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Twenty-five years after the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty hopes for a warm process of normalization and the development of a 'New Middle East' based on trade and trust died long ago. The peace treaty, nevertheless, still holds despite calls for its cancelation from a broad range of groups in Jordan. The cold peace and frozen normalization between Jordan and Israel in 2019 have become part of a new Middle East of regional conflicts compared to that of 1994. In this context, one should not be surprised to find that public attitudes in Jordan towards Israel and the peace process remain stable but negative.

How does this negative public opinion in Jordan influence the country's foreign policy towards Israel and the peace process? This article documents this stability in Jordanian public opinion by exploring results of public opinion surveys from roughly 1993 to 2019. That Jordanians generally regard Israel poorly should not be a terribly shocking finding. However, this review also demonstrates that the issue of salience of these issues plays an important part in answering the question of the influence of public opinion over foreign policy. The limits of salience of foreign policy issues in general and the growing number of other foreign policy crises in the region has had a substantive impact in allowing Jordanian foreign policy elites the freedom to ignore public attitudes in foreign policy decisions. On the occasions when there are spikes in public demands, the government has the ability to produce reactive, palliative polices rather than develop proactive foreign policies.

Public opinion and foreign policy

Most studies of the linkage between public opinion and foreign policy draw from the experience of Western democratic countries. Public attitudes translate into electoral outcomes that reward and punish leaders for their foreign policies. Nevertheless, scholars disagree on whether this mechanism can produce public constraints on foreign policies, if public opinion can prove constitutive of foreign policy, or if leaders can successfully manage – if not ignore – public opinion when making foreign policy decisions.[1]

In systems where foreign policy leaders are not elected, scholars have found that public opinion can still influence foreign policy decision makers – but perhaps with more complicated causal relationships between the public, leaders, and other elite actors. As I have argued elsewhere, public opinion has influenced Jordan's foreign policy in certain cases with the alignment of a constellation of five variables.[2] The first variable, the salience of the issue describes the 'relative importance or significance that an actor ascribes to a given issue',[3] to both the public and to decision makers. Measuring issue salience among publics is relatively straightforward – through survey questions in which respondents rank the importance of various issues.[4] In contrast measuring salience for decision makers proves more convoluted, requiring indirect

measurement through the coverage the media affords to a certain issue.[5] Media discourse, however, more directly measures debates among non-decision-making elite actors. Issues of high and existential salience to decision makers may render all public concerns about foreign policy moot, while the issue of moderate salience to both the public and leaders may allow for greater public input.[6]

Divisions among elite actors as to the best policies leaders should pursue generate debates that keep the issue alive in front of the public – especially in the media. If these debates produce a consensus in the media that filters through to the public – especially one that opposes the foreign policy of leaders – this provides a necessary condition for the influence of the public in foreign policy decisions. When opposition forces mobilize this now public consensus – through protests or electorally (in democracies) – leaders have to either constrain their foreign policies or try to silence the opposition. In a non-democratic, but liberalized, political environment like Jordan such a mobilized consensus can lead to domestic restrictions on political freedoms and participation.[7] When such maneuvers fail or prove too costly, then leaders tend to abandon or modify controversial foreign policies.[8]

Jordanian attitudes towards peace and Israel

Analyzing public opinion towards Israel and the peace process in Jordan provides a task fraught with difficulties. The first question is one of method. How can one access public opinion? Building upon my process model and that of Philip Powlick and Andrew Katz detailed above, studying different parts of the public opinion-foreign policy nexus requires different sources of data. Assessing public attitudes most commonly relies on surveys to tabulate individual attitudes of respondents. Dissecting media discourse in the public sphere most commonly produces data for studying the debates of elites in the public sphere. Thus, media debates reveal the emergence of opposition to foreign policies as well as when those dialogues produce a consensus. Finally, scholars of social movements who investigate processes of mobilization look for contentious behaviors frequently manifested through the repertoire of public protest and demonstrations.

Because of its focus on attitudes of ordinary Jordanians, this article foregrounds the first of these three methods – that of polling. Jordan is among the better-surveyed Arab countries (along with Palestine, Egypt and Lebanon) because of its degree of political liberties, the early development of academic and commercial polling firms, and acceptance on the part of the government that scientific polling can provide useful information about societal preferences. This article will rely on polls from a variety of sources – despite some of the reservations about survey sampling method and potential sponsor bias that may accompany some if not all of these polls. The aim of this article is not to assess the methodological *bona fides* of individual surveys. Rather it intends to present pictures of attitudes in Jordan taken over the past 25 years and explain their variation – or lack thereof.

Surveys of the Jordanian public have not routinely asked the same or similar questions on a regular basis about attitudes towards Israel or the peace process – especially by the same polling source. Nevertheless, putting difference sources together (with all the methodological issues of inference that could arise) we can see that Jordanians for the most part do not have terribly positive attitudes towards Israel.

It is important to note the divergence of Jordanian public attitudes in relation to Israel and the peace process. In the case of the latter, attitudes over the course of the 1990s faded from support to opposition and generally have remained there since. Evaluations of Israel, however, have remained mostly constant and negative over time.

