

Our life is here

Citizenship and hybrid identities among Palestinians in Wihdat
refugee camp



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Summary

A discourse that portrays the Palestinian refugee as a suffering but struggling stateless person who has return to Palestine as his or her ultimate goal is dominating both in academic research and in Palestinian politics today.

By the use of data collected in Wihdat Camp in Amman in 2009, this study argues that not only the Palestinian elite but also those who live in refugee camps have started defining themselves as Jordanian citizens, and that this is contributing to the development of a hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity. This means that the image of the Palestinian refugee that is dominates both in the academic and in the Palestinian political discourse only to a small extent fits the large group of Palestinian refugees who are Jordanian citizens.

The study shows that the hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity is manifested in the camp Palestinians' attitudes to the Right of Return and in changes in their marriage preferences. Although the camp refugees in Jordan still consider return to Palestine to be the right of every Palestinian refugee regardless of their juridical status in their host countries, they no longer see return as an option for themselves. This is expressed by changes in choice of marriage partner. While a partner from the same village or family was the preferred choice for the first generations of refugees, the preferred choice today is a 'stranger'; someone from outside the family and village circle. Choosing a 'stranger' is an important strategy for enhancing the family networks and bettering their possibilities in Jordan, something that again contributes to greater integration and a reinforcement of the hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity.

The development of a hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity takes place in an environment of increasing polarisation between Jordanians of East Bank and Palestinian origin and of growing East Bank Jordanian nationalism. Thus, unless this identity is accepted by the East Bank Jordanians, it will not necessarily lead to Jordan developing into a more homogenous state. It may just as well develop into a bi-national state with two distinct national groups that both consider themselves to be Jordanian citizens with full rights.

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For my friend Hiam Saleh.

Oslo, December 20, 2010.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Anti-Palestinian hooliganism and slogans denigrating the Palestinian origins of both the Queen and the Crown Prince led to the cancellation of a July 17 soccer game between the rival Faisali and Wahdat clubs, who traditionally represent the East Banker and Palestinian communities, respectively. Matches between the two teams have a long history of violence, but the specific digs at the royal family marked a new low. The clubs have been fined and their fans publicly chastised, yet official media reporting and commentary has been noticeably thin. The game exposed the growing rift between East Bankers and Palestinians in Jordan. The King's silence on the event is noteworthy, as is a reluctance among our contacts to discuss the issue.¹

The tension between the two main communities in Jordan is nothing new. It has been a prevailing factor in Jordanian domestic politics since the influx of Palestinian refugees after the war in 1948. This tension became more acute with the Jordanian disengagement from the West Bank in 1988, as Jordan was no longer divided in a Palestinian (West Bank) and predominantly Jordanian (East Bank) entity. Even though the East Bank had been inhabited by a mix of Palestinians and East Jordanians since 1948, the fact that the Jordanian territory now was confined to the East Bank and that all Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians now lived on the same piece of land made the need to define what it means to be Jordanian more urgent, a need that was reinforced by the economic changes and regional peace making that upset the delicate balance between the two groups. The political liberalization initiated in 1989 gave the inter-communal tensions more public space, and issues of identity and citizenship were for the first time openly debated in the Jordanian media. The main line of contention in the 'citizenship and identity-discourse' that followed was the question of whether or not it is possible to be a 'real' Jordanian citizen without renouncing one's Palestinian national identity. Out of the debate emerged a 'nationalist' and a 'pluralist' point of view of what Jordanian citizenship means. The debate also led to increased polarisation between the Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians, and to a strengthening of Jordanian nationalist sentiments.

¹ Cable sent from the American embassy in Amman to US Secretary of State on July 23, 2009. Published by Wikileaks December 6, 2010.

In Jordan, football is not just football. It is an arena where political discontent is displayed. Beneath what seems like ordinary fan antagonism lie some unresolved questions: What does it mean to be a Jordanian? Who is a true Jordanian citizen? This study addresses these questions, mainly from the point of view of the Palestinians living in Wihdat refugee camp in Amman.

In the early 1990s the Palestinians who lived in, or had recently left the refugee camps had a strong Palestinian identity, partly defined in opposition to or hostility to a Jordanian identity. The Palestinian middle class of small merchants and low-level government employees also had a strong Palestinian identity, but they felt comfortable expressing at least some form of Jordanian identity, or at least loyalty to the king. Only the Palestinian economic elite saw no dilemma or contradiction in defining themselves both as Palestinian and Jordanian (Brand 1995: 49).

This study argues that today the Palestinian-Jordanian identity that was earlier confined to the Palestinian Jordanian elite also can be found among the Palestinians living in refugee camps in Jordan.

Although there is a number of studies on Palestinian identity in Jordan (Destremau 1994, 1995, Jaber 1995, 1996, 2006, Farah 1999, Hart 2002, 2004), and on citizenship in the Middle East (Davis 1995, 1997, Butenschon et al. 2000), Nanes (2003) is the only publication that to my knowledge deals explicitly with the relationship between citizenship and national identity. Nanes traces the citizenship and identity-discourse that developed after the political liberalization in 1989. Her study shows how the heated debates between nationalists and pluralists over definitions of who is truly a Jordanian put citizenship to the forefront of the debate, and how an opening for civil society activism offered possibilities for putting Jordanian citizenship to use. Nanes argues that it is not the juridical status per se that creates a feeling of citizenship, but rather the active use of this status, and she argues that in Jordan active use of citizenship has influences the citizens' national identities.

Nanes has collected her data through examination of documents, interviews with elite Palestinians and Jordanians and through observing the activities of a popular cam-

paign that worked to eliminate honour crimes in Jordan. Apart from a survey on Palestinian camp dwellers' opinions on the level of integration between the Palestinians and Jordanians, conducted by the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, Nanes does not address issues that concern the refugee camps and their inhabitants.

In this study I show how the inhabitants of Wihdat camp have been influenced by the citizenship and identity-discourse. Whereas they earlier saw their Jordanian citizenship as a mere commodity, the camp dwellers today have acquired a feeling of Jordanianness that they associated with their Jordanian citizenship. This has led to the development of what I call a hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity.

Definitions

The terminology used to label the different groups living in Jordan is confusing. This study varies between the terms 'Palestinians' and 'Palestinian Jordanians', 'Jordanians' and 'East Bank Jordanians', depending on whether or not it is obvious what category I am addressing. All these terms refer to inhabitants of Jordanian who hold full Jordanian citizenship. When I talk about Palestinians without citizenship, this is explicitly mentioned.

The term 'Palestinian refugee' is complicated. The vast majority of Palestinian Jordanians are refugees or descendents of refugees, and approximately one in five Jordanian citizen, regardless of origin, is a registered UNRWA refugee (al-Hamarneh 2002a: 188). As his study shows, this does not mean that they all consider themselves as refugees. Because it is not my task to decide if someone should be defined as a refugee or not, and because all the informants in this study are UNRWA registered refugees, I will not use the term 'refugee' unless there is a specific reason to do so. For the same reason I will avoid the term 'Palestinian camp refugees', and instead use 'Palestinians living in refugee camps', 'Palestinian camp dwellers' or simply 'camp dwellers'.

Jordanians who are not of Palestinian origin are commonly termed as 'Trans-jordanians' or 'East Bank Jordanians'. In this study I use the latter term.

The organisation of the study

In addition to this introduction, this thesis consists of five main chapters and a conclusion.

Chapter two addresses some methodological and ethical aspects of the study. It mainly deals with difficulties and limitations I met during my fieldwork, different sampling strategies, advantages and disadvantages to different forms of interviews, language issues, and interpretation and analysis of the material. It also addresses some ethical dilemmas I encountered during the fieldwork.

Chapter three introduces a question that runs through this study: Has the citizenship and identity-discourse and the Jordanian nationalists' demand of Palestinian loyalty to Jordan led to a strengthening of the Palestinian Jordanians minority identity, or has it contributed to strengthening their Palestinian-Jordanian identity? The chapter argues that Jordan is still in a post-colonial process of searching for a national identity and that the citizenship and identity discourse that developed in Jordan from the early 1990s is a stage in this process. This discourse has led to a further polarisation between the Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians, a development that has also been enhanced by ambivalent state policies toward the Palestinian Jordanians.

Chapter four consists of three parts. The first part gives a historical presentation of Wihdat camp and shows how the inhabitants relate to the changes that have taken place in the camp. The second part outlines how the Jordanian state in different ways control the camp and its inhabitants, while the third part discusses different forms of formal and informal discrimination the Palestinians feel subjected to. The chapter argues that a state strategy of de-Palestinisation of Wihdat camp through opening it up and integrating it physically into the city of Amman has been successful, but that this strategy at the same time has led to an 'us and them'-mentality in the camp, something that in combination with a strong feeling of discrimination contributes to slow down the process of de-Palestinisation.

Chapter five opens with a discussion of what I consider to be two hegemonic discourses on the Palestinian refugees and argues that these discourses have not taken the fact

that most Palestinian refugees in Jordan are Jordanian citizens into consideration. The chapter argues that citizenship has influenced the camp refugees' views on the Right of Return and that their identities have changed from Palestinian nationals with Jordanian citizenship to a more hybrid identity that comprises elements of both Jordanian and Palestinianness. This is especially evident among the youngest generation. The chapter ends with a discussion on the limits of Jordanian citizenship. It focuses on arbitrary abolition of citizenship and possible consequences of a future peace agreement between Israel, the Palestinians and the Arab states in the region.

Chapter six argues that the identity changes presented in chapter five have affected the marriage patterns of the camp refugees, and that this further strengthens their hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity.

The conclusion asks in which direction Jordan is going. Will it become a more united country, or will the polarisation continue to increase? It argues that a strengthening of the Palestinians' Jordanian identity is in itself not sufficient to bridge the increasing gap between the two communities, it also needs to be accepted by East Bank Jordanians. The conclusion presents some issues that need to be addressed and solved in order to achieve this acceptance.

Chapter 2: Methodical approaches and ethical implications

The method used in this study, fieldwork with semi-structured interviews and participant observation, is widely used for gathering qualitative data for the purpose of understanding social phenomena. However, like with any other research method, there is no possibility of affirming the reliability and transferability of the results achieved without making the foundation of the knowledge explicitly known (Thagaard 2009: 11). The first part of this chapter deals with the development of my methodical approach. It discusses some choices I made and consequences of these. The second part looks at some ethical aspects of the method used, especially in relation to the politically sensitive situation the Palestinian Jordanians live under.

Methodical approach

Choosing the field

The data for this study was gathered in Amman, mainly in Wihdat camp, from September to December 2009. My initial plan was to conduct fieldwork in a Palestinian village on the occupied West Bank where I lived in the spring of 2008. All preparations including the project description were done with this in mind. However, when I wanted to renew my visa for Israel after two months of intensive Arabic studies in Palestine, my papers from the University of Oslo and my student identity card did not convince Border Security that I was actually a student, and I was denied entry and had to go back to Amman.

I decided not to appeal the denial of entry, and to instead focus on finding a new project and make the most of the time I had left. After consultations with my supervisor in Oslo, I decided to conduct my fieldwork in one of the Palestinian refugee camps in Amman. I bought a map and chose the refugee camp closest to where I lived; Wihdat camp. Later this random choice turned out to be very useful, as it gave me access to informants with different juridical statuses in Jordan.

Entering the field – the importance of being introduced

Because of the unexpected way I ended up in Jordan, I had made no contacts in advance. From previous experience in the Middle East I knew the importance of being introduced, and I realised I had to use all available methods to create a network for myself as quickly as possible. Through the use of online networks and contacting

old friends and acquaintances from previous visits to the Middle East, and by contacting the UNRWA² and various Jordanian NGOs, I tried to find a way in to the camp. Taking formal contact with NGOs yielded no results, possibly because I was and unknown with no one to introduce me. Through a friend working for the UNRWA I was put in contact with a Palestinian student from Gaza who was herself doing research in a different refugee camp. This student volunteered to help me both to get a research permit from the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) and to try to find a way into the camp. She did not personally know anyone in Wihdat but she had friends who did, and through this chain of acquaintances I was no longer a stranger. Thus, the student functioned as a ‘gatekeeper’ (May 1993: 42) for me.

As I had worked as a language teacher for immigrants in Norway earlier, my plan at the outset was to volunteer as an English teacher in the camp. The purpose of this was twofold; first to have a pretext to get in contact with people, and second to give something of value in exchange for the time and information people gave me. Thus, when I went to the camp for the first time, I suggested this to one of the activity centres. They seemed enthusiastic and said they would call me back. However they never did so I started going to the camp regularly to check if there was any development in the “English teacher” project. In the end they were not able to decide what they wanted me to do, but it turned out to be a valuable exercise all the same. I got to know people in the camp, and one day, after about three weeks of going to the camp I was invited home to a woman for lunch, and to the wedding of another woman’s daughter. After this it became easier to ask for appointments for interviews. I believe this happened both because people started to know me better and because they by now knew a bit more about my project. In short, the weeks spent visiting the camp without making interviews gained me the trust I needed to be let in (Thagaard 2009: 61).

The sampling strategy

From the beginning I wanted to concentrate on ‘ordinary’ people, not community leaders or other people in power. I also knew that I wanted to do some kind of generation comparison. The first set of informants was a ‘convenience sample’, defined as “a strategic sample in the sense that the informants represent characteristics which are

² United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

relevant for our research, and the method of choosing informants is based on their availability to the researcher” (Thagaard 2009: 56, my translation). The informants were all recruited by and from two community centres that I had gained access to. The informants were all women of about the same age (from 25 to 35) and from more or less the same social strata. Two had left the camp when their families’ economies were strong enough to move to more comfortable neighbourhoods. After about five interviews I reached a saturation point (Thagaard 2009: 59); the information started repeating itself. After a while I also came to understand that these informants all to some degree were approved by the DPA in advance. This got me worried about the quality of the data collected, especially concerning potentially sensitive topics like the relationship between Palestinians and Jordanians. As I needed to talk to both younger and older people, people in less comfortable economical situations and because I also wanted to interview people who were willing to talk about Palestinian political activity in the camps, I decided to look for informants myself, outside the two centres.

By this time I had a better overview of the activities in the camp, and I asked for permission to join some handicraft classes for younger women. Through this I ended up with a different set of informants, through a process resembling the snowball method (Thagaard 2009: 56). I tried to avoid the potential problem of getting a one-sided sample by specifically asking people if they knew someone who remembered Palestine, someone with a specific social status, age etc. Through this I met ‘ordinary’ people with no connection to the DPA, the UNRWA or other officially recognized organisations.

Through a chain of people who trusted each other but who I never personally met, I was also put in contact with undercover political activists. This turned out to have potential ethical consequences, something I will address in the second part of this chapter.

I regard my sample to be reasonably varied when it comes to age, social, martial and juridical status. However, there is a clear gender bias as all the main interviewees are women. Throughout the fieldwork I tried, through sisters, mothers and wives, to get in contact with men. The reply was always a polite ‘yes’, but it never materialised. I believe this is due to the strong gender segregation in Wihdat. Thus, the men I did talk

to were all political or official representatives or husbands sitting in on interviews with their wives.

The gathered material

Apart from field notes and informal conversations with individuals and organisations, I have conducted 14 semi-structured interviews that in some instances turned out to be closer to focused interviews (May 1993: 93). The average time for an interview was about three hours. Mostly there was more than one person present, sometimes up to five, all of them engaged in the conversation. All in all I have interviewed about thirty people. In addition I informally talked to about 35 individuals in-depth. Outside the camp I had formal and informal meetings with the UNRWA field office and the DPA. Among the organisations I met inside the camp were a women's centre, a kindergarten, an Islamic charity, a handicap centre, a health clinic, a fitness studio for women, and an underground political party. I also visited and was given tours of Husayn and Jarash camps, and I went to visit friends in Hittin camp. As I took part in and observed ordinary social situations, I consider my method to be one of semi-structured interviews with participant observation (Fangen 2004: 101ff).

