

MAPPING THE ROLE OF THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN IN THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

Marwene Ben JENNANA¹

Abstract: The Palestinian cause is deemed to be a captivating focal point that made an endless amount of ink pour into academia from various perspectives, mainly in the field of International Relations. Considering its central positioning in Arab-Israeli relations, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan embarks on the Middle Eastern enigma as a central agent that bestows a double-pronged approach towards both parties through its uniqueness and original imprint on the constant interplay of Middle Eastern dynamics. This research aims to draw a comprehensive mapping to the Jordanian unique role vis-à-vis the Palestinian issue since the aftermath of the First World War (1914-1918). The examination of the Jordanian role is conducted via a tripartite pattern: The historical legacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the refugee crisis as well as the problems arising from the sea about important regional actors such as the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Israel. Methodology-wise, this article utilizes a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods to shed light on the Jordanian role as a case study. This approach is trusted to further foster a holistic understanding of this debatable issue and put into light an understudied perspective of the enigma.

Keywords: *Palestinian diaspora, Global displacement, International Relations, MENA, Jordanian Foreign Policy.*

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¹ PhD candidate in international relations and regional sciences at Vladivostok State University and junior researcher in Euro-Mediterranean studies.
Email: benjannenamarwen@gmail.com.
ORCID: 0000-0001-8368-5225.

ÜRDÜN HAŞİMİ KRALLIĞI'NIN FİLİSTİNLİ MÜLTECİ KRİZİNDEKİ ROLÜNÜN HARİTALANDIRILMASI

Öz: Filistin davası, başta Uluslararası İlişkiler alanında olmak üzere çeşitli perspektiflerden akademiye sonsuz miktarda mürekkep akıtılmasına neden olan önemli bir odak noktası olarak kabul edilmektedir. Arap-İsrail ilişkilerindeki merkezi konumu göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, Ürdün Haşimi Krallığı, Ortadoğu dinamiklerinin sürekli etkileşimi üzerindeki benzersizliği ve özgün damgası aracılığıyla her iki tarafa da çift yönlü bir yaklaşım sunan merkezi bir aktör olarak Ortadoğu muammasına giriyor. Bu araştırma, Birinci Dünya Savaşı'nın (1914-1918) ardından Ürdün'ün Filistin meselesi karşısındaki benzersiz rolünün kapsamlı bir haritasını çıkarmayı amaçlamaktadır. Ürdün'ün rolünün incelenmesi üçlü bir model üzerinden yürütülmektedir: Arap-İsrail çatışmasının tarihsel mirası, mülteci krizi ve Suudi Arabistan Krallığı ve İsrail gibi önemli bölgesel aktörlerle ilişkilerde denizden kaynaklanan sorunlar. Metodoloji açısından, bu makale, Ürdün'ün rolüne bir vaka çalışması olarak ışık tutmak için nitel ve nicel araştırma yöntemlerinin bir kombinasyonunu kullanmaktadır. Bu yaklaşımın, bu tartışmalı konunun bütünsel bir anlayışını daha da geliştireceği ve muammanın az çalışılmış bir perspektifini ortaya koyacağı düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Filistin diasporası, Küresel yerinden edilme, Uluslararası İlişkiler, MENA, Ürdün Dış Politikası.*

Introduction

The region of MENA (an acronym of political imprint to denote the countries of the Middle East and those of the Maghreb region in North Africa) served as a bridge between Africa and Eurasia throughout the ages² that amalgamed complex ethnic and religious features. Empirical evidence demonstrates that predominantly Asian Middle Eastern countries are viewed as an active hub for recurrent tensions between opposing political entities. In a close-up caption of the socio-demographic features of the region, the member countries of MENA are prone to encompass more than one definition since the term's original denotation invoked Europe as the reference point for "*the center*"³. Hence, the multifaceted nature of the Middle East necessitates a nuanced understanding of the diverse roles of protagonists and decision-makers that influence Jordan's unique position. Through this exploration, the research aims to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the intricate relationships and geopolitical forces that define the Middle East. Custodian of the holy sites of Jerusalem and a fundamental composer of Arab-Israeli relations, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan progressively became a bastion of a moderate Arab camp that adhered to pro-Western foreign policy across different historical milestones⁴ to navigate between the imperatives of its regional security and the complexities of regional geopolitics.

