

Abstract

Title of Thesis: Distinctions in Diaspora: A Comparative Study of Palestinian Identity in Jordan and Saudi Arabia

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The Palestinian refugee crisis is an ongoing, divisive issue in the Middle East, and the world at large. Palestinians have migrated to six out of seven continents, and formed diaspora communities in all corners of the world. Scholars affirm that the sense of Palestinian national identity is recent, only having formed as a response to the Israeli occupation of the 20th century. This thesis explores the factors that constitute that identity, and asks the question: How have the policies implemented by the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian governments influenced the formation of a national identity among Palestinians in both countries? Through conducting semi-structured interviews, it became apparent that policies of the host countries can have a powerful influence on the formation of identity among groups of displaced people. I argue that Palestinians in Jordan have widely developed a dual sense of national identity, in which they identify with both Jordan and Palestine, to varying degrees. In contrast, due to the more exclusive policies enacted by Saudi Arabia, Palestinians living there feel more isolated from their community, and do not identify as Saudi Arabian. Palestinian identity does not look the same between the two groups, the differences can be traced to policy. This thesis will explore the current state of Palestinian identity in both countries, and what that implies for the future of Palestine and its people.

Distinctions in Diaspora:
A Comparative Study of Palestinian Identity in Jordan and Saudi Arabia

By

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Dedication

For my interview participants. May you find peace and belonging wherever you go.

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Discussion of Translations

All translations of interviews from Arabic to English were done by the author. Most interviews took place in English, but several took place in Arabic and have been translated into English to be used for data analysis. The following Arabic words are used throughout the text and have been translated and transliterated into Roman script by the author, who has had extensive study of the Arabic language at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and the University of Jordan, Amman.

عربي	Romanization	English
النكبة	Al-Nakba	The Catastrophe
فلاحين	Fellaheen	Farmers, Peasants
واسطة	Wasitah	Connections, Nepotism

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Setting the Stage—The Question and The Answer

The conflict of 1948, referred to by the Palestinians as *Al-Nakba* (the catastrophe), led to the displacement of approximately 720,000 Palestinians. They fled to neighboring Arab countries of Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Egypt, and beyond—where they and their descendants continue to live today. As it stands, the refugees crisis looms heavily over peace negotiations between Israel and Palestine. Palestine views the right of return as a moral obligation and symbolic necessity to end the Arab-Israeli conflict, and Israel sees it as the destruction of the hard-fought Zionist project. Attempts to negotiate the return of Palestinians ultimately have not succeeded, and the issue remains unsolved. Given that the majority of their population is displaced as refugees in neighboring Arab countries, a unique sense of national identity exists among the Palestinian community. Without a territory to unite them, nor a cohesive culture to guide them, Palestinian identity developed differently among different groups. I theorize that the policies put in place by their host countries have direct influence on how Palestinian identity has developed, as I intend to explore in this research project.

In this thesis, I look at national sentiment among Palestinians in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and I examine the policies that both countries have enacted toward refugees and immigrant populations. Each country has a different set of rules and regulations, which shape the sense of connection that Palestinians feel both toward their native Palestine, and toward their respective host countries. I ask the question: How have the policies implemented by the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian governments influenced the formation of a national identity among Palestinians in both countries? The motivation behind this question ties back to the issue of peace negotiations.

Whereas the Palestinian refugee crisis constitutes such a significant portion of the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, any solution to the conflict will need to propose an adequate solution for Palestinians. How can host countries factor into the equation?

Though the Palestinian government insists on a right of return, I speculate that the desires of individual Palestinians may be more nuanced, depending on their situations in their host countries. I argue that, while these refugees still identify with their Palestinian ancestry and cling to the hope of a universal right of return, Palestinian identity is hard to define, and hard to maintain, for Palestinians living in the two countries in question. Palestinian identity is not monolithic, rather, these countries' policies influence how connected Palestinians feel toward their host country, and subsequently their homeland by comparison.

Understanding this crisis will require the acceptance of Palestinians by their host countries, and permitting the Palestinians to embrace their own sense of national pride, a task that many countries who host refugee populations fail to accomplish. Understanding the link between policy and identity could allow the countries in question to make informed changes to their refugee and immigration policies. Such changes could encourage refugees to connect with their host culture, rather than harbor a combative sense of resentment—while simultaneously allowing their Palestinian identity to prosper. Through this research, I attempt to make sense of what identity means to Palestinians, and how their varying senses of identity have developed. Jordan has a wealth of pre-existing research on Palestinians and identity, whereas Saudi Arabia has none. I aim to add to the conversation in Jordan, offering an updated perspective to previously conducted research. Using what I learn from Jordan, both from my own research and from that of previous scholars, I want to begin the conversation in Saudi Arabia. Chapters two and three will focus on Jordan exclusively, first addressing the policies that I will argue have

most heavily influenced identity, and then providing an analysis of the data I collected in Jordan through interviews. Chapter four will follow the same structure as chapters two and three, condensing a policy review and interview data into one chapter. Chapter five will examine similarities and differences between the two countries, and the implications they hold. Chapter five will also explore topics for further research.

I.2 Methodology

1.2.1 Data Collection

Considering that senses of identity can change as circumstances change, an exploration of this research topic requires current opinions. I utilize semi-structured interviews most heavily in this thesis. I traveled to Amman, Jordan, to conduct in-person interviews over the span of eight days. I found subjects by reaching out to connections I had made in the area the previous summer when studying in Amman, and by utilizing social media platforms. I attempted to find diversity in my subject pool, and I spoke with both genders, across multiple age groups, and with people at many different stages in their careers. I collected 22 interviews in total, 18 of which I examine in my analysis of Palestinian identity for the purposes of this study. I base my analysis on people of Palestinian origin who have spent the vast majority of their lives in Jordan. Meaning, my participants were either born in Jordan, or moved from elsewhere at a young age. The remaining four people I interviewed did not fall under this category. Two women had only recently moved to Jordan, one from Palestine and one from England. One man was not of Palestinian origin. One woman had spent the first twenty years of her life in Kuwait, and moved to Jordan to for schooling. The fourth participant who I do not include lived in Palestine until the age of seven,

and then moved to Qatar, only moving to Jordan in 2015 in his early twenties. Even though I do not include their responses in my analysis, I am grateful for their contributions, nonetheless.

They gave me interesting information to consider for future research, which I will address in my concluding chapter. As for interview participants in Saudi Arabia, I reached out to a friend who put me in contact with two Palestinian men living in Saudi Arabia.

I acknowledge the potential biases among my interview participants as a factor that may limit the scope of this thesis. Most of my participants speak English, many hold advanced degrees, and some have spent considerable time traveling or living in different parts of the world. These factors could potentially inform their world views, and frame their understanding of the Palestinian refugee crisis, as well as well as shape the development of their own identities. I recognize that my work is limited in scope, and is not necessarily representative of the entire Palestinian population in both Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In Jordan, I sought out a representative and intersectional range of participants to the best of my abilities, and I believe that the conclusions I have drawn from the answers I received paint a holistic, nuanced picture of Palestinian identity in Jordan. While my subject pool for Saudi Arabia is much more limited and lacks the diversity of my interviews in Jordan, I believe I collected sufficient data to draw preliminary conclusions about identity, and to make comparisons between the two countries.

1.2.2 Data Analysis

I used a qualitative data analysis software program called ATLAS.ti to analyze each interview. With the permission of the participant, I recorded interviews and transcribed them to a document that I then uploaded to the software. If circumstances did not allow me to record the conversation, I took notes by hand or by computer and transferred them to a document in the

same manner. I asked a series of basic questions to each interview participant, such as their age and occupation, as well as their nationality to place them in groups by their respective answers. I then asked a variety of more substantive questions. I encouraged each interview participant to take the conversation in whatever direction felt comfortable to them, thus leading me to ask a broad range of follow-up questions in addition to my pre-determined questions. After translating, transcribing, and grouping interview participants by basic categorizations, I reread each interview transcript and identified key words and themes that presented themselves across multiple interviews. My analysis primarily examines how my participants identify with certain themes, and how that compares to their respective nationalities and citizenship status within Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

1.2.3 Additional Source Materials

To lay the groundwork for my interviews and make sense of the political and historical frameworks that have influenced identity, I reviewed secondary source material, newspaper articles, and policy reports. Policy, as I have chosen to explore it, includes whether Palestinian refugees can obtain and maintain citizenship in their host country, what rights they have if they are not considered citizens, and whether their host countries respect their rights. I examine reports and articles by actors such as the United Nations, UNRWA¹, Refworld and Human Rights Watch.

¹ United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East. UNRWA was established by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 302 (IV) of 8 December 1949, and began operations in 1950. See: <https://www.unrwa.org/who-we-are>

Informative as they are, reports from these agencies are not without potential bias, of which I remained cautious in my research. Israeli newspapers, such as the Israeli Times, has accused UNRWA in the past of holding anti-Israel sentiment. Additionally, in 2018, President Trump severed US funding to UNRWA on account of their anti-Israel bias (DeYoung et. al 2018). Accusations of bias goes both ways in these instances. Biases can create gaps in the information provided in these types of sources. A policy report or article could outline the intended rules and regulations for a society, but it might not consider how stringently a society follows said rules. Nor do they always acknowledge gaps in policy, and how it could negatively affect a population. For example, UNRWA has provided aid to Palestinian refugees since 1950. Its reports highlight the benefits that it provides, such as infrastructure and education. They do not, however, recognize the unintended consequences of their aid, such as the developing dependency on international aid by Palestinian refugees and their subsequent inability to become self-sufficient in their host countries (Gabiam 2012).

To fill in the blank spaces that reports from such actors do not cover, I relied heavily on secondary literature. Volumes of academic literature exist on the Palestinian people, and I read the works of the most frequently cited scholars in the field. To mitigate biases in my work, I have sought perspectives from Palestinian and Israeli scholars alike, as well as from other foreign nationals. I sought diversity of scholarship, in particular, for outlining the historical context of my work. While several useful works exist on the relationship between Jordan and Palestine, no such scholarship exists on Palestine and Saudi Arabia. I relied most heavily on my interviews, as well as reports from UNRWA to best analyze the development of Palestinian identity in Saudi Arabia.

1.3 A Discussion on Identity

In his dissertation, Dr. James Fearon explains that scholars widely take the readers' understanding of the word 'identity' for granted, and that it often goes unexplained despite being a crucial variable (Fearon 1999). In my work, identity is the most crucial variable. However, I do not operate under a single definition of identity. I loosely relied on Psychology Today's definition of identity to inform my interview questions. According to this organization, identity "encompasses the memories, experiences, relationships, and values that create one's sense of self" (Psychology Today). I made sure to ask questions that would allow for a holistic understanding of these factors in my participants—memories, experiences, relationships, and values—as well as factors of positionality, such as gender, class, age and education.

Thus, identity is fluid by definition, and fluid in practice. I recognize that the word identity can evoke different meanings and reactions for different people. Rather than working with a set definition while interviewing participants, I encouraged them to direct the conversation and define identity for themselves. For some, Palestinian identity meant the actions they take or the clothes they wear, whereas for others, identity is more of a feeling than something tangible. In addition to understanding how my participants formed their individual identities, this thesis takes interest in the concept of a national identity—How do national identities develop in displaced communities who live in different parts of the world? To inform my understanding of national identity, I rely heavily on the research published in *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*, by Ruth Wodak, Rudolf de Cillia, Martin Reisigl, Karin Liebhart, Angelika Hirsch, and Richard Mitten. After conducting a case study on identity on Swedish identity, they conclude that:

different identities are discursively constructed according to context, that is according to the degree of public exposure of a given utterance, the setting, the

topic addressed, the audience to which it is addressed, and so on. In other words, discursive national identities should not be perceived as static, but rather as dynamic, vulnerable, and rather ambivalent entities (Wodak et al. 2009, 187).

Thus, when I reference identity throughout this piece, I am speaking to either the identity of the individual, or to broader national sentiments experienced as a collective group. I oscillate between describing how one participant identifies themselves, and how that informs my analysis on the formation of national identity among Palestinians, both toward Palestine itself and toward their host country. National identity is not monolithic, and as my participants reveal, one can feel that their identity as an individual encompasses multiple national sentiments.

Benedict Anderson describes a nation as “an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (Anderson 2006, 6), and I have also used his work to inform my understanding of Palestine as a nation, and therefore Palestinian identity. This idea of an “imagined political community” emerges in my interviews, as my participants discuss the idea of colonization drawing the modern nation-state borders—whereas, their sense of national identity goes beyond Western conceptions of these imagined borders that have been constructed by colonial projects. I approached my interviews with the simple notion that I could not project my preconceived notions of identity on to my interview participants—rather, I gave them the space to consider what identity meant to them, and how they fit in to a larger construction of a national Palestinian identity.

1.4 Historical Background—The Origins of the Palestinian Refugee Crisis

To best analyze the formation of Palestinian identity, it is essential to understand the roots of the Palestinian diaspora. The Zionist movement² gained traction under the leadership of Theodor Herzl (1860-1904), a Hungarian Jew who famously campaigned for a Jewish state and established the World Zionist Organization (Gelvin 2018). The first substantial migrations of Jewish settlers to Palestine began in 1882 as a result of violence toward the Jewish community in Russia, and four subsequent waves of migration³ followed in the first half of the 20th century as responses to anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe (Gelvin 2018).

Tensions between the rapidly expanding Jewish community and the Palestinian natives grew with each subsequent wave, ultimately resulting in violent conflict. The Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 saw massive demonstrations, protests, and violence between toward the Jewish settlers—but with British weaponry and support, the Jewish community successfully mitigated the uprising, leaving the Palestinians in disarray (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003). The elite, urban Palestinian class clashed not only with the Jewish settlers, but with the rural class of Palestinians simultaneously. This disunion among Palestinian leadership diminished their ability to fight their common enemy, and the aftermath of the Arab Revolt would continue to pose problems for Palestinians as they faced internal disagreements (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003).