The questionnaire and the interviews

After the first few visits to the camp I drafted a questionnaire and conducted a trial interview in Arabic with a Palestinian friend. It turned out that I lacked some Arabic words and expressions and that I had to rephrase some questions, delete others and add some new. The first actual version included four main topics: Family and marriage, economy, the camp and identity.

The aims for the interviews was to get as much concrete information as possible about the role these topics play in the lives of the interviewees, in order to better understand their attitudes and life choices. My ideal was for interviewees to talk about the subjects in terms of their own frames of reference as much as possible. This allows the meanings and interpretations that the individual attributes to events and relationships to be understood and thus provides possibilities for a greater understanding of the subject's point of view. In order to live up to this ideal my approach was to make the questions as open as possible, close to the method of the 'focused interview'. However, it is not correct to label the interviews 'focused'. I used a detailed questionnaire with introductory questions focusing on facts like age, marital

status etc. and during the interviews I made sure that as many as possible of the questions were addressed either embedded in the conversation or explicitly stated. Thus it is more correct to label the interviews 'semi-structured' (May 1993: 92ff).

An advantage of using semi-structured and focused interviews is that they have the ability to challenge the preconceptions of the researcher and that they also give the flexibility needed to change both the questionnaire and the way questions are asked during the fieldwork (Rosmer 2005: 61, May 1993: 93). This was important for my fieldwork. For instance I realized that asking direct questions about economy was not fruitful, as it seemed to be shameful to talk about among poor informants and uninteresting for informants who were better off. Integrating economy into conversations about marriage gave more information. On the other hand on some of the other topics my questions were too vague and general and I had to change them to avoid getting idealized rather than realistic representations of people's lives. Also due to the method of asking broad, open-ended questions I discovered two major shortcomings in my questionnaire. The first concerned the informants' attitudes to the Right of Return; the second concerned the role of religion in people's lives. The first of these topics turned out to be crucial for this study. This shows how important it is to give the interviewee the chance to talk about what is most important for her and not just what the interviewer believes is important.

Using tape recorder or taking notes?

There are some obvious advantages to tape recording. As all the information is preserved it is possible to go back to check and double check for mistakes, and quotes will be more precise. Since it is impossible to write down all the information given in an interview, taking notes instead of using a tape recorder will reduce the amount of gathered data. Taking notes also reduces personal contact between the researcher and the interviewee (Thagaard 2009: 102). Despite these shortcomings I chose not to tape record interviews or conversations. Since I did not know the interviewees or the social and political situation in the refugee camp well I was afraid that it would be difficult for people to trust me enough to be open if I recorded what they said. I got this suspicion confirmed on one occasion when I was engaged in an informal conversation with two informants. As they suddenly switched from general subjects to politics they anxiously asked me not to write down their names (I was taking notes). When I told

them I never did and that I was always taking notes in Norwegian they were clearly relieved. I compensated as much as possible for the loss of data by writing up the interviews as soon as possible after conducting them. The possibility I had to go back and double-check with the informants also reduced the chance of misquotes and misunderstandings. I believe that by not using a tape recorder I gained more trust and it made people more relaxed. As this resulted in some additional information I believe the advantages to this method were greater than the losses.

Time spent in the field

All in all I spent three months in Jordan. I first went to Wihdat two weeks after I arrived, and the first contact with the people who later became my informants happened after about one month. All the interviews were conducted during the last month of the stay.

An important reason why I was able to gain trust and access relatively quickly was my previous knowledge of Palestine. I had previously lived two years in different places in the West Bank and travelled extensively in Israel and on the Golan Heights. This meant that I had been to many of the places people came from originally and that I had a reasonably good knowledge of Palestinian culture. This plus the fact that I speak Arabic made me more of an 'insider', or at least not a total stranger. This was especially important during an interview I conducted with a political activist. At first she was wary of my motivation but after some time we discovered that we had common acquaintances on the West Bank. After this she became less sceptical and her answers were more open.

Language

After 2 ½ years of Arabic studies at the university of Oslo and three years living in different places in the Middle East, my command of Arabic is reasonably good. However, situations where I had to ask for rephrasing and clarification sometimes appeared during the interviews. This was to a certain degree compensated for by the possibility I had to meet the interviewees several times and the fact that I sometimes conducted the interviews in two or three parts. Despite this problem and because of the limited time and lack of preparations caused by having to change both the site and the theme of the project, I chose not to spend time looking for an interpreter. However, on three occasions I was able to bring with me native Arabic speakers who

were also fluent in English. These interviews made it clear to me that I both gained and lost something by not using a translator. For one thing, I lost the possibility of going into detail on certain subjects and I had fewer opportunities to ask follow-up questions because it was sometimes too complicated or too tiring. Another loss was the explanations of cultural praxis and quick updates on historical background that a good translator can supply (Borchgrevink 2003:97). On the other hand when the interviews were conducted through interpreters, direct contact with the interviewees was lost and I did not have the same control over the interviews. The attention quickly shifted from me to the interpreter and I had to work hard to keep focus on the topics I wanted addressed. I believe that my efforts to speak Arabic was a signal to the informants that I had a genuine interest in them and their culture, something that added to the trust I was given (Rosmer 2005: 56).

The analysis of the material

Because the gathered material is not very extensive, only about 90 pages, I chose not to use a computer programme to categorise the data. Already during the fieldwork I had an idea about which were the most important topics, and the first thing I did when I started analysing the data was to divide it into these topics by cutting and pasting the original texts into new documents. This enabled me to compare the answers of the different informants on the same topics. I then looked at the material again, this time asking myself what the different statements and stories were examples of or what they might represent. I then started to generate subcategories and combine these in different ways to find connections between them. From this four main themes emerged that mainly correspond to the chapters I ended up with. In other words, I have had a Grounded Theory-inspired approach, an inductive method where theory is developed from data rather than the opposite; a deductive method where a hypothesis is tested through the gathering of data (May 1993: 105, 112). As I had no hypothesis in advance, the latter method was out of the question. However, after the initial categorising and analysis of the data, I included other sources of theory, namely other research done on similar cases or incidents in order to validate my research, and to develop it further (Thagaard 2009: 189f).

Ethical implications of fieldwork with participant observation

The remaining part of this chapter will address some ethical aspects connected to my fieldwork. These have partly to do with general concerns of fieldwork and the treatment of informants in a politically sensitive area, and partly with specific situations that occurred during my fieldwork. I will also address one situation where I unknowingly might have put others at risk.

Contact with local authorities

From the beginning I was as open as possible about who I was and the nature of my research. On the first visits I brought with me the Palestinian student from Gaza. She had a clear understanding of what I was doing and of research ethics and I believe she was able to convey this to the people we met, many of which later became informants. I made it clear to each interviewee that she was free not to participate and that she was free to withdraw from the interview at any time (NESH³ 2006: 12f). However, as NESH points out concerning research in other cultures,

[t]he requirement regarding the consent of individuals that live in the society being studied must be combined with knowledge about and respect for local traditions and the powers that be. Insofar as possible, researchers should cooperate with the local inhabitants, members of the culture in question, and their representatives and local authorities (NESH 2006: 24).

Trying to cooperate with and gain the confidence of the local inhabitants and at the same time cooperate with local authorities represented by the DPA and the Camp Service Committee (CSC) led to both practical problems and ethical dilemmas⁴.

After obtaining a research permit from the central office of the DPA in Amman, I was told to go to the DPA office in Wihdat to present myself. When I got there a few days later, I was introduced to the director and as I was explaining the nature of my research, two young men entered the room and sat down without introducing themselves or acknowledging that I was in the room. I later found out that they were working for the CSC, and that they at the same time were representatives of the secret police. When the director asked me if my research was ‘political’ I was in doubt how

³ The National Committee for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences and the Humanities in Norway

⁴ The DPA and their executive arm in the camps, the CSC, are controlling life in the camps in many ways. I elaborate on this in chapter four.

to answer. After all, what does ‘political’ mean? I had no intention of asking for political affiliations, about opinions on the political situation in Jordan, the current regime or the royal family. However, being a Palestinian refugee has meant and still means living a life close to politics both as victims of it actors in it, and the political situation both in Jordan, Palestine and internationally has been and still is decisive for the everyday lives of the Palestinian Jordanians. Thus, when asking about identity, marriage, economy or the future it is impossible not to touch on to politics. My dilemma was: Should I elaborate on this and risk being stamped as ‘political’ and maybe lose my research permit or should I just stick to the narrower definition of ‘politics’ and answer that my research was not political? I opted for the last solution. In the actual interviews I avoided asking any questions that could be potentially uncomfortable or even risky to talk about. Instead, through asking open-ended questions I left the interviewees free to decide for themselves how political they wanted to make their answers. In this way I believe I both respected the DPA’s wish for me not to enter into politics and the informants’ right to express themselves as freely as they wanted or felt was safe.

A second problem appeared after the meeting with the DPA. As the two silent young men took me to the CSC for a briefing on their tasks in the camps, they informed me that they were going to be my guardians in the camp, for my own protection. I would have to report to them every time I entered the camp and have one of them with me at all times. They then took me on a tour of the main social institutions of the camp and I quickly realised that having them with me would make my fieldwork impossible for two reasons. The first because it is highly impolite to bring a young man on a visit to a woman and the second because I was afraid that people would not talk freely if I was considered to be somehow connected to the state’s security apparatus. After the tour I managed to convince the men that I did not need protection, and I promised to call them if I needed anything, and give them my schedule when it was ready. They agreed and I believed the problem was solved. However, when I needed a permission from them to teach English in the camp, they made the process very slow and at the same time informed me that I could teach at their centre without a permit. I politely refused. I did not want to be associated with them, I wanted to teach people who could also be informants and I wanted to keep my promise to the first people I had

contacted. This tug-of-war between the CSC and me over the permit to teach lasted throughout the fieldwork.

Confidentiality

Most of the interviewees smiled and laughed when I assured them that they would be unrecognizable in the finished study. They did not consider their opinions controversial, and did not see the point of depersonalization. However, even though I explained my project and how I wanted to use the information as thoroughly as possible to all informants and others I met, I am not in a position to judge whether or not they were fully aware of what the information they gave me could be used for. For instance, in this study I position the informants in the ongoing debate over what Jordanian citizenship implies and what being Jordanian means. My study can be read as a contribution to the debate over if the Palestinian refugees in Jordan should accept compensation and resettle in Jordan or insist on the Right of Return. Some of the informants' views on these topics, although not controversial in the 'unofficial' debate, are highly contentious, if not tabooed, in the official debate. I have no right to position the informants as individuals in these sensitive debates. Therefore and in accordance with the principle of confidentiality within the social sciences (NESH 2006), all names and identifiable characteristics have been left out or changed with pseudonyms. Given the nature of this study, I do not believe this has deprived the analysis of any significance.

The informant who disappeared – Unknowingly putting others at risk

On one occasion I might have put other people at risk. As mentioned above, I managed to get in contact with representatives of an underground political organisation working for the liberation of Palestine. We met for the first time in a flat far away from the camp where I explained what I wanted from them and why. After the meeting they agreed to help me by taking me to one of the leaders of the organisation, a woman living inside Wihdat. I explained that I was relatively well known in the camp and that they had to make sure there was no risk involved for them taking me there. I also specifically asked if we could enter the camp from a different place than I usually did. They assured me this was no problem and we agreed to meet again.

We met after sunset some days later, outside the camp. Contrary to my wishes, we passed though the main street, something that made me feel very uncomfortable. I

was assured that this was not a problem and we went to the informant's house. The interview turned out to be a very long one and we decided to stop half way and finish it another time. Outside the camp I agreed with the contact to keep in touch and we went our separate ways. After a few days I called the contact but there was no answer. This went on for about a week, and I decided to carefully check if something might have happened to him. Although I knew several people who were in a position to contact him, nobody managed to get in touch and I decided not to try and contact him again. I never found out what happened and I fear that their contact with me has caused problems with the security apparatus.

Concluding remarks

The purpose of this chapter has been to document and explain my fieldwork and my methodological approach. The data collection has been based on semi-structured, sometimes bordering on focused interviews supported by participant observation and informal in-depth conversations. The interviews were mainly conducted without interpreter, something I consider to have had both positive and negative consequences for the data produced.

My recruiting strategies have been varied but come close to the 'snowball-method' (Thagaard 2009: 56). Because I had several starting points, the final list of informants is varied concerning social status, age, level of education and juridical status in Jordan. There is however a clear bias in favour of female informants.

The relatively short time in the field was to a large degree compensated for by my previous experiences from living and working in the Middle East, my knowledge of Palestinian history and culture and of the Arabic language.

I have argued that my analytical strategy is best described as inductive but that I have also used deductive methods in the process of analysing the data as I have been inspired by other cases and theories in my interpretation of the material.

During the fieldwork I encountered some ethical problems. I have especially pointed out the dilemma of dealing with the wishes and demands of the authorities on the one

hand and on the other hand needing the trust and cooperation of the population. I have also discussed the need for depersonalisation in a politically sensitive situation and the risk of unknowingly putting others at danger.

Chapter 3: Jordanian identity and the citizenship debate

Citizenship does not in itself presuppose equality, democracy or a vibrant civil society; it is basically a contract between the state and the people. It regulates the legal status of the individual inhabitants of a state and decides the level of individual political participation and access to public resources. In this perspective, citizenship is the organising principle of modern states (Butenschon 2000: 11). However, questions concerning democracy and good governance or the role of the state in different societal fields like the economy, models of political participation, rule of law etc. can only be addressed when there is an established agreement over who legitimately constitutes 'the society'. The political situation when a state is established as a result of military conquest, territorial reorganisation or, as in the case of Jordan, of colonial design, is often one of instability and with competing groups struggling for territorial control and political power. The agreement over who constitutes the society can only be reached after the state is established, and the outcome of the struggles will determine who will constitute the political centre and who will be more or less excluded from influence in the emerging political system (Butenschon 2000: 4). In this chapter I argue that Jordan is still in a post-colonial process of defining who constitutes the society, and that the citizenship and identity discourse that has developed since the late 1980s is a part of this process. The chapter also introduces a question that is central in this study: Has the citizenship and identity-discourse and the Jordanian nationalists' demand of Palestinian loyalty to Jordan led to a strengthening of the Palestinian Jordanians minority identity, or has it contributed to strengthening their Palestinian-Jordanian identity?

Jordanian citizenship – an unsettled category

Already in 1949 an article was added to the Jordanian law that stated that

[a]ll those who at the time when this Law goes into effect habitually reside in Transjordan or in the Western part [of the Jordan] which is being administered by [the Kingdom], and who were holders of Palestinian citizenship, shall be deemed as Jordanians enjoying all rights of Jordanians and bearing all the attendant obligations (Kassim 2000: 207).

In 1954, a new citizenship law that granted Jordanian citizenship to all Palestinians living in the West Bank and to refugees who had fled during the 1948 war was

passed. Since then and until 1988 most Palestinians in Jordan have been defined as Jordanians, entertaining full individual political, civil, economic and religious rights (Kassim 2000: 207). An important exception to this is the approximately 120 000 refugees originally from the Gaza Strip, which up to 1967 was administered by Egypt. These people are eligible for temporary Jordanian passports, which do not entitle them to full citizenship rights such as the right to vote and employment with the government (UNRWA online 2009).

After Jordan disengaged from the West Bank in 1988, Palestinians with permanent residency on the West Bank lost their citizenship rights and their five-year passports were replaced with two-year passports. These passports function as travel documents but they do not imply that the holder is a citizen of Jordan; their holders are de facto stateless. Davis estimates that around 750 000 Palestinians on the West Bank were affected by this (Davis 2000: 51, Davis 1997: 74, 77).

