

Jordanians and palestinians living the test of times at the west bank essay

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This paper contains a discussion of the West Bank settlers particularly, the Jordanians and Palestinians.

The similarities and differences of the two cultures in terms of their practices and ideologies as well as their beliefs were delved into. An analysis on how the two cultures co-exist in the area despite its history of their fight for power over the West Bank is also provided. The paper also discusses on the conquest of the Israeli forces over the area and the effects of their occupation to the Palestinians and Jordan settlers in the West bank as well as their present economy. Jordanians and Palestinians Living the Test of Times at the West Bank West Bank, is a southwestern Asia territory that bound by the Jordan territory in its eastern portion and Israel on its north, south and western portions.

It is geographically placed seen on the western bank of the Jordan river. This territory was once part of Palestine but was formally annexed by Jordan in 1950. Jordan ruled the area until 1967 and during its rule, it granted full citizenship to Palestinians who were then living in the area (Encarta online encyclopedia, 2007). The armies of Syria, Egypt and Jordan engaged into a six day war with Israel, in 1967. The Arab armies were defeated and Israel took control of several territories occupied by Syria, Egypt and Jordan and such included the West Bank. In 1988, Jordan ceded to the Palestine Liberation Organization all territorial claims to the West Bank, however, this did not do much because Israel also tried to establish its rule over the area.

Israel imposed its laws in the West Bank governing the Palestinians in the process (Encarta online encyclopedia, 2007). The Israeli government

introduced various reforms and improvement in the area, however, not all of these reforms benefitted the West Bank inhabitants. The Israeli built roads for their exclusive use only, the Palestinians were prohibited from utilizing it. The Palestinians also tried to establish their claim over the West Bank against the Israeli government. The clash on the establishment of power in the West Bank, led to bloody uprisings. It was only through a peace convention in 2006 that Israeli government agreed to retreat its forces in the area (Encarta online encyclopedia, 2007). Majority of the population in the West Bank are Palestinian Arabs and 10 percent of the population in the area are Christian Arabs. Agriculture is the primary economic activity of the people because of the lack of more fruitful economic ventures in the area.

Most of the job opportunities can be found on neighboring Arab countries like Israel. The currency that are circulating in the area are the Israeli new sheqel and the Jordanian dinar. The dialects in the West Bank are similar to the Jordanian dialect (Encarta online encyclopedia, 2007). According to a Time magazine article, the Jordanian rule of the West Bank was more palatable for the Palestinians than the rule of the Israelis because they share the same culture. The Israelis were like robbers who took the Palestinian culture away from them. However, this does not mean that the Palestinians accepted the Jordanian rule with open arms. The two groups also had their share of uprisings in the quest of both parties to retain power over the West Bank area.

The Jordanian government invested heavily on the West bank even if this was already under the Israeli control because it had the aim of recovery. The

investment made by the Jordan government on the area somehow uplifted the economy in the West Bank, however, this positive standing in the economy did not last long as other wars and uprising ensued thus, crippling the area's available resources (Encarta on line encyclopedia, 2007) The Palestinians in the West Bank are the original settlers of the area. They were the original heirs of the West Bank before it was occupied by various conquerors, among them were the Jordanians and the Israelis (Encarta on line encyclopedia, 2007). Based on culture and practices, the Palestinians and the Jordanians are almost similar.

In terms of religion, both are attached to the Muslim faith. Majority of the Palestinians and Jordanians are Sunni Muslim, the largest sect in Islam. Others practice different religions such as Christianity, Jewish and the other Muslim sects (every culture, n. d.).

For the Palestinians and the Jordanians, the role of women is basically to produce children and tend the household needs, they are not expected to work beyond the house and perform the duties of a man. Rarely is a woman perceived to be of equal rank as that of a man especially in the olden days. It is only recently that the women are allowed to perform other roles besides the tending the house needs and the children. Many women now are part of the workforce and are even doing men's job.

