Youth Bulges and Political Demonstrations in Jordan: Level of Acceptance of Demonstrations among Youth after the Arab Spring

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Abstract

This is a study of socio-political attitudes amongst youth in universities in the three major cities in Jordan: Amman, Irbid and Mafraq. The primary objective of the study was to analyse the phenomenon of demonstrations, to measure the levels of acceptance of demonstrations among students of Jordanian universities and investigate the main reasons behind their participation in demonstrations which swept the Jordanian street since the Arab Spring. Furthermore, the study aimed to investigate the impact of the Jordanian Spring on the level of acceptance of demonstrations by young people. The study was conducted using a survey research based on a sample of Jordanian university students from different levels of study and different faculties. The primary conclusion of the study is that the majority of Jordan's youth accept demonstrations and tend to participate actively in demonstrations particularly since the Arab Spring. The study also showed that youth unemployment has been one of the main motivations for the demonstrations across the country, which is, in turn, a product of the demographic explosion.

Key words: Youth, Political Demonstrations, Political participation, Demographic factor, Political attitudes

1.0 Introduction

The level of political participation in any country depends on several factors including demographic factors, socioeconomic status, and efforts by political institutions to mobilize people. Therefore, political participation can take a wide range of forms, ranging from voting for representatives as the easiest and most basic form, and which a majority of Jordanian citizens do with some regularity; forming or belonging to political groups, which only a few do, and engaging in legal or illegal demonstrations and protests. The individuals involved in such participation wouldexpect-or at least hope-that these actions would have an impact on the performance of the government and on itspolicies.

Public demonstration is an accepted form of achieving political change for citizens in advanced democracies (Dalton, Sickle, &Weldon, 2009). The same is not true for those countries that have experienced a transition to a democracy during the Third Wave of democratization. For them, because people had become disillusioned with the perceived performance of democratic governments, this led to an erosion of confidence in democracy itself and a decline in the protest movement (Inglehart&Catterberg, 2002). However, the revolutionary wave of demonstrations, protests, and civil uprisings that swept the Arab world in the last two years has represented unprecedented moment in the region's political history. The implications of the Arab Spring have led to the emergence of new concepts in the Arab political culture -which were practically frozen or unused- such as freedom, equality, democracy, justice, citizenship, human dignity, right not to fear security agencies and a culture of political demonstration.

In the case of Jordan, the practice of political demonstrations as a means of political expression has existed since the country' establishment in 1921.

Jordan has witnessed demonstrations and protests at various times, some sparked as a result of economic conditions, others as a result of political events such as those in 1928 (against the Anglo-Transjordanian treaty), 1955-1956 (against Jordan joining the Baghdad Pact), 1989 (April demonstrations, following the introduction of economicmeasures, known as the "HabbetNeesan" or "the People's Outburst"), and 1996 (bread demonstrations). However, participation in demonstrations as aspect of political culture still relatively new. After the Arab Spring, Jordan as a part of Arab world started to witness a significant increase in the number of demonstrations and demonstrators alike, (there have been more than 6600 demonstrations since the Arab Spring)making economic and political demands. In addition, many new political slogans and posters have been created.

The study of such political issues raises a number of important questions. The first to surface is; are demonstrations effective? In other words, does the exercise of this form of participation bring about change and effect policy makers? And to what extent do these demonstrations cause change? Moreover, as youth have a better understanding and awareness of politics and current events, it would be interesting to study their sense of direction and the predictability of their participation as active citizens in society.

2.0 Research Methodology and Design

The research methodology is the way in which researchers collect data samples and then analyse the data collected to solve the research problem through various procedures, schemes or algorithms. It therefore covers the scope and population of the study, sample size, the selection of a sample from a defined target population, source of data collection, tools and techniques used for theanalysis, and the interpretation or explanation, and presentation of findings.

2.1 Main Objectives of the Study

The momentous events that have swept across the Middle East since early 2011 have raised important new questions about the impact of the Arab Spring on political culture which is no longer as it was before. It was recognized that many demonstrations have occurred in Jordan since the Arab Spring, however there are no previous studies about the perspectives of young people, especially students. Are they with or against these demonstrations? This study therefore aims to:

1. Assess the level of acceptance of demonstrations from the viewpoint of Jordanian universities' students
2. Identify the main determinants of acceptance of demonstrations among Universities' students
3. Understand to what extent do students intend to participate in demonstrations in future?

2.2 Research Questions

In order to achieve the stated objectives, the current study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What is the prevalence of acceptance of demonstrations among students in Jordanian universities?
2. Does the financial situation (level of welfare) of the family affect their approval or rejection of demonstrations?
3. Does gender affect the acceptance of demonstrations?
4. Do the educational levels of students' parents affect the acceptance of demonstrations?
5. How effective are demonstrations in influencing the policy-makers?
6. Is demonstration effective in achieving their targeted objectives?

2.3 Descriptive Statistics

A series of descriptive statistics are used to describe the basic features of the data. Tools used in this study include pie charts, bar charts, and tables, which serve to summarize the most important characteristics of the students, determine the prevalence of demonstrations, the factors affecting this prevalence and the students' intentions to participate in future demonstrations.

2.4 Questionnaire and Sample Design

The first phase of the survey research process is the creation of a valid and reliable survey instrument for obtaining information from respondents. Some amendments were made to the questionnaire, and the amended version of the questionnaire consisted of 27 questions designed to reach the objectives and answer the research questions.

An important part of the questionnaire construction process is piloting, known as pre-testing of the questionnaire.

Accordingly, a pre-test (with 30 respondents) of the research questionnaire was deployed in order to assess the reliability and validity of the survey questions and the questionnaires overall. The responses from the pre-test guided improvement of the questionnaire to make it more understandable.

The second phase of a survey involves sample design. The target populations of this study are the students of Al-albayt University, Yarmouk University, and the University of Jordan. Accordingly, four faculties were selected randomly from these universities in order to represent both theoretically-oriented faculties (economic and social-humanitarian faculties) and practically-oriented faculties (faculties of engineering science and technology) to understand the variation in opinions across different types of faculty.

## 2.5 Sample Description

2.5.1 Gender and Faculty Type:

Figure 2.1: Distribution of four faculties' students according to gender
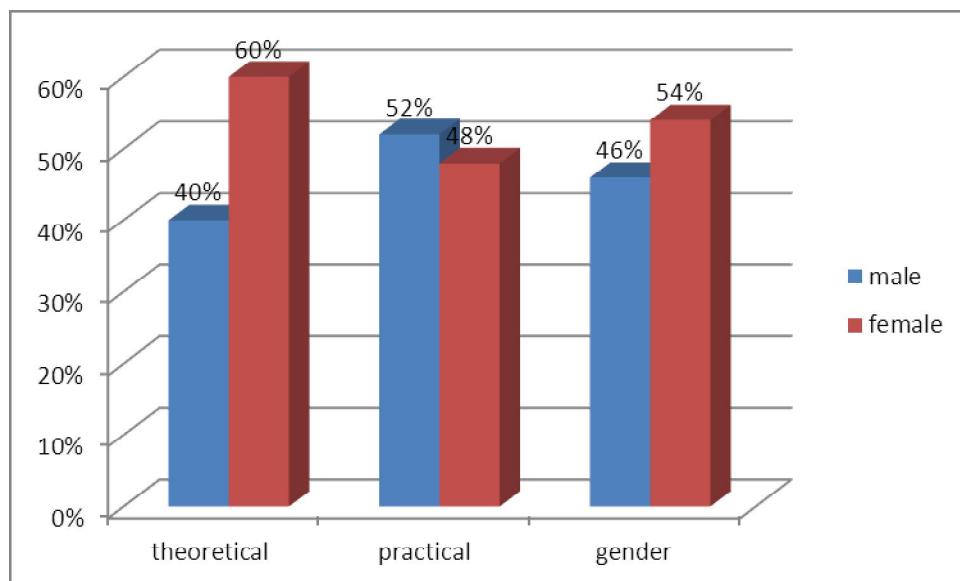
It is clear from figure 2.1 above that amongst Universities' student populations, females exceed males, constituting more than half the population (54%). In addition, at faculty' level, the number of female students exceeds that of male student in theoretically-oriented faculties at (60%), while males exceed females in practically-oriented faculties at (52%). Accordingly, the reason behind the high percentage of female students with respect to males in the whole study population (students at Jordanian public universities) is attributed to the fact that women are more likely to enter public universities and less likely to enter private universities than men. This may be because of the high costs of private higher education, since families may be more likely to invest in males' education on the grounds that they are more likely to find employment after graduation.

