# PUBLIC PARTICIPATION UNDER AUTHORITARIANISM: A CASE STUDY OF WATER MANAGEMENT IN JORDAN

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## ABSTRACT

In order to address the country's increasing water stress, Jordan's most recent national water strategy urges citizens to take an active role in promoting water awareness as a means to lower water demand. This is framed by the state as a positive development toward incorporating public participation into its water management. At the same time, power sharing among different stakeholders is a primary component of effective public participation initiatives. Thus, to what extent can an authoritarian regime encourage and develop genuine methods of public participation in its policy development and administration? This paper will argue (1) in the context of authoritarian regimes, real participation requires political reform, and that such a transformation is unlikely given the propensity of authoritarian regimes to centralize power, and (2) the international community has facilitated existing state-societal relations by altogether neglecting this relationship while making significant contributions to the state.

**Keywords:** Authoritarianism; Donor Relations; Public Participation; Water Management

For my family,

Jin Chang Peng

Shui Chen Peng

Yeena Peng

&

Poa Poa

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## GLOSSARY

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| Brackish Water | Water that is slightly salty, with greater salinity than freshwater but with relatively low concentration of soluble salts. |
| Ground Water | Water beneath the earth's surface that supplies wells and springs. |
| Riparian State | A state through or along a portion of a river or lake. |
| Stakeholders | Organizations and/or individuals with an interest in a common project. They may include: public agencies, landowners, special interest groups, customers, industry, and the community. |
| Surface Water | Water collecting on the ground, or in a stream, lake, wetland or ocean. |
| Tributary | A stream or river that flows into a larger stem of a river. It does not flow directly into a sea, ocean or lake. |
| Water Basin | Area of land where water from precipitation drains downhill into a body of water. It can also be described as catchment, drainage basin, and watershed. |

# 1: INTRODUCTION

Jordan has one of the highest standards of living in the developing world. It is home to a highly educated population and boasts access to advanced healthcare services in both urban and rural regions. Liberal economic policies introduced in 1999 by King Abdullah II have resulted in steady economic growth lasting for over a decade. Unfortunately, in the midst of these achievements, prospects for continued social and economic growth are increasingly challenged by water scarcity.

When measured by fresh water per capita, Jordan is the fourth most water stressed country in the world, with an average consumption of only 100 litres per day (HKJ, 2008). Water resources are naturally limited due to the country's semi-arid/arid climate, and forced immigration from violent conflict throughout the region has continuously aggravated the country's shortage of water resources. Ground water sources are overexploited and threatened with pollution, while dwindling surface water from the Jordan and Yarmouk rivers are shared with Israel, Syria, Lebanon, and the West Bank, all of which are upstream of Jordan. Population growth and rising living standards are expected to help raise water demand to 1647 MCM/year in 2020 (Assaf et al., 2004, p.74). Additionally, the indeterminate effects of climate change will likely challenge existing levels of renewable water resources, which are currently estimated at 750 MCM/year (Assaf et al., 2004, p.74).

Traditionally, Jordan's water management strategy has been supply driven. In 1997 Jordan developed a National Water Strategy in order to address the rising water stress. Water demand management was incorporated in this strategy, but did not include a specific demand management program. By 2002, a Water Demand Management Unit was established to oversee all demand management programs for all sectors in Jordan (Khaleq, 2008). More recently, in 2008 Jordan released an updated national water strategy that spans until 2022. "Water for Life" outlines goals for the different branches of the water sector and specific actions to take in order to achieve them. This new document clearly emphasizes both the gravity of the situation as well as the importance of demand management. In the opening statement by the Minister of Water and Irrigation, Raed Abu Saud, the reduction of demand is highlighted as a primary concern. He states:

> We intend to reduce demand by raising awareness of the general public on the water condition in Jordan. We all agree that we need to value water more, use it more wisely and have every stakeholder to take [sic.] his share of responsibility for protecting this vital resource (Abu Saud, 2009, Opening Statement).

Through its latest national strategy, the government of Jordan appears to have taken positive strides toward incorporating public participation in its water management. In theory, this goal is in line with international "best practices" which now regards user participation as an integral component of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM). In practice, IWRM involves the

application of knowledge from various disciplines and stakeholders in both the creation, and implementation of solutions. Mechanisms for power sharing, and the achievement of consensus among different stakeholders are primary components of this strategy. Thus, real participation is understood to include principles generally associated with democratic governance systems.[1]

If public participation is understood in this manner, to what extent can an authoritarian regime encourage and develop genuine methods of public participation in its policy development and administration? This paper will argue (1) in the context of authoritarian regimes, real participation requires political reform, and that such a transformation is unlikely given the propensity of authoritarian regimes to centralize power within the regime itself, and (2) the international community has facilitated existing state-societal relations by altogether neglecting this relationship while making significant contributions to the state.

This analysis uses the water sector in Jordan to draw attention to the political constraints of authoritarian regimes in achieving their developmental objectives. In authoritarian states, survival of the ruling regime is primary. When this aim conflicts with mechanisms of development, the regime will sacrifice those goals. These unmet objectives later challenge the ability of a state to attain other developmental aims by proxy. Indeed, poor water management in Jordan will have an effect on numerous sectors, including environment, industry, and

[1] "Real" and "genuine" are used interchangeably when accompanied with the term "participation". They simply connote an ideal characterization of public participation that will be defined later in the paper.

health. This paper also aims to highlight the significant role of bilateral and multilateral donors in the pursuit of these goals and the various effects of their intervention. A significant amount of resources and energy are funnelled through organizations such as the World Bank and USAID who research, fund, and design large development projects to improve the socioeconomic situation of countries around the world. At the same time, there is little evidence of economic growth or social progress that can be attributed to these efforts (Easterly, 2001; Moustafa, 2002; Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Governance reforms are necessary to promote the social and political development of developing countries in the long term, and the cooperation of large donors is essential to the transformation of existing state-societal relations.

Following these introductory remarks, part two of this paper will provide a brief background on the current water situation in Jordan. Part three will review existing literature on the benefits of public participation as a tool for policy development and implementation in general as well as in the management of water. This section will also review literature that explores the limits of public participation within authoritarian governance systems. Part four explores the political barriers to public participation in Jordan's water management by closely examining the most recent national water strategy and the bureaucratic structure of the water sector. Part five examines the negative effects of external donors in Jordan's water management by looking at donor led public participation initiatives and the significant intervention of the U.S. Part seven will contain concluding remarks.

# 2: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND THE SOCIAL CONTRACT

## 2.1 The Benefits of Participatory Decision-Making

Among scholars who advocate for participatory decision-making there is a general consensus on three overarching benefits. Public participation can improve the overall quality of policy, it can enhance the legitimacy of those governing, and it can build both citizen and administrative capacity for future collaboration (Odeh Al-Jayyousi 2000; Dietz & Stern 2008; Coenen et al. 2009; Coenen 2009). Such benefits are associated with what many have termed “real,” “genuine,” or “authentic” participation. These adjectives are often used interchangeably to indicate a particular depth of the concept “participation”. The general consensus is that the definition remains vague in order to accommodate various mechanisms, but that at the very least real participation extend beyond merely public consultation. Dietz and Stern’s definition accurately represents how public participation is understood in this paper; they define it as:

> Organized processes adopted by elected officials, government agencies or other public- or private sector organizations to engage the public in environmental assessment, planning, decision-making, management, monitoring, and evaluation. These processes supplement traditional forms of public participation (voting, interest groups, demonstration, lobby groups) by directly involving the public in executing functions, when they are

conducted in government are traditionally delegated to administrative agencies (Dietz & Stern, 2008, p. 1).

