

# Jordan: Between the Making of a Nation and the Politics of Living

Dina Mansour-Ille, Simone Haysom,  
Sebastian Ille and Jessica Hagen-Zanker  
June 2019

## **Acknowledgments**

The authors would like to thank all those that gave helpful suggestions and comments on this paper, in particular Karen AbuZayd, Roger Zetter and Clarisa Bencomo, who peer reviewed the paper.

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## 1. Context

For most of its existence, Jordan has been island of relative stability and peace in a region beset by conflict. For this reason it has been a major refugee-hosting country since its creation as a state. Migrants and refugees have entered the country fleeing war, seeking employment and medical care and for religious pilgrimage. The large-scale refugee presence has fundamentally altered Jordan's demographic composition, and its relations with Western as well as regional states. While its early history includes policies of remarkable openness and assimilation towards Arab migrants, over time Jordan has moved towards a more restrictive stance towards its refugee residents (De Bel-Air, 2007).

Forcibly displaced people have arrived in distinct waves:

- Palestinian refugees (1948) fleeing violence in the aftermath of the creation of the State of Israel. Around 100,000 Palestinians fled to Jordan.
- Palestinian refugees (1967) fleeing violence during the Six Day War between Israel and Syria, Egypt and Jordan. Around 140,000 fled the Gaza Strip, then under Egyptian administration, and around 240,000 left the West Bank, then under Jordanian administration.
- Lebanese refugees (1975–90) displaced by the civil war there. About a million Lebanese fled their country, many of whom crossed the border into Jordan.
- Iraqi refugees (1990s) fled persecution and violence and to escape the effects of economic sanctions. Around 200,000–300,000 mostly middle-class Iraqis fled to Jordan.
- Refugees (mid-2000s–) from the Iraqi elite fled to Amman in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime. This wave was small but ostentatious. When Baghdad and other cities descended into sectarian violence, thousands of middle class and poor Iraqis followed.
- Syrian refugees (2013–) displaced by conflict. The UN has registered 661,114 Syrian refugees in Jordan.

A further demographic shock was the expulsion of 300,000 Jordanians of Palestinian descent from Kuwait during the Gulf War in 1991, forcing them to return to Jordan (Chatelard, 2011). In addition, an unknown number of Palestinians have migrated to Jordan in search of employment and investment opportunities, as have many labour migrants from other Middle Eastern and North African countries, and from Asia. Many of these waves of migration have been large in themselves, and in proportion to the total population of Jordan at the time. Between 1948 and 1950, Jordan's population tripled, with a third of that increase caused by the reception of Palestinian refugees (Chatelard, 2011). Today, UNHCR-registered Syrian refugees (a lower figure than the government's estimate of Syrians in Jordan) are equivalent to almost 10% of the Jordanian population of 6.6 million (Jordan Times, 2016; UNHCR, 2017).

The situation of Palestinian refugees in Jordan is unique in the region. In 1948, most Palestinian refugees were granted full Jordanian citizenship rights, and they and their descendants (who retain refugee status) are regarded as Jordanians for all legal purposes. Today, Jordan is host to the largest population of registered Palestinian

refugees in the world, estimated at more than two million; perhaps half of the population is of Palestinian origin (El-Abed, 2006; Ryan, 2010).

Our focus in this case study is on Palestinian refugees and their experience from 1948 onwards, and on Syrian refugees arriving in Jordan in 2013–14. We also shed light on the experience of Iraqi refugees, namely those arriving in Jordan after the US-led invasion in 2003. Each of these refugee populations has been subject to varying policies on integration, naturalisation and employment, and each has received varying levels of international support, making Jordan an instructive case study of the effects of different approaches.

### ***1.1 Camps, cities and settlement patterns***

Most refugee movements to Jordan have been in massive waves over a few months or a few years, altering the demographic composition of major cities or the country as a whole. Inevitably, these influxes played a role in Jordan's urban development. Western aid to support refugees has been used to build infrastructure that refugees and citizens share, and wealthy Palestinian refugees invested in housing and the private sector in the first decades of the state, helping to grow nascent urban centres (El-Abed, 2004).

Refugee camps also play an important role in this story. When Palestinians first fled to Jordan in 1948, the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) and the Jordanian government established camps to house them. This first wave of refugees largely comprised families from poor rural backgrounds, who settled in camps with relatives from the same village in Palestine. Over time, Jordanian cities expanded and absorbed the camps, and refugees moved into the streets around them. Today, the boundary between camp and city is not obvious to the untrained eye. In recent decades, the upward socio-economic mobility of many Palestinian families has meant that they can afford better-quality housing, and they have moved to other neighbourhoods. According to UNRWA, only around 18% of Palestinian refugees living in Jordan are currently residing in the country's ten recognised camps (UNRWA, 2017). Meanwhile, other population groups have moved in, and camps also serve as reception areas for new migrants. In the mid-2000s, many middle class and poor urban displaced Iraqis took up residence in the capital, Amman, in middle-income neighbourhoods, informal areas and Palestinian refugee camps (Chatelard, 2008).

As the number of Syrians fleeing into Jordan picked up pace camps were built, and their management soon became securitised and restrictive. At times refugees have been subject to strict limitations on their movements in and out of camps. Approximately 21% of Syrian refugees are in six camps in the north: Zaatari, Azraq, the Emirati Jordanian Camp, King Hussein Park and Cyber City (UNHCR, 2017). However, most Syrian refugees, like Iraqis before them, settled in urban areas, following family members, tribal links or employment opportunities in particular towns or cities, primarily in the northern governorates and in Amman and Zarqa (Bellamy et al., 2017). As of July 2017, Amman, Irbid, Mafraq and Zarqa governorates were hosting – outside of the camps in these provinces – 76% of registered refugees (UNHCR, 2017). Syrians in urban areas are able to access government-subsidised medical care and schooling, and benefit from government subsidies on cooking fuel, bread and water and electricity. Inside the camps, UNHCR provides humanitarian assistance, shelter, legal

aid and access to the legal system.

The Jordanian government maintains that Syrians will not be allowed to naturalise and must return to Syria or be resettled elsewhere. The continued existence of closed camps serves to underscore this message. Camps have variously come to function as reception areas for newly arrived refugees, as visual shorthands for the country's refugee burden, and even as prisons or punishment zones for refugees found working in the informal economy (Bellamy et al., 2017). Jordanian towns and cities remain the real zones of refugee integration.

### ***1.2 Increasingly restrictive policies and durable solutions***

While Jordan's early history is marked by its remarkable mass naturalisation of Palestinian refugees, this was the high-water mark of refugee integration. Even Palestinian refugees from Gaza in 1967 were received under a different regime and given temporary Jordanian passports, rather than being granted Jordanian nationality (El-Abed, 2004). Today, more than 40 years after their displacement, ex-Gazans and their descendants remain temporary residents. Each subsequent refugee wave has enjoyed fewer rights to residency and employment, and the memories attached to previous refugee movements condition how the state reacts to subsequent arrivals (Lenner, 2016). While Jordan remains a relatively generous, tolerant and consistent host, its attitude to both labour migrants and refugees has become more restrictive.

A number of factors have pushed for the reform of policies concerning refugees. Over several decades the discourse around naturalisation has been permeated by fears that Jordan would be made the homeland of all displaced Palestinians, as part of a political 'solution' to the Arab–Israeli conflict that has at times been mooted by Israelis, and fears that Jordan would be destabilised by repeated outbreaks of conflict in neighbouring states. The deepening of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the Iraq war, growing instability in Lebanon and, lastly, the Syrian civil war have all contributed to a trend that increasingly sees refugees in light of the threat they pose to domestic security.

In this respect Jordan is hardly alone. Western countries in particular have also backtracked on their commitment to providing asylum, and so too do Jordan's neighbours. The Syrian crisis has demonstrated the limits of regional refugee hosting as Syria's neighbours have progressively closed their borders to new arrivals. Jordan is no exception. Its western border was sealed in mid-2013, followed by the north-eastern border in June 2016, trapping tens of thousands of refugees in a no-man's land (Hargrave and Pantuliano, 2016). Partly as a result, there has been a huge decrease in the number of arrivals from Syria following spikes in 2012 and 2013. Jordan's entry policies have also kept out young men travelling on their own, as well as Palestinian Syrian refugees.

An increasingly restrictive attitude, enduring violence and instability in Syria, the Arab–Israeli conflict and continued violence in Iraq all bode poorly for refugees achieving any of the traditional durable solutions. The great majority of Palestinians living in Jordan are naturalised and therefore long ago attained de jure local integration, though 'Gazan' Palestinians have no immediate prospects of local integration. The government likewise maintains that naturalisation is not an option

for Iraqis or Syrians. Resettlement opportunities in the (primarily) Western countries that have historically resettled refugees are in decline, and governments face increasingly hardline domestic attitudes to immigration of all kinds.

## **2. Legal and policy frameworks**

Jordan is not a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and UNHCR operates in the country under a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the government. According to the UNHCR website, '[i]n the absence of any international or national legal refugee instruments in force in the country, the MoU establishes the parameters for cooperation between UNHCR and the Government'. Such parameters include that asylum, once granted, is not bound by time or by a refugee's geographical origin, and the principle of non-refoulement should be respected. UNHCR undertakes status determination.

