

From Nation-State to Refugee-State? Reconceptualizing the Role of Forced Migrants in Jordan

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Thesis

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## **Abstract**

Refugees have been characterized in scholarship on forced migration as static, often helpless populations, falling under the responsibility of an international refugee regime, with their influence on the host state framed primarily as potential threats to sovereignty and as socioeconomic burden. I argue that in the case of Jordan, which has the highest refugee to citizen ratio in the world, refugees must instead be understood as actors with economic, political, and social agency that have played an integral role in the Jordanian state's economic and governance strategies. I examine the three most salient features of the modern Jordanian nation-state: 1) the country's status as a semi-rentier, aid-reliant economy; 2) the persisting authoritarian, elite coalition-based system of governance; and 3) the rapid urbanization and socio-spatial polarization experienced over the past five decades. I argue that as a result of the influence of Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugee influxes, Jordan has developed into a country defined by its refugees—a veritable “refugee-state.” This thesis concludes that the case of Jordan epitomizes the need for scholars to conceptualize refugees as individuals with the power to remake and fundamentally alter economic, political, and social systems within their host state—as part of and not separate to the host state's domestic development.

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## Introduction

Bordered by Syria on the north, Israel and the West Bank to the west, and Iraq to the east, the tiny kingdom of Jordan has largely escaped the turmoil that has beset these nations over the six and a half decades since its independence in 1946. Yet while Jordan has avoided the conflicts themselves, it has nevertheless faced their fallout—namely, through the millions of Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian refugees residing within its borders, in addition to a number of other smaller refugee populations. Each of these three primary refugee presences in Jordan have now become “protracted refugee situations,” defined as refugees that have been in exile “for 5 years or more after their initial displacement, without immediate prospects for implementation of durable solutions.”<sup>1</sup>

Most scholarship on protracted refugee situations and, more broadly, the relationship between refugees and the host state focus on issues of security, economic pressure, and the difficulty of funding and distributing aid to these populations.<sup>2</sup> As Edward Newman notes, “Refugee flows are demonstrably a source of international—mainly regional—conflict through causing instability in neighboring countries,” not only by introducing new forms of political resistance but also through the economic competition and resource strain placed on often already-impooverished countries.<sup>3</sup> The “durable solutions” of repatriation or resettlement as residents or citizens of another country remain out of reach for about two-thirds of the world’s refugees, and generations may be born and continue to live in refugee camps for their entire lives.<sup>4</sup> Within this framework, refugees are simultaneously cast as threats to the host state’s

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<sup>1</sup> James Milner and Gil Loescher, “Responding to Protracted Refugee Situations: Lessons from a Decade of Discussion,” *Forced Migration Policy Briefing 6* (2011) Refugee Studies Centre, University of Oxford, p 3.

<sup>2</sup> Milner and Loescher, “Responding to Protracted Refugee Situations” (2011).

<sup>3</sup> Edward Newman, ed., *Refugees and forced displacement: international security, human vulnerability, and the state*. United Nations Publications, 2003, p15

<sup>4</sup> Milner and Loescher, “Responding to Protracted Refugee Situations” (2011), p1.

security, economic burdens, and helpless, largely immobile populations subject to abuse and poor living conditions.

This characterization of refugees as a destabilizing burden is echoed in the case of Jordan. In response to the renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace effort pushed by U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, the Jordanian government has begun tallying up the cost of the Palestinian refugees, arguing that Jordan should receive USD \$50 million dollars for each of the 65 years it has hosted the Palestinian population.<sup>5</sup> In a 2013 speech to the United Nations, King Abdullah II of Jordan stressed that while “Jordanians have opened their arms to those in need, as we have always done,” they “cannot be asked to shoulder the burden of what is a regional and global challenge.” Citing the statistic that Syrian refugees now make up nearly 10 percent of Jordan’s population, King Abdullah II stressed the need for more international aid and support for Jordan in addressing the Syrian refugee presence.<sup>6</sup>

The economic and infrastructural pressures exerted by such a massive population influx are immense. However, as King Abdullah II’s speech also indicates, a vast refugee presence is not new for Jordan—in fact, refugees have been the norm rather than the exception. Jordan has the highest ratio of refugees to indigenous population of any country in the world, and has served as a shelter to over two million Palestinian refugees, close to 500,000 Iraqis, and over 500,000 Syrian refugees from the ongoing Syrian civil war.<sup>7</sup> According to both the Jordanian government and international media, every new refugee influx brings the country closer to the edge of economic, social, and political collapse. Yet how is it that the country has retained enough

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<sup>5</sup> “Jordan and the Palestinians: A Kingdom of Two Halves,” *The Economist*, March 8, 2014.

<sup>6</sup> King Abdullah II, “Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the Plenary Session of the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations,” (New York, 24 September 2013). <http://kingabdullah.jo/>

<sup>7</sup> Geraldine Chatelard. *Jordan: A Refugee Haven*, Country Profiles, Migration Policy Institute (2010).

stability over the past half century to continue to serve as the last “safe haven” for refugees from across the region?

In this thesis, I hypothesize that Jordan has reached a level of economic, political, and social codependence with its refugees that they themselves comprise an enduring constituency of the Jordanian state—forming a veritable “refugee-state.” By deftly leveraging the refugee presences within its domestic governance and economy, Jordan’s government has been able to continue a system of semi-authoritarian rule under the weight of each new population influx. However, rather than solely static populations manipulated by powerful Jordanian elite, refugees in Jordan must be conceptualized as individuals with economic, political, and social agency. I therefore examine the role of refugees in directing the development of the Jordanian economy, system of governance, and society, framing refugees as both the objects of socioeconomic and governance strategies undertaken by the country’s monarchy and government and as individual agents of transformation and change. Drawing on both secondary sources and field research I conducted in Jordan in January 2014, I argue that refugees may not only be manipulated and leveraged within the host state economic, legal, and social systems, but may themselves actively forge new means of economic participation, self-governance, and social interaction. Refugees have challenged the notion of Jordan as a state embodying a unitary, ethnic nation by both shaping Jordan’s economy, governance, and society and serving as necessary pawns for the government’s rule.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching question of this thesis is: How have refugees influenced Jordan’s modern economic, political, and social structure, both as instruments of formal and informal policies and as individual agents? Three sub-questions provide a framework for analysis:

First, how have refugees influenced the political economy of Jordan? For most of its history after independence, Jordan has been characterized as a “semi-rentier state” heavily dependent on foreign aid to buttress its economic and even political stability. Within this context, how have refugees figured into the economic strategies of the Jordanian government? Furthermore, how have refugees themselves exerted economic agency through participation in the Jordanian economy, and has this significantly influenced the economy’s modern development?

Second, how have refugees factored into the Jordanian monarchy’s governance strategies and the country’s political development? Have refugees in protracted displacement been included as subjects with political and legal duties and claims in Jordan, or ruled as temporary “non-subjects” with no political role or legal rights? If included, are their legal and political statuses equal to those of Jordan’s “indigenous” inhabitants? How have refugees themselves chosen to participate politically or adapt strategies of self-governance?

Finally, how does Jordanian society and physical development reflect the influence of refugee populations? In light of migration-driven processes of urbanization, how have the societal spaces of the city, refugee camp, and rural areas reflected the influence of refugee populations? Can Jordanian society be understood as divided by ethnic and national cleavages between different refugee populations and Jordanians, or have refugees contributed to a process of “cosmopolitanization,” especially within urban centers?

The conclusion to this thesis addresses the overarching question of refugee influence on Jordan, and finds that characterizing Jordan as a “refugee-state” does not fully account for the continuing monopoly on state institutions by East Bank Jordanians or the development of a new Palestinian-Jordanian identity. However, the impact of refugees on Jordan’s development

nevertheless supports the argument that refugees cannot be understood simply as economic, political, and social burdens, and instead must be conceptualized as agents of change within the host state. Three concepts require further clarification: who is a refugee, what “agency” means in the context of refugees, and the connection between refugees, ethnicity and the nation-state.

## **Research Context**

### ***Who is a refugee?***

The use of the term “refugee” as opposed to “forced migrant” within this thesis might seem imprecise and even incorrect—indeed, it is used to refer to a range of individuals within Jordan who, especially in the case of the Iraqis, are neither registered with the UNHCR nor self-identify as a *laji*’ (refugee in Arabic). In the international context, refugee is defined according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees:

A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.<sup>8</sup>

Until the 1967 Protocol, the legal status of refugee could even be limited to a temporal and geographic frame: the Convention only applied to individuals fleeing due to pre-1951 “events” and state had the option of adding a declaration limiting this to “events in Europe.”<sup>9</sup> The modern definition’s specification of political or social motives for flight has been criticized by scholars such as Gil Loescher and Alexander Bettes, who argue that the effects of environmental degradation, neoliberalism, and generalized violence provide equally legitimate reasons for protection by the international community. In the Middle East, the word refugee until

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<sup>8</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Geneva: UNHCR, 2007.

<sup>9</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees.

the past two decades has become nearly synonymous with the plight of the Palestinians: an individual whose state has been wrested from her, with the hope of return distant and uncertain.<sup>10</sup> The introduction of the category of “guest” to domestic frameworks for addressing individuals fleeing their home states—employed in various contexts by countries such as Lebanon, Jordan, and Turkey—adds a further layer of imprecision.

I have nevertheless intentionally chosen to use “refugee” throughout this work instead of the term “forced migrant,” meaning an individual who has been forced to migrate and differentiated only from someone who has voluntarily migrated (though this again becomes subjective). The word refugee in the context of not only academic literature, but the international aid community and media, has attained a level of use and synonymy with the injustice of forced flight that it has become the only word that adequately describes the displacement from the home country. This term will at times be used to encompass “asylum-seekers” and “guests,” but will usually not include environmental or economic forced migrants unless, as in the Iraqi case, the proximate causes of economic distress are political.

The number of refugees registered with either the UNHCR or UNRWA in Jordan as of March 2014 is about 2.7 million. This number includes 2,054,527 Palestinian refugees, 24,730 Iraqi refugees, 587,308 Syrian refugees, and about 1,350 other refugees. This number does not include an unclear additional number of Iraqi “de facto refugees” under the 1951 Convention (2013 government estimates placed the total number at over 450,000), up to an additional estimated 600,000 Syrians, and asylum seekers (about 790 as of December 2013).<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>10</sup> Virginia Mason, “The Im/mobilities of Iraqi Refugees in Jordan: Pan-Arabism, ‘Hospitality’ and the Figure of the ‘Refugee’”, *Mobilities*, vol. 6, no. 3, (2011) pp. 353-373.

<sup>11</sup> Refugee figures calculated based on the most recent estimates drawn from UNHCR and UNRWA: 2013 UN country operations profile—Jordan,” last modified April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2013, <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e486566.html>; UNRWA, “Where We Work: Facts and Figures,” last modified 1 July 2013. <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>

proportion of Jordanian citizens to refugees is about 3:1; however, this number is deceptive since many Palestinian refugees have Jordanian citizenship. While these numbers reflect estimates as of March 2014, the number of refugees in Jordan has fluctuated in proportion to the population over the past six decades. The majority of refugees in Jordan reside in urban areas outside of camps.<sup>12</sup>

While Chapter 2 discusses the question of responsibility for governing refugees in Jordan in depth, this section briefly outlines international treaties applicable to refugees. Because an individual's status as a refugee entails a rupture of the "the basic bond between citizen and government," governing and aiding refugees falls under the responsibility of the international community and the host state.<sup>13</sup> The "right to seek and enjoy asylum" outlined by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is at first glance a foundation for the protection of the transnational individual rights of refugees.<sup>14</sup> The 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees further outline the rights of individuals meeting the definition of a refugee as well as the responsibilities of the host state.<sup>15</sup> However, while Jordan is a signatory to the 1948 UDHR, it is not a party to either the 1951 Convention or 1967 Protocol. Nevertheless, international "responsibility" for refugees in Jordan falls under two different branches of the UN: the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Following the expulsion of over 700,000 Palestinians from historical Palestine after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the UN established UNRWA. Rather than a

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<sup>12</sup> UNRWA, "Where We Work: Facts and Figures."

<sup>13</sup> Richard A. I. Johnson, "Refugee Camp Security: Decreasing Vulnerability Through Demographic Controls," *Journal of Refugee Studies* (2011)24 (1): 23-46.

<sup>14</sup> *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, UN General Assembly, 1948.

<sup>15</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees. *Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees*. Geneva: UNHCR, 2007.

governance institution, however, the organization was developed specifically “to carry out direct relief and works programmes for Palestine refugees.”<sup>16</sup> Responsibility for all other refugees within Jordan falls under the UNHCR, which is tasked with registering and coordinating relief. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 2, the question of who is a refugee and how they are governed is an issue constantly negotiated between Jordan as a host state and the international “refugee regime.”

### ***Refugee Agency***

Images of gaunt children behind fences, surrounded by the beige, dust-driven fabric of a seemingly endless procession of tents characterize depictions of refugees. By definition, to be a refugee means to have been deprived of choice—the forced flight from a distant homeland thrusts the refugee at the mercy of the international community or the host state, waiting to be saved. As Hannah Arendt notes in the introduction to her seminal 1943 essay “We Refugees:”

A refugee used to be a person driven to seek refuge because of some act committed or some political opinion. Well, it is true we have had to seek refuge; but we committed no acts and most of us never dreamt of having any radical opinion... Now ‘refugees’ are those of us who have been so unfortunate as to arrive in a new country without means and have to be helped by Refugee Committees.<sup>17</sup>

Yet despite being forsaken and even menaced by the violence in their home countries, viewing refugees as simply objects acted upon by more powerful international actors elides an important concept central not just to refugees but to human beings: the notion of “agency.” The idea of refugees as agents is not foreign to literature on refugees: Arendt herself notes that

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<sup>16</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees. Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees. Geneva: UNHCR, 2007.

<sup>17</sup> Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees,” *The Menorah Journal* (1943), available online at: [http://www-leland.stanford.edu/dept/DLCL/files/pdf/hannah\\_arendt\\_we\\_refugees.pdf](http://www-leland.stanford.edu/dept/DLCL/files/pdf/hannah_arendt_we_refugees.pdf)

refugees may actively serve as “the vanguard of their people.”<sup>18</sup> As Philomena Essed, Georg Frerks, and Joke Schrijvers note in their volume *Refugees and the Transformation of Societies*, the concept of agency “centralizes people, conceptualized as social actors who process their own experiences and those of others while acting upon these experiences.”<sup>19</sup> For an individual to possess agency therefore means a fundamental ability to act based on some sort of choice. Discussing this concept in the context of refugees and forced migration is, however, problematic. While refugees may hold the ability to “process their own experiences and the experiences of others,” acting upon these experiences may be limited by economic means or physical confinement to the space of a refugee camp—never mind that the choice to flee was not much of a choice at all. Furthermore, as this thesis will explore, refugees have often been utilized as pawns in strategies of economic policy and governance, with their agency legally and physically limited by the actions of the host state and society and even by international organizations.

How can refugees therefore be understood as individual agents with the power to act in, adapt to, and even transform their environments? Conceptualizing refugees as agents is a necessary step to the different realities that many refugees face: while many are entirely dependent on international aid, many are not; while many refugees live in refugee camps, the majority live in urban environments. Acknowledging refugee agency is therefore a first step in dispelling the notion of refugees as static, camp-bound populations or as “passive victims of conflict and disaster, mere recipients of international aid.”<sup>20</sup> This thesis therefore acknowledges both the agency of powerful government and international actors in determining the legal status

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<sup>18</sup> Arendt, “We Refugees.”

<sup>19</sup> Philomena Essed and Georg Frerks, *Refugees And The Transformation Of Societies: Agency, Policies, Ethics and Politics*. (New York, NY: Berghahn Books, 2005).

<sup>20</sup> Essed and Frerks, *Refugees And The Transformation Of Societies*.

and fate of refugees, yet also seeks to highlight the agency of refugees as a direct contrast to conceptions of their passivity.

### ***Ethnicity, the Nation-State, and the Question of the Refugee-State***

Clarification of the terms of ethnicity and nation is important both to address the impact of refugees on the concept of the nation-state and because these terms have often been defined in highly divergent manners by various scholars. These definitions will be restated in part in Chapters 2 and 3, where this discussion is most relevant. The term “ethnic” has multiple meanings in different scholarly contexts. In this thesis, I employ Donald Horowitz’s definition of “ethnic” as an *ascriptive group identity* that may include race, language, religion, tribe, caste, and other forms of group self-identification. This broad definition guards against generalizations on the basis of descriptive characteristics, such as the Arab identity or Muslim identity, and allows for self-identification and delineation.<sup>21</sup> Ethnicity in this thesis may be used to differentiate between East Bank Jordanians, Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians; however, this distinction is challenged in Chapter 3.

Understanding the nation-state requires defining both the state and the nation. Max Weber’s definition of the state as any “human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory” is the most well-known, and will be used here.<sup>22</sup> The nation-state is a state that lays claim to the representation and well-being of a nation, as opposed to other state entities such as a federation, empire, or colonial power. Defining what constitutes a nation, however, is somewhat problematic. Walker Connor has argued that the nation is defined as “the largest group that shares a sense of common ancestry” with the corollary of the nation as being “the largest group that can be

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<sup>21</sup> Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 41-54.

<sup>22</sup> Max Weber, "Basic sociological terms." *Economy and society* 1 (1978):3-62.

influenced/aroused/motivated/mobilized by appeals to common kinship.”<sup>23</sup> Applied to the example of Jordan, the nation would be only those who share a common sense of ancestry as ethnically Jordanian. Scholars may employ the Hegelian notion of relationally defining a “national subject as a particular kind of human being, a member of a particular kind of community, and hence, ontologically and existentially distinct from strangers to that community.” The qualities of the “constitutive other” becomes the marker against which the nation is defined.<sup>24</sup> However, in his book *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*, Joseph Massad also discusses the role of juridical and state institutions in determining who constitutes a “juridico-national subject” of a nation-state.<sup>25</sup> Massad argues that “the juridical secures the precepts of nationalism by *interpellating* subjects as nationals, [even as] it simultaneously reveals nationality as a fiction to be molded and remolded by the law.”<sup>26</sup> This argument corresponds with arguments by scholars such as Benedict Anderson against the concept of a primordial, ethnic nation. Massad highlights that while an individual’s geographic or ethnic identity may be prediscursive, their belonging as a national subject is in part defined by their status as outlined by state and legal institutions. This top-down consolidation of the nation ties its members to the outlines of the state, whereas other definitions of the nation emphasize the state as a construct through which the nation and nationalist discourse is expressed.<sup>27</sup>

The relationship between the nation-state and refugees has been described by scholars such as Emma Haddad as one of conscious “othering.” As she argues, “The relationship between state identity and the identity of the refugee has a normative quality that allows the refugee to be

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<sup>23</sup> Walker Connor. "The timelessness of nations." *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 1- 2 (2004): 35-47.

<sup>24</sup> Sunera Thobani. *Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) p 5.

<sup>25</sup> Joseph Andoni Massad, *Colonial effects: The making of national identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>26</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, p 15.

<sup>27</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

negatively constituted as a threat to the nation-state.”<sup>28</sup> Through legal and rhetorical exclusion, the refugee becomes the necessary “other” against which the nation is defined, with the state serving as only a temporary custodian of foreign nationals. Inclusion—meaning the accordance of equal legal and political rights and the development of a “national consciousness”—would entail the development of a new Jordanian nation defined on terms other than East Bank Jordanian or refugee ethnicity, achievable through both official policies of multiculturalism and a social “cosmopolitanization.” As will be explored in Chapters 2 and 3, however, this analysis does not account for relationships between the refugees, host communities, and state in which the refugee is neither fully “othered” or “included.” This analysis also does not account fully for protracted refugee presences that—in the case of Jordan—date to shortly after the country’s independence as a nation-state. As this thesis explores, the unique post-independence relationship between refugees, the state, and “ethnic” Jordanians may characterize the country as a “refugee-state;” that is, one whose existence is defined in part by the refugees within its borders.

## **Study Scope**

This thesis focuses on the role of Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees in Jordan’s economic, political, and social development from its independence in 1946 to March 2014. In the interest of addressing the impacts of proportionally large refugee influxes, this research does not include analysis of smaller refugee and forced migrant populations such as Libyans, Somalis, Sudanese, and more. While population influxes and political developments before 1946 will be referenced, the focus of this thesis is on Jordan’s modern history and developments. This research primarily addresses refugee flows due to the following conflicts: the 1948 Arab-Israeli

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<sup>28</sup> Emma Haddad, *The refugee in international society: between sovereigns* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008): p 57.

War, the 1967 Arab-Israeli War, the 1990 Gulf War, the 2003 Iraq War, and the 2011 Syrian Civil War, as well as ongoing Palestinian refugee flows stemming from Israel's occupation of Gaza and the West Bank and Iraqi refugees fleeing persistent sectarian violence since 1990. It does not address the other primary form of migration—labor flows from Egypt and South and Southeast Asia. These inflows nevertheless certainly figure into processes of economic and social transformation in Jordan, and deserve a study of their own.

The most prominent refugee presence in Jordan's history has been the Palestinian refugees. Most Palestinians arriving in Jordan following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War were initially naturalized as Jordanian citizens, yet have since come to be portrayed as a demographic and existential threat and are estimated to comprise between 50 to 70 percent of Jordan's population, although no official Jordanian census has confirmed these numbers.<sup>29</sup> Scholars such as Laurie Brand and Massad have cast the polarizing rift between Jordan's East Bank Jordanian population—which asserts its indigenosity to the area of Jordan—and the Palestinian-Jordanian population as a primary characteristic of modern Jordan. The influence of the Palestinian presence therefore serves as an argument against conflating Palestinian refugees with subsequent proportionally smaller Iraqi and Syrian populations. This thesis's discussion acknowledges that, in many ways, refugee has come to mean Palestinian in Jordan and in the Middle East in general, and acknowledges that the territorial loss of the Palestinian homeland is a significant factor in influencing the nature of their presence in Jordan. However, the focus on the refugee as an actor is an effort to contextualize these more recent refugee influxes within a broader pattern of refugee flows to Jordan. By analyzing these different population influxes

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<sup>29</sup> These estimates vary sharply; two sources for estimates are included here: "Palestinians in Jordan," Minority Rights International, accessed 11 April 2014, <http://www.minorityrights.org/4945/jordan/palestinians.html>; "Assessment for Palestinians in Jordan," Minorities at Risk, accessed 11 April 2014. <http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/mar/assessment.asp?groupId=66302>

within the framework of the refugee as an actor, this thesis puts forward a critical understanding of the influence of protracted refugee presences not just within Jordan, but in other developing countries such as Pakistan and Tanzania. Jordan nevertheless presents a unique case in terms of both the proportional scale of its refugee population and the presence of refugees since its independence.

The field research conducted for this thesis was limited in both geographic scope and duration, and was enabled by the support of two grants from Middle East Studies at Brown University and the university's Dean of the College. Field research was conducted entirely in Amman, Jordan, with the exception of a visit to the King Abdullah Park Syrian refugee camp and to the University of Irbid. Consequentially, the final chapter of this thesis focuses primarily on Amman's urban development and cites interviews from refugees, Jordanians, and aid workers either living or working in the city. I conducted 21 interviews with Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian refugees, as well as East Bank Jordanians and key informants in NGOs, government, and academia. Future study on this subject would ideally entail more regionally comprehensive ethnographic field research in Jordan.

Finally, while this thesis's primary focus is on the impact of forced migration flows into that have accompanied a broader, all-encompassing process of globalization, it does not account for other global flows. Information flows, trade and capital flows, and climate change are all phenomena that scholars such as Manuel Castells and David Held have argued have been instrumental in mounting a challenge to the notion of a unitary nation-state. While the impact of these processes will be discussed in conjunction with refugee flows in Chapters 2 and 3, the effects of globalization on Jordan's economy, governance, and society are not directly addressed within this thesis.

## Terms

This thesis employs the following terms for the different populations residing within Jordan's borders:

*East Bank Jordanians:* Individuals with Jordanian citizenship whose origins lie within the physical territory of the current state of Jordan. Jordan's position to the east of the Jordan River is the source of the term "East Bank," which was also employed to differentiate from the Palestinian West Bank. This definition does not include Circassian Jordanians, who are not included within the scope of this work, or pre-1947 Palestinian, Syrian, and Egyptian populations within Jordan.

*Palestinian-Jordanians:* Palestinians who became Jordanian citizens following Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1950. This term also includes Palestinian-Jordanians registered as refugees with UNRWA, Palestinian-Jordanians who have held refugee status at some point but have since given up this status, and Palestinian-Jordanians who arrived in the country following the 1947 partition but do not have legal refugee status.

*Palestinian refugees:* Palestinians in Jordan registered as refugees with UNRWA in the context of the time period being discussed by the thesis. This category also includes Palestinian refugees from Gaza and some post-1967 refugees that do not possess Jordanian citizenship.

*Iraqis/Iraqi refugees:* Within the context of this essay, the terms are employed to mean Iraqis arriving in Jordan following the 1991 Gulf War. The word "refugee" is omitted in the context of the third chapter's argument concerning strategic state categorization of forced migrants and the rejection of legal refugee status by many Iraqis themselves. As Geraldine Chatelard notes "the highly political nature of the causes that have led to reactive migration from Iraq, even when proximate causes appear to be economic...renders the distinction between refugees or political exiles on the one hand and economic migrants or expatriates on the other hand particularly difficult."<sup>30</sup>

*Syrian refugees:* Individuals fleeing from conflict or political persecution in Syria, most often applying to refugees from the 2011 Syrian Civil War.

*Jordanians:* Individuals with Jordanian citizenship regardless of national origin.

## Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 begins by addressing the significance of refugees to the development of Jordan's political economy. It seeks to critically interrogate the perception of refugees as a "burden" on the host-state economy by both examining refugees as a source of strategic rents in

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<sup>30</sup> Geraldine Chatelard, "What Visibility Conceals: Re-embedding Refugee Migration from Iraq" in *Dispossession and Displacement*, ed. Dawn Chatty and Bill Finlayson (London: British Academy Press, 2012).

Jordan's aid-reliant economy and reconceptualizing refugees as economic agents. Chapter 2 focuses on the Jordanian government's governance strategies towards refugees over the past six decades, in which refugees have figured into a "legal hierarchy of subjecthood" that has in part enabled the persistence of Jordan's semi-authoritarian monarchy. Chapter 3 examines refugee flows to Jordan and internal migration within a broader process of urbanization and social dislocation from "traditional" spaces of interaction and community, and seeks to critically interrogate the veracity of "communal divisions" that appear to characterize Jordanian society. The conclusion presents the key findings of the thesis in reconceptualizing the role of the refugee within the three most salient features of modern Jordan. It also discusses the thesis's limitations and provides brief recommendations for future research.

## Chapter 1: Jordan's "Semi-Rentier Economy" and Refugee Economic Participation

### Abstract:

The development of Jordan into a "semi-rentier economy" is often attributed to its strategically important location, which has enabled the Jordanian government to court external rents and allow it to maintain a distributive relationship with its coalition of political support. Within this theoretical framework, this section will examine the extent to which refugees have figured into attracting external capital, with the state at times leveraging the presence of refugees to obtain both humanitarian aid—including through infrastructural development—as well as direct financial support.

However, viewing the role of refugee populations in Jordan's economy as simply a means to obtain external rents fails to adequately address the economic agency of these individuals. This section argues that refugees themselves have served to generate capital, not only through their own direct investment but through their participation in the country's labor force. Refugees have therefore played dual roles in the Jordanian economy's development, forming a fluid underclass of labor that has further enabled the persistence of the monarchy's distributive system of retaining support among its political coalition.

### Introduction:

The burden placed on the Jordanian economy by the Syrian refugee presence is, according to the Jordanian government, threatening to overwhelm the small, resource-scarce kingdom. The cost for hosting Syrian refugees for 2013 and 2014 is estimated to exceed USD \$5 billion, as the government and aid agencies struggle to cope with the infrastructure, employment, and resource challenges of accommodating a population that, with no resolution to the Syrian conflict in sight, does not appear to be leaving in the near future.<sup>31</sup> Speaking to the UN General Assembly in October 2013, King Abdullah II warned that Jordan "cannot be asked to shoulder the burden of what is a regional and global challenge," adding that "not even the strongest global economies could absorb this demand on infrastructure and resources, let alone a small economy and the fourth water-poorest country in the world."<sup>32</sup> According to the Jordanian foreign minister, foreign aid does not even cover 30 percent of actual costs incurred by the state.<sup>33</sup> The United

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<sup>31</sup> "Jordan sees Syria refugee costs soar, vows subsidy reform," *Jordan Times*, November 16, 2013.

<sup>32</sup> King Abdullah II, "Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the Plenary Session of the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations" (New York, 24 September 2013).

<sup>33</sup> "Jordan sees Syria refugee costs soar, vows subsidy reform," November 16, 2013.

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) received only 60 percent of its required funding in 2012, leaving it unable to fully meet the needs of not only Syrian refugees, but Palestinian, Iraqi, Somali, Sudanese, and other refugees.<sup>34</sup>

This chapter will examine the role both refugee influxes as moments of crisis and refugees themselves have played in the development of the Jordanian economy. As a resource-scarce, low-productivity economy, Jordan has at various points in its history relied heavily upon foreign aid as a source of economic and political sustenance, resulting in it being dubbed by scholars as a “semi-rentier state.” The scholarship on Jordan as a semi-rentier state is extensive, yet how the kingdom has obtained these external rents is less clear. Authors such as Laurie Brand have advanced the theory that Jordan has parlayed its geopolitically strategic position to garner financial support from the United States and the Gulf countries, going so far as to adapt its foreign policy in pursuit of the income essential to the durability of the Hashemite monarchy’s coalition of political support, which are appeased through side payments and public sector employment.<sup>35</sup> However, Ann Mariel Peters and Pete W. Moore argue that these theories are insufficient to explain the monarchy’s durability despite the decline of foreign aid as a percentage of government expenditures from a high of nearly 49 percent in 1967 to less than 15 percent in 2005.<sup>36</sup> Instead, Peters and Moore argue that to meet the “demands of a coalition [of political support] encompassing highly disparate economic preferences,” the Jordanian monarchy has adapted its distributive institutions with the aid of geopolitically motivated donors over time “to tap a diverse supply of rents that range from economic and military aid to protocol trade,

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<sup>34</sup> Ruth Sherlock, “UN makes record Syria appeal to avert 'greatest humanitarian crisis in modern history'” *The Telegraph*, December 16, 2013.

<sup>35</sup> Laurie Brand, *Jordan’s Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994).

<sup>36</sup> Anne Mariel Peters and Peter W. Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.” *Studies in Comparative International Development* vol.44 (2009): 256-85.

allowing them to retain power through periods of late development, domestic political crisis, and neoliberal conditionality.”<sup>37</sup>

This latter argument provides a useful lens through which to examine the monarchy and government’s position concerning the refugees and the impact of refugee crises on Jordan’s economy, particularly as to why the state continues to accept proportionally massive populations of refugees. Given the characterization of Jordan as a semi-rentier economy, refugee crises could be viewed as a source of strategic rents, with the presence of refugees being leveraged by the state, at times exploitatively, to attract not just needed humanitarian assistance but the external rents that enable its current distributive relation with the political elites. Indeed, some scholars have recently adopted a critical perspective towards both governmental efforts to obtain both humanitarian assistance and direct aid during refugee crises as well as where this money is being directed. Nicholas Seeley has argued that from 2005-2008, during the Iraqi refugee crisis, the government actively inflated the number of refugees in Jordan in order to obtain more international aid not ultimately targeted at aiding the refugees,<sup>38</sup> while Matthew Hall has also advanced similar perspectives by “skeptics” in the context of the Syrian presence.<sup>39</sup> Examining the hypothesis that refugee crises have been leveraged within the framework of Jordan’s semi-rentier economy, or even contributed to its development, is therefore crucial to understanding the current role of refugees in the Jordanian political economy.