With the announcement in August 1994 of the Washington Declaration, the declaration of principles towards a Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, a University of Jordan Center for Strategic Studies (CSS) poll reported to have found that 80 per cent of Jordanians supported the

Declaration with most expressing hope for a better economic future.[9] Attitudes of opinion leaders and elites while still supportive of the peace process were not as positive. Table 1 details Hilal Khashan's polls of professionals, both Palestinian and East Banker in origin, where majorities supported peace after the signing of the Oslo Accords (but not before) but not to the same extent as the public in the August CSS survey.

As Hilal Khahshan's results remind us, the Oslo Accords of September 1993 shook up the Arab consensus on Israel when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel offered each other mutual recognition. That the PLO moved on its own outside of coordination with Jordan at first caused King Hussein consternation. However, he quickly solidified a separate peace between Jordan and Israel as Arafat's actions lifted a constraint on Jordan pursuing its own state interests.[10] The Jordanian public thought the Oslo Accords would generally have more positive than negative effects on Jordan as revealed by a CSS survey conducted before the November 1994 Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty but published afterwards in February 1995 (see Table 2).

However, when asked to specify the type of effects (either positive or negative) that would occur, 'no effects' was the most common answer (80.2 per cent national/ 49.8 per cent opinion leaders of negative respondents, 54.9 per cent national/ 58.5 per cent opinion leaders of positive respondents).[11] The public was largely unprepared for the sudden movement of the peace process in 1993-1994 and thus maintained a generally negative view of Israel itself. Since the government announced that the peace process would deliver positive results for ordinary Jordanians, however, support for the peace process thus was much higher. Elites, driven more by policy and ideological agendas rather than personal financial concerns, remained more skeptical.

By 1997, these differences between public support for the peace process and elite disenchantment with it had become even more noticeable. A 1997 CSS poll showed that while 74.1 per cent of respondents in the national sample supported Jordan entering as a participant in the Palestinian-Israeli track of negotiations, only 58.4 per cent of opinion leaders supported it. In contrast, opinion leaders were almost three times as likely to oppose this.[12] In a related CSS survey on Jordanian–Israeli relations at roughly the same time, elites saw the relationship in less positive and more complicated terms (Table 3).

Table 1. Per cent supporting peace talks, among professionals, 1993–1994.[13]

	Jordanian	Palestinian	
	Fall 1994	**Spring 1993**	**Fall 1994**
Yes	66	26	63
No	32	51	32
Unsure	2	23	4
Number (n)	150	150	90

Table 2. Effects of the PLO-Israel agreements on Jordan, 1995 (per cent).[14]

	National Sample		Opinion Leaders	
Existence of Effects	Positive	Negative	Positive	Negative
Yes	45.1	19.8	41.5	50.2
No	31.8	58.3	44.3	36.4
Don't Know	23.1	21.9	14.2	13.4

Table 3. How would you describe the political relationship between the governments of Jordan and Israel? 1997 (per cent).[15]

Relationship	National Sample	Opinion Leaders
Very Close	7.8	6.5
Close	47.3	31.9
Bad	15.2	23.1
Very Bad	1.8	2.8
Other	16.2	30.4
Don't Know	11.2	5.1

Table 4. Degree to which you expect the Government of Israel to follow its treaty obligations with Jordan? 1997 (per cent).[16]

Degree	National Sample	Opinion Leaders
Great	5.4	6.0
Middling	30.2	31.1
Low	19.9	26.6
Will not follow its obligations	32.7	32.0
Don't Know	11.1	4.0

While more of the public saw that Jordan's relationship with Israel would bring economic benefits (50.4 per cent) than not (38.1 per cent), opinion leaders saw the opposite (35.4 per cent to 58.1 per cent).[17] As Table 4 details, however, elites and the public had little faith that Israel would follow through in its treaty obligations to Jordan.

As explained elsewhere, public support for the peace process began to decline for three main reasons.[18] The government sold peace as a solution for Jordan's economic woes but the promised economic benefits failed to materialize. Efforts to protest at the process of normalization helped unite opposition groups, leading the government to curtail democratization and political freedoms. Finally, actions by various Israeli governments towards the Palestinians and even towards Jordan reinforced skeptical attitudes and distrust of Israel.

Thus by 1999, Khahshan found that 70.5 per cent of his Jordanian respondents personally did not want peace with Israel.[19] In a survey by Zogby International in April 2002, only 5 per cent of Jordanians polled had a positive view of Israel while 89 per cent had an unfavorable view. Percentages of positive views of China, France, Iran, and Japan were at least ten times higher in Jordan.[20] Yet, 64 per cent of James Zogby's 2002 respondents still saw that peace in the region would likely be achieved within five years. In contrast, three years later that percentage to the same question had fallen to 43 per cent.[21]

Attitudes towards Israel have continued to remain relatively stable and negative in more recent surveys. At the height of the Syrian refugee crisis in 2014, a CSS survey found that 64 per cent of Jordanian respondents (50 per cent in the sample of opinion leaders) viewed Israel as the state most threatening to the security and stability in the Middle East. This compares with Syria at 10 per cent (16 per cent for opinion leaders) or Iran at 7 per cent (9 per cent).[22] The Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in 2016 also found that Israel was the most threatening country to Jordan in the eyes of 38 per cent Jordanians – while 20 per cent saw no threat, and 10 per cent saw Iran as the most threatening.[23] By 2019, the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies found that 93 per cent of Jordanians opposed the diplomatic recognition of Israel.[24] Thus, outside of a brief window in the wake of the Oslo Accords and the Jordanian–Israeli peace treaty, attitudes towards Israel have seen little variation, while attitudes towards the peace process remained negative in the 2000s.

