

THE ROLE OF CULTURE IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION: THE  
JORDANIAN-ISRAELI PEACE NEGOTIATION AS A CASE-STUDY

By

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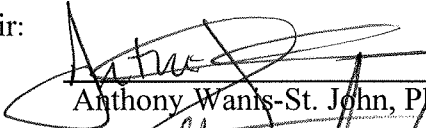
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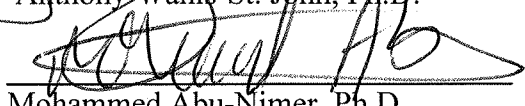
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## DEDICATION

To my mother Fatima, who gave me all what she can...

To my beloved wife Senta, who gave me all the love and support I needed...

To my beloved daughter Dana, the future is yours...

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ABSTRACT

The world is becoming more interdependent. Governments and diplomats negotiate across cultures every day. Some argue that negotiators are professionals and share the common diplomatic culture, therefore their cultural backgrounds are irrelevant to international negotiation and in result culture has no significant influence on the process. The author argues that culture *does* matter and it could influence the different negotiation elements: individuals, process, and outcome – the larger the cultural gap between the parties, the larger the cultural influence. To substantiate his argument, the author uses a case-study analysis of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation that led to the 1994 peace treaty. The author conducted eight semi-structured interviews with negotiators from the two countries who actively participated in the negotiation – including the heads of the two delegations. From this work, the author concludes that culture in the Jordanian-Israeli negotiation was manifested, and influenced the negotiators, the process, and the outcome in six different ways – culture was an enabler.

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## CHAPTER 1

### THE POWER OF CULTURE

As our world advances in the fields of communication, transportation, and commerce, among others, it becomes smaller and more interlinked and interdependent as well. Geographical borders have hardly any power in controlling the flow of information and ideas. However, it is not only good ideas that are crossing borders, but also challenges and conflicts. Such factors require higher forms of cooperation and communication among governments, institutions, and people. Together with cooperation and communication come agreements and disagreements, and the development of methods that can be used in reaching such agreements – and overcoming disagreements.

Negotiation is one of the oldest methods that people utilize in solving conflicts and achieving goals; in pursuing cooperation and consensus. Our history is full of examples and literature that document incidents that include negotiation in one way or another (for example, the literature on the Athenian-Melian dialogue, documents a negotiation process that occurred over three thousand years ago). Scholars of international relations, political science, as well as anthropologists and psychologists during the last century, flooded the academic field and the market with literature on negotiation processes, analysis, skills, and psychology. They all agree on the importance of negotiation in international relations and business; and generally, they all acknowledge culture as an intervening variable in international negotiation. However, when it comes to

its role, relevance, and impact on negotiation, scholars are divided. This research intends to shed light on the importance and relevance of cultural differences in international negotiation, especially where there is a large cultural gap between the negotiators' cultural backgrounds.

Culture is how people view the world; it is the way by which they explain and overcome their challenges. Culture somehow decides “what we pay attention to and what we ignore” (Hall 1976, 85). E. Hall (1992, 211) argues, “Culture is the medium evolved by humans to survive. Nothing in our lives is free from cultural influences.” Several qualities within culture drive people of different cultures to “see, interpret, and evaluate things differently, and consequently act upon them differently” (N. J. Adler qtd. in Kittler et al. 2011, 64). When individuals from different cultures come into contact, confusion and misunderstanding, is often the outcome. When people view same things in different ways, and fail to communicate their views of the world effectively, conflicts might erupt and negotiations might fail. It is not in the researcher's assumption that culture is the only or most influential factor in negotiation, but it is an important factor and ignoring it is an error. Hall (1992, 212) emphasizes that “culture is communication and no communication by humans can be divorced from culture.” The need for this research comes from the assumption that culture is underestimated by scholars of international negotiation and more attention is needed to this important factor.

This research surveys a wide range of literature and highlights the different opinions about the relationship between culture and negotiation – both the skeptic and the advocate views. It addresses and analyzes the different arguments and counterarguments on the role of culture in negotiation. The research starts with the struggle in defining

culture since there is a common agreement that culture is hard to be defined. The research also analyzes and presents the cultural dimensions that characterize the different cultures as they were presented originally by Edward Hall and Geert Hofstede.

Using the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation that ended with signing the famous peace treaty between the two countries in 1994 as the lens of analysis for addressing this research question was used for two main reasons: first, both countries are considered opposites in regards to their cultural dimensions – the cultural gap was relatively big between the two societies and chapter 6 in this research illustrated such a wide cultural gap. Secondly, the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation was marked among very few successful peace negotiation attempts in the history of the Israeli-Arab conflict. It was in the objectives of the researcher to analyze culture as an enabler in international negotiation rather than as a challenge or an obstacle.

However, the researcher concludes that in the case of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, culture indeed played an important role: the negotiators' cultural backgrounds were present in almost every aspect of the negotiation; as well as the five cultural dimensions that are analyzed in chapter 4 were projected in the perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors of the negotiators. The researcher projects six different roles that culture played in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation: first, culture influenced how the negotiators perceived the negotiation process as whole, including their perception of the other as well as the process. Second, culture and cultural values inspired the negotiators' attitude and behavior toward the other and it was reflected in their communication styles. Third, culture was used sometimes as a strategy for political maneuver. Fourth, culture provided solutions and mechanisms in solving disputes during the negotiation process.

Fifth, culture contributed in creating the good and friendly negotiation environment and atmosphere. Sixth, several interviewees emphasized that learning and respecting the other side's culture and traditions contributed for building trust and in transforming the relationship from the formal to the human. Almost all the interviewees emphasized that the cordiality that evolved during the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation was essential for the success of the negotiation. The main skeptic scholar on the role of culture, W. Zartman (1993, 17), wrote with some sarcasm that the negotiators' culture to negotiation is as relevant as "the breakfast that they had before negotiation." The findings of this research showed that goodwill gestures as simple as what to provide for the negotiators at breakfast indeed might influence the relationship as well as the whole atmosphere of the negotiation.

This research does not claim that there is a specific role for culture on international negotiation, nor does it claim that culture influences *all* negotiations in the *same way* – indeed each case is unique. However, the findings of this research show that culture did influence the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation in the above mentioned six ways and with different levels. The research's original intent was to challenge the skeptic's views as well as to provide examples on how culture influences the negotiators and the negotiation. There are several conclusions and lessons that could be learnt from the case analysis of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation that can be considered as good practices for future international negotiation.

## CHAPTER 2

### THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTION

This research aimed to address the following main questions within the given scope allotted within the framework of the Master's Degree IPCR Program:

What role does culture played, or has the potential to play, in international negotiation? And how might it influence the negotiators' style, if at all? The negotiation process? And the negotiation outcome?

Do official negotiators negotiate internationally within a shared diplomatic culture, or do their native cultural backgrounds influence their style?

What role did culture play in the Jordanian–Israeli peace negotiation of 1994? How did culture influence the negotiators' perception, attitude, style of communication, as well as the negotiation process, and the negotiation outcome in this specific case?

The research also addresses several specific questions that are related to culture and negotiation's style, process, and outcome. For example:

Does cultural background affect how negotiators view of the negotiation itself as a mean in international affairs?

Is there a national style in selecting negotiators? How it might be culturally related?

Is authority viewed, and approached, differently across cultures? How might such different views influence the negotiation?

Are word meanings perceived differently across cultures, and how relevant was such a phenomenon in the Jordanian–Israeli peace negotiation?

Does the intensity of the cultural influence on negotiation vary between secret and public negotiations?

The researcher's working hypothesis suggests that culture plays an important role in international negotiation: It influences the negotiators style, the negotiation process, and the negotiation outcome. This hypothesis seems especially relevant and valid when negotiations occur between two countries where a large cultural gap exists; for example a high-context versus low-context culture or high-power distance versus low-power distance and so on – which all applies to the case-study that was selected for this research. In other words, the larger the cultural gap, the more influential role culture plays in the negotiation process. However, the researcher accepts the idea that culture does not always influence negotiations with the same intensity and in the same way. Other factors might affect the amount of cultural influence, such as (but not limited to): the negotiator's experience in international negotiation; negotiators' understanding of the differences regarding the cultural dimensions; negotiators' experience with the other party's local culture; the historical relationship between the two parties and governments; the power asymmetry between the two parties; and the transparency of the negotiation (secret or public).

## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A specific research plan was made for this study in order to answer the research question. The researcher decided to use qualitative research methods for several reasons that are discussed in this chapter; this chapter also presents the research design and implementation strategy; results and discussion are presented in chapter 9.

Qualitative methodology was used to collect data in this research. The researcher employed a combination of text-based research and interview fieldwork to inform the results. The qualitative method was used for several reasons that are related to the substance of the research topic. There is a common agreement in social science that culture is “vague” and hard to measure (Fisher 1980, 7); it is difficult to isolate its influence from other variables that might affect negotiation. The subject of this research deals with meanings and perceptions; it deals with experiences that “cannot be meaningfully expressed by numbers” (Berg 2007, 3). In this research, the researcher was looking for answers in “meanings, concepts, characteristics, metaphors, symbols, and description of things,” which all best to be captured through the qualitative method (Berg 2007, 3). Though this methodology can be sometimes limited in terms of range and validity of the data, the researcher felt that using this approach would best capture the research intent to explore the role of culture in international negotiation. The human

interaction, views, perceptions, attitude, and behavior during the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation are all in the center of this research, which thus requires qualitative analysis – rather than quantitative one (Berg 2007, 13).

Corbin and Strauss (2008, 12), in advocating for the qualitative method, argue that “the research question should dictate the methodological approach that is used to conduct the research.” They add that “qualitative research allows researchers to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and to discover rather than test variables” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 12). As explained earlier, the substance of the research question, which is related to human perception, views, and behavior in relation to culture and international negotiation, determines that qualitative methods are the most appropriate in this case. The researcher was looking for meanings from the “perspective[s]” of the negotiators to “make discoveries that will contribute to the development of empirical knowledge” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 16). Indeed the researcher was looking for personal experiences by individuals who negotiated with other individuals from different cultures. In short, the researcher was interested “in how persons experience events, and the meanings that they give to those experiences” (Corbin and Strauss 2008, 16); and giving meanings are indeed a quality of culture.

However, the researcher understood that one of the main challenges in attaining validity in qualitative research include “the researcher bias” (Roberts et al. 2006, 41). The researcher acknowledges that being a Jordanian and his interest in the research subject might not only affect his perception of the data, but also the answers of the interviewees. P. Roberts et al. (2006, 44) argues that the researcher bias might reflect on the selective



approach to data collection and recording as well as its “interpretation based on personal perspectives.” Nevertheless, the researcher, while acknowledging that “complete objectivity or detachment in the research process is impossible,” applies several procedures to suspend or at least control his bias (Roberts et al. 2006, 45). The researcher worked on repeating similar questions in different variations to confirm answers and interpretation (see Appendix A). The researcher also revisited the transcription in several rounds of analysis to confirm the data selected as well as to check if any of the data left out contradicted his interpretation – more information on the content analysis are in the coming paragraphs. Finally, it was important to emphasize that the study notes assumptions where necessary accordingly in the final findings.

Furthermore, an in-depth literature review was first conducted on the role of culture and international negotiation, generally. The researcher also included a review of the definition of culture and the cultural dimensions as part of this process, looking at both emic and etic views vis-à-vis consulting general literature and native experiences that specifically describe and analyze the local culture (i.e. the Jordanian and the Israeli cultures in this case). The culmination of the content subsequently informed the compilation of the specific questions used during the interview phase of this research.

Following the literature review phase, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews with eight Jordanians and Israelis who actively and personally participated in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiations starting from Madrid Conference in 1992 until signing the Peace Treaty in October 26, 1994 to explore the relevance of cultural dimensions as described in the literature and its influence (if any) on the negotiators’ style and the overall negotiation process and outcome. To conduct the interviews, the

researcher prepared a list of questions from which he selected questions upon the direction of the interview; however, he often redirected the interview by using other questions from the list to be able to cover the following main five areas: the background of the negotiators; their perceptions of their own culture as well as their counterparts'; their experiences in negotiation as well as their perceptions, attitudes, and behavior during the negotiation process; their observations on their own team as well as their counterparts'; and finally their perceptions on the relationship between culture and negotiation (Appendix A). Interviewees represented different ranks, professions (military, politicians, professionals), or ethnicities to highlight experiences and look for patterns. Semi-structured interviews were specifically used in this research because they raise the "awareness that individuals understand the world in varying ways... [demonstrating the validity of] researchers approach[ing] the world from the subject's perspective" (Berg 95); the essence of this research was to try and understand how individuals' view of the world varies across cultures and how these different views influence their approach to negotiation.

Though at first it appeared perhaps difficult to reach the negotiators since most of them are occupying high rank positions in Jordan or Israel (and many others are deceased since the negotiation occurred twenty years ago), the researcher found acceptance and welcoming from most of the negotiators to whom he approached. Because only a small number of individuals participated in the negotiation process from 1992 until the Peace Treaty, the researcher interviewed any and all available negotiators accordingly (i.e. no specific selection methodology or sample process was used). Eight interviews were made with the total of 430 minutes of audio recording, which were transformed into 125 pages

of transcription. All audio recordings and transcription were coded and saved on the researcher's personal computer. Interviews were conducted between 24th of February until 15th of March 2012. The researcher traveled to Jordan and Israel for a week in March 2012 where he conducted six interviews in person; another in person interview was conducted in Washington D.C. at the interviewee's office; and one interview was made by phone because of scheduling challenges – the interviewee was in Jerusalem and the interviewer was in Washington D.C.

The eight interviewees (Appendix B) are all high ranked public officials (some are retired from service) who participated in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation; six of them were part of the permanent delegations of their respective countries.<sup>1</sup> The other two interviewees participated in the back channel negotiation that occurred between Hussein and Rabin.<sup>2</sup> It is important to note that three of the interviewees were heads of their delegations during the negotiation; two became Prime Ministers after the negotiation; two were advisors to their countries' Prime Ministers before and during the negotiation; one is currently a Supreme Judge; one is currently a deputy chief of mission for the Embassy of his country; and one is a former member of his government cabinet – at the time of submitting this research one of the interviewees became again the Prime Minister of his country. In other words, all the interviewees are high ranked public officials who were highly involved in the negotiation process. The researcher acknowledged that the number of interviews might affect the reliability of the data, for such reason he avoided to include

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<sup>1</sup> Each delegation had 14 permanent members.

<sup>2</sup> One of the two started in the formal negotiation as a support staff but he often participated at the negotiation table in the subcommittees. He shared with the researcher a story where he made a presentation at the main negotiation table among the permanent members.

any quantitative results. Nevertheless, the researcher also emphasized that the number of the individuals who participated in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation was a limited number – in fact the 6 permanent negotiators that were interviewed would sum to 21 percent of the 28 total permanent negotiators. Furthermore, the quality and status of the interviewees as well as their rich experience in the negotiation would trump their small number. Several individuals among the interviewees already published books on their negotiation experience as well as the whole Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation process.

Finally, in order to analyze the data, content analysis and critical discourse analysis were utilized. By using the qualitative software NVivo, the researcher worked on looking for patterns inductively from the transcription as well as the memoirs of some of the negotiators. The researcher went through analyzing the transcription in several rounds of analysis; whenever the researcher noticed a new pattern or category he went back into the transcription to compare findings. In the first round, 36 categories were identified; and after several rounds of analysis the 36 categories were clustered into 7 main categories that formed the framework for the discussion in chapter 9: (1) The selection of the negotiators; challenging the skeptics' arguments. (2) Individualism and Collectivism. (3) Low- and High-context. (4) High- and Low Power Distance. (5) High- and Low Uncertainty Avoidance. (6) Monochronic and Polychronic. (7) The roles of culture in the negotiation.

## CHAPTER 4

### CULTURE AND CULTURAL DIMENSIONS

Culture is the medium evolved by humans to survive. Nothing in our lives is free from cultural influences. It is the keystone in human civilization's arch and is the medium through which all of life's events must flow.

—Edward T. Hall, *Beyond Culture* 1992, 211

#### An Attempt to Define Culture

When scholars attempted to define culture, they often described the process as tricky and difficult. A. Wanis-St. John (2005, 119) confirms that “culture has a controversial history in the social sciences and has had a variety of meanings over time.” K. Avruch (2006, 109) reports that Kroeber and Kluckhohn, in 1952, gathered over 164 definitions of culture. R. Williams confirms such notion and states that “Culture ... is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language” (qtd. in Sjostedt 2003, 202). However, the difficulty or trickiness in defining culture was mainly because culture can be approached in different ways.<sup>3</sup> In his book, *Culture & Conflict Resolution*, Kevin Avruch emphasizes the importance of differentiating between two orders of culture, the generic and the local. He explains that the Generic culture is about universal

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<sup>3</sup> Some sociologists and anthropologists even reject the concept of culture and its relevance in scientific discourse (Kroeber and Kluckhohn 1952, 5).

human behavior or what some might call “human nature”; while Local cultures are “complex systems of meanings created, shared, and transmitted (socially inherited) by individuals in particular social groups” (Avruch 2006, 10). The generic culture helps to bring different cultures and individuals together, while the local culture helps in addressing the diversity and the particularity of each culture. Avruch (2006, 10) warns that ignoring any of the two orders will cause confusion. In other words, there are some patterns and qualities that are similar across cultures, but vary in its meanings and intensities. On the other hand, there are also many qualities that are particular to a certain culture. We need the former to connect and engage with people from other cultures, while we need the latter to better understand them.

Beyond the generic and the local, Avruch (2006, 5) defines culture as part of the individual’s experience, which was “learned or created by individuals themselves or passed on to them socially by contemporaries or ancestors.” He explains further, culture is “an evolved constituent of human cognition and social action” (Avruch 2006, 3). He expands the scope of reference of culture to include groupings that are based in class, occupation, profession, religion, or region – not just the typical ones, such as tribe, ethnic group, and nation (Avruch 2006, 5). In other words, a certain religion, profession, or class is some kind of a culture, where its followers share common values, rituals, heroes, and symbols. The latter notion is better explained through the professional culture theory that is discussed in chapter 5.

Nevertheless, it is important here to understand the difference, if there is any, between society (the social system) and culture. Kroeber and Parsons (1958, 582) notice a lack of consensus among sociologists and anthropologists on the distinction between

society and culture – some scholars from the two disciplines believes it is unnecessary to distinguish between the two since all “human behavior are sociocultural, with both societal and cultural aspects at the same time.” They emphasize how important it is to distinguish between the two terms; however, they do not refute the idea that culture and the social system are related, “interwoven with each other,” and the different analytical approaches of the relationship between the two should be used (Kroeber and Parsons 1958, 583). Kroeber and Parsons (1958, 583) add that “it is often profitable to hold constant either cultural or societal aspects of the same concrete phenomena while addressing attention to the other.” In analyzing the Jordanian and the Israeli cultures in chapter 6, the researcher approaches the two cultures from a sociocultural approach – with the assumption that social and cultural issues are interrelated.

On the definition of culture, Kroeber and Parsons (1958, 583) define culture as “transmitted and created content and patterns of values, ideas, and other symbolic-meaningful systems as factors in the shaping of human behavior and the artifacts produced through behavior.” Geert Hofstede (2001, 9), as a pioneer in studying cultural communication and cultural dimensions, defines culture as “*the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another.*” Hofstede (2001, 2) later used the term “software of the mind” in defining culture, which is the subtitle of his 1991 book. R. Cohen explains that the human software is “the set of cultural assumptions and rules governing the programming of the system, that accounts for mankind’s remarkable diversity and the incompatibilities to which it gives rise” (Cohen 1990, 10). He adds that each culture is a unique complex of

attributes;<sup>4</sup> a quality of the society rather than the individual; and it is obtained by the individual from the society (Cohen 1990, 11). Culture is not static (Abu-Nimer 2001b, 687), it is changing, especially when it comes in contact with other cultures – and such contact influences attitudes and behaviors (Wanis-St. John 2005, 120). It is “a property of information, a grammar for organizing reality, for imparting meaning to the world” (Cohen 2007, 12). In the context of this research, culture is defined as the social and cognitive dynamic frame that shapes the individual’s experience, perception and behavior, consciously and subconsciously. It is socially transmitted to the individual to construct the group common views and meanings – it is the collective knowledge, values, and behavior that distinguish a group of people from another.

In sum, it is important to understand that individuals might belong to and be influenced by several cultures at the same time (Wanis-St. John 2005, 120). Avruch (2006, 18) adds that “two individuals cannot share all cultural content perfectly.” Such information adds to the complexity of studying and analyzing culture and cultural behaviors. If the individual adapts (most of the time involuntarily) several types of cultures simultaneously, then how we can determine which actions of an individual are mostly influenced by which culture, especially that culture often affects the individual’s attitude or behavior subconsciously. The researcher agrees that the latter challenge poses as a serious limitation in cross-cultural research.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, the researcher believes that the qualitative methods that draw upon the individual’s experience as well as the

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<sup>4</sup> Edward Hall (1992, 213) agreed when he wrote, “Culture is a complex of related systems.”

<sup>5</sup> In this research, it was less important to determine which particular culture influenced the negotiator most – as long as it was not solely the diplomatic culture. The interest of this research was focused on the influence of culture on the negotiation, whether it was the national, the regional, the ethnic, or the religious it was irrelevant.



generic approach to culture, represented by the cultural dimensions that are discussed in the next section, all contribute in reducing the error of such a limitation.

### Cultural Dimensions

There are a variety of concepts, which scholars used to explain and analyze intercultural differences and its implications on cross-cultural communication. Avruch (2006) presents the two orders of culture that are mentioned earlier: the generic and the local. The generic draws upon attributes and qualities that are universal to human behavior; and the local guides our attention to the “diversity, differences, and particularism” of our cultures (Avruch 2006, 10). Ignoring one over the other is a mistake. A research that adopts only the generic approach leads the researcher to the minimalist conclusion – all humans share the same culture but speak different languages. On the other hand, adopting only the local could make the researcher “lose sight of the possibilities of *intertranslatability* across local cultures” (Avruch 2006, 10). In other words, in approaching culture we need to adopt both, the generic and the local approaches to be able to relate and connect people’s behaviors while addressing their particularity and diversity.

However, the researcher disagrees with Avruch (2006, 10) in his statement that the generic and local cultures are sometimes referred to as the analytical point of view or the etic and the local point of view, the emic; especially due to the fact that Avruch defines the generic as the universal human behavior “human nature.” Later in his book, Avruch (2006, 63) defines the etic approaches as “the identification of underlying, structurally deep, and transcultural forms, expressed in terms of certain descriptors that

are putatively capable of characterizing domains across all cultures.” His examples on the etic approaches were: Hall’s high-context/low-context distinction and Hofstede’s national cultural dimensions (Avruch 2006, 63). Avruch (2006, 10) writes, “These two orders of culture [etic and emic] have gone by different names. Black and Avruch refer to them respectively as generic and local culture.” The researcher bases his objection on the notion that Avruch should make it clear that the generic culture is a type or element of culture, while the etic is an approach for analyzing culture – same for the local culture and the emic approach. In other words, the generic could be used to describe culture, as a characteristic, while the etic is an analytical approach. The generic culture deals with concepts such as family, hierarchy, communication and so on, all are generic and universal; while the etic and emic approaches deal with how we can analyze these cultures, from theoretical and analytical point of view or from the local point of view. Hofstede (2001, 24) for example, uses the terms “specific” and “general.” He argues that there are some cultural specific issues that are not comparable across cultures (local), and there are some general aspects (generic) that are comparable (Hofstede 2001, 24). Hofstede (2001, 26) concluded that “[t]he ideal study of culture would combine idiographic and nomothetic, emic and etic ...” Because of the latter recommendation and explanation the researcher designed his methodology to accommodate both approaches.

Nevertheless, the set of the national cultural dimensions as presented in the works of Hofstede as well as in Hall’s, and upon which Avruch draw his analysis, are useful frameworks on which the researcher bases his etic approach in analyzing the cultures that are the subject of this research. Hofstede (2001, 31) defines the term *dimension* of a culture as “an aspect of a culture that can be measured relative to other cultures.”

However, he admits that his universal scale for the dimensions of culture cannot explain or “do justice to the profound meanings of local practices” in a certain culture (Hofstede 2001, 26). For the latter reason, he argues that both the emic and the etic approaches “are both equally necessary and complementary” (Hofstede 2001, 26). In this section, the researcher defines some of the national cultural dimensions which are used in the later chapters as frameworks of analysis for the case-study – the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiations. The researcher focuses in this research on five main cultural dimensions that are the most widely used:<sup>6</sup> high-context/low-context communication, individualism/collectivism, high- and low power distance, high- and low uncertainty avoidance, and monochronic/polychronic time.

#### High-context and low-context cultures

The terms high-context and low-context were introduced by Edward Hall in *The Silent Language* (1959), and later elaborated in *Beyond Culture* (1976) (qtd. in Kittler et al. 2011, 65). For Hall, “cultures differ in their use of context and information to create meaning” (qtd. in Kittler et al. 2011, 64). He bases his analysis upon people’s styles of communication. In his 1976 book, Hall “suggests that cultures can be characterized according to their communication styles by referring to the degree of non-verbal context used in communication” (qtd. in Kittler et al. 2011, 65). He explains that “[c]ontext is the information that surrounds an event” (Hall and Hall 1990, 6). Kittler et al. (2011, 65) explains that according to Hall, members of different cultures construct meaning differently by “using different ratios of context and information.” Context enables people

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<sup>6</sup> Researchers developed more than sixty etic characteristics that can help in studying, comparing, and approaching cultures (Avruch 2006, 66).

to compensate “any relative inaccuracy in language” (Kittler et al. 66). In other words, people might depend on context to complement the messages that they receive.

Hall (1976, 91) defines high-context communication as “one in which most of the information is either in the physical context or internalized in the person, while very little is in the coded, explicit, transmitted part of the message.” He adds that “HC [high-context] transactions feature preprogrammed information that is in the receiver and in the setting, with only minimal information in the transmitted message” (Hall 1976, 101). For him, high-context cultures, such as Japanese, Arabs, and Mediterranean peoples, are those where relationships are strong, people know enough about the context that they do not need, or expect, deeper background information (Hall and Hall 1990, 6). The emphasis on relationships in high-context cultures is what created the in-group and out-group distinction in such cultures. In high-context cultures, what people say does not necessarily present the whole story; more information lies behind the verbal words (Avruch 2006, 64); you have to be an in-group member to understand the whole picture. In other words, high-context people know enough about each other to the limit that they could rely more on nonverbal communication to response or give meaning and thoughts. Cohen (2007, 31) explains that “A high-context culture communicates allusively rather than directly. As important as the explicit content of a message are the context in which it occurs, surrounding nonverbal cues, and hinted-at nuances of meaning.”

On the other side of the spectrum is the low-context culture, where “the mass of the information is vested in the explicit code” (Hall and Hall 1990, 6) – what you hear is what you know. In such case, “[m]ost of the information must be in the transmitted message in order to make up for what is missing in the context” (Hall 1976, 101). Hall

and Hall (1990, 7) adds that members of the low-context culture separate personal relationships, work, and other interactions from one another – “each time they interact with others they need detailed background information.” Low-context people “convey meaning through words, so that meaning resides in the message, with few inferences to be drawn from the context” (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 60). In sum, Hall argues that context usage varies across cultures, “any transaction transferring meaning can be characterized somewhere on a continuum from HC [high-context] to LC [low-context]. ... a continuous scale of meaning with nearly all possible combinations of context and information but without both extremes (HC: only context; LC: only information) themselves” (qtd. in Kittler et al. 2011, 66). In other words, there will be always some need for context in low-context communication, and there will be always need for information in the high-context communication; cultures are spread over a spectrum with negative correlation between information and context – more information need less context and less information need more context.

The challenge mainly occurs when people from the two sides of the spectrum, high-context and low-context, interact together. For example, high-context people are often irritated and impatient when low-context people start giving them information that they do not need (Hall and Hall 1990, 9). Hall (1976, 127) warns that “If LC person interacting with a high-context culture does not really think things through and try to foresee all contingencies, he’s headed for trouble.” Nevertheless, low-context people are often frustrated because the high-context people do not provide them with enough information, which is an advantage that high-context people might have over low-context people (Hall and Hall 1990, 9). In such interactions, the most challenging issue is finding

the right balance of “contexting,” where the information provided are enough to make the low-context people feel involved and not left out; and the high-context people not frustrated by being lectured or “talked down to” by the too much information provided about the context (Hall and Hall 1990, 9).<sup>7</sup> Table 1 provides several characteristics of communication styles that differed between low-context and high-context cultures.

Table 1. Differences between low-context and high-context communication

Low-context	High-context
Direct and confrontation	Indirect and confrontation avoided
Explicit in communication	Implicit in communication
Verbal based	Context based (more nonverbal)
Speaker oriented style	Listener oriented style
Focus on problem at hand	Focus on history
People say what they mean and mean what they say	People are indirect, more information in the context

<sup>7</sup> However, once HC are involved in a new enterprise, they will keep asking until they have enough information – “context” to proceed (Hall and Hall 1990, 10); which sometimes frustrate LC people, because they might feel that the information that HC people asking for are irrelevant to the interaction.

In the negotiation setting, the low-context “negotiators rely primarily on explicit verbal messages, while high-context negotiators are more skilled in inferring meaning from context” (Adair 2003, 275). In result, low-context people tend to be more direct in their communication style, while high-context people tend to be indirect (Adair 2003, 275). The latter is only one example on how the low-context/high-context cultural dimension could affect the flow of communication in negotiation. Further examples were illustrated in the discussion in chapter 9.

### Individualism and Collectivism

Along the same line of low-context/high-context communication there is the individualism versus collectivism distinction, which is less about communication and more about relationships. As Hall (1976) emphasizes that high-context communication are those where relationships are strong; collectivistic societies tend to be high-context in nature and individualistic societies are low-context.<sup>8</sup> Hofstede (2001, 209) bases the individualism/collectivism dimension of national culture upon “the relationship between the individual and the collectivity that prevails in a given society” – the level of interdependence. It reflects upon how people live and interact together. He argues that “[i]n some cultures, individualism is seen as a blessing and a source of well-being; in others, it seen as alienating” (Hofstede 2001, 209). He adds that such a relationship between the individual and the group not only reflects upon how people live together, but also “it is intimately linked with societal norms ... It therefore affects both people’s mental programming and the structure and functioning of many institutions ...”

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<sup>8</sup> Hofstede (2001, 212) agreed with the notion “that Hall’s [HC/LC] distinction can be considered as an aspect of collectivism versus individualism.”

(Hofstede 2001, 210). Hofstede (2001, 210) adds that “[b]ecause they tend to value systems shared by the majority, issues of collectivism versus individualism carry strong moral overtones.” In other words, the individualism/collectivism dimension might be more visible in the human behavior.

The following quote from Hofstede et al. (2010, 92) explains this cultural dimension in brief:

Individualism pertains to societies in which the ties between individuals are loose: everyone is expected to look after him- or herself and his or her immediate family. Collectivism as its opposite pertains to societies in which people from birth onward are integrated into strong, cohesive in-groups, which throughout people’s lifetime continue to protect them in exchange for unquestionable loyalty. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 92).

Individualist cultures are those where the individual identity prevails over the group’s identity (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 59). In such cultures, the individual interest is the main interest, competition is encouraged, and there is more value to the individual needs (including individual liberty) over the needs of the group (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 59). Individualism implies that “individuals are supposed to take care of themselves and those immediately connected with them” (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 59). In other words, individualism promotes “autonomy and independence, self-determination, and protection of self-interests” (Cai et al. 2000, 592). In contrary to individualism, collectivism emphasizes interdependency, interconnection, conformity to group norms, relational harmony, and the protection of the in-group interest over the individual or the out-group interest - group needs are more important than individual needs (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 59; Cai et al. 2000, 593). In collectivist cultures, individuals are expected to support and “take care of their in-group members or relatives and in turn expect absolute loyalty from



them” (Dsilva and Whyte 1998, 59). Hofstede et al. (2010, 91) argue that in collectivist cultures, “a mutual dependence relationship develops [between the individual and the group] that is both practical and psychological.” In such relationships, collectivist cultures “place greater emphasis on status and role authority, than do individualist cultures” (Cai et al. 2000, 593). In other words, hierarchy and inequality are expected and accepted in such cultures – the two are further discussed in the following cultural dimension on power distance.

The emphasis upon the individual achievement versus the group relationship implies different styles in communication as well as different approaches to conflicts and disagreements. Hofstede et al. (2010, 90) report upon a business interaction between a Swedish company (individualistic culture) and a Saudi company (collectivistic culture). They conclude that the two cultures “have different concepts of the role of personal relationships in business”; while the Swedes consider business is done with a company; “for the Saudis, it’s done with a person whom one has learned to know and trust” (Hofstede et al. 2010, 90). The latter is a basic example on cross-cultural interactions between individualistic and collectivistic cultures, where the emphasis on the interest versus the relationship might clash.

Hofstede et al. (2010, 90) add that in collectivist cultures, when parties do not know each other well enough, “it is best that contacts take place in the presence of an intermediary,” someone that is trusted by both parties. Such sentiment came from the in-group and out-group issue, people in collectivistic society are interdependent and the emphasis on trust is high, an intermediary can act as the guarantor when trust is absent.

The individualist versus collectivist dimension of cultures provided us with sets of expected values, behaviors, and attitudes that could characterize such cultures. A better understanding of these characteristics contributes to successful cross-cultural interactions. Hofstede et al. (2010, 91) argue that the majority in the world are collectivist societies, where the emphasis on the “we” is more significant than the individualistic “I.” In collectivist cultures, because relationships and status are important, the issue of *face* and *saving face* versus *losing face* become important. A person’s reputation and status does not only affect the person, but also the group. In such environment, *face* becomes more important than material gains. In the Jordanian society people often say “a person’s reputation is all what he possess.” The latter statement, which reflects collectivism in the Jordanian culture, is telling us that a person’s material possessions have no value in comparison to his/her moral reputation – *face*. While in individualistic cultures, *self-respect* as defined from the individual’s point of view is the counter characteristic to *face* (Hofstede et al. 2010, 110). In other words, *face* is defined by the society, while *self-respect* is defined by the individual.