The Arab-Israeli war began in 1947, and at that time, Palestinian society remained disunited in most regards. The region was composed of different familial groups. This societal structure put them at a disadvantage compared to the Jewish settler population that had adopted

² Zionism—“The belief that Jews represent a national community entitled to their own independent state; Zionists have usually (but not always) viewed Palestine as the ideal location for such a state” (Gelvin 2018, 281).

³ The Jewish community referred to these migrations as *aliyah* in Hebrew, meaning “to ascend” (Gelvin 2018, 56).

British military prowess and nationalist ideals. The lack of unity made the Palestinian population vulnerable, and therefore susceptible to forced immigration. Israeli historian Benny Morris outlines the mass displacement of Palestinians in four distinct waves—all taking place between 1947 and 1948 (Morris 1987). With each wave came new policy changes and hardships that added to the intricacy of the conflict. The first wave, which Morris calls the Arab exodus, began in December of 1947. Then, in 1948, UN General Assembly resolution 181 endorsed the partition of Palestine into two states, and subsequently sparked violence against the Israeli Jews as the Palestinians expressed their extreme displeasure regarding the new resolution (Morris 1987).

Palestinian families with the means to relocate to neighboring countries did so en masse to avoid the violence. The fourth, and biggest wave of the conflict lasted from October to November of 1948, and saw an influx of both forced and voluntary migrations by Palestinian families in the Negev Desert⁴ as Israel battled Egyptian forces for that territory (Morris 1987). Simultaneously, the Israeli army worked to secure the Galilee⁵ region, prompting many Arab inhabitants of the area to flee to Lebanon (Morris 1987). And so, over the course of a year, tens of thousands of Arabs from all corners of Israel fled or were forced to leave their homes, upsetting the Palestinian national identity and earning the title of *al-nakba*. After the conflict of 1948, Israelis started to clear formerly Palestinian occupied areas to turn them into permanent Jewish settlements (Morris 1987). These establishments solidified Israel's presence in the region and dissuaded Palestinians from expecting to return.

⁴ Desert terrain located in southern Israel, between Egypt and Jordan.

⁵ Region in Northern Israel, bordering Lebanon.

The United Nations defines a refugee as “someone who has been forced to flee his or her country because of persecution, war or violence. A refugee has a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group” (UNHCR). The Arab-Israeli conflict prompted a General assembly to publish resolution 194, which affirms “that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest predictable date” (Paragraph 11). This resolution is not binding, nor does it have any legitimate standing in international law—and thus, it does not present any consequences for Israel. However, by ignoring the UN’s codes and regulations, Israel had made itself an enemy in the eyes of many international actors.

In theory, the principles of resolution 194 sound like a viable proposition for fostering the humane treatment of displaced peoples. Yet, in actuality, as Israel has discovered, following these principles is extremely complicated and would require economic, political, and social sacrifices. The phrase “earliest predictable date” is ambiguous—after seventy years Israel and Palestine have yet to devise a solution to resettling the refugees, so how could they suggest a predictable date? Additionally, Palestinians have the right to self-determination under this resolution, but as stateless people they do not have the means to enforce this right—who is responsible, morally and legally, for helping them achieve these means? Though many international actors criticize Israel for their treatment of Palestinian refugees, they do not propose specific resolutions to the ambiguity of these UN declarations. Thus, the question of who is responsible for the Palestinian refugees remains unanswered, and the Palestinian people remain dispersed throughout the world.

1.5 Literature Review

My research adds to an already thorough body of literature on Palestinian identity. Constructed rapidly and forcibly, Palestinians have developed a nuanced and complex identity that spans throughout multiple countries. This literature review will explore the primary factors that scholars have agreed constitute Palestinian identity thus far, making reference to multiple countries within the Palestinian diaspora. Many scholars have contributed to the conversation in Jordan, given that roughly 60% of Jordanian society is of Palestinian descent, whereas much less literature exists on Palestinian identity in Saudi Arabia. Although my own research will focus exclusively on Saudi Arabia and Jordan as case studies, I have expanded the scope of my literature to review to best make sense of Palestinian identity. Having a more holistic sense of the literature, and how scholars have described Palestinian identity across the Arab world as a whole, will allow me to understand how my case studies fit into the bigger picture. Furthermore, although my case studies will largely focus on historical and sociological narratives of Palestine post-1948, I have chosen to expand my literature review back several decades to include the emergence of Arab nationalism as a response to colonial rule after the fall of the Ottoman Empire.

1.5.1 *Hopes of return and an independent nation-state*

Some scholars agree that the hope of establishing a unified Palestinian nation-state, one which would welcome back all of the dispersed Palestinian refugees and their descendants, has driven the formation of Palestinian identity. In his book, *Palestinian Identity*, Rashid Khalidi explains that the Arab world experienced a surge of pan-Arab nationalism and the subsequent development of nation-states after the fall of the Ottoman empire. Arab countries such as Egypt,

Syria, and Lebanon, for example, had the privilege of further cultivating and developing this sense of nationalism within a nation-state framework, whereas Palestine remained subject to British and Zionist rule (Khalidi 2010). Palestinian people similarly wanted to establish themselves as an independent political entity in the region, which has been a salient factor in the creation of a unified Palestinian identity (Khalidi 2010). Palestinians still cling fast to the hope of establishing an independent nation-state, and ultimately counteracting decades of a distorted and dispersed identity. Refugees living in the Palestinian diaspora, in particular, see the importance of an independent nation-state, as it would provide them with both a physical and symbolic point of origin, which is integral to the creation of national identity (Fincham 2010; Silwaki).

1.5.2 *Identity as a response to Zionism*

Scholars commonly identify Zionism, and the opposition to Zionism, as a salient factor in the creation of Palestinian identity, but opinions as to the extent of that influence vary. Scholars Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal suggest anti-Zionist opinion to be one of the strongest unifying forces behind Palestinian identity after the establishment of Israel in 1948 (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003). Hillel Frisch touches on the sense of national identity among Palestinian refugees, in particular, in his article, which focuses primarily on Palestinian territories such as Gaza and the West Bank. He affirms that, while Palestinians in these territories have maintained a sense of identity, it stems from a collective sense of anger and hatred towards Israel. Frisch explains the concept of *al-Nakba*, which is how Palestinian refugees characterize the conflict of 1948 (Frisch 2002). *Al-Nakba* is the tragedy that united Palestinians against their common enemy of Israel, and is what continues to unite them as they long for a right of return (Frisch 2002). Today, when Palestinians living within the diaspora hear of suffering or unrest from within Israel

and Palestine, it intensifies their sense of identity (Lindhom 2019). Building on the conversation about identity in response to Zionism, the theme of being the “other” occurs frequently in the literature. According to certain scholars, Palestinian identity could not have formed without the absence of opposing identities. To be Palestinian is to not be Israeli, nor Jordanian, nor any other nationality (Fincham 2010; Nasser 2004). LeBlanc and Medine argue that a Palestinian cannot explain his/her identity without mention of Israel, highlighting how this identity formed as a counter response to a different identity (LeBlanc and Medine 2016).

Khalidi holds a slightly different opinion than the aforementioned scholars. He affirms that while Zionism and the subsequent creation of Israel helped to establish Palestine as a political entity, he refutes the claim that Zionism pushed the formation of a Palestinian identity. He claims that this line of thinking among scholars ignores the key factor that the creation of new states happened throughout the Arab world all at once after the first World War (Khalidi 2010). Palestinian identity and nationalism would have formed regardless of Zionism, albeit differently, and Khalidi does not find it representative of the entire picture to cite Zionism as the driving force behind Palestinian identity (Khalidi 2010).

1.5.3 Religion and identity

Palestinians are a diverse people, but Sunni Islam represents the majority of Palestinians today. Consequently, religion contributes significantly to identity. Kimmerling and Migdal discuss Islam as perhaps the most significant factor in Palestinian identity, as it connects the Palestinian people to Jerusalem (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003). In recent decades, in particular, Palestinians have cited Islam as the most important aspect of their identity. In Fincham’s study, she found that Palestinian youth internalize their religious identity to a higher degree than their

parents, and the youth she talked to in her research explained that to be Palestinian is to be Muslim, and vice versa (Fincham 2010). Islam has become an integral part of the fight for independence, with Muslims feeling a duty to liberate Palestine and reclaim Jerusalem (Fincham 2010). Additionally, for Palestinians in the diaspora, constructing their identity based off of religion allows them to form a deeper sense of comradery with the surrounding Arab world, all united against Israel (Fincham 2010).

1.5.4 The collective experience as a refugee and the loss of homeland

Given the vast number of Palestinian refugees, and the multi-generational aspect of being continuously in exile, Palestinian identity relies heavily on the refugee experience. Kimmgerling and Migdal conclude their work by stating that Palestinian hopes for a right of return to their homeland still constitutes much of their identity and unity as a people. They call the right of return the “fundamental building block of Palestinism” (Kimmerling and Migdal 1994, 406). Other scholars agree that a crucial aspect of identity, and thus the maintenance of that identity, is the shared experience of living in exile (Mason 2007; Khalidi 2010; Dana 2016). Victoria Mason explains that Palestinians living in the diaspora have passed down stories of the homeland through generations, and children that have never seen Palestine can describe intricate details of their family history in Palestine (Mason 2007). Palestinian identity is “stronger than ever” in Arab host countries (Shiblak 1996). As a way to maintain their connection to Palestine, those living in exile in the early years after 1948 refrained from making any permanent connections to their host countries, as they expected and hoped for a quick return (Mason 2007; Kimmgerling and Migdal 1994). Indeed, this ongoing lack of homeland is a factor in the construction of Palestinian identity (Lindholm 2019).

1.5.5 Relationships to host countries and the maintenance of national identity

Palestinians' relationships to their host countries varies, and my research will explore this aspect of Palestinian identity in more depth. As for the current literature, scholars agree that, in certain countries, Palestinians are experiencing a general and gradual shift toward assimilation through the younger generations. Jordan presents a special case study on this subject, as Palestinians are now an integral part of society. Jason Hart explores the relationship of displaced Palestinian children with their host country of Jordan, and their contributions to nationalist projects. He argues that, while mass migrations do spread culture and ideas internationally, immigrants, namely refugees, meet frequent social isolation and are highly regulated and confined by immigration policy (Hart 2002). Children in refugee camps have constant exposure to Jordanian media, most of which paints Jordan in an attractive light and promotes Jordanian nationalism (Hart 2002). In an education system such as that, it is difficult for Palestinian children to maintain a sense of national identity with Palestine. Thus, the burden of promoting Palestinian nationalism in a foreign culture falls on the older generations.

Certain scholars do not believe that the integration of younger generations of Palestinians into their host cultures would be a positive development, but rather, an indirect attack on a united Palestine. Harim Barakat claims that Palestinians have no control over their culture, as they are subject to the rule of their host countries (Barakat 1973). His piece expresses a sense of hopelessness for the future of Palestine, affirming that since a significant portion of its inhabitants have been displaced over decades and have developed a sense of identity outside of Palestine, their society cannot develop in the same way as in neighboring Arab states (Barakat

1973). Barakat shows a deep bias in his writing, as he sympathizes heavily with the experiences of the Palestinian refugees and talks about their situation with a sense of despair.

While Barakat suggests that Palestinians refugees are destined to lack national identity, Hart's piece suggests an optimistic future for displaced Palestinian children in Jordan. In a conversation with a young Palestinian girl named Muna, Hart was surprised to learn that she often allied herself with aspects of Jordanian culture, while simultaneously showing awareness of her Palestinian roots (Hart 2002). Hillel Frisch touches on the sense of national identity among internally displaced Palestinian refugees in his article, which focuses primarily on Palestinian territories such as Gaza and the West Bank. He affirms that, while refugees in these territories maintain a sense of national sentiment, it stems from a collective sense of anger toward Israel. Frisch explains the concept of al-Nakba, which is how Palestinian refugees characterize the conflict of 1948 (Frisch 2002). Al-Nakba united Palestinians against their common enemy of Israel, and is what continues to unite them as they long for a right of return (Frisch 2002). Hart, Frisch, and Barakat differ in their perceptions of how displaced Palestinians maintain national identities. While Barakat and Frisch present a bleak outlook, ones in which Palestinians can never find peace until Israel allows them to return, Hart looks to the future through the eyes of children. He finds that the social dynamics of displaced Palestinians are ever evolving, and children, more so than older generations, may be the ones to spearhead a more cross-cultural approach to developing a Palestinian national identity. Lindholm affirms that Palestinian identity is transnational and complex, and Palestinians can maintain their connection to their homeland while still fostering a connection to their host countries (Lindholm 2003).

These studies shift the conversation to the host countries that house Palestinian refugees, and how they have either enabled or prohibited Palestinians from maintaining a sense of national

identity. My work seeks to fill the gap between the maintenance of a national identity, and the formation of said identity. I will argue that, not only do host countries have influence over the extent to which Palestinians maintain their identity within the diaspora, but their policies have directly contributed to the formation of said identity. Many Palestinians in the diaspora have never seen Palestine proper, so their entire paradigm of being Palestinian derives from their experiences within their host country.

