figure was 20,000.[72] Participants can choose to attend a multi-day camp in a different governorate than their own or a daytime camp closer to home.[73] Haqiq reaches around 8,000 to 9,000 of these youth per year.[74] The program is designed so that kids participate in camps run in a different governorate than their home governorate. Camps have different themes, which range from the flashy-sounding "Internet of Things" and "Creativity & Innovation" to the more traditional "Friends of the Police-camp" (*Muʿskarāt Āṣdqāʾ A-Shurṭa*) and public safety.

On the particular day that I visited, there were 70 to 100 girls from the southern governorates of Tafileh and Petra. They had selected camps with the themes "Internet of Things" and "Creativity & Innovation." The girls stayed at the Amman Youth Hostel for several days. Some of them had never been to Amman, which made the camp quite an experience. The girls were all dressed in uniform-style clothes: camouflaged trousers and a T-shirt with the

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[72] Mandūbān Walī al-ʿAhd Wazīr Al-Shab āb Yaraʿa I ṭl āq Muʿskarāt Al-Ḥusayn lil-Aʿmal w Ālbināʾ (On Behalf of the Crown Prince..The Minister of Youth Sponsors the Launch of Al-Hussein Labor and Construction Camps) *Al-Ra'i,* June 28, 2019, Accessed July 8 , 2023, http://alrai.com/article/10491003/محليات/مندوبا-عن-ولي-العهد-وزير-الشباب-يرعى-اطلاق-معسكرات-الحسين-للعمل-والبناء.

[73] *"Khitām Faʿālīāt Muʿskarāt Al-Ḥusayn lil-Aʿmal w Ālbināʾ lil-Aʿāma 2018 bi-Mushāraka Shabābyyia Wasaʿa"* ("The Conclusion of Activities of Al-Hussein Labor and Construction Camps for the Year 2018 with Widepsread Youth Participation"), *Ministry of Youth,* July 28, 2018. http://www.moy.gov.jo/?q=ar/node/1974. Accessed April 11, 2020.

[74] Haqiq operates in 12 youth centers where they teach around 100 youth per camp during six weeklong camps.

Ministry of Youth logo. On this afternoon, the camp was visited by representatives from Haqiq and the Amman Administrative Council. While the Haqiq youth, who are typically around 18–21 of age at this stage of the program, ran the camp, a “captain” (*Kabtin*), a Haqiq instructor, hovered in the background and oversee the proceedings but took care not to intervene. The session’s goal was to teach the girls about the nine goals of Haqiq. After a lecture about three of the nine values (self-confidence, taking responsibility, and flexibility), the girls were led into the yard to engage in physical exercises that corresponded to these values.

Haqiq youth are well-trained in the art of interactive pedagogy and enthusiastic communication. Their lectures are short, interactive, and intense. The workshop leader, Safwa, first solicited the campers’ preconceptions on a particular topic on the day that I joined the training session. She asked, “What is the first thing that comes to mind when I say flexibility?” Energy levels rose, and many girls raised their hands.

In the first exercise, which embodied the value of flexibility, a group stood in a circle and was instructed to hold a long rope. Each member of the circle grabbed a section of the rope. Then, the leader directed the group to make different shapes with their bodies while holding the rope, such as a rectangle or a triangle. The other exercise in this sequence was the classic trust fall. The campers continued like this until they had covered all nine of Haqiq’s values.

The Haqiq system of administrative councils is based on youth running the council themselves. For example, the Amman administrative council is mandated to organize events such as the health fair. In the process, they mobilize resources and engage respected adults (e.g., medical professionals). When non-Haqiq youth attend volunteering events, they become spectators of the Haqiq youth’s efficaciousness and productivity. This creates a virtuous feedback loop in which Haqiq recruits have the opportunity to enact civic participation while other young people are meaningfully engaged in a relationship that appears to be youth-organized.

Far from being unintentional, persuading the youth themselves to organize events is a conscious plan. As one of the architects of the organization told me, ”Even if it is a short intervention, the idea is to have role models their age…It is all about showing them real kids, and we don’t interfere. It is all them, not only talk, also action, this is the best way to learn, to see kids their own age who do it.”[75] Acting as role models can be profoundly impactful for non-Haqiq youth. One interlocuter, Safwa, recounted a story about when she and her Haqiq companion were teaching Haqiq's nine core values to ninth and 10th graders. Safwa explained that, beyond simply teaching Haqiq’s values, she and her partner were conveying something more fundamental to the students: "that, you, as youth, can change things...There was excitement in their eyes, and many, like, five to 10 of the girls in one session broke down and cried.” When I asked why they started crying, Safwa said, “First, they were sad because they thought they will never be able to convince their parents to do these things, to volunteer, and so on. And also, (they cried) out of excitement. They thought, ‘Look at these girls, they are only a few years older than us, and if we work hard, we can become like them!’”[76]

To reinforce the impression that its members act independently, Haqiq is designed to make the organization appear to be shaped by youth themselves: as a self-acting, grassroots organization. For example, Haqiq instructors assume an anonymous role. At events and gatherings, they typically hover in the background and refrain from intervening. They blend in with their black or white Haqiq polo shirts, and their primary function is to intervene if the youth organizers who run the events experience any issues. In events where non-Haqiq youth are invited, visitors are unlikely to take any notice of the adult instructors.

Another aspect of Haqiq’s self-constitutive quality is that the administrative councils are formed through elections, which take place after the recruits graduate from the main program. At this point, some Haqiq graduates may opt to continue representing the organization in a system that is designed to create a lasting impact. Graduates of Haqiq are called "knights" (*Fursān*), which echoes King Abdullah's moniker for the nation's youth—"knights of change." The knights comprise a body called the General Council (*Hay' al-ʿĀmma*). Any member of the Hay Al-Amma (i.e., Haqiq graduates) can put their name forward to be elected to the administrative councils (*Al-Majālis Al-Idāriyya*), which operate in every governorate. Knights are elected to the administrative councils for one-year, non-extendable terms. Elections are major affairs in which aspiring candidates run ambitious campaigns. Candidates typically engage in phone canvassing with all prospective voters and circulate advertisements with their pictures and candidate statements on social media. During election season, the Haqiq Facebook page is full of such election messaging. On election day, voters cast secret ballots in person, and all voters must dip their fingers in ink.[77] The process is relatively transparent, despite rumors that pressure to vote is exerted on distant relatives such as "second cousins," which mirrors some of the dynamics present in Jordanian parliamentary elections.

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[75] Wisaam, Interview with author, Amman, June 29, 2019.
[76] Ashraf, Interview with author, Zarqa, June 18, 2019.

Once members are elected to administrative councils in each of the 12 governorates, they settle into offices at a local youth center (*Marākiz Al-Shabāb*) run by the Ministry of Youth, where they manage a small budget of JD 75 per month (around $100). The offices result from a cooperation agreement between the Ministry of Youth and the Crown Prince Foundation.[78] The councils then begin work on their main task: the organization of quarterly "volunteering events" based on specific themes decided by Haqiq and the running of Haqiq activities in state-run summer camps.

By adopting a hands-off governing model (albeit with a steady directive hand), Haqiq empower youth to act in unison as a generation. This surprises many who come into contact with Haqiq. One recruit said that when he and fellow Haqiq representatives organize local youth in their region, “people always ask ‘Who manages this?’ We say, ‘We manage this, and we do it for nothing!’” Another recruit said, “Sometimes, people think it is stupid that we are working for free, but we do it to raise our community, to develop it. It won’t be for nothing. People think about money only, Haqiq has taught us that when you work for nothing, you can raise your country, that’s what we tell them: we’re raising our country.”[79]

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[77] Fieldnotes, Amman, February 29, 2020.

[78] According to the agreement, Haqiq participants are supposed to encourage youth to come to come to the MoY youth centers and, in exchange, Haqiq get to use the spaces of the Youth Centers for training and activities. Conversation with trainer, Dr Hailat, June 13, 2019, Aqaba.

An Emancipated Generation?

The subtle insubordination that Haqiq promotes responsibilizes youth and leads them to challenge the narratives of youthhood as failure. It also encourages generational detachment—the disembedding of youth from the vertical ties of families—by drawing youth into a sense of shared purpose and of being connected to an entire generation that is capable of tackling modern challenges. This process leads youth to identify more with their own generation, which further detaches them from parental expectations and their parents’ attachment to state provisions.

One of the most prominent teambuilding exercises used by Haqiq, which involves both recruits and non-recruits at outreach events, is the classic trust fall. First, one person stands on a chair or a stepping stool. Below them, a group of participants holds a stretched-out sheet, which the person on the chair falls into backwards with their eyes closed. One recruit described the symbolism of the trust fall as follows: “we often say that the sheet represents your country and that you need to trust your country. Making the country better makes you better, it gives you the sense that you have to give back because the country has given you so much. So, you are actually asked to fall into your country’s arms.”[80] Beyond the nationalist symbolism, the trust fall serves an even more concrete purpose; ultimately, it is not the country that holds the sheet but other fellow Jordanian youth. Being caught by and having to trust fellow youth dramatizes an essential aspect of Haqiq: the organization builds horizontal ties between youth from a variety of backgrounds, class positions, and origins. By promoting horizontal solidarity with other youth and persuading them to act in concert, personal empowerment binds youth together in Haqiq. Thus, the organization uses language and activities to cultivate a shared sense of purpose while constructing a common youth identity.

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[79] Hussein, Interview with author, Amman, June 25, 2019.
[80] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

In several ways, Haqiq is designed to foster these horizontal ties. Identifying as national youth (rather than simply sons or daughters) exposes youth to the moral economy of self-reliance in order to adapt their identities, life pursuits, notions of the good life, and forms of engagement to Jordan's neoliberal austerity economy. First, through its recruitment strategies and partnership with the Ministry of Education, Haqiq selects youth from all over the country and each of the 12 governorates. Casting a wide net in recruitment means that participants interact with a wide variety of youth from many class positions and backgrounds, not least those who straddle the important Transjordanian–Palestinian divide. Discrimination and sowing divisions are not accepted. In one workshop, a Haqiq member from Amman mocked another person's dialect by alleging that their peer from Aqaba pronounced the word *pen* "in a funny way." The transgressor was reprimanded by the instructor, who said that this was not an acceptable way to treat other people and that everyone was there to learn about respect—one of Haqiq's nine key values.[81] Many Haqiq activities relate youth as a group to the nation. For example, Haqiq takes recruits on field trips to visit historically important places in Jordan, and participants design volunteering activities around the theme "know your country." In this way, Haqiq creates a microcosm of flattened divides through which youth can imagine being tethered to their peers all over the country, who act in unison.

Haqiq is also designed to flatten divisions in other ways. For example, the organization developed a non-hierarchical organizational culture that de-emphasizes status and power asymmetries. The instructors are called “captains” (*Kabtin/Kabātin)*, which connotes teamwork and cooperation. The captains introduce themselves by their first names, such as Captain Ashraf or Captain Lina. Recruits are expected to call the captains by these names only, which is unusual in Jordan, where professional or academic titles are often used to address people, especially in situations where palpable status hierarchies operate (old-young, student-teacher, or participant-instructor). All members of Haqiq—instructors and recruits alike—wear the same clothes: camouflage pants and a polo shirt with the Haqiq emblem on the chest (consisting of the colors of the Jordanian flag: red, green, white, and black) and a Jordanian flag on the right sleeve. The only difference between recruits and instructors is that they wear different colored shirts (e.g., when recruits wear white, instructors wear black, and vice versa). Only elected “knights” who are part of the administrative councils (*Hayy al-Idaryyia*) wear either red (when representing Haqiq on formal occasions) or green polo shirts.

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[81] Hiba, Interview with author, Amman, June 19, 2019

Against this backdrop of de-emphasized status asymmetries, recruits are compelled to enact a sense of shared youth identity. The entire Haqiq curriculum consists of activities that place young people in often unfamiliar situations in which they are forced to act as a group. After Stage 1 (the recruitment process) and Stage 2 (learning about Haqiq’s values in workshops and exercises), Stages 3 and 4 build on the interactive, practice-oriented pedagogy of previous stages. Stage 3 is known as the field trip stage (*Ziārāt al-Madaniyya,* literally “civil visits”) and usually consists of one sightseeing expedition to learn about Jordan’s history and one “volunteering trip” in which Haqiq youth gather to paint a public school, plant trees, or similar activities. During the fourth and final stage, Haqiq organizes a three-day camp in the facilities of an implementing partner, Challenger Team, just south of the capital. On the first day, the program begins at 7 a.m. and focuses on physical military training (*Tadrīb ʿAskarī*). Recruits must ascend climbing walls, learn how to use a bow and arrow, and train in obstacle courses. The second day is devoted to teambuilding exercises, such as figuring out how to throw an egg from a height without breaking it using a balloon. Finally, the third day of the camp consists of a lavish graduation ceremony at the ultra-elite King's Academy in Madaba.

In Haqiq, teambuilding exercises that may seem frivolous at first are imbued with an air of seriousness that surprises many. Some recruits said that they were bewildered by the weight and gravity of the organization's atmosphere despite its ostensible playfulness—its colorful uniforms, outdoorsy games, and teamwork exercises—after initially viewing the Haqiq recruitment day as an opportunity to skip school for a few hours. This seriousness puzzled many recruits because it defied common categories of work and play. One person explained, "In school, either you do classroom activities for serious matters, or you do schoolyard activities for fun. But here, with Haqiq, these more physical outdoor activities were not simply for fun; they had a deeper meaning."[82]

Conclusion

Like social movements, Haqiq reinforces the generational cleavage and imbues it with a sense of potential and optimism. Through its curriculum, activities, and ideational content, the organization draws youth into a relationship of shared purpose and identity, signifying youth as a generation capable of acting in unison, as sharing a destiny and having natural common interests while portraying individual youth as independent and autonomous.[83] Thus, on the one hand, GONGO-produced empowerment is real: youth gain skills and outlooks which may do affirmative work for them. However, on the other hand, such empowerment generates subtle attachments both to regime actors (like the crown prince), while inculcating self-reliance and detachments from the distributive state, a key regime imperative.

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[82] Nada, Interview with author, Amman, June 20, 2019.

[83] When acting as national youth, young people enter into a relation of subjectivation. This process is akin to the one Mannheim referred to as youth forming into a generation "in actuality." However, for Mannheim, it was wars and political upheavals that sucked youth from disparate backgrounds "into the vortex of social change." For example, the German wars against Napoleon "put the peasants, scattered as they are in remote districts and almost untouched by current upheavals, in a common actual generation group with the urban youth." The impetus of upheaval, Mannheim notes, created a "concrete bond" among youth who had "an active or passive experience of the interactions of forces which made up the new situation." Haqiq, I argue, enacts this process of bringing a generation – that previously only shared what Mannheim calls "location" – into a generation in actuality.

Finally, it should be noted that the uptake of this language of autonomy and self-reliance is necessarily limited and its saturation uneven. However, when the regime intervenes in the process of generational identity formation, the process that occurs when “similarly 'located' contemporaries participate in a common destiny,”[84] such intervention can at the very least prevent what James Scott called a “moral consensus”—that is, a “widely shared sentiment of what was justifiable under the circumstances.”[85] Identifying with an empowered generation rather than with its failure to live up to traditional expectations may at least generate ambivalences, which make straightforward claims of what the state ought to provide less likely to resonate with wide swathes of Jordanian youth.

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[84] Mannheim, “The Problem of Generations,” 303.

[85] James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 166.

Chapter 4. “The Government Cannot Be Solved—We’re Improving the Country in Other Ways”: The Moral Economy of Self-Reliance and Ambivalent Attachments in Jordan’s Youthscape

In July 2019, I traveled to Mafraq, an army-dominated town located 80 kilometers north of Amman that nearly borders Syria. Mafraq is the provincial capital of the vast Mafraq governorate, which encompasses the Syrian Desert that stretches east towards the border of Iraq. I had made an appointment with several youth in the Haqiq administrative council, the elected body of Haqiq graduates who run volunteering activities for local youth in the governorates. I met two young men, Hamid and Muhannad, at the local Ministry of Youth youth center, where the administrative council presided over a small office. The office was small, containing a desk and some scattered chairs. After my chat with the young men, we drove around Mafraq and ate fried chicken for lunch.

Although the three Haqiq youth representatives struggled to organize local youth (20 to 30 participants usually attended their activities), they were proud about bringing youth engagement to Mafraq. “Before we started,” Hamid said, “there were no outlets for youth to volunteer and help the community…Sometimes, people think it is stupid that we are working for free, but we do it to raise our community, to develop it; it won’t be for nothing. In general, people think about money only; Haqiq has taught us that, when you work for nothing, you can raise your country. That’s what we tell them: we’re raising our country.” I then asked, “Do many people know about Haqiq around here?” Hamid said, “Not everyone, you know, the Bedus (Bedouins), they work on their own things—work and families—and elders are not interested. But youth, yeah, they want to know how to join.”

Offhandedly, I asked, “Why is youth unemployment such a big problem in Jordan, you think?” To my surprise, Hamid took this as an invitation to discuss economic issues and launch into a lengthy and impassioned rant about the government:

> The government is really bad. There is no trust between government and people. They steal from the country. They live on our backs. The government causes the problems. For instance, eight years ago, His Majesty the king came to Mafraq. There was a particular U-turn in the road close to our village. This U-turn was wrongly placed and created danger. Eight people died in this crossing. When the king came, the people told him about this issue. He said, “Yes, a tunnel must be built here.” After that, nothing happened; the ministry, they didn’t do anything. This year, the king came again, and the people showed him that the problem remained.
>
> We wish there were better people in ministries, people that could be honest and true to themselves. The thing is that people in the ministries, they change all the time, after like four years, then they are replaced. This means that they try to steal as much as they can before they are replaced by someone else. Then they take their money and go to America, or Switzerland or wherever. They just think about themselves.[1]

I was taken aback by the strong and direct tone of Hamid’s criticism. While youth in Amman, Zarqa, or Irbid (the major urban centers) are not averse to complaining about politics, they rarely display such a willingness to express unabashed criticism towards the political system.

A few days later, I made a similar visit to the Haqiq administrative council in Kerak, a small town near the Dead Sea that was built around a famous crusader castle. Kerak encompasses an old town that surrounds the castle, a valley, and a new neighborhood atop an adjacent hill. When I arrived, I passed what looked like a newly built bus station that was about to begin operations at any time. They later told me that it was operational, but no one used it. Most small bus operators preferred the old, dusty roadside field that they had always used. I met the Haqiq team at a small café, after which we walked around town and visited the castle.

In discussions about Haqiq, they said that they were proud about organizing local youth. One of the young men, Abdullah, explained,

> Haqiq has given us a chance to volunteer. When we started, we were a joke. Now people take us seriously. What we can bring is that we send the message to other people, the messages of Haqiq. In Kerak, 858 youth have joined our events, now everyone knows about us. Sometimes I wear my Haqiq shirt in university, and people ask me “How can I join Haqiq?” When we first held events here in Kerak, five of six people turned up, now 100 people turn up…We in Haqiq are the most active people in all of Kerak. There are a couple of other organizations—they are mostly about doing a small event, then take a picture that can be shared on social media.

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[1] Hamid. Interview with Author. Mafraq. July 13, 2019.

Only minutes into our conversation, the issue of the government was mentioned:

Abdullah: Government here is a problem. One of my friends wanted to set up a small company that would help poor people, but the government said no.

Given the invitation to discuss politically sensitive topics, I probed further:

Author: What other problems are there with the government?

Abdullah: When we deal with them, there are lots of problems. They don't respect time. If we have a meeting, they are two hours late. Sometimes we want to do a volunteering activity and we don't get the OK from the government.

Author: What about the government's role in creating jobs?

Abdullah: There aren't many jobs. You know, they built some factories here in Kerak for chemicals and plastic. But all it does is give us pollution. Some of them can cause diseases. The managers sit in Amman, and they don't have to deal with the consequences…My siblings don't have work. My sister is a teacher, and my brother is an engineer (they are graduates with degrees in these subjects)—we have to start thinking about going outside Jordan. The thing is, you have to know someone important to get a job. It's as simple as that. You have to. They don't respect humans!

Author: What do you mean, "respect the human?"

Abdullah: I mean, to give them a job so that they can work.

Author: How do you feel about your siblings not finding work?

Abdullah: They work hard for four years in university, and they see no results. They are willing to get any work, anything, or they get married.[2]

Abdullah continued to criticize the government:

Abdullah: They steal; Jordan is a very hard country to live in; you can quote me on this; I don't care. When they are supposed to fix the streets, they take the money. We don't exist in their minds; they don't care. They should make us more efficient, but they don't.

Author: What should be done about the problems in government?

Abdullah: The government cannot be solved—we're trying to improve the country in other ways.

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[2] Abdullah. Interview with Author. Mafraq. July 13, 2019. By "getting married" instead of finding work, Abdullah presumably refers to his sister, as many young women end up exiting the labor market when starting families due to poor employment prospects. Ragui Assaad, Rana Hendy, and Chaimaa Yassine, "Gender and the Jordanian Labor Market," in *The Jordanian Labor Market in the New Millennium*, ed. Ragui Assaad. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014).

These Haqiq youth from Mafraq and Kerak are not only GONGO recruits; they have also actively run for office on the administrative councils to represent Haqiq in their governorates and heeded the regime's call for youth to take responsibility for themselves and their communities, which they enacted by organizing local youth to volunteer in their communities. However, this general espousal of self-reliance does not mean that they have any commitment, belief, or personal investment in the government or the regime as a source of good or justice. Rather, these Haqiq youth from Mafraq and Kerak illustrate that Jordanian youth operate in a social field of many, often competing moral economies.

In rebellious Jordan, there has been considerable research on how actors tap into moral economies to critique, protest, and defy the regime. These are moral economies of economic rights, rights to subsistence (often connected to specific subsistence goods), and the role of government in protecting citizens from economic risk. In this chapter, I illustrate that a moral economy of self-reliance that is vehemently pushed by GONGOs but also operates independently of such state discourse exists alongside these moral economies. Of course, attachments to various moral economies differ depending on class, geography, ethnicity, and kin networks. Yet, most Jordanian youth must navigate not only claims about what they should be able to expect from the government but also moral claims about why it is wrong to rely too much on the government. The Haqiq youth from Mafraq and Kerak may recognize that it is pointless to make any claims to the government, but they nevertheless espouse a moral conviction that it is their responsibility to look after themselves and their communities ("The government cannot be solved—we're trying to improve the country in other ways.")

While it takes the Haqiq youth as a starting point, this chapter departs from the GONGOs and their immediate surroundings to explore the circulation of competing moral economies in Jordan. It analyzes ideas about self-reliance that emerge from GONGOs, how they operate in social and political discourses, and the political work that they do. I argue that the moral economy of self-reliance generates significant ambivalences, whereby a variety of actors, even political activists, must contend with moral arguments that it is wrong to be overly reliant on the state.

The Promiscuous Heart of Morality

The concept of the moral economy was popularized by historian E.P. Thompson, who argued in his 1971 essay "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd" that popular responses to markets' encroachments on people's lives were not simply biological responses to hunger but morally laden and based on traditional views of various economic actors' obligations.[3] The other key contribution is James Scott's analysis of peasant households in 20th-century Burma and Vietnam and their incorporation into colonial state formation and free market expansion.[4] For Scott, a moral economy consists of a specific group's "notion of economic justice and their working definition of exploitation."[5] The moral economy explains why subaltern groups mobilize not in a mechanistic response to exploitation but when certain moral entitlements and expectations are violated. These theories of the moral economy posit that contention over economic distribution is never purely about subsistence or utility maximization but inflected by moral understandings and expectations.

Scholarship on Jordan has explored how moral understandings inform the basic social contract that connects the state and citizens.[6] Most notably, scholars have centered these moral economies to explain patterns of social mobilization. For example, moral economies have been used to elucidate why certain subsistence goods, such as bread or the socioeconomic benefits derived from national resources, engender stronger contention than other issues.[7] Other scholars have noted that the concepts of economic rights in general and dignity in particular *vis-á-vis* the state have allowed young activists to stake out moral positions that mobilized youth in the Hirak movement.[8] These scholars build on a long tradition of using the moral economy to explain Arab politics.[9]

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[3] E.P. Thompson, "The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century," *Past & Present*, No 50 (February 1971), 76-136, 79.

[4] James C. Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant: Rebellion and Subsistence in Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976)

[5] Scott, *The Moral Economy of the Peasant,* 3.

[6] Tariq Tell, *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013).

Today, it is widely accepted that early moral economists such as Thompson and Scott located morals outside of market-disciplinary discourses and practices. As Palomera and Vetta has contended, moral economies "are more-often-than-not portrayed as particular realms outside (or in the cracks of) the market and the state, as reciprocity-systems of survival linked to particular groups, often unprivileged ones."[10] For example, Andrea Muehlebach argued that, for Thompson, the moral economy "hinges on a conceptualization of morals as either epiphenomenal or as oppositional—as preamble, as mere afterthought, or as always already resistant" and as "heroically pitted against" market logics.[11] By contrast, Somers have claimed that today "all economic matters traffic in morality…, political economy is drenched in moral sentiments, and that those who fail to reckon with its moral claims will fail to understand the power of capitalism."[12] Scholars of moral economies in Jordan do not labor under the misapprehension that morals exist outside of market logics.[13] Yet, in analyses of Jordan, the potential imbrication of moralities in market-disciplinary projects, while possible in theory, are typically stated as a theoretical caveat in preparation for an analysis of how moral economies are leveraged to resist the Jordanian regime's market-disciplinary project. As Palomera and Vetta has noted, "the expansion of capitalist markets and their extremely complex social underpinnings tend to *stay outside of moral economists' research interests.*"[14]

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[7] José Ciro Martínez, *States of Subsistence,* Matthew Lacouture, "Privatizing the Commons: Protest and the Moral Economy of National Resources in Jordan," *International Review of Social History* 66, issue S29 (April 2021), pp. 113-137, 114.

[8] Yazan Doughan, "Corruption, Authority and The Discursive Production of Reform and Revolution in Jordan," (PhD Diss., University of Chicago 2018).

[9] Charles Tripp, *Islam and the Moral Economy: The Challenge of Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), Marsha Pripstein Posusney, "Irrational Workers: The Moral Economy of Labor Protest in Egypt," *World Politics* 46, No. 1 (October 1993).

[10] Jaime Palomera and Theodora Vetta, "Moral economy: Rethinking a Radical Concept," *Anthropological Theory* 16, No. 4. (November 2016): 418.

[11] Andrea Muehlebach*, The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and Citizenship in Italy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press), 6.

[12] Margaret Somers, "The Moral Economy of the Capitalist Crowd: Utopianism, the Reality of Society, and the Market as a Morally Instituted Process in Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 11, No. 2 (Summer 2020): 227.

[13] As Martínez notes, James Scott's classic approach to moral economy "obscures the moral underpinnings of market-disciplinary projects, such as neoliberalism or liberal capitalism, and constructs a false dichotomy between noncapitalist and capitalist values and communities." José Ciro Martínez, "Leavened Apprehensions:

By contrast, I center morality in the analysis of contention over distribution in Jordan. Following Muelehbach, the present analysis considers morals as "integral, indeed indispensable to market orders."[15] If it is accepted that all economies are moral economies and that market logics operate in moral registers, it is possible to adopt a non-hierarchical relationship between market and non-market moral economies as part of the analysis. Treating market logics as inherently moral enables an investigation of the complex ways in which moral economies operate in Jordan in and out of practices and discourses that resist the state, as well as those that push citizens to disregard the state as an irredeemable obstacle to their flourishing. Jordanian youth live in a social field of competing moral frameworks through which citizens make sense of the economy, distributive outcomes, and the relationship between politics and economics. While there are enduring moral frameworks (e.g., dignity or the right to subsistence) that prescribe the proper role of the state, I argue that there are also strong moral undercurrents in the claim that Jordanians should not overly rely on the state. These different moral economies sometimes operate in tension with each other and other times in surprising symbiosis.

"Giving Before Taking": The Moral Economy of Self-Reliance in Jordan

In 2015, the royal court arranged a meeting at Al-Husseiniya Palace with King Abdullah II and several carefully selected young people who represented "distinguished success stories." The

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Bread Subsidies and Moral Economies in Hashemite Jordan," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50. No. 2 (May 2018): 177.

