

Circassians in the Age of Nation-States: Stateless Entities, Banal Nationalism in the Pan-Islamism, Pan-Arabism and Territorial Nationalism in the Middle East

A Case Study of Circassians in Jordan

Research Background: Theoretical Relevance and Literature Review

- **The Context and the Literature**

The Middle East's heterogeneity, like many other regions in the world, is derived from the existence of various ethnic, national, religious groups and sects, and "much of the troubles facing this region revolve around the treatment or mistreatment of its minority population." (Kumaraswamy, 2003: 244). However, because of the religious nature and history of the Middle East, it contains many ethnic groups which maintained their cultural heritage and uniqueness. Circassians are one of those groups who migrated from Circassia, which is a historic region that encircled approximately the whole area between the Black Sea, the Kuban River, and the Caucasus, and resided in Turkey, Syria, Israel, Iraq and Jordan.

Circassians are almost forgotten, because one cannot find a country, a place or a state called Circassia in maps of the contemporary world. The Circassians are Muslims, who are called Cherkess in Russian and their native term is Adygey. Circassians were Christianised in the Age of Byzantine during the fifth and the sixth centuries. However, they all adopted Islam to become part of the Ottoman Empire to defeat the Russian Armies. In 1829 the Ottoman Turks had to give up Circassia to Russia. At this time the Circassians occupied almost the entire area between the main Caucasian range, the Kuban River, and the Black Sea. After the Russian invasion of the area, about 400,000 Circassians migrated to Turkey (1861–64). Today there are large Circassian groups in Turkey, Syria, and Jordan (For Historical Background See, Shenfield, 1999).

Circassians first arrived in Jordan in 1878 and they resided in Amman, Wadi Seer and Na'ur. Circassians also reside in Jerash, Sweileh, Zarqa, Azraq and other parts of northern

Jordan, and there are about 80,000 Circassians in Jordan. The existence of Circassians in Jordan occurred before Jordan became a constitutional state ruled by King Abdullah I in 1928 under British rule. Furthermore, on May 25th, 1946, Jordan became independent and became known as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Thus, Circassians in Jordan went through the processes of building Jordan as an independent nation-state.

The creation of nation-states in Europe was “a reaction to centralised international authority. Its establishment, which many writers date from the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, constituted a rejection of the universalist pretensions of the Holy Roman Empire and created an international system... to defend the sovereignty and independence of separate states” (Nau & Lester, 1985: 44). Many scholars consider the settlement of The Peace of Westphalia the starting point of the establishment of the modern European state system as “within three centuries it became a near universal ideal... pursued in all parts of the world” (Oommen, 1997: 4). The creation of nation-states in the Middle East followed, after the fall of a centralised religiously based authority that was represented by the Ottoman Empire. The destruction of the Ottoman Empire is considered by many scholars the fundamental change in the Middle East, (Anderson, 2002) as it led to the creation of nation-states and to the substitution of the rule of religion to the rule of nationalism.

However, the sort of nationalism that existed then was not Jordanian or Palestinian or Lebanese, it was Pan-Arabism. The failure of pan-Islamism, represented by the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, has meant that non-Arab Muslims in the Middle East were downplayed and people like Circassians, Kurds and Persians were excluded from the public and political sphere of the Middle East. The complex reality of Middle Eastern nationalism has been emphasised by the making of separate Arabic nation-states. This new form of nationalism is represented by the territorial form of nationalism rather than cultural or ‘ethnic’. In other words, instead of pan-Arabism, the unifying form of nationalism has become Jordanian,

Lebanese, or Palestinian and so on (Anderson, 2002; Khalidi, 1991; Kelidar, 1993). In Arabic language pan-nationalism is referred to as 'qawmeyeh' and territorial nationalism as 'wataneyeh'. This as Anderson (2002) puts it is a 'duality of national identity'. Moreover, both of the 'qawmeyeh' and 'wataneyeh' recognise no difference within the Middle East.