Various country case studies have shown that stakeholder participation in decision-making can lead to the development of higher efficiency solutions due to the wide scope of information necessary to accurately assess facts (Ostrom 1990; Easter & Hearne 1993; Dietz & Stern, 2008). Public participation provides governing bodies the information necessary to make informed decisions, especially in the case of environmental policy, which must include not only technical expertise but also an understanding of human systems of interaction (Coenen, 2009). It can provide the opportunity for citizens to articulate their interests but is also a means in which they first come to understand their interests, and their dependence on those of others (Dietz & Stern, 2008). Public participation allows for the recognition of the different objectives and concerns different parties have, and can provide an avenue in which actors gain different kinds of knowledge to make fully informed decisions (Dietz & Stern, 2008). Neoliberal theories perceive it as a manner in which to extract public preferences in order to develop optimal compromises (Dietz & Stern, 2008, p.48).

Arrangements containing a high degree of participation, such as collective action groups can solve principal-agent problems found in public administration. In any institution, the preferences and interests of principal and agents are misaligned (Fukuyama, 2004). Where market conditions can regulate the actions of principals through free market competition, in bureaucratic systems there are no similar mechanisms to control the actions of “principal” or in this case,

administrators (Fukuyama, 2004). Policy formed under severe misalignment can create incentives for administrators and citizens alike to shirk their responsibilities. In contrast, case studies drawn together by Ostrom (1990) have shown regulatory problems related to supply, credible commitment and mutual monitoring can be solved by systems of self-governance. In her later work on the subject she concluded, “When users are genuinely engaged in the decisions regarding rules affecting their use, the likelihood of following the rules and monitoring others is much greater than when an authority simply imposes rules on users” (Ostrom, 2006). On the whole, local participatory systems have been found to benefit from context specific information, reduced transaction costs, and greater innovation (Fukuyama, 2004).

Genuine public participation facilitates effective decision-making because policy is informed by public will. At a very basic level, it is a means of attaining consent from those being governed (Coenen, 2009). The argument of legitimacy is inherently related to the previous discussion of quality, wherein legitimate processes of negotiation are likely to produce better decisions because they incorporate a wider scope of information and preferences. In many instances, public administration requires shifting allocations of resources and opportunities from one group to another. Such circumstances can initiate conflict between parties and administrators, as well as between parties them selves. Citizens have a greater likelihood of responding positively to a decision if it is built on public support (Coenen, 2009). For Stivers (1990), administrative legitimacy derives from a system of accountability that works within a shared framework.

Bureaucrats and citizens actively form such a framework on an ongoing basis and only in this context can basic values be interpreted into policy. A legitimate system of public policy and administration is therefore dependent on a dialectic process in which all stakeholders inform one another's preferences to create a single shared point of view.

An ongoing relationship between administrators and citizens of this nature can help build mutual understanding and trust between these actors. This can build capacity of both parties to interact with one another by creating a virtuous circle of behaviour where future engagement benefits from a strong and experienced relationship (Dietz & Stern, 2008). For public participants in particular, participation facilitates empowerment and the learning of democratic skills (Coenen, 2009). Citizens gain knowledge of the various problems their societies face, how they intersect, and how to behave with others who have different opinions or interests (Coenen, 2009). On the whole, public participation can administer the social capacity needed in order to adapt and cope with various challenges in public policy and administration.

## 2.2 Public Participation in Water Resource Management

The symbolic meaning of water has lent some scholars to argue that public participation in water management is the only ethical means in which to govern water (Priscolia, 2004). It is understood by these scholars that control of water corresponds to control of life and livelihood; if there is no life without water those denied the resource are consequently denied life. Thus, those whom are

affected should have the opportunity to participate in the management of such a vital resource (Priscolia, 2004). While human rights arguments have made significant contributions to this field of study, given the focus of this paper, the remainder of this section will instead explore the pragmatic benefits of participatory initiatives.

An emerging global water crisis has highlighted the critical role that water plays in social and economic development. Although an increasing world population, diminishing resources and pollution have hindered the global water situation, poor management of existing resources has aggravated the problem. The Global Water Partnership (GWP-TAC, 2000) specifically points a finger at sectoral approaches to water management and top-down institutions. At the same time, the UN has recognized that good water governance is critical to the achievement of its Millennium Development Goals.[2] The recognition of water's wide scope of influence and the historical failure of water governance around the world has resulted in the popularity of Integrated Water Resource Management (IWRM) as an internationally recognized planning and implementation tool.

The IWRM approach was formed on the basic understanding that the different uses of water resources are interdependent. It focuses on achieving a desirable allocation of water to different user groups, and therefore stresses the

[2] In 2001, the United Nations (UN) adopted eight international development goals that all 192 UN member states have agreed to achieve by the year 2015. They include: (1) the reduction of extreme poverty, (2) achieving universal primary education, (3) the promotion of gender equality, (4) the reduction of child (5) mortality rates, (6) improving maternal health, (7) combating fighting disease epidemics, (8) ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development.

importance of involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process. Developed by the Global Water Partnership, IWRM has been defined as:

> A process which promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources, in order to maximize the resultant economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystem (TEC, 2000, p.22).

According to the guiding document for IWRM, real participation is once again defined as beyond consultation, and can only be achieved when stakeholders are a part of the decision-making process. Ultimately, the purpose of public participation is to pursue an appropriate balance between a top-down and a bottom-up approach to water management.

The rationale of referencing IWRM in this paper is not to advocate its adoption, but rather to identify public participation as an integral component of water management. Critics of IWRM protest against its vague character or narrow focus on demand management (Biswas, 2004). However, these are outside of the scope of this paper. Instead, this paper suggests that real participation as a principle of water management is rightfully recognized as an international best practice.

An ongoing system of public participation can facilitate a process of social learning. Social learning is a necessary practice for effective water management because it addresses both the social-relational and technically complex characteristics of managing the resource (Mostert, 2008). It is identified as learning via one-way or two-way communication, as opposed to learning

independently (Mostert, 2008). During this process, stakeholders must recognize their interdependence, organize, and exchange information and ideas. These activities aid in the reduction of gaps in knowledge when finding solutions to water problems, because actors reflect on their mutual relationships, their goals and how best to reach their goals together (Mostert, 2008). Social learning builds the experience needed to cope with the uncertainty and change of water management by increasing the adaptive capacity of actors (Pahl-Wostl et al., 2007). Actors that have engaged in a process of social learning are able to extract from a larger wealth of knowledge and the power structures of institutions can likewise be shaped to be more responsive to different points of view and consider the position of all stakeholders.

Wenger's (1998) "communities of practice" (CoPs) illustrate the links between knowledge, learning, and communities that social learning draws upon. Wenger emphasized learning from participation in groups of people who engage in a process of collective learning and form a shared library of resources. He saw this form of learning particularly integral to adaptive management of complex river basins in which different sources of knowledge and an ongoing process of learning lay at the core of management practices. Participation in this respect is influenced by the social structure and can likewise change it, as well as inform individuality by either confirming or shaping one's identity. Such a groups is able to evolve naturally because of common interests shared by members. By sharing information and experiences with the group, members are able to learn from one another, and have the opportunity to develop themselves.

In practice, this process of social learning is integral to various water management initiatives. Ostrom and Garner (1993), provide evidence suggesting that bargaining between actors in a system of self-governance can aid in the development of an efficient irrigation system. They maintain that interventions designed by outsiders can interrupt the mutual dependencies among farmers. In this scenario, there are no incentives for different parties to abide by the rules set by an outside party, rather the incentives favour cheating or free-riding. In contrast, bargaining between actors in a self-governing system allows for an outcome that benefits both parties. Social learning informs this process as annual meetings form the foundation of this relationship, where all actors commit to the establishment of rules based consensus.

In water reuse projects community confidence is essential to successful implementation. Khana and Gerraradh (2006) maintain that communication and participation are the best possible means to overcome the main obstacles of water reuse. Water reuse operations often fail because of a general lack of awareness in regards to its benefits, and fears concerning health and environmental risks. A process of social learning can create bonds of trust and a collective knowledge base in order to form a community that together identifies water reuse as a safe and essential practice.