[14] Jaime Palomera and Theodora Vetta, "Moral economy: Rethinking a Radical Concept," *Anthropological Theory* 16, No. 4. (November 2016): 418.

[15] Andrea Muehlebach*, The Moral Neoliberal*, 23.

group consisted of business entrepreneurs, founders of nonprofits, a successful film director, and a vocal "anti-smoking activist." The king took the opportunity to reflect on what these young role models said about the nature of contemporary Jordanian citizenship. He asserted that citizenship is about "what a person offers to his country, not what he expects from it…[as citizens], your achievements that you have presented are important signs of your creative thought and lack of dependence on what the state offers you, and that you are able to give before taking."[16]

This theme—that youth should give before taking—pervades regime language and address. In a speech at a graduation ceremony at Yarmouk University, Crown Prince Hussein said, "Here, I will quote what His Majesty said from this very podium: 'In the future, you will be the ones who create job opportunities, not those who seek them.'"[17] In a different speech, the crown prince said, "Jordan's youth have never been dependent or indifferent. We do not begin by starting with an attained achievement, neither security nor knowledge nor sustenance; *we do not take, rather we give*."[18] Giving before taking has a clear moral underpinning: it is wrong to depend on others for one's sustenance. In explaining the citizen's morally rectified role within this order, Crown Prince Hussein, who semantically embodies his role as a representative of the nation's youth, said,

> We (as youth) are not asking society or (government) officials to create opportunities for us. All we want is that they provide an *environment* that allows opportunities to be created (applause), an environment that welcomes entrepreneurship, nurtures innovation, and appreciates talents. What we need is for there to be left a space for us to be unleashed, without restrictions and limitations, without words like "it won't work" (*mā raḥ tuthbut*)," "it is not permissible (*mā biṣīr*)," "go get yourself a proper job" (*dawr lak shughl hagīgi*).

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[16] "Qiṣaṣ Najāḥ Urduniyya Umām Al-Malik" (Jordanian Success Stories Presented to the King), *Ammonnews,* February 15, 2015. https://www.ammonnews.net/article/220953. Accessed April 11, 2020.

[17] "Crown Prince Attends Graduation Ceremony of Post-graduate Students at Yarmouk University," *His Royal Highness Crown Prince Al Hussein Bin Abdullah II Press Release.* June 18, 2019. https://www.alhussein.jo/en/media/press-releases/crown-prince-attends-graduation-ceremony-post-graduate-students-yarmouk. Accessed Jan 31, 2022.

[18] Walī al-ʿAhd: Al-Mustaqbal Sayashahada lil-Shabāb Al-Waṭan fil-Maʿrafa wa al-Nahḍa (The Crown Prince: The Future Will Show Itself to Youth through Knowledge and Renaissance), *Ammon News*, July 24, 2014. https://www.ammonnews.net/article/200431 Accessed Jan 31, 2022. Emphasis added.

In Jordan, this moral economy of self-reliance is strongly related to the oft-repeated truism that human capital, particularly youth, is the country's only resource. This point has been repeated again and again. For example, King Abdullah noted that "our people are our most valuable asset" and that "high-skill human capital is our key strength." Of course, some would object to this statement and highlight the fact that Jordan does possess natural resources—phosphate and potash in particular—but that these resources have been privatized. Moreover, some political economists might argue that natural resource endowment is not necessary for national economic growth. Nevertheless, the idea that Jordanians are particularly responsible as human capital for national economic development is widely accepted. After all, Jordan is located in a region where national wealth is synonymous with expansive state coffers and the per capita wealth of the oil-rich Gulf countries.

This logic of national development—Jordanian youth as particularly responsible for economic development given the dearth of natural resources—was echoed by youth in interviews. According to Hiba, "Jordan only has human resources, especially youth. Jordan has to mobilize young peoples' energies."[19] Rahma, who volunteered at various NGOs, said the following:

> We (youth) have ideas…The young generation has ideas. Youth are our resource; Jordan does not have any (natural) resources. It is important to give the young people a chance. The role of the government is to get investment from abroad, so that people can make their ideas (have their ideas funded.) They need to make regulation easier, attract money…I think the king does a good job, they are trying, but there are few resources.[20]

The moral imperative to adjust to markets shifts the burden of responsibility for economic outcomes, such as youth unemployment, onto the youth themselves. Whereas official regime language consistently encourages aspirations, the moral economy of self-reliance produces the sense that youth themselves are to blame for youth unemployment. As Sukarieh wrote about contemporary youth discourse, "business and political leaders now talk not just of needing to raise the aspirations of young people, but of having to tackle the sense of *entitlement* among the young."[21] Blaming youth themselves for youth unemployment is common in policy circles. A USAID report on Jordanian youth in 2015 stated that a "cycle of attitudes" and a lack of awareness of "alternative job-seeking strategies" lead youth to 'believe that there are few opportunities for work."[22] In a 2008 report on Jordan, the World Bank made a similar case; the report argued that the cause of Jordan's rampant youth unemployment "is not so much an inadequate number of jobs as it is a mismatch between the available jobs and the *preferences* of unemployed Jordanians," as "Jordanians maintain a false optimism about their employment prospects and earning potential."[23] The report concluded that, if Jordan cannot compete internationally in high-wage products, "unemployment will decline…only if this group (the educated unemployed) lowers its expectations to match the kind of production in which Jordan can compete" and suggested that the government use "social marketing… to promote the notion that all types of work are respectable."[24] In addition, UNDP's Arab Human Development Report released a special report on youth in 2016, which claimed that "young people's awareness of their capabilities and rights [in the Arab region] collides with a reality that marginalizes them and blocks their pathways to …earn a living"[25] (i.e., an excessive awareness of rights prevents youth from engaging in economic participation).

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[19] Hiba and Safwa. Interview with Author. Amman. June 6, 2019.

[20] Rahma. Interview with Author. March 14, 2019.

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[21] Mayssoun Sukarieh, "The Rise of the Arab Youth Paradigm: A Critical Analysis of the Arab Human Development Report 2016," *Middle East - Topics & Arguments* 9 (December 2017): 79. Emphasis in original.

[22] Roozbe Shirazi, "Being Late, Going with the Flow, Always Doing More: The Cruel Optimism of Higher Education in Jordan." *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education* 33, no. 3 (September 3, 2019): 293-310, 6 https://doi.org/10.1080/09518398.2019.1659444.

[23] World Bank, "Resolving Jordan's Labor Market Paradox of Concurrent Economic Growth and High Unemployment," December 23, 2008. Accessed January 31, 2022, 23, emphasis added, https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11872.

[24] World Bank, "Resolving Jordan's Labor Market Paradox of Concurrent Economic Growth and High Unemployment," December 23, 2008, 35. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/11872.

[25] Mayssoun Sukarieh, "The Rise of the Arab Youth Paradigm: A Critical Analysis of the Arab Human Development Report 2016," *Middle East - Topics & Arguments* 9 (December 2017): 78-79.

Despite continuous challenges from social movements such as Hirak, the regime wants to continue shifting the moral economic argument away from the state's distributive role and towards citizens' responsibility to adjust to markets. In a nationally disembedded economy in which states allegedly cannot continue to provide life chances, remaining dependent on the state becomes a morally charged issue. The market is no longer viewed as a result of what Hayek called "intelligent design." As Hayek argues, "the individual…must be ready and willing to adjust himself to changes and to submit to conventions which are not the result of intelligent design, whose justification in the particular instance may not be recognizable, and which to him will often appear unintelligible and irrational."[26] In other words, individuals in the modern market economy must accept that the moral justification of distributive outcomes may be unrecognizable to them. Instead, they should focus on adjusting to the given conditions as the burden of generating sustenance shifts from the state to citizens.

The Culture of Shame

Recently, the moral imperative to adjust to markets has manifested itself in the topic of a "culture of shame" (*Thaqāfat al-ʿAyb*), which has surfaced in conversations about the Jordanian economy on the streets, in the media, and in policy circles. Jordanians have long discussed different types of "culture of shame," and the concept has many different usages. Recently, it has taken on a particular meaning that relates to how youth act with regard to the national economy. The notion of a culture of shame presumes that Jordanian youth—particularly university graduates—refrain from certain occupations because of "shame" (i.e., they shun certain occupations that are viewed as insufficiently honorable or desirable). This shame is supposedly twofold: an unwillingness to work with one's hands and serve others in hospitality.[27] Righteous journalists and commentators routinely comment that all professions are indeed honorable and that youth should not be so picky. According to Hussein Al-Khuzai, a professor of sociology at the University of Jordan, the notion of a “culture of shame” surfaced in the 1980s, when many Jordanians accepted jobs in Gulf countries rather than lower-paid jobs in Jordan.[28] The discussion of a culture of shame is connected to the role of expatriate labor, particularly Egyptians, who, it is presumed, end up doing much of the “shameful” work.

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[26] Hayek, F.A. *Individualism and Economic Order* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1948), 22.

Based on how the issue is phrased, the culture of shame presupposes that youth’s sense of entitlement to certain jobs after graduation is a problem to be solved. For example, one Jordanian morning show conducted a street survey in which youth were asked the following question: “If you were deciding (*Lau Kūn Sāhib al-Qirār*), how would you solve the culture of shame?” This elicited responses such as “we must overcome it together” and “everyone should take responsibility.” Youth’s supposed reluctance to accept low-quality jobs could also have been framed as a lack of high-quality jobs, an explosion of precarious working conditions in the private sector, or the government’s failure to spur economic growth due to corruption. By framing youth as a problem, the culture of shame taps into a moral economy of self-reliance, which transmits a strong moral judgment on youth who are portrayed as overly concerned about themselves and opt to maintain their own honor and self-respect rather than serving the larger pursuit of contributing to the country’s development and economic growth.

There are many indications that the extent to which normative factors influence youth’s employment decisions is not as significant as the culture of shame narrative alleges. Al-Khuzai, the sociologist at Jordan University, told *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed* that "Jordanian youth today are willing to work in any field, even with a small income…the talk of a 'culture of shame' comes to justify the inability to provide job opportunities, in addition to (justifying) the low income level."[29] In Jordan, media outlets now regularly report on youth who are willing to accept jobs that are supposedly considered "shameful." For example, some reports have highlighted that it is now possible to encounter not only women (which was previously unthinkable) but also young graduates working as gas station employees.[30]

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[27] Anyone who frequently uses ride-sharing services – such as Uber of Careem – in Amman or other urban centers in Jordan will have noticed that this form of work is not considered a “shameful” occupation for University graduates, perhaps because it entails owning your own car (which, according to ride-sharing services policies typically has to be a relatively new car), or that it is seen as a temporary commitment one can pull out of any time should something better appear.

[28] “Thaqafat Al-ʿAyb” la Tubrir Al-Baṭāla fi-l-Urdun (The Culture of Shame Do Not Explain/Justify Unemployment in Jordan), *Al-Araby*, September 7, 2019. Accessed Januarty 31, 2022. https://www.alaraby.co.uk/ percent22ثقافة-العيب percent22-لا-تبرّر-البطالة-في-الأردن

Instead of representing reality, the culture of shame narrative serves to deprive youth of a sense of entitlement to a decent life after completing a university degree. Such expectation was part of the original social contract, as the state filled the ranks of the bureaucracy with graduates. Although Jordan never had a public sector job guarantee scheme for graduates, which countries such as Morocco and Egypt introduced in the 1960s, at least in part of the country, graduates were more or less guaranteed public sector jobs.[31]

In interviews, youth almost unanimously claimed that the culture of shame does not exist—at least, not anymore. When I asked a group of Haqiq youth in Irbid about the culture of shame, one of the respondents, Nabil, said, "Perhaps there used to be a culture of shame, but not anymore, people can't afford to have a culture of shame."[32] Similarly, the group of Haqiq youth from Mafraq said, "There is no culture of shame anymore, it doesn't exist. People take any job." However, they added that some simple jobs are more appropriate for Jordanian graduates than others, such as working in a coffee shop or restaurant or as Uber and Careem drivers; by contrast, hard manual labor is better left to non-graduates and expatriate labor.[33] In the farming district of Dhiban, many farmers have had to sell their land to educate their children, youth who are than blamed for being too picky on the job market when they end up unemployed for long periods upon graduation. In an article in the magazine *7ibr*, a young Dhiban resident named Ali Al-Khudur expressed frustration with the culture of shame narrative saying "Can you explain to me what this 'culture of shame' actually means? If you educate your son [children] and sell your land, would you be satisfied working as a cleaner?! (…) On the contrary, those of us who own land work it, farm it, and this so-called 'culture of shame' does not exist for us. Things just need to be logical."[34]

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[29] "Thaqafat Al-ʿAyb" la Tubrir Al-Baṭāla fi-l-Urdun (The Culture of Shame Do Not Explain/Justify Unemployment in Jordan), *Al-Araby*, September 7, 2019. Accessed Januarty 31, 2022. https://www.alaraby.co.uk/ percent22ثقافة-العيب percent22-لا-تبرّر-البطالة-في-الأردن

[30] Tajārib Shabāb Taḥadūā "Thaqafat Al-ʿAyb" wa ʿAmalūā fi Maḥaṭāt Al-Maḥarūqāt (Experiences of Youth who Challanged the "Culture of Shame" and Worked in Gas Stations), *Al-Mamlaka TV*, June 25, 2022. Accessed January 31, 2023. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=347898583985067.

[31] This was especially true for the Transjordanian population. Yet, Jordanians of Palestinian descent also cultivated high expectations, albeit without virtual state guarantees, that university studies would yield results. First, Palestinian Jordanians have dominated Jordan's urban private sector. And, as Al-Khuzai pointed out above, those who were obsolete in Jordan found ample opportunities in the Gulf countries.

[32] Nabil, Interview with Author. Irbid. July 14, 2019.

Youth's rejection of the culture of shame is part of the process of reclaiming morality within the framework of self-reliance. Given the moral economy of self-reliance, no one wants to be seen as overly reliant on others. One graduate who worked at a restaurant made the following comment to Mamlaka TV in a report on the culture of shame: "I graduated from university. I couldn't find any job opportunities based on my qualifications. I looked for work in restaurants. I don't want to take money from anyone, from my dad, my family. One must be able to depend on himself. To stay at home and take your expenses from your family. This is shameful (*Hāda huwa al-ʿayb*)!"[35]

Rebuking the culture of shame narrative deprives youth of a language of economic rights and makes them adapt to the moral logic that Hayek called "market justice." Market justice involves a rejection of the notion that individual merit should correspond to a certain reward. Nevertheless, according to the moral edicts of market justice, each individual should accept that the market determines the results of their efforts because it offers their best chance of achieving success despite the individual uncertainty involved.[36] In this moral order, each individual becomes responsible for exerting themselves, identifying gaps in the market, and responding to price signals to enable "the size and composition of total output" to be as great as possible. However, they must do so without any claim to individual reward since uncertainty and the element of chance mean that no reasonable claim can be made that one's particular effort should be rewarded, let alone that one should be rewarded based on citizenship, needs, or other abstract principles.

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[33] Sulaiman and Muhammad. Interview with Author. Kerak. July 14, 2019.

[34] Shaker Jarrar and Yazan Melhem, "Society Undermined: A Jordanian District's Road to Poverty and Unemployment," 7iber, April 9, 2019. https://www.7iber.com/politics-economics/society-undermined-thibans-road-to-poverty-and-unemployment/.

[35] Thaqafat Al-ʿAyb bain Al-Shabāb wa Al-Shabāt fi Ẓul Qila Furaṣ Al-ʿAmal Al-Mutāha (The Culture of Shame among Young Men and Women in Light of the Lack of Available Job Opportunities), *Al-Mamlaka TV*, March 5, 2019. Accessed January 31, 2023. https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=291136938224710.

By rejecting the culture of shame, Jordanian youth accept that the individual has a responsibility to accept her particular fate (e.g., having to work at a gas station despite having a degree in business) despite the sense of randomness and sense of injustice that such fate might invoke. As Somers noted, "market justice rationalized a panoply of new moralizations, each one ratifying the outcomes of the market and reflecting a new political economy of moral worth that—to this day—moralizes the distinction between…worth and unworth, deserving and undeserving."[37] Thus, the inevitability of the market—and the moral duty to adjust to its whims—is a point that Jordanians can accept, at least partly, while admitting that the government is fundamentally corrupt.

Navigating Multiple and Competing Moral Economies

Jordanian youth must navigate multiple moral economies, relating not only to claims that they should expect certain socio-economic goods from the state but also claims that the state should not have to provide for them. The multiple moral economies through which youth operate lends themselves to a kind of uptake that Wedeen called "I know very well, yet nevertheless…"—an ambivalent attachment that eases subjects' accommodation to sometimes conflicting realities. These may include the Jordanian regime's corruption and neglect of citizens' dignity on the one hand and sustained investment in one's successful self-reliance on the other, despite knowing all the ways in which the government can be an obstacle to such aspirations.[38] Many young Jordanians are simultaneously critical towards the government and the wider state (less so of the regime and monarchy as such) and highly cognizant of barriers for ambitious youth, which are related to unaccountable and corrupt politics. Nevertheless, youth are prepared to heed the call to depend on themselves.

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[36] Hayek notes that markets "determine the allocation of benefits…(so) that…the total output assures that the real equivalent of each individual's share that accident or skill assigns to him will be as large as we know to make it." Freidrich Hayek, Law, Legislation and Liberty: A New Statement of the Liberal Principles of Justice and Political Economy. Vol 2. The Mirage of Social Justice. London: Routledge, 1982; 2013, 236. Hayek's argument here is akin to John Rawl's veil of ignorance argument, whereby imagining yourself in an original position without knowing your particular position in society reveals the basis of justice.

[37] Margaret Somers, "The Moral Economy of the Capitalist Crowd: Utopianism, the Reality of Society, and the Market as a Morally Instituted Process in Karl Polanyi's The Great Transformation," *Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism, and Development* 11, No. 2 (Summer 2020): 229.

Two of my frequent interlocutors and friends in Amman, Abdul Kader and Ahmad, were also long-time friends with each other. Whereas Abdul Kader has participated in several entrepreneurship competitions and eventually founded an e-commerce business, Ahmad managed to land a decent engineering job at a food processing factory. Ahmad's job security allowed him to sustain a skepticism towards Jordan's entrepreneurship craze. On the other hand, Abdul Kader was in a much more economically precarious situation, having pinned his hopes on entrepreneurial ambitions. While walking around the Abdali Mall in central Amman on a Thursday night, we discussed Jordan's economic problems. Ahmad said, "I think Jordan should invest more in manufacturing; this can create a lot of jobs. Entrepreneurship is basically about shifting blame to people themselves. Ninety-five percent of them will fail, and then they will face the reality of having to get a real job."[39] Abdul Kader, who walked a few feet behind us, overheard the discussion and likely registered my interest and eager follow-up questions to Ahmad's criticism of the entrepreneurship boom. Towards the end of the evening, Abdul Kader approached me and, mimicking his friend's earlier statement, said, "Yeah, you know, I think that entrepreneurship is partly about shifting blame to people themselves. Did you hear about this book, *The Entrepreneurship Myth*?" Abdul Kader was referring to Michael Gerber's book *The E-Myth Revisited: Why Most Small Businesses Don't Work and What to Do About It,* which, while on the face of it is yet another guide for small businesses, at least partly criticizes some of the ways in which entrepreneurship is used today. During our discussion, Abdul Kader felt the need to express his ambivalence towards entrepreneurship, which he felt alongside his enthusiasm for it. While he kept a distance from the facile language of entrepreneurship as a catch-all solution to Jordan's economic problems, he also maintained a commitment to entrepreneurialism. Abdul Kader did not experience this simultaneous critique of and attachment to entrepreneurialism as an inextricable contradiction. Rather, it was a testament to how youth operate in a field of competing moral economies, which they are highly cognizant of.

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[38] Lisa Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehensions: Ideology, Judgment, and Mourning in Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019), 7.

[39] Fieldnotes, Amman, March 14, 2019.

In interviews, I pushed interlocutors on the nature of the regime's motives for promoting youth empowerment and self-reliance. For example, I asked Ibrahim, a young man who was engaged in the youth empowerment sector, "Why do you think that the crown prince Foundation and several government-connected entities want to support the Hult Prize and youth entrepreneurialism in general?"

> Ibrahim: It is because of youth empowerment, basically.
>
> Author: But what are the actual conditions for entrepreneurs in Jordan?
>
> Ibrahim: It is not easy—the government is basically your partner in your business. As long as you make money, the government is your partner; once you lose money, they are no longer your partner. And without *wasta*, you are not really going anywhere."
>
> Author: But you just said that they want to empower entrepreneurs…?
>
> Ibrahim: That's a good question. I don't know.[40]

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[40] Ibrahim. Interview with Author, Amman. February 27, 2020.

While some participants, like Ibrahim, had not considered the regime's motives for promoting the responsibilization of youth, others were deeply cognizant and critical of it and still pinned their hopes on achieving self-reliance through entrepreneurship. I asked another interlocutor, Muhannad, why he believed that the leadership promoted entrepreneurship. He replied,

> It is easier for *them* to promote entrepreneurship. Unless they keep people busy, people will have too much time on their hands; they go home, they start to read books, they start questioning things. They ask, "Where did all the money go?!"…It's about getting young people to find solutions for ourselves. Entrepreneurship is a self-discovery journey. You become solution-oriented. You start blaming yourself. They want me to do their job.

Muhannad also mentioned an incident in which he was spending time with fellow members of an international youth organization called Aisac. During a break from their activities, they complained about having no money. Muhannad described the conversation as follows: "And everyone in the room said, 'We have to work harder, we have to put in more hours or find an extra job'…They were all broke but no one said, 'Oh my god, everything is so expensive in Jordan!'… The thing in Jordan today is that everyone thinks that *he* can be the new shining star and that *he* can be the one who finds a nice job…we don't ask the government for anything!"[41]

Muhannad himself, while intellectually inquisitive and critical, was deeply committed to entrepreneurialism. After a friend entered him and Muhannad into a financial technology (FinTech) hackathon organized by the Bank of Jordan in which they won second prize, Muhannad began to view entrepreneurship as a viable career option. This feeling intensified after the Bank of Jordan asked to continue collaborating on his FinTech idea, then invited him to attend a reception organized by UNDP as a young entrepreneur, where he had the opportunity to interact with "high-position people" such as cabinet ministers and business leaders. Muhannad eventually entered Hussein Technical University (HTU), a university named after the crown prince and run by the Crown Prince Foundation. There, he became deeply involved with the Hult Prize competition. After some time, he began developing a plant-growing product for home use, a project that received some attention from investors and eventually he got connected to a startup accelerator. Early on, Muhannad was worried that his parents would vehemently oppose his entrepreneurial ambitions. However, after he made many connections at the Bank of Jordan, UNDP, and the Crown Prince Foundation, they felt that Muhannad's efforts were yielding results. To Muhannad's surprise, his father even began to consult him on business matters; for example, he took him to inspect a restaurant that he considered investing in. Muhannad did not heed the regime's call to pursue entrepreneurship despite his critical outlook and intellectual curiosity but, in many ways, *because* of them. Like many other youth, he viewed entrepreneurship as a sector that is forgiving of eccentricity and individuality; thus, it became an outlet for his own personal drive and creativity.

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[41] Muhannad. Interview with Author, Amman. February 22, 2020.

Zeinab, a friend of Muhannad's, is a young woman who also participated in the Hult Prize competition. During our interview, she told me her own story. Zeinab grew up in the town of Al-Hasa in the Tafileh governorate.[42] Al-Hasa is one of three locations where the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) operates. The organization was privatized in 2006, which was a transfer of wealth mired in scandal and corruption claims. Zeinab's parents were schoolteachers in Al-Hasa and taught the miners' children. For Al-Hasa residents, proximity to phosphate extraction caused environmental and social problems, such as contamination and cracking that damaged houses and infrastructure. In response to these problems, the local community mobilized and launched a campaign called "All of us are responsible." They organized a conference in which many local youth participated. After the conference, the campaign aimed to pressure the company to assume responsibility for the negative externalities caused by their production. According to Zeinab, the campaign did not lead to any tangible results. To express their discontent, the community organized an exhibition at a local gallery to display over 100 documents, including a variety of rejection letters, unanswered requests, and empty replies from government ministries, the phosphate company, and local bureaucracies.

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[42] Zeinab. Interview with Author. March 22, 2020.

Given this experience, Zeinab was furious at the government. At one point, she said, "The government is useless, it'd be better to have no government at all."

I wanted to know more about how Zeinab became interested in entrepreneurship. She was interested in social development and was attracted to the message that one can make positive social contributions through social entrepreneurship.

> Author: What kind of problems can social entrepreneurship solve in Jordan?
>
> Zeinab: A good business finds solutions. In Jordan, there are many problems, like transport and education, for example.
>
> Author: But how can a small startup solve the issue of transport?
>
> Zeinab: One can make an application or a web service to solve transport issues.
>
> Author: How did participating in the Al-Hasa campaign affect you personally as an aspiring entrepreneur?
>
> Zeinab: I have always known that the government is a bit hopeless. If you want to be an entrepreneur, you need to register in all kinds of places, and you need *wasta*. There is no clear way of doing things, no set way; you have to figure everything out yourself.

Thus, for Muhannad and Zeinab, a strong cynicism towards the government did not preclude the uptake of a moral economy of self-reliance and espousal of self-reliance as a way forward from the impasse of social, economic, and political malaise.

Interpellating Youth as Global Citizens

To shift expectations away from the state's responsibility to provide towards individual responsibility to adjust, regime representatives and GONGOs typically describe the economy as existing in an international sphere beyond the influence of government and disembedded from national politics.[43] Indeed, as Hantzopoulos and Shirazi indicated in their study of Jordanian university students, "the discourse of globalization as neo-liberalism, which emphasizes state-led reform to generate national development through competition in the market economy, provides a new normative framework for Jordanian citizenship and nationalism."[44] Regime-produced accounts describe the economy that Jordanian youth enter into as determined by the whims of the global market, not the product of political choices, social contracts, systems of clientelism, or networks of privilege. This description of the economy rejects the notion that the government may distribute revenue according to set principles such as social justice.

As part of Amman Entrepreneurship Week, which is organized by the Queen Rania Center for Entrepreneurship in November 2018, a number of workshops and lectures were held for interested youth and university students. In one session, a scholar and entrepreneur named Ibrahim Farouk gave a presentation about how increasing global interconnectedness has reshaped the Jordanian job market. Farouk highlighted the contrast between two slides. The first slide showed a world map of the past, which was full of fences and barriers with superimposed words such as "closed economy," "trade barriers," "language barriers," and

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[43] Following Polanyi, I use "disembedding" not as an analytical description of market society but as a political project. As Polanyi recognized, economic relations are always integrated with systems of meanings, institutions, and structures of social relations. In his analysis of English market society in the late 19th and early 20th century, the practice of disembedding, which is driven by the ideal of the self-regulating market, is a "utopia" shaped by "continuous, centrally organized and controlled (state) interventionism." Karl Polanyi, The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2001), 146. We also know from Timothy Mitchell that conceiving the economy as separate from other fields of knowledge and social action makes available new forms of intervention, calculability, and expertise. Such expertise can be located within the state. However, in Jordan, markets are described as expertly designed at the global level beyond the reach of the state. Timothy Mitchell, Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity (Oakland, CA; California University Press 2002). From the sociology of markets literature, we know that how markets are described is central to producing those very markets. In other words, as economic sociologists have shown, descriptions of the economy have a performative force; they are constitutive of the economy. The language of amplifying Jordan's embeddedness in the global economy is part of what Çalışkan and Callon call "economization": "the processes through which activities, behaviours and spheres or fields are established as being economic." Koray Çalışkan & Michel Callon, "Economization, Part 1: Shifting Attention from the Economy Towards Processes of Economization," Economy and Society 38, No. 3. (2009), 370.

[44] Maria Hantzopoulos and Roozbeh Shirazi, "Securing the State through the Production of 'Global' Citizens: Analyzing Neo-liberal Educational Reforms in Jordan and the USA," *Policy Futures in Education* 12, No. 3 (2014): 376.