Nation-states in the Middle East are recent states. Murphree (1988) argues that nation-states in the Middle East are "historically derived heterogeneous collectivities thrown together by the processes of colonialism." (Murphree, 1988: 157) Furthermore, many scholars, such as Tibi (1997), have argued that states in the Middle East are "nominal states... These states claim to have the legitimacy of governments by the people. In being organised as nation-states, all Middle Eastern states enjoy international legitimacy. Internally, however, these states lack legitimacy." (Tibi, 1997: 205) The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, for instance, derives its name from the Hashemite family from the Hejaz region of Arabia, along the Red Sea. Thus, Jordan, originally, as a territory does not belong to the Hashemite family (Simon, 1974 & Anderson, 2001).

However, there had been certain strategies adopted by the Jordanian government to create a sense of national identity. In October 2002 the 'Jordan First' national campaign was launched for reasons of reinforcing the basis of a pragmatic, democratic state. 'Jordan First' "is a working plan that seeks to deepen the sense of national identity among citizens where everyone acts as partners in building and developing the Kingdom. It is also an approach that banks on past achievements and seeks to open new doors for policies and programs in development, education, culture, and communication and information." (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Jordan, 2004)

It has to be said that nationalism "is a historically based specific form of consciousness" which does not exist without the nation-state (Billig, 1995: 19). This form of consciousness appears when a bond between the individual and the state exists, and this bond is seen as a

psychological need for 'ancestral' attachment (Connor, 1994). Thus the nation-state accordingly is supposed to be ethnically based. Moreover; the creation of the consciousness and the bond means the creation of a collective identity that makes the individual a national (Billig, 1995). "The strength of nationalism derives above all from its ability to create a sense of identity" (Guibernau, 1996: 142). This sense of identity does not necessarily require the existence of a state. On the other hand, Gellner (1983) argues that nationalism emerges when the existence of the state is "already very much taken for granted" (Gellner, 1983: 4). Gellner's argument denies the existence of nationalism as a form of collective identity within certain social groups, such as the Kurds whom without the existence of a state "demonstrate a strong attachment to their Kurdish homeland and identity." (Joly, 2002: 8). However unlike Kurds, Circassians were able to demonstrate their loyalty to the Kingdom of Jordan and, at the same time, they were also able to maintain their language, customs, culture and traditions in relation to their identity _ privately though _ within the boundaries of Jordan as a nation-state.

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs "'Jordan First' is a project of renaissance and awakening. It stimulates the strengths of individuals and the society, consummates the work started by the predecessors and the early architects of the Nation and heralds a new era of economic, social, political, cultural and educational development. It releases the full potential of young Jordanian men and women and invigorates their ingenious work originating from their pride in belonging to their Homeland." Thus, this motto implies that 'Homeland' for all Jordanian citizens, including ethnic minorities, is Jordan which does not correspond with the so called need for ancestral attachment, i.e. nationalism and the need for a national identity.

Moreover, Shami's (1998) study on Circassians highlighted the fact that Circassians' identity in Jordan is different than those who resided in Turkey, as in Jordan they have attempted to adopt the 'tribal system', while in Turkey they have been considering themselves as a minority refusing to integrate.

Circassians were able to show their loyalty to Jordan by being trustworthy enough to be the ceremonial guards of the Jordanian royal family. Thus, the distinctiveness of the Circassian case derives, above all, from being able to participate fully in the building of the nation-state, Jordan, as Jordanian citizens and simultaneously maintaining their uniqueness.

Furthermore, creating a nation-state or drawing boundaries of the state is determined by 'subjective' or 'psychological variables'. "Nations are not objective communities...Instead they are, to use Benedict Anderson's term, 'imagined communities'" (Billig, 1995: 24). This type of national sovereignty "gives people their most important entitlement: a state that expresses their traditions, history and unity- their 'national soul'" (Luban, 1980: 392). Hence, 'Jordan First' as a motto can be interpreted as a desperate attempt to create a sense of unification and uniformity within the boundaries of Jordan to enhance its viability as a nation-state. Through 'Jordan First', the Jordanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs admitted that it is an attempt to make Jordan a melting pot, encircling all of its minorities under the umbrella of a Jordanian national identity. Ironically, Jordan's viability as a nation-state has been criticised, especially because the numbers of Jordan's biggest minority, 'Jordanians' of Palestinian origin, exceed the number of native Jordanians (Israeli, 2003). Thus, 'Jordan First' can be seen as a desperate attempt to enforce Jordanian nationalism and increase the viability of its existence.

