The Regional Policy and Power Capabilities Of Jordan As a Small State

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This article deals with the foreign policy activities of Jordan as a small state with a special focus on the Middle Eastern region. The article explores the impacts of Jordan's "smallness," its lack of power capabilities in terms of foreign policy, and its relations with other states in the Middle East as well as with extra-regional powers such as the United States. It also focuses on Jordan's behaviour both within regional organisations, during regional conflicts, and its economic and military dependence on other (stronger) states. This article provides a critique of existing concepts and dominant criteria of small states and, subsequently, a new conceptual framework for analysing foreign policy behaviour of small states. On this basis, this work explains particular foreign policy activities of Jordan in light of its "smallness" or lack of (hard) power capabilities, respectively.

Keywords: *Jordan, small states, Middle East, soft power, human security, conflict mediation, King Hussein, King Abdullah II, foreign aid, dependence*

Introduction

The research of states´ foreign policy behaviour has been dominated by studies of great and superpowers which was caused, above all, by the long-term predominance of realism in International Relations and its strong belief that only these powerful actors matter because they shape the international system. This resulted in the perception of small states as passive, weak and vulnerable, and therefore not im-

portant actors in the world politics.[1] Since the 1960s and 1970s, more attention has been paid to the topic of the foreign policies of small states, though only a few valuable theoretical, and even fewer, empirical studies exist in the literature.

The principal goal of this work is to provide a critique of existing small state concepts and of some dominant criteria in particular. On the basis of new conceptual framework for analysing the behaviour of small states, certain foreign policy activities of Jordan, as a case study,—in the light of its "smallness" and lack of power capabilities—is explained. Moreover, particular aspects of Jordan's behaviour might provide better understandings the behaviour of small states (also called small powers or small nations) in general. This work argues that small states are not necessarily "passive" in international or regional politics but rather their material capabilities deficiency constrains many of their foreign policy activities. As compensation for this deficiency, they expand non-material capabilities (such as manoeuvrability, diplomacy skills and positive imaging).

Although the foreign policies of small states tend to be functionally and geographically limited (usually to the region they are part of), this does not imply a lack of activity. Small states lack required (material and human) resources to make a significant change in international politics, to pursue international issues by itself or to be able to deal with all international affairs and problems they are confronted by. For this reason, such states focus only on certain issue and geographic areas. This is best articulated by East who suggested that 'reduced organisational capacity in foreign affairs means that small states will be less active overall, and differentially active in various areas of policy.'[2] However, in the last few decades, membership in international organisations (both regional and international) and participation in international regimes enables them to influence regional and even global issues and to contribute in solving worldwide problems. Moreover, small states often engage in policies (generally known as soft power policies) appropriate for utilising its good reputation or diplomatic manoeuvring in order to counterbalance their insufficient (i. e. relatively small) hard power capabilities.

The case of Jordan illustrates common efforts of some small states to play an active role in international (particularly regional) politics even despite their "smallness" and lack of material resources, and hence hard power capabilities. These efforts are demonstrated using the case of Jordan's foreign policies based on vigorous and efficient diplomacy

and soft power policies (such as conflict mediation, support of peace, human security and Islamic values), rather than on material power resources.

The conceptual reflections as well as the presented case study intend to stimulate discussion of the future research agenda on foreign policy of small states and their position in international and regional systems. The work is divided into three parts: the first section establishes a conceptual framework for further research, the second section explains an impact of "smallness" on small states behaviour and the third section focuses on "smallness" of Jordan and its implications for Jordan´s policies and relations within the region of the Middle East and with extra-regional powers, such as the US.

Definitional Criteria of "Small State" in International Relations

The problem of a general lack of analytical instruments to identify and compare small states, and to differentiate small from other states starts with the substantial disagreement over definitional criteria of small state and continues with the absence of a consensual definition. This results in a situation where individual researchers or studies create a definition of their own. Despite a widespread belief that for research and analytical purposes a consensus-definition has to be agreed on, Maass maintains an alternative view: 'such fundamental disagreement over what makes a state small has actually benefited the area of small states by providing it with conceptual flexibility to match different research designs as well as the quite substantial variations among actual small states in the world.'[3]

Additionally, the possibility of developing a precise definition is barely feasible since there are no consensual definitions of "power" or "size" in International Relations. Besides, some authors are persuaded that no strict definition is needed and that 'the research on small states [...] is best characterised by an "I know one when I see it" approach to choosing its subjects of inquiry.'[4] The difficulty in defining small states is, for some scholars, a reason to suggest that the concept is entirely useless.[5] Rather than completely resigning from studying small states, it is more useful to advance a more flexible concept, one that may not be precise, but also not entirely vague either. Since policy experts devote great energies to developing suitable concepts to analyse foreign policies of regional, middle and great powers, there is no reason to re-

fuse to study small states. Most states in the world are small and therefore they should not be overlooked. As an integral part of international politics, small states have 'proven to be a useful tool for analysis.'[6]

Although there is a general agreement about the distinctiveness of small nations as a specific category of states, this consensus disappears when an issue of basic attributes of "smallness" is brought up. The dispute relates to the question whether quantitative (capabilities-oriented) or qualitative ("relational") criteria are the most convenient to define "smallness" of state.