Arab labour migrants and refugees have in the past been admitted to the country on terms that emphasise pan-Arab solidarity and cultural values of hospitality. In practice, the state does not use the term 'refugee' in its own discourse and prefers to label displaced people and labour migrants alike as 'guests'. Although Article 21 of the Jordanian Constitution prohibits the extradition of 'political refugees', Jordan itself does not have a highly developed domestic legal framework for dealing with refugees. Law No. 24 of 1973 on Residence and Foreigners' Affairs requires that those entering the country as asylum-seekers present themselves to a police station within 48 hours of their arrival, and Article 31 of the same law allows the Minister of the Interior to determine on a case-by-case basis whether people entering the country illegally will be deported. The law does not explain the conditions under which individuals seeking political asylum will be recognised and acquire such a status, as with the 1951 UN Refugee Convention.

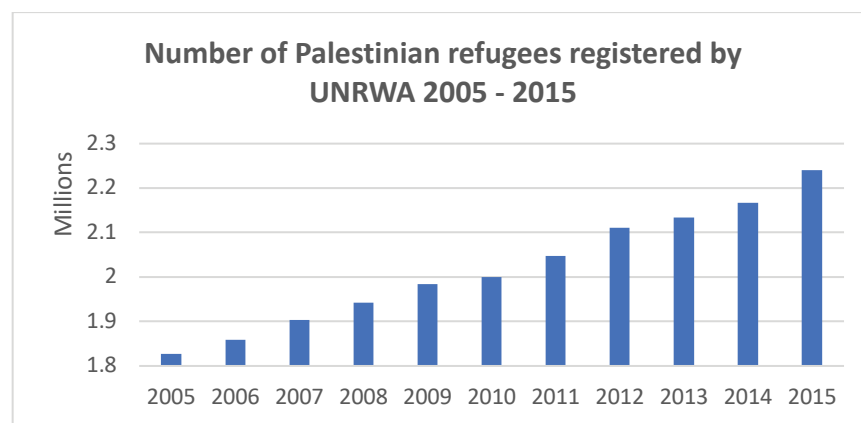
The Jordanian state is highly centralised, and the discourse around refugee issues is led through the Office of the Prime Minister. The government frames its current responsibilities in terms of its historic role as a refugee host, emphasising that Syrian refugees are received on the basis of solidarity, hospitality and indigenous norms, while also making clear that the refugee crisis poses huge challenges for the government's ability to deliver services to its own citizens. UN agencies involved in the refugee response liaise with line ministries (such as Health or Education) and the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC). MOPIC acts as the gatekeeper for governmental approval for aid projects. In addition, international NGOs deal with the Hashemite Foundation, a quasi-government organisation with strong links to the royal establishment, and which acts as intermediary between civil society and the state. Within the international aid system, UNHCR leads the coordination of the response for Syrians, Iraqis and all other refugees bar Palestinians.

Both the state and the international aid system are important providers of services to refugees. While UNHCR and its NGO partners provide a range of services inside the camps, the majority of refugees outside the camps rely on access to government health and education services, as well as UNHCR cash assistance (if they qualify for it). Refugees must have both an Asylum Seeker Certificate, issued upon registration, and a Ministry of Interior service card, for which they must register at a police station, in

order to access these services. Both Palestinian refugee waves were highly reliant on UNRWA upon their arrival, and UNRWA has remained the main provider of international assistance to Palestinian refugees in Jordan.

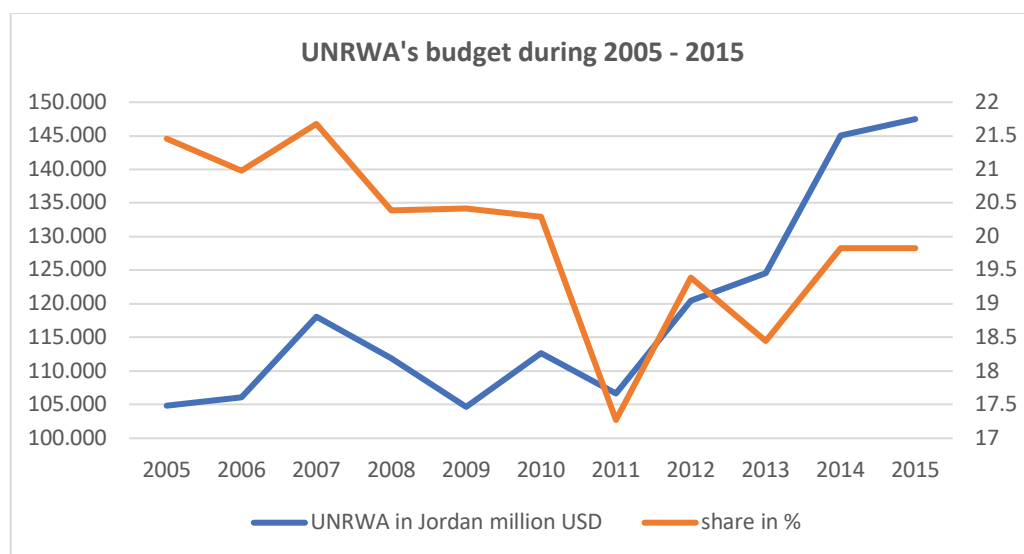
UNRWA concentrates most of its budget on education, alongside relief, infrastructure and health services. It supports almost 100,000 students a year (see Figure 4) and 172 schools for basic education, and trains more than 600 teachers per year (UNRWA, 2017c), as well as providing vocational training to almost 4,000 young people. Students' literacy and educational attainment are among the highest in the region (UNRWA, 2017) and student results, especially in maths and science, are significantly above-average compared to public schools in Jordan and in international assessments (World Bank, 2014). Registered refugees also benefit from primary health care and, under certain conditions, hospital care. In 2016, UNRWA's 25 primary health care centres dealt with over 1.55 million visits (UNRWA, 2017c). Almost 60,000 refugees received cash transfers in 2016, and almost 7,000 participated in micro-credit initiatives. Even so, when compared with their non-camp counterparts Palestinians living in the camps are still significantly poorer, live in larger households, achieve lower educational levels, suffer from poorer health and rely more heavily on UNRWA's support and other relief services. Those without a Jordanian passport suffer the most, with non-citizens three times more likely to live below the poverty line.

**Figure 1: Number of Palestinian refugees registered by UNRWA, 2005–2015**



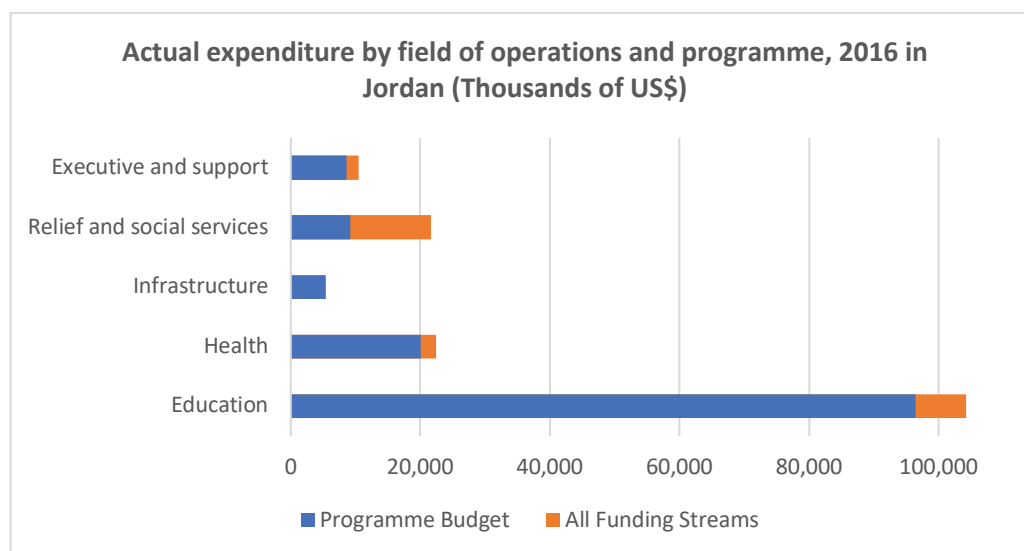
Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Palestinian Affairs, Yearbook 2015

**Figure 2: UNRWA budget, 2005–2015**



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Palestinian Affairs, Yearbook 2015

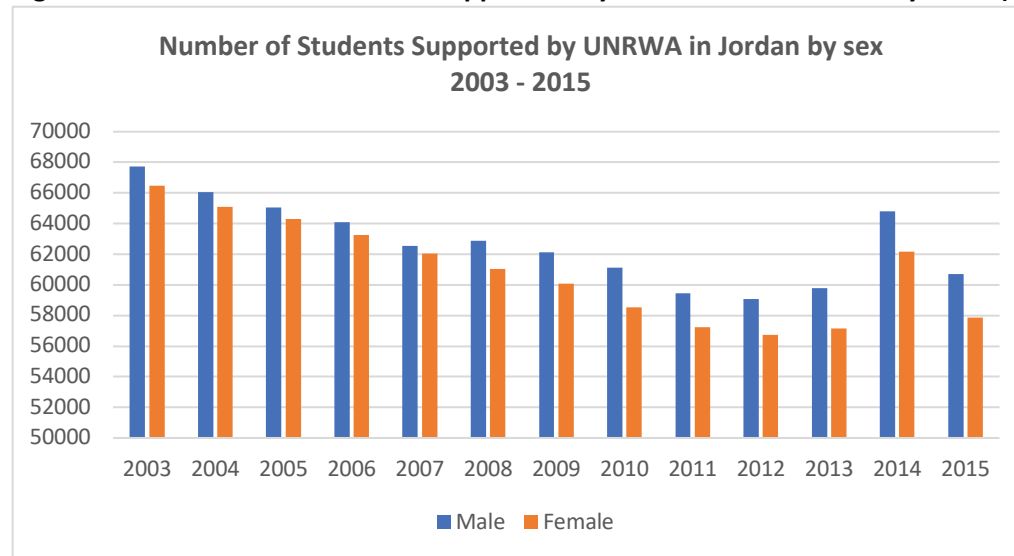
**Figure 3: UNRWA expenditure by area of operation and programme, 2016 (US\$ thousands)**



Source: UNRWA, annual operational report 2016.



