

Jordan: Surprisingly stable

A study of why the massive influx of Syrian refugees has not led to destabilization and internal conflict in Jordan.

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Abstract

Over the years, research has demonstrated that conflict spreads to the host country as a consequence of massive influx of refugees. Most studies gathered empirical evidence from African countries and focused on cases where conflict had already spread. In contrast to this literature, the main objective of this thesis is to examine the absence of conflict in Jordan after receiving Syrian refugees that amount to about 10 percent of Jordan's original population over the past three years, 2011-2014. In order to understand the absence of tension, this thesis applies three tripartite determinants of stability deducted from the previous literature: economic and foreign policy, institutional capacity for handling the refugee influx, and the demographic composition of the refugees. Examination of these determinants in the Jordanian situation lays the foundation for empirical analysis.

The study concludes that mainly three factors have kept Jordan stable: the majority of the Jordanian people's wish for stability, or rather their fear of ending up in the same situation as their neighbors; the political and economic support from foreign actors and patrons; and finally, Jordan's willingness and capability to control the borders and provide security. This study shows that all three factors are intertwined as stability is being secured through monetary and military support, which helps Jordan pay the military and intelligence expenses needed to prevent spillover from Syria. This support also pays for the political support from the citizens through subsidies and public sector employment in an effort to shield the citizens from the *de facto* deteriorating economic situation. This fragile stability has been the situation in Jordan the past three years, 2011-2014, but there are no guarantees that this will continue.

Regardless of the seemingly solid stabilizing factors, the balance of stability in Jordan is fragile and could be disrupted very easily. Several of the findings in this thesis prove to be dynamic and will likely change over time. The way the Government of Jordan (GoJ) is handling the refugee crisis is seemingly going in the direction of stronger security and less freedom for the refugees. Dissatisfaction between the refugees will grow as the crisis protracts if they are not allowed to create a new life in Jordan. The demographic composition of the refugees is also changing. Initially the composition proved to be a stabilizing influence, but as the crisis persists, more and more refugees are becoming involved in the fighting in Syria, making them more prone to violence. Creeping donor fatigue is also a problem for the future stability of Jordan, at least with the present refugee response plan that is proving to be far too expensive in the long-term perspective. What could be said with certainty is that the trajectory of the situation in Jordan at this point is far from set.

Preface

This thesis presents an analysis of the current stability in Jordan and its main objective is to explain this stability despite the massive influx of Syrian refugees. The previous semester I wrote a report for the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Jordan and the University of Oslo (UiO) on the impacts of the Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labor market. During the research for this report I started to realize the dimension of the impacts of the refugees on the Jordanian society, environment, economy as well as the country's political agenda. While living in Jordan I discussed this with family and friends back home, and they asked me "so you would initially expect Jordan to be more destabilized?" I was not sure how to answer to this question. I had to look deeper into the matter, and I chose Jordan's surprising stability as the topic for my master's thesis.

A second motivation for choosing this particular topic is the current need for information on impacts of the Syrian refugees in Jordan. The Government of Jordan (GoJ), non-government organizations (NGOs) and other humanitarian actors are all calling for research papers and reports on the refugee situation. Amman, the capital of Jordan, is today considered the humanitarian hub for Syrian relief efforts. If the international society wants Amman to continue to be the humanitarian hub, and Jordan to continue to receive and protect Syrian refugees, destabilization must be avoided. Nevertheless, destabilization due to a prolonged influx of Syrian refugees is not an unlikely future scenario.

In the case of Jordan where destabilization could be expected, it is important to analyze the different factors that could both create and prevent tensions and destabilization in order to prevent possible crisis. This study is not aiming to give the definite answers and present solutions to all of Jordan's future challenges concerning stability, but it is aiming to contribute to the hopefully increasing amount of literature on this topic, which is so desperately needed.

Acknowledgement

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Oslo, 21 May 2014.

Abbreviations/ definitions

ACAPS – the Assessment Capacities Project

ACTED – l’Agence d’Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement

BG – Brigadier General

Black September – The civil war in Jordan in the 1970s between the Jordanian government and radicalized fractions of the Palestinian refugees.

Bn – billion (1000 million)

CARE – Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere

CEO – Chief Executive Officer

DRSJ – Directorate of Syrian Refugees in Jordan

Fafo – Norwegian research foundation

Fedayeen – Arabic word for freedom fighter, often used as a term for a variety of Arabic militant groups

FDI – Foreign Direct Investment

GCC – Gulf Cooperation Council

GoJ – Government of Jordan

GID – General Intelligence Department

H.E. – His Excellency

IAF – Islamic Action Front

ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross

IDP – Internally Displaced Person

IMF – International Monetary Fund

ISIL – Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, an al-Qaida affiliated group fighting in Syria

Jabhat al-nusra – Arabic name for a branch of al-Qaida fighting in Syria

JAF – Jordanian Armed Forces

JOD – Jordanian Dinars

JT – Jordan Times

MoL – Ministry of Labor

MoPIC – Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation

MoU – Memorandum of Understanding

Mukhabarat – Arabic term for intelligence agency.

NGO – Non-government organization

NRC – Norwegian Refugee Council

PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organization

PRS – Palestinian Refugees from Syria

PTSD – Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder

SNAP – Syria Need Analysis Project

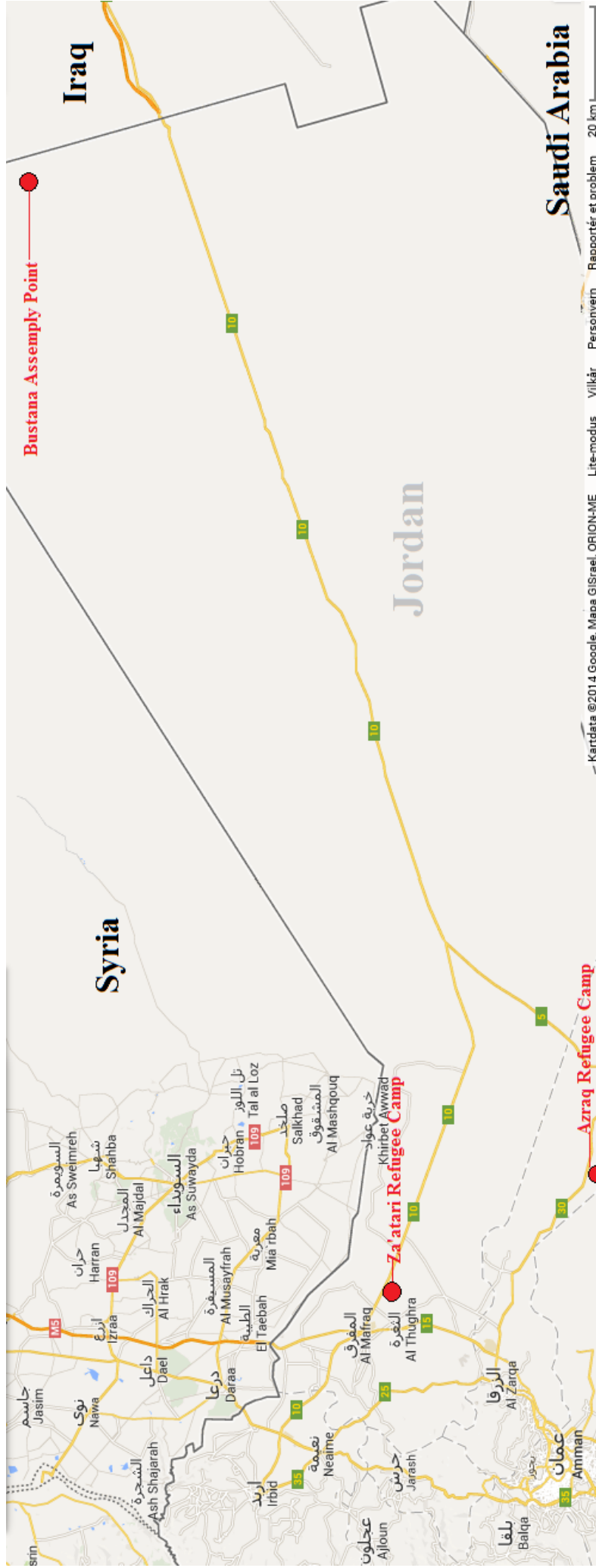
UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNRWA – United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East.

Za'atari – Jordan's largest refugee camps for Syrians in the northern region of Mafraq (see map next page).

Map over the Jordanian-Syrian Border areas*



*Map over the Jordanian-Syrian border areas from Google Maps. Coordinates are from Google Maps and Wikimapia.org, uploaded 11.05.14. For information about the Bustana assembly point, see International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), "Jordan: Syrian refugees dream of home", published 12.03.14, available at <http://www.icrc.org/eng/resources/documents/feature/2014/03-11-bustana-personal-accounts.htm>, accessed 21.04.14

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1. Introduction

There is an inherent concern in international politics that instability in a refugee sending country will spill into neighboring host countries, affecting ever-growing numbers of people and becoming increasingly complex to resolve.¹ However, although refugee influxes can create security concerns, there is no reason to expect deterministic links between refugees and conflict. In fact, the vast majority of the world's refugees never directly engage in political violence, and most recipient countries never experience armed violence as a consequence of a refugee influx.²

As Lake and Rotchild (1998) state, “conflict does diffuse abroad [...] “but largely to states that already contain the seeds of discord”.³ An obvious question would then be: does Jordan contain the seeds of discord? Or, rather, enough seeds to tip the balance of stability? The immediate answer would be yes, taking into consideration Jordan's geographical position and geopolitical role, internal political disputes involving tribal Jordanians and Jordanians of Palestinian descent as well as Islamists, secularists, and monarchists. On top of this, the Kingdom is struggling with energy problems, water scarcity, growing unemployment rate and wealth gap, and public debt and corruption. It might be said that Jordan is, as written in the Economist November 2013 “surprisingly stable for the moment”.⁴

In late 2012 and early 2013 demonstrations and violent outbreaks were not uncommon in Jordan. Tension was building up between refugees and Jordanians and between Jordanians and the state. The unrest did not escalate into conflict nor did it challenge Jordan's stability. Rather, it died out quietly. Over time, street protests have drawn diminishing crowds, showing a sign of declining opposition clout. Refugees were also dissatisfied with the state and the response from humanitarian organizations. Consequently, tension arose, especially in Za'atari, Jordan's largest camp for Syrian refugees. The trouble which raged in Za'atari the winter 2012-2013 due to bad handling of the massive refugee influx and lack of control did also

¹ Beth Elise Whitaker, “Refugees and the spread of conflict: contrasting cases in Central Africa”, *Journal of Asian and African Studies* vol.38 no.2-3, (June 2003): 211-231, 211.

² Idean Salehyan and Kristian Skrede Gleditsch, “Refugees and the spread of civil war”, *International Organization* vol.60 no.2, (2001), 335-366, 336.

³ Whitaker, “Refugees and the spread of conflict”, 226.

⁴ The Economist, “Jordan: Surprisingly stable for the moment”, *the Economist print edition, Middle East and Africa*: <http://www.economist.com/node/21589493/>, published 09.11.13 accessed 30.01.14.

calmed and Za'atari has never seen this current stability.⁵ The Kingdom seems as strong and stable as ever – at least more stable than prior to the outbreak of the regional wave of demonstrations and protests commonly referred to as the Arab Spring. Yet, the mood in the Kingdom remains anxious. *Why hasn't the massive influx of refugees caused destabilization and internal conflict in Jordan? What is the reason for the lack of severe tensions between the Jordanian population and their Syrian 'guests'?*

When economic deterioration and political vulnerability become symptomatic of a regime, the presence of a large number of refugees is particularly likely to contribute to the overall sense of crisis.⁶ In 2013 Jordan had a public debt constituting 79,5 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP)⁷, and during the previous ten years the government has been reshuffled or changed 13 times.⁸ Despite this, unrest has not taken root in Jordan, a country which is now hosting more than 600,000 Syrian refugees, approximately 10 percent of its population.⁹ Jordan is currently stable, but politically and economically fragile. The refugee situation is dynamic, as will be elaborated in this thesis, and persistence of the current stability can therefore not be relied upon. Destabilization due to a prolonged influx of Syrian refugees is not an unlikely future scenario. In situations where violence can be expected, such as in Jordan, it is important to analyze the different factors that could both create and prevent tensions and destabilization in order to prevent possible crisis.

Delimitation

There will undoubtedly be innumerable factors in play preventing or creating tensions in a situation like the one Jordan is witnessing today. Not all can be taken into consideration in this limited study. The internal political dynamics, interests of the superpowers, availability of resources, demographic composition both of the refugees and the locals as well refugee

⁵ Kilian Kleinschmidt, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Camp Manager Za'atari, briefing in Za'atari during a field visit to the camp 24.11.13.

⁶ Ragnhild Ek and Ahmed Kardawi, "Implications of Refugee Flows on Political Stability in the Sudan", *Ambio* vol.20 no. 5, (August 1991): 196-203, 196

⁷ At the end of November 2013, official data showed that the public debt represented 79,5 percent of the estimated GDP for 2013 compared with 75,5 percent of the GDP of 2012 (Petra, "Jordan's public debt balloons, topping JD19b", *The Jordan Times*: <http://jordantimes.com/jordans-public-debt-balloons-topping-jd19b>, published 28.01.14, accessed 20.05.14).

⁸ Jordanian Government Listing, available at the webpage of The Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan in Netherlands: <http://www.jordanembassy.nl/jordan/GL.htm>, accessed 18.03.14.

⁹ See UNHCR's Inter-Agency Information Sharing Portal online for updated number of UNCHR-registered Syrians in Jordan, available at <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>. It is worth mentioning that GoJ believes there are 1,350,000 Syrians in Jordan of which 750,000 were economic refugees from before the Syrian Crisis (Interview with the Director of the Directorate of Syrian Refugees in Jordan (DSRJ) Brigadier General (BG) Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, 05.11.13).

response by the state, international society and the locals are all some of the factors influencing the outcome. As mentioned earlier, the majority of the refugee theory focuses on conflicts where direct spillover has taken place. This is naturally not the focus of this thesis as direct spillover has not yet taken place – and maybe never will. This thesis is looking into tension as a whole, whether from spillover as a direct consequence of the crisis in the sending country or from tensions created as a consequence of the refugee crisis but not related to the conflict in the sending country. The thesis will try to explain why tension, either from within or from without, has not yet surfaced focusing on characteristics of the receiving country's economic and foreign policy, institutional capacity and the demographic composition of the refugee population.

Structure

The first chapter sets the framework for the study and provides a short introduction to the context. The methodological foundation used in the process of collecting empirical data for the study as well as ethical implications and considerations is also explained.

The first part of the second chapter introduces the academic debate concerning refugee influxes and the spread of conflict. In the second part the preexisting theories are narrowed down to three hypotheses that will be used for discussion and analysis in the third chapter.

In chapter three, the three hypotheses deducted from the existing theories are examined in order to understand and explain why the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has not witnessed more destabilization due to the refugee influx. The analysis emphasizes the pull- and push-factors that can affect destabilization.

The main findings of the thesis are gathered in the fourth and final chapter, along with some suggestions for further research on the topic.

Method

This qualitative case-study builds on empirical data collected during a seven months stay in Jordan from August 2013 to March 2014. From August to December 2013, I served as a student intern at the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman, writing a report on the impacts of the Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labor market. Informants and information collected for that report were equally relevant to the topic of this thesis. The informants were open to contributing to my master's thesis as well; hence the fieldwork from autumn 2013 is added to this study. The fieldwork consist of interviews and conversations, field trips, workshops,

meetings, as well as statistics and data gathered from relevant actors in the field, in addition to news articles, reports and other secondary sources.

The interviews conducted for this study were semi-structured allowing me to improvise and give follow up questions when needed. Conversations with participants of workshops and press releases, and actors met during field visits were planned as informal interviews with only an interview guide.¹⁰ Topics were prepared in advance but the questions were open.¹¹ This was necessary as I did not know at all times whom I would meet and to whom I would be able to talk. The interviewees chosen were mainly government officials, NGOs and political analysts for reasons that will be elaborated in the paragraph on ethical concerns. Prior to setting up and conducting the interviews, I informed the subjects of the purpose of the interviews. Sources I spoke to in 2013 were informed that I was intending to use the material for a report to the embassy, but also possibly for the master thesis I planned to conclude spring 2014.