Before closing this discussion on the merits of public participation in water management, an important distinction must be made between community involvement and public participation, as it is understood in this paper. Bakkar (2009) acknowledges the benefits of community involvement in water

management but at the same time contends that state intervention is essential to dealing with issues of financing, access, and operational management. Community involvement alone is not an effective response to water scarcity, real public participation in water management includes an ongoing relationship between the state and citizen. Involving communities can improve transparency and accountability, but the state is an integral mediator of competing citizen interests (Bakkar, 2009). Furthermore, the delicate balance between the provision of equal access and sustainability requires state intervention to set and enforce water management criteria (Bakkar, 2009). This is especially the case in many developing nations where community cooperatives provide services to rural areas and lack of state regulation leads to inequitable access to resources, over extraction, pollution and quality concerns (Bakkar, 2009).

## 2.3 Barriers to Public Participation under Authoritarianism

Meaningful public participation is political and implies sharing of power in decision-making. White (2000) contends that it should call into question existing social arrangements between the citizen and the state, by transforming the weaker partner, the stronger partner, and the relationship between them. If this is true, participatory initiatives should inherently be a site of conflict where interests of different stakeholders are unlikely to compliment one another neatly. White goes so far as to argue that if participation means that those whom have been disempowered are given a voice, we should expect a challenge of power relations both within any individual conflict as well as in wider society. The

negotiation of power embedded in the concept of participation, suggests a high degree of difficulty to implement such a program, particularly for authoritarian states. The top-down commitment to citizen empowerment is in direct opposition to the state's traditional political orientation.

In states governed by authoritarian regimes, the primary concern of the state is regime survival. Employing neo-patrimonial strategies confers distinct advantages on? regimes by aiding in the demobilization of opposition groups and building a loyal base of support (Bellin, 2004). Consequently, appointment in the public sector plays a large role in patron-client networks that help sustain the state (Alissa, 2007). Currently, civil servants make up 43 percent of Jordan's total workforce and their wages comprise of 58 percent of total government expenditures (Alissa, 2007, p.10). Selective favouritism and patronage flow to civil servants who received their positions on the basis of personal relations and lack the necessary skills to fill their positions (Jresiat, 1997). An over centralized bureaucracy is common, and used to combat employee ineptitude as well as maintain the state's power structure (Jresiat, 1997).

In effective models of bureaucracy, efficiency requires delegation of discretion in decision-making and authority. However, problems of control and supervision originating from delegation remain the central problem of public administration (Fukuyama, 2004). Effective organizations rely on a mixture of formal mechanisms and informal norms as a solution. Conversely, in an authoritarian state, control and supervision are maintained through the containment of power where important personnel and budgetary decisions are

made according to the preferences of a single authority (Jresiat, 1997). Additionally, the recruitment of top administrative posts is often based on the loyalty of higher bureaucrats and political leaders whom develop close identification and mutual interests with public service sectors (Jreisat, 1997). Fusion between the two deprives the decision-making process of independent professional input, as both are a part of the same power structure (Jreisat, 1997). It is no surprise that in many cases public service regulators are consumers them selves.

The interdependence of administration and the political system in authoritarian states, structure and define the formal functions of bureaucracy. As such, the bureaucratic culture in many authoritarian states contradicts the development of power-sharing mechanisms. It is doubtful that meaningful public participation can be facilitated in a context where transparency and accountability are likely to threaten the central role played by the state. Existing venues of participation are powerless to effect reform in a system where centralized powers refuse to delegate to their own counterparts, much less their citizens.

Successful administrative reform must focus on building internal capabilities of public agencies. It will require the appointment of administrative leaders on merit, less control by central offices over every aspect of decision-making and evaluations and rewards related to real work performance (Jreisat, 1997). Following these reforms, public service employees would likely place a greater emphasis on their professional identities rather than tribal or familial connections that have directed their performance and decision-making

(Fukuyama, 2004). Such a change in administrative ethos would open opportunities for delegating discretion, and ultimately pave the way for real public participation.

In the midst of these politically controlled environments, NGOs attempt to fill in the gaps left by a state's inability or unwillingness to deliver essential services. However, the character of NGOs inhabiting authoritarian states call into question, the normative perception of NGOs as mechanisms for collective empowerment. Bayat (2002) discusses both the internal problems of NGOs and the larger limitations placed on them by authoritarian governments in the Middle East. He contends that social development is threatened by NGOs who ultimately force citizen dependence on charity or precarious foreign aid. By serving a community function for free, they reduce the state's responsibility to its citizens. As a result, they assist in the overall decline of the public sector and in doing so sever the link between state and society.

Bayat also provides evidence of NGO's in the Middle East whom share the same paternalistic attitudes and structures of their authoritarian governments. Only one or two people make decisions in these organizations, and like their civil servant counterparts, staff of NGOs are motivated primarily by monetary incentives. This type of organizational structure ensures beneficiaries are perceived as recipients of assistance and not as partners in development. As such, citizens are not provided a means to question the quality and adequacy of projects and are generally shut out altogether.

Besides various internal problems, government surveillance prevents autonomous operation of NGOs and thus limits opportunities for public participation. Wiktorowicz (1999; 2000; 2002) has written extensively on the political limits of civil society and NGOs in the midst of state power in Jordan. He maintains that the political context of a state shapes and limits the potential of civil society to affect political change. In Jordan, the political system is structured to perpetuate regime survival and thus limits the role of NGOs in the nation's politics.

While authoritarian regimes support NGOs that reduce the burden of social-service provision and poverty alleviation, they also fear the possibility of these organizations to challenge state authority (Brand, 2001; Moustafa, 2002). Thus, while NGOs are permitted, strict legal control is imposed. In Jordan, all NGOs operating in the country must be registered with either the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Social Development (Omar, 2009). They are sub-divided and regulated according to their stated mission in order to accommodate the institutional structure (Sullivan, 2000). As each ministry controls all activity within its area of responsibility, NGOs are not permitted to engage in activities that cross multiple ministries and must clearly identify a singular statement of purpose (Sullivan, 2000). Civil society is thus partitioned and segmented into administrative units based on bureaucratic control.

Brand (2001) explores the relationship between NGOs and the government of Jordan by calling into question their classification as non-governmental actors. Jordan, like other developing countries have "NGO

hybrids". These are associations that categorize themselves as NGOs but have ties to the state that call into question their neutrality. Specifically in Jordan, the government's relationship with NGOs is not clearly distinguished, and the boundaries in between are blurred if not indistinguishable. A significant fraction of the NGOs in Jordan are named "Royal NGOs", and are presided over by a powerful member of the regime's elite.[3] These elites receive patronage and their organizations are given preferential treatment in policy and funding considerations. Outside of these collectives, it is common for other supposedly non-governmental organizations to receive funding or carry out state sponsored projects. In co-opting NGOs the government has blocked the ability of these organizations to engage in meaningful programs of public participation.

## 2.4 The Limits of International Public Participation Initiatives

The role of international community in shaping the character of NGOs must also be addressed in this discussion. Bayat (2002) attributes the spectacular growth of NGOs in the region in part to foreign funding from donors whom often extend aid directly to NGOs rather than individual states. These funds encouraged the formation of organizations as well as direct their mandates by allocating funds based on specific development initiatives. Thus, for many countries an imposing presence of external donors and non-state actors in service provision play a principal role in their system of governance.

[3] 60% of Jordan's more than 2000 NGOs are wealthy associations sponsored by the royal family (Abu Jamra, 2007) (Valbjørn, 2010).