Another important characteristic that differs between collectivistic and individualistic cultures are the concepts of *shame* versus *guilt*. In collectivistic societies the individual feeling is *shame* for any infringe on the norms and rules of the society; while in individualistic societies the feeling was *guilt* – “Shame is social in nature, whereas guilt is individual” (Hofstede et al. 2010, 110). Table 2 provides a list of characteristic differences that distinguish collectivistic and individualistic cultures from one another:

Table 2. Cultural differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures<sup>9</sup>

Individualism	Collectivism
Individual interest first / “I”	Group interest first / “We”
Everyone have a private opinion	Opinion is predetermined by the group
Focus on the task	Focus on the relationship
Self-face concern	Mutual face concern
Guilt	Shame
“Doing”	“Being”
Critique and feedback are welcome	Direct critique and feedback is rude
Self-actualization is the ultimate goal	Group harmony is the ultimate goal
Diversity is expected	Consensus is the norm

#### Power Distance

The third national cultural dimension that is used in the framework of analysis for this research is *power distance*. Basically, this dimension refers to the extent that people within the culture tolerate or accept inequality among individuals in different formal or social positions – and how status is weighted (Hofstede 2001, 79). Power here is defined as the ability to “influence,” “determine or direct” the attitude, behavior, or value of others (Hofstede 2001, 83; Varela and Premeaux 2008, 135). However, in the context of power distance, the focus is more on how people react differently to inequality and power

<sup>9</sup> Several of the characteristics that were listed in table 2 were extracted from Hofstede et al. 2010.

asymmetries in their cultures (Varela and Premeaux 2008, 135). Hofstede et al. (2010, 61) define power distance “as *the extent to which the less powerful members of institutions and organizations within a country expect and accept that power is distributed unequally.*” Hofstede (2001, 79), in his IBM research, distributes countries on a continuum that he calls Power Distance Index (PDI). According to the index countries can be categorized on a spectrum from low-power distance to high-power distance. The scoring implies that people react to power inequality differently across cultures. Hofstede (2001, 79) bases his scoring system upon three questions that “dealt with perceptions of subordinates’ fear of disagreeing with superiors and of superiors’ actual decision-making styles, and with the decision-making style that subordinates preferred in their bosses.”

Varela and Premeaux (2008, 135) conclude that members of low power distance cultures “challenge the status quo following power distribution” more than high power distance people. The latter implies that high power distance subordinates tend “to focus on maintaining stable and cordial relationships with superiors, minimizing contentions or expressions of disagreement,” even in situations where they are encouraged to express their opinion (Varela and Premeaux 2008, 136). Varela and Premeaux (2008, 136) summarize that high power distance manifest “vertical relationships with low fluency of communication,” where “the boss’s way is the only way.” The latter emphasizes hierarchy and status, which are the characteristics of collectivist cultures. Hofstede et al. (2010) provide further explanation when they wrote:

In the large-power-distance situation, superiors and subordinates consider each other as existentially unequal; the hierarchical system is based on this existential inequality. Organizations centralize power as much as possible in a few hands. Subordinates expect to be told what to do. There is a large number of supervisory

personnel, structured into tall hierarchies of people reporting to each other. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 73).

In the small-power-distance situation, subordinates and superiors consider each other as existentially equal; the hierarchical system is just an inequality of roles, established for convenience, and roles may be changed, so that someone who today is my subordinate may tomorrow be my boss. Organizations are fairly decentralized, with flat hierarchical pyramids and limited numbers of supervisory personnel. (Hofstede et al. 2010, 73).

Cultures with high power distance “legitimize differences in decision-making power between those who are in high power positions versus those who are in low power positions” (Shapiro et al. 2001, 302). On the other hand, low power distance cultures “reduce power differences” between people in different positions and “varying levels of formal decision-making power” (Shapiro et al. 2001, 302). Such attitude toward authority creates differences in styles of communication as well as decision-making between the high- and low power distance societies. For example, people in low power distance cultures are more likely to voice out their opinions to their bosses, and expect to be heard, more than members of high power distance cultures (Shapiro et al. 2001, 302). In other words, high power distance societies tend to be more authoritative, and where the flow of information goes in one way, from top to down.

Differences in styles of communication between low power distance and high power distance cultures can go as simple as calling people with their first names or titles or surnames. The researcher, who comes from a high power distance culture, was personally surprised to witness that students in the US (low power distance culture) often called their professors by their first names; in the Jordanian culture, this is not acceptable or expectable. Hofstede et al. (2010, 61) point out that in high power distance cultures, subordinates depend more on their bosses, while in low power distance cultures the

relationship leans more toward consultation. The latter might create frustration when lower rank employees from low power distance cultures negotiate with lower rank employees from high power distance cultures; while the latter have to refer to their bosses almost all the time, the former might have more space for decision-making. The opposite might happen when the high rank employees meet; while high power distance leaders can solely make decisions on behalf of their group, low power distance leaders prefer to consult their experts or staff. More differences in perceptions and characteristics among the low- and high power distance cultures are listed in table 3:

Table 3. Cultural differences between low- and high power distance cultures<sup>10</sup>

Low Power Distance	High Power Distance
Person oriented	Status oriented
Focus on experience	Focus on hierarchy
Informal communication across ranks	Formal communication across ranks
Everybody is equal	Inequality is tolerated and expected
Decentralized organization	Centralized power and organization
Powerful and less powerful people are interdependent	Less powerful people are dependent on the powerful

<sup>10</sup> Several of the characteristics that were listed in table 3 were extracted from Hofstede et al. 2010.

### Monochronic and Polychronic

As it was emphasized in the earlier sections that high-context cultures tend to be collectivist and low-context cultures tend to be individualist (same for high- and low power distance); polychronic (P-time) and monochronic (M-time) can also draw across the same lines. High-context/collectivistic/high power distance cultures tend to be polychronic and low-context/individualistic/low power distance cultures tend to be monochronic (Hall 1976, 150). The two terms P-time and M-time are related to how people in different cultures organize and perceive time and space (Hall 1976, 24). In M-time cultures, people “usually prefer to do one thing at a time,” which in result require implicit or explicit scheduling (Hall 1976, 17). Hall (1976, 17) argues that in M-time cultures there are emphasis on segmentation, schedules, and promptness. He explains how scheduling in M-time cultures is important, because it “makes it possible to concentrate on one thing at a time” (Hall 1976, 18). He adds later that people of M-time cultures “become disoriented if they have to deal with too many things at once” (Hall 1966, 162). Scheduling also helps in prioritizing things, important things comes first on the schedule. However, the shortfall in concentrating on one thing and prioritizing, that it make M-time people deny context –less important things are left out (Hall 1976, 18). Hall (1976, 20) adds that it “narrows one’s view of events” and denies the person “the experience of context in the wider sense.” In other words, monochronic people might miss the larger picture and in result might fall in aggregating issues that might be linked.

On the other hand, P-time cultures are characterized by having several things happening and organized at the same time; “possibly because they are so much involved with each other” (Hall 1966, 162). Hall (1976, 17) adds that P-time cultures “stress

involvement of people and completion of transactions rather than adherence to preset schedules.” He concludes in distinguishing between the two, by stating that P-time could be perceived as “a point” while M-time as “a road” (Hall 1976, 17). In other words, time in M-time cultures is linear, while in P-time it is multi-dimensional.

Hall (1976, 19) argues that for M-time cultures, time is not only linear, but also “tangible.” They perceive time as something that could be saved, spent, lost, wasted, made up, and running out; this is why it should be organized and prioritized carefully (Hall 1976, 19). They perceive space in the same way; it is also prioritized. In other words, the separation and distinction between the space to conduct business and the space to conduct personal relationships is highly correlated with being in an M-time or a P-time culture. In P-time cultures there is a grey line between private space and business space, while in M-time cultures the line is clear. In other words, in the work space M-time people expect to talk only about business, while relationships can be conducted in the designated spaces for relationships, such as home or anywhere except the business space.

To conclude this section, apparently there are several characteristics between M-time and P-time cultures that are contradictory and might cause challenges upon interaction across the two cultures. Hall (1976, 150) argues that M-time people perceive P-time people and their style of work as “almost totally disorganizing in its effect.” He adds, “The two systems are like oil and water: they do not mix” (Hall 1976, 150). Hall (1976, 150) argues that P-time people build their interest and “action chains”<sup>11</sup> around human relations, while for M-time people it is the work goal. He concludes that two

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<sup>11</sup> Hall (1976, 141) defined the term action chain as “a set of sequence of events in which usually two or more individuals participate.”



persons working together, one from P-time culture and the other from M-time culture, will view the whole process differently; they will not only have different objectives, but also priorities (Hall 1976, 150). Table 4 provides a list of differences in characteristics between monochronic and polychronic cultures:

Table 4. Cultural differences between monochronic and polychronic cultures

Monochronic	Polychronic
Short view of time	Long view of time
Time is linear and tangible can be spent, wasted, or saved.	Time is multidimensional
One thing at a time	Multi things at the same time
Schedule is important	Less interest in schedules or time organization
Business has time and space, and relationships has different time and space	No separation between business and relationship space – business can be conducted everywhere

#### Uncertainty Avoidance

Among the five national cultural dimensions that are discussed in this chapter, uncertainty avoidance is the only dimension that does not correlate with the others. In other words, there is a pattern where collectivistic cultures tend to be (almost always) high-context, high power distance, as well as polychronic, same for individualistic cultures who tend to be low-context, low power distance, and monochronic; however, Hofstede's data shows that an individualistic culture can score high or low on uncertainty avoidance and same for the collectivistic cultures. For example, Hofstede et al. (2010, 189) explain that while Britain and Germany are both Western and scored exactly the

same on power distance, and both are relatively individualistic, however, they scored differently with uncertainty avoidance – the former scored low (35 points) while the latter high (65 points). The reasons for such differences are mainly related to how the society deals with the ambiguity and the uncertainty of the future, and how it manages to develop norms and institutions to deal with the unknown.

Hofstede et al. (2001, 191) define uncertainty avoidance as “*the extent to which the members of a culture feel threatened by ambiguous or unknown situations.*” Hofstede (2001, 145) adds that societies over history cope with uncertainty and anxiety through technology, rules, and rituals, and religion. He explains that technology provides us with means “to defend ourselves against uncertainties caused by nature; law, to defend against uncertainties in the behavior of others; religion, to accept the uncertainties we cannot defend ourselves against” (Hofstede 2001, 146). As an example on the latter, religion often provides societies with the concept of *fate*; which means that there are things that are related to the future that we as human have no power over and it is only in the hand of a higher power – God. *People of fate* conciliate their anxiety toward the unknown future with their faith in God. In other words, you have to do your best and pray for God’s support and do not worry about the future because your fate is already determined by God – there was nothing more you can do about it. In such societies often people pray: “God give us peace of mind.”

Uncertainty avoidance mainly deals with structures and organization. Having a clear structure, including clear and detailed regulations, descriptions, schedules, and agendas are all forms or strategies of uncertainty avoidance; the less tolerant is the culture to uncertainty, the more structured and organized it was – and in result it will be

considered a high uncertainty avoidance culture. Societies tend to avoid the uncertainty through “planning everything carefully” (Clearly Cultural). The latter characteristic of high uncertainty avoidance culture might look similar to the monochronic tendency that requires scheduling; however, scheduling in the context of these two cultural dimensions is based on two different rationales: while the former work on a detailed schedule to avoid uncertainty, the latter (the monochronic) do scheduling to not break the *action chain*, because they want to do one thing at a time.

Nevertheless, the challenge might occur when individuals from low- and high uncertainty avoidance come in contact or try to work with each other; because at that point their contradictory characteristics might collide. For example, while high uncertainty avoidance people put a lot of emphasis on rules and structures, low uncertainty avoidance people hate it; because they do not like rules and structures; they might even perceive rules and structures as a violation for their freedom as well as a limitation for creativity and innovation – this is why low uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be more liberal and appreciative for freedom and individual liberty (Hofstede 2001, 146; Hofstede et al. 2010, 217). Other differences might include the level of tolerance toward the unknown, including openness toward strangers; tolerance toward change; and curiosity about trying whatever is new (Hofstede et al. 2010, chapter 6).

In explaining the influence of uncertainty avoidance on negotiation, Wanis-St. John (2005, 122) argues that intolerance toward uncertainty “can affect one’s willingness to negotiate in the first place,” because the outcome of negotiation is not determined. He adds that uncertainty avoidance might also influence the negotiators’ preferences for process; furthermore, the “reliance on explicit rules versus creative solutions, the need for

general principles versus detailed agreements, the form that commitment takes, the degree of implementation oversight sought by parties, the ability to tolerate deviance from the agreed upon terms, and even practicalities such as types of dispute resolution clauses ...” (Wanis-St. John 2005, 122). In other words, the level of uncertainty avoidance and tolerance to ambiguity influence the negotiators’ perception of the negotiation itself as well as the negotiation process and outcome as whole.

Table 5 provides a list for some of the general characteristic differences between low- and high uncertainty avoidance:

Table 5. Cultural differences between low- and high uncertainty avoidance cultures<sup>12</sup>

Low Uncertainty Avoidance	High Uncertainty Avoidance
Do not like rules or structure	Everything Planned
Internalized aggression and emotions	Emphasis on rules and structure
Comfortable with unfamiliar risks	No risks
Liberal society	Intolerance to change
What is different is interesting	Very strict code of conduct
Focus on process rather than content	Intolerance of ‘others’
Emphasis on achievement	Emphasis on security

In conclusion for this chapter, it is important to emphasize that the five national cultural dimensions that are analyzed here lie on a continuum. Cultures that lie on the

<sup>12</sup> Several of the characteristics that were listed in table 5 were extracted from Hofstede et al. 2010.

two poles of the continuum often have contradictory characteristics that could predict conflicts upon interaction. A low-context person might find it difficult to understand the non-verbal (contextual) messages of his high-context counterpart. A collectivist individual might think his/her individualistic counterpart is rude once they go into discussing business directly without developing personal connection. A monochronic person might perceive his polychronic counterpart as disorganized and inefficient once they notice that he/she is dealing with several tasks at once. A person from a high power distance culture will be surprised once he sees a low rank low power distance person calling his/her high rank boss with his/her first name – the high power distance person might consider the low rank person as rude and the boss as weak. A person from a culture of low uncertainty avoidance where taking risks is normal might feel that a person from a high uncertainty avoidance culture is too conservative, and in extreme cases he might think him/her is paranoid. In the cultural analysis section on the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, the research illustrates several examples that are related to the cultural gap and the contradictory characteristics across the continuum – similar examples from the actual peace negotiation between Jordan and Israel are also illustrated in chapter 9.

## CHAPTER 5

### CULTURE AND INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION

There is widespread agreement among scholars that culture in international negotiation *does* matter; however, on the level of its significance and influence remains a point of debate. In other words, the issue is not whether culture is relevant, “but the degree to which it affects negotiation” (Faure and Rubin 1993, 2). Cai et al. (2000, 591) cite several scholars such as Neale and Bazerman (1991), Pruitt (1981), and Pruitt and Carnevale (1993), who identify some “communicative and cognitive factors” that hamper mutual gains in negotiation; which may subsequently lead to a situation where “mutually beneficial outcomes ... go unrealized.” Wanis-St. John (2005, 120) emphasizes that “Cognitive and social psychologists affirm the roles of emotion, reciprocity, empathy, and assertiveness in the behaviors and processes of negotiation and conflict management” (Wanis-St. John 2005, 120). He adds that “the range of our emotional expressions, the ways we feel persuaded, and the boundaries of our empathy and assertiveness for others can all be highly influenced by our cultural assumptions and preferences” (Wanis-St. John 2005, 120-121). Avruch (2006, 40) affirms that “negotiation is about communication, and a focus on communication makes it difficult to avoid seeing the ‘human element’: subjectivity, cognition, and context – culture.” Cohen (1993, 22) emphasizes that the significance of cultural differences in negotiation is not based upon the external behaviors, “which hand one eats with or whether showing the soles of one’s

feet is considered” rude; what is at stake are more deeper and important issues, “such as whether society puts the individual or group first or approaches the resolution of disputes on the basis of abstract justice or social harmony.” He adds that dissimilar “cultures may disagree on important details of the nature and mechanics of the negotiating process” (Cohen 2007, 10). In other words, negotiation as others forms of communication are affected by cognitive and psychological perceptions; and perceptions and preferences in return are highly influenced by culture. Whether one can separate or alienate the influence of culture on perception and preferences that in result influence one’s style of communication, is the essential question in this research.

Yet, in light of this discussion, little empirical research has actually been conducted to assess these claims and the extent to which culture influences negotiation processes. Direct scholarly literature on the topic is scarce; it is limited to very few scholars, and mainly published during the past three decades (i.e. Fisher 1980; Ikle 1981; Graham 1985; Cohen 1990, 2007; Faure and Rubin 1993; Hopmann 1996; Wanis-St. John 2005; and Avruch 2006, among few others).

One could argue that the scarcity of empirical research on the topic reflects the fact that “Culture is an extremely broad concept” and hard to measure or control (Lang 41). Scholar G. Fisher (1980, 7) argues that cultural factors are “vague and fuzzy” concepts that are “not easily translated into practical application.” It is important to simultaneously note that Cohen (2001, 469) does attempt to list some factors that might

influence negotiation, such as, system of government,<sup>13</sup> individual psychology and belief, public opinion, ideology, and misperception, but he emphasizes that one cannot single out the most influential factor among the previous list. Other scholars such as Faure and Rubin (1993, 5) agree that the effect of culture (or a subculture) on human behavior is difficult to be evaluated objectively, simply because “culture is rarely the only external factor” that effect such behavior. It is further difficult for researchers to control different variables to measure the influence of a single cultural factor, or isolate its effects; but they can qualitatively look for patterns that recur over time (Cai et al. 2000, 592; Cohen 2001, 469; Cohen 2007, 18). Lastly, it is important to firstly define international negotiation in order to substantiate arguments for and against the role that culture plays in its context accordingly. The following explanation represents the development of the definition that is the basis of this research.

### International Negotiation

Negotiation is basically a method of conflict resolution; a “back-and-forth communication designed to reach an agreement” (Fisher et al. 1992, xvii). In the context of international relations, negotiation is the process in which governments resolve conflicts and pursue agreements over “identical” or “complementary” interests (Ikle 1981, 2). It is a peaceful process or method with the objective of agreement or settlement (Lall 1966, 8). Zartman and Berman (1982, 1) define international negotiation “as a process in which divergent values are combined into an agreed decision, and it is based on the idea that there are appropriate stages, sequences, behaviors, and tactics that can be

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<sup>13</sup> F. C. Ikle (1981, 225) recognizes the differences in government structures as more influential on the national negotiation style than culture.



identified and used to improve the conduct of negotiations and better the chances of success.” F. C. Ikle (1981, 3) defines negotiation as “a process in which explicit proposals are put forward ostensibly for the purpose of reaching agreement on an exchange or on the realization of a common interest where conflicting interests are present.” Faure and Rubin (1993, 7) define it as “a joint decision-making process through which negotiating parties accommodate their conflicting interests into a mutually acceptable settlement.” Rivers and Lytle (2007, 4) define negotiation as a deliberate interaction between two or more entities who are working together to settle incompatible interests; or “attempting to define or redefine the terms of their interdependence in a matter.” Regarding the issue of interdependency, Menkel-Meadow et al. (2006, 3) argue that people negotiate when they need the help of others in achieving their goals. In the context of this research, the researcher define international negotiation as the process of interaction (communication) between the representatives of two or more governments with the objective of resolving conflicted or complementary interests peacefully.

Each negotiation is different, but there are basic elements that do not change (Fisher et al. 1992, xix). The five key elements in all negotiations are: actors, structure, strategy, process, and outcome (Faure and Rubin 1993, 8). Negotiation processes could vary significantly depending upon three main factors: the actors involved in the negotiation, the issues negotiated, and the setting or the context in which the negotiation occur (Faure and Rubin 1993, 7). For example, *the actors’* factor includes: the power asymmetry (symmetry) between and within the parties, the number of parties and their backgrounds, who are at the table and who is not, and the issue of legitimacy, among other elements. *Issues to be negotiated* include: the quantity, the quality, the type,

material or non-material, the value and importance, as well as, the underlying interests and needs. *The setting and the context* include: urgency, environment, and issues of when, where, and how.

In summary, negotiation is a process that combines multiple elements that includes the individuals who are participating, the issues they are negotiating, the parties and institutions that they are representing, and most importantly, the context in which they are negotiating. In analyzing any negotiation attempt, one should take into consideration all these factors. Furthermore, negotiation is also about negotiation style, process, and outcome, which are all within the scope of this research. The next section provides a survey of literature that analyzes the role of culture in international negotiation.

#### Culture in International Negotiation: Developing a Framework of Analysis

As previously mentioned, there is a disagreement among researchers on the role and impact of culture in international negotiation. Such disagreement is driven by several challenges that researchers face in their attempts for studying culture. The first and major challenge is the absence of an effective framework of analysis, by which researchers can measure the scope, as well as, “the duration of impacts that cultures has on the negotiation process” (Wanis-St. John 2005, 118). Such an organizational challenge, not only creates criticism for the field (Zartman 1993, 17), but it also creates a question of reliability in assessing the role of cultures and its relationship to international negotiation; Wanis-St. John (2005, 118) argues that researchers often “ascribe either too much or too

little to culture.” The latter is highly expected as a result for the absence of a reliable framework of analysis.

Another challenge in cultural research is how to approach culture – in reference to the generic and the local orders of culture that are explained in the earlier chapter. Hofstede’s (2001) generic dimensions might imply that Asians and Arabs are collectivist societies with high power distance; however, Arabs and Asians are different in many aspects of norms, attitude, and behavior – here where the local culture becomes important.

Finally, another important challenge is related to the attitude toward analyzing culture in international negotiation. Wanis-St. John (2005, 118-119) argues that culture should not be addressed always as “an obstacle to reaching agreement,” but it also could be approached as a “learning opportunity that can potentially enrich the negotiation” – culture as an “*enabler*” rather than a challenge. The author in this research avoids the attitude challenge and approaches culture in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation as an enabler that contributes positively to the negotiation – his sentiment is to acknowledge the existence of the cultural factor and employ it constructively rather than treating it as a problem to be solved.

However, before going into illustrating how culture influence international negotiation, the next section presents some of the counterarguments that challenges the role of culture, if it has a role at all.

### Some Skepticism

The absence of a framework as well as the attitude of perceiving culture as a challenge has driven some skeptic scholars to question the whole relevance of culture in international negotiation. For example, W. Zartman (1993, 17) summarizes his skeptic views on the role of culture in international negotiation by arguing that “culture is cited primarily for its *negative* effects. Yet even the best understanding of any such effect is *tautological*, its measure *vague*, and its role in the process basically *epiphenomenal*.” Zartman here, in part, “dismisses culture for methodological reasons” (Avruch 2006, 42). Avruch (2006, 42) quotes Faure and Rubin who argue that “Zartman has ‘confused tautology with complexity and dynamism,’ ... dynamism means that culture is always tautological: both dependent and independent variable, ‘product and source,’ of social action (including negotiations).” In other words, research on culture and international negotiation has to overcome two main challenges: the absence of an analytical framework, as well as, the attitude that perceives culture as an obstacle. Culture should not be approached as a cause of negotiation’s failure, but rather as part of a solution for running a successful negotiation process.

Furthermore, Zartman (1993, 17), as one of the main skeptics about the role of culture in international negotiation, states that the negotiators’ culture to negotiation is as relevant as “the breakfast that they had before negotiation.” Beside the two main arguments that Zartman presents, which the author mention above (measuring culture is “*vague*” and primarily advocates cite the effect of culture as “*negative*”), Zartman adds:

In this internationalized world, is it not clear that previous national differences prevail no longer, because many have disappeared into a homogenized cosmopolitan culture of international negotiations fostered by the United Nations

and other multilateral encounters ... cultural distinctions did exist but do not any longer, at least among practicing diplomats, ... culture is what exists outside of negotiable situations and is absent within. (Zartman 1993, 19).

In the latter quote, Zartman presents the classical skeptic argument on the relevance of culture in international negotiation, which is diplomats are professionals and already share a common diplomatic culture. Zartman and Berman (1982, 226) agree that “the world has established an international diplomatic culture that soon socializes its members into similar behavior.” They even went further regarding the process by stating that “negotiation is a universal process, utilizing a finite number of behavioral patterns, and that cultural differences are simply differences in style and language” (Zartman and Berman 1982, 226). Cohen (1993, 37) counters Zartman’s argument by stating that the common diplomatic culture “theory is only partially valid.” First of all, no one claims that culture is the only or the most influential factor in negotiation, but rather it “is only one of a whole range of influences” (Cohen 1990, 13). Fisher (1980, 8) from his side, acknowledges that “the modern intensity of international interaction ... has produced something of an internationalized ‘culture’ which reduces the clash of cultural background and stereotyped images.” However, Hofstede disagrees with the comparison and argues that a “professional negotiation culture ... is more superficial than the national cultures because it consists of well-understood symbols and common habits, rather than shared values” (qtd. in Lang 1993, 39). On the other hand, R. Sunshine also argues that “a profession embraces cultural values (basic beliefs, norms and customs)”; however, “the commonalities of professional cultures will invariably be tempered by differences of professional’s national, sectorial and institutional cultures” (qtd. in Lang 40-41). In other words, people might join and master a certain profession culture, however, the original

programming of their minds and their deeper value and believe systems will ultimately condition their attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors within the profession culture.<sup>14</sup>

Fisher (1997, 66) counters the argument of a *common diplomatic culture* by raising three main points: first, diplomats cannot isolate themselves from the “mindsets” of their societies – “they identify with the interests and outlooks of the publics they represent” (Cohen 1990, 14). As Cohen (1990, 14) puts it, “No one can achieve complete impartiality. Nor would they last long if they could.” Fisher (1997, 66) argues that very few who can impart themselves, “and they probably would not be trusted to represent their national clients.” The latter means that once a person is able to integrate in a different culture, especially a common culture with “the adversary,” this person becomes less trusted within his/her own society.<sup>15</sup>

Second, decision makers are somewhat restrained in making decisions that are acceptable and sensible in their societies; their decisions and behavior should fall within their “public’s tolerable limits of morality or national self-image” (Fisher 1997, 67). Fisher (1997, 67) admits that this factor varies from one country to another; which might depend on the state’s type of government: the more democratic the state, the more its leaders will adhere with its public opinion (this also applies to the next point made by

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<sup>14</sup> For more information on the professional culture theory and its influence in international negotiation see Gunnar Sjostedt’s book, *Professional Cultures in International Negotiation: Bridge or Rift?* The volume, which contains contributions by several negotiation scholars, provides an insight on how professional cultures in some cases can bridge diverse delegations, while in other they might cause or deepen rifts.

<sup>15</sup> For further information on this topic see Milton J. Bennett’s “Towards Ethnorelativism: A Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity.” Also see Abu-Nimer 2001b, in which he explains how the deeper the cultural content the more influential it is (such as religion). He finds that reaching the last two levels of Bennett’s developmental model of intercultural sensitivity, pluralism and integration, is difficult and even problematic when it comes to religion (Abu-Nimer 2001b, 701).

Fisher). The researcher would argue that also in authoritarian states the more traditional the state; the more its leaders are expected to follow its norms, at least on the outside.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, foreign policy in principle is a group activity – Fisher minimizes “the impact of individual idiosyncrasy” (Cohen 1990, 14). W. Lang (1993, 43), who is a former diplomat, confirms that “Negotiators, as a rule, do not act on their own behalf; they act on behalf of those who issue instructions.” Fisher (1997, 67) adds that the collective involvement of several individuals leads to decisions that reflect the mindsets of the wider society. In Cohen’s (1990, 14) words, “Decisions are made, on the whole, by groups, ratified by groups, and implemented by groups.” In other words, whatever the individual’s style or opinions and beliefs, by the end of the day, negotiators in international negotiation represent governments and act upon the interest of these governments and according to its norms and values.

Cohen (1990, 14) adds on Fisher’s three answers by emphasizing the “distinction between routine and controversial issues” (also: Hopmann 1996, 144). For example, the more the issues negotiated are technical, “the less the effect of cross-cultural differences” (Cohen 1990, 14). Hofstede confirms that “Negotiations are easier with people from other countries sharing the same professional culture than with those who do not” (qtd. in Lang 1993, 40). In contrast, “the more emotive, ‘political,’ and public the issue, the more likely are cross-cultural effects to be felt” (Cohen 1990, 15). For example, the issue of how public or secret the negotiation is a strongly valid point. Wanis-St. John (2011, 277) in his book, *Back Channel Negotiation: Secrecy in the Middle East Peace Process*, argues

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<sup>16</sup> In the discussion (chapter 9), the author provides several examples that confirms such sentiment.

that in Back Channel Negotiation (BCN), negotiators enjoy more freedom to explore options that they cannot express easily in public. He explains that by choosing BCN, leaders mitigate four areas of uncertainties that might affect their decisions as well as the negotiation process: “(1) uncertainty regarding the cost of entry into negotiations, (2) uncertainty regarding the emergence and actions of spoilers, (3) uncertainty about underlying interests and priorities of the parties, and (4) uncertainty concerning negotiation outcome” (Wanis-St. John 2011, 277). In other words, leaders often seek BCN to avoid confrontations with their constituencies. In secret negotiations, negotiators are less restrained by their cultural and social norms and politics; so they are able to take more risks toward a settlement.

On the same line of the latter argument, Cohen (1993, 37) explains while reflecting on the Egyptian-Israeli relations, that “the ethnocentric views of political leaders, parliamentarians, and army officers usually drowned out the voices of professional diplomats.” Later in this research, the author elaborate in his research’s results on how the “common diplomatic culture” theory is based on the false assumption that all international negotiations are conducted by diplomats who are well trained in diplomacy – negotiators are selected in different culture upon different standards and qualities that are not necessarily related to diplomacy or experience. Furthermore, as Lang (1993, 40) explains, less “international negotiations are carried out by diplomats residing abroad; [while] more international agreements are negotiated by experts coming from respective capitals.”

In short, the skeptic views on the role of culture in international negotiation can be summarized in four main arguments: first, culture is a *vague* concept and thus one cannot



determine its influence. Second, culture is often approached as a challenge in negotiation rather than an enabler. Third, based on the professional culture theory, diplomats already have a common culture and a common code of conduct therefore the negotiators' cultural backgrounds are irrelevant. Finally, a fourth factor that is not addressed directly is power. Some might argue that power is the most influential factor in negotiation, and once power asymmetry is present, then the stronger sets the rules and culture becomes irrelevant.

### The Argument for Culture's Relevance

Anthropologists argue that there are "patterns of personality" exist within groups that share a common culture; "the individual picks up the knowledge, the ideas, the beliefs and values, the phobias and anxieties of the group" (Fisher 1980, 37). Advocates for the relevance of culture in negotiations, argue that individuals reflect their values through their behavior (Faure and Rubin 1993, 6). However, only "few nations have the same scale of values," or shared understanding of society, language, culture, or religion; international negotiators must be aware of this, because ignorance on this matter might cause unnecessary offense and hinder the negotiation (Plantey qtd. in Cohen 1993, 27).

Culture as a value system, may direct the actions of the negotiators through imposing certain norms of conduct; it effects their perceptions and understanding of the circumstances and others; it even may instruct the negotiators about the "appropriate behavior" in a certain situation (Faure and Rubin 1993, 6). Lang (1993, 43) confirms, he adds that culture determines "the self-perception of the negotiator; culture is, to some extent, a yardstick for evaluating the performance of a negotiator and for evaluating the

outcome of a negotiation” (Lang 43). In other words, negotiators might perceive success and failure in negotiation differently.

Faure and Rubin (1993, 8) suggest three main types of cultural influences on negotiation: first, culture sets the conditions by which the negotiators behave in the negotiation. Second, the interaction between different cultures with different norms and behaviors may hinder the negotiation process by “hardening” positions and causing misunderstandings. Anthropologist and former U.S. diplomat, G. Fisher (1980, 7), argue that the wider the cultural gap between the negotiators, the greater the possibility for communication challenges and misunderstandings (Cohen 1993, 27). The differences in values, norms, and verbal and nonverbal conducts may hinder the negotiation process even before delving into the issues to be negotiated – at least they might create a “psychological unease” (Fisher 1980, 8; Cohen 1993, 27). Third, culture can enable the negotiation process, especially when the parties discover common values, norms, and traditions; all of these could simplify and facilitate a smoother interaction (Faure and Rubin 1993, 8).

As a pioneer in studying culture and international negotiation, Fisher (1980, 11) advocates for analyzing the relationship between the negotiation and culture through a psycho-cultural approach – for Fisher negotiation is based in social psychology. People behaviors are determined by “perceptions of reality, not objective reality itself” (Hopmann 1996, 121). Fisher (1980) summarizes the effect of culture on a person, in an international interaction, in four main ways:

First, the human minds are “**information processors**,” however, it “depends on how it turns out to be programmed,” people process information and interoperate them to

create meaning (Fisher 1980, 13). Fisher (1980, 14) adds, minds that are programmed similarly can communicate easily, but since culture is a main supplier in such programming, then “such a similarity cannot be relied on when cultures differ.”<sup>17</sup>

*Second*, culture often filters, or even blocks, information “that conflicts with the way we expect to see it” (Fisher 1980, 14). Social cognition theorists explain how people use past experiences to organize, understand, and react to current events. In chapter eight of his book, *The Negotiation Process and the Resolution of International Conflict*, Hopmann (1996, 122) explains how people filter information in several stages: (a) “selective attention,” people give attention to a selected amount of information; (b) “selective retention,” people memorize limited amount of information selectively; (c) “selective recall,” people are selective in what to recall from their memories. He adds that “facts may be rationalized, a process in which information is reinterpreted to try to make it consistent with preexisting beliefs and values” (Hopmann 1996, 123).

*Third*, the mind might not only create the meaning for the incoming message, “but [it might] goes further to project that same meaning to the other party” words and behaviors (Fisher 1980, 15; Cohen 1993, 27). Culture as a shared meaning system, provides the outlines in giving meanings to verbal and nonverbal messages that a person encounters; such meanings are not necessarily inconsistent with the original intended message.