Most of the interviews were held in English as this is the working language for most of the government officials, at least those working with international matters or matters involving foreigners. There were, however, a couple of interviews where the interviewee could express himself much better in Arabic. I did not know this prior to the meetings, but as I have studied Arabic one and a half year at the University of Oslo (UiO) and three semesters at the University of Damascus in Syria, we managed to understand each other as long the interviewees were patient – and they were. At workshops held in Arabic, there was most often simultaneous translation available. In cases where this did not work, there was always a friendly English speaker who could answer my questions when I doubted my understanding. When talking to Syrian refugees during field visits, I only spoke Arabic. These were not deep conversations, however, and the language barrier was of minor interference. Regardless of this, I did not use anything from the Arabic speaking interviews or conversations that I was not a hundred percent certain of that I had understood completely.

I did not use a recording device during my fieldwork with one exception. When I attended a workshop in Irbid, I knew they only spoke Arabic and I decided to use the recorder. Without the recorder, I would probably not have remembered some of the details.

¹⁰ Press releases such as for example the launch of the Syrian Regional Response Plan (RRP6) by UNHCR in Amman, Jordan 16 December 2013 or workshops held by research institutes or universities studying the impacts of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian society. Several actors working with the Syrian refugee issue such as government actors, representatives from the international donor society and humanitarian agencies always attend such happenings.

¹¹ Ottar Hellevik, *Forskningsmetode i Sosiologi og Statsvitenskap*, 7. Utgave, (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 2002), 97-98.

During interviews, I listened carefully and took notes, fearing that a recording device would prevent the interviewees from speaking freely – especially government officials. In order to be sure the information was correct, I was not afraid to ask the interviewee to repeat the answer. Moreover, after every interview I reviewed my notes and tried to recount every detail.

* * *

As this is a case-study of one country, the goal is not to generalize the findings to other cases. A case-study of one country is an intensive examination employing broad and detailed knowledge so as to understand the case in its entirety.¹² As the renowned political science scholar Todd Landman wrote: “[...] single-country studies provide contextual description, develop new classifications, generate hypotheses, confirm and infirm theories, and explain the presence of deviant countries identified through cross-national comparison”.¹³ A single case study can also give an opportunity to study the development and dynamics of variables, as in the case of Jordan where the dynamics of the variables becomes evident.¹⁴

Ethical concerns

The impact of the Syrian refugees in Jordan is a topic high up on the agenda both for the international society, the Jordanian government and municipalities, as well as Jordanian citizens and Syrian refugees. Jordanians at all levels of society are engaged in the topic, but the discussion is divisive – and so are the “facts” that flourish in government circles and public space. Especially in government circles, there is an impression that there are some restrictions on what opinion to express regarding the refugee issue. Out of my respect to the wishes of my sources due to their fear of political ramifications or consequences, I have chosen to retain some of my source’s anonymity.¹⁵

Interviewing government officials and employees of humanitarian organizations working with refugee management and relief work is different from interviewing traumatized refugees. Originally, I planned to interview Syrian refugees also. However, talking to and interviewing refugees traumatized by war is difficult and can have negative consequences for the interviewees and the researcher. That is the primary reason why I chose to focus more on official sources and humanitarian organizations, and avoided dealing with the refugees

¹² Hellevik, *Forskningsmetode*, 108-109.

¹³ Todd Landman, *Issues and Methods in Comparative Politics: an Introduction*, third edition, (London: Routledge, 2003), 28-29.

¹⁴ Hellevik, *Forskningsmetode*, 99.

¹⁵ National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, *Guidelines for Research Ethics in the Social Sciences, Law and the Humanities*: [https://www.etikkom.no/Documents/Publikasjoner-som-PDF/Guidelines%20for%20research%20ethics%20in%20the%20social%20sciences,%20law%20and%20the%20humanities%20\(2006\).pdf](https://www.etikkom.no/Documents/Publikasjoner-som-PDF/Guidelines%20for%20research%20ethics%20in%20the%20social%20sciences,%20law%20and%20the%20humanities%20(2006).pdf), published 2006, accessed 30.04.14, 18.

directly. I do not have the experience or credentials to speak with traumatized war refugees, so for their sake, I chose not to try and perhaps fail. In matters relating to the demographic composition of the refugees, I have used statistics and data collected by humanitarian organizations, the government, and other researchers who are more experienced than me in the field when it comes to dealing with traumatized refugees.¹⁶

Refugee Haven

During the past fifty years, millions of people have crossed international borders to escape conflict and trouble in their own countries, bringing problems for the receiving countries. The response of receiving countries to such refugee influxes has varied. Some governments have received refugees with generosity, while others have tried to prevent refugees from entering, or treated them harshly by, for example, restricting their movements. Jordan has in fact the highest ratio of refugees to indigenous population of any country, and has during its “career” as a receiving country tried a variety of refugee responses.¹⁷ See table 1 for a historical overview of the size of different refugee influxes to Jordan.

Table 1: Historical overview of refugee influxes to Jordan¹⁸

Year	Nationality	Population	Refugees arrived	% of population
1948	Palestinian	400,000	100,000	25
1967	Palestinian	1,278,416	380,000	30
1990	Palestinian (from Kuwait and Gulf countries)	3,170,000	300,000	9,5
2003	Iraqi	5,164,000	750,000	14,5
2011	Syrian	6,508,271	1500	0,02
2012	Syrian	6,508,887	230,000	3,1
2013	Syrian	6,508,887	405,500	6,3

¹⁶ National Committees for Research Ethics in Norway, *Guidelines*, 12.

¹⁷ Elisabeth Ådnegard, “Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Influx on the Jordanian Labor Market: Who are the Syrians Replacing – Jordanians or Egyptians?”, Report for the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Amman and the University of Oslo, December 2013, 14; Karen Jacobsen, “Factors Influencing the Policy Responses of Host Governments to Mass Refugee Influx”, *International Migration Review vol.30 no.3* (Autumn 1996), 655-678; 655-657; Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples - Jordan : Palestinians* (2008): <http://www.refworld.org/docid/49749cfcc.html>, accessed 26.11.13.

¹⁸ Dr. Khalid al-Wazani, “al-athar al-iqtisadiyya wa al-ijtima’iyya li-azma al-laaji’iin as-suriyyiin ‘ala al-iqtisad al-urdun”, (الآثار الاقتصادية والاجتماعية لأزمة اللاجئين السوريين على الاقتصاد الأردني), *Issnaad Consulting*, November 2012, 33. Data for 2013 is collected from UNHCR (UNHCR, “Syrian Refugees in Jordan – Daily Update 16.01.13” and “Inter-Agency Regional Response for Syrian Refugees, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey 17-23 January”: <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/documents.php?page=53&view=grid&Language%5B%5D=1&Country%5B%5D=107#page-53>, accessed 21.04.14).

Since the Palestinian exodus of 1948, migration to and from Jordan has played a key role in Jordanian politics, economy, and society. Although most Palestinians are integrated and have Jordanian citizenship, they are still considered refugees with a right to return to their homeland.¹⁹ In 1970 as a direct consequence of the Palestinian refugee influx, civil war broke out in Jordan between the Jordanian government and the radicalized factions of the refugees, known as the *fedayeen*.²⁰ Jordanian policy toward the refugees made it possible for them to organize themselves politically and create a “state within the state” or a “state-in-exile” in the refugee camps and the ghettos of the hundreds of thousands of refugees who resided in Jordan. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the formal name of the organized fedayeen, had taken over large areas in Jordan where they trained their own fighters in addition to providing education and welfare for its own refugee population. Radicalized groups from the camps carried out cross border attacks into Israel and threatened the Kingdom’s security. The Jordanian government had to take measures, leading to the civil war known as *Black September*.²¹

The latest refugee influx to Jordan came in the wake of the US invasion of Iraq which reportedly drove 750,000 Iraqis to seek refuge in the Kingdom.²² Many of these refugees were wealthy and could to a large extent rely on themselves without need for direct support from the state or international institutions.²³ Similar to the current Syrian refugee influx, the majority of the Iraqi refugees did not live in organized camps and consequently affected the areas where they settled, mainly the capital. However, the Iraqis did not seek work in big numbers, but rather created work opportunities by investing and establishing companies. The Iraqis who had money were granted a residence permit lasting for one year at the time, with possibilities for extension as long as a considerable amount of money was left as guarantee in a Jordanian bank.²⁴

¹⁹ Ådnegard, “Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Influx”, 14; Minority Rights Group International, *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples- Jordan: Palestinians*.

²⁰ Arabic word for freedom fighters.

²¹ Beverly Milton-Edwards and Peter Hinchcliffe, *Jordan: A Hashemite legacy*, Second Edition (Routledge: New York, 2009), 40-44; Alan George, *Jordan: Living in the Crossfire*, (Zed Books: New York, 2005), 32-33; Sarah Kenyon Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries: Refugee Camps, Civil War, and the Dilemmas of Humanitarian Aid*, (Cornell University Press: New York), 26-28.

²² Dr. al-Wazani, “al-athar al-iqtisaadiyya wa al-ijtima’iyya li-azma al-laaji’in”, 35.

²³ Interview with BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, 05.11.13; interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi, Director General at al-Quds Center for Political Studies, 10.9.13.

²⁴ Ådnegard, “Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Influx”, 15-16; interview with Dr. Khalid al-Wazani 12.09.13; Dr. al-Wazani, “al-Athar al-Iqtisaadiyya wa al-ijtima’iyya li-azma al-Laaji’in”, p.4; Laurent Y. Peter, “Syrian refugee crisis strains Jordan as US offers aid”, *Global Post*: <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatches/globalpost-blogs/rights/syrian-refugee-crisis-strains-jordan-us-offers-aid>, published 09.05.13, accessed 25.11.13; Ammanet.net, “200 alf ‘aamil wafid mukhaalif bi-l-Urdun. Wa 20 alf yujaddidun tusaarihahu”

As opposed to the different Palestinian influxes, the Syrian influx can be compared to the Iraqi influx in both numbers and the fact that the majority live outside camps. The demographic composition of the refugees and their impact on the society has proven to be quite different however. No two refugee influxes are the same and responses will necessarily vary.

Short introduction to current Jordanian economy

Jordan is one of the most open economies in the Middle East and is well integrated with its neighboring countries through trade, investments, and tourism. As a result of the open economy, the regional integration and its geographical location, Jordan is highly vulnerable to the political, economic, and social volatility in the region.²⁵ Exogenous shocks following the Arab Spring such as sabotage on the gas pipeline in Sinai and decline in tourism and foreign investments have affected the country severely. The social impacts of these shocks were mitigated by external grants and higher food and energy subsidies, a targeted wage increase and social spending – which inherently caused the budget deficit to grow even higher.²⁶

Jordan's economical problems were so severe they had to accept a 2 billion (bn) dollar International Monetary Fund (IMF) loan in 2012. The IMF loan was granted on the basis of a fiscal plan to reduce public sector financing needs and lower public debt, carefully balanced against the risk of a recession and social acceptance. Nevertheless, protests and demonstrations erupted when Government of Jordan (GoJ) cut subsidies in late 2012.²⁷ Everyone on Jordanian soil enjoys the subsidies provided by GoJ, and cuts in subsidies are essential to get the Jordanian economy back on track, especially after the massive increase in population due to the refugee influx. With further cuts in subsidies however, demonstrations could easily re-erupt.

There is no doubt that the Syrian refugee influx has had economic consequences for Jordan. A 10 percent increase in population has had a tremendous impact on Jordan's infrastructure draining on scarce resources, already poor education, and health systems, as

(200 ألف عامل وافد مخالف بالأردن.. و20 ألف يجددون تصاريحهم) Ammannet: <http://ar.ammannet.net/news/215194>, published 13.11.13, accessed 25.11.13.

²⁵ Ådnegard, "Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Influx", 9; The World Bank, "Jordan Overview", updated September 2013, <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/jordan/overview>, accessed 27.10.13.

²⁶ International Monetary Fund (IMF), "Jordan gets \$2 Billion IMF Loan and to Support Economy", *IMF Survey Magazine: Interview*: <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/survey/so/2012/int080312a.htm>, published 03.08.12, accessed 18.03.14.

²⁷ Tobias Buck, "Protest in Jordan after fuel subsidy cut", *Financial Times*, <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/066b952e-2df0-11e2-8ece-00144feabdc0.html#axzz2wLHyZoRz>, published 14.11.12, accessed 18.03.14.

well as the labor market.²⁸ However, it is important to mention that the refugee influx also has benefitted the receiving country. According to Dr. Khalid al-Wazani, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and chairman at Issnad Consulting, the Syrians contributed with almost 2,8bn Jordanian dinars (JOD) to the economy in 2013, mainly due to revenue from sales taxes. Additionally, investments related to the Syrian crisis, both by international and Syrian investors, created about 200,000 jobs. Dr. Khalid al-Wazani argued, on the other hand, that these benefits, of around 3,1 bn JOD, do not outweigh the burden for GoJ amounting to no less than an estimated 4,6 bn JOD.²⁹ Other positive economic impacts are the flow of donor money into the Jordanian economy and international goodwill to the receiving country, encouraging, for example, IMF to ease their demands for austerity measures following the loan granted in 2012.

Several sources have expressed that the Syrian crisis came as a gift package from above to Jordan which, prior to the flow of humanitarian money and donor support, was on the edge of a crisis with a public debt constituting almost 70 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) and a public deficit of – 6, 2 per cent in 2011.³⁰

Level of tension and violence

There have been, and still are, tensions in Jordan relating to political reform and economic issues as well as the presence of the refugees. 9,000 marches, demonstrations, strikes, rallies and sit-ins between January 2011 and spring 2013 makes this period one of the most contentious in Jordan's history.³¹ When the Jordanian Arab Spring started in 2011, the demonstrators had some of the same demands as Syria's protest movements. Nevertheless, Jordan is different; the protesters called mainly for reform, not the downfall of the regime.³² The cause that gathered the largest protesters were cuts in subsidies for oil and food in late

²⁸ Around 600,000 refugees are registered with UNHCR, while the total number is supposed to account for 800,000 as many of the refugee are not officially registered. Government estimates are even higher (Simone Hüser and Dr. Otmar Oehring, "The Socio-Economic Implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – A Cost-Benefit Framework", Event Contributions Summary from the workshop 18.02.14, available at <http://www.kas.de/jordanien/en/publications/37031/>, published 09.03.14, accessed 12.03.14, 2).

²⁹ Dr. Khalid al-Wazani, workshop at Landmark, Amman, "The Socio-Economic implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – a cost benefit framework", *Konrad Adenauer Stiftung* and *Issnaad Consulting*, 18.02.14.; Hüser and Dr. Oehring, "Socio-Economic Implications of the Syrian Refugees".

³⁰ Global Finance, "Jordan Country Report", *Global Finance*: <http://www.gfmag.com/gdp-data-country-reports/246-jordan-gdp-country-report.html#axzz2tUoZbtyt>, accessed 16.02.14.

³¹ Sean L. Yom, "The Mirage of Economic Appeasement", *Jordan Business*: http://www.jordan-business.net/cover_story/mirage-economic-appeasement, published October 2013, accessed 19.03.14.

³² Deborah Amos, "In a Rough Neighbourhood, Jordan Clings to its Stability", *NRP*: <http://www.npr.org/blogs/parallels/2013/07/01/196656296/stability-or-democracy-in-jordan-its-a-fragile-balance>, published 01.07.13, accessed 19.03.14; Sean L. Yom, "The Mirage of Economic Appeasement".

2012. Regional violence and chaos have seemingly taken the steam out of the protest movements as stability trumps concerns over the economy these days.³³

The number of rallies and sit-ins in support of reform in Amman and other governorates has decreased since late 2012. In a survey of Jordan Public Opinion from December 2013 carried out by International Republican Institute, the two largest groups of respondents (a total of 46 percent of those questioned) answered they didn't know why the protests stopped or they were not convinced of the effectiveness of protests, and they gave up as the protests produced little benefits. 12 percent feared that Jordan would follow the path of neighboring countries.³⁴

The Jordanians fear they will become a minority in their own country if Jordan pursues the same refugee policy with open borders. Accordingly one man went as far as to say that he didn't want his Jordanian ID card as it was no use for him if he becomes a refugee without rights in his own country competing over limited resources.³⁵ Jordanians without health insurance, for example, are deeply frustrated that refugees have better access to free health care than they have.³⁶ Several Jordanians also fear for their own security in border areas when the fighting on the other side of the border is getting to close, blaming the Syrians for bringing the war with them.³⁷ Consequently, a majority of the Jordanians want to close the borders to the Syrian refugees or at least limit the number. In a survey conducted by the International Republican Institute in the beginning of December 2013, 43 percent of the questioned agreed to close the borders in the face of more Syrian refugees and 32 percent agreed to continue to receive Syrian refugees, but limit the number. Only 23 percent wished to continue to receive more Syrian refugees, while 3 percent answered they were not sure or did not know.³⁸ Security struggles among Syrian refugees themselves have appeared in the form of fear and rumors of Syrian Regime members, disguised as refugees, suspected of attempts to destabilize Jordan and create tension between the refugees.³⁹

³³ Amos, "In a Rough Neighbourhood".