Logically, every dollar and every function supplied to the state by an external source is representative of a state responsibility that is not fulfilled. The intervention of these actors thus threatens the social contract between the state and its citizens. Ghani and Lockhart (2008) have characterized this problem as the “sovereignty gap” in which a gap exists between the *de jure* sovereignty offered by the international system and the *de facto* capabilities of states to serve their populations and behave as full members of the international community (2008, p.3). The international system is based on the belief that states are capable of fulfilling domestic and international responsibilities in exchange for given rights. On this premise, the sovereign guarantee and the concept of non-interference are basic components of the international system, in which foreign aid is distributed. In reality, many states are unable or unwilling to fulfil these responsibilities. In this context, foreign aid contributes the ability of states to remain unaccountable to both their population and the international community. Without any means to hold the state accountable, the likelihood of real public participation is doubtful.

As a development paradigm, public participation has widespread endorsement from international development agencies and national governments alike. Its popularity and increasing adoption by NGOs and donors appears like a success for those whom advocate it (White 2000). In practice, its broad definition has allowed development initiatives across the globe to indiscriminately be labelled as participatory. Despite the best of intentions of those putting international standards into practice, the dangers of widespread adoption have

recently garnered attention. As such, many public participation initiatives have been criticized for blind, short-sighted adoption that does not take into consideration the specificities of societal needs and constraints (White 2000; Bakkar, 2008).

Ghani and Lockhart (2008) lament the popularity of donor led development projects that fail to engage both the state and citizens simultaneously. In regards to public participation initiatives, exclusion of both parties eliminates the integral element of social learning discussed earlier. When service delivery may positively contribute to state legitimacy, it is important to keep in mind intervention in weak states is inherently problematic. If on the one hand the state is excluded, there is a danger for many donors to perceive public participation as an end in itself rather than as a means to attain developmental objectives. On the other, without approval of citizens, donors may imply that existing state structures are in fact legitimate (Pavanello & Darcy, 2008). As such, in any context, the nature and extent of the relationship between donors and states, as well as the states and their citizens is essential in determining whether intervention positively or negatively contributes to a country's development.

# 3: AUTHORITARIAN POLITICS AND JORDAN'S WATER MANAGEMENT

## 3.1 Water Scarcity in Jordan

Renewable water resources in Jordan originate from precipitation over its territories and flows of international watercourses of which Jordan is a riparian party. The natural climate of the region limits regular precipitation while only 20% of it can be extracted for use, as the rest is lost to evaporation (Nortcliff et al., 2008, p.18). In 2002, the usage for all purposes amounted to 73.5% of the total renewable potential, and supplied only 18% of the water needs in the country. The remaining 82% of needs were covered by water imports from neighbouring countries (Nortcliff et al., 2008, p.18). Current annual consumption in Jordan is estimated to be 955 million cubic meters (MCM) (Nortcliff et al., 2008, p.18). In contrast, renewable freshwater resources are estimated just in the range of 780 to 850 MCM per year (Nortcliff et al., 2008, p.18).

Political developments in the region have contributed to the demographic composition of the population of Jordan, which now consists of Jordanians, Palestinians, Syrians, and other smaller communities with origins from Iraq and Caucasus (Haddain, 1996). These different cultural compositions affect the Kingdom's water relations with neighbouring states, who are similarly water stressed. As such, prospects to augment resources are externally limited in two respects. On the one hand the region is suffering from water scarcity as a whole

and on the other, what limited water is available must be divided between Jordan and its politically unstable neighbours. Against this backdrop, the domestic water sector is increasingly vital in the development of a sustainable long-term water strategy.

### 3.2 The Institutional Design of the Water Sector

Jordan's highly centralized public administration coincides with the country's authoritarian structure of governance. Jordan is a constitutional monarchy with representative government. Executive powers are vested in the King whose powers are exercised through appointed ministers; these ministers in turn oversee governorates that are likewise appointed by the King (CIA, 2009). The National Assembly is half elected (Chamber of Deputies) while the other half is again, appointed by the King (Senate) (CIA, 2009). These features of the state are mirrored in the water sector, where decision-making is relegated to a select few despite the large complex structure of the water sector.

In 1988, the government passed Article25a Law18 stating that all water resources available within the boundaries of the Kingdom would be considered state owned property (Shatanawi, 1999). In coordination with this law, the central government has intervened in all facets of the water sector by regulating transactions in political markets and allocating available water resources administratively (USAID, 2009). The organization of the water sector consists of a complicated structure of institutions in which roles and responsibilities are allocated on the basis of formal and informal norms.

The Royal Committee responsible for the current national water strategy is the most powerful body in water policy formation (Zeitouin, 2009). The committee has oversight of all policy in the sector including but not limited to: allocating water share to individuals and corporations, the development of alternative water projects, and encouraging private sector investment (MWI, 2009). Headed by Prince Feisal, and made up of six other appointed members including the Minister of Water and Irrigation, the Minister of Agriculture and Environment and the Director of the Economic Department at the Royal Court; it consists of some of the most powerful actors in the country (MWI, 2009).

The Ministry of Water and Irrigation (MWI) created in 1992 is the official body responsible for monitoring water supply, and the country's wastewater systems. It designs and implements water and wastewater development programs, conducts research, procures financial resources, and forms national water strategies and policies (MWI, 2009). The MWI has two constituent authorities, the Water Authority or Jordan (WAJ) and Jordan Valley Authority (JVA). The WAJ is an autonomous agency first developed in 1988 and later incorporated into the MWI (MWI, 2009). It is in charge of providing domestic and municipal water and wastewater disposal and treatment. Its responsibilities are broad but include designing and constructing physical infrastructure and operating services. In 2007, the Jordan Water Company (Miyahuna) was created as an independent limited liability company fully owned by the WAJ to take over the water and sewage services in Amman (Primus, 2008). A management committee, consisting of seven members whom represent the interests of the

MWI, JVA, the Project Management Unit (PMU), the Water Authority, the Municipality of Greater Amman, the Ministry of Planning, and the Jordan Electricity Company, run Miyahuna. The JVA, also an autonomous agency created in 1988, develops water resources in towns and villages as well infrastructure and tourism facilities in the Jordan River Valley region (MWI, 2009). In 2001, the JVA's responsibilities were extended to the development of tourism in the region as well.

In addition to these three primary bodies, there are 14 public institutions whose responsibilities are related to water and agriculture (Shatanawi, 1999). Among them are: the Ministry of Agriculture, responsible for water management at the farm level and extension services, the Ministry of Health, responsible for monitoring water quality and assuring its compliance with water quality standards for public health, and the General Co-operation for Environment Protection, responsible for water resources protection. The Ministry of Agriculture in particular plays a significant role in water policy, as it has authority under the Agriculture Law No. 20 of 1973 to exploit surface water resources to provide water for the growth of crops for animal feed or provide water for livestock (Shatanawi, 1999).

Under the MWI there are also two relevant units, the Water Demand Management Unit (WDMU) and the PMU. Established in 2002 the WDMU is responsible for water demand management programs for the urban sector in Jordan (MWI, 2009). The PMU was originally born in 1997 as an organizational body assigned to manage specific development projects in Amman, but has now

evolved to address broad objectives related to the country's emerging private water sector (PMU, 2010). In order to fulfil this mandate, a Water Sector Audit Unit (WSAU) was formally established under the body of the PMU in 2008. However, due to the premature stage of the private water sector, the activities of the WSAU are not clearly outlined. Instead, it is simply charged with the responsibility of developing performance indicators in expectation that it will monitor the performance of all private and public water utilities (PMU, 2010).

The complexity of this organizational structure deceptively masks the simple composition of power within the sector. The MWI is the single institutional body overseeing a significant fraction of these "independent" water agencies and units. Under the direction of the MWI are the following bodies: the JVA, the WAJ, the WDU and the PMU. Furthermore, in addition to his post in the Royal Commission, the Minister of Water and Irrigation also chairs the executive boards of the WDU and the PMU. In contrast, the substantial population of middle and low-level management positions are relatively insignificant to the overall system of administration (Shatanawi, 1999).