"protectionism." The second slide showed a truly integrated map of flows and integration, with lines flowing uninterrupted across space. Later that day, I attended another session titled "The Fourth Industrial Revolution," in which Nibal Jarrar from an IT company called Semantic Intelligent Technologies gave a talk on the changing global economy to university students at Princess Sumaya University for Technology. Jarrar discussed how new technology has reshaped the world economy and suggested that this entails both opportunities and risks for young people who are entering the job market. In particular, Jarrar warned that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will eliminate many jobs. "Which kinds of jobs?" he asked the audience. "Accountant," one student said. "Cashier," said another. "Yes," affirmed Jarrar, "even truck drivers think about that!"[45]

The idea of an upcoming Fourth Industrial Revolution is a trendy abstraction that encapsulates the description of the modern, nationally disembedded economy that Jordanian youth are supposedly subjected to. The concept of the Fourth Industrial Revolution was introduced by Klaus Schwab, the founder and CEO of the World Economic Forum, at the organization's 2016 meeting. It encompasses the introduction of cyber-physical systems such as driverless cars, smart robotics, the internet of things, and 3D printing and will allegedly replace the Third Industrial Revolution, which was characterized by IT and automation.[46] Schwab suggested that "the speed of current breakthroughs has no historical precedent. When compared with previous industrial revolutions, the Fourth is evolving at an exponential rather than a linear pace. Moreover, it is disrupting almost every industry in every country."[47]

The Jordanian monarchy has been a keen adopter of the concept of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. In 2017, when the World Economic Forum held its regional meeting in Jordan, a key section was titled “Harnessing the Tides of Disruption: Policy Reforms in the Context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.” In 2019, the MENA World Economic Forum was once again held in Jordan. King Abdullah asked the audience to consider how the Fourth Industrial Revolution can “transform people’s lives for the better.”[48] Indeed, concepts such as the Fourth Industrial Revolution can provide youth with a sense of proximity to global transformations. At the same time, it pushes people to experience the economy as a fast-paced phenomenon that everyone has a responsibility to keep up with. One instructor at a GONGO said, “Last year they talked about the Fourth Industrial Revolution, now they talk about the Fifth Industrial Revolution! Before, they said most jobs will be different in 30 years, now they say the top 20 jobs that are most common now will be gone already by 2040!”[49]

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[45] Fieldnotes, November 13, 2018, Amman.
[46] Fieldnotes, November 13, 2018, Amman.
[47] Klaus Schwab, "The Fourth Industrial Revolution: what it means, how to respond," *World Economic Forum,* January 14, 2016, https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2016/01/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-what-it-means-and-how-to-respond/. Accessed January 31, 2022.

It is not only talk. The Crown Prince Foundation initiative TechWorks allows youth to test technologies such as 3D printing machines for free at its Amman premises. Moreover, the GONGO Jordan River Foundation runs a project called Social Innovation Labs, which exposes youth to new technology. In 2018, I attended a session of the Social Innovation Lab held at a public school in an impoverished area of southern Amman. The Social Innovation Lab runs a project they call “a mobile exhibition of emerging technology.” In a common room on the second floor of the dilapidated school, instructors from Jordan River Foundation displayed shiny Samsung tablets and virtual reality headsets. In the middle of the room, there were placards of the Social Innovation Lab’s slogans: “I can build something from nothing” and “I turn all my dreams into reality.” During my visit, a group of secondary-school girls attended the mobile exhibition and were visibly excited to miss their regular class. After a short introduction by the instructors, teams of girls had the opportunity to record short movies with the tablets and try the virtual reality headsets.[50]

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[48] “King: Jordan will continue to back entrepreneurship, innovation,” *Ammonnews*, April 6, 2019. https://en.ammonnews.net/article/40507#.XvQ-dy2B01I. Accessed January 31, 2022.

[49] Fieldnotes, Amman, June 6, 2019.

[50] Fieldnotes, Amman, November 14, 2018.

Of course, it is highly questionable whether robotics and Artificial Intelligence positively impact young Jordanians' employment prospects and whether Jordan is truly being incorporated into the global economy at an unprecedented level. Undoubtedly, the country has taken steps to integrate into the global economy in recent years.[51] However, while both exports and imports have increased, GONGOs' and other regime actors' description of the nationally disembedded economy overstates the extent to which globalization affects youth's economic prospects. Exports have low value added and much of the increase in exports in recent decades have little connection to the domestic labor market.[52] Moreover, foreign direct investment (FDI) has remained largely unchanged since the mid-1990s.[53] Thus, Jordan's particular reliance on the world economy, whereby imports have grown much more rapidly than exports, has not significantly impacted the job market that Jordanian youth enter. Rather than a description of shifting economic conditions, removing the economy from the national level seeks to deprive citizens of a language of expectations of state care while shifting the moral argument away from the state's role in distributive outcomes to citizens' moral imperative to efficiently adapt to markets.

However, the message that citizens are subject to global markets and must adjust accordingly may resonate with a young population whose mental horizons transcend Jordan's borders and its corrupt austerity economy. Today, many young people do not see themselves as bound by the borders of Jordan's jurisdiction. For decades, Jordanians have traveled abroad for work. According to data from Arab Barometer Wave V, 45 percent of Jordanians today consider migration, which is the second highest rate in the Arab world (second only to Sudan, at 50 percent).[54] In addition, Jordan leads the Arab world in terms of the percentage of citizens who wish to migrate for economic reasons (83 percent). Furthermore, this figure predates the COVID-19 health and economic crisis.[55] Youth are much more likely that older citizens to consider migration. In Jordan, 59 percent of youth and only 36 percent of adults have considered emigrating, which represents a 44 percent gap.[56] Some Jordanians even buy Syrian passports in an attempt to migrate to Europe via Turkey.[57]

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[51] Jordan increased its reliance on trade by joining the WTO in 2000 and entering into free trade agreements with the USA and EU in 2001 and 2002. Jordan also established the Aqaba Special Economic Zone (ASEZ) to boost exports.

[52] For example, industries in the Qualifying Industrial Zone in Aqaba, while boosting exports, employ mostly foreign labor, and much of the capital invested is non-Jordanian. Pete Moore, "QIZs, FTAs, USAID, and the MEFTA: A Political Economy of Acronyms," *MERIP* 234 (Spring 2005). Jordan's previously vibrant small and medium enterprise (SME) sector was deeply integrated into regional circuits of trade but has struggled immensely due to a drop in demand in recent decades from war-torn neighbors Iraq and Syria. Moreover, the rapid increase in imports has exposed local private sector operators struggling due to exposure to global competition. While Jordan is vying to be the IT hub of the region and has reached some success in this area, Jordan has to compete with Egypt with its much bigger domestic market and UAE with its unlimited. Thus, due to poor exports and higher import rates, the regime is increasingly dependent on foreign capital inflows to counter the growing trade imbalance and prevent the depletion of the Jordanian currency.

[53] World Bank Data, "Foreign direct investment, net inflows (percent of GDP) – Jordan" https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.KLT.DINV.WD.GD.ZS?locations=JO. Accessed January 31, 2023.

Among my interlocutors, potential opportunities abroad were a constant topic of conversation.[58] Some had even begun to apply for visas, imagined a way out through relatives who lived abroad, or searched for temporary opportunities that might initiate processes that could lead to a future without the restraints of Jordan's economy (e.g., completing a master's degree or attending a training or conference abroad). For example, one of my interlocutors was involved in a lengthy visa process to move to Australia, where his brother was living and working as a doctor. This entailed repeatedly taking and failing TOEFL English tests and having visa applications denied. Even Haqiq youth often oscillated between nationalist proclamations and admissions of their wish to emigrate. Through my connection to a prestigious American university, I often came to embody hopes of a bright future abroad in the eyes of many young people that I met, and I barely met anyone who did not ask me for advice on how to find opportunities abroad.

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[54] Abdul-Wahab Kayyali, "Jordan's Stubborn Insistence on 'Business As Usual,'" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace* (blog), November 13, 2020, https://carnegieendowment.org/sada/83232?fbclid=IwAR3bs_wqTo1uDEcQxvVxDX5LHIEa7gXG-Po758D0WSxvOKPxMgJJMD_MlMc.

[55] Arab Barometer, Wave 5 Data. Topic Report: Migration. Michael Robbins, "Migration in the Middle East and North Africa" *Arab Barometer,* June 2019. Available at https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/ABV_Migration_Report_Public-Opinion_Arab-Barometer_2019.pdf. Accessed December 15, 2020.

[56] Ibid, p.5.

[57] Esraa Mohareb, "Some Jobless Jordanians Take Risky Path to Europe." *Al-Fanar Media*, May 28, 2022, Accessed July 8, 2023, https://www.al-fanarmedia.org/2018/02/jobless-jordanians-choose-risky-path-europe/.

[58] The international context is important as a causal force. Rather than isolating the effects of ideological impact and youth programming as a "treatment" outside of the context in which such programs are applied (see, e.g., Jones 2017), I seek to bring context into the analysis. I follow Schwedler, who argues that case-centered analysis is problematic in treating "individual cases (usually countries) as bounded entities whose politics can be largely explained by what is found inside." Departing from methodological nationalism, I look at Jordan in relation to global and political-economic processes which shape the way in which youth receive the messages that the regime is communicating. Jillian Schwedler," Against Methodological Nationalism: Seeing Comparisons as Encompassing through the Arab Uprisings," in Erica S. Simmons and Nicholas Rush Smith, Rethinking Comparison: Innovative Methods for Qualitative Political Inquiry (Cambridge University Press, 2021). 172-189.

Even those who were set on staying in Jordan, who were more often than not young women, bemoaned the hopelessness and desire to leave that afflict their generation. For example, Majeeda said, "Today in Jordan, no one loves this country, everyone wants to emigrate, no one cares anymore."[59] Another interviewee, Amina, said, "There's so many bright minds, but people want to leave, there's no trust in the government, so people lose hope. The rate of voting among youth is very low. People complain about cost of living, no jobs, etc."[60]

Beyond migration, Jordanian youth operate in an entirely different informational environment than previous generations, which is characterized by social media, images of success, and globalized dreams. In Jordan, social media influencers have grown in popularity and are themselves successful entrepreneurs who often travel the world, thus reinforcing globalized norms of self-realization and consumption. Technological developments related to smartphones and social media have occurred so rapidly that even twenty-somethings watch teenagers with bemusement. When I asked a Haqiq recruit in her twenties about how she viewed modern teenagers, she replied, "They are more mature somehow, and they all have Facebook and phones. When I was 16, only grownups had phones and computers."[61]

Often, a more global and informed outlook clashes with local economic realities. For the group he calls "middle-class poor," Asef Bayat described this asymmetry for those with

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[59] Majeeda, Interview with author, April 16, 2019, Amman
[60] Amina, Interview with author, March 19, 2019, Amman
[61] Hiba, Interview with author, June 19, 2019, Amman

> high education, self-constructed status, wider worldviews, and global dreams who nonetheless are compelled — by unemployment and poverty — to subsist on the margins of the neoliberal economy as casual, low-paid, low-status, and low-skilled workers…Economically poor, they still fantasize about an economic status that their expectations demand — working in IT companies, with secure jobs, middle-class consumption patterns, and perhaps migration to the West.[62]

Of the clash between global aspirations and local constraints, one interviewee named Widaad said, “Our generation is more aware, but you need to have the tools to know what to do with it, the awareness.” I asked, “What happens if you don’t have those tools?”

> Mental health issues, you feel shitty, you dream of going abroad only. This is especially common among guys. Among some of them, all they talk about is leaving Jordan. My boyfriend, for example, he does this, he talks about leaving, but I don’t think anything will come of it. He is a satellite coordinator at a TV station. He works for 12 hours every day, he doesn’t have eid (holidays) off. He spent 12 months unemployed and he had to use a lot of *wasta* to get this job. But he still wants to leave Jordan, maybe work for Al-Jazeera or something.[63]

Thus, youth’s global context disconnects them from being subject only to the regime’s interpellation. Indeed, as Ong noted, global embeddedness is “prying open the seam between sovereignty and citizenship,” thus diffusing the state as a site of interpellation. What does this mean for youth governance? Because Jordanian youth today are more connected, globally facing, and integrated into global informational circuits than before, GONGOs can tap into existing global scripts about the virtues of self-reliance, entrepreneurialism, and individualism. Moreover, rather than appearing as the government’s policy choice, embedding the message of self-reliance in these global contexts imbues it with an air of globally determined inevitability. The sense of potentiality associated with migration further disembeds citizens from their national political contexts. If a citizen considers migration and is uncertain about where to settle to build their life, this will inevitably affect their willingness to appeal to a particular territorialized government to provide them with life chances. Young people who are considering migration often become more focused on equipping themselves with the skills needed to make their way in a globalized world. Moreover, undertaking visa processes, obtaining a passport, and considering crossing borders make citizens subject to governmental scrutiny and more concerned with obedience and keeping a low profile. Despite the potential drawbacks of immigration and brain drain, the regime may utilize this global context to communicate that there are unlimited opportunities for youth to seize, that Jordan is subject to global economic logic (e.g., the Fourth Industrial Revolution and digitalization), and that citizens should be prepared to assume the responsibility of developing the skills needed to compete in such globalized markets.

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[62] Asef Bayat. “A new Arab street in post-Islamist times.” *Foreign Policy*. (January 26, 2011).

[63] Widaad, Interview with author, April 27, 2019, Amman

State-Centered Moral Economies and Their Limits

To understand how the moral economy of self-reliance operates and how it is absorbed by Jordanian youth, it is necessary to delve deeper into the various moral economies that they must navigate. In Jordan, moral economies have long mediated state-society relations. As Tariq Tell demonstrated in his treatise on the social origins of Jordan's autocratic social contract, "the resilience of monarchy is located in the growth and consolidation of a moral economy centered upon the state" rather than being based on "religious or charismatic authority."[64] Once the state began to provide resources, life chances, and subsistence goods, it gained an "arbitral role over the moral economy of the East Bank." It is this "structural dependence on direct entitlements from the state" that has underpinned Jordanian authoritarianism.[65]

This state-centered moral economy provides the ethical framework for much political mobilization in Jordan today. Moral economies structure the pattern of what Jillian Schwedler called "routine protests," or repeat encounters between the state and citizens that "embody meaning through their routine practices as much as their disruptions" and are "keeping issues active in public debate."[66] These routine protests often arise and are sustained in response to the state's perceived violation of state-centered moral economies, such as when it demands too much of its citizens (e.g., tax hikes) or fails to sufficiently provide for then (e.g., removal of subsidies, lack of job creation, and job precarity.)

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[64] Tariq Tell, *The Social and Economic Origins of Monarchy in Jordan* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2013), 14

[65] Ibid, 133.

Such state-centered moral economies also structure more transgressive, non-routine, and oppositional activities, such as the youth-dominated Hirak movement that emerged during Jordan's Arab Uprisings. Within Hirak, which featured loosely structured movements organized around relations of kinship, friendship, and geography, state-centered moral economies generated a sense that the regime had violated the dignity of citizens. The concept of dignity (*Karāma*) was influential throughout the broader Arab Uprisings and was taken up in Jordan in specific ways.[67] In his study of Hirak activists, Doughan described the violation of dignity as unreciprocated care for another. His activist interlocutors in Hay al-Tafileh, a Transjordanian-dominated Amman neighborhood, felt that "the fervent, even militant, loyalty they exhibited towards the state was not reciprocated with due respect and care in the form of social welfare provisions such as infrastructural services, jobs, scholarships and health insurance…(103-104) For the Hay al-Tafileh to be treated by the state as instruments, rather than loyal supporters of the king who deserve the state's care, was construed as a disregard of their karāmeh (108-109)."[68]

The primacy of *karama* in the Hirak movement stemmed from a moral economy grounded in expectations of state care. Another moral violation that often spurs resistance and mobilization in Jordan is corruption. As Doughan noted, while corruption previously referred to specific acts of embezzlement and bribery, “by 2010 it had become a generalized category that referred to any form of financial or bureaucratic mismanagement, and reflected widespread panics about public morality.”[69] As the statements by Haqiq youth in the introduction of this chapter illustrate, the belief that kleptocratic ruling elites engage in “stealing” provokes moral indignation. For many Jordanians, corruption is responsible for an entire host of outcomes. Doughan illustrates that, for many Jordanians, corruption “was the reason why the promise of development never materialized; why the usual means of social mobility such as education, business and commerce no longer achieved that end; and why some people were able to accrue wealth and political power while others suffered poverty and neglect.”[70]

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[66] Jillian Schwedler, *Protesting Jordan: Geographies of Power and Dissent* (Stanford University Press, 2022), 148.

[67] The concept of dignity is a moral rubric that resurfaced during the Arab Uprisings. As Pearlman has noted, "prioritization of dignity" is connected to "an optimistic readiness to engage in resistance." Wendy Pearlman, "Emotions and the Microfoundations of the Arab Uprisings," *Perspectives on Politics* 11, no. 2 (May 21, 2013): 388, https://doi.org/10.1017/s1537592713001072.

[68] Yazan Doughan, "Corruption, Authority and The Discursive Production of Reform and Revolution in Jordan," (PhD Diss., University of Chicago 2018)

Thus, Jordanians mobilize and resist the state in various ways, such as by routinely complaining about, protesting, and rejecting it. When and how they do so are based not on mechanistic responses to worsening social mobility, poverty, or restriction of freedoms but rather moral economies. Aside from the more general state-centered moral economies that focus on dignity (state neglect) and corruption (stealing), other moral economies revolve around specific subsistence goods.[71] One example is the bread subsidy, around which Jordanians have displayed a shared resolve; threats to the bread subsidy led to country-wide unrest in April 1989 and the Karak bread riots of 1996. From the mid-1970s onwards, the state and the Ministry of Supply began to expand consumer protections and, by the end of the decade, 80 percent of a family’s expenditures were subject to government regulation.[72] According to Martínez, such practices formed a set of expectations which formed the "soil from which many Jordanians continue to judge the Hashemite regime's provisionary practices."[73]

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[69] Ibid, 5.

[70] Ibid, 78.

[71] This scholarship builds on a literature on how specific subsistence goods may “transcend(s) its physiological functions.” As Arnold notes, “popular consensus about what distinguishes legitimate from illegitimate practices resides in the nested meanings of specific constitutive and/or communal social goods.” Thomas Clay Arnold, “Rethinking Moral Economy,” *American Political Science Review* 95, no. 1 (March 2001): 85–95, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0003055401000089, 93. See also, Erica Simmons, *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[72] José Ciro Martínez, *States of Subsistence,* 46.

Many actors have refused to accept this moral shift and attempted to refocus on the state's enduring role in the economy. These actors want to put the spotlight precisely on the level of which the government can still be held accountable for economic outcomes. As Sara Ababneh demonstrated, a significant portion of Jordanian activism has focused on "re-politicizing the political" through the language of economic rights—in other words, by re-embedding the political and economic.[74] Jordanian activists refuse to allow the regime to abdicate its responsibility for distributive outcomes. Ababneh noted that much of the Hirak movement involved a struggle to redefine economic sovereignty.[75] Activists criticized the IMF and the government's dependence on such international financial institutions , which they called the "the reign of the IMF" (*hukm al-sandūq*). A common chant was "Do you know who governs us? The damned Monetary Fund. Take your money and leave us alone."[76] Thus, these activists did not accept the nationally disembedded market as an inevitability; rather, they viewed it as a political imperative to retake national control to enable the state to reoccupy its role as distributor of economic goods. By contrast, the regime views such reactions as petty politicking and as clinging to backwards positions. King Abdullah asserted that, "We cannot allow fear of change nor reluctance to embrace modernisation and scientific advancement to waste the vast potential of our tremendous human resources. We will not tolerate miring … the future of

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[73] Ibid, 178.

[74] Sara Ababneh, "The Struggle to Re-Politicize the Political: The Discourse on Economic Rights in the Jordanian Popular Movement 2011-2012," Youth Politics in the Middle East and North Africa, *POMEPS STUDIES* 36 (November 2019).

[75] Ababneh notes, "Hirakis redefined the political, insisting on placing the economic at its heart. Like their revolutionary counterparts in Egypt and Tunisia, Jordanian protestors struggled to maintain a dignified life in a global context in which most decisions are not taken on the national level. Activists protested that policies and recommendations of international agencies such as the IMF dictate Jordanian policy. In order to address the grievances of Hirakis Jordan would need to have economic sovereignty." Sara Ababneh, "The Struggle to Re-Politicize the Political: The Discourse on Economic Rights in the Jordanian Popular Movement 2011-2012," Youth Politics in the Middle East and North Africa, POMEPS STUDIES 36 (November 2019): 57-58.

[76] Ibid, 76.

Jordanians in petty politicking and narrow interests…if we are to continue with our reform and development endeavours to create a better present and future."[77]

The abundant literature on state-centered moral economies, protests, and social movements in Jordan has a significant weakness. While these accounts explain why, when, and how Jordanians protest the state in specific ways, they fail to explain the overall patterns through which the state, despite continual resistance, continues to violate state-centered moral economies without encountering mounting challenges to its existence. As Schwedler has explicated, the regime has even developed "a repertoire of responding to nationwide protests," which includes tools such as "dismiss the prime minister, appoint a new one, and call for a national dialogue" (which last occurred in 2018). When Jordanians are protesting austerity measures such as subsidy cuts, the state typically "[reverses] parts of the subsidies, often through a workaround that technically maintained the cuts while providing alternative means of offsetting the impact of price increases."[78] This state tactic was precisely the one used to erode the all-important bread subsidy. In 2018, the regime began to remove the subsidy; as a result, the price of a kilogram of white pita bread rose by 60 percent. The regime argued that the subsidy was wasteful and benefitted foreign workers and Syrian refugees living in Jordan and replaced it with a cheaper cash transfer system that targeted poor Jordanian nationals. Moreover, by appealing to the moral economy of self-reliance, the regime defended the removal of the subsidy on the basis that state resources should be directed towards the deserving (*al-Mustaḥiqīn*), which implies that those who are not poor should be able to rely on themselves without state help.[79] In these ways, the moral economy of self-reliance can dilute Jordanians' commitment to expectations of what the state should be able to provide.

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[77] Official Website of His Majesty King Abdullah II, "Discussion Paper 7: Developing Human Resources and Education Imperative for Jordan's Progress," April 15, 2017. Accessed February 1, 2023. https://kingabdullah.jo/en/discussion-papers/developing-human-resources-and-education-imperative-jordan percentE2 percent80 percent99s-progress.

[78] Jillian Schwedler, *Protesting Jordan: Geographies of Power and Dissent* (Stanford University Press, 2022), 113.

Moreover, even Jordanian social movements and their activists, who are at the forefront of articulating state-centered moral economies, must respond to the moral economy of self-reliance. They must respond to criticism that it is immoral to seek to reestablish a relationship of dependency with the cash-strapped government and often feel the need to distance themselves from claims that they want to nurture a parasitic relationship with the government.

A notable example is the unemployment march of 2019. In February 2019, a small group of unemployed youth in Aqaba staged a sit-in at the local royal palace. The protestors then began marching towards Amman to stage a sit-in at the Royal Court to demand jobs. As they marched, they were joined by more disaffected youth. By February 20, the demonstrators numbered more than 150. The Royal Court announced that it was ready to meet the protestors' demands by providing them with jobs. This concession disbanded the Aqaba youth sit-in but inspired a group of youth from the city of Ma'an to also march towards the capital. The Cabinet issued a statement asking the Ma'an protestors to return home to allow the government time to identify a solution. When the protesters refused, a ministerial delegation was sent to listen to their demands.

Some commentators hailed the protestors. In *Addustour*, political commentator Fares Al-Habashneh described the protestors as emerging "from the cage of expectations and waiting" to "clear the dust from the ears of the government" and demand "a job opportunity and their right to dignity after many years of government neglect of thousands of Jordanians."[80]

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[79] Dana Jibril, "Kayf Waṣalnā Ilā Rafaʿ Al-Daʿm ʿan Al-Khubz wa Salʿa Āsāsyyia?" (How Did We Get a Lift of the Subsidies on Bread and Basic Commodities?) *7ibr,* November 27, 2017. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://www.7iber.com/politics-economics/jordanian-government-lifts-subsidies-off-bread-basic-goods/.

[80] Fares Al-Habashneh, "Mawsim Hijra Al-Mutaʿaṭilīn ʿAn Al-ʿAmal Ila ʿAmān - Mādha Bʿad?" (Season of Migration of the Unemployed to Amman – What's Next?), *Addustour,* February 24, 2019. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://www.addustour.com/articles/1059353-موسم-هجرة-المتعطلين-عن-العمل-إلى-عمان-ماذا-بعد؟

However, the protestors also received criticism. In a statement, Prime Minister Omar Razzaz explained that youth must understand that "the government cannot create new jobs in the public sector to hire every young person" and that "the previous method of hiring in the public sector caused (economic) sagging (*Al-Turhal*)."[81] According to this logic, if the state hires people, this will cause broader problems that negatively affect others. When the minister of labor, Ali Zahir Al-Ghazzawi, inaugurated an unemployment office in the Russeifa region in 2017, he said, "The role of government is (to create the conditions for) employment, not hiring (people directly)."[82] In Arabic, there is a difference between the words *tashghīl* and *tawẓīf.* Although both words mean "employment," *tashghīl* connotes a more general employment of productive capacities, while *tawẓīf* means the actual appointment of people to particular roles. Thus, Al-Ghazzawi argued that it is legitimate to hold the government responsible for creating conditions for employment but not for directly hiring everyone, a distinction that the unemployment marchers failed to recognize.

In *Al-Dostoor*, political commentator Oraib Rantawi castigated the unemployed marchers and articulated his disappointment that the government gave in to some of their demands. Rantawi argued that if marches on foot were successful, Jordan might soon see motorized convoys involving even more people. Noting that mostly expatriate workers had benefited from the economic renaissance of Aqaba, which the initial marchers left from, Rantawi asked, "Why were the youth of Aqaba not trained to fill these jobs[that expatiates hold]?" He continued,

> How do we prevent the prevailing culture that prefers "the warm embrace of the government" over "the embarrassment of the insecure private sector?"...I personally know young men from Amman and Zarqa who work long hours, toil and toil, but they

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[81] "Al-Razāz lil-Shabāb: La Yumkinunā Taʾmīn Furaṣ ʿAmal Khalf Al-Makātib" (Al-Razzaz to Youth: We Cannot Guarantee Job Opportunities Behind Desks). February 20, 2019. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://www.ammonnews.net/article/438481.

[82] "Wazīr Al-ʿAmal: Al-Hukūma Dūrhā Tashghīl wa laysa Tawẓīf" (Minister of Labor: The Government's Role is [to create the conditions for] employment, not hiring [people directly]), *Roya News,* Augist 13, 2017. Accessed January 31, 2022. https://royanews.tv/news/133734.

> have succeeded in building families and educating children, with their diligence, and I know others who are qualified and found their opportunities in Aqaba…Some boldness and frankness in dealing with the issue seems necessary.[83]

In the above excerpt, Rantawi implies that it would be unfair to those who "work long hours" to build families under the present circumstances for others to be handed jobs without the same kind of effort.

The variety of responses to the unemployment marches illustrates how the circulation of a moral economy of self-reliance makes it difficult even for protest movements to navigate the tightrope of making strong claims on the government while not appearing overly eager to depend on others. For example, Hirak activists attempted to distinguish between demanding handouts and windfalls on the one hand and a sense of economic dignity on the other. Doughan's Hirak activist interlocutors decried the shift from enjoying access to employment and services in the bureaucracy to becoming increasingly dependent on state subsidies from the Ministry of Social Welfare and even on direct gifts from the Royal Court.[84] This shift led to a "sense of loss of state care," despite their receipt of state support.[85] At one point, Hirak activists protested in front of the Royal Court. When representatives of the court emerged to distribute financial assistance checks, the activists tore them up, threw them to the ground, stepped on them, and complained that they "did not come to beg!"[86]

When I discussed the ongoing Thursday protests with Salim, one of my activist interlocutors, he felt the need to distinguish himself from the type of activism that is only geared towards asking for specific favors, such as jobs or handouts. Salim said, "I stopped going to the Thursday protests a couple of months ago. You know, the people there, they're from outside

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[83] Oraib Rantawi, "Bi-Ānt̤ār Al-Mazīd min Al-Masīrāt Al-Rājala wa Al-Mawʾlila" (In the Waiting for More Marches – by Foot as well as Mechanized Ones), *Addustour,* February 23, 2019. Accessed January 22, 2022. https://www.addustour.com/articles/1059164-بانتظار-المزيد-من-المسيرات-الراجلة-والمؤلّلة.