Yet while this analysis is a valuable exercise in understanding both shifts in government rhetoric surrounding refugee presences, particularly the Iraqis and Syrians, as well as temporal fluctuations in aid to the Jordan and the role of the international aid community in the country’s

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<sup>37</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

<sup>38</sup> Nicholas Seeley. "The politics of aid to Iraqi refugees in Jordan." *Middle East Report* 256 (2010).

<sup>39</sup> Matthew Hall. "The Syrian Crisis in Jordan." *Middle East Report* (2013).

economic development, the scholarship on Jordan as a semi-rentier state fails to encompass an important factor: the economic agency of the refugees within the domestic economic system. By conceiving of refugees as static populations to be manipulated by powerful elites, rentier theory does not fully address the economic participation of refugees and even their integration into both the economic and political systems of Jordan.

This chapter seeks to expand conceptions of Jordan as a semi-rentier state by arguing that refugees have figured in the development and persistence of Jordan's distributive system of political support through their direct participation in the country's private sector. Drawing on interviews conducted in Amman, Jordan and additional research drawn from relevant news archives, the Department of Statistics and the World Bank, and nongovernmental sources, this chapter reaches two primary conclusions concerning refugee participation in the Jordanian economy. First, despite facing serious difficulties obtaining work permits, low-income refugees have historically and currently constituted a significant portion of the country's labor and service industry. While many observers note the impact of Syrian labor on low-income Jordanians, others argue that they mainly compete not with Jordanians but with the estimated 1.2 million Egyptian migrant workers in Jordan.<sup>40</sup> Second, while most individuals certainly fit the impoverished, war-stricken image typically associated with refugees, author Joseph Sassoon explores a very different type of refugee in his scholarship on the Iraqi refugee crisis: the so-called "Mercedes refugee." As he argues, wealthy Iraqis invested directly in the Jordanian economy in the form of real estate, construction, and manufacturing projects, in addition to business expansion.<sup>41</sup> Basem Lozi indicates that this increase in investment appears to be

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<sup>40</sup> "Syrian Businesses in Jordan: A Bittersweet Opportunity," *The Economist*, August 1, 2013.  
<http://www.economist.com/blogs/pomegranate/2013/08/syrian-businesses-jordan>

<sup>41</sup> Joseph Sassoon, *Iraqi Refugees: The New Crisis in the Middle East*, Reprinted by I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd (New York: 2010).

occurring in the Syrian case as well.<sup>42</sup> The middle class of each refugee population has also had an almost uniformly positive impact on the country's private sector through the creation of small business enterprises, as will be explored in depth in the case of Palestinian and Syrian refugees.<sup>43</sup> By reconceptualizing refugees as actors with economic agency within Jordan, this chapter explores how periodic refugee influxes have figured into the development of the Jordanian economy and their role in enabling the persistence of Jordan's semi-authoritarian regime.

### **Jordan: A Semi-Rentier Economy**

First proposed by Hossein Mahdavi in 1970 and later built upon in 1987 by scholars Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani in 1987, rentier theory was developed in response to the emergence of the so-called "oil states" which shared the traits of both immense resource wealth and a seemingly durable authoritarian regime.<sup>44</sup> Rentier theory has in its various conceptualizations sought to explain both this durability and the country's lack of economic/infrastructural development by attributing the cause to external rents. These rents, defined as income generated largely independent of the state's domestic productivity, provide a vital source of spending in the state's budget. In the case of the oil states, this is manifested as "effortlessly accrued rent" generated by a small fraction of the population (mainly in the government) and distinct from an economy with high foreign trade.<sup>45</sup> At first glance, then, Jordan is a far cry from the picture of oil-fueled prosperity permeating early literature on rentier theory. Lacking any natural resources in significant quantities beyond potassium and potash (and

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<sup>42</sup> Basem Lozi, "The Effect of Refugees on Host Country Economy: Evidence from Jordan," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business* vol. 5, no 3 (2013).

<sup>43</sup> "Syrian Businesses in Jordan: A Bittersweet Opportunity," *The Economist*, August 1, 2013.

<sup>44</sup> Peters and Moore "Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."

<sup>45</sup> Hossein Mahdavy. 1970. "The Patterns and Problems of Economic Development in Rentier States: The Case of Iran." in *Studies in the Economic History of the Middle East from the Rise of Islam to the Present Day*, ed. M. A. Cook. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

a contested amount of oil shale), Jordan would appear to have little to leverage. However, as Beblawi and later scholars have noted, Jordan has nonetheless been dependent on proportionally massive amounts of foreign aid and remittances, earning it the label of “semi-rentier state.”<sup>46</sup>

In its broadest conception, a semi-rentier state is defined as simply one that “relies more heavily on external revenue rather than domestic taxation” in terms of government spending—a definition that leaves open to interpretation what exactly the nature of this revenue is or how the country may obtain it.<sup>47</sup> In the context of Jordan, scholars such as Laurie Brand argued that Jordan has successfully manipulated its geopolitical position to earn both inter-Arab aid and other foreign aid, even altering its foreign policy based in order to obtain this aid.<sup>48</sup> Up until 1989, foreign aid in the form of direct grants, budgetary support, and development projects constituted as much as 54.9 percent of the entire state revenue, with fluctuations in amount apparently traceable to the waxing and waning of Jordan’s favor in the eyes of donors.<sup>49</sup> As Brand argues, these external rents resulted in a Jordanian economy that reflected “limited development of indigenous productive forces; a standard of living far higher than the level of indigenous productive forces would have suggested or allowed for; state services and infrastructure far more extensive than the GDP would have permitted; and a very high percentage (nearly 50%) of the work force on the state payroll.”<sup>50</sup> The channeling of these rents in the form of side-payments to the “indigenous” East Bank Jordanian political coalition members enabled a preservation of a political status quo undeterred by an apparent campaign of political liberalization from 1989 to 1994. While Peters and Moore present the critique that this

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<sup>46</sup> Hazem Beblawi, “The Rentier State in the Arab World” *Arab Studies Quarterly*, vol. 9, no. 4 (Fall 1987), pp. 383-398.

<sup>47</sup> Scott Greenwood, “Jordan’s “New Bargain:” The Political Economy of Regime Security,” *Middle East Journal*

<sup>48</sup> Brand, *Jordan’s Inter-Arab Relations*.

<sup>49</sup> Brand, *Jordan’s Inter-Arab Relations*, p 48.

<sup>50</sup> Brand, *Jordan’s Inter-Arab Relations*, p 48.

semi-rentier theory assumes a causal relationship between external rents and a lack of economic and political liberalization and instead argue that the formation of a political coalition during the pre-independence era necessitated a constant pursuit of rents, they agree with Brand in characterizing Jordan's "history of basing foreign policy on rent maximization."<sup>51</sup>

Scholarship on Jordan's political economy has focused on the interaction between foreign policy and rent maximization, noting events such as the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty as indicative of this pragmatic reasoning.<sup>52</sup> Yet there has been sparse analysis of the relationship between rent maximization and the phenomenon perhaps most central to Jordan's modern history: the Palestinian, and later Iraqi and Syrian, refugees that have flooded across the country's borders. From a regional and even global perspective, Jordan appears to have had an uncharacteristically welcoming policy towards refugees. By analyzing this policy in the context of semi-rentier theory, the role of refugees in Jordan's economic development can be viewed as a simply an additional method of rent-seeking.

### **Refugees and the Politics of International Aid**

Can refugees be manipulated to attract foreign aid? This question seems antithetical to the images of human misery permeating the Syrian refugee camps, or the inability of humanitarian organizations to obtain the funding necessary to even provide basic shelters for these displaced individuals. The Jordanian government has repeatedly emphasized the burden placed by refugees on the country's scarce resources and infrastructure, suggesting that the costs of hosting refugees far outweigh any monetary benefits, if not ultimately outweighing humanitarian imperatives. Indeed, as the Jordanian finance minister stated in November 2013,

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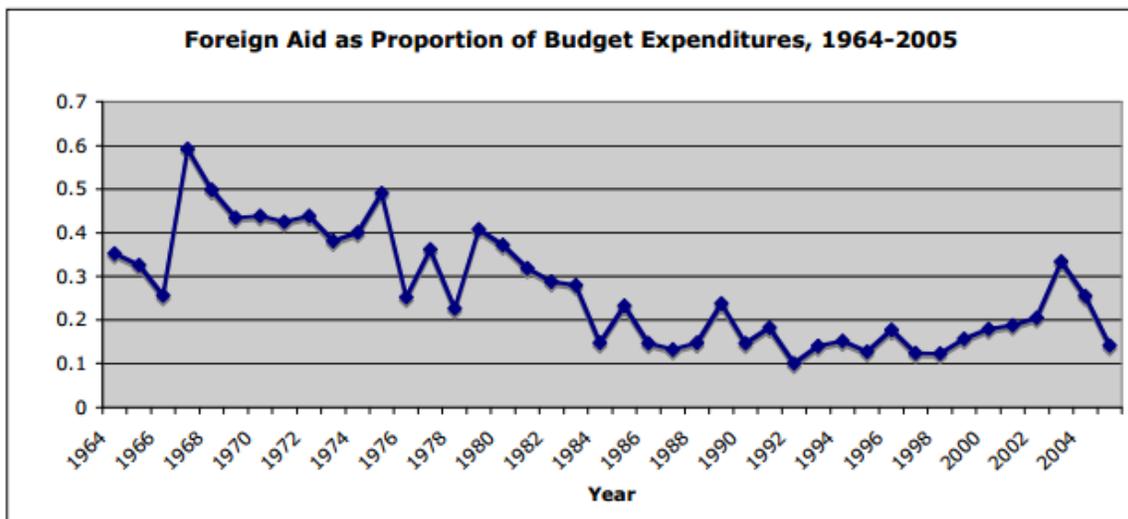
<sup>51</sup> Peters and Moore "Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan."

<sup>52</sup> Brand, *Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations*.

the total cost of hosting refugees in 2013 and 2014 would exceed USD \$5 billion, far outstripping the amount of aid received to cope with the refugee crisis.<sup>53</sup> In addition, privatization and economic reform efforts over the past decades have been expressly aimed at reducing the portion of external assistance in the country’s GDP. It would seem, then, that the refugee presence is attracting a woefully insufficient amount of aid that would not be necessary for the Jordanian economy if not for the continuing influxes.

Most scholarship has focused primarily on Jordan’s leverage of its strategic position to obtain rents, highlighting data on the amount of yearly foreign aid received by Jordan that reveals a series of sharp fluctuations. Peters and Moore highlight the chart below, outlining fluctuations in foreign aid as a proportion of budget expenditure from 1964-2005, as evidence of successes and failures in Jordanian rent-seeking foreign policy. For example, the decline between 1990-1994 is attributed to Jordan’s initial decision to support diplomatic negotiations with Iraq before the first Gulf War.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure 1: Foreign Aid as a Proportion of Budget Expenditures, 1964-2005**



Source: Central Bank of Jordan Yearly Statistical Series, 2006.

<sup>53</sup> “Jordan sees Syria refugee costs soar, vows subsidy reform,” November 16, 2013.

<sup>54</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

In addition, the next table demonstrates the year-to-year shifts in the absolute quantity of foreign grants and soft loans received by the Jordanian government since 2000. The first spike can be seen in 2003, with the total amount of funds received more than doubling from USD \$596.6 million in 2002 to USD \$1490.1, coinciding with the start of the Iraq War. Total foreign funds remained slightly higher than 2002 levels for the period of 2004-2007, increasing again after the signing of an agreement “whereby the United States agreed to provide a total of USD \$660 million in annual foreign assistance to Jordan over a five-year period.”<sup>55</sup> Another dramatic spike occurred from 2011-2012, with total funds reaching an unprecedented level of USD \$3,051.4 million.

**Table 1: Direct Foreign Assistance to Jordan, 2000-2012**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grants</b>	<b>Soft Loans</b>	<b>Total</b>
2000	368	307	675
2001	224	237	461
2002	470.6	126	596.6
2003	1136.7	353.4	1490.1
2004	474	141.5	615.5
2005	470.2	171	641.2
2006	485.4	189.6	675
2007	470	210	680
2008	719	418.5	1137.5
2009	697.85	676.85	1374.7
2010	782.19	351.36	1133.5
2011	704.97	28.34	733.31
2012	2109.1	942.3	3051.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>9112.01</b>	<b>4152.85</b>	<b>13264.8</b>

Source: Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Jordan<sup>56</sup>

These increases in aid are attributed to the need to maintain Jordan as a “stable” partner in the region; indeed, out of the donors who contributed to Jordan in 2012, only four specifically

<sup>55</sup> U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service, *Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jeremy Sharp (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, January 27, 2014). <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33546.pdf>

<sup>56</sup> “Foreign Assistance,” Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, accessed April 11, 2014, [http://www.mop.gov.jo/pages.php?menu\\_id=282&local\\_type=0&local\\_id=0&local\\_details=0&local\\_details1=0](http://www.mop.gov.jo/pages.php?menu_id=282&local_type=0&local_id=0&local_details=0&local_details1=0).

listed “support of refugees” as their highest priority.<sup>57</sup> The surges in aid directly correspond with years in which major conflicts in the Arab world began—the Iraq War and the Syrian Civil War. As Jeremy Sharp noted in explaining the almost USD \$13.1 billion in aid from the United States to Jordan from 1951 through 2012, “Jordan’s geographic position, wedged between Israel, Syria, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia, has made it vulnerable to the strategic designs of its more powerful neighbors, but has also given Jordan an important role as a buffer between these potential adversaries.”<sup>58</sup> It is Jordan’s strategic importance, then, that would seem to merit this aid, an importance that increases in the light of every major conflict or, in the Palestinian case, attempts at a peace process.

Yet the Jordanian government has also at times explicitly employed the presence of refugees as a means of attracting foreign aid, which has not always been put to use in direct help of the refugees. When examined in a historical perspective, the Jordanian government’s position towards each refugee influx—namely the 1948 Palestinian expulsion from Palestinian territories, the 1967 Palestinian influx, the post-1991 Gulf War forcible return of Palestinian refugees from Gulf countries, the post-Iraq War influx, and the most recent Syrian refugee crisis—hints at a pragmatic approach. Joseph Massad and Avi Plascov note the role of Palestinians in attracting development and direct monetary aid, not to mention the infrastructural support through “parallel institutions” provided by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA).<sup>59</sup> In the case of the Iraqis, several observers, chief among them Nicholas Seeley, have argued that the shift in government policy towards Iraqis (initially dubbed “guests”) in 2007 was a means of obtaining aid that targeted not refugees but mainly

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<sup>57</sup> “Foreign Assistance.”

<sup>58</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations*.

<sup>59</sup> Avi Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957* (Totowa, NJ: Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1981).

Jordanians.<sup>60</sup> In the most recent Syrian influx, my own independent research and research by scholars such as Matthew Hall indicate a similar manipulation of both the number of refugees and the aid itself.<sup>61</sup>

During the period following the 1948 Palestinian exodus, the Jordanian monarchy leveraged the new refugee population by adopting a two-fold strategy of inclusion and exclusion that allowed for the continuation of the international aid regime, most prominently through the UNRWA, while simultaneously providing refugees with citizenship and encouraging Palestinians to seek employment.<sup>62</sup> While Jordan and the Palestinians have emphasized their refugee status as a means of ensuring the right to return, this emphasis also allowed for the continuation and escalation of international aid during Jordan's early years, both through humanitarian and development assistance for Palestinians in Jordan—that in practice was directed towards East Bank industrialization and side-payments—and the creation of parallel institutions by UNRWA.

From 1948-1952, the Jordanian government relied mostly on UNRWA to cover its budget for the Palestinian refugees, publishing yearly reports that outlined current financial needs. As Avi Plascov notes in his book *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, “occasionally the reports were exaggerated to get a larger subsidy from UNRWA,” and sometimes Jordanian police intervened to ensure Palestinians remained in refugee camps to ensure a continued flow of aid.<sup>63</sup> In addition, while Jordan received foreign assistance directly intended for economic and infrastructural development, aid intended specifically for refugees was also directed towards development projects that did not necessarily benefit them. Plascov

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<sup>60</sup> Seeley. “The politics of aid to Iraqi refugees in Jordan.”

<sup>61</sup> Hall. “The Syrian Crisis in Jordan.”

<sup>62</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 34.

<sup>63</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 38.

notes that “Under the guise of promoting integration, the monarch did his utmost to “balance” the small, dense and relatively progressive West Bank with the vast, poor, backwards, sparsely populated East Bank...Most economic activity and building was concentrated on the East side, to which the government directed most allocations” of British and UNRWA aid.<sup>64</sup> By 1959, Peters and Moore note, “the East Bank hosted 36.4% of Jordan’s industries where little industrial development had been present a decade earlier” while the West Bank saw little further industrialization under Jordanian control.<sup>65</sup>

As Peters and Moore also argue, “aid-based rentiers may come to rely upon foreign donors to supply important institutions that the recipient state itself is unable to provide. These “parallel institutions” may provide public goods, such as infrastructure or economic reform, or simply court new rents.”<sup>66</sup> Beginning in the 1950’s, the UNRWA served, and continues to serve, as a decentralized governance institution for the country’s Palestinian refugees as well as provide needed infrastructural support, allowing “the Hashemites to enter late development and deal with the Palestinians on the cheap.”<sup>67</sup> Overall, Plascov notes (in quite polarizing language):

“Jordan gained tremendously from the vast economic input provided by UNRWA [along with continuing British support], which did far more than simply relieve it of handling the relief of refugees. The backward State was modernized not only by the making of roads, the afforestation and the subsidizing of the education and health frameworks, but also by all the benefits accruing from the fact that an ‘international’ organization of such magnitude, 98 per cent composed of refugees, functioned within a poor country. Naturally, almost everyone tried to exploit this situation and a great deal of corruption was involved. The rumors that high officials tried to arrange interest-free loans for themselves or relatives, and profited from land transactions needed for UNRWA schemes in the Jordan Valley were not without basis.”<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 36.

<sup>65</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan,” 268.

<sup>66</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

<sup>67</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

<sup>68</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 69.

In 1967 Jordan received another boost in aid through the Khartoum agreement, which, while explicitly intended to help with the effects of the Second Arab-Israeli War, was also negotiated by King Hussein partially on the basis that Jordan was the caretaker of the Palestinian people. While this initially did little to offset the impact of the war, aid from Arab states continued to increase through the 1970s, a phenomenon mainly attributed to Jordan's "frontline" position and a need to preserve domestic security following the 1970 Jordanian Civil War caused by disputes between the Jordanian government and PLO members in Palestinian refugee camps.<sup>69</sup>

In the Iraqi case, as Seeley and others have argued, the Jordanian government inflated the estimated number of Iraqis in its rhetoric as a means of attracting international support. Jordan was initially reluctant to draw international attention to the Iraqi refugee crisis, viewing the situation as a threat to the country's economy and security, and aid organizations accused the government of concealing the refugee crisis and even deporting refugees. However, government rhetoric began shifting in 2007. In 2007, the Jordanian government strengthened appeals for aid that would be directed at helping the country shoulder the burden of an estimated 750,000 Iraqis. The appeal and a desire to establish a "protection space" for Iraqis against deportation led the UNHCR to direct 60 percent (USD \$21 million) of its 2007 budget for Jordan directly to the Jordanian government. From 2007-2009 Jordan received nearly USD \$400 million as aid for Iraqis, in addition to substantial increases in U.S. aid meant to "help Jordan recover from the effects of the Iraq invasion."<sup>70</sup> While Seeley notes that much of this aid, especially aid directed to international and local NGOs, did much to address the needs of Iraqis, the fact that few Iraqis were registered refugees made it difficult to effectively do so. In addition, because Iraqis were

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<sup>69</sup> Samir A. Mutawi, *Jordan in the 1967 War*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179.

<sup>70</sup> Seeley. "The politics of aid to Iraqi refugees in Jordan."

not living in camps and in the city, “programs were also required to help vulnerable Jordanians in the same areas. Most agencies set quotas stipulating that 25–50 percent of the beneficiaries should be Jordanians, though in reality the number was often much higher.”<sup>71</sup>

While this quota policy was technically standard procedure in ameliorating the effects of such a massive refugee burden, in April 2007 a comprehensive survey by the Jordanian Department of Statistics and the Norwegian NGO Fafo estimated the actual number of refugees at 161,000, with only 50,000 to 75,000 vulnerable. The Jordanian government delayed the release of the survey until late 2007, and amended the report with its own estimated figure of 500,000, though subsequent studies supported Fafo’s findings. The amount of aid money received for the Iraqi refugee “crisis” dwarfed aid for other refugee crises, but the Jordanian government’s “insistence that aid be targeted at communities rather than at individual Iraqi families, and its reluctance to adopt permanent local solutions” made this aid substantially less effective. Indeed, a “permanent underclass” of thousands of poor Iraqis has developed in Amman and the surrounding areas that remains unable to legally work, but unable to access needed aid.<sup>72</sup> While increased development directed towards the country’s water infrastructure and education was undoubtedly desperately needed, the use of the Iraqi presence to obtain this aid enabled the government to avoid sustainable solutions and continue its rentier system of dependence on international aid.

While the recent nature of the Syrian refugee crisis limits the amount of empirical data, most agree that international aid has thus far been insufficient to address the impact of the refugee presence. However, interviews with NGO employees, Syrians, and Jordanians indicate conflicting impressions as to whether a similar exploitative behavior is occurring. As Hall cites

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<sup>71</sup> Seeley. “The politics of aid to Iraqi refugees in Jordan.”

<sup>72</sup> Fafo/Jordan Department of Statistics, *Iraqis in Jordan 2007: Their Number and Characteristics* (November 2007).

in a 2013 piece on the Syrian refugee presence, “‘Abdallah,’ a Syrian refugee living in Zaatari where extensive initial mismanagement by the Jordanian Hashemite Charity Organization (JHCO) and poor location resulted in disastrous living conditions, “repeats a pervasive rumor that the camp exists as a display of suffering for the Jordanian government to garner extra millions in international aid.”<sup>73</sup> A professor I interviewed at the University of Jordan noted that the perceived mismanagement of aid for both refugees and Jordanian host communities was part of a larger trend of corruption, citing the stalling of projects funded by a \$5 billion donation from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the unsuccessful, heavily funded education initiatives undertaken by Queen Rania of Jordan.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, most concede that Jordan is under incredible strain from the refugees—but more so, as will be discussed in the final section, from the Syrian conflict as a whole—and therefore deserving of higher levels of international aid.

In January 2014, the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) released a widely anticipated report, titled the “National Resilience Plan 2014-2016,” that provided an updated assessment of the estimated costs of the refugee presence as well as the “resilience-based development approach” being adopted to extend long-term support to Jordanian host communities. Citing steep drops in foreign direct investment (FDI), increasing budget and trade deficits, and high unemployment, the investment plan aims to focus on areas hosting the refugees such as Mafraq, Irbid, and Ramtha that even before the crisis were plagued by high poverty rates that have since been exacerbated.<sup>75</sup> The proposed budget of the project, USD \$2.3 billion dollars, is declared as separate from existing national aid requests and independent of existing humanitarian initiatives. Though support for host communities is certainly a vital facet of the current relief effort, the initiatives also propose lasting solutions to

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<sup>73</sup> Hall. “The Syrian Crisis in Jordan.”

<sup>74</sup> Interview with anonymous professor at University of Jordan

<sup>75</sup> Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, *National Resilience Plan 2014-2016* (January 2014).

poverty, unemployment, and inadequate infrastructure that predate the Syrian refugee influx. As Bader Almadi, a professor I interviewed at the University of Jordan noted, in many ways the Syrians (and the Iraqis before them) represent “a golden opportunity” for development.<sup>76</sup>

Finally, evidence of the persistence of the rentier system in Jordan is visible in the continuing expansion of the government and military bureaucracy, a main method of side-payment distribution. In a report titled “A Decade of Struggling Reform Efforts in Jordan: The Resilience of the Rentier System,” former Jordanian foreign minister Marwan Muasher highlighted the persistence of the “ossified layer of elites,” a group mainly consisting of Jordanian tribes that “has become so entrenched, powerful, and ossified that it is now not only resisting such reform from below but—more dangerously—from above.”<sup>77</sup> Thwarting even the reform efforts of a king increasingly dependent on this political coalition in the face of uprisings across the region, the political and tribal elite has demanded the persistence of the rentier system despite the pressures of economic liberalization. Leveraging the refugee presence for both direct aid and infrastructural support, along with Jordan’s strategic importance, enables the continuation distributive system, even though this aid can only partially offset the growing deficit.

#### *Does Rentier Theory Fully Account for Refugees in the Jordanian Economy?*

Based on the previous examination of the Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugee presences in Jordan, it would seem that the extractive, rent-seeking behavior adopted to maintain a political coalition, proposed by Peters and Moore, is an apt explanation for the Jordanian government’s policy towards the refugees passing across its borders. Indeed, as opposed to countries such as

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<sup>76</sup> Interview with Bader Almadi

<sup>77</sup> Marwan Muasher, “A Decade of Struggling Reform Efforts in Jordan: The Resilience of the Rentier System,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (May 2011).

Lebanon, which has adopted a decidedly hostile posture towards the Palestinian refugees, the Jordanian government has effectively capitalized off the refugee presence. By employing the refugee presence to both attract direct international aid and institutional behavior, the refugee crises of the past decade has enable the Jordanian government to continue a semi-rentier system endangered by economic liberalization.

However, rentier theory proves insufficient in explaining both Jordanian policy towards refugees and the role of refugees in the Jordanian economy. While rentier theory is perhaps an appropriate lens for understanding Jordan's leverage of its strategic position, the costs involved with massive population influxes render the gamble of hosting refugees highly risky, especially if international support is ultimately insufficient to cover these costs. Jordan's acceptance of refugees would then be entirely conditioned on amount of expected aid to be received. Yet in the case of the Iraqi population influx, from 2003-2006 the Jordanian government "remained quiet about the growing humanitarian needs of displaced Iraqis," preferring instead to label Iraqis as "guests" and allow urban integration.<sup>78</sup> While Jill Goldenziel argues that the abrupt policy shift in 2007 to emphasizing the burden of the refugee presence "occurred because of new opportunities to extract strategic rents from the international community in the form of foreign aid and development assistance tied to the presence of refugees," this explanation alone is insufficient to explain Jordan's silence from 2002-2006, during which the Jordanian GDP actually remained above 4 percent and reached as high as 8.6 percent.<sup>79</sup> In the case of the Syrian refugees, it is unclear if the aid contributed by the international community will fully cover the

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<sup>78</sup> Jill Goldenziel, "Aid, Agency, and the Malleability of International Law: The Post-2003 Iraqi Refugee Crisis" (PhD. Diss., Harvard University, 2012).

<sup>79</sup> Trading Economics, "Jordan GDP Annual Growth Rate," last modified April 14, 2014. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/jordan/gdp-growth-annual>

costs of the refugee presence, yet in 2013 the Jordanian economy had a 3.2 percent GDP growth rate—higher than the regional average for oil-importing states and the highest since 2009.<sup>80</sup>

Refugee populations in Jordan cannot therefore be viewed solely as entities to be leveraged for rents, in the way Jordan may leverage its strategic position or foreign policy. Rather than static, extractive populations, refugees have played an integral role Jordan's development through participating directly in the Jordanian economy in two main ways. Refugees have served as a vital source of labor, with the Palestinians initially forming nearly the entirety of the work force required for early Jordanian industrialization. As Palestinian labor was replaced with Egyptian migrant workers—with estimates of more than 400,000 Egyptians working in Jordan—the entry of Syrian workers into the labor market, most often without work permits, has resulted in increased competition and depressed wages.<sup>81</sup> Refugees arriving in Jordan have also provided skilled labor and discrete skills, such as craftsmanship. Second—most prominently during the Iraqi influx and Palestinian refugees expelled from the Gulf—refugees have provided a valuable source of capital, or foreign direct investment (FDI), for the Jordanian economy, investing directly in manufacturing and real estate and increasing the Jordanian foreign currency reserves. During the most recent refugee influx, middle-class refugees and skilled Syrian laborers have set up small businesses and workshops that supplement both the Jordanian private sector and informal economy. These combined factors have rendered refugees integral to the development of the Jordanian private sector, and in many ways has enabled the survival of the “bloated” public sector, which has served as the main distributive institution through which the monarchy has ensured the support of its tribal coalition—a phenomenon which will be discussed in depth in the next chapter.

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<sup>80</sup> Trading Economics, “Jordan GDP Annual Growth Rate.”

<sup>81</sup> Norma Naamat, “Jordan Issues Amnesty to Egyptian Workers,” *Al Monitor*, January 18, 2013. <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/politics/2013/01/jordan-egyptian-workers.html>

## **The Economic Agency of Refugees in Jordan**

The short-term and long-term benefits of refugees to a host country's economy has been extensively studied by scholars such as Karen Jacobsen, who argues that for many African countries such as Tanzania, refugees provide a cheap source of labor and attract developmental aid.<sup>82</sup> In her book *The Economic Life of Refugees*, Jacobsen notes that while “many refugees take up residence in camps under the care of various authorities, a much greater number live among the local community, in rural or urban areas, and never register or seek international assistance. Common to almost all refugees, however, is the destitution that results from their flight experience, paired with a strong desire to support themselves by pursuing livelihoods.”<sup>83</sup> Viewing the millions of refugees that have passed across Jordan's borders through this perspective reveals a determination felt by many refugees to become directly involved in the Jordanian economy, whether out of a basic desire for survival or a chance to escape the helplessness caused by a loss of homeland, livelihood, and loved ones.

The first Palestinian influx to Jordan effectively enabled the country to enter development through the displacement of a massive number of individuals with little initial choice of employment other than working as laborers. Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the population of Jordan tripled in size, with over 450,000 of the new population of 1.5 million official refugees (along with another 450,000 Palestinians residing in the Jordan-controlled West Bank). As Plascov discusses in his book, the resulting increase in international aid enabled Jordan to embark upon a number of infrastructural projects mainly focused in the East Bank, transforming areas such as Amman from a collection of sleepy villages to a burgeoning industrial center. Plascov notes further that “the development of the East Bank was carried out mainly by

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<sup>82</sup> Karen Jacobsen, *The Economic Life of Refugees* (Bloomfield CT: Kumarian Press, 2005).

<sup>83</sup> Jacobsen, *The Economic Life of Refugees*, 1.

Palestinians who, having little option, put their knowledge, skill and talents at the disposal of the regime.”<sup>84</sup>

Contrary to most of the refugee influxes that followed them, however, the Palestinians of the 1948 exodus were also given Jordanian citizenship, an attempt to both promote unity between the West Bank and the East Bank but also the clear economic benefits offered by the refugees’ absorption.<sup>85</sup> The Jordanian Palestinians were not only vital for the labor of Jordan’s domestic economy; they were also “the most important manpower reservoir for the developing Arab oil countries.”<sup>86</sup> By equipping the Palestinians with citizenship, the Jordanian government could in effect export its cheap labor to other countries, avoiding unemployment and reaping the benefits of remittances sent back by Palestinian labor. As Jordan’s industrialization progressed, the void left by exported Palestinian labor caused domestic wages for unskilled labor to increase during the 1980s as Jordanian firms competed for manual workers, a trend that was partially offset by the import of labor from Egypt and Syria.<sup>87</sup>

The latest influx of Syrian refugees are therefore in many ways a “boon” to the labor market. Since the vast majority of refugees working in Jordan are unable to obtain a work permit—which are usually issued only if the individual possesses expertise unique from Jordanian citizens—many refugees work for less than the minimum wage of USD \$282 per month.<sup>88</sup> Business owners in Amman, Mafraq, Ramtha, and other areas hosting the refugees have taken advantage of the wave of cheap labor, even while risking the fines for hiring individuals without work permits. During a visit to Anas Shawarma, a Syrian restaurant chain that opened a

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<sup>84</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 37.