1.5.6 Conclusion

The scholarship focuses on the primary components of Palestinian identity, and how living within the diaspora has influenced the development of identity. The scholars I read centered their work around the internal factors of identity, and the ways in which Palestinians have cultivated and maintained a connection with their homeland. Most of the current scholarship lacks an in-depth analysis of how host countries have influenced the identity of the Palestinians living there, especially from the perspective of law and policy. Authors I have read acknowledge that host countries have influenced identity, with little mention of how specific policies enacted by these host countries have had influence, which is how this thesis will contribute to the conversation. Hart and Fincham are exceptions to my general conclusion, as they both took a sociological approach to researching identity outside of Palestine as it has been influenced by Jordan and Lebanon, respectively. I continue the conversation that they started, by examining the themes they addressed more closely, namely by looking at the policies of my case study countries. While scholars such as Hart have already started to make sense of Palestinian identity in Jordan, no such study exists in Saudi Arabia, which is why I have selected it as a case study.

1.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter first introduced my research question: How have the policies implemented by the Jordanian and Saudi Arabian governments influenced the formation of a national identity among Palestinians in both countries? This thesis compares the experiences of Palestinians living in Jordan to those in Saudi Arabia, and answers the research question by conducting semi-structured interviews with Palestinians in both countries. Throughout this thesis, I will argue that, in Jordan, a dual sense of identity has emerged—Palestinians feel connected to both Palestine and Jordan. Further, Palestinians in Jordan widely identify with the idea of a pan-Arab identity. Whereas, in Saudi Arabia, Palestinians do not harbor national sentiments toward their host country—they define themselves as Palestinian only. However, as their lived experience is outside of Palestine, they do not feel completely connected to Palestinian identity. The differences between the two cases are significant, and they have emerged from specific policy choices made by the Jordanian and Saudi governments. The following chapters will explore both the policies enacted in each country, as well as the subsequent identity formations among Palestinian communities. Thus far in the literature, scholars define Palestinian identity as a response to Zionism, the collective experience of loss of homeland and being a refugee, and Islam. The scholarship also explores how Palestinians form relationships to their host countries, and how said relationships influence identity formation. This thesis will expand upon relationships to host countries as a salient factor of Palestinian identity; specifically, it will address how policies determined by host governments factor into identity.

Chapter Two: Jordanian Policies and their Effects on Palestinian Identity

2.1 Introduction

The wave of Palestinians that flooded into Jordan after the conflict of 1948 completely changed the social dynamics of the country, with Palestinians out-numbering native Jordanians by a ratio of two to one (Abu-Odeh 1999). Whereas the native Jordanian populations consisted primarily of Bedouin tribes, the Palestinian migrants were both city dwellers and *fellaheen* (farmers)—a difference that the Palestinians of Jordan still note today between themselves and those of nomadic, Bedouin origin. This rapid shift in the demography of Jordanian society left the government scrambling to find a solution to this refugee crisis as thousands of Palestinians fled the West Bank; and they took a stance of inclusion. The government, a constitutional monarchy under the jurisdiction of King Abdullah I, began issuing passports to the Palestinians, which would give them full rights as citizens. Decades after the initial wave of immigration in 1948, the Jordanian government places certain restrictions on certain groups of Palestinians, and is more stringent in granting citizenship. Yet, for those whose families moved from Palestine during or immediately after 1948, the difference in treatment by the Jordanian government is slim.

This chapter will discuss the history of Jordan, and how it has transformed and developed as a nation-state. The modern history of Palestine would not exist as is without Jordan, and vice versa, as their stories are deeply intertwined. Then, I focus on several policies enacted by the Jordanian government toward Palestinians, beginning in 1948. Specifically, the policies prompted by the initial conflict of 1948, as well as the war of 1967, proved the most significant in my research. These are policies, both domestic and foreign, that I argue have had the most

salient effect on the formation and continuation of Palestinian identity. I will provide a chronological overview of the policies and practices that have influenced Palestinian life in Jordan, before exploring how said policies have influenced the development of identity through my interview collection in the following chapter.

2.2 Transjordan—A Colonial Project

Before the introduction of colonial powers into the region, Jordan did not exist as an entity in the way it does today. It was a largely tribal society, with its approximately 250,000 inhabitants organized in small, familial structures (Abu-Odeh 1999). The Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916⁶ gave authority of the region to the British, who installed the first leader, Emir Abdullah, in 1921 (Abu-Odeh 1999). The British Mandate extended past the Jordan river and to the Mediterranean Sea. Whereas the British involved themselves heavily in the diplomatic proceedings of Palestine to the west of the Jordan river, they took a more hands-off approach to governance in the east, or Transjordan, as it was then called. Britain declared Transjordan an independent entity in 1923, provided that Emir Abdullah would respect the authority of the British mandate in Palestine (Abu-Odeh 1999). Meanwhile, as the Zionist project continued to expand and Jewish migrants moved to Palestinian territory en masse, Palestinians began migrating to Transjordan during the 1920s and 1930s. The first waves of Palestinian migrants did not come to Transjordan as refugees—rather, they migrated on their own accord and, being educated and capable, they found great financial success in Transjordan (Plascov 1982). Some 10,000 or so Palestinians settled in Amman before 1948, where they worked as civil servants and

⁶ Treaty drawn by French diplomat Francois-Georges Picot and British diplomat Mark Sykes in 1916 to divide the region between the two colonial powers after the fall of the Ottoman Empire (Ottoway 2015).

Ministers (Plascov 1982). In 1946, Emir Abdullah negotiated Transjordan's complete independence from Britain, and renamed the country the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan⁷. Abdullah was then crowned King of the fledgling Kingdom.

The UN partition of 1947, closely followed by the Arab War of 1948, left the government of Jordan scrambling to manage fraught tensions between Israel and the rest of the Arab world, as they worked to accommodate the significant influx of Palestinian refugees into their country. Abdullah envisioned a much more expansive, pan-Arab kingdom than Jordan alone—he had aspirations of unifying large sections of neighboring Arab countries, and he viewed the annexation of Palestine as the first step in the process of unification (Plascov 1982). He took a calculated, yet simultaneously welcoming approach to foreign policy regarding the Palestinian case, as a way to increase his popularity among the Palestinians and work toward his ambitious pan-Arab state (Plascov 1982). He took it upon himself to act as a mediator between the Palestinians, the Zionists, and the British (Plascov 1982). He worked tirelessly to win the support of Palestinian elites and nobility, as a way to grow support for his territorial pursuits (Abu-Odeh 1999). As a result of his efforts, he became widely popular among Palestinian refugees after the war with Israel, as Jordan offered a safe space to Palestinians to a much higher degree than they could find in neighboring Arab states (Plascov 1982).

While Abdullah's popularity grew among Palestinians, the Arab League⁸ grew increasingly cautious of his ambition. As Abdullah worked to finalize his plans of annexing the West Bank, Egypt organized other Arab states to expel Jordan from Arab League (Plascov

⁷ Renamed Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in 1948.

⁸ The Arab League, formally known as the League of Arab States, is a regional political body founded in 1945, consisting of representation from 22 Arab states (Thomas 2002).

1892). The League, however, lacked the authority and organization to place any such restrictions on Jordan, and nothing came to fruition. Unhindered by the Arab League, Abdullah and Palestinian leaders voted for the annexation of the West Bank in 1948.⁹ The Arab League, at a loss for power, conceded to this decision, provided that Abdullah only maintain control of the West Bank “ ‘until the liberation of Palestine’ ” (Plascov 1982, 15). This decision would drastically alter the social, political, and economic dynamics of Jordan by introducing approximately 900,000 Palestinians into a country of approximately 450,000 native Jordanians (Gandolfo 2012).

2.3 Policy Changes—The Immediate Aftermath of Al-Nakba

The conflict of 1948 sent thousands of Palestinian refugees to Jordan, and beyond. In Jordan specifically one third of the refugees landed in refugee camps, another third in villages, and the last third in towns (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003). Thus, Jordan became a desirable place to settle for the Palestinians, compared to other Arab countries that placed most of their refugees in camps. As evidenced by the Arab League’s concession to a unified East and West Bank only “until the liberation of Palestine”, much of the Arab world hoped that the refugee crisis would be temporary. The hope of resettlement for the Palestinians informed policy making throughout the region—countries did not grant permanent citizenship to Palestinians, because they assumed that their stay would not be permanent. Jordan, however, established more inclusive, permanent solutions. King Abdullah took a welcoming approach to the new influx of

⁹ Vote took place at the Jericho Conference on December 1 of 1948. Government officials sought representation from nobilities in the villages of Palestine, and encouraged a diverse array of voices to participate in voting (Plascov 1982).

refugees, and “tried to bind diverse peoples and tribes into a cohesive hole” (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003, 218). Yet, the policies enacted by Abdullah were not without limitations to certain groups of Palestinians, and the adverse effects that certain policies have had on specific groups has created divisions in identity formation.

2.3.1 Passport Amendment Ordinance No. 11 and Additional Law 56

King Abdullah took his first official step toward naturalizing Palestinian citizens under the law by implementing the Passport Amendment Ordinance No. 11 in 1949, which gave Jordanian passports to Palestinians living in Jordan—which then consisted of both the East and the West Bank, after the annexation of 1948 (Gandolfo 2012). Later that year, Abdullah implemented Additional Law 56 to further consolidate the terms of Jordanian citizenship and promote inclusivity for the Palestinians (Gandolfo 2012). Established in December of 1949, Additional Law 56 once again stipulates that Palestinians shall be granted Jordanian passports. Furthermore, it holds that Palestinians should have the ability to travel and seek employment within Jordan and among neighboring Arab states (Gandolfo 2012, 50). It stipulates that citizens, including refugees, can vote in parliamentary elections, thus giving them a voice in the political proceedings of the country (Plsacov 1981).

Additional Law 56 made Jordan the first country to grant citizenship and such rights to its Palestinian refugee population, thereby including Palestinians as an active part of society (Plsacov 1981). This law also discontinued the Ministry for Refugee Affairs, in an attempt to prove that Palestinians would quickly become a part of Jordanian society, and would not be considered refugees in the eyes of the law (Gandolfo 2012). Gandolfo affirms that Additional Law 56 was an interim measure taken by King Abdullah to help “quell the dissent stirring in the

camps,” as Palestinian refugees grew increasingly dissatisfied with the lack of opportunity and aid found within Jordan’s refugee camps (Gandolfo 2012, 51).

By discontinuing the Ministry of Refugee Affairs in Additional Law 56, Abdullah further stoked the dissatisfaction of the Arab League, who worried that granting Palestinians citizenship in their host countries posed as an obstacle from an eventual right of return (Plascov 1981). In his policy-making, Abdullah had to appeal to the wishes of the League, to best maintain a relationship with the rest of the Arab world as they united against Israel. The League maintained a hard, non-negotiable stance on the issue of Palestine (Abu-Odeh 1999). As of 1950, the Arab League affirmed that any country that negotiated any sort of peace agreement with Israel would automatically forfeit their membership of the league, as the Member States had no interest in compromise with the fledgling state of Israel (Abu-Odeh 1999).

King Abdullah thought differently. He saw peace negotiations as the only logical step forward in resolving the region’s tensions, which created a rift between the Jordanian government and neighboring Arab states (Abu-Odeh 1999). Thus, Abdullah’s motivations for accepting Palestinian refugees by enacting Additional Law 56 ran deeper than simply having a strong moral compass. He believed that other Arab leaders were “deluded and dazzled” by their own statements regarding Israel (Plascov 1981, 5). While other Arab leaders spouted rhetoric that encouraged “[throwing] the Jews into the sea,” Abdullah acknowledged Israel’s military prowess and maintained a more realistic appreciation for their power and influence in the region (Plascov 1981, 5). Abdullah recognized that to gain control of a larger pan-Arab state, which was ultimately his political goal, he would need the support of the Palestinians—and would therefore need to ensure their comfort in Jordan (Gandolfo 2012). Making Palestinians citizens of Jordan would acknowledge the possibility that they might not be able to return to their land in the new

state of Israel, which was not an option that other leaders in the Arab League even wanted to consider. Therefore, the Additional Law 56 drew skepticism across the rest of the Arab world. I will discuss via my interviews how Additional Law 56 promoted a general feeling of inclusion among Palestinians, as it gave them the freedom to pursue upward mobility within Jordan as a citizen.

2.3.2 *Nationality Law*

As Gandolfo argues, the measures taken by King Abdullah and the Jordanian government to assimilate the Palestinian refugees were discriminatory, despite their best efforts to appear inclusive. Namely, the Nationality Law of 1954 drew divisions between Palestinians and Jordanians, and among Palestinians themselves. The Kingdom of Transjordan established this law originally in 1928, but amended it to specifically address the Palestinian population in 1954 (Gandolfo 2012). In an attempt to seem more inclusive to the ever-expanding refugee community, Abdullah forged a series of new reforms to the Nationality Law regarding Palestinian refugees. Under King Abdullah's jurisdiction, Parliament officially ratified the constitution in 1954 to read "anyone carrying a Palestinian passport issued before 15 May 1948—provided that he is not Jewish—and habitually residing in Jordan during the period 20 December—16 February 1954" was to be granted full citizenship (Gandolfo 2012, 45). He created this idea of a 'refugee-citizen,' meaning a person who has the same rights as permanent citizens, but with the option to nullify their citizenship and return to their home country (Soh, You, Yu 2016). To receive funding from a United Nations agency to take care of a refugee population, that population must retain their asylum-seeking status. By creating a sort of limbo for the refugees, in which they were naturalized as Jordanians but maintained their titles as

refugees, Jordan ensured the survival of funds from UNRWA to maintain the growing population (Plascov 1981). King Abdullah found a middle ground in coining this “refugee-citizen” term.