[84] Yazan Doughan, "Corruption, Authority and The Discursive Production of Reform and Revolution in Jordan," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago 2018), 105

[85] Ibid, 106.

[86] Ibid, 106.

Amman. We wanted to criticize the system, but they are just like ‘Give me a job, give me JD 200, and then that’s it.’” I first met Salim at an entrepreneurship competition where he represented an art NGO that developed a business plan to monetize its activities by charging private schools for mural painting activities and art classes with students.[87] Salim is a civil engineering graduate with six years of work experience. Despite his resume, he cannot find a job. In the past, Salim had operated his own business renovating schools. After starting the enterprise, he was immediately commissioned for two projects and quit his other day job. However, after completing the first two projects, the jobs dried up, and he had to dismantle the business.

At our meeting, it became apparent that Salim was more critically minded than most budding entrepreneurs. When I asked about what entrepreneurship training does for Jordan’s youth, Salim said, “This is a trend here. I had barely heard about entrepreneurship in the middle of last year. The prime minister talks a lot about it. But here’s what I think. These efforts are not efficient. The government gives out lots of money for this cause, then other NGOs, like an incubator, make trainings and competitions, they give some prize, and then they pocket the rest.” He said that, when he attended an entrepreneurship competition hosted by the International Rescue Committee, “they gave USD 25,000 out to really poor business ideas…Every young person will sell bananas online, yes! That’s the solution to everything!” Then, he chuckled as he said, “Oh, I’m going to jail after this.”[88]

After briefly conversing about his involvement with the art NGO, I realized that Salim was not keen to discuss civic engagement. Instead, I asked him what he does in his spare time. After listing a few hobbies, such as basketball, he mentioned, “Oh, and also some politics.” When I probed into his answer, he revealed that he was a participant in the Thursday protests that were taking place at the time (March 2019) in Amman’s Fourth Circle roundabout, next to the Ministry of Interior. These protests were part of the aftermath of the *Habbit Huzayrān* (June Rising) of June 2018, which resulted in the ousting of Prime Minister Hanī al-Mulqī.

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[87] Salim. Fieldnotes. Amman. February 3, 2019.

[88] Ibid.

Salim, who had also engaged in student politics in his university days, said that protestors were objecting to the tax bill. However, because the bill had already been implemented, they were also protesting other issues: "Like, for example, I cannot say whatever I want on Facebook, they can put me in prison, but then the king also say that youth should have the right to express themselves…The government says that the minimum standard of living, you should earn JD 800 a month, but the average wage is like JD 300–400, how are we are supposed to live? There are like 80,000 engineers in Jordan, but only 30,000 engineering jobs. How?!...they are afraid because of what happened in Egypt and Tunisia. Where is the money from corrupt people in the government? If we see that the government can find this money and take it back, we will build trust. Now there is no trust between people and government."[89]

For Salim, his political activism and social engagement were all intertwined in the idea that Jordan and Jordanians needed to become more self-sufficient. He argued that Jordan is subject to exploitation in the global economy. Salim emphasized that Jordan's imbrication in "capitalism" made economic and political self-determination impossible. He said, "You know, we all suffer from capitalism here. Yes, our enemies are also Zionists, but *really*, our enemy is capitalism. We are pushed down…we don't need any help from outside." Later, I asked, "What would you do if you were in charge of this country?" He replied, "I would make sure we own our own industries. I would go to the desert, I would plant things, and let people work there, unemployed people, and then we can feed ourselves." This notion of self-sufficiency also informed Salim's volunteering activities. He was strongly involved in the question of justice for Palestine and had worked with an NGO the Palestinian refugee camp called Jarash camp

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[89] Ibid.

(locally known as “Gaza Camp”). The NGO work from the motto “Don’t give them a fish…” The NGO selects a few families and helps them to find a sustainable income, such as giving them livestock to tend or tools to work the land. They have completed 11 projects to date. Salim also said that the NGO’s work help alleviate the government because “it [the government] is poor and they can’t do everything, so we can help some poor people for example.”

According to Salim, what would restore the honor of Palestinian refugees and Jordan’s standing in the world is the kind of self-reliance that Palestinians have been constantly robbed of. Through his engagement in NGOs, entrepreneurship, and views on the importance of national and economic self-sufficiency, Salim operated in multiple moral registers of self-sufficiency and the rights and expectations of citizens *vis-á-vis* the government.

To make sense of the outcomes of distributional struggles in authoritarian countries, scholars must take the the moral economy of self-reliance seriously. Its uptake does not manifest as the complete espousal of the self-sufficiency gospel but as a kind of ambivalence. People’s criticism and indictment of the government as politically and morally corrupt does not answer the question of how to act in the world. Many young Jordanians are simultaneously open to the moral imperative to adjust to the state’s slimmer commitment to provide life chances to its citizens.

Chapter 5. Authoritarian Futures: Entrepreneurialism and the Political Logics of Unrealizable Aspirations

As discussed in Chapter 2, at the beginning of the new millennium, entrepreneurship emerged in Jordan as an organizing principle of youth governance. It appeared to be a viable way to alleviate youth unemployment and provide hope for the country's youth. Both international agencies, GONGOs, and NGOs began to promote individual enterprise in schools, communities, and youth centers. This encouragement was sustained even amidst poor legal, political, and economic conditions for Jordanian entrepreneurs (unless you were a regime-connected businessman).

Some researchers have argued that Jordanian youth see through the myths surrounding entrepreneurship and that they apprehend the contradiction between aspirations (personal investments in entrepreneurship) and outcomes (the low likelihood of entrepreneurial success).[1] This is undoubtedly the case for many Jordanian youth. However, I argue that the promises of entrepreneurship draw many young Jordanians into hopefulness and future aspirations even in the face of deep economic uncertainty. Moreover, I argue that GONGOs and elusive governance in Jordan help to manage and contain the asymmetry between aspirations and outcomes without making them seem irresolvable. The interpellation of youth as entrepreneurs hinges on making individual enterprise viable to a group that is disconnected from capital markets, often downwardly mobile, and has little potential to start a successful business without resources and connections. This interpellation requires what Wedeen, who built on the work of Fredric Jameson, described as "*contain(ing)* political contradictions and conflict." In this way, Wedeen explicated that ideology "renders abstract political anxieties and fantasies livable …

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[1] In her study, Sukarieh studies development interventions, such as microcredit trainings, in Jordan that seeks to generate individualistic and self-reliant citizens. Sukarieh (2016, 1201) argues that participants draw on their class consciousness to reject key tenets of the self-reliance message, dismissing the idea that they should become self-interested entrepreneurs.

by filling in gaps and smoothing over what would otherwise be nagging and perhaps unsustainable inconsistencies."[2]

In the first part of this chapter, I showed how GONGOs encompass the contradiction between aspirations outcomes and present entrepreneurship essentially as a matter of having a good idea, not possessing capital, and feasible with information technology (IT) devices such as phones and laptops, which many youth already possess. In addition, GONGOs create the impression that entrepreneurial ideas can be found in youth's immediate surroundings. Had the regime directly promoted youth entrepreneurship, its promises would not resonate as much with youth given how the state is too tainted by all the ways in which it privileges regime-connected businessmen, upholds patron-client relationships, and undermines individual enterprise. Through GONGOs, the case for entrepreneurship is further removed from the state, which fosters a sense of a just market in which budding entrepreneurs can operate. In Jordan's political present, as Shirazi noted, attachment to the uncertainty of entrepreneurship secures consent, "not to the Althusserian state apparatus, but rather, to the intuitions, habits, and feelings named above, those that enable the endurance of difficult economic conditions as a practice of optimism."[3] The second part of the chapter explores the political work that the containment of the aspirations-outcomes imbalance does. Through an ethnography of GONGO-run entrepreneurship competitions in Jordan and an analysis of budding entrepreneurs that I followed throughout my time in Jordan, I investigate how youth themselves perform the labor of containing the contradiction between aspirations and outcomes.

Economic Conditions for Entrepreneurs

While entrepreneurship has emerged as a central citizenship ideal, the regime does very little to improve actual conditions for entrepreneurial activity in the kingdom. While small improvements have been made (e.g., Jordan climbed over 25 positions in one year to rank 75 out of 190 countries in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Report),[4] conditions for small businesses remain poor for several reasons. First, there is a lack of access to capital, and youth are generally not connected to networks of capital or capital markets. The reality is that, while venture capital opportunities are growing, they are much scarcer in Jordan than in Europe and the United States; moreover, existing venture capital is typically comprised of risk-averse yield investors who seek rapid returns on their investments.[5] Second, accessing credit is not only difficult but requires applicants to shoulder enormous personal risk. Jordan is one of a few countries in the world that criminalizes debt; nearly 2,000 people—around 12 percent of Jordan's prison population—are currently incarcerated for non-payment of loans.[6] Recently, Jordan's draconian bankruptcy law became an object of public debate after scores of women from poor areas (*gharimāt)* were imprisoned after defaulting on microcredit loans.[7] It was only after the king personally intervened by launching a debt forgiveness program, which he announced himself by calling into the state television morning show *Yasʿd Ṣabāḥak*, that over 5,000 women managed to avoid incarceration.[8] In addition, while starting a business Jordan is relatively easy, ending a business is a difficult and hazardous process. According to a managerof a local youth empowerment NGO, "People get traumatized by this. They are pushed towards 'Oh, I want to work for the government again.'"[9]

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[2] Lisa Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehension*, 5.

[3] Shirazi 2019, 7.

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[4] "Doing Business 2020: With a Strong Reform Agenda, Jordan Joins the Top 3 Global Improvers," The World Bank Press Release, October 24, 2019.

[5] Fieldnotes, Amman, March 1, 2020.

[6] Rana Sweis, "Microloans, Seen as Salvation for Poor Women, Trap Many in Debt," *New York Times,* April 8, 2020.

[7] "Al-Tamkīn Al-Mutawḥish: Kayf Sāham Al-Iʾtmān Al-Saghīr Iṭāla ʿmr Al-Nisāʾ w Usrhi" ("Brutal Empowerment: How Micro-Credit Too Over the Lives of Women and their Families"), *7iber,* Feb 3, 2019.

[8] "Al-Malik Yuwjah l-Iṭilāq Juhud Waṭanī l-Musāʿda al-Gharimāt" (The King Launch National Effort to Help Gharimat), *Al-Mamlaka,* March 22, 2019.

[9] Seif, Interview with author, Amman, June 23, 2019.

Moreover, running a business in Jordan is difficult without the right connections.[10] Business representation, such as the Amman Chamber of Commerce, is geared towards serving large, well-connected businesspeople and businesses. This is because they already have access to *wasta* in ministries and the parliament and can shape legislation accordingly.[11] One interlocutor described the relationship between state and small businesses as follows: "It is not easy—the government is basically your partner in your business—as long as you make money, the government is your partner; once you lose money, they are no longer your partner. And without *wasta*, you are not really going anywhere."[12] Although entrepreneurship promotion exists separately from any circuits of capital or actual economic markets, the regime nevertheless presents entrepreneurship as viable through GONGOs and elusive governance by disconnecting individual enterprise from the retrograde political and economic environment in which it exists.[13]

Addressing Jordanian Youth as Entrepreneurs

One of the key ways in which the entrepreneurship sector presents individual enterprise as viable is by foregrounding the ideational aspect of entrepreneurship: that new ideas are the key to successful market participation. Thus, the youth empowerment sector deploys a meaning of entrepreneurship that hinges on complete separation between the innovator's function and the possessor of capital. According to this logic, the modern entrepreneur creates value in the economy by utilizing future projectivity and acts separately from—but sometimes in conjunction with—capital. This contemporary meaning of entrepreneurship is relatively new. Classical political economists did not consider entrepreneurship and innovation central to the dynamics of capitalism.[14] It was in the later works of Austrian School economists that this definition emerged. Notably, Israel Kirzner defined entrepreneurs as individuals who grasp opportunities that were created by the temporary absence of full market adjustment for pure entrepreneurial profit. In his classic work *Competition and Entrepreneurship*, Kirzner emphasized that the "pure entrepreneur" was a non-owner: "An important point . . . *is that ownership and entrepreneurship are to be viewed as completely separate functions.…*Purely entrepreneurial decisions are by definition reserved to decision-makers who own nothing at all."[15]

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[10] In one survey, 86 percent of the interviewed businesspeople stated that *wasta* is necessary for all kinds of interactions with the bureaucracy, and 56 percent of them admitted to using it regularly. Markus Loewe, Jonas Blume and Johanna Speer, "How Favoritism Affects the Business Climate: Empirical Evidence from Jordan," *Middle East Journal* 62, no. 2 (Spring 2008), 268.

[11] *Wasta* means favoritism or connections and refers to using connections to get things done.

[12] Suleiman, Interview with author, Amman, February 20, 2020.

[13] Despite the complete separation between economic activity and entrepreneurialism, many regime-coalition elite entrepreneurs, such as Fadi Ghandour (Aramex/Wamda), Ghassan Nuqul (Nuqul Group), Maher Kaddoura (Accenture Middle East) and Dina Shoman (Arab Bank), invest in youth entrepreneurship acting as success stories and opening up the field of possibilities that youth could succeed if they work hard. Nadine Kreitmeyr, "Neoliberal co-optation and authoritarian renewal: social entrepreneurship networks in Jordan and Morocco," *Globalizations 16*, no.3 (August 2018): 294.

In Jordanian youth GONGOs, the figure of the "pure entrepreneur" is central. The separation between economic and ideational production inputs allows GONGOs to address youth as potential entrepreneurs, even those who do not possess any economic capital. Youth learn that great business ideas are "out there" and that anyone who puts their mind to it can uncover them through the power of innovative thinking. They are told that business ideas can be borne from any circumstances, and youth learn to think about their life experiences as potentially marketable because they are in a unique position to discover everyday problems that require new products or services. Capital, if it is needed at all, can be found in capital markets. Workshops are often held to give aspiring entrepreneurs advice on how to procure financing for their projects. In reality, while they are increasing, venture capital opportunities are scarce in the Middle East and North Africa, and the venture capital that does exist often consists of so-called "yield investors" looking for quick returns on their investments and are rarely prepared to make risky bets on unknown startups.[16]

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[14] Political Economists such as Adam Smith and David Ricardo did not give entrepreneurship much thought. Neither did Karl Marx, who did not view risk-taking or the presence of uncertainty as possible sources of profits, except temporarily.

[15] (1973) (47, emphases added) Joseph Schumpeter, who is often recognized as the "prophet of innovation," also distinguishes between the entrepreneur and the capitalist. For Schumpeter, entrepreneurial activities drive the economy out of equilibrium, and as a result, the entrepreneur can earn transient profits. However, he can act without capital: "the role of the entrepreneur is to identify arbitrage opportunities, while modern capital markets generally enable him to find a capitalist to bear the risk for him". David Evans and Bojan Jovanovic, An Estimated Model of Entrepreneurial Choice under Liquidity Constraints, Journal of Political Economy 97, no. 4, (August 1989), 809.

Ideational entrepreneurship is celebrated in many forums. In a speech to the UN, the crown prince said, "Too often, people of my generation are labeled as 'dreamers,' yet we all know that every great deed was born a dream. Idealism is not foolish, it is fearless."[17] After participating in an entrepreneurship event, an informant posted the following message to his Facebook account: "The World moves on the Shoulders of dreamers," and the Crown Prince Foundation-connected entrepreneurship competition Hult Price in posted a quotation attributed to Robin Williams on its Facebook page: "No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world."[18]

Indeed, the lionization of the pure entrepreneur, which has spread worldwide, has not escaped Jordan. On a sunny afternoon, I visited the Jadal Cultural Center and Café to escape the heat and bustle of downtown Amman. Jadal, which had recently gotten in trouble with the authorities,[19] is located in a staircase-lined passageway that takes people up and away from the busy downtown streets and towards the quieter Lweibdeh neighborhood located atop one of Amman's hills. In the passageway, which also houses independent bookstores and shops, graffiti murals add to the somewhat subversive atmosphere. At the time, there were three large faces painted on a mural: Mahmoud Darwish, the famous revolutionary Palestinian poet; Marcel Khalifa, a composer, oud player, frequent collaborator of Darwish, and a critic of the

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[16] This fact was relayed by a representative of a US-based Venture Capital firm at an entrepreneurship event I attended in Amman. Ethnographic Observation, Amman, March 1, 2020.

[17] "HRH Crown Prince Al Hussein bin Abdullah II delivers @ United Nation General Assembly," September 30th, 2017. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vhQiCqfkyfQ. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

[18] (a quote, taken out of its context and wrongly accredited to the actor, while in fact taken from one of the monologues of Williams's character Mr. Keating in the movie the Dead Poets Society) June 10, 2019. https://www.facebook.com/HultPrizeJordan/photos/a.488753478161744/830818877288534/

[19] Officially because of serving drinks despite not being registered as a café, but more probably out of political reasons because the venue puts on social and political conversations, feminist self-defense classes, and spoken word performances.

Israeli Occupation; and Steve Jobs, who was depicted next to one of his more famous quotations: “Don’t let the noise of others’ opinions drown out your inner voice.”[20]

The separation of ideas and capital allows youth to reimagine their futures and act in the present accordingly. One of my interviewees, Lara, is a young woman who had participated in the Hult Prize, a global business idea competition whose local chapter is presided over by the Crown Prince Foundation. After competing, she decided to establish an environmental consulting business to advise landlords and homeowners on how to reduce their energy consumption. I asked Lara how the experience of participating in the Hult Prize had changed her outlook on her career. She said,

> It changes your way of thinking. I never knew I could make something myself, without a lot of big things. Now I have learned to have a role in my community and to be effective…Hult Prize taught me to start with something small…Before, I thought that if I want to start a company, I need lots of money. And I learned that I don’t need to have it all, a massive budget, etc.; you can just start making a change rather than waiting. Many people here are just criticizing things. There’s a lot of complaints. Because there is no work and so on. But I tell people, why don’t you just start, a project or become a freelancer or something, rather than doing nothing.[21]

Aside from a focus on innovation, Jordanian youth are enlisted as entrepreneurs by insisting that they already possess the most necessary means of production for successful market participation. A significant portion of the youth empowerment sector aims to persuade youth to interact with and access new technology. For example, a major initiative of the GONGO Crown Prince Foundation is TechWorks, a large, hangar-like space in the King Abdullah Business Park filled with machines (e.g., 3D printers and Computer Numerical Control machines) that budding entrepreneurs can use to experiment with and make prototypes.[22] TechWorks has become a model of what the regime envisions for the extensive network of nearly 200 youth centers throughout the kingdom, which the Ministry of Youth presides over. At the reopening of the Theban Youth Center in Madaba following an upgrade sponsored by the Crown Prince Foundation, the crown prince suggested that the youth centers be turned into “Idea Factories” (*Masnaʿ Al-Afkār*) that enable youth to access 3D design and 3D printing to “transform ideas into products that serve the local community.”[23] Increasing their proximity to technology relieves youth of apprehensions about whether they can make products for future markets and brings their ambitions close enough to the realm of the possible to obfuscate the challenges that they entail.

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[20] Fieldnotes, Amman, June 6, 2019.

[21] Lara, Interview with author, Amman February 24, 2020.

[22] I visited Techworks in February 2019. When I visited TechWorks, I was given a tour of the shiny new machinery by the local manager. He noted that it is more difficult than people think to operate large-scale 3D printers. I received evidence of this complex nature of making products from scratch when his showpiece, which was meant to illustrate the potential of TechWorks in helping youth develop their entrepreneurial ideas, was a "recycling box" in which people could deposit recyclable waste in exchange for some kind of coupons that could

Aside from giving youth access to technology, the internet has also made available new forms of skills acquisition. Many budding entrepreneurs speak of YouTube-related skills such as programming or graphic design. The idea of “working on yourself” (*āshtaghal ʿala hālu*) is frequently heard. The regime supports the notion that youth must also educate themselves beyond formal higher education. When Queen Rania met a group of young ambitious Jordanians for an *iftar* meal in May 2019, she said, “I can’t tell you how much pride I feel when I see youth that really exert themselves and work on themselves (*āshtaghalū ʿala hālukum*) with their ambition and enterprise.”[24] To facilitate such work, Queen Rania, whose main priority is education, established the self-learning platform Edraak (“realization”) in 2014 under the banner of the Queen Rania Foundation. In Edraak’s first month, 82,000 users registered with the massive open online course (MOOC) portal.[25] The three main categories of courses are technology, business and entrepreneurship, and personal development; popular courses

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be used in participating stores. In effect, the 3D-printed "recycling box" consisted of four boards shaping a fridge-sized box with a couple of holes. Ethnographic Observation, Amman, February 25, 2019.

[23] Petra National News Service, “Walī Al-ʿAhd Yaftatiḥ Markaz Al-Shabāb Dhībān Bʿad Taḥdīthuh Li-Tlbīa Iḥtīājāt wa Mutaṭalabāt Al-Shabāb”(The Crown Prince Inaugurates the Dhiban Youth Centre after its Modernization to Meet the Needs and Requirements of Youth) June 27th, 2019. Available at. https://petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=105201&lang=ar&name=news. Accessed September 8th, 2020.

[24] Queen Rania YouTube Channel, ”Iftar with a group of young Jordanians,” May 27, 2019, accessed September 30 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qHwlLpMAWEs

[25] “Edraak gains popularity with huge number of registered users,” *Jordan Times*, June 16, 2014, accessed September 30, 2021, http://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/edraak-gains-popularity-huge-number-registered-users.

include "Risk Management," "Android Application Programming," and "Turn Your Crafts Into a Business."[26] Many informants have used Edraak or similar sites, such as Lynda.com and Udemy, and frequently post PDF diplomas on Facebook after completing a course.

Finally, another way in which entrepreneurialism is made feasible to Jordanian youth despite their lack of resources, connections, or local market opportunities is through the concept of social entrepreneurship.[27] By sidestepping the profit motive altogether, social entrepreneurship invites youth to start projects that address social problems. Social entrepreneurship renders the very social and economic problems that youth suffer from objects of meaningful activity. By opening up Jordan *as it is* to managerial problem solving, social entrepreneurship deflects attention from political and social sources of poverty and immiseration. As Cho (2006) indicated, "the social entrepreneur asks 'How can I mobilize resources to solve this [social] issue?'" Regular profitable businesses are particularly valorized when they are also social in nature—when they have an ethical purpose.

In Jordan's youth entrepreneurship sector, even regular profit-seeking business ventures are expected to include a world-improving quality. This ethicization of business is best expressed by the founder of the Hult Prize, Ahmed Ashkar, who made the following comment in an interview: "from my perspective, there's no line drawn in the sand between a standard enterprise and a 'social' or 'impact' enterprise. The true definition of a social enterprise is simply an enterprise that operates to maximize shareholder value and recognizes that in order to do so, it must generate net impact as a byproduct of its existence." In other words, Ashkar sees a complete collapse between economic and social value:

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[26] "Courses/Specializations," *EDRAAK,* accessed Aug 25, 2020, https://www.edraak.org/courses/.

[27] As a concept, social entrepreneurship dates back to the 1970s. Founded upon the intellectual work of Duke University business professor Gregory Dees, social entrepreneurship organizations include Ashoka (founded in 1980 in the USA). Ashoka have been active in the MENA region since 2003 and recognized around 200 social entrepreneurs in 10 MENA countries between 2003 and 2014. Nadine Kreitmeyr, "Neoliberal co-optation and authoritarian renewal: social entrepreneurship networks in Jordan and Morocco," *Globalizations* 16, no.3. (August 2018), 289-303. According to Kreitmeyr, "Although social entrepreneurship in MENA countries dates back to the early 2000s, it is only after the Arab uprisings of 2011 that an 'entrepreneurship boom' has swept the region."

> The world is capitalistic, this will never change. Money makes the world go around. What has changed today is simply that the levers to generate money and market cap. 80 percent of millennials prefer brands that they can assimilate impact to. $1 out of every $5 spent today is on impact. If you want to build a business that is relevant in the next decade, you have no other choice other than to build the kind of enterprise my team and I around the world promote (one with positive social impact). It's why we exist. It's why I created the Hult Prize, and continue to lead it.[28]

The Entrepreneurship Competition

In early 2019, the Hult Prize entrepreneurship competition announced its annual theme or "challenge": the problem of youth unemployment. The organizers of the Hult Prize invited aspiring entrepreneurs from all over the world to identify a business idea with the potential to create meaningful work for 10,000 youth. In its challenge statement, the Hult Prize described why youth must assume the challenge of generating jobs for themselves. Under the rubric "Help is Not on the Way," it argued,

> Creating meaningful work for youth is a stated priority of almost every government in the world—elected or unelected…Governments in many places are run by incumbent political and economic elites, not by democratically elected officials. With few exceptions, those elites are not young people, and they are more interested in protecting their positions of privilege than in opening up new market spaces to create opportunities for youth. Where governments are democratically elected, the political parties in power are inevitably beholden to the interests of their largest financial backers. … Private universities are the same: While ostensibly in business to serve youth, they are functionally structured to serve the interests of their largest donors and senior faculty. Those donors and faculty are not young people...(L)arge corporations in general have not had adequate incentives to create large-scale opportunities for youth—if they had, they would be doing so already…Whatever proclamations and reports might say to the contrary, help is not on the way. Without greater creative engagement by you—today's global youth—the opportunities you seek will not be found.[29]

This is a critique of politics that responsibilizes youth ("Without greater creative engagement by you…the opportunities you seek will not be found"). This responsibilization is based a critique of government that significantly differs from the type of critique that scholars often discuss in authoritarian contexts, which is directed at a particular incumbent government, its policies, its restrictions of freedoms, and its inability to deliver economic growth or distributive outcomes. This Hult Prize challenge for youth to generate jobs is premised on a more objective critique of government, breeding a skepticism not only for actually existing governing arrangements but for the politics of central governance as such. This critique accommodates both criticism of government and meaningful engagement towards individual economic flourishing, containing all the ways that the first (repressive austerity governance) in fact undermines the other (chances for individual flourishing).[30]

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[28] Aby Sam Thomas, "Impacting The Future: Ahmad Ashkar, Founder And CEO, Hult Prize Foundation," *Entrepreneur: Middle East*, May 16, 2018, accessed September 30, 2021, https://www.entrepreneur.com/en-ae/entrepreneurs/impacting-the-future-ahmad-ashkar-founder-and-ceo-hult/313446.

[29] Hult Prize, "The Global Youth Challenge: Solving Youth Unemployment," (p.10) Available at http://www.hultprize.org/Hult percent20Prize percent202019 percent20Challenge.pdf. Accessed December 20th, 2020. It featured a quote from Harvard Economist Edward Glaeser "Another way of looking at the . . . rise in joblessness is that it represents a failure of entrepreneurial imagination. Why haven't smart innovators figured out ways to make money by employing the jobless?."

In GONGOs, entrepreneurship is promoted as a meaningful avenue of engagement for structurally excluded youth. No practices capture this better than the ubiquitous entrepreneurship competition. Competitions run by GONGOs abound, including the King Abdullah II Award for Youth Innovation and Achievement (KAAYIA), the Queen Rania National Entrepreneurship Competition, and the Crown Prince Award for Best Government Service Application. These competitions take many shapes, but they also share common characteristics. They usually require youth to form teams in which they typically give each other professional-sounding titles such as “vice president of operations” or “chief communication officer.” The teams must then create a business proposal and present the business plan in front of an expert panel of judges, which typically consist of successful entrepreneurs or investors. Modeled on the inspirational and charismatic Ted Talks, the pitch should immediately capture the audience’s attention and move from identifying a problem

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[30] Part of this governmental critique is a kind of epistemological skepticism, that government cannot know the demands of society anyway. For Hayek (1976, 15), it is a “synoptic delusion” that all the relevant facts can be known to some one mind, and that it is possible to construct from this knowledge a particular desirable social order. Arguably, the Jordanian regime, which is not averse to mobilizing cynicism towards governance as such in other areas, such as towards the utility of political parties (Martinez 2017) or of democracy promotion (Schuetze 2019), may utilize such cynicism to its own advantage. Indeed, Paul Du Gay (2000, 165), in his work on enterprise culture in the UK notes that part and parcel of the political justification of the enterprise culture was “a widespread skepticism concerning the powers of ‘political government’ to plan and steer from the centre.”