<sup>85</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*.

<sup>86</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 45.

<sup>87</sup> M.I.T. El-Sakka, “Migrant Workers” Remittances and Macroeconomic Policy in Jordan”, *Arab Journal of Administrative Sciences* (2007).

<sup>88</sup> <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/?id=64059>

branch in Amman in late 2013, I observed a raid by the Ministry of Labor that resulted in at least one dozen employees being detained—a routine procedure in locations illegally employing Syrians.<sup>89</sup> When I interviewed the Jordanian manager of Bakdash, a Syrian ice cream shop near Anas Shawarma, he stated that despite the risks, Syrian labor is still cheaper than Jordanian labor. Furthermore, the owner of Bakdash noted that Syrians bring distinctive skills to the workplace: they are “more smooth” with the customers and “work harder” than Jordanians.<sup>90</sup> The attribution of unique skills to the Syrian refugees is echoed in a recent article by CSMonitor, in which a Jordanian business owner notes: “These people can bring in so much. I’m finally hoping to see good carpentry for instance, or good glass blowing, or just good sweets.”<sup>91</sup>

The illegal and legal labor participation by refugees also applied during the Iraqi refugee influx and to members of other refugee populations. Despite a widely held perception that Iraqis were extremely well-off, a significant proportion of poor Iraqis also participated in the labor market. Ghazwan, an Iraqi refugee who first fled to Jordan in 2005, lamented the near impossibility of obtaining a work permit in Jordan (despite multiple attempts, he has yet to obtain one). Instead, he noted that most poor Iraqis work illegally in temporary jobs, such as construction or serving as waiters during hotel events, and constantly run the risk of abuse from their employers. Mohamedain, a Sudanese refugee from Darfur, also spoke of low wages and abuse by Jordanian employers in an interview. He related a story of another Sudanese refugee in prison after disputing with an employer who refused to pay him—the employer requested JOD 800 (about USD \$1,135) in exchange for dropping charges.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Interview with anonymous employee of Amman restaurant Volksburger

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Yousef Yaacoub

<sup>91</sup> Jane Arraf, “Will Syrian Refugees Transform or Threaten Jordan’s Economy?” *The Christian Science Monitor*, October 12, 2013. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/2013/1012/Will-Syrian-refugees-transform-or-threaten-Jordan-s-economy>

<sup>92</sup> Interview with Mohamedain Suleiman

Finally, some business owners and observers interviewed also expressed the perspective that refugees were taking jobs considered undesirable for Jordanians. Mansur argues that the Syrians “are not competing with Jordanians, but with other guest workers. The more labor is available the lower the cost of labor to Jordanian businesses.”<sup>93</sup> Mansur referred specifically to the country’s large Egyptian migrant worker population, noting that while in recent years Egyptians had begun to demand higher wages, the Syrian influx has prevented them from doing so. By filling the ranks of much-needed undesirable labor jobs and fortifying the country’s private sector through “craftsmanship” and “entrepreneurship” (words that have been respectively attributed to the Syrians and Iraqis), he argues that refugees strengthen the country’s economy for the benefit of most Jordanians. Yaarab Mousa, the Jordanian owner of Bakdash, noted a “culture of shame” among East Bank Jordanians in regards to jobs in the service industry, arguing that most Jordanians would never consider working in construction or food preparation.<sup>94</sup> However, NGO employees working in Mafraq and Ramtha, extremely poor areas with the highest refugee presences, strongly rejected the notion that Syrian refugee presence has not affected the host population, pointing to increasing unemployment among unskilled Jordanians.<sup>95</sup> Yet while there are certainly issues concerning wage depression for low-income migrant workers and poor Jordanians and refugees competing for labor jobs, the decrease in costs could also attract more business to Jordan and benefit existing businesses, especially considering the country’s minimum wage as of 2010 was significantly higher than most of the developing world—bad for the country’s poor, good for business, and good for GDP.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>93</sup> Yusuf Mansur, “The Cost of Refugees,” *The Jordan Times*, February 04, 2013. <http://jordantimes.com/the-cost-of-refugees>

<sup>94</sup> Interview with Yaarab Mousa

<sup>95</sup> Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, *Needs Assessment: Review of the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordan* (November 2013).

<sup>96</sup> “Minimum Wage by Country,” last modified March 27, 2014. <http://www.quandl.com/economics/minimum-wage-by-country>

The initial and subsequent influxes of Palestinian refugees therefore provided the kingdom with cheap, skilled labor that both enabled its early development and served as a source of remittances through higher-wage labor in the Gulf countries. While during the 1970s-1990s this outflow of labor was replaced by the import of Egyptian and Syrian migrant workers, it also has resulted in a rise in wages in the construction sector and service sector (where most of this labor was concentrated). The influx of skilled workers following the Gulf War temporarily sent unemployment skyrocketing (though this was offset by factors discussed in the next section) but it is the most recent Iraqi and Syrian refugee crises that can be seen as resuming a trend of refugees as cheap labor. Rushde, an Egyptian waiter at a popular Amman restaurant, noted somewhat despondently in an interview that while he understands that Syrians are working to survive and support their families, the job market for Egyptians has also become increasingly competitive.<sup>97</sup> For all the Jordanian Ministry of Labor's attempts to regulate Syrian labor, at least 160,000 Syrian refugees—a figure that will only increase as the conflict continues—are estimated to be working in Jordan, a phenomenon that for better or for worse is being taken advantage of by Jordanian business owners.<sup>98</sup>

### *Foreign Direct Investment*

The physical capital brought by each refugee population has also had transformative effects on the Jordanian economy. Mansur emphasizes the role of capital spending and foreign direct investment (FDI), or a direct investment into the business or production of one country by an individual or company, either by purchasing a business in the host country or expanding an existing business. Jordan is classified by the United Nations Conference on Trade and

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<sup>97</sup> Interview with Rushde AlEsyuti

<sup>98</sup> Hani Hazaimah, "Around 160,000 Syrian Refugees Work Illegally in Jordan," The Jordan Times, March 17, 2013. <http://jordantimes.com/around-160000-syrians-work-illegally-in-jordan>

Development as among the top 20 countries globally in attracting FDI, which by 2005 consisted of 13 percent of the country's total GDP.<sup>99</sup> Studies by Lozi and by the Jordanian government indicate that there has already been a substantial increase in capital spending by Syrians in Jordan—"in 2012 Syrians injected more than \$1bn of capital into the Jordanian economy." In the first two months of 2013, "101 Syrian investors launched new ventures at the [Jordanian] Companies Control Department (CCD) during January and February 2013, up from 34 during the same period of 2012."<sup>100</sup> The rise of FDI as a result of these new business ventures: "in 2012 the Jordan Investment Board (JIB) registered 114m dinars (\$161m) of Syrian investment in the Kingdom, up from 3m dinars the previous year. A further 49m dinars of investment was registered in the first half of 2013."<sup>101</sup> This increase came directly after a drop in investment during 2011, apparently prompted by investor uncertainty surrounding the protests sweeping Arab countries.<sup>102</sup> Indeed, signs of increased Syrian business presence can be seen from the border provinces to Amman—the owners of Damascus's oldest ice cream shop, Bakdash, opened a branch in Amman in May 2013 (though it had to close briefly due to overwhelming demand). Indeed, Awni al-Rashoud, head of the Jordanian Investment Bank, stated in an interview: "We've received 650,000 refugees and we'd like to welcome more Syrian investors who can help create jobs for Jordanians and non-Jordanians."<sup>103</sup>

Overall FDI was also 37 percent higher for the first quarter of 2013 than the previous year—a sign that "Arab investment, instead of going to Syria and Lebanon or Egypt for that matter, has come to Jordan instead as a safer haven," though this increase is not caused by the

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<sup>99</sup> Yusuf Mansur, "Overcoming Barriers to Foreign Direct Investment in Jordan," Free the World (2008). [http://www.freetheworld.com/arab/Overcoming-Barriers\\_Foreign-Direct-Investment.pdf](http://www.freetheworld.com/arab/Overcoming-Barriers_Foreign-Direct-Investment.pdf)

<sup>100</sup> <http://jordantimes.com/data-shows-uptake-in-investments-by-syrian-businessmen-in-jordan>

<sup>101</sup> "Syrian Businesses in Jordan: A Bittersweet Opportunity," *The Economist*, August 1, 2013.

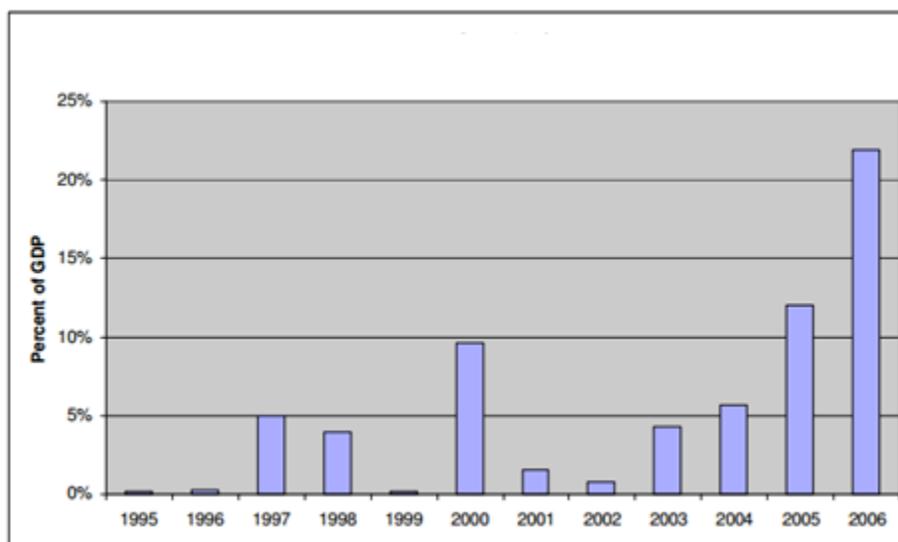
<sup>102</sup> World Bank, *Jordan Economic Monitor* (Spring 2013).

[http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/Jordan\\_EM\\_Spring\\_2013.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/content/dam/Worldbank/document/MNA/Jordan_EM_Spring_2013.pdf)

<sup>103</sup> "Syrian Businesses in Jordan: A Bittersweet Opportunity," *The Economist*, August 1, 2013.

Syrian refugee presence.<sup>104</sup> During the Iraq refugee crisis, there was an even more “stunning boom” in FDI: “in 2002, FDI flows to Jordan were only JOD 52.8 million. In 2003, they jumped nearly six-fold to JOD 309.3 million, increased to JOD 461.6 million in 2004, and then doubled again in 2005 to a stunning JD 1.086 billion. In 2006 they doubled yet again, to JOD 2.2 billion.”<sup>105</sup> The role of FDI in overall GDP, seen in the figure from the CSS study below, ensured a relatively substantial increase in economic growth from the period 2003-2007—perhaps odd considering the rhetoric surrounding the overwhelming cost of the Iraqi presence. The second table charts the percentage growth of GDP from 1996-2005.

**Figure 2: FDI as Percent of GDP**



Source: Authors' calculations. GDP is from "Main Economic Indicators," CBJ Monthly Statistical Bulletin, Dec. 2006, March 2002, and accessed online, April 26, 2007. FDI is from UNCTAD World Investment Report 2006.

**Table 2: Jordan's Real GDP Growth<sup>106</sup>**

1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
6.2%	2.1%	3.3%	3.0%	3.4%	4.3%	5.3%	5.8%	4.2%	8.4%	7.2%	6.4%

Source: CBJ Yearly Statistical Series and "Industrial Origins of Gross Domestic Product at Current Prices," CBJ Monthly Bulletin accessed online, April 26, 2007.

<sup>104</sup> Yusuf Mansur, "Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria," *The Jordan Times*, May 13, 2013.

<sup>105</sup> David DeBartolo and Ibrahim Saif, *The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan* (Amman: Center for Strategic Studies, 2008).

<sup>106</sup>

Most growth in FDI, however, cannot be attributed to the Iraqis living in Jordan, who as of 2007 made up only 5.4 percent of overall investment in Jordan, up from only 1.1 percent in 2004. This increase is nonetheless significant in the context of a population assumed to be simply a weight on the Jordanian economy. Furthermore, Iraqi investment in the manufacturing and construction sectors in particular helped to both increase GDP and address infrastructural challenges of the refugee presence.

These cyclical influxes of capital and FDI are also visible—though perhaps less well documented—in the aftermath of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars. The implications of these influxes for the scarcely populated, infrastructure and resource-poor country were also emphasized, as in the case of the more recent Iraqi and Syrian refugee influxes—however, the benefits to Jordan’s economy in terms of capital inflow were also immense. While little concrete data is available before the early 1970’s on levels of investment, it can nevertheless be established that the “the capital brought in by the well-off Palestinians who invested in the private sector and in housing, managed to set the bases for the urban centres that were created or developed in the years to follow.”<sup>107</sup>

The forcible repatriation of over 300,000 Palestinians and Jordanians, as well as an influx of thousands of Iraqis, in the aftermath of the Gulf War deeply impacted the Jordanian economy in terms of remittances from foreign workers, which until the late 1980s consisted of nearly 20 percent of GDP. However, increases in investment, with 25 percent increases in real estate investment alone, by both returnees (the term is somewhat misleading since many Palestinians held Jordanian citizenship without ever having lived in Jordan) and refugees offset the negative impact of this crisis by a significant degree. Jordan was able to maintain a growth rate much

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<sup>107</sup> Oroub Al Abed, “Palestinian Refugees in Jordan,” Forced Migration Online, accessed April 11, 2014. <http://www.forcedmigration.org/research-resources/expert-guides/palestinian-refugees-in-jordan/fmo025.pdf>

higher than during the financial crisis of the late 1980's. While it is important to consider other political factors contributing to Jordanian economic recovery (or lack thereof) during the 1990s, including the implications of its treaty with Israel in 1994, IMF-sponsored loans and reforms, and the ire of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states for Jordan's initial support of Iraq during the Gulf war, the influence of refugee and returnee investment helped to ameliorate negative factors.

Beyond simply attracting rents, then, refugees have themselves played an integral role in Jordan's economic development through both labor participation and capital investment. The support provided by refugees—most prominently the Palestinians—to the country's private sector has also partially enabled the development and persistence of Jordan's expansive public sector, a phenomenon which will be discussed in depth in the next chapter. The partial integration of refugees into Jordan's economy is also perhaps evidenced in Jordan's ability to sustain a GDP growth rate of 3.2% in 2013. Yet according to central bank governor Ziad Fariz, "Syrian refugees [affected] growth by I would say at least 2 percent [for 2013]. We would have had 5 percent," commenting on both the toll of the Syrian refugee presence and the "resilience" of the Jordanian economy.<sup>108</sup> As the final section notes, however, Jordan's leverage of refugee presences throughout its history has in part enabled it to offset the much more significant costs of regional conflict and crisis which, rather than the refugees, are the principle factors that affect the Jordanian economy.

### **Offsetting the Costs of War**

As one article on the Iraqi refugee crisis begins, "Ask any Jordanian in Amman about Iraqis in their country, and they will immediately tell you that Iraqis have driven up the prices of

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<sup>108</sup> Suleiman Al-Khalidi, "Jordan's economic growth hit by Syrian refugee burden: central bank," *Reuters*, October 29, 2013.

virtually everything in the capital.”<sup>109</sup> Iraqis were not alone in receiving the blame for economic issues; the presence of Syrians has been pointed to by academics, aid community members, and policy makers alike in contributing to massive inflation in areas of the country. Yet when figures such as the estimated annual cost of JOD 2,500 (USD \$3,750) per refugee and an estimated total cost of over USD \$2 billion since 2011 are highlighted by both government and independent sources, both how these costs are calculated and how these costs are ultimately covered must be examined to understand if they are ultimately outweighed by the discussed “benefits.”<sup>110</sup>

What are the direct costs of hosting a refugee population? To take the Syrian refugee presence as the latest example, in 2013, the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) released a report outlining the estimated costs of the Syrian refugee presence incurred by the government, with the costs of urban refugees being enumerated as:

- Municipal services (insecticides, street lighting, road construction): \$115.80 per person per year
- Running and maintaining the urban water delivery system: \$102.30 per person per year
- Primary education: \$877 per student per year
- Secondary education: \$1,195 per student per year
- Primary and tertiary healthcare: \$874 per patient per year
- Hospitalization (every 10,000 people require construction of 20 new hospital beds): \$197,000 per bed.<sup>111</sup>

The United Nations, which along with other NGOs covers most of the costs of refugees living within the camps, estimated the following figures for the over 120,000 refugees currently hosted in camps are estimated to cost:

- Education: \$520 per student per year
- Electricity provision: \$500,000 per month

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<sup>109</sup> Stefanie Nanes, “Jordan's Unwelcome 'Guests!'” *Middle East Report* 244 (2007).

<sup>110</sup> Nikita Malik, “The Cost of Syrian Refugees,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (September 2013). <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2013/09/19/cost-of-syrian-refugees/gnmy>

<sup>111</sup> IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, “Hosting Syrian Refugees—The Cost Conundrum,” UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (November 8, 2013).

- Trucking water: \$3 per cubic metre or \$12,000 per day
- Overall running costs: \$200,000 per day (down from \$500,000 per day initially)
- Security services: \$5 million per year
- Gravel laid over sand to reduce dust: \$12 million (one-time)<sup>112</sup>

However, as Dr. Abdel Baset Athameneh, director of Yarmouk University's Refugees, Displace Persons, and Forced Migration Studies Center noted, these costs are calculated by increasing the amount spent on Jordanians in proportion to the number of refugees.<sup>113</sup> They do not account for differences in need, which Yusuf Mansur argues has skewed estimated costs upwards. Nevertheless, with an ongoing shortfall in international humanitarian aid, these costs represent a serious challenge to Jordan's infrastructural ability to sustain the refugee presence.

Beyond the costs incurred directly by the Jordanian government, however, the Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugee presences were also highlighted as primary causes of pressure on host communities through sharp inflation in housing costs and commodity prices and an increase in unemployment. Yet while direct relationships may be drawn between the refugee presence and the cost of real estate in areas with a high refugee presence, placing the blame for rising inflation and unemployment solely on the refugees ignores the economic effects of broader regional and domestic factors, such as conflict and poor infrastructure. A closer examination of both the Iraqi and Syrian cases reveals a distinction between the microeconomic effects of the refugee presence and their macro-level impacts on the Jordanian economy, with the latter effects ultimately offset by external rents and the economic activity generated by refugees discussed in the previous section.

### *The Iraqis*

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<sup>112</sup> IRIN Humanitarian News and Analysis, "Hosting Syrian Refugees—The Cost Conundrum."

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Abdel Baset Athameneh

During the Iraqi refugee crisis, the rise in food, real estate, and gasoline prices was attributed by many Jordanians to the waves of Iraqis that settled mostly in the capital city of Amman. Iraqis in Amman were colloquially dubbed the “Mercedes refugees,” with Al-Jazeera reporting in 2005 on the “Iraqis with satchels full of cash buying apartments and villas by the fistful” and interviewed local Jordanians who described the Iraqis as “looters and prostitutes.”<sup>114</sup> The Jordanian government estimated the costs of hosting the Iraqis to be more than JOD 1.6 billion by 2008.<sup>115</sup> However, in a study titled “The Iraq War’s Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan,” published in 2007 by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Ibrahim Saif and David M. Bartalo examine the sources of inflation for the 2003-2007 period, concluding that “the Iraq war has contributed significantly to inflation in Jordan because of rising food prices, rising fuel prices, and rising real estate prices. The displaced Iraqis in Jordan, on the other hand, have contributed far less to inflation and growth in Jordan than is often stated.”<sup>116</sup>

The fact that “inflation rose to 6.25% in Jordan in 2006, from only 1.6% in 2003” and that Iraqis were largely concentrated in urban areas, as opposed to secluded in refugee camps, rendered them the subject of ire by locals. Food prices were the main source of inflation: “food items’ CPI value was quite stable from 1999-2002, but in 2003 it increased 2.60%, followed by 4.58% in 2004, 5.13% in 2005 and 7.45% in 2006, for a total of 21% since 2002,” an increase that directly impacted Jordanian consumers.<sup>117</sup> Saif and Bartalo note that in fact, food exports from Jordan to Iraq increased by an “average [value] of JD 67 million annually in 2001-2002 to JD 142 million in 2004-2006.” At the same time as demand for food in Jordan was growing

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<sup>114</sup> “Jordan Booms as Iraqis Flee Hardships,” *Al Jazeera*, October 12, 2005.  
<http://www.aljazeera.com/archive/2005/10/200841014248164542.html>

<sup>115</sup> Andrew Harper, “Iraq’s Refugees: Ignored and Unwanted,” *International Review of the Red Cross*, Vol. 90 No. 869 (March 2008).

<sup>116</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War’s Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*, p 1.

<sup>117</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War’s Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*, p 11.

because of the rise in population, “exports of Jordanian fruits, vegetables and milk to Iraq reduced the domestic supply of food in Jordan, causing prices in Jordan to rise.” While the Iraqi refugee presence certainly caused the rise in demand, the increase in Jordanian food exports to sustain the American military presence in Iraq was also a contributing factor.<sup>118</sup>

The cause of the rise in real estate prices also cannot solely be attributed to the Iraqi presence in Jordan, though the surge of buying by Iraqis nevertheless “enhanced inflationary pressures on the housing market.” As Stefania Nanes noted in an article for the *Middle East Report*, the limited existing available housing had already contributed to an inflationary trend in housing prices; the arrival of the Iraqis only exacerbated this trend. Furthermore, the absolute rise in real estate prices must be differentiated from the increase in the country’s consumer price index (CPI) which only increased by 7.1% from 2002 to 2007. This figure, though flawed in its underestimation of rent prices, nonetheless reflects the fact that Jordanians already owning property were not significantly affected by this price rise—rather, the ones most affected were the Iraqis themselves.<sup>119</sup>

The third cause, with perhaps the most long-term implications, of inflation during the 2002-2007 was the rise of fuel prices—a phenomenon directly connected with the Iraq War and not the Iraqi presence in Jordan. Until the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, the country was Jordan’s main trading partner and source of heavily subsidized oil.<sup>120</sup> Even during the period of crippling international sanctions against Iraq following the Gulf War, “the Jordanian government used to pay for its imports of Iraqi oil by sending Iraq Jordanian consumer goods rather than cash,” maintaining a mutually beneficial “barter-trade” relationship. Following the 2003 Iraq War, while Jordanian exports to Iraq increased as a result of the American military presence, the

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<sup>118</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War’s Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*, p 5.

<sup>119</sup> Stefanie Nanes, “Jordan's Unwelcome 'Guests'.”

<sup>120</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War’s Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*, p 5.

heavily subsidized source of oil that Jordan had relied upon ceased almost completely. While the Gulf states initially contributed subsidized oil to offset this loss, the amount of money spent on fuel by Jordan nearly doubled from JOD 661 million in 2003 to JOD 1,110 million in 2004, and more than tripling to JOD 1,929 by 2006.<sup>121</sup> The impact of this increase in fuel prices was significant, especially considering the Jordanian government's practice of directly subsidizing consumer fuel purchases. While the government continues to subsidize fuel purchases, it has been steadily decreasing them since the late 1980's due to IMF structural adjustment policies—a process that accelerated following the 2003 Iraq War. Because the dramatic increase in fuel prices for consumers coincided with the Iraqi refugee influx, some Jordanians placed the blame for inflated prices on the refugees. Yet as Saif and Bartolo note, “because most of the Iraqis in Jordan live in Amman, one might expect that inflation in Amman had been higher since the war than in other areas of Jordan... However, the opposite is the case: Inflation in Amman since 2002 has been lower than inflation in Jordan as a whole. From 2002-2005 cumulatively, the cost of living in Amman rose 8.5%, while in Jordan as a whole it rose 8.7% over the same period.”<sup>122</sup> This main impact of inflation was felt by rural areas due to food and fuel price increases, which unlike real estate prices were not directly caused by the refugee presence.

Iraqis also had a limited effect on unemployment in Jordan, primarily due to Jordanian policies concerning work permits. Foreigners, regardless of whether they are registered refugees or other migrants, are not able to legally work in Jordan without a work permit. In order for Iraqis to obtain a work permit during the 2003-2007 period, they must also have had residency permits, which require “150,000 Jordanian dinars (around \$211,700) in the bank, a sum that most

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<sup>121</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*, p 4.

<sup>122</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*.

Iraqis in Jordan cannot afford.”<sup>123</sup> By May 2007, Iraqis consisted of less than one percent of the officially employed workforce despite officially making up about 12 percent of the total population. While some Iraqis worked illegally, many Iraqis reported “that they have been refused pay after finishing work and discriminated against in pay compared to Jordanian co-workers.”<sup>124</sup> Nevertheless, the relatively high unemployment rates in Jordan from 2003-2007 and the visibility of the Iraqi presence caused “some Jordanians [to] perceive Iraqis working illegally as taking jobs that would otherwise be done by Jordanians.”<sup>125</sup> As in the case of the Syrian refugees, a perception that the refugee presence was responsible for inflation and unemployment figured highly in influencing negative public opinion.

### *The Syrians*

Due to the recent nature of the refugee crisis, few scholarly reports have comprehensively examined the relationship between the refugee presence, inflation, and unemployment. In his study “The Effect of Refugees on Host Country Economy: Evidence from Jordan,” Basem M. Lozi draws on data up to July 2013 to trace the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis on food prices, unemployment, and foreign direct investment (FDI). While this study is beneficial in providing a snapshot of the macroeconomic position of Jordan following the start of the 2011 Syrian civil war, it nonetheless fails to fully explore alternate causal factors for shifts in macroeconomic variables.<sup>126</sup>

Statistics drawn from the Central Bank of Jordan and synthesized by the economic database *Trading Economics* in the graph below indicate that “the inflation rate in Jordan was

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<sup>123</sup> Stefanie Nanes, “Jordan's Unwelcome 'Guests!'”

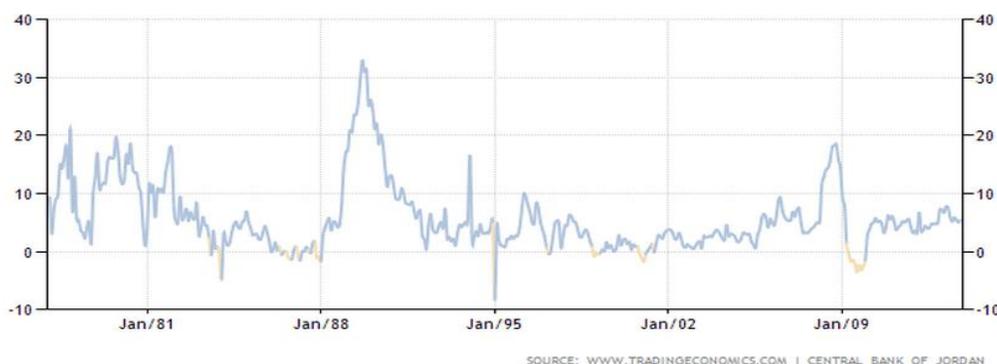
<sup>124</sup> Stefanie Nanes, “Jordan's Unwelcome 'Guests!'”

<sup>125</sup> DeBartolo and Saif, *The Iraq War's Impact on Growth and Inflation in Jordan*.

<sup>126</sup> Basem M. Lozi, “The Effect of Refugees on Host Country Economy: Evidence from Jordan,” *Interdisciplinary Journal of Contemporary Research in Business*, Vol. 5 no.3 (July 2013).

recorded at 5.45 percent in September of 2013...From 1977 until 2013, Jordan Inflation Rate averaged 5.8 percent reaching an all time high of 32.9 Percent in August of 1989 and a record low of -8.3 percent in December of 1994.”<sup>127</sup> While inflation may have increased from the previous year, it is significantly lower than the all-time high.

**Figure 3: Jordan Inflation Rate**<sup>128</sup>



Lozi’s study proposes that the refugee presence resulted in higher inflation and in higher unemployment. In relation to unemployment, he presents the following chart:

**Table 3: Inflation Rate in Jordan**

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Inflation rate	3.5%	6.5%	7%	14%	-0.7%	5%	4.4%	4.8%

Source: Source: Department of Statistics, Monthly Statistical bulletins, (Various Issues).

Lozi attributes the increase in inflation from 2009-2012 to “international markets and refugees from other countries,” though the Syrian refugee influx did not actually begin till halfway through 2011. Moreover, the increase in food prices reflects multiple influences, including a drought in early 2011 and the decline in food imports from Syria by over 50

<sup>127</sup> Trading Economics, “Jordan Inflation Rate,” last modified April 14, 2014. <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/jordan/inflation-cpi>

<sup>128</sup> Trading Economics, “Jordan Inflation Rate.”

percent.<sup>129</sup> The increased demand for food due to the Syrian population, most of whom rely on rations only partially covered by the UNHCR and partner agencies, can nonetheless be seen as the major cause for inflation. With the Jordanian Food and Drug Administration reporting that the country imported 87 percent of its food in 2012, the rise in demand could prove disastrous not only for food prices but the sustainability of the refugee presence.<sup>130</sup>

The increase in real estate prices, which is indicated by Lozi as the second main cause of inflation, has been concentrated largely in the northeastern provinces, which host over 60 percent of Syrian refugees. In areas such as Mafraq and Ramtha, rent prices have doubled and even tripled, even forcing some Jordanians to become homeless.<sup>131</sup> However, Yusuf Mansur has presented an alternate hypothesis concerning the rise in real estate prices experienced in parts of Jordan during refugee crises. Speaking in relation to the inflated prices of housing in the midst of the Iraqi refugee crisis, Mansur pointed to the practice of real estate speculation adopted by many Jordanians following each refugee crisis, noting: "If you sold before 1948 and saw the prices double, or triple, or quadruple, or quintuple when the Palestinians came, you regretted it."<sup>132</sup> Following the most recent Syrian refugee influx, he has expanded his perspective on the role of refugees in the context of real estate prices, noting that Syrian investors in real estate still fall fourth behind Iraqis, Saudis, and the U.S. in magnitude of purchases.<sup>133</sup> Finally, it is important to note that the largest impact of the refugee influx has been on rents, not land prices. While this is

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<sup>129</sup> Oxford Business Group, "Economic Update: The Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordan's Economy," September 15, 2013. [http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/economic\\_updates/impact-syrian-refugees-jordan%E2%80%99s-economy](http://www.oxfordbusinessgroup.com/economic_updates/impact-syrian-refugees-jordan%E2%80%99s-economy)

<sup>130</sup> Lozi, "The Effect of Refugees on Host Country Economy: Evidence from Jordan."

<sup>131</sup> Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, *Needs Assessment: Review of the Impact of the Syrian Refugee Crisis on Jordan*.