"Smallness" Measured by Quantitative Criteria

Quantitative criteria relate mostly to geographical and demographic size (land area and population), economic and military strength (Gross National Product, GNP, and military expenditures), but also available natural resources. They are often used either separately but this results in ambiguous and confusing classification because states can be small in one respect, but large or powerful in another. Israel, regarding its territory and population, is a small, yet economically and militarily powerful state. Yet nuclear weapons transform it into a potential regional power with leverage over the regional security agenda. Similarly, the small oil Gulf monarchies have small populations and land areas, and are militarily dependent on stronger states however, they have enormous economic power. That is why it is necessary to combine as many criteria as possible in order to develop more accurate concept of state's size.

Moreover, individual criteria usually relate to other applied standards. Size of land area and especially population are primary and most frequently used characteristics because they often correlate with many other criteria, such as natural resource base, arable land and GNP, or military expenditures.[7] The larger the landmass the richer and more diverse natural resources and agricultural products might be. And retaining a numerous population might implicate higher incomes, larger market and bigger economy.[8] Such variables might be converted into considerable economic strength and thus also higher defence expenditures and military power which, in turn, can be transformed into political power and influence. Therefore, larger states are often more powerful than small states (however, not every large country is able to turn material capabilities into political influence). However, there are several, but very important exceptions such as large territory along with

small population (in the case of large sparsely populated or completely uninhabited areas like deserts or polar areas), small land area together with rich resources of raw materials (states with great reserves of strategic raw materials, such as oil) or a small population and economy along with extensive military power (re: the possession of nuclear weapons). Also the character (i.e. stability and conflict potential) of the region and sense of threat influence the amount of money state spends on armaments and then the amount of military expenditures does not have to correspond with size of economy (and the number of soldiers with the size of population).

The evident advantage of this approach is that the measurement of quantitative standards is easier and more exact and the resulting definition of size (i.e. "smallness") is of more permanent character. Nevertheless, it also implicitly requires delineation of a "borderline" between particular categories. Baehr aptly observes that '[o]nce the criteria are set out, the problem remains where to draw the line among [...] "small," "middle," and "very large."'[9] Some authors attempted to capture small states' distinctiveness from other categories by exactly drawn line,[10] yet the process of determining cut-offs of particular criteria of "smallness" is subjective. For example Vital's small state has a population of less than 10–15 million in the case of economically developed states and 20–30 million in the case of developing states.[11] According to others, small state's population is not larger than for example one or two million inhabitants (such state is rather considered a micro- or ministate). Similar problems accompany cut-offs determination in the case of all measurable criteria.

This work argues that conceptualising small states by means of exact figures of individual criteria is wrong in principle. Not only are the boundaries subjectively defined and there is no general consensus about any possible cut-offs but there are also too many exceptions which do not fit them and too many states which exceed given cut-offs only very slightly. Christmas-Moller clearly explains that the social (and thus also political) world is 'not organised in distinct groups but on a continuum with transition from one category to the next.'[12] It is also important not to exclude quantitative criteria completely since material capabilities and strength of a state are (more of less loosely) linked to state's power. Advocates of either group of criteria (or of single criterion) limit the scope of research since neither quantitative, nor qualitative standards are sufficient for explaining foreign policy behaviour. Rather, it is useful to combine different criteria because most of

them are interrelated, and only this way of conceptualisation embraces most aspects of "smallness."

"Smallness" Judged by Qualitative Criteria

The impact of state's size on its foreign policy is connected with relations with other states and with intra-regional and international affairs. Qualitative criteria based on power relations are, in essence, relative and hence "smallness" can be judged only in comparison with other states and in relation with particular issues (such as participation on global decision-making process, dependence on other states etc.). In contrast to quantitative standards, this perspective implies a possible change of "smallness" during a certain period of time.

The concept of power and power relations shifts the definition of small state from solely capabilities-based concept to another dimension—understanding state's size as an *(in)ability* (power, capacity) of a state to achieve intended goals, fulfil national interests, secure its demands and/or resist the demands of other states.[13] Hence, a small state is a state that does not have enough power to project its influence or to resist the projection of influence on it by other states. Therefore, they do not endanger regional and/or great powers but they are not perceived as potential strategic allies either. Hence they can be (and often are) excluded from the decision making process regarding global and also regional political issues. In the past, either the Concert of Europe, or later great and superpowers assumed the right to decide about important international issues and small nations could not participate in such decision-making.[14] This indicates that 'small states are necessarily [...] less important states in terms of power and influence'[15] within international politics characterised by power relations.

