

The Function of Tribe in Jordan within the Social and Political Interferences: A Sociological Approach

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• Abstract

This study aimed to examine the transformation of tribe in Jordan from the social function to the political function, the reasons for this political control over the social roles of tribe inside the contemporary Jordanian society, and to understand the motives of this transformation. The study found a domination of political function at the expense of social function, even though historically the tribe has played a strong social role in parallel with its political and security role. Therefore, the study results concluded the continuation of symbolic social role for tribe in the mentality of people but the effectiveness of its role is limited to the political aspect, where the political system was the biggest factor of this transformation through the exchange of interests between the state or country and the tribe, the state wants the support of tribes, and the tribes seek to achieve the interests of its people through this closeness to the state and its institutions. This change in the roles and functions which affected the Jordanian tribal institution is a structural transformation, and also contributed to it a series of changes in the Jordanian society structure, which associated with modernity, and specifically changes in production from the agriculture and pastoral patterns to the semi-capitalist rents associated with the state.

Keywords: Function of Tribe, Social and Political Interferences, Transformation

• Introduction

In the commentary and explanation of Ibn Khaldun's concept on inclination, Frederick Matouk says in his book, "Sdam Ala'sbyat Ala'rbiah" or "The Arabic Bias Conflict" that skin bias is political, which is like a walnut crust, very harsh, but the heart of it is social, and its soft like the heart of nut. The softness of social bias or inclination that is surrounded by the brutal political and military bias leaves no room for the separation of political from social (Matouk, 2017:19).

The local community made up of individual who are united by the natural or automatic ties, such as common goals which go beyond the personal interest of individuals, and the sense of belonging to the human group itself which controls the thoughts and actions of individuals, and make them feel comfortable and safe; as a result they share the good and the bad, and guarantee together the unity of their society where as the local community represents the shared and productive life, especially if it based on blood ties, such as family and tribe (Khalil, 2008:56), which Jean-Jacques Russo viewed it as a joint stock or shareholding company that individual's interest in it align with interest of the group, where individuals in it are ready to give, produce, sacrifice, and even bend down knowing that they will get a higher returns. It's a stored balance for each member of the group (Russo/ translation of Zaiter, 2016: 31).

Durkheim viewed the tribe as a society that have multiple social groups, but it still maintain its unity and homogeneity or coherence, and doesn't accept to be divided into several distinct societies, even though it consists of small families that don't consider distinctive political sections in the general framework of the tribe (Ghonim, 2009:47). The tribe considers a social unit and an extension of the family, and distinguished by a particular sequential kinship that align with a special residential system, and therefore it expresses a spatial unit, where members of the same tribe believe in the presence of one common grandfather who established the tribe, and sometimes this grandfather consider a legendary figure.

It must be realized that tribe in the history and present of Jordanian society represents an institution that has weight and influence in the political, social, economic, and even religious life, where it deeply linked to the values and heritages of society, and has played a central role in the existence of Jordanian society, and in building its state and government, and therefore it has been active and took part in all changes that reached the society's structure. In addition, its impossible to neglect or overlook that tribe in the Jordanian social system consider the most effective institution, since its the most important element of building the state and its stability, safeguarding its unity, and the stability of its social security.

Since the 1970s, the authority in Jordan has dealt with the tribe as the most important social elements, and this indicate that the Jordanian regime has a tribal depth in its formation, which is a feature or stigma that may accompanied the history of the state, and gave an Arab and international impression of the state backwardness or reactionary, its distance from democracy and institutions, and it's one of the ideas that may have been unfair about Jordan classification, and understanding its political and social reality, where the tribe was more open and flexible, and the evidence on that its integration and incorporation through its members in the various institutions of modern nature. It's also worth mentioning the central role that plays in supporting the issues and affairs of Arab nation and its history in supporting the free Arabs in their struggle against the colonialism. Even though, tribe didn't abandon its traditional roles, new roles were added to the old roles, and contributed to the functional and symbolic existence.

• Study Problems & Questions

There are many studies that dealt with the tribe, in terms of its definition and its historical formation factors, and the organism of its economical, social, political, and civilization existence within the framework of specific objective circumstances and events, which is through it the structure of the tribe was formulated in the societies before and after the Arab state in its modern form. The tribe, as a major social unit, was created with the development of social organizations from their first simple forms, as a simple kinship structure to shape its dimensions by expanding across the bloody kinship slope, and the marriage and regional alliances arriving to its growth and expansion as a socio-cultural unit that contain a certain group or human groups, which claim the cultural and social privacy, and the residence and belonging to its own territory within the partnership framework of branching from one single dad.

