

THE IMPACT OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES ON LEBANESE POLITICS

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ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES ON LEBANESE POLITICS

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The overall purpose of this thesis is to analyze the impact of the Palestinian refugees on Lebanese politics. The role of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is discussed within the framework of explaining the political character of the Lebanese state. In this context the Lebanese state's perception concerning the Palestinians refugees in Lebanon is analyzed through explaining the living conditions of the refugees and the Palestinian military and political activities in Lebanon as well as the restrictions of the Lebanese laws and regulations on the Palestinian refugees. It is argued that the Lebanese state follows discriminatory policies against the existence of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

Keywords: Lebanese state, Palestinian refugees, marginalized laws and regulations

ÖZ

FİLİSTİNLİ MÜLTECİLERİN LÜBNAN SİYASETİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİSİ

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Yüksek Lisans Ortadoğu Araştırmaları Bölümü

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Bu tezin genel amacı Filistinli mültecilerin Lübnan siyaseti üzerindeki etkisini analiz etmektir. Lübnan'daki Filistinli mültecilerin rolü Lübnan Devleti'nin siyasi karakteri çerçevesinde açıklanmıştır. Bu bağlamda Lübnan'daki Filistin askeri ve siyasi faaliyetleri, Filistinli mültecilerin yaşam koşulları bunun yanı sıra Filistinli mültecilerle ilgili kısıtlayıcı Lübnan yasa ve yönetmelikleri üzerinden Lübnan Devleti'nin Filistinli mültecilerle ilgili algısı analiz edilmiştir. Lübnan Devleti'nin ülkedeki Filistinli mültecilerin varlığına karşı ayrımcı politikalar izlediği iddia edilmiştir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Lübnan Devleti, Filistinli mülteciler, marjinal kanunlar ve düzenlemeler

Dedicated to my devoted family

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INTRODUCTION

The issue of the Palestinian refugees is one of the most chronic problems of the Middle East. The refugee problem started amid the Arab Israeli conflict, and mounted with the several wars which erupted between the Arabs and the Israelis. Each of those wars left behind thousands of displaced and homeless people who evacuated their lands fearing the tragedy of the wars.

Like all the socio-political phenomena, there are different and contradictory views explaining the reasons which created the problem of the refugees, those views are mostly biased to one side against the other; in the sense that the pro-Israel academics and historians blame the Arabs for voluntarily leaving their homes and lands and departing to other countries. On the other hand, the pro-Arab historians blame the establishment of the state of Israel for being the main reason behind the refugee problem. They are convinced that the Zionist ideology applied violent policies against the Palestinians and forced them to evacuate their lands.

Irrespective of this debate around the reasons of the problem, which I explained in details in chapter two, the refugee problem is a clear fact and is experienced by different Arab countries. The Palestinian refugees live in different Arab countries like Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Egypt, and the Arab Gulf States, however in the literature the Palestinian refugees of Lebanon has a very special situation which differentiates them from the other Palestinian refugees in the aforementioned countries. It is believed that the Palestinians in Lebanon have the worst living conditions compared to the Palestinian refugees in the other Arab countries. In Khalidi's words: "the Palestinians in Lebanon have by no means lived a life of ease."¹ Thus, this thesis aims to question the validity of these general understandings and widespread thoughts about the refugees in Lebanon, by

¹ Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians in Lebanon: Social Repercussions of Israel's Invasion", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring 1984), p. 257.

highlighting the status and living conditions of those refugees, as well as the dynamics and interaction between them and the Lebanese state.

In order to understand the circumstances and the background which led to that special situation which the Palestinians witness in Lebanon, this thesis explains the special nature of the Lebanese political system which is historically based on a system known as "the confessionalism". Confessionalism is a system of government based on distributing political power proportionally among the religious communities and based on the population census of 1932. Taking into consideration the fragile balance between the three main religious sects of the Lebanese society; Sunni Muslims, Shi'a Muslims, and the Maronites, and the facts that majority of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are Sunni Muslims, the Lebanese people have been considering the Palestinian refugees as a threat to that fragile confessional system, as their containment in the society would increase the power of the Sunni sect.

That feeling of suspicion by the Lebanese people towards the Palestinian refugees, together with the political activities of the those Palestinians out of the control of the Lebanese government, led the Lebanese government, backed by a wide sector of the Lebanese society, to take a harsh stance against the refugees, and to limit their access to the Lebanese institutions, so as to minimize their impact on the Lebanese internal politics.

In order to explain the situation about the life of the Palestinians in Lebanon, the thesis underlined several aspects relating to the daily life of the Palestinians, such as the labor laws, the land property rights, and other public rights and freedoms. The study listed the types of limitations and constraints which are imposed against the Palestinians in Lebanon. Taking this into consideration, it could be argued that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live a life which can be characterized by deprivation, and conflicts, as well as marginalization by the Lebanese government. The thesis argues that the Lebanese suspicion against the Palestinians within the concerns of the fragile confessional system had played the crucial role in shaping the political stance towards those refugees. In this regard, it is noteworthy to mention that the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were considered by different segments of the Lebanese society as being responsible for the problems facing the

country; the biggest and most tragic of these problems being the Lebanese civil war of 1975.

It could be mentioned that although there seems to be many studies concerning the Palestinian refugees, the studies about the relations between the Lebanese state and the Palestinian refugees are scarce. This thesis will contribute to alleviate this limitation in literature especially as it had translated some of the Lebanese laws and regulations from Arabic to English. The translated laws and regulations will support my arguments while explaining the impact of the Palestinian refugees on Lebanese politics, and the Lebanese policies towards the Palestinian refugees.

In order to understand the problem of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, an explanation to the political system and the historical background of the Republic of Lebanon is highlighted in chapter one. That chapter explains the developments in the Lebanese political system since the French mandate adopted the principles of "the confessional system" in the first constitution of Lebanon in 1926, until the adoption of the current political system, set up according to the Ta'if Accord (1989), which put an end to the lengthy civil war (1975-1990). The Lebanese civil war is also dealt with in chapter one. The chapter also explains the unique structure of the Lebanese society, which is composed of different religious sects. The differences and divergences are deeply rooted in the Lebanese society not only between the different religions, but also between the members of the same religion. This kind of diversity made the situation in Lebanon so fragile, complicated, and very sensitive to the external factors.

In the second chapter, I tried to explain the background of the problem of the Palestinian refugees, how it was created, and how they settled in Lebanon. The subsequent Arab-Israeli wars resulted in further waves of refugees who fled the West Bank and the Gaza strip, seeking safe refuge in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Moreover, some additional thousands of Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon following the fight between PLO and the Jordanian army in 1970. Therefore the second chapter will explain the roots of the Palestinian refugee problem in light of establishment of the State of Israel and the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and the events

that followed. I gave importance to equally highlight the different views which explain the factors and circumstances that created the problem of the refugees.

It is clear that there is no agreement among the historians and academicians on the reasons and factors which created the problem of the Palestinian refugees, and led them to depart their homes to settle in the neighboring countries. The divergence among the historians is another evident of the complicated structure of the problem, and shows that the refugees had faced, from the very beginning, a difficulty in getting their case understood.

In the third chapter, I highlighted the international efforts to handle the refugee problem. The most prominent effort in this regard came with the establishment of the United Nations Refugees and Works Agency (UNRWA), which took the leading role in settling the refugees, and stood as the sole service provider for the twelve refugee camps, especially with the reluctance of the Lebanese state to be involved in official assistance or administration of the camps. The living conditions in the refugee camps are explained in this chapter as well. The chapter argues that the interrelated problems such as overpopulation, lack of infrastructure, health, poverty, education and environmental problems are the problems faced by the refugee camps. Moreover it also argues that such living conditions of the refugees have deteriorated due to the scarce assistance from the international and regional organizations.

Despite the big efforts of the UNRWA, its programmes remain insufficient to meet the demands of the Palestinian refugees due to the high number of refugees and the shortage of the donations, which it receives from the international community. However at this point, it's underlined that although the UNRWA services are inadequate to alleviate the difficulties that the Palestinian refugees experience, it is still vital for them because it is the main service provider in Lebanon. It should be also noted that according to the UNRWA statistics, only half of the refugees are registered in the official camps, thus the other unregistered half receives very

limited financial aid from other donor agencies, which makes the lives of those non-ID refugees worse.²

Chapter four highlights the marginalized Palestinian refugees in the Lebanese political and social life, which became significant mainly as a result of the Lebanese government's regulations against the Palestinian refugees. This chapter argues that as a result of the government policies, the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have significantly deteriorated. In order to clarify these policies, the relevant laws and regulations are examined.

Looking at the Lebanese government's policies, it is clear to see that the Palestinian refugees are almost excluded from the Lebanese society as they are deprived of the Lebanese citizenship. Moreover with respect to the laws and regulations, the other foreigners in the country have more job opportunities compared to the Palestinian refugees. Because they don't have the Lebanese citizenship, the Palestinian refugees are excluded from reaching any governmental services as well as the social insurances that the Lebanese state presents to its citizens. They do not have the right to work in white-collar professions, and their access to the government's health and education facilities is not allowed. Such regulations prohibit the reconstruction, renewal, or rehabilitation of the shelters in the refugee camps as well, the situation which deteriorates the housing conditions in the camps.

The animosity between the Lebanese society and the Palestinian refugees significantly deepened especially after the 1975 civil war. Therefore the chapter also sheds the lights on the Lebanese civil war, which deteriorated the Lebanese economy and increased the animosity against the Palestinian refugees. During the civil war, the mutual attacks between the Lebanese militias and the Palestinian factions increased, and resulted in a high number of death tolls from both sides. The involvement of other countries in the war prolonged the disputes, deepened the divisions between the Lebanese and the Palestinian refugees, and made it hard to bring peace to Lebanon. In the Ta'if Agreement of 1989 which put an end to the

² Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, "Non-IDs", <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/Rights/Areas-of-Work/No-Id-s.aspx>, accessed on March 3, 2012.

civil war, the alienation of the Palestinian refugees from the Lebanese society is evident. After the civil war, the borders of the refugee camps were strictly defined and the security of these borders was controlled by the Lebanese patrols through the military check points. The regulations in the check points became another problem for the Palestinian refugees. In this context, leaving and entering camps, as well as moving freely in Lebanon became restricted with the lengthy procedures such as travel documents, visas, etc. which are difficult to be obtained by the Palestinian refugees.

However the chapter also argues that such strict regulations of the Lebanese state against the Palestinian refugees derives from the fragile sectarian balance in the country. The sensitivity of the structure of the Lebanese society has been evident for long decades. As the majority of the Palestinian refugees are Sunni Muslims, it has always been clear for the Lebanese government that existence of the Palestinian refugees would further change the demographic structure of the country. In this context according to many Lebanese, the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon damage the country politically and economically.

The last chapter is about the Palestinian factions and the political dynamics in Lebanon. This chapter argues that the establishment of Palestinian factions in Lebanon came as a result of the Lebanese discriminatory policies against the Palestinian refugees, together with the weak structure of the Lebanese state. In this context the Palestinian political movements in Lebanon are highlighted in order to underline the “state within a state” problem in Lebanon, which is interrelated with the policies of the Lebanese state.

The chapter highlights the leading role that the Palestinian factions had played among the refugees. The factions have created a motivation for the refugees by linking them with their pre-1948 ties and enhancing their stance against the daily problems they experience in the refugee camps. The social network that the factions created for the Palestinians could not be disregarded, thus the structure of the Palestinian political factions in Lebanon is clarified. However due to the independent activities of such organizations, their attitudes increased the hostilities between the Palestinian refugees and some segments of the Lebanese society, and

created a convenient atmosphere for the eruption of internal conflicts. In this context, the Nahr el-Bared crisis of 2007 which is considered as the most violent conflict after the 1948 is explained.

Besides the internal crises which the Palestinian political and military factions had created, there are also other problems that they caused. Due to their close relations with Syria and the attacks against Israel from the southern Lebanese border, such factions created a terror atmosphere for the Lebanese citizens as well. As a result, the tension between the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese society escalated, and led to deepen the suspicions and the discriminatory policies of the Lebanese government against the refugees.

The chapter also argues that under such difficult conditions for the refugees, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) became the umbrella organization for the variety of other Palestinian factions. Its leading and protective role for the Palestinian refugees is explained, especially after the signing of the Cairo agreement of 1969. As a result of the Cairo Agreement and Jordan's expelling of the PLO members who got an alternative refuge in Lebanon, PLO attacks against the State of Israel from the Lebanese border increased. These attacks put the security of the Lebanese state at risk, especially with the retaliatory raids and attacks launched by Israel against the Lebanese territories. The argument that the PLO activities damages the stability, the sectarian relations in Lebanon, and also threatens Lebanon's power politics in the region is analyzed.³

In addition the chapter debates the decreasing popularity of the PLO among the Palestinian refugees due to its departure from Lebanon in 1982, and the signing of the Oslo Agreement with Israel in 1993. As a result of the PLO's departure, the Palestinian refugees were disappointed. Until that time the PLO was filling the political vacuum, alleviating the inadequate aid, as well as raising the morale of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. It was accepted as the vanguard of the Palestinians. Due to the departure of the PLO from Lebanon, and the consequent events such as the massacres in Sabra and Shatila, led to a feeling of abandonment

³ Farid El Khazen, "Permanent settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon: A recipe for Conflict", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 278.

and deprivation among the Palestinian refugees. Moreover signing of the Oslo Agreement in 1993, further decreased the popularity of the PLO among the refugees who believed that the agreement ignores their legitimate rights, especially "the right of return". The trust towards the PLO decreased due to the clientalist relations of the organization, which left the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon more isolated and alienated in the Lebanese society.