From 1995 West Bank Palestinians were again issued five-year passports, visually indistinguishable from the passports carried by Jordanian citizens. However, these passports do not contain a national ID number and do not give the holders access to the civil, political, social and material resources of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan or the right of abode in the state of Jordan (Davis 1997: 8, 2000: 54).⁵ The reported number of non-citizens living in Jordan varies enormously, ranging from 349,933 including non-Palestinian guest workers and other foreigners (Jordan Department of Statistics 2004) to about one million, only including holders of passports without a national ID number (Davis 1997: 77). The low official number is probably due to the fact that in the national censuses, holders of all kinds of Jordanian passports are counted as citizens even though they do not all have the same citizen's rights⁶. Since the Gazans are the only ones without national ID number who are permanent residents of Jordan, they are the only ones who are counted separately. It is important to keep in mind this uncertainty of the numbers when one discusses Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin.

⁵ Some literature refers to 'national ID number', while other refers to the 'yellow identity card'. In practice this means the same, since one cannot be granted a yellow card without having a national number.

⁶ See appendix 1 for details.

Citizenship and nationality – what does it mean to be Jordanian?

Davis (1997, 2000) distinguishes between ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’, defining citizenship as “a datum: a certificate regulating the relationship between the individual and the state” and nationality as “a signifier of a collective identity or an imagined community” (Davis 1997: xiii). This definition fits well with how the older informants in this study describe their identity; they do not in any way link their citizenship and their national identity to the same physical and mental entity. Legally they are Jordanian citizens and enjoy full rights, while culturally and historically they are part of the Palestinian nation. However, it seems that Gubser’s observation that “[t]hose in the camps [...] fundamentally see Jordanian citizenship as a convenience rather than an identity or a loyalty” (Gubser 1983: 15) is becoming less valid, and that a generation that feels if not loyalty to the Jordanian state, then at least some form of Jordanian identity, is coming of age. This does not imply that young Palestinians are substituting their Palestinian nationality for a Jordanian one but rather that they are developing a national identity that has room for being both Jordanian and Palestinian, a hybrid identity. In this perspective, Davis’ distinction between ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’ becomes problematic, and Kymlicka and Norman provide a more useful perspective:

At the individual level talk of a person’s ‘citizenship’ can refer to three distinct ideas or phenomena: (a) her *status* as a legal citizen, defined largely by a panoply of civil, political, and social rights as well as a relatively small number of duties (e.g. to obey the law, pay taxes, perform military service); (b) her *identity* as a member of one or more political communities, an identity that is often contrasted with her other more particular identities based on class, race, ethnicity, religion, gender, profession, sexual preference, etc.; or (c) her *activity of civic virtue*. [...] These three ideas are conceptually and empirically linked in a variety of ways (Kymlicka and Norman 2000: 30f).

Instead of distinguishing between citizenship and nationality, a person’s nationality or nationalities are included as a potential part of his or her citizenship. This opens up for a more flexible understanding of the relationship between the two, and a more comprehensive understanding of what national identity means.

The third idea of citizenship; active participation in the polity, is central for the understanding of citizenship in this study. Nanes argues that it is through claiming one’s rights as a citizen and by taking part in the public discourse one develops a

sense of belonging to and identification with the political community (Nanes 2003: 23). In the case of Jordan, al-Hamarneh disagrees and claims that the debate over loyalty and citizenship contributes to limit the Jordanian citizen identity of the Palestinians in Jordan:

[In Jordan] the question of 'loyalty' is frequently discussed: to whom are Palestinians in Jordan *more* loyal, to Jordan or to Palestine, or, more specifically, to the Jordanian political system or to the PLO? This peculiar discussion can only strengthen the perception of guest and 'minority' status of the Palestinians, as well as increase East Jordanian xenophobia against them (al-Hamarneh 2004: 204).

These contradicting views generate an important question that runs through this study: Does the polarisation between the two groups and the constant nationalist demand of Palestinian loyalty to Jordan necessarily strengthen the Palestinians' minority identity or can it also contribute to strengthening their Jordanian identity?

Regardless of one's view on this point, the participation in civil society that to a certain extent was made possible with the political liberalisation from 1989 has been limited in pace with the stagnation of the liberalisation process. This stagnation might have a negative effect on the further development of the citizenship of the Palestinian Jordanians:

[T]he exact rights citizens have will partly define both their citizenship status and identity, as well as the range of political and social activities available to them. The form of citizenship identity they have will have an impact on their motivations to participate virtuously in civic and political activities; and so on. Similarly, if one of these aspects of citizenship is eroded, then the others will be affected as well (Kymlicka and Norman 2000: 30f).

However, the effects of the open debate over citizenship and Jordanianness that was made possible by the liberalisation cannot easily be reversed even if the space for public expression has decreased since then.

On the basis of this understanding of citizenship and with the different limitations to citizenship in Jordan in mind I will now present the debate over citizenship and Jordanianness that emerged after 1989.

The citizenship debate

Although Palestinians were granted citizenship in 1950 and the vast majority of the Palestinians in Jordan today hold Jordanian citizenship, Jordanian society is divided along national lines. Palestinian Jordanians dominate the private sector while East Bank Jordanians control the public sector, including the army, state security services and the bureaucracy (Brand 1995: 48, Robins 2004: 3). This does not mean that Jordan started out having two groups with separate national identities. Neither does it mean that the country became bi-national in 1948 with its conquest of the West Bank and the subsequent granting of citizenship to the Palestinian refugees, as during this period, localized identities (city, family) and supra-national identities (Arab) were stronger forms of identity than state-level nationalism (Nanes 2003: 2). Rather, the distinct national identities of the Palestinian and East Bank Jordanians developed gradually.

Influenced by growing anticolonial sentiments and ideologies in the Third World, an anticolonial current overtook Jordan in the mid 1950s, demanding complete independence from the British as well as democratic reforms. Although this movement did not reach its aim of democratic reforms, it resulted in the emergence of a Jordanian 'self', radically opposed to the British 'other'. With the emergence of an increasing Palestinian national consciousness, the rise of the PLO and the Palestinian guerrilla movements in the 1960s, the need for a national redefinition became urgent, and after the Civil War in 1970-71 where much of the country's elite backed the regime, the 'other' of the Jordanians changed from the British to the Palestinian Jordanians (Massad 2001: 12f). Thus, distinct Palestinian and Jordanian national identities emerged over time and are relatively recent developments. This emergence was mediated by a shared Jordanian citizenship:

Although the national divide and the challenges it poses to the regime occupies much of the writing about Jordan, little attention has been paid to the simple fact that it is precisely because Palestinian Jordanians are Jordanian *citizens* that the Jordanian situation is so complex. [...] [T]hrough the granting of citizenship to Palestinians, Jordan made a commitment to them and created a unique challenge for itself. The question then becomes: how can these two national groups live peaceably in one country? (Nanes 2003: 2f).

The relationship between the two communities has waxed and waned with changing political and economic circumstances, but tensions have always been a persistent if suppressed feature of domestic politics. These tensions were allowed a more open expression from 1989 when Jordan embarked on a path of political and economical liberalisation that opened the public sphere to discourse and also to a certain degree to participation in civil society (Brand 1995: 46, Nanes 2003: 4).

The disengagement from the West Bank the year before had already given a push to forces that were asserting an exclusivist nationalism that excluded large segments of the population as non-Jordanian. These forces took the denationalisation of the West Bank Jordanians as evidence that not all Jordanian citizens belonged to the Jordanian nation (Massad 2001: 262). Thus, even if citizenship has been an issue in the debate over who is a Jordanian throughout the history of the state, the changes, debates and activities that took place after 1988, in combination with peacemaking in the region intensified the discussion of what citizenship means both in terms of identity and in terms of rights (Nanes 2003: 2f).

Through these public discussions, two opposing views on who is truly a Jordanian and over the distribution of political and economical rights and privileges crystallised; the nationalist and the pluralist discourse. While the Jordanian nationalists give primacy to national identity over juridical citizenship, the pluralists give primacy to juridical citizenship over national identity. This battle between inclusive and exclusive definitions of Jordanian identity is inherently a battle over the status of Jordan's citizens of Palestinian origin (Nanes 2003: 1). While the pluralist discourse represented something fundamentally new in Jordan (Nanes 2003: ii), the nationalist discourse had roots in Jordanian history and politics, dating back to the anticolonial, nationalist movement mentioned above.

The official discourse

The regime's politics toward the two national groups in Jordan has been, and still is, dominated by the balancing act that is characteristic for Jordanian politics in general, the aim of which is not ultimately to defend the notion of the nation-state but to defend the monarchy and keep it in power (al-Oudat 2010: 66). The basis of regime security has since the foundation of the state been the indigenous Jordanian tribes and

the army. Strategies of recruiting to power and awarding members of important tribes is crucial to the regime, something that has reinforced the connection between tribal affiliation and East Banker identity (Brand 1995: 48), indicating that there is a difference between Palestinian Jordanians and ‘real’ Jordanians. Even though the vast majority of the Palestinians in Jordan legally are Jordanian citizens, they are in the official discourse Palestinian refugees who are waiting to go home to Palestine (Nanes 2003: 139). Yet at the same time, the general strategy of Jordan has always been to integrate the Palestinian refugees in the socio-political structure of the country and to integrate the Palestinian refugee camps into municipal planning and construction (al-Hamarnah 2002a: 174). However, contrary to the perception of many Palestinians, and despite strong evidence that the regime is not above exploiting and encouraging inter-communal tensions when it sees fit, the evidence suggests that the state’s goal has been less to impose an East Bank Jordanian identity on the Palestinians than to create a hybrid Jordanian identity for both communities (Brand 1995: 50, 57).

It is important to be aware that the ethnical and the political divide not always concur. In the political discourse it seems like the identity divisions are clearly drawn, that ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Jordanian’ are fixed and clearly demarcated communities. In reality, history and current facts on the ground show that this duality has never been that clearly marked (Nanes 2003: 138). It is not simply a matter of origin but also one of class and political standing. Since the foundations of the state, there has been Palestinians loyal to the Hashemites, and East Bank Jordanians who have opposed them. In the 1960s, some East Bank Jordanians were recruited to the Palestinian resistance movement (Brand 1995: 54). It is also important to note that although there is a strong nationalist movement in Jordan, East Bank exclusivist nationalists are a minority among East Bank Jordanians (Nanes 2003: 150).

Two views on citizenship and national identity – the nationalists vs. the pluralists⁷

The nationalist definition of who is a Jordanian stresses a nativist, East Bank identity that excludes Palestinians who arrived after 1948 from the political community. For nationalists, only national homogeneity can preserve loyalty to the state, and they

⁷ This section is based on Nanes 2003: 141-153.

insist on lineage membership in the titular nation as being the most important criteria for political inclusion. Palestinian loyalty to Jordan has always been suspect due to floating identity and conditional legitimacy. The attempts of Palestinian guerrilla groups to take over Jordan during the civil war of 1970-71 were to some a clear signal of the disloyalty of the Palestinian Jordanians.

However, East Jordanian nationalists acknowledge the law and admit that the Palestinians legally are Jordanian citizens but insist on making distinctions based on national origin as the 'real' basis of citizenship. To the extent that Palestinians can become 'real' citizens, a demand is that they make the choice between remaining Palestinian or becoming Jordanian. For the nationalists this choice is related to the need for loyalty to the state. They see no difficulties with the loyalty of the Circassian and Chechen immigrants who arrived in the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th century. They believe these immigrants became integrated because they came to Jordan of their own free will, as opposed to the post-1948 refugees, who were forced to come to Jordan. Because they did not come to Jordan of their own free will, their loyalty is suspect.

Jordanian pluralists actively refer to the law as the basis for Jordanian citizenship, regardless of national origin. They hold that one can choose to be a Jordanian without ceasing to be Palestinian and that this does not disturb their loyalty to Jordan. Jordanians of Palestinian origin are considered to be as Jordanian as the East Bank Jordanians. Thus, the pluralists stress a more legalistic definition of citizenship and a more hybrid sense of identity than the nationalists

The East Bank nationalists are forced to recognize the Palestinian Jordanians' right to remain in Jordan as a legal reality but at the same time they try to undermine it by emphasising the importance of identity and lineage. All nationalists naturally support the right of return, but while some hold that large groups of Palestinians should be forced to return when possible, others hold that only Palestinians who want to return should, but that those who choose to remain must become full-fledged Jordanians with only one loyalty; that to Jordan. The pluralists support both the right of return and the right to remain for all Palestinian Jordanians and at the same time they

recognise that since the right of return may not be possible to carry out, the right to remain is the right that needs to be protected.

Conclusion

The debate over whether or not it is possible to be a true Jordanian citizen and at the same time have a different national identity shows that the question of who legitimately constitutes the Jordanian society is still not answered, and that there is still uncertainty over what it means to be Jordanian. Through its balancing act of keeping its power base and at the same time trying to integrate the Palestinians into the Jordanian society, the state has contributed to this uncertainty.

In order for the state to succeed in its aim of developing a hybrid Jordanian identity and integrating the Palestinians deeper into Jordanian society, this situation of uncertainty needs to be solved. By applying the pluralists' idea that there is no contradiction in being both a Palestinian and a Jordanian citizen, the Palestinian Jordanians would be given an opportunity to become active citizens and to take part in the public debate and the development of Jordanian society without having to denounce their Palestinian identity and their loyalty to Palestine. On the other hand, by not letting go of the Jordanian nationalists' constant demands for the Palestinians' undivided loyalty to Jordan, the Palestinians' access to involvement in the Jordanian polity might not just be hampered, but also possibly weakened.

Chapter 4: The Palestinians in Wihdat camp – between exclusion and inclusion

Wihdat camp has a long history of resistance and political activism, and is a strong symbol of the Palestinian struggle. Wihdat Club, one of the most famous and successful football teams in Jordan, has its origins in the camp, and one can detect a distinct pride and local patriotism among its inhabitants. But there is also a widespread concern that the camp is rapidly losing its Palestinian character and becoming a normal neighbourhood, indistinguishable from its surroundings. This chapter argues that the state has been relatively successful in its recent strategy of physically opening up Wihdat camp and integrating it into the city of Amman. But at the same time the regime strategy has contributed to strengthening the local patriotism and an ‘us against them’-mentality in the camp. The state’s firm control of the camp through the use of state institutions and the bureaucracy in combination with the camp dwellers’ strong feeling of being discriminated against works together to give them a sense of exclusion, a sense of being considered as less Jordanian than other groups. Throughout this chapter I will use empirical data from my fieldwork to illustrate how the recent development influences on everyday life in Wihdat.

Who are the Palestinian refugees?

The Palestinian refugee camps were set up after the two periods of influx of refugees in 1948 and 1967. When the refugees first came to Jordan, they settled by their own means, in different places and in different ways and were provided for by the ICRC⁸ and the American Quakers. UNRWA took over these tasks when it was established in 1950, and it also started constructing refugee camps. This was desired by the Jordanian state, which wanted to gather the refugees who had up till then been squatting in different places in distinct, controllable areas. Setting up refugee camps would also solve the notable problem of disagreements between landowners and refugees over land rights, as the state now bought or leased the land the refugees lived

⁸ International Committee of the Red Cross

on from the landowners⁹. According to Jaber, the construction of the camps was a way of preserving social order under the changing demographic circumstances and to keep the Palestinian refugees and the Transjordanian population apart (Jaber 2006: 188). The establishment of the camps made it easier for the authorities to control the refugees but at the same time it also made it possible for the refugees to pursue their old relationships and values. Thus, the camps became “foci both of oppression and of Palestinianism” (Sayigh 2007:112). The core ingredient of Palestinian identity in Jordan; the ‘refugee identity’, derived from the refugee camps:

The typical camp, with its UNRWA-schools and clinics, dirty yards and narrow streets, poverty and pride, social networks and political activities, local informal economy and international protection, solidarity within and xenophobia towards outsiders, strict boundaries and internal freedom, rural conservative and urban liberal stances, were symptoms of an unstable but deeply-rooted identity (al-Hamarneh 2004: 205).

Today there are about 1,9 million Palestinian refugees in Jordan, representing 42 % of all Palestinian refugees registered with the UNRWA in their five fields of operation¹⁰. 18 % or about 334.000 of the refugees in Jordan live in camps; the rest mainly live in cities and towns. Because the UNRWA definition of a Palestinian refugee excludes people who ended up outside the agency’s five fields of operation or who were not residing in Palestine at the time the 1948 war broke out, the actual number of refugees is higher than the official UNRWA numbers. Also, refugees often do not notify the UNRWA of changes in family status and many of the refugees’ descendants are not registered with the UNRWA.