(often a socially or morally coded one) to providing a solution packaged as a marketable product. Through PowerPoint presentations, videos, and other IT tools, the teams are expected to present business ideas in an appealing and professional manner. The competition invites youth to use their projective capacities by compelling them to assume to role of entrepreneurs and imagine themselves as fully fledged market participants. In entrepreneurship competitions, participants summon the future perfect tense and imagine not only what the market will demand in the future by presenting a business idea but also what they themselves will be in the future.

The entrepreneurship competition is symptomatic of the disconnection between entrepreneurship as a citizen ideal and actual economic activity driven by entrepreneurs. It maximizes participants' activity, but it is cheap and easy to organize. As small, DIY, and unprofessional events, business idea competitions can seem trivial. However, they can profoundly impact participants by rearranging their sense of agency and identification as market players. Part of their appeal is the experience of being summoned to contribute one's own efforts. In Jordan, high school graduates are typically expected to ignore their personal preferences and choose a university major whose entrance score requirements correspond to their final high school exam (*tawjīhī*) score. Thus, education is still dominated by rote learning. In this context, entrepreneurialism is connected to notions of individuality and passion in powerful ways. Many young people find it exhilarating to defend a product or idea that they themselves invented. One participant said, "This is what the competition does; in a way, it puts *you* on the spot, people ask *you* questions, the judges the judges ask *you* questions about *your* idea, you have to come up with something, to produce something." A campus director of the Hult Prize told me about a friend who competed for the Hult Prize. He said to the campus director, "This is the first time ever that I'm working on something that's mine." The campus director added, “So now he knows the taste. And now he will start working on his own projects.”[31]

Since GONGO-promoted entrepreneurship is disconnected from actual economic activity, it is the project’s ambition and audacity that are rewarded, not its viability. For example, one of my interlocutors participated in the Hult Prize in 2018, when the competition was still relatively small. As a mechatronics student at the University of Jordan, he and his fellow competitors conceived of a device that could simultaneously extract energy from solar and wind sources. The product was a flower-shaped wind turbine made of solar panels. During the day, it would unfold to catch the sun's rays. In the evening, it would fold back up and rotate like a wind turbine. The local judges for the Hult Prize were highly impressed, and my interlocutor and his team won the national competition. They had the opportunity to travel to a regional final in Boston to represent Jordan. However, after winning the Jordanian Hult Prize, the team simulated and modeled the product, which, as talented engineering students, they had the skills needed to undertake. Ultimately, they found that the “wind-sun flower” was not remotely operational and would not provide the functions that they had hoped for.

The wind-sun flower is purely an object of the imagination. It epitomizes how youth entrepreneurs are encouraged to identify with economic potential despite their structural economic surplus status. Many scholars have illustrated that, in the neoliberal era, economically superfluous groups are addressed through the carceral state,[32] left to endure in “zones of social abandonment,”[33] or expelled altogether.[34] In a sense, entrepreneurialism is a different response to a similar problem: how to contend with surplus populations. Entrepreneurialism is a lifeline extended to youth; it signals that they may still belong or exert themselves usefully, even in the absence of gainful employment.

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[31] Suleiman, Interview with Author, Amman, February 27, 2020.

[32] Loïc Wacquant, *Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009).

[33] João Biehl, *Vita: Life in a Zone of Social Abandonment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005) Elizabeth Povinelli, *Economies of Abandonment: Social Belonging and Endurance in Late Liberalism* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).

[34] Saskia Sassen, *Expulsions: Brutality and Complexity in the Global Economy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

Many of the competitions that I observed occurred at Zein Innovation Campus or "ZINC," a large co-working facility sponsored by the telecom giant Zein. ZINC is located in the King Hussein Business Park, a large office building complex that houses much of Jordan's technology and media industries and lies on the western edge of Amman, next to Al-Hussein Public Park. Multinationals such as Microsoft and Ericsson exist alongside thriving local businesses, such as Aramex and ArabiaWeather. The business park is a small, secluded, and gated world lined with the only bike lanes that I encountered during my time in Jordan. Many of the regime's youth empowerment organizations, such as the King Abdullah Fund for Development and the Crown Prince Foundation, are headquartered at ZINC and seek to symbolically connect youth empowerment to the actual economy. At ZINC, events, talks, competitions, workshops, and meetings are held every day of the week, and multiple events are simultaneously held on weekends. Many of the most ardent aspiring entrepreneurs spend long hours working on their startups in the complex.

In Amman, ZINC is part of what geographer Harry Pettit called the "hopeful city." In his ethnography of young unemployed men in Cairo, Pettit described the hopeful city as the "terrain of objects, places, and discourses spanning public, private, and developmental spheres—training centres, employment fairs, and the entrepreneurship scene," which gave his interlocutors "a euphoric sense that their global, middle-class aspirations are realizable."[35] ZINC includes a large central hall scattered with desks and chairs where people can convene and collaborate on ideas. At one end of the room lies a leveled spectator stand, which is used for talks or startup competitions. ZINC's interior features the standard repertoire of innovation aesthetics, which are intended to inspire creativity and innovation: colorful walls with different patterns and shapes. Two quotations adorn the walls by the entrance: “I’ve always been fascinated by the ability of entrepreneurs to take a brick, find a hole in the wall, and build a whole city” (King Abdullah II) and “An introduction to the Arab World we want: an Arab world where entrepreneurs teach and our teachers innovate…Where the next big thing was developed by the kid next door” (Queen Rania).

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[35] Harry Pettit "'Without hope there is no life.' Class, affect, and meritocracy in middle-class Cairo," (Ph.D. Thesis London School of Economics, 2017), 64-65.

One afternoon, I had scheduled a meeting at ZINC with Laila, the campus director for the Hult Prize at the American University of Madaba, a prestigious private university south of Amman. After competing in the Hult Prize herself and idolizing Hult Prize founder and CEO Ahmad Ashkar, she decided to apply for her current role. To create excitement among students and persuade them to register for the competition, she walked around campus and told students, “Sign up! You can win a million dollars!” This sum is awarded to the winner of the global competition as an investment in their business.

By hailing fellow students, Laila, as a representative for the Hult Prize, performed the work of interpellation, particularly a type of interpellation that compels its subjects to use future projectivity and to imagine themselves in the future perfect tense. Campus directors such as Laila work hard to make competing in the Hult Prize seem appealing to fellow youth. Indeed, much of the work of Hult Prize representatives is to generate excitement. Originally, Laila was not particularly interested in the business aspect of entrepreneurship, but she was drawn to the enthusiasm and energy that the Hult Prize exudes as a hub for ambitious young businesspeople. In addition, Laila was good at her job. For example, she always ensured that food was abundant at recruitment events because she knew the power of free snacks, sandwiches, and drinks for motivating students to attend. When Laila was a freshman, she and a few friends, none of whom had heard about the Hult Prize, learned that there was free food at a campus event and decided to stop by. After enjoying a free meal, they felt that it would be polite to add their names to the email list being circulated. This is how Laila got into the Hult Prize. Therefore, Laila coaxed a fast food delivery service and an energy drink brand to sponsor her recruitment events. She also organized parties such as “Hultoween,” a forest cleanup activity in Ajloun, and a tree-planting initiative in Madaba that aligned with the environmental theme of that year’s competition. Laila’s university was so happy about her incidental marketing of the institution through her engagement with the Hult Prize that they asked her to be the face of the university’s marketing materials.

To a great degree, the extent to which interpellating youth as entrepreneurs resonates with youth depends on making it difficult to withstand its sense of optimism and hope. When Laila called upon fellow students, she noted that “there was a lot of negativity, like people were saying ‘we are never going to make it.’”[36] However, a surprising number of students ultimately entered the competition. Even if most people do not do so, their disavowal (which is captured in this case by the students who said “we are never going to make it”) is arguably difficult to sustain. Sharing the university cohort with Laila, you would have to reject not only the concept of entrepreneurship as an income-generating project but also its sense of broader optimism and, frankly, fun. While many young Jordanians remain skeptical towards entrepreneurship, there are opportunity costs to disavowing the entrepreneurship revolution. For example, as a fellow student at the American University of Madaba, one would have to actively reject the invitations, food, parties, and sense of belonging to a forward-looking group of young people. Those who reject the interpellation must assertively cling to the state provisions associated with the old social contract and risk being seen as dependent on government support rather than a DIY-inspired go-getter.

In multiple ways, the Hult Prize captures the appeal of entrepreneurship, which contains and represses much of the ambivalence that many youth experience. The Hult Prize was founded in 2010 by several MBA students at the Hult International Business School in Cambridge, Massachusetts. One of the students, Palestinian-American Ahmad Ashkar, eventually assumed leadership of the organization.[37] Over the ensuing years, the Hult Prize spread around the globe and found an outlet among ambitious budding entrepreneurs on Jordanian university campuses. The winners of campus competitions qualify for regional competitions, which take place in multiple locations worldwide. [38] Many of the Jordanian winners of campus competitions petition their universities for funding or seek external sponsors to travel to these regional competitions. Whereas some students travel to nearby Ramallah or Beirut, others fly to Boston or Tokyo. Traveling and being part of a cosmopolitan community are key motivating factors for students to compete. On some campuses, the Hult Prize competitors are known simply as "the people who got to travel."[39] In Jordan, the competition became so successful that it was eventually acquired by the Crown Prince Foundation, which strengthened the Hult Prize's mandate to operate in the kingdom.[40]

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[36] Laila, Interview with Author, Amman, Jordan, February 17, 2020.

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[37] After I left the field, it was revealed that serious sexual and other forms of misconduct took place at the upper echelons of Hult Prize after which the Crown Prince Foundation dropped the initiative. An investigation revealed that Mr. Ashkar "wielded excessive and unchecked power over employees' careers and over participants' likelihood to succeed in the competition" and "leveraged his position, charisma, and business connections to create an insulated atmosphere where he could act without consequence." https://www.hultprize.org/conclusion-of-kirkland-ellis-llp-investigation/. Statement from Martha Doyle, Interim CEO, Hult Prize Foundation, commenting on Conclusion of Kirkland & Ellis LLP Investigation, November 30, 2021, accessed September 1, 2022, available at https://www.hultprize.org/conclusion-of-kirkland-ellis-llp-investigation/.

[38] If a competitor win "a regional," they get the opportunity to develop their business at the Hult Price business "accelerator" in London. The best teams from there go to the grand finals in the UN building in New York. There are some exceptions to this general setup. In some universities, only the winners advance to the regionals, but sometimes the second and third teams can also progress, but this is at the discretion of the Hult Prize. The second and third teams have to apply, and if they are deemed good enough, they can go to the regional finals too. You can also apply to regional finals through something called "general form." Moreover, some teams enter the London Accelerator through something called the Wild Card Round.

[39] Suleiman, Interview with author, Amman, February 20, 2020.

[40] Many organizers and campus directors witnessed how things changed when Hult Prize liaised with the Crown Prince Foundation. One campus director told me that the previous year, they had had problems with the university administration who obstructed their activities on campus. After the Crown Prince Foundation assumed the helm, everything changed: "Now, if you need anything from the university, from sponsors, it is easy, you'll get it."… Suleiman, Interview with author, Amman, February 20th, 2020. Speaking to local Jordanian Hult Prize staff, they also notices a considerable difference following the association with the Crown Prince Foundation, with regards to doors opening, interests from sponsors, etc. Anwar, Interview with author, Amman, February 24, 2020.

In June 2019, I attended the Hult Prize regional finals in Amman. The event was hosted at the imposing King Hussein Cultural Center, which is nestled in the valley between Jabal Amman and Jabal Al-Nathif, and stands next to the headquarters of the Greater Amman Municipality. The regional finals are a extravagant event, with teams from Jordan and around the world participating. The aesthetics of the Hult Prize—its logo, printed materials, and social media output—have a more professional feel than most similar organizations in Jordan. The entire patio-style square outside of the Cultural Center was filled with the Hult Prize's pink logo, which was printed on flags, roll-up banners, and the lanyards that held participants' name badges. The event was sponsored by major players such as ZEIN Telecom, the Crown Prince Foundation, and the Dutch Development Bank. Youth attendees were dressed up to their teeth and mingled in the square while waitstaff served soft drinks and canapés. For most Jordanian university students, this event is an exceptional outing.

Once the regionals were underway in the main auditorium, they provided an exhilarating display of adrenaline, loud music, and energy. The main event consists of a final pitching competition. Earlier in the day, all teams had pitched their business ideas to judges in smaller, separate rooms. During the evening finals in the main auditorium, eight finalist teams are called to the stage to pitch their ideas again, with only seconds to prepare. This is called "on the spot pitching"; as a result, each participant is on the edge of their seat until the last finalist has been announced. The fact that most people in the room are on the cusp of having to deliver one of their most consequential (or, at least, most nerve-racking) performances on the spot means that the adrenaline is palpable and the atmosphere is ecstatic. When the announcer called out the finalists, huge cheers erupted from the crowd, especially the finalists' fellow students. There are strict rules for pitching. Each team is allotted six minutes to pitch their mock business, and four minutes are reserved for Q&A with the judges. Time limits are strictly enforced, and the participants' microphones are shut off when time is up.

Arguably, the intuitive appeal of entrepreneurship has on many youth must be seen in the context of the threats to economic redundancy that youth faces. In her study of underemployed (and therefore "unmarriageable") men in Abidjan, Ivory Coast, Jordanna Matlon investigated how economically superfluous subjects relate to capitalism. In Matlon's field site, the traditional way of relating to the economy is through a producer-provider, breadwinner ideal. Because fulfilling this ideal was unavailable to the men in her study, they adopted identities and practices that nevertheless related them "back" to the economy.[41] Matlon called these identities, which are based on either entrepreneurial or consumerist ideals, "capitalist identities as ends in themselves." Through them, young men "assert economic participation as alternatives to the producer-provider ideal"[42] because, "cut off from a salaried, breadwinning identity, men in Abidjan asserted identities equally rooted in capitalism… Agency within this dialectic involves an explicit need to claim membership."[43] The value of Matlon's work is that it calls attention to what she called the "puzzle of exclusion and consent"– how the objectively excluded are re-absorbed into relations of domination.[44] Matlon contends that facing exploitation is one matter, while facing exclusion is another; whereas one might resist exploitation, it is more instinctive to assert belonging in the face of exclusion.

In the face of economic redundancy, Jordanian youth adopt entrepreneurialism precisely to reassert a sense of belonging, membership, and valuable citizenship and become economically re-integrated on new terms that differ from those of previous generations but remain positively charged. In this way, youth are "linked back to the economy" through

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[41] Jordanna Matlon, "Racial Capitalism and the Crisis of Black Masculinity," *American Sociological Review* 81, No 5, (September 2016), 1014-1083. Matlon notes that "despite the vast literature documenting their disappearance from the labor market and its social consequences, there is a theoretical void linking un-and underemployed black men's activities back to the economy," 4.
[42] Matlon, "Racial Capitalism," 1.
[43] Ibid, 19.
[44] The "puzzle of exclusion and consent": We are left with a puzzle: how are black men, who are most likely to be excluded from capitalism in the traditional male role of producer and provider, absorbed into capitalism as prominent symbols? Ibid, 3.

"capitalist identities."[45] However, such interpellation hinges on entrepreneurialism being presented as attractive and feasible to diverse groups of Jordanian youth who are often disconnected from financing, consumer markets, and the necessary business connections. Through GONGOs, the case for entrepreneurship is further removed from regime politics, which enables a sense of a just market in which budding entrepreneurs can operate. The rest of this section explores the particular ways in which entrepreneurialism invites youth to invest hope in small businesses, how entrepreneurialism as ideology operates in Jordan by containing inconsistencies, and the fantasy work performed to present it as a viable alternative to meaningful engagement.

Privatizing Hope

The previous section explores the logics of interpellation and the forms of address that hail youth as entrepreneurs by adapting the concept of entrepreneurship to appeal to youth who lack the means and opportunities to start successful small businesses. This section further explores how budding entrepreneurs contend with the asymmetry between expectations and outcomes. Considerable research has shown that, for a variety of populations, hopes and aspirations can operate independently from objective life chances. For example, in his ethnography of hope, Miyazaki explored the Fijian Suvavou people's relationship to hope. Despite being constantly rebuffed by the government, the Suvavou people continually petition it with claims to their lost ancestral lands. Miyazaki explores hope as a "method" consisting of the repetition and replication of the Suvavou people's claims despite their permanent rejection. Although unfulfilled, their practices of hope "confirm their self-knowledge, the truth about who they really are."[46] In this case, hope no longer appears to be an asset but a phenomenon that is intimately related to identity and meaning.

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[45] Matlon, "Racial Capitalism" 19

[46] Hirokazu Miyazaki, The Method of Hope Anthropology, Philosophy, and Fijian Knowledge (Stanford University Press, 2004), 3.

Another way to think about the disconnect between expectations and outcomes is through Jens Beckert's concept of "fictional expectations." Beckert noted that "rational expectations" dominate economics and other social sciences, whereby actors' expectations, at least in the aggregate, equal the "statistically expected value for a variable." According to rational expectations theory, actors use all available information; therefore, outcomes do not systematically differ from forecasts. By contrast, the concept of fictional expectations indicates "the openness of the future, which makes expectations *contingent*."[47] This means that "very different expectations can exist under conditions of uncertainty."[48]

One of my interlocutors, Alaa, is a mechanical engineering graduate from Jordan University. While a student, he became interested in soft skills workshops and teambuilding training. Like many Jordanian higher education institutions, Jordan University had established an entrepreneurship and innovation center that offers courses and workshops, and Alaa attended as many as he could. He also became involved with NGOs and GONGOs and attended two three-day volunteering and social entrepreneurship courses. However, Alaa struggled to find an engineering job after graduation despite searching for several years. He often felt that his lack of *wasta* (connections) worked to his disadvantage. At several job interviews, he was even asked whether he had any interest in the particular company or organization that he was applying to. Of his engineering classmates, he estimated that a third obtained engineering jobs, a third were unemployed several years after graduation, and a third worked in unrelated fields that were "beneath" their educational level, such as in fast food restaurants or as delivery or Uber drivers.

After a frustrating years-long job search, Alaa utilized his skills in empowerment and soft skills training to obtain a temporary job at a local NGO that was an implementing partner for a UNICEF-funded project called Makani. There, he taught market skills and positive thinking to 10- to 24-year-olds. Along with his repeated failure to land an engineering job, Alaa's work with Makani increasingly led him to aspire to become a professional or entrepreneur in the youth empowerment sector. To improve his skills, he began to take online courses through skills acquisition platforms such as Edraak or UDemy. When his temporary contract with the local NGO ended, Alaa started his own NGO to teach volunteering and entrepreneurship. When I met Alaa, he and a partner were holding courses and workshops in Amman that focused on the SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound) methodology of project management. In addition, Alaa's NGO ran a small volunteering "team" (*farīq*) that organized occasional volunteering activities or helped other nonprofits. While his NGO's trainings and workshops were initially free for participants, Alaa hoped to eventually monetize this engagement. After a few months, he began to charge a subscription fee to be part of the volunteering team and to advertise entrepreneurship courses.

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[47] Jens Beckert, *Imagined Futures: Fictional Expectations and Capitalist Dynamics* (Harvard University Press, 2016), 10.
[48] Ibid, 10.

When Alaa was confronted with protracted waiting and threat of becoming surplus labor labor, he decided to be proactive and start a small NGO. Identifying as entrepreneur allowed him to adopt a hopeful and action-oriented disposition. I met Alaa several times in 2018 and 2019 and participated in several of his NGO's activities. Over the years that I followed Alaa, his engagements allowed him to sustain the experience of being on the cusp of a breakthrough, maintain proximity to social mobility, and valorize citizenship.

By the time Alaa was in college, he had already taken steps to start a small business with some fellow students. The idea, which they called "Time Banking," was that students could trade services with each other via an app. For example, if one student provided translation services to another, they could receive points that they could use towards another student's services, such as graphic design. Alaa had ardently pursued this idea: "We had so many meetings and plans and worked really hard. Then, just before the final step, finalizing the website, something went wrong." When I asked what, he replied, "I don't know, some politics, I guess, in the university. But I regard this project as a success."[49]

One day in March 2019, Alaa and I walked around central Amman. He wanted to obtain my input on an "opportunity" (*forṣa*) that he had encountered online. I found out that he was applying for the Atlas Corps, a U.S. nonprofit that brings "youth leaders" from around the world to the United States to volunteer and acquire experience in nonprofits (a kind of reverse Peace Corps). Alaa was also excited about his NGO; this made him feel that his life was going somewhere and that a "big break" may be imminent. On our walk, he wanted to pass by the Shoman Foundation Library to ask the library staff whether they had any seminar rooms available for rent that he could use for his organization's gatherings. After asking around at the library, Alaa was told to email his inquiry to a staff member who was currently unavailable. On our way out, he told me that people wanted to work with his NGO. For instance, some university professor had contacted him showing interest in cooperating with the organization. In addition, Alaa had declined an offer from another organization that offered to "support" his NGO. At a meeting with this organization, Alaa, who had expected financial support, was dismayed to find that they wanted to incorporate his NGO under their leadership. He said, "I realized immediately that they weren't serious; I didn't want to embarrass them, I obviously said no."[50] These minor connections and encounters, while ultimately fruitless, nevertheless gave Alaa the sense that things were moving in the right direction.

Access to technology and the sense of possessing means of production aided Alaa's efforts to try to make his NGO more impactful. He proudly showed me that he had managed to secure his own domain name for his email address, which made his organization seem more professional in online communications. After a while, Alaa became interested in digital marketing and advertised his NGO's activities on digital platforms such as Facebook and

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[49] Ethnographic Observation, Amma, February 23, 2019.
[50] Ethnographic Observation, Amman, February 23, 2019.

Instagram. For around $200, he claimed that his marketing efforts had reached many people and solicited a significant number of responses. In particular, many people had filled out a Google Form that Alaa had created to declare their interest in attending his NGO's entrepreneurship classes. He showed me neat pie charts that summarized the Google Form responses. Every year, Alaa posts highlight videos on YouTube with footage from the last year's activities and inspirational piano music in the background; it blends images of himself, impoverished refugee children, and his lectures in front of full auditoriums.

Alaa's future orientation and defiant hopefulness manifested in his views on social and economic development, which prescribed important roles for people such as himself, who acted and tried to improve themselves:

> The way I see it, to make the country better, we need to make the people better. If people acquire more skills, if they become better by volunteering and making good causes, then this might spread. If I'm trained in social innovation, then I might affect my neighbors and my friends, and then they might affect their friends, and so on. The government is trying to educate people, but they can't reach out to everyone, so we can help to reach out to more people.

Crucially, Alaa's investment in entrepreneurialism makes his engagement meaningful, not what he seeks to accrue from such an investment. In other words, it is not the extent to which his engagement instrumentally leads to other objects of desire that keeps him motivated but rather the meaning that he derives from his identity as an individual who is productive and has aspirations. Alaa narrated this identity in contrast to other people: "People expect too much… They just sit at home. If you run a workshop, you need to pretty much pay people to come…In Jordan, you can't expect to be given everything."[51]

As the example of Alaa illustrates, hope and a sense of progress may be generated even in milieus of poor prospects. Margaret Frye has investigated why 78 percent of Malawi female primary school students predicted that they would graduate from secondary school when national estimates estimated this figure at under 7 percent. Frye argues that externally generated public narratives about educational ambition influenced personal identity among the schoolgirls who were valorizing the construction of the self as “one who aspires”[52] despite their lack of realistic grounding in outcomes. Frey argues that ”youth use visions of a brighter future to refine their narratives about themselves and transcend their present reality.” For Malawi schoolgirls, hopes and aspirations are linked to identity and the “‘type of person’ that she is at present.”[53] Thus, it is only by understanding future aspirations as assertions of personal identity that the asymmetry between expectations and outcomes can be understood.

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[51] Ethnographic Observation, Amman, November 28, 2018.

Another interlocutor, Ahmad, strongly identified as an entrepreneur. While taking an English course at the University of Jordan, he was recommended the book *Rich Dad, Poor Dad* by Robert T. Kiyosaki, a financial self-help classic with a global readership. This book deeply affected Ahmad and set off a series of events that led him to start and close several businesses and even drop out of college. Following the dictates of the financial self-help literature, Ahmad began a grocery delivery business in Sahab (a municipality east of Amman) with some young people from the neighborhood. However, the business failed. At this point, Ahmad had switched from studying nursing at Jordan University to studying disaster management at a university closer to Sahab. After the delivery business failed, he established another business that sold pilot flight simulator software. After Ahmad raised some money for his first business among his relatives, they were reluctant to support him in his new venture; thus, he had to manage it on his own. Although this venture was profitable, Ahmad shut it down after discovering that the software “was a little bit of a scam.”

At one point, Ahmad caved in and obtained a regular job at a call center at an Amazon-style firm. However, he quit after six months to again pursue his entrepreneurship dream and founded an online travel agency. According to Ahmad, it was not difficult to establish a company: “You need, like, $200 to set up an online company.” He also solicited IT or graphic design-services from sites such freelancer.com and appwork.com. The travel agency business allegedly broke even, but Ahmad nevertheless shut it down after a while. Around this time, he also quit his university studies. His mother, a retired schoolteacher, and his father, a fruit and vegetable salesman, did not approve of this decision. When I first met Ahmad, he was working for an online American advertisement service called Taboola, which provides advertisements at the bottom of many websites; typically, they consist of “clickbaits” with attention-grabbing rubrics. Ahmad designed the advertisements and put them on various websites. He had earned $20 the previous month but hoped to scale it up and make considerably more money. With regard to marriage plans, he had deflected growing family pressure in the past; he wanted to first establish a successful business, then find a marriage partner himself.

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[52] Margaret Frye, ”Bright Futures in Malawi’s New Dawn: Educational Aspirations as Assertions of Identity,” *American Journal of Sociology* 117, No. 6 (May 2012), pp. 1565-1624. 1567.
[53] Ibid, 1567.

Ahmad was rather unfazed by his repeated startup failures. During one of our meetings, I asked, “Whose fault is it that unemployment is so bad in Jordan?”

Ahmad: Not anyone’s fault in particular…Dads and moms in Jordan value education a lot. They want their kids to graduate and get a job, not to study on their own, etc. We in Jordan value the wrong education; that’s a big problem.

Author: But if people cannot find jobs because the economy is so bad, isn’t the economy also bad for entrepreneurs?

Ahmad: Well, all the big companies started in bad economies (economic conditions). If you have the right mindset, if you can solve a problem, if you have a solution, then it’s fine. If the economy is bad, fantastic, then there are lots of problems to solve that will generate businesses. That’s what I believe.[54]

Ahmad refused to identify as a victim of circumstances. His optimism, determination, and grit kept him active in the face of his structural economic redundancy.

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[54] Ethnographic Observation, Amman, March 7, 2019.

In government statistics, both Alaa and Ahmad are considered to be unemployed. Both lived at home over the years that I knew them; yet, they were constantly on the cusp of potential breakthroughs, new business ideas, and exciting projects. Indeed, Ghassan Hage noted that, in capitalism, hope is connected to "the ability to maintain an experience of the possibility of upward social mobility," regardless of whether this is likely to occur.[55] As Laurent Berlant argued, actors typically "perform not the achieved materiality of a better life but the approximate feeling of belonging to a world that doesn't yet exist reliably."[56] In the absence of being able to offer the "achieved materiality of a better life," GONGOs can make this "approximate feeling of belonging to a world" (in Berlant's words) available through their youth governance, a feeling that encompasses the asymmetry between aspirations and outcomes and thus makes personal investment in entrepreneurialism meaningful to individual youth.

