

# The role of the Great Arab Revolt in shaping Jordanian national identity

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## ABSTRACT

The Arab peoples' struggle for independence and opposition to Ottoman rule began with the Great Arab Revolt. It helped Jordan achieve national sovereignty, fortify shared belonging, and shape its national identity. Deconstructing and analyzing how the uprising shaped Jordanian national consciousness and strengthened Arab and Jordanian identity are the goals of this study. The causes of its eruption, the influence of its leaders, its tactics, and its political and social fallout are all examined in this study. The study used an analytical historical methodology, examining records, historical sources, and earlier research while examining the events' context and changes. In addition to laying the groundwork for the process of creating a Jordanian national identity through resistance symbols, guiding collective awareness toward independence, and reaffirming the historical connections between the Jordanian people and their liberation movement, the results showed that the Great Arab Revolt successfully strengthened the sense of Arab unity. It also helped to facilitate political interaction and provide a foundation for popular resistance. An essential historical legacy in the development of Jordanian national identity and the fortification of its unity was the Great Arab Revolt, a crucial event that directly aided in the consolidation of the notion of Jordanian national identity.

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## 1. Introduction

One of the key ideas that goes into creating a state's political and social entity is national identity. It shapes the communal consciousness that articulates the present and the future and establishes a common sense of belonging. The history of the Arab world emphasizes the significance of researching national identity, especially in light of the national liberation revolutions that were instrumental in changing the political and social climate and establishing a national identity founded on commonalities in language, history, values, and national identity [1].

Given this, the Great Arab Revolt is a significant event in both Arab and Jordanian history. It was more than just a revolt against Ottoman rule; it was a rebirth of the Arab nation, ushering in a new age of unity and national consciousness. In addition to bringing about significant political and cultural changes, the revolution came to represent defiance and self-reliance. Given that Jordan was a part of the geography of Arab resistance and struggle, it also helped Jordanians feel more a part of the Arab community and their national identity [2].

Looking at the literature and earlier research, it seems that the study is lacking in a thorough examination of how the Great Arab Revolt, in particular, shaped Jordanian national identity outside of the broader settings of Arab emancipation. To connect the historical roots of the uprising to the cultural and social elements that developed in Jordan both during and after the uprising, this gap is required [3]. Therefore, by examining historical circumstances, the role played by its leaders, and the tactics they employed, this study seeks to shed light on how the Great Arab Revolt influenced Jordanian national identity. It also examines how this uprising has continued to impact national consciousness and how it has influenced the development of the contemporary state. In order to show that the uprising was not just a fleeting incident but rather a positive process that greatly consolidated the characteristics of Jordanian national identity and its close ties to resistance and independence, the research uses an analytical methodology that draws on historical sources and pertinent documents.

## 2. Historical Background of the Great Arab Revolt

### 2.1. Political and Security Conditions Before the Revolt

The years preceding the Great Arab Revolt and its significant changes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were a time of stress and instability in the Arab world. The Ottoman Empire relied heavily on its military bureaucracy to rule the area, and it frequently encountered opposition from European nations looking to increase their sway there, particularly during World War I. In many parts of the Levant, the social and political environment was undermined by Ottoman rulers who enforced rigorous administrative organization, repressive policies, and control over key towns [4].

Security conditions were also precarious because of the deteriorating relations between the central government and the local clans and tribes, which occasionally broke into disloyalty or insurrection, particularly after Ottoman reforms did not satisfy the local populace's expectations. A climate of continuous stress and difficulties was added to the general environment when some regions, like as Transjordan, stabilized outside of direct Ottoman rule, but this was inadequate to guarantee long-term stability [5].



## **2.2. Causes of the Great Arab Revolt: Ottoman Conditions, Arab Dreams, and National Motives**

One of the main causes of the uprising was the Ottoman condition. The latter years of Ottoman authority were characterized by a number of reforms and forced centralization tactics that frequently caused public unhappiness, especially because of the wars the Sultanate inflicted on its subjects and the looting of the resources of the Arab world. A sense of social and political dissatisfaction crystallized as a result of these measures.