Evoking the Jordanian position into the analysis requires inspecting several interrelated factors. In this vein, it is compulsory to put into light the complex military/diplomatic tapestry of complications that culminated over time since 1948 in addition to the ethnic Jordanian identity. Geographic proximity and demographic reality render it nearly impractical for the Jordanian Foreign Policy to be studied without considering the potential impact of any conflict or settlement related to the Palestinian problem. The first chapter titled 'Understanding the Jordanian Position within the Arab-Israeli Conflict' initiates the analysis by displaying the historical milestones of the Arab-Israeli conflict while determining the Jordanian influence according to precise timeslots. This section is solely dedicated to laying the foundation of the analysis by directing the reader's attention to the most influential events and key concepts that have historically encroached on the development of the Jordanian role

² Hayat Kabasakal et al. (2012), "Leadership and culture in the MENA region: An analysis of the GLOBE project", *Journal of World Business*, Vol. 47, No: 4, pp. 519-529.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S1090951612000065?via%3Dihub>.

³ Alan S. Weber & Sihem Hamlaoui (2018), *E-Learning in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region*, Springer Cham.

⁴ Nader Ibrahim M. Bani Nasur et al. (2012), "Jordanian Foreign Policy toward The Palestine Issue", *British Journal of Arts and Social Sciences*, Vol. 8, No: 1, pp. 1-16.

vis-à-vis the Palestinian cause, all later summarized in Table 1. Furthermore, the second chapter, titled ‘Cracking the Jordanian Influence via the Refugee Crises’ discusses Jordan’s shift in the mechanisms of hosting the Palestinian refugees and enshrines the impact of regional dynamics on its immigration policies. It also examines Jordan’s transition from a transit state, a mediating role in promoting peace in the Middle East via supporting the Palestinian liberation movement to a country engaging in a more self-centered approach characterized by the normalization with Israel. Last but not least, several sensitive geographical strategic resources will also be considered in this paper’s calculations, exemplified by the water and oil spots around the Jordanian circumference. Overall, the research posits that crafting an acute understanding of these interconnected features is vital in comprehending Jordan’s position and contribution to the pursuit of a peaceful resolution in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as per the decisions drawn out of the Oslo Accords of 1993, which finally gave the Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip.⁵ The geostrategic location presents an additional parameter to the assurance of the balance of power and secures lesser tensions vis-à-vis the Palestinian cause. While a substantial body of literature expounds on the Palestinian cause, the Jordanian perspective has been barely studied in proportion to the existing literature.

Drawing a comprehensive assessment of the role of Jordan requires assessing how Jordan was handling the crisis according to three alternatives that pertain to migration mechanisms. More minutely, the literature on migration studies raised questions about the ground-rooting principles that define the guidelines behind the circulation of refugees. Mandated by its Legal Statute and Resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees maintains that only “*the three traditional durable solutions for refugees within the legal framework are local integration, resettlement and repatriation*”⁶. Notwithstanding, it is, firstly, essential to demystify the conceptual definitions at the elementary systemic-level concepts of analysis. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees defines the concept of ‘Local Integration’ as “*a complex and gradual process with legal, economic, social and cultural dimensions that imposes considerable demands on both the individual and the receiving society*”⁷ to be properly implemented. It is a comprehensive

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ Hanana Bamadhaj Omar & Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin (2023), “The permanently minority people: Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, (Attempted) social death and desire to return”, *Cogent Arts & Humanities*, Vol. 10, No: 1, p. 4.

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, “Local integration”, UNHCR, Date of Accession: 10.01.2024 from <https://www.unhcr.org/local-integration>.

point of view of the refugees' international status that brings forth a globalist bundle of rights to war escapees just as the average citizen of the hosting country such as equal access to employment, education, healthcare, property, as well as legal status. Refugees are consequently no longer reliant individuals on international assistance from international instances such as the United Nations. Rather, they were allowed to lead independent and self-reliant lives in their host country, and "*in many cases, acquiring the nationality of the country of asylum is the culmination of this process*"⁸. Furthermore, the approach of 'Resettlement' posits a different view of the refugee's status. The UNHCR defines the latter as "*the transfer of refugees from an asylum country to another State, that has agreed to admit them and ultimately grant them permanent residence*"⁹. Last but not least, the Repatriation policy implies a safe, dignified, and voluntary return of individuals "*to their country of nationality under specific conditions laid down in various international instruments and human rights instruments as well as in customary international law*"¹⁰.