This idea of a refugee-citizen seemed practical in theory, but created problems for Palestinians and Jordanians alike in practice. It made the Palestinians’ place in Jordanian society to appear more temporary, thus making it more difficult for them to establish permanent economic and social relationships. As my interviews suggests, this idea of the refugee-citizen created divisions not only between Jordanians and Palestinians, but among groups of Palestinians with different citizenship statuses. The Nationality Law defined Jordanian citizenship in nuanced terms that categorized citizens as Jordanian, foreign, Arab, or expatriate (Gandolfo 2012, 45). These distinct categories of citizenship gave different rights to the people represented by these categories—for example, this new system discriminated against women. If a Jordanian woman married a Palestinian man, their children may not be eligible for Jordanian citizenship, even if they were born within Jordan. The new law held that citizenship could only be passed down through the father (Gandolfo 2012, 46).

Thus, while the Jordanian government technically granted citizenship to Palestinians, under the Nationality law they faced discrimination due to the nuances of the policy. This piece of legislation continues to hold in Jordan today, and it adversely affects Palestinian women and thus the Palestinian community as a whole. Evidence drawn from my interviews supports the notion that, while Additional Law 56 sought to merge Palestinian and Jordanian identities, the Nationality Law prevented complete assimilation from taking place.

2.4 The Reign of Hussein—Reconfiguration of Palestinian-Jordanian Citizenship

King Abdullah I was assassinated in 1951 in an act of terror. His son, Talal, ascended the throne, but would later step down in 1953 for health concerns. Talal's son, Hussein, became king at 17 years old (Abu-Odeh 1999). Hussein inherited a wealth of growing international and domestic political tensions, as the Arab world struggled to subdue the ongoing conflict with Israel. Hussein left behind a complicated and divisive legacy—he consistently fought for the Palestinian case, and took measures to include Palestinian-Jordanians in his vision of building a pan-Jordanian identity (Gabbay 2014). Yet, he took a widely pro-Western stance to diplomacy, and forged multiple alliances with Israel throughout his reign (Abu-Odeh 1999). To the dismay of his Arab neighbors, Hussein made such alliances with Israel to further his ultimate goal, which was solidifying the longevity of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. He knew that doing so would require the ability to coexist with Israel (Rubner 2008)

2.4.1 *The Six Day War and Black September*

Despite the “de facto alliance” between Israel and Jordan that Hussein had worked to secure, a drastic rupture to peace between the two states took place in 1967 during the Six Day War (Rubner 2008). Israeli forces entered the West Bank, as well as territories in other neighboring Arab countries, and sent a new wave of Palestinian refugees to the East Bank. The exact number of Palestinians who became refugees as a result of the war is unknown, but it is approximated between 250,000 (Kimmerling and Migdal 2003) and 355,000 (Refworld). Despite the newfound Israeli presence, Jordan maintained its claim to the West Bank, and Jordanian law continued to apply throughout (Human Rights Watch 2010). The United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 242 after the 1967 conflict, which called for peace between Israel and

neighboring Arab countries, as well as withdrawal from the newly conquered territory (Lieberman 2016). Despite this resolution, Israel kept a foothold in the West Bank, which intensified the pressure on King Hussein to sever political ties between the two banks (Abu-Odeh 1999). Given the massive increase of displaced Palestinians after the war, the Jordanian government rapidly expanded the number of refugee camps (Abu-Odeh 1999). Jordan also forged an agreement with Israel to create an open bridge policy, which would allow the flow of people and goods openly between the West Bank and the East Bank (Abu-Odeh 1999).

Frustrated by the Israeli presence in the West Bank, Palestinian guerrilla fighters began waging warfare against Israel (Gabbay 2014). Though they at first received encouragement and support from the Jordanian army, the guerrilla fighters began staging their own attacks toward Israel from the West Bank, and the situation began to spiral out of Hussein's control (Gabbay 2014). Dissatisfied with the Jordanian monarchy, certain Palestinian guerrilla factions began calling for the overthrow of the regime (Makara 2016). What was once a conflict with Israel turned to a domestic struggle, as the Jordanian army sought to eradicate the guerrilla warfare waged by the Palestinians. In September of 1970, tensions had reached their peak between the Jordanian army and the *fedayeen* (Palestinian guerilla armies), resulting in a violent clash between the two sides. The Jordanian army effectively forced the *fedayeen*, and subsequently the authority of the Palestinian Liberation Organization¹⁰, out of the Jordan over the course of several months (Makara 2016). September of 1970 became known as Black September among the Palestinians and Jordanians, as many military as well as citizen casualties took place.

¹⁰ The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) was formed in 1964 to “centralize leadership among various Palestinian groups” (Britannica 2019).

This violent clash had lasting impacts on the relationship between the Palestinians and the Jordanians. Namely, the Jordanian government sought to rid the public sector of those who might be disloyal to the monarchy, and instill only native Jordanians in government positions (Makara 2016). Palestinians in Jordan still feel the effects of this policy today. Palestinians do not feel represented by the government in a country where they are the majority population, which has affected their connection to Jordan. Yet, the ramifications of this lack of representation have not affected Palestinian identity as closely as other policies outlined in this chapter.

2.4.2 Disengagement

The war of 1967, followed by Black September, prompted further talk by Palestinian leadership to establish an independent West Bank. The West Bank had been previously annexed by Jordan, and then occupied by Israel in 1967. Then Prime Minister Juma' of Jordan warned that an independent West Bank would hinder relations between Jordan and Palestine, saying that "the West Bankers should realize that their lives, souls, and future are all tightly and sacredly bound to this bank. That bond will never be broken under the leadership of King Hussein" (Abu-Odeh 1999, 140). Prime Minister Juma' affirmed that the Jordanian government wanted to maintain a close relationship with Palestine, and to continue supporting Palestinian people. Indeed, in my findings, Palestinians feel deeply connected to Jordan, saying that Palestinians and Jordanians are one culture, and one people.

Despite King Hussein's desire to maintain a presence in the West Bank, Jordan had lost considerable territory and military prowess during the war. Then, the First Intifada in 1988¹¹ shattered the remnant of a foothold that Hussein maintained in the West Bank. In addition to working to quell the violence in the West Bank, Hussein had to consider that Jordanian citizens started to grow skeptical of Jordan's previously inclusive policies toward Palestinian refugees (De Bel-Air 2007). Having run out of options to salvage his connection to the West Bank, Hussein formally severed ties between the two banks later that year. In a monumental speech explaining his rationale for the separation, King Hussein recognized the PLO as the sole representative body for the Palestinian people (Oroub Al Abed 2001). King Hussein claimed that this decision of disengagement served to acknowledge an autonomous Palestinian nationality, with the West Bank as its central location (Lieberman 2016).

From the moment of disengagement on, the Jordanian government viewed Palestinians who had previously been living as Jordanian citizens in the West Bank as Palestinians, which complicated both Palestinian and Jordanian identity. What had once been a unified country housing both Palestinians-Jordanians and Jordanians became two separate places, and drove a wedge between the two segments of the hybrid Palestinian/Jordanian identity that had previously emerged. First, all of the Palestinian-Jordanians living in the West Bank at the time of disengagement—approximately three quarters of a million—lost their Jordanian citizenship¹² (Gandolfo 2012). Further, to make sense of the confusing new dynamics, the Jordanian government imposed a system of citizenship regulations on Palestinians. They created a tiered

¹¹Arab uprising in Gaza and the West Bank, including violent tactics by young militants, as well as various forms of protestation (Lieberman 2016).

¹²Exceptions to the revocation of citizenship were Palestinians living in UNRWA registered refugee camps in the West Bank (Gandolfo 2012).

system, which granted different layers of access to Palestinians depending on where they came from, and how long they or their family had lived in Jordan. The following table taken from justice.gov outlines the different levels of citizenship after 1988:

Table 1: Palestinian Tiers of Citizenship in Jordan¹³					
Origin	Residence	Kind of Passport	Family Book*	Card of Crossing **	Accessibility to Services
Jordanian-East Banker	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with National ID number	Yes	-	Full access
Jordanian-Palestinian of 1948	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with National ID number	Yes	-	Full Access
Jordanian-Palestinian of 1967	Permanent residency in Jordan	Five-year passport with national ID number	Yes	Yellow Card—Family reunification	Full access
Jordanian-Palestinian of 1967	Permanent residency in the West Bank	Five-year passport without national ID number	No family book	Green Card	Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council
Jordanian-Palestinian from Jerusalem	Permanent residency in Jerusalem	Five-year passport without national ID number	No	Green Card	Work needs a work permit, university education payment in foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council
Palestinians of Gaza	Permanent residency in Jordan	Two-year temporary passport	No	In case of family reunification-Blue Card	Work needs a work permit, university education payment in

¹³ Table and notes taken directly from Refugee Review Tribunal—Australia, accessed at <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/eoir/legacy/2013/12/04/JOR35401-Palestinians-West%20Bank.pdf>

					foreign fees, ownership with the approval of a ministerial council
Palestinians of the West Bank of Gaza Strip	Permanent residency in West Bank of Gaza Strip	Palestinian authority passport (LP)	No	Permission to enter	Treated like any Arab in Jordan: as long as there is a valid residency they can access services permitted for foreigners

Notes:

* Family book: this registers the civil status of the members of the family (birth and marital status)

** Crossing Card (or Card of Crossing [the bridges]): a card given by El Mutaba wel Taftish (the inspection and follow-up department affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior in Jordan). The Yellow Card indicates that its holder is a permanent resident in Jordan, and s/he is able to go to the West Bank because of the family reunification card s/he holds. The Green Card indicates that its holder lives in the West Bank and his/her visit in Jordan is temporary (one should usually provide a reason, i.e. work permit, education certificate justifying their stay). The Blue Card is for Gazans who live in Gaza or in Jordan. It indicates that they were included in family reunification cards as being able to live in Gaza

Of the policies I have outlined, my findings reveal that this complicated system of citizenship introduced by the Jordanian government has had the most salient effect on the formation of Palestinian identity in Jordan. National sentiment and identity formation in individuals vary drastically depending on their tier of citizenship. Palestinians who moved to Jordan in 1948 had, and continue to have, the most leniency and the least amount of restrictions, whereas green and blue card holders face more obstacles to living freely in Jordan. Green and blue card holders must seek a work permit before looking for employment, and they must pay a foreign rate for university tuition, among other economic obstacles (Al Abed 2001). These new policies created contentious tiers of citizenship, in which green and blue card holders were more restricted in their travel and their economic opportunities in Jordan than yellow card holders, and thus divided such card holders from the rest of the population. These divisions have had a lasting

effect on Palestinian identity, as those individuals who face these restrictions feel less supported by the Jordanian government, and less assimilated in Jordanian society as a result. Further, these tiers of citizenship remain the Jordanian government's justification for revoking citizenship status from Palestinians today.

2.4.3 Revoking and restricting citizenship

After 1988, the Jordanian government began stripping Palestinians of their Jordanian citizenship with more frequency, and crediting the system of yellow and green cards as justification (Human Rights Watch 2010). They continue to do so in the present day under King Abdullah II, who took the throne in 1999. According to Human Rights Watch, their justification lacks any sort of a clear legal basis. Former Jordanian Prime Minister Ali Abu-Ghareb affirmed in an interview that Jordan lacks a clear citizenship law toward Palestinians, given the tumultuous history between Jordan and Israel (The Times of Israel 2012).

While Jordanian policy had previously been much more open to Palestinians migrants entering from the West Bank, they tightened the border significantly in 2001 due to the Second Intifada, which was another intense period of violence between Israelis and Palestinians. The border patrol began detaining thousands of Palestinians a day, as well as charging them a deposit of thousands of dinars that would only be refunded if they exited the country in a timely manner (De Bel-Air 2007). Furthermore, as recently as 2009, the Jordanian government attempted to revoke Jordanian citizenship from Palestinian-Jordanians, many of whom had been living within the Kingdom for decades (Gandolfo 2012). This drastic measure suggests a sense of distrust of the Palestinians by the Jordanian government, despite their efforts to provide them with citizenship rights. The attempt exposes the Jordanian government's reluctance to grant full

citizenship to all Palestinians without hesitation. It also suggests that the government continues to see Palestinian-Jordanians as a temporary problem, with the ultimate goal being resettlement in Palestine proper.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviews the major turning points in Jordanian policy regarding displaced Palestinians. Immediately after the war of 1948, the Kingdom under Abdullah developed an open policy toward Palestinians, granting them citizenship in Jordan. I addressed the Additional Law 56, which provided Jordanian passports to Palestinians that allowed them to move about the country in search of employment with greater ease, and the Nationality Law, which granted full citizenship to non-Jewish Palestinians. I addressed some of the critiques of the Nationality Law, which disadvantages Jordanian women by not allowing them to pass their citizenship to their children if they marry Palestinian men. I also explored the impacts of the War of 1967, during which Israel took control of the East Bank, and the Jordanian government devised a different, more nuanced method of classifying Palestinians through yellow, green, and blue cards to account for the drastic demographic changes after Hussein's decision to disengage from the West Bank. This method of classification, which restricts rights on certain groups of Palestinians, paved the way for the Jordanian government under King Hussein, and today King Abdullah II, to strip Jordanian citizenship from Palestinians without a clear reason for doing so. The separation of the East and West Banks under King Hussein in 1988 had a salient effect on the Palestinian population, as Palestinians who had been living as Jordanian citizens for decades had to re-establish themselves under an independent West Bank. Ultimately, being a Palestinian in Jordan today is more precarious than it was in 1948, and citizenship and protection under the law is not

a guarantee. Chapter three will explore the effects that this uncertainty has had on Palestinian identity over time.

