A POLITICAL DEMOGRAPHY OF THE REFUGEE QUESTION PALESTINIANS IN JORDAN AND LEBANON: BETWEEN PROTECTION, FORCED RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

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A political demography of the refugee question Palestinians in Jordan and Lebanon:
between protection, forced return and resettlement

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CARIM

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Abstract

Refugees from Palestine are one of the oldest refugee populations in the world. And UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which anchors Palestinian refugees' claims for their right of return to Palestine, is now 63 years old. Yet, in Jordan and Lebanon, the refugees' main host countries, the Palestinian presence grew in importance in domestic politics through the 2000s. In Lebanon there were the political debates surrounding the granting of some civil rights to Palestinian refugees, which culminated mid-2010. In Jordan, controversies over political naturalisation stir up violent political debates.

This essay explores the reasons behind the fact that, in Jordan and Lebanon, granting civil rights to refugees raises a lot of concern. It also examines how the civil rights issue cannot be separated from that of the protection of the Palestinian "cause", the right of return. More generally, the report investigates the various perceived challenges and the outreach of Palestinian refugees' settlement (*tawtin*) in each of the two countries, before and after the late 1980s-early 1990s.

Return and resettlement were taken as the two extremes of a similar demographic policy, and therefore, proved to be powerful political tools for regimes and political actors, at the local, regional and international levels. The theoretical framework of political demography and the "political economy" of Palestinian refugee trends and policies in Jordan and Lebanon also allowed for the Palestinian issue to be resituated in the history and the socio-political context of each country; thus revealing their specific challenges. The essay shows that the granting of civil rights to Palestinians is hampered by its politically-destabilising significance in host countries, where civil rights are constructed as citizenship-bound privileges. Therefore, debates on Palestinian refugees flag up deepening rifts within Jordanian and Lebanese citizenries, and diverging views on political "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991). In Jordan, such a rift has been deepened by the recent emergence of nationalist movements and by the tensions which emerged in the wake of the Arab uprisings. Representations of national populations as closed, *de jure* and ethnic-based increasingly oppose views of nationhood as open, *de facto* and assimilationist.

Résumé : Une démographie politique de la question des réfugiés. Les Palestiniens en Jordanie et au Liban, entre protection, retours forcés et réinstallation ?

Les réfugiés de Palestine constituent maintenant l'une des plus anciennes populations de réfugiés au monde. En 2011, soixante-trois ans se sont écoulés depuis l'adoption de la résolution 194 de l'Assemblée générale des Nations Unies, qui fonde les revendications palestiniennes d'un droit au retour des réfugiés de 1948 en Palestine. En Jordanie et au Liban, principaux pays d'accueil des réfugiés palestiniens, la question des réfugiés a cependant pris une importance accrue sur les scènes politiques nationales et régionale depuis les années 2000. Au Liban, des débats intenses entourent en 2010 les projets débattus au Parlement d'attribuer certains droits civils aux réfugiés palestiniens. Dans le même temps en Jordanie, des mesures contradictoires de naturalisations politiques de réfugiés mais aussi de privations de nationalité créent nombre de tensions.

Cet essai cherche à expliquer pourquoi, dans ces deux pays, la question de l'attribution de droits civils aux réfugiés fait l'objet d'autant de controverses, et reste indissociable de la protection de la cause palestinienne du droit au retour. Plus généralement, cette étude explore les divers enjeux attribués, au Liban et en Jordanie, à l'éventualité d'une réinstallation des réfugiés palestiniens (*tawtin*), avant et après la période-charnière de la fin des années 1980-début des années 1990.

Le retour et la réinstallation sont envisagés comme les deux extrêmes d'une même politique démographique et, en conséquence, comme de puissants instruments manipulables par les régimes en place et l'ensemble des acteurs politiques impliqués, sur les scènes domestique, régionale et

internationale. Le cadre théorique de la démographie politique et de l' « économie politique » des populations permet de dépasser les discours convenus sur la question des réfugiés et les modalités de son « règlement ». Ce cadre dévoile l'étendue des enjeux des exodes de 1948 et 1967, et permet d'expliquer les mesures directes et indirectes appliquées aux réfugiés et déplacés depuis lors, en resituant ces dynamiques et ces mesures au sein de l'histoire et du contexte socio-politique caractérisant ces deux pays. L'étude montre que l'attribution de droits civils aux réfugiés est freinée par la construction politique de ce type de droits en termes de privilège réservé aux citoyens et clients des régimes en place. Les débats sur le sujet des réfugiés trahissent les fractures divisant les populations libanaise et jordanienne comme « communautés imaginées » (Anderson, 1991), fractures creusées, dans le cas de la Jordanie, à la faveur des « printemps » arabes et de l'émergence récente de nombreux courants nationalistes. Des représentations des populations nationales comme fermées, *de jure* et à base ethnique s'opposent ainsi à d'autres conceptions de la nation comme ouverte, *de facto* et assimilationniste.

En conclusion, l'étude évoque la possibilité de contourner le blocage politique lié aux enjeux du nombre des réfugiés palestiniens au sein des populations nationales et à l'intransigeance d'Israël touchant à l'application de la résolution 194. Un projet d'incorporation de la Jordanie au sein du Conseil de Coopération du Golfe discuté mi-2010 aurait peut-être pu amorcer un changement de perception de la question des réfugiés et de leurs droits sociaux, par un changement d'échelle géo-démographique et politique, mais aussi économique, grâce à la création d'un marché du travail régional s'étendant d'Israël aux pays du Golfe.

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Refugees from Palestine are one of the oldest refugee populations in the world: their origins date back to 1948 and the creation of the state of Israel. Time has passed and December 2011 marked the sixty-third anniversary of UN General Assembly Resolution 194, which anchors Palestinian refugees' claims for their right of return to Palestine[1]. Since then, several other international resolutions have been taken over this matter[2]. In spite of such international involvement, no solution was agreed upon, pertaining either to the issue of refugees' return or to that of compensation.

Moreover, in Jordan and Lebanon the refugees' main host countries, the Palestinian presence is now becoming increasingly important in domestic politics. In Lebanon, attempts at granting civil rights to Palestinian refugees revived an active political debate starting mid-2010. Opponents to the measure claimed it was the first step in the *tawtin* (resettlement) of refugees. In Jordan where most 1948 refugees and 1967 displaced persons are Jordanian citizens, the issue of national unity has become a growing concern for both "Transjordanians" and "Jordanian-Palestinians". Contradictory measures of nationality-stripping and political naturalisation stir violent political debates; the refugees now embody the emerging nationalist movements' fierce opposition to the Hashemite regime.

Such dramatic events reaffirm the centrality of the Palestinian factor in regional, as well as domestic politics even though more than sixty years have now passed since the 1948 "tragedy" (*nakba*), during which three to four generations of refugees were born in exile. Therefore, the resilience of the debates on Palestinian refugees' rights in Middle Eastern host countries and the reasons behind enduring calls to implementing refugees' return, need to be explained.

This essay explores the reasons why, in Jordan and Lebanon, the issue of granting civil rights to refugees raises so many concerns and why it is taken as an incentive for resettlement. Put in other terms: why is there this reluctance to separate the protection of the Palestinian "cause" (the right of return) from that of Palestinian individuals, even if the issue is put in human-rights terms? More generally, the report investigates the various perceived challenges and the outreach of Palestinian refugees' settlement in each of the two countries.

By the end of 2010, the Palestinian Bureau of Statistics had estimated the number of Palestinians in the world at about 11 million. However, this figure covers a wealth of political, legal, historical and socio-economic categories and situations, stemming from the various intervention processes conducted by numerous actors at different levels (international, regional, national, communal…). Such multiple, overlapping categories offer a political outlook on the refugee issue.

Indeed, the Palestinian question is a case in point for the political demography of the Middle East. The diversity of categories characterizing Palestinians underlines the diversity of challenges posed by the question of return (or assimilation) for each national setup and political actor. This subjectivity constructs political issues and designs their patterns. For example, the issue of the numerical balance between "Palestinians" and "locals" in Lebanon touches upon the sectarian structure of the host population. In Jordan it is viewed by certain nationalist actors in terms of "aliens" gaining political power and absorbing economic resources. Palestinian refugees and the issue of their return is, therefore, a topic for political demography.

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[1] Paragraph 11 of UNGA resolution 194 (III) voted 11 December 1948 "Resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which, under principles of international law or in equity, should be made good by the Governments or authorities responsible. Instructs the Conciliation Commission to facilitate the repatriation, resettlement and economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees and the payment of compensation […]".

[2] Resolution 1456 (XIV), 9 December 1959; Resolution 237 (1967) of 14 June 1967; Resolution 242 (1967) of November 22, 1967; Resolution 3236 (XXIX), 22 November 1974; Resolution 50/28 of 6 December 1995 (on UNRWA) (Kossaifi, 1996: 10-11).

At the same time, Palestinians in the region are caught between the two extremes of the implementation of the right of return and assimilation in host countries; while the principle of return has to be reaffirmed in the policies applied by host states to the refugees. The question of return (or assimilation) directly influences the size of hosting population, as well as its internal structure and its rate of increase. Return and assimilation are, therefore, also the two extremes of a demographic policy, defined as a measure bound to affect a population' size, structure and its rate of increase.

In order to clarify the many challenges posed by Palestinian refugees in their host states, the essay will analyse the various discourses and measures carried out for Palestinian refugees' return or resettlement. We will look at these as subjective representations of citizens and citizenship or national "imagined communities" in Jordan and Lebanon, from 1948 to the present day. Therefore, this essay will resituate these discourses and policies within the wider framework of actors' representations of what is "the national"; put in other words, discourses and policies related to *tawtin* will be analysed against the backdrop of the institutional context (historical, economic, social and political), within which such policies are elaborated and debated. As a matter of fact, migration policies can be considered as a crystallisation of, sometimes unconscious, perceptions linked to "conceptions or myths about country, nation, history and origin, people, citizenship and welfare", or "an expression of a country's national interest" (Hammar, 2001: 19). As such, at the domestic level, the various migration policies are instruments of institutional reform "making up people" (Hacking, 2000). In other words, categorising a multi-ethnic population and building these categories into people's attitudes and beliefs is a way of drawing the line between the members of the national population (full citizens) and the others (non-citizens, aliens), sometimes subcategorized in line with their distance from the "core" of national citizenship: for instance, naturalised Palestinians/ two-years passports in Jordan; holders of national identification cards in Lebanon/ stateless refugees.

It may be considered problematic to talk about refugees from a "national" point of view. Particularly, as Palestinians, as refugees, are so clearly a "transnational" community. However, as often stated following on from H. Arendt (1951), it is the expansion of state systems and state-national societies that created the refugee, as well as the bi- or multinational individual. Palestinian refugee case is, indeed, a case in point: "Palestinian exile, central in the second half of the XXth century's history of the region, is [...] a consequence of the construction of Nation-States" (Sfeir, 2008: 16). Moreover, the "inflexibility" of the region's "nation-states" (or projects thereof, for example the Palestinian National Authority) is a challenge to implementing return attempts, for it contrasts with the refugees and transmigrants' transnational practices and flexible strategies (Hanafi, 2006).

The essay is composed of two parts, articulated around the late 1980s. Discourses and policies tackling Palestinian refugees changed greatly with the ending of the Lebanese war and the signing of the Ta'if Accords. In Jordan at the same moment, the country's territory and national population were cut in half after the *fak irtibat*, while its political demography was also affected by the Oslo and Wadi Araba Accords, sealing peace with Israel.

Part I tackles the way the Palestinian demographic issue and its challenges have been politically constructed by local and regional contexts in both countries. It also examines policies implemented in response to those perceived stakes in both countries. Part II describes the political-demographic outreach of trends and events in the late 1980s and early 1990s. It touches too upon the emergence of a rights-based approach to refugee issue' treatment within international policy-making on refugees. Elements of violently emerging debates on the issue of *tawtin* today are also described and analysed against the backdrop of recent factors: economic deterioration, stalled Arab-Israeli peace process and political shifts at the national level including an upsurge in nationalist ideologies in Jordan and attempts at reshuffling the political-sectarian issue in Lebanon. Cutting across the report, there is the question of membership, civil rights and the legal status of Palestinian refugees in the two host countries. In conclusion, the essay advocates the breaking of the political deadlock by targeting the challenge posed by the Palestinian refugee' demographic ratio within the national population. It points out the opportunities offered here by a project to incorporate Jordan into the GCC countries. And more generally it argues for an opening of a regional labour market ranging from Israel to the Gulf countries, a labour market able to absorb labour flows from Jordan and Lebanon[3].

I. The political construction of the Palestinian demographic issue in Jordan and Lebanon from 1948 to the 1980s.

In Jordan and Lebanon, the wave of forced migration from Palestine following the *nakbah* (catastrophe) of 1948 merged within specific socio-political contexts, at the domestic, regional and international levels, before reshaping them. The characteristics of these contexts in 1948 and their evolution since then, the patterns and characteristics of the Palestinian displacement shaped the terms of conflicts later seen as embedded in the Palestinian presence. This especially calls for questioning, contextualising and deconstructing the often -essentialised issue of the numerical balance between "Palestinians" and "locals" and related categories, something seen in very different terms in Jordan and in Lebanon. This chapter covers the four-decade period running from 1948 to the late 1980s. The 1988 severing of administrative ties between the East and the West Bank; 1991 and the Ta'ef Accords for Lebanon particularly mark a turning point in Palestinian-Arab relations.

I.1. Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon after 1948: a political demography

Before 1948, national borders in the region were porous and these were considered artificial by populations. Palestinians historically kept a wealth of economic, social, familial and even political relations with Lebanese and Jordanian neighbours, for example between South Lebanon and Galilee (Sfeir, 2008). Pendulum cross-border movements for seasonal agricultural work were also the norm between the West and East banks of the Jordan River. Moreover, Jordan's administrative apparatus and political elites were incorporating a lot of Palestinians, in line with the Arabist policy of King Abdullah I.

There were a series of steps that marked the exile process and that concerned 90% of Palestinians: November 1947 and the adoption of the Partition Plan for Palestine (UNGA Resolution 181); its rejection by Zionists and Arabs; the Israeli-Arab war in May 1948; the loss of prominent Palestinian towns (Haifa, Jaffa, Acre, Ramleh, Nazareth, …) and their rural hinterlands after the defeat; and finally the signatures of armistice agreements between Israel and the Arab States (Lebanon, 23 March and Jordan, 3 April 1949) (Pappe, 1992: 87). The advent of the Israeli state within the limits of the armistice lines not only meant physical borders around countries in the region. But it also left Palestine as an alien, confiscated territory, later reconstructed as a mythical paradise (Sfeir, 2008: chap. 1). Through forced exile (Morris, 1987), it also constructed a new people: after 1948, Arabs from Palestine became refugees from Palestine and then they became Palestinians (Sanbar, 1984). However, this category fails to encompass all the Palestinian victims of the conflict. The circumstances of arrival in the host country; the perception of the various waves of incomers by local administrative setups, as well as the socio-political evolution of the Jordanian and Lebanese contexts, all overlapped with categories defined by international agencies and were reflecting regional political dynamics (especially relations with Israel). All, indeed, led to an evolving labelling/categorization/reconstruction process of the refugees and their descendants. This process partly determined the policies selectively applied to the various constructed categories within the refugee community as a whole.