<sup>132</sup> Tom A. Peter, "Iraqi Refugees Spill into Jordan, Driving up Prices," *The Christian Science Monitor*, November 29, 2006. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2006/1129/p04s01-woiq.html>

<sup>133</sup> Yusuf Mansur, "Impact of Syrian Crisis on Jordan" (paper presented at the International Conference on the Socioeconomic Dimensions of the Syrian Conflict, Lebanon, July 4 2013). <http://www.slideshare.net/YusufMansur1/inter-conference-on-the-socio-economic-27>

a concerning phenomenon for members of the host community, changes in rent prices nevertheless have a lesser impact on overall inflation.<sup>134</sup>

Instead, exogenous pressures have also played a major role in Jordan's lack of economic growth. In 2012, terrorist attacks on the pipeline running from Egypt to Jordan through the Sinai Peninsula reduced the supply of relatively cheap natural gas to 16 percent of contractual terms, forcing Jordan to again start purchasing on the expensive international market.<sup>135</sup> Unease over the Arab uprisings also decreased foreign direct investment by 40 percent in 2011. The country's "bloated" system of grants and subsidies for consumers was also pointed by both analysts and government officials as a chief source of Jordan's economic downturn. In 2012, the IMF announced a three-year credit plan of \$USD 2 billion dollars to alleviate the Jordanian economic situation, in exchange for further reform of this system. In response, the Jordanian government has enacted a five-year subsidy reduction program—another major reason for increases in prices felt by consumers.<sup>136</sup>

As discussed in the previous section, some economists argue that Jordan would have actually had negative growth in 2013 without the Syrian refugee presence. While the costs of regional conflict appear to be numerous, the costs of refugees themselves are more limited, though the burden exerted by such population influxes weighs heavy on resources and infrastructure. Instead, the benefits of the refugee presence may ultimately help to offset the costs of regional conflict. Facing the peril of international approbation if it turns away refugees—as it has done in the case of Palestinian refugees for political reasons—Jordan has instead chosen to make the most out of the periodic refugee influxes while attempting to ensure its political

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<sup>134</sup> Interview with Yusuf Mansur

<sup>135</sup> World Bank, "Jordan Overview," accessed April 11, 2014.  
<http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview>

<sup>136</sup> World Bank, "Jordan Overview."

stability. By leveraging the refugee presence for international aid and allowing (if in the Syrian case somewhat hesitantly) investment and labor participation by refugees, the country as a whole has been able to sustain growth even while local communities may suffer.

## **Conclusion**

As Ibrahim Saif, the Jordanian Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, noted in an October 2013 interview, the impact of the Syrian refugee crisis is tantamount to “the United States absorbing the entire population of Canada.”<sup>137</sup> The economic, resource, and infrastructural pressures of such a population influx are serious, and come amidst a series of attempted economic reforms by the government that temporarily further exacerbate the burden on Jordanian residents.

Yet refugees and the international organizations in Jordan aimed at supporting them have also played a critical role in the country’s development. As a semi-rentier state for most of its existence, the Hashemite monarchy has relied on an institutionalized system of rent distribution to its political supporters to help ensure its continuance as one of the region’s most resilient semi-authoritarian regimes. During the 1950s to 1980s, the monarchy was able to continue this system through a reliance on foreign aid. While this system was momentarily disrupted during the late 1980’s to mid-1990’s, Peters and Moore argue that during this post-IMF reforms era of neoliberalism, the monarchy adapted and continued its system of rent-distribution through a combination of “foreign aid as budget support and unregulated privatization proceeds.”<sup>138</sup> While much of this aid stems from Jordan’s role as a pivotal “buffer state” for both the United States and Gulf countries, the Jordanian government has also at times utilized aid directed for refugees

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<sup>137</sup> Norimitsu Onishi, “As Syrian Refugees Develop Roots, Jordan Grows Wary,” *New York Times*, October 06, 2013.

<sup>138</sup> Peters and Moore “Beyond Boom and Bust: External Rents, Durable Authoritarianism, and Institutional Adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.”

to development projects. In the case of the Iraqi crisis, observers have argued that the government's policy towards Iraqis fleeing conflict in Iraq (dubbing them "guests") and inflation of number of Iraqis in Jordan resulted in the misdirection of foreign aid towards project not specifically adapted to refugee needs. The National Resilience Plan developed to support Jordanian host communities bearing the brunt of the Syrian refugee crisis also offers a "golden opportunity" to utilize international aid in building an infrastructure with implications beyond the refugee presence.<sup>139</sup>

Refugees also have themselves participated directly in the Jordanian economy, defying any characterization of refugees simply as a static population to be leveraged for external rents. In a country that for many has become a long-term, if ultimately impermanent, home, Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, and other refugees have contributed to the recent flourishing of the Jordanian private sector and boosted GDP through investment and enterprise. While unemployment persists at high rates among refugees and most registered refugees are dependent on aid from the United Nations and its partner agencies, the macro-economic contributions of refugees nonetheless contradicts the stereotype of refugees as solely a burden on the Jordanian economy. Refugees have vied with migrant laborers for jobs in the Jordanian economy's labor sector, working for lower wages that increase profit for Jordanian businesses. Palestinian refugees were instrumental in the building and growth of Jordan's private sector through labor, entrepreneurship, and remittances. During the Iraqi crisis, Iraqis injected billions of dollars into the Jordanian economy through construction and business enterprises. Capital inflows by Syrian refugees are only increasing, with Syrian factories moving to Jordan and small businesses (both formal and informal) opening on a nearly daily basis.

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<sup>139</sup> Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, *National Resilience Plan 2014-2016*.

As this chapter has demonstrated, refugees have directly influenced the development of the Jordanian economy as both a source of rents and as economic agents. The next chapter seeks to examine the role of refugees in the governance strategies of the Jordanian regime. It argues that the dilemma of governing new populations while preserving its own authority has compelled the monarchy to adopt a strategy of inclusion and exclusion that has been challenged by refugees themselves. The government's claim of representation and stewardship of these refugees also furthers the conceptualizing of Jordan as a refugee-state.

## Chapter 2: Governing the Refugees: Inclusion/Exclusion and Refugees as Political Agents

### Abstract:

Since shortly following Jordan's independence, the Hashemite monarchy has grappled with the dilemma of governing the refugees that have flooded across the country's borders. For the Palestinians, this uncertainty compelled the monarchy to adopt simultaneous strategies of inclusion and exclusion, seeking to naturalize the refugees as Jordanian subjects and citizens even while asserting their refugee status in order to preserve the "right to return." This strategy has served to institutionalize a legal hierarchy of subjecthood between citizens, residents, and long-term and short-term refugees that has ultimately contributed to the monarchy's power. However, a closer examination of Jordan's history and the current position of the Syrian refugees indicates that this analysis, while not without merit, simplifies and erases both the refugees' political agency and tactics of "divide and rule" employed by the regime. Palestinian and later Iraqi refugees have actively blurred the line between subject and non-subject, with Palestinian refugees (and Jordanians of Palestinian descent) increasingly voicing demands for more equitable methods of political participation and influence. The development of systems of self-governance in the Syrian refugee camps following the recent Syrian influx also reflects attempts to forge a space for political action by refugees.

### Introduction

The political narrative surrounding refugees, especially the Palestinians, in Jordan is one of demographic threat and instability. Their proportionally massive numbers (Jordan has the highest refugee to population ratio in the world) has consistently sparked fears over the past half century that Jordan would be subsumed under a foreign identity.<sup>140</sup> Some of the latest iterations of this anxiety were clearly visible in a manifesto released in 2010 by a group of retired Jordanian military officers calling themselves the "National Committee of Military Veterans." The document demanded the revocation of Jordanian citizenship from all Palestinians in the country, arguing that their legal status was an endangerment to the right of return and an affront to Jordan's identity as a state "for Jordanians."<sup>141</sup> While the manifesto was quickly met by a counter-manifesto "signed by thousands of Palestinians and Transjordanians" condemning its divisive message but also emphasizing the right of return, the rift was only the latest

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<sup>140</sup> Geraldine Chatelard. "Jordan: A Refugee Haven," Country Profiles, Migration Policy Institute (2010).

<sup>141</sup> Curtis Ryan, "'We are all Jordan'...But Who is We?" *Middle East Report* (July 13, 2010).

manifestation of a divide between refugees and the kingdom's subjects dating to the 1948 Palestinian influx.<sup>142</sup> In a country where the term “refugee” has come to be almost synonymous with Palestinian, this rupture appears to have also affected perspectives towards the latest waves of Iraqis and Syrians entering the country.

Refugees and the question of how to govern them have played a pivotal role in Jordan's political development, with forced migrants on average constituting between one third and half of the country's inhabitants since 1948. Yet this influence has not manifested simply in the discussed East Bank vs. the Palestinians divide that appears to characterize Jordan's political sphere. Instead, this chapter argues that the presence of refugees since 1948 and the political and legal ambiguity of their statuses have allowed the monarchy to adopt a governance strategy of simultaneous integration and exclusion, resulting in a legalized hierarchy of belonging among the various inhabitants of Jordan that has contributed to the construction and perpetuation of a “national” divide. Fresh from the task of building a political coalition of support among the territories' tribes and merchants during the years before Jordan's independence, the influx of Palestinian refugees and the annexation of the West Bank posed a significant governance challenge to the fledgling Hashemite monarchy. Were the refugees to be included as subjects with political and legal duties and claims in the kingdom, or ruled as temporary “non-subjects” with no political role or legal rights? Building on Joseph Massad's discussion of the state's role in the interpellation of the national subject through legal mechanisms, this chapter argues that the state has actively created a multitude of categories of subjecthood—citizens, refugees, refugee-citizens, guests—that have alternately integrated, partially integrated, or excluded displaced persons from political participation in Jordan. Instead of governing and representing solely its

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<sup>142</sup> Ryan, ““We are all Jordan”...But Who is We?”

citizens, the government has also exerted authority over its long-term refugees, thereby rendering refugees disenfranchised constituents of the Jordanian state. As scholars such as Ellen Lust-Okar have argued, a strategy of cooptation and “divide and rule” has in part enabled the Jordanian monarchy to resist democratic reform and legitimated this political disenfranchisement of much of Jordan’s inhabitants.<sup>143</sup> While no similar pretense of integration has met the Iraqi and Syrian populations that have recently sought asylum, the category of “refugee” has nevertheless assumed a status between subject and non-subject that the Jordanian government has been tasked with administering. The portrayal of these forced migrants as a demographic threat has the potential to either further solidify the strategy of “divide and rule” or, as some scholars argue, provide an alternate “other” to distract against the destabilizing effects of the East Bank-Palestinian constructed division.

However, characterizations of refugees as static populations to be leveraged for political gain elide the refugees’ own agency as political actors. As this chapter also argues, refugees have actively blurred the lines of this hierarchy of subjecthood by exerting their own forms of influence, whether through political integration or the formation of sub-state governance systems. Palestinians seeking to gain influence in the Jordanian system have adopted a strategy of “Jordanization,” such as through adopting Jordanian accents, while others stake claims on both their national identity as Palestinians and as Jordanian subjects.<sup>144</sup> The Palestinian refugee camps have been dubbed by some as “independent republics” or “state within a state,” a method of political expression that despite increasingly direct, non-representative state control is a manifestation of refugees’ political participation and self governance. Most importantly, as Ruba Salih argues, Palestinian “refugees are uttering a distinctively new political discourse, which is

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<sup>143</sup> Ellen Lust-Okar, “Divided They Rule: The Management and Manipulation of Political Opposition.” *Comparative Politics* 36, 2 (2004), 159-180.

<sup>144</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*,

reflective of their long-term practices of attempting to achieve rights, while simultaneously claiming their right to return,” defying state practices of partial integration.<sup>145</sup> This process is also reflected in the behavior of Syrian refugees, who in spaces such as the Za’atari refugee camp and in their own urban communities are beginning to form “political milieus” and systems of self-governance.<sup>146</sup>

The chapter begins by providing theoretical definitions of what it means to constitute a national subject, a term that will then be analyzed in the context of the Jordanian monarchy’s governance strategies towards refugees, both within refugee camps and among the population. The formation of a legal hierarchy of subjecthood and the effects of selective enfranchisement and disenfranchisement will then be discussed, followed by an exploration of refugees’ roles as political agents within Jordan.

### **Subjects and Non-Subjects, Citizens and Refugees**

For much of its history, Jordan has operated under a monarch armed with the power of dissolving the authority of the elected parliament at any time he chooses—a power that has been wielded multiple times over the course of Jordan’s history. It would seem then that the political participation or status of the country’s inhabitants would be irrelevant, since ultimately all would face the same divine authority of the king’s rule. As Jordan’s history (and the history of the region) aptly indicates, however, the authority of the Hashemite kings was far from automatic. From Abdullah’s assumption of power as Emir of Transjordan in 1921 to the country’s independence in 1946, the king faced the challenge of consolidating his authority over a

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<sup>145</sup> Ruba Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights: Palestinian Refugees and the Emergence of a “Political Society,” *Jadaliyya*, March 26, 2013. [http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10814/reconciling-return-and-rights\\_palestinian-refugees](http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/10814/reconciling-return-and-rights_palestinian-refugees)

<sup>146</sup> Andreas Hackl, “Power and Politics in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp,” *IRIN*, November 1, 2013. <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99045/analysis-politics-and-power-in-jordan-s-za-atari-refugee-camp>

collection of tribes and merchants who had largely avoided the Arab Revolt against their previous Ottoman rulers. As Yoav Alon discusses in his book *The Making of Jordan*, the monarchy embarked on a process of integrating disparate tribal networks under the umbrella of its authority through incentivized coalition building. In exchange for their obedience, tribal members were offered lucrative positions in the state's military and bureaucratic structures—effectively nationalized by state institutions. The new subjects included not only tribes but Syrian and Palestinian merchants, as well as a range of minorities including the Circassians that would form the king's personal bodyguard force.<sup>147</sup> Yet the shaky political coalition that carried the state to independence in 1946 was challenged by an influx of Palestinian refugees and Jordan's annexation of the West Bank, tripling the country's population overnight. The question of whether this new population could be considered subjects can only be answered by an examination of both what it means to be a subject (and a non-subject) as well as how a subject is constituted.

The use of the word "subject" rather than "citizen" is not simply a nod to Jordan's monarchical government; it is a reference to a *national subject*, or an individual belonging to the nation claimed to be represented by the state. Who this national subject is has been explored by numerous postcolonial scholars that initially centered their questions around the nature of the ontological difference between the "subject" and the "other." Walker Connor has argued that the nation is defined as "the largest group that shares a sense of common ancestry" with the corollary of the nation as being "the largest group that can be influenced/aroused/motivated/mobilized by appeals to common kinship."<sup>148</sup> Applied to the example of Jordan, the nation would be only those who share a common sense of ancestry as ethnically Jordanian. Indeed, scholars discussing

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<sup>147</sup> Yoav Alon, *The Making of Jordan: Tribes, Colonialism, and the Modern State* (London; New York: I.B.Tauris, 2009).

<sup>148</sup> Walker Connor. "The timelessness of nations." *Nations and Nationalism* 10, no. 1- 2 (2004): 35-47.

the formation and constitution of the national subject often employ the Hegelian notion of relationally defining a “national subject as a particular kind of human being, a member of a particular kind of community, and hence, ontologically and existentially distinct from strangers to that community.” The qualities of the “constitutive other” non-subject becomes the marker against which the subject is defined.<sup>149</sup> These essentialist and relational ideas of subject identity seem to highlight a subjective (or objective) difference between the subject and the non-subject.

However, in his book *Colonial Effects: The Making of National Identity in Jordan*, Joseph Massad also discusses the role of juridical and state institutions in determining who constitutes a “juridico-national subject” of a nation-state.<sup>150</sup> Massad argues that “the juridical secures the precepts of nationalism by *interpellating* subjects as nationals, [even as] it simultaneously reveals nationality as a fiction to be molded and remolded by the law.”<sup>151</sup> He rejects the notion that a nation refers to any primordial ethnic identity, arguing that while a individual’s geographic or ethnic identity may be prediscursive, their belonging as a national subject is in part defined by their status as outlined by state and legal institutions. This top-down consolidation of the nation ties its members to the outlines of the state, whereas other definitions of national subject emphasize the state as a construct through which the nation and nationalist discourse is expressed.<sup>152</sup>

In this framework, the subject is defined by her legal status—citizen, resident, non-citizen—and ties to state institutions through voting or participation in the military or government. The individual’s identification with a nationalist discourse evoking cultural

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<sup>149</sup> Sunera Thobani. *Exalted subjects: Studies in the making of race and nation in Canada*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007) p 5.

<sup>150</sup> Joseph Andoni Massad, *Colonial effects: The making of national identity in Jordan* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2013).

<sup>151</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, p 15.

<sup>152</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and nationalism*. (New York: Cornell University Press, 2008).

characteristics, highlighted by some as a prerequisite to subjecthood, is argued by Massad to be a product of these legal and state institutions.<sup>153</sup> While this definition fails to fully account for individual agency—as will be discussed further in this chapter—it nevertheless provides a rubric against which to identify the non-subject. Rather than the Hegelian “constitutive other” possessing objective characteristics against which the subject may be defined, the non-subject is instead one who lacks legal status within the state—a non-citizen or an alien—without connection to or claims upon state institutions. The difference between subject and non-subject would therefore appear to be black-and-white, its legal nature absolving it of any ambiguity. However, as the next section indicates, the presence of refugees in Jordan has instead contributed to a blurring of this dichotomy, instating in its place a legal and institutional hierarchy of subjecthood that is a defining feature of the modern Jordanian political sphere.

### **Between Subject and Non-Subject: Governing Refugees in Jordan**

Refugees pose a unique legal quandary for both the nation-state and the international arena, with the status of refugees one of the main unsolved humanitarian dilemma of the modern age. While refugees are entitled to few legal or political rights in their host country as subjects of a foreign state, what differentiates refugees from migrants is a rupture of the “social contract” with their state of origin. Instead, they must direct their humanitarian claims to the international refugee regime, mediated through the governing authority of the host state.<sup>154</sup> In an international framework that has come to be defined by the Westphalian state—and in which the importance of individual rights have yet to exceed the importance of state sovereignty—refugees who no longer retain the protection of their host state are unmoored from the international system. While

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<sup>153</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, p 16.

<sup>154</sup> Robyn Lui, “Governing Refugees 1919-1945,” *Borderlands E-Journal*, Vol. 1 no.1 (2002).  
[http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol1no1\\_2002/lui\\_governing.html](http://www.borderlands.net.au/vol1no1_2002/lui_governing.html)

the UN has put forward treaties such as the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, both its definition of a refugee as an individual fleeing from political persecution and the agreement's non-binding nature renders it ineffective.

In Jordan's case, the refugee dilemma is exacerbated by the utter lack of legal instruments to effectively address the refugees' plight. Jordan is not a party to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, yet the government has often deployed the language of international law in depicting refugees as an international burden.<sup>155</sup> This lack of codification is significant in its implications for refugees' ambiguous legal status within Jordan. By not signing the main treaty supporting this international refugee regime, the Jordanian government has instead itself assumed primary responsibility for refugee governance (even while relying upon international agencies for aid and infrastructural support). Despite the fact that refugees are foreign nationals, their proportionally massive numbers and, for many, the long-term nature of their presence renders refugees a third category between subject and non-subject. In the case of the Palestinians, Jordan's role as "caretaker" of the refugees has allowed it to wield foreign political clout while continuing to co-opt and repress Palestinian refugees domestically. However, "if you are a refugee in Jordan and you don't have Jordanian citizenship, of course you are automatically excluded from [political participation]. It goes without saying," argues Dr. Mohamed Eidat, a law professor at the University of Jordan. Legally speaking, he notes, refugees are foreign nationals and are therefore not included in the polity of their host country.<sup>156</sup> Yet for the nearly two million Palestinian refugees in Jordan who also possess Jordanian citizenship, this distinction between subject and non-subject is unclear. As Salih and others have argued, Palestinians are subject to "a double paradoxical process of assimilation and exclusion or

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<sup>155</sup> King Abdullah II, "Remarks by His Majesty King Abdullah II at the Plenary Session of the 68<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the United Nations."

<sup>156</sup> Interview with Mohamed Eidat

exception.”<sup>157</sup> While the figure of the “refugee” has come to assume a status of physical permanence yet political separation, the fusion of this identity with citizenship has enabled the selective deployment of “refugee” as a means of political separation. While excluded from the Jordanian nation, Palestinian refugees are governed and represented through the Jordanian state, problematizing the entire notion of Jordan as a unified nation-state.

The Iraqi and Syrian refugees appear to fall more firmly into the realm of non-subject, with no large-scale naturalization occurring as in the case of the Palestinians. Yet as this section highlights, these individuals nevertheless figure into the hierarchy of subjecthood established by the regime’s policies towards the Palestinians. Jordanian policy in response to the Iraqi influx reflected dual fears in regard to the security and demographic threats posed by the incoming population, preferring to label Iraqis “guests” instead of more long-term refugees. As Geraldine Chatelard and Victoria Mason have noted, this ambiguous legal status allowed for the integration of “desirable” Iraqis and contributed to the characterization of Iraqi guests as uncontrolled, embedded threats to Jordanian security and politics—a position that allowed the regime to scapegoat domestic political problems and even distract from domestic political inequality.

While the Jordanian government initially also referred to incoming Syrians as “guests,” the sheer magnitude of the influx forced the government to allow the UNHCR to register Syrians as refugees. In many ways, the Jordanian response to the Syrians mirrors the case of the Palestinians. With little hope of return or resettlement elsewhere (unlike the case of the Iraqis), Syrians pose a long-term political and governance challenge. The formation of refugee camps that now constitute small cities (Za’atari refugee camp is now the fourth-largest population center in Jordan) and the vast urban refugee presence have sparked fears of a permanent stay, yet the likelihood that any Syrian refugees would be naturalized is slim. Instead, the regime has

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<sup>157</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

assumed the responsibility of both governing the Syrians and maintaining their exclusion, tasked with ensuring the political primacy of its increasingly outnumbered “true” subjects.

### *Palestinians in Jordan*

Dubbed by some as simply “an arid piece of land left over after the carving out of Palestine, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq...to satisfy the personal ambition of an Arab prince who was left after World War One without a territory to rule,” Jordan had nevertheless by its independence in 1946 formed a political unit roughly coalesced along its British-drawn borders.<sup>158</sup> The initial success (or rather, subsistence) of the Jordanian state has been attributed to the deft process of coalition-building among its inhabitants, supported by British funds. While “in the first years, under British supervision, non-Transjordanians from Syria, Palestine, and the Hijaz held the few positions of power available to Arabs,” local revolts compelled King Abdullah and his British general John Bagot Glubb to employ a strategy of co-optation and repression in which leaders and elders from rural tribes were integrated into the regime’s coalition of support in exchange for land grants or positions in the bureaucracy.<sup>159</sup> As Betty Anderson notes, “those affiliated with the state structures gained the right to ‘assume the cloak of the nation’ and define its history, its boundaries, and its people,” which meant a popularization of the notion of the “Bedouin” (though not necessarily Transjordanian) as the kingdom’s rightful subjects and bearers of its national culture.<sup>160</sup> However, as Anderson also discusses, the Hashemite monarchy’s legitimacy was also helped by King Abdullah’s support of the unification of Greater Syria, a project that earned him the support of politically active Syrians and Transjordanians residing within the newly created borders and legitimated his control over

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<sup>158</sup> Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, p 3.

<sup>159</sup> Betty S. Anderson, *Nationalist voices in Jordan: The street and the state*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), p 42.

<sup>160</sup> Anderson, *Nationalist voices in Jordan*, p 17.

Jordan as a foreign ruler originating from the Hijaz. By appealing to notions of Hashemitism, which connected not only Jordan but the Hashemite monarchs in Syria and Iraq, Abdullah was able to successfully claim “the apparently contradictory right to leadership of a nation-state and a region-wide, pan-national identity.”<sup>161</sup>

While the porous border between Palestine and Jordan had allowed for a high degree of pre-exodus migration and trade, the 1948 exodus and annexation of the West Bank effectively tripled the population of Jordan overnight. Displaced and bereft of their livelihoods and belongings, the refugees that arrived in territorial Jordan and the West Bank posed serious economic, political, and infrastructural challenges for the fledgling state. Yet the refugees also posed a distinct opportunity for the monarchy to continue the ‘interpellation of national subject.’<sup>162</sup> As Alon and Massad discuss, though King Abdullah had made concessions to territorial-based national appeals in constructing the nation-state by placing Transjordanians in positions of power and creating a top-down, border-based nationalism entwined with the state, the new territory and new potential subjects provided an opportunity to extend the nation even further. In 1948, following the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli war, Jordan troops occupied the West Bank, with the initial stated intent of serving as a “caretaker” until Palestine’s independence.<sup>163</sup> Despite outcry from fellow Arab League nations, King Abdullah immediately took steps towards legally annexing the West Bank, holding a conference in Jericho on December 1 to determine the future of the territory. Abdullah sent on his behalf to the conference a delegation of Palestinian deputies, in an attempt to signal the legitimacy of his rule. A resolution was passed granting King Abdullah sovereignty over Palestine, but which also “urged

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<sup>161</sup> Anderson, *Nationalist voices in Jordan*, p 17.

<sup>162</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, p 15.

<sup>163</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*.

the return of all the Palestinian refugees to their homes and properties and to receive compensation for all losses sustained.”<sup>164</sup>

On December 20, 1949, Jordan took the controversial step of granting refugees and residents of the West Bank Jordanian citizenship, a move met with considerable opposition from other Arab countries advocating unsuccessfully for a region-wide Palestinian passport.<sup>165</sup> As Avi Plascov discusses in his book *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-57*, “by granting citizenship to the refugees, Jordan sought to legitimize its claim to be the only viable country for the Palestinians. Still it ensured that the refugees retained their special status and continued to qualify for international aid.” The extension of the Jordanian national identity to the Palestinians was furthered by subsequent citizenship laws, including the 1954 Nationality Law that defined Jordanian nationals as: “Any Arab born in the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan or in the occupied part of Palestine and emigrated from the country or left—including the children of this emigrant wherever they were born—who would submit a written application and renounce their former nationality,” thereby allowing Palestinian refugees in other countries to submit applications for Jordanian citizenship.<sup>166</sup> In pursuit of nationalizing the Palestinians, some Jordanian officials such as Finance Minister Musa Nasir even asserted that “there are no refugees in Jordan, as all Palestinians enjoy citizenship.”<sup>167</sup> The nationalizing project undertaken by the Jordanian regime therefore sought to subsume Palestinian refugee identity under the banner of the Hashemite state. Through a regime-encouraged “process of controlled participation,” many refugees “took part in the offered process of integration, voting and being elected to Parliament, serving in the rapidly expanding Jordanian administration, and in effect carrying out the policy at thwarting...refugee

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<sup>164</sup> Al Abed, “Palestinian Refugees in Jordan.”

<sup>165</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 47.

<sup>166</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 47.

<sup>167</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 47.

political separateness.”<sup>168</sup> Refugees were not stateless, but rather citizens under the protection of the greater Arab nation of whom King Abdullah and later King Hussein was the representative.

In practice, however, the continuation of policies building and favoring a tribal coalition undermined this pan-Arab sentiment but also appeared to be a necessary step in maintaining the regime’s authority in an environment characterized by nationalist movements. Massad’s discussion of the military and government as the institutions through which the national subject is legitimated highlights the continued exclusionary policies adopted in relation to areas viewed as the preserve of only the regime’s most loyal coalition. Until 1956, the commanding general of Jordan’s regular army, the Arab Legion, was British officer John Bagot Glubb (nicknamed “Glubb Pasha”). Glubb supervised a division between rural “Bedouins” and Circassians—whom he perceived as more loyal to the monarch—and *hadari* “settled” Jordanians—associated with more political activity—within the army.<sup>169</sup> In 1950, the National Guard was formed as a second branch of the Jordanian army, in which all Jordanian men of military age would be compelled to join. Massad cites Glubb’s justification for creating this organization on two levels: first, to assert that the Palestinians “could not be half-citizens. We must make them feel trusted, and the first sign of trust was to arm them.”<sup>170</sup> The second, however, was to defend the Arab Legion against criticisms as a solely East Bank entity while retaining its East Bank character.<sup>171</sup> The new National Guard consisted mostly of Palestinian West Bank villagers, and was poorly equipped and seen as significantly less prestigious in comparison to the Arab Legion. As Plascov writes, Palestinian refugees “were strongly attracted to the Arab Legion” but were largely excluded.<sup>172</sup> Even following the integration of the army in 1956 following Glubb’s dismissal and the eventual

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<sup>168</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 160-161.

<sup>169</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, 177.

<sup>170</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*.

<sup>171</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, 204.

<sup>172</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 99.

abolition of the National Guard in 1966, Palestinians and even East Bank nationalists were largely excluded from high ranks in the army in favor of the Bedouin and Circassian-Jordanian soldiers that had staffed the army during the colonial era as a buffer against the nationalist coup attempts that seemed to be sweeping the region.

In addition, as discussed in the previous chapter, the king enacted a policy of directing most international aid towards the development of the East Bank as opposed to the West Bank. Refugee camps in particular were underdeveloped (though this will be discussed more in the next section). At the municipal level, refugees were “constantly reminded of their status by the local population or the bureaucracy.”<sup>173</sup> The continuing perception of refugees as guests by the host population indicated that for all the regime’s nationalizing rhetoric, the practical implementation of this policy continued to fall short, both on account of the host population’s fear of displacement and as a result of direct regime policies.

The effects of the dual process of inclusion and exclusion employed towards the refugees came to a head following the loss of the West Bank to Israel during the 1967 war and the subsequent Jordanian civil war in 1970-71. The Jordanian nation experienced a rapid contraction, in which many of its national subjects—who had never fully been included—were left outside of its borders. During the 1960s, the newly formed Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) gained sway among Palestinians through its promise of equal representation and active military efforts towards reestablishing the Palestinian homeland. Frustrated with what amounted to a sidelining of the Palestinian cause by the Jordanian monarchy, a number of Palestinians within Jordan’s borders joined the *fedayeen*, or guerilla units of the PLO, and began launching attacks on Israel from Jordan, much to the king’s alarm. Following the 1967 war and the perceived apathy of Jordan in defending the West Bank, *fedayeen* activities increased in Jordan, along with the rise

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<sup>173</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 162.

of a Jordanian Nationalist Movement (JNM) challenging the authority of the regime. While the king initially attempted to defuse tension, “after the king’s motorcade was attacked on June 9, 1970, Bedouin units shelled two refugee camps in Amman. As Adnan Abu Awdah states, the “army reaction was both revealing and alarming. The choice of two refugee camps as the target of the army’s anger implied that the army looked on all Palestinians as an extension of the fedayeen and vice versa.”<sup>174</sup> Following the civil war and expulsion of the PLO, despite the fact that many Transjordanians deserted to the side of the guerillas and most Palestinians in the Jordanian army remained at their posts, Palestinians and Palestinian refugees received the focus of blame for sedition.<sup>175</sup>

Massad argues that following the 1970 civil war the Palestinian refugees and Palestinian-Jordanians within the newly shrunken Jordan “came to be identified as “other” by the Jordanian regime and its allies, and were instrumental in helping the formation of a Jordanian national self opposed to that other.”<sup>176</sup> Transjordanians, represented by Transjordanian nativists vocal on the political stage, were depicted as fearful of the Palestinians—despite the fact that many Transjordanians had also taken part in the resistance. However, this characterization is a simplification of the machinations undertaken by the regime during this period. Instead, while the king and government continued to insist on the unity of the Palestinian, Transjordanian, and other inhabitants of Jordan under the banner of the Hashemite monarchy, “whether to placate Transjordanians, punish Palestinians, improve security, or some combination of the three, the government began to implement a policy of preferential recruitment of Transjordanians into the

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<sup>174</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, 244.

<sup>175</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*.

<sup>176</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*, 222.

bureaucracy” and a purge of Palestinians.<sup>177</sup> In the aftermath of the upheaval, the refugee status assumed new significance, as well as any associations with the refugee status by virtue of Palestinian identity. While King Hussein did not officially give up his claim to be the representative of the Palestinian people till 1988, in practice the government began a process of differentiation of both existing refugee populations and new waves of Palestinians that continued to enter the country.