1. Understanding the Jordanian Foreign Policy within the Arab-Israeli Conflict

Colloquially known by the name of Jordan, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan "*is a recent creation, having been established in 1921 within borders drawn by European colonial powers*"¹¹. Considering its Arabo-Islamic affiliation, the official nomenclature of the country is officially known as المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية (the Arabic official calling of the country), a designation that signals the Arabic heritage of the country about the Hashemite dynasty that governed in the country since its inception. In opposition to the common perception of the engaged stakeholders in the Palestinian cause, the role of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been engraved in history thanks to its multi-natured forms of responsiveness in a complex Middle Eastern milieu. Historical ties, refugee challenges, diplomatic relations, security concerns, societal identity, and resource constraints all converge to create a nuanced landscape for Jordan to evolve as an original "*model of inclusiveness relative to many of its neighbours*"¹². While the elaboration of some events amplified the importance of the multi-structured nature of Jordan's foreign policy others signaled that its role was shortened of

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, "Resettlement", Date of Accession: 10.01.2024 from <https://www.unhcr.org/what-we-do/build-better-futures/long-term-solutions/resettlement>.

¹⁰ European Commission, "Repatriation", Date of Accession: 10.01.2024 from https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/european-migration-network-emn/emn-asylum-and-migration-glossary/glossary/repatriation_en.

¹¹ Géraldine Chatelard (2010), "Jordan: A Refugee Haven", MPI, 31.08.2010, Date of Accession: 11.01.2024 from <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/jordan-refugee-haven/>.

¹² Dalia Dassa Kaye et al. (2008), "Chapter Three: Jordan", in *More Freedom, Less Terror? Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World*, RAND Corporation, pp. 59-80.

benefits to serve the national interests at the expense of the interests of the “*Islamic Ummah*” (an Arabic word, meaning “*people*”, “*group*”, or “*community*” formed based on some common and coherent features)¹³. Yet official authorities maintain that the country supports “*an independent and viable Palestinian state on the lines of 4 June 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital, based on the resolutions of international legitimacy, international law and the Arab Peace Initiative*”¹⁴.

Right after the end of the Second World War, multiple ethnically differentiated Jewish immigrants clustered around the Zionist project that had been forwarded to the world by the Jewish political thinker Theodor Herzl. In a quick outlook, the Zionist movement was adopted and funded by the British Crown, under the rule of King George VI of Britain, to assist the scattered Jewish population in Europe to reach their proclaimed ‘Promised Land’ in Jerusalem. The pan-Israeli sentiment in the second half of the 20th century has been increasingly normalized in Europe and was synchronized with the rising anti-Semitic calls for the exodus of Jewish descendants around the globe. In the pursuit of a profound understanding of the Palestinian cause, it is imperative to start by examining the inimical triangular relationship between Israel, Jordan, and Palestine as the existence of one is anchored politically to the existence of another. Interconnected throughout history, Jordan and Palestine “*only became formally viewed as two separate entities after 1921, when Winston Churchill severed Transjordan – its name derived from its location east of the Jordan River - from Palestine, which under the British mandate was set out to become a national home for the Jewish people*”¹⁵. The communal tensions on the Palestinian soils touched upon its climax in the late 1940s, but it got two flocks involved in an atrocious war since the inception of the British Mandate in 1918 that opposed the Jewish and the Palestinian communities with each other over the issues of the merit for statehood and the

¹³ Golam Dastagir & Ismath Ramzy (2018), “Ummah”, in (eds. by Zayn R. Kassam & Yudit Kornberg Greenberg & Jehan Bagli) *Islam, Judaism, and Zoroastrianism*, Encyclopedia of Indian Religions, Springer Dordrecht.

¹⁴ وزارة خارجية المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية (n.d). القضية الفلسطينية وعملية السلام. وزارة خارجية المملكة الأردنية الهاشمية.
<https://www.mfa.gov.jo/content/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%B6%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D9%88%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B3%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85>

¹⁵ Anne Bauer (2022), “Jordan and the Palestinian cause”, Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, October 2022, Date of Accession: 12.01.2024 from <https://www.kas.de/documents/268421/16446927/Jordan+and+the+Palestinian+Cause.pdf/637518a0-7cf3-066f-caeb-ecd0a8788b49?version=1.0&t=1664645271140>.