I.1.a. The dynamics of exodus: numbers and categories

Estimates for the total number of persons displaced by the creation of Israel, the Arab defeat and the sealing of borders range from 900,000 to 1 million on the Arab side, and 520,000 to 577,000 on the Israeli side (Morris, 1988: annex 1). The Clapp mission (Economic Survey Mission, 28 December 1949) talked of 726,000 persons having fled the territories which became Israel and this figure is now the most widely used by the authors. Yet, the total numbers of persons depending on assistance registered within the Arab countries had reached 971,243 by 30 September 1949 (quoted in Brand, 1988: 150). The difference between the two figures not only reflects inaccuracies such as double or undue registrations. It also stems from choices made in refugee labelling, choices based on the arbitrary exclusion of certain

categories. The lower figure does not, for example, incorporate the persons displaced within the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, respectively placed under Egyptian administrative supervision, and annexed by Jordan after the conflict[4]. Also, persons who were absent from Palestine before 1948 are not considered direct victims of the conflict, though their return to Palestine and their recovery of family assets became *de facto* impossible after the conflict, making them forced migrants.

International agencies and labelling of refugees

The emergence of the refugee issue was rapidly dealt with as an international issue and led to the creation of UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East) by UNGA Resolution 302(IV) of 8 December 1949. UNRWA became operational in May 1950 and started providing emergency relief to Palestine refugees qualifying for its assistance. Palestinian refugees were defined as those: (1) whose normal place of residence was Palestine from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948; (2) who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflicts; (3) who found refuge in a country where UNRWA provides assistance; or (4) who is a descendant through the male line of someone meeting conditions (1) to (3). UNRWA's operation zone was circumscribed to Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. Its mandate, as stated in the resolution, was twofold: "to carry out, in collaboration with local governments, the direct relief and works programs as recommended by the Economic Survey Mission [the Clapp Mission] and to consult with interested Near Eastern governments concerning measures to be taken in preparation for the cessation of international assistance for relief and works projects." (Bocco, 2010: 231). This mission statement suggests that resettling Palestinians in host countries was implicitly embedded in UNRWA's original setup.

It is essential to note, here, that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict spurred the setting up of UNRWA as a specific aid body, separate from UNHCR: a unique occurrence. First, Palestinians registered with UNRWA are excluded from the scope of UNHCR's intervention by virtue of Article 1D of 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees, which stipulates that refugees cannot be protected by UNHCR if already under the jurisdiction of another body, within the latter's zone of operation. Such a decision was taken to avoid the overlapping of UNRWA's mandate with UNHCR's, which is incompatible with political conflicts (Destremau, 1993: 36). Second, the specific definition of refugees under UNRWA's mandate was rooted in the rejection of Palestinian refugees by the International Organization for Refugees[5] in 1948. The UN organization claimed that Palestinians did not fit the definition of a refugee[6] because there was not "[….] a well-founded fear of being persecuted…". IOR, in fact, held that Palestinians could not convincingly demonstrate their forced expulsion (Sfeir, 2008: 143-5). The assumption, widely held at the international policy-level, that Palestinians voluntarily fled their homeland without trying to defend it, would have deep consequences for negotiations on the implementation of UNGA Resolution 194 on the right of return to Palestine (denied on that basis by Israelis). It would also have implications for the perception of refugees in host countries. From the onset, the international definitions of Palestinian refugees, namely that the Palestinians suffered from economic (and not political) deprivation; the creation of UNRWA and the definition of its mandate all bore with them the probability of refugees' resettlement in their host countries. For this reason, Palestinians' demographics became a highly politicised issue.

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[4] Jericho Agreements, 1 December 1948.

[5] IOR, UN body created in 1947 which preceded UNHCR, set up on 1 January 1951.

[6] See UNHCR's website: www.unhcr.ch; such a definition is an outcome of IOR's and previous instruments.

Jordan and Lebanon: counting the refugees

The reality of Palestinian "refugeeness" was acknowledged by aid agencies[7] and acted upon in terms of assistance and services. But the counting of beneficiaries (needy refugees) never ceased to spur debates, for it decides the level of financial involvement by international donors while also playing a crucial role in political and international negotiations. At the domestic level, the ratio of Palestinians in a given population is a political instrument. The ratio fluctuates with the role granted to Palestinians by the various actors and the political context of the moment. At the international level, lowering the global figures has been a typically Israeli policy, to undermine claims of responsibility and to anticipate the effects of the implementation of Resolution 194. Inflating the figures, conversely, has served politico-economic purposes such as attracting more international assistance to receiving countries.

Estimates of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan (the East and West Bank, as the latter had been annexed by Jordan) range between 350,000 (Israeli sources and Clapp Mission) and 470,000 persons. As mentioned above, this gap may result from the non-incorporation in the figure of persons displaced within the West Bank, or between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The East Bank alone received between 70,000 and 100,000 persons. Theoretically, the gap between high and low estimates may depend on the incorporation in the figure of persons who did not register as refugees: wealthy families; families reunified with next of kin on the East Bank; those ashamed to claim assistance; or persons unable to prove their residence in Palestine or the loss of their belongings. The gap may also be politically motivated: for example, it might be originate in Israel as a way to defuse foreign critics. It is then paradoxical to see that UNRWA-registered refugees in 1952 set at 101,981 persons, while Jordanian officials actually use the low estimate of 70,000 Palestinian incomers due to the 1948 war.

Jordan experienced two more sizeable waves of Palestinian forced immigration, in 1967 and 1990-91. After the Six-Days War, the Israeli Army occupied the West Bank, annexed by Jordan in 1950, as well as the Gaza Strip, formerly under Egyptian administration. As a result of the war, native inhabitants of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip (i.e., those not registered as refugees) found themselves on the East Bank of the Jordan River. The category of "displaced persons" was created for these forced migrants.[8] After all, it was argued, they were displaced within the same country (due to Jordan's annexation of the West Bank[9]) and were thus the responsibility of the Jordanian authorities. As for 1948 refugees registered with UNRWA, who had taken refuge in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip between 1949 and 1967 and were thus displaced for the second time by the new conflict, they were labelled "refugees-displaced".

As they were composed of Jordanian nationals, the two categories of displaced and refugee-displaced persons were not immediately numbered. Here again, estimates range between 250,000 from Israeli sources[10] and 388,000 from Jordanians, including 60,000 refugees and displaced persons from the Gaza Strip, holders of Egyptian travel documents. Some 100,000 more persons were also added to this group, deportees from Israel or visitors from the West Bank whose return permits had expired (Abdel Jaber/ Klinov, 1996). The figure ultimately used by Jordan – with final status negotiations in mind – was an upper estimate of 400,000 displaced and refugee-displaced following the 1967 war.

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[7] Until December 1949 and before the advent of UNRWA in May 1950, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the League of the Red Cross Societies (LRCS) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC, the Quakers), mainly involved in the Gaza Strip.

[8] Defined by UNGA Resolution 2252 (ES-V), 4 July 1967 as "unable to return to Palestinian territories occupied by Israel since 1967".

[9] As well as granting Jordanian nationality to the inhabitants of the West Bank and to Palestinian refugees incorporated within the new borders of the Kingdom.

[10] E. Kanovski is an Israeli academic, whose point in the publication quoted here is to emphasize the positive impact of refugees and displaced Palestinians "integration" on the Jordanian economy (Kanovski, 1976).

Lastly, the First Gulf War of 1990-91 and subsequent forced eviction of foreign labourers, and nationals from non-allied Arab countries[11], led some 300,000 persons to finally settle in Jordan, a figure used by Jordanian authorities and international agencies alike. As Jordanian nationals, most of them of Palestinian descent, they were removed from UNHCR's mandate and categorized as "returnees". But most were descendants of families who had emigrated from the West Bank in the 1950s, at that time under Jordanian control, and who had, therefore, never lived on the East Bank (De Bel-Air, 2006).

As regards Lebanon, the hazards of counting the incoming refugees and selecting needy aid beneficiaries among them have been described by J. Sfeir (2008: chap. 4). A peak of 142,000 refugees in early 1949 was deemed too high and encompassed semi-nomadic Bedouins, poor Lebanese citizens pretending to be refugees and Lebanese residents of Palestine, of whom some eventually recovered their nationality. Restrictions applied to the beneficiaries of aid led to the eviction of pendular migrants settled in the border area, some Bedouins and wealthy refugees. Numbers were finally set at 105,000 refugees (holding a UNRWA registration card) in 1951. While a census conducted by the Lebanese government in the same year established the total number of refugees (namely those having fled Palestine because of the conflict) at 130,000 (quoted in Sfeir, 2008: 130; 159).

Apart from (1) Palestinians registered as refugees with UNRWA, as well as with the Lebanese government there are two additional Palestinian categories in Lebanon. There are (2) the Palestinian refugees registered with the Lebanese authorities (holding ID cards), but who are not registered with UNRWA: some refugees of 1948 and others 1967 displaced persons. Then (3), there are the non-ID Palestinian refugees, who moved to Lebanon in the 1970s after the events of Black September in Jordan or because of the civil war in Lebanon and who neglected at the time to register themselves. They have, therefore, been counted as illegal immigrants (some are perhaps registered with UNRWA in other fields of operation) (Shafie, nd: 2; Elsayed-Ali, 2006: 13). All in all, the number of Palestinians may have reached 375,000, before the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 (Courbage, 2002: 194).

Therefore, in Lebanon and in Jordan alike, the somehow arbitrary definition of refugees and subsequently, the subjectivity of refugee figures released, crystallise political representations of Palestinian refugees. Notwithstanding a sense of solidarity among host countries' population towards refugees, the latter appear as political victims, yet also as losers, economically needy, yet also privileged with aid, as well as a burden on the host economy. At the social level, the refugee remains at the margins, especially if a camp dweller. However, the specificities of each host context gives different stakes to refugees: so the refugee has different experiences in Jordan and in Lebanon.

I.1.b. National and regional contexts in 1948

Jordan and Lebanon were built as political entities on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. Yet they were built as products of very different sets of political and historical circumstances, which shaped institutions and which were thus determinant in the way the Palestinian refugee issue was constructed in both cases. In the case of Lebanon, political sectarianism played an essential role in the matter. In Jordan, three institutional elements underlie the divergent stakes which were attributed to refugees: the Arabist stance of the Hashemite family; the development of patrimonial clientelism as a structural feature in state-society relationship; and the Transjordanian's reluctance to accept Hashemite rule.

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[11] The war displaced 4 to 5 million persons, of which around 1 million transited through Jordan. With Asian labourers fleeing Iraqi exactions in Kuwait, some Arab countries' nationals were forcibly sent away from every Gulf country for their governments had shown support for Iraq's invasion of Kuwait: Sudanese, Yemenis, as well as Jordanians and Palestinians. Estimates suggest that 360,000 Jordanians, most of them of Palestinian background, entered Jordan during the period, while cross over to the Palestinian territories and re-emigration to Europe, Australia, North America left some 300,000 of those "returnees" on Jordanian soil.

The emergence of political sectarianism in Lebanon

Under Ottoman domination, political power in Lebanon was decentralised and granted to religious community leaders. After the demise of the Empire, European powers confirmed the primacy of religious sects within the polity, effectively ending any chance of a government run on democratic and liberal principles. In Lebanon, the French Mandate "ossified" the sectarian-based system, with religious communities as the basis for public order (Corm, 2005: 25-26). The Mandate Declaration (24 July 1922 by the Council of the League of Nations), gave France the mission to set up an "organic status" for Lebanon. The Declaration expressly forbade any interference in community rights, personal status issues, teaching and education establishments, as well as political direction (art. 3; 6; 8; 9 of the Mandate Declaration). The 1920 Legal Commission and the 1922 Representative Council members were respectively appointed and elected through a sectarian distribution of seats. "These two bodies and the confessional system thus formalised a communal system already existing under the Ottoman Empire, while also reforming it" (Sfeir, 2008: 72). Indeed, the organic status of Mount Lebanon ("Petit-Liban"), promulgated by the 1861 protocol signed by the Ottomans and European powers, known as the *mutassarifiya*, had "reinforced communal status as a source of temporal power" (Corm, 2005: 82). At the time the six main religious communities of the Mountain were already ranked according to the number of delegates they sent to the Governor, a non-Lebanese Christian appointed by the Ottomans[12]. This order satisfied the Ottomans, who were already accustomed to a "decentralised management of non-Muslim communities". It also suited European powers, seeking to increase their influence within the Empire allowing them to promote a Christian state in the area (Corm, 2005: 82).

The setting up of institutions aimed at building a national identity, or, at least a citizenship link between the state, and the diverse components of the society. The process is articulated around two steps: the drawing up of the Lebanese Constitution in 1926 and the 1943 National Pact as the outcome of a compromise between Lebanese elites (Picard, 1988: 107-8)

The 1926 Lebanese Constitution illustrates the translation of communal systems into political communitarianism, or sectarianism[13] along two complementary lines: personal status, and politics. First, the State delegates to communities or sects the registration of events and the legal settlement of matters pertaining to personal civil status and to family issues (marriage, filiation, custody and inheritance). Second, "political sectarianism implies a distribution of political and administrative posts according to confession", which would later be taken as a pretext to bar Palestinians from certain economic sectors. These two types of sectarianism "are at the base of Lebanese politics and define the way it is exerted in independent Lebanon" (Sfeir, 2008: 74-75).

The 1932 census results, defined the numerical domination of Christians (and among the Christians Maronite domination) over Muslims.[14] In line with Article 95 of the Constitution which distributes political functions along sectarian belonging, the National Pact of 1943 re-formalises the sectarian balance of the country by granting the Presidency of the Republic and the Commandment of the Army to Maronites. Sunnis, meanwhile, are given the Presidency of the Council of Ministers; Shi'ites, the

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[12] Four Maronites, three Druzes, two Greek Orthodox, one Greek Catholic, one Sunni and one Shi'i.

[13] In Lebanon, communities taken into consideration in the distribution of power are religious, not ethnic: Kurds are counted as Sunnis, Armenians are classified according to the sect, the Church and rite they claim to belong to and follow, etc. (Picard, 1988: 108). Communitarianism is thus equated with sectarianism in this case.

[14] As stated by R. Maktabi, "Political representation and power was to be distributed according to the proportional size of each confessional sect as rendered in the census. The census therefore provided the demographic as well as the political cement that molded and legitimized the principle of power sharing under Christian dominance" (Maktabi, 1999: 220). Yet it is important to note that such figures are a result of some manipulation, among which: including Lebanese emigrants abroad of which 85% were of Christian background; denying Lebanese citizenship to some 60,000 persons of predominantly Muslim background (i.e., unable to prove their quality of former Ottoman subjects and/or their presence on Lebanese soil on 30 August 1924), while decree 8837 announcing the census explicitly stated the incorporation of refugees of Christian background (Armenian, Syriac and Chaldean refugees) into the Lebanese citizenry (Maktabi, 1999).

Parliament's Presidency; and the Greek-Orthodox, the Parliament's Vice-Presidency. This kind of distribution emphasizes the political domination of the Maronites within Parliament where Christian MPs also outnumber Muslims (Sfeir, 2008: 76). The (unwritten) Pact is considered the document founding the independent Lebanese nation; yet it may be considered a "sectarian" rather than a "national" pact (Picard, 1988: 119).

Indeed, (1) the Pact actually "freezes" Lebanese political life along sectarian lines. The Pact (2) freezes the definition, as well as numerical distribution of sectarian communities, for political sectarianism politicises demographic dynamics. Therefore, since 1932 no comprehensive population count has been conducted. And this, even if the Ta'if Agreements, signed in 1990, led to some amendments in the demographic ratios underlying political power distribution. For this reason, (3), the issues of population classification, population counts and, particularly migration became overtly political.