**Figure 4: Number of students supported by UNRWA in Jordan by sex (2003–15)**



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Department of Palestinian Affairs, Yearbook 2015.

## **2.1 Right to work**

According to the 1998 MoU between UNHCR and the Jordanian government, UNHCR is obliged to find durable resettlement solutions for recognised asylum-seekers after six months of recognising their status – although the Jordanian government does not enforce this provision in practice. In finding ‘durable solutions’, UNHCR treats Jordan as a *transit* country, not a final destination. As noted, the Jordanian Constitution prohibits the extradition of ‘political refugees’, and Article 2(1) of the MoU between UNHCR and Jordan obliges Jordan to uphold the principle of non-refoulement.

Once their status is recognised by UNHCR, refugees are not automatically granted specific rights that take account of their vulnerability, such as the right to residency, employment, public education and healthcare. They are instead treated as foreigners and are not granted the right to work. The Jordanian Labour Law of 1996 makes no mention of refugees or asylum-seekers (Kelberer, 2017). Law No. 24 of 1973 stipulates that Jordanian nationals and companies must not employ foreigners without a valid work permit.

The legislation around labour migrants has also often been constructed around bilateral treaties with neighbouring states, such as the treaty signed with Egypt in 2007, which has allowed hundreds of thousands of Egyptians to come to the country as temporary labour migrants, but with their labour restricted to certain industries and with labourers expected to meet other requirements, such as medical and criminal record tests. In practice, many Egyptians work in the informal sector too, where they compete with other forced and voluntary migrants. With the strict and expensive regulatory environment around work permits, many are forced to work informally. Here, refugees and labour migrants alike face protection threats associated with informal work: exploitation, harassment and abuse by employers.

The legal and policy regime, and its fluctuations, highlight how different displaced groups have been afforded markedly different rights, with consequences for the

ability to integrate. The laws around employment and economic activity demonstrate this. Palestinian refugees from 1948 and their descendants are full citizens and have full rights to employment, though a policy of 'Jordanisation' of the public sector restricts their access to public sector jobs. 'Gazan' Palestinian refugees have more limited rights and must apply for work permits on the same basis as other foreigners. Their rights to own property are also curtailed, and they are only issued 'temporary' passports, which restricts their ability to travel and so to become migrant labourers themselves (El-Abed, 2006). Iraqis fleeing in the mid-2000s were received as foreign 'guests' but given their wealthier and more educated profile and smaller numbers they were in practice granted more stable residency rights, and their informal employment was more-or-less tolerated (Chatelard, 2011). Wealthy Iraqi refugees were able to buy residence rights and find highly skilled employment. Iraqi refugees who are not rich are mostly without a secure legal right to be in the country and risk deportation for working illegally. They accordingly have little or no sustainable income and are struggling to support themselves and their families.

Syrians were initially received according to a bilateral treaty between the two countries that permitted reciprocal freedom of entry and movement and allowed Syrians to work in Jordan (and vice versa). Although Syrians still required work permits under the treaty this was weakly enforced, especially as migrant Syrian agricultural workers filled important seasonal labour gaps (Aljuni and Kawar, 2014). When Syrian refugee flows became more intense, this provision began to be more strictly monitored and additional policies about registration were implemented. While in the first few months of the Syrian influx this situation continued, in 2013 the government began to crack down on informal workers and insist, through threat of deportation to camps and fines for employers, that Syrians be subject to the same legal requirements as other foreign workers. In mid-2016 and again in early 2017, there were reports of deportations and forced expulsions of registered Syrian refugees by the Jordanian authorities (see for example HRW, 2017).

Prior to the Jordan Compact (see below), the requirements for a work permit were: 1. valid identity documents – a requirement that many refugees could not meet as they lost their identity documents en route (there are no special laws/regulations for refugees); 2. passing a background security check by the Ministry of Interior (MOI) – a deterrent to vulnerable refugees who feared that this might jeopardise their safety and status; and 3. a sponsor/employer willing to pay between \$240 and \$522 for the permit. There is also a list of professions and industries that are by law only open to Jordanian citizens. These include medical, engineering, administrative, accounting and clerical professions; telephone and warehouse employment; sales; education; hairdressing; decorating; fuel sales; electrical and mechanical occupations; guards; drivers; and construction workers (Library of Congress, 2016). Recently, an additional 11 other job sectors have reportedly been closed to foreign workers (El-Hindy, 2016). Permits tie workers to the specific employer who applied for the permit: they are not transferable to other industries or even other businesses. Work permits also require employers to make payments into Jordan's social welfare system, which refugees and employers alike resent.

The Jordan Compact,<sup>60</sup> agreed in 2016, is intended to ease these regulations and encourage the Jordanian government to issue more permits. Research shows mixed views on the impact of the Compact. The number of permits issued has not increased at the expected rate, due to a range of factors. Critical among these is that, while the government provides the permits without charge, it has not removed the requirement that refugees present Syrian identification documents (Mellinger and Van Berlo, 2016). [There were reports in 2016 that Syrians without identity documents or valid passports continued to face difficulties in relation to the right to work \(see for example NRC, 2016\).](#) A large number of refugees only have the skills to do jobs that are by law reserved for Jordanians, and hence work permits will not allow these refugees to pursue work according to their skills. Concerns persist over the security and low pay of jobs even with a permit, meaning that refugees remain reliant on assistance provided by UNHCR. Some refugees have expressed concerns about losing their right to resettlement by applying for a permit, and thereby demonstrating economic integration.

The regulatory environment around starting businesses and registering them with the government is sometimes unclear and often complex (UNHCR, 2016). The wealthiest Syrian refugees have been able to gain a residence permit through the 1973 Residence Law, which allows foreign entrepreneurs with commercial or industrial ventures (ILO, 2015a) to apply for 'investor status' through a large investment (currently 250,000JD (\$351,000)). This is the same route that some displaced members of the Iraqi elite took in 2005–2006. Owing to the large capital investment required, this has only been an option for a small number of rich and successful refugees. Jordan has benefited not only from the capital investment, but also through the relocation of manufacturing and other Syrian and Iraqi businesses to the Jordanian economy (ILO, 2015b).

For foreigners wanting to start businesses without residency rights, Jordanian law requires that, in some sectors, a Jordanian citizen should own 50% or 49% of a business's capital and made a minimum investment. This minimum investment has fluctuated between 10,000JD (\$14,000) and 50,000JD (\$70,000). When a non-Jordanian without a Jordanian partner tries to register a business, the matter is referred to the Foreign Investors Affairs Department in the Ministry of the Interior, which gives final approval on these applications. In practice, many applications are refused (Bellamy et al., 2017). Refugees with more social and economic capital have been able to enter into business partnerships. The legal framework for registering small and home-based businesses is unclear and many, if not most, small businesses, whether run by locals or migrants, are not registered and operate in the informal economy.

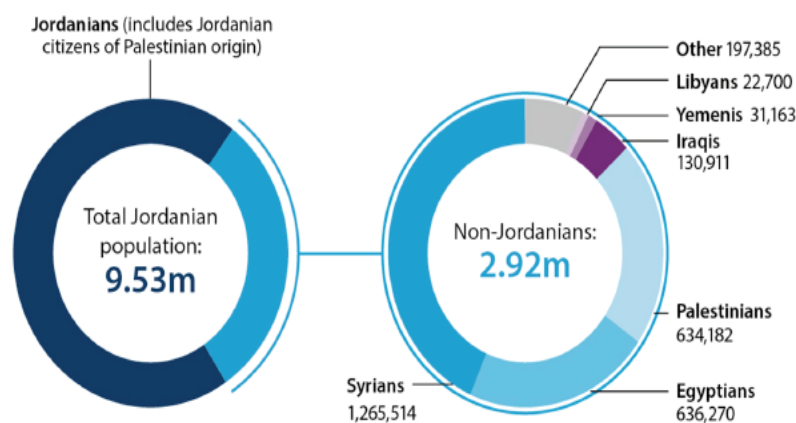
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<sup>60</sup> In February 2016, as part of the London conference on '[Supporting Syria and the Region](#)', the Jordanian government, development partners and international and non-governmental organisations came together to explore ways to create jobs and investment opportunities for countries most affected by the Syrian refugee crisis. The resulting agreement, the Jordan Compact, is a potential blueprint for other host countries looking for ways to facilitate the socioeconomic integration of refugees.