regulations of the borders.¹⁶ Following the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, the transition from the Emirate of Transjordan (1921-1946) to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (1946-present) marked a pivotal moment in history by gaining independence from Britain in 1946 and Emir Abdullah bin Al-Hussein emerged as a key figure in the region. Recognizing the strategic importance of the Transjordan zone, King Abdullah negotiated with the British, ultimately establishing the Emirate in 1921. Even though the first Arab-Israeli confrontation was brief (from 1948 to 1949), it is deemed to be detrimental in regards to the Jordanian stance on the cause. In fact, After the defeat of the Arab forces, King Abdullah I was left in control of East Jerusalem in addition to some determined parts of the territory West of the River of Jordan, now colocalized as the West Bank area. Amman's foreign policy extended a branch of the olive once again to their Palestinian counterparts. Under the leadership of King Hussein bin Talal (1952 - 1999), Jordan played a crucial role in promoting the international quest to affirm the existence of Palestine and contributed to rendering it a global cause since the 1960s.¹⁷ The Jordanian campaign of 1967 (military operations) was part of the broader Six-Day War after which “*the animosity between the PLO and Israel was compounded by the Israeli conquest*”¹⁸ of the West Bank of the Jordan River. The ties among the three countries were characterized by a certain level of equilibrium until the 1970s, a period that earmarked a rational re-shuffling of the Jordanian strategic interests and started a “*process of ‘Jordanization’ that went hand in hand with a process of ‘de-Palestinization’*”¹⁹. In actuality, the inter-communal agitation was held at a relative stalemate until the outbreak of the events of ‘Black September’ on the 21st of September 1970. This internal conflict was a pivotal milestone that diverted the traditional alliance between the Jordanian government and Palestinian militant groups locally and the commitment of the country to pan-Arabic sentiments.

The events ended with the expulsion of the leadership of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) from Jordanian territories. It marked intensification at the level of bilateral repulsion and discredited the PLO practices to a great extent vis-à-vis international opinion. Once again, the Jordanian mediation in the Palestinian issue is subject to a long 24-year period of stability and a mixed-feelings approach.

¹⁶ Todd R. Phinney (2007), “The Second Palestinian Intifada”, in *Airpower versus Terrorism: Three Case Studies*, Air University Press, pp. 43-64.

¹⁷ Sune Haugbolle & Pelle Valentin Olsen (2023), “Emergence of Palestine as a Global Cause”, *Middle East Critique*, Vol. 32, No: 1, pp. 129-148.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁹ Anne Bauer (2022), “Jordan and the Palestinian cause”.

As the early 1900s dawned, Jordan's engagement in the Palestinian liberation movement reached an impasse. Consequently, the country came to conclude that embarking on a normalization process with the Hebrew State is a necessary station to appease the tensions in the region. This initiative has been regarded by international opinion as a significant blow to the cultural and political legacies of Arab nationalism as per the predicament established by the Egyptian leader 'Jamal Abdul Nasser' in the 1950s. In this regard, it is important to note that Jordan is the second country to have normalized diplomatic and economic relations with Israel. Perhaps, the events of September 2000 were the most agitated popular movements that urged a political upheaval in Israeli-Arab relations. Notably, the political developments in the early 2000s were characterized by non-uniform empathy schemes among Middle Eastern actors. Most narratives find concomitance on the point that the Second Intifada took place in December 2000 as a natural consequence of the First Palestinian Intifada, agreed to be a less intensified confrontation between the Palestinian Authorities and the Israeli Defence Forces. The rise of armed confrontation was deemed by historians to be too influential on the cause in question from different dimensions. Mostly, it has prevailed in drastic aftermaths of the post-Oslo Accord entente as well as the Camp David peace efforts to inaugurate a period of pacific understanding between the Palestinian Authorities and the Israeli government. The latter *"essentially halted the peace process and intensified tensions between the incumbent and opposition elite"*²⁰. At the Jordanian end, the escalation of violence has, thereafter, inverted the expected outcomes when it comes to the juxtaposition of the Kingdom to the Palestinian resistance movement. As such, it is possible to trace two grassroots reasons that can explain the emergence of the Second Intifada. The increased violation of the pre-established bilateral agreements from Israel's military occupation coupled with the unfulfilled role expected from the PA earmarked a turndown from the peaceful/diplomatic forms of resistance and placed the responsibility of liberation in the hands of the radical Islamic groups in the region.

Overall, scanning the sum of the most influential events by the inception of the section contributes to solidifying the backbone of this chapter in several ways. Inspecting the aforementioned milestones spanning from the late 1940s until the present moment, exemplified by the Arab-Israeli War of 1948 and the Second Intifada during the year 2000, is taken as an elementary stage for drawing a clear and concise picture of the Palestinian cause and which extent the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been supportive to the cause for the

²⁰ Husam A. Mohamad (2007), "The Peace Process and the Palestinian Political Landscape", *Journal of International and Area Studies*, Vol. 14, No: 1, pp. 85-94.

last 50 years. These historical markers not only shed light on the evolution of Jordan's engagement with two of the most influential agents that run the operation (the PLO and the Israeli authorities), but also contribute to the broader narrative of the region's intricate dynamics. By tracing these key events, the author intends to draw a comprehensive as well as more nuanced understanding, the element offering insights into the complexities and influences that have shaped the intricate tapestry of the Israeli-Palestinian issue.