Jordan: Hashemite Pan-Arab ambitions, Transjordanian opposition to Hashemite rule and the development of patrimonial clientelism

In Jordan, the political significance of the Palestinian refugees' presence after 1948 and, more acutely, after 1967 is also rooted in the Kingdom's pre-1948 political and social history.

The creation of the Emirate of Transjordan on the East Bank of the Jordan River in 1921 was the result of a failed Hashemite ambition to rule over the "Fertile Crescent", from Mesopotamia to the shores of the Mediterranean.[15] In order to control the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and to prepare for its aftermath, Great Britain relied on the Arab nationalist movement, under the leadership of Sharif Hussein of Mecca. The Great Arab Revolt against the Ottomans broke out in June 1916. It did so after Britain supposedly acknowledged[16] the Sharif's political claims over a territory ranging from the Arab Peninsula, to what it today Israel, including Northern Iraq, Syria and Palestine. However, in spite of Faisal, Hussein's son, seizing Damascus the symbolic capital of the Arab Kingdom and the establishment of an Arab government in the name of his father by October 1918, post-war international agreements foiled Hashemite Arab ambitions[17]. Nationalists in 1920 were eventually confined to Transjordan, under British Mandate. From then on, the youngest son of Sharif Hussein, Abdullah claimed Hashemite throne in Damascus for his brother Faisal (himself hoping for the throne of Iraq). The British finally proposed that Abdullah rule over Transjordan, yet opposed any territorial combination of Transjordan either with Iraq, or with Palestine. Abdullah had to accept this "insignificant", "poor, backward and ungovernable" piece of desert, in place of the throne of Iraq and the dream of an Arab kingdom.

Besides the political frustration associated with the circumstances of the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan, there was also the difficulty of federating the local populations under Hashemite rule. Indeed, neither the religious factor[18], nor the role played by Abdullah and the Hashemites in the Arab Revolt achieved this. First, Arab nationalists were generally defiant of Abdullah and considered him

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[15] This period and the circumstances of the creation of the Emirate of Transjordan are described in Schlaim, 1988 and in Salibi, 1996, for instance. An insider's view is provided by T.E. Lawrence's memoirs, *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*.

[16] By way of the Hussein-Mac Mahon correspondence, Mac Mahon being at the time the British Higher Commissioner in Cairo. Yet, the terms of this exchange seem to have been vague (Schlaim, 1988: 22-24).

[17] The Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916 shared the Fertile Crescent region between France and Great-Britain; the Balfour Declaration involved the latter in the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, and the San Remo Conference held in 1920 granted France the administration of Syria (down to Der'a in the south). League of Nations' mandates were granted to France over Syria and Lebanon and to Great-Britain over Palestine and Iraq, already under occupation, as well as over the territory stretching between the two entities, that would become Transjordan.

[18] The Hashemites are Beni Hashem, from the tribe of Quraysh, descendants of Ali, the fourth (and last) orthodox Caliph of Islam and the husband of Fatima, Prophet Muhammad's daughter. Sharif Hussein proclaimed he was the descendant in the thirty-eighth generation of the Prophet.

too dependent on Britain. Second, local tribal leaders and prominent Transjordanian urban families opposed his rule for various other reasons. The Hashemites were perceived as an "alien" power, imported from the Hejaz. Moreover, Abdullah, himself an urbanite, born in Mecca, educated in Istanbul and, as noted above, clearly "Arabist" in his political stance, built Transjordan's bureaucracy around an urban educated, culturally and religiously-mixed elite of Syrians, Lebanese, Hejazis and Palestinians, thus provoking the ire of nationalists. Also, some opposed his absolute power, patriarchal ruling methods and his first attempts at clientelism to secure political support. Third, the rural and tribal populations proved very difficult to control for the new power: this contradicts the supposedly "natural" alliance between the Hashemites and the Bedouins. Some tribal groups had been supporting the Ottomans. Other factors also fed the defiance of the bulk of tribal groups in the Emirate towards the Hashemite regime and triggered many uprisings between 1921 and 1926. Here we need only mention: the negative associations of an alliance with Great-Britain, a political regime perceived as being "imported", attempts at political centralization, the progress of Wahhabi ideology among the tribes and internal shifts obstructing consensus.

However, a clientelist "pact" of "allegiance for food" (Tell, 1994) between the Hashemite and the rural populations was achieved by 1948. After 1925, an unprecedented crisis hit desert and rural areas. The setting up of national borders disrupted the previous economic system based on mobile long distance cattle-grazing and trade, military protection of Hajj convoys and villages and raids on caravans and travellers (*ghazw*). Moreover, severe droughts in the late 1920s and early 1930s and Wahhabi raids in the south of the country put the last touch to this deep crisis in the rural and desert areas, inducing forced sedentarization, poverty, famine, and dependence. Mandate authorities, fearing the onset of political instability, thus undertook support measures: recruitment of the Bedouins in the Desert Patrol Force, infrastructural building sites (roads and the like) and real estate law cancelling the collective property system. By so doing, the regime managed to establish dependency' ties with the rural population, thereby replacing tribal solidarity and creating an alternative to the sheikhs' patronage. The dependency of Bedouins and peasants on additional income provided by the State, especially through employment in the Army, thus set up a long-lasting "'social contract' of allegiance for food" (Tell, 1994: 206).

Any panorama of the region before 1948 has also to take into account another factor, the Zionist project.

Israel, the Zionist concept of "transfer" and the right of return

The concept of "transfer", or "the organised removal of the indigenous populations of Palestine to neighbouring countries" (Masalha, 1992: 1) has been an essential part of Zionist political thought since T. Herzl. This was a solution to the 'Arab question' in Palestine which would permit the establishment of a Jewish state without Arabs, or with an Arab minority that was as small as possible (Morris, 1990). Throughout the 1930s, the *Yishuv* leaders, among them Ben Gourion, had been casually envisaging the transfer of Palestinian Arabs to Transjordan, a claim rejected by the Mandate authorities (Portuguese, 1998: 27). Zionist leaders pleaded that part of Transjordan[19] be included in the Zionist territorial claims of a Greater Israel, as presented during the 1919 Paris Peace Conference. The League of Nations confirmed Transjordan's non-inclusion in Zionist territorial claims (August 1921)[20], and its non-inclusion as part of the Jewish national homeland (September 1922) before acknowledging it as a state under British mandate (May 1923). However, in spite of these international commitments and the rejection of geographic partitions and population transfers in Palestine partition plan throughout the

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[19] Stretching eastwards to Amman and the Hedjaz railway line.

[20] Article 25 of the Mandate on Palestine.

1930s, such as the Peel plan[21], the issue of transfer pends in the background of negotiations on the Palestinian issue. As a matter of fact, the UN partition plan did implement a partition[22].

Also, after the 1948 war, the issue of an alternative homeland for Palestinian Arabs combined with the issue of return: the Zionist project was grounded in the necessity of achieving a demographic majority over the conquered land, through massive immigration and colonisation. The advent of the Israeli State, later, demanded the numerical dominance of Jews over Arabs. Occupation of Palestinian lands and houses became a priority. Urban quarters were reoccupied; abandoned villages were destroyed, or rebuilt and renamed by Israeli settlers. This was rapidly achieved through incentives to diaspora Jews to come to Palestine. They were immediately naturalised by virtue of the Return Law passed in 1950, which grants every diaspora Jew Israeli citizenship. Therefore, in spite of international acknowledgment of the Palestinians' right of return to Palestine, there was a *fait accompli* that hampered the repatriation of refugees (Pappe, 1992: 97).

I.1.c. The Palestinian refugees: their impacts in contexts

This multifaceted context, prior to the 1948 exodus and in its immediate aftermath, heightened the importance of the refugee influx to Lebanon and Jordan. This chapter will not take into account the geographic and social cleavages which emerged soon after the conflict. It will concentrate, instead, on the political outcomes of the exodus, especially in terms of the demographics' significance which gave a structural role to Palestinian refugees, on the regional and national political stage. Indeed, the question ultimately raised by the exodus, within the national and regional contexts, is that of nation-building patterns in both countries, for the refugees emphasized pre-1948 socio-political rifts that were already ingrained in those societies.

Political significance of number

The nature of Israel's creation, as well as its specific nation-building process based on the exclusion of Arabs and the implementation of a religiously-homogeneous society and polity, raised issues of population numbers in Jordan, as well as population structure and the political model in Lebanon.

Jordan

Repeated assertions, from some Israeli leaders (for instance in Netanyahu, 1993: 344-45), stating that Jordan is the "alternative homeland" (*watan badil* in Arabic) for Palestinians, inevitably raised the stakes over 1948 refugees and 1967 displaced Palestinians. The refugees here were cast, in fact, as the vanguard of the Palestinians' total transfer to the East Bank of the Jordan.

Among nationalists, this inevitably raised the issue of the Hashemite regime's Arabist policy and their incorporation of the displaced and refugees, and the West Bank population within the Kingdom. The issue of the proportion of Jordanians of Palestinian background within the Jordanian population[23] then became one of the most crucial and discussed issues, by Israel, Jordan and by other international actors. And this became the case notwithstanding the constructed nature of the categories: the arbitrary categorization of "refugees" as post-1948 needy forced migrants; inaccurate and late registration of displaced non-refugees, the ignorance of pre-1948 mobility across borders (the Palestinian origin of a good part of Jordan's political, economic and social elites, for instance, does not raise controversy);

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[21] The Peel Plan published in 1937 is "the point of reference for most schemes aiming at resolving the Palestine question" (Passia, 2002: 14). It made provisions for unification between the territory allocated to Arabs and Transjordan. Similarly, a transfer of Arabs living in zones allocated to Zionists was envisaged.

[22] As the context had dramatically changed after the Second World War and the Holocaust.

[23] The Palestinian refugees on the East Bank, as well as the West Bank inhabitants (refugees and non-refugees) were naturalised Jordanians in 1950 (see footnote 40).

and the controversial representation of national borders, from Transjordan (the East Bank) to the Fertile Crescent.

The issue of the Jordanian population' demographics also rests on several other assumptions, which affect the final figures. As an example, Table 1 illustrates the diversity of population estimates for the East Bank on the eve of the 1948 exodus (much underestimated in most Israeli literature on the issue), and the subsequent calculation of the Jordanian/ Jordanian Palestinian ratio.

Table 1. Some estimates of the proportion of refugees and the displaced within Jordan's resident population (East Bank, 1971).

Population May 1948 (East Bank)	250 000[24]	375 000[25]	450 000[26]
Annual average growth rate (%)	2,8[27]		
Non-refugee population (1971)	471 826	728 000	849 287
Total Jordanian population (1971)	1 723 000[28]		
% non-refugee population (1971)	27.4	42.3	49.3
% Palestinian-Jordanians in Jordan (EB) (1971)	**72.6**	**57.7**	**50.7**

This example emphasizes the looseness of statements related to the issue of whether Jordanians of Palestinian origin are a majority on the East Bank: there is flawed data here, as well as clear political prejudices and biases.

Yet, perceptions play a political role. It is thus worth noting that 1967, which saw the contraction of the national territory after the loss of the West Bank and a sizeable population increase for the East Bank (which received 200,000 to 400,000 refugees-displaced and displaced), was a watershed in Jordan's history. After this date, indeed, perceptions of a Jordanian-Palestinian demographic majority strengthened. Data released by Jordan in the 1990s, (conveniently) point out that the Jordanians of Palestinian background (registered refugees) had reached half of the national population after 1967 (Table 2). However, these data have been aired at multilateral discussions on refugees and the right of return, which suggest they are biased in favour of Jordan's interests, something which will be analysed later. To sum up, the political stakes of demography, in Jordan, became more acute after 1967. Yet, semi-official figures stated the Jordanian-Palestinian ratio to be 46% in the late 1990s (Fafo, 1997).

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[24] Gilbar, G. in: Winckler, 1997: ix, estimate for 1947.

[25] IBRD. "The Economic Development of Jordan", Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1957, p. 49. (Estimate for late 1947, based on the statistics of registration of food rations during WWII).

[26] Al Mady / Mousa, 1959: 311. Updating for mid-1948 of the figure of 433,659 inhabitants for mid-1946, based on the number of identity cards delivered.

[27] The method of calculation is taken from E. Kanovski: the annual average growth rate of 2,8 % is calculated for Jordan (East Bank) between the two population census of 1952 and 1961. Considering the strong immigration from the West Bank to the East Bank, and also taking into account the low emigration rates of the Transjordanians (the 1961 census shows that 80% of expatriate Jordanians were originally from the West Bank), the author states that this rate of growth is a maximum for the pre-1948' East Bank inhabitants (Kanovski, 1976: 146). However, such assumptions can be questioned for a number of reasons: the 1952 and 1961 censuses do not prove very reliable; moreover, expatriate figures are usually underestimated, all the more so that Transjordanians were emigrating to Europe, i.e. they were not necessarily considering a return.

[28] Statistical Abstract, 1971. Here again, during the 1970s, after the loss of the West Bank by Jordan and until 1979 census, held on the East Bank only, population figures were relatively inaccurate as they were obtained by extrapolating the 1961 census data for the East Bank, taking into account births and deaths.

Table 2. Estimate of the proportion of refugees, refugees-displaced and displaced in Jordan's resident population (East Bank, 1948-1994, Jordanian official data)[29].

Year	Total resident population	Jordanian resident population (East Bank)	Refugees	Refugees displaced	Displaced	*Returnees*	Total	% of a,b,c, d in Jordanian population (East Bank)
			(a)	**(b)**	**(c)**	**(d)**	**(a+b+c+d)**	
1946		**433 000**						
1948			70 000 (1)					
1952		**586 200 (8)**	102 000 (1)					17.4
1961		**896 751 (8)**	146 998					16.4
1967	1 126 000 (9)	**1 114 740**	186 000 (3)	188 500 (2)	200 000 (4)		**574 500**	51.5
1972					240 000 (5)			
1979	2 100 019 (8)	**2 011 051 (8)**	308 265	291 512	302 214		**898 790**	44.7
1991	3 701 000 (9)	**3 419 724**	562 991	434 233	463 917	300 000 (6)	**1 406 133**	49.9
1992	3 844 000 (9)	**3 551 856**	587 200 (3)	450 300 (2)	480 154	270 678	**1 517 654**	50.3
1993	3 993 000 (9)	**3 689 532**	608 900 (3)	531 100 (2)	496 000 (3)	244 222	**1 636 000**	51
1994	4 139 458 (8)	**3 824 493 (8)**	630 994	618 552	512 368	216 133 (7)	**1 761 914**	51.7

Lebanon

In Jordan as much as in Lebanon, the problem of the various actors is to balance out the political pros and cons of inflating and decreasing the numbers. Displaying low figures allows actors to escape responsibility and to undermine the number-based power of a sector of the population. High figures confirm the gravity of the issue; for Lebanon (and for Jordan alike), it "demonstrate[s] that Lebanon cannot alone bear the burden of Palestinian presence without sinking" (Courbage, 2002: 195). In the mid-2000s, the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon registered by UNRWA[30] was 406,342 (about 10% of the estimated resident population). However, many refugees registered with UNRWA seem to be currently residing in other countries[31]. Indeed, other estimates gave around 250,000 Palestinian refugees residing in Lebanon (El Sayed-Ali, 2006: 13). The same issue of conflicting figures (from simple to double) regarding the number of Palestinians in Lebanon emerged in 1995 at the time of the multilateral negotiations on refugees (Courbage, 2002: 196).