### 3. The impact of forced displacement on Jordan

Jordan hosts the second-highest number of refugees as a proportion of its inhabitants and is considered to be the sixth-largest refugee-hosting country in the world (UNHCR Factsheet, 2017). Refugees account for a large share of the population, and in some municipalities, they outnumber residents (European Parliament, 2017). Historically, forced displacement has been an integral part of the formation of the Jordanian nation, and it continues to shape Jordanian culture and politics today.

**Figure 5: Population breakdown, 2015**



Source: European Parliament, based on data from the Jordanian Department of Statistics.

#### 3.1 Palestinian refugees

Jordanian citizens of Palestinian refugee origin are cultural and political figures and form the backbone of the private sector: while hard data about their impact is lacking, it is impossible to imagine Jordanian society without them – the country would be half the size it is. The development of their community is inextricable from the development of the Jordanian state, and the growth of Jordan's cities

### Significant historical moments in Jordanian–Palestinian relations

- **In 1946 Jordan gained its independence**, and in 1948 the country saw a mass influx of Palestinian refugees as a result of the Arab–Israeli conflict.
  - **The annexation of the West Bank** and the emergence of a rhetoric stressing unity between Palestinians and Jordanians prompted a general attitude of openness by Jordanians towards Palestinians.
  - The **mass naturalisation of Palestinians** allowed them to participate in political and social life and become part of Jordanian culture and society. This also resulted in the rise of a more inclusive rhetoric describing Jordan as part of a larger, regional Arab and Muslim identity, rather than an identity focused on tribalism and kinship.
  - **The 1967 defeat** led to the rise of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Palestinian nationalist movement, which forced a change of perceptions and attitudes on both the Palestinian and Jordanian side as the PLO gained a stronger hold in Jordan’s refugee camps. This was perceived by King Hussein as a threat to his authority and a general threat to security. A major confrontation occurred as the government attempted to disarm the camps.
  - **The 1970–71 conflict** between the Jordanian army and the Palestinian resistance movement, which broke out in September 1970 (‘Black September’), saw months of fighting and heavy casualties on both sides. A large number of Palestinians fled to Lebanon, Iraq, Syria and the Occupied Territories. Relations between Palestinians and Jordanians deteriorated further (Al-Abed, 2004). A Transjordanian nationalist movement emerged that stressed a national identity that excluded Palestinians and Palestinian-Jordanians.
- In 1988 Jordan severed legal and administrative ties with the West Bank**, resulting in the complete separation of the East and West Banks and the revocation of citizenship rights of those residing in the West Bank at the time (Al-Abed, 2004; Ramahi, 2015), marking the start of a process creating ‘tiers’ of citizenship rights and documentation determined by origin and residence.

#### 3.1.1 Demographic effects

Estimates of the number of registered Palestinian refugees in Jordan range between 634,000 (as per the figures of the Jordanian government) and 2.1 million (as per UNRWA). An estimated 43%–60% of the Jordanian population is either Palestinian or of Palestinian origin (Abdullah, King of Jordan, 2009; Al-Abed, 2004), while stateless Palestinians in Jordan comprise 18% of the total population. The variations in these figures reflect the complexity of the Jordanian–Palestinian relationship, and the various categories of rights and statuses among Palestinian refugees (Ramahi, 2015). Beyond these headline figures, data and analysis on the impact of Palestinians on Jordan’s demographic profile is sparse. One study looking at fertility rates among Palestinian and Jordanian women finds that fertility is slightly higher for Jordanians (Khawaja, 2002). Another study (van Hear, 1995) argues that Palestinians returning to Jordan en masse in the early 1990s resulted in greater demand for education and health services: 57,000 new school places had to be found (*ibid.*).

### **3.1.2 Political and social effects**

Of all refugee nationalities, Palestinians have had by far the most significant impact on Jordan's history, culture, society and politics. The literature, particularly in Arabic, is expansive when it comes to assessing and reflecting on the impact of Palestinians in Jordan from 1948 onwards. Their presence in Jordan's modern history since 1948 – just two years after the declaration of independence – placed them at the heart of debates on identity and nationalism from the 1940s through to the 1970s. The Israeli annexation of the West Bank and the emergence of a discourse around the unity of the 'two banks' further contributed to an assimilation process that created a common culture and a shared history between Palestinians and Jordanians. Beyond this, Palestinian displacement (referred to in Arabic as *al-taghriba al-falastinia*) is also part of a wider narrative around the Arab–Israeli conflict, pan-Arabism, statelessness, state-building and the right of return (Tamari, 1997; Knudsen and Hanafi (eds), 2011).

Since the beginning of the Palestinian crisis, the Jordanian government has adopted a policy aimed at integration, first through naturalisation and then through granting equal political and civil rights and allowing Palestinians to positively engage in political and social life. By the 1950s, naturalised Palestinians were allowed to vote in parliamentary elections, and naturalised Palestinians assumed important government positions. One, Mohammed Al-Abbasi, became Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1970, during the events of Black September. Following the end of the conflict between Jordanian forces and the Palestinian resistance movement, the political impact of Palestinians was severely restricted; legal and administrative ties with the West Bank were severed and citizenship rights curtailed, pushing a significant number of Palestinians out of political life.

Despite their political marginalisation, Palestinians continued to have a significant impact on Jordanian society and culture. The Palestinian plight became part of Jordanian social history and represents an integral part of Jordanian culture and arts. Inter-marriage between Jordanians and Palestinians is common; Queen Rania al-Yassin, the wife of Jordan's ruling monarch, is of Palestinian origin.

### **3.1.3 Urban and spatial impacts**

A good deal of the literature on the Palestinian experience in Jordan focuses on the urban and spatial impact of Palestinian refugees, and the visible physical changes they have brought to urban spaces, particularly in the appearance and architecture of Amman. Hanania (2014) identifies both positive and negative effects. The 1948 displacements were followed by a 'formative period', where streets were paved, modern buildings and government offices were built, pavements constructed, and trees planted throughout the city. Architects and engineers, many of them of non-Jordanian origin, were contracted to help reshape and modernise the capital. A number of notable architects, such as Nasri Muqhar and Jabra Khamis, were Palestinian. However, the large and rapid influx of Palestinians – Amman's population increased from 65,500 in 1946 to 175,000 by 1959 (Hanania, 2014) – also meant that the city's development was rapid and disorganised. From a quiet urban space characterised by Arab and Ottoman architecture, Amman was rapidly turned into a vibrant and busy city. Ottoman and Arab urban architecture was replaced with Western styles based on a vision of building a 'modern city'; green space was lost as

the city grew, and social demarcations became more pronounced as the wealthy moved to the hills, leaving the centre of the city to the urban poor (Hanania, 2014).

### **3.1.4 Economic impacts**

Although a large majority of Palestinians both outside and inside the camps hold Jordanian citizenship (96% and 85%), a significant number of those displaced from Gaza as a result of the 1967 war do not hold a Jordanian passport, but predominantly a two-year temporary passport without a national number. The high degree of naturalisation makes it difficult to obtain distinct data for Jordanians of Palestinian ancestry, since the Bureau of Statistics does not report information on ethnic origin (Reiter, 2004).

The strongest insight about the current situation of Palestinian refugees and their development over the past decades can be obtained from two Fafo reports (Arneberg, 1997 and Tiltnes and Zahng, 2013). It is essential to distinguish between refugees who are living in the ten recognised refugee camps and those outside them. According to Tiltnes and Zahng (2013), there is little statistical difference between out-of-camp refugees and those who have obtained Jordanian nationality. These refugees have been and are significantly better off compared to those who still reside in camps but are still subject to various forms of discrimination. Palestinians have been under-represented in parliament<sup>61</sup> and face discrimination, above all in the state administration (Centre for Strategic Studies, 1995; Al-Monitor, 2013). The situation is aggravated by the higher fertility rate of 3.3 births, the highest of Palestinian refugees in the region according to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Although a disenfranchised majority, Palestinians are still in a better economic and political situation than in any other country in the region (MAR, 2006).

Palestinians have historically economically outperformed native Jordanians, and they dominate the private sector (Reiter, 2004). Around 300 Palestinian companies accounted for 40% of Jordanian GDP in the 2000s, with the largest share taken by the Arab Bank. Palestinians' economic stronghold is in commerce and real estate, while Jordanians control the public sector and agriculture. This means that they are more exposed than Palestinians to international market price fluctuations and economic and political crises (*ibid.*). The majority of Palestinian wealth is concentrated within a small elite of Palestinian businessmen.