Furthermore, Arab aspirations to create a distinct, autonomous Arab unity, topped by a state that stretched from the Gulf to the Atlantic and was governed by a highly centralized Arab leadership, had started to take shape. With the rise of Arab nationalism, which was advocated by Arab leaders and intellectuals and called for the abolition of Ottoman hegemony and the creation of a sense of collective Arab belonging, this was bolstered by a consciousness that sought to restore Arab glory and rebuild an identity rooted in ancient Arab history [6].

The rise of Arab leaders—particularly Sharif Hussein bin Ali—who possessed religious and political prestige and had the distinct objectives of freeing the Arabs from Ottoman rule and elevating the Hashemite family's prominence served as a symbol of nationalist motivations. Other leaders also actively participated in the revolutionary process because they wanted to fortify Arab national identity and attain independence [7].

## **2.3. Leaders and Concerned Parties**

Important individuals came to prominence in the pre-revolutionary era, such as Sharif Hussein bin Ali, the Hashemites' leader in Mecca. With the backing of Britain and the West in general, he proclaimed himself the head of the Arab opposition to Ottoman rule in order to fulfill his religious and national goals. In order to attain Arab independence and unity, Sharif Hussein assembled a group of Arab academics and statesmen, as well as a number of tribe and clan leaders, to form a leadership body [8].

Among the most significant participants were the Arab nationalist forces, which included the Prophet's family, tribes, and intellectuals. With an emphasis on mobilizing the Arab population in the arenas of resistance and striving to coordinate efforts to support the revolution and raise national awareness, they set shared objectives in opposing Ottoman rule and uniting forces against future colonizers, thereby promoting national identity and strengthening the aspirations of establishing an independent Arab state [9].

## **3. The Revolution's Goals and Its Impact on Jordan**

An important turning point in the history of the modern Arab nation was the Great Arab Revolt. It was a well-articulated strategic endeavor that sought to transform the country's national character and create a political and social framework that reflected Arab aspirations for independence and freedom, rather than only being a political resistance movement against Ottoman control. Therefore, a thorough and in-depth examination of the nature of these objectives, how they influenced the development of Jordanian national identity, and how they strengthened the ties between the broader Arab struggle and Jordan's particular interests is necessary to comprehend the revolution's objectives and their direct effects on Jordan [10].

### **3.1. The Revolution's Main Goal: Liberating the Arab Nation from Ottoman Supremacy**

The Great Arab Revolt's ultimate objective was to lay the groundwork for the restoration of the Arab nation's historical and cultural standing as well as the freedom of the occupied Arab areas from Ottoman rule. One of the main driving forces behind the revolutionaries' continuous fight was their determination to restore the Arabs' historical rights and cultural standing. This yearning is a result of the realization that the Arab spirit was stripped of its constituent elements and its cultural identity was marginalized as a result of centuries of Ottoman domination [11]. In order to achieve unification and consolidation among the Arab areas and allow all Arab societies to live freely and without colonial restraints, the revolution was a profound national response that called for the creation of an independent Arab state that was marked by sovereignty and dignity. As a result, the notion that Arab unity and the restoration of the old Arab civilization's covenant depend on the liberation of the Arab homeland. As part of the broader battle, this bolstered the sense of national belonging and was closely associated with the formation of Jordanian national identity [12].

### **3.2. The Revolution's Impact on Igniting Resistance in the Eastern Regions of Jordan**

The areas that made up Transjordan were directly affected by the Great Arab Revolt from the beginning, as they became key hubs for resistance and the fight against Ottoman rule. The area was strategically significant geographically because it provided the Ottoman occupation forces with positions and routes. In these areas, violent conflict and a spirit of resistance thrived, along with a sense of national identity. This led to a new understanding that opposing occupation was a social activity that strengthened a shared Arab identity and helped to establish Jordanian national identity rather than just a one-time deed. Realizing that resistance connected them to the larger objectives of liberation, Jordanian tribes and clans actively supported the revolution. This contributed to the strengthening of the idea that Jordan was a key player in the Arab struggle and that its resistance was part of a larger Arab mission to attain freedom and independence rather than just a local or tribal battle [13].