To further complicate the state of affairs, the Prime Minister, and his team of appointed ministers are reshuffled once a year between the royal court, the government and the parliament in order to prevent the emergence of alternative bases of power (Valbjørn, 2010). At the cost of effectiveness and continuity of policy in the water sector, seventeen different Water Ministers have filled the position between 1988 and 2006 (Haddain, 2006). Although, the full effects of these transitions are difficult to gauge, the consistency of Jordan's current

national water strategy is threatened by this tradition. King Abdullah endorsed the country's new national water strategy in February 2009, and by December of the same year a new Minister of Water and Irrigation was sworn in (MWI, 2009). Given the previous Minister's integral role in drawing the thirteen year long plan, the inauguration of a new Minister of Water and Irrigation calls into question whether the national strategy will indeed be reflected in future policies. Furthermore, the all-encompassing role of the Minister alluded to earlier suggest these constant changes ultimately affect the coherence of a long-term strategy.

The institutional arrangement of the water sector has not been organized to produce effective public policy or administration. The convoluted organization, short-sighted mandates and numerous inefficiencies reported by scholars and development administrators provide evidence of this (Jreisat 1997; Shatanawi 1999; Haddain 1996; 2002; Zeitoun 2009; USAID 2002). Overall, the general administrative structure suffers from the duplication of responsibilities between ministries, contradictions in agencies, and poor coordination (Jreisat, 1997). For instance, the main functions of the JVA to oversee supply and wastewater systems mirror two of the numerous responsibilities of the MWI. In general, the MWI's omniscient presence in all aspects of the water sector has resulted in an inefficient allocation of human and capital resources. There are also territorial problems such as the JVA's monopoly on the Jordan Valley where the country's most productive and export-oriented farmers are located and which as a result, the Ministry of Agriculture has the most interest (World Bank, 2000).

There is no coherent scheme in which the sector is arranged; it is neither by region nor task or role. Similar to the MWI, most institutional bodies are responsible for overseeing a variety of functions spanning across the entire country. The agencies that do have specific responsibilities located in one geographic region or area, have political significance such as the Jordan Valley, where agricultural interests are located and Amman, the capital of the country. The WAJ's focus on urban water supplies in Amman and the JVA's control of the Jordan Valley has meant that little management attention has been paid to upland irrigated agriculture and other large sections of rural areas.

In regards to the role of NGOs, approximately 15 organizations work directly or indirectly on water issues in Jordan (Abu Jamra, 2007). They fall into three main categories: international NGOs, leading national NGOS, and local community based organizations. The role of NGOs is constrained to operational issues, such as the provision of direct services, promoting awareness, community development and implementing donor-funded projects (Abu Jamra, 2007). This dynamic reflects the general lack of influence civil society has in the water sector. As a result of funding from a combination of direct contributions from supporters and from contracts to supply development from either the government or from donors, these organizations have entrenched allegiances to the state as well as emerging loyalties to international donors (Abu Jamra, 2007). It is not uncommon to find that government affiliated NGOs, such as the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature, have been established under patronage

schemes (Abu Jamra, 2007; Valbjørn, 2010). On the whole, there is little evidence of genuinely independent NGOs in the country.

The Jordan Environmental Society (JES) is the largest NGO in the country working in the water sector. It was founded in 1988 as a non-profit and non-governmental organization, with the objective to balance development and economic growth while realizing the principle of sustainable development in attaining both these goals (JES, 2009). The political character of the organization's mandate is absent from each of the projects implemented since 1991. They have no coherent focus outside of the environment, provide various services to citizens and are unspecific in their goals or tasks. Examples of project descriptions include "biodiversity protection" and "environmental awareness" (JES, 2009). The indistinct approach to the projects implemented by JES indicate that the organization's objective has little to do with its actual functions. Instead, its relationships to the state and donors appear to wield significant influence, especially given that bilateral or multilateral donors have funded each of JES' projects. The JES also holds a memorandum of understanding with the Ministry of Environment for cooperation in all environmental issues and at the same time, numerous UN organizations have cooperated with the JES and provided technical training for staff since 1999 (JES, 2009). Evidently, the JES has no coherent objective guiding its work and is entirely under the influence of those who fund its operations.

Similar investments and partnerships have been made by the government of Jordan and its donors to implement research centers and academic programs

to examine water demand management issues. As a result, attention to water policy and management is continuously increasing within Jordanian universities where graduate degree programs have formed at the University of Jordan and Jordan University for Science and Technology (Zeitoun, 2009). However, academic lobbying and advocacy efforts have little effect beyond the promotion of water awareness and consultation (Zeitoun, 2009). Furthermore, the lack of formalized avenues for consultation (especially in the case of the national water strategy) exemplifies the government's sentiment toward these initiatives.

The haphazard approach to water management in Jordan uncovers a bureaucracy that allocates responsibility and power to the benefit of state authority. In general, water management is in the domain of top-down institutions of which the legitimacy and effectiveness are highly questionable. It is therefore unlikely that genuine public participation is able to emerge when the institutional structure of the water sector provides incentives for administrators to act in the interest of themselves and the state, before the population.

### 3.3 Public Participation in Jordan's Water Management

Jordan's national water strategy was officially endorsed in May 2009 and set the planning platform for the water sector until 2022. As of writing this paper, the official document has already informed four policy papers; one each in Water Utility Policy, Irrigation Water Policy, Ground Water Management Policy and Wastewater Management Policy. Together these five papers form the road map to the future of Jordan's water sector. Yet, despite a development program that

consistently refers to good governance, accountability, transparency, and public participation, the country's national water strategy fails to engage its citizens. The development of Jordan's water policies has indicated a consistent preoccupation with maintaining state control over all aspects of the water sector.

Jordan has traditionally focused on large-scale supply management strategies, whereas effective solutions for water scarcity aim at bridging the gap between demand and supply by addressing both avenues. Supply solutions are concerned primarily with locating, identifying, developing, and managing new water resources and demand management consists of strategies to improve the existing patterns and total levels of water use (Haddain, 1996, p.66). A comprehensive demand management strategy includes public awareness campaigns, water efficiency improvements, regulatory measures and strategic water pricing (Haddain, 1996, p. 69). Unlike supply strategies, managing demand requires politically sensitive acts such as re-allocating resources or implementing water taxes. Thus, it is logical that many governments chose to seek the less politically costly option to address the problem. Unconventional means of supply such as desalination and grey water treatment have allowed the state to prolong politically costly demand strategies but are expensive and require significant energy to develop and maintain (Haddain, 1996).

In reaction to the high expense of unconventional supply solutions, in 1997, Jordan introduced the principle of water demand management in their national water strategy. Its implementation however lacked a detailed plan on what its incorporation into the national water strategy would entail. Jordan improved its

initial attempt at a demand management strategy in 2002 when a Water Demand Management Unit was developed under the protective umbrella of the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. Upon its inception, the unit developed a small variety of independent demand management programs for municipal, industrial and agricultural water sectors (Abdel Khaleq, 2008). Seven years later in 2009, a new update further elaborated on Jordan's demand management strategy in its newly formed national water strategy, where several of the actions outlined are related to demand management. These include: instituting demand management to control ground water depletions, revising water tariffs, adopting water saving technologies and promoting awareness about water scarcity and efficient water use (HKJ, 2008). ). It is evident a more integrated approach is being sought by incorporating specific demand strategies while advocating investment in supply infrastructure. At the same time, the course of its design and a closer reading of the strategy reveal a purposefully limited approach to managing water demand.