Yet the case of Lebanon is in some ways different to Jordan's: according to some the presence of Palestinians threatens the structure and cohesion of society. In Jordan, by contrast, the existence of the

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[29] Sources: (1) Direction of Palestinian Affairs/ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), 1994; (2) UNRWA / MFA, 1994; (3) MFA, 1994 ; (4) Department of Evaluation and Follow up, Direction of Palestinians Affairs / MFA, 1994 ; (5) Ministry of Occupied Territories/ Article 74 ; (6) Department of Statistics (DoS), 1993 ; (7) DoS, 1995 ; (8) DoS, censuses ; (9) DoS, Statistical Yearbooks.

Data with mentions (1), (2), (3), (4) are taken from the same report (MFA, 1994).

[30] The other two categories number few people: some 13,000 persons in category 2 (refugees and displaced non registered with UNRWA) and between 3,000 to 16,000 for category 3 (non-ID Palestinians).

[31] K. Dorai (2003) estimates that there may be around 100,000 Palestinian refugees from Lebanon who, since the 1980s, have emigrated to Arab Gulf countries and northern Europe, mainly to Germany, Denmark and Sweden.

country is the issue at stake. As noted by E. Picard, Israel was built as a Jewish State, an ethnic-based democracy achieved through the exclusion of Arabs. Israel's unique setup may question the viability of Lebanon's social organisation, the "Lebanese formula" of "elites' consensus democracy" based on the 1943 National Pact and the ideal of peaceful coexistence and power-sharing between religious communities (Picard, 1988: 128-129). Indeed, some Christian Maronites opposed the formula from the outset and wanted Lebanon to become a Christian homeland, on the Israeli model of a Jewish homeland[32]. For them the creation of Israel was "an argument against Arab nationalism" (Gordon, 1980: 93). The presence of the refugees thus forced Lebanon out of its neutral position in the region. In a way that is comparable to the Jordanian case, where stances towards the Palestinian presence reflect opposing views on Arab nationalism and "Transjordanian" nationalism, positions adopted on the Palestinian issue stress political cleavage in Lebanon. This is particularly evident between Arabist stances and "Lebanist" positions, a cleavage that reveals the fragility of the consensus holding up the "National Pact" and, most of all, uncovering divergences of views on the nation-building process.

Moreover, permanently settling the Palestinians in the country would bear far-reaching consequences in the Lebanese context: granting citizenship to Palestinians, who are mostly Sunni Muslims, would upset the delicate sectarian balance in Lebanon and, thus, the institutional foundations of the country. This issue of Palestinian resettlement in Lebanon is, today, in fact, the most controversial topic regarding refugees in this country. Notwithstanding individual, non-confessional-based political involvement, some state that, in general, "Maronites and other Christians are defiant of an evolution [the *tawtin*] that would accelerate their demographic demise; Shi'ites and Druze may not either look sympathetically to a relative increase of the proportion of Sunnis. The Sunnis, lastly, who along the crises experienced by the country, have progressively forged a certain Lebanese identity, are not anymore in a hurry to receive the additional troops of their 'ethnic Palestinians' co-religionists" (Courbage, 2002: 193).

Clientelism, emigration and the economy

Another long-term outcome of 1948 and (especially for Jordan) 1967 forced migration was the advent of economic competition setting refugees and locals against each other. This was true in terms of jobs but also mattered for infrastructural development. In line with national institutional setups, the economic burden/opportunities associated with demographic increase was taken as a confessional threat in Lebanon. In Jordan, meanwhile, it is read, instead, as a blow against the clientelist ties linking Transjordanian rural areas and the Hashemite monarchy.

In Lebanon, it is widely acknowledged that the refugees were a cheap and docile source of manpower for Lebanese trade and businesses; before Palestinian businesspeople started contributing successfully within the unregulated Lebanese economy. Yet, some voices lobbied that Lebanon was already overpopulated and poor, and that is was thus unable to accommodate the 100,000 or more 1948 refugees. The argument was that the rise in unemployment stemming from the preferential hiring of cheap (Palestinian) labourers instead of local ones, would then push the Lebanese to emigrate. The point is that the sectarian structure of the country would be further thrown off balance, as Christians were, at that time, more likely to emigrate than nationals from other religious traditions. This "economic", migration argument remains in vogue among those who oppose the settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon (Sfeir, 2008: 103; 125).

In Jordan, the economic claim is addressed to the State. The absorption of the resources-rich West Bank, which enjoyed commercial infrastructures, a productive and numerous workforce and a modern public sector developed under the Mandate. After 1949, investments, economic, industrial and infrastructural development were immediately polarized in the urban areas of the East Bank, where

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[32] Gordon (1980: 93) quotes Monseigneur 'Aql, Patriarch's delegate, who in 1946 "urged the UN to establish a national home for the Christians on the model of their plan for the Jews". Also, in 1948, "the Maronite Archbishop of Beirut presented a memorandum to the same effect, to the UN Conciliation Commission on Palestine".

Palestinians as well as the regime and its allies had been settling. However, the clientelist structure of Jordan's economy which was controlled by some prominent, wealthy families (also comprising some of Palestinian origin) and bureaucrats enriched by aid flows, did not allow average middle-class educated Palestinians to penetrate the local labour market. After 1967 and the subsequent loss of 45% of Jordan's GDP, frustration mounted to the point that, as was noted by Haas, "the high proportion of academics among the fighters of the Palestinian resistance in 1970 explains [their attempt at] overthrowing the regime by force" (Haas, 1975: 79). For the rural East Jordanians, however, economic development following the Palestinians' arrival associated refugees and economic deprivation. Unequal infrastructural development, indeed, deepened the economic gap between urban and rural areas or small towns which did not receive refugees. Therefore, from then on, claims that refugees and urban zones (i.e., the Palestinians) were favoured by the regime at the expense of the "original" inhabitants have been recurrent in nationalist discourse.

Security at stake: the sovereignty factor

The impact of demographics and competition for economic assets cuts across time and blurs with the militarization of Palestinian struggles against Israel from the late 1960s onwards; a struggle that took place in Jordan and that later centred on Lebanon. Threatening Jordanian and Lebanese sovereignty, Palestinians, therefore, embody increasingly a security threat, notwithstanding the fact that, ultimately, it is the Israeli denial of the right of return that powers the escalation in the Palestinian struggle.

The progressive militarization of the Palestinian struggle took place in line with the development of Palestinian organisations: the most prominent being the PLO created in 1964, the nationalist Fatah and PFLP and the DPFLP, all influenced by Marxist ideology which all shaped Palestinian nationalist ideology. Financial input from the diaspora and grants from rich Arab states, as well as military supplies allowed for the development of Palestinian organisations. This was helped along too by donations from some powerful Palestinian families and businesses connected to the Jordanian, Lebanese and, more generally, to the regional economies. Alongside military activities the organisations were also able to assist and supervise Palestinians in cultural, social and educational terms. In Lebanon, for instance, (Picard, 1988: 131-139; 167), administrative, cooperation, health, education, press, research institutions, political and military institutions had their headquarters in Beirut or in South Beirut; they employed thousands of managers in powerful businesses, well connected to the Lebanese economy and powerful financially. In Lebanon, again, Palestinian fighters outnumbered the Lebanese Army in the late 1960s. Indeed, Palestinian guerrilla operations there provoked devastating retaliation from Israel on Lebanese territory, spurring reactions that split along local political fault lines. Arabists supported the *feddayin* and the struggle against Israel, while "Lebanists" called for the repression of Palestinian organisations in the territory. The Lebanese Army and the *Kataeb*, began to confront Palestinian fighters after respectively 1966 and 1970.

In Jordan, similar concerns about sovereignty and a parallel militarization took place after 1967, with the nascent perception that, on the East Bank, a "fedayyin-state" was trying to establish itself (Czichowski, 1988: 573)[33]. Israel's incentives for host states to get involved and to confront and to control the Palestinian armed struggle "succeeded" in Jordan. Indeed, the events of Black September 1970 led to the bombardment of the camps by the Jordanian Army, while clashes between Palestinian activists and the Jordanian forces lasted until 1972, when the organisations were expelled to Lebanon. As in Lebanon, front lines between the two "communities" were far from clear cut in reality[34]. However, the

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[33] The *fedayyin* were raising taxes, defied control by the Jordanian army, were circulating with weapons in East Bank's towns, and searched civilian cards on public space. Also, Fatah and PFLP had established camps in the Jordan Valley, pushing thousands of local peasants out to seek refuge on the hills (Czichowski, 1988: 573).

[34] Many East Bankers of every background (Circassians, Bedouins and villagers, and offspring of prominent urban families) fought on the side of the *fedayyin* while, at the same time, even the Jordanian Intelligence Services had many high-ranking officers of Palestinian origin.

events led to a rift between "Palestinians" and "East Bankers". Later, the decision taken by Arab representatives in the 1974 Rabat Conference, to grant the PLO sole representation of the Palestinians (claimed by Jordan) infuriated King Hussein. But it also added to the perception, for many on the East Bank, that Palestinians were ultimately a menace to Jordan's sovereignty and security.

I.2. Demographic engineering: policies implemented towards Palestinians

The political consequences of the demographic input from Palestine, in Jordan and Lebanon, have been constructed according to regional and national contexts. Policies implemented by international actors and by national governments, therefore, respond to the refugees' political impact as perceived by the polities; and, to a certain extent, by the various sectors of citizenries in both countries. Refugees' impact in demographic, economic and security terms were discussed in I.1.

Policies towards Palestinians in both countries have, officially, converged on "the promotion of the right of return as a founding principle of domestic and foreign policy" (Al Husseini, 2006: 106), for reasons essentially rooted in the regimes' concerns for stability[35]. However, beyond political realism and regimes' ideologies, measures and policies addressing the refugees also serve other policy-maker interests, for example that of spurring socio-economic progress. Palestinians' multifaceted significances, therefore, comply with divergent political interests and, for this reason, shape policies, at times seeming contradictory or inconsistent. In Jordan, measures implemented generally disclose some kind of assimilation of refugees and the displaced, yet these remain partial or "segmented"[36]. Conversely, in Lebanon, where the settlement of refugees is most adamantly rejected and where non-assimilation is promoted, the polity has practised what might be called the segmented containment of refugees.

This suggests that even in Lebanon Palestinian refugees were never external to the socio-political context of host states. Rather, they became, from the onset of the exodus, active contributors to Jordanian and Lebanese nation-building processes.

I.2.a. Failed attempts at dissociating the right of return and the issue of rights

International agencies (such as UNRWA) and initiatives aimed at superseding, or at working together with host governments have tried to have a say in refugee management, but with only limited success.

Regarding UNRWA, as stated by Riccardo Bocco, "the Agency's mandate has been characterized from the beginning by a number of ambiguities related to the objectives of its donors and the possible impact of its operations, that is, the refugees' resettlement outside historic Palestine. […] By dissociating politics from humanitarian aid in the early 1950s and through its Works programmes, UNRWA began implementing resettlement strategies, the scope of which was humanitarian (rather than political) but with political consequences" (Bocco, 2010: 231-232). Various infrastructural and agricultural projects, progressively aimed at replacing international assistance, attempted to integrate beneficiaries in local economies. However, "After the political opposition to the implementation of its large-scale work programmes in the mid-1950s, UNRWA turned to the provision of "essential services" (primary health care, relief, and social services) and focused on education. This concentration of activities on human development also contributed indirectly to the protection of Palestine refugees and their legitimate cause, without jeopardizing the right to return. From the 1960s

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[35] Indeed, host countries' regimes, and, especially, Jordan's are in a precarious political situation. They are caught between a triumphant and inflexible Israel, revenge-thirsty public opinion, instrumentalised by opposition movements and refugees' pressure groups claiming their duplicity during the conflict. Every government was conscious of the impossibility of implementing resolution 194. Yet, it would have been politically suicidal to acknowledge it for any Arab regime (Al Husseini, 2006: 107)

[36] We refer here to the concept of "segmented assimilation" coined by A. Portes (1995), which refers to the assimilation of a migrant to parts of the receiving society only.

onwards, education has become the largest single programme in terms of investment, funding, and personnel involved" (Bocco, 2010: 232).

In September 1965, the League of Arab States' summit in Casablanca agreed on a regional rights regime applicable to "Palestinians". And this regime was termed the Protocol for the Treatment of Palestinians in Arab States or the "Casablanca Protocol". The resolution called on Arab nations hosting refugees to grant them rights of work, travel and residency, on a par with the citizens of host countries[37]. Yet, neither Jordan nor Lebanon abided by the Protocol's principles. Lebanon for instance "signed the protocol with several reservations that made the right to work conditional on the country's economic situation and restricted entry into and exit from Lebanon. Among other things, this allowed the Lebanese authorities to adjust the number of work permits to the state of the Lebanese economy and made re-entry into the country more difficult" (Knudsen, 2007). This example is one of many underlining Lebanon's policy of containing the Palestinian refugees, yet with some exception.

I.2.b. Lebanon: a segmented containment of the Palestinians

In. addressing the three kinds of political stakes noted earlier associated with the Palestinians' forced immigration into the country (demographic, economic, security-related), the Lebanese authorities notably made exceptions for some Christian Palestinians.

Demography and selective naturalisations

In general, since 1949 Palestinians in Lebanon have been considered foreigners. Some hold residency cards; others who arrived after 1948 remain particularly vulnerable and are considered, instead, as illegal immigrants. Palestinians are officially excluded from Lebanon's politics, society and economy. Therefore, their impact on the sectarian balance is supposed to be zero: officially, at least, because of the right of return. However, 1948 refugees were treated in a sectarian fashion. Naturalisation especially was made possible for some 30,000 Palestinian Christians, by a December 1949 decree allowing for the restitution of Lebanese nationality. Palestinians of Armenian and Lebanese descent (5% of the 130,000 registered refugees) benefitted from the measure. Yet later, well-to-do Palestinians property owners or Palestinians sharing kinship ties with Lebanese notables or Christian Palestinians could also be naturalised, alongside returned emigrants from Latin America, Africa and the rest of the Middle East. Naturalisation decrees demonstrate that Christians and persons of upper socio-economic status were more easily naturalised (Sfeir, 2008: 82-83).

Partial socio-economic containment

As foreign nationals, Palestinians have no status in Lebanon. Such a void served the interests of Lebanese employers who saw Palestinians as cheap, skilled, manpower: and this in a country already characterised by a lack of economic regulations. More generally, many refugees were thus able to blend into the Lebanese economy, as employees or as business owners and managers. Yet after the 1958 uprising and the coming to power of Fuad Shehab there was a stricter security agenda and the integration of Palestinians into the Lebanese economy was significantly curtailed by Decree n° 17561, 18 September 1962. This decree incorporates three restrictive principles with regard to the right of Palestinian refugees to work in Lebanon: a) they need a work permit; b) there is a preference for Lebanese workers in operation; and c) there is the requirement for the reciprocity of rights and obligations. From then on, some professions were barred to foreign nationals and, consequently, to Palestinians.

The Cairo Agreements passed in 1969 between PLO representatives in Lebanon and the Lebanese government addressed civil rights, such as the right to work. However, after 1982 and the exile of the

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[37] http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/publisher,LAS,,,460a2b252,0.htmls

PLO leadership and fighters from Lebanon, the Labour Ministry issued decree 38/11 in 1983, which barred refugees from working in 72 professions. The Cairo Agreement was repealed by the Lebanese cabinet in May 1987 and with it the Palestinian refugee "privileges" enjoyed between 1969 and 1982, including the right to work, though this was not fully enforced (Knudsen, 2007: 5).