Circassians have maintained their language, however, "language here is seen... as symbolic rather than communicative... the underlying general feeling seems to be simply an emotional and national one" (Al-Khatib, 2006: 4). This, Circassians' emotional and national attachment to their homeland, is what distinguishes Circassians and what is supposed to place them as a challenge to Jordan as a nation-state that propagates pan-nationalism and territorial nationalism. Moreover, Islam or pan-Islamism is the only shared characteristic between Circassians and the majority in Jordan.

Moreover, “throughout their life in Jordan, many of them have occupied important government positions at all levels, e.g. prime ministers, ministers, deputies, army and police chiefs, and have always seen themselves as co-founders of the country... they have enjoyed full citizenship rights and duties” (Abd-el-Jawad, 2006). Thus, it is important to study the role of religion in integrating or disintegrating minorities in the Middle East. Additionally, it is also essential to understand the effects of minorities’ participation in nation-state building, like in the case of Circassians, on their ethnic and national identity. The state is the political representative of the nation, while “the nation-state is the global norm for political organisation” (Keely, 1996: 1051). This means that the nation-state is what gives a nation its legitimacy to constitute a government, and even if a state contains more than one ethnicity inside its territories, it always tries to embrace them under the umbrella of one nation or, as in the case of the Circassians, under the umbrella of ‘Jordan First’. During colonialism, the state did not refer to the ‘nation’ in terms of political legitimacy; rather it referred to a ‘territorial state’ which embraces more than one nation. This legitimacy of existence or sovereignty of colonial states had been challenged by the peoples’ desire for self-determination.

Connelly & Kennedy (1994), argue that the new World Order, that is based on the hierarchies of the citizen, the nation and the nation-state, raises the possibilities of racial and ethnic conflicts. However, this is not true in the case of Circassians in Jordan.

Nation-States, however, are modern, “One may say that the birth and the maturation of modern times were marked by blending the tribes into nations; then by nations gaining political sovereignty, and by the replacement of dynastic realms with nation-states as well as the melting of their disparate subjects into nations” (Bauman, 1998: 3-4). Nations are seen to be a modern phenomenon which embraces modern expansions of capitalism, bureaucracy, urbanisation, industrialism, and secularism (Ozkirimli, 2000; Smith, 1986).

This makes the paradigm of the nation-state appear romantic and thus one would argue unrealistic, as the existence of the nation-state is not taken for granted, as the constituencies of the real 'nation-state' are not and were not a possibility. It has been stated that, "no society can remain culturally self-contained and isolated... the idea of national culture makes little sense, and the project of cultural unification on which many past societies and all modern states have relied for their stability and cohesion is no longer viable today" (Parekh, 2000: 8). The rationale behind this argument is that many immigrants do not wish to adopt and conform to the nationalism of the country in which they have finally resided. Preserving and keeping their cultural and societal traditions seem more consolidating for immigrants.

As a result of the resistance faced, many nation-states, like Jordan, tend to develop a sense of cultural cohesion and unifications through campaigns like 'Jordan First'. The importance of studying Circassians' identification and the role of 'Jordan First' derives from the need to understand the processes of nation-state building in the Middle East and the knock on effects of these processes on the Circassian Community as a culturally and linguistically distinguished minority in the Middle East. Moreover, it is also important to tackle the effects of 'Jordan first' on Circassians' ethnic identification.

Research Problem, Rationale and Questions

Many may argue that if Circassians are so integrated into Jordanian society why is this research so important? Doing this research has a lot to do with the complex context Circassians are placed in. First Circassians are not Arabs, and Jordan was based on the notion of Pan-Arabism, as Pan-Arabism was promoted and adopted in the first place by the Hashemite family. Thus, this would imply that Circassians are not integrated but I would suggest that they are. Secondly, Circassians became Muslims under the Ottoman Empire rule, which was pan-Islamist, but on the other hand, Jordan was based on anti-pan-Islamism. Finally, Circassians are fully-integrated and witnessed the building of Jordan as a nation-state though they are not Arabs, Christians, on the other hand, have an inferior status in Jordan, though they are of the same Arab ethnic origin (International Religious Freedom Report, 2006).