Conclusion: Won't They be Disappointed?

A crucial question that needs to be addressed is, if institutions generate hope that is likely to be left unfulfilled, will this lack of fulfillment not cause frustrations that are directed towards the very institutions that fostered hope in the first place? While this is perhaps a constant possibility, considerable research has shown that hopes and aspirations are modes of being that are not necessarily dependent on any endpoint. The work of Beckert, Miyazaki, Frye, Matlon, and Berlant suggests that actors often cling to hopes and dreams of a different future, which constitute an obstacle to their flourishing. As Beckert has claimed, "actors, motivated by an imagined future state, organize their activities based on this mental representation and the emotions associated with it…Actors act *as if* the future were going to develop in the way they assume it will, and *as if* an object had the qualities symbolically ascribed to it."[57]

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[55] Ghassan Hage, *Against Paranoid Nationalism: Searching for Hope in a Shrinking Society* (Annandale: Pluto Press Australia, 2003), 13, emphasis in original),

[56] Lauren Berlant, "Nearly Utopian, Nearly Normal: Post-Fordist Affect in *La Promesse* and *Rosetta," Public Culture* 19, No. 2. (Spring 2007), 273-301, 277.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that expectations do not need to be met to be maintained. For example, Craig Jeffrey found that young unemployed men in India maintained the hope of obtaining a respectable job as a civil servant despite expressing full awareness that the number of applicants for such jobs far surpassed their limited vacancies.[58] Similarly, Harry Pettit argued that young men in Cairo, Egypt "survive their…immobility through forming a 'cruel attachment' to a discursive and material terrain of Egyptianised meritocracy that affects them with hope for the future."[59] Moreover, Ayala-Hurtado studied the surprising optimism observed among precarious educated youth in post-2008, austerity-stricken Spain. Participants maintained an attachment to positive future outlooks by drawing on past narratives on the projected utility of education rather than basing their predictions on present objective conditions. Thus, Ayala-Hurtado concluded that "projected futures can be structured by beliefs based on the past more than by lived experiences, even when individuals are aware of the disjuncture between past and present."[60]

Of course, immobility and a lack of "life chances and chances to meaning" (as Norbert Elias called it) may lead to expressions of frustration and spur youth revolts. However, when and why this happens is an empirical question. In addition, regimes are not powerless actors. At the very least, they can alleviate and manage the process by which actors identify and experience their structural economic positions. This means that acquiescence to authoritarian rule does not necessarily result from a kind of bargain or sufficient contentment with the present situation; it can also form from ideas about the future.

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[57] Beckert, *Imagined Futures*, 9-10.

[58] Craig Jeffrey, *Timepass: Youth, Class, and the Politics of Waiting in India* (Stanford University Press, 2010)

[59] Harry Pettit "'Without hope there is no life.'", 3

[60] Elena Ayala-Hurtado, "Narrative Continuity/Rupture: Projected Professional Futures amid Pervasive Employment Precarity," *Work and Occupations* 49, no.1. (June 2021), p.4.

Chapter 6. "You Have to Start with Yourself": Youth Civic Engagement in Defiance of the State

In June 2019, I rode in a car with three people through downtown Amman. One of the passengers was an interlocutor of mine, Muhannad, a volunteer at an UN-organized NGO that promotes gender equality. On our way to a restaurant, we stopped at a red light. A male shop assistant stepped out of a women's clothing store on an adjacent street. It was late in the evening, and the shop was about to close. The shop assistant ducked under the half-closed roll-up door and went across the pavement to the street railing. There, he threw a piece of plastic in the gutter, then turned around and walked back towards the shop.

After observing the scene, Muhannad, who sat in the front passenger seat, uttered a swear word. Without hesitation, he opened the car door, picked up the piece of plastic from the gutter, and nimbly jumped over the street railing. He called on the shop assistant, who was about to duck under the half-closed roll-up door to return to the shop. The assistant stopped mid-stride and turned around to look at Muhannad with a perplexed look; his eyes widened, and he turned his palm upwards while shaking his head. My interlocutor handed him the piece of plastic and said something inaudible to me. The shop assistant's face softened. He nodded and returned to the shop with the piece of plastic. As a volunteer and an individual who was trained to care about social goals, it was natural for Muhannad to approach his fellow citizen and reprimand him for his lack of care for the environment.

In recent decades, the issue of Jordanians' changing responsibilities towards each other as citizens has come to the fore. The virtues of civic engagement have been universally lauded by the growing number of private associations and the regime and government alike. Between 2008 to and 2015, the number of officially registered civil society organizations (CSOs) tripled from around 1,500 to over 4,600.[1] Moreover, the regime has begun to aggressively promote what it calls “active citizenship.”

How autocratic regimes manage—and why they sometimes encourage—civic engagement has been studied in various ways. Some scholars have focused on how regimes repress associational autonomy.[2] In Jordan, the regime surveils, legally restricts, and infiltrates independent NGOs that are deemed too political. Other scholars have shown that, even when associational autonomy is allowed to flourish, CSOs often reproduce rather than challenge existing power relations.[3] In addition, some researchers have highlighted that civic responsibility functions as a kind of safety valve through which citizens can vent their grievances and frustrations while the regime maintains strict political “limits to empowerment.”[4] Yet other scholars have analyzed civic participation as a way for regimes to gain legitimacy in the international community, which is bolstered projects with liberal facades such as youth empowerment to sustain the flow of aid and geopolitical support[5] or allow civic initiatives to compensate for reduced welfare provisions.[6]

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[1] USAID, ”CIVIL SOCIETY ASSESSMENT REPORT,” USAID/Jordan Monitoring & Evaluation Support Project (MESP), May 2016, https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00M5C4.pdf, 7.

[2] In Jordan, Wiktorowicz (2002) has noted that the regime uses a number of strategies to circumscribe the independence of the associational sector, namely using certain legal and administrative measures aimed at preventing the politicization of NGOs, “infiltrating” civil society with GONGOs, which aims to dominate civil society “from within,” (85) and, finally, centralize created the General Union of Voluntary Societies, a “corporatist entity to monitor voluntary activities in the kingdom.” (88). In Jordan, independent societies need to register with the Ministry of Social Development, and societies are prohibited from having “political” objectives. In order to receive foreign funding, societies need approval from the entire council of ministers (cabinet), making it unfeasible most of the time. Second, the regime restricts engagement in the form of public debate and free speech. The regime also regulates public affiliation. As Abu-Rish notes, “Whether it is through the Political Parties Law (passed in 2015) or the Law of Association (passed in 2006), the regime has set very specific definitions for legally-sanctioned types of public meetings and efforts at community organizations.” In a survey by Jordan University’s Center for Strategic Studies, 75 to 80 percent of all respondents claimed that they are afraid to criticize their government. Ziad Abu-Rish, “Doubling Down: Jordan Six Years into the Arab Uprisings.” Jadaliyya, April 2, 2018. http://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/33938.

[3] Francesco Cavatorta and Vincent Durac, *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: The Dynamics of Activism* (London: Routledge, 2014); Amaney A. Jamal, *Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World* (Princeton University Press, 2009); James N. Sater, *Civil Society and Political Change in Morocco* (Taylor & Francis US, 2011).

[4] Quintan Wiktorowicz, “Civil Society as Social Control: State Power in Jordan,” *Comparative Politics* 33, no. 1 (October 1, 2000): 43, https://doi.org/10.2307/422423. Daniel Brumberg, “The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy,” *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 4 (October 1, 2002): 56–68, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2002.0064.

This chapter approaches authoritarian civil society differently. I argue that GONGOs help activate youth that have been made idle by the demise of the distributive state that used to employ them. The regime needs youth to act civically to assuage the generational suffering resulting from the collapse of the welfare state and its attendant viable paths to stable, salaried work and smooth transitions to adulthood. Volunteering in Jordan has become part of what Mitchell Dean called the "post-welfarist regime of the social," within which the collective ethos of the welfare state has been displaced onto the social field.[7]

At the same time, the regime must restrict certain types of civic activism deemed politically dangerous and it uses ministries and coercive agencies for this purpose. In Jordan, there are laws that restrict public assembly, restrictions on the activities that CSOs may legally engage in, and a general atmosphere of fear of transgressing political red lines. The logic of the regime's management of civic activism, therefore, is to strike a balance between civil resistance and total resignation, two outcomes that the regime fear.

GONGOs and the broader regime governance of civil society allow the regime manage these contradicting policy goals of simultaneously encouraging and restricting civil society activity. This chapter contains an analysis of one youth GONGO, Ana Usharek, and two private youth-run NGOs, Phi Science Institute and Clean & Hike, and their relationship to the regime and state.

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[5] Benjamin Schuetze, *Promoting Democracy, Reinforcing Authoritarianism: US and European Policy in Jordan*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019); Sarah Sunn Bush, *The Taming of Democracy Assistance: Why Democracy Promotion Does Not Confront Dictators* (Cambridge University Press, 2015), Line Khatib, "Syria's Civil Society as a Tool for Regime Legitimacy," in *Civil society in Syria and Iran: Activism in Authoritarian Contexts*, ed. P. Aarts & F. Cavatorta (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013): 19–38.

[6] Salam Kawakibi, "The Paradox of Government-organized Civil Activism in Syria," in in *Civil society in Syria and Iran: Activism in Authoritarian Contexts*, ed. P. Aarts & F. Cavatorta (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 2013): 169–187. Laura Ruiz De Elvira and Tina Zintl, "The End of the Baʿthist Social Contract in Bashar Al-Asad's Syria: Reading Sociopolitical Transformations through Charities and Broader Benevolent Activism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46, no. 2 (May 1, 2014): 329–49, https://doi.org/10.1017/s0020743814000130.

[7] Mitchell Dean, *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society* (SAGE, 2010). It is not a coincidence that, as Nguyen observes of Vietnam, a "form of ethical citizenship … emerges at the same moment that structures of solidarity decline and leave people to fend for themselves." Minh Tho Nguyen, "Vietnam's 'Socialization' Policy and the Moral Subject in a Privatizing Economy," *Economy and Society* 47, no. 4 (November 27, 2018): 627–47, https://doi.org/10.1080/03085147.2018.1544397.

I show that the GONGO Ana Usharek opens up Jordan's parliamentary politics to youth activism despite all the ways in which the parliamentary system is geared towards regime reproduction. In the two NGOs, I illustrate how civic activists, fueled by the royal discourse encouraging civic activism, espouse a kind of defiant activism that keeps them going despite that various state entities constantly get in their way. At the same time, they are forced to adjust to the limits that the state imposes keeping their activism well within the bounds of politically innocuous activity. Thus, in different ways, all of the organizations help the regime manage the balance between total resignation, idleness, and generational malaise among youth, on the one hand, and the risks of fueling youth's resistance and political mobilization, on the other hand.

Why the Regime Wants Civically Active Youth

Government-fostered civic participation is not a new phenomenon in Jordan. For example, the Youth Welfare Law of 1987, which established the Ministry of Youth and Sports, mentions that, aside from "deepening the loyalty of young people to the homeland and the King, and emphasizing in his education the respect of the Constitution and the law," the ministry will also "[organize] the energies of youth and [consolidate] the values of team and voluntary work within them."[8] However, in Jordan today, the regime's call for youth civic engagement has substantially grown to permeate all youth policy. In his Discussion Paper No. 1, King Abdullah developed the concept of "active citizenship":

> I call on all fellow citizens to actively engage in important decisions and problem-solving activities of our society, such as reducing poverty and unemployment, continuously enhancing healthcare and education, improving public transport, overcoming the increasing cost of living, and fighting corruption and any waste of public funds. This starts now, by making our voices heard in the election campaigns and

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[8] Qanūn Rʿāīa Al-Shabāb (Youth Care Law), 1987. Available at http://www.lawjo.net/vb/archive/index.php/t-15014.html. Accessed July 8, 2023

> by voting on election day. But democracy is much more than voting, and does not end with casting our ballots. It is an on-going process; it is about holding our elected officials to their commitments and remaining continuously engaged in the discussions and debates on the issues facing our families, our communities and our nation...As citizens, I call on you to uphold practices that will keep our society engaged and vibrant. Engaged citizens follow the news in newspapers, online, and on radio and TV. They write letters to the editors of their newspapers or to their Members of Parliament. They join community groups to organize community action about local issues and problems such as playgrounds, traffic safety, rubbish collection, water and sewage networks, and maintenance of roads and infrastructure.[9]

The GONGO sector is charged with realizing this vision. For example, Nahno, an initiative of the Crown Prince Foundation, gathers NGOs and charities in a shared database in which volunteers can register and find information on volunteering opportunities. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Nahno and the Ministry of Youth created a "volunteering bank" to mobilize youth to address the national crisis.[10] At the public University of Jordan, all students must complete 10 hours of volunteering to sit their final exams.[11] While active citizenship concerns all Jordanians, youth play a unique role in this royal vision. In a speech on Jordan's Independence Day in 2007, the king referred to youth as "Knights of Change," a moniker that has endured and become integrated into everyday parlance in Jordanian schools.[12]

Members of the royal family have not been averse to disseminating ideals of active citizenship by leading by example. For instance, in 2020, King Abdullah and Crown Prince Hussein undertook a diving session in the waters around Aqaba to clear litter from the seabed. In footage from the dive, which Queen Rania released on her social media accounts, the king can be seen helping to free a sea turtle from netting.[13] Crown Prince Hussein, who has also participated in nature cleanup campaigns, declared that volunteering helps youth "develop their personality, interact with the society and [improve their] skills to communicate, plan and work as a team."[14]

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[9] King Abdallah II, "Our Journey to Forge Our Path Towards Democracy," *King Abdullah II Official Website*," (December 29, 2012). https://kingabdullah.jo/en/discussion-papers/our-journey-forge-our-path-towards-democracy. Accessed July 8, 2023.

[10] Bahaa Al Deen Al Nawas, "Braizat Takes Stock of Jordan's Youth Programmes, Looks Ahead to Future Growth," *Jordan Times,* July 4, 2020, https://jordantimes.com/news/local/braizat-takes-stock-jordans-youth-programmes-looks-ahead-future-growth. Accessed July 8, 2023.

[11] Amina, Interview with author, March 19, 2019, Amman.

[12] Roozbeh Shirazi, "When Projects of 'Empowerment' Don't Liberate: Locating Agency in a 'Postcolonial' Peace Education," *Journal of Peace Education* 8, no. 3 (October 26, 2011): 277–94, 280 https://doi.org/10.1080/17400201.2011.621370.

Primarily, civic engagements are directed not at the objects but the subjects of volunteering. Rather than being an end in itself, civic engagement has become a means of addressing volunteers' economic exclusion and Jordan's broader social malaise. However, to persuade youth to act, the state cannot simply retreat from the social arena and expect them to step into its place. As Barbara Cruikshank demonstrated in her study of citizen empowerment in 19th century Britain, civic participation "was not…naturally occurring; it was something that had to be solicited, encouraged, guided, and directed… Even the legal recognition of associations…was not enough to ensure democratic order if citizens could not be *led to exercise* their political freedoms; the capacity of citizens to exercise self-government itself had to become a matter of government."

This instrumental view of civic engagement, in which a government can treat social symptoms by fostering civic activism, was lucidly expressed by former prime minister Omar Razzaz in a series of articles written for the daily newspaper *al-Ghad* in 2022. In these articles, Razzaz offered his views on politics in the kingdom and proposed a theory he called "the two-thirds dilemma" (*al-Muʿḍala Al-Thalathayn*). He observed that two-thirds of the population fails to participate sufficiently in the political and economic arenas, which he described as "a condition that is dangerous if left untreated." In addition, Razzaz noted that two-thirds of working-age citizens were unemployed, two-thirds of eligible citizens did not vote in the recent parliamentary elections, and two-thirds of citizens reported a general level of pessimism in national surveys. Thus, in multiple arenas, two-thirds of the population appeared to be excluded, non-participating, and/or disengaged. According to Razzaz, it was "striking, and perhaps most dangerous" that Jordanians aged 25–35 were more pessimistic than average. For example, he highlighted that the level of optimism surrounding the recent "Royal Committee to Reform the Political System" was 46 percent among 18- to 25-year-olds but only 22 percent among 26- to 30-year-olds, which signals an uptick in pessimism once youth enter the labor market.[15] Razzaz reasoned that, unless they are shown how to engage in the economy and society, citizens become lost to frustration and a downward spiral is initiated if disengagement persists: "with the passage of time…it becomes more and more difficult to transition to a state of engagement and participation. If the situation continues…frustration turns into a feeling of despair and injustice, and a desire for extremist thought and drug addiction."

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[13] Emma Day, "King Abdullah II and Crown Prince Hussein dive deep to help clean Jordan's seas," *The National News*, Feb 19, 2020, accessed September 1, 2021, https://www.thenationalnews.com/lifestyle/king-abdullah-ii-and-crown-prince-hussein-dive-deep-to-help-clean-jordan-s-seas-1.981450.

[14] Haya Al-Dajani, "Enabling Youth Volunteerism for a Better Future in Jordan," British Council in Jordan, December 31, 2006, p, 11, https://knowledge.unv.org/evidence-library/enabling-youth-volunteerism-for-a-better-future-in-jordan.

While this is a tragic image, there is still hope, according to Razzaz. The third of the population that remains engaged must lead the way because this

> is the third that has not lost hope, not because he is naïve, but because he still believes in the future. This third did not remain a spectator waiting. He has sought and still seeks to have his voice heard, and he insists on active and positive participation in public issues, volunteering, and initiatives at the social level, and finding job opportunities or initiating his own work (entrepreneurial) project (at the economic level).[16]

As a solution, Razzaz prescribes more engagement and active citizenship. He contended that "there is no isthmus separating the frustrated two-thirds and the engaged third. Rather, it is an ebb and flow that rises and falls with every piece of news that pushes a person to optimism or pessimism and every active role he can play in his life or the lives of others." In other words, these groups—the engaged third and the disengaged two-thirds—are not fixed. With every active role that a citizen can play, they will move from frustration to engagement and from pessimism to optimism.

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[15] To say the least, to many Jordan observers, pessimism surrounding the prospects of yet another such committee might also be seen as a sign of basic critical thinking and a healthy level of cynicism.

[16] Omar Razzaz, "Muʿḍala Al-Thalathayn…Bayn Al-Aḥbāṭ wa Al-Inkhirāṭ" (The two-thirds dilemma between frustration and engagement), *Al-Ghad,* January 23, 2022, accessed February 24, 2022, https://alghad.com/عمر-الرزاز-يكتب-لـالغد-معضلة-الثلثين.

Razzaz's reasoning is revealing. He prescribes a new role for government: to combat frustration and waithood with avenues for engagement and optimism. Razzaz did not propose the prevention of youth surplus status by addressing its sources, unemployment and lack of future prospects. Instead, the government can confront these issues by focusing less on the disease and more on treating its symptoms. Politics must offer avenues for engagement even in the face of adverse structural conditions. In this way, active citizenship seeks to recruit youth into the "engaged third" and unhitch them from the stasis of waithood and unmet expectations in the present. It invites youth to act now, without delay. When Queen Rania met with young members of the private youth empowerment organization Loyac, she commended them: "What sets you apart is that you did not wait for a job opportunity to come to you, you took the initiative and decided to improve your skills."[17] Thus, the queen lauded their decision to *choose* to become the engaged third, in Razzaz's terminology.

Regime-promoted civic activism is a testament to the authorities' fear of the inactivity and surplus character of youth in relation to state and capital. As Cruikshank noted in her reading of de Tocqueville, "what was particularly threatening to a stable, democratic order was not the unruly and the subversive, but 'the indifferent, the apathetic,'"[18] even in democratic societies. The almost cacophonic encouragement to act, which emerges from the monarchy, GONGOs, and ministries in an entire host of overlapping initiatives, must be understood in this light: not as revealing a coherent strategy but exposing a desperation to counter youth idleness and economic redudency among political elites.[19]

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[17] Queen Rania Media Centre, "Queen Rania Meets Board Members, Staff and Beneficiaries of LoYAC-Jordan", March 31, 2013, accessed September 30, 2021, https://www.queenrania.jo/en/media/press/queen-rania-meets-board-members-staff-and-beneficiaries-loyac-jordan.

[18] Barbara Cruikshank, *The Will to Empower: Democratic Citizens and Other Subjects* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999), 98.

This instrumental view of civic participation has been echoed by other actors. As stated in a British Council Report on volunteering in Jordan, "volunteering is also an effective and uncontroversial mechanism to help youth overcome disillusionment resulting from personal or social difficulties."[20] According to an Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development report on Jordan, "volunteering is a powerful tool for combatting social exclusion, promoting youth's development, consolidating their trust and co-operation, cultivating their civic sense and building societal resilience."[21] Even within INGOs, civic participation is viewed as a balm that can soothe the aching body politic, which is reeling from the pain of economic redundancy.

The way volunteers themselves describe their engagement often corresponds to this instrumental view of volunteering—of not simply treating social ills such as poverty but also the volunteers' own suffering, which results from a lack of social belonging. One volunteer, Widaad, who worked with Loyac and the Jordan River Foundation, reasoned that volunteering can combat a sense of alienation among youth. She said, "Our generation is more aware, but you need to have the tools to know what to do with it, the awareness." I asked, "What happens if you don't have the tools?" She replied,

> Mental health issues, you feel shitty, you dream of going abroad only…Through volunteering, the sense that you are useful in the machine can help, it's an outlet for your energies, for your skills, and you feel a sense of accomplishment. When my

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[19] As Cruikshank (1999) shows, state-promoted active citizenship concerns how people's "discontent and their indolence be turned to 'useful citizenship'." This form of governance seeks to "corral action," not "quiescence."(52) By "enlarging the scope and reign of individuals," this form of governance "is a technique that works to limit the need for state action…by getting them to act."(55)

[20] Bahaa Al Deen Al Nawas, "Braizat Takes Stock of Jordan's Youth Programmes, Looks Ahead to Future Growth," Jordan Times, July 4, 2020, 11 https://jordantimes.com/news/local/braizat-takes-stock-jordans-youth-programmes-looks-ahead-future-growth.

[21] OECD, Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, (2021) https://doi.org/10.1787/8b14d38f-en. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/eb1ee76a-en.pdf?expires=1677662454&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=EF13DA73FBC7D26DB95E8C1E561885B3

> boyfriend was unemployed, he felt he was useless, that he doesn't matter. When you volunteer, you give your time, effort and your skills to this place, it can enhance your belonging to this place.[22]

A volunteer named Majeeda at another GONGO, Ana Usharek, said,

> Sure, we are not living in utopia, but what's the point of just complaining about that the government is filled with corruption, etc. Sure, you could think that it doesn't matter what I do because everything will end up in the hands of the rich. And it is true, youth is not taken seriously, not until you are 30 or 40, youth are not seen as qualified. For example, you cannot stand for parliament until you are 30. But we have to at least try to make things better. We have to start by building bonds among people, forming bonds, then maybe we will be taken more seriously, now youth are taken for granted. It becomes like a cycle. The older generation is disengaged, only care about themselves, then they pass this on. We have to break this cycle.[23]

Majeeda believed that volunteering could generate a sense of belonging:

> I think that everyone can do something, we can grow emotional attachments, I know that if you spread love, love will come back to you, we need to create 'love for the place that you're in.' Maybe you gather some people, make a meeting, then maybe it grows into an event. Today in Jordan, no one loves this country, everyone wants to emigrate, no one cares anymore. For example, through volunteering, we can get people to take care of the country, not throw garbage in the street, people will start perhaps to respect laws and rules, they will perhaps stop breaking laws and stop harass people. We can develop more love for the country.[24]

Majeeda and Widaad approached volunteering instrumentally: as treating the volunteer. The objects of volunteering—the poor and the sick—rarely featured in these descriptions.[25] Majeeda and Widaad recognized that they were responsible for producing a sense of belonging in the absence of the welfare state and economic prospects. Such recognition does not absolve the government from responsibility but charges citizens with acting of their own accord. As one

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[22] Widaad, Interview with Author, April 27, 2020, Amman.

[23] Majeeda, Interview with Author, April 16, 2019, Amman.

[24] Majeeda, Interview with Author, April 16, 2019, Amman.

[25] As one seasoned volunteer explained, "In Ramadan, if you are a charity, you have to call and book up institutions like orphanages months in advance because there are so many organizations that want to help them." Widaad, Interview with Author, April 27, 2020, Amman.

GONGO instructor told me, "Jordanians throw rubbish in the street and say 'Why doesn't the government pick it up!?'…People just complain…Instead, they should do stuff themselves."[26]

Ana Usharek

The GONGO Ana Usharek is an example of how GONGOs encourage youth's civic activism. Ana Usharek opens up not only society but also the parliamentary system and elections for youth engagement. It is part of a broader trend of government bodies and GONGOs encouraging youth participation in Jordan's parliamentary system. For example, the King Abdullah II Fund for Development (KAFD) regularly runs sessions on "Youth Participation in Political Processes" in parliament.[27] In addition, a recent cooperation agreement between the Independent Election Commission (IEC) and the GONGO Crown Prince Foundation seeks to "enhance election awareness among the youth, boost cooperation between Crown Prince Foundation and the IEC to encourage the youth to engage with political parties, and raise awareness in election procedures and stages."[28] Moreover, an outfit called Jordanian Youth Government, which began in 2010 as an independent NGO after it was subsumed under the purview of Ministry of Youth, runs a "National Youth Leadership Program."[29]

This GONGO-centered push to involve youth in elections seeks to combat youth's growing disengagement and disinterest in politics. There is considerable evidence that youth, in particular, lack interest in Jordan's parliamentary elections. For example, survey data from the Arab Barometer Wave V showed that 41 percent of respondents aged 18–29 reported having voted in the 2016 parliamentary elections, while 55 percent of people aged 30 and above did so.[30] Meanwhile, 52 percent of young Jordanians surveyed in the Arab Barometer Wave V reported that they were not at all interested in politics, compared to 46 percent of respondents aged 50 and above.[31] Meanwhile, the percentage of youth who reported "trust in government" declined from 73 percent in 2010 to 42 percent in 2019.[32]

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[26] Lina, Interview with author, February 17, 2020, Amman.

[27] "Youth Experience Kingdom's Political Processes First-Hand through KAFD Project," Jordan Times, January 28, 2020, https://www.jordantimes.com/news/local/youth-experience-kingdoms-political-processes-first-hand-through-kafd-project.

[28] Crown Prince Foundation. "CPF, Independent Election Commission Sign MoU," August 30, 2022, Accessed July 8, 2023, https://www.cpf.jo/en/media/cpf-independent-election-commission-sign-mou.
The IECs independence must be seen in the context of that its board is appointed by royal decree, according to a 2012 law governing the body. Jordan Times, "Royal Decree Names New Board of Election Oversight Body," April 6, 2016, http://jordantimes.com/news/local/royal-decree-names-new-board-election-oversight-body.

[29] ʿAn Al-Mʿahad Al-Sīāsā (About the Political Institute), accessed July 8, 2023, https://www.shababgovjo.org/SiteContent.aspx?id=118.

Engaging youth in parliamentary elections must be seen in the broader context of combating youth superfluity and the crisis of citizenship. Considerable scholarship has shown that autocratic elections are far more than window dressing and allow regimes to incorporate key elites by distributing resources and privileges.[33] Yet, as Ana Usharek illustrates, parliamentary politics are also utilized to incorporate broader social groups today.

Ana Usharek ("I participate") is an organization that was initially conceived and run by the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a U.S. nonprofit connected to the U.S. Democratic Party. Despite Ana Usharek's work on seemingly politically sensitive topics, the royal court granted the organization approval to operate at all Jordanian universities. At the same time, many other forms of student activism were severely restricted.[34] In 2019, it was announced that the Crown Prince Foundation would assume responsibility for Ana Usharek and take over the program from NDI while continuing to receive funding from USAID. The program's curriculum remained more or less unchanged. The Crown Prince Foundation retained most of Ana Usharek's staff but disqualified non-Jordanian students from participating. Working with

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[30] OECD, Empowering Youth and Building Trust in Jordan, OECD Public Governance Reviews, OECD Publishing, Paris, (2021) https://doi.org/10.1787/8b14d38f-en. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/eb1ee76a-en.pdf?expires=1677662454&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=EF13DA73FBC7D26DB95E8C1E561885B3

[31] Ibid.