The (minor) projection of small state's power and influence applies to the relation with other (more and less powerful) states and hence to state's position within the regional and international system. Therefore, the geostrategic position must be taken into consideration—how large (and powerful) are neighbouring states and other states in particular region, and how the given state is ranked in the global size and power hierarchy of states. Simply, small states are affected by different surroundings and have to deal with certain problems since they are situated in different regions and border on different countries. Also Keohane confirms the importance of a state's status within regional and international systems when he suggests that 'a small power is

a state whose leaders consider that it can never, acting alone or in a small group, make a significant impact on the system.'[16] It does not possess enough power capabilities to become a (regional or international) hegemon and therefore has minor chance to shift the arrangement of power relations or to transform the system. Crucial is whether small state *recognises* and *accepts* its position and thereupon adjusts its foreign policy to the reality of international politics without any aspirations to its transformation. The way the state perceives itself and is perceived externally (by other states and powers) is also relevant for foreign policy analysis.

Together with the aforementioned, the matter of security is closely related; small states recognise security deficits (its own capabilities are not sufficient for guaranteeing its security) which state's representatives understand as unchangeable, and admit the need for external assistance from (i. e. dependence on) more powerful states or institutions in obtaining security.

Since we suggest to think within a relative framework and not subjectively constructed (although exact) boundaries, the outcome cannot be a precisely defined concept which would help to distinguish small states from others. On the contrary, it is necessary to focus on one particular state; how relatively large or small its population is, its landmass, economy, military and natural resources *vis-à-vis* neighbouring states and other states in the international system. These relative figures of quantitative criteria can provide a basis for exploring (power) relations of a given (small) state with others and its position within the international system. Merely this way of conceptualisation can adequately demonstrate how particular state is small, weak and insufficiently powerful, influential, and important in world politics.[17]

Regarding the creation of suitable analytical framework, first, it is necessary to use a complex set of standards in order to minimise possible exceptions and, at the same time, develop a relatively homogenous category of states different from large states. Second, attention should be aimed to *relative*, not absolute value of these individual criteria (evaluation of particular variables of the given state in relation to its specific position and surroundings, and to other states is needed). And third, measurable and qualitative standards should be combined, since including the term "power" into the concept of small state is essential for adequate analysis of (power) relations and hence foreign policy. Favouring physical characteristics and material resources ignores other important criteria, such as political power and ideological capabilities,

and cannot therefore express adequately the complexity of "smallness" of a state in world politics. The whole concept is meaningless, unless we take into consideration relations with other states or size of other states, respectively. "Smallness" simply exists and makes sense only *vis-à-vis* "largeness." That is why "relational" criteria, with regard to "power," are essential for the conceptualisation of small state.

The Impact of "Smallness" on Foreign Policy Behaviour

Each state's foreign policy is influenced by many factors (e. g. character of political regime, level of economic development, geography, political surroundings) and according to a general belief, also size and power has a certain impact on state's foreign policy behaviour. Therefore, small states have been studied as a distinctive group of states which behave in a certain way within the international system. "Smallness" and limited material capabilities might restrict autonomous execution of foreign policy. However, some authors are convinced that small states are capable of dealing with many problems they face despite their "smallness" and lack of power, as is explained in detail below.[18]

Small states exhibit a, generally, low level of participation in international affairs due to their limited political power and international importance which stems from their "smallness." Consequently, their foreign policy priorities and activities are usually limited both in geographical and functional terms; to their immediate surroundings (usually the region they are part of) and to a narrow range of foreign policy issues.

Limited power and ability (or inability) to implement a specific policy within the international system results in small states being unable to act as autonomously as great powers and are naturally afraid of unilateral behaviour of powerful states which can have a negative impact on them, yet they cannot prevent it. Therefore they support multilateralism in international relations, often through international institutions, and promote an observance of international law, norms and principles. This, along with preventive diplomacy serves as an instrument for conflict prevention—small states are generally too vulnerable which is why they try to avoid armed conflicts (especially with stronger nations). This leads also to the reluctance to use military force and the employment of non-military foreign policy instruments (such as diplomacy, economic incentives, cooperation etc.). Nevertheless, this does not mean they do not arm themselves. In many cases (often due to the

high instability of a region) states spend a high percentage of GNP on armaments to better ensure their security, or at least to strengthen their bargaining positions.

Despite certain security deficits and the inability of self-defence for long periods of time, small states are not absolutely helpless. They are often members of alliances which improve their defence capabilities considerably—at a relatively low cost—and guarantee defence in case of conflict. Their smallness and vulnerability can be advantageous for another reason as well: they can use it to gain more military and financial aid from great or regional powers. Prasad calls this efficient utilisation of weakness (smallness) as a "power of being powerless" which implies that even "being unimportant" is important for small states if they know how to use these skills effectively.[19] Obtaining help from wealthy and powerful states is considered to be a part of their manoeuvrability,[20] however donors demand, in return, political support and might use their aid as a leverage. Thus their significant impact on small states´ security and economic well-being (and, in consequence, foreign policy) makes these weaker states even more vulnerable. For example they often avoid policies and activities which could, as a result, alienate powerful states, including their donors (e. g. they choose to stay neutral in conflicts).