The following table provides a summarizing overview, visually encapsulating the interconnected journey that underscores Jordan's historical role within the Palestinian enigma.

Table I. The milestones of the Jordanian-Palestinian relations

Event	Period	Key Details
Arab-Israeli War of 1948	1948-1949	The first major involvement of Jordan in the Palestinian cause
Six-Day War	June 1967	Israel's conquest of West Bank and Palestinian & refugee influx to Jordan
Black September	September 1970	Expulsion of PLO leadership from Jordan
Normalization with Israel	1994	Second Arab country to normalize ties with Israel
Second Intifada	2000-2005	Emerges as a consequence of the failure of the Oslo Accord and Camp David peace efforts

2. Methodology

As far as the research design is concerned, this paper adopts a mixed approach, relying on extensive data analysis and statistical findings as per the official publications of the Department of Statistics (DOS) of the Jordanian government in addition to the data provided by international and regional actors such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East. It adopts a sequential explanatory design to provide a comprehensive understanding of Jordan's fluctuating involvement in the Palestinian cause over time from 1918 to post-1921. The process of data collection and analysis uncover patterns, trends, and correlations related to Palestinian displacement, resettlement, and integration as the fundamental key concepts employed throughout this paper.

The examination of the Jordanian role is conducted via the examination of the Kingdom's foreign policy towards the Arab-Israeli problem from a tripartite pattern: The historical legacies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the refugee crisis, and the problems arising from the sea of Jordan vis-à-vis important regional actors such as Israel and Saudi Arabia. This first component involves a comprehensive analysis of the historical context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, focusing on events and developments from the early 20th century, such as the ramifications of the emergence of Israel towards the Arab sentiment. The second corner of the methodology centers on studying the Palestinian refugee crisis and presenting an assessment of the nature of the Jordanian contribution in the context of past and present complex regional dynamics. Lastly, demystifying the importance of the sea resources is viewed as a central part of the research as it considers the influence of important regional actors, such as neighboring countries and international organizations, in shaping the dynamics of the conflict and Jordan's policies.

3. Cracking the Jordanian Influence via the Refugee Crisis

Jordan's chronicles are best exemplified by a woven pattern of connections amid the Middle East. Indeed, amalgamating different areas of influence and various temporal intervals bridge the Kingdom's past and present legacies. As the analysis paves its way ahead, this piece of academia seeks to relate the historical facet of the enigma to another facet of pivotal importance. The previous section uncovers a long-standing narrative that extends from the ashes of the Second World War to the complexities of the modern era. By delving into the historical canvas, the study confronts a crucial juncture ahead of the analysis. Chiefly underscoring an integral part of this connection: the plight of Palestinian refugees. It is

marked not only by political maneuverings and state relations, but also by the profound human dimension. There have been instances when Jordan voiced concerns about the welfare of Palestinian refugees, championing their rights and attending to their humanitarian necessities. The nation's familiarity with hosting refugees has granted it an understanding of the obstacles and challenges encountered by uprooted communities. While the country has provided logistic and financial assistance to the refugees, its diplomatic relations with Israel are influenced by broader geopolitical considerations.

As argued in the rationale scattered throughout this paper's plan, different dimensions in the Palestinian questions are interrelated and, thus, it is not possible to examine the intricacies of the Palestinian refugee crisis without first starting by making a brief reference to the historical circumstances that drove this crisis. The policy of Jordan in the migration issue has been defined by multiple dynamics since the Palestinian exodus of 1948. It has wielded a substantial impact on the nation's political atmosphere, economic framework, as well as its social landscape. A multiplicity of factors enhances the juxtaposition between the Jordanian and Palestinian people to a degree that has put Jordan "*hosting the second-highest share of refugees per capita in the world, as per the data provided by the United Nations*"²¹. In a more minute depiction, "*the country now has more than 60 % of its population who are descendants of Palestinian refugees*"²². The country is trapped between two options that keep its policies on hosting the Palestinian war escapees in constant bewilderment. In actuality, the oscillations of the oil revenues in the Persian Gulf have substantial implications on the dynamics of regional geopolitics. It is, indeed, a significant parameter that comes in the calculations of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. As per the data gathered by the United Nations, Jordan has been one of the destinations for displaced Palestinians with "*more than 1.5 million individuals, living in 58 recognized Palestinian refugee camps*"²³, scattered between Jordan and other neighboring countries. One of the fundamental reasons behind state policies towards refugees is driven by security matters relating to the unresolved dispute over the establishment of the state of Palestine west of the Jordanian River. Although the popular rejection of the establishment of the Hebrew State was supported by the rise of a pan-Arab sentiment in 1948, the Jordanian authorities were put between the jaws of Scylla and the

²¹ UNHRC, "Jordan", Date of Accession: 13.01.2024 from <https://www.unhcr.org/countries/jordan>.