This research is an attempt to understand the complex reality lived by Circassians on daily basis in Jordan, and this will be done through answering the following research questions:

1. What effects did 'Jordan First' have on the Circassian community in Jordan? Is it a threat or a source of empowerment?
2. What is the main factor behind Circassians integration into Jordan? Is it religion? Or successful national campaigns?
3. How do Circassians identify themselves? Circassians, Muslims or Jordanians? To what extent does the strength of ethnic identification of the old generations of the Circassian community differ than that of the younger generations?

Theoretical Issues

- **Circassians' Integration: Islam the Transnational Religion. The Persistence of Pan-Islamism**

Pan-Islamism, as a term, is considered a modern phenomenon by western historians, as it had emerged by the mid 1870s (Qureshi, 1999). Nonetheless, Pan-Islamism has emerged into history as a phenomenon since the establishment of Islam as a religion (Ozcan, 1997). It entails that identities of Muslims have to be based, above all, on religion, rather than the 'nation'. In this sense, Islam is a transnational religion that identifies its followers as 'Muslims' and its community as ummah (Marranci, 2004). This further involves the denial of all the geographic, ethnic and national divisions amongst the people of Islam. Furthermore, it represented a shift from tribal, national paradigms of communities to a community that "could strive to transcend this base tribalism in the name of a greater unity" (Mandaville, 2002: 63). The start of Pan-Islamism started by the Prophet Muhammad's and his follower' migration from Mecca to Al-Medina erasing all the geographical and tribal boundaries that existed before.

Many have argued that the fall of the Ottoman Empire, which was based on the principle of Pan-Islamism, also saw the fall of the concept of Islamic ummah, and a restoration of the values of the modern nation (Keddie, 1969). Many have argued, and even concluded, that Pan-Islamism had been created by the Ottomans in order to create a sense of unity in the whole of the Muslim world in order to defeat the British armies. However, this needs to be questioned, as the idea of Islamic unity developed after the emergence of Islam. One must state that 'Pan-Islamism', as a term not a phenomenon, developed by the 1870s.

Nationalism in the Middle East, unlike Islam, is a modern phenomenon. Smith (1995) states that, "Modern nations are simultaneously and necessarily civic and ethnic" (Smith, 1995: 99). Following Smith's assumption relating to the nation-state, Ethnonationalism would appear to

be the basic element which nations are based on. Smith's assumption is further elaborated by Connor's statement;

Our answer, then, to that often asked question, "what is a nation?" is that it is a group of people who feel that they are ancestrally related. It is the largest group that can command a person's loyalty because of felt kinship ties; it is from this perspective, the fully extended family (Connor, 1994: 201).

However, this type of nationalism may not be achieved as no nation can remain self-contained and culturally isolated (Parekh, 2000). Additionally, "Not only are the ethnic populations of most states 'mixed', for most states have significant ethnic minorities and many are deeply divided; but the boundaries of these states do not often coincide with the extent of a single ethnic population" (Smith, 1986: 129). Furthermore, and throughout history, nation states are not ethnically homogeneous and have throughout history been involved in suppressing minorities, whether these minorities are transnational or are solely within the boundaries of the nation state. Therefore, one might say that ethnicity and nationalism are both social constructions, and even the psychological need for ancestral attachment is a social construction.

Transnationalism is a process of constructing social discourses which transcend national boundaries (Basch; Glick Schiller; Szanton Blanc, 1994). According to the romantic paradigm of the nation-state, "one can be a member of only one state and nation at a time." (Smith, 2002: 199) But with the emergence of transnationalism this seems unreal, as "Our focus becomes the manner in which migrants, through their life ways and daily practices, reconfigure space so their lives are lived simultaneously within two or more nation-states" (Basch; Glick Schiller; Szanton Blanc, 1994: 28). The emergence of transnationalism has been facilitated by the processes of globalization.