### **3.3. The close connection between the revolution and Arab identity, and efforts to strengthen national sentiment in Jordan**

One of the primary forces behind the development of a more cohesive Arab identity was the Great Arab Revolt. It served as a catalyst for reaffirming a national identity that goes beyond tribal or sectarian ties and was crucial in solidifying the idea of a coherent nation that was united against colonialism. Realizing that a sizable section of Jordanians were actively supporting the shared Arab cause was made possible by the revolution. The construction of a collective consciousness that sees resistance to occupation as a means of enhancing the status of the homeland and the nation later cemented this. The feeling of Arab identity, which was reinforced during the revolution, increased both individual and collective consciousness and helped to create a common self-image that goes beyond conventional boundaries and concentrates on creating a free and independent future for Jordan. This future validates the ongoing fight to create a sovereign state that blends national identity with great Arab principles and embodies the spirit of national mobilization [14].

The Great Arab Revolt's objectives were not just catchphrases; rather, they were well-defined and essential plans that helped to drastically alter Jordan's national identity concept, fortify the ties of resistance, and achieve the spirit of Arab struggle—which is founded on a shared destiny and purpose. By establishing a stage of full independence and elevating the ideals of resistance and



belonging, these objectives contributed to the formation of a new collective consciousness that made Jordan an essential component of the larger Arab nation and a significant player in its political and social structure [15].

#### 4. The Revolution's Contributions to Strengthening Jordanian National Identity

Jordan's sense of national identity was shaped and reinforced in large part by the Great Arab Revolt. It marks an important turning point in the history of the area, emphasizing the cultural and social distinctiveness that set the Jordanian people apart and successfully fostering a sense of national identity and collective awareness [16].

Residents of Transjordan, in particular, actively participated in the resistance movement against Ottoman domination, making the territory a crucial component of the Great Arab Revolt. The historical ties between the uprising and Jordan were strengthened by the participation of local leaders and Jordanian tribes in aiding the uprising, whether by sending fighters or by giving the rebels food and intelligence. Jordan became an active and significant player in the Arab struggle as a result of this official engagement and the collaboration of the uprising's leaders. It was a major contributor to the revolution's momentum rather than just a spectator to the events. This strengthened the people's feeling of solidarity with the Arab national objective and, consequently, with an autonomous Jordanian national identity [17].

However, the Great Arab Revolt's symbols, such as Sharif Hussein bin Ali, and their support of Jordanians in spreading the national message were crucial in establishing the principles of resistance and national honor. As a representation of the revolution and the anti-colonial fight, Sharif Hussein inspired Jordanians and played a major role in bolstering their sense of pride and patriotism. Additionally, the Jordanian national figures mentioned throughout the uprising—such as revolutionaries, tribal sheikhs, and local leaders—helped to spread the ideals and principles of the struggle and solidify them as a component of the nation's culture, which helped to strengthen the country's identity and validate its moral standards.

Furthermore, the Arab revolutionaries' fight was not restricted to a particular elite; rather, it involved broad public involvement with Jordanian roots, as people from all walks of life joined the resistance to Ottoman occupation, whether through land defense or support activities. With the conviction that Jordan could mediate and decide Arab independence and develop the national identity represented by culture, history, language, and customs, this popular participation gave the concept of unity and belonging an internal national dimension [18].