International and regional institutions enable small states to achieve some of their goals if they lack necessary material or other capabilities to do it by themselves. They retain the possibility to articulate and push through their interests (for instance thanks to the "one state, one vote" rule) and into better negotiating positions. For the purpose of achieving some common objectives, states with insufficient influence often create blocs within international organisations or like-minded groups in order to balance the superior position of powerful states (for example the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries in 1973-74 imposed an oil embargo on some Western states in order to improve their terms of oil trade at the expense of these powerful nations, and to "punish" some of them (primarily the US) for their support of Israel during the Yom Kippur War).[21] In addition, members of international organisations are formally equal; hence even small nations have the possibility to participate in international affairs, in creation of new international legal norms and in solving global issues. The acceptance of new international norms strengthens the security of small (military weak) states because norms restrict unilateral policies and the use of violence and military force by great powers. For these reasons, small

states are usually highly active within such structures.

As said, a state's political power and influence stems, to a certain degree, from its material resources. Nevertheless, a small state does not have to be limited in its foreign policy by the deficiency in material capabilities and strength ("hard power"); it can increase its influence by using soft dimensions of power. On this grounds, it pursues to balance the lack of hard power by using "soft power," a source of political and diplomatic capabilities, in order to strengthen its political power and influence, and thereby international importance (another question is if small states are able to, and actually do, translate their soft power into political gains). For example the Al Jazeera television network may be considered as a soft power instrument of Qatar which is a very small (though very rich) state who influences neighbouring societies and thus Middle Eastern affairs through modern media. By improving its reputation, credibility, image and external attractiveness, a state facilitates closer cooperation with more powerful states so that it obtains military and political support, economic aid or direct foreign investments.[22] The non-coercive policies of small states; these "attractive instruments of power,"[23] include, among others, the promotion of democracy, civil rights, freedom, human security and mediation services as a way of solving conflicts, diplomacy etc. Soft power policies are less expensive than the development of hard power capabilities; however their implementation can be a long-term activity which is why it requires domestic stability.

These general behaviour patterns of small states are ideal-typical; there might be exceptions because there are many factors (domestic and others) to be considered during the foreign policy decision-making process. Moreover, the changing international environment has a great impact on the overall possibilities of foreign policy behaviour.

The Foreign Policy of a Small State: The Case of Jordan

A quick look at the political map of the world and the Middle Eastern region gives an idea of the relative size of Jordan's land mass. With an estimated 89sqkms, Jordan is among the smallest states and territories in the international and regional system. This is also applicable to its small population size (6.5 million), and weak economy (GDP = 36.82 billion USD, GDP per capita is 5,900 USD) (see Table No. 1).[24] Jordan's demographic vulnerability stems not only from its population size, but also its composition because more than a half of total Jordanian in-

habitants are of Palestinian origin. For instance King Abdullah II has been criticised for being influenced by the US and Israel, respectively, who require Jordanians of Palestinian origin to be granted permanent residence in order to prevent their return to Palestinian territories.[25] The vulnerable economic condition is linked to a serious lack of natural resources (unlike the Persian Gulf monarchies, it has no oil and/or natural gas), chronic shortage of water and, due to vast infertile desert areas, has insufficient arable land which accounts just for 6% of the territory.[26] Moreover, the Jordanian economy has to deal with many other problems such as an increasing inflation rate, reduced economic growth, a high level of unemployment (especially among youth) and poverty. Due to its bleak economic situation, Jordan relies on foreign aid from rich oil producers in the Persian Gulf and some Western countries (mainly the US), and remittances from Jordanian workers abroad.

Table 1: Jordan's position within the international and regional systems regarding the size of its land area, population, economy and military

Size criterion	Jordan's position in the international system (total number of states and territories)	Jordan's position in the regional system (total number of states and territories)
Land Area	112th (251)	13th (20)
Population	105th (238)	13th (20)
Economy (GDP)	101st (226)	18th (20)
GDP per capita	139th (226)	14th (19)
Military (number of active troops)	45th (200)	10th (20)
Military expenditures	4th (172)	4th (19)

Source: table and ranking (from the largest to the smallest states) made by author, particular figures from: CIA Factbook, Country Comparison—Area, Population, GDP (purchasing power parity), GDP per capita, Military expenditures, available at: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/rankorder/rankorderguide.html#top> (accessed 2 May 2012); IISS (The International Institute for Strategic Studies) (2010), The Military Balance 2010, London: Routledge, pp. 164, 245–277, 462–468.