Questions of salience in public opinion

Based on the public opinion foreign policy nexus model, for attitudes to influence foreign policy the issues need to hold salience to the public, in other words be seen as important among the public. Thus, while surveys measure attitudes of Jordanians on issues like evaluations of Israel or support for the peace process, investigating the salience of the issues also proves important for assessing the impact of public attitudes. One can locate the salience of attitudes towards Israel and the peace process at two levels. The first compares attitudes about the salience of foreign policy issues in general to domestic issues. The second contrasts the salience of attitudes on the peace process, evaluations of Israel, and the importance of the Palestinian issue to other regional foreign policy issues (such as the Syrian crisis).

Starting in the early 2000s, CSS polls frequently asked respondents to rate the importance of issues facing the country or to specify what important issues were for the government to deal with. Because of changing question wording over time, however, we do not have a standard index of issue salience in the same way CSS polls evaluate support for democracy or levels of confidence in the various Prime Ministers and their cabinets. Often of the dozen or more issues of importance that respondents have to rank their salience, a variety of types of issue, domestic, regional, and international, on economic, social and political topics often reflect a concern for 'pocketbook' issues. These personal and often concrete and short-run economic issues provide more salience for their simplicity and immediacy. Foreign policy issues – short of war and terrorism – often lack a sense of urgency. In this, Jordanians prove similar to other publics such as in the United States, where foreign policy issues generally rank as less salient than domestic and economic issues.[25] Figure 1 demonstrates this lack of salience of foreign policy in Jordan relative to economic issues that have a direct and immediate personal effect like unemployment since 2001 in CSS polls. Because of varying question wording, the four categories of issues cover different configurations of specific issues. Nevertheless, general foreign policy issues barely approach the salience of these other types of issues.

Other polls compare attitudes on the peace process, evaluations of Israel, and the importance of the Palestinian issue to other foreign policy issues, such as evaluations of the threat Iran or the importance of the conflict in Syria. Table 5 shows the salience of various issues related to the peace process, Israel or Palestine, or foreign policy in general. Both Zogby and CSS polling asked respondents to rate the importance of these issues alongside or relative to other issues facing the country or the region. In the early 2000s, and even in 2014, questions related to the peace process and Palestine ranked near the top of important issues facing the country or region. In recent years, however, other regional or national issues have eclipsed the salience of the peace process and Palestine/Israel. As with with Figure 1, these issues compete with domestic
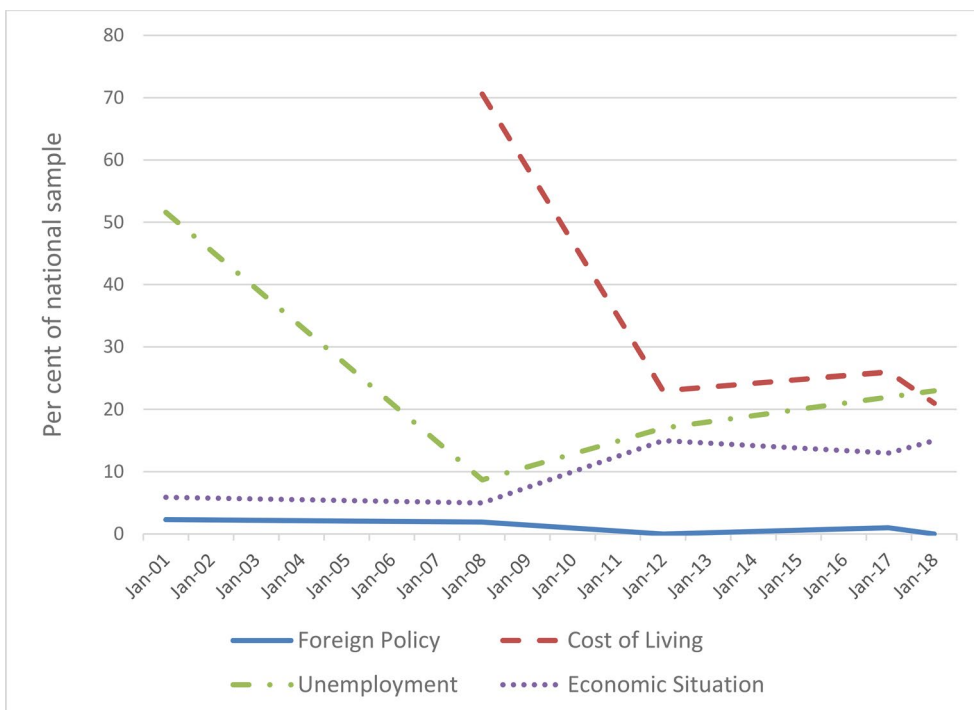

Figure 1. Greatest problem facing Jordan / top issue for government to work on.[26]

Table 5. Importance of issues to the country or region.