[32] Amaney Jamal, Michael Robbins, & Salma Al-Shami, "Youth in MENA: Findings from the Fifth Wave of the Arab Barometer," Arab Barometer, August 12, 2020, https://www.arabbarometer.org/wp-content/uploads/Youth-in-MENA-2020.pdf. Indeed, that the "trust in government" (Althiqa bil-Hukuma) is low is something that gets discussed a lot in Jordan. When I attended the Jordan World Youth Forum, Sara Ferrer Olivella, Jordan Representative at UNDP, asked whether they agreed that there is insufficient trust between people and the government. I was shocked when almost every young person in the room raised their hands. Fieldnotes, Jordan World Youth Forum, Dead Sea/Sweimeh., March 16, 2019.

[33] See, e.g., Lust-Okar (2006), Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009), Blaydes (2011).

[34] Schuetze, *Promoting Democracy, Reinforcing Authoritarianism.*

23 universities across the kingdom, Ana Usharek trains students in democratic citizen action, such as creating advocacy campaigns and petitioning Members of Parliament. Ana Usharek's program features seven themes (e.g., women's empowerment, political parties, and tolerance). In partnership with the Ministry of Education, Ana Usharek has also added a school program that promotes civic education and collective action for students.

In March 2020, I spent a few weeks participating in and observing Ana Usharek's programming. On one occasion, I spent an extended day at Irbid National University, where Ana Usharek held discussions on democracy with three different groups of students. In the session, two staff members from Ana Usharek were present: a regional coordinator and a university coordinator. The first thing that struck me was how modern and inviting the pedagogy felt. Instructors used colorful pens, post-it notes, and other learning tools and resorted to experiential learning techniques that stimulated multiple senses; they even had a role-playing exercise in which some participants served as representatives of the upper house of parliament and others as representatives of the lower house of parliament.

Since it was mid-March, a few days after International Women's Day, the instructor began the session by asking the students to each blow up a balloon and adorn it with the name of a woman whom they admired. Most young men wrote their mother's name; one woman wrote Angelina Jolie, while another wrote Queen Rania. The instructor then neatly tied up the balloons and gathered them in a corner to embellish the seminar room. Subsequently, the instructor moved on to the theme of the day: democracy. She asked, "What does democracy mean to you?" and "What do you think of when you hear the word 'democracy?'" Responses varied widely. One participant said "freedom," while another said "it doesn't exist (here)—there is no equality, no justice." Other responses included "an illusion," "freedom of speech," "the right to choose," and "human rights." After soliciting answers and skillfully gauging the students' pre-existing ideas on the topic, the instructor lectured on the separation of power and the three branches of government that comprise the foundation of democratic governance according to Ana Usharek's model. She discussed the role of each branch—the legislative, judiciary, and executive branches—in turn. After describing the separation of power in the abstract, the instructor applied three branches of government model to Jordan's political system. She explained that Jordan's parliament, judiciary, and prime minister have separate spheres of power, which provide checks and balances in the system.

I was surprised that Jordan's prime minister represented the "executive" branch in the instructor's description of Jordanian politics. The monarch, who appoints and regular replaces prime ministers, was mentioned only once in the exposé of Jordan's political system: when the instructor noted that the king plays an essential role in ratifying legislation. As I sat next to Ana Usharek's regional coordinator during the session (which was led by the university coordinator), I asked her why the monarch was absent from this model of Jordanian politics. She replied, "The curriculum only mentions that the king needs to approve laws from the legislature. This [the king] is a red line (*khat al-aḥmar*)—you know, here in Jordan, we don't talk about it too much." After the short lecture, the students were asked about the extent to which Jordan is democratic, based on this model of democracy, in relation to the presence in Jordan of elections, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. The students' answers varied, but most replied that Jordan is somewhat democratic.

I had asked the regional coordinator if she could request that the students stay behind after the session (if they had time) to participate in informal focus groups (with around 4-5 students in each group). Most of the students, who appeared to be curious about me and my presence, agreed to stay and chat. To follow up on the theme from the main session (i.e., reflecting on Jordan's supposed level of democracy), I asked the focus groups to rate how democratic Jordan is on a scale from 0 to 5 with 5 being most democratic and to justify their answers.

The participants' answers diverged. While some replied 0 ("there are no rights, no justice"), others were more ambivalent. One girl said, "2.5. Jordan is not North Korea, like, it is not like we can't do anything." Another stated, "3. It is much more democratic here than in Syria. Being able to live securely is important." A third person said, "5. Jordan is much better than Saudi and Egypt." Two participants said, "If there is a problem, it is because we chose the wrong MPs."

I then asked, "What can young people do to improve things?" One student said, "We, the youth, are better-equipped. We are much more aware of what is going on around us in the world. For example, I practice Brazilian jiu-jitsu. I follow people—influencers—via YouTube from all over the world. I know what is going on around me." Another student replied, "There should be a quota for youth in parliament, and through organizations such as Ana Usharek, we need to work on awareness." A third student said, "We need to learn more about politics in school, students should be more free to discuss politics, like here in Ana Usharek."

During the second phase of the Ana Usharek program, which is called Usharek+, students design advocacy campaigns and, according to the curriculum, "are taught how to identify influential decision-makers who can support their campaign and how to reach them through meetings, media, public events, and other methods."[35] I asked the regional coordinator to provide examples of such campaigns. A recent campaign petitioned universities to install solar panels, another encouraged consumers to use fewer plastic bags, a third advocated for the rather reactionary policy of lowering the legal age of marriage, and a fourth argued for lowering the age limit for candidates running for parliament.

Overall, Ana Usharek enlists youth in social and political action through a version of Jordanian politics that obfuscates the regime's role by omitting the monarchy altogether. Ana Usharek also portrays Jordan as, at the very least, partly democratic, given that the triumvirate of the prime minister, parliament, and judiciary correspond to the ideal model of liberal democracy, which is characterized by the separation of powers. The ideological effect of Ana Usharek is that it allows youth to meaningfully participate in the parliamentary system as if it were politically consequential. The separation of monarchy from politics permits Ana Usharek to direct youth towards improving the parliamentary system as though the monarchy did not design this system to fail in predictable ways.

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[35] Crown Prince Foundation. "Ana Usharek," December 26, 2022, Accessed July 8, 2023, https://www.cpf.jo/en/our-initiatives/ana-usharek.

For example, an essential aspect of Ana Usharek is that youth hold MPs accountable for their actions. Participants are expected to ask difficult questions to parliamentarians in special sessions and to work with MPs in advocacy campaigns. As one of the instructors told me, "In Ana Usharek, young people have shown great courage to hold them (MPs) accountable."[36] The King himself has argued that holding MPs accountable is key to active citizenship. In a speech, he said, "You, the youth, have the responsibility to hold coming legislatures and parliamentary governments to account, judging them by the degree of their commitment to implementing their electoral platforms to address the problems and challenges you face."[37] However, to make the practice of holding MPs accountable meaningful requires de-recognizing that the monarchy has designed the electoral system to politically weaken MPs in the first place. As many scholars have illustrated, Jordan's parliamentary system is primarily designed for MPs to compete for limited state resources, which they distribute to constituencies. Therefore, among Jordanians, MPs are referred to as "service deputies" (*nawāb khidma*).[38] Moreover, the regime's implementation of a single non-transferrable vote (SNTV) system specifically aims to incentivize voters to cast identity-based votes while discouraging political rivals from running on substantive political platforms.

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[36] Lina, Interview with author, February 17, 2020, Amman

[37] "On the Occasion of the University of Jordan's 50th Anniversary | King Abdullah II Official Website," n.d. https://kingabdullah.jo/en/node/49819.

[38] Ellen Lust-Okar, "Competitive Clientelism in the Middle East." *Journal of Democracy* 20, no. 3 (2009): 122-35, 122

By misrecognizing the role of authoritarian politics, Ana Usharek offers a space in which social action can be imagined as independent and meaningful. Also beyond GONGOs, many young Jordanian have heeded the regime's call for youth to civically engage by establishing independent NGOs. However, inevitably any independent civic activism has to navigate a complex set of policies simultaneously restricting their activities. The next section analyses two such NGOs and their complex relationship to the state.

Trash Politics

The two private NGOs that I analyze in this chapter were founded by enthusiastic youth who were excited by the opportunities that associational autonomy offers. They espouse a Do-It-Yourself ethic, are highly ambitious, and see themselves as operating outside of any government mandate. In contrast to self-serving bureaucratic institutions, they regard themselves as uniquely productive and truly change-making. However, the NGOs' activities inevitably become entangled with state institutions due to legal limits on civic associations, the opportunities that associating with state actors offers, and state entities that jump on their bandwagon. The effect is that they keep operating organizing youth, albeit within strict limits.

As the vignette about Muhannad illustrated, trash, littering, and rubbish collection have become key domains onto which active citizenship is projected. For example, organizing nature cleanups has become a prevalent way to express social consciousness. There have been multiple public campaigns that encourage volunteers to conduct cleanups in nature. In 2017, the Ministry of the Environment launched the campaign "Our mission…protecting the environment," which, according to Minister of the Environment Yaseen Khayyat, aimed to "turn every citizen into a guardian that protects our forests, parks, streets, markets, universities and schools from litter."[39]

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[39] Laila Azzeh, "Thousands Join Campaign to Keep Kingdom Litter-Free," *Jordan Times*, April 8, 2017, Accessed September 2, 2020, https://jordantimes.com/news/local/thousands-join-campaign-keep-kingdom-litter-free.

Moreover, the Public Security Directorate, which oversees the national police, launched the campaign “Our Environment, Our Lungs” with the goal of “enriching the values of citizenship and promoting a culture of preserving natural recourses and the environment.”[40] Under another cleanup campaign called *baladak baītak* (“your country is your house”), the crown prince helped clean up a nature reserve called Husban Forest.[41] Aside from nature cleanup campaigns, tougher fines on littering have been introduced,[42] and recent events have highlighted the plight of so-called “homeland workers” (street cleaners).

In this general atmosphere of care for nature, a private NGO called Clean & Hike began to organize trips from Amman to various locales around the country where volunteers could pick up trash and venture on a short hike in the area. Clean & Hike organized trips once or twice a month; buses pick up participants from two locations in Amman and take them to various nature reserves and popular recreational areas visited by hikers and local picnickers, who often leave traces by way of litter and trash. Trips are sometimes combined with sightseeing, visits to small museums, or local restaurants to taste regional delicacies.

I joined Clean & Hike on several occasions in 2019. On a Saturday morning in May 2019, volunteers gathered early at a coffee “roastery” in the upscale neighborhood of Lweibdeh. A surprising number of volunteers had signed up for the event. The atmosphere was buoyant. People bought half-price coffee, and the bus nearly left on time. On the way, we picked up another group of participants in the western part of Amman, who filled every available bus seat. Upon entering the bus, a female participant roared, “Are we ready to rumble?” People responded “Yeah!” while clapping their hands. The participants were appropriately dressed; many sported expensive hiking gear, such as hiking boots, convertible hiking pants, and soft, stretchy, colorful scarves. Several participants brought pick-up tools, such as “grabbers”—long sticks with a pick-up mechanism at the end that allows the user to pick up items from the ground without bending. The participants’ investment in equipment revealed a personal investment in the project.

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[40] Inṭilāq Faʿālīāt Ḥamla Bīʾtnā Raʾtunā fi-Aʿjlūn (Launching the Activities of Our environment, Our Lungs Campaign in Ajloun) October 18, 2021, https://www.petra.gov.jo/Include/InnerPage.jsp?ID=192522&lang=en&name=news

[41] “Walī al-ʿAhd Yushārik Majmūa min-a-Shabāb fi al-Ḥamla al-Waṭaniyya Baladak Baītak,” al-Ghad, May 11, 2019, accessed September 1st, 2021, https://alghad.com/ولي-العهد-يشارك-مجموعة-من-الشباب-في-الح/.
This follows a greater logic in which autocratic leaders utilize “informal and personal communication styles popularised by the advent of social media,” which have replaces the model of “‘sacred detached rulers’ “Yessayan, M. T. (2015). *Monarchical nation branding: Queen Rania’s performance of modernity on YouTube. Celebrity Studies, 6(4), 430–442.*doi:10.1080/19392397.2015.1087208 Indeed, the carefully curated images of royal families have become “sites of an aspirational consciousness imbued with individual responsibility” (Wedeen, *Authoritarian Apprehensions*, 20)’

[42] Roya News. “Littering Now Punishable by 1,000 JD Fine, Imprisonment,” July 28, 2021. https://en.royanews.tv/news/30021/2021-07-28?fbclid=IwAR2jRhMJNpEH4Au4hYlic4BsZxyewZK-DyRwaFWGXEP37oZEycsxsTOwpZY.

After a couple of hours of driving, we arrived at our destination, Wadi Al-Rayan, which is located outside the city of Jerash in the northern part of the country. Although the event had been described as “cleaning nature while hiking,” these two activities were separate. First, the group picked up trash, then went on a small trek. For this trip, organizers selected a *wadi*—a valley—set among rolling hills in Jordan’s beautiful northwestern region. A stream ran through the bottom of the valley, and a particularly lush and green area stretched around it. The combination of the stream, lush landscape, and protection from the wind made the location ideal for recreation. As we picked up trash, local visitors utilized the area for multiple purposes. Groups of people picnicked in the shade of large trees. Some groups were large families, while others consisted of women and children. Some played music on portable speakers. One group had even brought an oud and a flute. Children bathed in the stream and played in the water. Groups of young men drove back and forth over a small, paved strip next to the stream in cars that they had “pimped” with stickers, powerful speaker systems, and tinted windows.

Visitors to the area had not been particularly careful with their waste. The entire area was littered with plastic bags, food waste, used diapers, cans, and everything in between. When it was time to begin the cleaning, the group gathered, and each volunteer was given gloves and several black waste bags. The group, which consisted of around 40 to 50 people (including five to ten foreigners), was supervised not only by the NGO organizers but also two to three local guides and several officers (also known as “rangers”) from the Royal Department of the Environmental Protection, a small security force that reports to the Ministry of the Environment. The presence of the rangers and their pick-up trucks infused the entire enterprise with an air of legitimacy and official status. Relations between the rangers, guides, and organizers seemed amicable, and the atmosphere was cheerful.

A large white truck followed the volunteers and quickly filled up with black plastic garbage bags. The group was extremely efficient; the cleaners with grabbers, particularly young men, ventured into the stream to pick up rubbish. After about an hour, an end to the cleaning was called, and all the participants gathered around the white truck, whose open top was now brimming with large garbage bags. A photoshoot ensued with the entire group standing before the truck with the day’s spoils. The more daring young men even climbed onto the truck and sported V-signs with their index and middle fingers. Indeed, photos were essential to the whole enterprise; one volunteer was specifically charged with taking pictures.

At one point, I walked and picked up trash with another participant. A car full of young local men drove by on the paved road next to the stream. As they passed my fellow nature cleaner and I, the driver must have spotted a small puddle of water in the road. He turned slightly towards the puddle and sped up slightly; one wheel dipped into the puddle, and water splashed onto the volunteer beside me. His entire pants were soaked. The driver opened the window and said “Sorrrryyy!” in a comic tone. The four young men drove on and, after passing us, started to laugh hysterically.

What surprised me about the entire cleaning enterprise was the inevitable encounters between the volunteers and the local citizens whose trash we picked up. Before joining the nature cleanup, I imagined that the encounters would primarily be between the volunteers and the trash. Instead, the participants picked up trash practically at the picnickers and weekend revelers feet in the *wadi*. Naturally, they attracted considerable attention. Mostly, the picnickers watched as middle-class Ammanis and a few foreigners picked up their kids' old diapers and waste from last week's picnic. During the cleanups, two of the Jordanian volunteers felt the need to apologize to me as a foreign visitor for the negligent behavior of their fellow citizens, which had caused the sorry state of the *wadi*. "You know, this is unfortunately the culture here," one of them said despairingly.

In a video posted to the NGO's Facebook page, the project's founder Omar claimed that the local picnickers were not at fault, saying, that "all the trash is left by outsiders who come and leave trash and then leave." However, in other statements, the Omar admitted that the project also aimed to encourage the people that volunteers encountered to take better care of nature. In an interview in one of the many articles written about Clean & Hike in the newspaper *Al-Ghad*, the founder said, "We often make trips on Fridays to encourage families who are enjoying outings and picnics in the same day (Friday is family day in Jordan) to clean after themselves. Some weekend celebrators even join us to pick trash, especially children, and we deliver a message to them by giving out free waste bags for them to help preserve the beauty of the area in which they sit."[43] The NGO's founder also told reporters that caring for nature is the social responsibility of every person and that keeping the country clean "[reinforces] true belonging and patriotism within each one of us."

During my volunteer experience with Clean & Hike, it became apparent that, as innocuous as the NGO was, it had to constantly navigate the state. For example, Omar has spent considerable time trying (and repeatedly failing) to officially register the NGO with relevant ministries. This means that the organization is potentially in a legal limbo with regard to the authorities. Omar also realized that it is best to arrange trips in association with the Royal Department of Environmental Protection, which would ease any potential conflict with locals or other law enforcement actors during volunteering trips. At the same time, the rangers could claim to be performing productive work, which they demonstrated by posting pictures of the cleanups on social media. The members of Clean & Hike, particularly Omar, must also play a public role in reinforcing the ideals of active citizenship advocated by the regime. Like the leaders of many similar initiatives, Omar has often been invited to morning shows to fill guest spots and produce positive, feel-good content or portrayed on news reports as an ideal active citizen.

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[43] Iīkū Hāīkars..Mubādara Shabāibiyya li-Urdun Kh āl al-Nafāīāt (Eco Hikers…Youth Initiative for a Waste-free Jordan), *Alghad*, November 8, 2021, Accessed July 8, 2023, https://alghad.com/إيكو-هايكرز-مبادرة-شبابية-لأردن-خال-م/

While it knows how to navigate bureaucratic issues, such as soliciting the rangers' participation, the organization's mission is to organize non-state civic activism. It built its brand on the idea that only independent citizens can create real change in a context where authorities are feeble and self-serving. While I chatted with Omar over lunch after one of the hikes, he mentioned an occasion when Clean & Hike ran a joint session with the Ministry of the Environment. Apparently, the ministry had reached out to the NGO to inquire about ways in which they could cooperate. However, Omar, who had accepted the invitation because he was keen to develop partnerships and sponsorships to help sustain the organization, was disappointed by the ministry's participation. About the co-sponsored event, he said, "A few people from the ministry showed up, they took some pictures, and off they went. After they left, some locals even complained that the ministry staff actually littered while they were there; they threw plastic bottles and the like."[44] After this event, the ministry contacted Clean & Hike again to cooperate on another cleanup, but Omar declined. His frustration with the government was exacerbated by his failed attempts to officially register the organization, which had taken three to four months and entailed considerable money and effort. To register, Omar said, "We need an office, we have to pay an accountant and a lawyer—it is too much." He had asked whether the registration fee could be waived for Clean & Hike, given its social usefulness, but this request was declined.[45] By the time we met, the official registration had still not been completed.

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[44] Fieldnotes, May 31, 2019.

Clean & Hike is fueled by a sense of defiance towards the regime; at the same time, it has responded to the regime's call to act civically and care for nature. Omar and his fellow civic activists viewed themselves as acting on an authentic urge to care for the country, in contrast to the state, who did so for the optics. This skepticism towards the state, which is seen as incapable of addressing public needs, entails the risk of resignation and frustration among youth. The counter such disengagement, the regime simultaneously encourages civic activism through GONGOs. Just like Ana Usharek, Clean & Hike is driving youth to act civically despite all the ways that authoritarian politics is simultaneously discouraging it. A balance is thereby struck between resistance and total resignation.

Phi Science Institute

Like Clean & Hike, the science communication organization Phi Science Institute is a privately-run NGO. Phi Science Institute was founded in 2014 by a group of science students who were passionate about science but disaffected by the lack of channels in universities for creativity for young scientists. They saw an opportunity to improve how science is communicated to broader populations and wanted to find a way to release the creativity of scientific research for social ends. Phi Science Institute began to build a science community outside of the universities, produced online scientific content in Arabic, and founded an annual research summit in 2015.

While it is not politically contentious, Phi Science Institute has a bold vision. Its co-founder, Ahmad, indicated that its long-term goal is "to enable scientists to do their own thing, even theoretical research." I asked, "Isn't that what universities should be doing?" He replied, "Yes, but universities in Jordan discourage any kind of innovation or research—it is all about learning theory and practicing clinically." However, to reach its goal of emancipating scientists from retrograde universities, companies, and scientific institutions, Phi Science Institute had to look to the regime and state actors to mobilize resources. Through its connection to the Royal Scientific Society, Phi Science Institute works closely with its president, Princess Sumaya (King Abdullah's cousin), who is deeply involved in a host of Jordanian GONGOs. Phi Science Institute also cooperates under a memorandum of understanding with the Crown Prince Foundation.

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[45] Fieldnotes, May 31, 2019.

When Phi Science Institute sought to scale up its educational activities around science education, it founded the Phi Applied and Innovative Research Project (PAIR) program, which trains young participants to combine applied scientific research with entrepreneurialism. This focus on entrepreneurship, a favorite topic of donors, GONGOs, and ministries alike, allowed Phi Science Institute to assemble a group of powerful stakeholders to implement the PAIR program. The latter readily found supporters in Princess Sumaya, TechWorks (which is part of the Crown Prince Foundation), and the Embassy of the Netherlands.

However, rather than releasing scientists' creativity, the PAIR program was more focused on commercializing science through entrepreneurship. First, program participants are assigned a narrow science-related "problem" to work on. Some participants that I chatted with at the PAIR program's launch were given problems such as "a higher rate of child obesity in public schools compared to private schools" and "high levels of dehydration in Jordan." They then formed teams, develop financially viable business ideas to address these problems, and invent marketable products by formulating prototypes and marketing strategies. I pushed Ahmad on why they boil down science education and communication to economic entrepreneurialism. He replied, "You know, entrepreneurship can liberate these young scientists. If they find a sustainable business idea, they can sustain themselves financially and do their own thing while solving problems in society—sanitation, health, water, etc."

In March 2019, Ahmad invited me to attend the launch of the PAIR program. The event occurred in a Sheraton Hotel ballroom in central Amman. All youth present—the PAIR program participants and Phi Science Institute staff and volunteers—sat towards the back of the room. Meanwhile, all of the older attendees sat towards the front, and the most distinguished guests were seated in the middle of the front row. A entire host of dignitaries, such as Tamam Mango, the CEO of the Crown Prince Foundation, and Mothanna Gharaibeh, the minister of communication, attended the launch. After the PAIR project was presented, the Dutch ambassador spoke. Then, Ahmad gave an impassioned speech directed to the powerful academic leaders, ministers, and GONGO leaders in the room to "open the door" for youth and release their creativity.

Like Clean & Hike, Phi Science Institute struggles with state bureaucracy. In addition, this issue emerged despite the organization's ties to some of the most influential people in the country. For instance, Ahmed described Gharaibeh: "he is great and really helpful, but if he is traveling for two weeks, nothing happens at the ministry, and you can't get any help." Phi Science Institute managed to register with the Ministry of Trade and Industry. However, it essentially registered as a company, which was deemed cheaper than registering as a civic society association with the Ministry of Social Development. The real problems began when the organization attempted to secure foreign funding. An application to receive grants from overseas takes three to six months. For Phi Science Institute, the process involved applying for a grant via the Company Control Department, which is part of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. Then, an application must be approved by the entire Council of Ministers and the Cabinet, including the prime minister. This cumbersome process is one aspect of Jordan's very restrictive 2008 Law of Societies and a foreign funding control policy introduced by the Council of Ministers in October 2015.[46] Neither the authorities nor the ministers need to provide a reason for rejecting an application. Indeed, the foreign funding requests of seemingly innocuous NGOs are frequently rejected.[47] Ahmed even mentioned participating in a meeting between nonprofit organizations and the prime minister around January 2019, in which the NGOs raised the issue of barriers to foreign funding. Ahmad indicated that issue of foreign funding generated the most friction between the sector and the government. Phi Science Institute is considering registering an outfit in the United States that could accept foreign funding on its behalf, this outfit could then directly cover costs related to the organization's projects, such as paying for hotel rooms for a conference.

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[46] "Jordan Seeks to Muzzle Watchdog over Foreign Funding." *International Press Institute*, October 2, 2017. https://ipi.media/jordan-seeks-to-muzzle-watchdog-over-foreign-funding/.

As exemplified by Phi Science Institute, the nearly insurmountable challenge of securing foreign funding means that the organization must continue to turn to local stakeholders such as members of the royal family, GONGOs, and ministers and become entangled in regime politics. Like Clean and Hike, Phi Science Institute's relationship with the regime and the government is vexing and complicated. The NGO's forced entanglement with regime politics runs parallel to its wish to distance itself from them to achieve the true change-making aspirations at the core of the organization.

Overall, autocracy is inimical to civic activism. Yet, even in this environment, the regime fears citizens who do not sufficiently civically engage and are idle and disaffected by the lack of meaningful economic opportunities. Therefore, regimes such as the Jordanian one has compelled citizens to civically engage by providing opportunities for meaningful action within this system. The purpose of active citizenship fostered by the regime is to create space for social action, which operates at the intersection of resistance and acquiescence. Through disparate webs of NGOs and GONGOs, civic activists operate despite the ways in which state institutions restrict civil society activism. GONGOs like Ana Usharek open up a corrupt and politically meaningless parliamentary system for youth's civic activism, while private youth NGOs are encouraged and given mandate to operate by the regime, while state iinstitutions continue to keep them in check.

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[47] Human Rights Watch. "Letter to Jordanian Prime Minister Al-Tarawneh Regarding NGO Funding," October 28, 2020. https://www.hrw.org/news/2012/07/20/letter-jordanian-prime-minister-al-tarawneh-regarding-ngo-funding.

Conclusion: Bridging the Literatures on Autocracy and Neoliberalism

This dissertation has analyzed changing modes of youth governance in Jordan. I have illustrated that in the place of distributive state institutions, a new set of political entities called Government-Operated NGOs (GONGOs) have emerged in Jordan (and beyond). Often funded by regimes, GONGOs operate semi-independently and ostensibly in civil society. With their hybridity and elusiveness, GONGOs challenge how scholars think about autocracies as typically seeking to dominate the public sphere and assert citizen dependence on formal state institutions. GONGOs have emerged as many autocracies—whether austerity-stricken, hydrocarbon-reliant, or post-communist—have scaled back distributive commitments by shrinking public sector employment schemes, subsidies, and welfare provisions, threatening the citizen acquiescence that was cultivated for decades by enmeshing citizens in relations of dependence.

Through an analysis of Jordanian youth GONGOs, I have tried to address the puzzle of why autocracies clothe themselves in unofficial garb through GONGOs. Existing explanations highlight either coercion—that GONGOs' hybridity allows regimes to operate in civil society and crowd out independent actors—or legitimacy—that GONGOs help project a veneer of pluralism to both international and national audiences. In contrast, I have argued that GONGOs help manage changing expectations of the state and citizens aspirations in the context of autocracies' abandonment of distribution and welfare. First, GONGOs shift the locus of interpellation—the site of the state's address of citizens—away from the state itself. This decentering of the state responsibilizes citizens to care for themselves and privatizes hopes and aspirations. Second, GONGOs help insulate the regime from citizens' claims-making by displacing the state as the unitary object of grievances and frustrations. The kind of acquiescence that GONGOs produce rests not on legitimacy or coercion but on persuading citizens not to regard the state as an irredeemable stumbling block to individual flourishing, even amidst extreme economic uncertainty. In making these arguments, this dissertation has focused particularly on Jordanian youth, a group uniquely targeted by GONGOs because by having growing aspirations unmet by an increasingly uncaring and neglectful state, their frustrations are particularly threatening to regime stability.