³⁴ International Republican Institute, "Survey of Jordan Public Opinion, November 30 – December 6 2013", available at http://www.iri.org/sites/default/files/2014%20March%2010%20Survey%20of%20Jordanian%20Public%20Opinion,%20November%2030-December%206,%202013_0.pdf, accessed 16.04.14, 11.

³⁵ Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq and Ramtha, Jordan" *Mercy Corps*, <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/partner.php?OrgId=31>, published May 2013, accessed 16.04.14, 14.

³⁶ Government official who had lived abroad to long, and not worked for GoJ long enough to acquire full health service and pension from the state was discouraged over this. He had just used his savings on dental care.

³⁷ H.E. Abu Zaid, Governor of Amman and former Governor of Irbid at the workshop at Landmark, Amman, 18 February 2014 on "the Socio-Economic Implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy"; Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions" (2013), 15.

³⁸ International Republican Institute, "Survey of Jordan Public Opinion".

³⁹ Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions" (2013), 15.

Tensions between Jordanians and their Syrian “guests” are growing as the crisis persists. Initially, Jordanians were opening their houses to their Syrian “brothers”, but their sympathy for the refugees is weakening as hardship is growing.⁴⁰ The prolonged Syrian presence has served to focus on and help give voice to old grievances. An elderly woman in Mafraq acknowledged that there were problems before the Syrians came. No doubt they made the conditions worse, but it is also very easy just to put the blame on them.⁴¹ Reportedly, the nature of the tensions between the refugees and the host communities has changed since the early phases of the crisis. Initially centered on a lack of resources and economic opportunities, the tensions – at least in Mafraq – “have later transformed into a struggle over identity, territory and even security”.

* * *

In the following chapter, different theories relating to the consequences of a massive refugee influx will be presented. The first part of the chapter introduces the academic debate concerning consequences of refugee influxes whether they are political instability, economic growth or status quo. In the second part three theoretical explanations for stability despite a massive refugee influx are presented. These are finally narrowed down to three hypotheses that lay the foundation for the empirical analysis in the third chapter.

⁴⁰ Mercy Corps, Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in Mafraq, Jordan, *Mercy Corps*: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/partner.php?OrgId=31>, published October 2012, accessed 16.04.14, 6.

⁴¹ Mercy Corps, “Tapped Out: Water Scarcity and Refugee Pressures in Jordan”, *Mercy Corps*: <http://www.mercycorps.org.uk/research-resources/tapped-out-water-scarcity-and-refugee-pressures-jordan>, published March 2014, accessed 16.04.14, 23.

2. Theoretical background – Refugee influxes: consequences and possible explanations.

There has been done a great deal of research on the consequences of massive refugee influxes on *receiving countries* focusing on the spread of conflict from the neighboring *sending country*. Most of the studies gather empirical evidence from refugee experiences in Sub-Saharan and Central Africa, with typical case studies such as Rwanda, Tanzania and Congo (Zaire).⁴² Despite the continuous incidents occurring in the Middle East resulting in millions of refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs), not very many of the works employ empirical data from this particular region. However, there has been a recent upward trend of studies using empirical evidence from the Middle East.⁴³ This will likely continue because of the situation in the region today – in particular the Syrian conflict which has caused the worst refugee crisis since the genocide in Rwanda 20 years ago.⁴⁴ International humanitarian organizations are calling for academic studies and assessments in order to make out the best strategy for coping with the increase in refugees in Syria's neighboring countries as the crisis drags on.

Political instability, economic growth or status quo?

It is a well-established fact that refugees impose a variety of security, economic and environmental burdens on receiving countries. Most analyses concentrate on cases where conflict already had spilled over from the sending country and do not consider cases with a non-violent outcome. However, not only negative consequences follow a massive refugee influx. There may also be a significant flow of resources in the form of humanitarian

⁴²Examples are Karen Jacobsen, "Livelihoods in Conflict: The Pursuit of Livelihoods by Refugees and the Impact on the Human Security of Host Communities", *Journal for International Migration* vol.40 no. 5, (2002): 95-123; Jennifer Alix-Garcia and David Saah, "The Effect of Refugee Inflows on Host Communities: Evidence from Tanzania", *The World Bank Economic Review* vol. 24 no. 1 (November 2009): 148-170; Samuel Nii Ardey Codjoe, Peter Quartey, Cyntia Addoquaye Tagoe, Holly E. Reed, "Perceptions of the Impact of Refugees on Host Communities: The Case of Liberian Refugees in Ghana", *International Migration and Integration* vol. 14 (July 2012): 439-456; Whitaker, "Refugees and the Spread of Conflict".

⁴³ The Norwegian research foundation Fafo have done several studies and assessments of refugees in the region the last decade (for an overview see Fafo's webpage <http://www.fafo.no/pub/emner/midost.htm>); Dawn Chatty at Oxford's Refugee Studies Center is another example of one who is increasingly looking at the Middle East and the challenges related to the constant flow of refugees to and from states for an overview of her latest publications, see the following website: <http://www.rsc.ox.ac.uk/people/academics/dawn-chatty> (accessed 16.04.14).

⁴⁴ BBC Middle East, "UN says Syrian refugee crisis worst since Rwanda", *BBC*: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-23332527>, published 16.07.13, accessed 15.04.14.

assistance, economic assets and human capital leading to increased prosperity for the receiving country – or it might not cause major societal or socio-economic change affecting the altering the country's stability.⁴⁵

Political Instability

Refugee movements are generally the result of conflict, but can also be a cause of conflict. It is widely accepted that refugee influxes can place considerable stress on natural resources, leading to both environmental and social impacts.⁴⁶ Ragnhild Ek and Ahmed Kardawi (1991) present the case of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees in Sudan in the period 1969-1985 where the Sudanese perceived the refugees to pose a huge strain on the fragile Sudanese economy, infrastructure and environment. The refugees arrived at a time when the country was facing political unrest and different levels of conflict. Consequently the refugees were increasingly blamed for the growing hardships. The refugees had become too many and they had stayed for too long according to their Sudanese hosts. The Second Sudanese civil war erupting in 1983 was not a direct consequence of the presence of the refugees. Nevertheless, the influx is likely to have been adding to the tensions as the refugees were blamed for the deteriorating economic conditions while the government was accused for prioritizing the refugees over the nationals. Adding to this, the demographic composition of the refugees caused disturbance to the ethnical and ideological balance in the country changing the political scene.⁴⁷

Optimal conditions for growing tension and spread of conflict include a low state capability or willingness to provide security along the borders and the refugee camps.⁴⁸ Border control is very important facing a refugee crisis, both to prevent the spread of conflict from the sending country directly, but also to make sure that the receiving country doesn't let in more refugees than its population and resources can handle. Without the capability or willingness to provide security, there could easily be tension. Attacks between the sending state and refugees – for example cross-border attacks – are likely to happen more frequently if security measures are not sufficient. Attacks between the host state and refugees – with Black September as a very extreme example – are as history shows, not unlikely if security measures are insufficient. Ethnic violence between refugees and locals could easily break out

⁴⁵ Karen Jacobsen, "Can refugees benefit the state? Refugee resources and African statebuilding", *Journal of Modern African Studies* vol. 40 no. 4, (2002): 577-596, 577; Whitaker, "Refugees and the spread of conflict", 214.

⁴⁶ Adrian Martin, "Environmental Conflict between Refugee and Host Communities", *Journal of Peace Research* vol. 42 no. 3, (May 2005): 329-346, 332.

⁴⁷ Ek and Kardawi, "Implications of Refugee Flows".

⁴⁸ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 6.

if the country's ethnic balance is being disturbed. Even inter-state war could be a result if the state government doesn't prevent the refugees from mobilizing and militarizing, resulting in attacks and reprisal attacks from the sending state.⁴⁹ Hence, security is essential for preventing instability and conflict. However, as will be elaborated below, security measures that are too extreme can also lead to tensions.

In some cases, as Sarah Kenyon Lischer explains, refugees can possibly become more prone to violence over time – especially for long-term refugees who initially wished to return as soon as possible, but see no hope of return until radical change occurs in their homeland. As time passes, leadership among the refugees may emerge that unites the refugees behind a program of political and military action. This might happen in Syria's neighboring countries as a result of the seemingly “never-ending” conflict and the resulting displaced persons in the region.⁵⁰

Economic growth

In several of her research papers, Karen Jacobsen states that when refugees are permitted to work alongside their hosts to pursue livelihood, they would be less dependent on aid and better able to overcome the sources of tension and conflict in their host communities.⁵¹ In other words, correct handling of the refugee influx can, combined with a convenient demographic combination of refugees, be beneficial for the host state. The tendency to store refugees in camps and the failure to look for more creative and positive approaches to “never-ending” refugee situations could be a real waste of resources. The camp approach fails to recognize how refugees can contribute to the economic vitality and to the human security of the host communities if allowed to pursue their livelihood.⁵²

Host governments normally resist programs which enable the refugees to pursue their livelihood as they prefer refugees to go home after a short period. Short-term solutions such as relief aid are, however, expensive in the long run. In due course, it is also more likely to lead to passivity, dependency, and frustration.⁵³ Beth Elise Whitaker shows an example from Tanzania where nearly 600,000 refugees from Rwanda was settled in a dozen camps along the border. The rural hinterlands were transformed into sprawling cities and “sleepy towns” became headquarters for hi-tech operations due to the refugees and the international

⁴⁹ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 11-15.

⁵⁰ Lischer, “Dangerous Sanctuaries”, 22-23.

⁵¹ Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state?”; Jacobsen, “Livelihoods in Conflict”.

⁵² Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state?”, 119.

⁵³ Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state”, 110-111.

humanitarian presence. Even though there was an increase in crime, environmental degradation and inflation which caused resentment among Tanzanian hosts, it did not threaten the overall stability of the country.

One problem that can appear when refugees are allowed to engage in economic activity is if the refugees turn out to be more productive than locals, for example when they as farmers are able to put the land to better use and profit from their labor.⁵⁴ The effect of refugees' increased economic resources on the relation with the host community can go both ways; it could lead to increased resentment by the host community; but, on the other hand, it could lead to increased willingness to socialize and deal with the refugees.⁵⁵

Status quo

A massive refugee influx can also have minor implications and consequently no conflict appear, maybe against all odds.⁵⁶ The Iraqi refugee influx to Syria last decade can serve as an example of this. At the beginning of the 21st century, especially after the bombings of the Samara Mosque in 2006, it is estimated that Syria hosted up to 1.5 million Iraqis.

Nevertheless, this massive refugee influx did not lead to any massive tension or conflict between the Syrian hosts and their Iraqi guests, despite the historical hostility between the two people, scarce resources, and subsidized goods available for refugees, growing budget deficit, increasing rent, and high unemployment among other factors.⁵⁷

Reinoud Leenders (2008) found that spillover of the Iraqi conflict is not very likely due to the refugees' demographic composition and also the fact that they escaped the violence to avoid fighting. Highly educated refugees with a majority of elderly, women and children who did not participate in the violence before the crisis are less likely to engage in violence in the receiving country. However, Leenders argues, tension and conflict should, nonetheless, not be written off, especially if the conflict persists. Socio-economic destitution and the failure to provide humanitarian assistance were already the cause of tensions between Iraqi refugees, the receiving state, and host communities and would likely continue to be.

However, as is known today, the Iraqi influx did not cause severe tension or conflict despite the seething discontent among their Syrian hosts.⁵⁸ It could be argued that the refugee

⁵⁴ Jacobsen, "Can refugees benefit the state?", 106.

⁵⁵ Jacobsen, "Can refugees benefit the state?", 112; Oliver Bakewell, "Repatriation and Self-settled Refugees in Zambia: Bringing Solutions to the Wrong Problems", *Journal of Refugee Studies* vol. 13 no.4, (2000): 356-373.

⁵⁶ Codjoe et. al., "Perceptions of the Impact of Refugees on Host Communities", 441.

⁵⁷ Reinoud Leenders, "Iraqi Refugees in Syria: Causing a Spillover of the Iraqi Conflict?", *Third World Quarterly* vol. 28 no. 8, (2008): 1563-1584, 1564.

⁵⁸ Leenders, "Iraqi Refugees in Syria".

crisis did not unfold properly and that there might have been a different outcome if the Middle East didn't have the Arab Spring three years later in 2011. Nevertheless, the situation has several similarities to the situation Jordan is witnessing today.

Possible explanations for the lack of destabilization

In the next chapter, three hypotheses will be tested in an empirical analysis. Before deducing the three hypotheses from the existing theory, it is necessary to elaborate three explanations that guide the understanding of Jordan's refugee situation today as these are among the leading explanations in the field used for analyzing stability and the consequences of refugee influxes. The first is that the "Middle Eastern monarchy" is inherently stable. The second is that there have to be a balance between security measures and freedom for the refugees in the government's response to the refugees. Finally, there is the hypothesis about the stabilizing effect of a particular demographic composition within the refugee population.

Monarchy as inherently stable

What explains the variation in political stability in the Middle East? One point that is frequently mentioned by the media and scholars is regime type. Scholars have for a long time hypothesized Middle Eastern monarchies as being distinct from other authoritarian regimes.⁵⁹ A monarchy is a regime led by a hereditary sovereign who may hold varying degrees of power. In the Middle East today, there are eight Arab monarchies: Jordan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, and UAE. These monarchies are not identical to, for example, the Norwegian and British monarchies which are constitutional kingships. In the Middle East, the kings and emirs "not only reign, but *rule*".⁶⁰ During the Arab Spring, Middle Eastern republics have fallen like dominos, but the monarchies on the other hand stand firm. This corresponds with the many theories on "monarchical exceptionalism". That the Middle

⁵⁹ Among others, these have written about the Middle Eastern monarchies apparently inherent stability: Holger Albrecht and Oliver Schlumberger, "'Waiting for Godot': Regime Change without Democratization in the Middle East", *International Political Science Review/ Revue Internationale de Science Politique* vol.25 no.4, (2004): 371-392; Lisa Anderson, "Dynasts and Nationalists: Why Monarchies Survive". In: Kostiner, J. (ed.), *Middle East Monarchies: The Challenge of Modernity* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2000), 53-69; Sean L. Yom, F. Gregory Gause III, "Resilient Royals: How Arab Monarchies Hang On", *Journal of Democracy* vol. 23 no. 4, (October 2012): 74-88; Victor Menaldo, "The Middle East and North Africa's Resilient Monarchs", *Journal of International Politics* vol.74 no. 3, (July 2012): 707-722.

⁶⁰ Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 76.

Eastern monarchies are more resilient and less likely to fall than the republics is almost a *fait accompli* among scholars of the region.⁶¹

Not only have the monarchies survived the Arab Spring, but they have also proved to be more resilient over time. Since King Abdullah I was proclaimed king of Jordan in 1946, the Hashemite family has ruled the Kingdom.⁶² Jordan has faced internal and external challenges similar to the region's republics. The Arab Republic of Syria, for example, witnessed a turbulent period with a succession of coups starting from 1949 until Hafiz al-Asad gained control over the different fractions in the early 1970s.⁶³ In the 1950s and 1960s, Jordan went through a turbulent period where the Kingdom's rule was challenged both internally and externally, culminating in the event of *Black September* in 1970. However, unlike the Syrian republic, the Jordanian monarchy survived and the ruling family has not changed since the creation of the Kingdom 68 years ago.⁶⁴

The most common arguments used to explain the inherent stability of the monarchies are cultural and institutional. According to the cultural arguments, Arab monarchies enjoy more legitimacy than the republics since the monarchical rule is considered traditional and claimed to be based on tribal social structure and Islam. Hence, a lower degree of repression is needed. The institutional arguments explain the monarchies' resilience as a result of the monarch's high esteemed position in the society which allows him to more easily retain the support of existing elites while at the same time engage in processes of modernization in response to popular pressure. By appealing directly to the masses, a king can calm opposition and prevent further unrest with promises of change due to his unique position. This is more difficult to do for republican dictators who constantly have to please their vital cadres.⁶⁵

Sean L. Yom and F. Gregory Gause III (2012) argue that these explanations are inadequate. They state that the absence of revolution cannot be reasoned from the mere presence of legitimacy, because this would have to mean that every regime must be legitimate unless it is overthrown. Regarding the institutional explanation, they argue that kings as well as authoritarians pursue policies that they hope will keep them in power. If the monarchical institutionalism was exceptionally good, why wouldn't the dictators of the republics take the

⁶¹ Eirik Stavstrand, "Freedom and Stability in Contemporary Monarchies: Testing the Theory of Monarchical Exceptionalism", Master Thesis at the Department of Comparative Politics, University of Bergen, spring 2013.