The researcher believes through his follow-up and interest in the Jordanian social affairs, where tribe forms in it one of its most important structural pillars, its a pattern that has a depth in the Arabs history, as in the history of Jordanians who believe in the depth of their intellectual perceptions that their tribal affiliations are their symbolic and main capital to preserve their own pure Jordanian identity especially with their constant interference with huge waves of asylum from different nationalities which threaten this symbolic capital, and it's a matter that constantly forcing them to speak highly of their tribal affiliations, and they try to stick to them through the practice of symbolic behaviors that enhance their sense of belonging to certain group more than others, where this feeling make them feel strong and proud, even on a symbolic level.

The Jordanian state worked to absorb and digest the tribes and integrate them into its military and civil institutions, and grant them the individual and grouped privileges to become part of the active structures of Jordanian state's depth. This situation represented the re-production of tribe and its incorporation into the state institutions, where the political action was the way in which through it the process of reproducing tribal formation was carried out to represent a strong ally of the political

system on the one hand, and to strengthen the cohesion within the tribes themselves, in order to add new gains for the members of the tribe on the other hand.

Therefore, the study attempted to examine the transformations that were evident in the function of the tribe as a social pattern with a historical depth from the social as a fundamental function to the political as a more effective alternative. The study attempts to answer the following two questions:

- Why is this shift in the function of tribe at the contemporary Jordanian society from the social to the political?
- What are the reasons behind this shift in the function of tribe at the contemporary Jordanian society despite the continued existence of tribe in the real life of Jordanian, but in different ways?

• Study Objectives

The study aims to try to understand the relationship between the transformation of tribe's social function to the political, and the reasons for this continuous existence of strong social connection between its members. The Jordanian state raised on the reproduction of the tribe in the governmental and the representative political structure of the Jordanian state, where the tribe continues to form the backbone of Jordanian state political composition, but this employment of the traditional social structures in the political system was at the expense of its social roles, which were going parallel with its political and security roles, and its probably one of the things that contributed to the absence of tribe's effective social roles.

• Study Structural Terms & Framework

Tribe, Society and the State in Jordan:

The skin bias or inclination consider as a unit of faith and security within its people, but socially is an existential or conscience unit that prevails over all relationships, led by the political relations inside and outside the tribe, which over time became part of the personality of tribes in different parts of the world. Ever since the dawn of history, the tribe has been based on an internal psychosocial project, and on an internal and external political project. Therefore, people are continuously divided into two categories: the "We" category and the "Others" category (Matouk, 2017: 44).

Tribe affiliation and inclination passion are an intellectual division, which based on a deliberate distribution of the social relationships map, and in association with the political relations. Therefore, there are symbolic and social values of tribe in the depth of its members that formulate the state of their psychological and social existence, which mentally connected to their distinction and differences from others, regardless of who they are. Perhaps, the tribe can be viewed according to the concept of Pierre Bordeaux as a bank of capital which contains the fundamental, symbolic, social, economical, and political aspects. It's a unit that continuously competes with other units, and it's a local community capital that organizes and sponsors the processes of competition, and works to preserve the public interest (Khalil, 2008).

The tribe association and affiliation, which based on the association of blood, kinship, intermarriage, gamogenesis, or inclination consider the foundation for the relationship of the tribe with its members to formulate an integrated system for individuals and society, to become a political, economical, social, security, and religious system, and to express the extension of family composition, where individuals believe that they aren't alone in the society, and that their tribe is like a safe haven in time of hardships.

The researchers believe that tribe has functions that help to consolidate and preserve the social system structure of society, and the most important functions are: the social coherence, bond, unity, or solidarity function, where the tribe consider a social unit dominated by the social unity, harmony, and cooperation, and therefore all members of the tribe rush to help or lend a hand to the member who needs aid, assistance, or support. This solidarity or unity results in a sense of security and stability for the members of the tribe, which is a stronger feeling than the one that exist in the same family, due to the fact that tribe is larger than family in size and more powerful (Jassim, 2018).

The tribe also carries out the process of social control and provides the internal security of its members, which consider the second main function of the tribe, and this will be performed when Sheikh of the tribe and his aides supervise implementation of the law, which is a set of traditions and customs, and the Sheikh also oversees the execution of punishment for those who violate those laws, traditions, and customs. The social control consider a phenomenon that has its own social rules, which gradually grow, formulate, and fall into place from the center of social environment, which become through the social interaction processes compulsory rules for all individuals. It pierce into their personalities and become part of it through the social nurturing of individuals in the tribal society, where the effectiveness of social control depend on the nature of tribal group on the one hand, and on the social nurturing and development pattern, as an inheritance on the other hand. Therefore, the tribal communities make the constitutional law as a great tool for social control of individual's behavior who violate customs and values (Al-Qureshi, 2011).