| Date	Issue	To	Rank	Per cent
Zogby Polling				
2002[27]	Rights of Palestinians	Country	2 of 10	86
	Palestine	Country	4 of 10	83
2004[28]	Resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict	Country	1 of 11	n/a
2005[29]	Resolving the Israel-Palestinian conflict	Country	2 of 11	n/a
2014[30]	Greatest obstacle to peace in the region: Continuing occupation of Palestinian lands	Region	1 of 6	52
2018[31]	Ending the occupation of Palestinian lands and resolving the Israeli/Palestinian conflict	Region	3 of 3	Mean: 5.81/10
2019[32]	Palestine	Region	5 of 9	30
CSS Polling				
2018[33]	External political and security challenges	Country	15 of 15	0.0
2019[34]	'Deal of the Century' and the Palestine question	Country	13 of 17	0.6
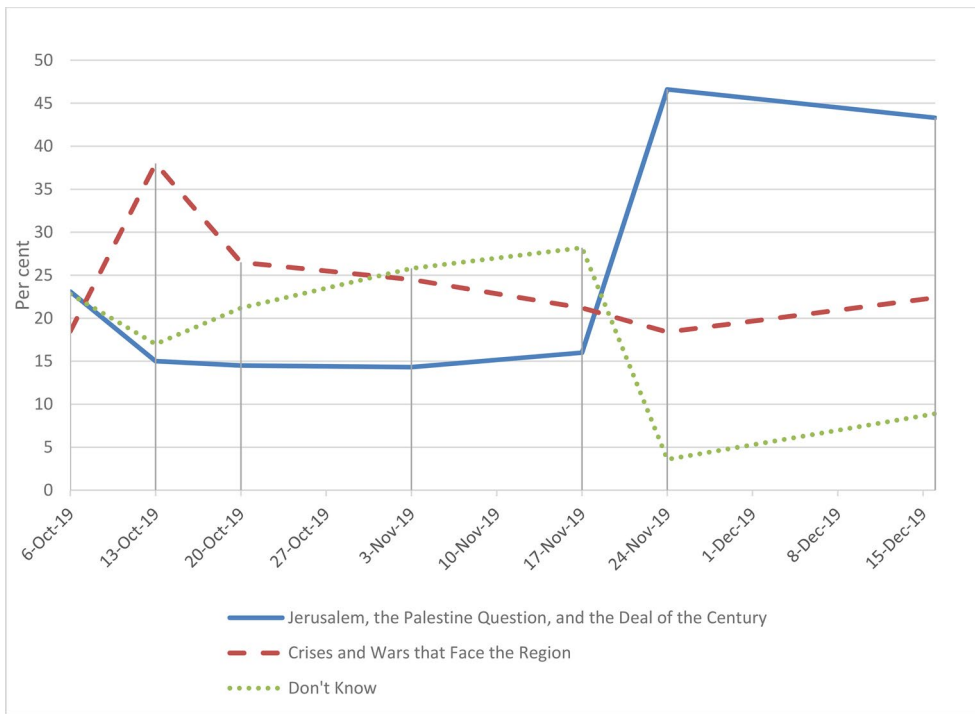
Figure 2. Most important issues facing the region – Fall 2019.[35]

and personal financial topics in reference to issues facing the country. However, we can also see that this salience has declined to foreign policy issues of regional importance.

One can notice a degree of variability in the salience of these issues at both the country and regional levels. Figure 2 aggregates CSS polling from late 2019 on the salience of regional issues. As the graph demonstrates, the salience of regional wars and crises and issues related to the question of Palestine and the peace process rise and fall in somewhat dramatic fashion over the last three months of 2019.

The volatility reported in Figure 2 across this short time period also demonstrates the impact of the timing of surveys when asking about contemporaneous events. During October and November of 2019, there were sustained media attention and demonstrations about two Jordanians detained by Israel, Hiba Labadi and Abd al Rahman Meri, whom Israel released after significant diplomatic activity by Jordan's government.[36] Also with the twenty-fifth anniversary

of the Jordanian–Israeli treaty, Jordan took back possession of land that it had leased to Israel under the treaty.[37] Finally, on 18 November, the Trump administration announced that it would not view Israeli settlements in the West Bank as violating international law.[38] A few weeks earlier, the United States withdrew its troops from northern Syria leading Turkey to attack Kurdish opposition groups. In other words, the salience of attitudes followed current events – with a bit of a time lag.

Nevertheless, over the long run it is still possible to identify larger trends. First, the salience of domestic issues in Jordan generally exceeds that of foreign policy issues. Second, that the salience of the Palestinian issue, the peace process and attitudes towards Israel while still prominent have also been joined by a host of other regional issues in their salience. This relative decline in salience will have effects on the place of public opinion in Jordan's foreign policy towards Israel and the peace process – despite relative stability in the highly negative attitudes that ordinary Jordanians hold towards Israel. Before discussing those effects, one can note some of the limits on our understanding of both attitudes towards Israel and their salience in Jordanian public opinion.

Questions of method and validity

Questions of methodology and validity provide some limits to our understanding of both public attitudes and the salience of issues in Jordanian public opinion. Attention to survey methodology issues such the wording of questions, sampling frameworks and nonresponse present traditional challenges, if not problems, to assessing public opinion. Moreover, this review of public opinion research in Jordan also requires attention to differing attitudes between elites and the ordinary respondents as well as alternative sources of data – such as the press – for public opinion in Jordan.