Chapter Three: Palestinian Identity in Jordan—Data Analysis

3.1 Introduction

One interview participant recounted a poignant story—during Black September, his grandfather on his father’s side, along with his father and his uncles, fought for the Jordanian army, against the Palestinian uprising. Meanwhile, his grandfather on his mother’s side was a member of the PLO. The two men just so happened to be in the same village one day when the Jordanian army dropped bombs on locations of PLO members, which ultimately killed his maternal grandfather and his eldest uncle. After the violence settled, his paternal grandfather went out with a team of people to try and help the wounded. Among those they rescued, was my participant’s father.

This story is a salient example of the narratives that I heard over the course of my interviews with Palestinians in Jordan. Since the mass exodus from Palestine, the Palestinian people have been pulled in a number of directions. They have landed in different locations, and developed differences of opinion and perspective. This man’s grandfathers, though both Palestinian, ultimately fought against one another during Black September. I recount this story to exhibit the range of experiences and identities that exist among the Palestinian diaspora, even among those living in the same host country.

This chapter will provide a comprehensive analysis of my interview collection from Jordan, linking the most salient trends to the policies of the previous chapter. Although overarching themes emerged in my interviews, I found significant variance and intricacies in how people balance their Palestinian and Jordanian identities. Some of my participants felt completely Palestinian, others mostly Jordanian, with a wide range in between. I found generally

that these differences correlate with citizenship status, or lack thereof. Those whose fathers are not Jordanian, without permanent citizenship, experience being a Palestinian in Jordan differently than those individuals with more permanence. While the last chapter sought to explain the nuances of Palestinian citizenship under Jordanian law, this chapter will reveal how these variations affect the formation of Palestinian identity, according to my interview participants. I will keep all participants anonymous, as I asked them to discuss potentially sensitive political viewpoints. I will only make reference to their gender, age, or occupation as it is contextually appropriate.

3.2 Breaking Down the Levels of Citizenship

As addressed in the previous chapter, multiple classifications of citizenship exist for Palestinians in Jordan. Understandably, my interview participants did not always know the exact category under which they fall, given the complexity of this system. Nor did I fully grasp the different tiers before conducting my interviews. Thus, I have simplified the tier system into four distinct categories for the purpose of my analysis. My analysis condenses the categories into the four categories found in Figure 3.1. The following chart shows the percentage of participants in each category:

- Jordanian Passport and Ability to Travel to Palestine (Yellow Card)
- Jordanian Passport Only - No Crossing Card
- No Jordanian Passport
- Two Year Passport - Blue Card

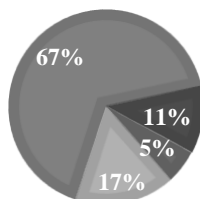


Figure 3.1: Condensed Tiers of Citizenship

I received a broad range of responses to my interview questions. However, some key themes emerged that showed a connection between a person's citizenship status and their sense of identity. I received similar responses to my questions from people with the same citizenship status. Generally, those individuals with permanent Jordanian citizenship who also have the ability to travel between the West and East Banks feel the most fluid about their identity. My participants also revealed that the less permanence someone has in Jordan, the more strongly connected they feel to Palestine. I will explore the nuances of this trend in more detail in this chapter.

3.3 The Citizen Experience – A Dual Identity

Additional Law 56 gave Palestinians Jordanian citizenship, and I found citizenship, or a lack thereof, to be one of the most salient contributors to the formation of Palestinian identity. A common theme among my participants is the link between holding Jordanian citizenship and feeling connected to both Jordanian and Palestinian societies equally. Of my 12 participants who have permanent citizenship, all but one mentioned in some capacity that they feel a sense of dual identity between Jordan and Palestine¹⁴. Those whose families migrated to Jordan shortly after 1948 retained full citizenship and the rights that come with that status. My interview participants indicate that this significantly affects how they balance their Palestinian and Jordanian identities.

¹⁴ The one person who did not express this sentiment was a young man who had spent most of his childhood in a Palestinian refugee camp just outside of Amman. He explained to me that he feels fully Palestinian, saying "In my heart, I feel I am Palestinian. I studied in the UNRWA schools. I think that has made me feel Palestinian more than Jordanian. Because I lived in a refugee camp." He also noted that "If I say I am Jordanian, this will mean I have forgotten Palestine." An interesting point for further exploration would be the relationship between life in Jordan's refugee camps and the formation of identity.

One participant, whose grandparents gained citizenship shortly after 1948, feels that Jordanians and Palestinians are equal in Jordanian society. He explained a sense of brotherhood between Jordan and Palestine, noting that culturally and socially, the two countries are the same. When prompted about his hopes for the future of Palestine, he explained that he envisioned Palestine and Jordan merging to create one state. Though he was the only person to indicate a hope for Palestine and Jordan one day becoming one state, I heard this sentiment of brotherhood between the two cultures frequently throughout my interviews.

Indeed, every person with full citizenship cited the cultural similarities between Jordan and Palestine as a key factor for the sense of dual identity that they feel. They do not feel that there is a disconnect between Jordan and Palestine, and thus they do not have to give up Palestinian cultural values by living in Jordan because of these cultural similarities. One participant explained, when asked about cultural differences between Jordan and Palestine, “Foreign people ask this a lot. There is no difference.” This similarity allows them to align themselves with cultural values that are not necessarily distinct to one place or another, but representative of a broader identity.

Beyond feeling connected to both Jordan and Palestine, participants from all levels of citizenship, expressed this idea of a pan-Arab identity. As one noted, the current nation-state borders are a result of European colonialism. France and England decided where to draw the borders, subsequently separating Palestine from Jordan. Thus, many participants do not view the borders as a true division between the two countries. Another participant, a middle-aged male, explained:

Between the people, as people, there is no problem. Palestinians and Jordanians are one people. Jordan was ‘created’ a hundred years ago. The land was one, Jordan, Palestine, and Syria. All of this is new. A lot of people are married with each other. There is no problem between the people. Before the creation of the

state of Israel, across the river, across the valley, the relationships were not divided east and west as they are now. People of Irbid¹⁵ were trading, communicating, visiting, with people of Haifa¹⁶. The land was interconnected, from north to south.

As one participant explained to me when I asked him about how he identifies himself:

“There is no one answer. I am Arab, then Muslim, then Palestinian.” I argue that the integration of the Palestinian people into Jordanian society, made possible by policy, has allowed Palestinians to construct this dual sense of identity, or a broader, pan-Arab identity. If Palestinians had no upward mobility within Jordanian society, and therefore had no option to make a fulfilling life for themselves within Jordan, their identity may have formed in response to Jordan as the ‘other.’ Instead of Jordan being the other to Palestine, the two identities are interconnected, and Palestinian identity has formed in cohesion with Jordanian identity.

3.4 Discrimination Against the Majority

Despite the sentiments of brotherhood and interconnected identities between Jordan and Palestine as evidenced in the previous section, being Palestinian in Jordan is not always without struggle. Palestinians outnumber native Jordanians throughout the country. Amman houses the most significant division with a population of roughly 70% Palestinians. Yet, the native Jordanian population controls the public sector and the army, as a result of the policies spurred by Black September, and the Palestinian population does not always feel accurately represented by their government as a result. As one participant, a young man with Jordanian citizenship explained:

¹⁵ Jordanian city to the north of Amman.

¹⁶ Israeli city on the Mediterranean Sea.

Let's talk about police force and army. Only 4 percent of these departments are accepted to be of Palestinian origin. The rest has to be Jordanian. The ones who get accepted, they rarely get any higher rank. The majority of our people are Palestinian. Literally every policeman you see in the streets are Jordanian, but every civilian you see is Palestinian.

Another man, who moved to Jordan from Palestine as a young child during the war of 1967

notes:

Representation is to be proportionate, but it's not Palestinian at all. It's supposed to be, that's what I understand. To have the same number of representatives to the relevant number of voters. If that's not discrimination, I don't know what is, in my opinion. There is discrimination in the system of voting, for example, over the years. Since 1970, ever since then there was more Jordanization of certain government bodies. Very few Palestinians. This created discrimination. If I get stopped by traffic and I get a ticket for something, which happens a lot, the other guy who is Jordanian, has a much easier time. He would say his tribe name and many of the policemen know his tribe. That's what's weakening Jordan.

My participants spoke openly about discrimination they have faced both by the Jordanian government, and by people of Jordanian origin. Being Palestinian and not having such deeply rooted connections helps create this sense of discrimination, as Palestinians cannot easily ascend the ranks to high-powered government or military jobs. Thus, those of Jordanian origin maintain control of the government, leaving the Palestinian community underrepresented in government affairs. According to Gandolfo, Black September "etched deep scars into the relationship between the two communities," and that from then on, the Jordanian government has taken measures to erase certain Palestinian narratives from the history books (Gandolfo 2012, 152). She affirms that Black September perpetuated the act of 'othering' within a domestic framework, pitting the Jordanian government against the Palestinians, and exacerbating tensions among the people.

On a more interpersonal level, my participants discussed discrimination that they have felt from native Jordanians. Some felt none at all, and referred back to that idea of brotherhood between Palestine and Jordan. I found that those who had grown up outside of Amman, in

communities with more native Jordanians, felt more discrimination than those who grew up in the city, where Palestinians are the vast majority. Experiencing discrimination is not specific to Palestinians with or without Jordanian citizenship—participants from both categories mentioned it. 14 out of 18 participants mentioned that they had either seen discrimination, or experienced it directly from native Jordanians. I argue that the policies enacted under King Hussein have contributed to the continuous existence of discrimination among Jordanians and Palestinians. While Palestinians had previously been considered a part of Jordan without question, Hussein's tiered system of documentation created a rift among the two groups. To be considered a Jordanian, one had to be a certain type of Palestinian. Though 14 participants cited discrimination as an issue, most held that it is not prevalent enough to concern them. They affirmed that the younger generation is starting to outgrow some of the biases that their parents held, which is a step in the right direction for full cohesion.

3.5 Stateless

While those with Jordanian citizenship feel more connected to Jordan and more satisfied with how the Jordanian government has treated the Palestinian people, those without citizenship had vastly different experiences. The Nationality Law does not allow women to pass their nationality to their children. I saw the effects of this policy firsthand while talking with people whose mothers hold Jordanian citizenship, but whose fathers do not. I spoke with two people with these circumstances. They both have lived in Jordan for their entire lives, and they face significant challenges at the hands of the Jordanian government, as they do not have certain rights under the law. This law is especially challenging for my participants in the realm of education. Both individuals were students at the University of Jordan, and they explained the

inequity between Palestinians with a Jordanian passport and those without when it comes time to pursue a university degree. Those individuals without Jordanian citizenship cannot take out loans, nor are they eligible for scholarships from universities, according to one of my participants. “That’s really the biggest problem I face, and I’m still facing it,” she explained. Also, those without citizenship cannot own property. The aforementioned participant’s brother wanted to buy a car, but without Jordanian citizenship, he had to register it under his mother’s name and not his own. Such is the case for any large piece of property, such as a car or a home. Palestinians without citizenship cannot purchase these items in their name, and they must rely on family members to do so for them.

In general, my interview subjects exemplify a tendency of those lacking Jordanian citizenship to express less loyalty to Jordan. They are more intent on either returning to Palestine one day, or leaving the region for a different country. One participant provided a salient theoretical example about this idea of feeling loyal to one’s country:

If I had a conversation with somebody from the Finland government, and he asked me, like, he wanted to know, and he asked me for himself: If you got Finnish citizenship, would you be loyal to Finland? I told him, of course I would be loyal to Finland, but if you’re giving me the rights as a human, I must be loyal. My children will be Finnish.

Another participant echoed this sentiment, saying that Palestinians will be loyal to countries that treat them with respect. In this person’s experience, he explained that he does not feel respect from the Jordanian government, as he has limited rights. This observation was common among people without Jordanian citizenship, both those with a Blue Card from Gaza, and those whose fathers are not Jordanian. When asked about the government, these individuals expressed disdain for the lack of assistance it provides to Palestinian refugees, even those who have lived in Jordan for their entire lives. People in this category, despite voicing their frustrations with the

government, expressed gratitude to the Jordanian government for doing what it can for the Palestinian people. They acknowledged that Jordan was given the daunting task of handling refugee populations not only from Palestine, but from several other countries in the region as time went on.

Indeed, opinions about treatment of the Palestinian population by the Jordanian government differed significantly. As one participant explained:

I can buy houses; I can buy cars. They treat me like a Jordanian...I have to follow some regulations regarding the Jordanian people who are originally from Palestine, but it's not like a big difference or big problem. Instead of going to the Jordanian authority to renew your passport, you have to go to a different authority. And also as I told you before, a lot of Jordanian people support the Palestinian case, and they consider us like their case.

All participants with Jordanian nationality shared this sentiment, at least to some degree. One participant explained that the government has always been good to the Palestinians, though sometimes he feels slight differences in treatment. This idea is the key difference among those who are happy with the Jordanian government. Some say that they feel there is no differences in their treatment of the Palestinian people compared to the native Jordanians, whereas others are content with the government, yet do notice some subtle differences.

3.6 A Life Without واسطة [Wāsiṭah]

Regardless of citizenship status and the rights that accompany that status for Palestinians in Jordan, professional and social discrimination exists. Almost every participant told me how the concept of واسطة [wāsiṭah], has affected their experience as a Palestinian in Jordan. Wasitah directly translates to *connections* in English, but it holds a much more nuanced meaning for Arabs. People use wasitah to describe nepotism, and the concept of having high-powered connections in society. As one participant explained, Jordan has “lots of corruption based on families. This country is a shame-based society, based on reputation in the family.” Before the

initial wave of Palestinian refugees in 1948, Jordanian society was structured around tribal and familial units. The wealthier, high-powered families had control over those with less wealth, and thus the system remains that persons from high-status families will enjoy ample economic opportunity (Gandolfo 2012). Palestinians do not have such connections, and there is less opportunity for them, even if they have Jordanian citizenship.