Jordan is surrounded by larger, more populous and economically stronger states engaged in mutual political and ideological disputes which placed Jordan into a position of a buffer state between current

or possible rivals (see Map 1). This, along with high instability in the region, conflicts and generally problematic relations results in high military expenditures (between 7–11% of GDP in last few years) and, compared to its population, relatively large army (100,500 active and 65,000 reserve troops) which is widely understood as well-trained, disciplined and professional.[27] However, these figures are dwarfed by neighbouring states; it borders on an alleged nuclear power (Israel) and also within the meaning of conventional weaponry and number of troops, many Middle Eastern countries greatly exceed the size of Jordanian military. As Mufti concludes, the obvious effect of this situation is Jordan's inability (i.e. insufficient capacity) 'to impose its will on any of its neighbours through military means, [and] to stand up on its own to a determined attack by any of them.'[28] It follows that Jordan seeks regional and extra-regional alliances and powerful allies.

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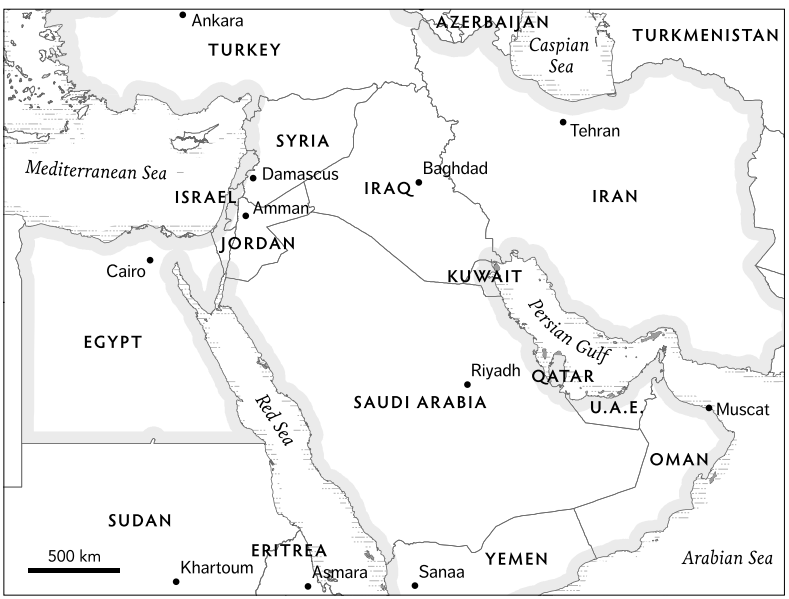

Map 1: Jordan in the Middle East

This is an interactive map. Go beyond the printed page, experience interactive features online, explore the Middle East in detail by following this link:

bit.ly/ZtcRxv

Or take a picture of this QR-code on your smart device.

Long-term economic problems and insufficient military capabilities led to Jordan's dependence on foreign aid in order to secure and maintain its defence capabilities and feasible economic and social programmes which, in turn, legitimises the Jordanian regime. Without assistance from abroad, the very survival of the Jordanian regime would be endangered.

Until the 1950s, Jordan's main protector and donor was the UK; former administrator of the earlier Emirate of Transjordan. In 1957, Jordanians demonstrated against remaining in the alliance with Britain on the basis of the Anglo-Jordanian Treaty (1948) which was regarded restricting the Kingdom's independence. The treaty guaranteed mutual assistance in war and £10 million GBP as an annual subsidy for Jordan.[29] After its termination, Britain ceased its financial support and withdrew its troops from Jordanian territory. Syria, Egypt and Saudi Arabia committed themselves to covering the lost revenues, though this promise went unfulfilled.

Financial and military provisions were ultimately made by the US. Even though Jordan was not included in the Eisenhower Doctrine, an anticommunist logic was deployed when the country faced domestic political crises in 1957 and 1958. Over the years Jordan demonstrated that it was a solid ally of the US and even tended to take a less-than-active position in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Such a policy direction assisted in maintaining the power status quo in the Hashemite Kingdom since the US indirectly—through a deterrence push—intervened in the aftermath of the so-called Black September (1970) to limit Syria's invasion of Jordan with Iraqi collusion. External support was also essential for preventing the spread of transnational ideologies, particularly pan-Arabism, a.k.a. Nasserism. Jordan faced a series of internal crises and tensions since its post-WWII founding though there was a clear spike in the 1950s–1970s. This was largely due to the manner in which Nasser was reaching for regional hegemony; inspiring armed internal opposition groups in Jordan. For this reason, Jordan entered into alliances with like-minded, relatively conservative monarchical regimes from the Persian Gulf in order to balance the threat posed by rival revolutionary republics. Saudi Arabia became Jordan's closest ally and was used to deter Egyptian pan-Arabism from taking root.