Perhaps the clearest manifestation of this trend was the legalization of a hierarchy of citizenship and refugee status. As the *Palestinian Yearbook of Law* states:

In 1983, the Jordanian government created a dual system: yellow cards, which represented full residency and full citizenship rights for persons who had left the West Bank for the East Bank before June 1 of that year; and green cards, providing a renewable two-year Jordanian "passport" and no right of residence for those who left the West Bank after June 1, 1983. Green card holders can visit Jordan for only up to one month at a time. Thus it is really no more than a travel document, of the type also issued to Palestinians by Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. As already noted, Jordan has recently announced that green card holders can apply again for five-year passports, but such a passport does not constitute full citizenship.

The main category of Palestinians in Jordan who are not Jordanian citizens consists of those displaced from the Gaza strip in 1967. They constitute approximately 70,000 persons. As noncitizens, they need official permission to work and then they can do so only in the private sector. The noncitizens use Egyptian travel documents when traveling abroad and need return visas to get back into Jordan. Permission to remain or return is granted or denied at the whim of the Jordanian government.<sup>178</sup>

The justification made for these layers of identification came from the Jordanian regime's distancing from attempts to nationalize the Palestinians. Those who already had citizenship would retain it, albeit with an additional marker to differentiate them, while any additional refugees would be placed in a grey zone between subject and foreigner. Gazans were placed firmly in the category of non-subject, with no clear legal framework to address their plight despite the fact that their presence persists to the present. For the most part, however, Palestinian

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<sup>177</sup> Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 4 (Summer, 1995), p 53.

<sup>178</sup> *The Palestine Yearbook of International Law*. 2000/2001. Vol. XI. Great Britain: Kluwer Law International.

refugees continued to be integrated as at least partial subjects, though with an understanding of the allegiance of West Bank Palestinians to Palestine and not Jordan (which in practice meant little since the Palestinians could still not gain access to an alternate form of citizenship).

Yet the contraction of the nation discussed by Massad also had implications for Jordanian citizens by retroactively reducing the boundaries of the “true” subject to only a segment of the population, legitimating the exclusion of others by virtue of their refugee status. A developing sense of Transjordanian nationalism accelerated by regime favoritism led to the apparent increase of a sense of demographic anxiety about the Palestinians living within Jordan’s borders. Informal measures taken by the regime to disenfranchise Palestinian Jordanians, even those without refugee status, and prevent new Palestinian refugees from entering the country supported a notion that the regime had its Transjordanian subjects’ interests in mind. In 1993, King Hussein introduced a new “Single Non-Transferable Vote System” which, while not explicitly directed at marginalizing refugees, operated on the assumption that most individuals would vote for tribal or familial candidates if left with a single vote. Coupled with electoral redistricting away from Palestinian population centers, the combined effects of the new electoral reforms marginalized the Palestinian refugees even further. In addition, during the Iraqi and Syrian refugee crises, efforts have been undertaken by border police to explicitly prevent new Palestinian refugees from entering.

Despite outcry, justification for this division was upheld by explicitly referencing the refugee status of the Palestinians. Stefania Nanes writes of an incident in which a former Parliament member, Adnan Abu Odeh, authored a book calling for democratic equality between East Bank Jordanians and Palestinians, an act which resulted in public outcry and his eventual dismissal. As she writes, “nationalists perceived Abu Odeh’s call for increased democracy

(primarily in the form of electoral and bureaucratic reform) as destroying Jordan's delicate political balance through the handover of political power to economically dominant Palestinian Jordanians.”<sup>179</sup> There was apparently no need for the regime itself to stifle potentially destabilizing democratic reform; Transjordanians appeared to be rising to the cause of repression themselves. As Sarah Tobin argues, the use of *al-watan al-badeel* (the alternative homeland) as a buffer against electoral or democratic reform has been employed by not only Transjordanians and Palestinians but by government officials. She writes:

“Visions and fears of *al-Watan al-Badeel* (The Alternative Nation) have arisen again during this time of uncertainty, and have been featured in international discussions of the future of Israel and Palestine. The concern is that the instability and political delegitimization of the Hashemite regime might lead to the creation of a new governmental structure, one that would establish Jordan as a Palestinian state. The Alternative Nation is a scenario that the ethnic minority Jordanians would prefer not to see play out, given their politically privileged status; at least some Palestinians would also hesitate to support it. This is because the Alternative Nation provides justification for the expulsion of Palestinians from Israel and negates the ideological claims for the Right of Return. In this scenario, it is not that Jordan wins or that the Palestinians win *per se*, but that Israel wins and the Right of Return is diminished in its symbolic and political power.”<sup>180</sup>

Applied in the context of the Palestinians, the government is provided with a legitimate reason to prevent full *tawtin* (resettlement) and the population is provided with a reason to maintain the status quo. The skewed demographics of representation are justified by the logic that, as refugees, Palestinian Jordanians should be grateful for the rights afforded them without becoming too invested in political participation. This analysis does not reflect simply an East Banker vs. West Banker schism. Rather, it reveals a more complex power structure in which refugees and individuals associated with refugee status can be legitimately marginalized in the name of preserving a regime-dependent, ethnonational primacy. In this analysis, refugees are

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<sup>179</sup> Stefanie Nanes, “Hashemitism, Jordanian National Identity, and the Abu Odeh Episode,” *The Arab Studies Journal*, Vol. 18, No. 1 (Spring 2010), p 181.

<sup>180</sup> Sarah A. Tobin, “Jordan’s Arab Spring: The Middle Class and Anti-Revolution,” *Middle East Policy Journal*, Vol. 19, no. 1 (Spring 2012).

necessary to the hierarchy of power constructed by the monarchy; half-subjects that serve as a demographic weight against attempts at reform who fear disrupting the status quo. While Brand cites “anecdotal evidence” that “suggests that the regime is not above exploiting such tensions (generally by encouraging the expression by Transjordanians of various forms of anti-Palestinian-ism) when it sees fit,” other authors such as Curtis Ryan are more explicit about the strategy of “divide and rule.”<sup>181</sup>

Initially integrated and subsequently partially excluded, the Palestinian refugee presence set the stage for Jordan’s approach to governing subsequent refugee crises. While the regime successfully co-opted a number of Palestinian economic elite and those considered “highly loyal” to the regime, refugee status was selectively deployed in other cases to create a hierarchy of subjecthood in the country. The perceived demographic pressure on the Transjordanian population and the informal disenfranchisement of Palestinian “refugee-citizens” had the compound effect of discouraging democratic reform or any delegitimization of the monarchy’s authority—evidenced in unity projects such as the “Jordan First” initiative. Such initiatives promoted the notion of a unified nation at odds with a fractured legal reality, in which the Jordanian state governed not a Jordanian nation but two legally disparate populations. Yet Massad’s argument that the Palestinians provided an “other” against which to mobilize a Jordanian nation can also be considered in the context of subsequent refugee crises. Did the Iraqis provide an “other” against which the entire Jordanian population, Palestinian and Transjordanian, could mobilize? Or did they serve simply as an extension of the Palestinians?

### ***Iraqi “Guests”***

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<sup>181</sup> Brand, “Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity,” p 57.

The Iraqis that arrived in Jordan seeking asylum from ongoing violence in their home country were placed inextricably in the shadow of the country's Palestinians and, consequentially, within the hierarchy of subjecthood. While pan-Arab rhetoric dictated that the Iraqis were "brothers" and "guests," this did not imply that Iraqis enjoyed the same rights as Jordanian citizens. As this section notes, Iraqis served a dual function of an "other" against which the Jordanian population could mobilize and utilize as a scapegoat, yet were also placed under the governance of the Jordanian state on the lowest rung of subjecthood as fellow Arabs. This inclusion/exclusion relegated many Iraqis to a legal void in which rights under the state or international community were often not applicable.

The Iraqi influx following the 2003 U.S. invasion did not occur in a single wave. Instead, from 2003-2008 Iraqis slowly poured across the border, an inflow that escalated in 2005 following an increase in sectarian violence. During the prewar period, Jordan had served as a main transit point for nearly 700,000 Iraqis seeking resettlement in third countries as a result of the Gulf War, and an estimated 200,000 had sought refuge in Jordan. As Geraldine Chatelard discusses in one of the few reliable resources for information on pre-2003 Iraqi flows to Jordan, the "vast majority of Iraqis in Jordan were either visitors on a temporary residency, or irregular aliens who had overstayed their six-month residency. The latter were liable to expulsion to Iraq, a threat which was sometimes implemented but was spared to women, children or the elderly."<sup>182</sup> Almost none were given or qualified for refugee status under the Geneva Convention, and those who did seek asylum with the UNHCR employed this means as a last resort in pursuit of secondary migration.

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<sup>182</sup> Geraldine Chatelard, "Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990-2003): Historical and socio-spatial dimensions," Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, Working Paper No. 68, University of Oxford (2009), p 25.

Until the Iraqi influx in 2003, then, Jordan served primarily as a “transit country” for individuals streaming from Iraq following the Gulf War under the pressure of sanctions. Chatelard describes Jordanian policy as “semi-protectionist,” or “letting them in but depriving them of a status, therefore encouraging them to move forward,” a policy that she argues the government attempted to continue to an extent following the 2003 invasion.<sup>183</sup> While Chatelard discusses the foreign policy and economic incentives for this policy towards the Iraqis, the domestic political role of these individuals is more unclear. Before 2003, Jordan was able to keep most Iraqis in a state of enforced invisibility, their status low on the list of domestic concerns as the country grappled with economic reforms, the transition from King Hussein to King Abdullah II, and rapprochement with Israel.

However, following the 2003 invasion, the steadily increasing inflow of Iraqis fleeing conflict catapulted their status in Jordan to an issue of increasing domestic and international political tension. Yet Jordan’s forced maintenance of the Iraqis’ temporary “guest” status excluded them from the discussed hierarchy of subjecthood established in relation to the Palestinians, for the explicit purpose of preventing the integration implied by “refugee” status. Within this framework, the lack of legal standing both deprived most Iraqis of legitimacy as asylum seekers and allowed them to be scapegoated by both the Jordanian media and the government as a moral, resource, and security threat—a depiction that mainly occurred following the 2005 bombings of three Amman hotels by Iraqi Al Qaeda operatives. As Chatelard notes, “calls for international support include security and precaution measures for which national expenditures have increased by 20% since 2005, allegedly to prevent terrorist attacks from foreign elements but also, one may contend, to suppress domestic discontent that could ensue

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<sup>183</sup> Chatelard, “Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990-2003).”

from a deteriorating economic situation.”<sup>184</sup> While the fear of terrorist attacks was legitimated by the 2005 bombings, both Chatelard and Joseph Sassoon also note that the Iraqi presence was utilized to impose harsher security measures on Jordan’s own population.<sup>185</sup>

Iraqis in Jordan served as a useful focal point for security, identity, and economic concerns. As discussed in the previous chapter, the government actively inflated the number of Iraqis in Jordan, a move arguably motivated by economic concerns but which also could serve policy goals by expanding the scope of the perceived threat. Nevertheless, there is also a disparity between the official policy of exclusion and a process of “segmented assimilation,” in which wealthy Iraqis have obtained long-term residency or even been naturalized.<sup>186</sup> In 2012, a report documenting the naturalization of about 40 wealthy Iraqis in 2007 and 2008 was met with public outcry, and the news that former intelligence chief Mohammad al-Dhahabi had naturalized many Iraqis perhaps contributed to his 2012 imprisonment on corruption charges.<sup>187</sup>

Within the framework of the hierarchy of subjecthood, Françoise De Bel Air proposed the idea that Iraqis could instead become the focus of Jordan’s “demographic demon” and distract attention away from the demographic threat of the Palestinian nationals. As he notes, the pressure of the Iraqi presence could lead to a definition “of national identity for the Kingdom and its citizens, or to finally come to terms with a non-national regional, identity encompassing all national affiliations and promoting citizenship based on *jus solis*.”<sup>188</sup> While this idea will be discussed further in relation to the latest influx of Syrian refugees, the fact that most Iraqis lack

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<sup>184</sup> Chatelard, “Migration from Iraq between the Gulf and the Iraq wars (1990-2003).”

<sup>185</sup> Geraldine Chatelard, “Jordan’s Transient Iraqi Guests: Transnational Dynamics and National Agenda,” Middle East Institute, October 2008.

<sup>186</sup> Chatelard, “What Visibility Conceals.”

<sup>187</sup> Al-Qulab, Rudad. Tajnis Athria’ ‘Araqiin bein 2007 wa 2008- Watha’iq [Naturalization of Wealthy Iraqis Between 2007 and 2008—Documents; in Arabic], Khaberni.com, January 23, 2012. khaberni.com/more-68392-1-تجنيس%20اثر%20رياء%20عراقيين%20بين%202007و2008و20%20وثائق

<sup>188</sup> Françoise De Bel-Air, “Iraqis in Jordan since 2003: What Socio-political Stakes?,” CARIM Research Reports 2009/10. (San Domenico di Fiesole: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies).

legal status would indeed seem to place them in a distinct category from the Palestinians, with an ability to serve as a Hegelian “other” against which Jordanian national identity may finally coalesce. However, as will also be discussed, by being grouped in with Palestinian refugees as simply further evidence of a demographic threat, the Iraqi and Syrian presence may also have the effect of further cementing this hierarchy.

### *Syrian Refugees*

Three years since the 2011 uprisings that began in the Syrian town of Dara’a, a mere ten minutes from the Jordanian border, there is little sign that the conflict—or the refugee flows it has triggered—will abate in the near future, with estimates of between 600,000 and 1 million Syrians currently in Jordan (out of whom 600,000 are registered refugees). While the Jordanian response to the Syrian population influx initially mirrored its response to the Iraqi refugee crisis—terming the incoming individuals “guests”—the increasing volume of asylum seekers prompted the government to acquiesce to UNHCR registration in summer 2012, allowing the organization to open Za’atari refugee camp in late July 2012.<sup>189</sup> Yet while at least 120,000 of these refugees have been placed in U.N. camps and holding centers such as Za’atari, Mrajeeb al Fhood, or Cyber City in Jordan’s northern rural provinces, the vast majority of refugees have instead sought residence within Jordan’s cities and towns.<sup>190</sup>

The creation of refugee camps and the widespread urban presence of refugees, as well as the familial and tribal linkages between Syrians and the Jordanian population in the north seem to evoke parallels to the 1948 Palestinian influx into Jordan—the fact that Jordan has allowed for

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<sup>189</sup> IRIN, “Briefing: The Mounting Syrian Refugee Crisis,” August 20, 2012.

<http://www.irinnews.org/report/96136/briefing-the-mounting-syrian-refugee-crisis>

<sup>190</sup> CARE International, *Lives Unseen: Urban Refugees And Jordanian Host Communities Three Years into Syria Crisis* (April 2014).

the widespread official registration of refugees seems to indicate a resignation to the long-term nature of the Syrian presence. However, the Jordanian response to Syrian refugees has been framed almost strictly in terms of the economic and social burden imposed by the refugees. The government's focus has been not on the possibility of long-term integration but on the short-term impacts of refugees. In contrast to Jordan's claim to represent the Palestinian refugees by providing them with citizenship and even its silence on the issue of Iraqi "guests," the Syrian refugees appear to have been placed firmly in the category of non-subject Arab refugees within Jordan's legal hierarchy of subjecthood—a responsibility as Arab "brothers" but ultimately under the jurisdiction of the international community.

Examining the presence in the context of the Iraqi and Palestinian influxes indicates that these new refugees may serve to replace the "other" against which the Jordanian nation is defined, as discussed by Massad and De Bel Air. If there is a political role to be served by these refugees, it might be argued, it is to provide a burden for which the Jordan population must unite to be able shoulder. In a January 2013 report titled "Brothers or Others? The Dynamics of Syrian Forced Displacement in Jordan," authored for the Norwegian NGO Fafo, which previously paired with the Jordanian Department of Statistics to release a report on the Iraqi refugees, Cathrine Thorliefsson noted how "Syrian refugees are imagined within the framework of the family as "brothers in blood" of whom there is a moral obligation to protect" by Jordanians and in official enjoinders to aid the refugees.<sup>191</sup> These "brothers" are not imagined as part of the nation, as was once so in the case of the Palestinians, but rather as temporary guests to whom Jordanians maintain a familial duty.

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<sup>191</sup> Cathrine Thorliefsson, "Brothers or Others? The dynamics of Syrian forced displacement in Jordan" (presented at Fafo, Amman, January 29, 2013). [http://www.fafo.no/Fafo-frokost/130129/manus\\_cathrine\\_thorleifsson.pdf](http://www.fafo.no/Fafo-frokost/130129/manus_cathrine_thorleifsson.pdf)

However, it is unclear whether the shared effort of bearing this burden will lead to a definition “of national identity for the Kingdom and its citizens, or to finally come to terms with a non-national regional, identity encompassing all national affiliations and promoting citizenship based on *jus solis*,” as De Bel Air optimistically predicted would result in the case of the Iraqis.<sup>192</sup> While, as of March 2014, it is perhaps still too early to discern the Jordanian government’s long-term position towards Syrian refugees, government policy already reflects a series of contradictions. Even while it is likely inevitable that many Syrians will be forced to remain in Jordan for long-term stays, whatever the outcome of the conflict, it is likely that Jordan will continue to approach it as a “temporary” phenomenon. The government has characterized this current refugee population much in the same way as the previous ones: as stateless individuals in the care of a beneficent government, preserved in a state of constant humanitarian emergency. Even so, the government has opened a birth registration office just outside Za’atari refugee camp to provide identity documents for the thousands of Syrians born in the area since 2011, and some Syrians have chosen to obtain residency instead of registering as refugees—signs of both the presence’s growing permanence and fluidity of refugee status.<sup>193</sup> Yet for the most part, refugees remain constantly in flux, governed by the Jordanian regime the bottom of a hierarchy of subjecthood constructed during the Palestinian refugee influx.

The above analyses of Jordanian governance strategies and policy responses towards refugee populations in the context of its broader population indicate a use of inclusion/exclusion or legal ambiguity in addressing each population. The resulting effect was a placement of

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<sup>192</sup> De Bel-Air, “Iraqis in Jordan since 2003.”

<sup>193</sup> Hussein Al-Shar’aa, “Al-Ahwaal Al-Madania Tastahadath Maktaban fi Mukheim Za’atari [Civil Status Creates an Office in Za’atari Refugee Camp; in Arabic], Al-Rai.com, March 11, 2014. <http://www.alrai.com/article/636518.html>; “Legal status of Individuals Fleeing Syria,” Syria Needs Analysis Project, ReliefWeb (June 2013). [http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/legal\\_status\\_of\\_individuals\\_fleeing\\_syria.pdf](http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/legal_status_of_individuals_fleeing_syria.pdf)

refugees on the lowest rung of subjecthood—“brothers” in the broader Arab nation under the domain of the Hashemite king’s rule—lacking the access to political power or legal claims of “true” subjects, or citizens with an added ethnic or political allegiance to the state. Yet as in the previous chapter’s initial focus on the rentier theory to explain Jordan’s open-door policy towards refugees, this top-down explanation does little to elucidate the individual actions and political decision-making of refugees, and their own challenges in representing themselves in the Jordanian state. The next section will explore each case and highlight the methods in which refugees have exercised agency in shaping Jordan’s political development.

### **Refugees as Political Agents**

Understanding the political role of refugees in Jordan on an individual level first requires an acknowledgement of the fact that, rather than constituting cohesive political, economic, or social groups, refugees themselves reflect varying class and political differences that affect their behavior within the host community of Jordan. As the introduction’s discussion of *agency* notes, refugees as individual political agents are able to internalize, react to, and make decisions according their goals and experiences, local connections and financial means, and transnational identifications. As a result, the legal hierarchy of subjecthood developed in the first section of this chapter cannot be understood as solely imposed in a top-down direction. Instead, refugees in Jordan have both actively blurred the divisions between citizen and refugee and chosen to retain their statuses as transnational political actors while simultaneously laying rights claims upon the state. By exercising their own strategies of legal integration/exclusion—a choice that is nonetheless inevitably influenced by class and other factors—refugees in Jordan also challenge conceptions as politically immobile populations.

*Palestinians in Jordan: Adaptation, Survival, and Demands for Rights*

This section notes three main ways in which Palestinian refugees have exerted political agency in both choosing and challenging their statuses within Jordan's legal hierarchy of subjecthood. First, by choosing to integrate or participate politically within Jordan, many Palestinians adopted methods to discursively challenge the boundaries between subject and non-subject, and in some cases effectively integrated themselves within the political elite reserved for "true Jordanians," challenging the notion of the state as exclusively the preserve of an ethnic Jordanian nation. Second, many Palestinians initially and continued to make the active choice not to engage in the Jordanian political sphere and themselves rejected calls for integration, preferring instead to maintain allegiance to the Palestinian homeland. This loyalty has taken shape at points by transforming Jordan's refugee camps and surrounding urban areas into virtual "independent republics," in which Palestinians may preserve their identities as refugees and carve spaces for self-governance and political expression. Finally, as Salih has argued, many refugees have chosen instead to retain their allegiance to a Palestinian nation while simultaneously arguing for equal political and legal rights in Jordan.<sup>194</sup>

Partial integration of Palestinians into the Jordanian political elite during the 1948-1967 period was an entry made conditional on their allegiance to the Hashemite monarchy under the banner of Hashemitism, which required to an extent a relinquishment of their identities as Palestinian refugees.<sup>195</sup> Geraldine Chatelard notes that "a significant number of Palestinian families, mostly from the upper middle class and above, accepted the terms of the pact with the Hashemites and have thrived in Jordan."<sup>196</sup> Indeed, within the Hashemite strategy of co-opting and repressing Palestinian separatism, Palestinians themselves have been major players. For

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<sup>194</sup> Salih, "Reconciling Return and Rights."

<sup>195</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*.

<sup>196</sup> Chatelard, "What Visibility Conceals."

example, King Abdullah II's wife, Queen Rania, is of Palestinian origin, and has been touted as an example of the unity of the Jordanian nation. She herself has utilized the pedestal of First Lady to argue (albeit controversially) for issues such as the ability of Jordanian women to pass citizenship to their children, a key bone of contention with Transjordanian nativists.<sup>197</sup> The rise of Palestinian technocrats in the King's court and in the parliament has also blurred the assumed dichotomy between an East Bank Jordanian public sector and a Palestinian private sector.<sup>198</sup>

In some cases, refugees actively challenged the discursive boundaries excluding them from desired positions of military or political influence by undergoing remarkable processes of adaptation. Salih cites an anecdote in which Abu Ahmad, a shopkeeper in the Hittin refugee camp, notes how the military began the process of excluding Palestinians from the National Guard and Arab Legion:

When they recruited for the army, they showed an onion to them and asked them to say what it was. Those who said *basala* were Palestinians and did not get into the army, those who said *ibsala*, were Jordanian Bedouins, those they took into the army.<sup>199</sup>

While this story, which Salih acknowledges may be "legend," highlights the manner in which characteristics attributed to the true, loyal subjects could practically be deployed to exclude Jordanians, it also underlines the possible ways in which Palestinians could "de-sacralize and contest these discursive constructions."<sup>200</sup> For example, Yousef, a Palestinian-Jordanian student at the University of Jordan, Amman, noted how his own grandfather had adopted a Jordanian accent and grounded his ancestry in the Transjordanian town of Ajloun in order to ease his entry as an officer into the Arab Legion.<sup>201</sup> Multiple scholars have noted the shifting uses of Arabic

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<sup>197</sup> Nicolas Pelham, "Jordan queen's decree stirs tempest over citizenship rights," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 17, 2012. <http://www.csmonitor.com/2002/1217/p07s02-wome.html>

<sup>198</sup> Ryan, "'We are all Jordan'...But Who is We?"

<sup>199</sup> Salih, "Reconciling Return and Rights."

<sup>200</sup> Salih, "Reconciling Return and Rights."

<sup>201</sup> Interview with Yousef (last name omitted)

dialects and accents as a means of asserting political allegiance or social assimilation. Renowned linguistic scholar Yasir Suleiman (himself Palestinian) noted how, following the 1970-71 civil war, many Palestinian male university student employed code-switching, or a shift to “Bedouin dialect,” during identity-card checks as a means of distancing themselves from association with the Palestinian *fedayeen*.<sup>202</sup> The use of dialect to connote political allegiance is significant in its challenge of the apparently codified boundaries of identity used to exclude Palestinians.

Secondly, many Palestinian refugees have also actively chosen to resist nationalizing projects by the Jordanian state, and instead asserted their identity as subjects of the Palestinian nation. As Plascov discusses in his book on the Palestinian refugees in Jordan from 1948-1957, the main opponents to citizenship and nationalization initiatives were not the Transjordanians—they were the refugees themselves. As he notes, many refugees “were uneasy that Jordanian citizenship would contradict and replace their right to Return,” and expressed their uneasiness by arguing for a Palestinian-wide “Refugee Card” that would stand as “a symbol of separatism.”<sup>203</sup> Yet rather than an active separatist movement, the efforts by many Palestinian refugees to retain their refugee status and resist political, or initially even economic and social integration, represented a desire to preserve and support their separate identity to guard against common accusations that “the Palestinian people do not exist.” By exerting their autonomy within Jordanian society and sometimes even actively remaining disengaged from Jordanian politics (instead choosing transnational forms of political activism), Palestinian refugees in Jordan instead expressed their allegiance to a broader Palestinian “political community.”<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Yasir Suleiman, *A war of words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. (Cambridge:Cambridge University Press, 2004), p101.

<sup>203</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 49.

<sup>204</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

The preservation of the refugee camps as political symbols has been a key method of maintaining the notion of a broader Palestinian “political community.” As Salih and Plascov note, “refugees have adamantly resisted the persistent attempts by the Jordanian government to transform the camps into *hai*, urban districts fully assimilated into the urban landscape, as this would symbolically and politically annihilate their status as refugees, their political identity, their history of suffering and temporariness which they have internalized and which stand, and, for many of them, their entitlement of return.”<sup>205</sup> While (as will be discussed in the next chapter) a process of urban assimilation has inevitably occurred, refugee camps have been referred to by some scholars as “independent republics,” that—while in the case of Amman’s Wihdat camp and Al-Husseini physically resemble the urban sprawl surrounding them—retained up until the past two decades a semi-autonomous system of governance. As Jalal al-Husseini notes in his discussion of the role UNRWA has played in supporting this autonomy, “the wide range of responsibilities taken on by UNRWA in the camps, together with the international dimension of its UN mandate, have contributed to conferring to the Agency the informal status of an “alien” governmental body holding “extra-territorial” sway over the camp communities.”<sup>206</sup> The initial UNRWA practice of primarily employing Palestinians led this influence to take the shape of a form of self-governance. While the agency’s influence declined and administration of the camps shifted increasingly (though never fully) towards the government—including through the establishment of the Department of Palestinian Affairs in 1988—the camps have nevertheless served as a means of retaining a somewhat distinct Palestinian political community.

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<sup>205</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

<sup>206</sup> Jalal Al Hussein, “The Evolution of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan. Between Logics of Exclusion and Integration,” in *Cities, Urban Practices, and Nation Building in Jordan*, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2011).

Finally, as Ruba Salih notes, refugees in Jordan and Palestinian-Jordanians appear to articulate the argument that rights should not come at the expense of return, or vice versa. While Palestine as the “mother/*watan* can never be exchanged, rights can and should be achieved in the country where one lives and not necessarily or exclusively in the *watan*/homeland.”<sup>207</sup> Citizenship and the rights it entails in Jordan are demonstrably not limited to Jordanian “nationals,” as was evidenced in the top-down imposition of citizenship during the immediate post-1948 era. On the other hand, many Palestinian-Jordanians note that they would like to retain allegiances to both their identity as Palestinian refugees and their identity as Jordanian. For the countless Palestinian-Jordanians who have never set foot in Palestine, Jordan is their home, yet the refugee identity is also part of their familial legacy. By participating in calls for electoral reform and articulating their equality within the Jordanian nation, Palestinian refugees are challenging any notion of themselves as helpless, manipulated masses. Choosing to be both a refugee and a citizen may no longer mean that these individuals must occupy a “lower” rung on the hierarchy of subjecthood: rights does not mean relinquishing the prospect of return. Instead, the state may be forced to account for the demands of its refugee inhabitants as a “refugee-state” responsible for their governance.

### ***Iraqis: Transnational Politics***

As temporary “guests,” many Iraqis in Jordan lacked any formal legal status either as refugees, citizens, or (for most) even residents. Many Iraqis therefore occupied a position almost outside the realm of subjecthood in Jordan, and arguably served as an “other” against which the population could mobilize. The Jordanian policy of initially refusing refugee status to Iraqi refugees had serious, ongoing consequences for low-income individuals who were forced instead

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<sup>207</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

to overstay their guest visas in the country, risking deportation or fines if discovered. However, the low registration rate of Iraqi refugees also indicates an active choice on the part of Iraqis not to register. As Victoria Mason notes, most Iraqis have rejected the label of refugee, with many refusing to register with the UNHCR unless as a policy of last resort for secondary migration. Instead, “While over time many Iraqis have employed the label as a practicality in the context of their dealings with international agencies (particularly the UNHCR) – at a more basic level it has been a painful identity for many Iraqis to reconcile with. Many Iraqis see it as a shameful label that projects their drastic downward socio-economic mobility” and actually prefer terms such as “guest” or *muhajirin* (immigrants).<sup>208</sup>

Iraqi status in Jordan also reflects the fact that for most Iraqis, far from being a permanent arrangement, many engage in circular migration between Jordan and Iraq or view Jordan simply as a “transit country.”<sup>209</sup> Engagement within the Jordanian political sphere is kept at a minimum simply because it is not a priority, and legal status becomes an issue only when the individual is unable to obtain resettlement in a third country. In the case of Ghazwan, an Iraqi refugee living in Amman who has been waiting for resettlement in the United States for the past five years, his refugee status has become nearly a state of permanence, yet one that he remains hopeful will imminently end.<sup>210</sup> For Iraqis who have obtained residency permits instead of registering as refugees, residency allows them to obtain work permits and invest, which may be preferred to participating politically.

Finally, in a limited number of cases, wealthy Iraqis were actually able to bypass refugee status and restrictive visa laws and obtain long-term residencies or even, in some controversial

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<sup>208</sup> Victoria Mason, “The im/mobilities of Iraqi refugees in Jordan: Pan-Arabism, ‘hospitality’ and the figure of the ‘refugee’.” *Mobilities* 6, no. 3 (2011), 353-373.

<sup>209</sup> Chatelard, “What Visibility Conceals.”

<sup>210</sup> Interview with Ghazwan

cases, citizenship. Eschewing the refugee status in these cases stemmed from a desire to utilize Jordan as a “base of operations” for regional business activity or real estate. Rather than any plans on a permanent stay in Jordan, these wealthy Iraqis were able to establish investment ventures unrestricted by any supervision from or obligations to international agencies. This wealth also translated into the political arena: former intelligence chief Mohammad al-Dhahabi was even accused of accepting bribes from Iraqis in exchange for citizenship. In a report listed by Khaberni, moreover, one of the Iraqis listed as obtaining citizenship is the owner of the Royal Automobile Museum, the private collection of the monarchy’s vehicles.<sup>211</sup> While many Iraqis’ statuslessness as a result of Jordanian policy was detrimental (and continues to be) to their welfare and security, for others this status appears to have been a conscious choice. In the Syrian crisis, the widespread refugee registration and the construction of camps to host refugees had very different implications for the modes of political action taken by Syrians.