There are several governmental sectors that ban Palestinians completely, but the majority technically allows them under the law (Refworld). In practice, however, my participants said it is exceedingly difficult to find employment without *wasitah*. Long-established Jordanian families still control many sectors of employment, and will hire those with familial connections. Furthermore, once a person of Palestinian origin does find a job, he or she might experience some disadvantages that native Jordanians may not face. In some instances, these disadvantages are blatant discrimination. For example, one participant believes he lost his job due to his Palestinian origin. He had a heated disagreement with a colleague, who then reported him to his company's Human Resources department. His boss, a native Jordanian, expressed anti-Palestinian sentiments directly to him, shortly before firing him. He believes that, had he been Jordanian, he could have retained his employment. This story is the only extreme example of discrimination in the workplace that I heard from my participants, but others have explained more subtle instances of discrimination due to their lack of *wasitah*. Two individuals, both of whom hold Jordanian nationality, told me stories of losing a job to a native Jordanian who had fewer credentials than them for the position. They cited their lack of *wasitah* as the reason for this.

Some Palestinians in Jordan have taken a different approach to establishing connections, and combatting their lack of *wasitah*. One participant, a man in his twenties with Jordanian

citizenship, explained that both his paternal grandfather and his father attempted to completely “Jordanize” themselves upon relocating to Jordan. This man explained that his father “thinks, walks and talks like a Jordanian.” His father and grandfather were both in the Jordanian army, and they expected all of the subsequent sons of the family to do the same. He said that he knows plenty of other Palestinians families who took the same approach once they settled in Jordan. This mentality created a massive rift among his extended family. Certain family members wanted to completely assimilate with the culture, and abandon their Palestinian roots. My participant adopted that mindset for a short time, but ultimately decided to research the subject on his own and form his own opinions. He took an entirely different approach to his identity, and for a significant portion of his adolescent years, he wanted to be a martyr for Palestine. When prompted about where he stands now, he said:

I’d rather focus on myself than be a martyr like some of my friends. They started an association after Donald Trump announced the capital of Israel is Jerusalem. Some of them were arrested. They get released, they get arrested, they get released again...that’s their life. What is that going to do? I’d rather work on myself than become a martyr and destroy my career and have it go on my record.

No other participant expressed a similar narrative. To varying degrees, my other participants’ families kept them engaged with their Palestinian roots. This story begs the question of how Jordan’s immigration policy at the time could have influenced this man’s father in his decision to completely immerse himself in Jordanian culture. He grew up during the time when the Jordanian army allowed Palestinian people to enlist, and he did so. Was his mindset a product of his time in the army, or did he join the army to further prove to himself and his fellow countrymen that he was loyal to Jordan? Regardless of the answer to that question, it seems evident in this man’s case that his time in the army instilled a sense of Jordanian nationalism within him that I did not hear from any other participant. Most felt burdened by their lack of

wasitah, need to work especially hard to achieve the successes of their Jordanian counterparts, due to their lack of established familial connections. The Jordanian government, though not by decree, encourages this tribal system, especially for filling jobs in the public sector, which has alienated Palestinians from certain functions of Palestinian life.

3.7 Keeping Palestine Alive

The majority of my participants have never spent significant time in Palestine. Only three people that I spoke with possess the proper documentation to return to Palestine, and one left Palestine as a young child. With that in mind, I asked every participant a series of questions about how they stay in touch with their Palestinian identity, and how, or if, they hope to keep their familial and cultural history alive for generations to come. My participants expressed feeling empowered by the sense of global awareness for the Palestinian case, explaining that it is not merely a Palestinian issue, but a global one. The Palestinian case should continue to attract the attention of other Arab countries, and the rest of the world alike. Yet, whether someone actively strives to stay connected to Palestine remains a personal issue, one that prompted a vast array of different answers from my participants. As one person put it:

In Palestine, you can find a lot of people not giving a s*** about Palestine. Here, same. And you find that some Jordanian people love Palestine more than Jordan. Because it's an Arab issue. Traditional issue, religious issue. All these things together. But for me, I don't prefer. Because my life is here, not in Palestine at all. You should keep it for history, it should be a site, but for living there, I don't think it's a good idea for me.

This participant, a 37-year-old man, holds a permanent Jordanian passport and a Palestinian ID that allows him to travel to the West Bank. This perspective has given him the experience to speak to the opinions of Palestinians in Palestine proper. He acknowledged the complexity

behind the Palestinian case in the Arab world, explaining how some non-Palestinian Arabs might feel more strongly about the Palestinian case than some Palestinians themselves.

Indeed, many participants acknowledged the significance of the Palestinian cause, and the importance of educating and exposing the world to the history of the ongoing conflict, without any personal desire to involve themselves in the fight. This further strengthens support for the trend introduced in section 3.3, arguing that those whose families had the opportunity to begin their lives in Jordan with complete citizenship feel more connected to Jordan, and thus have less urgency to move back to Palestine proper.

Regarding the desire to return to Palestine, I devised an illuminating question half-way through my data collection. I began asking my participants, “If you had the option to move to Palestine now, would you?” Everyone I asked said no, regardless of citizenship status, or other individual life experiences. They explained that their lives are in Jordan, and they would not wish to live under Israeli occupation. Some people do not wish to stay in Jordan for their entire lives, and want to move elsewhere. Indeed, one of my participants moved to Chile shortly after our interview, and has since sent me photo updates. However, they still find small ways to keep Palestine with them. Staying connected to their origins is important for most of my participants. “We must stay connected to our roots. If you cut your roots, you will die,” said one participant. As another explained, “I have the Palestinian flag in my room, I wear the Palestinian map as a necklace and love to let it be seen, plus I love to wear traditional clothes in occasions such as my graduation.” Given the interconnectedness of Jordanian and Palestinian society, my participants said they usually feel comfortable expressing their Palestinian identities in public, especially in Amman, where the majority of the population is of Palestinian origin. I heard one exception to

this trend, with one participant saying he does not feel comfortable expressing his Palestinian identity in public. “When asked where I’m from, I say, ‘I’m from here.’”

Palestinians have traveled all over the world, and have developed large communities on all continents. That large-scale migration has made this a global issue, as certain participants explained. One participant said that “Palestine is a global case. You can feel Palestinian whether you are Palestinian or not. It is the first strong case that happened in the Arab world. It was the foundation of other problems in the Middle East.” Another shared this idea of Palestine being relevant globally, saying “Palestine is a humanity case. It’s not a case for myself. You can support Palestinians and still be American, still be a human being and support Palestinian rights.” As another participant explained, “Don’t just take Palestine out of the equation. You can’t do it. Because you can take it out of the books, you can take it off the internet...but our values, our homeland, you cannot take it from us.” My participants felt encouraged by the vast number of Palestinian communities around the world, because the large presence of Palestinians globally will prevent the issue from fading from people’s minds.

Most of my participants expressed a desire to pass a strong sense of Palestinian identity on to their children, in a way that their parents and grandparents did for them. I asked the same question of all of my participants about what their older relatives told them about Palestine, and I received similar answers. They mentioned simpler, more pleasant times in Palestine, back when it was primarily farmland. Though my participants have not experienced this for themselves, they want to pass on the memory of Palestine to their children. “I will teach them that they are originally Palestinian,” said one participant. One explained that she wants to decorate her future home with Palestinian flags and artifacts, as well as those from Jordan, to help her children celebrate their multiple identities.

3.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter provided an overview of the data collected from my interviews in Jordan. I focus specifically on 18 out of the 22 people I spoke with in Jordan, as they have spent the majority of their lives, since birth or early childhood, in Jordan. My participants help me understand the nuanced system of citizenship that exists in Jordan, and how it continues to impact Palestinians as they try to establish a life there. The individuals I spoke with ranged from Palestinians with full citizenship, who have full rights under the law, to those who have spent their entire lives in Jordan on a temporary visa. Through speaking with people of all ranges of citizenship, it becomes clear that how one feels about Jordan, and in turn, Palestine, can be influenced by the type of citizenship distinction they hold. Those with Jordanian citizenship felt more established in Jordan, and thus, they felt both Jordanian and Palestinian. Those without permanent Jordanian citizenship felt more strongly connected to their Palestinian roots. Regardless of citizenship, Palestinian people in Jordan often feel disadvantaged in some capacity due to a lack of *wasitah*. Without the long-standing familial connections that native Jordanian families have, it is more difficult to find employment in many sectors. Even after finding employment, Palestinians may face discrimination in the workplace. In sum, the most salient trend throughout my interviews rested on the discussion of a dual identity between Palestine and Jordan, or, a pan-Arab identity shared with countries throughout the region. I argued that Jordan's policies have influenced the development of these identities. And, although these ideas are not universally shared among Palestinians in Jordan, the allure of permanent citizenship and thus the chance for a stable and productive life have made Jordan one of the more desirable locations for resettlement within the Palestinian diaspora.

Chapter Four: Policy and Identity in Saudi Arabia

4.1 Introduction

While Jordan and Palestine have a deeply rooted historical and political connection, other Arab countries have not been as welcoming to Palestinians. Gulf states, in particular, such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Kuwait do not grant citizenship to Palestinians (Refworld). The Saudi Nationality System makes obtaining citizenship nearly impossible for foreigners (Refworld). For the thousands of Palestinians displaced after 1948, Saudi Arabia was a viable option, as it had economic opportunities, especially for the educated class of Palestinians. A 2003 report estimated anywhere between 123,000 and 290,000 Palestinians living in the Kingdom (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2017). That number is an approximation, as no official count exists in Saudi Arabia given their stringent refugee policies.

Palestinians in Saudi Arabia often hold travel documents or residency papers from different countries. Many came through Egypt, others through Syria or Lebanon, and many Palestinian-Jordanians travel to the Kingdom with their Jordanian passports (Obeid and Hameed 2018). Palestinians born and raised in Saudi Arabia do not have citizenship, and live on temporary resident papers. In this chapter, I will argue that Saudi policies toward Palestinian immigrants and refugees have affected Palestinian identity among those living there. Notably, the Saudi government does not give citizenship to Palestinians, nor does it recognize Palestinians as refugees. Thus, Palestinian people living there feel no connection to Saudi Arabia. They feel like outsiders, and the Saudi government considers them foreigners. Thus, they identify most strongly with Palestine. Yet, Palestinian identity to them looks different than it does among Palestinians in Jordan. They are farther removed from Palestine, they are not surrounded by

fellow Palestinians, and they have created lives for themselves in Saudi Arabia—all factors that have shaped their sense of identity into a unique entity, one that looks different from Palestinian identity elsewhere. At the heart of these differences lies Saudi policies. This chapter serves as a brief supplement to the more extensive work on Jordan done in chapters two and three, and to create a framework for potential further research that could apply my thesis to other countries.

To explain this argument, I will present an overview of Saudi immigration policy, as it pertains to Palestinian immigrants. I will discuss the longstanding traditions surrounding the Kingdom’s immigration policy, and I will explore the minor changes that have occurred throughout the past few decades. I focus on the policies that I argue have the greatest effect on the formation of Palestinian identity. Then, I will discuss the findings from my primary source collection of interviews, and conclude by discussing the connection between policy and identity.

4.2 Saudi Nationality System

4.2.1 The foreigner is the non-Saudi

The Saudi Nationality System¹⁷, developed in 1914, outlines nationality within the Kingdom. Several key clauses stand out as discriminatory, especially as they pertain to Palestinian immigrants. Under section one, clause three, the statement reads: “The foreigner is the Non-Saudi” (Refworld). Whereas my interview subjects in Jordan suggested a sense of comradery throughout the Arab world, one which includes Palestinians, this clause suggests that a person of non-Saudi origin might struggle to find community and acceptance within Saudi

¹⁷ Refworld translated the Nationality System from Arabic to English, and it is widely available online.

Arabia, Arab or not. Indeed, the Saudi government has little opportunity for foreigners to acquire citizenship and become completely naturalized into Saudi Arabia. According to this system, foreigners may only be granted residence with proof of employment, and the Kingdom gives strong preference to those with higher degrees, engineers in particular (Refworld). This policy leaves no room for refugees, or those who are struggling to find a place to start over.

4.2.2 No such thing as a refugee

Palestinians could not have come to Saudi Arabia as refugees under any circumstances. The word “refugee” is nowhere to be found in the Saudi Nationality System’s documentation of policy, implying that the state does not legally recognize those seeking asylum. Thus, Saudi Arabia has attracted wealthier, more educated Palestinians who meet the employment requirements for residency. Lacking the option of refugee status, Palestinians, among other asylum seekers, must live as working expatriates within Saudi Arabia. Additionally, they are not entitled to the benefits of UNRWA and other refugee-serving organizations (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2017). Working in Saudi Arabia without citizenship, merely with residency status, severely limits one’s rights. Employers reserve the right to keep the passport of an employee with residency status in their possession, which hinders their ability to travel throughout Saudi Arabia, and the rest of the world, including to return to their home country (Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada 2017).

4.3 Exclusionary Measures

Given that Saudi Arabia does not recognize refugees, relocating to Saudi Arabia was not a realistic option for many fleeing Palestine in times of conflict with Israel. Thus, major policy

shifts aligned with the wars of 1948 and 1967, as we see in Jordan, have not occurred in the same way. Rather, Saudi immigration policy has shifted around their economy, following the demand for foreign laborers as oil prices rise and fall globally (Pakkiasamy 2004). However, compared to neighboring Arab states that have had to help accommodate the growing Palestinian diaspora, policy has not shifted much at all since the creation of the Palestinian diaspora, with the exception of several restrictions.