The Jordanian people's collective consciousness underwent significant changes as a result of the revolution, which promoted sentiments of patriotism, pride in Arab identity, and an understanding of the need of cooperation and unity in accomplishing national objectives. The emergence of slogans expressing resistance and the fight for independence became ingrained in the collective memory and helped to shape Jordan's national identity as a cohesive set of social and cultural characteristics that bind the people together in support of a common cause. The revolution's significance as a turning point in contemporary Jordanian history was further cemented as the ideals of sacrifice, patriotism, and belonging became ingrained in the communal consciousness [19].

Through active involvement, symbols, and collective consciousness, the Great Arab Revolt not only advanced the objectives of liberty and independence but also directly aided in the strengthening and solidification of Jordanian national identity. They became essential parts of the Jordanian national fabric as a result of this significant influence on the conscience of the Jordanian people and the inculcation of a sense of Arab and Jordanian togetherness and belonging.

## 5. Strategic and Cultural Results and Impacts

Despite its difficulties, the Great Arab Revolt produced important political and strategic results as well as deep effects on Jordan's national identity and cultural fabric. These results successfully strengthened Jordan's standing in the Arab and regional arenas and laid the groundwork for the country's identity.

### 5.1. Political Outcomes Represented by the Declaration of the Mandate and the Formation of the State

The start of a new chapter in the political history of the region—the major powers' acceptance of the Arab peoples' right to self-determination—was one of the Great Arab Revolt's most notable political outcomes. A significant obstacle to the uprising and issues with establishing national identity resulted from the imposition of French and British mandates on a sizable portion of the Arab world following the conclusion of World War I and the accomplishment of certain national objectives. Notwithstanding the political difficulties they encountered, the uprising served to highlight the Arab people's determination to maintain their independence and sense of national identity, especially that of the Jordanians [20].

As a direct result of the revolutionary spirit and demands for unity and independence, the events that followed the revolution also led to the establishment of Jordanian state institutions, including the independent Jordanian Emirate. As the cornerstones of Jordanian national identity, the nation state, belonging, and land loyalty were strengthened, laying the groundwork for a sovereign state.

### 5.2. Developing National Awareness Through Educational Institutions and the Media

The revolution made significant investments in raising national consciousness through the media and educational institutions, emphasizing the necessity of creating curricula that emphasized Arab heritage, national culture, and the history of resistance. In order to inculcate a sense of nationalism in the minds of the younger generations, schools and cultural centers were constructed where they were taught the values of solidarity, belonging, and pride in Arab and Jordanian identity.

The press and radio in particular were crucial in spreading nationalist ideas and reminding people of the liberating role and accomplishments of the revolution. This united common attitudes toward the homeland and identity, helped create a sense of pride and belonging, and made the revolution and its objectives a part of the collective consciousness [21].

### 5.3. Establishing the Concept of National Unity and Resistance as Part of Identity

Among the most significant results of the revolution were the Jordanian people's trust in their national cause and the development of the idea of national unity, especially in light of resistance against colonialism and occupation. The fight for freedom and independence and resistance evolved into universal symbols that brought together diverse facets of society. The Jordanian



people's identity was shaped by their resistance to invaders, which also served as a key tenet in bolstering Arab pride and national pride.

Additionally, this resulted in the Jordanian people's solidarity with the revolutionaries and the spread of the idea of sacrifice for the homeland. As a result, they were more equipped to face external threats, maintain national unity, and foster devotion to their leadership. This had a direct impact on maintaining the national entity and increasing societal awareness [22].

As a result, the Great Arab Revolt's political and cultural effects saw a notable evolution in the creation of Jordan's national identity, including independence proclamations, the bolstering of national consciousness via media and educational institutions, and the solidification of the ideas of resistance and unity. The revolution was a genuine beginning point for uniting the elements of the Jordanian state and bolstering its Arab and regional presence because of these outcomes, which significantly contributed to the development of a unified framework for national identity and highlighted the significance of cooperative struggle and combat.