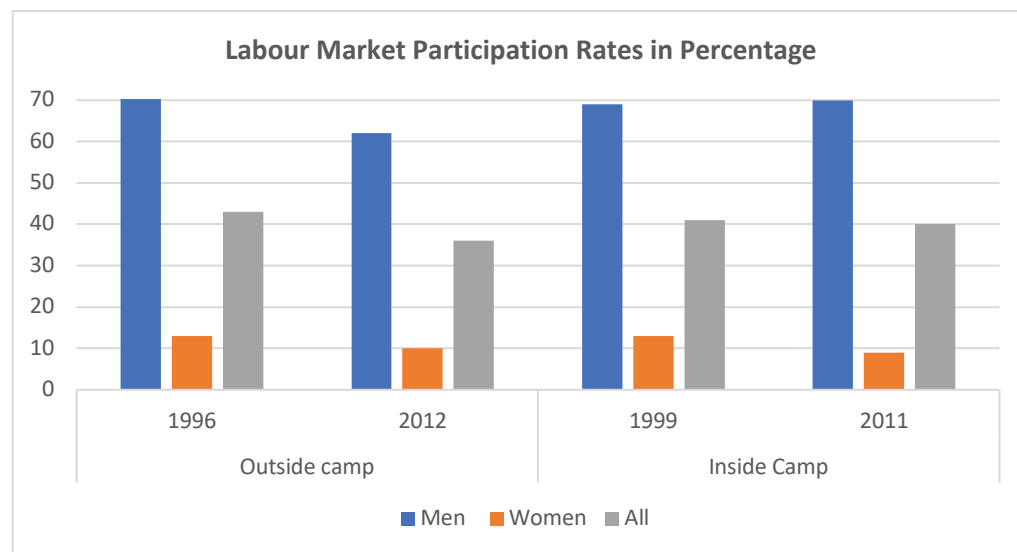
Comparing the two Fafo reports (Arneberg, 1997 and Tiltnes and Huafeng, 2013) indicates that, over the past 20 years, child mortality and acute malnutrition have been very rare in Jordan, in the case of the former particularly among refugees and displaced children. Both reports also describe significant differences between those refugees living in camps and those outside of camps with respect to other determinants, with little change over recent years. In 1997, those living inside the camps generally had a lower level of education and fewer opportunities to attend school. University education was more common among non-refugees, except for those returning from the Gulf. Consequently, refugees outside the camps were often skilled workers and drivers, working in sales, trade, commercial services,

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<sup>61</sup> Only nine out of 55 senators are Palestinian and Palestinians obtained only 18 of the 110 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. None of 12 governorates is led by a Palestinian (Minority Rights Group, 2017).

manufacturing, education and health services, while those living in the camps frequently relied on transfers, had lower incomes and thus lower wealth levels and less access to income-generating resources such as land. In addition, those not living in camps were more frequently self-employed. Wage was the main income for both groups, but those living inside the camps earned less income due to lower labour market participation and employment levels and lower pay. While labour force participation for males stood at 71%, only 15% of women were looking for or working in a job and reported themselves to be housewives more frequently than any other group.

**Figure 6: Labour market participation rates (%)**



Source: Fafo 2012: *Insights into the Socio-economic Conditions of Palestinian Refugees in Jordan*

Non-refugees tended to work in occupations at both ends of the spectrum, frequently working as professionals and managers, but also as cleaners and messengers.

The differences between those outside and inside the camps are historically determined. Those who settled in the camps were largely peasants with little or no educational background, whereas those outside the camps frequently belonged to the educated urban middle class (Barakat, 1973). In relative terms little has changed since then, though overall Palestinians have seen a gradual improvement, mainly in terms of educational attainment, especially among female students. Tiltnes and Zhang highlight the persistent disparity between camp and non-camp populations 16 years after the previous Fafo report. Those living in camps are still significantly poorer, live in larger households, achieve lower educational levels, suffer from poorer health and rely more heavily on UNRWA support and other relief services. Those without a Jordanian passport suffer the most. Non-citizens are three times as likely to live below the poverty line of \$1.25. In recent years, the government has tried to address some of the problems refugees face by supporting projects offering free health insurance to children under six and subsidising health care.

Education remains a key issue. The educational gap between those living inside the camps and non-camp refugees is increasing, allowing twice as many men under the age of 35 living outside of camps to complete post-secondary education than those



living in camps. However, younger cohorts tend to be more likely to complete basic schooling and achieve higher educational attainment than older cohorts. Although the education gap between both groups remains, women inside the camps tend to do worse than men in older cohorts, but better in younger cohorts. This difference is not evident between the sexes with respect to those under 35 living outside of camps. Since literacy is strongly correlated with education, literacy is higher outside than inside the camps. In addition, the educational attainment of the household head reflects strongly on the reading and writing proficiency of other household members.

Due to the high fertility rate, the share of the working age-population is lower inside the camps than outside. Age is one of the principal reasons for economic inactivity, with health and lack of suitable jobs being of lesser importance. Those living outside the camps are on average educated for longer. Youth inside the camps more frequently entered the labour market at an earlier age yet were also more likely to be unemployed. The overall labour market participation rate is similar for both groups, while men inside the camps enter the labour market sooner and retire earlier than men outside the camps. Figure 6 shows that labour market participation fell significantly among those living outside the camp, as well as women living inside the camps. This is explained by a significant drop in the share of adults who want to work but are currently not employed (from 20% to 10% for men, and 5% to 2% for women). For men, this is primarily explained by the large share of men with a post-secondary degree pursuing further education and no longer actively seeking work. Men who completed their studies and are married are significantly more likely to work as part of their responsibilities as a wage-earner. For women, marriage entails family responsibilities such as motherhood and domestic labour, preventing them from finding employment.

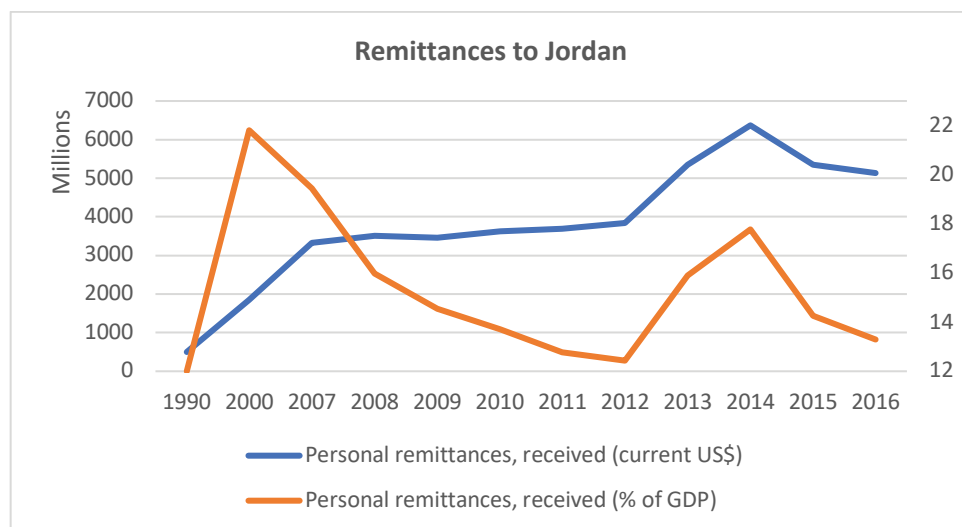
Although Palestinian refugees are well-integrated into the labour market, they less frequently work in the public sector compared to native Jordanians, for the reasons previously outlined. Women who are employed are more frequently highly educated and work as professionals or managers, mostly in the services, education and health sectors. Women living in the camps more frequently work in trade, are agricultural workers or are employed in elementary occupations, whereas those outside the camps are employed as office workers, professionals, managers and technicians. The occupational landscape for men has not seen meaningful change over recent years, and differences in occupation between men inside and outside the camps follow a pattern similar to that for women. Outside the camps, women are three times as likely to work as professionals or in managerial positions and twice as likely to work in technical or administrative professions than men. Men, on the other hand, are five times more likely to work in trade and agriculture and are more frequently employed in the manufacturing sector. In general, unemployment is negatively correlated with education for men, but positively correlated for women. Unemployment rates are higher inside the camps than outside.

Palestinians outside the camps are paid higher hourly wages and are entitled to a wider range of benefits (especially sick leave, paid vacation and holidays) than those living in camps, even working in the same profession. The latter group report worse working conditions and lower job security. Those outside the camps enjoy significantly higher annual household incomes, possess a larger amount of durable goods (such as

air conditioning units and vacuum cleaners) and have higher wealth and economic status than those residing inside the camps. This group is comparable to non-refugees.

Wage income constitutes the principal source of revenue, while transfers and income from self-employment are becoming increasingly rare. Poverty support from the National Aid Fund and UNRWA is more frequently given to those living in the camps. They also rely more heavily on remittances. A higher share of those inside the camps falls below the absolute poverty line, while growing income disparity means that a higher share of those outside the camps fall below the relative poverty line.

**Figure 7: Remittances to Jordan**

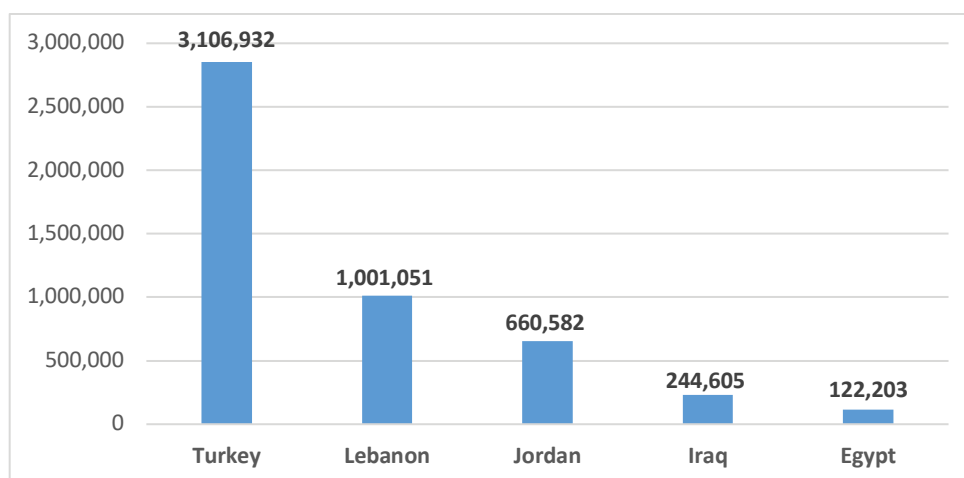


Source: DataBank, World Development Indicators, The World Bank

### 3.2 Syrian refugees

The conflict in Syria has triggered what the European Commission has labelled ‘the world’s largest humanitarian crisis since World War II’ (European Commission, 2016).