*Fourth*, the “**attribution of motive**”; people regularly, consciously or unconsciously, attribute motives to others during their interaction with them – also

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<sup>17</sup> This is an indirect criticism by Fisher for the professional culture theory – the common diplomatic culture.

known as the *attribution error* (Pettigrew 1979; Fisher 1980, 15; Fisher 1997, 32). People assume “that other people’s actions reflect their inner dispositions, giving too little attention to the power of situations to call forth behavior” (Harvey et al. qtd. in Hopmann 1996, 130). In other words, people attribute their own behavior to circumstances, while their adversary’s actions are explained by their inner manipulative intents that are inherent in them.

On their side, Faure and Rubin (1993) analyze the influence of culture on each of the five key elements of negotiation: actors, structure, strategy, process, and outcome:

**Actors**; where the major influence of culture on negotiation can be seen. Culture, “conditions how the actor perceives issues, other actors, and their intentions,” culture in some cases determine how the negotiation teams are selected, and who can speak and when to speak (Faure and Rubin 1993, 9; Fisher 1980, 21). Zartman and Berman (1982, 226) argue that cultural differences direct “individuals to bring different sets of assumptions to the bargaining situation.” Individuals from different cultures perceive negotiation differently, some see it as a “power confrontations,” while others see it as a “cooperation venture”; some are result oriented; others are process oriented (Faure and Rubin 1993, 9; Abu-Nimer 2001a, 234).

Fisher (1980, 17) argues that challenges in negotiation sometimes arise from the differences in the negotiators’ expectations from “a negotiation’s social setting.” For example, collectivist cultures, perceive negotiation as “simply one episode in an ongoing relationship,” for them, “Negotiation is not an end in itself” (Cohen 2007, 37). Successful negotiation “is not a conflict that is resolved but a relationship that is mended” (Cohen 2007, 69). In sum, Faure and Rubin (1993, 9) argue that, “from the most elementary

gestures to the most sophisticated rhetoric,” the negotiators are largely influenced by their cultural backgrounds.

**Structure**; it includes the organizational setting, the degree of transparency of the negotiation, the number of parties, and issues to be negotiated. Faure and Rubin argue that culture could be one of the components of structure; it may manifest itself as “a code of conduct” (Faure and Rubin 1993, 10). Culture can influence everything from where and how sit in a negotiation, and beside whom.

On **Strategy**, culture “may influence the way negotiators envisage how a settlement on an issue should best be reached” (Faure and Rubin 1993, 10). Fisher (1980, 27) confirms the latter, stating that “individuals normally reflect the mind-set of their institutional culture.” While some cultures prefer a deductive approach, agreeing on principles before addressing the issue; other cultures prefer the inductive approach, first the problem and then the principles will come along the way (Faure and Rubin 1993, 10; Fisher 1980, 51). Within the same lines, Fisher (1980, 27) argues that to anticipate the decision-making style (as well strategy) of the other side is part of the negotiator’s art; it helps in influencing the other side’s decisions.

Furthermore, members of some cultures lean to search for compromises in challenging situations; others look for consensus; while another group will work on attaining victory (Faure and Rubin 1993, 10; Hopmann 1996, 134); some people are “task-oriented,” while others are “affect-oriented” (Hopmann 1996, 133). Often literature on negotiation and culture is more focus on national negotiating styles; in such literature one could expect to find statements like the following: “To [an] American, ‘anything is permitted unless it has been restricted by the state.’ For the Soviet counterpart, ‘nothing is

permitted unless it is initiated by the state” (Fisher 1980, 28); or the “Japanese system disallows flexibility at the negotiating table” (Fisher 1980, 32). Other examples on national negotiating styles and strategies can be found in the works of Blacker (1977), Fisher (1980), Ikle (1981), Pye (1982), Binnendijk (1987), Cohen (1990; 2007), and Requejo and Graham (2008), among others. However, it is important to avoid falling into the labeling and stereotyping trap once dealing with books that provide explicit statements on how certain people negotiate.<sup>18</sup>

*Process*, negotiation is about communication, indeed, cultural dissimilarities might influence the effectiveness of communication (Faure and Rubin 1993, 11; Avruch 2006, 40). Hopmann (1996, 152) argues that “All negotiations depend on communication, and this is one area in which the human element cannot be discounted.” Fisher (1980, 53) borrows the term “noise” from communication analysts, who define it as the background destructions that hinder the message and has nothing to do with the substance – for him cross-cultural misunderstandings can act as a “noise” during the negotiation interaction. A good metaphor in one culture might be understood differently in another. Some cultures are direct to the substance and the problem, while others are indirect. Even time is perceived differently in different cultures and such differences on time perceptions might disrupt the negotiation process (Faure and Rubin 1993, 11). Such misunderstandings are highly expected when, for example, low-context and high-context people communicate. In the discussion section of this research, the author illustrates

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<sup>18</sup> Rubin and Sander (2001, 15-16) provide some advices on how to avoid labeling and stereotyping in negotiation.

several examples that occurred during the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation that are inconsistent with such argument.

Finally, ***Outcome*** is influenced by all the other four factors; the impact of culture on these factors will indirectly affect the outcome (Faure and Rubin 1993, 12). Faure and Rubin (1993, 12) add that culture can influence the outcome directly. Some cultures prefer a certain form of outcome, for example, while some favor a detailed written agreement, other cultures are more interested in “the substance of the agreement.” Faure and Rubin (1993, 12) add that culture might also affect how parties “interpret and value the outcome attained in the negotiation”; some parties perceive the agreement as a contract on certain matters, while others might perceive it as “symbolic manifestation of the good relations.” Faure and Rubin (1993, 12) conclude that, in assessing outcome, “*Fairness* is a key concept for any negotiator.” In some cultures, fairness is based upon equality, while in others gains are tied to contribution or believe gains should be distributed upon needs.

### *The Advocate*

In Cohen’s (2007) *Negotiating Across Cultures: Communication obstacles in international diplomacy*, the combination of theory and practice provides a cross-cultural analysis on negotiation from U.S. diplomacy experience. He explores the effect of cultural dissimilarities on diplomatic negotiation (Cohen 2007, 10). Through interviews and historical records on U.S. negotiation events with Mexico, Egypt, China, India, and Japan, Cohen (1993, 27) displays how cultural dissimilarities may intrude or impinge the whole negotiation process. The thesis of his book: “cultural factors may hinder relations

in general, and on occasion complicate, prolong, and even frustrate particular negotiations where there otherwise exists an identifiable basis for cooperation” (Cohen 2007, 8). Cohen (2007, 10) argues that a gesture that has no specific diplomatic intention may still have diplomatic consequences.”<sup>19</sup> Cohen’s (2007) study provides a persuasive evidence of the perseverance of cultural influences on goals and behavior in international negotiation. He demonstrates how the differences in national cultural dimensions lead to different national negotiation styles (Cohen 2007, 218). In this study, Cohen draws the line between two main national cultural negotiation styles: on one hand, the low-context culture, which is usually individualist, i.e. the U.S., which is mainly characterized with the explicit and detailed verbal communication. On the other hand, the high-context culture, collectivist, such as Egypt, Mexico, India, China, and Japan, adopt an implicit and nonverbal communication style. However, Cohen (2007, 218) insists that the existence of such differences does not imply that outcomes are determined once these two styles meet. Other contextual factors might influence the negotiation (as well as the cultural significance), such as circumstances, interests, and power asymmetry (Cohen 2007, 218). In Cohen’s (2007, 219) words, “Cultural factors are not usually decisive by themselves but are amplified by situational factors.” Cohen (2007, 225) concludes his book with ten recommendations to be used by low-context negotiators when they have to negotiate with a high-context counterpart. Such recommendations might contribute to a smoother and probably successful negotiating experience.

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<sup>19</sup> In the book he analyzes the *Astoria* affair, which is an example on how actions by states that has no diplomatic intention but cultural dimensions can be interoperated with diplomatic consequences (Cohen 2007, 3 – 8).



Cohen has been a long-term advocate for the role of culture in international negotiation. In his earlier book, *Culture and Conflict in Egyptian-Israeli Relations: A Dialogue of the Deaf*, Cohen (1990, 13) examines how cultural differences affect the success or failure of bilateral negotiation – the Egyptian-Israeli in this case. He starts from the notion that international relations are, in a way or another, some type of intercultural relations (Cohen 1990, 8). He argues that the cultural incompatibility that runs deep and wide between Egypt and Israel lies behind the failure in developing pleasant and cooperative relations before and after the peace treaty in 1979 (Cohen 1990, 17). The two cultures are “virtually a closed book” for each other (Cohen 1990, 161); “a volatile chemistry of intercultural dissonance emerged between Egypt and Israel,” because of such “civilizational disjunction” (Cohen 1993, 31).

Therefore, he goes into analyzing the two societies and cultures to highlight the differences in perceptions, values and views of the world. He supports his argument through “well-chosen examples of abortive proposals for negotiations, misunderstandings of motives, miscalculations of the effects of one side's moves on the other, and deep-seated obstacles inherent in the traditions of the two peoples” (Cohen 1990, 161; Campbell 1990). For example, on one hand, Egyptian culture emphasizes the value of shaming avoidance by preserving face; from this, a language of hinting and nuances evolved to avoid embarrassment at all costs and to soften disagreements (Cohen 1990, 162). On the other hand, Jewish culture, as an individualist culture (Cohen 1990, 33), emphasizes the value of guilt, where “Self-esteem is a product less of outward appearances and social approval than of the internalized dictates of one’s own conscience” (Cohen 1990, 162). Cohen (1990, 162) adds that such differences in values,

as well as in communication, since Egyptians are high-context and Israelis are low-context, leads to frustration and communicational dysfunction. Cohen concludes that there is a “need to revise conventional thinking on ... the bilateral relationship [between Egypt and Israel]” (Campbell 1990); as well as, “attacking the ‘myths’ on both sides” (Campbell 1990). As a solution, Cohen (1993, 35) suggests mediation, a third-party who is culturally sensitive, who could act as a cultural broker when the low- and high-context cultures collide.

Nevertheless, Cohen “inevitably downplays the real conflicts of interest that are more than the product of differing cultures and casts of mind” (Campbell 1990). His argument, on this matter, that the Israeli-Egyptian relationship “falls into the category of neither of overwhelming shared interest nor of irreconcilable conflict” – “There was no need for them either to fight or to embrace” (Cohen 1990, 17). In other words, for Cohen, the Egyptian-Israeli relationship was mainly doomed by cultural ignorance and miscommunication, rather than incompatible interests – a better cultural understanding might bring different outcomes.

In summary, the theories of the scholars who advocate the idea that culture influence international negotiation can be clustered as following: *first*, culture affects the individual negotiator in different ways: (a) it conditions the negotiators perceptions and behaviors in certain situations. (b) In general, individuals are prepared psychologically to block information that contradicts or conflicts with their own views – culture provides the programming for such views. (c) Individuals project meaning for the other’s words and actions upon their own views – again conditioned by culture. (d) Individuals often

commit the *attribution error (motive)*, by which they tie their own actions to contextual factors, while others' to their nature. *Second*, the style of decision-making: there is a cultural factor in the way that negotiators are selected, as well as, how decisions are made. It is important in some cultures, who to speak, when to speak, and where and how to be seated. *Third*, there are cultural differences in how people perceive the negotiation itself and its purpose, while some look at negotiation as a problem solving; others perceive it as a relationship solving. *Fourth*, the "national character"; there are cultural differences regarding strategy, process, and approach. Some cultures approach negotiation from a deductive approach, while others from an inductive one. *Fifth*, even outcome can be perceived differently, for some an agreement comes in the form of a detailed agreement, while others look at its substance. *Sixth*, the small cultural behavioral characteristics can affect the negotiation negatively, same as "noise" might affect communication – it might affect the whole atmosphere of the negotiation if it was not addressed or recognized by the negotiators.<sup>20</sup> The list on how culture influence international negotiation can keep going; in short, for the advocate scholars, culture influence negotiation in all its elements, actors, structure, strategy, process, and outcome. Whether it is conducted by diplomats or ordinary people, negotiation has a cultural touch

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<sup>20</sup> A seventh point that is not the subject of this research is language and translation factors, which Fisher (1980, 59) and Cohen (1990) elaborate on it further. Cohen (1990, 41) argues that "A living language has no existence independent of culture"; "Language not only reports experience, it also defines experience." Hopmann (1996, 141) explains that "interpretation and translation may introduce cultural bias into the negotiation." Fisher (1980, 61) argues that "When meaning is further modified by gestures, tone of voice, cadence, asides and double-meanings which do not enter into translation, the problem is compounded." Other problems with language include: some words have no direct translation as well as negotiating in a second or third language – Cohen (1990) allocate an entire chapter that deals with language.

all over it. It is best expressed in Cohen's (1990, 14) words, "Cultural influences, in brief, are inescapable."

The conclusion of this chapter, including the skeptic and the advocate views on the role of culture in international negotiation, form the point of reference for this research. In chapter 9, where the author discusses and analyzes the results of this research, several outcomes were consistent with the literature that is discussed in this chapter, while others were contradictory. Nevertheless, this section is meant to survey the literature on the role of culture in international negotiation as well as it reviews the work of Raymond Cohen who is considered one of the main advocates for the argument that culture does influence international negotiation. In the next four chapters (6-9) the author applies a case-study analysis on the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation to answer the research question as well as to explore if the theories about the cultural dimensions (chapter 4) and the influence of culture on international negotiation (chapter 5) are applicable on the case of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation.

## CHAPTER 6

### JORDANIAN AND ISRAELI CULTURES

An outsider might think that Jordanians and Israelis have more commonalities than differences. They have the longest borders with each other; both people speak Semitic languages, Arabic and Hebrew; and both people's religious beliefs, Islam and Judaism, are rooted within the monotheistic Abrahamic tradition. Yet, a closer look suggests a paradox between their two cultures.

The comparison that Cohen (1990) provides in his book, *Culture and Conflict in Egyptian-Israeli Relations: a Dialogue of the Deaf*, between the Egyptian and the Israeli cultures, is to some extent applicable to the Jordanian-Israeli case due to the fact that Egyptians and Jordanians share cultural and social commonalities as Arabs at both the *generic* and *local* levels.

Cohen (1990, 19) argues, for example, that both (Israel and Egypt) countries' religions have a tradition of revelation: in Islam to Mohammed and in Judaism to Moses. Both have also translated their beliefs into holy texts, the Quran and the books of Moses that are considered "exhaustive sacred legal codes, [in the form of] the Shari'a and the Torah," and "legislate on every aspect of life and society and are interpreted and applied by scholarly elite which thereby acquires a role of spiritual and sometimes secular leadership" (Patai 1958a, 19). Cohen (1990, 19) further explains that such religious codes and beliefs "permeate every aspect of daily life, including diet, integrate the political and

the religious, and envisage their full flowering in a form of theocracy.” Cohen (1990, 19) adds that in the two cultures, “At the social level, the values of family and home are paramount” – however to different extents.

Nevertheless, all these previous similarities, in a way or another, are superficial (Cohen 1990, 19). A closer look can reveal the wide cultural gap between the two cultures. Israel to some extent, is “a nation made up of immigrants from many lands who, for centuries, maintained a distinct way of life as a more –and often less– tolerated urban minority among strangers, preoccupied by a sense of divine election and the prospect of return to the promised land”; their main ethos is a combination of “personal autonomy with a strong sense of community” (Cohen 1990, 19). Furthermore, Israel is a manifestation of a “modern Western-type culture” that is transplanted in the Middle East (Patai 1958a, 1).

Jordan on the other hand, even if it composes a significant number of ethnicities, where refugees outnumber locals; still it is relatively a homogeneous Arabic society, with a significant Muslim majority. Embedded within its core values and societal features are all the characteristics of the traditional Middle Eastern culture, which includes for example focus on extended families and even larger tribes. The latter, is what reinforce the cultural gap between Jordan and Israel; in Jordanian culture, the individual subordinates his or her needs for the collective interests of the larger group, whereas Israeli culture is vice versa.

To understand these concepts more in-depth, the following sections provides a cultural comparison between the two societies by applying some of Hofstede’s and Hall’s

national cultural dimensions. These dimensions provide a framework for comparing the Israeli and Jordanian culture on the generic level. Several elements of the local cultures are incorporated in this following comparison that also helps in providing a clearer understanding regarding the differences within the two societies.

### Israeli Culture

Israel is a nation of immigrants; at the root of its national identity comes from two millenniums of diasporas, “a shared religious tradition and a common fate”; with Zionism and the Holocaust added into its modern history (Cohen 1990, 28). The founders of Israel who shaped its political institutions and culture, “were [thus] largely cultural strangers to the Middle East, rarely even speaking Arabic” (Cohen 1990, 9).

### One National Israeli Culture

Some might question the validity of speaking of one singular Israeli culture because Israel is comprised of immigrants from all over the world with diverse cultural backgrounds. Patai emphasizes that the Israeli Jewish population during the first decade of the state, “is composed of two major elements approximately equal in numbers,” European Jews (Ashkenazi) and Jews from the Arab land (Mizrahi), with each group “[bringing] along with it its own traditional culture” (Patai 1958a, 21). Despite such diversity, Israelis have great similarities in their basic values.<sup>21</sup> Cohen (1990, 29) illustrates that “Diversity remains at the level of folklore rather than of basic ethos.

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<sup>21</sup> Because this research focuses on cultural interactions that occurred and affected the Jordanian-Israeli negotiations process, the author refers to the Israeli culture as the dominant Jewish culture that is embedded in political and social structures of the state (i.e. not representative of Arab-Israelis).

Israel's main communities, indeed, display remarkable points of similarity, and even their differences are being blunted by intermarriage and vigorous policies of integration" (Cohen 1990, 29).

Cohen (1990, 29) adds that "for most of the history of the [Israeli] state it is possible to speak of the *political culture* of a dominant elite in relation to the conduct of government and foreign policy." For example, for the first three decades after the establishment of the state of Israel, the Labor party, of which many representatives were from Eastern European cultural-orientations, was the dominant representation in all government coalitions.<sup>22</sup> The state at that time was "highly centralized [and was considered a fragmented] bureaucracy" (Mizrahi 2008, 152). Education, the health system, and jobs were provided by the Labor party (Mapai at that time). In other words, the Eastern European experience shaped the state as well as the nation's identity and culture. Cohen (1990, 29) further emphasizes that "the culture of the Yiddish-speaking Jewish community of Eastern Europe known as *shtetl*," was highly influential in the establishment of Israel and Patai (1958a, 2) further confirms the latter, stating that the European Jews "transplanted" their Western-type culture in Israel. Cohen (1990, 29) adds that "Their influence on the development of the institutions and practices of Israel in all areas was decisive"; they "tried to create a utopian, egalitarian, socialist society, religious but open to intellectual inquiry, with focus on the group, not the individual" (Rosenthal

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<sup>22</sup> Often the year 1977 is referred to as a turning point in the history of Israel. It marked the transition of power from Labor to Likud (a confirmation of Israel's democracy), however, it also marked the change of Israel's society, the Mizrahi are no more a periphery in the Israeli Jewish society. S. Peres (1995, 229), former Israeli Prime Minister, wrote in his memoir, "The Likud election victory in 1977 marked the end of forty-four years of Labor hegemony, beginning in the prestate years and continuing after Israel's independence." Even Peres called the chapter that addresses this period as "New Society."



1997, 19). While the latter point might suggest that Israel was shaped by (and into) a collectivist rather than individualist culture, Cohen argues that community in Israel “is highly valued, but at a national rather than ‘clan’ level” (Cohen 1990, 44). One might suggest that collectivity might apply on the national identity as well as the clan identity – such sentiment what created confusion in where to classify a state like Israel on the individualism/collectivism spectrum, the coming sections of this chapter will explain this point further.

### Zionism and the Melting Pot

The life in the *yishuv* and how decisions were made in the Zionist organization and the Kibbutzim, all contribute to the vision of establishing a democratic state of Israel.<sup>23</sup> This vision is translated into the Declaration of Independence, which reads: “it [the state of Israel] will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex.” However, there were some tensions and challenges in pursuing such vision – e.g. the cultural and ethnic diversity of the people.

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<sup>23</sup> The founders aimed for a Jewish State, which implies several characteristics (as the Israeli Supreme Court defined it): maintaining a Jewish majority, the right of Jewish migration, and maintaining the ties with Jewish communities outside of Israel (Dowty 1999, 10). Thus, “The state of Israel is established explicitly on an ethnic basis” – “an ethnic democracy” (Dowty 1999, 3). For such reasons, Israel has no constitution. The constitution was never made for several reasons that Axworthy and Johnson (2008, 61-62) listed as following: first, the secular versus the religious debate – the Orthodox argued that the Torah is the Jewish constitution. Second, Ben-Gurion wanted a strong government and rule of law, similar to the unwritten British constitution. Third, because Israel was passing through wars (including the issue of the Arab minorities) a compromise was made and the Knesset approved that the constitution to be constructed over time. In result, “a number of separate statutes” were formed, called Basic Laws, which function as quasi-constitution (Axworthy and Johnson 62); which former Supreme Justice Aharon Barak called it “a cripple constitution” (Naor 2008, 83).

For the latter reason, an attempt for a cultural “melting pot” policy dominated the language within state policies – aiming for intra Jewish assimilation.<sup>24</sup>

On the latter topic, Cohen (1990, 29) presents several powerful policies and mechanisms that were adopted by the state to “absorb” the new immigrants. Foremost, an educational system that promotes Zionism values to students at all ages; a program for adults, “*ulpan*” that teach them modern Hebrew, as well as “introducing the newcomers to the norms of their new home” (Cohen 1990, 29). Cohen (1990, 29) adds that “An entire system of symbols, institutions, and festivals was created or borrowed from traditional sources to act as focuses of national pride and loyalty”; including religious and national holidays and the remembrance of the Holocaust.

In other words, the dominant one political culture that shaped the pre-state in the *yeshuv* and continued several decades after the establishment of Israel – which is dominated mainly by Western Jewish culture – influenced all the aspects of life and managed to develop an identity of what does it mean to be an Israeli. Cohen (1990, 29) argues that the political situation and the dominant policies “have exerted considerable pressure on minority groups to conform to prevailing patterns” – assimilate.

Another reason for cultural unity, Cohen (1990, 29) argues, is “the collective experiences and challenges” that Israeli citizens faced together since the establishment of the state. However, the sense of national identity is ancient in the Jewish mindset. Cohen (1990, 31) tracks the Jewish history as far as the exile and the destruction of the temple

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<sup>24</sup> For a critical reading on Israel’s “melting pot,” read F. Lazin’s (2002) “Israel’s Changing Collective Identity,” in *Issues and Dilemmas in Israel and American Jewish Identities*, the Adler Seminar on the Future of Judaism in America.

that transformed the Jewish community into a diaspora, a “self-sufficient Jewish community [that found] “a refuge in the midst of an alien environment.” The destruction of the temple, the exile, and living in an alien environment, made Jews feel that they are by their own – “God had ‘hidden his face’” (Cohen 1990, 31). The reaction was to come closer together and more communal life developed, while waiting the time to return “home.” Peres (1995, 9) states in his memoirs, describing his life as a child in the *Shtetl*, “... we children knew little or nothing of the Gentile world. We felt as though we lived on a Jewish island, surrounded by a sea of thick and threatening forests.” Cohen (1990, 31-32) explains that “For the individual, the collectivity was a *community of fate* – one’s destiny was inseparable from that of the group” – this is how Jews derived their robust “sense of shared national destiny.”

Furthermore, such a communal life of isolation, with the sense of shared destiny, developed a strong perception of collective responsibility. Individuals cannot survive outside their Jewish community; the group should stand for the individual, and the individual should stand for the group. Not only for the small community, but for all Jews; it is written in the Talmud that “all of Israel stand surety for one another” (qtd. in Cohen 1990, 32). Cohen (1990, 30) adds that such unity was stronger than tribal or sectorial differences – which is usually a cause for fractions in the Arab case; it is the unity of the minority against the strange majority; it is a unity where nuclear family relations and loyalty does not “distract the attention of Jews from their communal identity” – the community comes before the nuclear family; communal is national, rather than on the tribal or family level.

### Individualism

A significant difference between the Jordanian and the Israeli cultures is the distinguished roles assigned to the individual by the two societies. Despite the strong community feeling, the Jewish culture embraces the individual autonomy – a great contradiction from the Arab collectivist culture that “achieve[s] group cohesion only at the expense of individual rights” (Cohen 1990, 32). On *Individualism*, which measures the level of interdependence among the members of the society, Israel scores 54;<sup>25</sup> guaranteeing for itself a middle position that leans more toward individualistic societies (Hofstede 2001, 215). Hofstede explains that Israel “is a blend of individualistic and collectivistic (sec.) cultures” (Hofstede, What about Israel). They have small families where the common norm is to “focus on parent-children relationship rather than aunts and uncles”; however, at the same time there are in the society some close ties with extended families (Hofstede, What about Israel). Patai (1958a, 23) agrees that the European Jews transplanted in Israel “the same type of family which existed in the Western World everywhere: the small, nuclear, or immediate family.”

Hofstede adds more on the individualistic characteristic by explaining that the “belief in the ideal of self-actualization” strongly exists in the Israeli society. He continues, “Loyalty is based on personal preferences for people as well as a sense of duty and responsibility” (Hofstede, What about Israel). “Individualism [, in the Jewish culture,] is encouraged from an early age”; that includes individual problem-solving and a moral conduct that is guided by conscience, rather than shame (Cohen 1990, 33).

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<sup>25</sup> As explained in chapter 4, Hofstede in his IBM research developed an index by which he classifies countries into low and high scores regarding the five cultural dimensions that he developed.

Several studies show that the Israeli society emphasizes “the development of moral autonomy and independence of action”; the results of a study that compares Arab and Jewish children in Israel, confirms that the Jewish society put emphasis on the individual, “and at the same time both moral autonomy and the welfare of the group” (Cohen 1990, 34). In short, while Israelis share a strong sense of national unity on the state level – which gives them some collectivistic notion, still they are generally individualists on the personal level – this explains their score of 54 points on the individualism/collectivism cultural dimension that places them closer to the middle.

#### Low Power Distance

Regarding the *power distance* cultural dimension, which measures the cultural tolerance toward inequalities, Israel with its 13 points score, position itself among the lowest in this dimension, right before Austria (Hofstede 2001, 87). Hofstede (What about Israel) explains how the egalitarian mindset of the Israelis, makes them “believe in independency, equal rights, accessible superiors and that management facilitates and empowers.” He adds that such low power distance implies a decentralization of power, where managers count on the capabilities and expertise of their team members (Hofstede, What about Israel). He concludes that in workplaces informality is the norm, “with direct and involving communication and on a first name basis” (Hofstede, What about Israel).

Rosenthal (1997, 72) explains how “egalitarianism of Israel’s socialist founders encouraged people of all stripes – employers and employees, schoolchildren and teachers – to interact on a first-name basis. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, for example, is not even called by his first-name, but rather with his nickname, Bibi. Rosenthal (1997,

72) confirms that former Prime Minister Golda Meir used to be called Golda rather than Mrs. Prime Minister. Such informality extend even within military ranks, Rosenthal (1997, 72) confirms that soldiers might call their generals with their first names (the latter was emphasized as an important observation by the Jordanian and Israeli negotiators; it is further explained in chapter 9).

Rosenthal (1997, 20) continues on the issue of informality by stating that Israelis “hated jackets and dresses, and banned neckties as the symbols of the hypocritical, decadent Europe they had fled.” Later in her guide, Rosenthal (1997, 83) comments on the Israeli’s dress and appearance by saying that “For many Israelis, ‘style’ ranges from informal to very informal.” Even Rosenthal is ironic in her latter comment; she meant to emphasize the informality in the Israeli culture, which confirms Israel’s ultra-low power distance scoring. Cohen (1990, 35) comments:

The informality of Israeli society, at the best a bluntness of expression combined with a neglect of the external forms of courtesy, at worst an unconcealed disrespect for tradition and a certain insensitivity toward others. (Cohen 1990, 35).

#### High Uncertainty Avoidance

For the Jewish people, the Holocaust came as a reminder of a history that is full of “persecution and oppression” (Cohen 1990, 37). In literature about psychology, Israel is known “as a *postdisaster community*.” Such communities develop some characteristic features: “defense mechanisms of denial, repression, and fight”; “the fear of a repetition of the trauma”; and finally, “A great sense of solidarity is shared by the survivors,” in contrast to “anger and hostility toward outsiders” (Cohen 1990, 38). Cohen (1990, 39) reports from a study, that young Israelis from various Jewish ethnic backgrounds, “see

the world as ‘a hazardous place, where men are basically evil and dangerous’ and view Arabs intentions in a pessimistic light”; they believe that another genocide inflicted by Arabs on Israel, is viewed as a real possibility.” The author of this research doubts that a study from 1955 (less than a decade after the Holocaust) can reflect the current situation; however, there is no doubt about the influence of the Holocaust on the Israeli-Jewish mindset. Cohen (1990, 40) reports that the sentiment of “The worst is always expected,” is deeply rooted in the Israeli mentality, both, at the people as well as the leaders. In consequences, “the propensity of the Israeli leadership to take political risks or display negotiating flexibility is minimal” (Cohen 1990, 40).

The latter characteristics are inconsistent with Israel’s scoring on the *uncertainty avoidance* cultural dimension. Israel with its scoring at 81 point, places it self “among the stronger uncertainty avoidant countries” (Hofstede et al. 2010, 193; Hofstede, What about Israel). Hofstede (What about Israel) explains that cultures with a high score on this dimension has “an emotional need for rules (even if the rules never seem to work), time is money, people have an inner urge to be busy and work hard, ... security is an important element in individual motivation.” He adds that such cultures are strongly expressive, which explains the Israeli’s style of “talking with their hands, gesticulating and vocal aggressiveness (sec.)” (Hofstede, What about Israel).

### Low-context

The Israeli culture is relatively a low-context (LC) culture.<sup>26</sup> Cohen (1990, 42) illustrates that LC cultures “tend to be individualist, conscience-oriented, and ‘modern’”; all of these are present in the Israeli culture. As it is defined in earlier section, LC is a style of communication where the message is explicit, with less emphasis on context; or on implicit messages – what you hear is the only information you need. LC communication is blunt and direct. Cohen (1990, 44) explains that directness “is equated with honesty.” He adds that “Language is used instrumentally rather than socially, and therefore emphasis is on accuracy and not lubrication” (Cohen 1990, 44). Rosenthal (1997, 20) confirms that the founders of Israel “were anti-authoritarian, straight-speaking and passionately informal.” Cohen (1990, 35) agrees that early Israelis developed a “straightforward style of speech and manner, which has become something of a national trademark.” Hofstede (What about Israel) also confirms that communication in Israel “is direct and expressive.” In other words, the Israelis’ style of communication confirms its low-context cultural dimension where messages are explicit and directly forward.

Cohen (1990, 45) adds that even current spoken Hebrew reflects such characteristic of the Israeli culture; he describes: there is less verbal redundancy, contradiction is not perceived offensive, “Insinuation is lost on the Israeli,” and intricacy and hinting is not particularly appreciated. Cohen (1990, 45) explains, “Since ‘face’ plays

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<sup>26</sup> There is inconsistency in identifying Israel as a low-context culture. For example, in the work of Rosenbloom and Larsen (2003) Israel was considered high-context, while in the work of Adair (2003), as well as Hall (1976), it was considered as a low-context culture (Kittler et al. 2011, 75). Nevertheless, most of the cultural related literature that the author found on Israel approached it as a low-context culture; including the work of Hofstede who classified Israel as an individualistic culture – and individualistic cultures generally tend to be low-context.



much less important a role in the culture, one is less sensitive to what others say. Hints and roundabout expressions are simply unnecessary”; if you want to say something, just say it. Generally speaking, current Hebrew has “none of the periphrasis which permits the rough edge of unpleasant faces to be smoothed”; actually, Labor Zionism encourages such a style of communication, “Israelis have been taught to avoid beating about the bush. On the contrary, forthrightness is seen as an admirable quality and equated with sincerity” (Cohen 1990, 56).

Nevertheless, in this research the author gives less emphasis on the Arabic and Hebrew languages since the negotiations were mainly conducted in English. He does not underestimate the negotiator’s native language and how it affects the perceptions and the style of communication even when speaking in a second language. However, Cohen (1990) elaborates more on language and its effect on cross-cultural negotiation in his book, *Culture and Conflict in Egyptian-Israeli Relations: a Dialogue of the Deaf*.

In summary, because of their low-context communication style, Israelis put more emphasis on words, since words are the means to convey the message. As Cohen (1990, 45) emphasizes, “content is taken deeply seriously.” The other feature is directness; the Israeli bluntness and straightforwardness might sometimes be mistaken with aggressiveness and rudeness. On the other hand, Israelis “tend to distrust easygoing ‘niceness’ as concealing some deeper purpose” (Cohen 1990, 56). Clearly, a cross-cultural communication between low-context’s bluntness and high-context’s politeness is problematic in nature.

### Monochronic

Mainly because Israel is considered a low-context culture, it can also be considered a monochronic as well; which means organization plays an important role in the society. As Hall (1976, 150) emphasizes, low-context cultures tend to be monochronic, they prefer to have an organized schedule, so they can pursue one thing at a time. Patai (1958a, 28) confirms that “organizations play an extremely important role in the life of Israel.” He adds that “The life of the average Israeli, from birth to death, takes place largely within several interlocking organizational frameworks.” The monochronic cultural dimension is mainly concerned with the cultural use of time and space. On this matter, the author’s experience with the Israeli negotiators confirms the monochronic mentality, as well as, his experience with the Jordanian negotiators confirms their polychronic mentality; he includes more specific examples in the discussion section.

In conclusion, the Israeli culture is unique in its characteristics and composition. Hofstede (What about Israel) confirms this by stating that Israel, in general, occupies a unique position in his database of countries in regard to its scores on the different cultural dimensions. The main reason is related to the wide diversity of influences that Jews has to deal with during their dispersion. However, people are able to speak of a larger singular Israeli culture, because of the Western cultural influence that was imposed on all Israelis by their founding fathers. Patai (1958a, 47) confirms that the Western culture what the founders of Israel used “as the prototype and the basis upon which to build the culture of their old-new land.” He adds that the immigrants, under the instruments of the Western civilization, had no choice except to assimilate (Patai 1958a, 59). Some of these

instruments vary between a Western education system that promotes punctuality, and other Western values; and the Knesset, the Israeli parliament that is based upon Western democracy, which passes many regulations that are based in the western way of life (Patai 1958a, 63). Other Westernization institutions include the Army and the Labor union. Patai (1958a, 70) predicted:

Israel, in twenty years, will definitely have passed the main hurdles on its way to becoming a Western country with a Western population and a Western culture ... it will be one people, with one Western-type culture. (Patai 1958a, 70).