2.5.2 Welfare Level

In order to evaluate students' level of welfare, the students were asked about regarding their allowance, how many cars their family own, whether the family live in a house or an apartment, and their parents educational levels and occupational status.

Figure 2.2: Students' welfare level distribution according to faculty type:
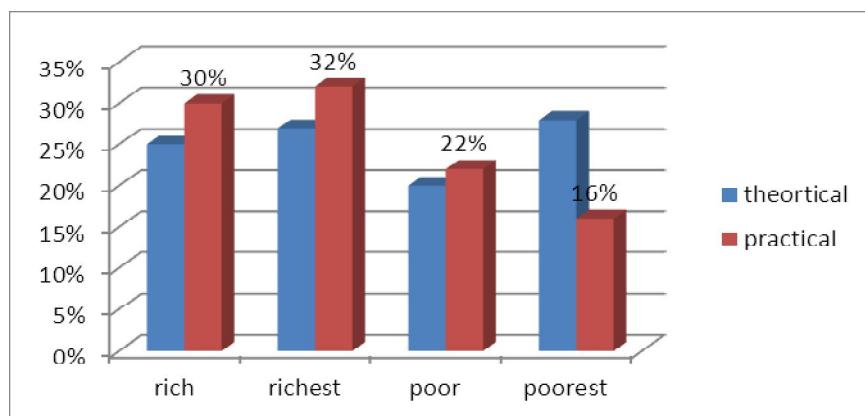
It is apparent from figure 2.2 that students from the lowest-income background are more likely to be in theoretically-oriented faculties than in practically-oriented ones (which may be because courses in practically-oriented faculties are more expensive than those in theoretically-oriented ones). However, whilst there are some minor differences, the welfare categories are almost equally distributed between both faculty types

3.0 Theoretical Framework: Demonstrations and its Causes

Demonstrations and the causes are much discussed and debated political topics. Before elaborating on the theories on which I will draw to explain the demonstrations in Jordan, I will first attempt to define terms such as Arab Spring, political culture and demonstration, and then go on to discuss the main causes of demonstrations.

3.1 Arab Spring

"Arab Spring" is also known as the "Arab Awakening" refers to the revolutionary wave of demonstrations and protests that arose and spread across the Arab world starting on December 18th 2010.These revolutionary protests which started in Tunisia, Egypt Libya and Yemen have swept away long ruling autocrats Bin Ali, Mubarak and Qaddafi. However, while Presidents Mubarak and Ben Ali left office quickly, Qaddafi adopted a radically different approach to preserve his regime by unleashing a wave of violence against his own people.

After January 2011 many countries across the Middle East and North Africa (including Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Morocco, Algeria and Oman) have experienced popular uprisings against their regimes. Meanwhile, several minor demonstrations have been mounted in Lebanon, Mauritania, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Sudan, and Western Sahara demanding political reform. A major slogan of the demonstrators in the Arab world has been ash-shabyuridisqat an-nizam ("the people want to bring down the regime").

3.2 Political Demonstration

Political participation may be divided into conventional and unconventional types (seeGoel and Smith 1980: 76–77). Voting or running for elections, joining party organizations, trade union memberships or activities in other political organizations present conventional forms of participation, while protest which can take many other forms, including marches, sit-ins, strikes,demonstrations and these represent activities which are usually considered unconventional (Markus, 2012). Protest as unconventional participation can be defined as an expression of objection, by words or by actions, to particular events, policies, situations or regimes.

Meanwhile, Maldonado in an analysis of Latin American economies distinguished between riots, strikes and demonstrations. He defined a strike as "any strike of 1,000 or more industrial or service workers that involves more than one employer and that is aimed at national government policies or authority" (Maldonado,2012,20), whereas he argues that riots are violent demonstrations or clashes where citizens use physical force. Meanwhile, he defines political demonstration as "any peaceful public gathering of at least 100 people for the primary purpose of displaying or voicing their opposition to government policies or authority, excluding demonstrations of a distinctly anti-foreign nature." (Maldonado, 2012, 20).

For the purposes of this study, the researcher essentially follows Tilly's definition of political demonstration as "a series of acts through which politicized interests organize large numbers of participants and affect a disciplined march between symbolically important locales. Such a demonstration seeks to draw both wide attention to its cause and to present political demands before those in positions to make the desired changes" (in Alpaugh, 2007).

3.2.1 The Main Causes of Demonstrations

In his book, *Anatomy of Revolution* Crane Brinton argued that all societies have tensions and signs of discontent. Brinton examined the old regimes of four primary revolutions from western history (the English, American, French, and Russian) to identify the preliminary signs of a revolution. Moreover, he identified a sequence of events and a specific set of political and social conditions that were required within each state to support a revolution. He came up with a theory on how revolutions have shared elements, common stages, and similar conditions prior to the revolution occurring. According to Brinton the revolutionary fever begins with certain symptoms:

1. Individuals from all social classes are discontented .
2. Individuals feel restless and held down by unacceptable restrictions in society, religion, the economy or the government
3. Individuals are hopeful about the future, but they are being forced to accept less than they had hoped for.
4. Individuals begin to think of themselves as belonging to a social class, and there is a growing bitterness between social classes.
5. The social classes closest to one another are the most hostile towards each other.
6. Scholars and thinkers give up on the way their society operates .
7. The government does not respond to the needs of its society .
8. The leaders of the government and the ruling class begin to doubt themselves and some join with the opposition groups .
9. The government is unable to get enough support from any group to save itself.
10. The government cannot organize its finances effective and either becomes bankrupt or imposes taxes heavily and unjustly.

In the Arab world, experts analysing the Arab uprisings highlight various causes. Amongst the many political, and economic factors contributing to the uprisings, researchers mention growing economic inequality, generational change, global financial and economic crisis, corruption, lack of good governance, failure of political leaders to meet the rising expectations of the people, political repression, rapid population growth, high unemployment, low wages, rapid increase in the cost of food and essential goods, and climate change[1]. Accordingly, it can be argued that the Arab protests and demonstrations came as a result of long-simmering and closely interlinked socio-economic, demographic and political dissatisfaction.

- **Socio-economic reasons**

There are real socio-economic reasons behind the demonstrations in the Arab world particularly in the countries that have witnessed demonstrations (e.g. Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Lybia, Morocco, Algeria, Syria and Jordan).ThedaSkocpolis one of the most prominent social scientists who has studied social revolution. She defines social revolutions as "rapid, basic transformations of acountry's state and class structures, and of its dominant ideology. Moreover ,social revolutions are carried through, in part, by class-based upheavals frombelow" (Skocpol.1979). Accordingly, many researchers have argued that socioeconomic deficits and increasing alienation of the Arab middle class, are amongst the main factors contributing to the Arab Spring.

In 2009, the Arab Human Development Report concluded the main challenges to human security in Arab countries. It suggested that Arab countries have to deal with many economic challenges, including high unemployment and persistent poverty, low wages, uneven economic growth, high inflation, food and water shortages, and the negative consequences of conflicts and wars[2]. Economically, standards of living are in steep decline in most Arab countries, including the oil-producing states and most people have experienced a decline in living standards and high youth unemployment especially amongst lower and middle-income groups as shown in table 3.1.

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[1]See Aaltola, Behr, Cheterian, Johnstone, Mazo and others
[2] See further Arab Human Development Report 2009 at
http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2009e.pdf

Table 3.1

Country	GDP	GDP	Unemployment	Population	Poverty rate[5]
Yemen	2,900	6.2%	35.0%	65.4%	45.2%
Morocco	4,670	3.2%	9.8%	47.7%	15.0%
Syria	4,730	4.0%	8.3%	55.3%	11.9%
Jordan	5,240	3.2%	13.4%	54.3%	14.2%
Egypt	5,860	5.1%	9.7%	52.3%	20.0%
Algeria	8,220	4.1%	9.9%	47.5%	23.0%
Tunisia	8,620	3.4%	14.0%	42.1%	3.8%
Libya	18,720	3.3%	n.a.	47.4%	30.0%
Bahrain	23,980	4.1%	15.0%	43.9%	n.a.
Saudi	22,850	3.8%	10.8%	50.8%	n.a.