UNRWA’s operational definition of a Palestine refugee is any person whose "normal place of residence was Palestine during the period from 1 June 1946 to 15 May 1948 and who lost both home and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 conflict." Palestinian refugees are persons who fulfil the above definition and descendants of men fulfilling the definition (UNRWA online 2009).

⁹ Based on an interview with Matar Saqer, Public Information Officer at the UNRWA Jordan Field Office, Amman, November 23, 2009.

¹⁰ Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, the Gaza Strip and the West Bank including East Jerusalem.

“The origin of Amman is Wihdat” – the history of Wihdat camp

Wihdat, officially New Amman Camp, is one of 13 Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan. It was established in 1955 on 0,488 square kilometres 3 km north of the centre of Amman. In the beginning, 5000 refugees from the villages between Yafa and Jerusalem inhabited the camp. Wihdat today has 21 private clinics, seven mosques, a post office and a police station. UNRWA is responsible for two health centres and 16 schools for about 11 000 students. There is also a youth club, a rehabilitation centre for the disabled and 14 NGOs running charities, kindergartens, awareness projects and vocational training projects (DPA 2008: 33). As the camp today has more than 50 000 inhabitants¹¹, overcrowding is one of the most serious day-to-day problems. For instance, the schools run double shifts to accommodate the large number of students. The overcrowding is also evident in the market. There are about 2 500 enterprises in the camp making it the main shopping area in East Amman for both clothes, food and other commodities, but the infrastructure is not sufficiently developed, and getting from one side of the camp to the other can be a serious challenge.

Camp identity in Wihdat

Wihdat was one of the main centres in the formation and development of the Palestinian national movement in Jordan and it was in the 1960s, 70s and 80s a strong symbol for Palestinianism (al-Hamarneh 2002b). Because of its strong position both ideologically and as a centre for armed struggle, it was together with al-Husayn camp almost razed to the ground by the Jordanian armed forces during the civil war in 1970-71. The camps were used as training grounds and operational centres and as the fiercest resistance was launched from them, casualties there were especially high (Bailey 1984: 57, Brand 1988: 171). People in Wihdat are proud of the history of the camp and one can still sense the camp identity described by al-Hamarneh above.

I feel that Wihdat is Palestine. When I enter the camp I'm met with the smell of Palestine. I'm not sure why this is. Maybe it's the people, or the football team. The solidarity. Wihdat is like our homeland (watanna). I like everything here.

-Imm Fuad (49)

¹¹ No exact numbers exist, but most estimates are around this number.

Imm Fuad links her patriotic feelings for Wihdat directly to Palestine. For the younger generation however, the patriotism is linked to the camp itself, it is not connected to Palestine:

Wihdat is different from the other camps. It has everything. We have more education. In my family, for instance, we all have higher education. Wihdat is my identity, my childhood. My best memories stem from Wihdat. I love the people here, and I feel more at home here than I do in Dahiyeh [where I live now]. People in Wihdat are united, but people who come from other places destroy the unity, they are not like us.

-Rim (26)

Like al-Hamarnah points out and the quote above shows, there is a strong 'us against them'-mentality in the camp. However, when I ask Amine how Wihdat compares to other camps, she answers *I don't know. Why would we go there?* Although she feels strongly about Wihdat, she does not consider other camp dwellers to be closer to her than other Jordanians. Thus, the distinction is not between an 'us' that comprises all Palestinian camp dwellers and a 'them' that comprises all other Jordanians. It is the Palestinian inhabitants of Wihdat camp against the rest. This does not mean that the people in Wihdat feel that they are not a part of Amman. For Samah, Wihdat is the true Amman, and the people of Wihdat are its 'true' citizens:

Life in Wihdat is good, people have solidarity, we are all the same. We go to the same schools, dress more or less the same. Wihdat is like a separate ecosystem, a separate culture. You can trust people here, because you know who they are. Here we drink coffee, in the West side they drink cappuccino, latte, all sorts of things. Here we eat bread; there they have lots of fancy names for it. When you think about it, everyone in Amman originate from the camps, but people have moved out and become different. The origin of Amman is Wihdat.

-Samah (33)

Although the inhabitants of Wihdat are proud of the camp and carry a distinct camp identity, the content of this identity has changed. While for the older generation the pride of and identity with Wihdat is linked to Palestine, the youngest generation feel proud of and identify with it because it is their home. Thus, a specifically local patriotism has developed at the same time as the Jordanian state has implemented a strategy of opening up and enhancing greater integration of the refugee camps into Jordanian society.

State intervention in Wihdat after the Civil War

After the Civil War and the crushing of the Palestinian national movement in 1970-71, the first wide streets were built across Wihdat. This was done mainly for security

purposes¹², but also as part of a government strategy to integrate the camps of the Greater Amman district into the metropolis of Amman and at the same time promote greater integration of the Palestinians into the Jordanian society. Later, electricity, telephone and wastewater lines were installed. In the early 1980s permanent cement roofs were built and limited permissions to build second floors were given (al-Hamarneh 2002b, 2004: 209). Today Wihdat looks more like a working class neighbourhood in East Amman than a refugee camp. The borders between the camp and the surrounding areas are blurred, there are no gates and no special permits are required to enter. It is no longer a purely Palestinian area, as fifteen to seventeen percent of the inhabitants are Egyptian, Iraqi, Gypsy and other minorities (al-Hamarneh 2004: 216). The only official sign that it is a refugee camp is the UN flags swaying from the UNRWA schools and social centres, and a trained eye will notice the layout of the buildings and the pattern of straight alleys typical for the refugee camps in Jordan.

The informants all agree that Wihdat has changed fundamentally since the Civil War. Improvements in education, health and infrastructure are greatly appreciated but the price to pay for this development is a loss of Palestinian character in the camp and a feeling of political acquiescence. The informants blame increasing drug use, gang violence harassment of girls and other unwanted behaviour on what they see as a weakening of the solidarity between the Palestinians, reinforced by the influx of new, non-Palestinian inhabitants. Samah connects the state's opening up of the camps directly to the Arab countries' need for stability in the region:

The state opened up Wihdat, it is part of the city, not a closed unit like before. None of the countries around Palestine wants it to be a state; they fear it, because then the whole situation will change. They can talk about Palestine and the Palestinians, but they cannot take action. We can't talk about this, one has to be careful and keep things to oneself. Even though you can read about this in books, you cannot talk. It is safer to keep quiet.

-Samah (33)

Budur and Rim feel that the change in the composition of inhabitants due to an influx of poor people who are not Palestinians, and the explosive development of Wihdat as

¹² Before this there were only narrow alleys, making it hard for the armed forces to enter and control the camp.

a main commercial area in East Amman is destroying the Palestinian character of the camp and that it is quickly changing into a 'normal' neighbourhood:

Wihdat resembles a town, not a camp. It doesn't feel like a camp, especially because of all the people from other places. [...] People move out because the units are too small, they need more space. It is not allowed to build more than two floors, so it is hard to expand. I hope people will return, but I'm afraid Wihdat is changing into an ordinary neighbourhood. It's a pity really. But we will remain Wihdatis till we die!

-Rim (26)

In the future, the camp will turn into a market; it will no longer be a residential area. It will be like Souq al-Hamidiyye or Khan al-Khalili¹³. But the camps will remain causes even if the people disappear. Their names will remain as symbols. And anyway, there are many camps in Jordan so the phenomenon won't disappear.

-Budur (46)

It seems that the state has been successful in its strategy of integrating Wihdat into Amman and decreasing the camp's role as producer of Palestinian identity in Jordan. However, as the next section will show, at the same time as they opened up the camps, the state by different means also increased its control over the camp residents. This in combination with a general use of the bureaucracy to control the Jordanian population and the camp dwellers' strong feeling of being discriminated against works together to limit the integration of the Palestinians into Jordanian society.

The matrix of control in the camps

[The State] are more in control now than they used to be, they want to know everything that is going on. For example, some time ago two people like you, who wanted to learn about life in the camp, came to my house. Two men from the secret police accompanied them. Of course I didn't talk to them about the things we are talking about now. They didn't do anything wrong, and they didn't take notes, but I didn't want to talk about things like these in front of them. The reason they are two is to control each other, to make sure we won't be left alone to speak freely. They don't want old wounds to be opened. [...] They [the state security apparatus] aren't like they were before; they don't kill. They have become calmer due to international attention from for instance the Red Cross, and because of the focus on human rights. They are being watched.

- Imm Anwar (62)

While the Jordanian government took control over the refugee camps by use of the armed forces in 1970, they now mainly control the camps through different govern-

¹³ The most important traditional markets in Damascus and Cairo, respectively.

mental institutions. The Secret Service, the Civil Defense, the police and the Department of Palestinian Affairs (DPA) have permanent presence in the camps (Farah 1999: 150). The DPA is the Jordanian government's executive arm in dealing with the Palestinian refugee camps and is linked to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. The DPA is responsible for providing infrastructure and for facilitating services provided by other institutions like the UNRWA and governmental institutions and ministries. The stated aim of the DPA is to work "hand in hand with other governmental institutions, UNRWA, NGOs and the donating countries, to establish productive projects that lift economic normality if refugees and training programs for the provision of the necessary and proper skills for the labour market (DPA 2008: 11). But the DPA also has a controlling function. Although the DPA is only directly present in five camps a Camp Service Committee (CSC), called *al-lajne* by camp inhabitants, is present in all the camps. The members of the CSCs are all residents of the camps and they are chosen by the DPA, which also funds the CSCs. The members are usually men of influence and status in the camp, a status equivalent to village heads, or are important members of a particular clan (Farah 1999: 150). In order to obtain a permit to open a business, a certificate of residence that makes it possible to apply for higher education or other important official documents, one has to go to the CSC. According to one informant this is a means for the state to control the camp inhabitants:

I have had problems because I am politically active on behalf of Palestine. For example, a friend and I were planning to open a café. We did everything right, followed the rules, filled in the papers and invested a lot in getting it ready. But at the very last minute, we didn't get the opening permit from the DPA. This is because of my dealings with politics; this is one way the State controls us.

- Wael (28)

People do not distinguish between the DPA and the CSC when they talk about them, they are both called *al-lajne*, and they are both considered to be tools of the state. A staff member of an UNRWA office outside the camps told me that people in the camps hate the DPA and the CSC because they are considered to be representatives of the secret police, and people believe that they work for the state and not for the people. Like Wael, she also claimed that permits could be denied if one is too political or in other ways a problem, and that nothing can be done without a permit. Budur also agrees to this:

I used to think that the DPA was created for our benefit, but it isn't. It is created for the state, and they decide everything. I didn't know, but they decide everything here [in the camp]. The people who work there are employed by the state. All the employees used to be Palestinians, but now it is mixed. Ibrahim [the head of the DPA in Wihdat] is Jordanian, of Jordanian descent. This has never happened before.

-Budur (46)

Farah mentions that in Baqa' camp, where she did her fieldwork, many believe that the CSC have made profit out of the services they offer, mainly the pavement of alleyways, as the amount they collected from inhabitants exceeded the costs incurred. Residents also point out that they had offered their free labour on many of the projects, including the paving of roads (Farah 1999: 151).

In the past, UNRWA employees would distribute food, assist in helping individual families fix or renovate their shelter and intervene in some of the conflicts that emerged in the camps. Today, due to economical cutbacks, the agency's contribution is more abstract and expresses itself mainly through its educational programs, as well as programs directed to enable refugees to become 'self-reliant' such as 'income-generation projects'. A consequence of this is that the role of the DPA has become more important and more visible in the camps, as they have slowly taken over some of the functions previously carried out by UNRWA (Farah 1999: 150).

According to Matar Saqer¹⁴ the division of power and responsibility between the state and the UNRWA is not always clear:

When it comes to the women's centres, we are not in charge, but we keep an eye on them. Earlier they were financed by the UNRWA, and the directors of the UNRWA in the camps were also directors of the women's centres. From the mid 1990s their own revenues finance the centres, and the CSC administers them. Yet, they are using our premises and we among other things contribute with legal advice services. We created them, but they want to be independent. It is true that there is a vacuum here.

This situation opens up to a power struggle between the UNRWA, the different state institutions and high-ranking representatives from the camps. During a visit to one of the camps outside Amman I got a taste of this struggle.

¹⁴ Public Information Officer at the UNRWA Jordan Field Office

Playing the power game – the incident of the lost glasses

Today we went to the CSC to get research permission for my friend. Since they didn't know what to do, they called the mukhtar¹⁵, who is a family acquaintance of my friend. He invited us to his house for coffee and then took us to the police, where my friend, like me, was appointed a police guardian while she was in the camp. We then went with the mukhtar to some of the institutions in the camp to make appointments for interviews. At one point I discovered that I had forgotten my glasses somewhere and after checking with the mukhtar's wife, we called the police to ask if I had forgotten them there. They found nothing. On our way back to the bus I suggested we pass by the police station again to ask if they had found the glasses, and the mukhtar agreed. I was very surprised when the chief of police exploded in anger, screaming that we didn't trust him and that we accused him of being a thief. I tried to take the blame for this faux pas, being a foreigner, but he did not listen, as all his anger was directed at the mukhtar. After about 15 minutes my friend managed to calm him down, after he had tried to throw us out of the police station several times, screaming to the mukhtar that he 'would pay for this'.

From my field diary

On our way home we tried to understand what had happened. How could the chief of police become this agitated because a foreigner had overstepped a social convention? We came to the conclusion that this was probably a show put on to make sure we understood who was in charge of the camp and to put the mukhtar in his place. We had learned that you do not challenge the power of the state without getting in trouble, whether you are a foreign student or a mukhtar.

Embedded authoritarianism

In connection with increasing popular unrest due to economic problems in the late 1980s, Jordan in 1989 started a process of political liberalisation. Parliamentary elections were held for the first time since electoral activities were banned and martial law was imposed in 1957, greater civil society activism was permitted and in 1992 political parties were allowed. This process led to a change in the methods the regime

¹⁵ Traditionally a village headman, a position first established by Ottoman authorities as their administrative representative in the villages. In the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan it is used more loosely as a term for important leaders in the camp.

was using to keep control of the population. With its new democratic rhetoric, the state could no longer afford straight-out repression. Thus, rather than the brutal forms of physical force used during the martial law period, the state now resorted to what Wiktorowicz calls ‘embedded authoritarianism’, which he defines as “social control projected through a complex array of administrative procedures, legal codes and informal regulative practices designed to constrain opposition without resorting to violence. [...] [P]ower and control are embedded in bureaucratic processes, masked beneath the veneer of visible democratic institutions and practices” (Wiktorowicz 2002: 111). However, although the primary agent of control is now the bureaucracy and not the secret police, the military or totalitarian instruments, the secret police still play an important role, as it checks and controls people, organizations and institutions before eventual permits and positions are approved by the bureaucracy. In this way the regime can claim to be democratic at the same time as they control and repress the citizens through the bureaucracy (Wiktorowicz 2002: 121f). This does not mean that torture and violence is no longer used by the Jordanian regime, but that this more often than before occurs in instances where embedded authoritarianism fails, and not as a first remedy (Wiktorowicz 2002: 124n6).

Discrimination – that we are all Jordanians is only true on the posters

Citizenship can be characterised as both a status and a set of rights. Since a cardinal value of citizenship is equality, individuals who do not have the same political, economical or social rights as other citizen can claim to be discriminated against based on this unequal distribution of rights (Nanes 2003: 10).

With the redefinition of the Palestinians as the ‘other’ after the Civil War in 1970-71, the Palestinian-dominated merchant class lost much of its political power to the Jordanian-based bureaucracy. Discriminatory politics against Palestinians became increasingly institutionalised; there was less employment in the public sector and fewer academic opportunities available for them. An unofficial quota system for employing Jordanian academics that started in the 1970s and became intensified after 1989 resulted in emptying Jordan’s state universities of Palestinian academics, as few new positions have been given to Palestinians (Massad 2001: 13f, 258).