“Globalisation has increasingly eroded these national boundaries, and made it structurally impossible for individual nations to sustain independent, or even autonomous, economies, politics and social structure” (Robinson, 2001: 5). Globalisation as a term is one of “the most liable, fluid and slippery in its meaning and political implications” (Munck, 2002: 24). Therefore, for a better understanding of this term we must theorize it “as a product of technological revolution and the global restructuring of capitalism in which economic, technological, political and cultural features are intertwined” (Kellner, 2002: 286). Globalisation has been marked by the compression of space and time, by technological advances like planes, telephones, the internet, etc. made it “almost literally possible to have a foot in two countries” (Basch; Glick Schiller; Szanton Blanc, 1994: 23).

Hence, this erosion of national boundaries can be regarded as a countervailing force to nationalism and the nation-state. Therefore, studying the reasons behind Circassians’ integration should focus and critically analyse the role of other factors, such as religion, and critically assess the impact of national campaigns, such as ‘Jordan First.’

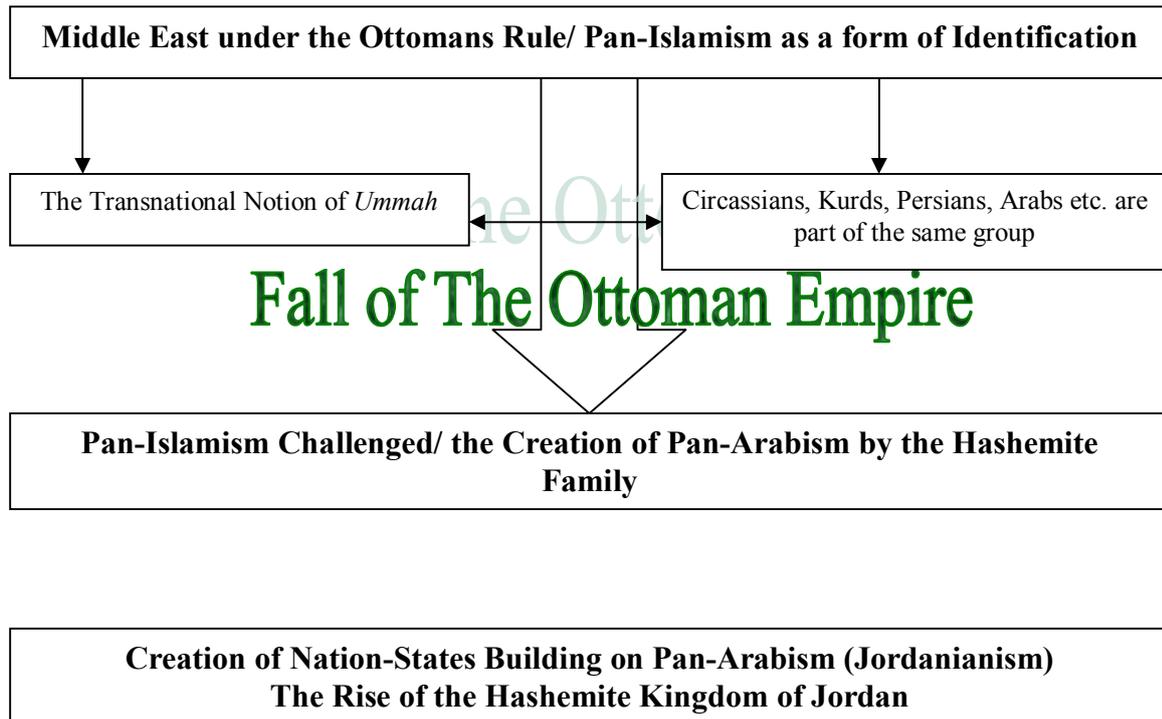
Moreover, while nationalism is being threatened by transnationalism; religion or in other words the transnational orientation of religions has been thriving and prospering. Ali (2003) stated that “in a world without nations or nationalisms, the Islamic identity came close to being a universal ‘nationality’” (Ali, 2003: 62). Ali’s argument presumes some kind of unity between the whole of the Muslim communities, whom are heterogeneous and of different ethnic origins. Roy (2002) also emphasises that Muslims are, regardless of their ‘real’ culture, sharing of a common Muslim culture.