1: GDP per capita 2010 (USD at PPP), Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Data

2: GDP 2010 (% real change p.a.), Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Data

3: Recorded unemployment 2010, Economist Intelligence Unit, Country Data

4: Economist Online, "Mapping the Arab World", 17 February 2011

5: Percentage of population under poverty line, CIA World Facebook, latest recorded figures

Source: Aaltola M., Behr T., The Arab Uprising: Causes, Prospects and Implications, *The Finish Institute of International Affairs* **Briefing Paper 76, March 2011, www.fiia.fi/assets/publications/bp76.pdf, 02 05 2011.**

A number of socio-political analysts argue that repression is not sufficient for Arab rulers to stay in power, but that they have relied also on an "authoritarian bargain" or "social contract". According to the contract, dictatorial regimes promise the population a minimum of subsidies and economic security, and in return citizens abandon their political rights and are expected to maintain some degree of political loyalty to the regime (Desai et al. 2011). However, the contract that had regulated relations between these power systems and the people of the Arab world for decades has been frustrated. Desai argues when regimes cannot keep their promises by fulfilling the economic side of the bargain and providing economic security, the regime will inevitably suffer from a legitimacy deficit and the authoritarian bargain will collapse (Desai et al. 2011).

Finally, social media networkssuch as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube have ultimately played an important role in the Arab Spring to the degree that some argued that Arab uprisings and protests could be called Twitter and Facebook revolutions (Alrasheed, 2012). Many activists and organizers who played crucial roles in demonstrations used online social networking as a key tool in expressing their thoughts. Moreover, this enabled the spread of information about where, when and how one could participate in political demonstrations and agitation. In addition, social networksbroke down fear-related barriers created by governing regimes by helping many of the demonstrators to connect and share information and helping individuals to organize demonstrations and spread awareness of them. Therefore, these developments have made it increasingly difficult for the regimes of the region to control information flows.

- **Demographic structure (Youth bulges and political violence)**

Years of strong population growth can be considered one demographic structural reason for the Arab Spring.The world population according to the 2010 revision of the World Population Prospects has reached 6.9 billion, of which half of the population is under the age of 24 years and roughly 1.2 billion young people are between 15 and 24 years (Mirkin, 2010). According to a report by the International Labour organization (ILO) the youth unemployment rate for 2010 (which covers those aged between 15 and 24), was 12.3%, recording a decrease of 0.4 p.p. when compared with the previous two years. In 2012, the average unemployment rate increased again to 12.4%, and has continued to grow to 12.6% in 2013.

The most important trigger for change in the Arab world has been from its demographic development. The total population of the Arab countries has nearly tripled, growing from 128 million to 359 million inhabitants (Hegasy, 2011).

By 2011, 359 million of the world's population will live in the 22 countries and areas of the Arab Region and will together account for five per cent of world population. According to the 2009 United Nations Arab Human Development Report, Arab society is a largely youthful one as one out of every five people is between the ages of 15 and 24, and around 60% of the Arab population are below the age of 25. In addition, according to the report, the median age of the total Arab population is 22 years, compared with the global average of 28. These statistics indicate that the Arab world is witnessing a "youth bulge"[3].

This being the case DrUrdal, in his paper *Demography and Armed Conflict,* asserts: "When youth make up more than 35 percent of the adult population, which is evident in many developing countries, the risk of armed conflict is 150 percent higher than in countries with an age structure similar to most developed countries." (Urdal, 2011,9).It is worth mentioning that unlike most regions, unemployment rates in the MENA region are higher amongst more educated youth. In addition, young people are almost three times more likely than adults to be unemployed (as shown in table 3.1, figure 3.1 and figure 3.2).

Figure 3.1 Unemployment rates by region (2008)
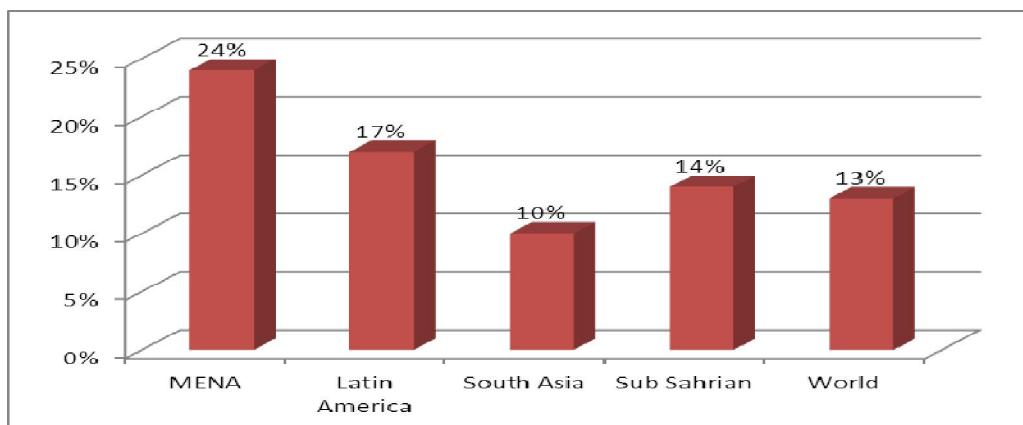
Figure3.2 Adult and youth unemployment rates in some countries of MENA
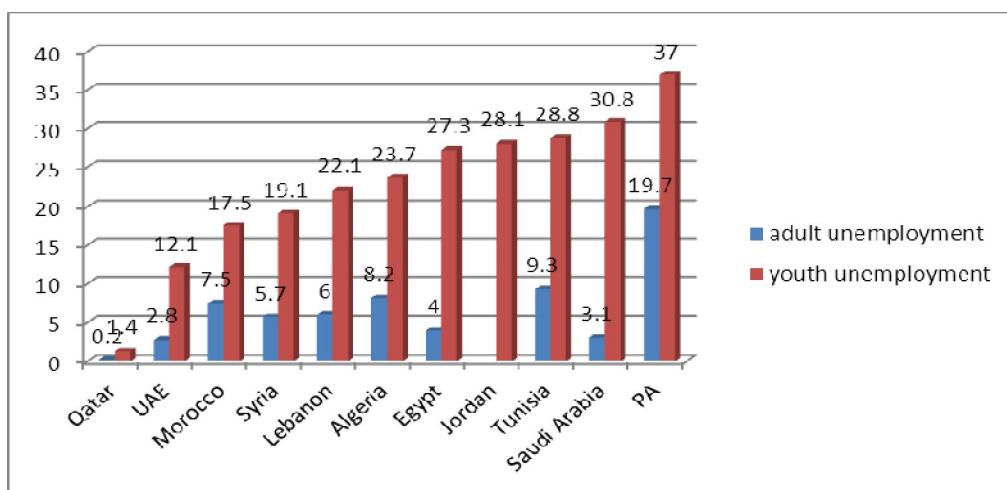
Hence, some researchers have argued that there is a relationship between high population growth and political violence as countries with rapid population growth are more likely to experience domestic armed conflict than countries with low population growth (Urdal, 2005).In ''So, are civilizations at war?,'' Interview with Samuel P.

Huntington by Michael Steinberger, (The Observer, Sunday October 21, 2001). Huntington introduced the idea of demographic structure as a contributing factor when he argued, "I don't think Islam is any more violent than any other religions, and I suspect if you added it all up, more people have been slaughtered by Christians over the centuries than by Muslims. But the key factor is the demographic factor"[4].

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[3]Youth bulges defined as large cohorts between the ages of 14 and 24 years.
[4] see http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/21/afghanistan.religion2

Furthermore, socialists argue that there is empirical evidence showing that countries with large youth bulges are generally more vulnerable to public violence and unrest, and their existence has been associated with times of political crisis(Goldstone, 2001). Specifically, in his examinations of youth bulges and instability, Goldstone concludes that "most major revolutions—the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, the Frenchrevolution of the eighteenth century and most twentieth-century revolutions in developingcountries—occurred where exceptionally large youth bulges were present"(Goldstone 2002,11).

Henrik Urdal in "The Devil in the Demographics: The Effect of Youth Bulges on Domestic Armed Conflict, 1950-2000" argues that there is no evidence to link youth bulges above a certain critical level with violence, as Huntington claims. However, he found that the combination of a country's poor economicperformance and youth bulges could be explosive. In addition, he concluded that a youth bulge could amplify existing social tensions and unrest to the point of conflict (Urdal, 2006).