²² Judith Ann Cochran (2018), "Jordan's solution to the refugee crisis: idealistic and pragmatic education", *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 47, No: 2, pp. 153-171.

²³ *Ibid.*

fangs of Charybdis.²⁴ Theodore Herzl's effort to concretize the Zionist project is deemed to be the initiation for bringing forth instability to the Palestinian people.

In fact, "*the declaration of Israel in 1948 marked the genesis of the Palestinian refugee problem ongoing to this day*"²⁵. As a result of the ethnic displacement of the same year, 'King Abdullah I' who is 'the second son of Hussein ibn Ali, the ruler of the Hejaz'²⁶ ordered the construction of 4 refugee camps, namely; Jabal el-Hussein camp, Irbid camp, Amman as well as the Zarqa camp. Tension grew even further with the initiation of the second Arab-Israeli in 1967 which caused the displacement of nearly 400,000 displaced Palestinians. The persistent inter-communal statehood of rivalry has consistently caused difficulties for the Jordanian regime to take a solid stance concerning the migration question. Simultaneously, the country reaped valuable assets to boost its internal market. In fact, "*the remittances of those Palestinians who went to look for work in the Gulf also played a major role in developing Jordan's public and private sectors*"²⁷. However, Palestinians' flee to Jordan has been mostly recorded as a result of the Gulf War, and most of them were expelled from Kuwait following the 1991 invasion. In this context, Jordan's imprint has been amplified by the regional deficiencies and expanded its role from just a neighboring country that supports the cause to a transit country that Palestinians used as an entry point to the West Bank.

Moreover, the Jordanian stance can be explained from an opposite perspective. The Bottom line is that the implication of Jordan with the Israeli-Arab conflict comes with its benefits as well. No one can deny that Jordan plays a significant role in hosting Palestinian refugees and that it has been a country with pivotal roles behind the back of the Palestinian cause. However, the Kingdom also benefited from integrating the Palestinian diaspora into its society to boost its internal market. That being said, the neighboring conflict originated a significant boost in the economic engine of the country and brought qualified labor (mostly from the upper and Middle classes) with cheap expenses to Jordan. It is for that reason that "*the Jordanian government has welcomed resettlement projects undertaken by international organizations or US development agencies within the broader framework of development*"²⁸. As a result, the state policies are somehow assessed as biased and not fully engaging in

²⁴ An English idiomatic expression denoting a situation involving two dangers in which an attempt to avoid one increases the risk from the other.

²⁵ Hanana Bamadhaj Omar & Mohd Irwan Syazli Saidin (2023), "The permanently minority people: Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Lebanon, (Attempted) social death and desire to return".

²⁶ Britannica, "Abdullah I", Date of Accession: 13.01.2024 from <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Abdullah-I>.

²⁷ Géraldine Chatelard (2010), "Jordan: A Refugee Haven".

²⁸ *Ibid.*

advocating the “*right of return*”. In this regard, the Jordanian authorities welcomed the international aid provided by UNRWA (The United Nations Relief and Works Agency) and took it to be a mechanism that helps Jordan reap potential benefits from the influx to its territories. In a nutshell, UNRWA is, the agency that has served Palestinian refugees since 1949 with the mission “*to help Palestine refugees achieve full potential in human development under the difficult circumstances in which they live, consistent with internationally agreed goals and standards*”²⁹. It signals the amplitude of the role conducted by Jordan by referring to the camps on its lands. It is one of the parameters that define the country’s level of responsiveness vis-à-vis the theoretical aspects presented earlier. With a plethora of ten refugee camps enshrined throughout its territory, “*more than 2 million registered Palestine refugees live in Jordan, the largest number of Palestine refugees of all UNRWA fields*”³⁰. The registered refugees are hosted in the following camps: Amman New Camp, Baqa’a Camp, Husn Camp, Irbid Camp, Jabal el-Hussein Camp, Jerash Camp, Marka Camp, Souf Camp, Talbieh Camp, Zarqa Camp.