And the thesis finishes with a conclusion where all the findings above put into context, and where the findings of this thesis is written and analyzed.

CHAPTER 1

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF LEBANON

1.1 Establishment of the Republic of Lebanon

Republic of Lebanon (*Al Jumhuriyah al Lubnaniyah*) is a mountainous country which is neighboured from the north and the east by Syria, from the south by Israel and from the west by the Mediterranean Sea. Throughout its history, within the effect of its geographical position it has been affected by various civilizations and therefore it is composed of different identities. However today the interests of the different religious identities are more diversified and the competition among the religious groups contributed to shaping the political, social and economic character of the country. The religious distinctions are the decisive factor in allocating the political, economic and social power.

The political power in Lebanon is divided among the religious sects through the system called *confessionalism*. The confessional system appeared in 1926 during the French Mandate and in the the post-Mandate period, through the National Pact of 1946 it became as one of the main characteristics of the country. The system distributes the political power among major religious groups according to the 1932 population census, which promotes the position of Christians. Depending on that system, the president has to be a Maronite Christian where as the prime minister has to be a Sunni Muslim and the speaker of the Chamber of Deputies (the Parliament) has to be a Shi'a Muslim. According to confessionalism, the Chamber of Deputies is formed with respect to 6-5 formula which means six Christians for every five Muslim representatives in the Chamber of Deputies. Therefore from 1932 up to Ta'if Accords of 1989, the Christians had more considerable power compared to the Muslims. "As Michael C. Hudson described the situation, the president 'is not only the balancer but a representative of the most influential group in the country.'"⁴

⁴ Michael C. Hudson, "Democracy and Social Mobilization in Lebanese Politics", *Comparative Politics* 1 (January 1969): 250 quoted in David S. Sorenson, *Global Security Watch – Lebanon: A*

Although the balance of power between the Christians and the Muslims had changed through the Ta'if Accord of 1989, however the religious factor within the principle of confessionalism kept being the essential pillar of the political system, as cancelling or changing it would mean the failure to reach an agreement to end the civil war. It could be stated that confessionalism is regarded as the dogma of religious coexistence which brings out sectarianism on the basis of political, social and economic interests through the religious differentiation in the Lebanese society.⁵ Therefore it could be emphasized that the competition among the religious groups has a significant role in the formation of political crises, civil wars and the different problems in Lebanon.

1.2 The Development of the Political System in Lebanon

After the independence from France in 1943, the Modern Lebanon's first leaders the Christian President Bishara al-Khoury and the Sunni Muslim Prime Minister Riyad as-Sulh drafted the new constitution, *the National Pact*, which kept the balanced confessional system of 1926. In this point it's necessary to highlight the different political perspectives of the Christian and Muslim political leaders, which hinder the political stability in Lebanon. Throughout history, the Lebanese have always witnessed the political struggle based on religions which could be regarded as the main characteristic of the country. The difficulty of settling stability in Lebanon could be observed in the different foreign and domestic policy preferences of Muslims and Christians. For example, on the external level while the Muslims prefer following foreign policies compatible with the other Arab countries in the region, the Maronites on the other hand are in favour of having closer relations with the United States (US) and the West, because of their feeling as an isolated minority in an Arab surrounding space. "The divide between Christians and Muslims, exacerbated by the French policies which were biased to the Christian community in Lebanon, created a certain political schizophrenia, with the Christians generally looking toward the West and the Muslims toward the Arab East."⁶ The

Reference Handbook. (The USA: ABC-CLIO, LLC, 2010), p. 16.

⁵ Sune Haugbolle, *War and Memory in Lebanon.* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), p. 23-4.

⁶ Michael C. Hudson, "Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story", *Journal Of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997). p. 247.

confessionalism based regime together with traditional problems between Christians and Muslims made the state of Lebanon more vulnerable to political crises and civil wars.

After Khoury, the presidential term of the pro-Western Camille Chamoun started in 1952, and ended up with his resignation amid the 1958 political crisis which happened as a result of the mounting nationalist momentum in the Arab world. That nationalist movement, together with the establishment of the United Arab Republic (as a confederation between Egypt and Syria) was contradictory to Chamoun's Western oriented policies. The political crisis of 1958 emerged from the desire of the Lebanese Muslims to join Gamal Abdel Nasser's led United Arab Republic against the Maronites' desire to join the Western supported Baghdad Pact. The crisis ended up with Chamoun's call for the United States to send troops to Lebanon and later Eisenhower convinced Chamoun to resign.

It was clear that the fragile political structure and the sectarian movements were already paving way for the eruption of violence in the country. Hence, within the emergence of a different problem, such as the Palestine refugee problem, Lebanon was ready to show its inner danger out of water, pulling the third parties into swamp as well.

1.3 The 1975 Civil War

Thousands of Palestinians started settling in Lebanon as a result of the 1948 and 1967 Arab-Israeli Wars, as well as the Palestinian expulsion from Jordan in the 1970s. Therefore the increasing Muslim population together with the increasing effect of the Arab nationalism shakened the already fragile political structure of Lebanon. As most of the Palestinian refugees settled down the southern border of the country, where the largely Shi'a Muslims live, their presence perceived as a problem by other Muslim sects as well.

Due to the Jordan's expulsion of the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO) members who settled in Lebanon, together with the transfer of the PLO headquarters from Jordan to Lebanon, the tense in the country reached to the peak point, especially after the PLO started its military attacks against Israel from the

Lebanese territory. These attacks provoked Israel to retaliate. On the economic and social level, the existence of those Palestinian refugees increased the burden and hardened the living conditions in the country, thus created a common feeling by the Lebanese people that the Palestinian refugees are responsible for all the problems in Lebanon.

Especially after Lebanon became the PLO headquarter, the Palestinian attacks against Israel have brought Lebanon many times to the brink of war. Those attacks provoked Israel to retaliate by air raids and artillery attacks against the southern Lebanon. Since South Lebanon district is mostly composed of Shi'a Muslims and Palestinians, the Israeli attacks escalated the tension between the Shi'a Muslims and the Palestinian refugees and motivated the Shi'a to create paramilitary organizations like Amal to protect the Shi'a from the attacks of the Palestinian factions, Christian organizations and Israeli troops. Thus the tension in southern Lebanon paved the way for the eruption of the civil war.

The breaking point came up in 1975 with the assassination attempt of the Maronite Christian President Pierre Gemayel which was perceived as done by the Palestinians. Therefore the Phalangists-a radical Christian paramilitary group in Lebanon-retaliated the assassination attempt by massacring 27 Palestinians in a bus, the event which sparked *the 1975 civil war*.⁷ The war was dramatically escalated because of the sectarian nature of the country. During the course of the war, the Syrian troops intervened into Lebanon and stayed there from 1976 to 2005. Moreover, Israel invaded the southern of Lebanon in 1978 and only withdrew its troops in the year 2000.

As a country geographically surrounded from north and east by Syria and from south by Israel, Lebanon's diversified and fragile political structure together with the Palestinian existence in its territory, motivated both Syria and Israel to interfere frequently in Lebanon's domestic affairs. When the civil war erupted in 1975, Syria and Israel exploited the situation and benefited from each opportunity to interfere in

⁷ Tim Llewellyn, *Spirit of the Phoenix*. (The USA: Lawrence Hill Books, 2010), p. 57.

the country by inflating the tensions between the Palestinians and the Lebanese as well as the conflicts among the Lebanese religious sects.

Throughout the course of the war, Syria used to create alliances with some of the Lebanese political factions such as the Christian militias in Beirut and then the Amal Movement, to achieve its goals in shaping the political atmosphere and creating pro-Syrian governments in Lebanon. For example Syria supported to *the Lebanese National Movement (LNM)* led by Druze leader Kemal Jumblatt to launch attacks against the Lebanese Christians and to force the President of the Republic Suleiman Frangieh to resign. Syria was always keen to have its control over the Palestinians in Lebanon in order to keep a stable pro-Syrian in the country. It is noteworthy that there were no fixed alliances between Syria and the Lebanese factions or the Palestinian groups. Syria was changing its alliances according to the course of events. For example, and contrary to its previously mentioned support of the Muslim factions against the Christians, Syria later supported Lebanese Christians against the Palestinians in *Tel el-Zaatar* refugee camp because the militants of this camp were creating problems to the pro-Syrian government at that time. The Syrian intervention ended up with the destruction of the whole camp in 1976.

The Arab League diplomatic intervention in October 1976 led to holding two conferences in Riyadh and in Lebanon which established *the Arab Deterrent Force (ADF)* in Lebanon. That force was responsible for providing security by dividing a line-*the Green Line*- between the Muslim and Christian districts through the checkpoints. Because of the fact that the ADF was mostly composed of Syrian soldiers, the Syrian government got the chance to be the most influencing actor in Lebanon until 2005.

In order to end the Israeli occupation and provide stability in Lebanon, *the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL)* was founded by the United Nations. Hence the Israeli troops started its withdrawal conversely by handling the places it withdraws to the Greek Catholic paramilitary organization, *the South Lebanon Army (SLA)*. This situation resulted in an increase of the turmoil in south Lebanon, not only between the Shi'a Muslims and the Palestinian refugees, but also with the Greek Catholic Christians as well. Syria's role in Lebanon and in the region

increased widely, due to its dynamic policies and changing alliances. The growing attacks on northern Galilee from southern Lebanon and the increasing influence of Syria prepared the ground for Israel to re-occupy Lebanon in 1982.

The assassination attempt of the Israeli Ambassador to the United Kingdom came as the last triggering event for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon. In June 1982, Israel launched *the Operation Peace for Galilee* in Lebanon, which mainly aimed at ending Syrian supported PLO activities in Southern Lebanon. In the first week of the invasion, while destroying the PLO units and moving towards Beirut, Lebanon witnessed clashes between the Israeli and the Syrian troops. In July, the Israeli army reached Beirut and captured strategically important Lebanese cities, and destroyed the southern cities, located on the important trade routes, such as Tyre and Sidon.

In August 1982, through cease-fire agreement between the PLO and Israel, it was agreed that the PLO members must evacuate Lebanon. Although the PLO members, the UNIFIL and the Israeli troops started leaving Lebanon, the tension did not appease. Furthermore on 14 September 1982, the peace seeker with Israel, the Lebanese President Bashir Gemayel was assassinated.

On 9 September 1982, and for the first time since the signing the Cairo Agreement of 1969, the Lebanese Army entered in the Bourj el-Barajneh Palestinian refugee camp, to arrest the Palestinians suspected of the assassination event. Unlike the retaliatory assaults against the Palestinians before, this time the Palestinians were exposed to broader massacres. Within the course of these events, the most hostile massacres took place in Shatila refugee camp in what is known as Sabra and Shatila massacres on 16 September 1982, resulted in the killing of thousands⁸ of the Palestinians by the Phalangist and the SLA soldiers with the help of the Israeli troops who encircled the camp. Due to the heavy death toll of the massacres, the US and French peacekeeping forces returned to Lebanon. However the turmoil and the bloodshed also targeted the peacekeeping forces and enforced them to leave Lebanon after only seven months. In 1983 the Israeli army accelerated its

⁸ Bayan Nuwayhed al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982*. (Canada: Pluto Pres, 2004), p. 295.

withdrawal from the other Lebanese cities to south Lebanon in the so-called *Security Zone* and stayed there until May 2000.

After the evacuation of the PLO from Lebanon, and because of the escalated hatred of Shi'a Lebanese on Palestinians as well as the lack of authority of the central government, the Amal Movement militia of the Shi'a started increasing its mobilization in the destroyed refugee camps, such as Sabra, Shatila and Bourj el-Barajneh. During the period called *the War of the Camps* between 1984 and 1988, the scary battles continued between the remaining Palestinian militias and the Syrian supported Amal Movement. In 1986 the clashes and the destruction in the Rashidieh refugee camp located in Tyre, even spreaded into Beirut which brought a much massive scale of ruin for Lebanon.

The Palestinian factions in Lebanon under the umbrella of the PLO took part in the civil war by allying themselves with the Lebanese national movement. This situation strengthened the belief among the Lebanese rightists and the Christians that the Palestinian existence in Lebanon played a significant role in triggering the civil war. This situation put more burdens on the Palestinian refugees and contributed to more deterioration of the stance of the Lebanese society towards the Palestinians. It can be argued that the civil war negatively affected the position of the refugees, and eradicated any possibility of improvement in their situation in Lebanon.

1.4 Ta'if Agreement and Beyond

In September 1989, the Ta'if Conference was held in the city of Ta'if, under the auspices of Saudi Arabia, so as to put an end the Lebanese civil war. The Conference was formed of 31 Christian and 31 Muslim delegates, which again shows the significance of sectarianism in the Lebanese arena. The Ta'if Agreement tried to resolve the confessional nature of the Lebanese regime. Therefore it equalized the number of the Christian and the Muslim representatives in the parliament through increasing the number of the members of the Chamber of

Deputies to 108.⁹ Furthermore it redefined the duties of the President, Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Parliament. It also ended the responsibility of the Sunni Muslim Prime Minister to the Maronite President. Although it also called for the disarmament of the militias, it could not persuade Hezbollah and the South Lebanon Army (the SLA) to put down their arms. It also could not achieve the full withdrawal of the Syrian and the Israeli troops from Lebanon. However, the Ta'if Accords has important impacts on Lebanon, especially because it ended the civil war and attempted to reduce the effects of confessionalism in the Lebanese administration. It can be said that Ta'if Accords had provided a new beginning for the Lebanese citizens to reconstruct their lives.