The idea of state came as an expression of a political entity or organism that has an international recognition and sovereignty or supremacy due to its ultimate power and decision making rights that control the society, and over time the relationship between the state and society would be built, which consider one of the distinctive features of modern world. In light of this relationship, the influence between the state and society will be shown in a reciprocal form; taking into account that the state within the modern Middle East was established at a time when society was still within the formation of tribal, local, religious, or national entities, which affect the structure and composition of the modern state. Therefore, the transformation processes in the Arab state differed from the changes that happened in the European world, where the Arab state continue to be held captive, due to the reciprocal influence and affect between the authority and the social structure to the social reality that has been reproduced within the political composition of Arab states historically, and in the modern era (Owen, 2004).

If the tribe has a functional and a social role, its function and role that precedes the formation of modern state, where the tribe originally; way before modernization is a social entity that mainly based on the unity of blood and kinship, and has a tendency bias that expresses the loyalty to the tribe and belonging to it, and not to the state or nation. The social importance and role of this entity lies in preserving the unity of the tribe, its values, and customs, and in resolving the tribal disputes within the traditional society, but it cannot be a substitute for the values of modernity and urbanization, which are in contrary with human rights and the institutions of civil society, but today the tribe in the Arab society as a whole has turned into a political project, and the role of so called "Madafah" or guesthouse has turned into something similar to political parties that formulate tribal coalitions and political deals (Ghonim, 2009).

The tribal phenomenon reverts to the beginning of Jordanian state formation. The society is a tribal structure and formation, and the tribe is the social system, according to this situation, the state had no choice but to turn to the tribal framework to establish and hold its legitimacy by absorbing and integrating the tribal leadership into its political structure taking into account the tribe balances and taking care of it not only through the distribution of profits and wealth, but also through the reproduction of tribe in state institutions. The coalition between Britain and Arabs in the Great Arab Revolution inherited a "rent-a-weed relationship" between the Jordanian tribes and leaders of the Arab Revolution, where the Jordanian tribes have long reminded the governing royal family of their standing and positions that were taken alongside the royal family in their struggle with the Turks. Therefore, the merits and benefits of this alliance had to be paid throughout the history of state from that time until now, and the political composition of state was rebuilt from the bureaucrats, civilians, militants, tribes, and the Jordanian Middle Easterners as the main foundation for governing Monarch, and its political governmental and parliamentary formation (Mahariq, 2006).

It's possible to call for a reciprocal relationship between the state and the tribe, which was establish according to the concept of dependence and interest. The state relied on the tribes to gain and maintain its legitimacy, and the tribesmen relied on the state to arrange their political and economical circumstances, and this showed clearly in most state institutions (Al-Hourani, 2012).

Despite all the structural changes that have affected the Jordanian society, and the various tensions that were between the state and the tribes, today it's not possible to say that state's relationship with the tribe or the relationship of individual with the state and the tribe is only interest-based

relationship. This saying isn't true, but the truth calls for an organic connection between the state and the tribe based on the common existence. This relationship between the regime and the tribe continued through the tribal leaders based on common interest and profit, and by building a mutual loyalty, where the duality of tribal loyalty and loyalty to the state were established, and then the dual identity continued in the local social awareness, while the tribal origins of Jordanian East (Bedouin and countryside) are the way to cross to the Jordanian national identity (Layne, 1994).

Accordingly, the relationship between the state and the Jordanian tribe was built, which has been reproduced in practice through the parliamentary elections that were well-established in the legal documents, where the electoral laws designate some representative seats to the Bedouins on the basis of their division into south, central, and north, and usually own by sheikhs, elders, their sons, or one of the tribe from the civilians and militants retirees who held senior positions in the state, and therefore consolidate and strengthen the political role of the tribe to ensure continued exchange of benefit, and political and social legitimacy for both parties, the state and the tribe.

• Analytical Approach & Study Results

The tribal society is characterized by the simplicity of its social unit's formation, where each tribe represents a society that can be divided into smaller societies, such as houses and moieties or rods. The tribal social system stand on a geographical pattern, where there is a strong connection between the geography and the tribe through land ownerships which don't only constitute geographical area, but also a distinct social unit with special kinship, economical, and political entity that distinguish it from the rest of the tribes in the same geographical surroundings, and grant it the right to resolve any disputes within the tribe, practice the process of social control, and the right to establish the coalitions that guarantee the process of external control.