Citizens of Palestinian origin have also been discriminated against through electoral laws. IN 2008, only seven out of 55 senators¹⁶ were of Palestinian origin and the election laws are designed to over-represent segments of the population allied with the regime (Choucair-Vizoso 2008: 49).

However, when discussing discrimination in the formal political system it is important to keep in mind that although Palestinian Jordanians suffer a particular exclusion from politics, the entire public sphere is limited by the overarching authoritarianism of the regime, prohibiting the majority of all Jordanians from an active role in governance (Nanes 2003: 10).

For the informants, discrimination in the labour market and in public administration is a more urgent problem than discrimination in the political system, because it keeps them from climbing the social ladder and reaching their goals.

*It is impossible for us to get jobs in the security system. My brother is an officer in the army, but only because he was supported by a Jordanian with connections. He had *wasta*¹⁷. According to the law, we are all equal, but in reality we are not. There is a difference between private and public sector, and in public sector there is a limit to how far we can get.*

-Luay (53)

Budur agrees, but believes that because the Palestinians are in majority, the state also controls them for strategic reasons:

There is not equality between the Jordanians and us. We are constantly asked where we are from, and there is a glass ceiling that stops us from climbing too high in the system. That we are all Jordanians is only true on the posters. They know we are more numerous than they admit. They used to put the letters J (Jordanian) and B (Palestinian) in our passports, but not anymore. But they can tell by your name anyway.

-Budur (46)

Not everyone agrees that differences between Jordanians and Palestinians are a result of state discrimination. Maisam links discrimination to poverty and considers the differences between Jordanians and Palestinians as a natural result of the Palestinians being latecomers:

¹⁶ Members of the Jordanian Senate are appointed directly by the king.

¹⁷ Connections

Yes, there are many poor people here, but not just Palestinians. You can't blame poverty on discrimination. I feel that people who complain about discrimination are exaggerating. [...] The Palestinians came here with nothing; they had to build everything from scratch. The Jordanians who were already here had houses and land. This is the reason why there is a difference between us. It is natural. Maybe the Jordanians have an advantage from better wasta, but still.

-Maisam (41)

Shuruq thinks there is no difference between the two groups, but admits that her opinion might change if she travelled more outside of the camp:

There is no difference between Jordanians and Palestinians; we are the same. Or, maybe I would have noticed that there is a difference if I for instance went to Mafraq. I don't know. Here there are mainly Palestinians, so I don't feel there is a difference.

-Shuruq (32)

Imm Anwar has a different view on discrimination. She acknowledges that it exists, but she does not consider it to be a problem:

We raise [our children] to know where they are from. Even the Jordanian authorities do that. By asking people where they are originally from, they remind people that they are Palestinian, even if that is not their purpose. They are helping us more than we are helping ourselves. Our daughters, who have all attended state schools, were asked all the time if they were refugees from the 48 or the 67 war. It helps us to remember who we are.

- Imm Anwar (62)

The youngest girls have the strongest sense of local patriotism and at the same time feel they are looked upon with suspicion by out of camp-Jordanians:

People from outside dislike people from Wihdat. My cousin for instance does not want a girl from the camp. I don't know why. People say we are difficult, strong. There isn't much difference between Wihdat and the surrounding areas really, but people are prejudiced. The real difference is between us and the rich people [the people in West Amman]. [...] Maybe people dislike that people are so close to each other here, that everyone knows everyone. Maybe they are afraid of us.

-Amina (26)

We don't know why people think about us like that. Go to Shmisani and ask. The boys fight a lot here; there are lots of big fights. Maybe this happens because there are such close ties between people. The older generations didn't want brides and grooms from the camps, but it is easier now, there is more interaction. Maybe people are afraid to mix with us because of all the fighting, that they are afraid to get involved.

-Ahlam (28)

The informants feel that discrimination keeps them from achieving many of their personal goals. At the same time it is a recurring reminder of their Palestinianness and

as Imm Anwar points out it in this way helps strengthening or at least maintaining the Palestinian identity of the Palestinian citizens of Jordan.

Conclusion

The informants have complicated feelings toward Wihdat. They are proud of belonging to it and display a strong local patriotism, especially the younger generation. At the same time, they have conflicting feelings toward the rapid changes that have happened as a result of the state's intervention into both Wihdat and other camps in Amman. As the camps have been integrated into the rest of Amman these changes have brought new possibilities for work and economic development. But they have also contributed to an increasing de-Palestinisation of the camps, something that in the long run might undermine their symbolic importance as strongholds of Palestinianness and keepers of collective memory.

The discrimination and suspicion the camp Palestinians feel they are met with might contribute to slowing down the process of de-Palestinisation of the camps, as it contributes to an 'us and them'-mentality that enhances the local patriotism and feeling of belonging. Other factors that also contribute to this are the security apparatus' control of the camp, the embedded authoritarianism that characterises the whole society and the discrimination of Palestinians in the political system.

Chapter 5: Citizenship and the right of return

The power of citizenship is probably best known to those who are denied it: the right to carry a passport and be protected by a state; the right to abode; the right to membership in a political community with access to decision-making institutions and public welfare. Citizenship is a scarce public good that is distributed by the state, a source of collective identity and an instrument of political control. [...] It is the right to have rights (Butenschon et al. 2000: 5).

Over 1,9 million Palestinian refugees, 42 % of the grand total of Palestinian refugees registered with the UNRWA reside in Jordan. Yet, the fact that most of these have Jordanian citizenship is treated like a detail in both the Palestinian and the academic hegemonic narratives of 'the Palestinian refugee'. While there is a wide selection of literature that deals with the Right of Return and the legal status of the Palestinian refugees in general, there is limited qualitative research available on the Palestinian camp refugees in Jordan, and little of this research deals with citizenship.

After a brief clarification on what I mean by 'generation' I will present what I conceive to be the hegemonic discourses of 'the Palestinian refugee' and how these discourses have dealt with Palestinian refugees who hold Jordanian citizenship. My claim is that their citizenship has mostly been ignored. The second part of the chapter discusses what effects Jordanian citizenship has had on the identities of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan and to what degree this has made them different from the dominating image of 'the Palestinian refugee'. For this purpose I will use empirical data from my fieldwork in Wihdat camp.

The third and final part of the chapter discusses the limits of Jordanian citizenship. The purpose of this part is to assess to what degree the Palestinian refugees with Jordanian citizenship can trust that their citizenship and rights will not be taken away from them at some point in the future. A lack of trust in the stability of their citizenship might contribute to slowing down the development of a hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity, something that would give the Palestinian Jordanians less incentive to take part in and influence the development of Jordan.

A short note on generations

Abdallah divides the Palestinian refugees into four generations and defines generations as “groups of persons who have lived through the same historical periods and political and economic situations at the same point in their life cycle” (Abdallah 2009: 48). These four generations are *the old generation/the generation of Palestine*, born in or before 1938, *Banaat al-nakba*¹⁸, born between 1939 and 1953, *the Saudi generation*, born between 1954 and 1968 and *the television or satellite generation*, born between 1969 and 1983. In this study this division is not used in a strict sense. Rather, I have merged Abdallah’s *old generation* and *nakba-generation* into one generation called *the oldest generation* and *the Saudi generation* and *the television generation* into one called *the middle generation*. In addition to these two, I have added a third generation born after 1983 that I call *the youngest generation*. In this way I am left with three generations with different approaches to being Palestinian, Jordanian citizen and a refugee. Of course, not all informants fit into ‘their’ generation. This has to do with among other things class, education, political orientation and personal life experience.

Who is the Palestinian refugee? – the hegemonic discourses

Even though a Palestinian national identity was emerging in the early 1900s in connection with the collapse of the Ottoman empire and the following colonisation of the Middle East, the war in 1948 and the following expulsion and dispersal of the Palestinians from their homeland has been the most important event in shaping a modern Palestinian national identity, both in Palestine and in exile (Khalidi 2010). The experiences of exile; fragmentation, loss of homeland and denial of return has shaped an identity of ‘suffering’, and it was in exile that the resistance was later formulated, that the ideology of ‘armed struggle’ and ‘revolution’ was asserted as a strategy to overcome processes of victimisation and to transcend the state of dispossession, denial and statelessness. The dispersal and fragmentation thus served as uniting factors in the development of the modern Palestinian national identity,

¹⁸ Daughters of the catastrophe

making the absence of territory a weighty component in creations and recreations of ethnic and national identities in exile (Schulz 2003: 2). Return has become a focal point of identity and politics, described by Schulz as a “mantra in PLO discourse,”

a doxa of Palestinian discourse, a hegemonic principle to which there has been very little, if any, counter-argument. [...] [B]ereavement of both land and time suggests a loss of orientation in life, and therefore of meaning. Only a return can change present turmoil and non-existence. In a liminal condition, it is only the constant wish and hope of returning which is meaningful. Return implies harmony after turmoil, coming home after time in the wilderness. [...] As time has passed and as exile has proved enduring, however, the hope and the dream have been transferred to the younger generation. Ceremonies have been held to hand over keys to the children. As the first generation came to realize that maybe they were not going back after all, then it was the children who would come home: ‘If we can’t go, then maybe our children will.’ [...] Return has, however, become increasingly abstract, and has been placed in a distant, undefined tomorrow. It would and must happen, but when, no one could know (Schulz 2003: 205ff).

The very different experiences of the generation that was forced to leave everything behind and spend their lives grieving, and the next generation that grew up in exile, looking for identity in active struggle have been

moulded into a nationalist discourse effectively defining the ‘Palestinian self’. Both the suffering and the unbending struggle have clustered around the camp as a focal point: ‘Clearly suffering and resistance are conflated with an assumed purity of identity that inheres in life in the camps’. Camp Palestinians have thus been portrayed as the real Palestinians; they were both the real victims of the *nakba* and the real actors of *nidal* – the struggle. Also, they are the ones to return (Schulz 2003: 124).

Thus, in the Palestinian hegemonic discourse, the ‘real’ Palestinian refugee is a suffering and struggling camp dweller whose main purpose is return to Palestine. The Jordanian Palestinians’ citizenship has no place in this narrative.

When it comes to the academic empirical research on camp refugees, most of it has been done in Lebanon (Sayigh 1979, 1994, Peteet 1991 etc.), where the mainly stateless Palestinians live under very poor conditions and with an uncertain future. In a situation where they have limited access to work, public services and other basic commodities and have been legally considered to be foreigners for the last sixty years, it is safe to say that they fit the description of the ‘Palestinian refugee’ well.

When Sayigh and Abu-Lughod write about the Palestinians who live in refugee camps in Jordan, they downplay the importance of citizenship and emphasise their status as refugees. Sayigh shows how the majority of in and out of camp-refugees subsist at the lowest economical level in Jordan, as well as in the other major refugee areas (Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza). However, she holds that

[w]hat creates a political refugee identity is [...] not just poverty, which the refugees share with many of the surrounding populations, but a mix of low status, limited opportunity, vulnerability and thwarted national identity. Even when Palestinians have adopted the nationality of a host country, theirs is a lesser citizenship (Sayigh 1998: 20).

She does not explain in what way their citizenship is 'lesser', and she gives citizenship little if any importance in the formation of the identity of the Palestinians living in refugee camps in Jordan.

Abu-Lughod also downplays the importance of the citizenship of the camp dwellers in Jordan:

In Jordan, Palestinians have perhaps achieved the greatest degree of 'home' in exile. [...] However, despite this, Palestinians retain a poignant sense of exile, the political expression of which has been severely repressed (Abu-Lughod 1988: 66).

She does not give citizenship any weight when she goes on to generalize about the camp refugees, claiming that the refugees need to return to Palestine in order to become healed as a people. They carry with them an 'unhealable rift in their souls' that can only be healed through the exiles being given the option of return. Through this option,

Palestinians who, in the past forty years, have not only guarded their status as exiles but have passed it on to their children, leaving the entire community in a psychological limbo which prevents its members from moving in any viable direction, might once again be regarded as refugees rather than exiles (Abu-Lughod 1988: 68).

In this way, both Sayigh and Abu-Lughod connect a 'poignant sense of exile', a 'psychological limbo' and the impossibility of 'moving in any viable direction' to refugee-ness, and not to statelessness, as Takkenberg suggests may be a more important factor:

The fact that most of the Palestinians who were displaced as a result of the 1948 war are at the same time both refugees and stateless persons prompt the question as to which of these two manifestations of 'unprotectedness' has had the more significant impact on the individuals concerned. It is obvious that initially the refugee dimension was of overriding importance, as from one day to the other the refugees had lost the means to sustain themselves, dispossessed from their homes, land and other belongings. Gradually, the legal and political impairment of being stateless, not belonging to a state, not having a national passport, became more significant. As being stateless has also equally affected many Palestinians who are not refugees, it may even be argued that this element has been more dominant than the refugee aspect in negatively affecting the life of individual Palestinians (Takkenberg 1998: 347f).

To sum up; in both hegemonic discourses the Palestinian refugee is stateless, in limbo and needs the option of return in order to heal.

There is no reason to doubt the validity of this assessment when it comes to the Lebanese camp refugees. But are the Jordanian Palestinians who are not stateless in a limbo, and do they need the option of return to heal? I do not claim that these researchers are wrong. What I wish to point out that because of their Jordanian citizenship, the Palestinian refugees in Jordan to a lesser degree fit in to this description and that this has been understated. As I have shown, the return to Palestine is a core component in the hegemonic discourse of the Palestinian refugee. In the following section I will have a look at how the informants view both an eventual future return to Palestine and the juridical Right of Return and how these views connect to their Jordanian citizenship.

The effects of Jordanian citizenship – changing identities and changing views on return.

The one thing that is absolutely undisputed among the informants is that all Palestinian refugees have the right to return and that this right cannot be waived or negotiated away. Only the refugees themselves can make the choice between staying in Jordan and moving to Palestine. Thus, when it comes to the juridical Right of Return, the Palestinians in Jordan are to a certain degree in agreement with the Palestinian and academic hegemonic discourses. However, this does not necessarily mean that all the informants *want* to return or that they consider themselves bereaved of meaning and in a limbo where only return is meaningful. In the following section I will present findings from Wihdat camp that show clear differences between the oldest generation and the two younger when it comes to return, citizenship and identity. While the

oldest generation live in a state of temporariness or limbo, the middle generation hold a more ambivalent position and the youngest generation clearly challenges the doxa of return.

Palestine is my country; Jordan is a place I live. The oldest generation – Imm Khalid, Shirin, Imm Anwar

The oldest informants, who either remember the nakba or grew up in the 1950s and remember the turmoil of the first years well, have identities that are very much in accordance with ‘the Palestinian refugee’. I will give a short insight into their stories of expulsion and have a look at how their views and opinions fit the description of ‘the Palestinian refugee’.

Shirin grew up in Palestine, and remembers both her homeland and the nakba well:

We are from Majdal and Ras al-Ein, Kufr Kasem. [...] I remember 1948 like it was yesterday. Guns, tanks, planes. We escaped on donkeys; there weren't cars like there is today. The bullets swirled around us and I escaped death several times. In Majdal we escaped into the mountains. A boy who was around 12 years old came riding on a horse, he fell off but he didn't die, and he told his father, who was picking fruit, that they [the Jews] were coming. His father came running and shouted 'run!' We didn't have weapons. It was an expulsion/deportation (taghriibe). [...] We went from place to place because we didn't feel safe anywhere. We didn't have land, and there were no jobs. That's why we ended up in Amman; it held possibilities. We believed we would be able to go back within a few months. We thought the fedayeen would be able to fight them. We didn't think the Jews wanted our land, we thought they wanted our belongings. But God decides. Everyone in Palestine had their own vegetable garden, they grew what they needed, were independent. We had land. Here there is no land, we can not manage on our own. [...] I still have hope that all Palestinians can return to Palestine. But my life is as it is. God decides.