Indeed, Israel as one can see it today is more western than being Middle-Eastern. Even the Oriental Jews, their style of life is no different today from the Western Jews. In short, Israel is a western state that is transplanted in an Arab or Middle Eastern world.

#### Jordanian Culture

Jordan, as part of the Arab World, "is perhaps the most rural yet the most modern ... the most religiously and culturally homogenous" among all the Arab countries (South 1998, 3). Jordan as we know it today is in somewhat a new nation, established in 1921 under the British mandate, and became independent as the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1946 (Nydell 2006, 168; Shoup 2007, 9). However, its roots are ancient in the Arab and Middle Eastern history and culture (Patai 1957, 1).

Because of the 1948 war and the annexation of the West Bank,<sup>27</sup> the Jordanian population tripled (Patai 1958a, 4; Patai 1957, 1). The waves of Palestinian refugees, in 1948 and 1967, changed the Jordanian society significantly. East-bankers were mainly

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<sup>27</sup> Jordan disengaged with the West Bank in 1988.

Bedouins and lived in small towns; they identify with their Bedouin Arabic culture where loyalty belongs to the tribe. The West-bankers through their interaction with the British and other Western influences they had relatively more urban living standards – other Palestinian refugees were villagers. Generally speaking, “Palestinian-Jordanians are the urban residents, while the rural people are Bedouins” (South 1998, 55). Nevertheless, Jordanian cities expanded significantly over the last few decades and more native Jordanians resided in the cities. Furthermore, the Jordanian culture is mostly influenced by the Bedouin tradition and culture; it influences “the daily lives of most Jordanians” – whether native or from a Palestinian origin (South 1998, 59).

On the Palestinian-Jordanian cultural dynamic; in contrary to the Israeli experience, where the cultural gap between European Jews and Oriental Jews was wide, Jordanians and Palestinians shared the common Arabic language and culture, as well as the religion.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, most of the Palestinian refugees were granted the Jordanian citizenship and enjoys equal political and civil rights with the native Jordanians. In other words, the Jordanian society is relatively homogeneous, ethnically, religiously, and culturally.

The majority of Jordanians are Sunni Muslims, with 5-8 percent Christians (Nydell 2006, 169). Jordanian men and women are relatively well educated, English is widely spoken as a second language, and the government is considered moderate and pro-Western; Nydell (2006, 169) adds that “Jordan is probably the most democratic of all

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<sup>28</sup> There are also Christian minorities among the refugees and the natives as well; however, Christians share the Arabic and the Islamic culture with the rest of the population – with some minor differences (Shoup 2007, 42).

Arab countries” – Shoup (2007, 97) also confirms. Nydell (2006, 170) concludes in her writing about Jordan: “Jordanians are very personable, warm, and welcoming.” C. South (1998, 66) adds that Jordanians love to tell jokes, laugh, talk, eat, loud music and voices, and car horns. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this research, it is better to take a deeper look, beneath the stereotypes and labels, into the Jordanian culture to understand from where such attitudes and behaviors are coming from.

Patai (1957, 2) argues that to study the Jordanian culture, one must start with the general Arab culture and society. Jordanians are indeed part of the larger Arab and Islamic culture and they often identify themselves with the larger Arab nation – even the Jordanian army is called the Arab Army. Arabs are generally Muslims, with only five percent Christians. Cohen (1990, 19) argues that even Islam and Judaism are alike in content, they “perform opposing national functions.” He explains, “Whereas Judaism and Hebrew have perpetuated Jewish separateness and sense of nationhood, Islam and Arabic join Egypt [same applies to Jordan] first with the wider Arab nation and then with the vast community of the faithful, the *umma*” (Cohen 1990, 19-20). Islam for Muslims is not only about beliefs and rituals, it is a way of life that influences “all aspects of the individual’s life, sets rules for his behavior towards his fellow men, and forms the basis of his outlook on social, political, and legal issues” – it is a manual for proper conduct (Patai 1957, 3; Patai 1958b, 87). In other words, Jordanians share with the Arab World their religion, their language, and even their “history up to the end of the First World War” (Patai 1958b, 73). The shared Arabic heritage and Islamic tradition among the Arab

countries allows, to some extent, the generalization of a common Arab culture, by which, Jordanian culture could be analyzed.

Jordan was not among the countries that Hofstede (2001) surveyed in his research; however, he provides data on the Arabic culture that are based on the scores of six Arab countries (Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, and Saudi Arabia). The author considers this data valid to Jordan because of the earlier reasons that he mention regarding the common Arab culture; furthermore, four of the six countries are relatively close geographically and socially to Jordan (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Lebanon).

### Collectivism

On contrary to individualism, collectivist cultures prioritize the interest of the group over the interest of the individual. In such societies, people belong to larger social groups, clans and organizations, where they receive privileges in exchange for loyalty (Hofstede, What about the Arab). Relationships are strong, and “everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group” (Hofstede, What about the Arab). With its 38 points score, the Arab culture is indeed collectivist.

Arab collectivism is clearly present in the Jordanian culture. Similar to Israel, the basic social unit in the Jordanian society is the family (Patai 1957, 2). However, family in the Jordanian context extends to further relatives and community. Relationships among family members are not only limited to social relations, but often extend to include businesses, organizations, and both social and sport clubs. Patai (1957, 2) adds that “Even political parties initially functioned as quasi-familial associations, and their kin-group character is occasionally preserved to this day.” Interestingly, Patai’s latter argument

from 1957 is relatively still valid until these days; to some extent several political parties are tribally based – or at least based upon personal relationships. In parliamentary and municipal elections, Jordanians often vote upon personal connections; tribes and large families have their own candidates.

Generally, individuals in the Jordanian society identify themselves with their clans or tribes.<sup>29</sup> South (1998, 67) argues, “Being part of a clan is ingrained in Arab tradition.” Surname is very important identification for one’s tribe. Individuals, as well as institutions, ask about the surname to identify where the individual is coming from and how such an individual is connected in the society.<sup>30</sup> Typically, tribalism should be a challenge for a modern state. The leadership while building the state has to invest remarkably in shifting loyalty from the family, the local community, or the tribe, to the nation-state (Fathi 1994, 33). Nevertheless, the Jordanian regime managed to integrate the old tribal system into the modern nation-state system (Fathi 1994, 33). The Jordanian regime managed to gain loyalty from the tribes’ members, at the same time did not dismantle its social structures. In contrary, often the regime encouraged and embraced the tribes and its values. Late King Hussein used to call the Jordanian people, “my family and my tribe.” In his reply to some negative articles that were published in the Jordanian press on tribalism, late King Hussein wrote: “I have noticed that some articles have been directed against the tribal life, its norms and traditions. This is most regrettable because it

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<sup>29</sup> Interestingly, in Jordan even settled agricultural (also urban) groups “take on tribal ideology and refer to themselves in terms of clans or tribal sections” (Fathi 1994, 55). Often in urban cities in Jordan members of the society, especially when it comes to disputes, apply tribal terms and norms.

<sup>30</sup> For example, in the Jordanian army, personals are not allowed to put their surname on their name tags. The reason is to avoid bringing tribal discrimination and loyalty into the army; they put on the tag, first name, father name, and the grandfather name.

harms a dear sector of our society ... 'I am al-Hussein from Hashem and Quraish, the noblest Arab tribe of Mecca, which was honored by God and into which was born the Arab Prophet Mohammad'. Therefore, whatever harms our tribes in Jordan is considered harmful to us, as this has been the case all along, and it will continue so forever" (qtd. in Fathi 1994, 35). In other words, both the regime and the people do not see any harm in embracing both, the tribe and the nation-state. S. Fathi (1994, 35) emphasizes that Bedouins do not see "any contradiction in thinking of themselves as 'Jordanian Bedouin'"; hence, "affiliation to a tribe may complement other aspects of collective identity." She concludes that tribalism in the Jordanian context is not necessarily contradictory to modernity, it could be viewed "as a 'cultural renewal', that is 'a process which involves, among other things, a modern understanding of the local culture'" (Fathi 1994, 36).

Another duty that the individual is expected to pay to the group is loyalty. Loyalty in the Jordanian culture starts with the nuclear family, then kin-group, village, tribe, religion, and at the end nationality (South 1998, 67; Patai 1958b, 77). Prioritizing loyalty is best expressed through the proverb: "me against my brothers, my brothers and me against our cousins, my cousins, my brothers and me against the rest of the world" (Fathi 1994, 53). On the state-individual relationship, prioritizing loyalty mainly depends on the political situation; the government often invests in re-shifting loyalty from the tribe to the nation and vice versa. For example, the Jordanian government in the past decade tried to introduce the "Jordan first" national campaign. Jordan First, as defined by the Jordanian government was "an attempt to define a new social accord between Jordanians, as it



emphasizes the pre-eminence of Jordan's interests above all other considerations, and reformulates the state-individual relationship" (Jordan First).<sup>31</sup>

Hofstede argues that "Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and overrides most other societal rules and regulations" (Hofstede, *What about the Arab*). Nydell (2006, 15) argues that "Loyalty to one's family takes precedence over personal preferences." Loyalty even goes before rules; because "*In the Arab culture, people are more important than rules*" (Nydell 2006, 30). Nydell (2006, 31) quotes Lawrence of Arabia who wrote "Arabs believe in persons, not in institutions." For example, it is normal in Jordan for people to apply for exceptions to bypass procedures. Individuals in public offices are expected to provide exceptions and better services to those whom they know personally or those from the same tribe or town. The Royal Court in Jordan is a manifestation for the institutionalization of this practice as a cultural norm. Jordanians often go to the Royal Court for example to ask for an exemption from paying fees for their health treatment in a public hospital; or to ask to admit a student with lower grades in a public university. On the tribal and the extended families level, often community leaders who have wide connections, have offices (*diwan*) to receive requests by the people for employment in the public sector, or health fees exemption, or university admission – it often includes participating in resolving a conflict between two families.

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<sup>31</sup> On the other hand, late King Hussein once said, "We are Arabs first and Jordanians second" (qtd. in South 1998, 67); as an indication of the interest in shifting loyalty from the Jordanian-nation level to the Arab-nation level. Sometimes, the regime encourages shifting loyalty from the nation back to the tribe, especially in the times of elections. For example, changing the parliamentary elections law to one vote per person, meant to strengthen the tribal candidates. Jordanians when they have one vote, they have to choose between the tribal candidate and the political or ideological candidate; often they will choose the tribal candidate and that is because of the cultural norm. The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan boycotted the elections several times in objection for the one-vote system; such a system, with the presence of a strongly collective tribal system, is fatal for ideological political parties – the tribe comes first.

Such requests might include amnesty from a jail sentence. Jordanians developed a term for such a practice; it is called *wastah*<sup>32</sup> (some kind of nepotism).<sup>33</sup> On the other hand, “On the political level, *wastah* is one of the forms of patron-clientship ‘with the political figure securing loyalty in exchange for assistance in the form of mediation’” (Fathi 1994, 37). Nevertheless, *wastah* is a manifestation of the Jordanian collectivistic feature, where the group expects some type of reciprocity among its members.

Another important characteristic that comes with collectivism is *face* and honor. Hofstede (What about the Arab) argues that in collectivist societies, emphasis exists on face and shame; “offense leads to shame and loss of face.” Nydell (2006, 15) emphasizes that the individual’s “dignity, honor, and reputation are of paramount importance, and no effort should be spared to protect them.” The Jordanian society is relatively a small society, to the extent where it is very normal for two Jordanians who meet for the first time to find a common relative or a common friend. Because of such close ties with all of society, Jordanians are very concerned with the group opinion (i.e. likely members of their family or extended family) and their public actions as well to *save face*.

Interestingly, shame is not only tied with wrongdoing, but it can be tied with actions that affect one’s status. For example, most of the janitors, office boys, gardeners, and other similar jobs in Jordan are occupied by foreign labor – mainly from Egypt; because a Jordanian will feel ashamed to work in a lower status job. On the other hand,

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<sup>32</sup> “‘The *wastah* system is generalized in the society and performs important functions within the family and clan as well as outside it. One needs a *wastah* in order not to be cheated in the market place, in locating and acquiring a job, ... The *wastah* procedure is complex, its rules varied depending on the sphere and nature of activity whether it is legal, familial, economic, etc...’” (Fathi 1994, 37).

<sup>33</sup> Interestingly, in the Israeli society there is a similar term to *wasta*, which is “*protektzia*,” the term also related to personal contact in getting services (Mizrahi 2008, 152).

that same Jordanian will accept to do a similar job in a foreign country, European or American, not an Arab. However, to be fair, Jordanians in general have a sense of pride that they do not give up easily.

More on the shame issue, shame “is often viewed as collective, pertaining to the entire family or group” (Nydell 2006, 15). For Jordanians, “the honor of a family can be ruined by the so-called bad behavior of an individual” (Shoup 2007, 40). Even in punishment, the family bears the individual’s bad behavior collectively. In the case of a murder, the extended family of the offender has to move to another place, in case they live in the same neighborhood of the victim’s family. They cannot come back to their homes until the problem is solved and the victim’s family is satisfied with the resolution – the process is called *jalwa* (family expulsion). The extended family here defined by *the Khamseh* (the group of Five), which are the family members “who are within five degrees of relationship” (Patai 1958b, 172). Patai (1958b, 172) argues that “The importance of the *Khamseh* emerges in case of conflict, and especially in matters of blood feud.” The extended family collectively contributes to the blood money, in the case of a murder.

In short, the Jordanian culture is collectivist, where being part of a group is important for the individual. As the author quotes Hofstede et al. (2010, 91) earlier “a mutual dependence relationship develops [between the individual and the group] that is both practical and psychological.” Jordanians are psychologically programmed to be part of a larger group, being a family, a clan, a town, or an institution. Harmony within the group is highly important, as well as, consensus. Avoiding conflict within the group is

important to maintain harmony and to avoid shaming and the loss of *face*. However, the Jordanian society as any other collectivist culture puts more importance on issues of status and the role of the authority. In other words, collectivist societies are also hierarchical societies. The latter characteristic is better explained in the *Power Distance* cultural dimension.

### High Power Distance

As the author mentions earlier, collectivist societies tend to embrace hierarchy and so far tend to have a *high power distance* in general. At the score of 80 points, the Arab World is among the countries that are considered as having a high power distance (Hofstede, What about the Arab). The latter implies that the society tolerates, even expects, inequality within the individuals in the society – the people accept the unequal distribution of power. Hofstede (What about the Arab) emphasizes that the Arab World high scores “means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification.”

In the Jordanian culture people repeat the proverb: *elle malo kbeer, yeshtarelo kbeer*, which means “who has no leader need to buy him one.” The latter proverb confirms the tendency and even the expectation of the people, culturally, to have a higher reference; a leader that they can subordinate to. Arabs acceptance of hierarchy is consistent with the very foundation of the Islamic tradition, it is written in the Qur’an (4:59): “O ye who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the messenger and those of you who are in authority.” The Bedouin culture, even in its essence as egalitarian – Bedouins love freedom and independency – still emphasize hierarchy (Fathi 1994, 55). For examples,

tribes have *Shaykhs* (leaders); even there is no political organization or structure that forces them to have ones. Jordan is a monarchy, people and even their tribes before them, accepted the Jordanian royal family as their leaders. Jordanians, including the elites of them, are both, psychological and culturally, prepared to subordinate to higher authority.

Hofstede (What about the Arab) argues that in a high power distance society, “Hierarchy in an organization is seen as reflecting inherent inequalities, centralization is popular, [and] subordinates expect to be told what to do and the ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat.” The author elaborates more on the former qualities, in the analysis section on the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, by drawing actual examples from the negotiations. However, the emphasis on the power distance within the Jordanian society is highly present. Students do not call their teachers by their names; an engineer or a doctor will be called by his/her professional title, either *Doctor* or *Mhandes* (engineer).

Since *family* is the basic unit at the foundation of the Jordanian and the Arabic society, power relations in the society are reflections of the family power dynamics – people start to learn about and psychologically accept hierarchy starting from home. Cohen (1990, 27) explains that “The paradigm of authority in Egyptian society is the relationship of father and children.” The latter norm is highly present in the Jordanian culture. For example, the King of Jordan often addresses Jordanians with “My brothers and sisters” or “Sons and daughters of my beloved nation” (Speeches a.; Speeches b.); a school principal will start by saying “my children students.” Young people call any elder either *uncle* or *aunt* or the father/the mother of their older child – for example if the older son is Yazan, then the father is called *Abu Yazan* (the father of Yazan) and the mother

will be *Um Yazan*. All of these are examples that are reflections of two main cultural norms: first, the society is collectivist and addressing someone as a family member is a sign of good will and respect. Second, it is a reflection of the hierarchy and authority acceptance, because “the father commands absolute authority” within the family (Cohen 1990, 27).

Another example can be seen in the military. In the Jordanian army, ranks and titles are very strict. A lower rank personal will be punished if he/she calls a person with a higher rank with his/her first name or without the title. In other words, there is an emphasis on formality, even in communication. Finally, power is centralized in the Jordanian organization. Those who are on the top of the organizational pyramid must be involved in every decision; “decisions simply require consultation with superiors (if you are not dealing with the top person)” (Nydell 2006, 58). Even if the leader delegates authority, still the subordinate, as a gesture of *respect*, will seek the leader’s approval.

### High Uncertainty Avoidance

The Arab World scores 68 points on the *uncertainty avoidance* cultural dimension, which places Arabs among the high uncertainty avoidance cultures (Hofstede, What about the Arab). Indeed the Arabic culture “maintain rigid codes of belief and behaviour (sec.) and intolerant of unorthodox behaviour (sec.) and ideas,” which all signs of high uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, What about the Arab). The Jordanian culture in general is a conservative culture and maintains a high code of conduct that is based in the tribal traditional system. However, several elements in the culture show some contradiction to the characteristics of the high uncertainty avoidance cultures. Most of all

is punctuality. Time and schedules are the least of concerns for Jordanians (South 1998, 66) – more elaboration on time and schedules in the polychronic section. Another contradictory factor is that high uncertainty avoidance cultures tend to be uncomfortable with strangers; however, Jordanians indeed “enjoy friendships with foreigners” (Nydell 2006, 170). The latter is better explained by the cultural norm of hospitality.

While the method sounds contradictory, Jordanians (Arabs in general) solve the challenge of uncertainty about the future through the concept of *fate*. The concept of fate is embedded in what Hofstede (What about the Arab) refers to when he writes that high uncertainty avoidance cultures create “beliefs and institutions that try to avoid” the ambiguity of the future; simply by depending on God’s will and believing that there is nothing they can do, Arabs solve their uncertainty about the future. Jordanians and Arabs in general are “people of fate,” they add the word *insha’allah* (God willing) whenever they talk about the future (South 1998, 66). Such a doctrine is rooted in Islam; “man has no power to control nature directly, but he can and should pray to God and implore Him to bend the inimical forces of nature to man’s advantage” (Patai 1958b, 278; Nydell 2006, 13). Man, whatever he/she does, has no power on the future; it is all in God’s will. Even governmental officials open their speech with “Trusting first in God” and ending with “God is the renderer of success” (Patai 1958b, 279). In other words, the Arabic, especially the Islamic culture avoids the uncertainty about the future by more devotion, because it is only God can determine the future.

Furthermore, as in other collectivist cultures, Arabs and Jordanians avoid conflicts and disagreements that might threaten the harmony of the group. For such reasons, they

developed for every “social situation ... its own set of conventions and etiquette, thereby reducing to the minimum the risks of uncertainty otherwise inherent in human encounters” (Cohen 1990, 27). In other words, people developed different types of social rules for interaction (a code of conduct) to avoid the uncertainty about possible conflicts that might occur upon human interaction. However, the author focuses in this research more on social rules, the society code of conduct, rather than state laws. Jordanians have state rules that they often break; or at least they enjoy having exemptions from such rules.

### High-context

As collectivist cultures, Arabs are indeed *high-context* too. The context that surrounds the explicit message, including where it happens and said by whom, as well as, the whole “surrounding nonverbal cues and indirect nuances,” is as important as the message itself (Cohen 1990, 25). Nydell (2006, 32) argues that foreigners [mainly Westerns] “often miss the emotional dimension in their cross-cultural transactions with Arabs.” She adds that Arabs often “include human elements in their arguments,” which implies that communication with Arabs does not stop at the direct words that a person uses in the communication, but rather the whole package, including the history and the future. The whole package includes gestures and emotions; Nydell (2006, 37) argues that if a person is not able to understand the hand and facial gestures, he/she will not be able to get the full meaning from a conversation with an Arab, because they use lots of them (South 1998, 89).<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> For example, in Jordan there are many shops that sell coffee on the side of the road. The waiter maintains an eye contact with the driving customers and exchanges some gestures with them before they even stop



In high context cultures, “speakers prefer to convey their ideas by implication rather than by explicit statement” (Cohen 1990, 43). Chapter 9 illustrates more examples on the implicit Jordanian style of communication, similar to other high-context cultures; Jordanians provide hints rather than direct messages – especially if the topic is sensitive. Such a style is basically rooted in the norm of avoiding confrontation to save face and avoid conflict. Cohen (1990, 27) emphasizes that in the Arabic culture “differences must on no account be openly expressed; direct confrontation is to be evaded. Bluntness and undignified behavior are anathema.” Nydell (2006, 58) confirms, “Arabs are not likely to criticize openly but are more likely to hint” their messages. She adds, “Perhaps you will find yourself on good enough terms with an Arab friend to ask for constructive criticism from time to time. If you do, tactful hints will be offered – listen for them” (Nydell 2006, 192). In other words, indirect communication is the form rather than direct, especially on critical issues.

Additionally, language in high-context culture, is not only a mean for transmitting facts, but rather it is “a *social instrument*” (Cohen 1990, 43). For the latter reason, Arabs select and evaluate their words carefully. Words are very important, they can be more important than actions. Nydell (2006, 18) argues that while for Westerners (or people of the West) “actions are far more important and more valued than words. In the Arab culture, *an oral promise has its own value* as a response.” The Jordanian culture is full of examples that emphasize the value of giving a promise – *giving a word*. In Jordan you

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their cars; by the time they park, the waiter manages to know if the customer wants coffee or tea and how sweet it should be.

would often hear someone describes the good qualities of another by saying “his words like the edge of the sword,” or “his words are a contract”; because for someone to fail in keep his word is considered shameful in the society.

### Polychronic

As explained earlier, collectivist and high-context cultures tend to be polychronic as well. Hall (1976, 22) emphasizes that in polychronic cultures time and space are multidimensional in contrast to monochronic cultures where time is tangible and linear. Hall (1976, 22) argues that Arabs, as polychronic people, “interact with several people at once and continually involved with each other.” Such a character is important to maintain relationships; they are collectivists and relationships are more valuable than substance.

Generally speaking, Jordanians are less concerned about schedules and time, because they are coming from a “culture of fate” (South 1998, 66). Nydell (2006, 57) confirms that time among Arabs “is not as fixed and rigidly segmented as it tends to be among Westerners.” Patai argues that punctuality in the Arab culture is a serious problem, traditionally “The smallest unit of time is either the morning or afternoon or the night” (Patai 1958a, 59). However, since Patai’s observation in 1958, such attitudes have been changing. Nydell (2006, 57) explains that because “people respond to the demands of economic and technological development and modernization,” they are more punctual now. In somehow, there is some general punctuality these days, but in comparison to the Westerns, still Arabs have way to go.

Furthermore, scheduling and its importance is still a challenge in the Jordanian society. Hall (1976, 22) adds that scheduling is hard “if not impossible.” Nydell (2006,

57) adds that meetings “need not have fixed beginnings or endings.” In contrary to monochronic people, polychronic people are less concerned about going over an agenda item by item – they aggregate issues together. Meetings can easily be interrupted by a phone call or an unscheduled guest. Polychronic people are flexible and ready to accommodate unscheduled events and visits as they occur.

However, accommodation is often in favor of those from the in-group circle; which means an already existing relationship is required. Hall (1976, 22) explains that in polychronic cultures, “one has to be an insider or else have a ‘friend’ who can make things happen.” In the section on *collectivism*, I explain the term *wastah*; often you need to know someone to get things done in Jordan – apparently this is a common polychronic feature.

Another characteristic of the Jordanian society, which it inherited from the polychronic tendency, is centralization. The authority in Jordan is very centralized. Hall (1976, 22) confirms that polychronic systems “demand a much greater centralization of control.” The top leader deals with everybody and all things. Hall (1976, 23) explains that there are some flaws for such system, the polychronic bureaucracies are limited in size, it only works if the head is really talented, and the centralization makes it slow. On the other hand, once you know the right person, things can be done fast and smoothly.

#### Jordanians and Israelis, a comparison

From the prior discussion, one could arguably suggest that Jordanians and Israelis are almost occupying two different universes that overlap. On one hand, both societies identify with national religions that are similar in many aspects. Islam and Judaism,

besides being monotheists, are perceived by their followers as more as a way of life than a spiritual belief. However, while Islam brings Jordanians as part of the larger Arabic and Islamic nations, Judaism encourages Israeli to be closer as a community and as an Israeli nation. On the other hand, they score the opposite from each other in four of the five cultural dimensions that were used in this research (see table 6), which makes them different in many organizational and communicational ways.

Table 6. Jordan-Israel comparison of national cultural dimensions<sup>35</sup>

Cultural Dimension	Israel	Jordan	Mean	Min.	Max.
Power Distance	13 (L)	80 (H)	57	11	104
Individualism/Collectivism	54 (Ind)	38 (Col)	43	6	91
Uncertainty Avoidance	81 (H)	68 (H)	65	8	112
Low-context/High-context	LC	HC	N/A	N/A	N/A
Monochronic/Polychronic	M-time	P-time	N/A	N/A	N/A

On the power distance cultural dimension, while Jordan as an Arab state is considered one of the countries with significantly high power distance (Arabs score on average 80 points), Israel is considered ultra-low power distance at 13 points. Such a difference in the power distance dimension predicts some challenges in communication and organizational styles. While Jordanians might perceive Israelis as informal in their communication style and lack for the respect of status and seniority, Israelis might

<sup>35</sup> Data and classifications were extracted from the work of Hall (1976) and Hofstede (2001).

perceive Jordanians as too formal and too polite. Cohen emphasizes that “Diplomats from third countries who have worked with both Arabs and Israelis often contrast the civility of the former with the roughness of the latter” (Cohen 1990, 55). He concludes that “Arabs and Israelis are at virtually opposite ends of the spectrum of civility” (Cohen 1990, 56).

In decision-making, Israelis might feel frustrated because the Jordanian negotiators have always to consult with their superiors, because power is centralized. On the other hand, coming from an ultra-low power distance culture, Israelis look at superiors with less formality if not as equals. Such tendency is reflected in the decentralized power in Israel. For example, since its establishment, Israeli governments were always formed by coalitions. Such partisan coalitions made the Israeli government more fragmented than coherent. Political parties in Israel join the government coalitions upon certain interests and demands; they share the government seats according to the interest of their constituencies; this make the government more fragmented with minimum coordination among the different ministries that are managed by different parties with different interests – this is just one example on the decentralization of authority in Israel. In the Jordanian case, power is centralized and hierarchy goes vertically until the top leader. Jordanians psychologically and culturally are prepared for such inequality. While Israelis, as a “Jewish community,” everybody who is part of the “chosen people” is equal.

Another important difference between the two societies is the individualistic versus collectivistic cultural dimension. How much the two societies invest in

relationships versus the individual's achievement. While the score gap between the two is not as large as the power distance one, still the Western oriented Israeli culture tends to be more individualistic, where freedom and individual liberty is the norm. Family in the Israeli society is important, but the nation is more important. Family in the Israeli society is the biological family, while in the Jordanian society family is extended to include hundreds if not thousands of relatives and other people that an individual could identify with. Together with collectivism comes loyalty. In the Jordanian culture loyalty starts with the nuclear family, then kin-group, village, tribe, religion, and at the end nationality (South 1998, 67; Patai 1958b, 77). In contrast, Israelis loyalty to the nation is way greater than the family or the clan.

One of the communicational challenges that might erupt with the individualism/collectivism dimension is that Israelis, coming from an individualistic society, will tend to focus on the issues at the stake – they are goal oriented. While Jordanians, as collectivists, will be more focusing on the larger relationship – process oriented. In the section on the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation I elaborate more on how Jordanians while negotiating with the Israelis were also interested in sustaining a relationship of harmony with the larger Arab society. I also elaborate on how Jordanians were more focus on the process and the relationship dynamics more than developing an immediate agreement.

Collectivist cultures tend to seek consensus within the group; the group sharing one common view is a sign of strength and harmony. While in the individualistic society, having several views is a sign of diversity – pluralism is something good. Another

important difference is confrontation versus conflict avoidance. Because of the importance of *face* and relationships, Jordanians might tend to be less confrontational; they select their words carefully to avoid making an insult for the other or for a member of their own group. Israelis, tend to be direct and straightforward in sharing their opinions.

The latter characteristic is best explained through the cultural dimension on the styles of communication – low-context versus high-context. The low- and high-context gap can be the most related to negotiation, because as I explain earlier, negotiation is about communication. Israelis as a low-context culture will tend to communicate their ideas explicitly and direct to the point through words. Jordanians, as they come from a high-context culture relay more on hinting and conveying messages indirectly – often nonverbally or contextually. Jordanians in their daily life use lots of metaphors, proverbs, and folk stories to convey their messages. Israelis might distrust indirectness and politeness and they might consider it as tactics for maneuvering – and most probably they will miss the message behind the metaphor. On the other hand, Jordanians might explain the Israelis' emphasis on wordings as a lack of trust; or even they might feel that they are being talked down.

Clearly, when people from low-context and high-context cultures communicate they are vulnerable for misunderstandings or at least part of the meaning may be lost. Israelis coming from a low-context culture believes in written agreements, as well as explicit words – “what we told each other is what we meant and here it is in writing.”

While in the Jordanian culture the emphasis on oral promises is high – “I gave you my word and you gave me yours” – oral promises are as important as contracts.

Another significant difference between Jordanians and Israelis is how they perceive time and space – monochronic versus polychronic. Nydell (2006, 59) emphasizes that “Arabs have plenty of time, and they see little need to accommodate foreigners who are in a hurry and trying to pressure them.” While Israelis, who are coming from a monochronic culture, time is tangible, it can be gained or wasted. The challenge here regarding the difference in perceptions about time and space is also equated with the perception of the whole negotiation process. Jordanians for example, as also high-context and collectivistic people, perceive negotiation as a process for mending a dysfunction in the relationship more than it being a process for solving a dispute over objectives. For such a reason, an Israeli will be surprised from the emphasis that a Jordanian negotiator will put on them sharing cigarettes during a coffee break. For a Jordanian, smoking the cigarette is already a sign of agreement regarding the relationship – normalization. For the Israeli, sharing a cigarette has nothing to do with negotiating the two countries dispute over borders in the Jordan Valley. Indeed, such an example is relevant to the cultural dimension on context, but it also related to time and space. Jordanians as polychronic people can do and speak business anywhere and anytime, being at the negotiation table or in the corridor between the meetings rooms, all are places for conducting business.

Finally, the two societies score high on uncertainty avoidance; however, Israel at 81 points is way higher than Arabs who scores 68 – just above the mean of 65 points.



Indeed, Jordanians in general, even they are generally traditional, however they are more open to meet foreigners. On contrary to high-UA people, Jordanians can develop trust with strangers way easier than Israelis. The issue of connecting with the other is better explained in the Jordanian society through the norms of generosity and hospitality – that is a sentiment of collectivist cultures. On the other hand, the history of grievance and hostility by others explains the Israelis lack for trust in others – as Jews they feel they are by their own in an anti-Semitic world.

In short, where the Jordanian society is homogenous and develops its characteristics from the collective tribal tradition, Israeli society is more diverse and roots its culture in the individualistic Western culture. Jordanian collectivism implies high power distance, polychronic, and high-context style of communication; where relationships are formal across ranks, group consensus is essential, conflict is best being avoided, and hinting in communication to save face. For Jordanians time and space are multidimensional, dealing with many issues and people simultaneously are normal. On their side, Israelis are individualistic, with ultra-low power distance, monochronic, and low-context way of communication; where everybody is equal, communication is informal and direct to the point; things should be written and addressed one at a time. Therefore, the two societies' cultural perceptions and styles of communications contradict and even conflict with each other. However, the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation went way smoother than one could predict. Did the cultural characteristics and differences among the two societies hindered or enabled their peace negotiation? Or more precisely, how much these cultural qualities were present in the negotiation? In the

coming chapters the author illustrates first the Jordanian-Israeli historical relations and how it influenced the peace negotiation; and he also provides a general analysis of the negotiation to highlight some of the factors that lead to its success. Finally, he elaborates more on the cultural factor by sharing some of his results from interviewing some of the negotiators from both sides.

## CHAPTER 7

### JORDANIAN-ISRAELI RELATIONS

The peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, signed on 26 October 1994, constitutes *the* major success that emerged from the Madrid peace conference. However, it became increasingly evident that the two countries, and more specifically the founders and the leaders of each country had been negotiating for more than 75 years to facilitate peace between their respective states, as well as finding a permanent solution to the Palestinian issue. However, such prolonged commitment and willingness for peace never materialized into a formal, public peace treaty prior to 1994 (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 116).<sup>36</sup> Apparently that common interest, familiarity, willingness, and long term cooperation and negotiation did not guarantee successful negotiation outcomes. Rather, the dysfunctions in other elements, such as timing, motivation, third-parties' interests and influences, the status of the negotiators, and the psychological barriers among the two societies altered familiarity, willingness, common interest, and cooperation in pursuing peace. Nevertheless, Jordan and Israel managed to reach a peace agreement; an agreement that many speculated, at that time, to become a *warm peace*.

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<sup>36</sup> In reality the agreement that was signed on 26 October 1994 is the fourth among a series of four agreements that were signed between the two parties. Started with the draft agenda for peace in October 1992 that came as a result for Washington talks; 14 September 1993, which is the Common Agenda; and the Washington Declaration in 25 July 1994 that ended the state of war (in this paper, the term I use as "1994 Peace Treaty," refers to all the four agreements).