Finally, applying to Urdal's hypothesis that "Countries that experience youth bulges are more likely to experience political violence than countries that do not" as the Arab world has accumulated a large youth bulges it is no surprise to say that youth have played and continue to play a prominent role in sparking protest movements across the Arab world, to the extent that the current Arab Spring "intifadas" have been called "youthrevolutions" and "high-tech revolutions".Furthermore, in the presence of a large, disaffected youth bulge, a few dedicated youthsand in particular concerned and informed youth can take it upon themselves to represent theinterests and grievances of their cohort and act as advocates of change within their communities. On the other hand, some argue that despite high youth participation in demonstrations, there is no association between youth and political violence in the Arab revolutions. Instead, they argued that the occurrence of violence doesnot necessarily mean that young peopleare responsible. In fact, many demonstrations have been met with violent responses from government security forces as well as from pro-government militias and counter-demonstrators, rather than violence from protesters (Hendrixson, 2012).

- **Political reasons**

Alongside economic concerns and demographic structure, the political circumstances present in the region also constitute an important driving force behind the demonstrations sweeping the Arab world since late 2010. Political repression, the lack offreedoms and public accountability and the abundance of political oppression are seen as another important impetus for demonstrators to take to the streets. Urdal argues that "Motives for committingpolitical violence can be economic – like poverty, economic recession or inequality – or political- like lack of democracy, absence of minority representation or self-governance" (Urdal 2006, 609).

What the Arab region is going through is a result of the culmination of decades of mis-governance characterised by deficient internal and external accountability mechanisms and the lack of truly independent institutions that have the power to hold public officials accountable. Many researchers have described the crisis in the region as a "crisis of governance". The concept of governance has been defined as the manner in which authority is exercised within a country. The World Bank has adopted another definition of governance as "the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised. This includes (1) the process by which governments are selected, monitored and replaced, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies, and (3) the respect of citizens and the state for the institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them" (Kraay, and Zoido-Lobatón, 1999. p.4).

Various efforts have been made in the research and international development community to assess and measure the quality of governance of countries. One of these efforts is the Worldwide Governance Indicators project, developed by members of the World Bank and the World Bank Institute. Good governance as a key for development has six basic dimensions which include:

- The degree of voice and accountability (which includes transparency and civil liberties) ;
- Political stability;
- Democratic accountability and absence of violence;
- Government effectiveness (which includes the quality of policy making and public service delivery);
- Rule of law;
- The control of corruption (Kraay, and Zoido-Lobatón, 1999).

The overall scores for Arab countries on a variety of aspects of democracy governance-indicators are low as shown in table 3.2. For example, Arab countries have the lowest score for freedom, and also had the lowest ranking for "voice and accountability," being among the worst worldwide at 23.7 percent, with a declining trend. They also have low indicators for various aspects of the political process, civil liberties, political rights and independence of the media.

Table 3.2: Direction of institutional reforms in Arab countries: change in governance indicators between 1996 and 2007

	voice and Accountabilit	Political stability	Government Effectivenes	Regulatory Quality	Rule of law	Control of corruptio	Average institution
LOW INCOME	0.09	-0.09	0.09-	0.29	0.10	-0.18	0.02
Comoros	-0.41	-1.45	-1.09	-0.61	..	..	-0.89
Mauritania	0.20	-0.89	-0.88	0.50	0.28	..	-0.16
Somalia	0.02	-0.71	-0.58	0.19	-0.54	-0.13	-0.29
Sudan	0.22	0.28	0.31	0.63	0.17	-0.12	0.25
Yemen	-0.12	-0.33	-0.47	-0.27	0.21	-0.33	-0.22
LOWER MIDDLE INCOME	0.01	0.34	-0.27	-0.05	-0.05	-0.31	0.00
Algeria	0.35	1.26	-0.13	0.28	0.49	-0.10	0.36
Djibouti	-0.34	-0.26	0.00	-0.97	-0.27	..	-0.37
Egypt	-0.20	0.30	-0.41	-0.55	-0.21	-0.64	-0.29
Iraq	0.67	0.08	-0.19	1.60	-0.28	0.00	0.31
Jordan	-0.27	-0.46	0.04	0.06	0.07	0.47	-0.02
Morocco	0.01	0.09	-0.02	-0.26	-0.27	-0.46	-0.15
Syria	-0.16	0.21	-0.73	-0.31	-0.06	-0.09	-0.19
Tunisia	-0.37	-0.06	-0.05	-0.41	0.52	0.18	-0.03
OPT	-0.58	..	..	..	..	..	-0.58
UPPER MIDDLE INCOME	-0.08	0.62	-0.38	0.57	0.15	0.04	0.15
Lebanon	-0.06	-1.57	-0.82	-0.23	-0.44	-0.42	-0.59
Libya	-0.12	2.23	-0.05	1.12	0.67	0.14	0.67
Oman	-0.01	0.29	-0.48	0.53	-0.14	0.56	0.13
HIGH INCOME	0.06	0.01	0.15	0.27	-0.13	0.38	0.12
Bahrain	0.37	0.54	-0.02	0.38	0.49	0.58	0.39
Kuwait	0.01	0.39	-0.15	0.33	-0.05	-0.12	0.07
Qatar	0.30	0.48	-0.43	0.21	0.79	1.12	0.41
Saudi Arabia	0.03	-0.07	0.16	0.28	-0.18	0.32	0.09
UAE	0.13	0.02	0.44	0.17	0.18	0.87	0.24
OVERALL AVERAGE	0.03	0.22	-0.19	0.08	-0.02	-0.19	-0.02

Source: UNDP/AHDR calculations based on World Bank Governance Indicators, 2008

Political corruption and a lack of basic freedoms were other important motives for demonstrators to take to the streets. Political corruption in some Arab countries has reached levels which cannot be ignored by citizens, for example, the use of power by government officials for illegitimate private gain by turning state and national resources into private property for those in positions of power.

Finally, according to the democracy index[5], (published by the Freedom House and Economist) which uses five criteria: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture, Arab countries are categorized as authoritarian regimes with the lowest scores as shown in table 3.3.

Table 3.3: Democracy index by region

Rank	Region	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012
1	North America	8.64	8.64	8.63	8.59	8.59
2	Western Europe	8.60	8.61	8.45	8.40	8.44
3	Latin America and the Caribbean	6.37	6.43	6.37	6.35	6.36
4	Asia and Australasia	5.44	5.58	5.53	5.51	5.56
5	Central and Eastern Europe	5.76	5.67	5.55	5.50	5.51
6	Sub-Saharan Africa	4.24	4.28	4.23	4.32	4.32
7	Middle East and North Africa	3.54	3.48	3.52	3.68	3.73
	World	5.52	5.55	5.46	5.49	5.52

Published by the Freedom House and Economist) is a measure of democracy in the countries in the Middle East.

4.0 Demonstrations in Jordan

4.1 The Demographic Profile of Jordan

- **Population size of Jordan**

According to the Department of Statistics (DOS) /Jordan), the population of Jordan increased in size from approximately 2.1 million in 1979 to approximately 6.2 million in 2011. It is expected that the population will continue to rise to reach approximately 9.9 million in 2050 (see table 4.1). However, it is clear from table 4.1 thatthe population growth rate in Jordan has been higher than the global average for many decades. The population size doubled approximately seven times between the years of 1952 and 2000, jumping from 586 thousand in 1952 to 4857 thousand at the end of 2000.

Table 4.1: Population of the Kingdom by Sex, and Estimated Population for Selected Years. (pop. 000)

Year	Male	Female	Total
1952	301.7	284.5	586.2
1961	469.4	431.4	900.8
1970	784.3	723.9	1508.2
1980	1164.0	1069.0	2233.0
1990	1809.0	1659	3468.0
2000	2501.4	2355.6	4857.0
2010	**3151.0**	**2962.0**	**6113.0**
2020	3779.0	3587.0	7366.0
2030	4301.0	4114.0	8415.0
2040	4728.0	4561.0	9289.0
2050	5006.0	4876.0	9882.0

Source: Department of Statistics (DOS /Jordan
At http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/index.htm

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[5]The Democracy Index analyzes 165 independent countries and two territories.

- **Population profile (Jordan's Youth)**

In terms of the age profile of the population, table 4.2 shows a noticeable change, as the proportion of young (under 15 years) decreased from 48.8% in 1980 to 37.5% in 2010. Meanwhile, the proportion of the population in the 15-64 age range rose from 47.7% in 1980 to 58.6% in 2010, and the proportion of the older population (60 years and over) rose from 3.5% in 1980 to 3.9 % in 2010. In addition, according to 2011 statistics, young people under 24 years make up 58.88% of the total population, whereas those between 15 and 24 make up 21.56% (36.8% of the working-age group). Moreover, the median age of the Jordanian population is 22.4 years compared to a median age in the Arab world of 22 years, and a global average of 28.4. These statistics indicate that Jordan is witnessing a "youth bulge".