This shift of ideology was not because of cultural influence from the West but because of the dire need for women to take these roles. Life is economically difficult in the West Bank and all efforts must be contributed to find work and provide food for the family (every culture, n. d.). Aside from these

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similarities, the two cultures also share the same belief in terms of courtship and marriage. They do not adhere to the Western style of dating and courtship. Their beliefs dictate that the man and the woman should have associated with each others families before they should enter into a romantic relationship. Courtship does not mean entering into a simple relationship-it means marriage (every culture, n.

d.). Marriage is an important rite of passage for both cultures. They usually celebrate this with a feast catering 200 to 2, 000 guests. A similar kind of celebration is also undertaken whenever a child is born, especially if the child is a baby boy. The Joradanian society has a higher regard for boys than girls.

The Palestinians share the same ideology (every culture, n. d.). It is also the practice of the Jordanians to build houses that are several stories high; this is in preparation for the marriage of their sons.

The sons who marry take their wives to the family home and live on one story of the house. The women take charge of the cooking as well as the household chores while the men do not contribute any effort to the household works as they are prohibited by their culture from engaging in such activites. The Palestinian men also do not do houesehold chores. They have high regard for gender roles and distinction of the sexes (every culture, n. .). People from both cultures are also very hospitable.

They do not allow their visitors to bring anything, they provide for all the needs and the guests are expected to consume all that they serve. People

from both cultures are also very formal and conservative, as compared to the Western people (every culture, n. d.). Most of the Jordanians and Palestinians also have a very good educational background.

There is a great number of them who have attended school in universities and finished college degrees. However, those who are in the West Bank do not have very good jobs because there are only a few high paying jobs in the region. Most of the educated serve in Israel where there is a higher pay offered and in nearby Arab countries which have better economies.

These Muslims, however, do not hold high positions in the countries that they work for because the priority are the local inhabitants. Aside from these they are not also given the same salary as to that of a local employee who hold the same position; they receive a lower salary. This practice can be attributed to the fact that the Israelis look lowly to the inhabitants of the West Bank, which happens to be a part of their conquered state until 2006 (every culture, n. d.). Among the dissimilarities in the culture of the Jordanians and the Palestinians is their heritage. The Jordanians have a country of their own—Jordan whereas the Palestines do not have a territory that they can call their own.

The Palestinians are displaced and most of them are refugees in different Arab countries including Jordan. The Palestinian territory in 1947 was divided by the United Nations into two—the Palestinian state and the Jewish state. The Palestinian Arabs who comprised sixty-five percent of the population then did not agree of the partition plan and as a result thereof, a war ensued. The Palestinian Arabs lost in the war while the Jewish state

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successfully established Israel in 1948. The Palestinians tried to establish their power in the area but they were not successful.

This failure has led to poor stature of the Palestinians in the present day (Encarta online encyclopedia, 2007). The water scarcity in the area also contributes to its poor economic standing, it lacks better resources that could provide for the needs of the people. The various uprisings and the surge for power in the area is also a factor.

Instead of concentrating on enriching their economy, the Palestines are busy fighting for their right to rule their land from the Israelis. The Israeli government played hard in giving up the West Bank leadership as compared to the Jordanian government which ceded its interests to the Palestine Liberation Organization. This cession of interests may have been a factor for the co-existence of the Jordanians and Palestinians in the area. Another factor may have been the fact that the Jordan government houses many of the Palestinian refugees in their country and their sharing of similar religious belief and culture.

The fact that majority of both cultures adhere to the same Muslim sect is a great factor. They do not have a clash of ideologies as compared to Christians and Jews who have great disparities in their principles and the ideologies that bind them. In addition, the Palestinian culture in the West Bank also have a great influence from the Jordanian culture because of its conquest of the area for nearly seventeen years and the curriculum that the education system in the West Bank region follows is patterned after the Jordanian curriculum. This type of curriculum may have been a factor in

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building a smoother relationship between the two cultures because they get to have a deeper understanding of each other's beliefs and background. However, it must be noted that not all those who have Jordanian citizenship in the West Bank are really Jordanians.

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