-Shirin (appr. 80)

Shirin is a typical representative of the oldest generation. She defines herself as a refugee and believes that a return to Palestine is her individual right as well as the right of every Palestinian refugee. For this generation, Palestine is a physical place and their only real home. Return to Palestine is an, if not realistic, then at least ideal option for the future, both for themselves and for their descendents, who they consider to be refugees.

Imm Khalid is in her 70s. Her husband died 19 years into their marriage and from then on she took care of herself and her ten children by running a small grocery shop

she and her husband owned. She is very proud of her children. Most of them have higher education and all but two sons are married. Imm Khalid looks back on her life in Wihdat:

I have no good memories from Wihdat. People here are good; even if we are from all over [Palestine] we are one family. That is the best thing about Wihdat. I haven't seen much good here, we had to leave our fields and orchards behind. My wish is to die in Palestine. I have a three years old grandson who says: I'm a tiger. I'm going to bite the Jews. [She shows me some soil she brought back from al-Aqsa when she went to visit in 2000] The Jews are digging under al-Aqsa, but there will come a day... [...] I pray to God that we will go back one day; children, grandchildren; everyone.

-Imm Khalid (74)

Even though she has done comparatively well and her children have been very successful, Imm Khalid says she has 'no good memories from Wihdat'. The only positive thing she can think of is the people, the Palestinians in it. It is the link to Palestine that makes it a good place, nothing else.

Even though they both are full citizens of Jordan, neither Shirin nor Imm Khalid feels any belonging to it. They are Palestinian nationals, waiting in Jordan for the chance to go back home. For the oldest generation, Jordan is a waiting place, a limbo where they wait for the Right of Return to be implemented and they or their descendants can go home to Palestine.

When I ask her if she has Jordanian citizenship, Shirin answers that she has *citizenship, family book (dafter al-eele) and UNRWA rationing card (kart ma'an)*. She mentions the family book because this is a proof that she is a full citizen with a national ID number. But at the same time, by mentioning the UNRWA rationing card she says that the fact that she has Jordanian citizenship doesn't make her Jordanian; she is a Palestinian refugee.

Imm Anwar has been politically active in the Palestinian resistance since she was 14, in the early 1960s. She is illiterate but this has never stopped her from taking part in politics and she holds a strong position among the followers of her party in Wihdat. She calls all the inhabitants in the camp 'her children'. Like Imm Khalid and Shirin

she hopes and believes that all Palestinian refugees will be able to return sometime in the future:

We live in Jordan, that is true, but it is not as if they gave us citizenship out of goodness. We are more useful for them than they are for us. We are the oil of Jordan. We don't want their passports; they can take them back. Palestine is my country; Jordan is a place I live. I am against the idea that Jordan is the second homeland of the Palestinians. Jordan is for the Jordanians, Lebanon for the Lebanese, Syria for the Syrians, and Palestine for the Palestinians. [...] Here in Jordan we are fine, we have everything we need, but we don't have what we want; our homeland.

-Imm Anwar (62)

Imm Anwar is aware of how Jordanian citizenship can lead to a feeling of belonging to Jordan and she thinks it was wrong to grant the Palestinian refugees in Jordan citizenship. This also becomes clear when she talks about the Jordanian security apparatus and their control over the camps: *we are guests here; they want to keep control over their state. This is understandable.*

At the same time, even if she is reluctant to admit it, she is aware that the attitudes to return are changing:

The new generation is thinking more like this [Jordan for the Jordanians, Palestine for the Palestinians] than we do. Or, I don't want to lie. Even if they think 50 % like me, it is good. But I think the real figure is 90 %.

-Imm Anwar

None of the representatives of the oldest generation express a sense of belonging to Jordan; they are Palestinian and they believe in and hope for a physical return to Palestine for all refugees and their descendents. Because they have no land, they see the Palestinians in the camps as dependent, as opposed to in Palestine before 1948, where they were free and independent. While Imm Khalid and Shirin put their hopes in God, Imm Anwar believes political or armed struggle will bring a solution:

These days our political work is mainly about talking, like we are doing here now. We cannot do much more than keeping the awareness alive. We are doing this while we are waiting for the power balance in Jordan to change. Remember the French and the German revolution. Remember the Vietnam War. Algeria, Libya. They all won in the end, and so will we. Even if it takes a thousand years, justice will come.

-Imm Anwar

Farah points out that

the historical and political messages in the narratives [of people who remember the exodus] reveal an attempt to delineate a 'Palestinian culture' and Palestinian ways as different from 'Jordanians.' Taking into consideration the common denominators of language, religion and historical relations, such a reproduction of difference between Palestinians and Jordanians by necessity involves the appropriation of nationalist discourses. For Palestinians, Exile and Return necessitate the invocation of being the 'other' in Jordan, and Return refers to territory other than the Jordanian boundaries. Consequently, keeping Exile and Return as part of popular culture and oral tradition is a way that renders the Jordanian citizenship irrelevant to the formation of national identities (Farah 2003: 231f).

This fits well with how the women of the oldest generation present their identities. An interesting point is how this nationalist discourse or 'Palestinian regionalism' (al-Hamarneh 2004: 217) can be read as a mirror image of the Jordan for Jordanians-nationalism that has been voiced in the citizen and identity-discourse. Imm Anwar is using the same arguments as the Jordanian nationalists but with a different aim; while the Jordanian nationalists want to keep Jordan for the East Jordanians by excluding Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin from the Jordanian polity, Imm Anwar's aim is to stop the erosion of the Palestinian national identity among the Palestinians in Jordan. For the younger generations however, the picture is more complicated. This is evident in the middle generation, meaning people who are born in Jordan after the first period of turmoil, about 1960, and up to about 1980.

Complex and contradicting identities. The middle generation – Maisam, Budur, Reem

The middle generation has more complex identities of belonging than both the older and the younger generation. They have a variety of ways of dealing with the contradiction of being both Palestinian refugees in Jordan and Jordanian citizens, something that becomes evident in this section. I ask Maisam how she imagines Palestine:

Even if I've never been to Palestine, it's my homeland (watani). Jordan is my country (baladi). I imagine Palestine as a paradise on earth, a beautiful land.
-Maisam (41)

Later I ask her what she considers to be her main identity. To my surprise she answers

I am Jordanian first, then Palestinian. I am a Jordanian citizen, and I enjoy full rights. Jordan is the best country in the Middle East. [...] A Jordanian is someone who is born in Jordan and who holds Jordanian citizenship. [...] We are not refugees, why would we call ourselves that? We have the same rights, we are citizens.

-Maisam

Then, when I ask her if she thinks it is important to raise the children to be Palestinian, she replies that

it is important to make the children aware of Palestine. They have to know everything. We hope we can leave everything here behind, and go back.

-Maisam

These quotes hold some important points: Firstly, for Maisam Palestinianness is connected to the land and not to the Palestinian nation. Secondly, she does not make a direct connection between the right of return and refugee status. Thirdly, she connects Jordanianness to citizenship and refugeeness to statelessness/lack of citizenship and not to Palestinianness. This last point supports Takkenbergs suggestion that statelessness has been more dominant than refugeeness in negatively affecting the lives of individual Palestinians.

Maisam distinguishes between 'my country' (baladi) and 'my homeland' (watani). She connects her citizen's rights to her Jordanianness, and her attachment to the land of Palestine to her Palestinianness. Reem does the same but contrary to Maisam she considers herself to be a refugee:

At heart I am a Palestinian, but it might well be that I die without having seen Palestine. We want to go back but at the same time we have a life here, we have rights, we are Jordanians. We want to see the land even if it is just for a holiday, but this remains a dream. If I have children, I will teach them what my parents taught me. We are born and raised here but Palestine is our homeland (watanna). We are foreigners everywhere; we are lost. I'm a refugee because I don't live in my homeland. My children will be refugees and so will my grandchildren. It will never end.

-Reem (26)

While Maisam connects refugeeness to statelessness, Reem connects it to being a Palestinian who by force is not living in Palestine. Thus, for Reem the refugee status is collective, and it is logical that for her the refugee status is hereditary. For Maisam who does not connect refugee status to the collective right of return, it is not. Budur represents a third position. Like Reem, she defines herself both as a refugee and a Jordanian but where Reem sees the Palestinians as 'foreigners everywhere' and 'lost', Budur defines Jordanians and Palestinians as 'the same':

We are refugees and so are our children and grandchildren. It will never end. I think Jordan can develop into a more homogenous country with a more unified population. Jordanians and Palestinians are the same; we are not two

countries with two peoples. It is modern border policies that have created this idea.

-Budur (46)

To underscore the connection between Jordan and Palestine she defines Syrian and Lebanese culture as ‘different’, and Jordan as ‘home’:

I feel at home in Jordan. Jordan is mine, even though Palestine comes first. I have been to Lebanon, Syria, the Gulf, but I didn't feel at home there like I do here in Jordan. They do things differently; they are different. If I knew Palestine, if I could travel there, it might be that I still felt that Jordan was my country, that I was a stranger in Palestine. My life is here. I'm a Wihdatiyye. Wihdat is my team¹⁹.

-Budur

By defining herself as a Wihdatiyye, a camp dweller, she dissolves the contradiction between her Palestinianness and her feeling of being at home in Jordan.

Like Budur, Reem also feels that the Jordanians and Palestinians are closer than other Arabs, even though she identifies herself as a refugee and feels ‘lost’:

People mix here in Jordan, because we live together and know each other better than they did when they lived in Palestine. It would be strange to continue the tradition of marrying someone from your own village; one has to look to the future. Nobody cares if you marry a Jordanian. Jordanians and Palestinians are closer than other Arabs, like for instance Lebanese and Syrians. We are the same; we share the same culture.

-Reem (26)

Maisam, Reem and Budur all connect their Jordanianness to rights and citizenship and their Palestinianness to their historical background, the land of Palestine. This is in accordance with Davis' distinction between ‘citizenship’ and ‘nationality’. Maisam even makes a distinction between balad (country) and watan (homeland) to clarify this difference. However, as they are balancing between the ideology of return and the reality of a future in Jordan, some fundamental differences come to light. One difference is over what it means to be a refugee and whether or not there is a connection between refugeehood and the Right of Return. They also differ to what degree they consider Jordan to be home. They agree that Jordan is neither just a waiting place nor their homeland (watan) but while Reem considers herself to be a citizen and a foreigner, Budur is a citizen and at home. The various ways of solving the ambi-

¹⁹ Referring to the Wihdat Football Club, the pride of Wihdat and of all Palestinians in Jordan.

valence of being both a Jordanian citizen and a Palestinian and the contradictory identities this creates makes Davis' clear-cut distinction between citizenship and nationality problematic. Kymlicka and Normans understanding of identity and its relation to citizenship offers a more suitable framework, as it opens for a more flexible understanding of the relationship between national identity and citizenship. The usefulness of this perspective becomes even clearer in the analysis of the identities of the third generation.

Our life is here. The youngest generation – Dima, Ratiba, Jamila, Amine and Ahlam

During the first interviews, all with women aged 25 to 50 years, I was told several times that if I asked younger women or girls, I would get totally different answers. During an interview where several women in their 30s and 40s were present, I asked if they had any ideas of where I could find younger informants. They replied by asking me why I would want to talk to them:

If you talk to girls in their late teens, you will see that they think differently from us; they are more into clothes, make-up and these things. You will get a totally different story. They are not fateful to Palestine like we are; they have other ideas. This is because of mass media, cell phones, these things.

-Samah (33)

And indeed, the answers I got from the young girls were very different. But while the older women look at the young generation as apolitical and unfaithful to the cause and see this as an expression of degeneration of Palestinian identity, the young have their own ideas of what it means to be a Palestinian and to be fateful to Palestine, and also of what it means to be Jordanian.

These differences first became clear to me during an interview with Maisam, as I asked her daughter Dima her opinion on her mother's wish to return to Palestine:

I want to stay here. There is a difference between the generations when it comes to this. Our life is here. I'm not sure I would want to go back even if I could. I would probably go and have a look, and then choose the better of the two. But I agree with my mother that we are Palestinians and that it is important to transmit the stories to our children.

-Dima (17)

Dima, like the women of the middle generation, connects her Palestinian identity to her family's roots. However, contrary to the older women she does not mention her rights or citizenship as an argument for why she is Jordanian; this is natural to her,

not something she needs to explain or excuse. Like Budur, she is not sure that she would feel at home in Palestine, but while Budur expresses sadness over the possibility that she might be a stranger in Palestine, Dima has a pragmatic and practical view on return; she has no desire to move to Palestine. She is more concerned about her personal future in Jordan than the common future of the Palestinians.

When I ask Jamila (19), Ahlam (28) and Amine (26) how they see their future, they talk about work and marriage. Like Dima they neither dream of nor hope for a return to Palestine:

Amine: [My future is] Zaaher wa baaher. Good.

Jamila and Ahlam: You can't say that. You don't know how it will be. Who knows these things?

Jamila: I'm going to work with my father [as a tailor]. I want to make money. I wish for a car, if I had a car I could move around. I can learn how to drive. I want money.

Ahlam: Just get married, and you will get the car at once!

All: If you marry someone with money, all your problems are solved.

Ahlam: I want to study to be a teacher. My old job [dental nurse] was very tiring, and I made very little. 70-80 JD a month for 12-hour days. It was pointless. After paying for transportation, there was nothing left. I tired myself out for nothing.

Jamila: It is hard to imagine the future, I'm afraid to be disappointed. Anything could happen. It is not easy to find a good job. If you for instance work as a beautician and do house calls, you may get into trouble; those who do this are not well looked upon. They may have to walk outside in the evening, and people will start talking.

The girls from the youngest generation see it as natural that they will spend their lives in Jordan. They are not guests and they are not passive or in limbo, they want to shape their own future they and believe they will be able to do so. They may see many challenges in the future, but being Palestinian in Jordan is not one of them.

This clear wish to stay in Jordan does not imply that they no longer consider themselves to be Palestinian or that they are willing to waive their Right of Return. Although they have other important identities, they are still Palestinian:

First I'm Wihdatiyye, then Jordanian, and then maybe thirdly Palestinian. I don't feel that passionate about it. This is where I live, and this is where I belong. [...] I am born here, and so are my parents. We are Jordanians; we have only seen Palestine on TV. [...] The important thing is to be able to go there, to have the right to see the land and to have the freedom to move back and forth. We can live here, that is not the problem.

-Jamila (19)

Jamila does not list 'refugee' as one of her three most important identities. Still, like all the informants, Jamila, Amine and Ahlam agree that they as Palestinians have an undisputable right of return to Palestine. The difference between the youngest women and the older is that the young clearly express that they have no desire to live in Palestine. They are also less interested in the political struggle than their parents' generation, and they do not believe the nakba and the Palestinians becoming refugees is something they or their generation should take responsibility for:

*Our parents talk about Palestine, but we are not too interested, it is not that important to us. They used to have a textbook at school called *al-qadiyyet al-filastiniyye*²⁰, but it is no longer in use. These days they only talk about Palestine in geography, and they never talk about the conflict or the Jews. It is not our responsibility; older people have to take responsibility for it. We are used to the situation as it is now.*

-Jamila

This does not mean that young Palestinian Jordanians do not look upon themselves as Palestinians or that they believe there is no difference between Palestinians and Jordanians. The football field is an arena where these differences are addressed:

There can be problems when Wihdat plays Faisali. At my school [a state school, not an UNRWA school] there was a big group fight between the girls because of a game. We like each other, but we still fight sometimes, just like when Egypt played Algeria²¹. We even marry them, that is no problem, but we think differently, and we are both stubborn.

-Jamila

Even though they don't feel responsible for the struggle for Palestine, the girls see it as their duty to transmit the stories and the Palestinian culture. Jamila is for instance very eager that I interview her neighbour who remembers both the nakba and the history of Wihdat well, and she says she has always been very interested in hearing

²⁰ The Palestine cause

²¹ This match took place in Sudan on November 18, 2009, just three days before I met Jamila for the first time. The match led to considerable violence among supporters, and to diplomatic tensions between the two countries.

the stories of the old people, and thinks it is important to retell them and keep them alive in order not to forget the past. Ratiba agrees to this:

We are still in contact with our relatives in Palestine. [...] This is important in order to be updated on what is happening, and for keeping mental contact with the land. [...] It is important to talk and to tell the stories. The children have to know them, and they have to know what is going on now. [...] This is commitment [intima'], not a duty [wajib]. The children must get the awareness about Palestine with their mothers' milk.