⁶² Milton-Edwards, "Jordan – A Hashemite Legacy", viii.

⁶³ Alan George, *Syria: Neither Bread nor Freedom*, (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2003), 6.

⁶⁴ Kjetil Selvik and Stig Stenslie, *Stability and Change in the Modern Middle East*, (New York: I.B. Tauris & Co Ltd, 2011), 162.

⁶⁵ Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 77.

same measures?⁶⁶ The authors instead give what they call a “strategic” explanation to what makes monarchies more stable. First, broad-based, cross-cutting coalitions are important for autocracies regardless of institutional structure. Second, oil rents or recirculated oil rents from neighboring countries in the form of aid are used as inducements for regime supporters. Finally, foreign patrons help with diplomatic, economic, and military support during crisis. This could help explain Jordan’s stability against all odds and the hypothesis will be tested in the empirical analysis in the next chapter.⁶⁷ Moreover, the three criteria in Yom and Gause’s strategic explanation about monarchy stability are also applicable to other regime types. This hypothesis will be referred to as “economic and foreign policy as determinants” as this is the leitmotif of the hypothesis.

Strategies and responses to the refugee influx

The choices made by host governments about how to respond to a refugee influx must be highly weighed with many factors in mind. Security politics, refugees’ rights, as well as citizens’ rights are definitely factors that should be intertwined in such decision-making. Security and stability are often of high priority. Border control, efficient intelligence, and police services are essential for a state to provide safety for the refugees and its citizens as mentioned above, in addition to prevent destabilization as a consequence of the conflict next door.

As Karen Jacobsen has shown, several host governments choose to gather refugees in camps due to security issues. In camps, refugees can be assisted and managed by international refugee agencies, the impact on the society of the receiving country would be minimal, and the host government would have to worry to a much lesser extent about refugees competing with locals for scarce resources such as land, jobs and environmental resources, as well as the exhaustion of existing resources such as schools, housing and health facilities. However, one of the most obvious dilemmas in the camps is that the more control, security, and surveillance utilized, the more frustration and less integration felt among the refugees. In a protracted crisis, the end result is a non-participating, passive refugee population. Jacobsen argues that security can be achieved in a different way, by utilizing refugee resources. Letting the refugees settle and pursue their life in host communities will, according to Jacobsen, increase the welfare of the host community in two ways. First, international refugee assistance will

⁶⁶ Stavstrand, “Freedom and Stability in Contemporary Monarchies”, 22-26; Menaldo, “The Middle East and North Africa’s Resilient Monarchs”, 707-709; Yom and Gause, “Resilient Royals”, 77-78.

⁶⁷ Yom and Gause, “Resilient royals”, 81-86.

“trickle out” into the communities, and second, the economic activities of refugees will contribute to the host community’s standards of living.⁶⁸ Whether the government strategy is to gather refugees in camps or not is essential in this matter.

Previous literature has shown that letting refugees pursue livelihood by being granted access to resources, freedom of movement, and employment, they would be less dependent on aid and better able to overcome the sources of tension and conflict in their host communities.⁶⁹ However, the literature has also shown that giving the refugees too much space could possibly come at the expense of the local communities, especially the working poor.⁷⁰ In the process of providing livelihood opportunities for the refugees, care must be taken to ensure that security problems are being addressed. Jacobsen highlights three concerns in particular. First, she mentions the importance of an inclusive approach. It must be ensured that the programs and interventions address the needs of the affected host community as well as the refugees. Programs that involve and include both groups are more likely to be embraced by everyone in the host communities and are more likely to succeed. Secondly, humanitarian agencies must recognize existence of illicit activities that both displaced and local rely on.⁷¹ The most common example of this is that many refugees work in the informal market, depressing down wages to a low unacceptable to locals as they are not getting the same support and aid as the refugees.⁷² This could lead to tension between locals and refugees. Finally, donors must advocate with host governments to allow refugees to pursue livelihoods in host communities, not only in camps, so these communities can benefit from the international aid as well.⁷³

For the relief and development organizations handling a refugee crisis, the question is not necessarily how best to help refugees alone, but how to find solutions that are also acceptable to host countries. For receiving states, the number one priority tends to be security and stabilization. Without the receiving country’s acceptance and active involvement, it will be much more difficult to help refugees.⁷⁴ Regardless of the amount of pressure from the international society, the receiving country is a sovereign state and has the final word. It is the government that has the final say when it comes to security measures, whether to gather the refugees in camps and whether to allow the refugees to pursue livelihood. This second

⁶⁸ Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state?”, 577-580.

⁶⁹ Jacobsen, “Livelihoods in conflict”; Ek and Kardawi, “Implications of Refugee Flows”.

⁷⁰ Robert Chambers, “Hidden Losers? The impact of rural refugees and refugee programs on poorer hosts”, *International Migration Review* vol. 20 no. 2, (Summer 1986): 245-263.

⁷¹ Jacobsen, “Livelihoods in conflict”, 115-116.

⁷² Ådnegard, “Impacts of the Syrian Refugee Influx”.

⁷³ Jacobsen, “Livelihoods in conflict”, 115-116.

⁷⁴ Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state?”, 116.

hypothesis – “institutional capacity as determinant” – will be discussed empirically in the next chapter.

Demographic composition of the refugees

Another factor that could help explain the lack of severe tensions in a receiving country is the demographic, social, and political composition of the refugee influx. As mentioned above, Reinoud Leenders finds that the demographic composition of the refugee influx can explain the low level of violence between the Syrian host communities and the Iraqi refugees, among refugees, and among the refugees and the state.

In his case study, Leenders looks at the Iraqi refugees’ propensity for violence, and argues that the composition of the social and political characteristics of the refugees better explains why they have not facilitated a spillover from conflict to the extent some had expected. According to Leenders, the fact that the Syrian government imposed tight surveillance and hard restrictions on the refugees together with the demographic composition of the Iraqi refugee population not typical of political radicalization and violence explain the lack of destabilization. First of all, women, children and elderly were disproportionately represented among the refugees, and the number of men in “fighting age” was few compared to the rest. There were also a disproportional share of academics and well educated professionals among the Iraqi refugees in Syria who, similar to women, children, and elderly are less likely to engage in violence and radicalization. Most of the Iraqi refugees did not participate in the conflict prior to their exile and they almost unanimously expressed a strong tiredness of the whole conflict with no intention to participate in it, equally disappointed in all political parties and fractions involved.⁷⁵

Beth Elise Whitaker presents a similar finding when comparing the cases of Rwandan refugees in Tanzania and Congo, where in the last mentioned case the influx led to massive destabilization while in the first it did not. The composition of the refugees was emphasized in those cases; there were more politically active individuals from the previous government among the refugees in Congo.⁷⁶ This corresponds with Sarah Kenyon Lischer’s theory that “situational refugees” are unlikely to have the propensity for violence as compared to her two other categories of refugees: “persecuted refugees” and “state-in-exile refugees”.⁷⁷ Lischer defines “situational refugees” as refugees who fled their homes due to war, chaos, and

⁷⁵ Leenders, “Iraqi refugees in Syria”, 1577-1578.

⁷⁶ Whitaker, “Refugees and the spread of conflict”, 217-220.

⁷⁷ See Lischer, *Dangerous Sactuaries* page 19 for the complete table of types of refugees and propensity for violence.

deprivation with a wish to return as soon as there is peace and stability. They have none or very loose initial political organization. In sharp contrast to the other categories of refugees, the “situational refugees” will return to their homes regardless of the outcome of the conflict as long as the hostilities come to an end. In the receiving country, the goals of these refugees are to pursue their livelihood and return to their previous life as much as possible.⁷⁸

In other words, characteristics of a refugee population such as a disproportionate distribution of children, women, and elderly; high level of education and/or wealth, and what Lischer defined as “situational refugees” are all possible stabilizing factors for a receiving country. “Demographic composition as determinant” is the third and final hypothesis that will be used in the empirical analysis below.

Conclusion

No refugee influx is the same, and the response of the receiving country also varies. Rather than expecting that refugees will spread conflict, it is important to analyze the dynamics in play and in Jordan’s case the reasons for the lasting stability, in an effort to prevent destabilization. Out of the persisting theory, three hypotheses have been deducted: “economic and foreign policy as determinants” focusing on foreign aid and the importance and usage of “foreign rents”; “institutional capacity as determinant” dealing with the handling of the refugee influx; and “demographic composition as determinant” looking into the demographic composition of the Syrian refugees in Jordan. These hypotheses will be examined in the following chapter.

⁷⁸ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 19-21.

3. What kept Jordan stable?

Jordan, a country that is already struggling with political unrest, scarce resources and a growing public deficit, has upheld its stability despite the immense impact of the refugee influx from Syria. Jordan's geographical position and the fact that Jordan's "superpower friends" don't want to see Jordan fall, are important to understanding the Kingdom's stability in a troubled region. Stability is naturally GoJ's highest priority and all decisions are based on this. The demographic composition of the Syrian refugees in Jordan can also be considered a stabilizing factor, but only in the short-term. Should the refugees lose their hope of returning to their homes due to the protracted crisis, the situation could change rapidly, especially if the government does not allow refugees to pursue livelihood and start a new life for fear that this would have negative impacts on its own citizens. In situations where destabilization can be expected as a consequence of a refugee influx, such as Jordan, the host government and the international community must work together in order to protect the refugees, but at the same time address the challenges and underlying seeds of conflict in the receiving country to prevent destabilization.⁷⁹ The previous chapter presented the theoretical debate concerning refugees and the spread of conflict and deducted three hypotheses that lay the foundation for the empirical analysis that follows: "economy and foreign policy as determinants", "institutional capacity as determinant" and "demographical composition as determinant".

Economy and foreign policy as determinants

As elaborated in the previous chapter, the inherent stability of the Middle Eastern monarchies is generally accepted as a theory, but explanations vary as to why. Yom and Gause's "strategic" explanation will be used to explain the Kingdom's stability. As argued in the previous chapter, this hypothesis is equally relevant for other regime types and is therefore not referred to as the monarchical hypothesis, but rather the "economic and foreign policy as determinant" hypothesis. The following table shows the findings regarding this first hypothesis:

⁷⁹ Whitaker, "Refugees and the spread of conflict".

Table 2 Economy and foreign policy as determinants for stability

Present in Jordan	Broad-based coalitions	Oil-/strategic rents	Patrons
Yes		X (recirculated oil rents from GCC)	X (US, Saudi Arabia)
No	X (but broad-based, cross cutting coalition for stability)		

Broad-based, cross-cutting coalitions

Supporters are crucial for a regime as it is impossible to rule through repression alone. A regime relying on a broad-based, cross-cutting coalition will naturally enjoy a larger degree of legitimacy and trust from the people. A regime that manages to link different social constituencies to the ruling family has a better chance of success than regimes with only one foothold.⁸⁰ The power base of the Hashemite Kingdom has traditionally been the Jordanian Bedouins, known as East Bankers.⁸¹ East Bankers have historically been patronized through a social contract consisting of generous welfare benefits and privileged access to state jobs. With time, however, Palestinian businessmen have become a part of the authoritarian contract receiving economic benefits in return for political support, thus creating a broader power base for the regime.⁸² However, as the Syrian refugees increasingly strain the Jordanian economy, the old patronage systems that ensured tribal and Palestinian businessmen's loyalty to the monarchy are negatively affected.⁸³

Tribes and townships increasingly blame the government and local municipalities for not doing enough to help the areas that have borne the biggest burden from the refugee influx. The East Bankers' frustration with the GoJ was striking at a workshop in Amman, where the cost-benefit framework of the socio-economic implications of the Syrian refugees on the Jordanian economy was discussed. The majority of the participants were East Bank

⁸⁰ Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 81.

⁸¹ While Jordanian bedouins are called East Bankers are Jordanians of Palestinian heritage commonly referred to as West Bankers (George, *Jordan*., xiii; 24-25).

⁸² Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 81; George, *Jordan*, 87; Tony Karon, "Jordan is Living Dangerously as Syria Burns", *Time Magazine Online*: <http://world.time.com/2013/01/16/jordan-is-living-dangerously-as-syria-burns/>, published 16.01.13, accessed 31.03.14.

⁸³ Nikita Malik, "The Cost of Syrian Refugees", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Sada*: <http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2013/09/19/cost-of-syrian-refugees/gnmy>, published 19.09.13, accessed 31.03.14.

government officials from the northern governorates. One by one they criticized the GoJ for leaving the municipalities with the bill for the Syrian refugees.⁸⁴ The old power base is also protesting against the loss of traditional economic privileges as a result of the IMF austerity measures.⁸⁵ Should the economic strain brought on the East Bankers continue, the relationship between the monarchy and its old powerbase is likely to deteriorate.

In early 2013 a tribal based opposition movement attracted hundreds of angry Bedouin – originally the monarchy’s traditional power base. The movement’s popularity cooled off quickly, and in November the same year, the protest movement drew no more than fifty demonstrators due to protest fatigue, intelligence infiltrations, and imprisonment of leaders.⁸⁶ Nevertheless, the dissatisfaction is still alluring and a consequence of the East Bankers’ decreasing reliance on GoJ is increased tribal importance. Where the state has failed to provide benefits and privileges for its supporters, tribal affiliation has become more important in order to maneuver within the Jordanian bureaucracy. According to a government official who left his position at a ministry for this reason, “the ministries’ hallways are filled with tribe members of the different ministers not lobbying, but claiming their interests”. He complained that no one listened to qualified, reasoned arguments for decision-making: “They only listen to the voice of the tribe”.⁸⁷

Hence, the broader based coalition that barely existed is being challenged, and so is the traditional deal between the old power base and the monarchy. For the moment it seems like the broad-based, cross-cutting coalition is voting for stability rather than any political regime in particular – fearing that Jordan could end up like its neighbors; Syria and Iraq.⁸⁸

Recirculated oil rents from neighboring countries

“Loyalty has a price and everybody knows this”.⁸⁹ The cost of buying broad-based, cross-cutting coalitions through public paid jobs and subsidies is not cheap. The Gulf States use oil rents in order to create a broad-based coalition by distributing goods and services to the people. By not using the people’s taxes to pay for a broad-based, cross cutting coalition, this

⁸⁴ H.E. Abu Zaid, Governor of Amman and former Governor of Irbid, H.E. Qasem Mhedat, Governor of Mafraq, Dr. Heidar al-Atoum, Health Department in Irbid, as well as other government officials participating at the workshop at Landmark, Amman, 18 February 2014 on “the Socio-Economic Implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy”.

⁸⁵ Malik, “The Cost of Syrian Refugees”.

⁸⁶ David Schenker, “Jordan Not Out of the Woods Yet”, *The Washington Institute*: <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/jordan-not-out-of-the-woods-yet>, published 19.02.14, accessed 31.03.14.

⁸⁷ Interview with a Jordanian government official working in a ministry, 20.02.14.

⁸⁸ Schenker, “Jordan Not Out of the Woods Yet”.