### Historical Overview, 75 Years of Back Channel Negotiations

The Jordanian-Israeli communication and peace offers between the two countries can be traced historically to the era even before their official establishment as countries beginning in 1919 (i.e. approximately 75 years). Starting in this early era, friendly and unfriendly communications and offers began to be exchanged between the two countries,<sup>37</sup> through *back channel negotiations*.<sup>38</sup> While several factors and interests motivated calls for such attempts for peace to be made public, more pressing concerns kept such discussions in the shadows until the official peace treaty was signed in 1994 (even though it was possible to formalize the peace treaty as early as 13th September 1993).<sup>39</sup>

Several elements prevented King Hussein and his predecessors from negotiating publicly, most notably the pan-Arabism movement, the Jordanian demography (the East and West Bankers), and the Jordanian economic and military dependency on other Arab and foreign countries. It was only on 3 December 1996 that King Hussein spoke openly for the first time about such meetings in an interview with Avi Shlaim, an Israeli professor of international relations at the University of Oxford (Shlaim 1999).

The Jordanian-Israeli relation was mainly based upon three main dimensions: First, the common interests between the two parties on achieving their desired dreams

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<sup>37</sup> Prior to the establishment, between the Zionist Movement and the Hashemite leaders.

<sup>38</sup> Back Channel Negotiation (BCN) is the term that Wanis-St. John (2011, 1) use to describe secret negotiations and encounters between adversaries that kept in secret and away from the public and other political actors.

<sup>39</sup> As soon as the Oslo Declaration of Principles was signed between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel, Jordan had no more serious challenges in signing a peace agreement with Israel.

and ambitions of sovereignty, security, and sustainability. Second, the mutual economic and political benefits that they could achieve from cooperation. Finally, the influence of third-parties who often, but not always, produced a counterproductive force in achieving peace. In other words, the two parties did not choose to cooperate, but rather circumstances, interests, and common threats forced them into this direction.

### King Faisal and the first attempt for peace

Far back in 1919 Amir Faisal, the son of Sharif Hussein of Mecca, met with Chaim Weizmann (who was the President of the Zionist Organization at that time and later became the first President of the State of Israel); the meeting was arranged by the famous Lawrence of Arabia in England (Mack 1998, 260). The talks covered the possibility of reconciling the Zionist hope in Palestine with the Arab ambition in Syria.<sup>40</sup> At that time, the question of the establishment of Israel was not on the table, and such meetings were exclusively based on the mutual interests and benefits for both leaders and their parties: the Jewish wealth can support Faisal's rule in Syria and the Hashemite legitimacy can empower the Jewish existence in Palestine (Mack 1998, 259-260). In Faisal's mind, the cooperation was aimed against the French and the British: "Arab numbers and Jewish money would create an independent power in the East sufficient to oust the hated Europeans" (Garfinkle 1998, 19). Faisal expected to find partners for peace within the Zionist movement; during the Paris Peace Conference, in an interview with Reuters, Faisal said:

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<sup>40</sup> Mack (1998, 260) also mentioned another earlier meeting that took place in Aqaba in June 1918 that was mediated by Lawrence as well.

The two main branches of the Semitic family, Arab and Jews, understand one another, and I hope that as a result of interchange of ideas at the peace conference, which will be guided by ideals of self-determination and nationality, each nation will make definite progress towards the realization of its aspirations. Arab are not jealous of Zionist Jews, and intend to give them fair play, and the Zionist Jews have assured the nationalist Arab of their intention to see that they, too, have fair play in their respective areas. (Mack 1998, 260).

The Faisal-Weizmann exchange led to the signing of the first written agreement between the two parties on 3 January 1919, which endorsed the Balfour declaration and confirmed the goodwill and understanding between Arabs and Jews “in realizing their national aspirations in their respective territories in Palestine” (Shlaim 2001, 8). In this early attempt for peace, one can see that both parties emphasized their common interest regarding their existence and security, and both parties agreed that cooperation could achieve these goals. The timing of this agreement was critical in facilitating closer ties between the two parties largely due to the fact that both were at the establishment stage and thus shared common challenges. Furthermore, third-party intervention and support had mixed effects on this early negotiation. For example, powerful actors like Britain provided the atmosphere for the negotiation to occur; along with France, it had the power and the means to support the negotiation outcomes and implementation – by the end of the day the two parties were living under a British mandate.

Nevertheless, this early attempt for peace failed. A. Shlaim (2001, 8) in his book, *The Iron Wall: Israel and the Arab World*, notes critical element that explains why the agreement failed: he argues that the agreement between Faisal and the Zionist movement “ran counter to public opinion in the Arab world.” He adds, “whether or not Faisal had the authority to sign an agreement affecting the Palestine Arabs in the first place, he was forced by his own nationalist followers to declare that the separation of Palestine from

Syria was not acceptable and that Zionist aspirations for a state clashed with Arab ideas” (Shlaim 2001, 8). In other words, Shlaim argues that the status of the Arab leader was not strong enough among his people to create an agreement between the two. The public’s perception of Zionism as an “ally of British imperialism in the Middle East and as an obstacle in their own struggle for self-determination” undermined the feasibility of this agreement (Shlaim 2001, 8). In other words, Shlaim claims that the Arab public was not yet ready for peace. However, there were more shortfalls from the Zionists side as well. For example, the fact that the Jews already had signed the Balfour Declaration and thus enjoyed stronger ties and influence with the great powers than Jordan. To ensure the continuance of their strong relationship with France, for example, the Zionists did not support Faisal when the French decided to remove him (Garfinkle 1992, 20). Furthermore, the Zionists had further ambitions at that time that goes beyond what they declared to Faisal.

#### King Abdullah I, more attempts in critical times

After the UN plan of partition in Palestine, Zionist leaders began looking for an Arab leader who would accept the dual idea of partition and the peaceful coexistence with a Jewish state. King Abdullah of Transjordan proved to be an ideal candidate as he increasingly viewed the Zionist movement as a strong source of support for achieving his vision to rule over greater Syria. On their side, the Zionists looked at Abdullah as a critical entry point in the midst of surrounding Arab hostility (Shlaim 2001, 29-30) – a leader with whom they could conduct “exchange of services” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 74). Shlaim (2001, 30) argues that both Abdullah and the Zionists spoke a same

language of realism, shared the same patronage of Great Britain, and shared the same threats.

To address the latter, the two parties began coordinating efforts vis-à-vis meetings. A critical topic addressed in these meetings was how to solve the Palestinian conflict in a satisfactory way for both sides (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 74). Both the Zionists and King Abdullah recognized that the major threats to their countries come from within each other. Their shared long border, the high percentage of the Palestinian populations in each of their countries, the religious expansionists on both sides, and the pan-Arab nationalism movement all represented factors that increased this fear.

T. Hopmann (1996, 87) quoted the Roger Fisher and William Ury's *Getting to Yes* approach in problem solving negotiations, when he wrote that "parties to a negotiation should not view one another as adversaries bargaining against one another, but rather they should view the situation as one in which they have a common problem that needs to be overcome by taking a joint decision." The parties in this case, the Hashemite monarch and the Zionist Movement, concentrated on their similarities and avoided any contradictory issue that may escalate the dispute. "Abdullah and the Zionists saw in each other a means to an end" (Shlaim 2001, 29). Abdullah saw the Zionists as a potential source of support for his vision, a united Arab Kingdom; and they saw him as the "one man who [they] knew wanted peace with Israel" and who could allow them to navigate safely through a hostile Arab region (Shlaim 2001, 68). In sum, these mutual and common objectives created a special relationship that would last for years.

In 1947, King Abdullah met secretly with Golda Meir, the Acting Head of the Jewish Agency's Political Department at that time. The meeting commenced largely as a



reaction to the United Nations General Assembly decision to creating an independent Arab state in part of Palestine. Abdullah and Meir's talks largely concentrated on negotiating an agreement for dividing the land of Palestine between them according to the UN partition map (Dallas 1999, 32). Earlier, Abdullah proposed Jewish autonomy in Palestine under the Arab rule – something that Meir rejected (Karsh 1999, 86). However, his vision for such a state can be explained from two angles: on one hand, he believed that Jewish autonomy in part of Palestine within Transjordan would greatly benefit the kingdom, vis-à-vis the influx of Jewish funds and the high technology they possessed. On the other hand, he worried about subsequent Arab reaction against him regarding his support for the partition. He said "I agree to partition that will not shame me before the Arab world when I come out to defend it" (Karsh 1999, 86).

In May 1948, another meeting between Abdullah and Golda Meir took place near the Jordan River, where the king expressed interest in attaching the Palestinian part to Jordan. Meir expressed that the Jews would favor such an attempt, as long as the King did not interfere with the establishment of Israel and would avoid any military confrontation (Shlaim 2001, 30). However, this last minute meeting did not prevent Abdullah from sending the Arab legion to the 1948 war. Yet, the cease-fire line between Jordan and Israel after the war, "did conform, more or less, to the 1947 partition plan map" (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 74).

Some critiques of King Abdullah and the reasons that motivated him and the Zionists to negotiate included that Abdullah's personal ambitions exceeded the Transjordan: he was looking to rule over Syria and Lebanon as well as the kingdom of Iraq (Kashgari 2011). Nevertheless, this was not only Abdullah's ambition, but *the Arab*

ambition and dream to have a united Arab kingdom demonstrated when Arab tribes joined the Arab revolution against the Ottomans to have their own Arab Kingdom under the Hashemite rule. At the same time, the Zionist movement itself also had territorial ambitions as it viewed the state of Transjordan as a connected part of Biblical Israel and wished to build settlements on both sides of the Jordan River (Kashgari 2011). While talking to a visitor, King Abdullah once said, “I know that I am hated, but peace with Israel is the only sensible solution that I could envisage” (Dallas 1999, 2). Wanis-St. John (2001, 4) argues that in Back Channel Diplomacy (BCD), negotiators enjoy more freedom to explore options which they cannot express easily in public. Clearly, Abdullah adopted the BCD approach to be able to enjoy the advantage of secrecy in the freedom of exploring a wider range of solutions.

The interactions that occurred between Abdullah and the Zionists produced three agreements that were a breakthrough in a long pattern of failed negotiations between Arabs and the Zionists.<sup>41</sup> The two most important and promising agreements were: the non-aggression pact and the treaty of peace that were signed in February 1950, neither of which were ever implemented (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 75). Some analysts argue that the reason behind the failure of these early attempts was largely related to the status of King Abdullah and his “ability ... to deliver his end of the bargain” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 75). The third-party pressure on both sides, from other Arabs and Western states, created a negative impact. Finally, “the psychological gap between elite proposals and Jordanian public opinion” also played a role (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 75). The

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<sup>41</sup> The General Armistice Agreement between Israel and Jordan in April 3, 1949; Draft Agreement between Jordan and Israel February 24, 1950; and the Jordanian and Israeli Drafts of a Non-Aggression Agreement between Jordan and Israel 28 February, 1950 (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 311).

former critiques of the reasons behind the failure are in many ways biased and do not address any of the shortfalls on the Israeli side. For example, even King Abdullah accepted the UN partition plan and offered “a peace that did not demand the return of the Palestinian refugees, Israel never offered Jordan an adequate peace deal” that Abdullah can defend in front of his people first and the Arab public at large (Al O’ran 2009, 9). Israel did not give a good offer, “because Israelis were divided” on whether to have peace with Jordan or not (Al O’ran 2009, 9). The founders of Israel, besides being busy in establishing their own state, were living the euphoria of their recent victory in the war of independence or the Arab *nakbah* (catastrophe) – and thus they believed they could make peace upon their own terms. Al O’ran (2009, 10) confirms this idea when he states, “the Israeli Revisionist historians revealed a wealth of evidence that Israeli decision-makers thought time was on their side; they were strong and the Arabs weak. As such, they could afford to wait and dictate their own uncompromising conditions for peace, which they were not pressed to achieve, anyway, in light of more urgent matters related to state building.”

However, the assassination of King Abdullah on 20 July 1951 confirmed the psychological gap as well as the strong opposing forces motivated by the pan-Arabism sentiment. His assassination marked the closing of a thirty-year chapter of attempts for peace. It took his grandson, King Hussein, twelve years to reconnect and become involved again in direct dialogues with the Israeli leadership (Shlaim 2007, 194). Hussein told Shlaim in the interview in 1996: “I knew that he [King Abdullah] had tried his best for peace and that he had not achieved it. But I did not have any details. When I assumed responsibility, I looked for papers to do with my grandfather’s reign, but unfortunately no

documents were found. So I didn't have any idea as to what exactly had happened" (Shlaim 1999).

### King Hussein and fighting for peace

Hussein, who was the favorite of his grandfather King Abdullah I, was "a realist and gifted reader of the political charts at home and in the region" (Al O'ran 2009, 10). The eighteen-year-old monarch understood that only through peaceful coexistence his regime and country could benefit fully (Al O'ran 2009, 10). However, in a hostile and tough neighborhood, peace with one side creates an enemy on the other. For example, after Iraq and Turkey signed a defense treaty in 1955, known as the Baghdad Pact, Egypt and Saudi Arabia tried to prevent Jordan from joining the treaty (Shlaim 2007, 78). For the Saudis, the pact posed the threat of empowering the Hashemite regime, their historical rival, which could threaten the existence of the Saudi kingdom (Shlaim 2007, 80). On the other hand, the Egyptian president Jamal Abdul Nasser was a strong advocate of Arab nationalism, and viewed Jordan's participation in the pact as exacerbating the influence of Western power in an *Arab* defense treaty (Emphasis added: Shlaim 2007, 79). The young King Hussein, was caught between whether to join the Baghdad pact and start a conflict with the most radical Arab leader (Nasser), or ignore the pact which could affect his relationship with his main source of financial and military aid – the West. Nasser, after the United States' refusal to engage in a military deal with him, reached out to the Soviets, subsequently signing the famous Soviet-Egyptian arm deal (Shlaim 2007, 83). The deal rocketed Nasser's popularity in the Arab World; in Jordan, the excitement

exceeded the “[h]undreds of thousands of Jordanians, [who] listened avidly to the propaganda on Radio Cairo,” to reach the ranks of the Jordanian army (Shlaim 2007, 83).

Nasser’s propaganda started motivating Jordanians to consider ways to remove the Hashemite regime from ruling the country. Hussein reacted to this development by assigning Hazza Almajali, a pro-British and close to Iraq who comes from a family of tribal sheikhs, as Prime Minister (Shlaim 2007, 86). When Hazza started working on joining the Baghdad Pact, riots and demonstrations broke out all around Jordan, both in the West and East Banks; it represented the most serious series of riots in the history of Jordan (Shlaim 2007, 87). Apparently, the young king faced overwhelming challenges, internally and externally, that mainly challenged his moderate approach in dealing with his surrounding powers and trying to survive in a tough neighborhood that is not only disputed between the two superpowers, but between Israel and the Arab World.

In the mid-1960s, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) under Yasser Arafat started its guerrilla raids against Israel from the Jordanian territories; Syria mounted several raids as well (O’Connell 2011, 39). In reaction, Israel attacked Samu, a town near Hebron; the whole village was destroyed 15 Jordanian soldiers were killed. That incident was an indication for King Hussein that Israel was planning to occupy the West Bank (O’Connell 2011, 39). Hussein thus felt betrayed, especially due to the fact that the attack came after his recent contact with the Israeli leadership. “Hussein had been secretly meeting with an authorized senior Israeli, Yaacov Herzog, for three years in an effort to find out Israel’s terms for a durable peace—without success ... The king said his purpose was to find out what Israel wanted and whether their difficulties could be negotiated” (O’Connell 2011, 40).

Hussein's frustration was based upon the fact that "[t]he action that led to the Israeli attack was not something that Jordan condoned or sponsored or supported in any form or way" (Shlaim 1999). Israel and Jordan knew that Nasser motivated Arafat to carry attacks from the Jordanian front to escalate the tension between the two countries. Hussein felt betrayed because the Israeli response on Samu took place the same day that he received a friendly letter from the Israelis; it made him realize "that to Israel all Arabs were the same: mortal enemies" (O'Connell 2011, 40). However, Hussein's reflection on the incident made him the critical importance of "[figuring] out a way of dealing with the threats [between Jordanians and Israelis] in a different way, in a joint way" (Shlaim 1999).

Hussein then approached back channel negotiations to obtain the latter goal. In the house of his friend in London, Hussein met with Abba Eban, who became the Israeli foreign minister in 1968 (Dallas 1999, 125). Together, they had several meetings that built a progressive and positive image of Hussein in the eyes of the Israeli leaders. R. Dallas (1999, 126) wrote that "[i]n Abba eyes; Hussein and not Sadat was the pioneer of realism in the Arab perception of Israel." In a report to the Alignment Party's Political Committee on 19 May 1968, Eban summed up his meeting with Hussein: "We have reached the path of direct contact with an Arab country for the first time since 1948 and have crossed the Rubicon. Whether or not it leads to something, it is still an added dimension to our policy—the end of mediators, and I think this is a matter of historical significance" (Shemesh 2010, 98). Nevertheless, again the Israelis did not manage to

bring an appealing offer that Hussein could present with confidence to other Arab leaders.<sup>42</sup>

In order to conciliate the pan-Arabism and domestic Palestinian pressures “that threatened to escalate into fatal domestic challenges to the regime ... and state stability,” Hussein was forced to join the 1967 war (Al O’ran 2009, 11). He traveled to Cairo and put his army under the Egyptian command. The results of the 1967 war were catastrophic on the Arab side. Hussein’s plea against joining the war failed, “and Jordanian forces, under Egyptian command, shelled the Israeli side of Jerusalem” (Al O’ran 2009, 11), but in result, the whole West Bank and East Jerusalem fall under the Israeli occupation . Many argue that joining the war was the most “fatal mistake” in Hussein’s career (Al O’ran 2009, 11). Hussein justified his choice of joining the Arabs in the 1967 war by saying: Jordan was “threatened by two things: we either followed the course we did; or alternately the country would tear itself apart if we stayed out, and Israel would march into the West Bank and maybe even beyond” (Shlaim 1999).

Nevertheless, since half of the Jordanian population became after the 1967 war under the Israeli occupation, it became clear that both countries were depending on each other regarding their existence. Hussein needed Israel to protect his regime from his internal and external adversaries; and Israel needed Jordan as a secure buffer zone on its

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<sup>42</sup> Al O’ran (2009, 13) argue that “of all Israeli interactions with Jordan, only one Israeli plan was offered to settle the Jordanian-Israeli conflict: the Allon Plan (named after Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon).” The plan offered “Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank in exchange for peace with Jordan, stated that Israel would annex the Jordan Valley on strategic and security grounds, which, unsurprisingly, was met by a Jordanian rejection of the plan. Nothing short of recovering all of the West Bank (including East Jerusalem) would have incited King Hussein to agree” (Al O’ran 2009, 14). Hussein rejected any plan that would compromise on land; however, he accepted the idea of land swap in principle: “meter for meter” (Al O’ran 2009, 14). Al O’ran (2009, 14) added that the Israeli Labor-led coalition government feared giving up any land from biblical Israel to not lose its coalition, as well as, its main priority a peace with strong Egypt rather than weak Jordan.

longest borders (Dallas 1999, 126). Hussein explained how dependency and cooperation was unavoidable between the two countries when he said, “If we looked at water, it was a problem that both of us suffered from. If we looked at even a flu epidemic, it affected both of us. Every aspect of our lives was interrelated and interlinked in some way or another. And to simply ignore that was something I could not understand. One had to do something, one had to explore what was possible” (Shlaim 1999).

King Hussein at that time did not yet possess the power or the popularity among his people and neighbors to carry out such negotiations publicly. As much as the Mufti of Jerusalem was a negotiation spoiler for King Abdullah in the 1930s and 1940s, Arafat was the main spoiler of King Hussein’s efforts. Hussein was not able to join the 1978 Camp David agreement, mainly because he could not engage in an agreement without the PLO support. The PLO had more popularity in the West Bank and among the Jordanians from Palestinian origin than the king at that time. Dallas (1999, 164) explained that Hussein, in his first meeting with President Carter, expressed his willingness to be party to the negotiations if they were based on the return of the West Bank and East Jerusalem. Hussein proposed that a returned West Bank and East Jerusalem could be placed under international control until the Palestinians chose a ruler. However, Israel refusal to involve the PLO in any negotiations as long as Arafat did not recognize the Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 prevented the King from joining the negotiations (Dallas 1999, 164). Dallas (1999, 164) added that Sadat also refused Hussein’s participation “because of [Hussein’s] style of escalating demands and opportunism.” Clearly, Sadat was more flexible in his demands over the Palestinian problem than Hussein; he understood that Hussein will not be able to compromise on any Palestinian issue since



Palestinians constitute a large proportion from the Jordanian population. Brzezinski, Carter's national security advisor, stated that the Carter administration avoided adding more parties to the negotiation table as it could complicate the process; thus, they did not invite the King (Dallas 1999, 164).

Other factors blocked Hussein's attempts to join Camp David include: first, Hussein could not predict the reaction of the Jordanian Palestinians in the East Bank, as much as those in the West Bank. Second, the Arab League Summit in Rabat in 1974, limited his power vis-à-vis its recognition of the PLO as "the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people" (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 81).<sup>43</sup> Hussein had thus already declared that he would not represent the Palestinians without an official and clear request from the Arabs and the Palestinians themselves. Third, unlike the case of Egypt, Hussein could not afford isolating Jordan from the Arab World by individually signing an official peace agreement.

In his book, *Back Channel Negotiation: Secrecy in the Middle East Peace Process*, Wanis-St. John (2011, 25) wrote that Sadat's concessions in Camp David and his trip to Israel "elicited no reciprocal movement from Israel toward a more comprehensive peace and resulted in Egypt's isolation within the Arab world." After The Camp David agreement, the Arab states not only suspended all official aid and severed

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<sup>43</sup> Earlier, in 1972, King Hussein offered a "plan for a United Arab Kingdom, a federation between Palestine (Gaza Strip and the West Bank) and Jordan (the East Bank) with each region having its own government and separate judicial system. Amman would be the capital of the Jordanian region and Jerusalem of the Palestinian region" (Al O'ran 2009, 13). Both the PLO and Egypt refused such a plan, which led to the 1974 Rabat Summit outcome, where the PLO became the only representative of the Palestinian cause. Al O'ran (2009, 13) added, "Had the Israelis agreed to withdraw from the 1967 territories early enough upon King Hussein's repeated requests, the Rabat decision might have been pre-empted."

diplomatic relations with Egypt, but also suspended it from the Arab League and from other Arab institutions; the League of the Arab States headquarters was even moved from Egypt to Tunisia.<sup>44</sup> Ultimately, Sadat paid for this decision with his life when fundamentalist army officers whom were supported by the opposing Muslim brotherhood assassinated him. In short, Hussein took a wise decision by keeping himself, and his kingdom, out of the Camp David accords –waiting for another decade or so for public peace negotiations.

In reality, Hussein never gave up in pursuing peace. The Arab League Summit of 1982 reconfirmed the PLO status as the only legitimate representative of the Palestinian people; however, this time they opened the possibility for the PLO to negotiate with Israel over a permanent solution “*only* within a framework of an international conference” (Al O’ran 2009, 14). The latter was a clear signal that Arabs are heading toward recognizing the existence of the Israeli state. Hussein has been always an advocate for an international peace conference that will function as a venue for legitimizing a peaceful solution for the Palestinian issue. For him, as much as it was frustrating that he has to deal with Arafat, it was exciting the shift in the Arabs’ paradigm toward a peaceful settlement for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The next section, which analyzes the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, covers most of the events that occurred during the 1980s that are related to the Jordanian-Israeli relations in their journey toward peace.

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<sup>44</sup> It took a decade until Hussein managed to engineer a summit in Amman (1988) where he managed to invite Egypt back to the Arab League (without Egypt revoking its peace agreement with Israel). It is highly believed that Hussein engineered the return of Egypt in the Arab League to break the taboo of bilateral peace with Israel, and to make a future peace agreement with Israel more acceptable.

## CHAPTER 8

### JORDANIAN-ISRAELI PEACE NEGOTIATION

The Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation was always marked with secrecy. Only a limited number from the elites on both sides had the knowledge or the access to these encounters. It is important before going into analyzing the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation in the 1990s to understand why the parties choose (or were forced) to take the back channel.

#### Why taking the Back Channel?

Leaders choose *back channel negotiation* (BCN) or diplomacy to mitigate several areas of uncertainties that may affect the negotiation process: *First*, the cost of entry into negotiations (Wanis-St. Jordan 2001, xiii). In the Jordanian-Israeli case, Abdullah greatly feared not only the Arab reaction to his plan, but also the reaction of the Palestinian National Movement under Hajj Amin Hussein leadership – the same challenge that Hussein later faced. *Second*, leaders have uncertainty about the effects of the spoilers. Abdullah had to deal with Ibn Saud and the radical Syrian leaders who were looking to incorporate Transjordan into their countries. Hussein faced a greater range of such: Nasser of Egypt, Al Assad of Syria, Saddam of Iraq, and Arafat of PLO, all of whom had spoiled or prevented him from engaging in several peace initiatives. *Third*, the uncertainty caused by the lack of information on the other party's interests and preferences. Faisal, Abdullah, and King Hussein (in a later stage), were curious about the

Jewish aspirations and wanted to know and understand what exactly their adversaries wanted out of a Jordanian-Israeli agreement. When A. Shlaim (1999) asked Hussein to explain his reasoning for meeting with the Israelis, he answered: to know “what I am dealing with. I had to explore, I had to find out what is the thinking in Palestine.” Hussein explained that he engaged in such conversations “to try to see if there is any way to resolve the problem.” *Finally*, leaders prefer BCN because they are uncertain about the impact of negotiation outcomes on them. The Hashemite leaders realized the international interest regarding the Jewish fate, and the amount of Western support the Jews possessed. On the other hand, they were aware that any public compromise regarding land or principles will be costly. As I mention earlier, Hussein justified his choice of joining the 1967 war by acknowledging the two-fold threats: on one hand, the domestic situation where the majority of the population is either Palestinians or pro pan-Arabism (*al-qawmieh al-Arabieh*); On the other hand, the Israeli threat who might not only occupy the West Bank, but also continue further into the East Bank. In other words, if Hussein entered a bilateral peace agreement with Israel (or even if he enter a public peace talks), at that time the costs might be his throne or even his life, like Sadat.

### Negotiating for Peace

The earlier chapter on the Jordanian-Israeli relations laid down the history, as well as the context in which the leadership in Jordan and Israel operate, addressing some of the key reasons and circumstances that prevented the two parties from achieving peace. This chapter builds upon the themes elicited from this broad framework. By which, the

author hopes the picture will be complete in regard to the environment and the context in which the negotiators in the 1994 Peace Treaty operated, as well as, all the other factors that influenced the negotiations, before addressing the cultural ones.

This chapter illustrates the factors (other than cultural) that contributed to the success of the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Treaty in 1994 through providing a comparison with an earlier attempt, happened in 1987, that is known as the London Document – or the Hussein-Peres peace negotiations. In providing the comparison, the author utilizes in part L. Z. Eisenberg and N. Caplan's (2010, 23) framework of analysis from their book, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: Patterns, Problems, Possibilities*; the publication examines the various negotiations between Israel and the different Arab states utilizing the seven following points of analysis: previous negotiating experience, purposes and motives, timing, status of negotiating partners, third-party considerations, proposed terms of agreement, and psychological factors. However, in this analysis six main factors are covered: previous negotiations, motivations, timing, status of negotiators, third-party considerations, and the psychological barriers. The author left out one of the factors, which is "proposed terms of agreement," because this factor is covered in part while analyzing the other factors.

The comparison of these two cases, the London Document 1987 and the Peace Treaty 1994 demonstrates the importance of timing of the negotiation, the motivation, the third-parties' interests and influences, the status of the negotiators, and the psychological barriers between the two parties, which all could alter familiarity, willingness, common interest, and long term cooperation in pursuing peace.

1980s Lots of Process, Without Peace

The earlier chapter on the Jordanian-Israeli relations concluded with the Arabs authorizing, during the Arab League Summit in 1982, the PLO (*only* the PLO) to pursue peace negotiation with Israel *only* within an international conference. The problem was that neither Israel nor the United States accepted to negotiate with the PLO unless it renounce violence, recognize Israel's right to exist, and accept the UN resolutions 242 and 338 (Al O'ran 2009, 15). Upon such circumstances, Hussein had to work his way with Arafat in order to pursue him to accept the two UN resolutions 242 and 338, as well as, agreeing into joining a common Jordan-Palestinian delegation to engage into peace negotiations with Israel.<sup>45</sup>

In general, the 1980s marked as a period where many efforts were made to move towards peace; it was an exhausting and painful decade for both Jordanians and Israelis. P. Robins (2004, 158) in his book, *A History of Jordan*, argued that the 1980s was a decade of peace plans, it was "strong on form, [but] delivered little by way of outcome"; *a lot of process, but without peace* (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 73). In 1987, King Hussein and Shimon Peres, Israel's foreign minister at that time, conducted several secret meetings in London, where they personally crafted a peace document that was referred to as the London Document. The accord consisted of two documents, the first planned for

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<sup>45</sup> In 1985, Hussein managed to arrange "an agreement with Arafat on a common approach to a peace process involving Israel" (Al O'ran 2009, 14). They agreed upon a common Jordanian-Palestinian delegation that will negotiate with Israel under the umbrella of an international conference (Al O'ran 2009, 14). Latter, Hussein discovered that Arafat was maneuvering and hesitant to make such decision. Getting frustrated from Arafat, Hussein in 19 February 1986 made a three and a half hours public speech, in which, he "announced that he was ending his efforts to construct a joint peace strategy with Arafat and the PLO. He characterized Arafat as unworthy and said that the problem lay in his unwillingness to accept Resolutions 242 and 338" (Al O'ran 2009, 15). Furthermore, two years later Hussein announced the Jordanian disengagement with the West Bank, ending his long term efforts in speaking on behalf of the Palestinian people, as well as, ending the Jordanian ambition in the West Bank.

an international conference that would provide an umbrella for bilateral negotiations in the form of a series of bilateral committees; while the second outlined the Jordanian-Israeli agreement over a peace settlement that includes the occupied territories (Robins 2004, 162; Al O’ran 2009, 16). The plan failed in materializing for several reasons (which are discussed in the next sections). Ironically, the 1994 Peace Treaty, which commenced five years later with an international peace conference in Madrid, also utilized an umbrella for bilateral negotiations approach that took the form of a series of bilateral committees on various topics. Though both negotiation attempts processed a similar structural approach, their final outcomes differed drastically.

#### Previous Negotiating Experience

As discussed in the previous sections, the Jordanian-Israeli relationship was anything but new: the countries possessed a long history of secret negotiations, cooperation, and agreements. Some described this relationship as “the worst kept secret dialogue in the Middle East” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 116). Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 75) suggest that Jordanians and Israelis informally cooperated in managing the West Bank; “[t]heir ‘Open Bridges’ policy allowed for the movement of people and goods among Israel, the West Bank, and Jordan. Such cooperation was based on their mutual interest; “Israel had no desire to administer the West Bank at the level of day-to-day affairs” but Jordan does (Garfinkle 1992, 55). In chapter two of his book, Garfinkle (1992) illustrates several areas of cooperation as well between the two countries after the 1967 war. Such cooperation included: borders security, education, water, agriculture, pollution control, commerce, tourism, banking, intelligence and terrorism, air traffic

control, Aqaba-Elat, and media among others. Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 75) quote Ian Lustick from his 1978 book, *Israel and Jordan: The Implications of an Adversarial Partnership*, “Whether any open, negotiated settlement between the two countries could provide as satisfactory an arrangement [is doubtful].” The communication between the two countries was directly between the king and a small number of the top Israeli leadership;<sup>46</sup> this created some sense of continuity, stability, and trust (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 117). Regarding the meetings in Washington that followed Madrid, Y. Lukacs (1997, 181) commented in his book, *Israel, Jordan, and the Peace Process*, that the Jordanians and the Israelis negotiated “the building blocks of functional cooperation that had already been secretly discussed between the two sides.” He added that they knew each other’s positions, strengths and weaknesses, and limitations (Lukacs 1997, 181).

In consideration of the London Document experience, the author shares Eisenberg and Caplan’s (2010, 117) conclusion that familiarity and cooperation alone do not guarantee a successful outcome. However, what one can learn from the two initiatives is “that the trust and stability created by the unique nature of long-term Jordanian-Israeli relations *did* contribute to the achievement of a formal peace treaty, once the two parties decided to go public” (Emphasis added: Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 117). The London Document was never made public; thus the question at the forefront is what motivated the two parties to make the second attempt a public affair?

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<sup>46</sup> Hussein met with all the Israeli prime ministers, since the establishment of Israel, except Menachem Begin.



### Motivations

In previous negotiations, Arab and Israeli leaders agreed to engage in negotiations to either please or respond to pressure from a third-party. The Jordanians and the Israelis agreed to meet in 1987 “with similar primary goals of reaching a Jordanian-Israeli peace and finding a diplomatic mechanism that would allow for a comprehensive settlement of the larger conflict” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 117). Both preferred the Jordanian rule of the West Bank over the Palestinian rule; however, they did not necessarily share the same “vision for what should become” of the Palestinian land (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 117). For Israel, annexing the West Bank would threaten the Jewish demography within the state; for Jordan, it would also threaten the Jordanian East Bankers’ demographic balance and the popularity of the King as a result.

However, there were other factors that motivated Hussein to move forward. On the Israeli side, the rise of right wing conservatives like Ariel Sharon and Yitzhak Shamir, who were promoting the “Jordanian Option,” was painful and annoying for Hussein. Sharon used to claim that a Palestinian state already existed: “Jordan is Palestine” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 77). Shamir also believed that the only motive for Hussein to advocate for peace was based on his fear that Jordan would be transformed into Palestine and his ability to rule would subsequently end (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 77). However, Hussein was largely motivated to negotiate with the Israelis in 1987 after receiving several promises from Arafat regarding acceptance of UN resolutions 242 and

338, as well as his readiness for peace;<sup>47</sup> Hussein knew he would not be able to achieve peace without the Palestinian participation. On the other hand, Al O'ran (2009, 15) argued that the participation "of the PLO was double-edged sword for both Israelis and Jordanians. For Hussein, the higher the profile of the PLO in negotiations, the less risk regionally or internally, while to the Israelis, the higher the profile of the PLO the harder it would be to rally support for the negotiations internally."