Between 1992 and 1998 the prominent Lebanese Sunni leader Rafiq al-Hariri who had the Saudi Arabian citizenship, became the prime minister. He focused his efforts on rebuilding the state, and tried not to provoke the Israeli government against Lebanon, thus he tried to retain the control over the Palestinians. However again due to several factors like sectarianism, fragile political structure, and the alliance of the Palestinian militias with Hezbollah against Israel the outcome of Hariri's policies were significantly minimized. For example, as a result of the attacks from South Lebanon against Israel by Hezbollah and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command (PFLP-GC), Israel launched cross-border operations; in 1993 *the Operation Accountability* and in 1996 *the Operation Grapes of Wrath*. Similar to the Lebanese, in 2003 the struggles among the Palestinian factions in the refugee camps damaged the Palestinian unity as well. In addition to the Israeli operations, other factors like the Syrian military existence, the uncontrolled paramilitary movements, and the conflicts in the refugee camps minimized the possibility of a durable peace in Lebanon. Between 2000 and 2004, Hariri was again elected as the prime minister. As the Syrian government was accused of Hariri's assassination in 2005, another problem appeared and deepened the divisions between the Syrian supported Lebanese political groups and the anti-Syrian political groups. This high degree of polarity, together with the mounting

⁹ Now Lebanon, "The Taif Agreement", <http://www.nowlebanon.com/Library/Files/EnglishDocumentation/Official%20Documents/Taif.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2011.

international pressures resulted in the departure of the Syrian military from Lebanon.

After the partial reconstruction period with Hariri, the country was destroyed once more with *the 2006 Lebanon War* which came as a result of the anti-Israeli attacks of Hezbollah from south Lebanon. Israel retaliated by air strikes which escalated the political stalemate, destroyed the infrastructure, and displaced thousands of the south Lebanon population. "...the reconstruction costs exceeded \$4 billion, and 1,109 civilians are known to have died, though the number could be higher."¹⁰ As a result, the UN Resolution 1701 called for the full cessation of hostilities and set a truce between Hezbollah and Israel.

The latest crisis between the Lebanese government and the Palestinian factions occurred in 2007 through the conflicts in the second most populated Palestinian refugee camp, Nahr el-Bared in the northern city of Tripoli. Consequently, the separatist movements of Fatah al-Islam (FI), located in Nahr el-Bared, brought the siege of the camp by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF). As a result, hundreds of people died and thousands of Palestinian refugees were displaced to the other camps. Therefore the crisis could be considered as the worst internal conflict, since the end of the Lebanese civil war.

In conclusion, it should be reminded that the confessional political and social life has been the core of the Lebanese politics. Related to that, the weakness of the Lebanese state could be explained with three systematic problems. The Lebanese state structure which is based on sectarianism, significant demographic shifts especially during the 1948 War which endangered the political power of the major religious communities and the liable atmosphere for the external actors to penetrate the system by establishing political, economic and military alliances with the internal factors.¹¹

¹⁰ Sorenson, *Global Security Watch – Lebanon: A Reference Handbook*, p. 39.

¹¹ Tom Najem, *Lebanon: The politics of a penetrated society*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), p. 31-2.

Since the independence till today, several factors have contributed to impose instability and to shaken the fragile balance of the country. The most important of those factors are the tensions among the religious sects, Syrian interference through the different religious parties, existence of mostly Sunni Palestinian refugees, the hard line stance of Palestinian and Shi'a militias against Israel, the emergence of radical religious groups due to the political and security vacuum. Hence for centuries, instability and assassinations have settled in the agenda of the country, and the Lebanese people have been living on the cutting edge, in the brink of the crises.

CHAPTER 2

THE ORIGINS OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEE PROBLEM

2.1 Background of the Problem

From the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire until 1948, the British Mandatory regime was constituted in Palestine. In order to strengthen its control in the region, through *the Husayn-McMahon Correspondence* of 1915-1916 with the Arab Hashemites, the Great Britain agreed on the establishment of an Arab throne including Palestine. On the other hand, in 1917 with the same purpose, it announced *the Balfour Declaration* which supports the establishment of a Jewish national home in Palestine.

The Jewish migration movements into Palestine called as *Aliyah* was shaped with *the Zionism idea* which envisages the establishment of a Jewish state in Jewish ancient homeland, including Palestine. The movements firstly took place at the end of the nineteenth century due to the rise of anti-Semitism in Tsarist Russia. *The Second Aliyah* appeared between 1905 and the eruption of the World War I of 1914. Consecutive Jewish movements continued depending on the increasing Jewish antagonism in Europe for instance from 1919 till mid of 1920s and it continued between the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the rising Nazism in Germany. Through *the Biltmore Conference* of 1942, the massive scale of Jewish migration was legitimized by acknowledging the right of unrestricted Jewish immigration. After the World War II, the Jewish immigration waves drastically increased. “In the second half of 1948, over 100,000 Jews arrived; in 1949, there were 240,000 new immigrants.”¹²

¹² D. Shaham, “Israel-40 years”, (Tel-Aviv: Am Oved,1991), p.72 quoted in Ariel L. Feldstein, *Ben-Gurion, Zionism and American Jewry: 1948-1963*. (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 36

In consequence of the increasing number of Jewish people in Palestine and the unrealized promises given to the Arabs after World War I, the growing Arab anger resulted in various conflicts between Jews and Arabs in 1920-1921, 1929 and the most destructive clashes between 1936-1939. The course of events led to the weakening authority and the evacuation of the British from Palestine in 1948. On April 2, 1947, just before evacuating Palestine, the British government inserted the problem of Palestine into the agenda of the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN). The United Nations Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was formed, so as to make a circumstantial investigation concerning the conflicts in Palestine and to bring comprehensive resolutions to settle the conflict. The UNSCOP's report to the General Assembly was prepared in nine months. Two views prevailed in the Committee which were; to divide Palestine into a Jewish and a Palestinian zone under an economic union, or to establish a federal democratic state in Palestine. As a result in November 1947, with a two-thirds majority the General Assembly, the Resolution 181 was approved. That resolution brought the partition plan and end of British mandate rule in Palestine.¹³

Especially due to the partition percentages between Jews and Arabs, the Resolution 181 was rejected by the Palestinian Arabs and the situation led to a deeper polarization in the society. In Khalidi's words:

“It said to the Zionists: ‘You will increase what you have 8-fold (from 7 percent to 55 percent of the country).’ It said to the Palestinians: ‘You yield 45 percent of what you have and let one-third of your population live as a permanent minority under alien rule.’”¹⁴

In terms of the partition plan of the UN, the Jewish state was declared on May 14, 1948. In the following day of issuing the UN Resolution 181, the 1948 War erupted. Because it harboured the creation of the Palestinian refugee problem, this war is called as *al-Nakbah* (the great disaster) by the Palestinian Arabs. However so as it

¹³ United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, “Official Records of the Second Session of the General Assembly: Supplement No. 11”, 3 September 1947. <http://unispal.un.org/unispal.nsf/0/07175de9fa2de563852568d3006e10f3>, accessed on 05 September 2011.

¹⁴ Walid Khalidi, “The Palestine Problem: An Overview”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 1 (Autumn 1991), p. 8.

led to the establishment of the State of Israel, it is therefore regarded as *the War of Independence* by the Israelis. Due to the establishment of the State of Israel, the 1948 War could be distinguished into two periods; as the civil war period and the full scale war period. The civil war period erupted between Jews and Palestinian Arabs, and ended with the establishment of the State of Israel, in May 1948. The full scale war period started as a result of the establishment of the State of Israel. This war, which ended up in 1949, included other Arab countries; Transjordan, Egypt, Iraq and Syria. “The inter-communal aspect is the dispute between Jews and Arabs in Palestine; the inter-state aspect is the conflict between the State of Israel and the neighbouring Arab states.”¹⁵

2.2 The Creation of the Palestinian Refugee Problem

The Palestinian refugee problem first appeared as a result of the 1948 War, due to the escalated tension between the Palestinian Arabs and the Jews. It should be also noted that it increased dramatically as a result of the other subsequent wars like the 1967 war. With respect to the terror atmosphere, conflicts and the deteriorated security conditions of the civil war period of the 1948 War, and by assuming that the turmoil will be temporary, the Palestinians started moving to the border lines or the coastal parts of the mandate ruled Palestine. Nevertheless, the Palestinian refugee problem was set in motion with the snowballing impact of the 1948 War, which caused high number of Palestinians to leave their towns and villages without being able to return back to their settlements.

Although there is no registered record concerning the population in the mandate ruled Palestine, it is estimated that at the end of the 1946, the total population was around 1.94 million, of which 1.33 million were Palestinian Arabs.¹⁶ It is also estimated that 750,000 Palestinian Arabs out of 1.33 million sought refuge in the neighbouring Arab states as a result of the 1948 War.¹⁷ It is estimated that more

¹⁵ Avi Shlaim, “Reflections on the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict”, *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 42, No. 1 (2011), p. 3.

¹⁶ Gideon Biger, “The Boundaries of Modern Palestine, 1840-1947”, (2004): 213-219 quoted in Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine: From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel*. (The United States of America: Princeton University Press, 2008), p. 305-306.

¹⁷ Nur Masalha, “A Land without a People: Israel, Transfer and the Palestinians, 1949–96”, (1997), p.

than 110,000 out of 750,000 Palestinians settled in Lebanon and the rest of them sought shelter in Jordan, Syria and Egypt.¹⁸ It should be also added that after settling in the countries mentioned above, due to the economic reasons in order to provide income for their families, some of the refugees resettled in oil rich countries such as Gulf States, Libya and Saudi Arabia. By 1970, their population came between 200,000 and 250,000 in Gulf and Saudi Arabia.¹⁹ As their settlement started influencing the policies of the states they settled in, the refugee problem had an imbalancing impact in the region on the long run. In Morris's words: "The Palestinian refugee problem and its consequences have shaken the Middle East and acutely troubled the world for more than five decades."²⁰

In order to highlight the historical aspect of the Palestinian refugee problem, it is important to mention the two main arguments about it. Although most of the historians agree on the starting point of the Palestinian refugee problem, there is great disagreement on the causes of the problem. The Israelis and Palestinian Arabs have different views concerning the reasons of the problem and the number of Palestinian refugees; therefore regarding the issue there is no one history. The main Israeli argument is that the Palestinian Arabs left their homes voluntarily upon the orders of their own leaders, or with the encouragement of the leaders of other Arab countries. According to this argument the number of the Palestinian refugees was about 600,000²¹. On the other hand, the Palestinian Arabs argue that they were forcibly expelled from their villages and towns by Jews and their military attacks to create a Jewish national home land. They also argue that they were massacred, with a pre-planned Zionist strategy.

xi quoted in Naseer Aruri (ed.), *Palestinian Refugees: The Right of Return*. (European Union: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 125 and Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*. (The United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 138.

¹⁸ Samih K. Farsoun and Christine E. Zacharia, "Palestine and the Palestinians" (1997), pp. 123-7 in Naseer Aruri (ed.), *Palestinian Refugees: The Right of Return*. (European - Union: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 125.

¹⁹ Edward Hagopian and A. B. Zahlan, "Palestine's Arab Population: The Demography of the Palestinians", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 3, No. 4 (Summer 1974), p. 61.

²⁰ Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 2.

²¹ Efraim Karsh, *Palestine Betrayed*. (Great Britain: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 267.

The historians and scholars also differ regarding the reasons of the problem. According to the pro-Palestinian scholars such as Walid Khalidi and Nur Masalha, the Jews adopted expulsionist policies against the Palestinian Arabs and the Palestinians were banished from their homes as a result of psychological and physical pressures carried out by the Zionists.²² Moreover the Zionist policies became obvious and violent after the declaration of the UN partition plan of 1947.

On the contrary, according to the Israeli scholars such as Efraim Karsh and Itamar Rabinovich the Palestinian refugee problem was not as a result of a pre-planned Zionist policy; it rather emerged after the other Arab states called upon the Palestinians to leave their lands. Therefore the reason of the refugee problem was that the Palestinian fled due to the turmoil and anarchy in the society and not as a result of a pre-planned Palestinian expulsion by the Jews. According to this argument, the Palestinians left their homes because of their belief that the Arab armies will be successful, will come and take everything under control.

Different from the previous group, some of the Israeli scholars such as Benny Morris, and Ilan Pappé have different views on the Zionist understanding concerning the course of the events. They have a challenging rhetoric towards the mainstream Israeli argument and question the approach towards the mainstream Arab-Israeli conflict of Zionists. They are called *new historians* or *revisionists*. According to the revisionists, Palestinian Arabs were expelled and massacred from their settlements by the Zionists who benefited from the disorganized and fragmented society of the Palestinian Arabs. They did not have modernized arms as Jews had and their expulsion was motivated by the misleading inducement of Arab officials in some of the Palestinian communities to leave their homes until the turmoil appease.