That these survey sources lack consistent wordings of questions about Israel, the peace process, Palestine, or the salience of foreign policy is a methodological issue that has already been pointed out above. This limits the possibility of reliable comparability of attitudes over time. Moreover, with very few questions about salience asked before the 2000s this hinders our ability to dig deeper than reporting results across polls. Nevertheless, we do have some iterations of questions that are worded the same or closely enough to discuss trends over time.

Questions of survey samples and their representativeness also deserve attention. Are the sample sizes of respondents relative to the general population reflective of Jordan's diversity and demographics? Do the surveys sufficiently randomize their samples to be statistically reliable? Do pollsters report the methods used in sampling? This article places a premium on the CSS polls as the center is the most important academic survey research institute in the country and is run and staffed by Jordanians. The CSS has also conducted survey research in Jordan since the early 1990s. Finally, it also makes its results – and even sometimes data – publicly available. The Arab Opinion Index by the Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies in Doha, Qatar also provides well-regarded surveys – especially since many of the Arab Center's pollsters are alumni of the CSS. Both survey centers come closest to what one could consider the gold standards of survey research.[39] In contrast, polls by Zogby, while much improved methodologically over time, have more limited samples in Jordan. Polls by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and other think tanks provide usable results as well. However, their sampling frames are often even narrower. Moreover, local commercial firms often perform these surveys.

A less indirect methodological question that also limits our comparisons across time relates to sampling issues. The CSS polls make a distinction between surveys of the public as compared to elites – 'national samples' and samples of 'opinion leaders' in their terms – not all polls are as clear in distinguishing that their sample may be drawn from individuals closer to elites as compared to the general public. For example, Khashan's surveys in the 1990s tended to be of professionals. While this focus on elites has some virtues, one should be careful not to interpret

this as general public opinion. Even when attempts at adding disclaimers on the findings, there could be a slippery slope[40] from discussing attitudes of 'some' Jordanians to 'many' Jordanians to 'Jordanians'.

The analysis of differences between the attitudes of opinion leaders and publics often reveals two themes. On one hand, elites tend to have more knowledge about issues and thus have formed more defined opinions about them while publics display a greater likelihood to offer a 'do not know' answer to questions. In a number of the polls in Figure 1, the opinion leaders surveyed found that issues of unemployment or cost of living were less important than the more abstract, 'general economic situation' which they likely saw as encompassing the more concrete economic phenomena of costs and employment. Figure 2 also demonstrates that the public has a high degree of uncertainty as 'do not know' responses are among the top three percentages – if not the leading response. This is a common occurrence across surveys: publics may lack knowledge and thus have non-attitudes.[41] On the other hand, the greater knowledge of elites tends to form opinions more guided by ideology than just information. Therefore, attitudes of opinion leaders may be more stable – or even rigid – in the face of changing environments compared to publics.[42]

In assessing elite opinions in Jordan, one can also access their attitudes through discussions in the public sphere – the press and media – as well as through survey results. On one hand, a comprehensive investigation of Jordan's press coverage on Israel and the peace process would be a welcome addition to this study. It would allow an assessment of additional key points in the public opinion–foreign policy nexus model.[43] On the other hand, such a review would exceed the limits of space in this article. Thus, it would best be treated as a separate project in its own merit – just as the study of survey results warrants its own treatment.

For the purposes of this argument, one can briefly summarize these elite debates in the Jordanian press as reflecting the highly negative attitudes towards Israel also found in surveys of opinion leaders as well as the general public. In terms of assessing the salience of foreign policy in general and issues related to the peace process, and Palestinian and Israeli issues in specific the Jordanian press presents these issues with a higher degree of attention, and thus salience, than found in survey results. On one hand, this results from the consensus among Jordanian elites in opposition to Israeli policies and a general support for Palestinian issues – especially in terms of opposition to Israel, but also the growing commitment of separating Jordanian state interests from those of the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories.[44] On the other hand, attention to foreign policy issues in the Jordanian press also reflects some degree of self-censorship and government-induced agenda-setting reflected in the government's growing restrictions over the press as opposition to the peace process rose in the late 1990s.[45] Nevertheless, attention to the Jordanian press can also present the peaks and troughs of events in relation to Israel and the peace process that can provide the context for specific moments in attitudes that surveys capture.

In sum, our evaluation of the salience of Jordan's relationship with Israel needs to keep in mind both methodological and contextual issues. Returning to Table 5, we can compare the seeming decline in the salience of Israel and Palestine with the longer run general lack of salience of foreign policy issues from Figure 1. It may be useful to note that the Zogby surveys of 2002, 2004 and 2005 while including questions about Palestine and Israel did not include similar questions about Iraq – a striking omission given the timing of the 2003 US invasion. Later surveys do ask about regional issues like conflicts in Iraq or Syria. Moreover, the 2002 surveys were conducted in March 2002 which witnessed a significant escalation of violence in the Palestinian al-Aqsa Intifada. A few months earlier, a December 2001 CSS poll found that less than 1 per cent of opinion leaders saw the peace process as one of their top three issues for the government to address. The issue did not even register as a priority among the national sample, although 2.3 per cent of the national sample saw 'Arab issues' as their top concern (the sixteenth of twenty issues).[46] In other words, the more limited sampling frame, issues of question

wording of the Zogby poll, the very presence of the questions asked, and the dramatic events surrounding its timing could help us temper our conclusion of the dramatic fall in the significance of peace with Israel in the 2000s. Instead, it may be that the issue – like most foreign policy issues – was not as salient to the public to begin with. Like any chronic condition, periodic flare-ups of events that are then reflected in public opinion mark the decline of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