## 6. Challenges and Criticisms

The Great Arab Revolt had a significant influence on the formation of Jordanian national identity, but it also encountered many obstacles and criticisms that need to be examined in order to present a fair and impartial assessment of its significance. In addition to the critiques aimed at the core objectives of the revolution, these difficulties also have to do with the character of the time, the shifting internal balances, and the disputes within the parties.

### 6.1. Internal Challenges and Conflicts Between Tribes and Parties

Internal Arab society posed serious obstacles to the Great Arab Revolt, particularly in the areas it represented, such as eastern Jordan. The disagreements and conflicts between tribes and clans, which constituted a substantial portion of the social structure, were among the most important of these difficulties. Some tribes took neutral or even antagonistic stances because they disagreed with the revolution's objectives. Internal conflicts occurred, which occasionally threatened the stability of the rebellious areas as well as the resistance's cohesiveness.

Furthermore, the revolution was criticized internally by forces and political groups who were unhappy with the activities of the revolutionary leadership or who were trying to further their own local interests. This made coordination more difficult overall and occasionally caused national objectives and conflicting interests to overlap [23].

### 6.2. Criticisms Related to the Revolution's Direction and Ultimate Goals

The lucidity and practicality of the Great Arab Revolt's ultimate objectives are criticized, particularly in light of the political landscape's shifts brought about by external forces like the Balfour Declaration and the stances of the British and French, which weakened the revolution's initial goal of achieving Arab unity and complete independence.

Given the limited outcomes of the gains on the ground, some academics and politicians criticized the revolution for falling short of its objectives of liberation and unity. Given the distribution of power and influence following the war, concerns were expressed regarding the degree to which political and social justice was attained for the Arab peoples, particularly the Jordanian people.

Additionally, some thought that the revolution's leadership did not always have a clear vision for the future and was occasionally influenced by major and colonial powers, which resulted in unforeseen consequences and occasionally the surrender of short-term policies at the expense of longer-term national objectives [24].

### 6.3. Economic and Social Challenges After the Revolution

Declining economic and social conditions and their effects on support for revolutionary activities and the stability of freed areas were among the nation's most urgent post-revolutionary issues. War and instability caused living standards to drop and infrastructure to deteriorate, which weakened public support and fueled dissatisfaction or doubt about the efficacy of freedom and revolutions.

### 6.4. Critical Evaluation and Its Impact on the Historical Image of the Revolution

However, the presentation of the revolution as a key element in forming national identity is criticized by various historical research and evaluations. This is especially important considering that some scholars say that outside factors, like the mandate and international interference, cloud the revolution's goals and success. Due to outside influences and unreported internal struggles that shaped history, the role of the revolution is occasionally evaluated insufficiently.

Therefore, internal issues, intertribal and interparty conflicts, and criticisms of the Great Arab Revolt's direction and ultimate goals were among the most important factors that influenced its course and results, notwithstanding its accomplishments and its contribution to the strengthening of Jordanian national identity. Comprehending these obstacles is crucial for a thorough and equitable evaluation of the revolution's function as well as for determining the elements that influenced its growth or mitigated its effects, improving the capacity to apply its lessons going forward [25].

## 7. Conclusion

An examination of the Great Arab Revolt's influence on Jordanian national identity shows that it was a watershed in the history of the area, bringing with it a new sense of pride in a common Arab-Jordanian identity. The uprising's activities and leadership solidified national ideas and bolstered ties of belonging, which still influence contemporary Jordanian identity.

The study's findings show that the uprising was a cultural and social movement that resulted in significant shifts in the idea of belonging and collective consciousness rather than just being a military or political one. Nationalism and opposition to the occupier emerged as a recurring motif, reflecting the collective position of the people in the area, especially in eastern Jordan, which was crucial in bolstering and articulating the national struggle within the context of the Great Revolt.

Through its cultural legacy and the principles of resistance and belonging that still serve as the foundation of Jordanian national identity today, history attests to the fact that the Great Arab Revolt played a significant role in forming the country's characteristics.

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