According to Ilan Pappé since the beginning of the Palestinian refugee movements, the Palestinian Arabs were expelled from their villages and towns by the use of force and psychological campaigns, for instance massacres, intimidation and

²² Walid Khalidi, "Why Did the Palestinians Leave, Revisited", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (Winter 2005), p. 42-54 and Nur Masalha, *Imperial Israel and the Palestinians: the Politics of Expansion*. (Sterling, VA: Pluto Press, 2000).

threatening. “Twelve days after the adoption of the UN resolution, the expulsion of Palestinians began. A month later, the first Palestinian village was wiped out by Jewish retaliation to a Palestinian attack on convoys and Jewish settlements.”²³

According to Morris, the Palestinian refugee problem was a result of the 1948 War and he explains the refugee movements in the 1948 War under four waves. Morris relates the four waves to the interrelated effect of Jewish and Palestinian policies with each other. Each wave is characterized according to these dynamics, which resulted in more Palestinians to become refugees. For example he explains the Jewish policy during the first wave as purely defensive and almost vegetarian, where as other waves with full of operations and conflicts.²⁴ The first wave between December 1947 and March 1948, the second wave-the mass exodus period-between April and June 1948 which was launched by a new Jewish plan-Plan D-and resulted in the expelling of 250,000-300,000 Palestinian refugees²⁵, the third wave between July-October 1948, and the fourth wave between October and November 1948 which also included large scale Israeli operations, resulting in the expelling of 200,000-230,000 Palestinian refugees²⁶. The revisionists also add that the continuity of the refugee problem was assured in 1948 by the Israeli government’s decisions through the Transfer Committee. Depending on that, the return of Palestinians was not allowed and their resettlement in neighbouring Arab states was encouraged.²⁷ Morris later brings a different perspective in his book titled *1948-The First Arab-Israeli War*. According to his new perspective, the Palestinian Arabs were very hostile towards the Jews so that the Jews expelled them to avoid being massacred by the Palestinian Arabs. Despite this new perspective of Morris, he is still regarded as a revisionist because of his earlier analysis towards the 1948 War.

The revisionists unveiled of the Israeli operations launched against the Palestinians, and they are accused of betrayal by the Israelis.

²³ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p. 127.

²⁴ Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*, p. 72.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 262.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 492.

²⁷ Benny Morris, *1948-The First Arab-Israeli War*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 411.

Irrespective of the argument about the reasons behind the Palestinian refugee problem, the fact is that hundreds thousands of Palestinians had to settle in other countries and their settlement changed the demographic balance in the Middle East after the 1948 War, and started to be considered as one of the most important international refugee phenomena. According to the UN sources, end of the 1948 War, 750,000 Palestinians were reported as refugees.²⁸ “By far the most protracted and largest of all refugee problems in the world today is that of the Palestine refugees. . .”²⁹ Consequently, the refugee problem was listed on the UN agenda in December 1948. The UN General Assembly issued the Resolution 194 which called for the right of return of Palestinian Arabs as soon as possible. Nevertheless, the Resolution was failed to be implemented and the refugee problem could not neither be solved nor alleviated.

Taking into consideration the large number of Palestinian refugees in the Middle East and their difficult living conditions, many international organizations were established in order to alleviate their basic problems and to broaden the relief and assistance programs. In December 1949, the United Nations adopted the Resolution 302 (IV), which established the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) as a subsidiary organ of the UN and started its field of operations in May, 1950. The UNRWA has five areas of operation; in *Jordan, Lebanon, the Syrian Arab Republic, West Bank and Gaza Strip*. As an international agency, working within the hosting governments, the UNRWA tries to improve the living conditions, mobilize assistance, provide protection for the Palestinian refugees, through providing the essential services such as food, education, employment opportunities, health, settlement, rehabilitation of the refugee camps, reconstruction of the settlements and the basic needs of them.³⁰ However it should be emphasized

²⁸ Final Report of the Economic Survey Mission, 28 December 1949 quoted in Ilan Pappé, *The Making of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1947-51 History of Modern Palestine*. (London: I.B. Tauris & Co. Ltd. Publishers, 1992), p. 96.

²⁹ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, *The State of the World's Refugees 2006: Human Displacement in the New Millennium*. (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 112.

³⁰ UNRWA, “Frequently asked questions”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=87>, accessed on March 2, 2012.

that Palestinian refugees do not have a legal relation with the UNRWA and the services of the UNRWA only comprehend the ones, who need assistance, live in one of the operational fields of the UNRWA, registered to the Agency, and meet the operational definition of the UNRWA, which determines who are the Palestinian refugees. "Palestine refugees are people whose normal place of residence was Palestine between June 1946 and May 1948, who lost both their homes and means of livelihood as a result of the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict."³¹

There are suspicions among the Palestinian refugees regarding the real aims of the UNRWA. Some Palestinians claim that this Agency seeks to serve the strategy of Israel by trying to convince the Palestinian refugees to accept the settlement in the countries where they live. It was also claimed that by improving the economic situation of the refugees, the UNRWA encourages the refugees to discard the right of return. As a result of such critics, the UNRWA lost some credibility among some circles of the Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA responded to such critics by asserting that it has no authority over the refugees and it is just implementing the tasks assigned to the Agency according to the UN Resolutions. Irrespective of the critics to the performance of the UNRWA, it should not be ignored that the Agency has been providing all kinds of humanitarian assistance and basic needs as it is the main, if not the sole, service provider to the Palestinian refugees over the last sixty years.

It can be said that without the efforts of the UNRWA, the suffering of the Palestinian refugees, would have been dramatically increased. "Nevertheless, at various times in the last 60 years, the Agency has had to argue the point that an improvement in the refugees' living conditions needn't be at the expense of their rights."³²

³¹ UNRWA, "Palestine refugees", <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=86>, accessed on March 3, 2012.

³² Paul McCann, "The Role Of UNRWA And The Palestine Refugees", *Palestine-Israel Journal of Politics, Economics & Culture* 15/16.4/1 (2008), p. 83-89.

CHAPTER 3

PALESTINIAN REFUGEES IN LEBANON

The problem of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon started with the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, and escalated with the 1967 War. According to William Harris, after the 1967-June War, 320,000 Palestinians were expelled from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to other places.³³ It is estimated that as a result of the 1967 War, the number of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was doubled up to around 240,000.³⁴ The number of the refugees in Lebanon increased tremendously in 1970s, due to the Jordan's expulsion and the growing Palestinian generations in Lebanon. As mentioned above as a result of the 1948 War, the number of Palestinians settled in Lebanon was more than 110,000.

Moreover due to the PLO's military activities in Jordan, Jordan's assignment as the PLO headquarters, and the number of Palestinians in Jordan made around 64 per cent of the total population³⁵, Jordan's expulsion of the PLO members and the Palestinian fighters resulted in the resettlement of thousands of Palestinian refugees in southern Lebanon. According to the UNRWA census, from 1950 till today the number of the registered Palestinian refugees in Lebanon has approximately tripled from 127,600 in 1950 to 433,000 in 2011.³⁶

³³ William W. Harris, "Taking Root: Israeli Settlement in the West Bank, the Golan and Gaza-Sinai 1967-1980," *Chichester: Research Studies Press* (1980): 7 and 16-17 quoted in Nur Masalha, *The Historical Roots of the Palestinian Refugee Question* in Naseer Aruri (ed.), *Palestinian Refugees: The Right of Return*. (European - Union: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 61.

³⁴ Hagopian and Zahlan "Palestine's Arab Population: The Demography of the Palestinians", p. 56.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

³⁶ UNRWA, "Number of Registered Refugees", [http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/reg-ref\(2\).pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/reg-ref(2).pdf), accessed on March 15, 2012 and UNRWA, "Palestine refugees: A special case", <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20111002306.pdf>, accessed on March 17, 2012.

As of June 2011, there are 433,000 Palestine refugees registered to the UNRWA in Lebanon and this number constitutes ten per cent of the Lebanese population.³⁷ The living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are difficult, because they are denied any access to the Lebanese governmental services as they do not have citizenship and legal rights. This will be illustrated in details in the coming chapter. “Of all UNRWA fields, Lebanon has the highest percentage of Palestine refugees living in abject poverty and registered with the Agency's social safety-net programme.”³⁸

3.1 The Role of the UNRWA

After the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, the UNRWA played a significant role in providing shellters, food, health care, relief, social services and educational assistances for the refugees. Today the UNRWA manages and provides services to the 12 refugee camps in Lebanon, therefore there is a great dependence of the refugees on the UNRWA. The programmes of the UNRWA in Lebanon can be listed as: rehabilitation of shellters, recreation of space for the densely populated areas, reconstruction and/or rehabilitation water and sanitation infrastructure for environmental health, and opening new education centres for the refugees. Through the donations that the agency receive, the UNRWA runs “74 schools (including six secondary), with 31,000 pupils , two vocational and technical training centres ,29 primary health centres, one community rehabilitation centre, nine women’s programme centres.”³⁹

Due to the the high number of the refugee population and their great dependence on the UNRWA, together with the insufficient funds of the UNRWA, the UNRWA services could not meet all the needs of the refugees. As a result of the shortage of the resources in the camps, some of the refugees left the official camps to other places, the situation which resulted in the emergence of unofficial settlements.

³⁷ Ibid, UNRWA, “Palestine refugees: A special case”, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20111002306.pdf>, accessed on March 17, 2012.

³⁸ UNRWA, “Lebanon camp profiles”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=73>, accessed on March 15, 2012.

³⁹ UNRWA, “Lebanon”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=65>, accessed on March 12, 2012.

3.2 Refugee Camps in Lebanon

Today there are twelve refugee camps in Lebanon, which are officially registered to the UNRWA. Only about 53 per cent of the registered Palestinians live in the official camps.⁴⁰ The other unregistered Palestinian refugees to the UNRWA, live without any ID or they are registered under the Lebanese government to *the Lebanese Directorate for Refugee Affairs*. However, the unregistered Palestinian refugees to the UNRWA are not eligible to access the facilities of the UNRWA, and thus compared to the registered refugees, their living conditions are much difficult. Palestinians in Lebanon are excluded from the main society through imprisoning them in refugee camps and preventing their integration with the Lebanese society, thus Lebanon is regarded as the only host country where the number of refugees in camps is more than 50%.⁴¹ Therefore in this part the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon will be clarified. For the locations of the refugee camps see map 1.

⁴⁰ UNRWA, "Lebanon Camp Profiles", <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=73>, accessed on February 29, 2012.

⁴¹ Simon Haddad and Dima Jamali, "The Politics of Refugees' Non Integration: The Dilemma of Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (Winter 2003), p. 8.



Map 1. The Map of Palestinian Refugee Camps in Lebanon
 (Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20120317153744.pdf> accessed on 15 July 2012)

3.2.1 The Burj el-Shemali Refugee Camp

Established in 1948, the Burj el-Shemali refugee camp is located on the eastern side of Tyre, south of Lebanon. Because of its location near the borders with Israel, the camp has been subjected to several Israeli attacks. During the Lebanese civil war and the Israeli invasion in 1982, a considerable part of the camp was demolished. The UNRWA began providing services to the Burj el-Shemali refugee camp in 1955 and it estimates the population of the camp more than 19,500 refugees.⁴² See Figure 1, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

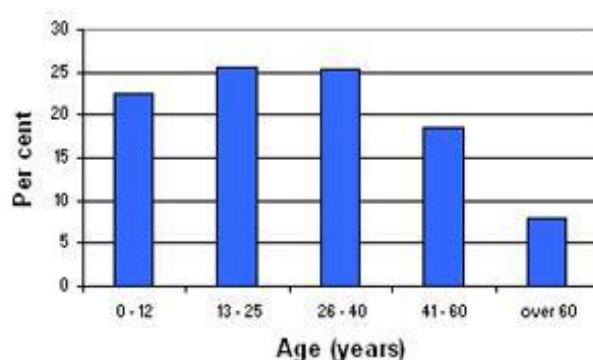


Figure1. The Demographic Profile of the Burj el-Shemali Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=135> accessed on February, 29 2012)

3.2.2 The el-Buss Refugee Camp

Located 1.5 km south of Tyre, the el-Buss refugee camp was originally established by the French government for the Armenian refugees in 1939.⁴³ Smallest among the other camps, the UNRWA records more than 9,500 refugees in el-Buss refugee camp.⁴⁴ See Figure 2, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

⁴² UNRWA, “Lebanon Camp Profiles”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=73>, accessed on February 29, 2012.