The overburdened Jordanian public

The fluctuations of the salience of Israel, Palestine and the peace process resulted both from the general stagnation of Arab-Israeli relations over the past decade and a half as well as the increasing importance of other issues. After the failure of the Camp David II summit in 2000 and the outbreak of the Al-Aqsa Intifada, the prospects for a resolution of the Palestinian–Israeli track of the peace process dimmed. The Oslo process of reaching a two-state solution has had its death pronounced many times since 2000. On the twenty-fifth anniversary of the 1994 Jordanian-Israeli treaty the likelihood of a new agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians has not seemed further away. This has resulted in a 'cold' normalization of relations between Jordanians and Israelis that King Hussein had hoped to avoid. In addition to Jordanians' perceptions of Israeli actions that have undermined peace, the shift in leadership of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinians also has limited the development of warmer relations.

Outside of the Arab-Israeli arena, regional international political events since 2000 also contributed to fluctuations in the salience of the peace process. Economic processes of neoliberal structural adjustment and globalization also contributed to the concerns of Jordanians about their daily lives and the general political direction of the country. Finally, the failure of greater democratization in Jordan – even in the wake of the Arab Spring – has shaped the salience of issues in Jordanian public opinion. Thus, in addition to the salience of the peace process declining, a variety of other concerns weighed on Jordanians that minimized the salience of the peace process. The cold normalization receded into one dilemma among many to the overburdened Jordanian public.

With the signing of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, many pointed out that the government insiders were prepared for making peace but the public was taken by surprise by the dramatic shift in foreign policy.[47] A significant portion of that gap stemmed from King Hussein's long, but secret, relationship with Israeli leaders like Yitzhak Rabin that only became public after the treaty was signed.[48] Thus, as evidenced above, the public may have accepted peace as a fait accompli and hoped for better times because of it; however, they did not trust the Israelis and still saw them as enemies. With the generational shift in leaders in Jordan and Israel since 1994, the trust between King Abdullah and Prime Minister Netanyahu since 2009 has never reached the level of understanding of Hussein and Rabin. King Hussein felt he had lost an Israeli partner for peace when Benjamin Netanyahu served his first term as Prime Minister in 1996. In 2011, King Abdullah wrote that Netanyahu 'shows no sign of compromise', but he commented to a journalist two years later that their relationship was 'very strong'.[49] On the eve of the peace treaty's anniversary in November 2019, King Abdullah reportedly refused to meet with Netanyahu.[50] Much of the lack of chemistry between the two leaders stems from his view that Netanyahu's and Israel's policies endanger a two-state solution with the Palestinians as well as infringe on Israel's bilateral commitments to Jordan as well.

Chronicling the disappearance of the peace process would be well beyond the scope of this article. Moreover, Jordanians tend to view the Israelis as responsible for negative interactions with Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and especially in Jerusalem. The regular commentary in the press and public sphere as well as protests and demonstrations in Jordan provide evidence in increases of the salience of relations with Israel in Jordanian public opinion beyond

polling results. Israeli actions that Jordanians perceive as directed towards Jordan – such as detaining Jordanian citizens or infringing on Hashemite interests in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound – are particularly influential in bolstering flare ups of salience.

Since the outbreak of the second Intifada, a series of regional events that have challenged the government's foreign policy. These crises have had domestic repercussions felt by most Jordanians as well. The September 11 attacks on the US and the resulting 'War on Terror' placed Jordan in alignment with US policy resulting in a domestic crackdown on Islamists in Jordan. King Abdullah tried to restrain the United State from invading Iraq in 2003 but ultimately failed to do so. While Jordan denied that the US coalition used Jordanian territory in the war, perceptions of Jordanian cooperation were commonplace.[51] The war resulted in the displacement of thousands of Iraqis to Jordan. The violence in Iraq spilled over into Jordan most visibly in 2005 with the bombing of Western hotels in Amman. While the 2011 Arab Spring did not produce the massive protests witnessed in Egypt or the violence of Syria, it did significantly rattle Jordanian politics. Regular demonstrations demanding reforms brought the fall of the government, but not the regime, as the King sacked his Prime Minister and reformed the constitution to meet the demands of protesters.[52] Protest behavior has regularly reappeared in Jordan since then – but not to the point where it has provoked the government to crack down severely.[53] The experience of protests in Syria that descended into a bloody civil war spooked both the government and protesters in Jordan to exercise restraint. Yet, the civil war swamped Jordan with Syrian refugees leading to a near humanitarian crisis at times. The toll of over a million additional inhabitants has touched nearly every aspect of Jordan's economy and society.[54]

For most Jordanians, the persistent economic crisis that faces the country has the greatest impact on their lives. As Figure 1 highlights, economic concerns remain far more salient for Jordanians than foreign policy issues. The government argued that the peace treaty and the process of normalization would result in greater economic growth in Jordan through trade and increased aid coming to the country. While there were some economic benefits in the years following the treaty, that growth slowed after the second Intifada and the shocks related to the 9/11 attacks. As King Abdullah began his rule, he expanded the role of the private sector in an attempt to open Jordan to the world economy. Again, economic benefits were short lived since the neoliberal economic reforms did bring some growth and foreign investment into Jordan. However, a narrow elite captured those benefits while most Jordanians only felt the related price increases. The process of economic liberalization did help restructure the political groups that supported the Jordanian government by enhancing the power of internationally linked capitalists in Amman at the expense of rural East Bankers who had exchanged state patronage for loyalty and service in the state bureaucracy and security forces.[55] The government did not match this economic restructuring with political liberalization. With the parliament and political parties captured by government loyalists, many Jordanians turned to the streets to make demands. This process became a common repertoire of contentious politics in the wake of the Arab Spring.