KSA¹⁸ has a long history of relying on foreign labor to boost their market. Though Saudi Arabia has an abundance of natural resources, it lacks human capital, and thus turned to foreign labor as a more cost-effective option than training and mobilizing the native population (Yüceşahin and Doğandor 2020). Beginning in the 1970s as oil prices plummeted globally, and continuing after the Gulf War of 1991 that exacerbated economic turmoil within the Kingdom, the Saudi government has attempted to localize the labor force and rely much less heavily on foreign labor (Pakkiasamy 2004). KSA wanted to localize the labor force to decrease unemployment rates among Saudi nationals, and to bolster the economy domestically (Pakkiasamy 2004). In 2003, the Saudi Manpower Council announced its ambitions to reduce the number of foreign workers and their families to no more than 20% of the total population by 2013, primarily focusing on the airline, oil, and banking sectors of the economy (Pakkiasamy 2004). Efforts to decrease the foreign labor force in Saudi Arabia ranged from bans on hiring foreigners in certain economic sectors, to more drastic measures, such as raiding and deporting companies with large amounts of foreign workers (Pakkiasamy 2004). Palestinians, having never

¹⁸ King of Saudi Arabia

been issued Saudi passports, were considered a part of this foreign labor force that needed to be diminished.

Despite these efforts to localize the labor force, the Saudi government recognized the need for specialized labor that foreigners can bring to the Kingdom, and accordingly moved to accommodate those with higher educations (Pakkiasamy 2004). In 2004, the Saudi Council of Ministers passed a resolution that allows expatriates who have lived in the Kingdom for more than ten years to apply for citizenship, giving extra consideration to those who hold specific scientific degrees (Freund 2004). However, this policy did not extend to Palestinians in the Kingdom. The Council claimed that this measure served “to avoid dissolution of their identity and protect their right to return to their homeland” (Freund 2004). While this would appear to be a noble cause, this measure was likely the product of the Saudi government’s efforts to localize the labor force, and had no genuine intentions to help preserve the Palestinian identity. By withholding the possibility of naturalization from the Palestinian community, the Saudi government could bolster the numbers of highly skilled foreigners whose countries have more stability than Palestine. Such workers could potentially return to their home countries as the Saudi government becomes less dependent on foreign labor. Palestinians, though they may not be labeled as such in the Kingdom, are refugees, and thus would be more likely to remain in Saudi Arabia without the option of returning to a stable home country.

4.4 Supporting Palestine from Afar

In purely examining their domestic policies, Saudi Arabia has little interest in supporting the Palestinian cause. However, philanthropic endeavors by the Saudi government in recent decades would say otherwise. Though restrictive within their borders, the Saudi Arabian

government has consistently provided large sums of money to UNRWA in support of the Palestinian cause. Indeed, KSA is one of the top three donors to UNRWA, and has an expansive record of donating large sums of money over the past several decades (UNRWA 2015).

4.4.1 Saudi Fund for Development

The Saudi Fund for Development (SFD), established in 1974 by royal decree, has been the principal source of funding from the Saudi government to UNRWA. According to the SFD website, their objectives are “to participate in financing development projects in the developing countries by granting them the necessary loans, technical aids necessary for financing studies and institutional support and financing and guaranteeing the national non-crude oil exports.” (UNRWA 2015). As of 2015, UNRWA estimated that Saudi Arabia had donated approximately half a billion dollars to Palestinian aid (UNRWA 2015). This estimate came shortly after one of Saudi’s biggest donations of 111.5 million US dollars to UNRWA. This donation supported every sector of UNRWA’s support for Palestinians, including Palestinians in Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, and the West Bank; the money went to funding public health and education initiatives in these locations (UNRWA 2015). Managing Director H.E. Eng. Yousef Ibrahim Al-Bassam of UNRWA remarked that “the government of Saudi Arabia has long recognized the vital role played by UNRWA in bringing dignity to the refugees of Palestine. This is why the Kingdom stands at the forefront of the international community by providing support to the Agency so it can continue to respond to the needs of Palestinian refugees” (UNRWA 2015).

4.4.2 *More than monetary*

Beyond the substantial financial contributions, Saudi Arabia has made a point to donate material goods, and to invest in tangible projects to help Palestinians. In June of 2010, the Saudi Campaign for the Relief of the Palestinian People donated truck loads full of flour to the Palestinian refugee communities in both Amman and Gaza (UNRWA 2010). This donation was one of several significant donations of supplies in 2010, including two donations of medicines and medical supplies to both Gaza and occupied Palestinian territories (UNRWA 2010). During Ramadan in 2012, the Saudi government donated ten tons of dates to UNRWA to distribute to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon (UNRWA 2012). The report on dates calls Saudi Arabia a “long-standing supporter of Palestinians in Lebanon,” also briefly mentioning that Saudi Arabia pledged 35 million USD to help reconstruct one of Lebanon’s Palestinian refugee camps (UNRWA 2012). Furthermore, in 2014, UNRWA announced a series of agreements with the SDF to construct schools and medical facilities in Gaza and the West Bank (UNRWA 2014). UNRWA’s initiatives, in partnership with the SDF, provided a Gazan university with a new auditorium, as well as a new faculty for the arts and human sciences (UNRWA 2014).

The aforementioned examples are just a few of many significant donations of material goods and money dedicated to a specific cause by Saudi Arabia to UNRWA, and the donations have not slowed down in recent years. Saudi Arabia has shown monetary support for Palestine consistently for decades, claiming to be fighting for Palestinians to help them improve their quality of life. Their financial support has surely made a difference in the lives of many, yet an interesting dissonance exists when examining their domestic policies. Do Palestinians living in Saudi Arabia feel supported and accepted by the Saudi government, and do they feel that Saudi Arabia is as big of an advocate for the Palestinian cause as it claims to be? Saudi immigration

policies would suggest that these exorbitant donations are merely for show. There is a significant disconnect between allocating funds to crises that do not directly affect the KSA, versus what the Saudi government will do for Palestinians seeking refuge within their borders.

4.5 Identity in the Kingdom—Data Collection

My interview collection offers some potential answers to the above questions regarding Saudi Arabia's commitment to the Palestinian cause. In asking the same questions of my participants in Saudi Arabia as I did of individuals in Jordan, they helped to explain the political and social experiences of Palestinians in Saudi Arabia, and how Saudi policies have affected their personal identities. To preserve the anonymity of my two participants, I will again not be using their names. I will instead refer to them as participant X and participant Y.

4.5.1 A highly educated foreign labor force

Participant X, a 27-year-old male, is an electrical engineer from northern Saudi Arabia. He grew up in a small town and moved to Riyadh for a job after university. Participant Y is the brother of participant X. He is also an engineer and is 29 years old. He currently resides and works in eastern Saudi Arabia. Their parents are originally from Gaza and moved to Saudi Arabia in the 1970s. Both participants hold a Palestinian passport and residency status in Saudi Arabia, but have intermittently returned to Palestine, having spent childhood summers in Gaza to visit family.

Both of their parents are highly educated—their father worked as a petrol engineer, and their mother as an Arabic teacher. Their high levels of education and employment correlate with the Saudi government's efforts to limit foreign labor to only those with highly specialized skills.

Participant X explained that Palestinians from the West Bank are much better off than people from Gaza, because they can apply for a Jordanian passport and relocate to Jordan. Their family, being Gazan, does not have that option, and must seek refuge elsewhere when leaving Saudi Arabia. When their father retired, he was not allowed to stay in the Kingdom, as he no longer had a work permit. He decided to move back to Gaza to be with family, most of whom still live there. I asked why his father made the choice to return to Gaza, despite the current desolate living conditions and the complete lack of mobility for its inhabitants, to which participant X responded, “I think a better question would be, where else would he go?”

This Saudi policy, that those without employment cannot remain in the Kingdom, sends a clear message to foreigners living there temporarily. It implies that if one cannot bring utility to the country, they are no longer welcome. Participant X and Y’s father had spent his entire career in Saudi Arabia, but had to leave the moment he retired. This signals to the foreign worker that, no matter their circumstances, they must constantly work should they wish to remain in Saudi Arabia. Not only that, but according to participant X, “If a foreigner is hired at a company, they’re expected to work 10 times as hard as a Saudi, and they receive a quarter of the pay.” This policy does not send a welcoming message to Palestinians living in the Kingdom. Given that Saudi Arabia does not grant asylum to those seeking refuge, any Palestinian that wants to relocate to the Kingdom must have a plan of action before doing so—a plan that, ideally, involves an advanced degree. Thus, Palestinian identity within the Kingdom is influenced by the constant struggle to find and maintain employment, and the drive to out-perform native Saudis on the job, thus exacerbating social divisions between Saudis and foreigners.

4.5.2 *National identities—connections to Saudi Arabia, Palestine, or neither?*

When asked about the experience of being a Palestinian in Saudi Arabia, participant X said he wanted to be “brutally honest.” He described the difficulties of being an outsider in such a homogenized culture, and the discrimination he experienced growing up:

It’s not just about being Palestinian, it’s about being a foreigner in Saudi Arabia. [My hometown], I don’t mean to stereotype people, is full of ignorant Saudis who are extremely racist. It’s not just part of the culture, it’s also systemic in their government. For example, I was born here, my siblings were born here, my father lived here for 35 years, but none of us have a Saudi nationality. This is the case for millions of people.

Thus, despite being Arab, and a native Arabic speaker, participant X has felt foreign in his home country throughout his entire life. Indeed, he hardly considers Saudi Arabia his home country. He describes his childhood as a sort of alternate reality, as he never made any real connections with native Saudis, and only ever made friends with foreigners. His father would keep him and his siblings housebound growing up, as he was nervous about how Saudis would treat his family. Thus, he watched movies, and learned English that way, rather than engaging with the society around him. He expressed a glimmer of hope when discussing his experience at university, where he met Saudi nationals that challenged his perceptions of those he had known growing up. They were open-minded and welcoming, and participant X felt comfortable as a foreigner among Saudis at that stage in his life. Yet, he figures that those people represent only a small sample of the Saudi population. Indeed, he figures that he has only ever had one true friendship with a Saudi. Yet, he does not feel entirely Palestinian, either. When asked about his identity, he explained:

I have the identity of being Palestinian, but whenever I go back there, I’m so different than anybody else there. I don’t feel like I belong there. Also, I don’t belong here. I don’t belong with Saudis at all. I’ve always lived in this limbo. I’ve never felt like I owe this country anything, or that I belong to it or that I have any kind of devotion to it. We’ve seen so many horrible things from the Saudi

government, that it's hard to believe that you belong here. You're constantly reminded that you're a foreigner in Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia's policies, stipulating that the foreigner is the non-Saudi, have had consequences for Palestinians residing within the Kingdom. While participant X does not feel connected to Saudi Arabia, he does not feel fully Palestinian, either. His national identity exists in a sort of "limbo."

Participant Y expressed similar sentiments, but did not agree with participant X entirely.

Participant Y has made more native Saudi friends, and consequently feels marginally more connected to the society:

I have a lot of Saudi friends. I have one Saudi best friend, and other Saudi colleagues at work and at college that I was really fine with, they were very good people. I can speak their language, their accent...people always tell me that I have a mixture of Palestinian and Saudi accent. I'm adapted to the culture, maybe better than [participant X], but I'm not comfortable with the politics and the decisions that were made against Palestinians here. I feel like I have spent my whole life here, in a culture that is out casting me, and doesn't even want me to be here. So, it's a mix of pain, and also I'm adapted here.

Participant Y has made more lasting connections in Saudi Arabia, which has created a complicated dynamic of feeling like an outcast while simultaneously at home. Participant Y, like participant X, said that he would take the chance to leave Saudi Arabia if given the opportunity for a better life. He also explained that he might miss Saudi Arabia, and the people there, whereas participant X is actively working to relocate currently and did not express any potential remorse over leaving. Thus, both participants have expressed displeasure with the Saudi government's treatment of Palestinian people, and only one of the two have made noteworthy connections with the locals. Regardless of their differing levels of integration into Saudi society, neither participant X nor Y identify as a Saudi. When prompted about how he would explain his national identity to someone, participant Y explained:

It depends on who is asking. If a Saudi person asked, I would say that I'm a Palestinian, but you know, to close the points between us, I would say that I was born here, to give them an idea that I am adapted to your culture. We can understand each other better. But for other people, I would just say that I am Palestinian.

This is a noteworthy distinction, as he does not feel a claim to Saudi identity, despite having lived there for his entire life. Yet, he makes a point to connect with native Saudis when they ask about his origins by saying that he was born in Saudi Arabia. This distinction suggests that participant Y wants to feel integrated into Saudi society, and even though the government's policies work against him, he can take small actions to find belonging in his community. Alternatively, it could be a way to mitigate potential discrimination that he might encounter if he were to omit that fact, and focus exclusively on being Palestinian when identifying himself.

When asked about what being Palestinian means to them, both shared a similar sentiment—the Palestinian people are united globally by their collective sense of suffering. Participant Y said that he felt as though he had a mission, because his people are suffering, and that he always feels as though it is his duty to try to make their lives a little bit better. He explained that “that’s how you grow up with a purpose.” Participant X explained that even though Saudi Arabia does not recognize Palestinians as refugees, they are refugees, and he wants the world to not lose sight of that. Palestinians with high levels of education and successful careers in Saudi Arabia are still refugees in many cases, as they do not have a stable place to return to in their home country. Both participants stay connected to Palestine through stories from their parents, and from the times they have visited Gaza during childhood. But from afar, they feel connected to their Palestinian identities through a shared sense of suffering, as well as through the experience of facing discrimination by the Saudi government. Participant X summarized this sentiment:

My people suffer. I suffer like they suffer, and that always reminds me that I'm a Palestinian, and that's not going to change, that common factor. I don't share much with people from Palestine. At the same time, we all understand this trouble as Palestinians, and that always makes me feel that I'm home, with people who understand what it means to be Palestinian.