⁸⁹ Yom and Gause, “Resilient Royals”, 83.

strategy makes it possible for the regimes to be less accountable to their people.⁹⁰ Jordan does not have a significant amount of natural resources that can provide rent. The main resource base centers on phosphate and potash and in 2011 natural resources accounted for 2.8 percent of Jordan's GDP.⁹¹ Still, the Hashemite monarchy uses rents to finance its coalition – recirculated rents or strategic rents as it also could be called. Due to the amount of the strategic rent Jordan receives, it might be considered a 'semi-rentier' state, a state in which rulers share out a significant portion of state income to the population in hope of securing their loyalty.⁹²

Due to Jordan's geographical position, sandwiched between Syria, Iraq and Israel, rents have poured into the country for years – not only from its western allies, but also from the Gulf countries.⁹³ During the past years the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has transformed from being an alliance organized around external security into one focused on domestic stability. Through recirculated oil rents in the forms of grants, cheap loans, and 'Foreign Direct Investment' (FDI), the Gulf countries help their fellow monarchy Jordan to alleviate the impact of potential economic and political unrest.⁹⁴ It has been reported that Jordan in 2014 will increase its state expenditure by 12.8 percent to spur its economy, spending from a \$5bn fund allocated from oil rich Gulf states.⁹⁵

The money allocated to Jordan to alleviate unrest makes it possible for the regime to expand public employment and costly subsidies as a reaction to demonstrations, thus preventing destabilization in the Kingdom.⁹⁶ However, it is widely suspected that Gulf money doesn't come without attachments and is therefore not necessarily solely a stabilizing factor. As Samuel and Tally Helfont, Phd. candidate and research fellow respectively, for Foreign

⁹⁰ Clemet Moore Henry and Robert Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development of the Middle East*, First Edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 8. The principle of "no taxation without representation turned around would fit to describe this phenomenon: "no representation, no taxation".

⁹¹ The World Bank, "Total Natural Resources Rents (% of GDP)", available at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.TOTL.RT.ZS>, accessed 01.04.2014; al-Wazani, "al-athar al-iqtisadiyya wa al-ijtimaa' li-azma al-laji'in", 2.

⁹² Selvik and Stenslie, *Stability and Change*, 157. The rulers do not use tax money for this purpose, but rent income – income derived from natural resources and not from productive work. Jordan does not have such resources on their own, but they benefit from allies who redistribute such money. They also receive strategic rent from allies due to their geographical position (Selvik and Stenslie, *Stability and Change*, 62, 156-161).

⁹³ Henry and Springborg, *Globalization and the Politics of Development*, 188.

⁹⁴ Bojan Francuz, "Friends with Benefits? Examining the Relationship between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Gulf Cooperation Council", *St. Norbert College*: <http://nchchonors.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Francuz-Bojan-St-Norbert-College-Paper.pdf>, published 03.12.11, accessed 01.04.14, 23-27; Rosamund de Sybel, "Strings Attached", *the Gulf: business news and analysis (features)*: <http://www.thegulfonline.com/Articles.aspx?ArtID=4798>, published September 2012, accessed 01.04.14.

⁹⁵ Suleiman al-Khalidi, "Jordan to use Gulf aid to spur economy hit by Syria crisis", *Reuters UK*: <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2013/12/03/uk-jordan-aid-syria-idUKBRE9B20J520131203>, published 03.12.13, accessed 01.04.14.

⁹⁶ Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 84.

Policy Research Institute (2012) claim, the GCC support presents “a social contract whereby the state ensures stability and economic success, but, in exchange, the people forego political rights”. This does not coincide with the wish of the majority of the Jordanian opposition, nor the will of the country’s long time patron: the United States of America.⁹⁷ Whether the Jordanian people prefer stability and bread before political freedom remains to be seen.

Reform has been encouraged and supported publicly by the GCC countries, but the GCC supports the political status quo in Jordan because the “monarchy club” fears that if one monarchy falls, the rest will follow like dominos. Their strategy is for Jordan to reduce the budget deficit by spending strategic rents while admitting to limited reforms without granting any real political liberalization. By doing this, the King is likely to remain in position, and the monarchies of the Middle East will not feel threatened.⁹⁸

Foreign patron(s)

In times of trouble, Jordan could also turn to its foreign patrons for support. Since the Cold War, when the Kingdom chose a pro-Western policy position, the US has stood by its ally for better and for worse. The US has long regarded Jordan one of its closest Middle Eastern allies. Now, it could be said that Jordan is the last guaranteed American foothold in the region.⁹⁹ Saudi Arabia has for years supported Jordan with a substantial amount of money and must also be considered a patron.

Over the years, the level of aid from the US to Jordan has varied, increasing in response to threats faced by Jordan and decreasing during periods with political differences or reductions of aid worldwide.¹⁰⁰ However, in 2011 the US Congress affirmed that given Jordan’s strategic value, the economic support will remain steady despite domestic pressure to cut foreign aid.¹⁰¹ Since 2008, Jordan has received \$660 million a year in accordance with a five year memorandum of understanding (MoU) that expires in 2014. \$360 million is considered economic support, and \$300 million is earmarked for military assistance. In

⁹⁷ Samuel Helfont and Tally Helfont, “Jordan: Between the Arab Spring and the Gulf Cooperation Council”, *Foreign Policy Research Institute (FPRI)*: <http://www.fpri.org/articles/2012/01/jordan-between-arab-spring-and-gulf-cooperation-council>, published winter 2012, accessed 01.04.14.

⁹⁸ Helfont, “Jordan”; Jordan Times, “Saudi Arabia renews support for Jordan reforms”, *the Jordan Times*: <http://jordantimes.com/saudi-arabia-renews-support-for-jordan-reforms>, published 12.03.12, accessed 01.04.14; Mona Christoffersen, “Protest and reform in Jordan”, *Fafo-report vol 50* (2013), 8, 65; Pierre Razoux, “The New Club of Arab Monarchies”, *The New York Times (Opinion Pages)*: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/06/02/opinion/02iht-edrazoux02.html?_r=0, published 01.06.11, accessed 01.04.14.

⁹⁹ Yom and Gause, “Resilient Royals”, 84.

¹⁰⁰ Jeremy M. Sharp, “Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations”, *Congressional Research Service*: <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL33546.pdf>, published 27.01.14, accessed 16.04.14.

¹⁰¹ Yom and Gause, “Resilient Royals”, 85.

addition to this, the Congress allocated another \$340 million to Jordan through overseas contingency funds. The US President Barak Obama announced in February 2014 that he would renew an agreement ensuring a minimum level of US aid as the Kingdom copes with the inflow of Syrian refugees.¹⁰² With this money, the Hashemite regime is able to continue to integrate the patronage of the East Bankers into its power balance by underwriting public sector employment and state investments.¹⁰³

The Kingdom's second patron, Saudi Arabia, is also interested in keeping Jordan stable, but their strategy is slightly different from the US strategy. First of all, Saudi Arabian aid is not as predictable as the American aid. For example, Saudi has not entered into a MoU or other agreements regarding minimum or maximum annual aid. Nor is there any account of the amount of aid allocated from Saudi Arabia available in open sources. Private transfers to the Jordanian leadership make it difficult to estimate the size of Saudi support. The aid from Saudi is sometimes large but often erratic and unpredictable and the Saudis have been accused of using unpredictable support as a tool to shape Jordanian policies to Saudi interests. In 2011 for example, Saudi Arabia granted \$1bn to support Jordan's economy and cover its budget deficit. In 2012 Jordan reportedly received no economic support from Saudi Arabia at all.¹⁰⁴ Then again in 2013, Saudi Arabia announced it would give Jordan \$10bn to help it deal with the Syrian refugees. This happened the day after GoJ announced that Jordan would not accept Palestinian refugees from Syria blaming their refugee situation on Israel's refusal to allow Palestinians into the West Bank or Israel. This type of rhetoric was highly appreciated by Saudi Arabia.¹⁰⁵

Through financial support, the US is pushing for increased political reform towards democracy in Jordan while Saudi Arabia is hoping that Jordan will adopt their view on political rights. The overall goal for the US and Saudi Arabia is the same: neither wish to see a destabilized Jordan, nor loose a stable and valuable ally. They simply just see different paths

¹⁰² Bloomberg, "US promises more aid to Jordan to cope with refugees", *alghad English*: <http://www.alghad.com/articles/503370-US-promises-more-aid-to-Jordan-to-cope-with-refugees?s=29e8cb06998bdc358f88e0caeea39c5>, published 15.02.14, accessed 02.04.14; Sharp, "Jordan", 13.

¹⁰³ Yom and Gause, "Resilient Royals", 85.

¹⁰⁴ Mohammad Tayseer, "Saudi Arabia Grants Jordan \$1 Billion for Budget al-Arab Says", *Bloomberg*: <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2011-07-26/saudi-arabia-grants-jordan-1-billion-for-budget-al-arab-says.html>, published 26 July, 2011, accessed 02.04.14; Neil Patrick, "Saudi Arabia and Jordan: Friends in adversity", *Kuwait Programme on Development, Governance and Globalization in the Gulf States at London School of Economics no.31*, (July 2013): <http://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/programmes/kuwait/documents/Saudi-Arabia-and-Jordan-Friends-in-adversity.pdf>, accessed 02.04.14, 14.

¹⁰⁵ Ariel Ben Solomon, "Saudi Arabia to aid Jordan with Syrian refugees", *the Jerusalem Post*: <http://www.jpost.com/Middle-East/Saudi-Arabia-to-aid-Jordan-with-Syrian-refugees>, published 14.01.13, accessed 02.04.14.

toward ensuring the monarchy's survival.¹⁰⁶ Both countries' need of Jordan as an ally seems to prove stronger than their political differences.

Institutional capacity as determinant

As pointed out in the previous chapter, security consideration tends to lay the foundation when host governments are to decide upon strategies for coping with massive refugee influxes. Three aspects relating to this will be discussed below: security measures, the use of refugee camps, and the issues related to the pursuit of livelihood for refugees. The following table shows the findings of the second hypothesis:

Table 3: Institutional capacity as determinant for stability

Present in Jordan	Security willingness/capacity	Accommodation in camps	Pursuit of Livelihood
Yes	X (excellent intelligence, control of the 370km border a challenge)		
No		X (not GoJ's strategy so far)	X (no legal rights regarding the pursuit of livelihood)

Security willingness, or capacity.

The Syrian crisis displays complex security challenges that compel the Kingdom to reinforce its security apparatus and adopt a harder line.¹⁰⁷ In this context, it is important to keep in mind that security is not only essential for the survival of the regime, but also for the country's capability to host refugees. A destabilized Jordan would be an even worse place for refugees than Jordan is today. The primary security measure is to control the border to Syria, preventing an uncontrolled flow of refugees, fighters and weapons. Nevertheless, border policy and security are complex issues. The international society has long accused Jordan of not keeping to the open border policy, but the GoJ denies the claim.¹⁰⁸ Jordanian political

¹⁰⁶ Patrick, "Saudi Arabia and Jordan", 9.16.

¹⁰⁷ Stimson, "Why Syria May Be the Catalyst for Jordan's "Arab Spring", <http://www.stimson.org/spotlight/why-syria-may-be-the-catalyst-for-jordans-arab-spring/>, published 02.11.12, accessed 20.03.14.

¹⁰⁸ Taylor Luck, "Jordan refutes Amnesty claims, says border open to Syrian refugees", *the Jordan Times*, <http://jordantimes.com/jordan-refutes-amnesty-claims-says-border-open-to-syrian-refugees>, published 31.10.13, accessed 03.04.14.

analyst Oraib al-Rantawi said already in September 2013 that “only one of ten [Syrian refugees] is permitted to enter Jordan from the airport – and there is no system to it. The same goes for the border in the north”.¹⁰⁹ According to Syria Need Analysis Project’s (SNAP) Regional Analysis of Syria and neighboring countries, the number of daily arrivals to Jordan decreased considerably in 2013, from 1,700 to 300 in May, reportedly due to border restrictions.¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, it is hard to criticize a country which has accepted more than 600,000 refugees over the past four years for implementing security measures regarding who is granted access to the Kingdom.

To maintain control of the 370km long Jordanian-Syrian border is challenging and Jordan is struggling. Notwithstanding the numerous watchtowers and checkpoints set up by GoJ and the fighter planes constantly patrolling the border, illegal border activity increased in 2013.¹¹¹ According to the commander of the Jordanian border guards, Brigadier General Hussein al-Zyoud, smuggling activity across the Jordanian-Syrian border last year increased by 300 percent.¹¹² The only legal border crossing for refugees today, Bustana, is located remotely in the eastern desert, making it easier for Jordanian border guards to control the flow of refugees, but harder for refugees to access.¹¹³ Forcing the refugees to cross the eastern desert of Syria is clearly a measure to limit the refugee influx to the Kingdom. Nevertheless, it is impossible to limit border crossing to the Bustana checkpoint. According to Jordan Times (JT), as many as 1,625 Syrian refugees crossed the border into Jordan over 72 hours in late March 2014 through illegal entry points.¹¹⁴ The crisis in Syria and the fear of spillover has led to a growing market for guns in the Kingdom and weapons are being smuggled both into and out of Jordan. The rate of illegal border crossings also rose last year by 250 percent.¹¹⁵

Jordan’s General Intelligence Department (GID)¹¹⁶, infamous in Jordan under the name *Mukhabarat*, is admired by professionals as a highly efficient and trustworthy

¹⁰⁹ Interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi, 10.09.13.

¹¹⁰ The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), “February Regional Analysis for Syria Report: Part II – Host Countries”, *Syria Need Analysis*, published 7 February 2014.

¹¹¹ During a field visit to Mafraq 19 February 2014 I observed at least two Jordanian fighters patrolled the border constantly. This could be seen and heard from Za’atari refugee camp. It was confirmed by the camp management that this was normal.

¹¹² Mohamed al-Daameh, “Arms Smuggling attempt foiled on Syrian-Jordanian border”, *asharq al-awsat*: <http://www.aawsat.net/2014/01/article55327870>, published 23.01.14, accessed 03.04.14.

¹¹³ ACAPS, “February Regional Analysis for Syria Report: Part II – Host Countries”; ICRC, “Jordan: Syrian refugees dream of home”. See map page 2 of this paper for the location of the assembly point of Bustana.

¹¹⁴ Petra, “Border guards prevent entry of five Syrian vehicles carrying weapons”, *the Jordan Times*: <http://jordantimes.com/border-guards-prevent-entry-of-five-syrian-vehicles-carrying-weapons>, published 30.03.14, accessed 03.04.14.

¹¹⁵ Al-Daameh, “Arms smuggling attempt foiled”.

¹¹⁶ In Arabic: *da’irat al-mukhabarat al-‘ammah* (دائرة المخابرات العامة) (GID’s official webpage, http://www.gid.gov.jo/ar/index_ar.html, accessed 03.04.14.).

intelligence service and comparable to Israel's renowned Mossad.¹¹⁷ When border control fails, GID has a reputation for waiting on the other side, following up on illegal border activity. This has been essential for the northern regions, especially Mafraq where government officials have reported on growing activity among "terrorist" sleeper cells funded by external actors.¹¹⁸ The arrest of a member of Syrian intelligence in disguise in Za'atari in March 2013 can serve as an example. One man was caught and captured with weapons and explosives, admitting to initiating rebel actions and burning down tents in the camp.¹¹⁹ Apparently, he managed to avoid the border controls, but not the intelligence services. The Jordanian journalist Linda Maaia gave another example of the efforts by Jordanian authorities: A Jordanian citizen who had infiltrated Syria and fought with the al-Qaida linked *Jabhat al-Nusra* was sentenced in December 2013. After his stay in Syria, the man returned to Jordan with a Syrian identification card and entered the Za'atari camp as a refugee in June 2013. Jordanian intelligence later somehow saw through his ruse and arrested him.¹²⁰

Obviously, it is not only Syrians entering the Kingdom that the *mukhabarat* is interested in. Similar to "the western world's fears" of foreign fighters returning from the Syrian conflict with combat practice and ideological training, Jordan is afraid of the destabilizing effect of returning fighters. According to Islamist sources, more than 2,000 Jordanians are fighting in Syria, with the majority of them under the umbrella of *Jabhat al-Nusra* and *Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)*. In November 2013 the JT reported that 60 foreign fighters were arrested at the border and, in the past 6 months, 180 suspected Jordanian jihadists with ties to Syrian Islamists have been detained by Jordanian authorities. Arrests of foreign fighters and managing of the numbers of refugees entering the country are signs of a regime in control.¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Ian Black, "Jordan embarrassed as bombing reveals CIA link", *the Guardian*, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jan/06/jordan-embarrassed-cia-link>, published 06.01.10, accessed 03.04.14; same picture has been presented by several officials with knowledge of the department.

¹¹⁸ Government official from Mafraq Governorate participating at the workshop at Landmark, Amman, "The Socio-Economic implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – a cost benefit framework", 18.02.14.

¹¹⁹ Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions" (2013), 15.