The strategy was a result of a directive issued by King Abdullah in 2008 to form a royal committee that would develop the water sector and establish a practical water management system (MWI, 2010). Outside of seven members of the committee, no other actors took part in its design ("Royal", 2008). The official document is organized with each chapter representing one aspect of the water sector. The section titled "water demand" is the only which public participation is addressed, but it is also the first approach discussed and the only personally advocated by Prince Feisal and Raed Abu Saud, the Minister of Water and Irrigation at the time. It appears in both of their brief opening statements where

each, separately urges the importance of raising water awareness in order to reduce national water demand (HKJ, 2008). Prince Feisal's foreward reads:

> A sincere effort is required from all Jordanians to understand and join collectively to address the water issues that are explained in this Strategy report. It is all [sic.] the more important to consider this Strategy report and the subsequent action plan as one of the highest priorities to perform on the national level (Al-Hussein, 2009, "Forward").

This short letter is a call for public participation but only as it is outlined in the Strategy's action plan. For the Prince, it is necessary that Jordanians begin to engage with the challenges of water management in the country, but it is likewise imperative that they do so according to the prescribed plan. A description and example of "awareness" specifically outlines its purpose and functions as imagined by the government:

> We will create awareness among the Jordanian public and decision makers as it is the first step towards behaviour change and lays the foundation for policy change. For example, if a high percentage of the population knew that 64% of all water goes to agriculture, but contributes little to the country's economic growth, an increase in irrigation tariffs would receive more public support (HKG, 2008, p.2-3),

Awareness defined in this passage functions as a shortcut to legitimizing national policy. Knowledge and acceptance of the severe water situation acts as a means of attaining endorsement without having to engage with citizens. Instead of

integrating the needs and desires of the population into policy, the state aims to shape them.

Other references to opportunities for public participation in the National Water Strategy are sparsely referenced. Consideration of local conditions is limited to assurance that the government will encourage groundwater basin user associations to implement protection zones for resources, and that water research and technology will be adapted to local conditions (HKG, 2008). Despite paying lip service to public participation, the government's promotion of awareness and local mechanisms limit citizen roles to the acceptance of national policies. Awareness alone fails to facilitate the process of social learning found in real mechanisms of public participation. Additionally, by conferring public participation to demand management strategies, participatory practices are naturally limited. Public influence in demand management alone continues to represent the existing centralized power structure historically representative of the Jordanian water sector. A clear imbalance is evident in relations where one actor controls the provision of goods, and the other is responsible for limiting its consumption.

## 4: THE PERILS OF DONOR INTERVENTION

Jordan's dire water situation has attracted individual water projects from bilateral and multilateral donors from all over the world. Currently, sixteen major international donors take part in the country's water resource management, while many others contribute financially via foreign aid. Among the external donors in water supply and sanitation are the UN, World Bank, Japan, Italy, France, Norway, South Korea, Canada, Spain, Sweden, China, Libya and various regional funds. The international popularity of the public participation rhetoric in environmental studies has influenced the donor community in Jordan to implement various projects in the country, which aim to increase public participation in Jordan's water sector. However, when assessed on a ladder of participation, they perform poorly. This is largely due to their isolated character and micro-level scale of operations. It is evident in the design of these projects that donors are preoccupied with the notion of public participation but do not incorporate the more difficult political aspects of its implementation. The ambivalent characteristic of these donor led projects ultimately lead to the waste of significant resources and the failure of such projects altogether.

One of the primary methods of public participation utilized in Jordan is the organization of a series of forums, or conferences in order to provide a platform of knowledge and exchange experiences from different actors. Project based consultations and recommendations formed in these meetings are cited as the

sole purpose of the project. In such cases, as well as others, simply interacting with select members of the public marks the success the project (Chebanne et al., 2004; Al Zoubi, et al. 2004; Smirat et al, 2008). Moreover, stakeholders are typically representative of only specific portions of society. The Zarqa River Basin project is among the most prominent and large-scale attempts at inviting stakeholder participation where stakeholder workshops aim to examine the socio-cultural impacts of the basin on the surrounding society. Unfortunately, representation is limited to government ministries, donor sponsored technical associations, and government affiliated NGOs such as the Jordanian Environmental Society (OPTIMA, 2010). The project literature reporting success of such projects focuses on the purportedly inherit democratic principles of participation but neglect the larger political setting these projects take place.

In an effort to combat these ineffective participatory mechanisms an emphasis on the development of appropriate systems of public participation has rose in more recent donor led projects. EMPOWERS was developed as a four-year regional program for participatory water management in Egypt, Jordan and Palestine. Its objective was to improve long-term access and rights to water for underprivileged populations by ensuring their participation in its governance (Laban & Moriarty, 2005). However, does so by focusing on achieving a model of "public participation" as an end in it self. The approach is self-titled and aims to develop a participatory planning cycle for IWRM. It includes two interrelated programs, Stakeholder Dialogue and Concerted Action (SDCA) and the Planning Cycle Framework. The planning cycle is designed to put decision-making within a

clearly defined set of steps in order to ensure that decisions are based on a logical flow of thought (Laban & Moriarty, 2005). The six steps titled, visioning, assessing, strategizing, planning, implementing, and reflecting, have within them further detailed sub-steps. It is organized to facilitate a constant flow of information, feedback and adjustment that is managed by the facilitators of the process, in this case EMPOWERS employees (Laban & Moriarty, 2005). The SDCA portion of the method incorporates key actors in the negotiation, planning and decision-making process by facilitating a dialogue between different stakeholders.

Facilitation is framed as the primary role of the organization in order to ensure that maximum participation by stakeholders is achieved. The other ambition of the organization is to convince national policy makers of the effectiveness of this specific approach so that they will replicate such projects on a larger scale (Laban et al., 2005). The dynamic of these simultaneous goal places EMPOWERS in difficult position. EMPOWERS facilitators must juggle between acting as a neutral facilitator and developing and advocating a specific project approach (Laban et al., 2005). The emphasis on a specific methodology has meant that each project could be defined as a success if the implementation of the project were completed given the steps outlined. The reports following and during the program emphasized how the EMPOWERS approach was adapted to local conditions regardless of the different problems and social dynamics in each community. An evaluation of the project reveals a systemic problem with the development and transference of a “model” form of public participation.

According to a rough estimation of the cost for replication of each EMPOWERS initiative is 8,000 Euro per year, and indicates that EMPOWERS is easier to replicate in middle-income countries and not in poorer regions where it has been targeted (Ghezae et al., 2007, p. 72).

On Jordan's induction into the program the objective of the project was made clear at an international conference on sustainable water management held in Tunisia:

> The key to the success of the project is less about the results of these processes, but rather in building the capacity of the participants to learn from participating in the process and be able to continue working towards successful management of their water resources in the future (Haddad et al, 2007, p. 2).

Thus, the EMPOWERS methodology is based on the notion of a process which builds capacity and "empowers" stakeholders to participate. At the same time, the premise of public participation as an effective water management tool is based on the belief that citizens have existing capacity which can be harnessed to form self-regulating institutions (Ostrom, 1990). If capacity is built within a specific framework, existing values, beliefs are preferences are undoubtedly in danger of co-optation.

Regardless, of participatory mechanisms implemented in EMPOWERS users have been framed as beneficiaries or passive recipients of external projects. The project's preoccupation with its methodology directly contradicted its mechanisms of public participation. At the conclusion of the four-year project,

an evaluation reveals its failures are too significant to call EMPOWERS a successful endeavour. Two important long-term goals of the project, to influence national policy and to institutionalize their approach, were not met. The recommendations for future projects suggest a longer time frame but also reveal that institutionalization of participatory approaches, necessitates changes in organizational culture (Ghezae et al., 2007, p.76). It refers more specifically to the norms, values and attitudes of staff and suggests that EMPOWERS include more focus activities to address organizational change (Ghezae et al., 2007, p.76). This critique is located only in a bullet point and consists of just a small portion of the evaluation but should encompass a large part of the discussion on the relevance and effectiveness of EMPOWERS. Externally led small scale projects do not address the wider societal need for participatory mechanisms in water management because they cannot escape the limitations imposed by the power relations in wider society. The very nature of Jordan's bureaucratic culture negates the development of power-sharing mechanisms where political reform is necessary in order to re-imagine existing state-societal relations.