⁴³ UNRWA, “El Buss Refugee Camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=138>, accessed on February 29, 2012.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

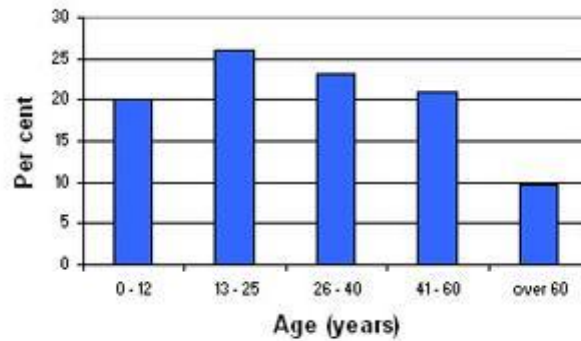


Figure 2. The Demographic Profile of the el-Buss Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=138>, accessed on February 29, 2012)

3.2.3 The Rashidieh Refugee Camp

The Rashidieh refugee camp is located in the southern Lebanon, on the Mediterranean coast, 5 km far from Tyre. There are more than 27,500 Palestinian refugees live in the camp.⁴⁵ Similar to el-Buss camp, the camp was firstly established by the French government for the Armenian refugees in 1936 and the UNRWA transferred it into a camp for the Palestinian refugees in 1963.⁴⁶ Due to its location close to the Israeli borders, the biggest part of the camp was demolished. About 600 shelters were destroyed and more than 5,000 refugees were displaced.⁴⁷ See Figure 3, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

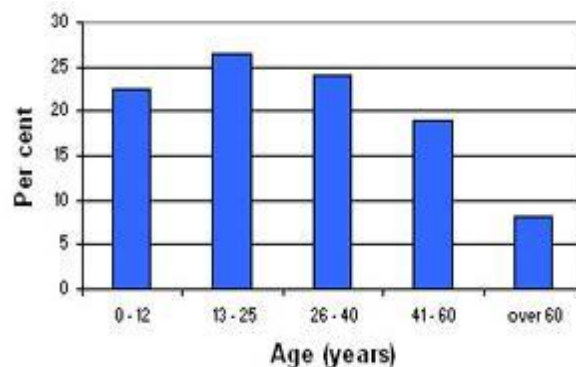


Figure 3. The Demographic Profile of the Rashidieh Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=141>, accessed on March 12, 2012)

⁴⁵ UNRWA, “Rashidieh Refugee Camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=141>, accessed on March, 12 2012.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

3.2.4 The Ein el-Hilweh Refugee Camp

Established in 1948 by the International Committee of the Red Cross, it is located in southern Beirut, near the city of Sidon. Geographically and demographically, Ein el-Hilweh camp is the largest among the other camps-“*grandiloquently described as ‘the capital of diaspora Palestinians’.*”⁴⁸ In addition, the problems in the camp are more significant and tense.

“Children are hungry and searching in the garbage food. We have children in the streets rather than in school. They come to school hungry and without adequate clothing. Some of them do not even have shoes. There is a new generation of illiterates. UNRWA throws out those who do not perform well academically and they are in the streets...We looked at one area and found seventy-five street kids. That’s just from one small area in the camp!... Those who pass the brevet are semiliterate... Kids these days are unable to study. Their home environment is lacking. How can they study in a home where no one cares, where there are so many problems!”⁴⁹

Despite the official records of the UNRWA, which estimates the number of the refugees to be around 47,500 registered refugees⁵⁰, the real number is estimated to be around 70,000. During the Lebanese civil war and as a result of the destruction of Jisr El Basha, the Nabatiyeh and the Tel el-Zaatar refugee camps, thousands of displaced refugees resettled in Ein el-Hilweh and thus the population of the camp increased dramatically. See Figure 4, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

⁴⁸ Rosemary Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 1 (1995), p. 46.

⁴⁹ Julie Peteet, “The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon”, in Kail.C. Ellis (ed.), *Lebanon’s Second Republic: Prospects for the Twenty-first Century*. (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2002) p. 83.

⁵⁰ UNRWA, “Ein El-Hillweh Refugee Camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=137>, accessed on February 29, 2012.

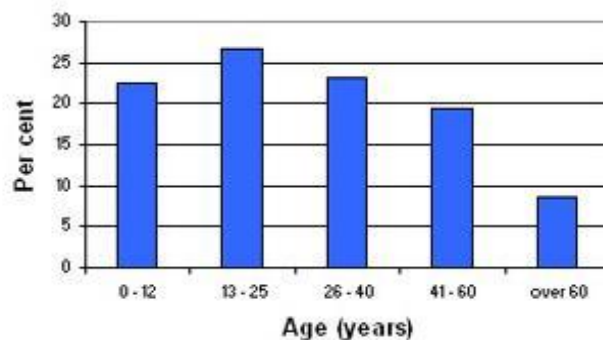


Figure 4. The Demographic Profile of the Ein el-Hilweh Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=137>, accessed on February 29, 2012)

The economic problems, low education levels, uncertainty, lack of authority, together with the overpopulation of the camp (over 70,000 refugees live in a 1.25 square kilometre piece of land⁵¹) created a convenient environment for the establishment of Palestinian political and military factions. This situation created what is known as the “state within a state” problem. It can be said that Ein el-Hilweh is a smaller entity which shows and reflects the complexities of intra-Palestinian rivalries and social and economic miseries.⁵² The competition and the continuous clashes among the Palestinian political and military factions, causes security problem as well. In the camp, the prominent Palestinian factions are; Fatah el-Islam, Jund al-Sham, Hamas, and Esbat al-Ansar. Because the Lebanese Army is not capable of imposing control on the camp, the conflicts among the Palestinian factions could not be contained. On this regard, the latest conflict erupted in December 2011 as a result of the murder of one of the members of Fatah al-Islam, which resulted in the retaliatory attacks against Jund al-Sham.⁵³ Therefore it could be said that the situation in the camp is too volatile to provoke any conflict.

⁵¹ Gary C. Gambill, “Ain al-Hilweh: Lebanon’s ‘Zone of Unlaw’”, *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, Vol. 5, No. 6 (June 2003).

⁵² Middle East Reporter (Weekly Edition), “Palestinians: Regional Tension Puts Ein al-Hilweh Camp on the Boil”, posted on January 6, 2012, accessed on March 9, 2012, p. 14.

⁵³ Mohammad Zaatari, “Gunmen killbodyguard of Fatah commander in South Lebanon”, posted on December 18, 2011, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Local-News/2011/Dec-18/157225-gunman-wounds-2-at-palestinian-refugee-camp-in-south-lebanon.ashx#axzz1oiMmc8SA>, accessed on March, 3 2012.

3.2.5 The Mieh w Mieh Refugee Camp

In the 4th km east of Sidon, the Mieh w Mieh refugee camp was established in 1954.⁵⁴ There are 4,700 registered refugees in Mieh w Mieh.⁵⁵ Most of the refugees in the camp came from the cities of Saffourieh, Tiereh, Haifa and Miron of north Israel⁵⁶. See Figure 5, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

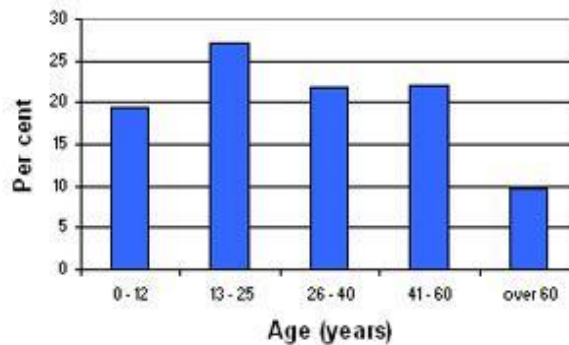


Figure 5. The Demographic Profile of the Mieh w Mieh Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=140>, accessed on March 3, 2012)

3.2.6 The Burj el-Barajneh Refugee Camp

The camp is located beside the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport, in northern Beirut. Established in 1948 by the League of the Red Cross Societies, it is one of the oldest Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. Today, the camp hosts “more than 16,000 Palestinian refugees.”⁵⁷ The camp was harshly damaged by the Lebanese civil war. See Figure 6, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

⁵⁴ UNRWA, “Mieh Mieh Refugee Camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=140>, accessed on March 1, 2012.

⁵⁵ Hoda Samra, “UNRWA and UNICEF Inaugurate Water Infrastructure Construction in Lebanon Camps”, posted on July 20, 2011, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/C788DA6385BE58B8852578D4006B047C>, accessed on February 27, 2012.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ UNRWA, “Burj Barajneh”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=134>, accessed on March 10, 2012.

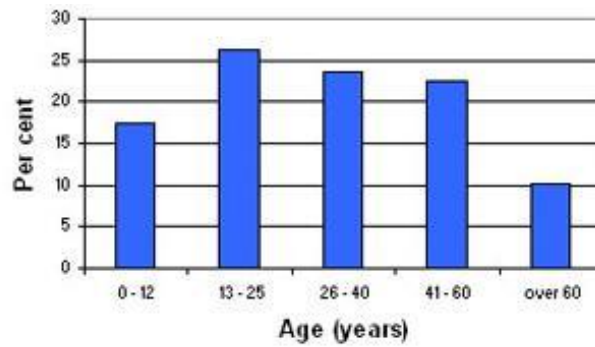


Figure 6. The Demographic Profile of the Burj el-Barajneh Refugee Camp
 (Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=134>, accessed on March 10, 2012)

3.2.7 The Dbayeh Refugee Camp

The Dbayeh camp is established on a hill, along the Beirut-Tripoli road, which is 12 km east of Beirut.⁵⁸ According to the UNRWA records, the Dbayeh refugee camp contains more than 4,000 registered Palestinian refugees. Similar to Burj el-Barajneh, the residents of the camp are mostly from the northern parts of Israel. Due to its critical place, which is on the Beirut-Tripoli road, the camp was deeply affected by the Lebanese civil war that: In 1990, a quarter of its shelters were destroyed or severely damaged and over 100 of its Christian refugee families were displaced.⁵⁹ However the camp is the last surviving camp on the eastern countryside of Beirut, after the civil war.⁶⁰

As the land of the camp belongs to the Saint Joseph monastery, the camp is distinguished from the other camps with its mostly Christian population. Moreover, compared to the other camps, its young population rate is low. See Figure 7, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

⁵⁸ UNRWA, “Dbayeh refugee camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=136>, accessed on March 10 2012.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

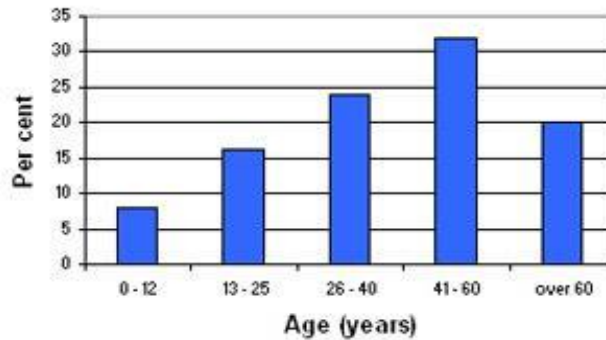


Figure 7. The Demographic Profile of the Dbayeh Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=136>, accessed on March 10, 2012)

3.2.8 The Mar Elias Refugee Camp

The camp was established by the Greek Orthodox Mar Elias in 1952 in southwest of Beirut. It hosts only around 600 registered refugees of both Muslim and Christian Palestinians; this makes it the smallest population.⁶¹ Similar to Dbayeh, its young population rate is low compared to the other camps. See Figure 8, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

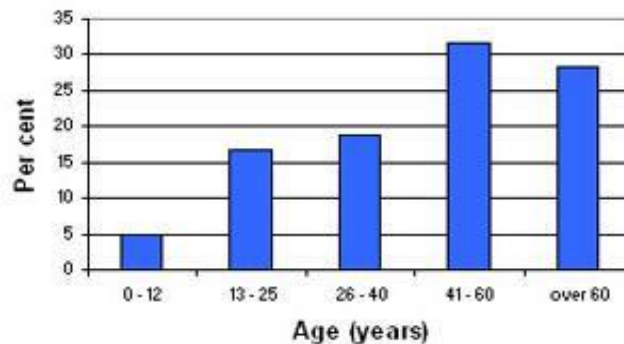


Figure 8. The Demographic Profile of the Mar Elias Refugee Camp

(Source: UNRWA <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=139>, accessed on 15 March 2012)

3.2.9 The Shatila Refugee Camp

Located in southern Beirut, the Shatila refugee camp was established in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross. According to the UNRWA, there are

⁶¹ UNRWA, “Mar Elias refugee camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=139>, accessed on March 15, 2012.

more than 8,500 registered refugees in the camp.⁶² The camp became internationally known with the planned massacre by the Christian militia in 1982. The massacre of thousands of the Palestinian refugees on the hands of the Lebanese Phalangists was a clear evidence of the grave extent of hatred and the profound atmosphere of animosity against the Palestinian refugees. After the massacres there were leaflets found in Sabra and Shatila, which were full of animosity such as: “...we shall accomplish our slogan: no Palestinian in the Land of Lebanon...”⁶³ Sabra and Shatila is considered the most tragic event encountered by the Palestinian refugees in one of their hosting countries all over the world. See Figure 9, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

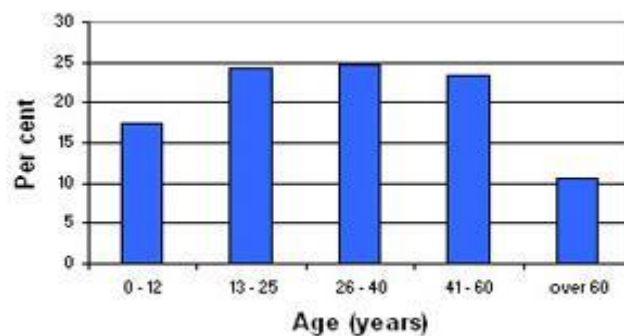


Figure 9. The Demographic Profile of the Shatila Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=142>, accessed on 15 March 2012)

3.2.10 The Wavel Refugee Camp

During the French Mandate period, the area was used as a French army barrack. The UNRWA services started in the camp in 1952.⁶⁴ According to the statistics of the UNRWA, there are almost 8,000 registered refugees in the Wavel refugee camp, which is located near the city of Baalbek, 90 km east of Beirut in the Beqaa Valley.