Whoever examine the social history of Jordanian society find that the tribe has formed up to this day one of the most important pillars of its social structure, and a major source of its value system which later formed its customs and the matrix of its intellectual structure, and regulate the aspects of its individual and group businesses and affairs. The sons of the tribes are voluntarily governed by their customs, values, traditions, and rules that shaped their intellectual structure, and gave them their identities and affiliations that they cherish.

It's their social capital that always make them feel distinctive within the tribe group, and give them the feeling of psychological and social security where each member of the tribe feels they own the tribe and therefore each of them will have the feeling that they own the geography of tribe, which strengthen their idea of power that distinguish them from the rest of the tribes. It's an overall source for everything they need in their life, and a structure that reinforces their emotional faculties which associated with their feeling of solidarity and harmony with all the members of the tribe. It's always supply them with the power and strengthen their self-confidence which derived from the depth of the tribal group that they belong to, and its also a cultural identity that individuals can identify through it their social existence.

It's worth mentioning that the regime in Jordan worked intelligently to integrate the structure of state with the structure of the tribe where the loyalty of individuals blended and merged between the tribe and the state to the point of not being able to separate between them. Therefore, the concept and sense of belonging to the tribe become associated with belonging to the Jordanian state, especially when talking about the tribes of the Jordanian East. This made the structure of Jordanian society which appears to be modern externally but internally a traditional structure to reproduce a culture and mechanisms of tribal solidarity through mechanisms that appear to be modern. Tribe continued to work as a socio-political institution to grant places and privileges to its members according to its tribal customs and traditions (Fahmi, 1997).

It's possible to say that state didn't move away from tribal structure during any historical periods due to the fact that political system itself stood on a tribal structure and elements despite its domination by the religious nature. If the structure of modern state requires to overlook or disregard the tribe role, and to turn the awareness of its members in their traditional affiliations to the tribe to be part of the national social structure which initially supposed to abandon the tribal bias and intentionally replace it with the "Citizenship" on the basis of equal rights and duties that

specified in the state legislation. It's something that didn't happen in the reality of Jordanian society which adopted the modern state, and didn't abandon the tribe (Al-Rousan, 2013).

The tribe has an important political, social, and economical functions imposed by objective circumstances which were intended to protect the security and safety of its members, and their physical interests from the external aggression. Therefore, members of the tribe recognize naturally that their safety connected with the safety of the tribe, and must be dedicated to defend the interests of their tribe to the end in order for the tribe to defend them. The relationship between the individual and the tribe will be strengthen and weaken according to the power of state and its role in ensuring the security and livelihood of people. Karl Marx says that development of human societies takes place outside the consciousness of human being, and that forces and relationships of production, and their conflicts and struggles are the driving forces of history and social transformations (Hussein, 2019).

The social function of tribe has gone hand in hand with its political function for a long period of Jordan's history, and often the role of tribe with the majority was strengthening. The large tribes hold social, economical, and political effect and power, but in the course of Jordanian parliamentary political effort, tribe solidarity was reproduced and activate the practice of the tribe to play a political role by supporting the candidate as member of the tribe motivated by kinship, where the success of candidate will offer the tribe a higher social status and political power compared with other tribes, and also grant the tribe privileges that benefit their members. Kinship relationships and individuals' loyalty to the primary groups have become stronger, and with tribal bias motives, and the tribal structure has continued to shape the political trends and practices for members of the same tribe, despite the economical and social changes of the Jordanian society. Motivated by strong symbolic affiliation and sensibility, the tribe and its image have been restored by having political influence that make its members feel socially empowered.

The continuity of tribe discourse or speech in parallel with the government speech, which emphasizes the solidarity and unity of tribe by supporting its members, means the ability to maintain the social status of tribe on opposite to other rival tribes. Therefore, the tribesmen and members of the tribe continued to call for the necessity and importunacy of continuing the political role of tribe, and reproducing it in the political structure of the Jordanian state, which resulted in the abandon of tribe social role, especially the one related to internal social control processes represented by the life of tribe members and their internal system.

It's not possible to say that tribe in Jordan today is a socially fading or disappearing structure, but it will remain one of the most important pillars in the social control processes of its members' behaviors through its long-standing inheritance value if given its actual role in the construction, development, and change processes. Nobody can ignore its political role which was part of the formation of Jordanian state, and there is a debate about the great need to not focus on its political roles apart from its actual social functions.

Perhaps, it's intellectually and academically unscientific to accuse the tribes in Jordan of being backward traditional structures or barbarism, but its better to talk about the effectiveness of modernity process and its advised integration into this development process which continue to do socially despite all the critics of its existence in the contemporary Jordanian society.

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