State policies began to witness significant shifts vis-à-vis the resistance movement from the 1970s onwards. It is vital to bring forth the fact that the engagement of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has been consistent from 1948 up to the moment in which the ‘PLO’ (Palestine Liberation Organization) was welcomed to exercise its anti-Israeli military operations from Jordanian soil. As a result, this initiative earmarks the transition of Jordan from a ‘transit’ state to a ‘resistance’ soil for the Palestinian cause. The conflict reached its pick in the period between 1970 and 1972; the monarchy faced a direct security-related challenge due to the exponential growth of militarized street guerillas between the Jordanian security forces and the militants of the ‘PLO’ as well as the ‘PFLP’ (Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine). This incident is marked in history by the name of ‘Black September’. It was an attempt to crumble the established order under the administration of King Hussein and take over the country. Hitherto, Black September molded the basis of the engagement of Jordan with the cause and fostered the radical change of the country’s dynamics to engage with the normalization with Israel in 1994 by the medium of the peace treaty. Violence erupted due to the negative approach of the Palestinian leader vis-à-vis the proclaimed “*secret*” sympathy that King Hussein maintained with Israeli authority over the

²⁹ Nooran Alhmdan (2021), “Palestinian Refugees: Myth vs Reality”, Middle East Institute Policy Center, February 2021, Date of Accession: 14.01.2024 from <https://www.mei.edu/sites/default/files/2021-03/Palestinian%20Refugees%20-%20Myth%20vs%20Reality.pdf>.

³⁰ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, “Jordan”, Date of Accession: 15.01.2024 from <https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>.

years. As a result, the post-1972 Jordan made a significant shift from the cause for a good reason. PLO leaders were expelled from Jordan and internal societal tensions were boosted in the public sector. The clash between the two armed forces was wrapped up by signing a ceasefire in the year 1970. Indeed, the tensions drawn out of the Black September in Jordan have engendered a serious fraction in Jordanian-Palestinian relations. One of the most notable aftermaths is the creation of the paramilitary brigade under the labeling of “*The Palestinian Black September movement*”, a commando faction that broke away from the PLO that assassinated Jordanian Prime Minister Wasif al-Tel in Cairo in 1971.

4. The Unseen Role of Geography in Determining the Jordanian Imprint

Jordan is a landlocked piece of land, situated in Southwest Asia, within the epicenter of the Arab Peninsula. The country covers a total land area that culminates to more than 91,800 square kilometers (approximately about 35,480 squares per mile) in addition to a maritime zone that touches upon 540.00 square kilometers. Administratively speaking, the Kingdom of Hashemite is divided into 12 separate governorates among which the central city of Amman is the political and economic capital of the country. In addition to that, the largest cities after Amman are Zarkaa to the east and Irbid to the North. It is home to a total population of 11.302.000 million³¹ (5,984,000 among which are males and 5,318,000 are females) as per the indications of the last national population survey conducted by the DOS in 2022. Nevertheless, the majority of the population is majorly affiliated with Islam as the fundamental religious belief in the county while limited minorities present to the society a beautiful sense of diversity and ethnographic richness employing different religious affiliations. Notwithstanding, the relatively vast circumference stands to reach five different counties. It shares territorial borders with Saudi Arabia from the East, a long border line with Israel in addition to the occupied Palestinian West Bank from the West. Moreover, both Iraq and Syria share a territorial border with the Kingdom from the North. As displayed by the map below, the country’s most favorable arable areas are located along the western coastline by the Dead Sea, a zone in which we can find a long series of mountainous and hilly zones.

³¹ DOS (2022), عدد السكان املقدر لنهاية عام , Department of Statistics, Date of Accession: 16.01.2024 from https://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/DataBank/Population/Population_Estimares/PopulationEstimates.pdf.

Figure I. Map of Jordan³²

As far as the water resources are concerned, Jordan is deemed relatively limited in terms of ports and logistics. Its only openings on any maritime resources are located by the shores of a zone of burning conflicts. This criterion goes in stark opposition to the expansion of the country in terms of going after becoming a model of uniqueness in the zone. Nevertheless, the Jordanian presence in the sea inherently benefits from unfettered maritime access scattered into three discrete geographical spots. One location is situated in the southern part of the country, whereas two spots are located in the northern region along the western shore. It is important to accentuate that not all these openings share the same qualitative as well as quantitative value for Jordan. Even though the country proffers a scarcity of ports, the southern maritime gate of the kingdom is the maritime point of chief salience concerning the Jordanian role in the region. The southern riverbank possesses the only commercial port that operates at full capacity in the city of Al Aqaba, a strategic 26 km-long shore southwards of the capital Amman. In actuality, “*Jordan and Israel have only very short coastlines on the Red Sea, on the Gulf of Aqaba*”³³. Meanwhile, the country has also access to the Dead Sea through the Jordan River in the north, a maritime region that is exclusively exploited for tourism-based purposes by the country. Nevertheless, the influence of such an approximation

³² WorldAtlas, “Maps of Jordan”, Date of Accession: 16.01.2024 from <https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/jordan>.