Iraq was also prioritised and quickly emerged as Jordan's strategic partner in security and economic affairs. Thanks to the country's rich hydrocarbon resources, Iraq was able to supply Jordan with oil at considerably reduced prices. As expected, this produced a high level of dependency of Jordan on Iraq so that when Operation Desert Shield commenced in January 1991, Jordan became isolated—it was one of Saddam's few allies at the time—and suffered serious economic stagnation as a result. Indeed, while Jordan's original plan of repelling Nasser's pan-Arabism required a dual containment policy that itself relied on both Iraq and Saudi Arabia, Jordan was slow to change its policy

approaches and ended up losing—for a while—its Saudi and US allies. But Jordan's choices were limited and it is largely regarded as pursuing the 'interests of a state trying to contain the worst consequences of a situation over which it had little control.'[30] Despite its limited capabilities Jordan's support for Saddam led to the deterioration of relations with the US and Saudi Arabia amounting to economic freezes and the loss of aid worth tens of millions of USD, undermining Jordan's economy.

While the effects of Jordan's support for Iraq were felt immediately, its recovery and damage control to many years to implement. However, the experience led King Hussein to redirect Jordan's foreign policy and play a balancing act between US regional interests and its own vulnerabilities which were increased as it sought to exit Iraq's sphere of influence. In short, Jordan needed to safely balance against Iraq in order to appease the US and thus normalise its economic and political relations. King Hussein, ever the prudent leader, saw that such a balance could be struck via Israel (with the support of the US). And so, in 1994, Jordan concluded a peace treaty with Israel. Similar to the Camp David accords, the US supported the peace through the announcement of enhanced economic and military ties wiping out is debt and encouraging proper economic engagement.

There is, however, no such thing as a free lunch. Washington conditioned its support for Jordan on the latter's full cooperation in ending the Arab-Israeli conflict and maintaining a solid sanctions regime against Iraq. Jordan was forced to prioritise US interests. This tradition has been reinforced by King Hussein's successor Abdullah II, evidenced in Jordan's place as the second largest per capita recipient of US economic aid, which was valued at over $670 million USD in 2012.[31] The Kingdom is simply 'hardly positioned to pursue purely Jordanian national interests.'[32] Moreover, Jordan's special position was seriously undermined when the peace process failed with the beginning of the Second Intifada in 2000 and Saddam's forced removal in 2003. As Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe[33] point out, Abdullah's influence on individual states involved in the peace process was, nevertheless, minor (compared to his father) and he could not be 'more than a bit player.'

Similar to Hussein, Abdullah II took a very pragmatic approach to the issue of Jordanian foreign relations and sought to repair diplomatic tensions with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia for the purpose of political and economic stabilisation. The policy succeeded and Saudi Arabia provided Jordan with some $1.4 billion USD in 2011.[34] Additionally, both Saudi

Arabia and Kuwait opened their markets to Jordanian commodities and qualified labour force. Using its steadily improving relationship with Saudi Arabia, Jordan began to extend its agenda to include more active relationships with the other Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) members. Indeed, Jordan is seeking membership in the GCC. Its prospects are significantly better than they were in the 1980s and 1990s when Jordan's application was flatly rejected. This is reducible to the internal alterations to the GCC, coupled with a clear external dimension to the series of revolutions and attempted coups following the 2011 outbreak of the Arab uprisings. In short, the GCC is increasingly becoming a mature security actor and has begun to look at ways of enhancing its collective military power. Jordan is one such avenue, especially since there is growing fear of mounting Iranian influence.[35] In this context, Jordan suits the GCC well; its body-politik is largely Sunni and its government—a Monarchy—is pro-Western, it is nervously eyeing the growing military, diplomatic and ideological power of Iran and Jordan has a well-equipped and trained military able to enhance GCC security and reinforce the organisation's deterrence capabilities.

In analysing Jordan´s foreign policy it is necessary to consider the individual characteristics of the King since he retains extensive powers over the formulation of foreign policy. Although the Hashemites, as a ruling dynasty, enjoy wide legitimacy among the Jordanian people, Abdullah II 'must maintain the institution of the monarchy in a post-modern era while governing a country beset by economic problems that render it dependent upon US and other foreign aid.'[36] Abdullah II has faced the difficult task of harmonising national and monarchical interests. Yet there has been one consistent dimension of Jordan's approach to its international relations, a deep recognition that the state is small—by both regional and international comparisons—and that such "smallness" produces inherent vulnerabilities to national security and the ability to pursue an autonomous foreign policy.[37]

Although Jordan has been active and even, at times, acted assertively, it never aspired to attain regional great power status; it has seldom commenced conflicts with other states or to shift thhe regional balance of power. Jordan is not an especially economically important state either and its economic problems indicate that it remains dependent on foreign assistance. This does not imply however, that it is resigned. In contrast, Jordan aims its foreign policy at increasing the Kingdom's influence in the Middle East and the international system through a different approach, one that is in-sync with its small stature.