The government often permitted demonstrations to protest foreign events – especially in relation to Palestine and Iraq. In this way, the government felt it could leverage popular frustration with its generally cautious foreign policy in relation to Israel and the US. Thus at times of regional tension the government allowed the public to mobilize – but within careful limits. At times the government even tried to not just channel but also lead public demonstrations such as Queen Rania leading a protest in 2002 against the Israeli reoccupation of the West Bank during an escalation of the second Intifada. Since the Arab Spring, however, the government has often lost the ability to channel street demonstrations since they often focus more on issues of domestic inequality and corruption than on foreign policy. The government has chosen to generally tolerate demonstrations rather than cracking down Syrian-style. This has allowed demonstrations to proliferate but still generally remain small and focused on specific demands rather than a broad mobilization against the government. Moreover, sectoral

demonstrations in Jordan can achieve their demands. A teachers' strike may yield a pay increase but a demonstration cannot liberate Palestine – it can only vent frustration.

Thus, public opinion in Jordan may have many reasons to feel overburdened with grievances and anxiety. Domestic economic crises and persistent inequality coupled with small spaces to voice discontent but not real political institutional mechanism to change policies fuels political alienation. Regional crises, wars, and state failures reinforce that Jordan, despite its failings, remains stable. Thus, Israeli actions and the general lack of progress in the peace process have created a situation over the past twenty-five years where attitudes towards Israel may be stable in their negativity, but the salience of those negative opinions often becomes lost in a sea of other grievances. The result of this fluctuating salience has seemingly allowed the government more latitude for its foreign policy towards Israel and the Palestinians.

The impact of the salience of issues in the Jordanian public on Jordanian foreign policy

As noted above in a process model of the linkage between public opinion and foreign policy, a constellation of variables can lead public opinion to constrain, if not constitute, elite foreign policy decisions. In the case of the anti-normalization backlash in the late 1990s, the government and public saw the peace process as an issue of moderate salience – as compared to the tremendous weight the government gave the signing of the peace treaty in 1994. The debate over normalization provoked elite divisions, but as a consensus developed in Jordan's public sphere in curtailing normalization the various opposition groups began to coalesce in opposition to the government's foreign policy. The government attempted to limit this surge in opposition through institutional manipulations and even coercive repression. This, however, began to backfire on the government as the moves of deliberalization reinforced the will of the opposition. As a result, the government began to back away from its desired deeper relationship with Israel.[56] However, the opposition could only push up to a point. The government made it clear, as King Abdullah reiterated in 2013, 'I don't want a government to come in and say, "We repudiate the peace treaty with Israel."'[57]

Moreover, in the 2000s, the decreasing lack of salience of peace and normalization – or perhaps more properly the burying of salience under the weight of a host of other issues – has freed the government to pursue its relationship with Israel with less constraints from Jordanian public opinion. The cooling of relations between Jordan and Israel not only has to do with a negative Jordanian public opinion. It also stems from the lack of chemistry between Israeli leaders and King Abdullah and from Jordan's dissatisfaction with Israeli policies. Short of revoking the peace treaty, the Jordanian government has relied on a variety of reactive symbolic actions. Maneuvers that accept an available option as satisfactory – in other words 'satisficing'[58] – leveraged Jordan's limited foreign policy tools to influence domestic and international audiences.

The government placing and relaxing of restrictions on the presence of the Palestinian group Hamas in the Kingdom allowed the government to signal Israel and the Fatah-led Palestinian Authority while at the same time shifting the behavior of Jordan's domestic Muslim Brotherhood movement. The attempted Israeli assassination of Hamas leader Khalid Mashal in the streets of Amman in September 1997 helped sour relations between Jordan and Israel, but allowed King Hussein to extract the Israeli release of Hamas's spiritual leader Ahmad Yassin to Jordan.[59] In 1999, the government banned Hamas in Jordan as it tried to help the PLO navigate an impasse in the peace process. Later, Jordan eased or tightened restrictions on Hamas and the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in relation to the movement's success and then failures in Egypt. During the 2010s, the government also helped foster splits within the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood – especially about the movement's debates over how the group should focus on Palestinian issues or restrict its energy on issues inside Jordan. This allowed the government to both weaken the strongest

opposition group in the country as well as limit criticisms of the government's foreign policy in parliament and the Jordanian public sphere. By working to fracture the opposition, the government intended to insulate foreign policy choices from the influence of public opinion and civil society.