**Figure 8: Syrian refugees in the MENA Region**



Source: UNHCR Syria Regional Response (as of 31 July 2017)

The vast majority of Syrian refugees (over 3m) are in Turkey and Lebanon (1m), with some 660,000 in Jordan and substantial populations in Iraq and Egypt. While the Syrian influx into Jordan has been depicted as a drain on the country's resources, putting pressure on its infrastructure and increasing competition for jobs in the informal economy in a context of national youth unemployment rates that reached 16% at the end of 2016 (Department of Statistics, 2016), some commentators have disputed this, arguing that refugees have been scapegoated for pre-existing service delivery problems and the behaviour of a rentier private sector (Mansur, in Al-Khatib and Lenner (eds), 2015). Such concerns also ignore the benefits that both the crisis and the conflict have created, with the relocation of major factories and businesses from Syria to Jordan, increased consumption as a result of the population boom (many refugees receive cash vouchers) and significant inflows of international aid (The Economist, 2013; Mansur, in Al-Khatib and Lenner (eds), 2016). Even so, the costs involved in providing assistance to Syrian refugees are substantial, amounting to about 1% of GDP in 2013 and 2014 (USAID, 2014). Foreign direct investment has plummeted, tourism and trade have declined, public debt has increased, and the economy overall has contracted.

There is limited literature assessing the social or political impact of Syrian refugees in Jordan. Negative public attitudes and policy concerns over their economic impacts, fears over the permanence of their stay and the implications of welcoming refugees amid increasing regional security and political challenges are all major themes (e.g. Francis, 2015). As such, particular focus will be given to assessing their economic and demographic impacts on Jordan, while also shedding some light on Jordan's policy stance and public attitudes in relation to the crisis.

### **3.2.1 Demographic impacts**

Syrians comprise the second-largest refugee group in Jordan today. Although some 660,000 are officially registered, many more are in the country unofficially, and the actual figure is likely closer to double that. Overall, Syrian refugees account for about one in ten inhabitants in Jordan, most of whom live in urban areas (UNHCR, 2016). While displaced Syrians are provided with shelter in camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, in reality 80% of displaced Syrians in the region live outside refugee camps (Miliband, 2015). Zaatari camp, which opened in July 2012, and has since grown to become one of the most densely populated centres in the region, the world's second-largest refugee camp and Jordan's fourth largest 'city' (Francis, 2015), hosts just 20% of Syrian refugees in the country.

Indeed, the influx of Syrian refugees has been felt by Jordan in terms of the cost of delivery of services, and the quality of services provided. The inflow in fact exacerbated existing problems in service provision – Jordan was already suffering from structural challenges in service provision before the Syrian refugee crisis (Francis, 2015; European Parliament, 2017). A number of studies document the effect of Syrian refugees on the education and health sector, as well as the costs of providing services to refugees. It is estimated that the fiscal costs of providing humanitarian services to the Syrian population (including health and education) amount to about 1% of GDP. In terms of demographics, Syrian refugees in Jordan are much younger than the Jordanian average, have marginally lower education levels and there is a higher

proportion of children and female household heads (Verme et al., 2015). These differences in population structure are important: the younger age, on average, and particular family structure mean that the Syrian refugee population has particular needs for education (particularly at the primary school level) and health services (for instance for maternal health and vaccinations).

There is no consistent evidence to demonstrate whether Syrians have a different health profile than Jordanians. Some studies suggest no differences in morbidity rates (Hidalgo et al., 2015), while others point to differences in terms of disease profile and increased levels of morbidity (MOPIC, 2013). Syrians may have injuries as a result of the war, and mental health issues may be more prevalent, which could affect demand for health services, though more research is needed. There is some evidence that the influx of refugees has led to the re-emergence of some communicable diseases, including measles and tuberculosis, which the Jordanian government had previously successfully controlled. A total of 34,314 communicable disease cases were reported among the Syrian population between 2013 and 2014 (World Bank, 2017, based on government statistics). This affects the health system financially, but also has symbolic importance as the eradication of communicable diseases was one of the most important public health missions of the Jordanian government.

Between 2012 and 2014, public health services were provided at virtually no cost to Syrians, but this led to steep increases in demand and was fiscally unsustainable. Now, Syrians are required to make a 20% co-payment, while they still receive some basic services for free. Health facilities still deal with about 1.5 million registered Syrians annually (World Bank, 2017); primary health centres are becoming overburdened (Francis, 2015), drugs and vaccines are being depleted at a rapid rate (IEG, 2016), waiting times are longer and there is a shortage of health workers (World Bank, 2017, based on government statistics). Pressures on public facilities may also displace some Jordanians towards other public sector or private facilities (USAID, 2014). As one study by MOPIC explains, the strains on public health facilities affect the quality of service provision. More specifically, the capacity of local hospitals has been exceeded by 23%, with 86% of this attributable to the Syrian crisis (MOPIC, 2016). MOPIC estimates that Jordan needs more than 1,000 new physicians, nearly 900 nurses and around 170 dentists (MOPIC, 2016).

There is also some evidence that the influx of Syrians has affected education. Over half of the Syrian refugee population in Jordan is under the age of eighteen, placing large demands on a public school system that was already under strain (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Overcrowding is the main threat to education quality (MOPIC, 2013). To alleviate the pressure on class sizes, the government has increased the number of double shifts, throwing off previous efforts to reduce the practice, and opened 98 additional double-shifted schools. The proportion of students attending double-shifted schools increased from 7.6% in 2009 to 13.4% in 2014 (Francis, 2015). In Amman and Irbid, almost half of schools have experienced overcrowding and have had to turn students away (*ibid.*). Plans were announced for another 100 primary schools to introduce double shifts in 2016–17 (Human Rights Watch, 2016). Double shifts can affect the quality of teaching and learning outcomes as the number of hours of teaching per child is reduced and teachers are overworked. Double shifts produce worse outcomes in Jordan than elsewhere (including UNRWA schools in Jordan), and

have been linked to increased tensions between host and refugee communities because shifts tend to be segregated (see Culbertson et al., 2016). It is estimated that an additional 5,707 classes would be needed to compensate for this overcrowding, or about 300 schools with 19 classes (MOPIC, 2016).

### **3.2.2 Economic and social impacts**

Confinement in camps, poverty or cultural mores exclude or distance Syrian refugees from Jordanian society, and without political rights Syrians do not take part in policy debates or participate in political processes. In parts of the country already hosting Syrian refugees from the 1980s, business partnerships have been struck between new arrivals and this more established community. Over time these connections may grow into tighter bonds and de facto integration, and the socio-cultural impact of Syrian refugees may become more visible.

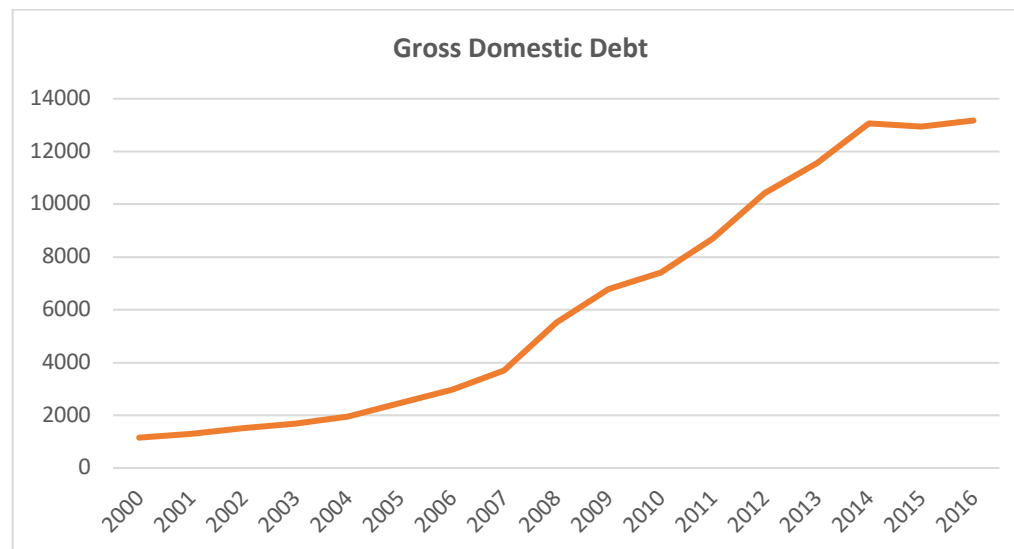
Without work permits, Syrian refugees are not integrated into the formal economy, but rather work (when they do work) alongside other migrants in the informal sector.<sup>62</sup> Syrians are considered adept at trades such as masonry, carpentry and electronics, and produce specialities in the food and beverage industry, notably pastries. Unemployment is high: according to one study in 2013, half of Syrian refugees were economically inactive – i.e. not in employment or working – and only roughly a third was employed (Host Community Support Platform, 2013). This situation has been aggravated by significant reductions in public sector employment and the disproportionate growth in the working age population between 2010 and 2013 (Jordan, 2015). According to UNHCR data, two-thirds of Syrian refugees are living below the poverty line (Immenkamp, 2017).