Nevertheless, by insisting on having an international conference as an umbrella for the bilateral negotiations, Hussein hoped to counter some of the challenges that prevented him from joining Camp David. An international conference, with the participation of the Palestinians, the Syrians, and the Lebanese, would prevent the reoccurrence of a case like that of Egypt post-Camp David; Hussein did not want to face isolation and aid cuts from the other Arab nations because of their exclusion from such processes. Additionally, with Arafat on his side, Hussein could avoid confrontation with the Palestinian population.<sup>48</sup>

For the 1994 Peace Treaty, the parties' motivations took a different form and new dimensions from those of 1987. After the first Gulf War, Hussein paid a high price for his support of Saddam Hussein. He lost the American and the Gulf States' support. His country faced a serious economic crisis after the disengagement with the West Bank and the return of hundreds of thousands of Palestinian and Jordanian workers from the Gulf.

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<sup>47</sup> Later Hussein discovered that Arafat at that time was not ready to accept the 242 and the 338 resolutions; and Arafat was just taking Hussein as a bridge to become recognized as a negotiation partner by the Americans and the Israelis. For more on the Jordanian-Palestinian Accords (see Shlaim 2007, 428-445).

<sup>48</sup> In 1977 the Palestinian National Council (mainly the PLO) reversed its earlier resolution to overthrow the Hashemite regime in Jordan (Robins 2004, 147). However, Arafat and the PLO remained the most popular in the West Bank and among the Palestinians in the East Bank. Hussein was indeed unable to move without Arafat.

However, economists speculated the potential mutual rewards that “jointly developing commercial and tourist facilities at the Dead Sea and at the twin cities of Eilat (Israel) and Aqaba (Jordan)” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 118). Hussein’s intentions were thus largely to place Jordan in “the best position to shape developments to its advantage” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 118). Majali et al. (2006, 255) argued that the rescue of the Jordanian economy was mainly dependent on what the U.S. could do for Jordan. Thus, Shlaim (2007, 552-553) argued that Hussein was able to restore the Jordanian-American relationship by moving fast on the 1994 peace treaty; Shlaim added that Jordan not only gained economic and military aid as well as debt forgiveness from the U.S. as a result, but also became recognized by the U.S. as a state of critical importance in the Middle East. On the Israeli side, the benefits exceeded economic factors as well, including the stabilization of long eastern borders, as well as creating a buffer zone between itself and the hostile leadership in Iraq (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 118). In short, the 1994 peace negotiations provided incentives for both parties that altered the functional status quo. Nevertheless, questions still remain as to whether the 1990s represented the right period to start implementing the London Document and hold the international conference; and whether in 1987 Peres was truly able to carry his part of the bargain in such a framework? The next section on timing answered these questions.

### Timing

Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 119) emphasized that since the Jordanians and the Israelis shared many common and overlapping interests, the right question for the 1994 Peace Treaty “is not why they were able to reach an agreement, but why at this time.” On

the other hand, the London Document in 1987, which was personally finalized by Hussein and Peres, “represented a test of whether the time was ripe” for a formal peace treaty (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 79).

The answer for the latter question is arguably no. Israel at that time had a unity government between the Labor and the Likud parties, which “created special obstacles in terms of the timing and status-of-negotiator factors” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 79). Shamir-Peres’ unity government was a huge dysfunction; for example, American diplomats had to duplicate all of their official meetings with Shamir and then again with Peres (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 80). On the other hand, Shamir was a big fan of the “Jordan Option,” his party was a big opponent for the land-for-peace idea, and above all, he refused the idea that Peres was negotiating with Hussein behind his back (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 80).<sup>49</sup> In his memoir, *Battling for Peace*, Shimon Peres (1995, 270) denied that he was negotiating with Hussein without Shamir’s approval. Peres wrote that “Shamir knew of and approved my mission to London, and he was the first to be told of what had been achieved as soon as I got back.” These back and forth accusations between the two Israeli leaders, are clear manifestation of the dysfunction in their unity government.

In short, in 1987 Hussein was ready for peace only to find that the Israelis were not ready. Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 80) wrote, neither rejected nor endorsed, the London Document “entered the limbo”; after “the 1967 war, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan had famously announced that he was merely ‘waiting for a phone call’ from King

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<sup>49</sup> Also see Shamir (1994, 167-168), where he claimed that the negotiations between Peres and Hussein went behind his back.

Hussein to resolve the status of the West Bank. Now in 1987, ‘Hussein was finally ready to lift the phone, only to find that Israel’s line was out of order.’ The latter statement by Eisenberg and Caplan that accuses Hussein for not calling Dayan in 1967 is inaccurate. Post 1967 war, the best that Israel offered “was ceding 33 per cent of the West Bank and East Jerusalem,” which King Hussein had no choice except to reject for sure (Al O’ran 2009, 12).

On the other hand, the timing for the 1994 Peace Treaty seemed ideal: The 1991 Gulf War hit hard the Jordanian economy due to the loss of the U.S. and the Gulf States’ foreign aid; the flight of three hundred fifty thousand Palestinian and Jordanian workers who were expelled from the Gulf States back to Jordan created further economic hardship in the kingdom; the end of the Cold War led to the absence of the Soviets as sponsors for Arab states; Gulf States, Egypt, and Syria sided with the U.S. in the Gulf War and now were eager to increase their relationship with the U.S. (which required rapprochement with Israel); and finally, after Madrid and Oslo, and with Syria and the PLO initiating talks to the U.S., Jordan could not afford to just sit and watch other Arab nations developed their relationship with this third-party power without taking initiative itself (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 119-120).

The author argues that the most important element regarding timing was the fact that the Palestinians (Arafat) negotiated directly and even signed an agreement with the Israelis. Adnan Abu-Odeh, former Hussein’s advisor, said in an interview that historically the Palestinian issue “placed two decision-making restraints on King Hussein, one Arab (removed by the Gulf War and Madrid) and one Palestinian (removed by Oslo)” (qtd. in Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 120-121). The latter was even more important, for the reason

that the Jordanians waited until the Palestinians signed the Declaration of Principles (DOP) with Israel on 13 September 1993, and just 22 hours later, the Jordanians signed the Common Agenda (Majali et al. 2006, 239; Robins 2004, 186). Hussein commented on the issue in his interview with Shlaim (1999) by saying, “Eventually the Palestinians decided they wanted to move on their own. This absolved us of any further responsibility other than looking after our own damaged population with regard to Israel and peace.” Hussein told former Prime Minister Rabin two weeks after the Palestinians signed the DOP, “now that the Palestinians have been able to speak for themselves and have assumed their responsibilities, we can do business” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 121). In other words, Jordan was ready and capable of carrying a peace agreement.

In short, both parties realized in the early 1990s that their interests can be best served by conducting public negotiations and signing a formal peace treaty. Together, they understood that the time and the surrounding environment were appropriate to move forward in this manner, and both thus successfully invested in such an opportunity for the best of their interests (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 121).

### The Status of the Negotiators

One of the most important factors behind the success or failure of the Arab-Israeli peace negotiations was the status of the negotiators. For example, both the Israeli and the Jordanian governments preferred a Jordanian Hashemite ruler in the West Bank over a Palestinian ruler; however, the King did not possess the power to enforce an agreement on the Palestinians or to speak on their behalf (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 80). For such a reason, Hussein needed an agreement with the PLO in the 1980s to gain the legitimacy

in negotiating the West Bank with Israel on their behalf (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 81).<sup>50</sup> On the Israeli side, Peres was not in a better situation; his “status proved even more problematic than Hussein’s” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 81). He started a half-term as a Prime Minister on a unity government with the Likud Party, and continued as a foreign minister for the second half. Even as a Prime Minister, his status was not as strong as if he were the leader of only Labor Party government. Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 81) explained that the Likud opposed the London Document, not only because it came from the Labor party, but also because they were against the essence of the land-for-peace formula.

The London Document, in short, failed into the trap where one (maybe both) of the parties would not be able to provide their share of the bargain (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 81). Peres blamed Shamir and wrote that the London Document could saved Israel six years of Palestinian *intifada* and saved the lives of many human beings (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 82). For Hussein, who already knew Shamir’s negativity, Peres proved as the disappointment. He believed that “Peres underestimated the strength of the domestic opposition [that] he would face.”(Shlaim 2001, 447-448). Al O’ran (2009, 16) argued that the London Document failure “was due not to PLO disapproval but to Peres’ inability to obtain approval from his own government.” After this experience Hussein trusted Peres no more, he was frustrated from the way that Peres handled the situation. In his interview with Shlaim (1999), Hussein complained about Peres and said: “I talked with him. I agreed with him on something and he couldn’t deliver.”

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<sup>50</sup> Also see chapter 20 “Peace Partnership with the PLO,” in Shlaim 2007.

The situation for the 1994 Peace Treaty, however, was different. Hussein and Rabin “commanded sufficient popularity and power at home to be able to make good on their promises” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 121). Rabin had a strong position and respect domestically, even within the Israeli right wing. During his election campaign, he stated that it was the time for Israel “to change [its] priorities and make peace”; and by electing him, apparently “the nation took him at his word” (Rabin 1997, 209). Rabin’s victory in the elections meant that the public supported his agenda for peace – they trusted him as a military man who served and protected Israel for decades. Hussein also found himself in a good situation. Backing Saddam Hussein (who wanted to free Jerusalem) in the Gulf War against the Americans, and the entire world, dramatically increased the popularity of King Hussein among his people, both Jordanians and Palestinians. Such popularity was confirmed in 1992 when Hussein returned from a cancer treatment in the U.S., “he was greeted by a massive and spontaneous demonstration of support and affection, hundreds of thousands strong” (Rabin 1997, 186). This made him realize two things: first, that he might not have enough time to deliver peace. Second, “that [because] he enjoyed the popularity and confidence of his people,” he would be able to move towards peace – Oslo gave him the right moment (Rabin 1997, 186). Hussein was quoted in Shlaim’s (2007, 550) *Lion of Jordan* when he said, “When I came back after the treatment for my illness in America, and I saw how the people of Jordan came out to greet me, I thought it my duty to do everything within my power to bring security to them.”

In short, both leaders, Hussein and Rabin, enjoyed a high level of respect and trust among their people, which made them able to carry on a successful peace negotiation.



Hussein also enjoyed a strong respect and popularity in Israel (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 122). Majali et al. (2006, 179) confirmed that “success on the Jordanian track was welcomed by all Israelis with the exception of a few ultra-religious groups. The Israeli government did not need to invest in any rigorous publicity campaigns to win support for its plan to make peace with Jordan.” In Jordan, the king faced some opposition from the Islamic movement; however, the 1993 Parliamentary elections confirmed the popularity of the king since people mainly elected on tribal base and king loyalists.<sup>51</sup> Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 123) concluded that the 1994 Peace Treaty “benefited from direct and focused attention by strong leaders in control of their governments who were well served by loyal and experienced diplomats.” In short, the popularity of the two, and the trust between them, as well as the trust from the public all contributed to such success.

### Third-Party Considerations

The Arab-Israeli conflict possessed a marked history of third-parties’ interests and negative interventions. As explained earlier, Jordan continuously restrained itself from engaging in bilateral peace agreements with Israel, due to fears of isolation and punishment from other Arab states. In the London Document case, Peres needed American cooperation and support, not only in the context of adopting the initiative generally, but also in presenting the agreement to Shamir as if it was an American initiative (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 82). However, the Americans were not comfortable in mediating at that time for several reasons, most notably: the “rocky” relationship between Jordan and the PLO, the “dysfunctional Shamir-Peres team”, and

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<sup>51</sup> More information on the Jordanian 1993 parliamentary elections in Robins (2004, 187-189).

finally, the basic idea of inviting the Soviets to interfere in the Middle East vis-à-vis their attendance at the International Conference (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 82). Regardless of American hesitancy, Shamir was already aware of the initiative and knew its authors were Peres and Hussein. Like Peres, Hussein also preferred that the initiative was framed as coming from the Americans, as such would allowed him convince the other Arab states to participate in the International Conference without appearing as a secret negotiator with Israel (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 83). In short, although the American concerns were legitimate, the London Document became another agreement added to the list of Arab-Israeli negotiations that failed (partly) because of “hesitancy on the part of the third party” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 83).

In the 1994 Peace Treaty, the Americans assumed their “traditional role as an external Great Power whom both sides, particularly Jordanians, were eager to impress” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 123). The U.S. support, money, and arms are all important incentives for the two parties. Contrary to 1987, the U.S. took an active role in the 1994 Peace Treaty. The U.S. acted as the “facilitator and guarantor, keeping the negotiators on track and enticing them to persevere until they reach an accord” (Kleiman qtd. in Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 123). For Jordan, the idea of having the U.S. as the negotiation’s patron, in addition to the international conference as an umbrella, proved enough of an incentive to immediately participate. Jordan thus became a part of the Arab consensus with its decision to participate (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 100).

In short, the third-party intervention in the 1994 Peace Treaty arguably contributed to its success. The American support and facilitation of the negotiations was essential for garnering support of Arab nations – the U.S. was the new Super Power and

its might was tested by the Gulf War at that time. This American role thus represented an extreme divergence from its hesitant stance in 1987 that contributed to the failure of the London Document. The international conference and the participation of other Arab States, further provided legitimacy to the parties to negotiate and create an agreement *publicly*.

### Psychological Factors

Selling the London Document to both the people and the elite represented a critical leadership challenge for both Jordan and Israel (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 86). For Peres, the challenge was how to gain support among the elite, the Likud Party in particular. Hussein, on the other hand, would have no problem in gaining elites' support; rather, the challenge would be how to advocate for it among the public, especially the Palestinians in the West Bank and in Jordan, and even with the PLO (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 86). Peres' failure to convince Shamir and his cabinet about the document, however, seems to have arguably saved Hussein what might have materialized into a difficult confrontation with his people.

Some of the speculations that Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 87) make regarding Hussein's latter challenge analyze the level of grievance among the Jordanian people (including the Palestinians in Jordan and the West Bank). For Jordanians, after all, Israel represented the cause behind the huge waves of refugees that they had to host and share resources with. Second, Palestinians in Jordan possessed (and continue to possess) huge amounts of anger towards Israel, due to viewing the state as the cause of their

displacement, “and for the treatment of their brothers and sisters under Israeli occupation” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 87).

On the Israeli side, the “general public always thought highly of King Hussein and looked to Jordan as the preferred negotiating partner in any deal over the West Bank” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 87). The challenge in Israel was mainly expected to come from the Likud and the other right wing parties; for reasons that are mentioned earlier in this research that included the principle of land-for-peace<sup>52</sup> and the idea of holding an international conference, however, a direct peace with Jordan was acceptable for them (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 87). In short, the two parties were unable to “establish a new psychological environment” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 88) that could facilitate a public negotiating process for the London Document.

For the 1994 Peace Treaty, both Hussein and Rabin thus recognized that they would need to seriously consider ways in which they could sell the agreement to their people. Unlike the 1987 speculations, this time the situation was real and an agreement had been made. Eisenberg and Caplan (2010, 127) provided the example of Marwan Muasher, one of the champions of the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, who at the beginning hesitated – for psychological and cultural reasons – from accepting the King’s offer in being the first Jordanian ambassador to Israel. As Muasher demonstrated, changing the perceptions of the average Jordanians and Israelis about each other would require increased efforts from the two governments.

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<sup>52</sup> Shamir was demanding peace-for-peace over the idea of land-for-peace (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 90).

In Israel however, things were much easier for Rabin. The Israeli public already has great respect for Hussein, and peace with Jordan was highly accepted even among the right wing. Rabin actually took the occasion of signing a peace agreement with Jordan to start advocating for peace with the Palestinians – which was a more difficult task, evidenced by the fact that it cost him his life. For Hussein, despite the difficulty, he still managed to convince the majority of his people that peace with Israel was a rational decision. Hussein insisted on broadcasting all the signing ceremonies live on Jordanian TV. In his address to the Jordanian parliament in July 1994, Hussein warned that without the support of the U.S., “Jordan could not withstand the economic and political pressures it faced” (Eisenberg and Caplan 2010, 129). However, it was his popularity among his people and their trust in him that eventually altered the grievance in their minds and hearts.

In short, the psychological barriers between the two people who perceived each other as enemies for all their lives must be hard. In the case of the London Document, negotiations never reach a stage where leaders needed to begin selling it to the public since Peres failed in selling it to the Israeli elite. The 1994 Peace Treaty, however, proved that how strong and skilled leadership altered the psychological barriers and significantly changed public opinion. The author does not claim that the two societies transformed overnight, but a large percentage of the two societies did change their perceptions of the other. A public poll in Jordan that was conducted in August 1994 showed that 80.2

percent of Jordanians support signing the Washington Declaration that ended the status of war with Israel (Al O’ran 2009, 3).<sup>53</sup>

### Summary

The Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiations until the 1994 Peace Treaty, and for 75 years, were doomed by three main factors that prevented any earlier public peace agreement to succeed: the status of the negotiators, the timing, and the third-party influence.<sup>54</sup> The 1994 Peace Treaty proved that once the negotiators (mainly the leaders), are strong and enjoy high popularity; have the right motivation; the skills to select (or even create) the right timing; together with the presence of a committed and powerful third-party, other factors, such as the psychological barriers, the history of violence, and even the terms of agreement could be altered.

In a more detailed way, there are several factors that contribute to the success (or the failure) of negotiations. The author concludes in this chapter that the following six factors are the most relevant to the Jordanian-Israeli case, are *interrelated*, and often *complement* each other. These factors are also helpful in realizing why parties choose back channel negotiations, and when is the right time to switch from BCN to official or front channel negotiations:

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<sup>53</sup> Other results in this poll showed that 71.2% expected that Jordan will regain its all territorial rights; 75.9% believed it will regain all its water rights; and 82.8% expected improvement in the economy (Al O’ran 2009, 3).

<sup>54</sup> Third-party influence includes mainly the mediators or the patron of the negotiation, but also it includes other states and actors who had interests or can affect the negotiations positively or negatively. In the Jordanian-Israeli case, other Arab states always played a negative role in preventing a successful outcome of the negotiations, until the 1994 Peace Treaty, where other Arab States provided the legitimacy for Jordan to negotiate bilaterally with Israel.

1. *The familiarity between the parties*: this includes previous successful cooperation and communication. Such familiarity might develop some kind of understanding and even trust among the parties which will encourage them to enter the negotiations in the problem-solving mode.
2. *Interests and Motivations*: the parties need motivations to encourage them to change the status quo. If their interests and motivations complement or even overlap with each other, this will encourage them to go to the negotiation table and try to explore and even solve the problem. The important part here is to make sure that the parties have the motivation and the expectations that the negotiations will produce a better outcome than the status quo – even if it requires creating such motivation.
3. *Timing*: the right timing is essential for the success of the negotiation. Timing is highly dependent on the other factors. A dysfunction in any of the next three factors (status of the negotiators, the third-party, and the psychological factors), mean bad timing; however, this could be solved by switching to BCN. On the other hand, switching from BCN to front channel negotiation requires the right timing for all the other factors, especially factors (4) status of the negotiators, (5) the third-party, and (6) Psychological barriers.
4. *Status of the Negotiators*: the success of the 1994 Peace Treaty was highly related to the presence of strong, skilled, and popular leaders. Leaders who can deliver their share of the bargain. It was remarkable how in the Jordanian-Israeli case, the status of the negotiators and their popularity managed to break the psychological barriers between the two peoples.

5. *Third-Party Role*: the role of the third-party in the Jordanian-Israeli experience was very important. In 1987 the U.S. was one of the main reasons for the failure, while in 1994 Peace Treaty, the U.S. was the champion. It played the right role by being the strong third-party whom all the parties respected and were willing to please. The third-party in the 1990s was able to provide the carrot and the stick to bring the parties to the negotiation table.
6. *Psychological Factors*: the psychology of the people is very important. If people are not ready to accept peace, then announcing peace might backfire. Sadat was assassinated for signing peace with Israel, and Rabin was assassinated for signing peace with the Palestinians. This factor is highly related to timing and the status of the negotiators. Hussein managed in a short time to break a strong psychological barrier between the Jordanian and the Israeli peoples. This could not happen, if the timing was not right (Jordan insisted on not signing its agreement with Israel until the Palestinians signed theirs) or if the leader was someone not as respected as Hussein.



## CHAPTER 9

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

While analyzing the data, several patterns appeared from the various interviews as well as the memoirs of some of the negotiators. Such patterns were clustered inductively into seven main categories: the first category aimed to counter the skeptics' point of view regarding the role of culture in international negotiation – this category focused mainly on the selection and the experience of the negotiators; five categories reflected upon the five cultural dimensions that were illustrated earlier in chapter 4 (high- and low-context, individualism/collectivism, high- and low power distance, high- and low uncertainty avoidance, and monochronic/polychronic time); and the last category illustrated the different ways that culture influenced the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation.

#### The Selection of the Negotiators; Challenging the Skeptics' arguments

During the content analysis, several patterns appeared that generally challenged the skeptics' views on the role of culture in international negotiation that were analyzed in chapter 5. Zartman was among those scholars who challenge the role of culture in international negotiation by rising four main arguments: first, *culture is vague*, which means it is hard to measure or to isolate its impact from the impact of other variables that influence negotiation; in other words, there is an absence of a reliable

framework of analysis to measure the influence of culture. Second, the *attitude* that culture is *perceived as an obstacle for the success of negotiation* rather than an *enabler*. Third, *power alters* other variables including culture. Finally, there is no role for culture because *diplomats share the same culture of diplomacy* that has evolved overtime in international relations – diplomats are professionals and share the same language and code of conduct. The latter skeptic point was the most common and the most popular in literature; therefore this section elaborates on this point further.

The first three skeptic arguments that are listed above were not elaborated here because of the following reasons: first, there is a common agreement that culture is difficult to measure. However, qualitative research proved to be helpful in such circumstances for this study. Second, in regards to the attitude, culture was approached as an *enabler* in this study and the results of this research showed that in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, culture was an enabler rather than an obstacle. Third, there is a wide range of opinion on the role of power asymmetry in international negotiation; however, on one hand, no evidence emerged during the data collection process that power asymmetry between Jordan and Israel was a factor. On the contrary, Jordan (with less military and political power) managed to achieve significant gains on the material level (i.e. borders, water, economy, security, and so on). On the other hand, the presence of a strong third-party such as the U.S. definitely played a significant role in the power dynamics between the two parties. The latter was quite visible in many occasions, such as when the U.S. pressured Israel to participate in the Madrid conference and when Jordanians insisted on involving the Americans on many occasions. For example, at an early stage of the negotiation process in Washington, during what to be known as the *sofa*

*diplomacy*;<sup>55</sup> Majali, upon disagreement with the Israelis on the basics of the process, said, “I propose to take up this matter of disagreement with the sponsors” (Majali et al. 2006, 33). In such case, the third-party was thought of serving as a way to reduce the power asymmetry.<sup>56</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the fourth skeptic argument that is emphasized in this research is the common diplomatic culture because it is the most common and the most popular argument among the skeptics – as part of the *professional culture theory*.<sup>57</sup> The researcher concludes that the common diplomatic culture theory is based upon two main *false assumptions*: first assumption is that all international negotiations are conducted among diplomats, including that negotiators are well-trained and professional diplomats; and the second is that negotiators across cultures are selected upon the same criteria, experience and professionalism in international relations. Furthermore, the researcher concludes that conducting negotiation among professional diplomats does not necessarily mean that culture should be alienated. In other words, having a cultural influence does

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<sup>55</sup> The sofa diplomacy or couch diplomacy is in reference to the sofa in the U.S. state department where Abdul Salam Majali (the head of the Jordanian delegation), Elyakim Rubinstein (the head of the Israeli delegation), and Haider Abdul Shafi (the head of the Palestinian delegation) were setting to discuss separating the Jordanian and the Palestinian delegations and the number of negotiators for each party; the sofa diplomacy took the whole first round and almost the second week of the second round; until then the two negotiation parties did not enter the negotiation room (see further information on the Sofa Diplomacy in chapter two in Majali et al. 2006).

<sup>56</sup> There were several other incidents where the Jordanian delegation hinted to include the U.S. to solve disagreements and balance the power; for example, the Jordanian senior negotiator Munther Haddadin, suggested including the U.S. as the jury and the judge in objection for the very legal and formal language that Robby Sabel used during a session on water (Majali et al. 2006, 106). Interestingly, the back channel negotiations that occurred between Hussein and Rabin, which included a limited number of their aid to finalize the peace agreement was kept secret even from the Americans (Interview 8). However, one could argue that at that point the relationship between Hussein and Rabin was way beyond official and diplomatic relations; the Israeli negotiator confirmed that their friendship was strong and personal (Interviews 8).

<sup>57</sup> In the interviews, there were some remarks that supported the *professional culture theory* that are discussed in this section; however, the professional culture theory in the data was never mentioned in the context of negotiation among politicians and diplomats, but rather among military personnel and lawyers including other professions that dealt with technical issues.

not mean that the negotiators were not professionals. The author suggests that professionalism and experience in negotiation is about investing culture as an enabler rather than an obstacle. Professionalism is about how to interact and navigate smoothly in the international arenas without abandoning your own norms, principles, and most of all, values. Successful negotiators are those who can speak in the international arenas in a way that both the counter party and the average members of their own societies will understand and tolerate while pursuing national interests. Professionalism and experience in international negotiation means negotiators should invest their knowledge and understanding of their opponent's culture to be able to build the trust as well as achieve mutual gains.

Nevertheless, the findings of this research suggest that not all the negotiators were diplomats or possessed such experience in negotiation; the majority of the negotiators were selected upon other criteria than diplomacy and experience in negotiation. For example, the Jordanian team who participated in the negotiation with Israel was formed by individuals who were loyal to the country (i.e. especially the regime) and well-respected in the Jordanian society, rather than on the basis of their qualifications as professional diplomats and negotiators. Abdul Salam Majali, the head of the Jordanian delegation, in his first encounter with Elyakim Rubinstein, who was the head of the Israeli team, addressed him by saying, "You are a young man, a diplomat and an expert in negotiations, ... I am not like you, ... I am a lot older, am a man of science and methodology, and not an expert in diplomacy and negotiations" (Majali et al. 2006, 18). The Jordanian negotiator stated during an interview with the author:

I have never negotiated. I am not a diplomat, I am not a politician by all means, I am not a historian, none of these things, I am a scientific person and I always have the scientific analysis whether confounding my old life with my relations with others or my job, whether a doctor, a director, or a president or a minister, I look at it that way. (Interview 1).

The data gathered from the interviews with five Jordanian negotiators during this research's fieldwork stage further confirmed that experience in diplomacy and negotiation was *not* the main selection criteria within the Jordanian team.

For example, a senior Jordanian negotiator, who had a main role in forming the Jordanian negotiation team, commented on the selection process and the Jordanian negotiators' experience by saying, "I do not think this is a matter of negotiation skills. I believe personally ... in hunch. I do not believe the 14 were negotiators in the terms of expertise, but we knew every ... issue ... it needed a full understanding of your case rather than an expertise of negotiation skills" (Interview 2). However, his statement confirms that the peace negotiation with Israel was a political process. He agreed with the need for expertise in technical issues, in economics, environment, law, and so on. But, he also added that whether you have the experience or not you need to know the issues of your country, the national interest, as well as the circumstances in the region and the world (Interview 2). Another Jordanian negotiator, who has been known for his experience in negotiation, confirmed that the combination of the Jordanian delegation was based on people who were well-aware of the substance of the text as well as "the context and conduits" (Interview 3). He called them the three c's – the content, context and conduits. In other words, *how to negotiate* came third after knowing the issues and the circumstances – the context. This same negotiator, when asked him if he considered himself at that time a politician, he answered, "I still do not" (Interview 4). In other

words, hardly any of the interviewed Jordanian negotiators considered himself a politician or a diplomat at the time of the negotiation. When Majali introduced his team at the negotiation table in Washington, he emphasized that Fayez Tarawneh, Jawad Anani, and Munther Haddadin are all retired officials and currently unemployed and himself a retired general and former Cabinet Minister (Majali et al. 2006, 55). The emphases here on the fact that the majority of the senior Jordanian negotiators were neither active politicians nor diplomats, but rather well-known figures that are famous for their loyalty and respect among the public. In short, negotiation skills were not the main criteria in selecting the Jordanian negotiators. The senior Jordanian negotiator confirmed the latter when he stated, “I am not going as a diplomat. Personally, I say things as they are and I do not have secrets” (Interview 1). He even expressed his criticism of diplomats when he said that he cannot agree with politicians “when they say something and mean something else” (Interview 1).

Furthermore, several of the Jordanian negotiators emphasized that their appointment came by the King or the head of the delegation, rather than based on their specialization in a certain field (Interviews 1, 2, 3, and 5). The only exception was the military negotiator who was interviewed: He was the president of the Jordanian-Israeli Mutual Truce Committee, and prior led a career in the Jordanian military intelligence in the department on Israel (Interview 4). In other words, he had a good knowledge of the Israeli politics and society, and had already conducted several previous negotiations with the Israelis. Other negotiators, when they were asked about their feelings when they were

selected to negotiate with the Israelis, several answered that they never met Israelis prior to the negotiation (though some did indicate that they met Jews while studying abroad).<sup>58</sup>

Some Jordanian negotiators emphasized that themselves or other members were selected upon personal contacts or by employing the Jordanian collectivist cultural characteristic that is known as *wastah*, which is employing personal contacts to become part of the team. A Jordanian junior negotiator who was at that time a freshly graduate, when he was asked how he was selected as part of the Jordanian delegation, he answered, “I have known ...,” and he named one of the senior Jordanian negotiators who comes from the same clan (Interview 5). The latter negotiator has experience in international law at that time, however, but, as he notes, the emphasis within the selection process was based on personal relations rather than because of his experience or position. It should also be noted that there was no application process to compare different candidates. Another negotiator complained that some of the Jordanian negotiators lacked the knowledge and the experience. He added that “during the times of forming and organizing committees, some higher rank people in Jordan mediated other persons [employing *wastah*] to join the committee; why? Because they are relatives” (Interview 4). He added, “In fact; we have people in the negotiations that were of high knowledge, awareness and responsibilities; while others were not, they came for negotiations just for

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<sup>58</sup> It is important to highlight that the question in the interview did not mention the word “Jews,” but the Jordanian negotiators’ answers included statements such as the following: meeting with Israeli officials was for “the first time in the negotiations. But I met Jews all over the place” (Interview 1). There is a Jordanian or generally an Arab sentiment to include Jews in talking about Israelis, and this is more a cultural issue. In the introduction to his memoirs, Abdul Salam Majali wrote that he was “the head of the first Jordanian delegation that negotiated the *Jews* peacefully” (emphasis added, Majali 2003, 11). In the latter quote, Majali used the word Jews rather than Israelis in his memoirs that were published in Arabic – for many Arabs, Jews means Israelis.

personal or money matters” (Interview 4). The two statements by the two negotiators confirmed that there were other factors and criteria that influenced the selection of the negotiators rather than their experience in negotiation and the mastery in the so called *diplomatic culture*.

On the other hand, the selection process on the Israeli side applied different criteria in the selection process. A senior Israeli negotiator stated that he was, at the time of the negotiations, the cabinet secretary of the Israeli government and Prime Minister Shamir, and later with Prime Minister Rabin (Interview 6). He said, “I was assigned first to Mr. Shamir to head our negotiating team towards the Madrid Conference because I had some experience already with the confidential contact with Jordan before then ... I had experience before that on a number of occasions with meeting with Jordanians ... I was an assistant to the late Moshe Dayan, who had contact with the King Abdullah I. So it was very appropriate, from my point of view, to work on the peace with the Jordanians ... I did work with Egypt first and then with Lebanon and then with Jordan, then with Palestinians and then with Syrians. Personally I had experience with all of them (Interview 6). Another Israeli negotiator answered the question on his selection by stating, that he was at that time “the coordinator of the government activities in the [occupied] territories” (Interview 7). He was appointed to the Palestinian track, but because of the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, he had to negotiate with both; and later he stayed with the Jordanian track once the joint delegation was split into two (Interview 7). In other words, those two negotiators were appointed because of their experiences, as well as their positions that were related to the Jordanian-Israeli conflict at that time. A Jordanian negotiator stated that “all the Israeli participated in negotiations



were of high degree of knowledge. Before coming to any committee; the Israeli negotiator studied well” (Interview 4). However, there are other factors that influenced the selection of the Israeli negotiators; for example, the Israeli parties had to be represented in the Israeli delegation to gain the public support for the outcome and that affected the dynamics and the consistency of the team (Interview 2). In other words, in some cases Israeli negotiators were selected upon their partisan background rather than expertise (in chapter 6, the section about the Israeli culture illustrates the Israeli political culture of coalitions that caused its fragmented government).

It was important to emphasize again that the analysis in this section did not mean to underestimate the performance of any of the two teams. In contrary, records showed that the two teams performed on a high level of proficiency and achieved successful results. However, this section challenges the claims that diplomats share a common culture therefore culture is irrelevant to international negotiation. Statements and examples that are mentioned in this section explained how the common diplomatic culture theory is not applicable in all cases, at least in the case of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation. *Negotiators are selected upon different criteria in different cultures*; other factors than negotiation experience are considered in selecting negotiators; and most of all, *negotiations are not always conducted among diplomats*.

Nevertheless, the data also showed that military personnel from both teams felt more comfortable in negotiating with other military personnel across cultures. A Jordanian military negotiator explained that in the negotiation committees he dealt with politicians, diplomats, law people, university academics, consultants and other different specialists from different fields. He added that “military people took over the

responsibilities of solving some problems as they are known for their trust [and] straightforwardness” (Interview 4). An Israeli military negotiator confirmed, when there was “problems between negotiators, we the military men solved the problem” (Interview 7). The Jordanian General stated, “I felt through negotiations with people with military backgrounds ... happy and at ease more than with the diplomats. It is an important point for militaries to take care of everything from papers to words and talks” (Interview 4). The Israeli General confirmed, “It was very different, we had so many things in common. It was ... an immediate chemistry ... between the army people” (Interview 7). He added, “... we formed a group of military guys, which went along very well” (Interview 7). It was surprising during the interviews how the military negotiators used the words “we” and “a group” to identify together across parties. When asked if he feels more comfortable negotiating with a Jordanian military rather than dealing with an Israeli politician, the Israeli General answered, “Absolutely, absolutely” with the Jordanian military is more comfortable (Interview 7).

