

Essay on protest movements in jordan

[Sociology](#), [Population](#)



Introduction:

The Arab Spring has brought about intrinsic changes in the way in which we view the countries which make up the Arab world. From relatively peaceful uprisings in Egypt and Tunisia to the bloodbaths in Libya and Syria (and to a lesser extent, Bahrain), we have seen the protests against totalitarian and authoritative dictatorships. In this sense, countries such as Jordan and Morocco have also experienced protests although these have been on a much smaller scale than those seen in other Arab countries and the countries' respective leaders have been quick to implement political reforms to assuage their respective populations.

Key events in Jordan

As already espoused in the introduction, the protests in Jordan have been relatively low key and these have chiefly focused on better living conditions for the population. One must remember that Jordan is quite a small country with limited resources and has been ruled by the Abdullah family for decades. Jordan's peace treaty with Israel also plays an important role for stability in the Middle East and this may also be seen as a factor for outside intervention to calm the protests. As explained the main focus of the protestors has been to secure relatively better living and working conditions for the poorer section of the populace who have been singularly hard hit by the recession. King Abdullah II who is a relatively young monarch has immediately sensed the pulse of the people and has put into place a number of social and economic reforms which have calmed down the protests although some issues, especially the one of democratic freedom still remain.

Social conditions:

Being a relatively small country, Jordan has potential to distribute its natural and human resources accordingly to ensure wealth creation. However, as so often happens, most of the country's wealth is concentrated in the hands of the very few although this has been changing over the past years. The country has also opened up to western exposure and the capital Amman is full of bars and discotheques while the young generation has full access to the internet. This relatively liberal regime has also assisted in burgeoning economic growth over the past few years although this has slowed considerably due to the recession which is quite understandable.

Medical tourism is also an area which is important for the country's economy and which has seen substantial growth over the past years. King Abdullah would be wise to continue protecting this important sector as it provides substantial opportunities for employment as well as increasing the country's economic resources and GDP. The population is relatively literate with levels approaching close to 100 per cent in the younger part of the population although there is still significant illiteracy in rural areas and among the older population.

Groups and movements involved in the protests:

Since there are quite a few political parties in the country, the issue of democratic freedom has not actually cropped up in the protests. However, only one part wields any political power with the others being largely marginalized and this is the Islamic action front. Some of the protests have seen the involvement of these other political parties but their effect has been quite minimal to say the least. Again, the protests centred chiefly on better

socio economic conditions for the poorer classes although Jordan remains one of the most economically successful countries in the whole Arab region.

Social media and its role during the protests

Social media was relatively absent during the protests in Jordan for various reasons. First of all, it was not necessary to mobilize large parts of the population for these protests as the bulk were quite content with the country's situation. Secondly, the protests were quite sporadic and disjointed and were nowhere near as intense as those experienced in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia. Youth's access to internet also assists them to become much more westernized in this sense and the need to turn to large scale social media mobilization was largely discounted in Jordan.

The country's future

Jordan is a small yet rich country although it lacks natural resources. It should continue to concentrate on its strong points which are medical tourism, the fact that it is an important transportation hub in the region and it can also act as a mediator between other countries such as Syria which is close to it. Otherwise the country can continue going it alone as it has substantial potential both economically as well as socially to continue advancing and making the most of the opportunities presented to it. King Abdullah and the ruling party should ensure that open democratic reforms are continually implemented and that eventually a system of multi party elections is implemented. If power continues to be wielded by the few then the country will possibly face instability and protests as the younger

generation clamour for further liberal reforms as is happening in other countries.

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