¹²⁰ Ali al-Rawashdan, "Jordanian government, military provide continuing assistance to Syrian refugees", *al-shorfa*, http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/articles/meji/features/2014/02/28/feature-01, published 28.02.14, accessed 03.04.14. Al-Shorfa is a US sponsored web site to highlight movement toward greater regional stability both through bilateral and multilateral cooperative arrangements (al-shorfa, about us: http://al-shorfa.com/en_GB/pages/about, accessed 03.04.14).

¹²¹ Taylor Luck, "Over 700 Jordanian jihadists fighting in Syria", *the Jordan Times*, <http://jordantimes.com/over-700-jordanian-jihadists-fighting-in-syria>, published 13.07.13, accessed 27.02.14; Taylor Luck, "128 Jordanians 'slain' in Syria – report", <http://jordantimes.com/128-jordanians-slain-in-syria---report>, published 30.11.13, accessed 27.02.14; Taylor Luck, "Trial of 'Syria 12' draws to close", *the Jordan Times*, <http://jordantimes.com/trial-of-syria-12-draws-to-a-close>, published 07.04.14, accessed 08.04.14.

Syrian refugees constitute now around 10 percent of the Jordanian population. Restrictions to the open border policy are not an unreasonable measure when seen from a security policy perspective. Jordanian Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh explained the situation to an American audience using an example more familiar to the audience: Jordan accepting 600,000 Syrian refugees is equivalent to if the US accepted the entire population of Canada as refugees.¹²² Despite pressure from donors and the international relief regime, the GoJ is still restricting the number of refugees crossing into Jordan. This proves that security and stabilization is prioritized over humanitarian principles and international recognition. Nevertheless, the GoJ is not in complete control of who crosses its 370km long border. Consequently people unwanted in the country always find a way in. This is, as discussed above, where the intelligence service comes into use.

“Accommodation”: camps or not

Despite the fact that no more than 20 percent of the Syrian refugees in Jordan live in camps, it will be fruitful to discuss the strategies behind the choice of whether or not to gather refugees in camps. First of all, historically, it was the organization of the Palestinian refugee camps that mainly set the stage for the civil war in Jordan in 1970.¹²³ Secondly, from a theoretical perspective, the organization of refugee camps, especially when located close to the border, have shown to be a push factor for destabilization for example in Kenya, Thailand, Tanzania, and Pakistan.¹²⁴ Third, for a policy reason, as there might be a change in GoJ’s refugee response toward placing more refugees in camps due to increased focus on national security and stability. After being announced to open in August (2013), September (2013) and January (2014), a new refugee camp in Jordan was opened 30 April 2014.¹²⁵ The Azraq camp, with a capacity to host 130,000, was finally opened reportedly due to the increase in the average

¹²² Curtis R. Ryan, “Jordan’s Security Dilemmas”, *Foreign Policy, the Middle East Channel*, http://mideastafrica.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2013/05/01/jordans_security_dilemmas, published 01.05.13, accessed 03.04.14.

¹²³ Milton-Edwards, *Jordan: A Hashemite legacy*, 40-44.

¹²⁴ Jacobsen, “Livelihoods in Conflict”, 104.

¹²⁵ BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud said during the interview 5 November 2013 that they expected the camp to open in January at the latest. Prior to that, there had been rumors in the international society in Jordan that it would open first in the middle of August, and then 1 September 2013. When I visited the camp 21 November 2013 with Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) the camp was ready to accommodate 30,000 refugees, and most of the staff was on a two day standby to receive refugees. Since October last year, the promise from GoJ has been that the camp will open when the average number of refugees crossing the border daily stabilize around no less than 600 (Carsten Hansen, Country Director at NRC Jordan during a tour at the Azraq Refugee Camp 21.11.13).

number of refugees crossing the border to around 600 per day.¹²⁶ This new camp indicates a change in GoJ's policy.

Even though gathering refugees in camps is believed to shield the locals from the burdens of the refugee influx, it would not necessarily prove beneficial to the receiving state. As mentioned earlier, an obvious dilemma with camps is that the more control, security, and surveillance used, the more frustration and less integration among refugees making them difficult to control. Of the six Syrian refugee camps in Jordan, the largest and most renowned camp is the Za'atari camp located in Mafraq, hosting a little over 106,000 refugees.¹²⁷ Za'atari has been through all stages of security, control and unrest since its opening. In spring 2013, the number of refugees in Za'atari increased from 123,000 to 171,000 in one month creating enormous pressures on the camp which ideally should host no more than 110,000 refugees.

Since then there has been considerable less serious tension. This is a result of the decrease in number of refugees living in Za'atari through the year of 2013, but also due to measures taken both by UNHCR and GoJ to get the situation under control and grant the refugees more freedom.¹²⁸ In November 2013 there were no more than 75,000 refugees residing in Za'atari, and in May 2014 there were according to UNHCR approximately 100,000.¹²⁹ The refugees enjoy a bigger role in the daily management of the camp and are able to pursue livelihood for themselves, for example, by working in the camps two

¹²⁶ 1st Agence d'Aide à la Coopération Technique et au Développement (ACTED), "Azraq Camp: New city with a capacity to host 130,000 people to open in the Jordanian desert", *relief web*, <http://reliefweb.int/report/jordan/azraq-camp-new-city-capacity-host-130000-people-open-jordanian-desert>, published 25.03.14, accessed 07.04.14.

¹²⁷ Za'atari with 106,000; Cyber City, infamous for bad conditions with around 500 refugees (the majority of Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRS) in this camp); King Abdullah Park with 800 refugees; Emirates Jordan Camp (EJC), a luxury camp with a capacity of 5000 only hosting 3,800 and finally a camp in Mafraq for Syrian dissidents and defectors hosting around 2-3000. The absolute majority of the camp refugees live in Za'atari, and since larger refugee populations are more often involved in political violence, this camp will be in focus (UNHCR, "Total Persons of Concern Za'atari Refugee Camp", *Syria Regional Refugee Response*, <http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/settlement.php?id=176&country=107®ion=77>, updated 07.04.14, accessed 07.04.14; estimates of refugees residing in the different camps was presented by BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud in an interview 05.11.13; The Associated Press (AP), "Syria Defectors Live in Secret Camp", *CBS News*, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/syria-defectors-live-in-secret-camp/>, published 28.08.12, accessed 07.04.14; Hanine Hassan, "Palestinian refugees from Syria war left to suffer by Jordan", *the electronic intifada*, <http://electronicintifada.net/content/palestinian-refugees-syria-war-left-suffer-jordan/13229>, published 10.03.14, accessed 07.04.14; Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 35).

¹²⁸ BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, workshop at Landmark, Amman, "The Socio-Economic implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – a cost benefit framework", 18.02.14; UNHCR, "Latest Documents - Detailed Indicator Report week 8 and week 12 2013", *Syria Regional Refugee Response*: <https://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>, accessed 25.02.14; Kilian Kleinschmidt, UNHCR Camp Manager in Za'atari briefing in Za'atari during a field visit to the camp 24.11.13.

¹²⁹ REACH, a joint initiative of two international non-governmental organisations, ACTED and IMPACT Initiatives, and the United Nations Operational Satellite Applications Programme (UNOSAT), did an assessment of residents in Za'atari walking from tent to tent and caravan to caravan, and found out that there were no more 75,000 Syrian refugees living inside the camp in November 2013 (Interview with Paul Reglinski, Head of Programme Development, Monitoring and Evaluation (Syrian Crisis Response) at ACTED, 17.11.13).

“supermarkets”, electricity services, administration to one of the twelve constructed municipalities, or patrolling as neighborhood watch trained by Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) and US Marines.¹³⁰ The infrastructure has improved magnificently, and with a public address system and a shopping street called “Shams Elysees” it reminds one more of a city than a desert camp.¹³¹ According to UNHCRs camp manager Killian Kleinschmidt there has been an inflow to the camp lately as a result of the opportunity to work in addition to less top down security. “Compared to the host communities, the life in Za’atari is not that bad and the refugees see this!”¹³²

Despite the improving conditions in Za’atari, there was a rare incident in the camp 5 April 2014 killing one refugee and injuring 29 Jordanian Gendarmes and 3 refugees. JT reported the following day that, according to Jordanian officials, clashes erupted after Jordanian police stopped three families attempting to leave Za’atari illegally through a break in the fence and three other people who tried to sneak in. Those who got caught started shouting for help and around 200 Syrians gathered around them throwing rocks at the officials. The number of protesters swiftly increased to 5000, setting tents on fire and throwing Molotov cocktails. Camp residents, on the other hand, claim that the protest was provoked when a four year old Syrian child was knocked over by a Jordanian security car. This has not been confirmed. According to the authorities, who only fired tear gas, gunshots were heard from the protesting crowd, and it was a gunshot that killed the Syrian refugee.¹³³

This incident illustrates the changing situation of the refugee camp. First, this is the first serious disturbance this year. In fact, there hasn’t been such international media focus around any incidents of this size since spring last 2013.¹³⁴ Secondly, the incident confirms that there are weapons available inside the camp. Director of the Department of Syrian Refugees in Jordan (DSRJ), Brigadier General (BG) Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, stated that no guns were found the following day, but the camp would be thoroughly searched.¹³⁵ And finally, refugees now, unlike earlier, are actively being prevented from leaving the camp.

¹³⁰ Interview with Kilian Kleinschmidt, UNHCR, in Za’atari refugee camp with Fafo, 19.02.14.

¹³¹ The name “Shams Elysees” is a wordplay, as Sham is the colloquial name for Damascus.

¹³² Interview with Kilian Kleinschmidt with Fafo, 19.02.14; Yolande Knell, “Camp for Syrian refugees starts to look more like home”, *BBC Middle East*: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-26565060>, published 14.03.14, accessed 10.04.14.

¹³³ Elisa Oddone, “One Syrian killed in refugee camp riots”, *the Jordan Times*, <http://jordantimes.com/one-syrian-killed-in-refugee-camp-riots>, published 07.04.14, accessed 07.04.14; AFP/Reuters, “Syrian reported killed in Jordan camp clashes”, *al-Jazeera*: <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/04/syrian-reported-killed-jordan-camp-clashes-20144615522758566.html>, published 06.04.14, accessed 07.04.14.

¹³⁴ After a quick google search it is easy to see that reports of tensions in Za’atari camp the past year have just been mentioned in articles focusing on other topics – with the exception of the incident early April 2014.

¹³⁵ Mohamed al-Daameh, “Syrian refugee killed in clashes in Jordan’s Za’atari refugee camp”, *asharq a-awsat*: <http://www.aawsat.net/2014/04/article55330913>, published 07.04.14, accessed 07.04.14.

Clampdowns on the bailout process and refugees being denied leaving are something humanitarian organizations have reported lately, but the GoJ has denied their claims. In November 2013 BG Dr. al-Hamoud said “no one is forced to stay in Za’atari”.¹³⁶ There are no fences surrounding the Za’atari camp, and refugees have been known to exit and enter the camp as they like.¹³⁷ However, BG Dr. al-Hamoud told the Saudi newspaper *al-Hayat* following the incident that the authorities fear a mass escape to outside the camp. According to him, this has started already and about 10 percent of the camp residents have managed to escape and there is a security plan to better control things inside the camp.

Za’atari has not had seen the current stability since its opening, except from this most recent incident. It is interesting that what sparked this latest unrest was Jordanian security officials preventing refugees from entering and exiting the camp illegally, something the refugees were free to do according to the director of DRSJ in November 2013– but apparently not anymore.¹³⁸ The GoJ’s fear of “sleeping cells” among the refugees working for the Syrian regime to destabilize the Kingdom is likely a reason for increased security measures.¹³⁹ A tightening of the control in Za’atari, together with the opening of the Azraq camp could signal a desire from GoJ to gather more refugees in camps. Several of the government officials at a workshop in February 2014 on socio-economic impacts of the refugees recommended exactly this: that the refugees should all be put in camps.¹⁴⁰ There might be a change in policy ahead, but until now, gathering refugees in camps has not been a part of GoJ’s security strategy.

Pursuit of livelihood

As mentioned above, gathering refugees in camps is a well used strategy by receiving states to reduce the negative impact of refugees and the burdens placed on host communities.

However, it is also said that letting refugees pursue livelihood in many cases will have socio-economic benefits for the host communities.¹⁴¹ The Syrian refugees bring with them a sizable amount of human capital that could be utilized to mitigate the costs of their presence and benefit the host communities. In a protracted refugee crisis, relief aid provided over a longer period to refugees living in host communities is unfortunate for two reasons in particular.

¹³⁶ ACAPS, “February Regional Analysis for Syria Part II”; interview with BG Dr. al-Hamoud, 05.11.13.

¹³⁷ Personal observation during my field visits in Za’atari.

¹³⁸ Interview BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud 05.11.13; Al-Hayat, “Fears Sleeper Cells Return to Za’atari”, *the Syrian Observer*: <http://www.syrianobserver.com/News/News/Fears+Sleeper+Cells+Return+to+Zaatari+After+Riot>, published 09.04.14, accessed 09.04.14.

¹³⁹ Al-Hayat, “Fears Sleeper Cells Return to Za’atari After Riot”.

¹⁴⁰ Government officials on the discussion part of the workshop at Landmark, Amman, “The Socio-Economic implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – a cost benefit framework”, 18.02.14.

¹⁴¹ Jacobsen, “Can refugees benefit the state?”, 577-580.

First, relief aid is building up under the divide between the guests and the hosts when the refugees get “free benefits” and the locals do not – regardless of their financial situation. Second, relief aid will, in the long-term, make recipients passive and it will benefit only parts of the society, such as owners of grocery shops and landowners due to increased consumption and cheap labor. The need for long-term thinking and a different response strategy is prevalent. An alternative to relief aid would be to utilize the refugees’ skills to help build up the economy.

The Syrian people are known for being hard working and the Kingdom could benefit from this. As a government official joked in several interviews: “Back in the days the Jews were all over the Middle East making money except from one country: Syria. You know why? Because they were such hard workers”.¹⁴² Nevertheless, the refugees have met several governmental barriers to pursuing acceptable living standards in the host communities. “The government does not grant work permits to Syrian refugees or Syrians without residency,” according to the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC).¹⁴³ If the Syrian refugees were permitted to work, they could contribute to the society with skills, taxes and general income generating activity. Despite the fact that Syrians are not granted work permits, around 160,000 Syrians are working, illegally as unprivileged, unskilled, informal workers, in the northern governorates of Jordan according to estimates by the Ministry of Labor (MoL).¹⁴⁴ These are the governorates with the highest number of “poverty pockets”, areas in which more than 25 percent of the population lives below the poverty line.¹⁴⁵ Due to the focus on the Syrian crisis, the poor Jordanians have been set aside as assistance has primarily benefited the Syrian refugees, excluding and further impoverishing Jordanians.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Interview with a government official 20.02.14, Amman. He made the same joke at another interview in October 2013.

¹⁴³ Email correspondence with Zein Soufan, Head of Social Studies Division, Policies and Strategies Department, Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MoPIC), 19.11.13. Early February 2014 however, the cabinet approved a recommendation by its economic development committee allowing the recruitment of Syrian guest workers in qualifying industrial zones and underprivileged remote areas outside governorate centres (Petra news agency, “Cabinet Approves Recruitment of Syrians”, *the Jordan Times*: <http://jordantimes.com/cabinet-approves-recruitment-of-syrians>, published 03.02.14, accessed 27.02.14).

¹⁴⁴ There is disagreement around the numbers of Syrians who have entered the labor market. MoL estimates that around 150,000-160,000 Syrians are working in the Kingdom while leading economists estimate that 50,000 jobs have been acquired by Syrian workers. Registered Syrian workers before the crisis was 2,333 (Interview with a government official working in a ministry, 20.02.14; Phenix Economic and Informatics Studies, “Ta’thiiraat al-‘amaala as-suriyya ‘ala suuq al-‘amal al-urduniyy” (تأثيرات العمالة السورية على سوق العمل الأردني), *Phenix and Friedrich Erbert Stiftung*, published 05.10.13, Amman, 7).

¹⁴⁵ Lynn Yoshikawa, ACAPS analyst for Jordan and Southern Syria, work group meeting and discussion on, and presentation, of the January thematic report at NRCs regional offices in Amman, 12.02.14; ACAPS, “January thematic report - Jordan: Baseline Information”, *Syria Need Analysis*, published 23.01.14, 1.

¹⁴⁶ ACTED, “Food Security Situation and Livelihood Intervention Opportunities for Syrian Refugees and Host Communities in North Jordan”, Assessment Report, published 25.08.13.