However, the professional culture theory here was confirmed regarding negotiation among military personnel, not diplomats. In all the interviews, the negotiators avoided to identify themselves as politicians or diplomats, as if being a diplomat is something negative. The Israeli General elaborated more on the sentiment that negotiating with diplomats is not a comfortable situation, while with military personnel it way comfortable and productive; he explained:

The diplomat is someone who tells you to go to hell in such a nice way that you are eager to start the trip ... but that are diplomats. But I think ... look on the Jordanian delegation, the head of the delegation was also an army man. Doctor Abdul Salam, he was a Doctor but he was brought up as a military ... [he was] very straight forward. (Interview 7).

A Jordanian senior negotiator who refused to identify himself as a diplomat or a politician stressed that he “cannot agree with the politics when they say something and mean something else” (Interview 1). In the earlier section on the Jordanian-Israeli relations, it was stressed that late King Hussein felt more comfortable in dealing with Rabin the military over Peres the politician. In other words, the professional culture theory might be applicable on military personnel in the Jordanian-Israeli case, but not on the politicians and diplomats case. Apparently, being described as a politician or a diplomat in the Jordanian-Israeli context is something negative. The negotiators preferred straightforwardness in the negotiation, which means to avoid diplomatic “tricks.” Majali in his first meeting with Rubinstein, he told him: “Say what you like and I will respect your right to speak no matter how bitter your words may sound, and beware of attempts to sweeten your words. If I conclude that you intend to sweeten the bitter talks, you will not find me the same man thereafter” (Majali et al. 2006, 19). And a Jordanian negotiator confirmed that the Israelis did not use any tricks with them; he added, “They were straight with us to be honest” (Interview 3). In other words, the interaction between the Jordanians and the Israelis during the negotiation was not a typical diplomatic interaction that followed the diplomatic norms.

The following five sections illustrate several examples on how the five cultural dimensions across the two parties, influenced the negotiators as well as the negotiation process:

### Individualism and Collectivism

The individualism versus collectivism is one of the main distinct national cultural dimensions between the two parties. It was clear in the language and words that were used by the negotiators during the interviews, as well as in the negotiation process itself. The Jordanian negotiators often spoke with “we” and embraced their team as whole, while the Israeli interviewee hardly spoke about the rest of their team unless they were asked specifically. All the interviewees were asked to identify themselves in respect to culture. A senior Jordanian negotiator said, “I am Jordanian by all means and I am proud of it; at the same time, I am proud to be a Jordanian [and] Arab, and this is very important in my life and certainly I am a Muslim, so I have these three things of which I am very proud of having” – Jordanian, Arab, and Muslim (Interview 1). He added, “we were Arabs, Jordanians, even our songs at the schools used to be of Arab, pan-Arab and we were proud of it” (Interview 1). The statement by the senior Jordanian negotiator confirmed the earlier literature in chapter 6 on the Jordanian culture, where the Islamic tradition and the Arabic language and ethnicity, brought the feeling for Jordanians as being members of the larger nations – the Arabic and the Islamic nations. Another point in his statement, was the usage of the word “we,” which was seen as a pattern among the different Jordanian negotiators – it was less used among the Israelis. Israeli negotiators when they were asked about identification they mainly mentioned profession with less emphasis on culture.

Furthermore, the main features of the collectivistic societies are the group interest, harmony, relationships, and consensus. When he was asked about the relationships within the Jordanian negotiation team, the senior Jordanian negotiator answered:

First of all we had like-mindedness. The team that was formed basically not coming from different parties or different walks of life. Most of us were former officials and we have something in common, Jordan, Jordan, and Jordan. And there was no disparity of course, one may differ in the logistics or the formalities, but as far as the issues were concerned, we were all in the same line of thinking. We have a national duty. This is a historic event, we have to do the best out of it, and we will not let down his majesty King Hussein who committed himself in front of 2,000 Jordanians in the National Congress at Sports City<sup>59</sup> and he said that we will not compromise on one centimeter on our occupied land in the South or one drop of water in the Yarmouk River or in the Jordan Valley, and we will not jeopardize the Syrian, Lebanese or Palestinian tracks in the process. So that is basically what we had as a guideline; we never differed from within on any of these issues (Interview 2).

The latter quote is basically a summary of the collectivist mindset. He started by emphasizing that the group shared the same mindset; the group was not coming from different parties or different backgrounds; the group had only Jordan as its common bond and Jordan's interest was the only goal; the group was all united on the issues – “the same line of thinking”; the group will not let down the king, especially he committed himself in public – face was involved; the group will not jeopardize the interest of the larger Arab group; and finally, the group “never differed from within on any of these issues.” All these factors, which the Jordanian negotiator considered as qualities, are indeed the main characteristics of collectivistic societies. While the Jordanian negotiator perceived the latter characteristics as qualities, an individualistic person might perceive them as weaknesses and disadvantages. From an individualistic mindset, this group of Jordanians lacked for pluralism and diversity, it could easily fail in what is called group-

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<sup>59</sup> In preparing the Jordanian people for the peace talks with Israel and the Madrid Conference, “King Hussein called a Jordanian national meeting to which dignitaries, officials and Jordanians from all walks of life were invited. His Majesty announced in a speech that Jordan could not afford to stay behind while the future of the region was being shaped, and he provided convincing arguments, quoting from the Qur'an, for Jordan to join the peace process in Madrid with its other Arab brothers” (Majali et al. 2006, 13).

think – the lack of diversity is a disadvantage in the individualistic culture rather than an advantage as it was perceived in the collectivistic Jordanian culture.

On the other hand, the Israeli team was more diverse and lacked for such common bond that existed within the Jordanian team. A Jordanian negotiator reported a conversation he had with Elyakim Rubinstein, when the latter said: “there is a big difference between my delegation and yours. Your delegation is unified, determined by the government of Jordan and with the blessing of the king. I have three from the Likud, three from the Labor ... three from the military, two from the Mossad ... everybody has their own terms of reference. When I go back, they call to their people. I am a head of delegation just by name, I report to Rabin, but I have different walks here” (Interview 2).<sup>60</sup> It is not in the interest of this research to evaluate the better cultural approach or best practices across cultures in forming negotiation teams; however, the reason from bringing this example was to illustrate the cultural differences between the Jordanian and the Israeli delegations. The latter conversation between the Jordanian negotiator and Rubinstein came as part of an incident by which the former complained from the latter that he changed his words. Rubinstein explained that the group dynamic in the Israeli side consisted larger diversity and less consensus – the same example was elaborated in the section on power distance and the respect for hierarchy and authority among the two delegations. Nevertheless, while none of the Israeli negotiators highlighted any

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<sup>60</sup> Rubinstein told Majali while trying to convince him to invite more Israelis to the *Sofa talks* that “the Israeli delegation was carefully put together in order to represent the different political shades of the Likud and other opposition parties and also to represent both military and civilian wings of the Israeli administration. It would be impossible for him to be the sole delegate” (Majali et al. 2006, 38). The latter quote could also be used an example on the cultural differences regarding power distance; Majali as the head of his team he was able to make decisions on behalf of his team – if he wanted.

differences among the Jordanian team, the Jordanian negotiator emphasized such differences within the Israelis when he stated that “sometimes the Likud people struck us as people who are very adamant to the book ... there was no flexibility in their positions” (Interview 3). The latter statement indicated that a Jordanian was able to identify the differences in style and approach among the Israeli team, while there was no similar statement on the Jordanian team. In contrary, the earlier statement by Rubinstein indicated that the Israelis perceived the Jordanian team as a unified group where consensus was the norm – the example also confirmed the political homogeneity within the Jordanian society.

Another feature of the collective society was related to the individual - group relationships. For example, the individual in the Jordanian culture felt obliged, and submitted to the group’s interest. When he was asked by the king to participate in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, the Jordanian negotiator commented, “I accepted it [the mission] with absolute thanks to his majesty to give me the chance to serve my country” (Interview 1). Another negotiator when he was asked to join the Jordanian negotiation team said that it was “a national duty.” He replied to the person who asked him at that time, “You should not ask anybody ... if you want to offer me an ambassadorial post, I would say thank you very much, but my family circumstances would not allow me to do as much, I decline, if you were offering me a ministerial job, I can decline, but this is a nationalistic endeavor, and no one, no one should apologize” (Interview 2). For the Jordanians, they perceived participating in the negotiation as a duty to pay for the larger group – the collective society – rather than a task that the individual should deliver according to his/her job. None of the Israeli negotiators replied to the same

question, about their feelings when they were selected to participate in the Jordanian-Israeli negotiation, with the same spirit. Their replies were mainly related to their positions or experience.

On the issue of the group interest versus the individual interest, the Jordanian negotiator observed that in Western societies (he indicated in another question that the Israeli society is a Western one) “there is more emphasis on the individual’s rights. For us [Jordanians], it is the secondary,” the group is more important (Interview 5). He explained that “the first thing they [the Jordanian negotiators] had in mind has been the interest of Jordan, and Jordanian interest, serving His Majesty and His Majesty’s goal” (Interview 5). He followed up on his former observation of the Israeli team by saying, “Yes, Israelis are individualistic but they have at the same time common goals, they have a common vision, especially in light of the situation in the region and what they perceive as their common interest as a state vis-à-vis the Arabs generally” (Interview 5). The Jordanian negotiator in the latter statement indicated the Israeli individualistic characteristic, but he emphasized the common national interest that brought Israelis together. As illustrated in the section on the Israeli society (chapter 6), Israelis are generally individualistic, but they value the community on the national level – as explained earlier that the regional circumstances and the collective grievances among the Jews and the Israelis what created the common national interest.

Another feature of collectivistic cultures is the group consensus and harmony. The Jordanian negotiator emphasized that for the Jordanians “the group and how we deal with each other was more important.” He added, “We were close to each other and we made sure that we agree on everything” (Interview 5). He also stated that the norm within the



Jordanian team was “respecting the others’ views and acting in common and as a group.” Later in the interview he added that “the differences were not major among the Jordanian team” (Interview 5). The senior Jordanian negotiator confirmed and said, “When we went to the negotiations, always, on all the days, I meet with everyone from my team. Ask everybody, I told them what happened that day, and to everybody ask and to talk what will happen tomorrow and if it comes, what is *our idea* about it” (emphasis added: Interview 1). He added that similar meetings were conducted with other Arab delegations (Interview 1). Another Jordanian negotiator confirmed that the Jordanians negotiated “more with each other” to come out with a group decision, because what is important for them “is the group ... [he continued] of course with the political leadership giving the instructions eventually on how to proceed” (Interview 5). It worth indicating that the latter statement reflected the tension between consensus and hierarchy in cultures that are collectivistic and scored high power distance at the same time. The statement also indicated the importance of consensus as well as the will of the leadership.

The Israeli negotiator from his side illustrated that in the Israeli society, “debate and listening to others and putting everything on the table,” is the norm (Interview 7). He pointed at the ground rules that are hanged at the wall behind his desk and by which they communicated in his department. He said, “Always speak your mind, there are no ranks in the room, be open”; he added, “That is part of our culture. I think at the end of the day one just has to take the responsibility and that is fine. Very much depends on him” (Interview 7). The latter quote by the Israeli negotiator illustrated several qualities of the Israeli individualistic culture, where the individuals can share their opinion freely without concerns about status or the group harmony. The negotiator selection of words indicated

the individualistic approach, “one just has to take the responsibility” and “Very much depends on him.” The same quote also indicated the low power distance characteristic in the Israeli society, “no ranks in the room” – the interview was with a reserved General in the Israeli army.

Other qualities of the collectivistic cultures included the importance of maintaining good relationships with the others, avoiding confrontation to save face, and respecting traditions and religion. The Jordanian negotiator, who earlier criticized his team’s organization, emphasizes that “The negotiators from Jordan were not appeared with a double face in front of Israeli. He did not deal with them in a way different from others. No, he was always in one face marked by respect, listening to others, did not mock or make fun of them; which is very important. There was mutual respect and appreciations. This was a reflection of our habits and traditions with whom we were talking or meeting. Of course our habits of generosity, hospitality were at its peak” (Interview 4). Another Jordanian negotiator explained why the Jordanian negotiators interacted with the Israelis with respect, he said:

I think this is all has to do with the culture, even the Islamic [culture]. If you want to go deep into this”; and he added in Arabic, when the Prophet said if someone greeted you, answer the greeting with a better one, he did not say only to Muslims (Interview 2). He continued in Arabic and said, also in the Quran, ‘And if you had been rude and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you’ (The Qur’an 3:159), he was talking to the people; Allah said ‘O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you’ (The Qur’an 49:13); he did not

say the Muslim or another (Interview 2). He concluded, “So this is the Islamic culture, respect” (Interview 2). The latter quote did not only emphasize the importance of relationships, harmony, and respect in the Jordanian, Arabic, and Islamic cultures, but it also emphasized the importance of religion and traditions in the life of Jordanians. Whether this Jordanian was an average person, a politician, or a diplomat, religion and tradition plays an important role in his/her life; which is a quality that is common within the collectivistic cultures.

Other emphasis on the collectivistic and individualistic characteristics that were noticed in the interviews included the emphasis on the common interest, across the two parties to avoid disagreements, rather than own group or self-interest. The Jordanian senior negotiator emphasized that he do not agree with diplomats and politicians “When they [are] being very selfish and seeing only their own point of view” (Interview 1). He added, “I always like to see the other side’s story” (Interview 1). The same negotiator appreciated how Rubinstein treated him “in public, in everything respect ... if someone were to open the door for me, he had to do it himself.” He added, if “he feels that I am angry, he gets terribly worried and so on” (Interview 1). The Jordanian senior negotiator explained the latter comments on Rubinstein’s approach to him as a way to show respect to his age; he also indicated that such kind of mutual respect and interaction should be the right approach in dealing with the other, rather than the politician’s “selfish” style.

The Jordanian senior negotiator emphasized that the former attitude of respect and cooperation influenced the negotiation process; or as another Jordanian negotiator described it, “It developed over time from the formal to the human” (Interview 3). The former Jordanian negotiator explained by saying, “We adopted a system, maybe a bit

unusual among others ... I go there and meet with him [Rubinstein] in a public office ... I will ask him what do you have to say today and I tell him what I have to say today, and we argue and argue and so forth so we produce something out, and I produce something out and then we stop. I go to my team and tell them what this fellow is talking and what do you think, he goes to his team and asks ... and then we meet again, then we talk until we find what are the common grounds and then we go to the plenary” (Interview 1). Such a process of negotiation left hardly any space for disagreements between the two parties in public; in other words, public confrontation were avoided through cooperation, which in some way or another, a way for *saving face* for the two parties.

#### Low- and High-context

The differences regarding the low-context versus high-context cultural style of communication were also noticeable among the Jordanian and the Israeli negotiators. Literature predicted that a high-context culture, such as the Jordanian one, would adopt an indirect style of communication, that is implicit, non-confrontational, and more context based (more nonverbal). People in a high-context culture look for more information in the context and would focus more on the history; because they are indirect, they depend more on hinting and metaphors. On the contrary, the Israeli low-context culture, would adopt more direct style of communication that is explicit, verbal based, confrontational, and would focus on the problem rather than the history and the context.

The data gathered from the interviews contained a significant amount of examples on how the Jordanian and the Israeli negotiators were influenced by the low-/high-context

cultural dimension, and in result such styles influenced the process. The Jordanian senior negotiator recalled an incident where he and the head of the Palestinian delegation wrote a statement; Rubinstein asked if he could see the statement; and the Jordanian negotiator agreed. Rubinstein after reading the statement asked if he can sign it, because he agreed on all its content. The Jordanian negotiator said “no ... when you talk [and] you say agree, finish; now no signature because we respect that” (Interview 1). One of the main distinctions between high- and low-context cultures is that in high-context cultures trust is important and words could be binding as if it were contracts. In a high-context culture someone would say, “I gave you my word” and this is a contract. While in low-context cultures, communication is as if it was among lawyers, if it was not written, it meant nothing. However, in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation words and promises were important. The senior Jordanian negotiator said that when he first met with Rubinstein, he looked him in the eye and told him to be direct and honest with him, no tricks and no games, “I hate any attempt by anyone to fool me. Say what you like and I will respect your right to speak no matter how bitter your words may sound ... If I conclude that you intend to sweeten the bitter talk, you will not find me the same man thereafter” (Majali et al. 2006, 19). Rubinstein replied, “I know all these qualities in you, and I promise you will not be disappointed” (Majali et al. 2006, 19). When he was asked if he believed Rubinstein, the Jordanian senior negotiator answered, “Yeah ... he was honest about whatever he says” (Interview 1). Several other negotiators emphasized that there was a high level of trust among the leaders of the two delegations, which was more significant in regard to average diplomatic interactions.

On the other hand, the whole process of the negotiation between the Jordanians and the Israelis was not only without a detailed agenda, but also they adopted what they called “no paper” style; which meant they were allowed to exchange ideas and options without making them binding agreements, even if they were written. The Jordanian negotiator made the comment on the “no paper” policy, “But you know what, because this was a long protracted process, you learn your lessons as you go on. You learn that if you renege on something that you accepted, that you allow him to renege on something that he had accepted for and so on” (Interview 3).

As illustrated earlier, high-context cultures tend to use hinting and indirect communication to convey messages. An important incident that occurred between Majali and Rubinstein reflected clearly the Jordanian high-context style of communication that is based in hinting and indirect messages rather than direct confrontation. The incident happened at an early stage during the Washington negotiation. The story started when Professor Walid Al Khaldi, the member of the Jordanian delegation, anticipated that Rubinstein will hand Majali a prepared draft peace treaty in the next session and before even the negotiation started, because (in his opinion) Israel was in hurry and more interested in the \$10 billion dollar loan guarantees from the U.S. rather than a peace treaty. Offering the Jordanians a peace treaty will fasten the process if accepted, or it would free Israel from the burden of going into peace negotiation if it were refused – all of that were only predications because it was believed that Shamir was not interested in peace. Majali rejected the idea and declared that Rubinstein will not try to fool him; Majali told Kalidi, “I am willing to bet \$100 that Rubinstein will not hand me a copy of a peace treaty as you expect” (Majali et al. 2006, 57). The next day Majali was surprised by

Rubinstein giving him a document that was prepared by the Israelis, upon the instruction of “Prime Minister Shamir himself” (Majali et al. 2006, 59). Majali was outraged and “hit the desk with his right fist, refusing to take the document” (Majali et al. 2006, 59). After a long discussion between the two about the motivation and the consequences of such a move by Rubinstein, the following conversation took place between them:

Rubinstein: Why don't you take a peek at the draft treaty, just have a quick glance?

Majali: No, Ely, no. To me this is not only a taboo, but it would be condoning the crazy notion of putting the cart in front of the horse ... You are married, Ely, aren't you?

Rubinstein: Yes.

Majali: And a rabbi conducted your wedding?

Rubinstein: Yes.

Majali: When you asked for your wife's hand from her family, did you tell her father what you would be doing in bed with their daughter right after the wedding party was over?

Rubinstein: No, I did not.

Majali: Why not?

Rubinstein: Because they would not give me their daughter.

Majali: But why?

Rubinstein: Because telling them about the happy ending in bed would be demeaning to her family.

Majali: But that was what would be happening between you and their daughter after she became your wife.

Rubinstein: Yes, but ones not go around telling it to others.

Majali: Okay then, do you realize what it means to us to mention the treaty at this time, before we get to negotiate? It is like telling your would-be father-in-law what you and his daughter would be doing in bed. (Majali et al. 2006, 61).

Majali et al. (2006, 61-62) concluded that “That metaphor ended Rubinstein’s unyielding insistence on considering the draft peace treaty. Majali took advantage of the silence, and wanted to show some flexibility, [so he told Rubinstein about what he thinks was better idea for all,] ... to exchange our visions of peace? We will tell you right at the outset what and how we think of peace, what it is to us and to you, what it entails in terms of gains and pains to us all.” Rubinstein agreed to Majali’s offer, and it was believed that the former dialogue was an important test for the evolving relationship of trust between Majali and Rubinstein (Majali et al. 2006, 62). The usage of metaphors and stories, which Majali and his team often did, was a manifestation of the Jordanian high-context culture where messages and lessons, especially upsetting ones, are conveyed in an implicit and indirect way.

On the other hand, the Jordanian negotiator confirmed that the Israelis were direct and straightforward in their style of communication with the Jordanians. He explained, the Israelis “were more mechanical than we were, more to the text ... and they did not like to use any ticks with us ... they were straight with us ...” (Interview 3). The Israeli negotiator confirmed that Israelis put “everything on the table”; the ground rules in his office, confirmed such sentiment of being open and “always speak your mind”; he added, “That is part of our culture” (Interview 7).

When the Jordanian negotiator was asked about the use of jokes and metaphors on the Israeli and the Jordanian sides, he confirmed that Rubinstein “was the only one who made jokes among his delegation”; Jordanians made more, “and I did more than others. I used jokes all of my life when I wanted to explain a different situation” (Interview 3). The latter statement was in consistent with the notion that people of high-context cultures



often depend on hinting and metaphors as an indirect way to convey messages; especially messages that are unpleasant or could be considered confrontational. The Jordanian negotiator added, “I mean my jokes were not innocent” (Interview 3). In other words, jokes were used not only to break the ice and create a friendly atmosphere, on contrary, it meant to be an indirect way of confrontation.

The Jordanian negotiator observed that Rubinstein’s jokes sometimes carried “a hidden message”; he added, “... but it is accepting, palatable” (Interview 3). On the other hand, the Jordanian negotiator confirmed that he would use jokes to send stronger messages. He recalled a story when he traveled with Prince Hassan to Tel Aviv to meet with Netanyahu. He explained that the aim was to talk about the vision of peace, as well as, “to convince Netanyahu to be more accommodating with the Palestinians” (Interview 3). The Jordanian negotiator complained by saying that while they (the prince and him) were talking about peace, and the future of the Middle East, and the Palestinian situation, “[Netanyahu] said, ‘you know, your highness, we should really pay much more attention to those Mediterranean flies in the Jordan valley you know when we spray our insecticides they fly those god damn flies to your side, but your side, when you spray they come to our side. Why do not we coordinate our spray campaigns in a way that those flies are caught in the middle and they do not harass tourists?’ And the Prince you know felt that this guy diluted everything he said with the flies ... So I felt that if the Prince could not answer him, I should answer him. So I said, ‘oh, Mr. Prime Minister, fantastic, fantastic, but I think I have a much simpler way to deal with the Mediterranean flies. Instead of having a committee on your side, a committee on our side, trying to agree on a date to spray insecticide, it takes a long time, by the time they finish those committees,

sub-committees, summer will be over and we do not need to spray anymore.’ And he [Netanyahu] said, ‘what, do you have a better suggestion?’ and I said, ‘Yeah, we can declare the Jordan Valley a no-fly zone’” (Interview 3). In the latter joke, the Jordanian negotiator meant to convey indirectly a demeaning message to the Israeli Prime Minister, because earlier he felt demeaned by the Prime Minister’s talking about a less important issue in comparison to the issues that the Prince and he were talking about. The Jordanian negotiator told the researcher that the Israeli Prime Minister got the message and since then they “never liked each other” (Interview 3).

As part of indirect communication, nonverbal messages, symbols, and gestures are way more used in the high-context cultures than the low-context ones. Several incidents confirmed the Jordanian negotiators’ sensitivity toward symbolism and nonverbal communication – everything has a meaning including shapes and colors. For example, when they were given their plastic name tags, a Jordanian negotiator complained to his colleagues about its colors, “Why did they choose blue and white? ... These are the colors of the Israeli flag” (Majali et al. 2006, 27). Another Jordanian had to explain to him that blue and white are also on the American flag, he told him, “notice also the red stripe across the bottom of the tag; it completes the colors of the Star - Spangled Banner” (Majali et al. 2006, 27). In another incident, when the Jordanian delegation entered the negotiation room, some noticed that several Israelis were wearing the Yamaka (the Jewish religious small cap); Majali et al. (2006, 27) reported on this incident, “Dr Haddadin whispered in Anani’s ear, ‘I will take my cross memento and hang it down my neck unto my chest. It seems that the Likud Party wants to cast on the negotiations a religious color.’” The Jordanian negotiator answered during the interview,

“Rubenstein himself, always wore a Yamak, and in the beginning we used to look at it because a Yamak to us means a very conservative, strict anti-peace camp” (Interview 3). Another story was shared in Majali et al. (2006, 50), Majali used to not wear his name tag around his neck; instead, he would walk while twirling it around his index. The Jordanian team, after sometime, they realized that Majali twirl his tag clockwise if he were happy and counterclockwise when he was angry, and it was true (Interview 1). All of these incidents, gestures, and symbols could pass unnoticed if it was not for the high-context background of the Jordanian negotiators, where everything has a meaning and a context.

On a final note, usually the misunderstandings across cultures occur because of the low- / high-context cultural gap; because across this cultural dimension, individuals interpret messages differently. Dealing with context is about dealing with meaning, and same things could mean different things in different cultures. For example, the Jordanian negotiator recalled an incident where a misunderstanding happened because of the usage of a word that described the same thing across the two cultures, but that thing symbolized two different meanings. The Jordanian negotiator explained, “for instance, we used the word ‘dog’ in the sense that he is loyal, he is friend or something. To Israelis, the word ‘dog’ seems to be a very nasty word; especially when it comes from an Arab” (Interview 3). He added, “There were many instances like that ... immediately the Israelis would protest and we would protest and then they would apologize and immediately withdraw the word” (Interview 3). Nevertheless, the low-context versus high-context cultural gap between the Jordanian and the Israeli societies did not cause any serious fractions during the negotiation, on contrary, the metaphors and the jokes that were used to convey

messages, contributed to the cordial atmosphere that was noticeable in the Jordanian-Israeli track.

### Low- and High Power Distance

Another important cultural dimension that remarkably distinguished the Jordanian and the Israeli societies from each other was power distance. Power distance was about how far the members of the society accepted inequality among themselves in regard to status and hierarchy. High power distance implied emphasis on status, hierarchy, formal communication across ranks, and centralized power and organization. On the other hand, low power distance implied focus on experience, informal communication, equality, and decentralized organization. The earlier analysis of the two societies in chapter 6 indicated that the Jordanian culture, similar to other Arab societies, accepts inequality within the society – the Arab World scored 80 points on the power distance index. On the other hand, the Israeli culture, scored 13 points, which ranked it as an ultra-low power distance society. Such a gap on this cultural dimension between the two societies was confirmed by the negotiators during the interviews, where they provided several examples that reflected the characteristics of this cultural dimension.

On the issue of formal and informal communication, several Jordanian negotiators expressed their surprise how Israelis communicated by their first name and in an informal way, even across ranks. The Jordanian negotiators provided statements in the interviews such as: “I heard them call themselves with the first name ... here we call with titles” (Interview 1). Another Jordanian negotiator, who is a former General, expressed his surprise when he saw “A female 18-19 year [old] Israeli soldier” called Elyakim

Rubinstein by his name, she said “O Elyakim, come and sit down, this is your seat” (Interview 4). He explained his surprise by saying, “We are disciplined army, so we have a discipline of calling people” (Interview 4). A third Jordanian negotiator confirmed, “They called each other by their first name. I saw a soldier calling a general by his first name”; he added, “we won’t do that” (Interview 5). Such observations were confirmed by the Israeli negotiators as well; the former Israeli General and negotiator, when he was asked about the latter observation, he agreed and said, “Yes, sometimes this happens” (Interview 7). He explained, “We are very informal but it is rarely a General, normally it is lower level commanders who can be called by their first name” (Interview 7). Another senior Israeli negotiator commented:

It is part of the ... culture indeed, I would not say everybody, but many in Israel would call higher authorities in the first name, for instance, with my late mentor Moshe Dayan I would call him Moshe, and with Yitzhak Rabin, I would call him Yitzhak. But on the other hand with Prime Minister Begin, I think I would call him Mr. Prime Minister but with Ehud Barrack we would call him Ehud ... But it is very common that you find people around high authority calling by first name. But I would of course, with the other side of negotiation if the formality persists ... for instance, Dr. Majali, I would call first Dr. Majali and I call him still Dr. Majali or Dr. Abdel Salam, but with the Doctor. Tarawneh who is, Majali is older than me by twenty years but Dr. Tarawneh who is so much younger I would call him Fayez many times. Or in your culture you call people Abu this, Abu whatever their son’s name or many Jordanians would call me Abu ... because I only have daughters and my eldest daughter is ... (Interview 6).

Another Jordanian negotiator explained that “Rubenstein [in the official meetings] would refer to them [other Israeli delegations] with their titles, but they used the words Mister or Doctor” (Interview 3). However, he retreated on his earlier statement and said, “But you know they did not use the word doctor a lot. Though many of them had PhDs, to them it did not matter much” (Interview 3). He explained when he was asked about the formality in communication within the Jordanian team, “They used to call me Abu ... For

instance, my name was Abu ... or Dr. ... *The word Doctor with me because my PhD many years ago; it seems like it is part of my name; people feel naked without it*

(emphasis added: Interview 3). Another senior Jordanian negotiator when he described how he was approached to join the Jordanian negotiation team, he said, “he [former Jordanian foreign minister Kamel Abu Jaber] was a dear friend and he taught me at the University of Jordan, my teacher, I said, Dr. Kamel, this is a ...” (Interview 2). In the latter statement, one could conclude that the Jordanian negotiator, even he stated that Kamel Abu Jaber was his “dear friend,” however, because of his status and he taught him in the past, still he addressed him with his title. During the interviews with the Jordanian negotiators, all of them whenever they mentioned Abdul Salam Majali, they referred to him by his title.

Apparently on the Jordanian side, where power distance is high, communication and titles were way important. The Jordanian senior negotiator confirmed that in his team everybody called him with his title. He explained, “You see, the problem with our language [culture] is that you cannot call Mohammed without ‘Abu... something’ [the father of...]” (Interview 1).

When he was asked about the level of formality in communication among and across parties, the junior Jordanian negotiator answered, “Informal between themselves [the Israelis], including us with some respect. Between the two sides after some time we knew each other and the relationship was less formal and more trust” (Interview 5). However, when he was asked, *did you call each other with your first name?* He answered, “They did among themselves.” The researcher followed with the question: *You did the same among your team?* He answered, “For us no” and followed the answer with

a smile that the researcher interpreted as “no way” (Interview 5). Another Jordanian negotiator agreed, Jordanians are *by nature* more formal” (emphasis added: Interview 3). The Israeli negotiator when he was asked if he observed informality in communication among Jordanians across ranks, he answered, “Pasha is Pasha,” and added, “No, on the Jordanian side it is totally different” (Interview 7).

On another note, several of the conversations that were documented in the book of Majali et al. (2006) indicated that the formal style of communication was more related to status, which implies that low rank individuals called the higher ranked with their titles, but not necessarily the opposite. Dr. Majali when he addressed Dr. Awn Al Khasawneh, the international judge, he said, “Listen Awn ...” while when Dr. Khasawneh replied, he said, “Pasha...” (Majali et al. 2006, 29). The latter is one example among many others that indicated that formality and titles in high power distance societies are hand in hand with ranks; once you are on the top; you are not obliged for giving titles.

Nevertheless, power distance was not only about formal and informal communication, it was more about status and hierarchy, and how decisions are made. The Jordanian senior negotiator who emphasized his age among other reasons for why he gained respect among the other negotiators across parties, emphasized that his observation of the other side behavior made him think that other members of the Israeli delegation “were even more senior than” Rubinstein, the head of the Israeli delegation. Such observation might be explained by the Israeli informal style of communication, as well as, the sentiment that Israelis are used to the democratic governance. The senior Israeli negotiator confirmed, “As a democracy, decision making in Israel I found out is much more debated than in other places” (Interview 6). The latter was also confirmed by

another Israeli negotiator who emphasized that “debate and listening to others and putting everything on the table” is the norm in Israel (Interview 7).

Rubinstein confirmed to the senior Jordanian negotiator that his power as the head of the Israeli delegation over his own team was not as influential as the power of his Jordanian counterpart (Interview 2). Such sentiment was highly expressed in several statements by several Jordanian negotiators in talking about Dr. Abdul Salam Majali, the head of the Jordanian delegation, or about His Majesty late King Hussein. When they were asked about decision-making within the Jordanian team or how they solved disagreements, among other questions that are related to the group relationships, often Jordanian negotiators included in their answers: “Thanks to Dr. Majali” or “Dr. Majali ... would say” (Interview 3). Others said, “... serving His Majesty and His Majesty’s goal” or “the final well is by the king, we all were looking to fulfill his vision” (Interview 5). Such statements had no equivalents in the interviews with the Israeli negotiators. The Israeli negotiators were not participating in the Jordanian-Israeli negotiations to fulfill Rabin’s vision for peace. Several negotiators indicated that Rabin was a strong leader; he had a vision for peace that he carried all the time during the peace negotiations; however Rabin was not the ultimate decision-maker in Israel (Interview 8).<sup>61</sup> On the other hand, the Jordanian King was an ultimate decision-maker if he needed to be. For example, one of the Israeli negotiators, who served as Rabin’s advisor, explained in the interview that while the negotiation was running in Washington, former foreign minister Peres went to Jordan “to talk with the King. Peres stayed there ... for two or three days ... and ... [he]

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<sup>61</sup> The Israeli interviewee (interview 8) provided several incidents that reflected the power struggle between Rabin and Peres, for example.



came with ... a draft of the peace treaty” (Interview 8). Several Jordanian negotiators indicated that King Hussein had the ultimate decision; some even went to say that they were negotiating to fulfill his vision (Interview 5). In describing the moment when he was asked by the King to join the peace negotiations, the senior Jordanian negotiator explained that His Majesty King Hussein told him, “we have decided to go for peace and I have selected you to be the head of this delegation for peace.” The Jordanian negotiator replied, “I am a soldier, you are the commander. Soldier follows his commander” (Interview 1). As explained in the earlier section on how the Jordanian delegation was formed, loyalty was one of the main criteria, if not the ultimate one.

Another characteristic that was related to power distance and the centralization of authority is that information was centralized on the top level, while the subordinates are mostly likely less informed. One of the Jordanian main negotiators, who was a former minister in the Jordanian government, explained that for the first time he learnt that Hussein and Rabin had several secret meetings prior to the peace negotiation “was when we went to exchange the documents at the Sea of Galilee” (Interview 3). On the other hand, the Israeli senior negotiator emphasized that his involvement in prior secret meetings with the Jordanian leadership was one of the reasons behind his appointment on the Israeli negotiation team (Interview 6).