The detention of Jordanians – usually of Palestinian origin – by Israel helped the flare-up of the salience of Israel on a number of occasions. The 2019 protests were particularly significant because of their timing alongside the silver anniversary of the peace treaty. The government hoped to leverage the popular discontent with its own unhappiness with Israel over the stagnation of the peace process and the Trump administration's plans that seemed to disfavor Jordan.[60] However, the strength of the popular protests took both the Jordanian government and the Israelis by surprise. This pushed the Jordanian government to both detain an Israeli who crossed the border as well as to ramp up pressure on Israel to release the two prisoners.[61] Thus, the confluence of government foreign policy preferences pushed it to use popular attitudes in a spike in foreign policy salience.

Other issues that could cause a short-term rise in salience were often directly tied to issues addressed in the peace treaty. The issue of territorial claims of Jordanian land occupied by Israel were resolved in the peace treaty by returning Baqura and Al Ghamr to Jordanian sovereignty. Israel was then able to lease the land for 25 years so that the Israeli farmers could continue their work on the land. In 2018, King Abdullah announced that Jordan would not renew the lease.[62] Thus, Jordan could fully claim to have all of its land claims with Israel resolved. This would allow Jordan to focus on issues of its bilateral relationship with Israel and its role in promoting peace between Israel and the Palestinians in a way that would limit Jordan's exposure to risk from their issues.

The issue with the most symbolic power in the peace treaty that could flare up has been Jordan's special status in relation to the Al-Aqsa and Dome of the Rock holy sites in Jerusalem. Any actions by the Israelis on what they see as the Temple Mount such as the digging of an archaeological tunnel in 1997 can spur public protests and diplomatic tensions. The location's epicenter at the start of the 2000 Intifada reveals the symbolic power of the holy sites. Later disputes over access to the compound, or Israeli installation of metal detectors and cameras likewise brought about demonstrations in Jordan that reinforced government displeasure with Israeli actions that chipped away at the Hashemite legacy in Jerusalem.

A more secular location of contention has been the Israeli Embassy in Amman. The building also serves as a site – or at least potential destination – of protest. However, Jordanian security forces rarely let crowds approach it. Similarly, the presence of Jordan's ambassador in Tel Aviv is also a common symbolic tool that the government uses to express displeasure with Israeli policies – often because of public protests. The Jordanian ambassador was recalled a number of times – notably in response to the second Intifada and Israeli attacks on Hamas in Gaza. In July 2017 an Israeli Embassy security staff member shot a Jordanian attacker in his apartment and collaterally his Jordanian landlord. This triggered a diplomatic crisis that piggybacked on a dispute over Al-Aqsa compound. Thus, the embassy staff were prevented for a short while from being evacuated to Israel.[63] It took nearly a year for a new ambassador to return to the embassy in Amman. Again, one can see the confluence of multiple issues to create a spike in the salience of Jordan's relationship with Israel. In some cases, the recalling of the ambassador can be seen as a satisficing tactic to both foreign and domestic audiences. Jordan recalling its ambassador to Tel Aviv or demanding the departure of the Israeli ambassador in Amman allows the government to lodge a strong diplomatic protest while still maintaining the framework of the peace treaty. The recalling of an ambassador also assuages domestic audiences that the government has done something without ceding to popular demands for ending the peace treaty.

Finally, the peace treaty supposedly ended the threat that Israel would turn Jordan into the alternative Palestinian homeland.[64] Discourse by right-wing Israeli parties planning to expel Palestinians from the West Bank and Jerusalem, however, kept alive fears of a 'transfer' of

Palestinians into Jordan. Everyday Israeli restrictions that pushed Palestinians out of the territories are also seen as a slow-motion expulsion that led to increasing restrictions on the residency of West Bankers in Jordan. The failure of Israel's peace camp to regain power, moreover, worries Jordanian officials to this day. Yet, the Jordanian government appears to have no alternatives other than an Oslo-style two-state solution that has been receding in feasibility over the past decade.[65] These concerns have led to a regularly recurring debate about a confederation between Jordan and the Palestinians – raised by Jordanians, Israelis and outsiders. King Abdullah, however, has shut down discussions of such alternatives by Jordanians and instead worked to resurrect a process that can lead to an independent Palestinian state.[66] These wishes are increasingly divorced from facts on the ground in the West Bank and from current Israeli plans and proposed future policies by contenders for its government. The variability of salience of peace in Jordan, however, has allowed the government to ignore these issues because there is no consistent pressure from the public to do more than continue Jordan's reactive diplomatic stance of crisis management.

Conclusion

The government's use of reactive satisficing foreign policies that also may serve to undercut domestic opposition forces has a feedback effect. The treating of some of the symptoms but not the causes of the public's negative attitudes only reinforces public malaise and alienation from foreign policy events. Jordan's government muddling through events amidst mounting regional crises and economic problems has allowed the government to claim it is managing issues – as it has for the past generation.

In the 25 years since Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty, the Jordanian public has not warmed to relations with Israel. In the past two decades, attitudes towards Israel have remained stable in their negativity. The fluctuating, if not declining, salience of these attitudes, moreover, has resulted from Jordan's persistent economic struggles and from the crises surrounding Jordan in Iraq and Syria. Jordan's foreign policy makers react to flare-ups in public opinion regarding Israeli actions from time to time. However, the fact that decision makers have to react and manage spikes in public discontent may someday crash into a wall of distrust and frustration in public opinion. The government has been remarkably fortunate – or perhaps adept – in keeping a day of reckoning at bay.

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Disclosure statement

Notes

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