Table 4.2: Population Distribution by Broad Age Groups in Jordan, 1980 to 2050 (percent)

Year	0-4	5-14	15-64	65+
1980	18.4	30.4	47.7	3.5
1985	17.5	29.5	49.1	3.9
1990	17.5	29.2	49.8	3.6
1995	14.7	26.5	55.6	3.2
2000	14.4	25.4	56.9	3.3
2005	12.8	24.1	59.5	3.6
2010	**13.2**	**24.3**	**58.6**	**3.9**
2015	10.9	22.6	62.3	4.1
2020	10.2	20.7	64.8	4.3
2025	9.4	18.8	67.1	4.7
2030	8.7	17.6	68.2	5.6
2035	8.0	16.4	68.7	6.9
2040	7.3	15.4	68.6	8.7
2045	6.6	14.3	68.4	10.6
2050	6.2	13.2	67.8	12.8

Source: United Nations, World Population Prospects: The 2010 Revision

- **Unemployment rates in Jordan**

Among the various socioeconomic problems Jordan is facing, the problem of unemployment is one of the most serious problems that has faced the Jordanian economy for decades. However, it should be noted that the problem of unemployment has a multifaceted effecton society. Unemployment in society certainly leads to increase in the poverty and crime rates due to depression associated with being unemployed, and at the same time, unemployment leads to deterioration in health of those affected.

Today Jordan has a high rate of literacy, and more educated and skilled young people are graduating every year from the formal education system. Therefore, whilst the number of graduates is increasing each yearthe employment opportunities that are being created in Jordan are not expanding at the same rate leading to a high degree of youth unemployment.

According to the Department of Statistics, the number of people unemployed in Jordan in the first quarter of 2013 increased to 12.8 percent from 11.4 percent in the same period in 2012. Moreover, the percentage of unemployed males was 11.1 percent compared with 20.5 percent for females. It worth noting that the unemployment rate was highest among graduates, with a 17.2 percent jobless rate in the period.Charts 4.1 and 4.2 show a historical data for the Unemployment Rate in Jordan compared with the global average from 2005 to 2012.

Figure 4.1: Youth (14-25 years) unemployment rate in Jordan and globally (2005 -2012)
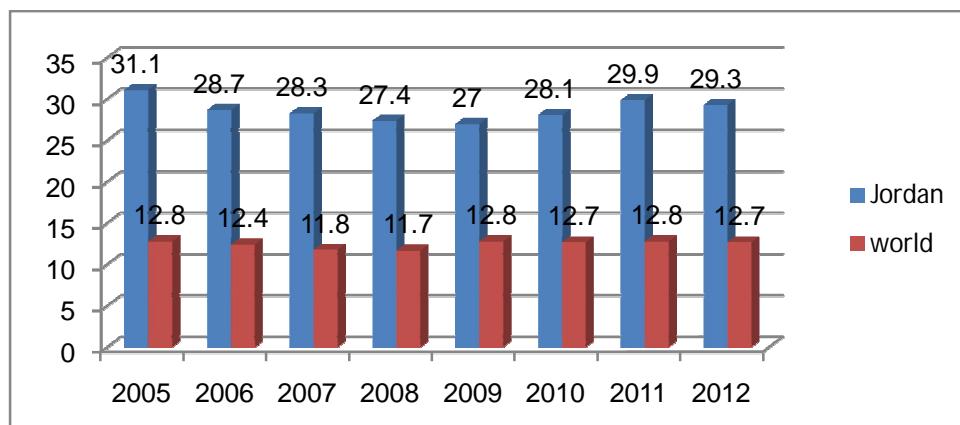
Source: Department of Statistics (DOS /Jordan)
At http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/index.h

Figure 4.2: Adult (25 + years) and youth (15-24 years) unemployment rates by sex, 2012
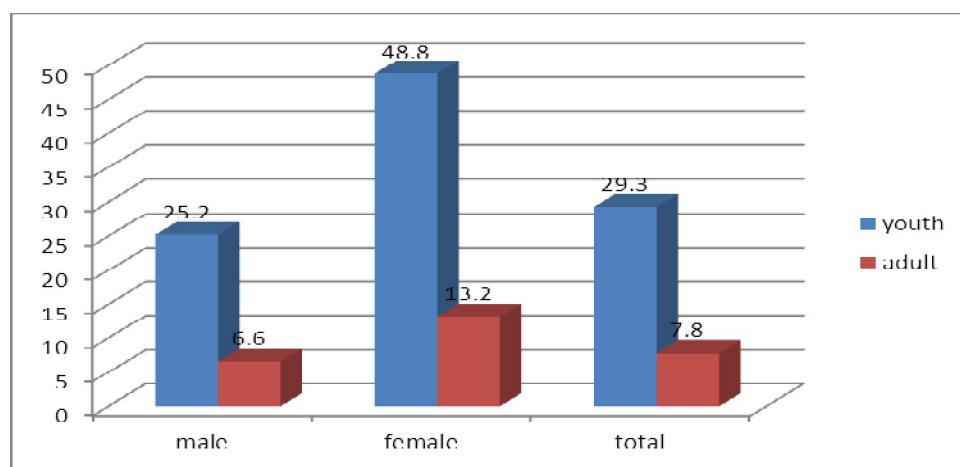
Source: Department of Statistics (DOS /Jordan)
At http://www.dos.gov.jo/dos_home_a/main/index.htm

4.2 Participation in Political Demonstrations

4.2.1 Political Attitudes of Students and Belonging to a Specific Political Party:

Figure 4.3: Students' distribution according to their political views:
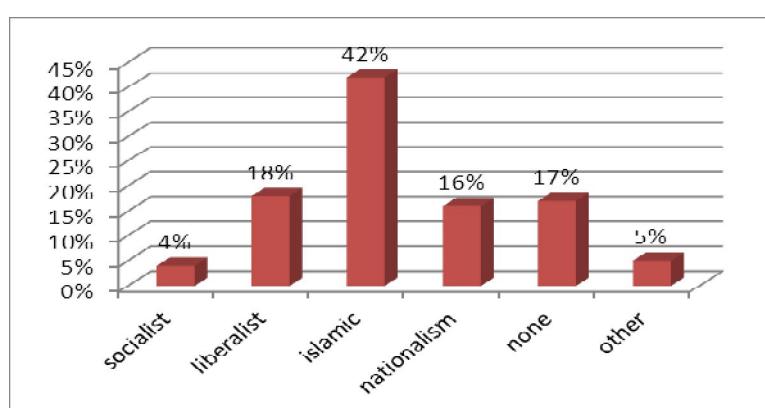
Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of students' political views, with the majority of students adopting Islamic political views, whilst a minority of students adopt either nationalist or liberalist viewpoint. In term of students' opinions of whether they accept or reject demonstrations with respect to their political views, it can be noted from figure 4.4 that most students adopting a specific political view agree with the idea of demonstrations, while those with no political affiliations are split roughly into two equal halves one accepting and the other rejecting the idea of demonstrations.