⁶² UNRWA, “Shatila refugee camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=142>, accessed on March 15, 2012.

⁶³ David Hirst, “No Palestinians in the Land of Lebanon”, *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 12, No. 3 (Spring 1983), p. 220.

⁶⁴ UNRWA, “Wavel refugee camp”, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=143>, accessed on March 12, 2012.

Thanks to its location, the camp was not severely affected from the civil war. See Figure 10, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

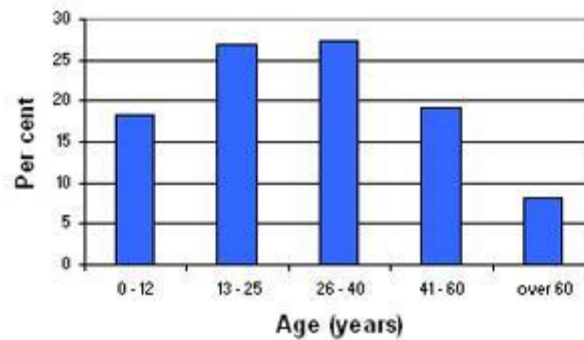


Figure 10. The Demographic Profile of the Wavel Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=143>, accessed on March 12, 2012)

3.2.11 The Nahr el-Bared Refugee Camp

The Nahr el-Bared refugee camp was founded in 1949 by the International Committee of the Red Cross, on the coast near the Mediterranean Sea of northern Lebanon. The UNRWA activities in the camp started in 1950.⁶⁵ It is estimated that until the 2007 crisis, around 30,000 Palestinian refugees were living in the camp.⁶⁶ Therefore it was regarded, as the second most populated camp after Ein el-Hilweh.

Due to the Lebanese government's aim to control the troubles made by the Palestinian factions, the tense relations between the Fatah al-Islam (FI) and the Lebanese Army Forces (LAF) erupted into a wide armed conflict on May 20, 2007. The conflict started within the LAF's military attack on an apartment, which was suspected to be the hideout of some Fatah al-Islam militants who robbed a bank. However, due to the heavy armed clashes between the both sides over two days, the FI declared unilateral ceasefire and thousands of refugees in Nahr el-Bared moved to the adjacent areas of the camp-mostly to the Beddawi refugee camp.⁶⁷ As Tine

⁶⁵ UNRWA, "Nahr el-Bared refugee camp", <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=144>, accessed on March 18, 2012.

⁶⁶ Tamas Landes. "Prepping For Peace: A Report from A Palestinian Refugee Camp In Lebanon", *Kennedy School Review* 9 (2009), p. 73.

⁶⁷ NOW Lebanon, "Chronology of a Crisis", posted on June 15, 2007. <http://www.nowlebanon.com/NewsArticleDetails.aspx?ID=3221#ixzz1pP6T83s9>, accessed on March 5, 2012.

Gade argues that despite the official number of the Palestinian refugees, which left Nahr el-Bared is 31,000 in reality the number is over 40,000.⁶⁸ Therefore the event is considered as *the second Nakbah* by the Palestinians.

After almost four months of this armed clashes, the conflict ended up on September 2, 2007 with the Lebanese government's declaration of ceasing the hostilities. It is estimated that 95 per cent of the camp was destroyed during these clashes; therefore the 2007 crisis is regarded as the worst internal conflict in Lebanon, since the end of the Lebanese civil war. On the other side, it's noted that the great destruction caused by that conflict positively changed the Lebanese government attitude as it joined the reconstruction project of the refugee camp with the UNRWA, which is a remarkable unprecedented move of the Lebanese government.⁶⁹ In addition the camp became the biggest reconstruction project of the UNRWA.⁷⁰

3.2.12 The Beddawi Refugee Camp

Located 5 km in the north of Tripoli, the Beddawi refugee camp was established by the UNRWA in 1955.⁷¹ According to the UNRWA, there are more than 16,500 registered refugees in the camp.⁷² In 2007, as a result of the conflicts in the Nahr el-Bared refugee camp, it is estimated that in a single night the number of the refugees was doubled to reach around 30,000.⁷³ Because of this unexpected increase

⁶⁸ Tine Gade, "Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon: Between Global and Local Jihad", Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI), <http://www.ffi.no/no/Rapporter/07-02727.pdf>, accessed on 5 March 2012, p. 28.

⁶⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway, "Norway to Give NOK 10 Million for Palestinian Refugee Camp", posted on June 24, 2008. <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/ud/Whats-new/news/2008/norway-to-give-nok-10-million-for-palest.html?id=518916>, accessed on March 19, 2012.

⁷⁰ UNRWA, "Reconstruction Of Nahr El-Bared Camp & UNRWA Compound: Progress Report 1 September 2007 – 31 October 2010", <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011042974549.pdf>, accessed on March 19, 2012, p. 4.

⁷¹ UNRWA, "Beddawi refugee camp", <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=133>, accessed on March 16, 2012.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid.

of the population, the problems of the camp became more complicated. See Figure 12, which explains the demographic structure of the camp.

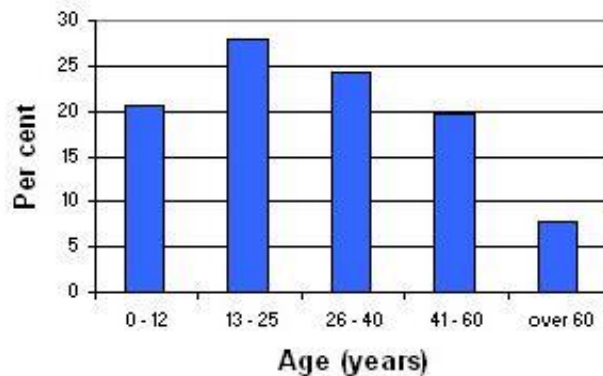


Figure 12. The Demographic Profile of the Beddawi Refugee Camp

(Source: <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=133>, accessed on March 16, 2012)

3.3 The Living Conditions of the Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon

Looking at the camps and figures about at this point an analysis of common characteristics and features of the camps will be useful. Over the last six decades, and as a result of the 1948 War and the non-implementation of the UN 194, the Palestinian refugees have been experiencing difficulties. They can not return back to their homes from the countries to which they migrated. It could be said that since 1948, the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have not shown a significant positive development. Therefore this part will highlight the the living conditions of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

As mentioned above, Palestinians in Lebanon live in 12 official camps with the assistance of the UNRWA run programmes. Despite its limited funds and capabilities, the UNRWA managed to offer some relief and social services for the refugees. However thousands of Palestinians in Lebanon still suffer due to the very difficult living conditions together with the Lebanese government's policies towards the refugees.

3.3.1 Overcrowded Camps

One of the main problems of the Palestinian refugees derives from the fact that thousands of Palestinians are forced to live together in such limited areas. According to the UNRWA the refugee camps, which can hardly absorb 50,000

persons are already hosting more than 433,000 refugees.⁷⁴ The tremendous overpopulation problem in the refugee camp escalated due to the external and internal conflicts of the Lebanese state. For example as a result of the 1967 War and the expulsion of Palestinians from Jordan to Lebanon in 1970s, thousands of Palestinians settled in Rashidieh, Burj el-Shemali, el-Buss, Ein el-Hilweh and Mieh w Mieh refugee camps, which are located in southern Lebanon. In addition, the negative repercussions of the Gulf Crisis in 1991, which diminished the job opportunities in the Gulf Arab states, forced thousands of Palestinians to seek refuge in Lebanon.

Moreover as a result of the 1975 civil war, some refugee camps were totally destroyed like the Nabatieh, Tel el-Zaatar, Dikwaneh and Jisr el-Basha refugee camps, therefore the Palestinian refugees of these camps had to resettle in other camps such as Ein el-Hilweh and Burj el-Barajneh. In the same context, the conflicts between the Shi'a Amal militia and the PLO between 1985 and 1987 as well as the great massacre events in Sabra and Shatila of 1982, forced some refugees to resettle in other camps, and caused a big population increase in the already overpopulated camps.

The Lebanese government imposes restrictions on the expansion of the refugee camps as well as preventing the refugees from building new dwellings. Therefore, in order to overcome the overpopulation problem, the camp residents enlarge the dwellings by expanding them vertically, rather horizontally. As a result of these restrictions, other problems exist, such as the inadequate infrastructure, insufficient lighting, and unhealthy ventilation, lack of sanitation and clean environment, and narrowed streets. "In a survey on the living conditions of Palestinian refugees in camps and gatherings in Lebanon, around 58% of sampled households suffered from inadequate lighting, 45% complained from poor ventilation and 65% reported humidity/dampness."⁷⁵

⁷⁴ Jennifer Ibrahim, "The Discrimination Against Palestinian Refugees Living In Lebanon", *Palestine-Israel Journal Of Politics, Economics & Culture* 15.1/2 (2008), p. 87.

⁷⁵ Rima R. Habib, Shiraz H. Basma, and Joumana S. Yeretian, "Harboring illnesses: On the association between disease and living conditions in a Palestinian refugee camp in Lebanon", *Faculty of Health Sciences, American University of Beirut, Lebanon. International Journal of Environment Health Research*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 2006), p. 107.

3.3.2 Health Problems

One of the major problems of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon is health problems. As a result of the ill-constructed and unhealthy buildings, the Palestinian refugees do not have access to clean water due to the the lack of wastewater networks, healthy water pipes and sewage systems.

The main service provider UNRWA is especially coerced in maintaining health services, and with respect to the overcrowded dwellings and infrastructural problems, thousands of Palestinians frequently suffer from infectious and epidemic diseases such as asthma, upper respiratory tract infections and an increase in the incidence of cardiovascular diseases.⁷⁶ In addition, although the garbage collection services are maintained mainly by the UNRWA and other NGOs, it is severely limited. Because of that, the disease spreading animals such as mosquitoes, lice, flies fleas, mice and rats, deteriorate the health conditions.⁷⁷

Because of the overcrowded camps and vertically constructed dwellings, the green areas are very limited and the environmental problems are evident in the photos of the refugee camps.⁷⁸ The houses are built with poor quality materials and too adjacent to each other, contrary to the international standards of safety. “The houses are typically built of either concrete blocks or corrugated metal sheets and suffer from numerous indoor environmental problems, including difficult temperature regulation, weak ventilation, mold and dampness. Cracks in walls and ceilings allow for seepage and for cockroaches and other pests to infest the homes.”⁷⁹

3.3.3 Economic Problems

In the limited area of the camps, where around 433,000 Palestinian refugees live, one of the major problems is *poverty*. According to the UNRWA 2011 figures: “2/3

⁷⁶ Ibrahim, “The Discrimination against Palestinian Refugees Living in Lebanon”, p.87.

⁷⁷ Ibid, p. 88.

⁷⁸ BADIL, Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, “Photo Gallery Lebanon”, <http://www.badil.org/fr/galerie-de-photos/category/20-lebanon>, accessed on March 17, 2012.

⁷⁹ Ibrahim, “The Discrimination Against Palestinian Refugees Living In Lebanon”, p.88.

of Palestine refugees are poor, subsisting on less than \$6 per day. 6.6% of these subsisting on less than \$2.17 per day.”⁸⁰ The job opportunities for Palestinians in Lebanon are very limited partly because of the very limited job opportunities in the country as a whole. The refugees work in seasonal and low waged jobs, mostly in agricultural and construction fields. The Lebanese government’s regulations, which will be handled in the following chapter, make it more difficult for the Palestinians to be employed. As a result, the job opportunities of the Palestinian refugees are restricted, compared to the job opportunities of the foreigners in Lebanon. For example the number of work permits issued by the Lebanese government to the Palestinian workers in 1999 was only 350 permits compared to more than 18,000 permits issued to the Egyptian workers in Lebanon.⁸¹

Moreover related to the economic plight of the Palestinian families, 29 per cent of the students drop out their schools,⁸² as the children are obliged to work rather than going to schools. The situation results in another socioeconomic problem in the camps, and increases the school drop-out rate. Similar to other basic problems in the camps, these problems are tried to be alleviated by UNRWA’s rehabilitation programmes. Nevertheless, especially as a result of the civil war of 1975, the infrastructure of most of the camps infinitely deteriorated, and the living conditions in the camps could not be developed. Furthermore because the vast majority of the Palestinian refugees do not have the Lebanese citizenship, the living conditions for the Palestinians are more difficult.

In conclusion, there are a variety of problems facing the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since their settlement; their conditions have not shown significant improvement. The work opportunities for the Palestinians are limited and their living conditions in the refugee camps are much lower than the living conditions out

⁸⁰ UNRWA, “Palestine refugees: A special case”, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20111002306.pdf>, accessed on March 18, 2012.

⁸¹ Jaber Suleiman, “Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”, Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty University of Sussex Falmer, (Brighton BN1 9SJ: United Kingdom, 2006), p.16.

⁸² Y. El-Madi, (1995) *Al Sakan wal marafiq al ‘amma fi mukhayamat lubnan*, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics quoted in Bassem Sirhan, et al. “Education and the Palestinians in Lebanon”, *Journal Of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 391.

of the camps. However it should be also noted that most of the Palestinian refugees are Sunni Muslims and they constitute the ten per cent of the Lebanese population, which threatens the confessional character of the country. Therefore some sects of the Lebanese society consider the Palestinian existence in the country as a triggering source of problems, imbalance, and instability. It could also be argued that the worst living conditions for the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon are experienced by those who do not have any citizenship, especially if they were not registered to any governmental or non-governmental institutions, which provide aid for the Palestinian refugees.