Jordan's economy has been heavily impacted by the mass influx of Syrian refugees, with reduced investment and a fall in tourism and trade leading to high unemployment rates, from 13.8% to 15.8% in 2016. GDP growth was estimated at 2%. As a consequence – and due to a lack of competitiveness, insufficiently diversified energy supplies and inadequate growth-supporting policies, as well as being a resource-poor country, Jordan has experienced a drastic increase in gross domestic debt. In response, the Jordanian government was planning a sales tax increase and additional taxes. The economy has operated below its potential since 2013.

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<sup>62</sup> According to the Jordanian Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, informal employment represents 44% of total employment in Jordan, while the IMF estimates the figure at 26% of the Jordanian economy – broadly comparable with other countries in the region (MPIC, 2010; Rawashdeh, 2017). Figures do not provide an accurate picture of the number of Jordanians versus migrant workers, but they do suggest that informal work is the most common form of employment for migrant workers, especially Egyptians (ETF, 2017).

**Figure 9: Gross Domestic Debt**



Source: *General Government Finance Bulletin Vol. 7 (5), June 2005; Vol 15(5), June, 2013, Vol. 19 (7), August 2017.*

### 3.3 Iraqi refugees

At the start of the war in Iraq in 2003, Jordan was already hosting an estimated 250,000–300,000 Iraqi refugees (Seeley, 2016). Many were from the Baghdad middle and upper classes, who acquired temporary residence permits at the border and settled in Amman and other Jordanian cities (*ibid.*). The bulk of the Iraqi refugee influx between 2004 and 2008 did not remain in Jordan permanently, but was resettled in the West or established transnational patterns of mobility within the region. There is therefore no definitive comment in the literature about the impact of Iraqi refugees in Jordan, beyond noting that the refugee crisis unfolded within long-standing economic and cultural connections between the two countries. The Jordanian state received high levels of foreign aid, much of which went into local services, in exchange for providing Iraqis with temporary asylum (Seeley, 2010).

In the aftermath of 2003, Iraqis were regarded as temporary visitors or ‘tolerated guests’ (De Bel-Air, 2007; Fagen, 2009; Seeley, 2016), and their entry and settlement was largely facilitated. Wealthy Iraqi refugees were able to acquire legal residence rights by making substantial deposits in Jordanian banks or investing in purchasing property and other assets (*ibid.*), triggering a property boom. The Iraqi refugee population today is estimated at 140,000, with 62,445 registered with UNHCR (UNHCR Jordan, 2017; Gavlak, 2017).<sup>63</sup> The significant reduction in Iraqi refugees in Jordan is in part the result of policy changes following terrorist attacks on hotels in Amman in November 2005, in which at least three Iraqis were involved (De Bel-Air, 2007). The rights enjoyed by Iraqis in terms of border crossing and settlement were limited or

<sup>63</sup> It should be noted that the number of Iraqis in Jordan is not consistent in the literature, let alone confirmed. While the government inflates the numbers at times, UN statistics only recognise registered Iraqis. Hence there are significant discrepancies in the literature regarding the exact number of Iraqi refugees.

withdrawn (Mahdi, 2007); acquiring and renewing residence permits was restricted, and overstayers were deported. Although UNHCR declared a 'temporary protection regime', Jordan continued to make visa renewals so difficult that most Iraqis lost their legal status, and a substantial, though unconfirmed, number of Iraqis have been deported since 2006.

#### **4. Public attitudes and perceptions of the 'other'**

Like the policies that the government has followed over the past decades in relation to the many waves of refugees that have sought safety in Jordan, public attitudes have also drastically shifted, both towards Palestinians and towards forced migrants more generally. Changing attitudes towards Palestinian refugees are reflected in schoolbooks, which stress Jordanian culture, identity, geography, history and heritage, and rarely mention Palestine. The media often portrays a sense of patriotism and pride in the country's army, monarchy and natural resources (Farah, 1999). Public frustration is increasing over the impact of Syrian refugees on resources, services and infrastructure (Seeberg, 2016), alongside security fears in the context of the challenges posed regionally by Islamic State (IS). Many Jordanians feel neglected by donors, who have focused their attention on Syrians, and by their government, for failing to take care of communities heavily impacted by the crisis. One example of a citizen-led effort to manage tensions and increase mutual understanding is the community-based radio show AmmanNet/Radio Al-Balad, co-produced by Jordanians and Syrians, which seeks to shed light on the situation of Syrians in Jordan (Kuttab, in Al-Khatib and Lenner (eds), 2015).

When discussing public perceptions it should be noted that Jordan does not have a free press, and space for criticism of the ruling elite or contestation of public policy is limited. Civil society is often linked to bodies aligned to the state or the royal family and is not outspoken. According to Freedom House (2016): 'The government tolerates modest criticism of state officials and policies. However, journalists risk arrest under a variety of restrictive laws, and much of the media sector is state-run. A number of journalists were arrested during 2015 in connection with reporting on foreign affairs and their impact on Jordan, including the conflicts in Syria and Yemen. Journalists routinely self-censor and are aware of certain "red lines" that may not be crossed in reporting, including critical coverage of the royal family'. These restrictions on the Jordanian press are reflected in the difficulties around undertaking large-scale independent academic research. Neither was this review able to draw on large public polls. As such, there is little literature that captures public perceptions, public debate or politically sensitive interactions between host and refugee populations.

#### **5. Integration: between policy and politics**

This project uses UNDP's definition of social cohesion as the basis for its understanding of integration: 'A general condition of stable coexistence within communities, when IDPs, refugees, and host community members accept socio-ethnic differences, have equitable access to livelihoods and other community resources, and feel safe and secure in their homes'. Legal, governance, functional and social 'domains' form the main elements of the multi-faceted process of integration (Zetter, 2017), with the first

two domains central to the interests of the receiving country, and the second two giving more emphasis to the refugee experience. The legal domain refers to the different models of membership enabled by legal entitlements, ultimately leading to citizenship. The governance domain comprises the institutional structure and processes which facilitate integration. The functional domain describes the levels of social and economic participation of refugees in their host country. The social domain focuses on the degree of social inclusion of the refugee within the majority receiving community, and relates to ethnicity, cultural identity, social networks and social capital (*ibid.*).

### **5.1 Legal and governance domains**

This report has dealt in detail with the legal and governmental approach to the integration of the majority of Palestinian refugees who hold Jordanian citizenship. During the 1940s and 1950s, government policy aimed at political assimilation and forging a common history, identity and society ‘uniting two branches of the same family’ (Brand, 1995). From the late 1960s, however, Jordan’s stance started to shift towards a more restrictive approach. With the rise of nationalism on both sides, Jordan began limiting the political and civil rights of naturalised Palestinians, as well as suspending further measures towards naturalisation.

With regard to Syrian refugees, the government’s official position remains that it will make no moves towards *de jure* integration. Its management of the crisis does, however, show that it will both implement and retract policies towards the Syrian refugee population that provide them with civic entitlements, like access to education and healthcare, when it deems it necessary. This is based in no small part on the degree and type of support that the international community has provided. For example, when international funding declined in 2014, Syrians’ access to government healthcare facilities was restricted, but when donors pledged greater support for developing Jordan’s economy in 2015, the Jordanian government relaxed fees and other restrictions on work permits for Syrian refugees.

### **5.2 Social and functional domains**

The vast majority of refugee flows into Jordan have involved the mass movement of Arabic-speaking, predominantly Sunni, Muslims, often with tribal or other kinship links within Jordan. While differences of dialect, culture and ethnicity have still been present, this has meant that some of the cruder barriers refugees often face in other parts of the world – incongruous religious practices or belief systems, racial or ethnic discrimination, and the inability to communicate in the host language(s) – have not been present or significant. In a sense, this makes *both* the presence and absence of social and functional integration harder to observe and brings to the fore more subtle questions of political expression and economic integration.

Most Palestinian refugees are Jordanian citizens, and in most respects take part in social and functional domains as robustly as non-Palestinian Jordanians. Inter-marriage is also, anecdotally, widespread, though no figures were available to quantify this. Palestinian refugee identity and participation in social and political life – and the state response to it – is, however, complex. The literature demonstrates that, throughout its history, Jordanian national identity has emphasised the (more inclusive) larger regional and universal collective of Arabs and Muslims, as opposed to an emphasis on



the smaller family on the basis of kinship and tribalism, which is part of the Transjordanian nationalist discourse (Al-Abed, 2004; Nasser, 2013). However, the national identity discourse inclusive of Palestinians started to crumble (Achilli 2014), exacerbated by the emergence of the PLO and the development of a separate Palestinian identity and nationalist discourse crystallised around the plight of the iconic figure of the 'camp dweller' (*al-mukhayyami*). The to-and-fro of integration and separation can be seen in events in the Palestinian refugee camps over the decades – from the camps becoming a hotbed of anti-monarchical organising in the 1970s to their gradual physical merging with surrounding Jordanian suburbs, to the resistance in the 1980s to World Bank-sponsored 'urban upgrading' projects in the camps, which a vocal minority objected to as they felt, simply put, that if the camps no longer looked marginalised, a potent symbol of Palestinians' continued exile would be lost, and their stay in Jordan would be considered permanent (Ababsa, 2010).