Figure 4.4: Students' opinions whether they accept or reject demonstrations with respect to their political views:
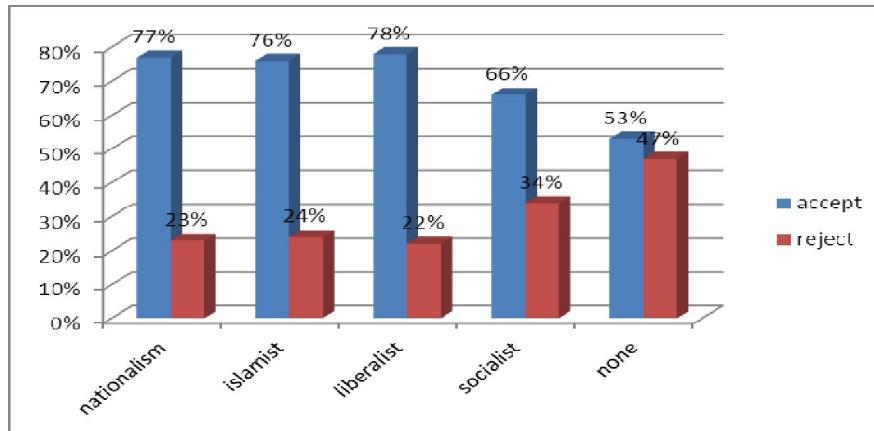
Figure 4.5: Students' distribution according to their belonging to political parties:
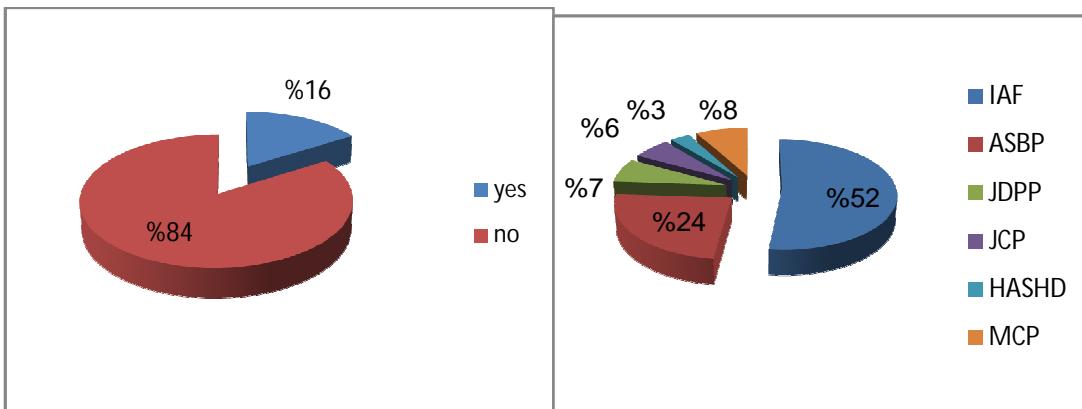
From the previous figure 4.5, it is clear that students who belong to a political party constitute a small percentage (16%) of all students, with almost half of those who do belong to a political party belonging to the Islamic Action Front Party (52%), followed by The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party (24%). Accordingly, it could be concluded that the practice of politics in the form of membership in political parties among Jordanian University students is not common[6].

4.2.2 Prevalence of Acceptance of Political Demonstrations amongst Students and Opinions Regarding the Effectiveness of Demonstrations on Policy Makers

Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of students' opinion regarding political demonstrations, where it is apparent that the majority of students tend to accept demonstrations (61%). Accordingly, these findings imply that demonstrations have become an effective tool for expressing opinions and demands. Regarding the effectiveness of political demonstrations on policy makers, figure 4.6 also indicates whether or not students believe that demonstrations affect policy makers in taking their decisions or not, where the figure highlight the fact that most students believe that demonstrations affect policy makers (79%).

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[6] JDPP: Jordanian Democratic People's Party; JCP: Jordanian Communist Party; HASHD: The Jordanian People's Democratic Party; MCP: The Muslim Centre Party.

Figure 4.6: Distribution of students' opinions regarding demonstrations and whether or not they agree that demonstrations affect policy makers:
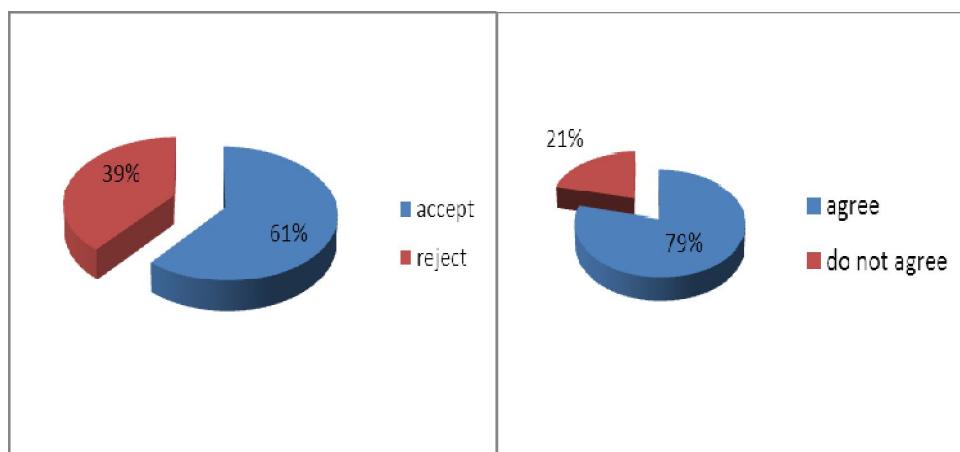
In term of gender and faculty types and level of acceptance of demonstrations, it is apparent from figure 4.7 below that the majority of students tend to accept demonstrations regardless of faculty type. However, it should be noted that the percentage acceptance among the students in theoretically-oriented faculties (68%) exceeds of those in practically-oriented faculties (55%). Moreover, it is clear that males are more likely to accept demonstrations than females.

Figure 4.7: Students' acceptance or rejection demonstrations according to gender and faculty type:

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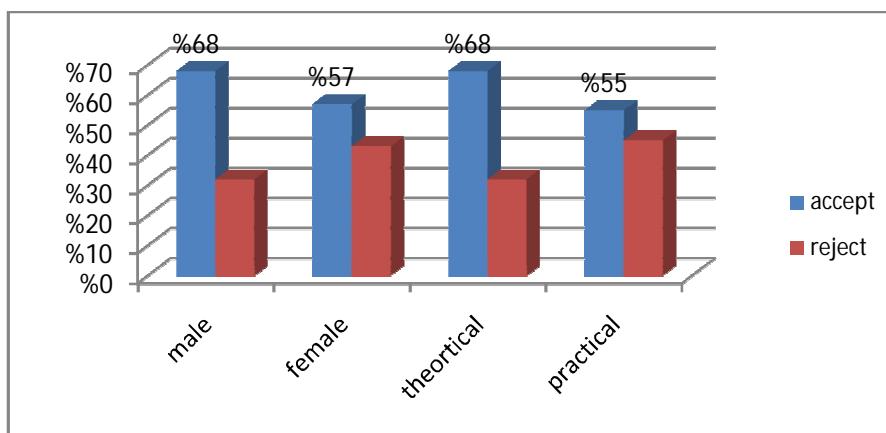
4.2.3 The Impact of Family Socioeconomic Status (SES) Factors on the Level of Acceptance of Demonstrations.

We expected that indices of family socioeconomic status, including level of parents' education, their occupational status and the family's welfare level would impact the acceptance of demonstrations. However, it is apparent from figure 4.8 that parental educational levels had an impact on the students' acceptance of demonstrations, as the majority of students who accepted or participated in demonstrations had parents whose educational levels were high. These results indicate that parents with high educational levels approve of their children participating in demonstrations more than parents with low educational levels.

Figure 4.8: Parental educational level and students' acceptance or participation in political demonstrations
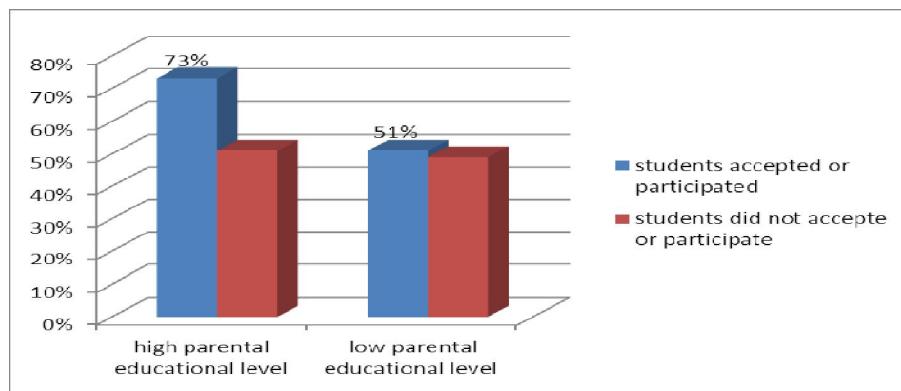
In terms of students' welfare level and acceptance of demonstrations, figure 4.9 highlights the fact that the majority of students tend to accept demonstrations regardless of their welfare level. However, it is worth noting that the poorer students tend to be more accepting of demonstrations.