As a culture and a civilisation, Islam is not only a monotheistic religion, unlike Judaism and Christianity; it is a way of life, (Lewis, 1993) “a system that encompasses the relationships of the adherents to each other and to their society from birth and until death” (Caesar, 2003: 1). Therefore I am hypothesising that the main integrative factor in the case of Circassians is

religion. Furthermore, and one of the main reasons behind my hypothesis is the inferior status of Christians in Jordan, though they are of the same Arab ethnic origin (International Religious Freedom Report, 2006). Haddad (2000), upon researching the Christians society in Jordan, stated Christians names in Jordan “are very authentic Arabic names and all of them can be traced back to the Arabic root... the people maintain their Arab culture and are proud of their ethnic origin” (Haddad, 2000: 140). However, Christians in Jordan are accepted as full citizens by law, but do not have the same level of social acceptance as Circassians in Jordan.

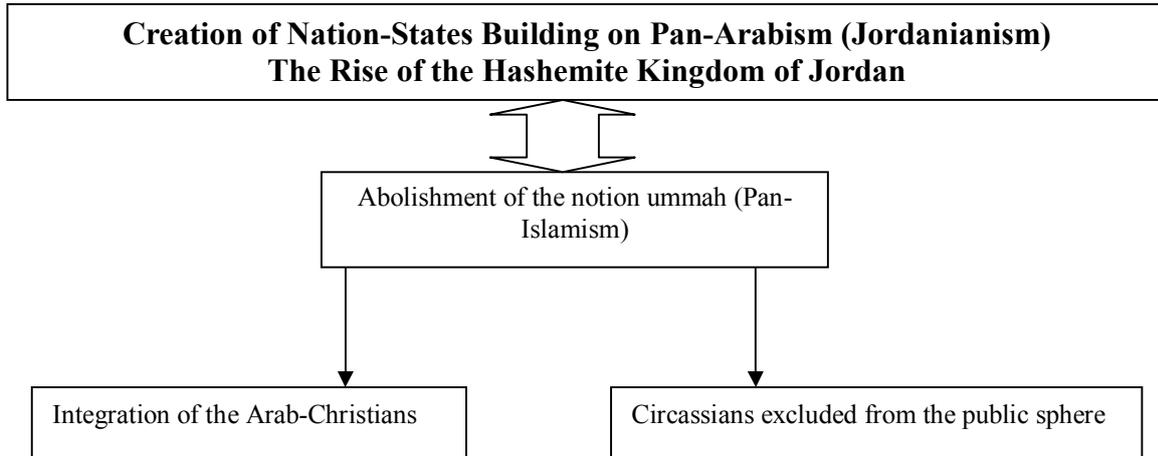
Hypothesis

The history of Middle Eastern nationalism is complex, and the creation of the contemporary form of it was not a straightforward process. The processes of creating Middle Eastern nationalism are explained through the following figure.