### ***Syrians: Forging a Space for Representation***

Many Syrians in Jordan continue to maintain hope of an imminent return to their home country, and view themselves as temporary “guests” within Jordan. Syrian refugees in Jordan have remained largely independent from the Jordanian political system, framing requests for legal status largely in economic terms and access to employment opportunities. Yet many refugees have also sought to establish modes of self-governance within Jordan, and forged or preserved new internal political spheres or preserved transnational modes of political participation. Instead of demanding rights solely from the state, Syrian refugees in the camps in particular seek to take control of their own governance and administration, a desire that may lead to clashes with Jordanian or international authorities. An article published in November 2013 by

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<sup>211</sup> Al-Qulab, Rudad. Tajnis Athria’ ‘Araqiin bein 2007 wa 2008- Watha’iq [Naturalization of Wealthy Iraqis Between 2007 and 2008—Documents; in Arabic].

the United Nations news service IRIN titled “Politics and Power in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp” begins with a quote: ““It has become very quiet”, says Kilian Kleinschmidt about recent months in Jordan’s Za’atari camp for Syrian refugees.”<sup>212</sup> Indeed, up until mid-2013, the camp had been the site of near-weekly riots, most focused on the poor living conditions but some reflecting increasing discontent among Syrians with the authorities’ supervision of the camp. As Kleinschmidt noted in a separate interview, the refugees have carried their desire to challenge authority from the uprising that forced them to flee: “They rebelled against authority. Authority was something negative,” especially one imposed with little consent.<sup>213</sup>

Part of the initial trouble with governing Za’atari stemmed from the formation of parallel systems of informal political authority. Several reports cite the influence of the “Don” of Za’atari, Mohammed Al Hariri, in spearheading a black market system of trade and political influence—a network that was limited, but not halted, in midsummer 2013 by a strategic deal brokered by Kleinschmidt.<sup>214</sup> The discomfort with Jordanian or aid worker authority has nevertheless required managers of Za’atari to approach its governance as they would a small city, bearing in mind the desires of its constituents—a move initially regarded with hesitancy by Jordanian authorities. Yet the emergence of both traditional leaders, such as tribal elders, and untraditional “thugs” such as Al Hariri is evidence that, if not arbitrated in some sort of representative governance system, the Syrian refugees within the camp are more than capable of creating their own. In attempting to create this system of governance, Kleinschmidt and UN authorities have plans for “12 districts with a variety of committees, assigned administration and humanitarian personnel per district, and a central administration headed by a Jordanian deputy

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<sup>212</sup> Hackl, “Power and Politics in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp.”

<sup>213</sup> Deborah Amos and Peter Breslow, “The Don Who’s Taken Charge Of Jordan’s Biggest Refugee Camp,” *National Public Radio*, July 14, 2013. <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/07/14/201153551/The-Don-Whos-Taken-Charge-Of-Jordans-Biggest-Refugee-Camp>

<sup>214</sup> Amos and Breslow, “The Don Who’s Taken Charge Of Jordan’s Biggest Refugee Camp.”

governor. “Traditional leaders” who have emerged from within the camp and are trusted by UNHCR and the Jordanian authorities may be integrated into some sort of representative camp committee.”<sup>215</sup> Despite government insistence that no permanent structures or methods of addressing the refugees be adopted, refugees themselves appear to have forced the hand of the government and aid workers to create a means of political expression.

For most refugees, including the majority living outside the camps, staying in Jordan is a remote possibility, and the majority express a desire to promptly return home. Yet in the absence of a resolution of the conflict at home and a persistence of what some perceive as marginalization within Jordan, refugees do not remain politically idle, as evidenced in the example of Za’atari camp. Some have utilized Jordan as a base to continue their resistance activities in Syria, extending the conflict to a transnational level.<sup>216</sup> What these budding political spaces and activities mean for Jordan is still uncertain, but it is clear that Jordan cannot afford the development of independent “camp republics” as seen in the case of the Palestinians. Whether this means an ultimate expulsion of Syrians or the development of a legal framework to curb this activity, the Jordanian government will be hard pressed to avoid some sort of remedy to this potential instability, even as it must maintain the refugees’ separateness for demographic stability at home.

## **Conclusion**

The regime’s response to the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and the territorial expansion of Jordan through its annexation of the West Bank entailed a strategy of subsumation of Palestinians under the banner of a Hashemite-Jordanian state and simultaneous exclusion and preservation of these individuals’ statuses as refugees. By providing refugees with equal legal

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<sup>215</sup> Hackl, “Power and Politics in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp.”

<sup>216</sup> Hackl, “Power and Politics in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp.”

rights as citizens and integrating them into institutions such as the military, the Jordanian state included refugees in the category of lawful subjects. At the same time, however, the regime practiced policies of political and military exclusion that instituted a budding hierarchy between “East Bank elements,” Palestinians and Palestinian refugees, and even other East Bank tribes. Following the 1967 Arab defeat, the loss of the West Bank, and the 1970-1971 Jordanian civil war, the Jordanian regime began the unofficial process of excising Palestinian-Jordanians from spheres of political influence by facilitating the resurgence of an exclusivist Transjordanian nationalism. An individual’s status as a “refugee” could be wielded as a tool to argue against the process of *tawtin* (naturalization) by arguing that full political participation precluded the “right to return.” Even as official monarchy and parliament positions maintained the equality of all Jordanian citizens, this rhetoric was undermined by the regime’s own practices—a process that continues through the twenty-first century. Subsequent waves of Palestinians refugees were not given citizenship, and citizenship was even revoked from some refugees in a number of cases that received international condemnation. The previous status of refugee camps as nuclear, UNRWA and self-governed political centers was also replaced instead by direct governance and administration by the government. Palestinian refugees occupied positions as second-class subjects in Jordan, as their statuses as citizens became increasingly diluted through an institutionalized legal hierarchy.

The influxes of Iraqis and Syrians occurred in the shadow of the Palestinian refugee presence in Jordan. The Jordanian government was loath to label Iraqis “refugees,” a category that in the absence of legal codifications had come to imply a state of permanence and a stake in the country’s political affairs. Instead, their status as “guests” instated yet another legally ambiguous category that nevertheless was highlighted as another demographic and security

threat. The Syrian case appears to reflect distinct parallels to the Palestinian case. Despite government assurances that the refugees will not be integrated as citizens, their proportionally massive numbers and the diminishing possibilities of resettlement or return in the near future appear to indicate that the development of some sort of legal rights framework is both necessary and inevitable. Yet as in the case of the Palestinians, the potential ultimate exclusion from self-governance may allow the regime to legally disenfranchise an even greater number of its subjects despite holding ultimate governing powers, with the refugees constituting yet another “other” against which to mobilize nationalist sentiments. In a country where the “true” subjects are an increasingly diminishing minority, the legal frameworks surrounding refugees has served as a buffer against pluralism and democratic reform. The development of Jordan into a refugee-state is therefore characterized by a legitimate disenfranchisement of a majority of its inhabitants, even as the state retains responsibility for governing them.

However, a characterization of refugees as static, stateless masses to be manipulated for state gain fails to account for their agency as actors. Palestinian refugees have played a pivotal role in Jordan’s political development through strategies of integration and assimilation with the regime, political activism within Jordanian politics, or even the creation of independent, sub-state political spheres. Ruba Salih and others have noted how in their involvement in spheres of “Transjordanian influence” refugees “de-sacralize and contest the discursive constructions where national differences are naturalized and instrumentally mobilized to erect exclusionary boundaries.”<sup>217</sup> The refusal of refugees to renounce the “right to return” also contributed significantly to the regime’s inability to subsume refugees under the banner of Hashemitism—yet as Salih also argues, Palestinian refugees are increasingly asserting the position that civil

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<sup>217</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

rights do not necessarily come at the expense of the right to return.<sup>218</sup> While poor Iraqis have largely suffered as a result of Jordan's policies, some Iraqis themselves refused the status of refugee because of its Palestinian connotation and chose to seek refugee status in the hopes of third country settlement. Wealthy Iraqis have sought residency and even naturalization, and wield their economic capital to obtain political influence. While the recent nature of the Syrian refugee crisis precludes in-depth analysis of their political participation, reports of the transformation of Za'atari refugee camp into a nuclear political community and the increasingly active political networks within urban society indicate that Syrians are forging spaces much in the way Palestinians did following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War.

How these political spaces may contest the state's authority and transform the arena of Jordanian politics remains to be seen, but the development of a legal framework to address this new population is seemingly inevitable. The only path to maintain the political primacy of its "native" population would appear to be a maintenance of the status quo, yet the pressures exerted from below by Palestinian-Jordanians and perhaps even the Syrians may prove to be too much for a persistence of this hierarchy, especially if the Israeli-Palestinian conflict reaches any form of resolution. Preserving the status quo may even prove to work against the monarchy, which may choose instead to adapt strategic political liberalization to prevent the pressures of these populations from reaching a breaking point. As will be discussed in the next chapter, the active participation of refugees in forging the spatial and social fabric of Jordan has led to the modern society of Jordan being characterized and defined in part by its refugees.

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<sup>218</sup> Salih, "Reconciling Return and Rights."

### Chapter 3: Urbanization, Cosmopolitanization, and Refugees in Jordanian Society

#### Abstract:

Refugee influxes and rapid urbanization have resulted in a “socio-spatial polarization” of Jordan’s cities and rural areas, in which cities and neighboring camps are stratified along socioeconomic and ethnic lines and rural areas have become increasingly marginalized. This process has contributed to a “social dislocation” experienced by both refugees and Jordanians alike. Each group must address not only its own ruptured community network, but negotiate a sudden forced proximity with a new “other.” In Jordan, this has resulted in a simultaneous blurring of social boundaries and a reproduction of refugee and Jordanian kinship and ethnic ties in social relations within the city. Populations subject to socioeconomic marginalization have faced higher levels of tensions and lower social cohesion, suggesting that barriers to “cosmopolitanization,” or the development of an individual-based, multicultural national society, may be based on economic and political concerns. This chapter concludes by noting that even as kinship and ethnic-based social networks persist, ongoing urbanization and the strengthening of civil society initiatives within the urban environment may improve relations between groups.

#### Introduction:

The 2011 influx of Syrian refugees into Jordan has been highlighted as a source of not only economic pressure but social tensions, as refugees crowd into urban and rural areas alike. However, refugees arriving in Jordan have not simply occupied cities and housing already constructed by the East Bank Jordanian population—instead, refugees have been primary agents of the rapid urbanization of Jordan.<sup>219</sup> Jordan’s shift from a largely rural society in the 1920s to a country where, by 2010, over 83 percent of the population is concentrated in urban areas has been described as “phenomenal” and (less positively) “overwhelming.”<sup>220</sup> This chapter explores

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<sup>219</sup> I rely on David Satterwaite’s definition of urbanization as “an increased proportion of a population living in settlements defined as urban centres. The immediate cause of most urbanization is the net movement of people from rural to urban areas...Care is needed to avoid confusing urbanization with ‘urban growth’ or ‘growth in urban areas,’ both of which are absolute terms rather than proportions.” Satterwaite notes that the characteristics of an urban center may be subjective according to the state and the economic context (the United Nations defines urban as the “de facto population living in areas classified as urban according to the criteria used by each area or country”); therefore, the proportion of population defined as urban is based on the Jordanian government’s subjective assessment. See: U.N. Department of Economic and Social Affairs, “World Population Prospects: The 2012 Revision,” *Population Division, Population Estimates and Projection Center*, 2012. <http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/Documentation/glossary.htm>; David Satterwaite, *The Scale of Urban Change Worldwide 1950-2000 and Its Underpinnings*, IIED, 2005.

<sup>220</sup> Robert B. Potter, Khadija Darmame, Nasim Barham, and Stephen Nortcliff. ““Ever-growing Amman”, Jordan: Urban expansion, social polarisation and contemporary urban planning issues.” *Habitat International* 33, no. 1 (2009): 81-92

the role of refugees in catalyzing and partially directing the spatial shifts that have transformed Jordan's landscape from a low-population, rural and town structure to one characterized by rapidly expanding urban environments. This rapid urbanization has caused a "socio-spatial polarization" within the city along socioeconomic and ethnic lines, refugee camps, and rural areas.<sup>221</sup> Palestinian refugees following the 1948 Arab-Israeli War settled within Jordan's cities, while also urbanizing and extending the borders of the camps through informal settlements that are now hubs of low-income migration. In Amman, poor Jordanians, migrant laborers, and Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian refugees alike have chosen to settle in north and East Amman, while Jordanian bureaucrats, elite Palestinian-Jordanians, and wealthy Iraqis have settled in and contributed to a rapid development of West Amman. As of July 2013, about 2,925,780 international migrants are projected to be living in Jordan (87.68 percent of whom are refugees), mostly concentrated in the municipalities of Amman, Irbid, Mafraq, and Zarqa'. Domestic economic development is largely focused on addressing these increasingly population-dense areas by building the urban infrastructure to support them, sometimes at the expense of Jordan's rural areas.<sup>222</sup>

The impact of these spatial shifts is significant for both refugees and the East Bank Jordanians, or the country's "indigenous" population. Refugees have experienced a "social dislocation" in the unfamiliar terrain of Jordan, with many simply struggling to survive. As Arjun Appadurai writes, refugees "move and must drag their imagination for new ways of living along with them," resorting to a process of reinterpretation of their social world within the new environment.<sup>223</sup> Yet this social dislocation and reimagination is not undertaken by refugees alone.

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<sup>221</sup> Potter, Darmame, Barham, and Nortcliff. "'Ever-growing Amman', Jordan."

<sup>222</sup> U.N. Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, "The Demographic Profile of Jordan," accessed April 11, 2014. <http://www.escwa.un.org/popin/members/Jordan.pdf>

<sup>223</sup> Arjun Appadurai, ed. *Modernity at large: cultural dimensions of globalization*. (U of Minnesota Press, 1996).

From rural and town areas characterized by kinship and tribal networks of social interaction, many East Bank Jordanians began to move to Amman, the seat of the country's bureaucracy, and other urban centers. Within the space of the city, refugees and East Bank Jordanians alike have been forced to negotiate a new spatial proximity with the "other."

This recasting of social relations within the city has arguably contributed to a breakdown of boundaries along ethnic lines and an emergence of class divisions.<sup>224</sup> Scholars such as Ulrich Beck have described the migrant as a key driver in an inevitable global "cosmopolitanization," in which the shared humanity of individuals, rather than their identity ties or national status, becomes the operative analytical framework through which to examine the expanding influence of non-state, transnational actors. Increased income inequality may further polarize these interactions along class lines. However, as this chapter also notes, the city may also become a space for the reproduction of ethnic relations, and ethnically homogenous areas such as the refugee camps and rural areas may also serve as anchors for ethnic-based divisions.<sup>225</sup> Yet the stratification of Amman along class lines instead of solely ethnic lines and the ongoing economic marginalization of both refugee camp and rural areas suggest that barriers to cohesive social relations are socioeconomically based. Therefore, while Jordan is not characterized by a unified, multi-ethnic national society, new forms of social interaction and exchange between refugees, Palestinian Jordanians, and East Bank Jordanians have emerged in Jordan despite government strategies of "divide and rule."

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<sup>224</sup> The term "ethnic" here refers to the introduction of this thesis's definition of "ethnicity" as an ascriptive group identity in which an individual may identify with a group distinct from another group based on factors such as race, language, tribe, and caste. It is here used to differentiate between self-identified groups of East Bank Jordanians, Palestinians, Iraqis, and Syrians. The term "national" is eschewed here because of its political connotations, though the nation may typically correspond to an ethnic group. The use of the word "ethnic" to describe intrasociety differentiations therefore problematizes the notion of an ethnic-national unitary society and state. See: Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*

<sup>225</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*.

## I. Urbanization and “Spatial Transformation:” Cities, Camps, and Countryside

Amman, the capital city of Jordan, is characterized by its rolling hills, beige buildings, and a relative lack of coherent urban planning or structure. The latter characteristic is usually attributed to its massive population growth and resulting rapid expansion—from a city of barely 30,000 in 1946, it has expanded to encompass over 2.4 million inhabitants, almost 40 percent of the country’s population.<sup>226</sup> This expansion has been attributed to the waves of refugees and migrants into the country, who have actively shaped the environment of the city. While many refugees sought the urban environment as a means of finding employment, still others settled in informal settlements and camps distant from the city center. Over the past five decades, however, the urbanization and extension of the camps through informal settlements has challenged the dichotomy between city and camp, especially in cases where neighboring towns envelop or are urbanized by the camps themselves.

This section highlights a scattered trajectory of domestic urbanization according to refugee and domestic population flows and economic means over the past six decades. Both the development of wealthy urban areas, poorer urban areas, and the camps was often a function not of government planning, but of individual and private building initiatives based on access to capital—a trend that has in large part persisted. This has resulted in a “socio-spatial polarization” of Jordan’s urban, rural, and refugee camp areas—defined as a stratification of urban neighborhoods along developed and underdeveloped lines and a spatial separation between rural, urban, and isolated camp areas. Observers note that the modern landscape of Amman is polarized by the existence of “two Ammans.” As Robert Potter highlights, “Eastern Amman has remained the habitat of relatively poorer groups and as the reception areas for recent arrivals, particularly

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<sup>226</sup> Philippe Droz-Vincent, “Cities, Urban Notables and the State in Jordan,” in *Cities, Urban Practices, and Nation Building in Jordan*, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2011).

refugees,” while wealthy West Amman has become the preserve of an expanding Ammani bourgeoisie and “urban notables.”<sup>227</sup> While the socioeconomic divide between these two areas reflects an ethnic division as well, the movement of subsequent refugee populations and economically diverse East Bank Jordanians into both “sides” of the city has blurred the ethnic divide. New Syrian influxes into low-population areas, particularly Mafraq, have also resulted in a renewed process of urbanization. Finally, East Bank Jordanian rural-urban migration and an economic shift away from rural areas, the ‘hearth’ of Jordanian tradition and culture, further underlines the trend of urbanization.

### ***Palestinians and Early Urbanization in Jordan: Dismantling the Camp/City Dichotomy***

In 1921, King Abdullah’s controversial selection of Amman, a “rural backwater inhabited predominantly by Circassians,” as the Jordanian capital over the tribal center of Salt established the small town of less than 3,000 inhabitants as the seat of the country’s domestic bureaucracy and home to a growing class of Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese merchants.<sup>228</sup> Despite this growth, Potter and others note that “it is Palestinians, displaced as a result of the foundation of the State of Israel in 1948 that have formed the main wave of migrants to Jordan in general and to Amman in particular.”<sup>229</sup> Following the 1948 war, Palestinian refugees in the East Bank of Jordan were distributed about equally among three primary forms of residence: cities and towns such as Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa’; the four camps set up by the Jordanian government, two of which were located next to the Amman municipality; and informal settlements in both urban and

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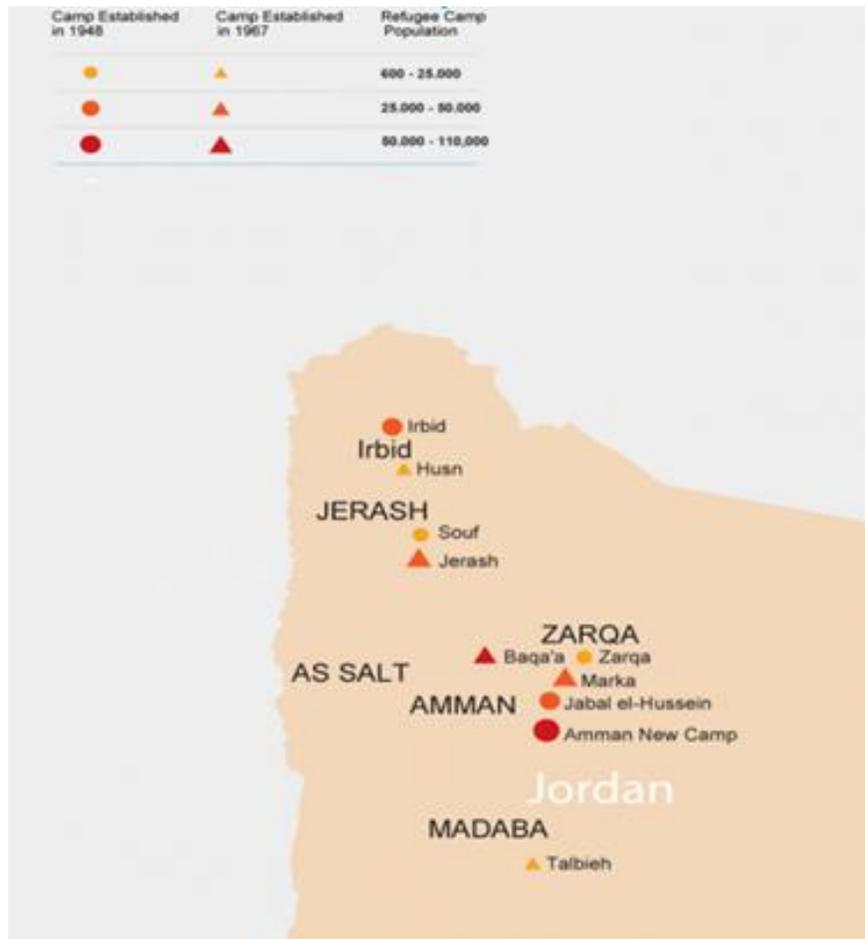
<sup>227</sup> Potter, Darmame, Barham, and Nortcliff. ““Ever-growing Amman”, Jordan.”

<sup>228</sup> Ali Kassay, “The Exclusion of Amman from the Jordanian National Identity,” *Cities, Urban Practices, and Nation Building in Jordan*, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2011).

<sup>229</sup> Robert B. Potter, Khadija Darmame, Nasim Barham, and Stephen Nortcliff. ““An Introduction to the Urban Geography of Amman.” *Geographical Paper No.182* (2007); A 1980 study estimated that between 60 and 80 percent of Amman consisted of Palestinian refugees and Jordanians of Palestinian descent.

rural areas.<sup>230</sup> The map below includes both the four official camps set up following the 1948 exodus, as well as the six additional “emergency camps” constructed in 1968 following the 1967 second Arab-Israeli War.

**Figure 4: Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan**



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Avi Plascov notes that the decision to settle in cities or camps was largely a function of socioeconomic status: the city-dwellers were “the educated professional classes, merchants, landowners, artisans and shopkeepers,” while other refugees, “almost all of them villagers,” resided in the camps or in informal settlements.<sup>232</sup> Plascov draws an almost dichotomous

<sup>230</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*.

<sup>231</sup> U.N. Relief and Works Agency, “Where We Work,” accessed April 11, 2014. <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work>

<sup>232</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 34.

distinction between camp and urban refugees—not only a spatial divide, but a class division. However, as Mohamed K. Dorai has discussed in relation to Lebanon, this differentiation between camps and cities elides an ongoing process of urbanization engaged in by Palestinian refugees in not only cities, but the camps and informal settlements on their borders.<sup>233</sup> While wealthy and middle class urban refugees (along with East Bank Jordanian bureaucrats) engaged in improvement and expansion of Amman and Irbid's developed areas, the refugee camps that formed the peripheries of these cities also underwent urbanization and growth. Many refugee camps and their surroundings transformed into low-income hubs of subsequent migration, while the areas developed by both wealthy Palestinians and East Bank Jordanians became home to the city's growing class of economic elite.

Resistance against infrastructural development was a defining characteristic of early attitudes towards the Palestinian refugee camps. Many Palestinian camp inhabitants viewed their exile as impermanent and initially refused to exchange their tents for more durable shelters. Ruba Salih notes that, as in other countries such as Lebanon, “it was also believed that people in camps would be more linked to Palestine by virtue of their poverty and encapsulation;” another motivation to resist initial development plans.<sup>234</sup> Following two harsh winters, however, many refugees conceded to building more durable shelters, though the camps are still referred to as *mukheimat* which in Arabic connotes tent structures. Jalal al Hussein, an urban geographer who has studied Palestinian refugee camps in both Jordan and the region in general, noted that “because they were to remain temporary places vested with the symbolism of the right of return, camps were subsequently left aside from Jordan's urban development policies at national and

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<sup>233</sup> Mohamed Kamel Dorai, "From Camp Dwellers to Urban Refugees? Urbanization and Marginalization of Refugee Camps in Lebanon," *Manifestations of Identity. The Lived Reality of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon* (2010): 75-92.

<sup>234</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

municipal levels,” a practice that continued until the 1960s.<sup>235</sup> Because this policy was retained during a period of rapid population expansion and urbanization, this developmental stratification resulted in the transformation of refugee camps into separate population centers, even after the extension of municipal services.

Yet gradually, the camps have transformed into urban centers integrated with the surrounding urban areas through a dual process of internal development and the expansion of the refugee camps borders. Al Hussein notes that demographic pressures—from both natural growth and new refugee arrivals—and an inability to expand the borders of the camp resulted in both unplanned internal development and refugee exit from the camps into surrounding areas.<sup>236</sup> Despite official refusal to expand refugee camp boundaries, refugees have extended the space of the camp vertically, “benefiting from or taking advantage of UNRWA’s [and later the Jordanian government’s] leniency or inability to control the situation,” and have constructed numerous extensions to their shelters.<sup>237</sup> These expansions go largely unpunished by the Jordanian authorities, who may exert pressure solely on those lacking the necessary *wasta*, or connections.<sup>238</sup> For camps such as Jabal al Hussein, these developments have rendered the camp nearly indistinguishable from its urban surroundings.

In addition, rather than static areas in which the refugee population remained tied to the boundaries of the camp, Jordan’s refugee camps are instead characterized by population flows both into and away from the camp space to neighboring areas. A 1999 study conducted by the Norwegian organization Fafo found that one-third of inhabitants of Jordan’s camps (excluding

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<sup>235</sup> Interview with Jalal al Hussein

<sup>236</sup> Al Hussein, “The Evolution of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.”

<sup>237</sup> The land of the ten official Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan was leased by the government at a reduced rate from Jordanian landowners following the 1948 and 1967 refugee influxes and turned over to the administration of UNRWA, with a lease term of 99 years. UNRWA and the Jordanian government have refused to officially expand the borders of the camps, citing both costs and the encroaching nature of these spaces. See: Al Hussein, “The Evolution of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.”

<sup>238</sup> Al Hussein, “The Evolution of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.”

Jabal al Hussein) were born outside of the camps, with about one-fifth of these born in Palestine or Israel and the majority of migration occurring from within Jordan.<sup>239</sup> Over half of refugees had migrated at least once in their lifetime.<sup>240</sup> Al Hussein further notes that “in the 1960s, those refugees seeking and able to afford more comfortable housing outside camps started renting out or selling their shelters to newcomers in need of extra-space or impoverished non-camp refugees, including returnees from Kuwait and other Gulf countries in the early 1990s.”<sup>241</sup> This practice was not limited solely to Palestinian refugees; the residences might also be rented out to Egyptian and Sri Lankan migrant laborers or non-Palestinian refugees. Furthermore, Ruba Salih argues that ““Refugees represent this moving out not as an exit, but rather as a process of extending the camp beyond its official territorial borders.” Citing an interview she conducted in Wihdat Camp, Salih highlights “As Ali’s words’ convey: My grandfather had a big family. Wihdat was too small to get all families next to each other. So the camp became bigger, like an onion. We made the borders of Wihdat. The government puts it much smaller.”<sup>242</sup>

Palestinian refugees in Jordan therefore exerted a physical impact on surrounding areas of the camp and near urban centers through both informal settlements and residence within developing or already-developed urban areas. As Myriam Ababsa documents, “informal settlements that grew significantly after 1967 were mostly set up on vacant lots, including floodable areas and steep hillsides, but also on agricultural land located in the eastern part of Amman, to the east of Jabal Hussein and Wahdat camps.”<sup>243</sup> Ababsa notes that these settlements were gradually transformed into “developed” settlements through upgrading programs targeting

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<sup>239</sup> Yarmouk/Fafo, “In-Depth Studies of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan” (presented at RWG Technical Co-Ordination Meeting on Data Bases, Amman, February 2000).

<http://www.fafo.no/ais/middeast/jordan/refugees/AmmanRWG.pdf>

<sup>240</sup> Yarmouk/Fafo, “In-Depth Studies of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.”

<sup>241</sup> Al Hussein, “The Evolution of the Palestinian Refugee Camps in Jordan.”

<sup>242</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

<sup>243</sup> Myriam Ababsa, “Social Disparities and Public Policies in Amman,” in *Cities, Urban Practices, and Nation Building in Jordan*, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2011).

Amman.<sup>244</sup> In Amman, these areas together formed “East Amman,” once an amalgamation of camps and informal settlements (in 1952, over 29 percent of Amman residents lived in tents and another 8 percent in caves) that was transformed by its inhabitants into an urbanized area.<sup>245</sup> The expansion of the Amman metropolitan area is only one example; the camps of Irbid, Zarqa, and Jerash now resemble other urban quarters of the cities.<sup>246</sup> As refugees moved out of the camps and urban refugees or those dwelling in informal settlements took up residence near the camps, these areas also attracted following waves of low-income migrants, including laborers, East Bank Jordanians, and subsequent refugee populations.

Refugee production of low-income urban spaces was also matched by a corresponding creation and development of “modern,” upscale and middle-class urban areas, a process of socio-spatial polarization also directed in part by Palestinian refugees and remittances from Palestinians working abroad. Urban refugees settled not only in the refugee camps and informal settlements, but in areas occupied by Palestinians that arrived before 1948. In Irbid, some Palestinian refugee families with pre-existing connections to the population, particularly the Palestinians from Nablus and Christian Palestinians that had arrived in Irbid during the 1920s, did not settle in the camps and instead built houses in the south of the city during the 1950’s.<sup>247</sup> The development of West Amman also reflects the influence of Palestinian refugees, especially during the “boom years” of 1973-1983 when Palestinians working in the Gulf countries remitted large sums of money to Jordan directed towards urban development.<sup>248</sup> While the majority of Palestinian refugees settled in eastern Amman, wealthier Palestinians and later capital flows

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<sup>244</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 34.

<sup>245</sup> Potter, Darmame, Barham, and Nortcliff. “An Introduction to the Urban Geography of Amman.”

<sup>246</sup> U.N. Relief and Works Agency, “Where We Work.”

<sup>247</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 34.

<sup>248</sup> Potter, Darmame, Barham, and Nortcliff. “An Introduction to the Urban Geography of Amman.”

contributed to development of neighborhoods in West Amman characterized by more comprehensive urban planning.

The migration of Palestinian refugees and subsequent capital influxes remitted by Palestinians working abroad resulted in a spatial transformation of the cityscape. While the camps were internally developed and expanded by increasing capital and population through informal settlements and peripheral expansion, wealthy and middle-income Palestinians who were able to leave the camps opted to shift to West Amman or expand middle-class areas in East Amman. This socio-spatial polarization between East Amman and West Amman, however, was only solidified through subsequent migrations. Local rural-urban migration and the expansion of the state bureaucracy also contributed to a consolidation of these spatial divisions within Amman, as the East Bank Jordanian peasantry was “transplanted” to the urban space.

#### *East Bank Jordanians, Amman, and the Rural “Heartland”*

The twentieth century has witnessed a spatial polarization in Jordan not only within the cityscape but between urban centers and Jordan’s rural areas, once the heartland of the country’s “tribal” population. As urban private industrialization increases in Jordan, some observers have described the continuing expansion of Amman and Zarqa’ as the administrative and military centers of Jordan as an “engine the state used to transplant and urbanize the “East Bank peasantry”” in an effort to draw them away from the unproductive “hinterlands.”<sup>249</sup> Nevertheless, Jordan’s rural areas remain predominantly East Bank Jordanian, reflecting a degree of ethnic separation between mainly Palestinian-Jordanian Amman and rural areas.<sup>250</sup> In addition, many

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<sup>249</sup> Lama Abu Odeh, “Materialist Analysis in the Service of a Nationalist Thesis: Response to Interview with Tariq Tell on the Hirak Siyasi in Jordan,” *Jadaliyya*, September 17, 2012.