Figure 4.9: Students' acceptance or rejection of demonstrations according to their welfare level:
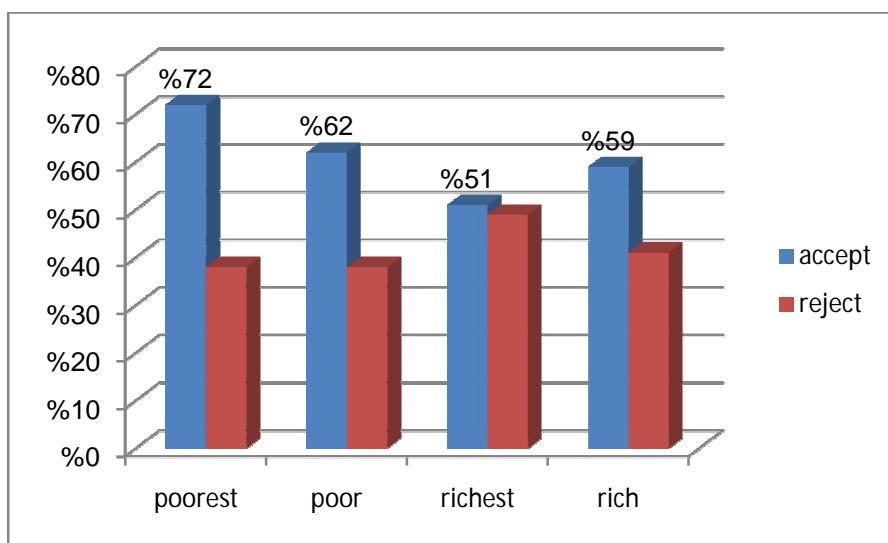
4.2.4 Main Factors Related to the Prevalence of Acceptance of Demonstrations among Jordanian Universities' Students:

It was previously mentioned that the majority of students tend to accept demonstrations, however, it is also important to explore students' opinion regarding three related issues; whether or not the number of demonstrations is believed to affect policy makers; the impact of the Arab Spring on their acceptance of demonstrations and the conditions that would make students accept demonstrations.

4.2.4.1 Increasing Number of Demonstrations (causes and effects on policy makers)

After finding out the students' opinions regarding whether demonstrations affect policy makers or not, it is appropriate to explore their opinions regarding the main reasons behind the increasing number of demonstrations and whether or not the number of demonstrations affect policy makers or not. It is shown in figure 4.10 that opinions are split mainly four ways, first is that there is a slowing down in the policy makers' reaction to demonstrators' demands (77%), the demonstrators' demands are not united which has an impact on the number of demonstrations (44%), and that the success of the Arab Spring has given hope to demonstrators that meaningful political change for the better is a distinct possibility (40%), followed by the "full belief of demonstrators in their demands" (25%).

Figure 4.10: Distribution of students' opinions regarding the reasons behind an increasing number of demonstrations
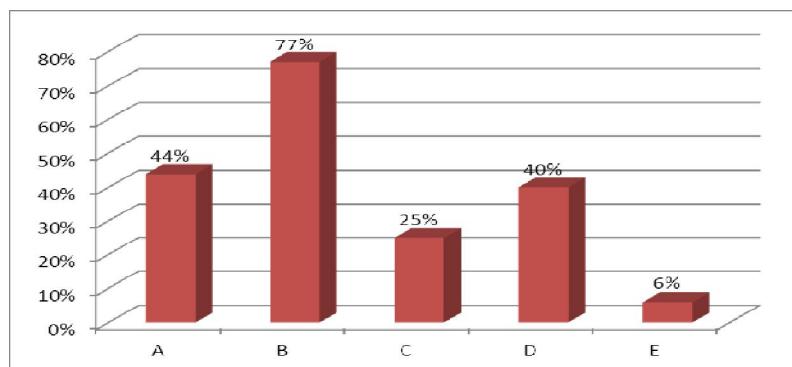
A. demands are not united
B. slowing down in response from policy makers
C. the success of the Arab Spring
D. full belief of the demonstrators in their demands
E. other

Regarding whether the increasing number of demonstrations affect policy makers or not, it is apparent from figure 4.11 below that the majority of students believe that the increasing number of demonstrations affect policy makers. Accordingly, this is an indication that demonstrators will continue to demonstrate and will not back down until they make sure their demands would be satisfied.

Figure 4.11: Distribution of students' opinions regarding the effectiveness of an increasing number of demonstrations on policy makers:
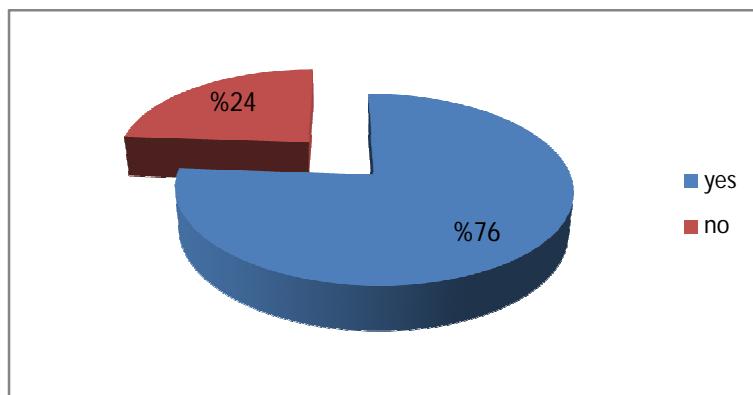
4.2.4.2 The Impact of the Arab Spring on the Prevalence of Political Demonstrations.

Figure 4.12 shows the distribution of students according to their participation in demonstrations before and since the Arab Spring. It is clear that the Arab Spring has had an impact on students' participation in demonstrations. Whereas before the Arab Spring they only constituted 8% of Jordanian University students, since the Arab Spring the percentage increased to 38%. Since the Arab Spring, Jordan has witnessed an increase in demonstrations, and other forms of social protest.

Figure 4.12: Students' distribution according to their participation in demonstrations before and since the Arab Spring:
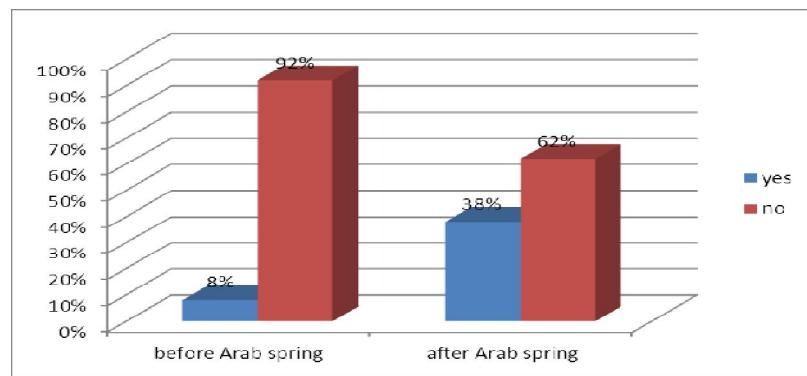
4.2.4.3 Reasons behind Participation in Demonstrations

The following section aimed to investigate the reasons why students do or do not participate in political demonstrations. It is clear from figure 4.13 that most students were motivated either by faith in the demonstrations' objectives (46%), or belief that demonstrations are the only way to express their opinions, and finally a belief that demonstrations affect policy makers[7].

**Figure 4.13: Distribution of students according to the reasons behind their participation in demonstrations:**
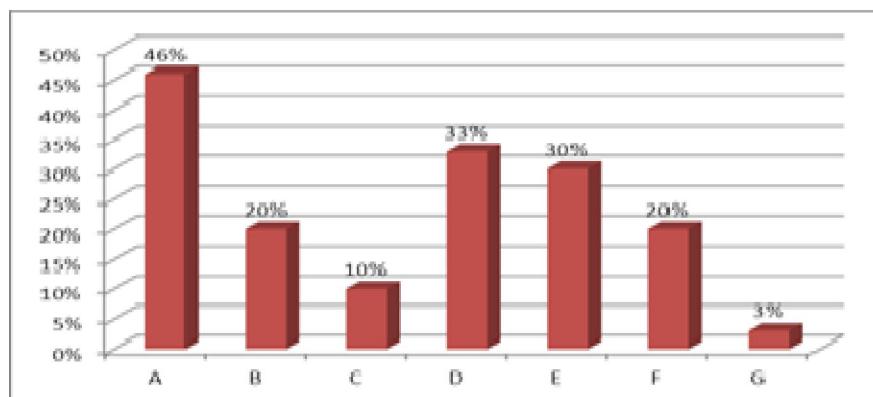
A. general frustration and high rate of unemployment
B. faith in demonstrations' objectives (political reforms and fighting corruption)
C. encouraging demonstrators
D. belief that demonstrations are the only way to express opinions
E. belief that demonstrations affect policy makers
F. backward trend in living standards
G. other

4.2.4.4 Conditions for Acceptance of Demonstrations:

This section aims to find out about the students' opinions regarding the conditions that would make them accept demonstrations.

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[7]Respondents were allowed to select more than one answer.