-Ratiba (31)

As seen, Jamila at the same time feels Wihdatiyye, Jordanian and Palestinian and she allows for the different identities to come into play in different contexts. She is in no doubt about being a Jordanian and at the same time Palestinian. Like Maisam, Jamila links her Palestinianness to her family's past, while she links her Jordanianness to her rights as a citizen. Contrary to Maisam, her goal is not to return to Palestine. She argues that she is Jordanian because she is born in Jordan, and so are her parents. She sees it at her birthright to live in the country and plans her future there.

At the same time the members of the youngest generation are fully aware of being descendents of refugees. They have deep knowledge of Palestine and take pride in being Palestinians. Palestine is addressed regularly in conversation, they ask each other where they are from, joke with the different dialects and associate certain places with certain behaviour.

Thus, an important difference between the youngest generation and the two older is that they do not necessarily *desire* to live in Palestine. They are at home in Jordan, and plan their future there. This does not in any way mean that they are ready to give up on the Right of Return; they want the right to choose between staying in Jordan and going back to Palestine.

The youngest generation is not in limbo. They are not putting their lives on hold while waiting for a return to Palestine. They have clear plans for the future, plans that do not involve a possible move to Palestine, but that focuses on their possibilities and limitations as citizens in Jordan. Contrary to the women of the middle generation who are torn between accepting a future in Jordan and their loyalty to Palestine and the cause, the youngest generation have developed a hybrid identity that comprises all the

different elements without this turning into a problem of loyalty that needs to be solved.

The informants stress the connection between citizenship and rights and being Jordanian. With time these rights have become something taken for granted, and this has for the younger generations created a feeling of security lacking in the oldest generation. This has enabled them to invest in a future in Jordan. Not being stateless or second-class citizens is what in their own eyes distinguishes them most from other Palestinian refugees in the Middle East. However, there are some limitations to how far this feeling of security stretches.

How “safe” are the Palestinian refugees in Jordan? The limits of citizenship

In line with the hegemonic discourse on Palestinian refugees, Kassim claims that “to be a Palestinian means not to have a formal citizenship, with the resulting hardships that make the Palestinian life in various communities continuously dangerous; the legal status of a Palestinian in the Middle East is always in doubt and left to the political exigencies of each host country” (Butenschon 2000: 202f). Through numerous examples, Sayigh (1998) and Kassim (2000) show that for the Palestinians, displacement and stripping of citizen’s rights has not been one-time experiences, but rather something multiple, involving many shades of insecurity and rights violations.

Arbitrary abolition of citizenship

Bearing in mind that most of the Palestinian refugees in Jordan have full Jordanian citizenship; to what extent should the Jordanian Palestinians worry about losing their citizenship? Arbitrary loss of citizenship has certainly affected them, albeit to a lesser degree than it has others, especially the refugees in Lebanon. The most serious incident for the refugees in Jordan happened in connection with the disengagement from the West Bank in 1988. After forty years of being full-scale Jordanian citizens, the Palestinians on the West Bank, more than a million people, were declared by King Hussein to be “Palestinian citizens”, which in reality rendered them stateless, as no Palestinian state existed. This was done regardless of Jordanian law, which has strict regulations for revoking a person’s citizenship, and against all principles of international law (Butenschon 2000: 51, 202, 211). This loss of citizenship also befell

Palestinian Jordanians whose family homes were in the West Bank but who were residing abroad either on the East Bank or in other countries at the time of the 1967 war, and who were unable to return to the West Bank after it came under Israeli occupation (Nanes 2003: 156f). At the same time, King Hussein declared that the disengagement from the West Bank did not have any implications for the Jordanian citizens with residency on the East Bank, independent of their background. Regardless of this incident, there is little to fear for the East Bank Palestinians as a group. As long as they are denied the Right of Return they have nowhere to go, and irrespective of this, Jordan would hardly manage without them. The Palestinians are deeply involved in the private sector and the absolute majority of the inhabitants of the capital Amman are Palestinians (al-Hamarnah 2002a: 173). As Imm Anwar puts it: *We are more useful for them than they are to us. We are the oil of Jordan.* However, from 2004²² to 2008, Jordan has withdrawn Jordanian nationality from over 2,700 Jordanian citizens of Palestinian origin, in an arbitrary manner and in violation of Jordan's nationality law of 1954. This has affected people from all social classes and occupations, and there seems to be no discernable pattern to who is affected. (HRW 2010). Bearing in mind the Palestinian refugees' history of expulsion, it is likely that incidents like these can create a general feeling of unease among the Palestinian Jordanians, and one should in general not underestimate an underlying feeling of being at risk of losing their citizenship in Jordan. One should also not forget that this is a constant reality for 3 %²³ of the Jordanian population; the Palestinians of Gazan origin who do not have citizenship.

Consequences of a future peace agreement –keeping the right to remain

The Right of Return for all Palestinians who fled in 1948 and their descendants was supported by UN General Assembly resolution 194 in December 1948 (Dumper 2006: 2). Yet, an often mentioned problem for the Palestinian refugees is their previous and present position as pawns in the negotiations between Israel and the PLO, later the Palestinian Authorities (PA). Khalili points out that “[a]s the asymmetrical peace negotiations between the PLO and Israel progressed, refugees increasingly feared that recognition of their rights – among them the right of return – would be “traded” for some kind of state in the occupied territories” (Khalili 2004:7). However, this is not

²² No statistics are available prior to 2004.

²³ According to Arneberg 1997

the only point of insecurity that might appear with an eventual peace agreement. Also the right to stay in one's host country, the right *not* to return, might be at stake. This is especially the case for the Palestinians in Syria, where the law explicitly states that Palestinian refugees can stay until the conflict is settled, and for the Palestinians in Lebanon, who are considered to be foreigners under Lebanese law. Of those refugees who ended up in Arab states only the ones who came to Jordan were granted the right to remain in the country they fled to (Nanes 2003: 149). However, this right has some potential limits. Since the League of Arab states only allows for citizens of their member states to be citizen of one Arab state, a consequence of a peace treaty might be that the refugees would have to choose individually or be chosen for collectively whether to stay in Jordan or return to Palestine:

For many, return was and is not negotiable; it was and is a principle and a right which no one can take away. It would be up to each individual whether he or she would like to employ that right. The question of a collective right of return to a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza would, to many, mean that the refugees would be made refugees again (Schulz 2003: 210).

Shuruq makes the connection between collective return and becoming refugees again even clearer:

Our future is here, not in Palestine, we will never return. I would like to go back to have a look, but we will stay here. Jordan is our future. And anyway, people in Palestine wouldn't like for us to come back, they would have become angry, and we would be suffering the same fate as in 1948 and end up in camps, all over again.

-Shuruq (32)

However, as seen above, it is highly unlikely that the Jordanian state would be interested in losing a majority of its population, it is more realistic that it would be the Palestinian non-citizens; the 120 000 stateless Gazans who would be forced to return (Brynen 2006: 67). A more realistic outcome of an eventual peace treaty for the Palestinians who hold Jordanian citizenship, and one that is in accordance with the Jordanian nationalists' wishes for the Palestinian population in Jordan would be that Jordan will force the Palestinians to choose between maintaining their Jordanian citizenship and claim Palestinian citizenship with resident privileges in Jordan. Through this option they would lose their right of participation in Jordan's political life by article 5, which forbids party members to claim non-Jordanian nationality (Robinson 1998: 395).

Conclusion

While the oldest informants fit the image of the Palestinian refugee as it is presented by the hegemonic discourse, the youngest do not. This chapter shows how the Palestinians in Jordan have gone through a process of change. From having an identity as Palestinian refugees in exile they have become Palestinian and Jordanian, and the youngest generation seems to have developed a hybrid identity. This influences the different generations' attitudes to the Right of Return. All generations agree that they as Palestinians have the right of returning to Palestine, but as opposed to the two older generations, the youngest do not wish to personally give up their lives in Jordan and return to Palestine.

The informants' argumentation indicates that the citizenship and identity-discourse also has had influence in the refugee camps. By insisting that they are Jordanian citizens with equal rights and at the same time defining themselves as Palestinians they defy the Jordanian nationalist claim that one in order to be a true Jordanian has to renounce one's Palestinian identity. This shows that the polarisation between the two groups and the nationalist demands of loyalty not necessarily must lead to an increased feeling of being a minority. On the contrary, it can strengthen the Palestinians' citizenship through their active use of it to claim or defend their citizen's rights.

Chapter 6: Marrying a stranger – what was once considered to be negative is now positive

The inhabitants of Wihdat Camp organise their lives around the family, and the interests of the individual comes after the interests of the family as a whole. This is a common social pattern in the Middle East, known as ‘familism’. Familism should according to Sayigh not be viewed as a cultural trait, but rather as an adaptive response to political and social insecurity, something that for instance can be a result of state oppression or the opposite, the absence of a state all together. (Quoted in Singerman 1995: 48) In societies where familism is prevalent, marriage as the objective of reproducing the family is the key to understanding many other issues, among them the ways people react to political and social change (Singerman 1995: 15). Thus, familism is not a static and unchangeable system; it is a strategic adaption to changing social and political circumstances. In this chapter I will argue that the hybrid identity and increased feeling of belonging to Jordan among the inhabitants of Wihdat manifests itself through changes in marriage patterns. There seems to be a movement away from family and village endogamy and a rise in the frequency of exogamous marriage. I believe that endogamy is less preferred than before because its strategic value has lessened with an increased integration into Jordan.

Palestine is not forgotten. The wedding of Budur’s daughter

One of the first things that happened when I came to Wihdat, before I had conducted a single interview, was that I was invited to the wedding of Budur’s daughter, Iman. Budur is a community leader, and holds an important position in one of the social service centres in Wihdat. She grew up in the camp, but her family moved out a few years ago and they now live in a newer, predominantly Palestinian neighbourhood in East Amman. The family belongs to the lower middle class, and like they often do for this class, the wedding takes place in a shopping centre in West Amman.

The first part of the wedding is dominated by symbols of Palestine. When I arrive, the couple is sitting on a throne in the reception area. The bride is dressed in a white wedding dress, the groom in a black suit. A group of hired male wedding singers and

dancers dressed in traditional Palestinian peasant attire and carrying sticks are standing in a half-circle in front of them, dancing *dabke* and singing songs about Palestine:

Who forgets Palestine? Who forgets Yafa, who forgets Haifa! Mother, mother, come and see! The groom is a Palestinian! He is from Yafa!

The guests, both men and women, are cheering and singing along, replying to the political slogans shouted by the dancers.

After this session, which takes about an hour, all the women head upstairs to the reception hall, joined by the wedding couple after some time. Upstairs there is dancing, cakes and soft drinks, but gone are the Palestinian songs, dance and symbols.

As seen in the previous chapter, even though the younger generations expect to stay in Jordan and see it as their country, they have not lost their Palestinian identity, and Palestine is not forgotten. This becomes obvious at the wedding. Through the performance of these rituals, Palestine is given a prominent place. Connerton states that although rites tend to occur at special places and at fixed times, like for instance at weddings, they also permeate

non-ritual behaviour and mentality. [...]. They are held to be meaningful because rites have significance with respect to a set of further non-ritual actions, to the whole life of the community. Rites have the capacity to give value and meaning to the life of those who perform them. All rites are repetitive, and repetition automatically implies continuity with the past (Connerton 1989: 44f).

I believe that the rituals at the wedding are not only manifestations of a continuation between the past and the present; they are also political acts. Khalili considers commemorative events in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon, whether organized by states or at the grass-roots level, to almost always have a political dimension:

For [the refugees], to recount and commemorate their belonging to the village is a way of declaring membership in the nation, concretizing their belonging to the Palestinian polity in the face of possible exclusion from it. In this sense, the commemorative practices are forward-looking political acts intended by the refugees as critiques of their leadership and their current social and political predicament (Khalili 2004: 18).

Thus, despite their growing sense of belonging to Jordan, the Jordanian Palestinians have not forgotten their past. Rather, they reproduce it and link it to the present through rituals like those I saw at the wedding. The Right of Return is not abandoned, and there is no sign that it will be so in the foreseeable future.

Exogamy is linked to a future in Jordan

Four days after the wedding, in an interview with Budur where her husband was partly present, she explained her choice of husbands for her daughters:

Because of the gossip and the lack of privacy it brings, I consciously did not choose men from our village for my daughters. [...] One of my daughters is married to a man from Yafa, one is married to a man from Hebron, and the third to a Jordanian. The men are all born here in Jordan. The Jordanian is really from Ramallah, but he is Jordanian, that is, his family came before 1948. [...] I want good men for my daughters; why should I choose a bad one? [...] I demand a high maher²⁴. A good start of a marriage is important, my daughters should be able to relax and feel safe. I always ask the men what they earn. Why shouldn't I?

-Budur (46)

Regardless of the strong positive focus on Palestine and the right of return at the wedding, when choosing marriage partners for her daughters, Budur gives issues of economy and security priority over the ethnicity of the groom. She and her husband also emphasise the need for the family to enhance their network in Jordan, and how this is connected to marriage:

Budur: Here in Jordan we mix. We don't care where people come from anymore. It is natural that things change; one can't just go on like before. This is development.

Husband: No, that is not the reason. The change has happened because we had to flee from Palestine.

Budur: That is true. The exodus [hijra] changed everything. The traditions have changed because of the exodus. [...] A reason why we are now marrying our children to people from different places is the importance of enhancing our networks. The escape from Palestine disrupted our old networks, and here in Jordan it is useful to have contacts from many different places. What was once considered to be negative [exogamy] is now positive.

²⁴ Bride price

This illustrates what I find to be a trend in Wihdat camp; an increasing number of marriages between strangers²⁵. In addition to an increase in actual marriages between strangers, I also find a strong preference for this kind of marriage. This, however, does not necessarily mean that exogamy is the normal practice. Of all the people I collected information about, 22 were married exogamously, and 21 endogamously. However, when the numbers are broken down to generations²⁶, there is a clear overweight of younger people being married to strangers and older people being married to a relative or someone from the same village:

| | Married to cousin | Married to relative other than cousin | Married to s.o. from the same village | Total endogamous marriage | Married to a stranger |
|-------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|
| Old | 4 | 3 | 6 | 13 | 6 |
| Young | 4 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 16 |

Although I do not have sufficient data to claim any statistical evidence, these numbers, together with people's stated preferences of exogamous marriage, suggests that a change in attitudes is taking place. Among my informants this is followed by a clear ideological preference for exogamous marriage, supported by a variation of arguments.

Maisam is married to her cousin on her father's side. She considers her wedding, which took place in 1986, to have been

very traditional. We met for the first time at the engagement. [...] Our grandfather decided and everybody else, including my husband and me, had to comply. We didn't think about it much; it was a natural thing. At that time, everybody got married that way. It was important for our families that we were from the same place. At that time it was absolutely preferred, it was in accordance with their habits and traditions. Things are totally different now. We both have younger brothers and sisters, and none of them have married the way we did. They have married at an older age, and most of them outside the family and village.

-Maisam (41)

Maisam thinks that the main reason for the change is strategic:

²⁵ By 'stranger' I mean someone who is not a relative and not from the same village in Palestine.

²⁶ For this purpose I have joined the oldest and the middle generation into one, as all the representatives of these generations were married before the end of the 1980s.

The Nakba and the hijra is very important when it comes to these changes. It is important for us to enhance our networks. Marrying strangers is a good way to get new contacts.