In Jordan, EMPOWERS was implemented in the Balqa governorate. The Balqa governorate has a population of 370,000 citizens, with rainfall averaging 500-600 mm annually (Abu-Elseoud, et al., 2007, p.42). Water problems in the Balqa include a high rate of water leakage of supply, difficulties delivering water to rural areas, and over exploitation of water from non-licensed and licensed wells (Abu-Elseoud, 2007, et al., p.42). Water planning is poor because of the institutional structure of the water sector discussed earlier. Institutions lack

communication, and there is severe overlap of responsibilities between them (Abu-Elseoud, 2007, et al, p.42). In the Damya village, EMPOWERS reported a poor relationship between villagers and government officials whom they believed to be lazy and have a careless attitude toward their position. One of the ways EMPOWERS addressed this issue was to interact directly with the governorate themselves. They approached Hassan Al Edwan, one of the most influential people in the Balqa governorate and the head of Jordan's new Government Development Unit, a unit in charge of the decentralization process in the country. Despite initial reluctance, Al Edwan was trained with other stakeholders in the EMPOWERS methodology to eliminate the communication gap between the local community and government agencies (Abu-Elseoud, et al., 2007).

In effect, this had little practical results, as the coordination between ministries and smaller governmental units is complex. Although interventions were relevant at the community and governorate levels, relevance at the national level was significantly less (Ghezae, 2007, et al., 2007). Local governments lack control over financial issues and remain tied to the national ministries in reaching sources for development projects (Ghezae, 2007, et al., 2007). As a result, the achievements made during the time span of implementation are negated by the little access local actors have to fund the project. By largely bypassing national ministries, independent sources of financing that are responsive to public planning and decision-making remain a key challenge of this project. Like many other development initiatives, EMPOWERS relied on funds from donors whose commitment can easily change with policy change, and the completion of the

project following the four-year commitment is exemplary. Today, there is no available reports or data on the EMPOWERS projects following 2007. The low degree of commitment and failure of long-term application of EMPOWERS exemplifies the greatest challenge in donor implementation of public participation initiatives. By placing EMPOWERS at the center of state-societal relations as a "facilitator" the project forced dependence on external actors. Where the state and citizen have inherent self-interests in engaging in a process of negotiation and social learning, the commitment of donors is tenuously tied to external politics and policy. The EMPOWERS project exemplifies the tendency of third parties to bring with them characteristics of self-interest that are not in the best interest of the domestic state or citizens.

Jordan's strategic, geographic, and political position has made the country a primary candidate for developmental aid specifically from the U.S. When measured on a per capita basis, it is the second largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid, followed only by Israel. At the same time, Jordan's economy relies significantly on such development assistance; especially from the U.S., which provides almost half of the total assistance, received by the country 2008.[4]As the country's primary donor, USAID has implemented programs that run throughout all aspects of the water sector. They include: the development of large-scale infrastructure, technical assistance and training, public outreach, investment in research, and the facilitation of private public partnerships. On the whole, the

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The World Bank recorded Jordan's official development assistance in 2008 as $742.22 million in U.S. dollars, while, the U.S. official development assistance database recorded $384 million in U.S. dollars were allocated to Jordan.

vast reach of USAID ensures these projects make a dramatic impact on the daily lives of Jordanians. This is highly problematic given the low degree of state and public participation in the design of these projects.

Under the Zara Ma'in Water Conveyance Project, USAID funded a water treatment plant that delivers 100,000 cubic meters per day of water to approximately 700,000 people in Amman and its surrounding region (USAID, 2009b). At the time of planning, the water supply in Amman was expected to increase by 40% as a result of the investment (USAID, 2009b). The estimated budget of the project was $125 million, the most expensive USAID/Jordan water project to date. Its payment was divided between the two, with USAID providing the bulk at $104 million (USAID, 2006). As the first design-build-operate water program in Jordan, the project is dominated by USAID in every respect and excludes both the government and population of Jordan[5]. Both the design and construction aspects were contracted to large international companies based in the U.S., with Black & Veatch consulting and the Morganit Group constructing (USAID, 2009a).

In such a project, with neither the citizen nor state as a major participant, there is no accountability. The state cannot be held directly accountable for a structure it had no part in designing or constructing, and USAID has no sovereign responsibility to provide to citizens of Jordan. Furthermore, after winning the contract from USAID, the actions of these companies are largely independent.

[5] A design-build-operate contract, is a construction contract where a single contractor, or entity is given the responsibility of designing, constructing a facility and then operating and maintaining it for a period before handing it over to a client.

Beyond budget considerations, and the completed construction of infrastructure, there is no other means in which to evaluate a project without the participation of stakeholders. Accordingly, USAID declared the project a “success story” shortly following the completion of construction, (USAID, 2009c). At the same time, future costs such as long-term environmental affects and maintenance/operating expenses should affect the determination of this project’s success but are nowhere to be found in documents released by USAID.

In contracting international firms, funds flow directly from USAID to these private organizations. As such, the relationship between donors, NGOS and private companies form the design of much of the water sector in Jordan. Ghani and Lockhart (2008) have observed the dynamics of this relationship and uncovered chains of intermediation where one organization charges a fee for its contract management service and then proceeds to subcontract that project to another organization. This trend is evident in a USAID-Jordan community-based program that provides small grants to support communities in their efforts to save water. The implementing organization is Mercy Corps, an international development agency that works on various projects in different regions of the world. Beginning in 2006, Mercy Corps helped local community organizations in rural areas to install rainwater cisterns and other technologies for efficient water use (USAID, 2009a). Two local partners are also included in the project; the Jordan River Foundation trains and shares field supervision responsibilities and the Royal Scientific Society provides technical training and assistance. Two years into the operation of the project, 30 community organizations out of the 120

expected over a five-year period beginning had taken part (Mercy Corps, 2008). That same year funding from Development Alternatives Inc. (DAI) permitted an extension of the project to include seven more organizations (Mercy Corps, 2008). These funds provided by DAI originate from a USAID contract awarded to the development contractor for the purpose of implementing a separate USAID-Jordan initiative called Water Demand Management (USAID, 2009a). The allocation of these additional funds to Mercy Corps is a subcontract of another program in which DAI has likely received payment from USAID to implement.

By relinquishing these state functions to outside agencies, entrenched interests of non-state actors are likely to develop at the cost of the state (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Each contracted project had its own rules and operating procedures it proceeded under without genuine regard to the local context or state ministries. It is logical for a private company like many of these contracted by the USAID, to complete a project at the least cost possible to them. However, the consequences of this objective in water management are numerous and varied. Water management is a social enterprise that requires the incorporation of social values and dynamics. Simply presenting communities with a pre-designed plan of engagement removes water from this social dimension. When projects are contracted and subcontracted to agencies, they are increasingly removed from the community they aim to address and any means of accountability.

Beyond the immediate failure of these projects, this type of donor intervention has far reaching consequences for the water sector and the state as

a whole. Indiscriminately donated funds and investments from external actors allow the state to retain the existing institutional organization of the water sector and avoid genuine reform. In the Cold War context, aid became a means of rewarding rulers who supported or opposed one of the superpowers. U.S. nurtured dictators who governed undemocratic systems, as neither foreign aid nor foreign policy advocated developing democratic political institutions and processes in many developing countries. This remains the case for the strategic relationship built by the U.S. and Jordan. A study examining aid flows conducted by Alesina and Dollar sheds light on the phenomenon of strategic aid donations. They conclude that aid flows are determined by political and strategic considerations of source countries at least, as much (and arguably more) as the policy and institutions of the receiving countries (2000, pp. 40). U.S. aid flows in particular are directed by elements of openness, democracy and poverty only when aid is controlled for allies within the Middle East.

