

## **Transformation: How Football in Jordan is Altering National Identity**

Sport has routinely been used by researchers to better understand cultural aspects of a society, but such studies have primarily focused on developed countries, leaving out increasingly important regions, such as the Middle East. The objective of this research was to explore how the Jordanian national football team, and its unprecedented success, as it attempts to qualify for the 2014 World Cup, is affecting Jordanian national identity. This was done to determine the validity of the notion that the Jordanian national football team is strengthening Jordanian identity. The results of this research found sport, in particular the Jordanian national football team, to have had a significant impact on strengthening Jordanian national identity, through building a sense of camaraderie and unity directed toward team. This research consisted of seven in depth interviews with Jordanians from various backgrounds, and representing different demographic groups. Interviews focused first on the role of sport, and the national team, on society, and secondly on the different characteristics of Jordanian identity. The results of this research suggest that the national football team has been, and can continue to be, an effective tool for unifying Jordan.