³³ Greg Shapland (2020), “Maritime Boundaries in the Middle East”, *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 51, No: 1, pp. 146-168.

to the Red Sea comes, surely, along with its predicaments on the county's surroundings. It is viewed to affect the power dynamics in the region, the feature that culminated in several diplomatic enchainings of the country. The port of Al Aqaba is owned and run by the Aqaba Development Corporation (ADC), a cooperation which is "*owned by the Government of Jordan and ASEZA*"³⁴ (an acronym for the Ministry of Economic Affairs in Jordan). As mentioned in an earlier stage of the analysis, the crux of digging into the geographical intricacies of the country is serving the general picture of this chapter by clarifying the Jordanian role in the Palestinian issue through the lenses of Jordanian-Israeli relations. In this regard, Jordan has signed two maritime boundary delimitation agreements with Israel and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

For the sake of precision, this section would only address the Jordanian-Israeli agreement. Better known under the labeling M.D.B., the maritime boundary delimitation is a legally binding agreement that operates under the auspices of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. Technically speaking, delimitation is a voluntary regulation mechanism that takes place among two or more states to decide on the regulatory methodology in the shared sea area. It is, therefore, based on the consent of the States concerned. Jordan has, consequently, signed with the state of Israel on the 18th of January 1996 an M.D.B. that reconciled the Jordanian position within the conflict. It is viewed as a part of the normalization and the restoration of the bilateral relations with the Hebrew State at the expense of the Palestinian cause. In actuality, the text of the agreement clearly states that it comes in harmony with the 1994 Peace Treaty that aims at "*reaffirming their [the state of Israel and The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan] faith in their wish to live in peace with each other, as well as with all States, within secure and recognized boundaries*".³⁵ This initiative earmarks the deviation of Jordan from the Arab cause and alginates its intentions with the countries of the present Arabic Middle Eastern fellows.

Conclusion

The paper followed a pace of an ascendant aspiration that took into consideration the unusual status of the country in the Middle Eastern question and also tried to smoothly float from the far historical causes to gradually on the Palestinian question in general. As an intricate case of

³⁴ Aqaba Development Corporation, Date of Accession: 17.01.2024 from https://www.adc.jo/about_adc.aspx.

³⁵ United Nations, "Maritime Boundary Agreement Between the Government of the State of Israel and the Government of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, 18 January 1996", Date of Accession: 18.01.2024 from <https://www.un.org/Depts/los/LEGISLATIONANDTREATIES/PDFFILES/TREATIES/ISR-JOR1996MB.PDF>.

study, the conceptual framework employed to support the historical and geographical grounding has considered three approaches as far as the migration studies are concerned: Local Integration, Resettlement, and Repatriation. The emphasis was later focused on displaying the manner through which Jordan has been a key player in pacifying the Arab-Israeli conflict. However, it soon became evident that Jordan's role transcends the conventional paradigms. To ensure the solidity of the analysis, two elementary factors have been underscored throughout this analysis. The research opens by studying the historical milestones as well as the diplomatic attributions conducted by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regarding its neighboring countries. Furthermore, the paper has been enriched in terms of the entirety question by demystifying the foggy of the geopolitical question, a driving factor that determined the position of Jordan. Notwithstanding, the analysis unveils that the flow of assistance of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan regarding the Palestinian issue can be depicted as unstable and inconsistent.

As far as the findings of this study are concerned, the paper draws to conclusion the fact that despite its regional strategic importance, Jordan's power is undeniably curtailed by a complex web of geopolitical considerations. The paper, hence, underscores the extent to which Jordan's influence is circumscribed by its external interests, mainly through its bewildering political status compounded with Arabic affiliations and normalizing status. The country's role is, thus, characterized by an observable oscillation. At the level of the performance related to the refugee's responsiveness, the analysis came to conclude that the handling of the Palestinian refugee crisis was approached with a mixed-method approach that essentially was decided according to the Kingdom's relations with Israel. Hence, the process of local integration and resettlement are the fundamental approaches adopted throughout history that translate an inexorably intertwined view of Palestine with the level of security threats posed by its surrounding nations. Therefore, it becomes evidence to say that Jordan's contribution is not driven by a pan-Arabic sentiment, but rather a pragmatic orientation grounded in the imperatives of regional stability and security. In summation, the previously delineated key factors in understanding the intricate interplay of politics, strategy, and humanitarian concerns.

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