CHAPTER 4

THE STANCE OF THE LEBANESE STATE TOWARDS THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES

In the previous chapters, I highlighted the structure of the diversified Lebanese society and the political system, which is based on a very sensitive and fragile balance of power among the three main sects; Maronite Christians, Sunni Muslims and Shi'a Muslims. This situation made the Lebanese state to traditionally take cautious measures against the Palestinian refugees for fear that the existence of that big number of Palestinians in the country could bring imbalance to the fragile sectarianism led system in Lebanon. These cautious measures which increased as a result of the civil war, helped aggravate the difficult living conditions in the refugee camps on one hand, and motivated the political and military activities of the Palestinian factions within these camps, on the other hand.

4.1 The Interrelation between the Lebanese Civil War and the Palestinian Refugees

In order to understand the dynamics and the atmosphere which led to the Lebanese civil war, we should highlight the role of the political Palestinian factions in Lebanon, especially the Palestinian Liberation Movement, as its activities on the Lebanese arena, together with its actions and attacks against Israel are considered of the reasons which led to the civil war.

4.1.1 Establishment of the PLO

Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, various Palestinian movements appeared, and later in 1964 they formed the Palestinian Liberation Movement-PLO as a political and paramilitary organization, which became the umbrella organization of these Palestinian factions, and was later recognised by the UN as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

After the 1967 defeat by Arabs in the war against Israel, the military attacks of the Palestinian factions against Israel were escalated from the Lebanese lands. This situation was faced by a strong opposition of the Christian Lebanese who considered such Palestinian activities as a threat to the sovereignty of the Lebanese to the extent that they described it as Palestinian occupation of southern Lebanon. On the other hand there was a great support to these military activities by the Lebanese people living in the south and they called for mass demonstrations to express their support to the Palestinian attacks against Israel. The intervention of the Lebanese army to suppress these demonstrations ended up with the death of tens of Lebanese and Palestinians. This tension led to holding of the Cairo Conference in November 1969⁸³ which put the guidelines of the activities of the Palestinians in Lebanon, within the principle of respecting the sovereignty of the Lebanese state and the non-interference of the Palestinians in the Lebanese domestic affairs. However the conference had also recognized the right of the Palestinian factions to launch attacks against Israel from the Lebanese territory. Because of this last point, the Christian political parties considered the agreement contradictory to the sovereignty of the Lebanese state. On the other hand, Israel considered the agreement as a violation of the 1949 Truce.

The PLO gained legitimization through the Cairo Agreement. Depending on this agreement, the Palestinian political and military factions in Lebanon have been strengthened more than before. Lebanon was transformed from just being as a refuge into being a site of revolt against Israel.⁸⁴ “The Cairo Agreement signed in 1969 by the Lebanese government and the PLO, enabled Palestinians to establish for the first time separate and independent political, social, economic, educational, cultural and legal institutions.”⁸⁵ The PLO was institutionalized in Lebanon by gaining a remarkable autonomy in southern Lebanon. The Cairo Agreement reshaped the relations between the Lebanese authorities and the PLO. Thus this

⁸³ Samih K. Farsoun and Rex B. Wingerter, “The Palestinians in Lebanon”, *SAIS Review*, [n.s.]: [1/2]:3 (Winter 1982), p.101.

⁸⁴ Peteet, "From Refugees to Minority: Palestinians In Post-War Lebanon" p. 28.

⁸⁵ Suleiman, “Palestinians in Lebanon and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations”, p. 400.

agreement has crucial importance for the Palestinian refugees and it was considered as the symbol of Palestinian self-determination.⁸⁶

The PLO was very active in Lebanese arena between 1968 and 1982 period. It experienced numerous clashes such as between 1975 and 1982 clashes the PLO clashed with Muslim and Leftist militias and in 1980s they clashes with the Shi'a groups.⁸⁷

The PLO also had a coordinated military power, the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA) to defend the rights of the Palestinians. It launched several attacks from Southern Lebanon against Israel, the situation which pushed Israel to launch retaliatory attacks against Lebanon. The infiltrations and attacks on Israeli targets originating from the Lebanese territory by the PLO increased markedly in 1970 as a result of two main factors. The first factor is the signing of the Cairo Agreement which legitimized the attacks of the Palestinian factions against Israel, from the Lebanese territories. The second factor is the expulsion of the PLO from Jordan to Lebanon in 1970⁸⁸, which made Lebanon the center of political and military activities of the Palestinian factions. (See Figure 12).

⁸⁶ Farsoun and Wingerter, "The Palestinians in Lebanon", p.105.

⁸⁷ Farid El Khazen, "Permanent Settlement of Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies* Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 287.

⁸⁸ The expulsion of the PLO came as a result of the escalation of the activities of the PLO in Jordan, such activities which resulted in several bloody clashes between the Palestinian factions and the Jordanian army from 1968 until the dramatic events which is called "the Black September" which erupted on 6 September 1970 after the Palestinian militant factions hijacked four civilian planes. and flew three of them to the PLO-controlled northern Jordan, and later blew up the planes after freeing the passengers. At that moment, King Hussein decided it was time to act. Throughout September the Jordanian military launched harsh attacks to expell the PLO out of Jordan. The PLO was completely dismissed out of Jordan, and re-established themselves in Lebanon.

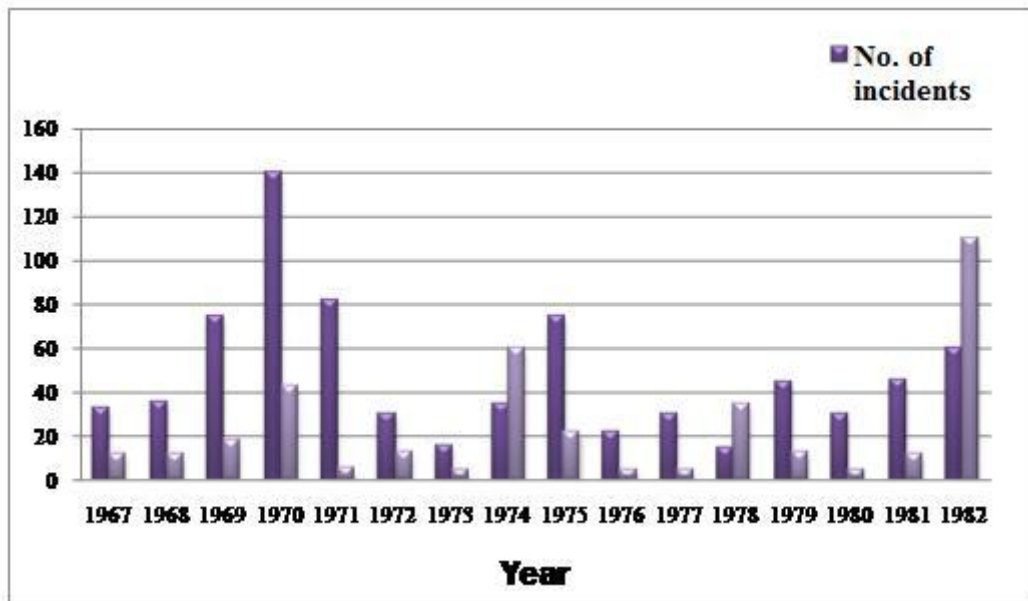


Figure 12. Number of terrorist attacks emanating from Lebanon, 1967-1983

(Source: Zeev Maoz, *Defending the Holy Land, A Critical Analysis of Israel's Security and Foreign Policy*, p.177.)

Such attacks caused an Israeli retaliation and created divisions in the Lebanese society. For example as a result of the cross border attacks of the PLO, in 1982 Israel invaded Lebanon in what called 'Operation Peace in Galilee'. Moreover in return to the Palestinian attacks, the Israeli air forces killed three influential Palestinian leaders in Beirut on April 10, 1973, and the crisis between Israel and Lebanon ended up with a turmoil between the Christian President and the Muslim Prime Minister, which led to conflicts amid Phalangist supported Lebanese army and the Palestinian guerillas in the country.⁸⁹ Therefore such tensions were effective in causing the Lebanese people to interrogate the legitimacy of the Lebanese government.

In the early 1970s with respect to the ascending power of Palestinians in the political sphere of Lebanon, the armed clashes between the PLO guerillas and the Lebanese state, and the retaliatory attacks of Israel against Lebanon, provoked the Christian rightist Lebanese parties to escalate its rhetoric and concerns about the Lebanese national sovereignty. From 1969 until the eruption of the Lebanese civil war in 1975, the rapid clashes continued between the right wing Lebanese militias

⁸⁹ Farsoun and Wingerter, "The Palestinians in Lebanon", p.101.

and the Palestinian guerillas, which added more fuel to the sectarianism fire in the country. It can be said that the Palestinian existence in Lebanon played a significant role in escalating the sectarian tension in the country, and destabilised the fragile balance in the society. These circumstances together with the active role of the Palestinian factions in the Lebanese arena and against Israel contributed to escalate the polarization among the Lebanese parties and created a convenient atmosphere which led to the eruption of the civil war. The perception of threat of the Christians increased more as a result of the PLO activities and concentrated pan-Arab sentiments in the country. Thus, the polarization took the tensions in a shattering way and the turning point erupted in Christian part of Beirut, Ein el-Rumaneh on April 13, 1975, when the Phalangist ambushed a bus carrying Palestinians and massacred 27 of the Palestinian passengers.

Several Palestinian factions were involved in the war such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) as well as the forces of Arafat, which joined the Lebanese National Movement (LNM) led by the Druze leader Kamal Jumblatt. Therefore the war exceeded Beirut district, reached to all the country and turned out as a battle between the LNM and rightists of the Lebanese Front. In addition, the war also attracted Syria to join the war besides the Phalangists to secure its position in the region. Nevertheless, because Syria's aim was just to keep the status quo and not to expel the Palestinians, Phalangists were plagued of Syria's existence in Lebanon and shifted its alliance to Israel, which carried more tension in the country by means of increasing the rivalry between Israel and Syria.

The hatred towards the Palestinians turned into a wider religious segregation in the following years of the civil war. "Due to the Palestinians' role in igniting the war, many blamed them for the country's misfortunes."⁹⁰ For example they were held responsible for the assassination of the elected President Bashir Gemayel on September 14, 1982. The assassination caused Israel to siege the Palestinian refugee camps with the occupation of West Beirut. The siege facilitated the massacres

⁹⁰ Are Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap: The 'Politics of Citizenship' for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 1948-2008", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (2009), p. 56.

against the Palestinian refugees by the Christian Lebanese Forces militia in Sabra and Shatila, which caused the killing of between 4,000 to 5,000 Palestinians.⁹¹ While it was thought that the worst bloody event was experienced by the Palestinians during Sabra and Shatila massacres, more destructive incidents started with the period of ‘the war of camps’ between 1985 and 1987. Within the changing alliances during the war, Syria supported Shi’a militia Amal, so as to curb the Palestinian refugee camps, because of the Palestinian threat to the Shi’a populated southern Lebanon, and destroyed the refugee camps of Burj el-Barajneh and Rashidiyeh. The ‘war of the camps’ had subversive effects on the Palestinian refugees, as more than 2,000 people have been killed.⁹²

The results of the civil war were really devastating for all communities in Lebanon. More importantly it determined the dissociation between the Palestinians and the Lebanese citizens in a brutal way. Before the war, while the relations were obscured, with the eruption of the war the hostilities between the two communities explicitly deteriorated. The civil war resulted in cutting the social interaction between the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese people. Before the war, both sides were sharing social services and having intermarriage relations, but the war resulted in eliminating such interaction and escalated the mutual suspicion and hatred.⁹³

Regarding the death toll of the war, although there are no concrete numbers, according to Sayigh the number is estimated to exceed 13,000.⁹⁴ Furthermore as a result of the civil war, many Christian Lebanese had to emigrate from Lebanon and the demographic structure of the state changed in favor of Muslims with the addition of mostly Sunni Muslim Palestinian refugees, the situation which caused Christian resentment.

⁹¹ Al-Hout, *Sabra and Shatila: September 1982*, p. 295.

⁹² Are Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 2 (2005), p. 217.

⁹³ Peteet, "The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon", p. 87.

⁹⁴ Rosemary Sayigh, "Too Many Enemies", (London: Zed Books, 1994), p.320 quoted in Michael C. Hudson, "Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story", *Journal Of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 256.

Considering Palestinians as an element of every problem in Lebanon, the Lebanese perceptions concerning Palestinian refugees had deteriorated, and especially the Palestinians were accused to be the responsible for the eruption of the civil war. “The Palestinians became an ‘other’ blamed for the ensuing civil war.”⁹⁵ Thus any possible cooperation between the Lebanese society and the Palestinians resulted in disappointment.⁹⁶

The fears of the Lebanese concerning the Palestinian refugees were also reflected in Ta’if Agreement signed in Saudi Arabia in 1989, which put end to the civil war and brought some political reforms to the Lebanese political system. Article 1-H of the agreement excluded Palestinians from obtaining citizenship as well as from permanent settlement, the procedure which reflects the concerns and sensitivities of the Lebanese towards the Palestinian existence in the country.⁹⁷

“Lebanon's soil is united and it belongs to all the Lebanese. Every Lebanese is entitled to live in and enjoy any part of the country under the supremacy of the law. The people may not be categorized on the basis of any affiliation whatsoever and there shall be no fragmentation, no partition, and no repatriation [of Palestinians in Lebanon].”⁹⁸
(Article 1-H of the Ta’if Agreement)

4.2 The Attitude of the Lebanese Government⁹⁹

In order not to destabilize the demographic structure of Lebanon, the Lebanese government avoid granting Lebanese citizenship to Palestinian refugees. Therefore the Palestinian refugees can not benefit from the accession to Lebanese public

⁹⁵ Peteet, “The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon”, p. 86.