<http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/7238/materialist-analysis-in-the-service-of-a-nationali>

<sup>250</sup> Ryan, ““We are all Jordan”...But Who is We?”

East Bank Jordanians have moved to “tribal cities” such as Salt, Karak, and Ma’an —suggesting that urbanization in Jordan cannot be generalized to mean residence in Amman.

The movement of East Bank Jordanians to nascent city centers of Irbid, Salt, and Karak during the late 19<sup>th</sup> century has been attributed to a “reaffirmation of the Ottoman state and the ensuing state of prosperity,” where residence in the city enabled the formation of a class of “urban notables” that nevertheless continued to be dominated by rural tribes.<sup>251</sup> King Abdullah’s decision to designate Amman as the capital of the new state of Transjordan in 1921, coupled with ongoing contention to his rule, threatened to draw political primacy away from the tribal urban centers. Yet as the process of coalition-building discussed in Chapter 2 commenced and rural East Bank Jordanians were recruited into the military and bureaucracy, some moved to the bureaucratic and military centers of Amman and Zarqa’. However, widespread East Bank Jordanian urbanization of previously rural areas and migration to Amman did not occur until after the Palestinian refugee influx in 1948.

This post-1948 urbanization occurred along socioeconomic lines as well as ethnic lines in the context of the Palestinian refugee influx, reflecting a pattern of socio-spatial polarization. For example, local urbanization vs. movement to the capital contributed to the expansion of the Irbid metropolitan area, and former rural tribal areas of Ma’an, Karak, and Salt have transformed into East Bank Jordanian-majority “tribal cities.”<sup>252</sup> Within Amman, East Bank Jordanians have settled in both sides of the city. Members of the continually expanding bureaucracy and military, along with “peasant investors” made suddenly rich by the land booms that accompanied the inflows of aid and refugees, and a “bureaucratic bourgeoisie” that has managed—whether by acumen or graft—to turn political influence into moneyed wealth” have contributed to the

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<sup>251</sup> Kassay, “The Exclusion of Amman from the Jordanian National Identity.”

<sup>252</sup> Myriam Ababsa, “Introduction,” in *Cities, Urban Practices, and Nation Building in Jordan*, ed. Myriam Ababsa and Rami Daher (Beirut: Institut Francais du Proche-Orient, 2011).

development and expansion of wealthy West Amman, which no longer reflects a single ethnic group.<sup>253</sup> In addition, as Ababsa notes, “some informal settlements built within Jordanian towns are the result of rural depopulation and changing lifestyles in a Jordanian population experiencing considerable population growth. Thus, large areas of rangeland have been illegally appropriated and built on by members of the Beni Hassan and Beni Sakhr tribes in the north and east of Amman, in Zarqa and in Russeifa.”<sup>254</sup> East Bank Jordanians thus form members of the city elite and its poor alike, occupying different spaces within its framework along both community and socioeconomic lines.

Yet while East Bank Jordanians have participated in ongoing rural-urban migration, many East Bank Jordanians have remained in the country’s underdeveloped rural areas, still the heart of Jordanian military recruitment and “traditional” source of political support as discussed in Chapter 2. As a chronically water-scarce country, Jordan is unable to support more than a small level of agriculture, that has greatly dwindled as a percentage of the country’s GDP as the population has rapidly increased (Jordan currently imports about 96 percent of its food).<sup>255</sup> Though following the 1948 Palestinian refugee influx a number of agricultural projects were initiated by UNRWA in rural areas, the organization’s declining budget and lack of domestic support for agricultural programs shifted development to the urban population centers.<sup>256</sup> The socioeconomic marginalization of these areas stands in contrast to the development of Amman, which expanded further during Iraqi forced migration to the city since 1991.

### *Iraqis: Urban Development and Transformation*

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<sup>253</sup> Ziad Abu Rish, “On the Nature of the Hashemite Regime and Jordanian Politics: An Interview with Tariq Tell,” *Jadaliya*, August 22, 2012. <http://www.jadaliyya.com/pages/index/6979/on-the-nature-of-the-hashemite-regime-and-jordania>

<sup>254</sup> Ababsa, “Social Disparities and Public Policies in Amman.”

<sup>255</sup> Mansur, “The Cost of Refugees.”

<sup>256</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, 34.

A majority of Iraqis fleeing conflict in their home country following the 1991 Gulf War and 2003 Iraq War chose to settle in Amman—with most viewing their stay in the country as temporary. Indeed, as Geraldine Chatelard notes, from 1991 to the late 2000s, “as new migrants seeking economic or physical security arrived from Iraq, other ones left Jordan” for work or resettlement in a third country or repatriation.<sup>257</sup> However, the transience of the Iraqi presence did not preclude them from exerting a distinct physical impact on the city’s built environment. As Wael W. Azhari and Sonia F. Najjar highlight in their study of the effect of the Iraqi presence on Amman’s architecture, wealthy Iraqis invested heavily in construction and urban development in West Amman, while low-income or impoverished Iraqi refugees who have been unable to achieve resettlement largely reside in the east of the city.<sup>258</sup>

The Iraqi “Mercedes refugees” furthered the socio-spatial polarization characterizing Amman through extensive investment in construction and development projects in West Amman. In a 2006 study of the impact of the Iraqi presence on the Jordanian economy, Ibrahim Saif and David M. DeBartolo cite high investments by Iraqis in construction and real estate—a pattern with both economic and spatial implications. As Azhari and Najjar note, this investment was concentrated largely in West Amman, capitalizing upon the relatively low population density and socioeconomic prestige of the area to open restaurants, housing, and even a JOD 80 million (USD \$112,834,979) mega-mall project.<sup>259</sup> The image below demonstrates the stratification between construction and development undertaken by wealthier Iraqis and living areas of low-income Iraqi refugees before 2003, a settlement pattern that has largely continued.

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<sup>257</sup> Chatelard, “What Visibility Conceals.”

<sup>258</sup> Wael W. Al-Azhari and Sonia F. Al-Najjar. “Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form.” *Australian Journal of Basic & Applied Sciences* 7, no. 7 (2013).

<sup>259</sup> Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar. “Transforming Amman.”

**Figure 5: Iraqi Construction Projects in Amman<sup>260</sup>**



Finally, while low-income Iraqis were unable to invest in construction projects in the manner of wealthier Iraqis, they clustered in low-income areas established by previous Palestinian refugees and East Bank Jordanians, furthering the socioeconomic spatial divide. Areas previously inhabited mainly by Palestinian-Jordanians and Egyptian and non-Arab migrant laborers such as North Hashemi became host to Iraqi refugees, who also favored living in the same neighborhood as other Iraqis. While only about 29,000 Iraqis in Jordan are registered with the UNHCR and fewer than 200,000 others are still estimated to be within the country, their influx was followed shortly by the Syrian refugee crisis, which presented new challenges to Jordan's urban and rural spaces.

### *Syrians*

The spatial distribution of the Syrian refugees is divided across the north of Jordan, with about 20 percent of refugees in one of three official camps and the remainder in rural and urban informal settlements, border towns and villages in Mafraq, and the cities of Amman, Irbid, and Zarqa'as of April 2014. While Syrian refugees have settled along the socioeconomic lines within Jordan's cities established by previous refugee influxes, the urban development of Za'atari camp

<sup>260</sup> Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman."

and the influx of refugees into the previously low-density province of Mafraq in both formal housing and informal settlements signal the possibility of a new phase of urban expansion.

Za’atari camp, the largest of the Syrian refugee camps, has rapidly attained the qualities of a full-fledged city since its formation in July 2012.<sup>261</sup> The main street, nicknamed the Champs Elysees, features over 3,000 shops and vendors selling everything from smuggled wedding dresses to traditional Aleppo kabob. While Za’atari camp’s conditions remain harsh, rife with contagious diseases and subject to frequent flooding and dust storms, signs of “refugee ingenuity” and a desire to control the shape of the camp’s built environment have marked a growing sense of permanence that may signal the transformation of Za’atari into another urban center. Prefabricated shelters have slowly replaced the rows of tents, and even the camp itself is spatially polarized into *hais*, or neighborhoods, with varying levels of safety. The opening of two new camps in late 2013 and April 2014 may result in a decrease in Za’atari’s population density, but the perception of Za’atari as a Syrian “city” with more opportunities than the other camps had led some refugees to even favor Za’atari over other options.<sup>262</sup>

Over 80 percent of the refugees, however, live not in the camps but in Jordan’s cities and rural areas.<sup>263</sup> While most Syrian refugees in Amman and Irbid have settled in low-cost housing neighborhoods, as in the case of previous refugee influxes, the Syrian refugee crisis in Jordan is distinguished by the concentration of refugees in previously low-density urban and rural areas in Mafraq. Indeed, Syrian refugees now make up 30 percent of Mafraq’s population, with host community members even outnumbered by refugees in many villages and in the province’s city

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<sup>261</sup> Hackl, “Power and Politics in Jordan’s Za’atari Refugee Camp.”

<sup>262</sup> Hall. “The Syrian Crisis in Jordan.”

<sup>263</sup> CARE International, *Lives Unseen: Urban Refugees And Jordanian Host Communities Three Years into Syria Crisis* (April 2014).

center.<sup>264</sup> Increasing numbers of “displaced Syrians seeking refuge in [Jordan] have formed informal settlements in close proximity to host communities,” unable to afford the city’s steep cost of living and avoiding the “dangerous” setting of the camp.<sup>265</sup> In December 2013, the Jordanian government released the National Resilience Plan, an initiative aimed at expanding urban social services for Jordanian communities coping with pressures of the refugee presence in Mafraq, Zarqa’, Amman, and Irbid. These planned programs include increased access to affordable housing, expansion of municipal services, and construction of new schools—plans that entail the construction of an urban infrastructure in previously rural areas and a possible formalization of informal settlements. The apparent resignation to the refugee presence for the near and even long-term future has already begun to exert a physical transformation on rural host communities.

Divided along socioeconomic lines rather than solely ethnic lines, with refugees, East Bank Jordanians, gypsies, and working migrants constituting sections of both wealthy and poor neighborhoods, Amman and cities such as Irbid and Zarqa’ present a distinct environment from the country’s rural areas and even the urbanized camps outside of Amman. As Potter and coauthors note, “modern-day Amman now shows marked socio-spatial polarization between its wealthy neighborhoods on the one hand and its poorer socio-economic quarters on the other... In this respect, again, Amman appears as a thoroughly ‘modern’ urban area, albeit one that also shows distinct traditional and informal characteristics at the local or micro-level.”<sup>266</sup> While this section has demonstrated that rural areas have both experienced urban development and face the presence of new refugees that may initiate new urbanization processes, the city of Amman

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<sup>264</sup> CARE International, *Lives Unseen: Urban Refugees And Jordanian Host Communities Three Years into Syria Crisis*.

<sup>265</sup> UNICEF, *Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan: A Multi-Sector Baseline Assessment*, December 2013.

<sup>266</sup> Potter, Darmame, Barham, and Nortcliff. “An Introduction to the Urban Geography of Amman.”

remains the center of population and commerce. As the next section highlights, the creation, occupation, and transformation of these urban areas is accompanied by a parallel dislocation and evolution of systems of social interaction, as refugees and Jordanians alike renegotiate their senses of belonging within the urban and rural spaces.

## **II. Social Dislocation and Urban Uncertainty: Refugees as Agents of Social Transformation**

Displaced and dislocated from their familiar social communities, refugees must forge new connections and forms of belonging within the space of the city and new society. The impact of these spatial and demographic shifts has also been felt by host communities, who have also actively engaged in the process of urbanization. In Jordan, refugees have played a primary role in a rural-urban shift, forging and expanding the social framework and boundaries of Jordan's capital city of Amman and, in the recent Syrian refugee influx, urbanizing previously rural or town areas. This process has resulted in a socio-spatial polarization along economic and ethnic lines.

However, the effects of this rapid urbanization are visible not only in a trend of socioeconomic stratification in both urban and rural areas; they have also resulted in a dislocation and transformation of social relations. The city as a site of cosmopolitanization holds the promise of a “freedom from the confines of ‘identity.’”<sup>267</sup> Transplanted from the village to the city, from tight-knit ethnic relations to virtual anonymity, the individual is faced with the possibility of carving new spaces and relations for herself within the new environment. Cosmopolitanization, in which members of a society begin to negotiate on an individual, rather than group, basis “the clash of cultures and rationalities within one's own life, the ‘internalized other’ ...correspond[ing] to the coexistence of rival ways of life in the individual experience,

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<sup>267</sup> Ulrich Beck, “The cosmopolitan society and its enemies.” *Theory, culture & society* 19, no. 1-2 (2002): 17-44.

which makes it a matter of fate to compare, reflect, criticize, understand, combine contradictory certainties,” may become the defining mode of existence within the identity-dislocated or even ethnic identity-free city.<sup>268</sup>

In Jordan, refugees may serve as agents and subjects of this change, ultimately constituting on an individual level the “rival way of life” that forces the host community individual to reevaluate her own perspectives. As Stephen Castles notes, “whether the initial intention is temporary or permanent movement, many migrants become settlers. Migratory networks develop, linking areas of origin and destination, and helping to bring about major changes in both. Migrations can change demographic, economic and social structures, and bring a new cultural diversity, which often brings into question national identity.”<sup>269</sup> In cities such as Amman, refugees and East Bank Jordanians alike experience a process of “social dislocation” in which they are both forced to reevaluate their own senses of belonging in unfamiliar spaces and negotiate a newly presented “other.” Yet while the forced proximity along socioeconomic lines that characterizes the city may lead to mutual cultural exchange between refugees and East Bank Jordanians, its social diffuseness may also prompt individuals to seek social ties with previously known community members. In both ethnically and economically homogenous areas such as the refugee camp urban centers and the “indigenous” town and rural areas, socioeconomic status and ethnic identity may become inextricably linked, provoking resentment against the perceived cause. Indeed, ongoing demonstrations for reform that began in 2011 center largely in East Bank Jordanian towns or rural areas, while “tensions” have emerged against the refugee presence in Mafraq and Amman.

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<sup>268</sup> Beck, “The cosmopolitan society and its enemies.”

<sup>269</sup> Stephen Castles, Mark J. Miller, and Giuseppe Ammendola. "The Age of Migration: International Population Movements in the Modern World, (New York: The Guilford Press, 2005): 4.

This section examines refugee and East Bank Jordanian efforts to preserve a sense of community—whether along broad national, ethnic lines or along kinship lines—as well as the production of new social systems through their interactions with the “other” within the city environment. It argues that while refugees and Jordanians have both reproduced and reforged community relationships along national and ethnic lines, the process of social dislocation occurring within the city and socio-spatial polarization along economic lines have blurred social boundaries between different ethnic groups. However, rather than producing a Jordanian society divided solely along class lines, the spatial and economic marginalization of refugee camp and rural areas and the reproduction of ethnic ties to these areas in the urban environment has contributed to the development of a Jordanian society characterized by “tensions” between different ethnic groups. While population-dense areas such as the city are often the epicenters of these tensions, it is the more ethnically homogenous and socioeconomically marginalized camp and town and rural areas that are the sites of interethnic and intraethnic contestations, suggesting that these tensions are socioeconomically based. This section then discusses additional factors contributing to a disruption of the process of cosmopolitanism, highlighting state policies and a weak civil society.

### ***Socio-Spatial Polarization: Community and Negotiating the “Other”***

#### *Palestinians*

During the immediate period after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, most Palestinians in Jordan were focused on the imperative of survival, with refugees of rural and urban origin alike dislocated from their former livelihoods. Reconstituting social and political networks in the wake of this loss proved a daunting task when most viewed their situation as temporary and reunion with family and friends as an imminent occasion in their former homes. Nevertheless, more than

sixty years later, Palestinian refugees have reconnected and reforged community networks within the cities, camps, and informal settlements of Jordan. Pre-exodus community preservation has been most successful in the refugee camps and their peripheries, even while the camp may be viewed by urban refugees as a social locus and a symbol of Palestinian identity. Yet most Palestinians also faced the additional challenge of reconciling the increasingly distant hope of return with their new status as Jordanian citizens, forging new social relations with their East Bank Jordanian “hosts” while asserting their statuses as equals within Jordanian society.

The initial settlement patterns of refugees after both the 1948 war and, to a lesser extent, the 1967 war reflected a distinct attempt to retain a sense of community within the new environment. Refugees settled not only according to economic means or rural/urban origin, as discussed in the previous section, but also according to their areas of origin. Plascov notes that Palestinian refugees arriving in Jordan in 1948 sought out concentrations of other Palestinians already in Jordan “because they had good family connections and friends,” such as in Irbid. Christian refugees settled primarily in Amman, Madaba, and Salt, while “refugees from Lydda, Ramleh, and Jaffa could be found in Zarqa’ and Amman.”<sup>270</sup> Even in the urban environment, Palestinians attempted to retain a semblance of their former communities; however, this phenomenon was even more visible in the refugee camps.

Peter Grbac argues that as “these tent cities develop into urban environments, there is a need to evaluate the urbanity of the camp space by considering the ways in which refugee spaces come to take on a hybrid nature where “refugeeness and agency have worked simultaneously to create ‘spaces of exception’ that are able to transgress the boundaries of place and non-

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<sup>270</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*.

place.”<sup>271</sup> Indeed, the refugee camps as “guardians of a preserved intrinsic “Palestinian-ness” in exile” has continually been emphasized by their residents, international agencies, and the Jordanian government itself.<sup>272</sup> Camps such as Wihdat are internally divided by *hais*, or neighborhoods, named after the area of origin from within Palestine, and refugees may be represented within camp councils by pre-expulsion or new community leaders. With the second and third generations of refugees growing up within the borders of the camps, systems of social organization have been tasked with retaining a Palestinian identity while simultaneously reflecting the changing perspectives of their inhabitants. Yet the spatial continuity between the urbanized refugee camp and surrounding areas also means that the population makeup and social practices of the camp are in constant evolution.

For many urban refugees, the refugee camp emerged as a locus of social activity, and the active expansion of informal settlements on its borders reflected a desire by refugees to create social networks along familiar ethnic lines. Palestinian-Jordanian student Yousef illustrated his personal connection to the camp in an interview. After arriving in Jordan from Bahrain during the 1991 Gulf War, Yousef and his family stayed for one year in Jabal al Hussein camp with his mother’s parents, before moving to Wihdat for the next five years. When his family finally decided to move from the camp, they relocated to Jabal al Nuzah, an area of Amman separated by a single main road from Jabal al Hussein, and then relocated once more to nearby Jabal al Taj. Yousef explained the series of moves by highlighting his family’s desire to remain close together, noting that much of his extended family has now moved outside of the camps. The development

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<sup>271</sup> Peter Grbac, “Civitas, polis, and urbs: Reimagining the refugee camp as the city,” Refugee Studies Center, (October 2013).

<sup>272</sup> Salih, “Reconciling Return and Rights.”

of urban networks with the camps as loci highlights a distinct connection between urban and camp refugees.<sup>273</sup>

However, the socioeconomic divisions emerging within Jordan's cities also reflected efforts by Palestinians to assimilate to and adapt to their new environment. Sari Hanafi notes that in Jordan and in most Arab countries, generally speaking, "Palestinian refugees show extraordinary social and economic integration outside the camps and informal gatherings," and the camps do not fully spatially segregate Palestinian refugees, especially in the twenty-first century.<sup>274</sup> Plascov notes efforts by Palestinians living in Amman to assimilate into their new setting, adopting a new dialect "in an attempt to please their East Bank Jordanian hosts," and intermarriage is high between Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians.<sup>275</sup> Yet as Ruba Salih argues, discourses attributing distinct characteristics to Palestinian-Jordanians in opposition to "true" Jordanians "tend to crystallize the identities of the holders into various degrees of Jordanianness or Palestinianness, seen as mutually exclusive entities, in contrast with the much more fluid and complex ways in which people themselves historically experienced these identities."<sup>276</sup> In Jordan, many Palestinian refugees retain their identities as exiles from their homeland, yet Palestinian refugees with Jordanian citizenship and especially descendants of refugees without refugee status are also members of Jordanian society. While the refugee camps (especially those outside cities) have remained in many ways symbols of Palestinian identity, within West and East Amman and in other Jordanian cities the Palestinian-Jordanian status has become much more fluid.

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<sup>273</sup> Interview with Yousef.

<sup>274</sup> Sari Hanafi, *Governing Palestinian Refugee Camps in the Arab East: Governmentalities in Search of Legitimacy*. Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, American University of Beirut, 2010.

<sup>275</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*.

<sup>276</sup> Salih, "Reconciling Return and Rights."

## *Iraqis*

Dubbed the “invisible crisis” by both scholars and the media, many Iraqis fleeing violence following the 2003 Iraq War seemed to fade against the background of Amman and Irbid’s urban landscapes, where most took up residence. However, as Geraldine Chatelard’s research demonstrates, Iraqi forced migrants in Jordan fall along a continuum of migration that has resulted in the development of social networks within Jordan, primarily in the Greater Amman area where most Iraqis have taken up residence. Even as Iraqis form connections with other Iraqis, Chatelard notes that religious and class identifications have also proved strong magnets as opposed to geographic origin.<sup>277</sup>

The relationship between Iraqis and their host community reflects both fear and acclimation. Iraqi immigrants already in Jordan, whether having fled from persecution or migrated voluntarily, formed a base of support accessible mainly by middle-class and wealthy Iraqis. As Chatelard highlights, “members of professions and the business elite represented throughout the various periods of Iraqi migration to Jordan formed solidarity networks encompassing Jordanians and Iraqis who had arrived at different periods, therefore playing an efficient role in anchoring the newcomers socially and professionally.”<sup>278</sup> Chatelard argues, however, that these professional solidarity networks were visible primarily for wealthy or Christian Iraqis. Most Iraqis in Amman have instead developed communities that have been largely stratified along socioeconomic lines, rendering connecting to fellow Iraqis a function of class rather than identity. Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar’s discuss the search by Iraqis for common points of community identification within the space of the city, noting that wealthy and middle-income Iraqis have used construction and property investment to not only expand business and

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<sup>277</sup> Chatelard, “What Visibility Conceals.”

<sup>278</sup> Chatelard, “What Visibility Conceals.”

reconstruct livelihoods, but as a method of constructing their own community centers. In particular, the authors highlight:

One important point of arrival for Iraqis' identity resides within the restaurant or café culture. There are several Iraqi restaurants that have opened in West Amman. In these cafes and restaurants 75% of guests are Iraqis, where a large number of Iraqi families gather to socialize on a daily basis. Many Iraqi restaurants in West Amman are social Iraqi hubs where Iraqis can meet, and wedding ceremonies can take place. The interiors of these restaurants are vivid with memorabilia and nostalgic elements that echo Baghdad or Mosul or any other city in Iraq...<sup>279</sup>

The locations constructed by the Iraqi guests themselves become the spaces for Iraqi “displaced culture and identity in Amman.”<sup>280</sup> Yet because many of these restaurants and cafes are clustered in West Amman, observations such as this highlight a class divide between higher-income Iraqis and low-income Iraqi refugees, who live mainly in the city's eastern areas. While middle-income Iraqis such as Anas, a self-identified Palestinian-Iraqi who came to Jordan in 2005, are also able to utilize these community spaces, high transportation and food expenses make these cafes and restaurants almost entirely inaccessible for low-income Iraqis. Without spaces to gather and socialize, community preservation and establishing new social relations becomes extremely difficult. Low-income Iraqis have therefore relied mainly on the help of organizations such as the Collateral Repair Project (CRP) in North Hashemi, where my interviews indicate a large number of Iraqi refugees are clustered.<sup>281</sup> Amanda Lane, the director of CRP, stated that one of the organization's goals is to “create a sense of community among the different nationalities of refugees” and Jordanians. However, she also highlighted Iraqi-specific social activities, such as Iraqi-only domino nights or Iraqi women cooking activities, and emphasized the provision of a social space for Iraqis as a main goal of the organization for

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<sup>279</sup> Al-Azhari and Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form."

<sup>280</sup> Al-Azhari and Sonia F. Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form."

<sup>281</sup> Al-Azhari and Sonia F. Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form."

“bringing people together and avoiding sectarian divisions.”<sup>282</sup> The focus of organizations such as CRP is increasingly shifting to humanitarian aid relief, especially in light of the Syrian refugees, and reflects a struggle for basic subsistence among refugees that may place community-building lower on the list of priority.

The formation of communities by Iraqi refugees in Jordan in neighborhoods such as North Hashemi and Zarqa indicates that even low-income Iraqis have managed to discover spaces of ethnic belonging within Amman’s landscape, and with time increasingly interact with other populations along class lines. At the same time, the ability of high-income Iraqi refugees to create community spaces for themselves and associate with other members of the city’s economic elite is evidence of the development of a new, cosmopolitan privileged class within Amman. As the income divide increases between populations, wealthy individuals from a range of backgrounds rub shoulders in West Amman’s cafes, nightclubs, and suburban neighborhoods, sipping Starbucks and shopping in mega-malls funded by new migrants. Meanwhile, low-income refugees in North Hashemi and other communities have over time appeared to acclimate to their new communities. Ghazwan spoke of his weekly meetings at a nearby cafe with four other men—one Iraqi and the rest East Bank or Palestinian-Jordanian—and noted the “hospitality” and “kindness” of his neighbors.<sup>283</sup> The arrival of Syrian refugees into Jordan’s urban, rural, and camp spaces has introduced yet another population and yet another form of social dislocation to be negotiated by all refugee populations and East Bank Jordanians alike.

### *Syrians*

The social dislocation and desires for community reconstitution among Syrian refugees newly arriving in Jordan has most often taken second place to an imperative of survival—yet

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<sup>282</sup> Interview with Amanda Lane

<sup>283</sup> Interview with Ghazwan

community networks may also serve as a source of economic support. While in spaces such as Za'atari refugee camp, the camp's closed environment has contributed to a process of community preservation along familial lines and by geographic origin in Syria, over 80 percent of refugees have eschewed the camps for cities and rural areas. With many focusing primarily on survival, social relations and kinship ties have taken a back seat in Jordan's capital, though in areas such as Mafraq that maintained strong connections to Syria before the civil war, refugees have benefited socioeconomically from the support of tribal and familial networks. Yet as Khalid Homsy, a Syrian refugee from Damascus whom I interviewed in Amman noted, the crisis has made Syrians see each others' "true faces," and reconnecting with other Syrian refugees may now be contingent on socioeconomic status.<sup>284</sup> Finally, while refugees have benefited from previous ties to Jordanian communities, the relationship between refugees and Jordanians is also characterized by economically based tensions. The spatial dynamic between camp refugees, urban refugees, and refugees occupying informal settlements in both urban and rural areas holds potential for a process of social transformation and community reformation much like the effects of the Palestinian refugee influx, in which urbanizing communities in areas such as Mafraq may experience socioeconomic rather than ethnic divisions.

The ethnically homogenous space of the refugee camp has reinforced development of social relations by place of geographic origin from within Syria. Za'atari refugee camp has rapidly developed its own "social milieu" over the year since its formation in July 2012: "trailers-turned-men's social clubs" have emerged alongside parallel spaces for women, and sections of the camp have developed into veritable *hais*, or neighborhoods, along community lines. However, the isolation of the camp has also contributed to tensions with "outsiders," who are seen as the arbiters of Syrian suffering. Media reports of clashes within Za'atari note the

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<sup>284</sup> Interview with Khalid Homsy

targeting of Jordanian policemen and aid workers by refugees driven to desperation by the poor living conditions of the camp. A Syrian woman living in King Abdullah Gardens Camp lamented that “Jordanians treat us like animals,” and expressed bitterness that her children were excluded from local schools.<sup>285</sup> The camp is therefore a source of Syrian solidarity and contestation against the Jordanian “jailer.” Za’atari’s development as a “Syrian city” has both political and social implications, and reflects an extreme example of socio-spatial polarization along ethnic lines resulting in interethnic tensions.

While the previous section of this chapter explored the socioeconomic motivations behind refugee movement to rural areas in Mafraq, a recent investigation by the UNHCR also highlighted a desire for social support motivating settlement formation near host communities in the municipality.<sup>286</sup> As a report on informal settlements in Mafraq and Irbid highlights, “it is worth noting how demographic, cultural and social reasons also affect a household’s decision to reside in an ITS [informal tented settlement]... whilst the majority of the population in Za’atari refugee camp is from the Syrian governorate of Dara’a by origin, the assessment revealed that the vast majority of ITS residents are from the governorates of Aleppo, Hama, and Rural Damascus.”<sup>287</sup> Refugees in Mafraq may occupy both informal settlements or shelter with local residents, relying on pre-conflict kinship and tribal ties. Community formation in these areas may therefore occur based on ethnicity, but this ethnicity might actually identify with the local population. In addition, increasing prices of housing within Mafraq have created widening socioeconomic divisions within its towns and rural areas, in which both refugees and East Bank Jordanians may be forced out of their homes.<sup>288</sup>

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<sup>285</sup> Interview with refugees in King Abdullah Gardens Camp

<sup>286</sup> UNICEF, *Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan*.

<sup>287</sup> UNICEF, *Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan*.

<sup>288</sup> UNICEF, *Informal Tented Settlements in Jordan*.

Syrian refugees that have sought shelter in Jordan's capital of Amman often lack the familial network of those settling among large communities of Syrians, and must forge new connections that may be shaped by their location within the city. Some, such as Khalid, have arrived alone, while others such as Nilma have come with their siblings and parents. Without direct proximity to Za'atari or other refugee camps, the effect of the refugee camp as a social center is not visible as in the case of the Palestinians. Yet urban Syrian refugees have also taken part in forming social networks, despite the obstacles of an absence of shared spaces or geographic identity within Syria. Hanin and Shatha, two Syrian refugees I interviewed from Dari'a and the suburbs of Damascus, explained that they chose to volunteer at Syria Bright Future, a Syrian NGO opened in Jordan that includes both Syrian and Jordanian (mainly of Palestinian origin) volunteers, out of a desire to "preserve hope for the future." Hanin, who arrived in Jordan with her parents and family, expressed the loneliness she felt during her first seven months in Jordan without the support of friends or a broader community, and stated that she began volunteering at the organization after searching online for opportunities for Syrians in Amman.<sup>289</sup> Syrian refugees interviewed also noted that living in Amman also forced them to establish connections outside of their community of origin: as Mohamed, a refugee from Daria noted, "we are all Syrian here," but also stated that he "got along well" with his Jordanian neighbors.<sup>290</sup> This stands in contrast to patterns of interaction among informal settlements or in border communities. An anonymous employee at the alternative education NGO Questscope stated in an interview that group activities for children organized by the NGO often result in geographic community-based separations, in which children from Dara'a associate mainly with

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<sup>289</sup> Interview with Hanin and Shatha

<sup>290</sup> Interview with Mohamed

other children from the area, and vice versa.<sup>291</sup> The recasting of the Syrian community in Amman along both ethnic and socioeconomic divisions signals new forms of social interaction occurring within the cityscape.