The challenges that have erupted in the northern governorates serve as an example of how unfortunate relief work can be compared to letting refugees pursue livelihood. A Jordanian carpenter who left Mafraq to go work in the capital for half the wage after losing work to a Syrian put it this way: “There is no longer room for Jordanians in Jordan”.¹⁴⁷ Confirming the Mafraq man’s experience, a young Syrian from the southern city of Dera’a revealed that he and his brother worked up to 18 hours per day lifting bricks for about one third of what Jordanian workers make in similar jobs.¹⁴⁸ There is no control over the illegal labor market, and employers pay their employees accordingly in reaction to supply and demand. The same unfairness arises in the housing market. Due to supply and demand, increased population and cash assistance provided to Syrian refugees, rents have increased drastically. In Mafraq rents are reported to have increased by 400 percent, and Jordanians have been forced to move out of their houses as they cannot afford increased rent.¹⁴⁹ International donors and aid agencies are indirectly contributing to push down wages and push up the price for accommodation and commodities by supporting Syrian refugees with food, shelter, and maybe even cash assistance.¹⁵⁰ This relief aid makes it possible for Syrians working in the informal market to accept lower wages and pay higher rent than the poor Jordanians because their basic necessities are already covered, forcing Jordanians to quit their jobs and move out of their houses.

As a result of the permanency of the refugee crisis, the Jordanian perception of their Syrian guests is changing. On radio morning shows, angry listeners are calling in daily, complaining about the Syrian presence in the Kingdom, wishing them gone – out of the country.¹⁵¹ “In the beginning of the crisis, the people [Jordanians] opened their doors to their Syrian brothers. The atmosphere is different now and the Syrians are being blamed for everything that is wrong”.¹⁵² Due to existing policies and programming the refugees have not been given the opportunity to contribute to economic growth and – by themselves – reduce

¹⁴⁷ Taylor Luck, “In Jordan, tensions rise between Syrian refugees and host community”, *the Washington Post*, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle-east/in-jordan-tensions-rise-between-syrian-refugees-and-host-community/2013/04/21/d4f5fa24-a762-11e2-a8e2-5b98cb59187f_story.html, published 21.04.13, accessed 08.04.14.

¹⁴⁸ Taylor Luck, “In Jordan, tensions rise between Syrian refugees and host community”.

¹⁴⁹ Discussion with a group of government officials in Irbid at the International Conference on “Refugees in the Arab Region: Hosting Communities and a Mysterious Fate” (in Arabic), in cooperation with Refugees, Displaced Persons and Forced Migration Studies Center, Yarmouk University and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 10-11.12.13, Irbid, Jordan; ACAPS, “Jordan Baseline Information”, 12.

¹⁵⁰ Ådnegard, “Impacts of the Syrian refugee influx on the Jordanian labor market”, 30.

¹⁵¹ Interview with BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, 05.11.13.

¹⁵² Interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi, 10.09.13.

social tensions.¹⁵³ Consequently, the refugees have been viewed through the perspectives of cost and economic burden. If GoJ allowed the refugees to contribute to the society with their skills in addition to tax income, the country as a whole could benefit from the refugee influx. Until now, this is not a strategy GoJ has utilized. If nothing is being done to solve the tensions between refugees and locals, the problems could spread. Many Jordanians have the impression that GoJ cares more about the refugees than its own nationals, and this could tip the balance of stability in the wrong direction.

Demographic composition as determinant

Similar to the case with Iraqi refugees in Syria as presented in the chapter on theoretical background, the lack of political nature among the refugees and the low level of conflict can partially be explained by the demographic and social composition of the refugees. There are, of course, other characteristics in a refugee population that play a role in this matter that are beyond the scope of this study, for example, how the ethnic and religious balance among the refugees interact with the balance of the receiving country. This is highly relevant in the case of Syrian refugees in Jordan as a large number of Palestinian Refugees from Syria (PRSs) among the refugees could disturb the fragile political balance in Jordan. However, GoJ does not accept PRSs.¹⁵⁴ Here follows the findings of the third hypothesis:

Table 4: Demographic composition as determinant for stability.

Present in Jordan	Women, children elderly (disproportionate)	Educated/ wealthy	No participation in conflict
Yes	X (majority, but <u>not</u> sustainable in a long term perspective)		X (number of participants grows with the protracted crisis)
No		X (the majority is from the rural south)	

¹⁵³ Harvard Field Study Group, January 2014, Jordan, “Non-Paper on the International Response to the Syrian Refugee Crisis”, available at: <http://hpcresearch.org/sites/default/files/publications/Harvard%20Field%20Study%20Jordan%20January%202014%20final.pdf>, accessed 26.02.14; workshop at Landmark, Amman, “The Socio-Economic implications of Syrian Refugees on the Jordanian Economy – a cost benefit framework”, 18.02.14.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), “PRS in Jordan”, UNRWA: <http://www.unrwa.org/prs-jordan>, accessed 16.04.14.

Gender and age

According to Lendeers' theory presented in the previous chapter, a disproportionate share of women, children, and elderly among the refugees will serve as a stabilizing factor. Of the refugees registered by UNHCR, 51 percent are female and 49 percent are male. The distribution of men and women is quite balanced in other words. 44 percent of the refugees are in the age group of 18-59, while 53 percent are below the age of 18. Only 3 percent of the registered refugees are over the age of 60. Elderly are certainly not overrepresented among the refugees in Jordan nor in any of the other countries receiving Syrian refugees, much likely due to the difficulties of movement in Syria and challenging border crossings. Women, children, and elderly together constitute the majority of 80 percent.¹⁵⁵ However, boys in the age group 12-17 would be more correctly placed in the "more prone to violence"-group making the percentage of refugees "less prone to violence" 73 percent – still a majority.

The explanation for putting boys in that group is twofold: as the crisis drags out, young boys grow up and reach the "critical age" of being more prone to violence and; due to an overstretched Jordanian school system; a "lost generation" is appearing. Boys and young men – not confined to the homes like women and girls – yet with nothing to do are becoming angry and frustrated, feeling a lack of purpose.¹⁵⁶ A refugee mother told a group of reporters from World Vision magazine that her children play war and torture all day long, no doubt based on things they witnessed in Syria.¹⁵⁷ In both camps and host communities, children, primarily boys, have come into conflict with the law, including participation in civil unrest, vandalism, and theft. During a field visit to Za'atari a group of around 50 boys passed the car, screaming and yelling at each other. Boys down to the age where they can barely walk followed the big boys waving sticks in the air and throwing stones, chasing the rival "gang". No one seemed to care to stop this aggressive behavior. There have been reports of cars that have been attacked with stones in the camp, so the driver rolled up the window and continued in a hurry.¹⁵⁸

Theresa Betancourt, Assistant Professor and Director of Harvard University's Research Program on Children and Global Adversity states research shows that youth who are suffering from war trauma, or *post-traumatic stress disorder* (PTSD), who relate to a

¹⁵⁵ UNHCR, "Demography", *Syrian Regional Refugee Response Jordan*:

<http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/country.php?id=107>, updated 07.04.14, accessed 08.04.14

¹⁵⁶ Mercy Corps, "Analysis of Host Community-Refugee Tensions" (2012), 5; Mercy Corps, "Mapping of Host Community-Refugee Tensions in" (2013), 20.

¹⁵⁷ John Warren, "Syrian refugee boys, Jordan", *World Vision Magazine*:

<http://worldvisionmagazine.org/node/930#U0V8RJVOXIU>, published 28.02.14, accessed 09.04.14.

¹⁵⁸ Personal observation in Za'atari, during a field visit to Mafraq and Za'atari with Fafo, 19.02.14.

particular ideology – even by identifying with extremist groups involved in violence – suffer less mental health distress. Being able to make sense of the terrible things the refugees have witnessed is a basic human need and such a need can often be manipulated.¹⁵⁹ Assessments conducted in both Za’atari and host communities have reported that young boys have been returning to Syria to join armed groups – out of their own will, peer pressure, or pressure from family.¹⁶⁰ The teenagers are offered social services and maybe jobs in exchange for ideological support”.¹⁶¹ Joining a jihadi- or another group fighting in Syria can give young boys a feeling of belonging as well as a purpose in life that they can’t obtain living “regular” lives in Jordan, where the schools are filled to capacity and legal pursuit of livelihood is close to impossible.¹⁶² As the Za’atari camp director put it: “In the camp, a young boy’s biggest wish is to get a wheelbarrow so he can be able to help the family. When he is tired of the wheelbarrow, he wants a truck. When he gets older, he wants a gun to protect his family. This is the future for the youth in Za’atari, unless we get them into the school system and can connect studying with prospects of a job”.¹⁶³ Today, 43 percent of Syrian school-age children are out of school.¹⁶⁴

Even though women, children, and elderly constitute the majority in the Syrian refugee population in Jordan, they are not disproportionately overrepresented. Almost 30 percent, 180,000 that is, can be considered to fall into the group “more prone to violence”. 180,000 are more than enough to cause trouble in a Kingdom of 6.5 million balancing on the fence of stability in a destabilized region. A lost generation made passive by the lack of opportunities could bear loads of frustration that can have severe long-term implications for Jordan’s stability regardless of the percentage they constitute. Moreover, as will be elaborated below, refugees that have participated in the conflict are more prone to political violence.

¹⁵⁹ Cecily Hilleary, “Syria’s Traumatized Children: a National Security Concern?”, *Voice of America*, <http://www.voanews.com/content/syrias-traumatized-children-a-national-security-concern/1749429.html>, published 13.09.13, accessed 09.04.14.

¹⁶⁰ UNHCR, “2014 Syria Regional Response Plan”, Launched 16 December 2013, Amman, 24.

¹⁶¹ Interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi 10.09.13.

¹⁶² Interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi 10.09.13; Macenzie Finley, “Refugees around the world: Syrian refugees in Jordan”, *Peacebuilding solutions*: <http://www.solvepeace.org/2014/03/26/refugees-around-the-world-syrian-refugees-in-jordan/>, published 26.03.14, accessed 09.04.14; UNHCR, “Child Recruitment, child labor, discrimination and loneliness – the crisis of Syria’s refugee children”, *UNHCR*: <http://www.unhcr.rs/en/resources/press-releases/child-recruitment-child-labour-discrimination-and-loneliness-the-crisis-of-syrias-refugee-children.html>, published 28.11.13, accessed 09.04.14.

¹⁶³ Interview with Kilian Kleinschmidt, UNHCR in Za’atari with Fafo 19.02.14.

¹⁶⁴ Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (Care) international Jordan, “Lives unseen: Urban Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities three years into the Syria crisis”, *Care*: [http://www.care-international.org/UploadDocument/files/CARE_Syrian%20refugee%20Assessment%20in%20Jordan_April%202014\(1\).pdf](http://www.care-international.org/UploadDocument/files/CARE_Syrian%20refugee%20Assessment%20in%20Jordan_April%202014(1).pdf), published April 2014, accessed 13.05.14, 9.

Over time, when these boys return from fighting in Syria, the refugee population can develop from being what Lischer describes as “situational refugees” to a “state-in-exile”.¹⁶⁵

Level of education and wealth

One of the factors Lendeers cites in explaining why there had not been any spillover from Iraq to Syria was the high percentage of academics and educated professionals among the refugee population. Like women, children, and elderly, educated refugees are less likely to engage in conflict. He also considered educated refugees to be less likely to engage in conflict because the Iraqi intelligentsia did not choose sides in the conflict and were therefore forced to flee by an emerging and fragile leadership fearing obstacles and opposition.¹⁶⁶ The percentage of academics and professionals among the Syrian refugees in Jordan is relatively low; while this contributes to Jordan’s stability, popular demographics do not fully account for it.

Refugees fleeing the fighting in urban areas like Damascus, Hama, Homs, and Aleppo tend to seek refuge in either Lebanon or Turkey as those borders are closer to their respective cities. Refugees from the eastern parts of Syria naturally try to cross the border to Iraqi Kurdistan. Hence, for natural and geographic reasons, most of the refugees in Jordan are from the southern, poorer, and more rural parts of Syria such as the Dera’a region. In Za’atari for example, 90 percent of the population was from the Dera’a region.¹⁶⁷ On a national basis, 53 percent of the registered refugees were from Dera’a, 15 percent from Homs, 8 percent from Damascus and 4 percent from Hama.¹⁶⁸ The vast majority of heads of household surveyed in CARE’s assessment of Syrian refugees from April 2013 had only completed primary education with the exception of those now living in the city of Zarqa where almost as many heads of household had completed secondary education. A larger number of households in Zarqa originate from urban areas like Damascus and Homs where access to education is more widespread. This could explain the higher level of education in this city.¹⁶⁹

Academics and educated professionals are not only inherently less likely to engage in violent actions. There are socio-economic implications of such a characteristic too. Unlike the

¹⁶⁵ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 19-25.

¹⁶⁶ Leenders, “Iraqi Refugees in Syria”, 1577.

¹⁶⁷ Interview with Paul Reglinski and Dana Tonea, ACTED, 17.11.13. According to Kilian Kleinschmidt the percentage has evened out a little in the past months as refugees from other parts of the country have settled down in the camp (Interview with Kilian Kleinschmidt, Za’atar 18 February 2014).

¹⁶⁸ ACAPS, “February Regional Analysis Syria Part II”, 13. Data on place of origin updated November 2013. For a map over Jordan’s northern regions see map 2.

¹⁶⁹ CARE, “Syrian refugees in urban Jordan: Baseline assessment of community-identified vulnerabilities among Syrian refugees living in Irbid, Madaba, Mufrag, and Zarqa”, *Care*: <http://www.care.org/syrian-refugees-urban-jordan>, published April 2013, accessed 13.05.14, 10. For this assessment, 240 households were surveyed, with a total of 1,476 household members.

Iraqi refugees in both Syria and Jordan who were largely from urban areas, the majority of Syrian refugees come from larger towns, villages, and rural areas as shown above.¹⁷⁰ Director of DRSJ BG Dr. al-Hamoud described the Syrian refugees in Jordan as “not educated”, without any money, and with habits not accepted in Jordan. The Iraqi refugees that came to the Kingdom in 2003 were described as the opposite. Many of the Iraqi refugees were wealthy and consequently less dependent on aid from the state and humanitarian organizations.¹⁷¹ Iraqis who had a certain amount of money deposited in Jordanian banks were also granted work permits.¹⁷² In general, Iraqis did not seek work in big numbers, but created work opportunities by investing and establishing industries and companies.¹⁷³ The Syrian refugees on the other hand “don’t have any money. They need to be supported or they need to work”.¹⁷⁴ Syrians that are not contributing to society due to the lack of work permits pose a severe drain on the already scarce resources in Jordan.

A high percentage of wealthy and educated individuals among the refugee population are likely to work as a stabilizing factor as they would be less dependent on the receiving state and be less of a burden for the society in general. This is nevertheless not the case among the Syrian refugees in Jordan. Even if it there was a disproportionate distribution of educated refugees, it would not benefit society unless GoJ opened up for Syrians to work in the formal market. Today, most of the Syrians with paid work are informal and unskilled labor, not necessarily building on their capacities from Syria.¹⁷⁵

Will to return and participation in conflict prior to fleeing

A third determining feature that characterizes the refugee population presented by several scholars is whether the refugees prior to fleeing did participate in the conflict or not.¹⁷⁶ As Lischer claims; “refugees who flee targeted persecution or defeat in a civil war will have

¹⁷⁰ Rochelle Davis and Abbie Taylor, “Syrian Refugees in Jordan and Lebanon: A snapshot from Summer 2013”, *Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and The Institute for the Study of International Migration, Georgetown University*: <http://ccas.georgetown.edu/document/1242799693627/Syrian+Refugee+Report+Sept+2013.pdf>, accessed 10.04.2014, 4.

¹⁷¹ Interview with BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, 05.11.13.

¹⁷² Peter, “Syrian refugee crisis stains Jordan as US offers aid”; Ammannet.net, “200 alf ‘aamil wafid mukhaalif bi-l-Urdun”.

¹⁷³ Iraqi’s is still the biggest group of investors in Jordan (Interview with BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud 05.11.13; interview with Dr. Oraib al-Rantawi 10.09.13).

¹⁷⁴ Interview with BG Dr. Wadah al-Hamoud, 05.11.13.

¹⁷⁵ Email correspondence with Byron Pakula, Country director ACTED Jordan, 12.11.13. Acted had found during an assessment in Za’atari that the refugees capacities from Syria were mixed, including some that were extremely educated. Even the extremely educated ones worked as unskilled labor – if they worked at all according to Byron.