Palestinians also had access to state education and social services restricted. Palestinians were accepted in government schools, as well as in the Lebanese University, a public institution, though with some restrictions. Regarding secondary schools, as foreign nationals Palestinians were entitled to benefit from 10% of places reserved for non-citizens. Private education for the wealthy and UNRWA schools supplemented the lack of basic education in the public system.

Access to Lebanese health services was barred. But again, UNRWA clinics and privately or externally-funded health centres were able, at least until 1982, to supply Palestinians with a good level of health care.

Lastly, regarding property ownership, as foreign nationals Palestinians were (until 2001), bound by the stipulations of Decree 11614 of January 1969. Palestinians were made to pay higher land registration fees than Lebanese nationals. Yet, as Arabs the Palestinians did not need permission from the Cabinet, for limited surface areas of from 3000 to 5000 metres squared (Suleiman, 2006: 18).

Attempts at restricting refugees' movements

In spite of some economic leeway and integration within Lebanese society from 1959 to 1969 there was tight control of the Palestinians both inside and outside the camps. One of the top priorities of the Lebanese army's security agency (Deuxième Bureau) has been, since its creation in 1959 by former President Fuad Shihab, to guard against Palestinian "subversion". Among other things, Shihab decided to curtail their movement inside the country (Khashan, 1994) and to put strong limitations on Palestinian political activism (Brynen 1990: 28). After 1969 and the signature of the Cairo Accords, however, civil rights were conceded and also "the right to form municipality-like committees in the camps and engage in armed struggle from bases in Lebanon" (Peteet, 2005: 7). Therefore, the grip of the Lebanese secret police and Army on Palestinians loosened[38]. These, indeed, regained their mobility and set up political and social institutions in Lebanon: social clubs, official political representations of the various movements, sponsored welfare and socio-educative initiatives.

I.2.c. Jordan: a "segmented assimilation" of Palestinians

In addressing the demographic, economic and security stakes of the Palestinian presence on Jordanian territory the regime had to balance various positions. There was: its Arabist ideology; the Zionist claims that its territory become an "alternative homeland" for Palestinians; nationalist political opposition; and a general rejection of any sign of Palestinian establishment on the East Bank coming either from the refugees and displaced persons, or from the Transjordanians and from left-wing political parties.

Demographic expansion: towards the assimilation of the Palestinians?

At the Jericho Conference held in December 1948, Abdullah I of Jordan and Palestinian notables, partisans of the Hashemites,[39] decided to unite the two banks of the river Jordan: the East (Transjordan) and the West Bank (Biblical Judea and Samaria, the regions of Nablus, Hebron and Jerusalem, as well as East Jerusalem). The annexation was finally ratified in April 1950 by the Jordanian Parliament. King Abdullah thus achieved part of his historical aim of expanding Jordan's frontiers beyond the narrow

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[38] Yet replaced by "private", Phalangist military attempts at controlling the development of Palestinian influence in the country.

[39] Opponants of the Hadj Amin Al-Husseini, the Mufti of Jerusalem and his supporters who were planning to set up an All-Palestine Government (APG).

borders of Transjordan. He also succeeded in linking the country to the symbols of Arabism: Jerusalem and the Palestinian cause.

In line with territorial annexation, all Palestinian refugees on the East and West Banks, as well as all Palestinian inhabitants of the annexed West Bank, were granted full and unconditional Jordanian citizenship[40]. All Palestinians were granted five-year passports and official identity documents identical to those used by the rest of the population; thereby theoretically granting Palestinians and Jordanians identical rights and duties. Moreover, the mentioning of the word "Palestine" in official documents was forbidden by royal decree in March 1950. At the same time, however, it was essential not to give rise to claims that "Jordan is Palestine": this would have justified an eviction of the Hashemites from power under the common assumption of "demographic engineering" (Bookman, 1997), whereby power is legitimised by demographic majority. From then on, statistical science became an instrument of power, blurring and concealing any information related to the internal composition of the Jordanian population. The absorption of the West Bank, and the (largely forced at the time) assimilation of its population as well as that of refugees thus achieved part of King Abdullah's pan-Arabist dream[41]. Then, at the same time, a black out on demographic information[42] and an official denial of Palestinian particularism was intended to secure Hashemite rule over the new citizenry.

However, faced with attempts at political destabilization stemming from Palestinian and (Trans)Jordanian nationalists, the regime also acted in parallel. It carried out a contradictory policy unofficially constructing two distinct segments within the population, in order to match one against the other and secure the regime's political domination. Indeed, the cover up of demographic information made it easy to spread rumours and to feed minds with assumptions, usually related by the press or by official speeches[43]. As noted above, the brutal shrinkage of national territory after the Six Day War in 1967, followed by the influx of displaced persons and refugee displaced populations from the West to the East Bank, deepened the perception of a Jordanian-Palestinian demographic majority. Then, at the same time, the progressive setting up of Palestinian organisations made Palestinian fighters and claims more "visible" in the public sphere. Therefore, it can be said that the Jordanian regime performed a policy of "segmented assimilation" towards the Jordanian Palestinians. Notwithstanding their being naturalised and their being barred from expressing any Palestinian particularism publicly, their being nationals did not grant them a sense of citizenship, for they could be stigmatised at any moment. It is worth noting that nationalists were also targeted by a policy of stigmatisation. Indeed the dangers of the Palestinian-Jordanians' demographic majority have always been implicitly emphasized; and thus the necessity of standing by the regime for protection. However as noted above, the events of Black September deepened the (constructed) rift between the two (invented) communities.

Migration as an economic outlet

Following the 1948 and 1967 exodus, unemployment rates sky rocketed to 25% of the labour force after 1948. At the same time, the economy was largely unproductive: it was based heavily on foreign aid. This situation, first, sustained the clientelist networks politically supporting the monarchy, involving tribal and rural groups as well as some influential Palestinian families allied with the Hashemites. Second, a

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[40] Jordanian Citizenship Law n°56, December 1949; Law n°6, 1954.

[41] Wealth of Koranic references was even used in public speeches to symbolically enroot the Palestinian population within the Jordanian national community, for example: "*Al-Muhajerin wa al ansar*" (approx.: "the emigrants and the supporters"). This refers to the first Muslims who fled Mecca (the 'emigrants') to find shelter in Medina (among the 'supporters').

[42] The only figures put forth in official discourses were that related to the number of refugees registered with UNRWA, amounting to approximately 30% of the total population. As said above, those displaced in 1967 are not registered because they are considered as moving within the country they hold citizenship of.

[43] It has become a national exercise to read between the lines and decipher official speeches to detect the social groups or economic interests implicitly targeted.

large share of the educated and skilled Palestinian-Jordanians failed to incorporate into business clientelist networks and rent-redistribution schemes, thus compelling many to make a living abroad. Since the 1950s, many Palestinians left the West Bank and headed off for the Gulf and the West in significantly higher numbers than the East Bankers[44]. In fact, after 1973 and the "oil boom" which opened opportunities in the Gulf labour markets, Jordanian workers, most of them of Palestinian origin (Brand, 1988) emigrated on a massive scale. This movement was facilitated by the "open-door" policy of the Jordanian government; yet it is important to note that no selective measures targeting specifically Jordanians of Palestinian origin were taken. This demographic policy of non-intervention (or implicit encouragement) regarding emigration alleviated, in a *de facto* way, the economic pressure on job provision and, therefore, politico-economic competition between the regime's clients and skilled manpower. It also strengthened the control over the growing political tensions rooted in the locking up of access to economic, political and social capital, which characterised the rent-based, clientelist economy of the Kingdom. Yet the open door policy on emigration was, in our view, an essential element of the segmented assimilation process experienced by many Jordanians of Palestinian origin, as it crudely emphasized the eviction of many of them from clientelist networks. Or rather it confirmed their perception that they did not fully belong to Jordan's nation-building process and that they were not to be granted the same citizenship rights as the regime's clients, themselves from diverse origins (De Bel-Air, 2003; 2007; 2010).

Security and the Rabat conference.

Lastly, 1967-72 saw the end of military confrontation between Palestinian fighters and Jordanian military forces. Yet Palestinian-Jordanians had become more unpopular within some sectors of the "Transjordanian" population and among interest groups there. Another blow to the integration of Palestinians among "fully-fledged" Jordanian citizens came with the Rabat Conference, held in October 1974. The Arab Summit [45] decided to make the PLO the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Jordan, it must be remembered, was host to the largest number of refugees and displaced persons, and the regime had been eager to strengthen its position as heir of the Arab Revolt. Therefore, this decision was unacceptable to King Hussein. From then on, indeed, Jordan ceased to allow Jordanians of Palestinian origin any access to high-ranking public positions and security-sensitive posts, which they had occupied before, for instance, in the army or in politics. The first open policy of discrimination against Jordanians of Palestinian origin thus dates back to 1974.

II. A new political economy of the Palestinian refugees

The previous chapter emphasized how the dynamics of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have been only one factor influencing the state of refugees in the host states. Different contexts and various domestic political calculations, intrinsic to each of the two host states have different effects on the importance and influence of refugees. This complex set of factors, therefore, had an impact on host state policies towards the refugees, their legal status in the countries where they reside, and the various aspects of their livelihood.

Along with the other Arab states, Jordan and Lebanon have also tirelessly expressed, over the decades, their respect for Resolution 194. Yet, the Palestinians proved to be a source of rentier income. Arab donors, indeed, supplied the countries bordering Israel with aid and grants. Also, remittances of nationals expatriated in the Gulf countries, most of them of Palestinian descent in the case of Jordan, played a major role in the Kingdom's economy. In the late 1970s and the early 1980s, for example, aid and remittances together added up to half of GDP. Moreover, in both cases the refugees affected "social contracts" and "state systems" to borrow Nazli Choucri's terms (2002). Certainly, they have

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[44] The 1961 census records that 80% of migrants originated on the West Bank.

[45] And UNGA Resolution 3236 voted in November the same year.

been key in Jordanian and Lebanese nation-building processes, though to different degrees and in different ways. As foreign residents, or even as stateless persons, they are kept out of Lebanon's mainstream, as much as possible: they are even made permanently precarious pending the implementation of the right of return, for the sake of maintaining their national Palestinian identity. Yet they became a major asset to the local economy and helped strengthen the political sectarian system. Conversely, albeit with reservations, most Palestinian refugees and displaced persons are citizens in Jordan: they permeate Jordanian life at every level.

II.1. "High politics" and changing political demography

However, the end of the civil war in Lebanon and the need for national reconciliation added a new dimension reinforcing the Palestinian refugees' political, social and economic position in the 1990s. In Jordan, similarly, the severing of the ties between the East and the West Bank seemed in contrast with the previous policies of "segmented" assimilation. Indeed, the 1990s marked the entry of international actors on the regional political stage, in the wake of the various peace treaties and structural adjustment programs. Therefore, host states lost the upper hand in terms of refugee policies.

II.1.a. 1988 fak irtibat and the Ta'if Accords

In **Jordan**, there were changes in the late 1980s: the first *Intifada* in 1987 in the Occupied Territories and growing calls to end contact with the Kingdom from certain Palestinian organisations. Following on these changes, King Hussein announced the severance of administrative and legal ties with the West Bank (*faq irtibat*)[46] on July 31st, 1988 (Abu Odeh, 1999: 224-229; De Bel-Air, 2006)[47]. This decision had important implications for Palestinian refugees. Jordan's territory contracted to its pre-1950 borders and thus opened the way to the claim for a Palestinian state on the West Bank. This decision not only signalled disruption in the Arabist stance of the Hashemites. It also deeply affected the patterns of citizenship and nationality for Jordanians of Palestinian descent. Article Two of the disengagement regulations indeed states that "every person residing in the West Bank before July 31, 1988 will be considered Palestinian and not Jordanian". Yet, it is important to note that the disengagement has not been inscribed in Jordan's Constitution, therefore it is theoretically reversible.

For 1967 displaced persons living on either bank, a system of coloured cards has, since 1983, defined their level of Jordanian citizenship and any links with the West Bank[48]. Displaced persons residing on the East Bank have been given yellow cards which allowed visits to the West Bank. Holders of yellow cards are deemed to be full-time residents in Jordan and are given national identity numbers that entitle them to full access to government services. However, it is another story for the one million, to one and a half million West Bank residents who have had Jordanian nationality since 1950 and who now have green cards. These individuals experienced a drastic change of status virtually

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46 Those ties had persisted in spite of Israel's occupation of the West Bank since 1967 and West Bank state employees were receiving their salaries from Jordan. After 1988, the Kingdom only retained the administration of Jerusalem's Muslim holy sites and Palestinian religious endowments (*waqfs*).

47 The royal speech, delivered by King Hussein on the evening of 31 July 1988, declared: "Today, we respond to the wish of the PLO, the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people and to the Arab orientation [seeking] to affirm the Palestinian identity in all its aspects ... It has to be understood in all clarity, and without any ambiguity or equivocation, that our measures regarding the West Bank concern only the occupied Palestinian land and its people. They naturally do not relate in any way to the Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origins in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. They all have the full rights of citizenship and all its obligations, the same as any other citizen irrespective of his origin" (IPO, 1994).

48 In 1983, the Jordanian government created a dual yellow and green card system to distinguish Palestinians living in Jordan from Palestinians living in the West Bank at that time. Yellow cards were granted to West Bankers who had left the West Bank before 1 June 1983. Palestinians who were living in Jordan at that date and who had obtained full residency and full citizenship ("family book") were, therefore, entitled to a yellow card. Palestinians living in the West Bank, who were holders of a Jordanian passport, were entitled to green cards. http://www.unhcr.org/refworld/docid/41501c2623.html.

overnight. Hence, their previous five-year regular passports, which granted them full citizenship rights, were replaced with temporary passports that had to be renewed every two years[49]. Moreover, green card holders, unlike other Jordanian citizens, have no national numbers, and are, therefore, only granted limited access to government services. They must also obtain a work permit to be legally employed in Jordan[50] (Tableau 3).

Legal status and characteristics of Jordan's inhabitants in the 2000s.

Origin	Residence	Kind of passport	Family book	Card of crossing	Accessibility to services
Jordanian East Banker	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with national number	yes	-	Full access
1948 Jordanian-Palestinian	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with national number	yes	-	Full access
1967 Jordanian-Palestinian	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with national number	yes	Yellow family-reunification card	Full access
1967 Jordanian-Palestinian	Permanent residency in the West Bank	Five-year passport without national number	no	Green card	Needs a work permit to work on the East Bank, pays foreign fees for education; ownership conditional to ministerial approval
Jordanian-Palestinian from Jerusalem	Permanent residency in Jerusalem	Five-year passport without national number	no	Green card	Id.
Palestinian from Gaza	Permanent residency in Jordan	Two-year temporary passports	no	Blue card	Id.
Palestinian from the West Bank or the Gaza Strip	Permanent residency in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip	Palestinian Authority passport	no	Permission to enter	Treated like any Arab foreign national: valid residency conditions access to services open to foreign national

Updated from El-Abed, 2004: 9-11.

In **Lebanon**, "the civil war and its aftermath were battles over the identity of Lebanon and its political-sectarian system and landscape, both of which had been radically destabilised by the militant Palestinian presence" (Peteet, 2005: 11). Indeed, the war violently targeted Palestinian political and military power, as well as dismantling their civil institutions strengthened by the 1969 Cairo accords

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[49] In 1995, the duration of West Bankers' passports was extended to five years by royal decree.