*Jordanians: Reproducing Kinship and Tribal Ties*

With the decline of individual or small-community agriculture, East Bank Jordanians within Jordan migrated to the cities in search of employment; a movement that predates the Palestinian refugee influx. Simultaneously, however, the rural areas of the country continued to be preserved as the hearth of tradition and culture, with the romanticized figure of the Bedouin initially a contrast to the *hadari* Jordanian, or one who had settled in a town instead of the countryside.<sup>292</sup> Following the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, East Bank Jordanians were brought in direct proximity with Palestinian refugees, facing the dual social interruptions of urban migration and a relatively new “other.” These shifts resulted both in the production of new systems of interaction within the city, marked by phenomena such as the emergence of a distinct Ammani dialect. However, as Ali Kassay notes, East Bank Jordanians also reproduced and reinforced “tribal” affiliations within the city and countryside as a means of preserving a sense of community and to continue access to sociopolitical and economic influence. Nevertheless, Jordanians did not identify themselves as a monolithic Bedouin against a foreign other, and tribal identities could be strategically deployed against other East Bank Jordanian tribes as well.<sup>293</sup>

Following the 1948 influx, Plascov describes a divergence in the attitude of East Bank Jordanian city and rural dwellers. While “the more educated Trans-Jordanian town-dwellers generally coexisted with the Palestinian group...the peasants, and especially the Bedouin, were

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<sup>291</sup> Interview with Questscope employee

<sup>292</sup> Massad, *Colonial effects*.

<sup>293</sup> Alon, *The Making of Jordan*, p 3.

far more reserved in their attitude toward them.” Though Plascov argues that on the whole “Trans-Jordanians looked down on the refugees with massive contempt,” this characterization is contradicted by other scholars.<sup>294</sup> The interactions between Transjordan and Palestine at the time of Jordan’s independence in 1946 were hardly fractious or segregated along national lines. Precolonial economic and social ties spanned the Jordan River, and a large population of Palestinians existed in Jordan before the 1948 exodus (with some 10,000 Palestinians residing in Amman alone before the 1948 war).<sup>295</sup> Joseph Massad and Ali Kassay also highlight the dominant ideology of pan-Arabism to explain both divergences in urban attitude towards Palestinians and the initial social relationship between the two populations.

However, as the Palestinian presence increased within Jordan and political rifts expanded during the 1970 civil war, Kassay also argues that Jordanian urban society experienced a “retribalization,” in which tribal ethnic connections within the city gained importance and East Bank Jordanian nationalists adopted increasingly exclusivist positions towards Palestinian-Jordanians and later other refugees. Instead of an urban modernity, Jordanian towns have played a “decisive role in the reproduction of collective entities: families, religious communities and ‘tribes’ - in the sense of a hierarchical system of differentiated allegiance.”<sup>296</sup> A “high-ranking government official” noted that the East Bank Jordanian “thinks that, 100 years ago, this was his country. Waves of foreigners came and Jordan opened its doors to them -- not just Palestinians, but Circassians and Iraqis and others” and is thus concerned about an increasing demographic marginalization.<sup>297</sup> As Kassay notes, however, this retribalization stemmed not only from demographic concerns, but political and economic concerns as well. The institutionalized system

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<sup>294</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*; Kassay, “The Exclusion of Amman from the Jordanian National Identity.”

<sup>295</sup> Plascov, *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan 1948-1957*, p 33.

<sup>296</sup> Ababsa, “Introduction.”

<sup>297</sup> Ryan, ““We are all Jordan”...But Who is We?”

of *wasta*, or family connections, relied upon by East Bank Jordanians concentrated in the bureaucratic sector meant that a primary manner of obtaining socioeconomic benefits was through the maintenance of a large network of “tribal” connections. In an increasingly industrialized city and movement away from the public and agricultural sector businesses that formed the primary means of employment for East Bank Jordanians, along with an increasing non-East Bank Jordanian domestic majority, these communal-based connections served as an access point to sociopolitical and economic influence.

Relationships between refugees and Jordanians in rural areas, especially in the north of Jordan, are both a function of preexisting relations and resource pressures. For the rural poor, the presence of thousands of additional individuals results in more than a clash of social customs; despite the possible positive macroeconomic influence of the presence, rural communities in Mafraq and Irbid have faced serious rises in commodity prices and rent. Rather than a refugee-Jordanian rift born out of social animosities, Jordanian host communities have faced very real economic pressures that are viewed—and depicted by the media—as directly connected to the refugee presence. The assumption of tribal primacy and affluence conceals an additional divide between the transplanted “peasant bourgeoisie” and the rural poor, replacing it instead with a communal-based animosity between the “loyal Bedouin” and the refugee intruder. As Tariq Tell notes, to understand sources of sociopolitical frustration within the Jordanian population, engagement with both “the articulate English speaking salons of western Amman and the offices of organized political parties” within city centers as well as “clan guest houses, mosques, and sports clubs in the small towns of the South, Jabal `Ajlun, and the Northeast” must be simultaneously undertaken.<sup>298</sup>

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<sup>298</sup> Abu Rish, “On the Nature of the Hashemite Regime and Jordanian Politics: An Interview with Tariq Tell.”

Majd Musa further argues that “although [Jordanian] tribespeople today define themselves as opposed to non-Bedouin others, particularly the Palestinian Other, they are aware of their place within a specific tribe and lineage that excludes other tribes.”<sup>299</sup> East Bank Jordanians cannot be understood as a monolithic entity governed by tribal relations; differentiation and group identities also form within this system. The description of East Bank Jordanians solely along tribal lines redeploys colonial categories—the Bedouin as the symbol of Jordanian identity was supported by British officials such as John Bagot Glubb as a means of differentiating between city Jordanians, who he viewed as more politically active and therefore more suspect, and less-educated rural Jordanians.<sup>300</sup> Instead of solely an ethnicity-based divide between East Bank Jordanians and refugees, several divides along class, spatial, and political lines may be observed. The preservation of tribal relations within the city and between the city and the countryside may be a way of not only retaining a sense of community, but gaining access to economic and social benefits through an officially sanctioned system of *wasta*, or influence based on both ethnic connections and economic capital.<sup>301</sup> These contesting networks of socioeconomic benefit may manifest in both ethnic and class-based tensions within Jordanian society.

### **Jordanian Society or Societies?**

The discussion of refugee and East Bank Jordanian community formation within the space of the city and the marginalized or newly populous countryside reveals a dual process of community preservation and acculturation. For refugees arriving in Jordan, the pressures of survival and an unfamiliar environment result in a decision-making process between

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<sup>299</sup> Majd Musa, “Constructing Global Amman: Petrodollar, Identity, and the Built Environment in the Twenty-First Century,” (Ph.D diss., University of Illinois, 2013): p 140.

<sup>300</sup> Massad, *Colonial Effects*.

<sup>301</sup> Kassay, “The Exclusion of Amman from the Jordanian National Identity.”

acculturation—adaptation and internalization of the host nation’s social practices—and community preservation. Long-term refugees such as the Palestinians and more recently Iraqis have carved spaces of social belonging within the city, in the form of the urbanized camp and informal settlements or through community centers, while also interacting with other refugees, migrants, and East Bank Jordanians along class lines. The Syrian refugees have thus far focused on survival, though the camp, informal settlements, and charitable organizations within the city provide a means of retaining community links valuable for survival. Their interaction with Jordanians and other migrants has been characterized by tensions over resources, but preexisting linkages have supported relationships in the north of Jordan. East Bank Jordanians have grappled with dual forms of dislocation: a rural-urban movement and a sense of demographic marginalization within their own country. One way of combating this is to solidify a sense of “tribal” identity as a means of social leverage and political influence within the city, yet this has not precluded an apparent integration within less ethnically homogenous urban spaces.

The simultaneous existence of ethnic divisions and class systems of social interactions provides a confusing picture of Jordanian society. Within Jordanian society, the existence of multiple communities with alternate ethnic identifications—Palestinians, Iraqis, Syrians, etc.,—that nevertheless occupy the same physical and social spaces communicates a sense of multiple, overlapping sub-societies within Jordan instead of a single society unified on a national basis. Refugees as non-citizens appear to be unable to participate equally in civil society, while even refugees with citizenship or residency may associate primarily with their own ethnic communities. These divisions may manifest in tensions in the city, where ethnic groups are forcibly placed in proximity to one another. Yet as this section concludes, the refugee and East Bank Jordanian populations within Jordan and the city in particular have nevertheless resulted in

a cosmopolitanization and multiculturalism that reflects the multiplicity of influences exerted by Jordan's diverse population.<sup>302</sup>

Tension between the city as the site of individual interactions and as a reproduction of communal ties is evident in the interactions between different populations within its spaces. In Amman, ethnic tensions appear to emerge in the arena of football, in matches between the city's teams of Al-Faisali and Al-Wihdat. While Al-Faisali's roster consists of mainly East Bank Jordanians from Amman and beyond, Al-Wihdat draws its name from the refugee camp on the southern outskirts of the city. As Dag Tuasted notes in a report for the Middle East Institute, at matches between Al-Faisali and Al-Wihdat, Al-Faisali supporters chant such slogans as “*Wahid, itnen, talagha ya Abu Hussein*” (One, two, divorce her Abu Hussein),” a reference to Jordan's Queen Rania, who is of Palestinian descent, and by extension a slur against the Palestinian members of the Al-Wihdat football team.<sup>303</sup> On the other side, following a victorious match against Al-Faisali, Luigi Achilli described how Al-Wihdat supporters crowded the streets of the camp in a celebration that included chants such as “we are from Wihdat, we are the children of Palestine,” expressing a sense of nationalism identified not with Jordan, but with Palestine.<sup>304</sup> Curt Rhodes, the director of education NGO Questscope, noted in an interview that in the schools of Ramtha and Mafraq students form groups along places of geographic origin from Syria and Jordan, and violent interactions between groups are common.<sup>305</sup> Tensions between Iraqis and Jordanians could even lead to deportation: Adnan, a Palestinian-Jordanian living in Amman, recounted somewhat ashamedly how a fight with his Iraqi Shi'a neighbors led to the

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<sup>302</sup> Ababsa, “Introduction.”

<sup>303</sup> Dag Tuasted, “Al-Wihdat: The Pride of the Palestinians in Jordan,” Middle East Institute, May 02, 2010.

<sup>304</sup> Luigi Achilli, “Fun, Football, and Palestinian Nationalism,” *Jadaliyya*, February 05, 2013.

<sup>305</sup> Interview with Curt Rhodes

police forcibly repatriating them to Iraq shortly after.<sup>306</sup> Within the city, therefore, a sense of social cohesion appears to be absent, and in its place instead is a carefully mediated web of tense relations liable to break out into violence.

Yet the ongoing tensions between East Bank Jordanians, Palestinian Jordanians, Palestinian refugees, and new refugee populations might seem inevitable as the populations adjust to one another. Despite retaining alternate national allegiances and despite a lack of equal access to political participation, arguments of primordial animosities or ethnic cleavages hold little water when observing the relative lack of direct violence or clashes between different social groups in Jordan. Indeed, as Ababsa notes in the case of the Palestinians and East Bank Jordanians, while “the two levels of identity confront each other when the football teams of Faisali and Wahdat meet...they are united when the national team plays.”<sup>307</sup> While divisions between the populations persist, Ababsa argues that the city has in part enabled the development of a new national sense of Jordanianness not solely based on tribal identity. The prevalence of Jordanian volunteers, regardless of origin, among volunteer groups aimed at aiding incoming refugees and the cooperation witnessed between different refugee populations was highlighted by Dima Karadsheh, a former director of the NGO Caritas Jordan whom I interviewed, as a sign of progressive integration.<sup>308</sup> In areas such as Mafraq and Ramtha, the shared backgrounds and precolonial histories of inhabitants suggests a system of interconnected social relations that predates and will persist beyond the Syrian refugees’ presence in Jordan.

As this chapter has demonstrated, rapid urbanization initiated by refugee influxes resulted in a transformation of a primarily rural Jordanian society to one characterized by urban sprawls and socioeconomic divisions, marginalizing both urban poor and the dwindling rural population.

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<sup>306</sup> Interview with Adnan

<sup>307</sup> Ababsa, “Introduction.”

<sup>308</sup> Interview with Dima Karadsheh

While observers have noted attempts to “transplant” the Jordanian peasantry to the city and preserve the political primacy of tribal areas, the social implications of a sudden physical proximity have also resulted in forced interactions. Within these spaces, refugees and Jordanians have both reproduced communal divisions and forged new interethnic relationships along class lines. As Amman and other Jordanian city centers grow in both population and economic importance, scholars have argued that Jordanian society can no longer be envisioned solely in terms of the clan, tribe, or ethnic origin—within the city, despite individual identification, many Jordanians are physically distant from these networks.<sup>309</sup> While refugees and Jordanians continue to occupy distinct social spheres within Jordan, these spheres have overlapped and intermingled—especially in the case of Palestinian Jordanians and East Bank Jordanians. Despite exclusivist nationalist rhetoric, the line between Palestinian-Jordanians and East Bank Jordanians has become increasingly blurred, most visibly within the city environment. Acknowledging that the two groups cannot be discussed in monolithic terms is essential to understanding that the “master cleavage” of Palestinian-Jordanian tensions that apparently defines Jordanian society is imprecisely deployed to conceal numerous other divisions faced by all modern societies. The expanding income inequality visible in the city, the urban-rural developmental divide, resource scarcity, and the socioeconomic difficulties faced by low-income refugees within both the camps and the city cannot be solely explained by ethnic divisions or Jordanian-refugee divisions. As this section also briefly addresses, the loosening of state restrictions on civil society and NGO programs that directly address the economic roots of social tensions may contribute to better intercommunal relations between Jordanians and new Syrian refugees.

Barriers to cosmopolitanization and better interethnic relations include a lack of social initiatives and a persistence of economic inequality. Civil society—NGOs, international

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<sup>309</sup> Ababsa, “Introduction.”

organizations, and informal citizen networks—remains weak in Jordan due to restrictive state policies towards organization formation and obtaining funding, crippling a facet of society typically characterized by interethnic interaction.<sup>310</sup> Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, the interference of the state in civil society can be seen as part of a strategy of “divide and rule,” though the monarchy has maintained an official position of social unity. The Jordanian government has maintained a position of “We are all Jordan” or “Jordan First” in an apparent attempt to reduce social frictions (arguing that to even discuss these frictions is *fitna*, or sedition), yet has both crippled its civil society and failed to enact any meaningful programs aimed at promoting intercommunity dialogue or addressing economic inequality either between Palestinian-Jordanians and Jordanians or between new refugee populations and Jordanians.<sup>311</sup>

However, reforms since 1989, including most recently in the wake of 2011 protests, and increased awareness on the part of both the aid community and Jordanians about the need to address intercommunal tensions has resulted in an expansion of efforts to promote social cohesion, with most initiatives headquartered in Amman. Programs such as the British Embassy’s Conflict Pool Initiative fund organizations addressing intercommunal tensions, mirrored by local efforts by NGOs such as Al Hayat.<sup>312</sup> NGOs such as Generation Foundation, an organization aimed at psychosocial support and conflict prevention founded in 2013 by both East Bank Jordanian and Palestinian-Jordanian youth, signal an increased desire to address social issues facing Jordan. Yousef Issawi, one of the founders of the organization, stated that the organization’s goal is to “create social and cultural networks between refugees and non-refugees and engage them in visible action in the refugee camp...and challenging the asymmetry of power

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<sup>310</sup> Ababsa, “Introduction.”

<sup>311</sup> Naseem Tarawneh, February 25, 2014, “Who’s Afraid of an Alternative Homeland?”, *The Black Iris*.  
<http://black-iris.com/2014/02/25/whos-afraid-of-an-alternative-homeland/>

<sup>312</sup> Interview with Kathleen Hockram

between different social groups in the camps, villages and cities and enhancing the participation of women and youth in cultural and social activities.”<sup>313</sup> Increases in social mobilization within the city to address issues of economic inequality and refugee aid may contribute to increased social cohesion among its inhabitants and Jordan in general.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter’s discussion of the Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugee influxes has demonstrated how, in the absence of access to rural or traditional forms of livelihood, refugees have instead utilized the cityscape as a means of reclaiming or reforging community networks and social spaces. Within the process of urbanization, the camp has emerged as locus of social activity, and can be absorbed within the surrounding urban environment or become an urban center itself, its frontiers expanded by a process of informal settlement and connection with urban refugees.

Al-Azhari notes that “Melvin Webber's celebrated ‘Non place Urban Realm’ is what best describes the new metropolitan multicultural new city of Amman; where the built environment is subject to constant change due to different waves of immigrants coming into the city. Each group bringing part of their culture to the new city that does not represent a place with a singular identity but a multi layered Ammani urban realm.”<sup>314</sup> Indeed, interviewees noted that refugee and migrant communities comingled without giving up their identity. One Jordanian interviewee described Jordan as a “fruit salad” rather than a “cocktail;” instead of a single, blended identity, she believed that refugee populations coexisted and engaged in a cultural exchange with each

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<sup>313</sup> Interview with Yousef Issawi

<sup>314</sup> Al-Azhari and Sonia F. Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form."

other and with Jordanians.<sup>315</sup> As Myriam Ababsa notes: Amman's "functions as the capital combined with the variety of its population (a core of Circassians and Bedouins plus Lebanese traders, Syrian officials and hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees, and more recently Iraqi refugees, many of whom are served by Asian servants and Egyptian labourers) lead Amman to fully play its urban role as a "place for maximisation of social interaction.""<sup>316</sup>

Yet the city has also served as a site of reproduction for ethnic relations aimed at establishing a hierarchy of access to sociopolitical influence. The extension of East Bank Jordanian tribal networks within the city connects the space to the marginalized countryside, but it also serves as a means of establishing social superiority over other groups as "true" Jordanians. While recent refugees retain their transnational allegiances and view themselves as temporary "guests," this exclusion is problematic for Palestinian-Jordanian citizens with both a Jordanian and Palestinian refugee identity. Yet even the Jordanian "tribal identity" cannot be cast as a monolithic opposition to the refugee "other," and is itself a construction of different tribal and non-tribal Jordanian identities. In addition, as civil society strengthens and Jordanians become increasingly aware of the class-based divide characterizing Amman and the rest of Jordan's cities and countryside, the focus of tensions may shift to addressing socioeconomic inequalities that affect all groups of the population.<sup>317</sup> While Amman may not be a cosmopolitan "melting pot" and areas of Jordan may remain ethnically homogenous, Jordanian society cannot be understood in terms of a refugee vs. indigenous population divide. Instead, Jordanian society exhibits influences from each population that has passed across its borders, influences visible from the bustling streets of its capital to the southern port of Aqaba and the northern border villages.

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<sup>315</sup> Interview with Dima Karadsheh

<sup>316</sup> Al-Azhari and Sonia F. Al-Najjar. "Transforming Amman: Displaced Iraqis Impact on Architecture and Urban Form."

<sup>317</sup> Ababsa, "Introduction."

## **Conclusion**

### **Research Summary**

This research has sought to understand the proportionally significant presence of Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees in Jordan as both part of government domestic policy and as individual and group actors with agency. The influx of Palestinian refugees to Jordan just two years after its independence in 1946 had a transformative impact on the country's modern development, as the government integrated and leveraged the presence of Palestinians and later Iraqi and Syrian refugees into economic and governance strategies. Simultaneously, refugees in Jordan have themselves engaged in economic participation and carved their own means of assimilation, political action, and even self-governance. The urbanization and potential cosmopolitanization of Jordanian society may signal a lasting effect of these waves of refugees on social relations within Jordan. As this thesis has demonstrated, conceptualizing refugees as static, helpless burdens elides both the instrumental manipulation of refugee populations by the host state and the refugees' own individual and group agency. Instead, Jordan has developed an economic, political, and social codependence with its refugees in which the state itself can no longer be described as solely a nation-state, but a refugee-state that governs and is itself influenced by the forced migrants within its borders.

### **Research Findings**

Three sub-questions outlined in the introduction were addressed by each chapter. The main findings of each chapter are outlined below:

*1. For most of its history after independence, Jordan has been characterized as a "semi-rentier state" heavily dependent on foreign aid to buttress its economic and even political stability.*

*Within this context, how have refugees figured into the economic strategies of the Jordanian*

*government? Furthermore, how have refugees themselves exerted economic agency through participation in the Jordanian economy, and has this significantly influenced the economy's modern development?*

Building on Karen Jacobsen's argument that, rather than economic burdens, refugees may actually contribute to economic growth, this chapter demonstrated the vital role played by refugees in both enabling the persistence of Jordan as an aid-reliant "semi rentier-state" and developing the country's growing private sector. Jordan's early distributive system of political coalition building—i.e., the exchange of land, employment, or economic incentives for political support of the monarchy—was constructed and enabled by British financial support during the mandate period. However, the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948 and the subsequent foundation of refugee relief agency UNRWA in part enabled the persistence of this "semi-rentier economy" by attracting a flood of security, humanitarian, and developmental aid. While scholars such as Laurie Brand and Peter W. Moore highlight Jordan's geopolitically strategic position and collaboration with U.S. policy in the region as primary factors in attracting needed aid, this chapter's research on the role of UNRWA in developing the infrastructure of the East Bank and the Jordanian government's aid policies surrounding the Iraqi refugee presence and even the Syrian refugees indicates that refugees may also be seen as a source of strategic rents. In the case of the Iraqi crisis, observers have argued that the government's policy towards Iraqis fleeing conflict in Iraq (dubbing them "guests") and inflation of number of Iraqis in Jordan amounted to a misdirection of foreign aid towards projects not specifically adapted to refugee needs.

However, this chapter also emphasized that viewing refugees as static populations to be leveraged for aid elides their own agency as actors engaged in economic participation and entrepreneurship. This thesis's examination of empirical data on foreign direct investment (FDI)

in Jordan and research by other scholars indicates that Palestinian, Iraqi, Syrian, and other refugees have contributed to the growth and recent flourishing of the Jordanian private sector and boosted GDP. Through investment, remittances, enterprise, and participation in the informal labor force, refugees in Jordan have helped shape the country's economic development and increasing privatization, while enabling the persistence of a bureaucratic, rent-incentivized political elite. Refugees in Jordan can therefore not simply be conceptualized as economic burdens, but must be understood as integral to the shape and trajectory of the country's economic development.

*2. How have refugees factored into the Jordanian monarchy's governance strategies and the country's political development? Have refugees in protracted displacement been included as subjects with political and legal duties and claims in Jordan, or ruled as temporary "non-subjects" with no political role or legal rights? If included, are their legal and political statuses equal to those of Jordan's "indigenous" inhabitants? How have refugees themselves chosen to participate politically or adapt strategies of self-governance?*

Chapter 2 began with an analysis of the regime's response to the influx of Palestinian refugees in 1948, highlighting a regime strategy of subsuming Palestinians under the banner of a Hashemite-Jordanian state. By providing refugees with equal legal rights as citizens and integrating them into institutions such as the military, the Jordanian state included refugees in the category of lawful subjects. At the same time, however, the regime practiced policies of political and military exclusion that instituted a budding hierarchy between "East Bank elements," Palestinians and Palestinian refugees, and even other East Bank tribes. Following the 1967 Arab defeat, the loss of the West Bank, and the 1970-1971 Jordanian civil war, the Jordanian regime began the unofficial process of excising Palestinian-Jordanians from spheres of political

influence by facilitating the resurgence of an exclusivist Transjordanian nationalism. Subsequent waves of Palestinian refugees were not given citizenship, and citizenship was even revoked from some refugees in a number of cases that received international condemnation. Palestinian refugees occupied positions as second-class subjects in Jordan, as their statuses as citizens became increasingly diluted through an institutionalized legal hierarchy.

The influxes of Iraqis and Syrians occurred in the shadow of the Palestinian refugee presence in Jordan. The Jordanian government's decision to label Iraqis "guests" instated yet another legally ambiguous category of subject that was nevertheless highlighted as another demographic and security threat. In the Syrian case, despite government assurances that the refugees will not be integrated as citizens, their proportionally massive numbers and the diminishing possibilities of resettlement or return in the near future appear to indicate that the development of some sort of legal rights framework is inevitable. Yet their ultimate exclusion from the realms of political participation may allow the regime to legally disenfranchise an even greater number of its inhabitants, with the refugees constituting yet another "other" against which to mobilize nationalist sentiments. In a country where the "true" subjects are an increasingly diminishing minority, the legal frameworks surrounding refugees has served as a buffer against pluralism and democratic reform.

However, a characterization of refugees as static, stateless masses to be manipulated for state gain fails to account for their agency as actors. Palestinian refugees have played a pivotal role in Jordan's political development through strategies of integration and assimilation with the regime, political activism within Jordanian politics, or even the creation of independent, sub-state political spheres. Wealthy Iraqis have sought residency and even naturalization, and wield their economic capital to obtain political influence. While the recent nature of the Syrian refugee

crisis precludes in-depth analysis of their political participation, reports of the transformation of Za'atari refugee camp into a nuclear political community and the increasingly active political networks within urban society indicate that Syrians are forging spaces for political representation. Chapter 2 concluded by noting the development in Jordan of a state system that claims to both represent citizens and many refugees alike while also preserving the refugees' alternate national identification, even as Palestinians participate within the Jordanian political system and other Palestinian, Iraqi, and Syrian refugees forge new means of self-governance and political participation.

*3. How does Jordanian society and physical development reflect the influence of refugee populations? In light of migration-driven processes of urbanization, how have the societal spaces of the city, refugee camp, and rural areas reflected the influence of refugee populations? Can Jordanian society be understood as divided by ethnic cleavages between different refugee populations and "indigenous" Jordanians, or have refugees contributed to a process of "cosmopolitanization," especially within urban centers?*

Chapter 3 highlighted perhaps the most visible example of refugee agency in shaping modern Jordan: the rapid urbanization that transformed Jordan from a collection of villages and rural areas to one in which over 80 percent of the population now lives in urban centers. The chapter began with a discussion of the socio-spatial polarization between and within the city (focusing on Amman), refugee camps, and rural areas of Jordan. It argued that while Amman has become increasingly divided along socioeconomic and ethnic lines, the refugee camps and have also been characterized by urban development and social evolution, as they have transformed from camps into urban landscapes that may themselves constitute the low-income areas of a broader urban center. East Bank Jordanians also engaged in rural-urban migration to the new

bureaucratic center of Amman; however, many also settled in so-called “tribal cities” or remained in Jordan’s rural areas, resulting in a polarization between the “tribal heartlands” and the mostly Palestinian city. Later influxes of Iraqi and Syrian refugees contributed to a solidification of socioeconomic spatial divides while contributing to renewed processes of urbanization in rural areas.

The chapter then addressed the question of whether this spatial transformation in Jordan has been accompanied by a “cosmopolitanization,” in which ethnic divides are replaced by individual-level interactions and divisions within the national society. In the forced proximity of the city, refugees and East Bank Jordanians must address not only their own ruptured community network, but negotiate a sudden forced proximity with a new “other.” In Amman, this has resulted in a simultaneous blurring of social boundaries and a reproduction of refugee and Jordanian kinship and ethnic ties in social relations. However, this chapter argued that the persistence of ethnic-based social relations within the city may be a means of obtaining economic or social influence, highlighting the emergence of a “Bedouin” identity among East Bank Jordanians. Furthermore, populations subject to socioeconomic marginalization have faced higher levels of tensions and lower social cohesion, suggesting that barriers to “cosmopolitanization” may be economically based. This chapter concludes that while barriers to cosmopolitanization and the rise of exclusivist East Bank Jordanian nationalism may be pervasive in Jordanian society, these voices are increasingly becoming a minority as civil society strengthens and socioeconomic divisions worsen.

### **Limitations**

This research faced three primary limitations as a result of shortcomings in research techniques or are the result of restrictions I myself set for study. First, the general focus of this

thesis on three broad facets of Jordan's modern development attempted to provide a macro-level perspective of the influence of refugees on host states and challenge notions of refugees as passive victims. Nevertheless, limitations of time and space may have prevented an in-depth analysis of these facets in a manner befitting their complexity. As such, future study might focus on a single facet, such as the political economy, in a more comprehensive manner, or expand upon and deepen the research already conducted to extend and hone the material already covered by this thesis. I possess an academic interest in returning to this subject in a future endeavor, either as a graduate thesis or in a future publication.

Second, both ethnographic field research and in particular research in Arabic were limited by both the duration of time spent in Amman, Jordan and a lack of access to primary sources cited by some of the texts read. During the two weeks spent in Amman, I was able to conduct about 21 interviews with Syrian, Iraqi, and Palestinian refugees, as well as East Bank Jordanians and key informants in NGOs, government, and academia. However, this method allowed for neither ethnographic generalizability nor accounted fully for the opinions of, for example, "nativist" East Bank Jordanians. Future research should integrate more fully field research as well as extensive research in Arabic.

Finally, the question of addressing the refugee as an actor in light of the danger of conflating the Palestinians with Iraqi and Syrian refugees—a concern addressed in the introduction—poses a significant challenge to this thesis's analysis. The "master cleavage" between Palestinians (many of whom may identify as Jordanian or Palestinian-Jordanian) and East Bank Jordanians in Jordan seems to be an identity conflict so immense and salient to the current Jordanian political, social, and economic system that disentangling the influence of refugees as actors may be nearly impossible. Nevertheless, the efforts made in this thesis to focus

on the economic, legal, and social implications of displacement and its impact on a host community eschews the narrative of a master conflict between Palestinians and East Bank Jordanians over the “identity” of Jordan. Instead, understanding refugees in the context of both government strategy and their own agency seeks to critically interrogate the ongoing divides that seem to stymie reform.

### **Final Conclusions and Future Research**

Hannah Arendt, in exile from Nazi Germany, wrote in 1943 that “refugees represent the vanguard of their peoples—if they keep their identity.” Arendt argues that for a refugee to envision herself as simply an “immigrant” or a “newcomer” undermines both the crisis of exile and the difficulty of adaptation in an alien and even hostile new home society.<sup>318</sup> Instead, even if a refugee makes her best effort to conform and abide by the host society’s rules, the brand of refugee inextricably labels the refugee as a separate, oppressed other. Refugees as an “other” have therefore been viewed as challenges to state sovereignty, local society, and as burdens on the host economy. Yet in the country with the highest refugee to population ratio in the world, these “threats” have not manifested in a societal or economic collapse. Instead, despite being surrounded on three sides by countries that have been engulfed in civil wars and sectarian divisions, Jordan’s monarchy has leveraged the presence of its refugees as a means of ensuring its stability—through aid agreements, disenfranchising its inhabitants, and maintaining a system of “divide and rule” among its population. At the same time, refugees in Jordan have themselves carved out spaces of economic participation, political action and self-governance, and preserved and formed new systems of social relations. Instead of static, helpless populations, Palestinian, Iraqi, and now Syrian refugees have over the years demonstrated a desire to forge new

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<sup>318</sup> Arendt, “We Refugees.”

livelihoods within the Jordanian state, even against the wishes of the government or international aid organizations.

Understanding that, just like citizens and human beings across the world, refugees still possess agency is an important step for not only scholars, but policymakers and aid workers attempting to address the increasingly overwhelming flows of refugees and displaced persons across the world. Conflict and persecution raised the number of displaced persons worldwide to 45 million—the highest in 18 years—and over four-fifths of refugees and displaced persons are concentrated in developing countries.<sup>319</sup> A comprehension of the transformative impacts that refugees may have in developing their new host environments could radically shape how governments and international aid agencies address these population influxes into their borders. This research is also a vital step in examining Jordan as a state that has itself has been transformed into a "refugee-state" through the influence of the refugees that cross its borders, and the policies the state has developed to address and leverage their presence. Future research might examine each facet of Jordan's development more closely and, in particular, focus on the relationship between aid agencies, the international community, and the Jordanian government in maximizing the potentially beneficial relationship between the country and its refugee constituents.

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<sup>319</sup> "UN Spotlights Plight of Refugees as Number of Displaced Hits 18-year High," UN News Centre, June 20, 2013. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp/www.iaea.org/html/www.sealthedeal2009.org/petition/story.asp?NewsID=45225&Cr=refugee&Cr1=#.U05-1fldXQg>

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