Saudi policies have not worked to alleviate the suffering of Palestinians living within the Kingdom. Suffering by Palestinians in Saudi Arabia might look different than that of Palestinian in other countries, but it exists by way of being excluded from Saudi society, even if they spent their entire life there. The inability to identify as a refugee, the need to constantly out-perform native Saudis in the work-place—these factors instill this sense of suffering among Palestinians in Saudi Arabia, thereby uniting them with the Palestinian cause.

Clear divisions exist within the Kingdom between Saudi nationals, and foreigners—but what has this meant for the formation of Palestinian identity among those living in Saudi Arabia? It would be too simplistic to say that, because Saudi Arabia treats them as outsiders, they feel completely Palestinian and harbor no connection to Saudi Arabia. They are connected to Saudi Arabia, even if elements of that connection are painful. To further complicate that dynamic, participant X explained that he does not feel like he is completely at home in Palestine when he returns to visit family. Therein lies a fundamental cornerstone of Palestinian identity—even if all Palestinians were to return to Palestine proper, they may struggle to find cohesion, as they have all been influenced by their places of exile.

4.6 Chapter Summary

Saudi Arabia has a strict immigration policy, one that does not provide much leniency to those seeking asylum. Indeed, they do not use the word 'refugee' when classifying foreigners seeking residency after fleeing violence. Rather, the Saudi government grants foreigners

residency based on what utility they could provide to the Kingdom, and it prioritizes those with high levels of specialized education. As is the case with most Palestinians living in Saudi Arabia, my interview participants came from highly educated families, and they themselves hold specialized degrees. Despite having spent their entire lives in Saudi Arabia, they do not feel a strong sense of connection to the country. One participant has some connections with the locals, but neither would consider themselves to be Saudi, nor are they pleased with how the government has treated them as foreigners. Rather, their Palestinian roots constitute the strongest part of their national identities. Saudi Arabia has created an environment in which the foreigner does not feel completely at ease, no matter the length of their residency. Yet, the Saudi government is the third largest donor to UNRWA. What is the cause of this dissonance, and what are the effects of these policies on the Palestinians living in the Kingdom? By donating to UNRWA, the Saudi government can successfully deflect responsibility for the Palestinian people to other governments and agencies. They can support the Palestinian cause from afar, so as to avoid potential criticisms regarding their stringent immigration policies from outside actors. Neither participant spoke of the Saudi government's significant financial contributions to UNRWA, but instead, they expressed displeasure with Saudi's domestic policies toward Palestinians—thereby suggesting that donations as a way to deflect responsibility has not impressed the Palestinians living in the Kingdom.

Chapter Five: Final Reflections

5.1 Making Sense of a Complex History

This thesis has argued that policy in Jordan and Saudi Arabia has affected the formation of identity among the Palestinian communities residing in the two countries in distinctly different ways. The previous three chapters have provided an in-depth analysis of Jordan and Saudi Arabia individually. I have discussed policies that have most significantly affected the Palestinian communities in both countries, and the subsequent identity formation that has occurred, in part, as a result of these policies. Jordan and Saudi Arabia have taken vastly different approaches to immigration. Jordanians and Palestinians are intrinsically linked; their histories have been intertwined since each country's inception. In contrast, Saudi Arabia is much farther removed from the Palestinian refugee crisis, and is reluctant to grant residency to any Palestinian without an advanced degree. Yet, the Kingdom shows a strong sense of commitment to the Palestinian cause, by donating frequently to UNRWA in support of initiatives to help Palestinian refugees throughout the Arab world. The two countries could not be more different in their approaches, and these differences have had consequences for the Palestinians. This chapter will briefly compare the two cases, and provide insight as to the implications of this study. It will also discuss topics of interest for future research.

5.2 Examining Key Similarities and Differences between Cases

The scholarship has previously acknowledged the multifaceted, intersectional nature of Palestinian identity—it is influenced by a broad range of factors, and it looks different throughout the Palestinian diaspora. Palestinian identity formed as a counter-response to

Zionism, which provided the necessary ‘other’ that national identities require. Palestinian identity has been sculpted by religion, as Islam plays a significant part in being Palestinian. It is also characterized by the collective loss of homeland and status as a refugee, which Palestinians share throughout the diaspora. Previous scholars have addressed how host countries influence identity, specifically to what extent Palestinians can maintain their previously established identity within their host country. This thesis takes the relationship to the host country a step further, and examines how the policies enacted by the host countries have contributed to the formation of identity. Through conducting interviews with Palestinians in Jordan and Saudi Arabia, the link between policy and identity became clear.

Jordan and Saudi Arabia differ substantially in their policy-making toward Palestinians. Most significantly, the two countries differ in their citizenship regulations. Citizenship for Palestinians in Jordan has seen a series of turbulent transformations since 1948. Some have been granted full citizenship, some have had their citizenship revoked, and subsequently, everyone has been categorized into a complicated tier system that not even the Palestinians themselves fully grasp. The unpredictability and uncertainty of these policies has created divisions among the Palestinian community in Jordan, as revealed by my interview participants. While individuals who have a permanent Jordanian passport and can enjoy full rights as citizen feel that being Jordanian factors significantly into their identity, those without such freedoms do not feel that way. My interviews revealed a sense of dual identity that has emerged between Palestine and Jordan, namely among those who have permanent Jordanian citizenship, as well as access to travel to the West Bank. They are proud of their Palestinian roots, and they hope to pass stories and traditions of Palestine to future generations of their family. Simultaneously, they are proud to be Jordanian.

Those without permanent Jordanian citizenship—either because their father does not have citizenship or because they are from Gaza—feel, first and foremost, that they are Palestinian, and do not share in the sentiment of dual identity between Jordan and Palestine. They are subject to more stringent regulations by the Jordanian government, and have faced more difficulties professionally and socially as a result. However, both individuals with permanent citizenship and those without emphasized the idea of a pan-Arab identity over that of individual nation-states—they belong to a collective identity, one that is bigger than only Jordanian or Palestinian. Palestinians with Jordanian citizenship emphasized this idea, as well, of unity among Arab countries. My participants from Saudi Arabia, having been born and raised in Saudi Arabia yet denied citizenship, did not echo this sentiment—they feel excluded from Saudi society, despite being Arab. Even though one of the two explained that he has successfully formed some lasting social connections in the Kingdom, neither identify as Saudi Arabian. In terms of their national identity, they are Palestinian, but that identity comes with the painful associations of the suffering of their people.

Given the differences regarding citizenship and identity between the two cases, I propose a hypothesis—perhaps it is easier to develop a strong sense of dual identity when one already has a solid connection to one place to begin with; thus, giving them the capacity to harbor strong national sentiment for a second country. Having been generally included in society, certain interview participants in Jordan have developed a sense of national pride toward Jordan. Perhaps, by conceptualizing their Jordanian identities, they can then maintain a similar sense of pride for Palestine by association. The Saudi Arabian case is different—instead of highlighting Palestinian pride, my participants explained their sense of being Palestinian as collective suffering.

Yet, in both countries, Palestinians have a chance at finding a fulfilling career. The same cannot be said for all countries in the Arab world. With proper documentation, Palestinians can find legal employment in both Jordan and Saudi Arabia. In both countries, they have a chance at upward mobility in their professional lives, to varying degrees. Domestically, Saudi Arabia does not distinguish a Palestinian from any other foreign national in the kingdom, and the government imposes stringent regulations for those seeking employment and residency. Consequently, most Palestinians who live in the kingdom are well-educated, and work in careers such as engineering, or medicine. In countries like Jordan, where UNRWA works closely with the government to provide resources to struggling refugees, Palestinians have some semblance of a safety net, should they need some extra support while they relocate and resettle. One cannot find such support in Saudi Arabia.

In Jordan, the government does not allow Palestinians to hold certain government offices, nor join the military, regardless of their citizenship status. This policy led Palestinians to move to the private sector, where many have found success. My interview participants held jobs as consultants, bankers, and tax brokers for Jordanian and international companies. Many have made a successful, comfortable life for themselves; thus, allowing them to feel at home in Jordan. Those individuals without citizenship have had more trouble, as they have had to take more time-consuming, fiscally draining steps to procure a proper education. Having to pay more for their education, being unable to own property, and more subtle discriminations have made it difficult for Palestinians without citizenship to establish themselves in Jordan.

5.3 Implications of This Study

I argue that this conceptualization of identity can be applied to all countries within the Palestinian diaspora, as well as different populations of refugees and migrants. Host countries, through their policy-making, have the power to drastically shape identity formation among refugee populations—especially, as with the case of Palestinians, if their collective sense of national identity has developed only recently. This power should not be taken lightly, and there exists a delicate balance between allowing minority/refugee populations to freely express themselves, and excluding them from the national identity of their host country. Jordan has done considerably better than Saudi Arabia, but not without mishaps and flaws that have had unintended consequences for Palestinians. In constructing immigration and refugee policy, host countries should offer a clear path to citizenship for the marginalized populations.

Arguments for extending citizenship to refugees in the Arab world rest on the basis that if Palestinians become naturalized to a new place, they will forget Palestine and give up fighting for the Palestinian cause. This thesis has shown that this is false. Rather, Palestinians who feel comfortable in their host countries have the resources and will to maintain and explore their connections to Palestine. Those who do not have that sense of security are merely focused on trying to create a better life for themselves. Granting a refugee citizenship does not mean that they will abandon their connection to their host country, but rather, that they could potentially have the means to return and rebuild one day. And even if they do choose to focus on establishing roots in their new society, giving them the chance for upward mobility would be the only logical strategy, and one that would be mutually beneficial for both the host and the migrant.

5.4 Future Research

First, this study would benefit from a more diverse pool of interview participants, in Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, especially. As noted in chapter three, the one participant who had spent his childhood in a refugee camp had a different perspective than the rest of my participants. A deeper analysis could benefit from more perspectives of Palestinians from refugee camps. The case study in Saudi Arabia should include female perspectives, as well multigenerational perspectives. It might be more difficult to find a variance of educational background, given that Palestinians generally need to hold advanced degrees to find employment. Furthermore, I have identified a couple points of interest for future research that intrigued me during the interview process.

5.4.1 *Policy and generational divides*

Throughout my interviews, I asked all of my participants to explain their family history in Palestine and in Jordan/Saudi Arabia. But, I did not begin prompting them for specific dates and timelines until I realized that those distinctions could be a salient defining piece of identity—about halfway through my interviews. I started to notice significant differences in the responses from people whose families came to Jordan in the initial wave of refugees in 1948, compared to those whose families came in 1967, or later. Older Palestinians often expressed a stronger sense of Palestinian identity than that of the younger generations, like because of their vivid memories of war throughout the 20th century. I would like to further investigate not only the generational divisions among Palestinians, but how the year that they came factors into their identity, as well. Such research exists among Palestinians in Jordan, but I would broaden the scope to include countries with smaller populations of Palestinians, such as Saudi Arabia.

5.4.2 *Global citizens*

Many people I talked to in Jordan had spent considerable time in different places. I found that a high number of participants had worked for a number of years in Gulf countries, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. A few participants had lived in the United States or other Western countries. Two individuals, though Jordanian citizens, had spent the first couple of decades of their life outside of Jordan—one in Kuwait, one in England—and had only recently moved to Jordan. This theme was common among my participants. Even if the individual had not spent time abroad themselves, someone in their family lived elsewhere in the world, and had given them outside perspectives. Or, several of my participants had already begun the process of applying for a work visa in a new country. I spoke with one participant, a man in his early twenties, mere days before he planned to fly to Chile to hopefully start a new life there. He shared a video with me of Chilean-Palestinians partaking in a traditional Palestinian dance at a rally for the liberation of Palestine in Santiago. He said that they must not speak Arabic, because they were saying chants in Arabic that sounded as if they had used Google Translate. It would be interesting to pursue this dynamic as a future point of research—potentially examining identity among Palestinians who live outside of the Arab world, or who have spent significant portions of their lives in several countries.

5.5 **Concluding Remarks**

To end my interviews, I asked my participants about their hopes for the future of Palestine and its people. They all echoed a similar sentiment—that one day, there will be peace among the people of the region. My work cannot provide an answer to the Palestinian refugee

crisis, nor can it make assumptions about what the future holds for the Palestinian people. But, it can help make sense of the complicated dynamics of Palestinian identity, an identity that has grown and flourished in all corners of the world. This thesis serves not only as a sociological exploration of the link between policy and identity, but as a celebration of Palestinian resilience.

APPENDIX A: Semi-Structured Interview Questions in English

1. What is your age, your nationality, and your profession?
2. Please tell me about your family history in Palestine and in Jordan/Saudi Arabia.
3. What does it mean to you to be Palestinian?
4. In what context do you consider yourself Palestinian, and in what context do you consider yourself Jordanian/Saudi Arabian?
5. How do you feel the Jordanian/Saudi government has treated the Palestinian people?
6. What do you hope for the future of Palestine and its people?

APPENDIX B: Semi-Structured Interview Questions in Arabic

- 1 . شو عمرك جنسيتك و عملك؟
- 2 . تحكي شوي عن تريخ العالة في الفلطيني والأردن\السعودي.
- 3 . شو يعني لك أن تكون فلطينيا؟
- 4 . متى تعتبر نفسك أردني ومتى فلطيني؟
- 5 . شو رأيك عن العلاقة بين الحكومة الأردنية والشعب الفلطيني؟
- 6 . شو تأمل في مستقبل فلطين والشعب الفلطيني؟

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