-Maisam

Ideological support for exogamy – development, health and religion

The informants give strong ideological support to exogamous marriage, something that supports my assumption that there is an actual change happening in the marriage patterns of the inhabitants of Wihdat. The following section will elaborate on how the informants connect exogamous marriage to development and enlightenment and endogamous marriage to backwardness. Imm Anwar thinks the rate of endogamous marriage is higher in Palestine, and connects this to the lack of mobility there:

Marriage patterns change as the world changes. This is nothing new. People study, they learn, and this changes everything. Cousin marriages are not so common anymore. It is more common in Palestine than it is here. I think this is because people are less mobile there, that they can't move around that much. It is the situation that creates and changes traditions.

-Imm Anwar (62)

Knowledge about health and genetics is an important argument for exogamy. Maisam, like several other informants, connects this to Islam:

There are several reasons for the change [marriage at higher age, and outside family and/or village]. One thing of course, is mass media and education. This has brought new thoughts. Another reason is that we know more about genetics and hereditary deceases. The religion says one should marry from outside, that fresh blood is important.

-Maisam

Endogamous marriage is mostly connected to backwardness and lack of education, for instance to the lack of knowledge of the difference between tradition and religion. During a visit to Jarash camp, two teenage girls gave me a tour. They explained the layout of the camp, pointing out the different neighbourhoods. When we reached the outskirts of the camp, they pointed down a street, telling me why they considered people in this area to be especially stupid and backwards:

They still marry their kids off to relatives. It is not a good thing. They look strange. It is important to marry outside the family, it says in the Quran. It is better for your health. These people don't know the difference between religion and tradition.

Ratiba is the only informant that connects endogamy to something positive; safety through predictability, but she also qualifies this with the health argument:

It is better to marry strangers, because in that way it is easier to avoid hereditary deceases. The Prophet says it is better. If one is related, both may be carriers of the same decease. If relatives marry, they have to take a test, just in case. People who marry relatives do it because it feels safer. Since the families know each other better, it is easier to predict if the marriage will work.

-Ratiba (31)

There is clearly a strong ideological preference for exogamous marriage among the informants, and one can also see a tendency of increasing exogamous marriage. In the following section I will compare these findings to other research done on marriage patterns among Palestinian refugees.

Marriage patterns among Palestinian refugees in Jordan, Gaza and Lebanon

Findings from the mid to late 1990s show a clear tendency of family and/or village endogamy among Palestinian refugees both in Jordan, Lebanon and in Gaza:

Kalimat and Hanssen-Bauer (1998) find that there in general is a tendency among Jordanians for village endogamy, the “reproduction of the village”, i.e. that people are transmitting the old family patterns by marrying a close relative and that patrilocality is still dominant. Findings show that Palestinian refugees in Jordan are on the same, or a higher level than the general population when it comes to the reproduction of the village. They also show that there is a strong tendency to marry within one’s own social group; refugee marry refugee, displaced marry displaced and so on. Only ten percent of the marriages in Jordan are between refugee and non-refugee.

According to Ugland (2003), family endogamy is still present, but declining among the Palestinian camp refugees in Lebanon. 33 % of all marriages are between cousins or other members of the same hamula²⁷, while in the remaining 67 % of the marriages, the spouses are not related. Village endogamy, however, is common, and marriage between partners with the same refugee status even more so. 89 % of

²⁷ A patrilineal descent group composed of all the members related biologically to the common great-grand-father, or of members who have related themselves socially to certain hamule by fictive relatedness (Al-Haj 1995: 316).

married spouses have the same refugee status, and almost 50 % are born in the same place, to families that come from the same place in Lebanon or Palestine.

Tuastad (1997) finds a high frequency of intra-lineage (and intra-class) marriages in Bureij Camp in Gaza. As many as two thirds marry a refugee descended from the same village, and there is a low frequency of marriages between fellahin (peasants) and madanin (city dwellers)²⁸. As Kalimat and Hanssen-Bauer, he concludes that the old pattern of village endogamy is being reproduced in Bureij.

It seems that what Jaber, Kalimat and Hanssen-Bauer, Ugland and Tuastad have found in Jordan, Lebanon and Gaza contradict my findings. However, three important factors that will be presented below qualify this. The first is how endogamy is connected to refugee identity.

Refugeeness, endogamy and the preservation of memory

Tuastad suggests that continued village endogamy in Bureij might be an expression of a strongly felt identity towards the original village. By marrying a relative or someone from the same village, one reproduces the social order that existed before the Nakba, and at the same time conserves the memories of the past. In this way the refugee identity is kept intact:

The traditions, codes of conduct, rituals, dialects, history, local idiosyncratic knowledge, as well as production of myths and legends that are transmitted through generations, locating the refugees in space and time, providing them with roots, are strengthened when both parents originate from the same village. Interpreted this way the high proportion of marriages of partners originating from the same village may imply that memory of the pre-48-war home is kept alive, as home as a social and cultural state is reproduced in new physical environments (Tuastad 1997: 112).

Sayigh also connects endogamous marriage to keeping the refugee identity alive:

In Jordan, with the highest absolute number of refugees in camps (252,089), village and family endogamy is still the rule rather than the exception. Hana Jaber notes village endogamy in Wihdat camp, linking it to the desire to conserve memory of origins. Whether based in hierarchy or in local mores, status boundaries work strongly to reproduce 'the refugee' as political/social /cultural figure, embodying a powerful collective history of oppression and

²⁸ These categories do not refer to people's current occupation or place of abode, but to their families' historical background in Palestine.

resistance. Pride in the "refugee identity" – as "strugglers," as "more Palestinian," as "refusing to disappear" – renders their marginality a latent form of power (Sayigh 1998: 23).

Jaber found that in the 30 families she examined in Wihdat camp, most marriages were not village endogamous, but happened within the family group (the *jamā'a*):

this term [the *jamā'a*] does not refer to Palestine, to religion, or even to village of origin, but to the family. This kind of ties concerns all the generations of the house, including the youngest. Sometimes the matrimonial alliances will extend to the *balad*, which means the village, but very few marriages are entered into outside this framework. We only registered one family where the girls were not married off quite young, and where the children were married "according to their choice (Jaber 1996: 45, my translation).

Jaber interprets this 'tightening the cord between those who share the memory' as the refugees' wish to preserve the memory of Palestine.

If endogamy is indeed connected to refugeeness and the preservation of memory like the evidence above suggests, it is logical that as the feeling of refugeeness grows less acute the need for endogamous marriage diminishes. Evidence presented in previous chapters indicates that in Wihdat this has been the case since Jaber conducted her fieldwork in 1996. Thus, the difference between Jaber's and my findings may be due to the difference in time. However, as both Jaber's and my sample is too small to have any statistical value, this is hard to establish with certainty.

Differences between stated preferences and actual choice of spouse

The second factor that qualifies a possible contradiction between my findings and the other evidence presented above is the difference between stated preferences and actual choice of marriage partner found by both Both Kalimat/Hansen-Bauer and Ugland. This may be an indication of an ongoing change:

[t]he observed levels of in-marriage agree only to some extent with answers given to questions regarding the preferred marriage type. [...] It is not clear if the difference between observed and preferred marriages is due to a recent shift in opinion, or if the complex choices involved in finding a spouse make the outcomes different than the preferences (Kalimat and Hanssen-Bauer 1998: 274).

Ugland found no specific preference for endogamy among the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, but found that individuals over 50 years prefer endogamy twice as often as the average.

In comparing preferences for marriage partners and actual types of marriage partners, we find that more marriages are entered into between cousins than that which the respondents report to prefer. Part of the reason for this may be that attitudes towards cousin marriages are changing (Ugland 2003: 218).

Lack of other options

The third factor is, as Tuastad suggests; that continued endogamy is not necessarily a result of actual choice. It might also be a result of a lack of contact with people other than those from the same family or village:

Whether this is a result of a preference, in the sense that refugees consciously prefer to marry someone from the same village in pre-48 Palestine, or is a result of a lack of new contacts outside the lineages and original villages, the patterns have implications that are important for the reproduction of refugee identity (Tuastad 1997: 112).

Thus, even though it is difficult to establish if an actual change in marriage preference is taking place, there are some strong indications in favour of this. Kalimat and Bauer Hansen and Ugland have found evidence that suggests such a change in their quantitative data from Jordan and Lebanon, and judging from my findings, there is strong preference for exogamous marriage in Wihdat.

Conclusion

There is a clear preference for exogamous marriage among the informants, and there also seems to be a change in the actual marriage pattern, with an increasing number of exogamous marriages. The informants link the preference for exogamous marriage to a belief that as Jordanian citizens they and their children will remain in Jordan, and that by arranging marriages between strangers they will expand and strengthen their social network there. The informants regard these changes as something positive; as a consequence of enlightenment and development, and they use religious and medical arguments to support them ideologically.

However, stateless refugees in Lebanon and in Jarash camp in Jordan who live with a great deal of uncertainty regarding their future also express an increased preference for exogamous marriage. This seems to contradict the assumption that preference for exogamous marriage is linked to a feeling of security provided by citizenship. Thus, it is possible that the change in marriage preference from endogamous to exogamous

marriage is a general trend in the Middle East, and not something specific for the Palestinians in Jordan²⁹.

Regardless of whether the changes in preference and practice among the Palestinians in Wihdat is a result of their Jordanian citizenship or part of a general trend in the Middle East, exogamous marriages help to strengthen the Palestinian refugees' attachment to Jordan. At the same time as they serve to strengthen the families' networks in Jordan, they weaken the old ties to Palestine. In this way the preference for exogamous marriage contributes to strengthening the Palestinian Jordanians' attachment to Jordan and to develop further their hybrid identity.

²⁹ To my knowledge there are no comprehensive statistics available on this issue. Neither the Lebanese, Jordanian, Israeli nor the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics publish information on relations between spouses before marriage.

Conclusion: Jordan – coming together or falling apart?

A hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity is developing among the Palestinians living in refugee camps in Jordan. This identity is manifested in changes in marriage patterns and in attitudes to the Right of Return. While Palestinians from the oldest generation define themselves as Palestinians and still hope for a return to Palestine for themselves and their descendants, members of the youngest generation prefer to live their lives in Jordan, and they define themselves as both Jordanian and Palestinian. A change of preference from endogamous to exogamous marriage for the purpose of enhancing the families' networks in Jordan contributes to strengthening this identity.

Those informants who express a hybrid identity connect their Jordanianness to their citizenship and citizen's rights, and do not see any contradiction between being Jordanian citizens and Palestinian nationals. This indicates that even though the citizenship and identity-discourse in the 1990s mainly was an elite phenomenon, it has had influence on all classes of Palestinians in Jordan. Thus, at the same time as the discourse contributed to increased polarisation between the two groups it also led to a strengthening of the Palestinians' Jordanian identity.

However, this strengthening of the Palestinians' Jordanian identity will not in itself lead to decreased polarisation between the two groups in the future. It is not sufficient that the Palestinians define themselves as citizens of Jordan and that they have developed a hybrid Palestinian-Jordanian identity. Their identity must also be accepted by the East Bank Jordanians as a valid variant of Jordanian identity.

One factor that makes this acceptance difficult to achieve is the unresolved conflict between Israel and the Palestinians, and then especially the key issue of the status of the refugees. The Palestinian refugees have a right to return to Palestine and to compensation. Even though individual refugees may no longer see return as a realistic, and often not even as a desired solution, they will not give up the right of return as principle as long as there is no acceptable solution to the conflict. Also, as long as this solution has not been found, the Palestinian side in the conflict, today represented politically by the Palestinian Authorities (PA) will not give up one of their most

important bargaining chips; the refugees. Thus, as long as the ‘refugee problem’ remains unresolved, the East Jordanian nationalists’ will be able to continue arguing that the Palestinians in Jordan are visitors and as guests should not be given the same rights and opportunities as the ‘real’ Jordanians. A solution to the ‘refugee problem’ will take the strength out of the nationalist argumentation and necessitate a new stage in the process of defining Jordanian identity.

This does not mean that there is a causal connection between the solution of the ‘refugee problem’ and a more homogenous Jordanian state; there are also several non-conflict related features that may contribute to a continued polarisation.

One of these features is a strong East Bank Jordanian resistance to reforms that aim at giving the Palestinians greater access to the Jordanian polity. It is this resistance that was expressed at the cancelled Faisali–Wihdat match in July 2009. When the Faisali fans cheered “divorce her you father of Hussein, and we’ll marry you to two of ours”, referring to Queen Rania who is of Palestinian decent, they challenged the regime to publicly choose sides and through this threatened to upset the regime’s survival strategy of balancing between the two communities. The diplomatic cable sent from Amman establishes that the insults “strike [...] at the core of Jordanian identity politics”, as it challenges the regime’s attempts to create an all-comprising Jordanian identity. Further, the cable connects the increasingly explicit and provocative Faisali slogans to the East Bank Jordanians’ frustrations with “the increasing pressures for reform that will inevitably lessen their near-monopoly on political and social power”. Without the implementations of these reforms, it will be difficult for the regime to reach its aim of developing a hybrid Jordan identity.

Another feature that if it is not suspended will contribute to continued polarisation is the arbitrary abolition of citizenship that some Palestinian Jordanians have been subjected to. A lack of trust in the permanence of their citizenship might weaken the incentive to claim their right to take part in shaping Jordanian society and the public debate. However, in connection with this it is important to keep in mind that unless the process of political liberalisation is revitalised, the possibilities for taking part in shaping the future of Jordan as active citizens are limited for most Jordanians, regardless of origin.

Appendix 1: Categories of Jordanian personal status documents and their appurtenant rights³⁰

| Origin | Residence | Kind of Passport | Family Book | Card of Crossing | Accessibility to services |
|---|--|---|----------------|---|--|
| Jordanian - East Banker | Permanent residency in Jordan | Five year passport with the National ID Number. | yes | - | Full access |
| Jordanian - Palestinian of 1948 | Permanent residency in Jordan | Five-year passport with national ID NUMBER. | yes | - | Full access |
| Jordanian - Palestinian of 1967 | Permanent residency in Jordan | Five year passport with National ID Number. | yes | Yellow Card - family reunification | Full access |
| Jordanian-Palestinian of 1967 | Permanent residency in the West Bank | Five-year passport without national ID number | No family book | Green Card | Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council |
| Jordanian-Palestinian from Jerusalem | Permanent residency in Jerusalem | Five-year passport without national ID number | No | Green Card | Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council |
| Palestinians of Gaza | Permanent residency in Jordan | Two-year temporary passport | No | In case of family reunification - Blue Card | Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council |
| Palestinians of the West Bank or Gaza Strip | Permanent residency in West Bank or Gaza Strip | Palestinian authority passport (LP) | No | Permission to enter | Treated like any Arab in Jordan: as long as there is a valid residency they can access services permitted for foreigners |

³⁰ Taken from FMO Research Guide

Acronyms and glossary of Arabic words

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| CSC | Camp Service Committee |
| DPA | Department of Palestinian Affairs |
| ICRC | International Committee of the Red Cross |
| JD | Jordanian Dinar. Equals 1,4 USD |
| NGO | Non Governmental Organisation |
| PA | Palestinian Authorities |
| PLO | Palestine Liberation Organisation |
| UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East |
| <i>al-aqsa</i> | Mosque in Jerusalem, one of the most important holy places in Islam |
| <i>balad</i> | Country, as opposed to homeland |
| <i>dabke</i> | Traditional Palestinian dance |
| <i>fellah</i> | Peasant, village dweller |
| <i>hamule</i> | Clan, patrilineal association |
| <i>lajne</i> | Synonym for the CSC and the DPA used by the resident of the camp |
| <i>madani</i> | Person of urban origin, not Bedouin or from the village |
| <i>maher</i> | Bride price |
| <i>mukhtar</i> | Traditionally a village headman, a position first established by Ottoman authorities as their administrative representative in the villages. In the Palestinian refugee camps in Jordan it is used more loosely as a term for important leaders in the camps. |
| <i>al-nakba</i> | 'The catastrophe'. The Arabic word for the making of the Palestinian refugee problem in 1948. |
| <i>wasta</i> | A contact, a person connected to people with power |
| <i>watan</i> | Homeland |
| <i>wihdatiyye</i> | Woman from Wihdat camp |

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