On a final note, it was stressed earlier that while in high power distance cultures the emphasis is on the status, low power distance culture emphasizes experience over status. The Jordanian negotiator explained one of his observations about the Israeli negotiators in relation to their informal style of communication that “They brought him [the Israeli negotiator in general] in negotiations because of his experience not because of

his rank as a colonel or even a major general. Therefore dealing with each other, they deal as civilians ... Diplomacy for Israelis is not for ranks” (Interview 4). He added later that “their militaries – they were law people – when they come to negotiate they do not talk out of their rank, but from their knowledge” (Interview 4). The section on the selection of the negotiators provided more examples on the differences in criteria for selecting the negotiators across the two parties. While experience and political affiliation was the norm in selecting the Israeli negotiators, loyalty and respect in the society was the Jordanian criteria.

#### Low- and High Uncertainty Avoidance

According to the earlier analysis, both Jordanian and Israeli societies scored high on the uncertainty avoidance dimension; however, while Jordanians scored close to the mean, Israelis scored way higher in this cultural dimension. For the Jordanian culture, as it was illustrated in chapter 6, it sounded contradictory to be polychronic and at the same time score high on uncertainty avoidance. However, after analyzing the interviews with several Jordanian negotiators, their statements showed that Jordanians are in the middle between high and low uncertainty avoidance. Even the senior Jordanian negotiator stated, “we do not go into something unless we know exactly what is the other side, what are his strengths, what is his faults, who is supporting him, and our situation in a very honest way”; this same negotiator emphasized that Jordanian negotiators were both, open and cautious, in approaching the Israelis (Interview 1). While he gave a statement such as, “first thing, this is the human being in front of you,” in reference to the Israelis, he explained how other Jordanian negotiators raised the question of whether they should

accept shaking hands or not if they were approached by the Israelis. The latter is an example of the paradox between being open for strangers and adversaries, a quality of low uncertainty avoidance cultures, and being cautious in interacting with strangers and enemies, another quality of high uncertainty avoidance.

Another cultural characteristic of the Jordanians that they are people of fate, they comfort themselves about the uncertainty by believing in fate and God's will. One of the senior Jordanian negotiators reported on his conversation with late King Hussein at his house in the Potomac in Washington D.C., shortly before the famous arrival of King Hussein to Amman in August 1992 after his long health treatment in the U.S. The Jordanian senior negotiator said that he begged King Hussein to not set on the top of the car upon the arrival to Amman to cheer the people; he told him, what if someone throw something to attack you. Hussein answered, "Are you serious? It is my destiny ... my faith in God is absolute. Nobody will decide if I dies or not" (Interview 2). The latter conversation between two Jordanian elite politicians reflected the cultural characteristics of the Jordanian people, being people of fate.

Uncertainty avoidance also influenced the way people organized things; more detailed agenda and rules is a quality of high uncertainty avoidance societies. As explained in the section on the polychronic and monochronic dimension, the absence of a clear structure or agenda was unpleasant for the Israelis – who possessed a high level of uncertainty avoidance. Nevertheless, the latter element of process and scheduling was better elaborated in the polychronic and monochronic section.

Another feature of high uncertainty avoidance is the tendency that change takes time and fast change is unwelcomed in the absent of uncertainty about its outcome. A

Jordanian negotiator described the Jordanian culture, as well as the Jordanian negotiation team when he said we “like change but [we] like change to happen in implemental steps” (Interview 5). He explained further, “If you see here for instance that you are in a society, generally it is a conservative society but sometimes changes occur at a certain period of time as a reaction. Jordanians, we do not like that generally, we like it to be proactive change, change which is based on the experience in the past and to happen over a comfortable period of time. We do not like sudden changes and this is how I view things” (Interview 5). In the latter statement, the Jordanian negotiator emphasized that Jordanians in general do not appreciate sudden change, which is a quality of high uncertainty avoidance, but he also emphasized that himself as a negotiator view change in the same way as his society. In an earlier comment, he said that he does not react to change in the same way all the time, “But generally, in our collective consciousness you have to respect others, respect others’ views. You do not act outside the norms of the society” (Interview 5). The latter comment reflected the collective cultural influence on this Jordanian negotiator as well as the idea that some of his actions, as a negotiator, are mainly influenced by his relationship with others – “you have to respect others” (Interview 5). Later in the interview, the researcher asked him if the nature of the negotiation, being public or secret, affects his style and behavior. He answered, “Yes, a hundred percent, once in public we are talking to our people, even the words we use is different” (Interview 5).

In short, while both the Jordanian and the Israeli societies are perceived as high uncertainty avoidance cultures, apparently there was a gap between the two, which was also in consistent with their scores in this cultural dimension (Israel scored 81 and the

Arab World 68, the mean for this dimension was 65; which means Jordan is closer to the middle between high and low uncertainty avoidance and this could explain why Jordan possessed some qualities from both, the high and the low). Jordanian negotiators, on one hand, showed some trust in the Israelis, they also perceived the absence of a structure and agenda as a positive element of the negotiations; both are qualities of low uncertainty avoidance. On the other hand, the Jordanian negotiators also showed less flexibility with change and high believe in fate, which are qualities of high uncertainty avoidance. On the Israeli side, a highly structured and well organized team of negotiators (Interview 5), who felt unpleasant for the lack of a clear structure and agenda (Interview 3), are all qualities of high uncertainty avoidance. To be fair, the Jordanian negotiators made several comments on how the majority of the Israeli negotiators perceived them with interest and cordiality. While the latter is certainly not a quality of a high uncertainty avoidance society, nevertheless, it could be explained through the long history between the two parties.

#### Monochronic and Polychronic

As illustrated earlier, the Jordanian culture was perceived as a polychronic culture and the Israeli as monochronic. The main differences within this dimension are related to the use of time and space. The Jordanian culture was more centralized, dependency on the leader was higher, and individuals dealt with several tasks, people, and events at the same time. For such reasons, scheduling was difficult in polychronic cultures, which might cause frustration for monochronic people who preferred dealing with one thing at a

time. Specialization was valued in monochronic cultures, because individuals are *programmed* to deal with one thing.

In the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation, several incidents and statements were made that indicated the Jordanian polychronic approach and the Israeli monochronic's. Generally, Jordanian negotiators emphasized that the Israelis were more specialized, while the Jordanians felt proud of being experts in several topics. An important example was drawn from a disagreement that happened between Munther Haddadin, the Jordanian expert on water, and Noah Kinarti, the Israeli expert on water. Both are known in their field and were handling the water dispute between Jordan and Israel since the 1970s – and both they did not like each other and they did not try to hide it (Majali et al. 2006, 105). The disagreement happened when Kinarti suggested breaking the negotiation committee on water, energy, and environment into three groups. Haddadin firmly objected and said, “We are fine the way we are. We do not want to miss points on any of these three topics. We sit in one group and discuss any topic we like together” (Majali et al. 2006, 109). Kinarti responded that “it is more practical to split in groups of specialty,” and he named the names of the experts in each side for each topic. Haddadin explained, “You see, Mr Kinarti ... I am appointed to head Jordan's teams on each of the three topics. Obviously, I cannot be in three different locations at the same time” (Majali et al. 2006, 109). Kinarti objected again and stated that “the only way to achieve progress is to split in three groups”; the disagreement escalated and both broke the negotiation session. Majali and Rubinstein got involved to solve to the disagreement, however, the following was what Rubinstein told Majali to explain why they were insisting on splitting the group into three: “We are just trying to get our job done. You are lucky with Haddadin who can

conduct the talks in any one of their topics. I have no one like him. Kinarti can talk only water, Wurzbürger can talk only energy, and Amran Prujenin can talk only environment. I cannot squeeze three of them in one” (Majali et al. 2006, 110). As a compromise, they decided to split the group into three subgroups, but only for a shorter time and in three corners within the same room, so Haddadin can attend all.

The latter incident is an example of the cultural gap between polychronic and monochronic cultures. First, it is quite popular to find a Jordanian who is expert on several topics. Second, it is also normal in Jordan that the same person can manage several tasks or departments. Third, as explained earlier that management in polychronic cultures is more centralized and the top man should be more involved in all directions, Haddadin was indeed involved in several tasks and did not feel comfortable to delegate his duties to other experts who were in lower positions; such as Dr. Abdallah Toukan on energy and Dr. Duraid Mahasneh on environment. The Israeli side acted in a monochronic manner, each one can work on one thing, negotiating one thing at a time and distributing tasks among experts is the best way for progress.

Such sentiment of handling several tasks and tracks was quite present within the Jordanian delegation. Another Jordanian senior negotiator stated that he was originally chosen because he was an economist, “but I filled in more than one gap; two gaps” (Interview 3). A third one explained that after the negotiation started, it was divided into twenty-seven negotiation committees to cover the major negotiation points. He added that according to the Jordanian cabinet resolution; “I was a member of most of these committees and a general coordinator between them” (Interview 4). A fourth Jordanian negotiator explained that such a sentiment reflected in having a large Israeli negotiating

team, a secondary team that is full of experts; he added, “So that was very professional on their side” (Interview 5). However, several members of the Jordanian negotiators indicated that despite their small number, they knew every single issue and interest of their country and they saw it within the larger regional and global picture rather than the narrow specific issue being negotiated (Interview 1, 2, 3, and 5).

Another aspect of polychronic and monochronic cultural gap was the perception of process versus substance; monochronic people tend to be more structured. Several Jordanian negotiators emphasized that the absence of a fixed agenda, during most of the negotiation sessions was a positive issue (Interview 1, 2, and 3). A Jordanian negotiator confirmed that “there was no structure in the negotiations ... there was no agenda for a meeting. There were no agreed minutes for meetings and you could renege on something you accepted upon in a previous meeting ... that somehow played into the dynamics of positive negotiations with time (Interview 3).<sup>62</sup> When he was asked if the Israelis appreciated such a process, which is the absence of agenda or structure, he answered that they [the Israeli] did not like it (Interview 3); another Jordanian added, the “Israelis where more structured” (Interview 5). Israelis complained about the absence of a structure, for them they would say, “What kind of negotiations is that,” where parties negotiate without a prepared agenda (Interview 3). However, for the Jordanian negotiator it makes sense to not waste time on reviewing text and concentrate on the goals (Interview 3).

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<sup>62</sup> His logic was, because it was a long process, one will calculate better to renege on something because the other side might renege on something too; he saw that such atmosphere was positive. His logic was in consistent with the Prisoner Dilemma regarding the issue that parties in protracted cooperation know that negotiations will be repeated.



However, when he was asked for further explanation on how the Israeli behaved in the absence of an agenda, especially that Israelis as monochronic people should insist on negotiating one thing at a time. He answered that the negotiation often jumped between topics, however, the Israelis “were closer to the book, the Israelis wanted to finish with the Jordanian delegation ... very quick” (Interview 3). Another Jordanian negotiator confirmed that the Israelis “sometimes ... they would jump on another issue sometime on another agreement ... but generally no, generally they separate things” (Interview 5). Regarding the former comment that the Israeli wanted to finish very quick, it is not surprising; monochronic people are task oriented, plus time is linear and equal money. For polychronic Jordanians, the relationship and the way by which goals are achieved was equally important. The senior Jordanian negotiator argued, “To bridge the gaps as much as we can, you cannot get it in one night, or one second, you have to take it over the time” (Interview 1). Another Jordanian negotiator confirmed when he said, “But in those negotiations [the Jordanian-Israeli Peace Negotiation], time was not a constraint” (Interview 3). Apparently, time is not a constraint from a polychronic point of view; however, the Jordanian military negotiator who comes from a more structured institution, the army, complained and stated that the only Jordanian negative behavior during the negotiation was “in respecting the dates and times” (Interview 4). Indeed, punctuality and scheduling is not a polychronic quality and it was emphasized in the section about the Jordanian society.

Finally, another aspect of polychronic and monochronic cultures was the issue of space and the usage of space. For monochronic people, business is discussed in the business space and time, while social issues are discussed during socializing time and

space, these two spheres are separated. For a Jordanian polychronic individual, the two spheres overlap; business can be discussed anytime and anywhere, and vice versa, a social interaction could be perceived as a business interaction – in reference to what Jordanians will call “normalization.” A Jordanian senior negotiator complained and asked, “Why do not we talk in the corridor over a cup of coffee” (Interview 2). The Jordanian negotiator saw no harm in conducting business anywhere and anytime, for such reason, this same negotiator explained that “we never met outside of the State Department in Washington ... we never encountered outside,” no visits were exchanged at the hotels (Interview 2). Because for polychronic people business can be conducted everywhere and there is no separation between the social and the business spheres, this negotiator considered meeting outside the State Department at that time as “normalization,” because business could be discussed there or relationships might become identified as normal; while within the State Department, business can be conducted anytime and anywhere.

In short, several incidents and processes in the Jordanian-Israeli negotiation reflected the characteristics of the polychronic and monochronic cultural backgrounds of the negotiators. At some points such differences created frustration and disagreements (for example the encounter between Haddadin and Kinarti); however, several negotiators agreed that some of these characteristics influenced the negotiation positively. For

example, the absence of agenda and agreements reduced the pressure on the negotiators; while the flexibility of time contributed for building the human relationship.<sup>63</sup>

### Six Roles for Culture

To go back to the initial discussion on how culture influenced the negotiators and the negotiation process; scholars argued that culture influence the negotiators' interests, priorities, and strategies (Brett 2001, 6). The cultural values affect the negotiator's perception on what are the issues that are more important or less important; the cultural norms state the appropriate behaviors to achieve such issues; and the cultural institutions are developed to promote and protect the norms and the values of the society (Brett 2001, 7). Therefore, in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation someone could predict that issues were prioritized upon the cultural values, and the negotiators' code of conduct was determined by their respective cultures, and all was reflected in the negotiation process.

When they were asked about their opinion if culture affected them or the negotiation in a way or another, the eight interviewees agreed about the importance of culture during the whole negotiation process, however, their statements reflected different

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<sup>63</sup> The researcher encounters with the negotiators to schedule the interviews for this research indeed reflected this cultural dimension. The researcher scheduled his meetings with the Israeli negotiators on an average of 3 to 4 weeks in advance. In trying to schedule the meetings with the Jordanian negotiators, whom are all elite politicians (two former prime ministers, a former minister, a retired general and currently a director of a center, and a high rank diplomat), none gave an exact appointment until one or two days ahead. When the researcher called the Jordanian former negotiators and indicated that he was calling from Washington D.C. and that he will be in Amman for certain three to four days, all those in Amman answered the same: "once you arrive in Amman, call me and I will see you for sure." Upon the arrival to Amman the researcher called the interviewees and all agreed (in a very flexible and informal way) to meet either in the next day or the day after, in one case it was possible to meet in the same day. On the issue of space, while the Israeli negotiators were interviewed in an office, in the lobby of a hotel, or through a phone call to the office; the Jordanians were interviewed, in offices as well as homes. Finally, on the issue of interaction with several people at the same time, several Jordanian negotiators had to take phone calls during our interview and in one case we had to stop the interview for approximately 30 minutes because an official guest arrived and wanted to see the interviewee.

levels of enthusiasm about culture. The negotiators were asked questions such as: do you think culture influenced the negotiation/ the negotiators, or do you think the negotiators' culture was present, and so on. Their answers varied between "yes of course"; "yes definitely"; "culture was everywhere"; "I think this is all has to do with culture"; and "it is an important element" or it is important to know about the other side's culture – other statements were extracted from the longer answers to the comprehensive questions.

Nevertheless, while analyzing the data that was extracted from the questions related to the role of culture, several patterns and conclusions came at hand that reflected several ways by which culture influenced the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation:

**First**, *culture influenced how the negotiators perceived the negotiation as whole.*

For example, while some perceived the negotiation as a national duty (Interview 1, 2, and 4), another saw it as a career opportunity (Interview 5); however, one of the Jordanian negotiators saw it challenging for his traditions and cultural values. The well trained and well experienced Jordanian negotiator expressed the feelings he had when he started negotiating with the Israelis, he explained:

There was a feeling of bewilderment – what the heck am I doing here? Is it true that I am breaking all these taboos that I was raised not to break? So you feel as you are sitting in the glass house, you do not know when someone is going to throw a stone and shatter it all over your head and honestly, I described the feeling when Danny Rothschild was sitting in front of me ... I used to hear about him and I could not see him. I swear I could see through him, I could see the wall behind him ... It was not an easy feeling. Suddenly, all the heritage you are raised to respect and take for granted is suddenly challenged and it crosses through your head and it tells you what the heck are you doing;

are you sure you are doing the right thing here? That is why we used to do for each other mock trials. I did that on purpose. We used to sit as a delegation and say let us assume we go back home and we are put on trial for treason ... in order to siphon off the feeling of tension and at the beginning they did not like the game but when I tried it once, two, three times joking, suddenly more people became involved. (Interview 3).

In the latter case, the local culture played a role in determining the perceptions of the negotiator toward the negotiation. It was not part of the Jordanian generic culture to hate negotiation, but it was the specific Jordanian culture toward Israel, the negotiator's main challenge was related to breaking the societal "taboos" and "the heritage" he was raised not to break.

**Second,** *culture and cultural values inspired the negotiators' behavior as well as their communication style.* On contrary to the earlier testimony where culture appeared as a psychological barrier, for several other negotiators, the cultural values motivated their participation and inspired their positive attitude and behavior. Some of the negotiators felt they have a larger mission than achieving the objectives that are written on the agenda. The Jordanian negotiator stated, "Especially they did not know us, I mean except for war and we did not know them except for war. Of course we would like them to see the human Arab" (Interview 5). Here the Jordanian negotiator felt his task was not only to present his case that was related to the disputed issues, but also the larger context, his human side – his culture. When he was asked about his feelings as a Jordanian negotiating with Israelis, and if his cultural background influenced the way he communicated with them, the senior Jordanian negotiator answered: "I think this is all has to do with the culture, even the Islamic if you want to go deep into this [translated

from Arabic: when the Prophet said if someone greeted you, answer with a better one, he did not say only to Muslims ... also in the Qur'an, 'And if you had been rude and harsh in heart, they would have disbanded from about you' (The Qur'an 3:159); he was talking to the people; Allah said O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you (The Qur'an 49:13); he did not say the Muslim or another]. So this is the Islamic culture, respect ... (Interview 2).

Another Jordanian negotiator agreed that the way by which his fellow Jordanian negotiators dealt with the Israelis "was a reflection of our [the Jordanian] habits and traditions." He added, "Of course our habits of generosity, hospitality were at its peak" (Interview 4). The Jordanian negotiators here emphasized that their cultural and religious heritage defined, or at least inspired, their behavior with their counterpart, rather than being inspired by any other diplomatic protocol.

**Third**, *culture was used as a strategy or a political maneuver*. The senior Jordanian negotiator who agreed that culture had a significant role in the negotiation suggested that culture was also used as "a political maneuver" (Interview 2). He explained while commenting on an encounter with Rubinstein:

[Rubinstein] was religious, very religious ... he started to talk about biblical issues to tell me that okay we can deal with Jordan, and on the Palestinian side it is very much difficult because Judea and Samaria ... So I told him, if you want to go biblical, I will go Qur'anic. And then we will never ever get out of this room. This is not a religious process; this is completely a political process. And in politics, everything is possible by the end, but in religion, no. Put religion aside, please. Do not mention the bible. I will mention something more powerful than the bible which is the Qu'ran. (Interview 2).

In the latter incident, the Jordanian negotiator explained how culture and religion could be used for political gains. In other words, the way culture was used in this particular case as a strategy, rather than an enabler.

**Fourth**, *culture* did not only influence the negotiators' attitude and behavior, but actually *provided solutions and mechanisms in solving disputes*. When he was asked about an incident where culture worked as an enabler to solve a challenge during the negotiation, the senior Jordanian negotiator recalled an incident where a serious disagreement occurred between the two parties over defining the Jordanian-Israeli borders in the south – in the desert of Wadi Araba; actually, the dispute over the borders in the south, at a certain stage threatened the whole negotiation. The Jordanian negotiator explained that the only document was available about the borders was from the British files – the Transjordan borders. The document described the borders very vaguely between Palestine and Transjordan mandates – it said through the middle of the Valley. The Jordanian negotiator continued, so there was no clear international border, it was a serious problem, and at a certain point an Israeli made a comment and “I left, I said finished, no more talk. I said this is very rude; the Jordan valley is a disputed land?” The story goes until Rubinstein suggested, ““ok the bottom of the valley”; I said how do you define the bottom of this valley? He said ... ‘we know that between these two walls in the middle that is the middle.’” The Jordanian negotiator continued, “So we measured from the top of the mountains in the East and the West and put it down. When we made a study, we have to give them ... something more than it should.” So it was a serious problem for us, so we suggested and agreed with them to determine the middle of the valley according to how the Bedouins determine the bottom of the valley, for us, “where

the water used to run through the valley ... this is how we recognize it,” (Interview 1); “which is the deepest point in the Wadi Araba” (Interview 2). The two parties agreed and this is how the problem over the borders was solved. Such incident provided an example on how culture and traditions contributed to solve serious matters – as serious as the borders.

**Fifth,** *culture contributed in creating the good and friendly negotiation environment.* Another Jordanian negotiator when he was asked if culture influenced the style of the negotiators or “everybody acted professionally?” He answered, “At the end of the day, we all wanted to be professional, but that does not mean that you cannot sugarcoat it” (Interview 3). In other words, culture can contribute in sugarcoating and easing the negotiation. The Israeli senior negotiator agreed when he said, “I think with the Jordanians it was the most, but also with the Lebanese I should say, the most open ... the idea of humor in the negotiations, I am a great fan of humor and with the Jordanians many of them had a good sense of humor and we could solve many [problems], at least improve the atmosphere by the sense of humor” (Interview 6). The Jordanian negotiator agreed when he said, “the sense of humor that was used was good in a way that it helped facilitate ideas, but at the same time helped improve atmospherics when things were not going very well” (Interview 3). Jordanians in general they love humor, and jokes are basically a form of high-context communication in its nature, they are often used to convey indirect messages – further explanation on this issue was provided in the section about low- and high-context communication (section 9.3).

**Sixth,** *learning and respecting the other side’s culture and traditions contributed for building trust and in transforming the relationship from the formal to the human.* The



Jordanian negotiator argued that the disagreements over the issues being negotiated could be “overcome ... by the personal respect between each other” (Interview 2). Another negotiator emphasized that “the personal element is important ... to get trust because you cannot always as negotiators continue to build on the premise of not trusting the other, you have to be careful ... there has to be an element of trust otherwise there won’t be compromise at the end” (Interview 5). However, the question to be asked was culture able to contribute for such respect and trust among the two sides?

Beside what was illustrated in the second point from this section, there was a common agreement between the interviewees that learning about and engaging with the counterpart through culture was an advantage that contributed to the negotiation success. The Jordanian negotiator shared his views on the importance of communication on the cultural level and said, “Once, I thought through my reading that this person is a religious orthodox Jewish or from a certain sect ... but when I sat down, met and talked to him, not for a day or a year, but for a long time, my view towards them has been changed ...” He explained further, “geographically we and Israel are near, whereas mentally we are very far from each other. We still do not know them. I always stress that in my talks and negotiations. We should know each other more than this. As you know more about the other, you get closer to each other. On the contrary, when you still ignorant of the others, you cannot establish a strong relation with him. Therefore building trust is of much more importance and cannot be built through TV or books we read, but it is done through talks and living peacefully” (Interview 4). He added, “Even in negotiations; especially the military ones; when the prayer is about to be, we look at our watches for time. Their leader [the Israeli] stops the meeting for prayer and he defined a special place for us to

pray. They always insisted to take us to the Al Aqsa Mosque when we go to Jerusalem. They know that Al Aqsa is very important to us (Interview 4). In other words, even diplomats should connect with each other culturally; engage personally rather than just learning from books and reports.

When he was asked, about whether being well trained in diplomacy, was enough for conducting successful negotiation? The Jordanian negotiator answered, “I am diplomatically trained but not culturally, it is an obstacle. Even in attitudes and behaviors, I may do something of good intention and they do not understand thinking it deliberate, so it makes a problem. Therefore understanding and being aware of the others culture is vital before dealing with him. If you do not know their culture, you may acquire them through experience and meetings” (Interview 4). He added later:

I have lots of situations [about cultural misunderstandings], not only one. When we met religious negotiators – we know that the religious ones do not eat meat with milk – we knew that these matters are complicated. I remember that one of them told us that he brings his food with him. But if you have fifty or sixty persons you would better prepare yourself. The times of their prayers, the places to pray, the tools they use – some put oil on their hands; others put something on their fingers and so on – we were ignorant of all of these things. But after dealing with them we came to know that these are some points of holy ideas. Therefore the picture became clear in front of us. Being ignorant of culture at some matters makes you question yourself: this person is a professor at a university; what is he doing, he is not a general person from streets. ... But because of knowledge and long experience we could overcome lots of these problems that may disturb the meetings. (Interview 4).

The Israeli senior negotiator agreed with his counterpart, when he was asked about the importance of culture, he answered:

I personally think that knowing the other side, understanding their culture, understanding their manners and then respecting them was an important part of our work. I think if you read Dr Majali’s memoir ... he deals with these issues, with our relationship. I have always felt that, personally I know Arabic and I like Arabic culture, I read the Quran, I read Arabic literature so I am very sympathetic

to it and respectful to it and it was helpful in the negotiations but also on the humane side, or the personal side when you work with people and you show respect to their religion, culture, language and so on, I think it helps mainly in despite its nice humane venue, and it helps us in creating confidence. (Interview 6).

He expressed, as an example, how nice it was when Prince Hassan addressed them in the Hebrew language, he emphasized, “it was very pleasant from our point of view” that he knew our language (Interview 6). He explained further by stating that:

it is a question of respect and of professionalism that you study the history of the other side and you respect it and I think the Jordanians, King Hussein, bless his memory, was very polite, very cultured ... personally I think ... you have to try to see how you deal with the other side, I mean, when you talk to somebody you have to know his family, his background, his ideas of course, ... I think it makes you feel better when you for instance, the past prime minister of Jordan, Al Khasawneh, he was a negotiator and legal advisor and he was always culturally interested in the poetry ... And it was always interesting to talk about it to see what people, where people take their inspiration from (Interview 6).

On a final note and as a follow up question, the senior Israeli negotiator was asked if he agreed that the more experienced the negotiators are, the less the cultural present in the negotiation; he replied, “I think it is always present” (Interview 6). When he was asked to provide further explanation, he said, “of course everybody has their interests, their needs and their goals ... I see culture not as a means or vehicle but also as a virtue by itself. I respect you not because I need something from you but because I respect you as a human being and as a representative [of] another country and so, but it is also helpful [considering culture] because it builds trusts, it builds confidence if they see that ... you respect where they come from and what they are representing. I have no doubts that it helps ... my view is that it is a virtue by itself” (Interview 6). Another Israeli negotiator agreed and embraced the Jordanian-Israeli track because of the trust that was built immediately, he said, with “the Jordanian delegation we were not looking every morning

where is the hidden agenda ... With the Palestinians every word that they brought we had to think what is the hidden agenda, what do they mean ... and I think that is part of culture, part of the way they were brought up” (Interview 7). In short, culture in the Jordanian-Israeli negotiation was manifested in different ways and influenced different elements in the negotiation; it influenced the negotiator’s perception of the negotiation itself, it also influenced his behavior toward the other positively, it contributed to the pleasant atmosphere that in result contributed to the trust that evolved among the two parties, it also was used as a tactical or political maneuver in some cases, and finally it provided creative solutions for disputes.

### Conclusion

There is no question that the influence and role of culture in international negotiation is a debatable issue. However, this research is meant to challenge the skeptic’s views as well as provide examples on how culture influences the negotiators and the negotiation through analyzing the case of the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation. This research does not claim that culture influence international negotiation in the same way and at the same level in every international negotiation case. However, it showed how culture influenced the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation in particular. Nevertheless, the researcher claims that many of the findings could be considered as good practices to be considered in future negotiations.

In conclusion, the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation showed that negotiators are selected upon different criteria across cultures; negotiations are not always conducted between diplomats; and most of all, being a well-trained diplomat or negotiator means to

know how to invest the cultural backgrounds of all the negotiators involved positively – employing culture as an enabler rather than avoiding culture. Indeed the Jordanian-Israeli case showed that the professional culture theory could be valid in some professions, such as military; but it was not necessarily valid for other professions, such as politicians, or even more technical professions, like water experts. In short, the common diplomatic culture argument was not applicable for the Jordanian-Israeli case, because the negotiators selected were not diplomats or at least they were not selected upon the criteria of experience in diplomacy and negotiation.

The second conclusion was that culture influenced the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation in different ways and at different levels. It influenced the negotiators' perception of the whole negotiation, some saw the negotiation as challenging for their entire heritage because negotiation by itself was perceived as normalization, as a relationship rather than substance or issues being negotiated. The culture also influenced the negotiators' attitude and behavior; several negotiators indicated that they dealt with the other party with respect because this how their own traditions and culture taught them to behave toward strangers, and even enemies. Culture also influenced the negotiation atmosphere; humor and indirect confrontations through metaphors provided a pleasant atmosphere during the negotiation. All the interviewed negotiators indicated that the pleasant atmosphere and the connection on the personal level helped in overcoming many obstacles as well as it transformed the relationship from the formal to the human. There were also some attempts to use culture in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation as a political maneuver or a strategy, however, the incident was quoted in this research showed that the relationship and trust across the two parties alienated such attempts.

Finally, culture in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation also provided solutions to disputes, at least in the border case that was discussed earlier.

In sum, culture in the Jordanian-Israeli peace negotiation acted as an enabler rather than an obstacle; it contributed to the success of the negotiation. One cannot claim that culture was the main reason, but indeed it was an important one. Several negotiators indicated that learning and respecting their counterpart cultures contributed for a better atmosphere. Good will gestures as simple as *what to provide for the negotiators at breakfast* indeed might influence the relationship as well as the whole atmosphere of the negotiation.

In a last note, the researcher understand the limitations of this research and its methodology and does recommend expanding this research by using the same case-study but with involving more subjects – more data and interviews; or to include another case-study and apply a comparison between the two cases. The researcher also understand the limitations of the national culture dimensions index that was made by Hofstede over three decades ago; the researcher suggests an updated research to be conducted among diplomats across different nations.

## APPENDIX A

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Background

What is your educational and professional background?

Where did you receive your education?

How do you identify yourself regarding, religion, ethnicity, and culture?

More elaboration on what that means to you?

Do you consider yourself traditional regarding your own culture?

Tell me more about your culture? How do you find yourself in that?

What role you had in the Jordanian/Israeli government before/when the negotiation started?

#### Negotiation

How you have been selected to be on the negotiation team?

How did you feel about that?

How did you feel about meeting the other side?

Did you have any expectations or impressions?

What was your role, and position in the negotiation?

How was your relationship with the rest of the team?

How was the relationship across ranks and professions?

How you made decisions within your delegation?

How did you solve disagreements within your delegation?

How did you prepare for meetings across the table?

Do you have a negotiation style? (tell me about it?)

How do you describe your team regarding the following:

- Organization:
- Relationships:
- Proficiency:
- Preparation:
- Communication:
- Discipline:
- Experience:
- Politeness:
- Directness/indirectness:
- Openness:
- Friendliness:
- Appearance:
- Decision-Making:
- Diversity:
- Authority:
- Punctuality:
- Respect:
- Conflicts / Disagreements:



What do you think about the other team regarding the earlier points?

### Culture

What part of your culture do you always carry with you?

How does it affect you? Examples!

Did you feel it present during the negotiation? Examples!

What was your perception of the other side's culture?

Was it present in them?

What values from your culture do you carry with you?

Was it present in the negotiation? How?

What values you felt were in conflict with other side? How did you overcome it?

### Culture and Negotiation

Describe your style of negotiation?

Describe their style of negotiation?

Did some of the actions of the other side confirm any of your expectations about their culture or their values?

Do you think your culture was present/ influenced your style of negotiation? Examples!

Do you think the other side's culture was present in the negotiation? Examples!

Did you feel that the other side care about details was too much?

Did they care about wordings? Can you give me some examples that you felt it was too much/ or they were careless?

How was the interaction with the other side?

Did you feel any of the actions of the other side were rude?

Any incidents of misunderstandings? Why do you think it happened?

Any incidents that you felt funny or strange?

Was the communication with the other side formal or informal?

Did you call each other with your first names? Was it strange? You did the same among your team?

### Closing

For how long you have been a diplomat / politician before the negotiation?

Do you feel in your style of communication that you are closer to the other side than your own people?

Can you share with me any incident that you believe culture was the engine behind it?

Do you think the process of the negotiation might have looked different?

Do you think the outcome of the negotiation might have looked different?

Do you think the cultural background of the negotiators (you/ the other side) influenced the negotiators' style? Examples!

Did it influence the negotiation process? Examples!

Did it influence the negotiation outcome? Examples!

Would you like to add something?

## APPENDIX B

### LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Interview 1 – Former Jordanian Prime Minister and member of the Jordanian negotiation team. Interviewed in person by author in Amman-Jordan on 11 March 2012.

Interview 2 – Former Jordanian Prime Minister and member of the Jordanian negotiation team (appointed as an Ambassador several years after the negotiations). Interviewed in person by author in Amman-Jordan on 15 March 2012.

Interview 3 – Former Jordanian Minister and member of the Jordanian negotiation team. Interviewed in person by author in Amman-Jordan on 15 March 2012.

Interview 4 – Retired General from the Jordanian Army and member of the Jordanian negotiation team. Currently is the director of a peace center. Interviewed in person by author in Amman-Jordan on 15 March 2012.

Interview 5 – Member of the Jordanian negotiation team and currently a senior Jordanian diplomat. Interviewed in person by author in Washington, D.C. on 24 February 2012.

Interview 6 – Member of the Israeli negotiation team and currently a Supreme Judge. Interviewed via phone by author in West Jerusalem-Israel on 04 March 2012.

Interview 7 – Reserved General in the Israeli Army and member of the Israeli negotiation team and currently a director for an institute for strategic studies. Interviewed in person by author in Tel Aviv-Israel on 13 March 2012.

Interview 8 – Reserved General in the Israeli Army and member of the Israeli negotiation team and currently a director for an institute for strategic studies. Interviewed in person by author in Tel Aviv-Israel on 13 March 2012.

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