Bolstering Jordan's Regional Importance and Influence

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Jordan is well aware of its power limitations and insufficient material resources and adjusts its foreign policy accordingly. It is also aware of its geopolitical location; it is situated in an unstable region where the use of force is common. This heightens the Kingdom's vulnerability and helps explain its drive in support of peace, preventive diplomacy, cooperation, Arab unity and welfare, and its mediation services points described as the 'hallmark of Hashemite leadership.'[38]

Since Abdullah II assumed power, he strove for the peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict which is vital to regional peace and the stability of Jordan in particular because any deterioration of the situation will affect it negatively; Jordan's population is mostly Palestinian. This is best seen in Jordan's involvement in the so-called Arab Peace Initiative (2002) which sought the most comprehensive peace to date; it was based on the idea of the full normalisation of relations between Israel and the bulk of the Arab states in exchange for Israel's full return to its pre-1967 frontiers and its allowance of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.[39]

It is important to note that support for regional cooperation goes beyond the Palestinian issue. Jordanian leaders seek to cultivate and maintain good relations with all its neighbouring states in economic, cultural and religious fields together with higher forms of security. Recently, Jordan has championed the idea of Arab unity—an irony considering the manner in which it resisted Nasser's similar drive—regional social welfare and the general resurgence of the Arab world. In this, Jordan has proposed several projects to create an Arab integration arrangement where all states would be treated equally with intra-Arab relations based on explicit and transparent cooperation, not dominance and power relations. In doing so, Jordan's limited (hard) power and vulnerable position is reflected.

Again, Jordan is not locked in the region and regularly participates in UN peacekeeping missions with deployable forces. Such international engagements—as Jordan's leaders emphasise—illustrate 'the country's global commitment to peace.'[40] Interestingly, considering its economic constraints, Jordan is a generous provider of both military and police personnel to UN missions such as Somalia, Haiti, Rwanda, Cambodia, Angola and Liberia.[41] However, these operations have also entirely practical benefits, such as employment opportunities for Jordanians, improving military skills and expertise.[42] Besides peace and regional

security, Jordan also supports human security world-wide. It is a member of the Human Security Network (formed in 1999), a group of 13 states that promote alternative perspectives on security where human beings, not states, are prioritised.

The internal dynamics of Jordan—as a small state—are also indicative of the way that it engages with the rest of the international community. It is a hybrid system where democratic rights and freedoms set it into a similar category as Bahrain and Kuwait, where the legal system is not used arbitrarily but rather in a transparent and democratic manner, individuals are endowed with an extensive set of rights and responsibilities and elect one legislative chamber. Jordan has all the necessary trappings to evolve into a full-fledged multi-party democracy. However, the simmering political situation, where a stream of cross-cutting cleavages exist (tribal, ethnic, national, religious, political and economic), locked in the catch-22 system of enhancing the already extensive powers of the King which may serve to further alienate segments of Jordanian society, coupled with corruption—which is rife—retards, or at least slows, adequate reform. This problem is likely to remain into the foreseeable future since parliament is weak and serves more as 'a facade of democracy behind which the Royal Court wields actual power.'[43]

Conclusion

The analytical framework for small states' foreign policy deployed here is based on combining a complex set of quantitative and qualitative criteria, which emphasises relative, not absolute values. Not only territorial and population size, economic capabilities, military and natural resources but also the geopolitical position, neighbours, alliances and internal dynamics directly influence the "smallness" of a state. The outcome of this work, its conceptualisation, is a relatively homogenous category of states distinguishable from super, great and middle powers.

When applied to the case of Jordan, the concept of small states comes alive since its leaders have dealt with a wide variety of foreign policy problems and restrictions resulting from country's basic features and regional position. The Hashemite Kingdom is economically and militarily vulnerable and dependent on the assistance and goodwill of powerful and rich regional and extra-regional states. Its weakness is intensified by its location in the middle of an unstable region

where it often acts as a buffer between adversaries.

Jordan has staked its own peace and security on its ability to encourage and sponsor cooperative political and economic programmes through an active policy approach in its neighbourhood, a point confirmed by King Abdullah's II who declared '[d]ecades of robust regional and international engagement have made Jordan one of the most stable, secure and prosperous countries in the region.'[44] This sentiment is confirmed by Ryan who explains that 'Jordan in the early twenty-first century—and under a new king—finds itself more secure in the regional system [and] had achieved greater stability in foreign relations than ever before.'[45] Jordan's regional policy and international engagement is based on the belief that there 'are no bystanders in the 21st century. There are no curious onlookers. There is no one who is not affected by the division and hatred that is present in our world.'[46] This conviction provides clues for understanding the many foreign policy steps during the reign of King Abdullah II undertaken with the explicit goal of managing Jordan's stability as a small state in a region plagued by endemic instability. The conflagration unfolding in the Middle East, collectively termed as the Arab Spring, is only the most chapter in a period of prolonged social and regional-level violence that spills over borders and produces acute challenges to the status quo. For Jordan, Samuel and Tally Helfont go so far as to suggest that after these events, Jordan became 'a strategic battleground' between two rival forces.[47]

Since Jordan—among other small states—must find allies to act as security anchors, it must tread cautiously to avoid getting dragged into the troubles of its friends. The lessons learned from the erroneous engagement with Iraq before the latter invaded Kuwait and the resulting isolation of Jordan has forced a new prudence among its leadership. In this context, Ryan rightly notes that 'Jordan realised that regional alignment politics are not necessarily a zero-sum game, [rather it] tried to make it a positive-sum game so that increasing cooperation with one set of allies does not mean conflict with former allies.'[48]

Jordan has, thus far, managed to be resilient in the face of numerous threats and crises and has succeeded in increasing its geopolitical importance; engaging in activities which are supposed to overcome its "smallness" and set it as a significant regional actor not punching above its weight. What the future holds remains a mystery, however it is clear that Jordan is capable of navigating the dangers of the region through the recognition and respect of its limitations.