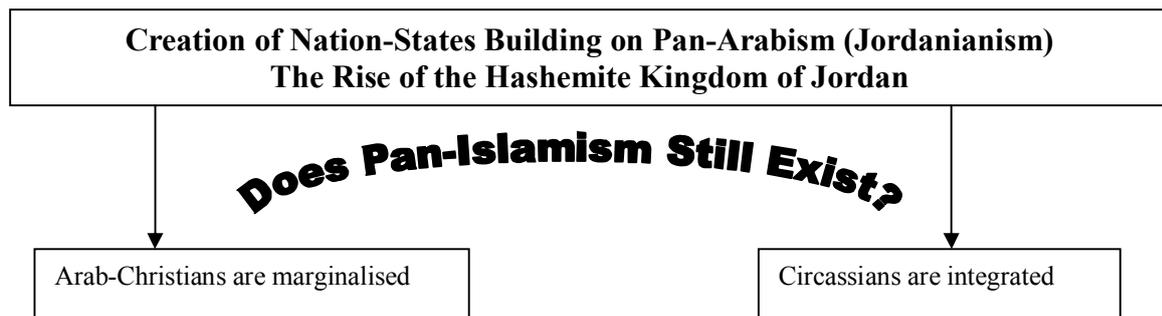


According to that historical profile, in theory, a group such as Circassians would be excluded from the social and political spheres of the Middle East. Additionally this would imply that Pan-Islamism has been defeated and that it no longer exists in the social structures of the Middle East. Moreover, this would mean that Arabs would identify more with Arabs, as a form of Pan-Arabism, or with people from the same '*Qawmeyeh*'. Building on the history of Middle Eastern nationalism, the structures at play when it comes to integrating societies would simply be 'Pan-Arabism' and 'Jordanianism', but data show that this is not the case. This is explained in the following figures.

What Would Normally Happen



What Happened in Fact



To explain the unique case of Circassians integration in Jordan, I have depended on the literature review to develop the following hypotheses:

- Circassian integration has been achieved through religion that is represented by Pan-Islamism.
- Middle Eastern nationalism is dual¹; however, religion remains the main 'behind the scene' force.
- Pan-Islamism and the concept of *ummah* still exist in the social structure and political sphere of the Middle East.

¹ There are two main forms of nationalism in the Middle East; the territorial form i.e. Jordanian, Palestinian, Lebanese etc. and the other is based on Pan-Arabism.

- National Campaigns, like ‘Jordan First’ in its current form, are a desperate and useless attempt to create a simplistic sense of nationalism, which has little relevance.

Research Design, Theoretical Framework and Methodologies

This research is based on a case study research design, in other words, it is based on the “detailed and intensive analysis of a single case” (Bryman, 2004: 48). The case study of the research is the Circassian community in Jordan. While case study research designs are controversial in terms of generalisability (Flybjerg, 2006), this research is not designed for the sake of generalisation. On the contrary it is designed for the study of a unique community that has a unique integration profile. Yin (1984) has identified three types of case study research design; ‘the critical case, the unique or the extreme case and the revelatory case’.

Furthermore, others may argue that “social science is about generalising” (Flybjerg, 2006: 219). However, I would argue that the study of Circassians as an integrated minority would help us identify the reasons behind their integration, and so apply these frameworks on other minorities elsewhere in the world. Following this aim, I would be using a critical realist approach, through critical realism we would be able to “understand- and so change- the social world if we identify the structures at work that generate those events and discourses” (Bhaskar, 1989: 2). This research will not focus on the social reality that Circassians are integrated into the Jordanian society; rather it will attempt to explain the social structures that led to their integration and maintenance to their culture and ethnicity.

Additionally, and as I have previously explained, this research is built on the hypothesis that in the light of the duality of Middle Eastern nationalism, Circassians integration has been achieved through religion that is represented by Pan-Islamism. Moreover, this research will also attempt to trace the impacts of national campaigns like ‘Jordan First’ on ethnic minorities. In respect of ‘Jordan First’, I am theorising that Jordanian nationalism is not a

factor which enhanced Circassians' integration; rather it widens the gaps between the majority and the minorities. Additionally, it jeopardises Circassians ethnic uniqueness. This is still a predictive theory, which I will be building on or invalidating through the field work.

The data collection process will take place in Jordan, and will depend basically on semi-structured interviews with Circassian respondents. The interviewing process is intended to be flexible, with an emphasis "on how the interviewee frames and understands issues and events—that is, what the interviewee views as important in explaining and understanding events, patterns, and forms of behaviour" (Bryman, 2004: 321). The sample will consist of twenty five male Circassians between the ages of twenty and thirty and twenty five females of the same age range, and twenty five male Circassians above fifty years of age and twenty five female Circassians of the same age range. I have chosen this framework for my sample because I am intending to make a comparison between older generations and younger generations of the Circassian community, for example a grandfather and his grandson, or a grandmother and her granddaughter. The interviews length will range between three to four hours.