Figure 4.14: Distribution of students' opinions regarding the conditions for acceptance of demonstrations:
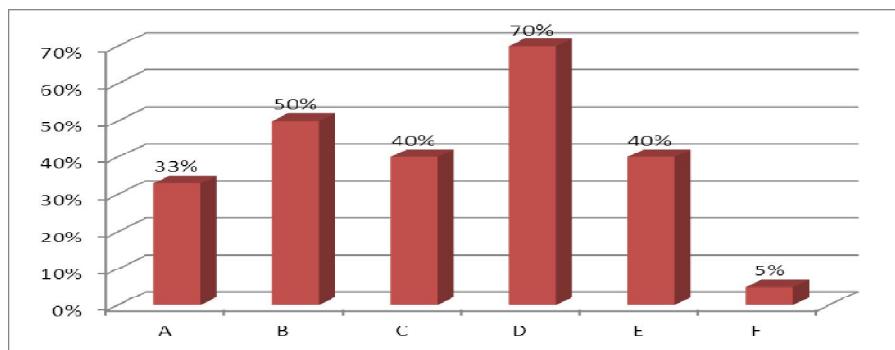

A. outside work time
B. not damaging to the interests of the state
C. no traffic jams
D. reasonable demonstrations that do not affect production process
E. expressing opinions without violence
F. other

It is apparent from figure 4.14 that the condition with the highest percentage agreement (70%) that demonstrations should be reasonable and not affect the production process, followed by two conditions with equal percentages (40%), that demonstrations should not damage the interests of the state and secondly that demonstrations should be only for the purpose of expressing opinions without resort to violence.

4.2.5 Reasons behind Lack of Participation in Demonstrations

Figure 4.15 shows the distribution of students' opinions regarding the reason behind their lack of participation in demonstrations, where their opinions were split between parental disapproval (36%), the fact that students do not participate in demonstrations because they fear of security consequences (26%), that demonstrations do not affect policy makers (22%), and finally due to lack of interest (16%).

Figure 4.15: Distribution of students according to the reasons for lack of participation in demonstrations:
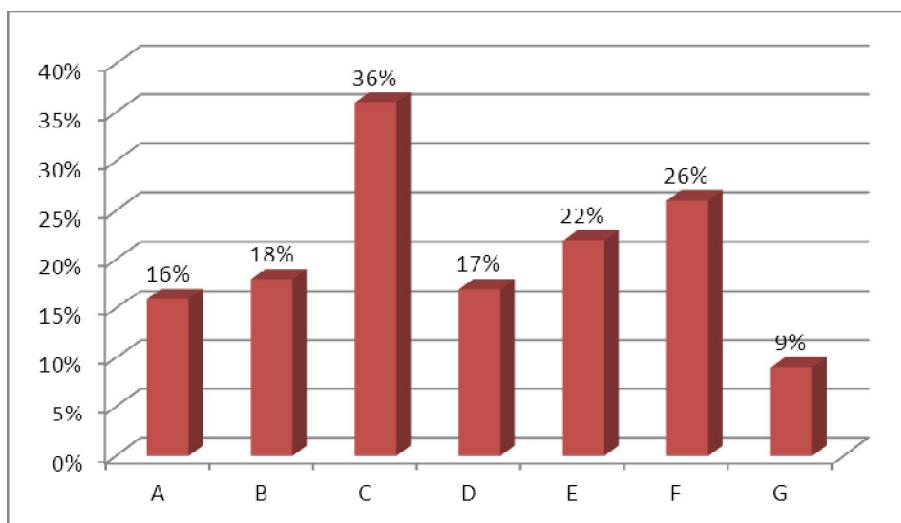

A. lack of encouragement
B. lack of interest
C. parents disapprove
D. no reasons
E. do not affect policy makers
F. fear of security consequences
G. other

4.3 Mass Media and its Impact on the Acceptance of Political Demonstrations

The mass media is a vital resource for most political actors, and may be even more important for social movements as the main channel of communication. Figure 4.16 highlights the fact that most students rely on either the internet (60%) or satellite TV (27%) as their main source of political news.

Figure 4.16: Distribution of students according to their mass media exposure
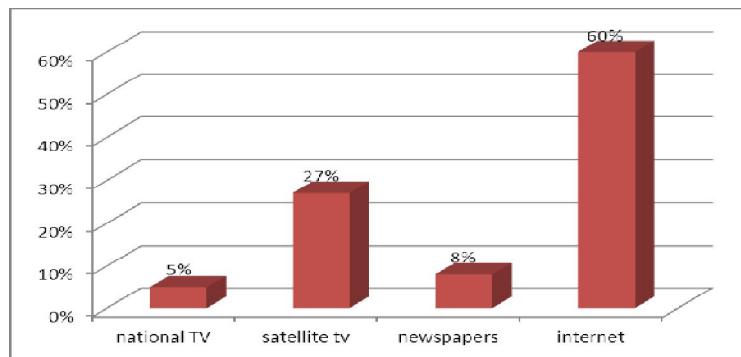
However, in term of students' acceptance or rejection of demonstrations according to their mass media exposure, it is worth noting that the majority of students tend to accept demonstrations, with acceptance reaching its peak among those who are exposed to the internet (74%) and satellite TV (66%) as shown in figure 4.17. Accordingly, internet and satellite TV are considered the most effective sources of political news and affects the acceptance of demonstrations among students.

Figure 4.17: Students' acceptance or rejection of demonstrations according to their mass media exposure
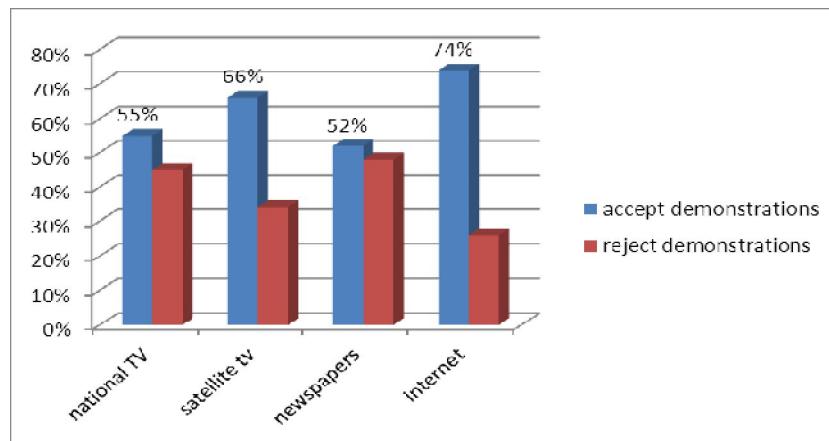
5.0 Conclusions

- The first conclusion of this study is that economic factors most influence the incidence of demonstrations in Jordan. For this reason, where the demonstrators' demands were economic and social in nature, seeking an end to all forms of corruption and improvement of living and working conditions for Jordanians, the demonstrators belong to two main groups which are the most affected. These are young people -who are more affected by these conditions than other groups in society- and the poorer classes, which is hard for them to acquire the basic necessities of life. Therefore, students tend to demonstrate when they are desperate and have little hope of realizing their rights and meeting urgent needs. It has been argued that "the traditional logic of demonstrators used to be that while participating in demonstrations meant putting one's life on line, people living in extreme poverty constantly saw their lives at risk anyway, so they would end up at the same point even without taking part in demonstrations; so instead of just sitting around waiting to die, they would aim for an improvement in their living situation even if it meant taking a risk"[8]

- It could be also concluded that the majority of Jordanian Universities' students accept demonstrations in general. However, students in theoretically-oriented faculties, poorer students, students who believe that demonstrations affect policy makers, students who depend on internet and satellite TV, students who have political views and whose parents' educational level is high are more likely to accept and participate in demonstrations than other students. Moreover, the majority of students believe that demonstrations and the increasing number of demonstrations affects policy makers.

- In term of the enrolment of students in political parties, it can be concluded that most students are not members of political parties as only 16% belong to political parties, with 52% belonging to the Islamic Action Front party. Taking into consideration that the Muslim brotherhood and its political front the IAF party, is the mostwell-organized political force in the country, it is worth remembering that Islamists are closest to the common people and this reflected in fact that the political attitude of the majority of respondents is Islamic.

- It can also be concluded that the Arab Spring is a crucial factor in the level of acceptance and participation in demonstrations among universities' students. The percentage of students who participated in demonstrations before the Arab Spring constituted only 8% of the student population of Jordanian Universities, while since the Arab Spring the percentage has increased to 38%.

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