[50] West Bankers' status became similar to that of Gaza refugees and displaced persons, who were granted only temporary passports upon arrival in Jordan after 1967. For Gaza was placed under Egyptian administration between 1949 and 1967, Gazans are now considered foreign nationals in Jordan.

but taken apart in 1987. At the onset of the war, right-wing Christian militias "cleansed" East Beirut of Palestinians and destroyed the three main camps in the area. The expelling of Palestinian troops from Beirut in August 1982 dramatically weakened their numbers and influence. Then, between 1983 and 1988, various battles including the Amal-led "war of the camps" in Beirut further dispersed refugees and redrew the camps so that their circumscribed boundaries became those of the early 1950s. J. Peteet states that the idea was to whittle away at the Palestinian population to stop them regaining political influence. It also helped to limit Syrian control over Lebanon and, possibly, to get in the way of a Syrian-Israeli peace agreement (Peteet, 2005: 10).

Indeed, the Ta'if Accords built post-war Lebanon around a common opposition to the Palestinian presence in the country: the accords ended the civil war there. Prepared by the Arab Tripartite Committee after consultation with Syria, the United States and various Lebanese leaders, it was negotiated in Ta'if, Saudi Arabia, in September 1989 and approved by the Lebanese Parliament on 4 November 1989. The accords stated that the abolition of confessionalism was a national goal. It also demanded the equitable participation of Christians and Muslims in the Cabinet, while the non-acceptance of the resettlement of Palestinian refugees on Lebanese soil was stated in "General Principals", section H. "The fact that rejection of the permanent settlement of Palestinian refugees was included in the [text of the Agreement] illustrates the political importance attached to this issue for Lebanon's national interests as well as confessional concern over the permanent settlement of the refugees in the country" (Knudsen, 2007: 5). The first example of post-war legal discrimination against Palestinian refugees was their exemption from the General Amnesty Law (Law 94/91), for they were blamed for igniting the civil war (Knudsen, 2007: 6).

The 1994 naturalisation decree 5247 which granted Lebanese nationality to between 91,000 and 108,000 from different confessional backgrounds. Two-thirds were Muslims with equal numbers of Sunnis and Shi'ites. They came too from different national backgrounds (Palestinians from the Seven Villages, Armenians, Iraqis, Turks, Bedouins…) which stirred controversy, since some Palestinians were naturalised. More generally, "the lack of confessional balance became a central argument in the battle against the decree. In the context of the after war, the argumentation on the confessional equilibrium took the national dialogue about the 'living together' as its reference" (Jaulin, 2006: 8).

More discriminatory policies were applied soon after Ta'if. On 15 December 1995 the Labour Ministry issued ministerial decree 621/1. This decree, in addition to the more than seventy jobs banned since 1962, added another forty-six salaried jobs and independent professions that Palestinians could not participate in. The text of the decree also underlined that the principle of national preference should be employed for all professions. In 2001, Parliament passed a law prohibiting Palestinians from owning, as well as from selling and bequeathing property, a right that they had had for decades.

As stated by Khashan (1994), the government's firm position on preventing the entry of 415 Palestinians deported by Israel from the Occupied Territories in December 1992 is suggestive of how the spectre of resettlement haunts Lebanese policy makers. In 1995, the government introduced new visa regulations that made return to Lebanon contingent on obtaining a re-entry visa. Indeed, article 2 of decree 478 ("Regulating Entry and Exit of Palestinians") made it mandatory for Palestinians residing outside Lebanon before 1 June 1995 and wishing to return to apply for a re-entry visa through the Lebanese diplomatic authorities. Those wishing to leave Lebanon were required to obtain an exit permit from the same authorities (Suleiman, 2006: 15).

At the regional level, another event signalled the toughening of Arab regimes' positions towards the Palestinians; a change which could be interpreted as a move to punish them for the PLO's support of the regime of Saddam Hussein during the First Gulf War. In 1991, the Casablanca Protocol that had served as a provisional regional protection regime was reviewed by the Arab League Council. Saudi Arabia and Kuwait's pushed for refugee rights to be weakened. The League Council approved the amendment in its resolution 5093 (12 September 1991), which made the status of refugees a national responsibility based on the laws of each member state (Takkenberg 1998: 149).

II.1.b. Arab-Israeli agreements, the right of return and demography

The signing of the Oslo Accords between the PLO and Israel in September 1993 made the prospect of Palestinian statehood a political reality: a contrast to the stepping up of discrimination towards Palestinians in host states. However, these Accords left the sensitive issue of the refugees' right of return to one side, this question was to be settled in the "final status" negotiations. The Accords, therefore, raised fears over the settlement of the 1948 refugees in host countries. The Wadi Araba Accords signed in October 1994 between Jordan and Israel could not but increase this fear. Indeed, by recognizing the State of Israel in the Oslo and Wadi Araba Agreements, the Palestinian authorities and Jordan implicitly acknowledged the impossibility for 1948 refugees to return to territories that they admitted belonged to Israel. Also, as Israel kept control of the occupied lands on the West Bank, the Palestinians were granted a political identity without a corresponding territory.

In **Lebanon**, the government not only rejected settlement as a solution. But it argued that the Oslo Process and the creation of the PNA one year later opened the way for refugees to return to their homeland. Foreign Minister Fariz Buwayz proposed, indeed, in April 1994 the expulsion of Palestinian refugees as part of a regional resettlement scheme. This echoed a similar statement by President Elias Hrawi (1989-98), who argued that the nascent Palestinian state meant the end of settlement in Lebanon (Knudsen, 2007: 7).

In **Jordan**, this threat to the implementation of resolution 194 raised general concerns. Indeed, some sectors of the population felt the Agreements could be a shield against Israel's project of "transfer": namely making Jordan an alternative homeland to Palestinians (Abu Odeh, 1999: 234). Some, indeed, believed that recognition of Israel by Jordan would work both ways and so secure Jordan's sovereign borders and political existence. Business people, in line with general opinion, also lauded the economic prospects included in the decision, the "peace dividends"; remission of Jordan's debt to the US, a marked increase of development and military aid. However, for refugees and displaced persons the Oslo and Wadi Araba Accords not only *de facto* settled the refugees in host states; they also placed the displaced persons in an ambiguous position. The fate of displaced persons and the right of return is discussed in multilateral negotiations, but beyond their reach, at the highest political levels. Moreover, topics of national identity, and affiliations which had been political taboos since 1950 were openly tackled. Therefore, Palestinians and, especially, displaced people, felt implicitly urged to "return" to the West Bank. More generally, nationalists raised the question of the political representation of diaspora members in Palestinian institutions as well as in the host countries, and expressed fears of refugees' double allegiance. It should be remembered that most had been full citizens of Jordan since 1950.

Yet, national identities in Jordan had been deeply shaken by the 1988 *fak irtibat* and peace agreements and the regime strengthened its control over the two segments of the population. The acknowledgment that 44% of Jordanians were of Palestinian origin was, as we have seen, politically constructed, yet it had far-reaching implications. The numbers were released in the wake of the multinational negotiations on refugee status. And they were then "confirmed" by a demographic survey conducted by FAFO, a Norwegian research and consulting agency, in the mid-1990s.[51] This figure reaffirms the centrality of the Palestinian question in Jordanian politics and also the control of the issue by the regime. Additionally, it gives a warning signal to Transjordanian nationalists and to Jordanian Palestinians, who cannot advocate their numerical majority to sustain their claims to political power.

The texts of the peace agreements shed light on PLO's "pragmatic" choice to move on with the process of State-formation in Gaza and in the West Bank. This new trend implied concessions over the full implementation of the right of return. It also explains the revival of the "compensation" option and the statements pertaining to the necessary separation between the principle reaffirmation of the right of

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[51] FAFO, 1997.

return and its full implementation. Yet implicitly, a new definition of return was promoted, trading the 1948 towns and villages of origin, for the territories of the Palestinian state as it was being constructed (Al Husseini, 2006: 116). The US-brokered peace summit at Camp David neglected the issue of the right of return. Palestinian negotiators did not go beyond requesting from Israelis the acknowledgement of the principle of the right of return and left its implementation patterns to further bilateral negotiations (Al Hussein/ Bocco, 2008: 65-66). Later peace proposals, from Taba in 2001 to Geneva in 2003, as well as the Beirut declaration (a Saudi peace proposal first submitted in 2002), endorsed such a line of negotiation. They would raise the principle of the right of return and demand Israel's pullback to the boundaries it held before capturing the West Bank, east Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights in the 1967 war (implementation of resolutions 242 of 1967 and 338 of 1973).

II.1.c. The emergence of a "rights-based approach"

The new focus of the Palestinian National Authority on its state-formation process also gave leeway to host states in incorporating refugee camps and pockets of Palestinian poverty within development projects and municipal maintenance schemes. Such an approach had been considered an absolute taboo until the late 1980s. The precarious living conditions of refugees were seen by the refugees themselves, and by some of the host states like Lebanon, as embodying the urgency of the right of return.

In 1998, Jordan engaged in a voluntary policy of upgrading refugee camps' infrastructures and living conditions there. The initiative was conducted with the agreement of the PLO, under the umbrella of the Economic and Social Productivity Programme (SPP) scheme, a program funded by the World Bank for improving living conditions in the Kingdom's poverty pockets. Within a few years, most of Jordan's camps had their physical infrastructure and parts of their dwelling capacities fully renovated. Even in Lebanon, the host country most adamantly opposing the upgrading of camps – something considered tantamount to resettlement – UNRWA was allowed to partly renovate the South Lebanon camps (Al-Husseini, 2006: 122).

Following the Geneva conference of 2004[52], UNRWA and international donors (the European Union in particular) advocated programs for camp infrastructure improvement to be launched. There is here a more developmental approach for improving, in a holistic sense, the refugee camps' physical and social environment (the adoption of a participatory, community-driven planning approach); along with the differentiation between the "right of return" and the "right to live in appropriate living conditions". Both underlie initiatives such as UNRWA's Infrastructure and Camp Improvement Program (ICIP) (Hanafi/ Misselwitz, 2009).

Also, on a more general political and policy level, "[a]fter the Oslo Agreements, the perception that the Palestinian Authority was too strongly involved in a process of state building and less worried about negotiating the implementation of UNGA Resolution 194 mobilized the refugees. [Therefore], [i]t was during the 1990s (following the Abu Mazen and Beilin proposal of 1995 which included a solution to the refugee issue)[53] that the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, a NGO based in Bethlehem, began focusing on a rights-based approach to the refugee question[54]. BADIL began questioning the representative role of the PA in negotiating the future of the

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[52] On 7-8 June 2004, UNRWA and the Swiss Government organized an international conference entitled "Meeting the Humanitarian Needs of the Palestine Refugees in the Near East: Building Partnerships in Support of UNRWA", which became known as the Geneva Conference.

[53] Beside detailed mechanisms for rehabilitating and compensating refugees aimed at rendering return less attractive, the agreement stipulated no official limitation for immigration in Palestine but no refugee return to Israel. See: http://www.mideastweb.org/beilinabumazen1.htm.

[54] BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights was officially established in January 1998. See: http://www.badil.org (last visited December 2011).

refugees and their right of return in particular. The BADIL stance and initiatives quickly spread outside the West Bank and Gaza, to the region and beyond" (Bocco, 2009: 241-242).

This chapter described the effects of "high politics" on the design of new policies and positions regarding the right of return from the end of the 1980s. The new challenges posed were to the nation-building process for the host states. These were articulated around seeking to secure Hashemite political domination in Jordan, and around seeking political consensus in Lebanon after the war. Since the late 1980s, the "pragmatic" approach of the Palestinian Authority's political leadership, as pertains to the issue of the right of return, has also been channeled towards state-building, if not yet nation-building. For international agencies, foreign donors and Palestinian non-governmental bodies, the challenge of the non-implementation of resolution 194 became a question of living conditions and rights denial – refugee, civil and national rights.

Policies formulated were, in Jordan, a *de facto* exclusion of a part of Jordan's citizenry on the basis of residence. This meant reducing the ratio of Jordanian-Palestinians to parity with the rest of the nationals, and it also involved a reshuffle of citizenship patterns. In Lebanon, policies targeted the refugees and blamed them for the fifteen-year conflict at every level. The newly established Palestinian Authority, for its part, did not renounce the right of return but acknowledged implicitly the limitations put by Israel on its implementation. International aid bodies and donors, as well as Palestinian society organizations pushed for a rights-based approach for the implementation of resolution 194 on the basis of international legislation. At the same time, a new perception of the outreach of the right of return claim was constructed, which rebuilt the living conditions of refugees in host states as civil rights, yet in no way an alternative to the right of return.

II. 2. The tawtin debate in the late 2000s

The next chapter tackles the popular reactions to post-1988s political events and decisions pertaining to the Palestinians' right of return and conditions of stay in the host countries. Indeed, beyond the macro level' "political economy" of the refugees' movements and related policies, lies the issue of how such demographic challenges are perceived in societies, how the Palestinian presence and their various legal statuses interfere with and shape representations of national "imagined communities" by the various actors, institutional and "popular". Before discussing recent politics and views, however, it is important to show that Palestinians have been, indeed, incorporated within Jordanian and Lebanese societies.

II.2.a. Palestinian belonging: non-migrants and rights-holders

More than sixty years have now passed since the 1948 *nakbah* and forty-five since the Six-Day War. Refugees born in Palestine are today aged 60 plus (around 5 % of refugees), and third and even fourth-generation refugees are now being born. More recent returnees from the first Gulf War to Jordan, for example, longed after Kuwait and their life in the Gulf, not after Palestine which their parents or grand-parents had left in the 1950s (quoted in De Bel-Air, 2006). Being a refugee is now a political fact enshrined in Palestinians' legal statuses, in their claims for their rights and, for some of them, real or perceived discrimination in the host country. Most Palestinian refugees are not migrants any longer. The definition of migrants, indeed, is based on a physical criterion, that of movement in space, which should not be confused with the concept of foreigner which is based on legal criteria (Simon, 2002). In Lebanon, as a matter of fact much of the discriminatory treatment Palestinians face is rooted in their statelessness, which has been used by the Lebanese authorities to deny them equal rights. Palestinians have suffered, in fact, unequal treatment not only in terms of the Lebanese population but also in terms

of other foreign residents in Lebanon (Amnesty International, 2007). Whereas in Jordan, full Jordanian citizenship grants social and economic membership[55].

We pointed out earlier in this report the looseness of borders in 1948 and the tight links existing between Palestinian and Jordanian, as well as Lebanese, societies which allowed frequent journeys, and the settlement of intermarrying families across several countries. In the case of Jordan, we saw that part of the Kingdom's political elite is of Palestinian origin, owing to the Arabist stances of the Hashemite kings. Prominent Palestinian families have been among the strongest allies of the monarchy over the years, commonly intermarrying and sharing to a great extent in the country's economy.

The existence of intermarriage between Palestinians and the non-Palestinian local populations is known, but numerical estimates are not available[56]. As quoted by D. Meier for Lebanon, unofficial figures state that in the mid-1990s, 30% of third-generation Palestinian children had at least one Lebanese national among their family members. Certain authors also stated that the period of the expansion of the Palestinian organisations in Lebanon was marked by an increasing level of Lebanese-Palestinian matrimonial unions. This would suggest that such marriages aimed at supporting the Palestinian cause (Meier, 2008: 19-20). More generally, marriages in the region are more often concluded between persons of the same lineage[57] and religious community, or of a similar socio-economic status and background (Bonte, 1994). As a result community borders are subjective and can shift between "us" and "the other".