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Notes

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2 Maurice A. East (1973), 'Size and Foreign Policy Behavior: A Test of Two Models,' *World Politics*, 25: 4, p. 559.

3 Matthias Maass (2009), 'The elusive definition of the small state,' *International Politics*, 46: 1, p. 65.

4 Jeanne A. K. Hey (2003), 'Introducing Small State Foreign Policy,' in Jeanne A. K. Hey (ed), *Small States in World Politics: Explaining Foreign Policy Behaviour*, Colorado, USA: Lynne Rienner Publishers, p. 3.

5 See for example Peter R. Baehr (1975), 'Small States: A Tool for Analysis. Article Review,' *World Politics* 27: 3, pp. 459–460, 466.

6 Maass (2009), p. 67. On the contrary, Baehr (1975, p. 466) talks about 'the insufficiency of the concept as an analytical tool' because 'small states form too broad a category for purposes of analysis'. But Baehr counts only on adoption one criterion for defining small states, which, obviously, results in the creation of a very vague concept.

7 Jack Sawyer (1967), 'Dimensions of Nations: Size, Wealth, and Politics,' *The American Journal of Sociology* 73: 2, pp. 152–153.

8 Michael Handel (2006), 'Weak States in the International System,' in Christine Ingebritsen (ed), *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle, USA, Reykjavik, Iceland: University of Washington Press, p. 157.

9 Baehr (1975), p. 459.

10 In none of other categories of states, precise figures of given criteria matter. Regional powers are defined by peculiar position within a particular region and middle powers by specific foreign policy behaviour. In reality, these states differ greatly in individual criteria.

11 David Vital (2006), 'The Inequality of States: A Study of the Small Power in International Relations,' in Christine Ingebritsen (ed), *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle, USA, Reykjavik, Iceland: University of Washington Press, p. 81.

12 Wilhelm Christmas-Moller (1983), 'Some Thoughts on the Scientific Applicability of the Small State Concept: A Research History and a Discussion,' in Otmar Höll (ed), *Small States in Europe and Dependence*, Boulder, USA: Westview Press, p. 40.

13 Annette Baker Fox (2006), 'The Power of Small States: Diplomacy in World War II,' in Christine Ingebritsen (ed), *Small States in International Relations*, Seattle, USA, Reykjavik, Iceland: University of Washington Press, p. 40.

14 Handel (2006), p. 151.
15 Heiner Hänggi (1998), *Small State as a Third State: Switzerland and Asia-Europe inter-regionalism*, p. 7, available at: <http://www.ipw.unisg.ch/org/ipw/web.nsf/SysWebRessources/272_1998/$FILE/272.pdf> (accessed 05 March 2012).
16 Robert Keohane (1969), 'Lilliputians´ Dilemmas: Small States in International Politics,' *International Organization*, 23: 2, p. 296.
17 They are not weak within the meaning of weak and inefficient state institutions but of minor significance in international politics.
18 See Handel (2006), p. 152 and Prasad (2008), p. 60.
19 Prasad (2008), p. 44.
20 Handel (2006), p. 190.
21 Ibid, p. 154.
22 Soft power can be useful for (militarily) powerful states as well, however for small states, soft power is even more significant because it enables them to achieve their policy goals even though they lack necessary material capabilities.
23 Marshall R. Singer (1972), *Weak States in a World of Powers: The Dynamics of International Relationships*, New York, USA: Free Press, p. 370.
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33 Ibid, p. 31.
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35 Sara Hamdan (2011), 'Gulf Council Reaches Out to Morocco and Jordan,' *The New York Times* 25 May 2011, available at: <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/26/world/middleeast/26iht-M26-GCC.html?_r=1&pagewanted=all> (accessed 10 May 2012).
36 Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe (1999), p. 28.

37 Jordan´s Resource Gap, available at: <http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/f_affairs1.html#Jordan's Resource Gap> (accessed 09 March 2012); The Hashemite Vision, available at: <http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo/f_affairs4.html#The Hashemite Vision> (accessed 09 March 2012).

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42 Prasad (2008), p. 59.

43 Milton-Edwards and Hinchcliffe (1999), p. 30.

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46 His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein—Vision: Peace, available at: <http://www.kingabdullah.jo/index.php/en_US/pages/view/id/151.html> (accessed 11 March 2012).

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