Today, Palestinian elites comprise a large proportion of Jordan's private sector (Ryan, 2002), with their own businesses and philanthropic foundations, usually social enterprises set up as family foundations (Ibrahim and Sherif, 2008). These family foundations offer assistance and grants to other institutions and manage a large number of charitable programmes. Examples include the regionally renowned Shoman Foundation and the Eljah Nuqul foundation, both of which aim to promote social change (Associated Press, 2005).

For Syrian refugees, family, tribal and employment links to Jordan have facilitated interaction, and in some cases integration, particularly through intermarriage between Jordanian and Syrian members of the same kinship group (Bellamy et al., 2017). Even where there is no kinship connection, Syrians live alongside (usually) poor Jordanians in the cities, and there are many reports of small-scale informal assistance from Jordanians to their Syrian neighbours. Bellamy et al. (2017) quote an elderly Syrian woman who put their relations in the context of Jordan's history with displaced people: 'We live amongst [Jordanian] Palestinians so they know what it's like to be a refugee'. Over time, Syrians are becoming less distinguishable from their Jordanian neighbours. Staff from the Jordanian Women's Union, who have worked in several poor neighbourhoods all over the country, note this shift: 'Being all Arabs, we have similarities, but we are also able to distinguish each other. At the beginning of the crisis we were able to identify Syrian women walking on the street or Syrian children playing outside. Now, everybody looks the same. We cannot distinguish anymore' (Al-Khatib and Lenner, 2015). Cultural values, such as the greater acceptance of childhood marriage amongst Syrians, will take longer to shift (*ibid.*).

Younger generations are integrating socially through their participation in the Jordanian education system. Bellamy et al. (2017) note that Syrian children in Zarqa are more likely to complain about differences between their circumstances and those of their Jordanian counterparts, rather than harking back to life in Syria. However, Syrian children face significant disadvantages within Jordan's school system (including through their disrupted education, their greater poverty and their ineligibility for university places or work permits upon graduation).

The Economic Policy Council (EPC), established in June 2016, is responsible for developing short- and long-term policies to enhance the economic situation of Syrian

refugees by improving the business environment, supporting start-ups and small and medium-sized enterprises, improving laws and regulations and reforming the tax system. In September 2016, the government approved the EPC's first recommendations (World Bank, 2016a), announcing an eight-point plan to reduce unemployment, as well as regional development packages to foster job creation, infrastructure support and funds for small and medium-sized enterprises. Fiscal measures as part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) include an increase in cigarette prices, taxes on alcohol and fees on car sales, and the removal or reduction of goods and sales tax exemptions.

In 2014, the European Union (EU) and Jordan signed a mobility partnership to foster mobility and integration. In total, the EU has provided Jordan with €950 million for the support of refugees and vulnerable communities via the Macro Financial Assistance Instrument, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability, the EU Trust Fund and the EU's humanitarian budget (Immenkamp, 2017). In addition, Jordan secured grants at a donor conference in London in early 2016 as part of the Jordan Compact. In return for improving employment conditions for Syrian refugees previously barred from legally working in Jordan, the international community agreed a \$2.1 billion aid package. Multilateral development banks offered to double concessional financing, from \$800 million to \$1.9 billion, while the EU agreed to waive taxes and quotas for products created by Syrians (Reliefweb, 2016), and to revise its preferential rules of origin. In return, Jordan promised legal employment to a large number of Syrians outside the SEZs by creating up to 200,000 jobs for Syrian refugees in the next five years (Crawley, 2017). In addition to quotas for involvement in municipal works via private sector employment, Syrians would be allowed to formalise existing businesses and to establish new businesses. A crucial focal point in the Jordan Compact is a commitment to the education of every child in Jordan to avoid a 'lost generation' of refugee children (Immenkamp, 2017). A year on, Jordan has secured \$923.6 million, partly via World Bank loans and a large cash transfer from the United States. The IMF has also approved a three-year extension under the Extended Fund Facility granting \$723 million to support economic reforms. In June 2017, the IMF disbursed \$71 million, bringing a total of \$141.9 million (IMF, 2017).

As a result of the Jordan Compact, Jordan has introduced a number of positive policy measures aimed at facilitating the integration of Syrians into the country's labour market. However, the Compact has not returned the expected results, and research by Bellamy et al. (2017) suggests that many Syrians will remain in the informal sector. Only 38,516 permits were issued between April 2016 and February 2017, substantially fewer than expected based on the political and financial effort expended. This is partly explained by the potential costs of formalised employment, including losing access to aid and the chance of resettlement to a third country, as well as becoming visible to a possibly unsympathetic government (Staton, 2016). Higher-skilled labour, such as engineers, physicians, accountants, lawyers and teachers, are excluded from the work permit scheme, and some industries are effectively closed to Syrians (Crawley, 2017). Conservative Syrian women are reluctant to enter a factory without male company and are restricted by household chores (for another example, see Reznick, 2016).

In order to attract new investment and improve access to the EU market, the Jordanian government intended to increase incentives and demand for jobs for Jordanians and Syrian refugees by creating Special Economic Zones (SEZs), estimated to provide 200,000 jobs. This is currently financed by \$300 million from the World Bank (World Bank, 2016b). In simple terms, tax incentives and trade opportunities should encourage firms to invest and provide job opportunities for refugees. The prospects are unclear. SEZs in Asia have eroded labour rights, reflected in low wages, longer working hours and abuse, leading to what have been called 'special exploitation zones' (Crawley, 2017). Cultural idiosyncrasies and the risk of losing benefits and being exposed to exploitation have reduced demand for regular labour, while employment opportunities are limited to a restricted set of professions at potentially low salaries. The creation of employment opportunities for Syrian refugees has also led to restrictions on foreign migrant workers, mostly Egyptians, in order to mitigate negative impacts on the employment of Jordanian workers (Abaza, 2016). Thus, instead of providing additional jobs, Syrian refugees have effectively substituted for migrant workers, especially since the SEZs provide cheaper labour for investors, thereby increasing the vulnerability and precarious living conditions of Egyptian workers, who account for 65% of migrant labour.

Similarly, in the Better Work programme, initiated by the ILO and the International Finance Corporation to increase employment for Syrian refugees in the garment sector, low wages and monotonous work, as well as the long distances between towns and factories, rendered work unattractive to Syrians, especially women. According to the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, migrant workers are exposed to violations of their labour rights, such as withholding of an employee's passport, non-payment, movement restrictions, unpaid and long overtime, an absence of holidays and even threats of imprisonment and physical and sexual abuse (SDC, 2014).

The Jordan Response Plan 2017–2019 provides \$7.6 billion for refugee-related interventions and \$2.5 billion for resilience strengthening on the basis of a three-year rolling plan to respond to the effects of the Syrian crisis. The plan focuses on the resilience both of refugees and host communities, promoting sustained access to education and energy, the mitigation of environmental consequences and pressures on natural resources, especially water, food security, the provision of health services and social protection to Syrian refugees, and justice services. It is also intended to create job opportunities and provide training for Jordanians and Syrian refugees, as well as local governance and municipal services. In addition, it is meant to create additional affordable housing, thereby easing the strain on Jordan's housing market, while reducing transportation costs and improving sanitation. The plan is complemented by the UN's regional refugees and resilience plan (3RP), which supports multi-year funding and policy implementation through national systems and local actors (Immenkamp, 2017). Finally, IKEA together with the Jordan River Foundation is financing a project that is expected to provide labour for 200,000 refugees and the same number of local workers within two years (Fairs, 2017).

## **6. Conclusion**

For most of its existence as an independent state, Jordan has been a major refugee-hosting country. This has significantly altered its demographic composition as a nation

and heavily influenced its political history, culture and identity. Today, over half of the population are of Palestinian origin. Jordan is also hosting over 650,000 Syrian refugees and an estimated 140,000 Iraqis. Jordan has historically been one of the most open countries towards Arab forced migrants and has acted as a regional crossroads for migrants seeking work opportunities, healthcare or religious pilgrimage.

Despite this rich history of welcome, in recent years policies towards refugees have become increasingly restrictive and securitised, and the policies of active integration that met the initial influx of Palestinians have been rolled back. This has created different 'tiers' of Palestinians with different rights and statuses, and an encampment policy aimed at segregation. Jordan has also adopted more restrictive border controls and residence regulations towards Arab migrants in general and forced migrants in particular. Meanwhile, the mass arrival of Syrian refugees has led to a number of international initiatives aimed at encouraging investment and trade in Jordan, in the hope of turning the crisis into an economic opportunity, both for Jordanians and Syrians.

Ultimately, Jordan's record as a refugee-hosting state must be assessed in the context of its geographical position and political history at the heart of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Its success in integrating millions of Palestinians should be viewed as a positive model for integration in the region, despite Jordan's subsequent turn away from an open-door policy towards Arab migrants and the integration policy adopted in relation to Palestinians.

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