For the analysis of the data I will use computer-assisted qualitative data analysis techniques, and the software that is to be used is NVivo. However, narrative analysis is the methodology that will be used in order to analyse the data. The use of narrative is important when researching identities, especially those ethnic and national identities are psychological and inter-subjective matters. Therefore a concept of identity should take "account not just of sociological processes such as social classification, boundaries and processes of identification, but also of strong emotions such as love, hate, shame, anger and so on which sociology either overlooks entirely or reduces to the social" (Vogler, 2000: 20). Moreover, identity represents a meeting point between social actors who are subject to processes of the unconscious and the society with all of its cultural, political and economic processes (Hall, 1996). Thus, it is

important to integrate a psychoanalytical methodology of analysis into the scope of this research. However, it is important to note that one should not focus on the individual aspect and ignore the social and vice versa, therefore, this research is designed to focus on both aspects.

Potential Impacts, Contributions and Policy Implications

This thesis will provide Western researchers with objective knowledge about minorities in the Middle East; I will be an outsider who will research a minority with objectivity. Furthermore, Circassians are an almost forgotten minority thus it is important to highlight their existence to the world, and that will increase awareness of their socio-political and cultural position. Circassians' ethnic and national identification has been continuously changing since the inception of their diasporic experience; hence, researching Circassians will provide a literature around nationalism and ethnicity based on a unique, distinctive profile of minority identification and attachment to the homeland. The research will also contribute to the body of knowledge about the role of religion and nationalism in the Middle East.

Moreover, this research will be policy relevant in the case of minorities, like Circassians, who wish to maintain their identity with their ancestral connections as well as with the state in which they reside. How does one avoid imposed assimilation, through campaigns like 'Jordan First' and avoid clashes which may emerge between them as a minority and the state and its majority? The research will also try to identify the downsides of 'Jordan First' and suggest alternative approaches, or improving 'Jordan First' as a campaign. Moreover, this research will benefit the Jordanian government in finding better solutions for integrating other communities in Jordan, such as the Christians and the Palestinians.

Ethical Considerations

This research involves a set of ethical issues that any sociological research would typically involve. Most importantly it involves issues of consent, privacy and confidentiality. This

research will contain interviews with Circassian respondents; it will not involve children, and the adults I am choosing for my research must be above 20 years of age.

Typically, respondents will be provided with data about the researcher, the research and its implications. Moreover, they will be asked to sign an agreement with researcher that explicates their consent, and their understanding of the research. The piece of paper will be printed, and prepared by the researcher explaining the research, the time interviews would take and their right to conceal their identities. Furthermore, after the transcription process, the respondents will be also allowed to read what they have said, and to sign again stating that this is what they have said during the interview.

Privacy and confidentiality will also be taken into consideration by the researcher. For example, I will be using aliases in order to conceal their identities. This way the respondents will feel safe and free to talk about how they feel concerning Jordan First, Pan-Arabism and Pan-Islamism. These ethical concerns lay at the heart of most sociological researches, and they are specific to my research as it involves some policy implications.

Practical Challenges

Negotiating access is one of the major challenges in the social sciences. However, in the case of my research the past few months have been invested in negotiating access. So far, I have four access points and I also have a back up plan. The first access point would be through my contacts in Jordan, as during my four-year stay in Jordan I have met a lot of Circassians whom I am in touch with until now. I have been promised access by my contacts. Moreover, I have also contacted the president of Al-Ahli Club, which is a Circassian club, and have been granted access through the club as well. The third access point is the Circassian Charitable Organisation in Amman, which is open to the public. The final access point will be through the University of Jordan where I have studied and where I also have contacts with members of staff that are able to help in granting me access to their Circassian students. The back up plan will basically be through meeting Circassians in streets, most accurately Wadi Al-Sir which is mostly populated by Circassians.

The University of Warwick provides a variety of facilities and utilities. Amongst those are telephone and fax, study space, audio-visual equipment, computing facilities, stationary, photocopying, and research training. However, these facilities are only provided to PhD students who will conduct their research in the UK. Nonetheless, supervision sessions will still take place while I am in Jordan through internet and phones.

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