Interestingly, this fact is not hidden from official USAID/Jordan documents. Jordan is often cited as a strategic partner, whom is geographically and politically central to the foreign policy interests of the U.S (2009a). Furthermore, Jordan's assistance via the Millennium Challenge Account is notably misplaced given the organization's mandate to reward states that have demonstrated a commitment to "sound development" (Sharp, 2009b, p.14). Freedom House and several development analysts protested prior to selection that Jordan should not be selected for several reasons, including its authoritarian political system (Sharp, 2009b). The political motivation that underlies such aid undermines the larger

national goals the funds aim to achieve. Developing countries are often at the hand of authoritarian leaders who actively pursue strategies to negate the effects of accountability. By aligning itself with U.S. policy while building a reputation for progressiveness, Jordan's regime has maximized its strategic value.

This type of growing dependence on an external actor has severe consequences for the relationship between state and citizens, and in turn for the development of an effective water management strategy. A sustainable approach to water management will necessarily require a new role for agriculture. The largest consumer of water in Jordan is irrigated agriculture, constituting approximately 63% of overall use, compared to 37% for municipal, industrial, and tourism uses (Khaleq, 2008, p.4). Historically, agriculture has played a significant role in the development of the country by contributing substantially to the country's economy at the time of independence. The government has since then consistently placed an emphasis on retaining an element of self-sufficiency in regards to food (Khaleq, 2008). However, despite best efforts at modernization and increases in production, the agricultural sector share of the economy has declined and in 2009 contributed to just 3% of the GDP and supplied only 2.7% the country's labour in 2007 (CIA, 2009, "World Factbook"). These current water use allocations reflect the role of politically powerful agriculture interests in the domestic water sector at the expense of a widening gap between water supplies and demand. As an active donor in the water sector, USAID (2009a) ironically reports that the country's tariff levels are too low to cover financial costs let alone environmental and opportunity costs. Subsidies are therefore one of the primary

causes of a widening gap between supply and demand and the consistent availability of external funds allows the government of Jordan to continue along this line of administration. As these patterns of behaviour progress, the state increasingly relies on external donors to maintain overall economic stability and to provide essential services, while simultaneously limiting the future social and economic development of the country.

Some have argued that the problem of water scarcity on the whole is due to inefficient water allocations and inefficient water governance. Researchers have found evidence from the Jordan River Basin, which proves enough water supplies are available to support sustainable water management, if its usage were reoriented to drinking water instead of agriculture (Orthofer, 2007; Al-Weshah, 2000)[6]. In contrast, many of Jordan's primary donors has primarily been located in the development of large scale, costly technical solutions. This is the case particularly for USAID led programs, whose focus has been on supplementing water supply with wastewater treatment and desalination. The previously discussed Zara Ma'in Conveyance Project is the largest and most expensive USAID/Jordan project budgeted at $121 million (USAID, 2009). USAID is also taking part in the ambitious Red Sea – Dead Sea Water Conveyance feasibility study to determine the technical, economic, financial and

[6] Interestingly, USAID subscribes to a similar belief. USAID is primarily concerned with the optimization of scarce water resources where water sector performance is perceived as an essential to component to economic development. Imbalance of supply and demand is perceived as a primarily economic concern. To exemplify their point of view, USAID quotes *The Economist*, "The problem with water in Jordan is not that it is too scarce but that it is too cheap" (USAID, 2009).

environmental feasibility of a multi-billion dollar project to pump seawater from the Gulf of Aqaba to the Dead Sea (USAID, 2009).

There are many demographic, cultural and ideological factors that govern the water allotment between different uses and sectors, and these should be addressed when approaching water scarcity. Addressing the gap between supply and demand through large-scale infrastructure serves only to prolong and deepen the crisis. In the case of agriculture, traditionally most policies and strategies focus on increasing yield of farming activities, but this does not address current usage patterns and the values associated with water use. A more integrated approach is needed; one example is to change patterns of trade to importing high water content products and exporting low water content products (Mourad et al., 2009).

Currently, Jordan exports virtual water that is embedded in tomatoes, eggplants and to the Gulf States and produces bananas, on of the most high water consuming crops, for domestic consumption (Mourad et al., 2009). A much need transformation of the agricultural sector requires taking all viewpoints into account. An approach increasing participation of these different stakeholders can help form incentives to conserve and utilize water more efficiently. Through a bargaining process, the government need to not combat with farmers currently producing these crops but can provide incentives for them to re-orient their activities such as create a body to manage relations between farmers and external trade agencies (Mourad et al.,2009).

# 5: CONCLUDING REMARKS

Public participation is widely accepted by the international community as an integral component of a sustainable water management strategy. As a general development practice, it can enhance the quality of policy, the legitimacy of state, and build capacity of both the state and citizens to develop effective policy. Public participation is especially relevant in the case of water management due to the social-relational aspects and the technological expertise required for effective strategies. Genuine mechanisms of public participation will introduce a process of social learning which facilitates the development of a shared framework and knowledge base to address water related issues. The development of these networks thus requires power sharing between the government and citizens. Traditionally, in authoritarian states such a dynamic runs contrary to the governance system, where power is concentrated and located with a select few.

Jordan has recently included public participation into its demand management strategies by emphasizing a public responsibility to promote water awareness. Unfortunately, public awareness alone does not fulfil the requirements of real public participation, and instead relegates citizens to the acceptance of national policies. The development of public participatory initiatives cannot escape the limitations imposed on it by the power relations in wider society. As such, the very nature of Jordan's bureaucratic culture negates

any attempt to develop of power-sharing mechanisms that do not address political reform.

The state's dependence on external funds to service the water sector further hinders prospects for public participation as donor programs and foreign aid sever the link of accountability between state and society. By indiscriminately funding the water sector, USAID contributes to the maintenance of the existing institutional structure, its current water strategies and their numerous inefficiencies. At the same time, the international popularity of IWRM has led to the incorporation of donor led public participation programs in Jordan. Although these programs aim to involve stakeholders in the decision-making process of projects, they ultimately fail because they are designed with donor interests taking priority over the needs of recipients.

Ghani and Lockhart (2008) suggest that the position of donors described here is the primary reason for the failure of most development projects and strategies. In contrast to the donor led initiatives described in this paper, they assess the success of national programmes as an alternative project. National programs have a unified set of rules that are put into effect uniformly across the state. This enables the government to perform a state function by mobilizing specific actors to complete crucial tasks, and do so effectively and transparently. Specific nationwide rules allocate roles, rights, and responsibilities for people and pathways for flows of money and information. Thereby, facilitating accountability and making sanctions for deviation possible.

For instance, in Afghanistan, the National Solidarity Program (a form of national program) has become the government's most successful rural development project (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Under the program, the Afghan Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development allocate funds to elected groups at the local level who then implement small-scale development projects (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). A limited number of domestic and international NGOs assist these local organizations and once a project is agreed on, $200 per family is distributed by the national government to execute the project (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Citizens contribute 10 percent of project costs through cash, labour or other means and they are involved in every aspect of the decision-making process (Ghani & Lockhart, 2008). Furthermore, the expenditure of funds is publicly tracked and monitored by villagers.

The organization of national programs removes donors from its central position between the state and its citizens and promotes accountability at all levels of decision-making and implementation. Donors whom allocate funds directly to the national government can oversee the transfer of funds to specific projects, and citizens are able to see immediate and tangible results of expenses.

The development of donor supported national programs for the water sector in Jordan would improve water governance, while still ensuring much needed foreign aid. This is not to suggest that national programs will serve as a panacea for water scarcity in the country. Limitations on water supply are likely to continue to challenge the state regardless of the development of such programs,

but the simultaneous emergence of public participation, accountability and transparency in decision-making and implementation will serve only to benefit the future of the water sector and Jordan's overall process of development.

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