After the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 built on archival research to analyze the evolution of Jordanian youth governance as the regime has abandoned autocratic welfarism in favor of autocratic neoliberalism. I illustrated that in early nation-state building, the Ministry of Youth emerged as a key institution organizing youth lives while reminding them of the Hashemite regime's benevolence. However, after the end of state care beginning in the 1980s, the state became part of a terrain of hopelessness and disengagement rather than state care and munificence. In response, youth governance began to circumvent the Ministry of Youth to promote self-reliance and responsibilized citizenship through GONGOs. Chapter 3 illustrated how GONGOs help the Jordanian regime reckon with the strong currents of youth radicalism emerging from the Arab uprisings and their Jordanian variants. In GONGOs that are sufficiently separate from the coercive core of the state, the regime can flexibly address youth as agentive and empowered without undermining core regime narratives around beneficence and traditional legitimacy. Chapter 4 analyzed what I call the broader moral economy of self-reliance—circulating in GONGOs and regime discourse, but also in TV shows, social media, and local vernacular—illustrating that Jordanian youth today must navigate not only claims about what they should be able to expect from the government but also moral claims about why it is wrong to rely too much on the government. I elucidated how the moral economy of self-reliance helps neutralize—and create ambivalences around—the decades-old state-centered moral economies in Jordan of economic rights, rights to subsistence, and the government's responsibility to protect citizens from economic risks.

Chapter 5 analyzed contemporary GONGOs' efforts to get youth to extricate themselves from state dependence by way of entrepreneurship. Studying GONGO-run entrepreneurship competitions, I demonstrated that GONGOs' decentered site of address helps make credible the promises of individual entrepreneurship even amidst extreme economic uncertainty. Finally, Chapter 6 followed young civic activists in GONGOs and NGOs. It argued that GONGOs' enable the regime balance its contradictory policies of simultaneously fostering and restricting civil society.

Theoretical Implications

Through the analysis of Jordanian youth GONGOs, I hope to contribute to making sense of the increasing entanglements between contemporary autocracy and neoliberalism. Indeed, a major goal of this dissertation is to connect the literatures on evolving autocratic institutions and governing techniques, on the one hand, to the literature on the global political economy and culture of neoliberalism, on the other hand. Exploring these entanglements has become a vital analytical enterprise. After experiencing several waves of democratization, today, according to most measures, the world is getting more authoritarian. At the same time, neoliberal capitalism—both as a macroeconomic policy program and an ideology that seeks to install competition and enterprise into almost every facet of life—is sweeping the world.

As autocracies became less totalitarian, scholars have turned away from ideology and coercion to explain authoritarian stability in favor of how autocracies rely on institutions to manage elite coalitions and facilitate social control (among the broader populace). Most notably, scholars have looked at how autocracies manage support coalition by distributing resources in parliamentary elections.[1] Scholars have noted that authoritarian regimes with parliamentary institutions have longer life spans and are less likely to experience civil conflict than counterparts without parliaments.[2] Others have highlighted the central role of ruling parties[3] and institutions of universal welfare in stabilizing autocracy.[4]

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[1] Lust-Okar (2006), Gandhi and Lust-Okar (2009), Blaydes (2011),

However, the literature on autocratic institutions has largely overlooked how citizens in most autocracies today are more exposed to global economic forces than was previously the case. The process of free-market expansion—the reduction of trade barriers, the shift of risk away from states and firms and towards individuals and families, and the spread of global neoliberal cultural norms—is one of the more vital transformations underway in the world today. It is well documented how neoliberal global transformations have generated new vulnerable populations through expanding economies of abandonment, expulsion, and abjection.[5] A growing literature has analyzed the effects of such economies of dispossession on young people around the world who are having to cope with extended periods of unemployment, "waithood," and what I have called youth's surplus status in relation to capital and the state.

Yet, even though scholars have registered how autocracies are "recombining," "liberalizing," and "upgrading" in the face of new global conditions,[6] the literature has almost exclusively focused on regimes' elite coalition-building: how regimes integrate the winners and ostracize the losers of economic reform,[7] a development also seen in Jordan.[8] In contrast, there are few studies of how evolving autocratic institutions recruit, interpellate, and enlist economically vulnerable groups. This dissertation has sought to provide insight into how, following the decline of the state-centered global orders, regimes must govern economically vulnerable citizens differently. Rather than satisfying their needs, securing their subsistence, and protecting them from global economic risk, regimes today increasingly have to manage the repercussions of economic uncertainty. I exemplify this by Jordanian youth who suffer from the absence of state care, which used to insulate Jordanians from global competition in labor markets and from global shifts in commodity prices. In particular, I have shown that managing expectations and aspirations is a critical area of concern for autocracies as regimes must build acquiescence not only among those youth materially invested in market reforms but also among those dispossessed and impoverished by it.

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[2] Gandhi and Przeworski (2001), Gandhi and Vreeland (2004).

[3] Gandhi (2010), Magaloni (2008).

[4] Knutsen and Rasmussen (2018).

[5] Povinelli (2011), Ferguson (2006), Sassen (2014).

[6] Brumberg (2002), Heydemann (2007), Heydemann and Leenders (2011).

[7] Heydemann (2007), Piro (1998), Valeri (2013).

[8] Bank & Schlumberger (2004), Carroll (2001), Peters and Moore (2009), Piro (1998).

This does not mean that scholars have ignored these economically vulnerable groups and how they endure, cultivate hopes, and adapt expectations in neoliberal authoritarian states. Scholars have studied how meritocratic ideals, education, and choice in the labor market keep citizens tied to hopes despite poor outlooks.[9] However, these studies rarely identify how these aspirations and changing expectations come into being in particular institutional contexts. By situating my study in hybrid regime institutions—GONGOs—I have sought precisely to make sense of how expectations and aspirations are renegotiated within particular modes of state-making and unmaking. Here, GONGOs provide an ideal vantage point through which to explore how citizens experience, adapt to, and occasionally resist the increasingly amorphous and sometimes illegible modes of governing. Rather than taking state institutions as preconfigured unitary objects, I have sought to understand how GONGOs reconfigure both the material and symbolic fabrics of the state. My interpretive methods help reveal the ways in which actors experience the shifting nature of the state and how they shift expectations and aspirations accordingly.

Studying changing governing technologies and state imaginings in the neoliberal era is not a unique approach. For example, scholars have looked at how neoliberal authoritarian states govern citizens in a variegated manner through logics of exception and how languages of the good life and investments in upward mobility have become ingrained in coercive-disciplinary regime governance.[10] Building on these scholars, this dissertation further sheds light on how managing expectations have become deeply ingrained in the institutional landscape of authoritarianism and its various projections of state power. Doing so, this dissertation also refixate the spotlight on social control rather than exclusively explaining regime stability through the lens of elite coalition-building. Understanding social control is becoming increasingly pivotal because, as Chantal Berman has asserted, authoritarian regimes today "preside over a larger, more diverse, and more mobilized civic sphere than in prior decades, and must update their survival strategies accordingly."[11]

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[9] Pettit, "The cruelty of hope." Shirazi, "Being Late, Going with the Flow." Hemment, *Youth Politics in Putin's Russia,* Hoffman, "Autonomous Choices and Patriotic Professionalism."

Finally, speaking both to comparative politics and political theory, this analysis of Jordanian youth GONGOs help scholars rethink the relationship between (neo)liberalism and autocracy. My findings on GONGOs speak to Jillian Schwedler's contention that we must start exploring how autocracies "simultaneously have become more liberal and more autocratic."[12]Arguably, GONGOs are part of a shackling of regime governance that is usually associated with liberalism. For Foucault, liberalism as an "art of government" emerged as a critique of the early modern police state, the all-knowing state that made claims to "know perfectly and in all its details the reality to be governed, and…its capacity to shape that reality at will on the basis of such a knowledge."[13] In this interpretation, liberalism is a kind of disavowal and stepping back from the claims to be all-knowing, omnipotent, and a natural feature in every citizen's life. Instead, liberalism, according to Foucault, prescribed a "self-limitation of governmental reason."[14] In his late lectures at the Collège de France, Foucault noted that, for the liberal state, "the principle of this limitation is not to be sought in what is external to government, but in what is internal to governmental practice."[15] Thus, for Foucault, modern governmental reason "consists in establishing a principle of limitation that will no longer be extrinsic to the art of government, as was law in the seventeenth century, [but] intrinsic to it: an internal regulation of governmental rationality."[16]

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[10] Ong, *Neoliberalism as Exception*, Wedeen, "Ideology and Humor in Dark Times"

[11] Chantal Berman, "Policing the Organizational Threat in Morocco: Protest and Public Violence in Liberal Autocracies." *American Journal of Political Science* 65, no. 3 (December 15, 2020): 733–54, 2. https://doi.org/10.1111/ajps.12565.

[12] Jillian Schwedler, "The Political Geography of Protest in Neoliberal Jordan," *Middle East Critique* 21, no. 3 (December 2012), 259-70, 261.

[13] Graham Burchell, "Liberal Government and Techniques of the Self," *Economy and Society* 22, no. 3, (August 1993), 267-282, 269.

[14] Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics Lectures at the College De France, 1978-1979*. (New York, NY: Picador, 2008), 20.

In this way, GONGOs establish a self-limitation internal to the state. More than simply window-dressing, GONGOs is a self-imposed restraint meant to curb essential parts of state governance. Doing so, GONGOs seek to both normalize a transfer of risk and hope towards individuals themselves while also narrowing the striking surface of citizens' frustrations and grievances. GONGOs are also indicative of the state's transformed raison d'être under neoliberalism. As Ilcan and Basok note, "the task of government today is no longer engaged in traditional planning but is more involved in enabling, inspiring, and assisting citizens to take responsibility for social problems in their communities, and formulating appropriate orientations and rationalities for their actions."[17]

By extension, this analysis of youth GONGOs helps to collapse enduring distinctions between liberal democracy and illiberal autocracy. In fact, many of the governing techniques analyzed in this dissertation emerge from advanced democracies. For example, the recurrent invocations of "the market" or "economic necessity" to justify the transfer of risk from institutions onto individuals, the responsibilization of individuals to look after themselves, and how, as Wendy Brown notes, austerity politics "removes a point of accountable power and establishes fiscal constraints or austerity measures as an incontestable reality principle"[18] have all emerged in advanced democracies. Indeed, as Wedeen has argued,

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[15] Ibid, 11.
[16] Ibid, 10.
[17] Susan Ilcan and Tanya Basok, "Community Government: Voluntary Agencies, Social Justice, and the Responsibilization of Citizens," *Citizenship Studies* 8, No. 2. (2004), 129-144, 132.
[18] Brown, *Undoing the Demos*. See also Cruikshank (1999), Foucault (2011), Muehlebach (2012), Rose (1990).

> “the disciplinary effects that may have originated in the market orientation of modern democracies—the endless cultivation of consumerist desire, driving ambitions for upward mobility, even the proliferation of philanthropic organizations that champion citizen empowerment by affirming the limits of citizens—have become to a serious extent independent of regime type.”[19]

Some scholars have even denoted “authoritarian neoliberalism” a global political force that makes autocracies more neoliberal and liberal democracies more authoritarian.[20] Thus, ultimately, studying neoliberal youth governance in autocracies may also help to trace the global convergences of regime types and, in turn, to question the utility of sharp distinctions between the categories of regime types themselves, taken for granted in much of political science.

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[19] Wedeen (2015, 9).

[20] Bruff (2014), Tansel (2017).

Appendix 1. Data Collection and Research Design

Sampling

This dissertation focuses on youth. For reasons that I already presented in Chapter 1, youth are an increasingly salient social group, due to both objective (the youth bulge) and subjective factors (the expansion of youth as a social category). Moreover, youth have borne the brunt of neoliberal restructuring in recent decades, which makes their grievances particularly important to manage and contain. Moreover, as new citizens come of age and have yet to form rigid expectations of the state, they embody the promise, from the regime's view, to renegotiate the terms of the social contract. In particular, I have chosen to examine urban, educated youth. While I traveled across the country (Irbid, Kerak, Mafraq, and Aqaba) to collect data, most of it was collected in the capital city of Amman and the surrounding cities of Zarqa and Al-Salt. Moreover, most of the youth that I encountered in GONGOs were students, graduates, or planning to obtain a college degree, presumably because educated youth were more likely to seek out GONGOs as a meaningful extracurricular activity.

In studies of Jordan, sampling is an important issue. The country has been historically divided in terms of geography, descent, class, and kinship. Thus, it is important to consider Jordanians' divergent backgrounds to understand their attachments to and detachment from the state. The divide between the West Bank (Palestinian) and the East Bank (Transjordanian) Jordanians is particularly salient. Overlapping with geography and class, the East Bank–West Bank divide has had an enduring impact on Jordanians' willingness to make claims on the state. While most major rebellions have emerged from rural areas with a Transjordanian majority,[1] Jordanian cities have been dominated by Jordanians of Palestinian descent with weaker links to the regime.[2] Moreover, Jordan's diverse population affects governance. Far from imposing uniform conditions on all citizens, the regime has unevenly applied policies and governed different populations according to different governing rationalities. Jordan's porous borders, waves of refugee intake, and inclusion in regional power struggles further require a responsive state apparatus that can govern different populations according to different logics.[3]

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[1] Salt and Kerak in the 1970s, and Maan in 1988 and 2002. "Maan : an Open-Ended Crisis," *Center for Strategic Studies Publications, University of Jordan*, June 11, 2012, Accessed July 8, 2023. https://jcss.org/803/maan-an-open-crisis/.

Even within this context, situating the study among urban, educated youth made sense for several reasons, primarily because multiple social and economic developments suggest that the average future citizen will be an urban dweller with aspirations of middle-class employment. By "educated," I mean those who have completed, are currently pursuing, or aspire to undertake tertiary education. Higher education is an excellent proxy for middle-class identities in Jordan and the broader Middle East. Yet, this category does not equate to economic prosperity, as it encompasses people who struggle financially and are part of what is sometimes called "the poor middle classes."[4] In Jordan, university graduates face a particularly difficult labor market.[5] For the regime and the state, it would be desirable in many ways if more Jordanians accepted the multitude of available lower-skilled jobs, which are often occupied today by migrants from Egypt and other countries. This would decrease unemployment rates and economic frustrations. However, demand for higher education remains consistent. Nearly two-thirds of Jordanians expect their child to achieve a university degree or higher.[6] The government has tried to ease the demand for higher education by reducing spending on this area.[7] However, this measure was compensated for by family spending on higher education, which rose by over 50 percent between 2002 and 2007.[8]

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[2] Myriam Ababsa, "Citizenship and Urban Issues in Jordan." In *Cities, Urban Practices and Nation Building in Jordan*, eds, Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Presses de l'Institut français du Proche-Orient, 2011), 39-64, 40, halshs-00652389.

[3] For instance, autocratic welfare in Jordan comes in two primary forms, forms that address the needs of different regime constituencies. Whereas public employment has by and large been reserved for the Transjordanian regime base, a subsidies regime was instituted to encompass larger social groups, including the majority of Jordanians with Palestinian roots.

[4] Pettit, "'Without hope there is no life'".

[5] The share of those with university degrees among the unemployed increased from about 12 percent in 2000 to over 30 percent in 2010. Assaad (2014, 9).

[6] Jon Hanssen-Bauer and Jon Pedersen. "Jordanian Society: Living Conditions in the Hashemite Kingdom." *Fafo Institute for Applied Social Science*, 1998.

[7] From 1.1 percent to 0.77 percent of GDP from 2002 to 2007 — a meager rate compared to other Arab countries like Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia. Shaker Jarrar and Yazan Melhem, "Society Undermined: A

Political-economic factors have forced many Jordanians that were previously excluded from higher education to invest in a university degree for their children. For example, a study by the independent Jordanian news outlet *7iber* showed that the economic viability of farming in the rural district of Dhiban declined in several waves from the 1970s onwards, which pushed residents to turn to higher education to secure future livlihoods. First, as the state expanded in the 1970s and 1980s, many children of farmers pursued employment in the military. The lack of available labor on farms and state subsidies for wheat led many farmers to shift from growing wheat and barley to more low-intensity farming, such as olive groves. The financial viability of farming further decreased in Dhiban due to the rising costs of farming, lower state support, and urbanization. In addition, the rapid expansion of Amman consumed considerable land—14 towns and 11 surrounding villages—and diverted precious water resources from rural production to urban consumption. Austerity meant that the state seized the opportunity to rent tractors to farmers, which it used to do for subsidized rates. Since many families had already switched to low-intensity farming, university education became the main destination for most Dhiban youth when the military could no longer absorb labor. Many farmers had to sell parts of their land or take out loans to send their children to university. While some secured stable jobs and moved to cities, many Dhiban residents did not find an outlet for their newly gained skills, which led some of them to join protest movements in 2011 and 2012.

Thus, as the case of Dhiban shows, the demand for higher education is extremely robust and continues to increase, partly because citizens take it upon themselves to invest in higher education when the regime ceases to care for them. As the Jordanian economy entered crisis

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Jordanian District's Road to Poverty and Unemployment," 7iber, April 9, 2019. https://www.7iber.com/politics-economics/society-undermined-thibans-road-to-poverty-and-unemployment/.

[8] Ibid.

mode in the 1980s, the higher education sector continued to expand and produce graduates. Demand for education continued to increase because rising unemployment levels made it impossible to obtain a job without a university degree. As the government was unwilling to spend more tax money on education, it allowed private education operators to meet this demand.[9] As a result, the number of students who attended Jordanian universities increased from around 30,000 in 1986 to over 100,000 in 1999.[10] Meanwhile, unemployment continued to increase far beyond the absorptive capacity of the shrinking public sector. In 1995, the minister of higher education, Ratib al-Saud, said in an interview with a newspaper *Ad-Dustour* that, "in the past, academic degrees were a ticket to a respectable position and that today they are a ticket to the unemployment supply."[11] Although a less educated population may have been more politically desirable, the regime simply could not affect preferences for higher education and had to accept its enduring appeal for Jordanians. Instead, through GONGOs and elusive governance, the regime sought to manage expectations and deflect attention away from its role in failing to deliver decent life chances to educated Jordanians.

The fate of Dhiban also illustrates the forces of urbanization and why it makes sense to study urban populations. Today, 82 percent of Jordan's population lives in urban areas, and nearly half of residents live in the Greater Amman-Russeifa-Zarqa conurbation (2.9 million out of a total of 6.5 million people in 2010).[12] Moreover, in urban areas, communities are increasingly intermingling, and tribal and other identities are weakening, according to some reports.[13] Extrapolating about Jordanian politics from a study on the urban educated runs counter to most previous research on Jordan. When studying Jordanians' responses to the state's declining distributive commitments, scholars have routinely focused on communities in which the highest political resistance is found: rural areas in general,[14] Maan,[15] and Hay Al-Tafileh.[16] Although this does not mean that urban dwellers have been quiet or that their protests (e.g., the June 2018 uprising have been ignored,[17] there is a tendency to locate a unique Jordanian recalcitrance in the rural, Transjordanian subject and to analytically privilege a type of actor with deep attachments to the state and who is irredeemably primed to pay attention only to state care. While these studies have brought crucial attention to Jordanians' changing relationship with state power in the face of neoliberal dislocation, overgeneralizing about Jordan based on studies of rural communities becomes problematic, given urbanization and the demand for higher education. Instead, this dissertation is concerned with the increasingly urbanized and communally integrated (between East Bankers and West Bankers) majority of youth who continue to directly suffer from neoliberal transformations, including a reduction in public sector employment, the casualization of employment conditions in the private sector, the rising costs of living (especially in urban areas), and skyrocketing youth unemployment.

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[9] From 1993 to 2008, the number of students enrolled in private universities grew from 7,000 to 57,000 students. Jarrar and Melhem, "Society Undermined." Anyone who has traveled around Jordan will note the surprising number of private universities that have sprung up almost across the country.

[10] Willy Jansen, "Gender and the Expansion of University Education in Jordan," *Gender and Education* 18, no.5 (November 2006), 473-490, 475, DOI: 10.1080/09540250600881600

[11] Yitzhak Reiter, "Higher Education and Sociopolitical Transformation in Jordan," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 29, no. 2 (November 2002), 137-164, 143, 10.1080/1353019022000012641

[12] As Miryam Ababsa notes, the "Jordanian city has historically contributed little to nation building, or to the emergence of the citizen, the decisive factor being direct allegiance to the Hashemite monarchy. Ababsa,"Citizenship and Urban Issues in Jordan," 45.

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[13] Jon B. Alterman, "Ties That Bind: Family, Tribe, Nation, and the Rise of Arab Individualism," Center for Strategic and International Studies, January 27, 2021, https://www.csis.org/analysis/ties-bind-family-tribe-nation-and-rise-arab-individualism.

[14] Sara Ababneh, "The Struggle to Re-Politicize the Political: The Discourse on Economic Rights in the Jordanian Popular Movement 2011-2012," Youth Politics in the Middle East and North Africa, *POMEPS STUDIES* 36 (November 2019).

[15] José Ciro Martínez, "Ambivalent States: Paradoxes of Subjection in the Jordanian South," Environment and *Planning C: Politics and Space* 41, no. 2 (November 5, 2022): 392–407, https://doi.org/10.1177/23996544221136708.

[16] Yazan Doughan, "Corruption, Authority and The Discursive Production of Reform and Revolution in Jordan," (Ph.D. Diss., University of Chicago 2018)

[17] Schwedler, *Protesting Jordan.*

Methodology and Observable Political Effects

Broadly, this study adopted an interpretive methodology by examining the meanings that shape social actions and beliefs.[18] Interpretive political analysis aims to uncover central political phenomena by studying "what language and symbols *do*—how they are inscribed in concrete actions and how they operate to produce observable political effects."[19] Thus, studying GONGOs through the meanings that people attribute to the world that they inhabit meant looking for specific observable political effects, i.e. specific discourses and practices that I was looking for in the field. These observable political effects can be parsed into three aspects. First, I looked for processes of identification, the conditions under which GONGOs' elusive governance resonated with youth and was made persuasive within local forms of citizenship and identity. I tried to assess the extent to which participants imagined themselves as excluded or included in the ideals of youthhood promoted by GONGOs and the extent to which they envisioned their lives and made decisions around career choices and social engagement in relation to these representations. Moreover, I asked questions that could reveal how actors in the target group rationalized their own structurally disadvantaged social positions, whom they blamed for disappointments, whom they credited for their successes, and the extent to which engaging in GONGO programming gave meaning to being young in Jordan today.

Second, in addition to forms of identification, I looked for the ways in which GONGOs affected participants' practices. Concretely, this entailed an examination of how participants practically responded to GONGO recruitment: the extent to which they established businesses, altered life plans, volunteered, spent time in new parts of the city, and reevaluated spare time activities. GONGOs produced observable effects even when participants are not necessarily convinced by their moral and political tenets, but in instances when it structures practices and actions.

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[18] Dvora Yanow and Peregrine Schwartz-Shea, *Interpretation and Method: Empirical Research Methods and the Interpretive Turn* (Routledge, 2014). Lisa Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture: Possibilities for Political Science," *American Political Science Review* 96, no. 4: (2002) 713–28, Erica Simmons, *Meaningful Resistance: Market Reforms and the Roots of Social Protest in Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

[19] Wedeen, "Conceptualizing Culture," 714.

Third, one of the strengths of immersive ethnographic studies is that they allow researchers to examine ambiguities and contradictions and the types of political work that they do in the world. In the field, I tried to make sense of these ambiguities (e.g., living under an oppressive and austerity-afflicted authoritarian state and one's personal aspirations) and how they structured beliefs and actions. For example, how did participants amalgamate contradictions into coherent stories about themselves and society? Thus, my observable political implications—what I looked for in the field—consisted of these three phenomena: identification, practices, and ambiguities.

Data Collection

I spent seven and a half months conducting fieldwork in Jordan between October 2018 and January 2023. The most intensive fieldwork period was interrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020. I conducted the bulk of my research by immersing myself in GONGOs. Most of the evidence came from my work with the Crown Prince Foundation and its initiatives, such as Haqiq, the Hult Prize, TechWorks, and Ana Usharek. After some persuasion, I managed to arrange a meeting with managers from the Crown Prince Foundation, who generously granted access to all the foundation's initiatives. I also conducted interviews and observations with other GONGOs: the Jordan River Foundation, the Queen Rania Centre for Entrepreneurship, and the Princess Basma Community Development Center.

In total, I interviewed 62 Jordanian youth, 54 of whom were GONGO recruits. The remaining eight participants were connected to private NGOs, which informed the comparison of GONGOs and NGOs in Chapter 6. The interviews were semi-structured. I did not record any of them because I wanted to maintain the possibility of discussing politically sensitive topics. This strategy proved to be advantageous; in Chapter 4, I analyze how attachments to self-reliance often co-exist with strong apprehensions towards the regime. After each interview, I took extensive notes as soon as I was able to. Around 60 percent of the interviews were conducted in English, around 20 percent were conducted in Arabic, and the rest were conducted in both languages, depending on whether the subjects' English skills were better than my Arabic skills. I used pseudonyms throughout the dissertation to protect the participants' identities.

In addition, I conducted observations and participant observations on 54 separate occasions. I undertook most of these observation in GONGOs by attending—and sometimes participating in—meetings, group sessions, talks, workshops, and seminars. Specifically, these observations included entrepreneurship competitions (which I analyze in Chapter 5) and programming in specific GONGO initiatives such as Ana Usharek (Chapter 6), the Hult Prize (Chapter 5) and Haqiq (Chapter 3 and Chapter 6). My data from these observations and participant observations consists of fieldnotes, which I systematically took during and after these activities.

I developed long-term friendships with five of my young male interviewees. I regularly met with them over several years and continue to be in touch with them.[20] I followed their daily struggles as they navigated their expectations, dreams, and aspirations while enmeshed in the GONGO apparatus. Every Thursday night during fieldwork, I would meet up with one close interlocutor and his friends. Over the years, our conversations shifted from youthful ambitions and singlehood to economic frustrations, the trepidations of both broken and successful engagements to fiancées, fatherhood, married life, and the daily pressures of being an efficacious breadwinner. Other relationships were more static. I met regularly with a couple of the young men at their houses, or we went on walks along Rainbow Street in Jabal Amman or Sweifieh in West Amman. They consistently arrived with a new business idea, an opportunity

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[20] Here, I selected only young men. In the cultural context, I believed that as a male researcher, I would gain better access to young men because spending a lot of time with young women in non-work contexts would potentially be seen as inappropriate.

(*forsa*) that had unexpectedly emerged, or a new business relationship that they had formed—anything that maintained their hope that Jordan could be the staging ground for their future individual development. These immersive research tactics allowed me to go beyond the statements made by participants in an interview setting by observing their behavior, language, and practice in everyday interactions between the regime and youth. At the same time, I remained attuned to how participants navigated ambiguities in their own lives, which may be difficult to capture in interviews. The data here consisted of extensive fieldnotes that I took at the end of each day.

Some of the 54 observations and participant observations occurred outside GONGOs at sites and spectacles that were relevant to making sense of the broader landscape of youth governance. For example, I visited career fairs at universities, regularly attended a weekly discussion club in which interested youth gathered to discuss various social and political topics in Arabic, volunteered at a nature cleanup organization (which informed part of Chapter 6), participated in the youth-led conference Jordan World Youth Forum in March 2019, and visited state spectacles such as the commemoration of King Abdullah's 20-year tenure on the throne.

In addition, I consulted many documents, including the government press, government reports, governmental strategic vision documents, school curricula, advertisements in public spaces, and government social media communications. Indeed, social media has become an important research tool. I benefited from the openness of many organizations; government entities, GONGOs, and other actors were eager to address youth on websites where youth spend significant time, including social media. Even ministries such as the Ministry of Youth regularly upload videos of important events and ceremonies on Facebook. I followed multiple informants on Facebook and every GONGO, NGO, and organization that was relevant to the youth empowerment sector in Jordan, to the extent that most of my feed consisted of their statements and updates.

For Chapter 2, I also undertook more comprehensive archival research by collecting archival material on Jordanian youth governance from the Shoman Foundation Library and the University of Jordan Library in Amman. I gathered around 15 texts on youth governance, which ranged from publications by the Ministry of Youth to academic studies on youth from Jordanian universities and other documents related to Jordanian youth.

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