Another factor seems more relevant for suggesting the social assimilation of Palestinian refugees in their host countries: fertility patterns. Analysing comparative fertility trends among refugee and non-refugee populations in Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank, demographer Marwan Khawaja noticed a convergence of behaviour. The refugees and non-refugees are coming together here, probably owing to the influence of "national" models, policies and background factors: "Taken as a whole, the findings reported here do not support the widely held view of heightened "political fertility" among Palestinian refugees. Rather, the reproductive behaviour of refugee women seems to converge with that of their non-refugee sisters everywhere. It is suggested that context-specific socio-economic conditions, or population and health policies, might be behind this convergence. The convergence can also be generated by various demographic mechanisms, including sex-selective migration affecting the marriage market, as well as the ideational diffusion of both contraception and small family norms […]" (Khawaja, 2003: 299). Therefore, according to these results, refugee status is no longer a fundamental distinguishing feature of Palestinian reproductive behaviour, even if some variations remain between camp and non-camp dwellers.

Taking such facts into consideration, can we say that the new policies aimed at improving the refugees' living conditions are demographic policies, embedded within social policies? Certainly, such a view on social policies acknowledges the issue of number, here seen as a manifestation of power[58]. Yet there is also here the view that a population is a constructed object, moulded by social organisation and constructed through interaction. This kind of representation of number, power and population also changed in the aftermath of the late 1980s, as will be seen now in relation to Lebanon and Jordan.

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[55] And access to all public services. However, all holders of the two/five-year temporary passports are treated as foreign nationals. For example, they are required to pay their education fees in foreign currency, which makes it difficult for the majority of them to enrol in Jordanian universities. Additionally, holders of temporary passports are required to apply for a work permit to work in the private sector (see Hilal/ Samy, 2008: 50-ff.)

[56] In Jordan, Palestinians are not distinguished in the statistics because they are naturalised.

[57] Fertility surveys conducted in Jordan report between 30% to 40% of consanguineous marriages in the 1990s and 2000s.

[58] And not the source of power (Rosental, 2006: 25-26). Palestinians in Egypt, for example, were not granted such "privileges" for they constitute only a fragment of the 85 million inhabitants of Egypt.

II.2.b. Lebanon: from "communautarisation" of refugees to "decommunautarizing" Lebanon's polity?

As noted above, "During the civil war, the large Muslim progressive movements' alliance with the Palestinians was a major factor signalling Lebanon's political fragmentation. Concomitantly, in the post war period, a Palestinian presence promoted Lebanese national cohesion. With few exceptions, Lebanese of various political and sectarian factions agreed on the need to strictly monitor the Palestinians and on their unwillingness to resettle them" (Peteet, 205: 17). As Khashan (1994) also states, opposition to resettlement in Lebanon is articulated openly by politicians and in the mass media there. It is probably the only issue where Lebanese of different persuasions seem to enjoy a consensus that "cuts across ideological and confessional lines" (Brynen, 1994).

However, as shown by Daniel Meier in his analysis of the 1989-2005 statements on the Palestinian issue, the notion of *tawtin* had different meanings for different politico-religious groups. Christian parties (Kataeb, CPL, PNL), including the Maronite League, perceived Palestinians as a danger for the sectarian political balance of the country, and as an element external to Lebanese national community. *Tawtin* therefore meant "naturalisation" and amounted to an encroachment on national identity. This was supported by inflated figures for the number of refugees in the country. It can be stated that the Palestinians are thus seen essentially as Muslims by such actors particularly as Christians lost some of their political prominence in this post-war period. Other political currents (Amal, Hezbollah) also rejected the settlement of Palestinians and civil rights as a way to facilitate the *tawtin*. Yet, at the same time, their militant arguments and Panarabist rhetoric took account of the need to struggle for the refugees' rights against Zionist plans. Sunnis and Druze, while also opposing the *tawtin* for militant reasons were not as radical in their reluctance and also supported the granting of civil rights to refugees. As a matter of fact, non-naturalised Palestinians being overwhelmingly Sunni Muslims, their settlement might add troops and a sizeable electoral base to the Sunni faction in Lebanon. Consequently, the debates on the issue of *tawtin* incorporated "the Palestinians into the mould of the Lebanese sectarian system" (Meier, 2009: 240). Such conclusions are certainly suggested in a survey dating back to 1992, which showed that opposition to Palestinian resettlement among Maronite Christians and Shiites was widespread (87% and 78% respectively, compared to 63% among Sunnis and 71% among the Druze) and intense (56% of Maronites and 51% of Shiites declared that resettlement should be resisted militarily, compared to 30% of Sunnis and 36% of Druze) (Khashan, 1994). Opinion polls conducted in Lebanon in the early 2000s also display similar trends (Haddad, 2004). Yet, in light of the political weakening of Christian parties in the wake of the Ta'ef Accords and Syrian domination over Lebanon, the toughening of policies targeting the Palestinian refugees may not reflect the Christian 'Lebanist' sectarian-based nation-building project for the country[59]. Rather, it is sometimes suggested that the Palestinian refugee issue is instrumentalised as a "proxy" instrument for Syria's interests or regional struggles. Opposing civil rights as conducive to resettlement, tightening restrictions on the camps and foreswearing jurisdiction over them may have meant making Syria into a leading regional actor[60]; "at the same time, many Arab and Lebanese analysts were convinced that Syria was merely jacking up the price it could charge to impose resettlement after its own requirements for peace were met" (Gambill, 2008). Moreover, Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri (who spent his youth in Saudi Arabia and held Saudi citizenship until 1992), was accused by many in Lebanon, of engineering the resettlement of Palestinians in the country, in line with the pro-settlement Saudi position. His motives were supposedly the relief of high Lebanese debt.

As a matter of fact, after Rafiq Hariri's assassination in February 2005 and the eviction of Syrian forces from Lebanon in the following months, policies towards Palestinians changed. In 2005,

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[59] I am thankful to Thibaut Jaulin for pointing out this fact to me.

[60] It "had the strategic benefits of making it more difficult for the PLO and Israel to reach a negotiated settlement at Syria's expense, while creating 'islands of insecurity' in the camps that would be impossible for Lebanon to manage without Syrian help" (Gambitt, 2008).

Lebanon eliminated a ban on Palestinians holding most clerical and technical positions, provided that they obtain a temporary work permit from the Labour Ministry; even if the consequences of this new opportunity were limited[61]. The authorities have also sought to engage in efforts to improve housing conditions, and have expressed an interest in finding a solution for non-ID Palestinians (an estimated 3,000 to 5,000 refugees) who are not registered with either UNRWA or the Lebanese authorities. On 19 August 2008, the Lebanese authorities and the Palestine Liberation organization (PLO) finally agreed to give temporary ID cards to the non-ID Palestinian refugees[62]. More recently, a draft law submitted mid-June 2010 to the Lebanese Parliament by Progressive Socialist Party leader Walid Jumblatt called for Palestinian refugees to be granted civil rights: allowing them to own property, work in any profession and be eligible for social security. The proposal led to a violent debate inside Parliament and was attacked by some Christian MPs, who warned that passing the law would be the first step toward *tawtin*. Six months later, the caretaker labor minister, Boutros Harb, signed a decree carrying the August 2010 labor law amendments into law.

Fierce political opposition and tentative policies may hamper the granting of civil rights to Palestinians in Lebanon. But even so it is worth noting that the political forces now facing each other on Lebanese political stage are no longer strictly sectarian. Indeed, the two loose political coalitions formed in the aftermath of the Cedar Revolution – after Rafiq Hariri's assassination and the ending of Syrian military occupation – federate various parties including Christian ones, around two principal parties: the main Sunni-based movement Future Current; and Hezbollah. It is thus very interesting to note that this apparent de-sectarianisation of Lebanese politics is connected to the granting of civil rights to refugees, as if, now, the challenges posed by demographics were not controlled by the same actors. Does this signal a change in the patterns of Lebanese nation-building? Only time will tell.

II.2.c. Jordan: the political naturalisation debate

In Jordan, the 1988 severing of ties between the two banks (*faq irtibat*) theoretically defined the national borders, as well as the national population. Also, the event in some senses reactivated the challenge of numbers. By stripping approximately one million West Bankers of their full Jordanian nationality (and the civil rights accruing to it), it brought the ratio of "Transjordanians" to Jordanians of Palestinian origin closer to parity on the East Bank. The Oslo and Wadi Araba agreements officially codified the new borders. But these same agreements put Jordanians of Palestinian origin in the awkward position of either forced settlement for refugees, or insecure national membership for 1967 displaced persons. Notwithstanding, there was a sense of security for East Bank nationalists; Additionally, a new pattern of socio-economic and political membership, meant to incorporate most sectors of society, was built up in Jordan, in the wake of the structural adjustment process and the Peace agreement with Israel that contained promises for Jordan's economic integration into regional and global markets (De Bel-Air/ Dergarabedian, 2006). In the early 2000s, after King Abdullah II succeeded King Hussein, some policies were even set up to strengthen national unity. These policies were also meant to encourage Jordanian citizens to share the values and profits of economic liberalisation, such as the "Jordan First" Campaign[63] in 2002 and "We are all Jordan" in 2006.

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[61] More than twenty high-level professions remain off-limits to Palestinians, those occupations governed by a professional syndicates, such as engineering, medicine or pharmaceutics. Few of them benefited from the 2005 reform: in 2009, only 261 of more than 145,679 permits issued to non-Lebanese were for Palestinians. Civil society groups say many Palestinians choose not to apply because they cannot afford the fees and see no reason to pay a portion of their salary toward the National Social Security Fund, since Lebanese law bars Palestinians from receiving social security benefits. Many Lebanese employers are also unwilling to support Palestinian workers in getting a work permit (HRW, 2010).

[62] Applicants allegedly will have to undergo a background check and the General Security Office will have to confirm their right to obtain an ID. Moreover, the ID cards will only be temporary.

[63] As described in a Jordanian official media release "Jordan First is an attempt to define a new social accord between Jordanians, as it emphasizes the pre-eminence of Jordan's interests above all other considerations, and reformulates the state-individual relationship. […]In summary, Jordan First is a philosophy of governance. […].

In the late 2000s, however, the fragile balance was upset. National unity has been a growing concern for both "Transjordanian" and "Jordanian-Palestinian" elites and has spurred harsh public debates. The possible refugees' resettlement in Jordan and even the dangers of a "transfer" of Palestinians to the Kingdom is fiercely discussed. Likewise there are arguments over contradictory accusations over the "de" naturalisation of yellow-card holders combined with the political naturalisations of West Bank and Gaza green-card holders.

In 2009, public protests started growing over reports that throughout the 2000s, the Jordanian Interior Ministry had stripped several thousand Jordanians citizens of their nationality. These citizens were originally from the West Bank but had not been living on the East Bank at the time of the 1988 *fak irtibat*[64].

Jordanian Interior Ministry's officials reacted to protests by claiming it was their duty not to hamper Palestinians' national rights. Indeed, Jordan's Interior Minister Nayef Al-Qadi[65] explained the political reasoning behind revocations. The citizenship of Jordanians of Palestinian-origin was downgraded to that of green card holders if they did not apply for "family reunification permits"[66] for themselves and/or their children on the West Bank (see table 3). This bureaucratic act was justified as a way of allowing Palestinians, currently residing in Jordan, to claim citizenship in a future Palestinian state. Qadi stated that the Jordanian authorities revoked the national identity numbers of citizens of Palestinian origin until they could demonstrate that they and their children had obtained "family reunification permits" on the West Bank. The Interior Minister asserted that his Ministry actually froze national numbers "in order to motivate (Palestinian-origin Jordanians) to consolidate their right to Palestine"[67] and claimed "we're not expelling anyone, nor are we revoking the citizenship of Jordanian nationals. We are only correcting the mistake that was created after Jordan's disengagement from the West Bank. We want to highlight the true identity and nationality of every person"[68].

Renewed concern about the transfer of Palestinians to Jordan was echoed on 1 May, 2010 when a group of retired army officers (the "National Committee for Retired Servicemen" (NCRS)) issued an open letter to King Abdullah. The letter demanded: real political reforms; a curbing of corruption; and greater power for Parliament. It also took a stand against the King's neo-liberal economic policies and the text criticized the appointments of Jordanian-Palestinians to key posts. It went on to demand that the state bring the 1988 "*fak irtibat*" into the Constitution, and that all Palestinians in the Kingdom

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To advance the liberalization process, the Jordan First campaign calls upon the government to deepen the sense of national identity among citizens and spread a culture of respect and tolerance to integrate and fortify a diverse, but united, national and social fabric that thrives in an atmosphere of justice, democracy, due process, and equal opportunity […]". http://www.jordanembassyus.org/new/aboutjordan/er1.shtml

64 Thereby denying them basic citizenship rights such as access to education and health care. Such measures happened to be implemented on the occasion of routine administrative procedures such as renewing a passport or registering an event at the Civil Status Department and did not apply to every member of a family in an identical situation Human Rights Watch (HRW). *Stateless Again. Palestinian-Origin Jordanians Deprived of their Nationality*, February 2010.

65 In an interview with *Al-Hayat*, July 19th, 2009

66 Or "Lam Shamel", a permit that allows the holder the right to enter the West Bank for visits.

67 The Minister went further to claim that once such "family reunification permits" were presented, the ministry would restore national identity numbers, which had not been witnessed. As a matter of fact, such a permit is almost impossible to obtain from the Israeli authorities: West Bank residency permit holders who were away from the West Bank for more than three years had their residency revoked by the Israelis.

68 The Interior Minister went even further in an interview with *Al-Jazeera* (21 July 2009), explaining that the ultimate goal of citizenship revocation is to encourage Palestinians to leave Jordan and to resettle in the West Bank: "Eventually, the goal is to force our Palestinian brothers to try again to go back to the West Bank to stay there and to obtain an Israeli approval and permit to stay and live in the West Bank...We are trying to stand fast and prevent Israel from emptying the West Bank of its Palestinian citizens".

should be deprived of their full Jordanian citizenship. It wanted too that the Army be ready to fight the "Zionist threat" of the "transfer" of Palestinians to Jordan[69].

Up until late 2011, when these lines were written, the same demands (noting the danger of transferring Palestinians to the East Bank; advocating the implementation of resolution 194; and asking for fixed borders, inscribing the *faq irtibat* in Jordan's Constitution) were made by several other political movements[70]. Several events[71] and campaigns also further emphasized the Jordanian population's apparent split along ethno-national divides. There was a campaign against Queen Rania and her family, accused of the appropriation of public land, massive corruption and, especially, of having catered for the massive political naturalisation of Palestinians (*tajnis*). Conversely, as the Cabinet was reshuffled twice during 2010-2011, multiple communication operations have been conducted by the new Interior Minister who affirmed the halt to the process of stripping nationality and restoring yellow cards to downgraded families.

Interestingly, the response to the NCRS petition came from Former Jordanian Prime Minister and Chief of the General Intelligence Department (*Mukhabarat*) Ahmad Obeidat on 10 April[72]. Along with the Officers, he advocated a tougher Jordanian stance against Israel and its attacks on the peace process and on Jordan. Yet, his petition also calls for national unity and emphasizes the intertwining of both peoples' future in Jordan. The document highlights Chapter Seven of the National Charter signed in 1991 and the "strong historical and geographical ties between Jordan and Palestine… in the face of the racist imperialist Zionist danger, which threatens the existence of our Arab nation, its civilisation and holy sites, and targets Jordan as it targeted Palestine". Moreover, point 4 of the letter mentions "the future union between the two countries, Jordan and Palestine"… as a "first step to comprehensive Arab unity".