¹⁷⁶ Leenders, “Iraqi Refugees in Syria”; Whitaker, “Refugees and the spread of conflict”; Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*.

higher level of political and military organization than refugees who escape general chaos or destruction”.¹⁷⁷ Cooperative for Assistance and Relief Everywhere (CARE) conducted an assessment in April 2014 where almost 80 percent of the refugees reported that bombardment, destruction or arbitrary arrests were reasons for fleeing.¹⁷⁸ Two features characterizing “situational refugees” stand out as particularly decisive: their wish to return as long as there is a cessation in hostilities, regardless of the outcome of the conflict; and their absence of participation in the conflict as they fled the country as innocent victims.¹⁷⁹

First, most Syrian refugees in Jordan and other host countries wish to return to their homes as soon as possible. In fact, refugees are already returning voluntarily to Syria. In August 2013, there were, for the first time since the outbreak of the conflict, more refugees returning to Syria than entering into Jordan – a trend which continued through 2013.¹⁸⁰ When leaving Syria, many of the refugees took their family members and what they could carry and fled, leaving the house as it was – but bringing along the key hoping to return in the not so distant future. Several Syrians have returned to check on their houses and belongings.¹⁸¹ They want to return permanently when they feel safe enough, or when jobs, schools, and health services are back in order. This is one reason why few Syrians are requesting a permanent move to a third country in another continent – it would make it more difficult to return to Syria when the conflict ends.¹⁸² However, as the conflict prolongs, the belief that the Syrian influx is temporary and reversible when fighting cease or ends, begin to fade. In Za’atari, two young Syrian girls ages around 4 and 8, holding hands, were asked where they came from. The oldest one whispered “*min al-harb*” in Arabic meaning “from the war”. They shook their heads when asked if they wanted to go back.¹⁸³ A recent survey from Oxfam showed that more than 65 percent of the refugees surveyed fear they might not be able to go back to Syria despite desperately wanting to return.¹⁸⁴

¹⁷⁷ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 18.

¹⁷⁸ CARE, “Lives Unseen”, 18.

¹⁷⁹ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 20.

¹⁸⁰ ACAPS, “Regional Analysis Syria Part II”, 17.

¹⁸¹ UNHCR, “The most important thing: Syrian refugees”, *UNHCR*:

http://www.unrefugees.org/site/c.lfIQKSOWFqG/b.8626511/k.162F/The_Most_Important_Thing_Syrian_Refugees.htm, accessed 10.04.14.

¹⁸² Anne Gearan, “U.S. aid to Syrian refugees generally stops at the border”, *The Washington Post*: http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/us-aid-to-syrian-refugees-generally-stops-at-the-border/2013/12/27/30237496-68cc-11e3-a0b9-249bbb34602c_story.html, published 27.12.13, accessed 10.04.14; Discussion with a Jordanian NGO, 30.01.14.

¹⁸³ Two young Syrian girls I met and talked to during a field trip to Za’atari and Mafrq with Fafu 19.02.14.

¹⁸⁴ Oxfam, “Syrian refugees fear they will not see Syria again”, *OXFAM*: <http://www.oxfam.org.nz/news/syrian-refugees-fear-they-will-not-see-syria-again>, published 12.03.14, accessed 10.04.14.

Second, as the crisis protracts and the refugee situation become more permanent, there is a possibility of stronger political cohesion among refugees and increased recruitment to military action in the home country, especially if the refugees' needs in the receiving country are not being met. As discussed above, young boys, lacking a purpose in life, are easily recruited to political and military purposes. After returning from fighting in Syria, their characteristics place them in one of the groups believed to be more prone to violence. The refugees may have been "situational refugees" in the beginning, with limited political cohesion and little military activity making them less prone to violence. With time however, their situation could develop to resemble Lischer's third and most violent category: "state-in-exile", or rather "opposition(s)-in-exile" due to the fractionalized opposition in Syria.

The characteristics of Lischer's third category are as follows: origin of flight is defeat in civil war; requirements for voluntary return are new government or military victory; initial political organization is strong and often grows in exile.¹⁸⁵ A possible scenario for the future of Syria is that the Assad regime stays in power.¹⁸⁶ As the majority of the refugees in Jordan are from the Dera'a region where the uprising started, there might come to hostility between the regime and the population from Dera'a. The proximity from the Dera'a region to the refugees in Jordan is alarming. The distance from Za'atari to Dera'a city is no more than 41km, and from Dera'a to Irbid in Jordan it is half that distance.¹⁸⁷ Cross-border attacks from both sides in similar situations are not unprecedented in the Kingdom as this was a determinant factor leading to the civil war in the 1970s. In that case, the Palestinian refugees did not flee as a state-in-exile, but developed over time into a highly organized militant state in exile.¹⁸⁸

The will to return and the lack of participation prior to flight are characteristics that, without a doubt, prevent refugees from turning violent or engaging in actions in order to change the outcome of the conflict at home. However, these characteristics are as discussed dynamic and can change over time if the refugee situation prolongs and alternatives for building a new life in the receiving country are limited.

* * *

¹⁸⁵ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 19; 24-28

¹⁸⁶ Yezid Sayigh, "A Melancholy Perspective on Syria", *Carnegie Middle East Center*: <http://www.carnegie-mec.org/2014/04/08/melancholy-perspective-on-syria/h7fc#>, published 08.04.14, accessed 09.04.14.

¹⁸⁷ Wikimapia satellite, distance measure Za'atari-Dera'a-Irbid, map available at <http://wikimapia.org/#lang=en&lat=32.304022&lon=36.322466&z=9&m=b&gz=0;358538818;323003375;4686355;0;2471923;3193759;0;2476332&search=zaatari>, accessed 10.04.14; see map page 2 in this paper for an impression of the distance.

¹⁸⁸ Lischer, *Dangerous Sanctuaries*, 26-27.

Table 4.4 shows the superficial findings of the analysis above. The hypotheses tested above where all tripartite. Every part of the hypotheses, or every factor, is in the table below placed in one of two groups: preventing or triggering destabilization. If a factor is found present in Jordan, it is regarded as preventing destabilization, while the absence of a factor is regarded a trigger of destabilization.

Table 5: Determinants, sum of determinants in Jordan.

	Preventing destabilization	Triggering destabilization
Economic and foreign policy as determinants	2	1
Institutional capacity as determinant	1	2
Demographic composition as determinant	2	1
Total	5	4

The table shows that five factors are preventing destabilization and four factors are triggering destabilization. This gives an impression of the fragile balance of stability in Jordan that could be disrupted very easily. Nevertheless, the table does not show the whole picture as some of the factors necessarily will prove more important and influential than others.

Conclusion

What can be seen as features that have upheld stability in Jordan are the majority's wish for stability and the composition of the refugees which makes them more peaceful. Even more important for the prevailing stability has been the Kingdom's capacity and willingness to provide security and control its borders by using its extensive army and renowned intelligence service. However, the decisive factor for keeping the Kingdom stable is the support it receives from its foreign patrons through monetary and military support which help the country pay the military and intelligence expenses, as well as pay for the political support from the citizens through subsidies and public sector employment. As long as Jordan's powerful patrons don't want Jordan to fall, it will not fall.

On the other hand, it is important to notice that the findings are also dynamic, seemingly going in the direction of stronger security measures from the government, more potential dissatisfaction among both refugees and locals, in addition to less money from the humanitarian organizations due to donor fatigue. Features that could tip the balance over to destabilization are the strategies for dealing with the refugees. If the refugees are not allowed

to pursue livelihood and violations are being enforced even more than they are today, the dissatisfaction will grow as the crisis persists. The strategy of stacking refugees in camps by force might also prove to be destabilizing like the protracted crisis in Jordan with the Palestinian refugee camps in the 1970s.

4. Conclusion: Stable for now, but not necessarily forever

Over the years, most research on the spread of conflict as a consequence of refugee influxes globally gathered empirical evidence from African countries and focused on cases where conflict had already spread. Considering the constant refugee situation in the Middle East over the past fifty years, surprisingly few studies have presented empirical analysis about the spread of conflict due to refugee influxes in the Middle East, for example following the Palestinian refugee influxes to both Jordan and Lebanon in the 1970s. In contrast to most of the previous literature in the field, the main objective of this thesis has been to examine the absence of conflict in Jordan after receiving refugees constituting approximately 10 percent of the original population over the past three years, 2011-2014. As the international media has noted: “Jordan is surprisingly stable for the moment”.¹⁸⁹ The thesis’ objective has been to explain why. In order to understand the absence of tension, three tripartite hypotheses were deducted from previous literature. The hypotheses of economic and foreign policy as determinants, institutional capacity for handling the refugee influx as determinant, and demographic composition of the refugees as determinant laid the foundation for the empirical analysis.

It became evident while testing the hypotheses empirically that some of the findings were more important and influential than others when it came to preserving Jordan’s status quo. First of all, the majority’s wish for stabilization, or rather their fear of going down the same path as its neighboring countries Iraq and Syria, was found to maintain the stability. This is an important factor, but not the most influential. A majority for stability could prove stabilizing, but if there is a strong and influential minority with the opposite vision, a majority might not prove enough to stop them. This minority could, for example, be the Jordanian political branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Islamic Action Front (IAF). IAF has for long been the strongest political alternative in Jordan. However, IAF has been struck by regression due to its boycott of political process in past years as well as regional change. The IAF lost their momentum when the party split into warring camps over what happened in Egypt when

¹⁸⁹ The Economist, “Jordan: Surprisingly stable for the moment”.

the Muslim Brotherhood were in power. For the time being, there are no alternatives to the Monarchy and the status quo – and the people prefer stability.¹⁹⁰

The second, and arguably most influential finding, is the support given to the Kingdom from different actors such as the GCC, Saudi Arabia alone, and the US. It has been claimed that the refugee crisis came as an economic gift from above to Jordan which was struggling with financial problems. This assumption is supported by the fact that the protests and tensions that characterized the social scene early during the Arab Spring were economically motivated. These protests have subsided over the past years arguably as a result of the IMF being less strict on enforcing austerity measures due to the refugee crisis; the money allocated from the GCC all together and from Saudi Arabia individually, to alleviate civil unrest; and the immense economic and military aid from the loyal ally US who is desperately holding on to its last true subordinate state left in the region. As long as these actors don't want Jordan to fall, and they keep on pouring money into the country's failing budget, the country is likely to remain stable.

A third finding that contributes to upholding the stability is Jordan's willingness and capability to control the borders and provide security. Jordan's extensive army and its renowned intelligence service – paid for by loyal patrons – have proved a valuable tool for the GoJ. When taking into consideration that smuggling activity across the border increased 300 percent from the previous year (2013) and illegal border crossings also rose by 250 percent, a legitimate question to ask would be why the increasing illegal border activity has not led to more violent actions or incidents. The answer could be found in the many reports of arrests related to illegal border activity. GID's arrest of the Jordanian who returned from fighting in Syria living in Za'atari with Syrian identity papers, as exemplified in the analysis, show the vast range of the intelligence service. This is very likely to scare off other insurgents or at least force them to keep a low profile.

Regardless of these seemingly solid stabilizing factors, the balance of stability in Jordan is fragile and could be disrupted very easily. In relation to this, it is very important to emphasize the dynamic character of several of the findings. How Jordanian institutions are handling the refugees, for example, is seemingly going in the direction of stronger security measures from the government and less freedom for the refugees. This could prove to be the drop that tips the balance over to destabilization. Dissatisfaction among the refugees will

¹⁹⁰ The Economist, "Jordan: Surprisingly stable for the moment"; Osama al-Sharif, "Jordan unlikely to follow Saudis on Muslim Brotherhood", *al-Monitor*: <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/03/jordan-muslim-brotherhood-saudi-terrorism.html#>, published 11.03.14, accessed 06.05.14.

grow as the crisis persists if they are not allowed to pursue their livelihood and violations to this are being enforced harder than they are today. Moreover, historically – in Jordan but also other places in the Middle East and Africa – gathering refugees in camps in close proximity to the border has not proved to be a successful strategy in most cases of protracted refugee crisis. It was, for example, the Palestinian refugee camps that were the centre for the Palestinian armed movements and where the cross-border attacks to Israel started in the 1970s. Creeping donor fatigue is also a future concern for Jordan. Relief aid is very expensive and not sustainable for a long term crisis. With creeping donor fatigue already showing, a new strategy for handling the Syrian refugees in Jordan is needed.

The demographic composition of the Syrian refugees in Jordan proved initially to be a stabilizing factor, but while analyzing the hypothesis the dynamic feature of the hypothesis was revealed. As for now, there is a majority of women, children, and refugees in the Syrian refugee population. However, as argued in the analysis, the longer the crisis persists, the more young traumatized boys grow up and become more prone to violence. Many of these boys are not offered education and therefore see no prospects for an honest living. Consequently, they are easier for radical and extremist groups to recruit. Moreover, the number of refugees enlisted into and partaking in violent activities in Syria from Jordan is growing as the crisis protracts, and so does the share of refugees that have participated in the conflict. As Lischer argues, this group is more likely to engage in violent activity due to their participation on one of the sides of the conflict. It could be a matter of time before there are reports of any severe cross border attacks. This destabilizing factor also depends on the willingness, competence and range of the Jordanian intelligence services that until now have proved sufficient.

In conclusion, what has upheld Jordan's status quo the past three years is mainly the support it received from powerful loyal patrons. Stability is being secured through monetary and military support which helps the country pay the military and intelligence expenses needed to prevent direct spillover from Syria. This support also pays for the political support from the citizens through subsidies and public sector employment in an effort to shield the citizens from the *de facto* deteriorating economic situation. For the past three years, 2011-2014, this has been the situation in Jordan, but there are no guarantees that this will continue. The longer the crisis lasts and as long as there is no long-term strategy for handling the refugees, the higher is the risk of violent activities and destabilization in Jordan – either as a direct result of the crisis in Syria or as a result of deteriorating conditions for refugees, as well as citizens in Jordan.

Final Remarks

In the regional context, Jordan has always been the less interesting country. Jordan has not been insignificant at all, but due to its long lasting stability and, compared to its neighbors, marginal geopolitical influence, it has not caught the interest of scholars of political science and international relations. Now, there is a different story. As the West's last secure foothold in the region, Jordan is strategically important in the ongoing regional geopolitical proxy war in connection with the Syrian crisis. Amman is the international hub for the humanitarian institutions dealing with the human consequences of the crisis, and important regional and global actors such as Saudi Arabia and the US have a high presence in the country. In order to continue to play the role as the eye of the storm for the geopolitical actors dealing with the biggest crisis of this century, the country needs to avoid destabilization and spillover from its neighbor in the north.

This limited study presents only a selection of factors that explain the surprising stability of Jordan. There are, of course, other factors that are equally important and it would benefit the receiving country and other stakeholders if these were studied thoroughly, such as the case of PRSs who are denied access to Jordan and international and domestic consequences of this. Writing this thesis created a myriad of questions that would be interesting to explore further. Would the Jordanian economy have failed if it were not for the Syrian crisis? Would the Arab Spring have gained foothold in Jordan if it were not for the bloody civil war next door? How can Jordan keep its status quo with a protracted refugee crisis, permanent water shortage, and increasing donor fatigue? How could donor fatigue be avoided or how to avoid dependence of donor support? Should there be rules to the ratio between aid given to refugees and poor citizens in order to avoid tensions between them, and dissatisfaction with the government? Would it be possible for the humanitarian agencies to draw up a tentative suggestion or plan for protracted refugee crisis and the transition from relief aid to a more sustainable aid type, at least for countries that have been the "victims" of several refugee waves over the past decades such as Jordan?

These are all difficult questions, and there are no easy answers. Nevertheless, it is important to raise these questions, with the aim of reaching the best solution to this crisis as well as future crisis. Two things are essential in order to address these challenging questions: open communication and further research. The most alarming finding that came up while conducting fieldwork for this thesis was the lack of honest communication and the extent of disagreement between different actors upon fundamental facts concerning the refugee situation. The communication between the actors involved in the refugee crisis must improve

– especially between international and domestic actors, including the UNHCR and the GoJ. More independent research and facts are needed in order to know how to handle this dynamic situation. This study offers no more than a snapshot of the time it was conducted. In order to understand the dynamics of the situation it is important to study the course of events while they are happening and also once it is all over. As for now, the trajectory of the situation in Jordan is far from set.

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