These two discourses refer to divergent visions of the "imagined community" embodied in the national population. The nationalists see a closed, *de jure* population and emphasize the dangers of demographics (increasing numbers of Palestinians being naturalised) as prone to deprive "real" Jordanians of their power. Indeed, in their petition the retired officers claim the presence of 2.5 million Palestinians in Jordan: of whom two million are naturalised refugees and displaced persons; in addition to 850,000 holders of yellow cards; and 1.25 million holders of green cards (West Bank residents); as well as blue cards (permanent residents of Jordan from Gaza, holders of two-years passports). Other, sometimes extravagant, figures of Palestinians supposedly having benefitted from "*tajnis*" and/or restoration of yellow card and national numbers circulate through privately sponsored media and internet outlets[73]. Very recently, the question was raised of a discrepancy of half a million people between the recorded number of national numbers issued and those of the population estimates of the time[74]. This shows the exaggerated importance given to numbers, as well as the confusion and the suspicion they fuel.

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[69] Published and circulated in *Kul Al-Urdun*, May 9th, 2010 (link dead)

[70] For example, a petition by the "Jordanian National Force": http://www.ammonnews.net/article.aspx?articleNO=87678 (last retrieved 08/12/2011)

[71] As in other countries, football has a history of bringing the country's ethnic tensions to the fore. Violence erupted during soccer games in Amman between Al-Wahdat club, traditionally a team supported by people of Palestinian origin, and the more Jordanian-supported Al-Faisaly club and led to anti-Palestinian hooliganism and slogans denigrating the Palestinian origins of the Queen. On 10 December 2010, 250 people were injured after riot police attacked supporters chanting political and racist slogans.

[72] A counter-petition based on an op-ed published earlier on Al-Jazeera.net, signed by 362 Jordanians including former ministers and officials, politicians, journalists and lawyers. http://www.chapter7jordan.org/chapter7statement.html (last retrieved 01/2012)

[73] For example the well-established "*Ammon News*" which introduces itself as "the voice of the silent majority".

[74] http://www.alrai.com/article/21172.html.

This kind of an upsurge in Transjordanian nationalist rhetoric acquired renewed national and international importance and grew in line with growing popular opposition to local leaders, in the wake of the "Arab Spring". Over the longer run, however, it is worth inquiring about the background to the upsurge in protest and fears at the end of the 2000s.

One of the main reasons was the election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's Prime Minister and his stubborn resistance to reviving any part of the stalled peace process and final status negotiations. In 2008, the peace talks were again frozen, over the issue of the construction of Israeli settlements. Concomitantly, the strengthening of nationalist or right-wing ideologies in the West and in the Middle East revived old threats. Jordanians, for example, were angered by the Dutch right-wing politician Geert Wilders's claim that "Changing [Jordan's] name to Palestine will end the conflict in the Middle East and provide the Palestinians with an alternate homeland"[75]. Similarly, Aryeh Eldad, a member of the Israeli parliament for the National Union party, adamantly calls for the transfer of Palestinians to Jordan and the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Kingdom as part of solving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict[76]. The Israeli government has not condemned these statements.

A second explanation for nationalist mobilisation is the acceleration of economic liberalisation under King Abdullah II, following his accession to the throne in 1999. Since 1989, the country has undergone a drastic reform process in economic terms. This has included trade liberalisation, financial deregulation and the privatisation of the public sector, which speeded up dramatically during the 2000s[77]. Different changes had radical implications for East Bankers: the alignment on international standards of production, the radical reshuffling of clientelist redistribution networks as Jordan incorporated itself into the global economy and aid schemes. East Bankers began to feel that they had lost their place in the Kingdom's economy and clientelist networks. As noted earlier, the patterns of control of the economy have always been a key factor in the perceptions of the challenges hampering the incorporation of Palestinians into Jordan's citizenry. East Bankers saw the benefits of privatisation and globalisation as directly accruing to the Palestinians, who go to make up a good deal of Jordan's business elites. Moreover, the new King's entourage was composed, in large part, of new generation, post-national business people who accessed governmental positions, and therefore became the focus of popular grievance. Many East Bankers from diverse backgrounds and professions felt progressively alienated, and put the blame for deregulation (and enduring corruption) on Palestinians. The 2008 economic crisis may also have increased the looming political division.

For all these reasons, implementing resolution 194, even by force if need be was for nationalists a matter of great importance: resisting Israeli expansionist policies; allowing for a re-appropriation of economic opportunities and redistribution networks; and, ultimately, achieving a sense of sovereignty and control over politics. The national population is seen as closed, *de jure* and ethnic-based; socio-

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In the same vein, nationalist publications released figures and raised cases of possible further transfers, such as that of some 275,000 Jordanian citizens said to be residing on the West Bank (*Ammon News*, 14 September 2010) or that of Jerusalemites holding Jordanian citizenship and yellow cards, bound to be denied the right to stay in the city by Israeli authorities (*Ammon News*, September 17h, 2010)

[75] http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3907722,00.html

[76] Among other actions; on 26 May 2009 MK Eldad proposed a bill to the Knesset calling for the creation of "two states on the two banks of the Jordan River, one for the Israelis and one for the Palestinians", which was debated in the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. On 5 December, 2010, he organised a conference in Tel Aviv on the theme "Jordan is Palestine". http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3722058,00.html; http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/141007 (last accessed January 30th, 2012).

[77] Supported by a series of agreements with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank in 1989, 1992, 1995 and 1999. The King also activated reforms that would lead to Jordan's entry into the World Trade Organization in 2000. Achievements included the Free Trade Agreement with the United States in 2001 and the revival of the Qualified Industrial Zone (QIZ) program, under which manufacturers could export tariff free to the US market by meeting precise rules of origin. Furthermore, the government privatized part of Jordan's telecommunication system and railways and passed news laws concerning intellectual property and antitrust regulations.

economic globalisation is not perceived as expanding opportunities, rather it is seen as a question of political deprivation. The question of the ratio between expanding population and Jordan's poor natural, agricultural and industrial resources has again to be pushed to the fore, as it was with Iraqi refugees in the Kingdom in 2003-2007. Yet Jordan is one of the world's biggest recipients of foreign aid *per capita*. This vision stands in stark contrast with the representation of Jordan as a national entity opened towards Palestine: something seen, for example, in the petition issued in response to that of the retired officers. Indeed, this second vision of Jordan is closer to the old Hashemite ambition to rule over the Fertile Crescent as a whole. Therefore, the issue of the Palestinians' return stands out as a demographic policy or, as a measure bound to have an effect on the volume, structure and dynamics of a population. Indeed, the issue of return, the discourses and measures pertaining to its implementation underlie two radically different visions of Jordan and Jordanian populations: one, closed, *de jure* and ethnic-based; the other, fluid, *de facto* and assimilationist. Both visions refer to two distinct political projects which each instrumentalise the Palestinians' return issue. For this reason, the Palestinian question and the return vs. *tawtin* options are, more than ever, a crucial challenge for Jordan's political future.

Conclusion and the way forward

The three common UNHCR solutions to protracted refugee problems are integration into host society (assimilation), resettlement to a third county or voluntary repatriation. Palestinians, as well as Arab host states reject the first two, while claiming the last under the label of "right of return". In spite of this, in Jordan and Lebanon, the two main host countries of refugees from Palestine, granting civil rights to refugees raises deep concerns and it is taken as an incentive for resettlement. From a politico-demographic point of view, the aim of the essay was to explore the reasons behind the host countries' reluctance to separate the protection of the Palestinian "cause" (the right of return) from that of Palestinian individuals: all seen from a transnational, human-rights point of view. More generally, it aimed at investigating the various perceived challenges and the outreach of Palestinian refugees' settlement (*tawtin*) in the two countries.

Return and resettlement were taken as the two extremes of a similar demographic policy, defined as a measure able to influence host countries' population size, internal structure, as well as rate of increase. A "political economy" of Palestinian refugee trends and policies in Jordan and Lebanon allowed for reincorporating both into history and for capturing their many implications and outcomes within the specific context studied. In Lebanon, on the national scale, the political sectarianism defining the "Lebanese formula" constructed the Palestinian refugees as a mainly-Sunni community destined to destabilise the sectarian equilibrium of the country. Therefore, Palestinians are seen as a challenge to Christian-Maronite political domination and as a possible support to the alternative political projects and normative representations of nationality and citizenship defended by more secular, Arabist and reformist political forces. On a regional scale, Palestinians may have been a stake in the power struggle between Syria and various regional (Israel; Saudi Arabia) and international (US, France) actors. Notwithstanding the political maze in which Palestinians were caught, all actors (yet for different purposes) converged on the necessity of depriving them of civil rights, until the mid-2000s. In Jordan, the perception and policies applied to Palestinian refugees were affected by two main factors: the Arabist ideology of the Hashemites and their reliance on Palestinian elites; the struggle between the regime and sectors of the rural populations. For the regime and transnational socio-political elites, Palestinian refugees and displaced persons supported Arabist claims, and gave Jordan a demographic and political boost while also securing economic aid flows. For the rural populations, refugees and displaced persons challenge the clientelist ties of "allegiance for food" binding them to the regime. For both countries, Israel's expansionism and ethnic-based citizenship proved destabilizing. Such contexts created the three types of challenges (demographic; economic and linked to security) posed by Palestinians. Yet the challenges had different implications in each country and for each concerned political actor, whether they labelled Palestinians as "Sunnis" or fellow Arabs, as "aliens" or, indeed, as full citizens. To respond to those challenges, Jordan performed a "segmented

assimilation" of refugees and then displaced persons, while a "segmented" form of containment was carried out in Lebanon, reflecting the leeway kept in the implementation of policies.

In such a setup, the granting of civil rights to Palestinians, even disassociated from the right of return and political rights in the host country, was hampered by its politically-destabilising stakes in host countries. After all, civil rights there are constructed as citizenship-bound privileges. Moreover, the Palestinian cause is much of a bargaining instrument for local political actors, on the local yet also on the regional and international levels.

The 1988 severing of the ties between Jordan's East and West Bank, the signing of the Ta'if Accords and the Arab-Israeli peace agreements in Oslo (1993) and Wadi Araba (1994) significantly altered the political, social and economic contexts in Jordan and Lebanon, and blocked the prospects of return for the 1948 refugees. In the meantime, new rights-based approaches and the PNA state-building, rather than a nation-building process, promotes a separation between the claim for the implementation of resolution 194 and the granting of civil rights to refugees in host countries. In Jordan, however, deteriorating economic conditions, coupled with the drift to extremism in Israeli politics, have strengthened the political rift between nationalists (opposing Palestinians' *tawtin*) and the weakened, corruption-ridden regime. In Lebanon, the recent acknowledgement of some elements of civil rights for Palestinians, by contrast, signalled the possible emergence of a political alternative to Lebanist, sectarian-based rule. In both countries, Palestinian refugees, therefore, point at deepening rifts within Jordanian and Lebanese citizenries, touching upon political "imagined communities" (Anderson, 1991). Representations of national populations as closed, *de jure* and ethnic-based increasingly oppose views of nationhood as open, *de facto* and assimilationist.

Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council: the way forward?[78]

As of today, what are the prospects for implementing resolution 194 or at least guaranteeing all Palestinian refugees civil rights in their country of birth? In September 2011 Palestinians tested the alternative strategy of seeking UN recognition of a Palestinian state. Had it been successful, stubborn Israeli resistance to reviving any part of the peace process and any land concession would have confirmed the "extra-territorial" nature (Hanafi, 2006) of the new entity. In order to control the challenges of numbers and demographics, and to provide an outlet for refugees, a change of territorial scale of reference (a confederation between the PNA-administered territories and Jordan, including Israel or not) is periodically advocated for. A reform in political systems is bound to neutralize the stakes of number and has also been called upon with little success to date. In Lebanon: the secularization of political life; in Jordan, the establishment of a constitutional monarchy. However, a recent initiative may have provided a regional solution for the Palestinian refugees' situation and associated political deadlock. It designs the outlines of a regional labour market ranging from Israel to the Gulf countries, a market that could be able to absorb labour flows from Jordan and Lebanon.

On 10 May 2011, at the occasion of the 13th Consultative Summit of the leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the grouping received membership bids from the Kingdoms of Jordan and Morocco[79]. This announcement was received with surprise by the Jordanian, Moroccan and, indeed, GCC populations, including experts and decision-makers. Diverse reactions and attempts to explain this rapid move were aired in the press in the following days: "Some analysts say the decision to include new members stems from political unrest in the Arab world. Some see it as a direct response to the continued Iranian initiatives to destabilize the region […]"[80]. However, another possible outcome of such a move has as yet not been noticed: its potential for providing an economic

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[78] The following lines are based on De Bel-Air, F. / Janbek, K. « Un nouveau Conseil de Coopération du Golfe…. à l'Océan, en passant par la Palestine ? », *Le Monde*, Idées, May 26th, 2011.

[79] "Jordan, Morocco to join GCC", *Khaleej Times*, 11 May 2011.

[80] "Divergent views emerge on GCC expansion plan", *Arab News*, 12 May 2011.

outlet for the Palestinian question. It would keep open the right of return. But, at the same time, it would integrate Palestinian and host countries' populations within a wider geographic and social entity, that of the Middle East and, especially, the Gulf Countries and their booming markets.

As a matter of fact, when analysed against the backdrop of the previously-described contexts (the Palestinian State birth act in September 2011, and the subsequent substitution of the right of return to a transnational citizenship), the inclusion of Jordan in the GCC would have had important consequences. Those consequences touch on the pending problems of: (1) balancing the Palestinian and likewise, Arab frustrations regarding the effective drop of the right of return; (2) strengthening Jordan's existence as a sovereign Hashemite Kingdom; and (3) absorbing the Palestinians into receiving countries' economies.

On the economic level, Jordan would have benefitted from such a move. It would have secured energy supplies at a stable low price, thus sparing its population recurrent economic uncertainties. It would also have entered a larger economic market, with increased opportunities for investment and trade. Moreover, Jordan would also have expanded its local job market, as political grievances are also rooted in a lack of rewarding economic opportunities in the region's clientelist systems and Jordan is no exception (De Bel-Air, 2010). Indeed, being a GCC member would have facilitated access to the Gulf labour markets for the Kingdom's job seekers and unemployed or under-employed skilled and semi-skilled manpower, at least over the short to middle term[81]. For the time being however, several factors, including the 2011 Arab uprisings, seem to have put on hold such far-reaching political and economic endeavours.

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[81] GCC countries are currently implementing a wealth of reforms in the labour sector, aimed at indigenizing manpower – native populations now suffering unemployment and thus in competition with foreign labour. This may suggest that increased flows of Jordanian (and let alone, Moroccan) labour are unlikely to be welcome by GCC populations. Yet, the specificities of the policies implemented suggest also GCC state apparatuses attempts to recapture decision-making power over the design of economy and the labour market, previously largely left under the control of local private employers by virtue of the sponsorship system (kafala). Yet, since 2010 sponsorship has been undergoing deep reforms in most GCC countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar, and was even formally replaced by a public body in Bahrain mid-2009. Thus, GCC states have some leeway for influencing the labour organisation. In any case, job opportunities in the Gulf are still many, as witnessed in Arab newspapers and job advertisement websites and additional Arab labour may have a "transitional" economic role to play, until Gulf countries' populations are trained to perform economic tasks.

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