⁹⁶ Jaber Suleiman, “Palestinians in Lebanon and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 397.

⁹⁷ Ibid, 56.

⁹⁸ Now Lebanon, “The Taif Agreement”, <http://www.nowlebanon.com/Library/Files/EnglishDocumentation/Official%20Documents/Taif.pdf>, accessed on November 5, 2011.

⁹⁹ According to some scholars: “the only thing that unites the Lebanese political functions today is antipathy for the Palestinians living in their midst.” See: Khalidi, Muhammad Ali and Riskedahl, Diane, “The Road to Nahr al-Barid: Lebanese Political Discourse and Palestinian Civil Rights”, *Middle East Research and Information Project*, Vol. 37 (Fall: 2007), p. 1.

health and education services, they have limited employment opportunities and they do not have the right to vote. The lack of social, political and employment rights of the refugees are imposed by the Lebanese laws.

The concerns and sensitivities which dominated the attitudes of the Lebanese government towards the Palestinian refugees, and led to increase the restrictions and obstacles imposed on the Palestinian refugees. It is also noted that these policies have significantly increased as a result of the Lebanese civil war for several reasons: 1) the common belief that the Palestinians were responsible. This belief promoted the hatred feelings towards the refugees, and increased the marginalization of the Palestinians in the Lebanese society. 2) the economic burden which has been created by the war decreased the resources of the country, and thus contributed to worsen the living conditions of the Palestinians.

The instability which had been created by the civil war and the increasing economic burden resulted from the war caused more isolation of the refugees. ‘Strangulation’ began to be used as a term by Palestinians to describe their situation in Lebanon – pointing out to the shift from the violent containment of the refugees to economic, social, and political marginalization.¹⁰⁰ For example compared to the pre-civil war period, the controls concerning thrusting weapons into the refugee camps became stricter, many unlicensed clinics, pharmacies and laboratories were closed by the Lebanese police.¹⁰¹ In addition the Ministry of Education started making controls over the UNRWA school students.

In 1994, the difficult living conditions in the refugee camps worsened more than ever due to the government’s decisions regarding prohibiting any repairment or rebuilding of the destroyed houses in the refugee camps. As a result, even the UNRWA had difficulties in repairing the refugee shelters. Knudsen defines the policy of Lebanon towards the Palestinian refugees as a “systematic legal

¹⁰⁰ Peteet, “The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon”, p. 82.

¹⁰¹ Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future”, p. 42.

discrimination.”¹⁰² After the civil war, the health and education facilities decreased a lot. For example, the access of the Palestinian students to public secondary schools was restricted. They were also debarred from receiving treatment in the government hospitals and from benefiting from the social security insurance.¹⁰³ In addition they were exempted from obtaining high salary jobs. Various official documents, which are difficult to be obtained, became obligatory for travel and employment.

In the post-civil war period, the Lebanese strict controls on the borders of the refugee camps increased more than before. More limiting regulations were brought and more hostile rhetoric started by the Lebanese political leaders. For example in April 1994 the Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz suggested that in order to provide the sectarian balance, Palestinians should be sent away from Lebanon.¹⁰⁴ In 1995 upon the expulsion of Palestinians from Libya, the Lebanese Minister of Tourism, Nicolas Fattoush stated that “Lebanon should not become a ‘dumping ground for human waste.’”¹⁰⁵

The Lebanese government’s marginalization concerning the Palestinian refugees is drawn up by Julie Peteet under four: a) the institutional marginalization, b) the economic marginalization, c) the experimental dimension, d) the discursive dimension.¹⁰⁶ In Peteet’s words the institutional marginalization is: “the exclusion from public institutions of social life and from the legal rights and protections the state affords its citizens.”¹⁰⁷ While economic marginalization is: “the extremely

¹⁰² Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap: The 'Politics Of Citizenship' For Palestinian Refugees In Lebanon, 1948-2008", p. 68.

¹⁰³ Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future”, p. 44.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, p. 43.

¹⁰⁵ BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency & Refugee Rights, “Appeal against the Expulsion of Palestinian Refugees from Germany to Lebanon” *Informationsprojekt Naher und Mittlerer Osten/Berlin Alternative Information Center/Bethlehem*, posted on August 15, 1997, http://www.badil.org/phocadownload/Badil_docs/publications/Article74/1997/art21i.htm, accessed on April 17, 2012.

¹⁰⁶ Julie Peteet, "From Refugees To Minority: Palestinians In Post-War Lebanon", *Middle East Report* 200 (1996), p. 27.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

restrictive options for employment and the near-total absence of social welfare provisions.”¹⁰⁸ Peteet suggests that the experimental dimension is “negativeness, fear and apprehension and a generalized awareness of self community as the object of scorn and hostility.”¹⁰⁹ And she argues that the discursive dimension is “the generic Palestinian is cast as trouble-maker and the cause of Labanon’s post-war woes.”¹¹⁰ In brief the marginalization policies of the Lebanese government covered a variety of fields relates to the daily life of the Palestinian refugees and directly deteriorated the living conditions inside the camps.

The settlement of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was perceived by many Lebanese citizens as they believed that the Palestinian strategy was to overthrow the Lebanese government and replace it by another government favouring the PLO and serving its goals. According to this view, the Lebanese Republic then will be transformed into a legal cover for a Palestinian-controlled state.¹¹¹

As I mentioned before concerning the decline of the Lebanese government to grant citizenship to the Palestinian refugees, it is so clear that in the Lebanese case, that the main obstacle which inhibits the Palestinian refugees from living a normal life inside Lebanon is the refusal of the Lebanese government to the "*tawteen policy*" which means the resettlement of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

According to a survey, 75 per cent of the Lebanese people are against *tawteen*. On the sectarian level; 87 per cent of the Maronites, 78 per cent of the Shi’as, 78 per cent of the Catholics, 78 per cent of the Orthodoxes, 71 per cent of the Druzes and 63 per cent of the Sunnis are against *tawteen*.¹¹² Besides its special nature in the Lebanese context in light of the complicated confessional system and the fragile balance between the segments of the society, the idea of *tawteen* is also not

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Walid Phares, *Lebanese Christian Nationalism: The Rise and Fall of an Ethnic Resistance*. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995), p.109 quoted in Michael C. Hudson, “Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story”, *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 3 (1997), p. 254.

¹¹² Sayigh, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future”, p. 45.

welcomed by the Palestinian refugees themselves because it is noteworthy that the principle of *tawteen* is traditionally rejected by the Palestinians and Arab countries as well for fear that its implementation would make the Palestinians reluctant to continue their struggle to return back to their homes in Israel and would then empty the Palestinian refugee case in its content. According to the Arab view, the refusal of *tawteen* enables Palestinians to preserve their national identities by linking the right of return to their *nakbah* memories, which also provides the solidification of the Palestinian nationalism.

In this regard it is important to refer to what is called as “selective naturalization” which is a procedure taken by the Lebanese government in some circumstances and includes granting the Lebanese citizenship to some Palestinian refugees (mainly from the Christian Palestinians) so as to create a kind of demographic balance by increasing the number of Christian citizens vis-à-vis the Muslim population and vice versa. For example between 1948 and 1978 some 40,000 Palestinian refugees¹¹³ and in 1990s around 60,000 Palestinian refugees were granted with the Lebanese citizenship by the Lebanese government.¹¹⁴

4.3 Employment Regulations

After the civil war, the job opportunities in the country drastically decreased in general and for the Palestinian refugees in particular. As a result of the civil war, most of the country was destroyed and the hatred against the Palestinian existence escalated by the Lebanese. So as to increase the job opportunities and provide more resources for the Lebanese citizens, the Lebanese government imposed job restrictions on foreigners and on the Palestinian refugees in particular since 1962, when the right of foreigners to work in Lebanon was regulated by a law entitled “The Law Regarding Entry To, Residency and Exit From Lebanon”¹¹⁵ which made it obligatory for foreigners to obtain a work permit in order to be employed in Lebanon. In the same context, in 1995 the Lebanese Minister of Labour issued the

¹¹³ Hudson, “Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story”, p. 249.

¹¹⁴ Petee, “From Refugees to Minority: Palestinians in Post-War Lebanon”, p. 29.

¹¹⁵ Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Lebanon, “The Law Regarding Entry To, Residency and Exit From Lebanon”, <http://ahdath.justice.gov.lb/law-nearby-Foreigners.htm>, accessed on August 24, 2012.

decision 621/1 which aimed at limiting the jobs and professions that can be practiced by foreigners, this decision restricted some jobs to be only practiced by the Lebanese. Later in February 2001, another Resolution by “the Resolution of Minister of Labour Mr. Boutros Harb, Number 10/1, broadened the number of prohibited jobs for foreigners. The Resolution explains the job occupations and professions which can be only performed by the Lebanese nationals (approximately 72 jobs) under the categories of *wage earners* and *business owners*. As a result of this Resolution, it became almost impossible for foreigners to be employed as all work opportunities were assigned for the Lebanese citizens.¹¹⁶

Also the Decision 10/1 give to the Lebanese Minister of Labour the authority to exempt some foreigners from these restrictions if those foreigners are eligible to the conditions stipulated in Article 8 of Decree No. 17561 of September 1964, if the foreigner is:

- a) An expert or a specialist whose work cannot be filled by a Lebanese national.
- b) Director or a representative of a foreign company.
- c) Residing in Lebanon since birth.
- d) From Lebanese origin or his/her mother is Lebanese.
- e) Married to a Lebanese female for more than one year.
- f) Citizen of a country, which applies reciprocity policy of allowing Lebanese nationals to work in the same jobs.”¹¹⁷

It is evident and visible that the aforementioned conditions are very difficult to be available and therefore it is almost impossible for the foreigners to find jobs in Lebanon. In this article, it is also required for those foreigners to have the citizenship of a country, the condition which does not fit the Palestinian refugees thus preventing them from benefiting of this article.

In the same context, there is also a specific decision concerning the employment opportunities of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. According to the Ministerial Decision No. 94/1 issued by the Minister of Labour in 2008, the Palestinian

¹¹⁶ The Resolution of Minister of Labour Mr. Boutros Harb, Number 10/1, <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/decision1-10.pdf.aspx>, accessed on May 17, 2012.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

refugees are allowed to be employed in the same work opportunities like the Lebanese citizens if they are; a) born in Lebanon, b) officially registered in the records of the Lebanese Ministry of the Interior, and c) obtaining a work permit.¹¹⁸ Although this decision seems to offer significant facilitations for the Palestinian refugees, it should be noted that it is very difficult for the majority of the Palestinian refugees to get the requirements mentioned above as most of them are not registered in the Lebanese Ministry of Labour, moreover it is almost impossible for them to get a work permit, due to the lengthy and complicated procedures required to get such permits.

The obligatory condition of obtaining a work permit is also mentioned in Law number 129, issued on 17/8/2010 by the Minister of Labour.¹¹⁹ This law explains the procedures required to issue a work permit. According to that, the Palestinian refugee must get a work contract from the employer in order to obtain a work permit from the government. However it is very clear that it is almost impossible for the Palestinians to get such work contracts, as their employers refrain from giving such contracts in order to avoid the additional costs of registering the Palestinian employers to the government for social insurance facilities. In addition there are other paper works required to attain the work permit. These paper works include: 1) An official declaration by the employer stating the number of foreigners he/she employs. 2) An official declaration stating that all the taxes have been paid. 3) Accommodation certificate from the Local Chief. 4) Employee's clean criminal record certificate. 5) Around 1000 US Dollars fees for each worker.¹²⁰

As a result the Lebanese employers hire the Palestinian refugees unofficially with lower salaries and without any registrations to the government, consequently no

¹¹⁸ Committee for Employment of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon – CEP, http://www.cep-lb.org/pdf/cep_qa_english.pdf, accessed on June 5, 2012.

¹¹⁹ House of the Representatives of the Lebanese Republic, Article 59 of the Labor Law, <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/Article-59.pdf.aspx>, accessed on April 25, 2012.

¹²⁰ Hoda Baraka, “Palestinians in Lebanon: Chains of Misery (Bound by the Law and the Market)”, *The American University in Cairo Forced Migration and Refugee Studies Program (FMRS) Cairo to Camps*, February 2008, <http://www.aucegypt.edu/GAPP/cmrs/outreach/Documents/Lebanon%20Research-final.pdf>, accessed on February 12, 2012, p. 12.

work contracts are given to those employers, thus no work permit can be obtained from the government.

In conclusion, the unemployment rate of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon remains high. For example, according to the work permit records of the Palestinian refugees, in 2007 there were 102 renewals of work permits and just 3 new work permits. In 2008 there were 87 renewal of work permits and only 1 new work permit whereas in 2009 there were only 66 renewal of work permits, and there were not any single new work permit.¹²¹ Depending on the aforementioned context, applications for work permits are low, and they decrease every year considerably.

It should be also considered that in case the work contract would be obtained, other administrative obstacles would face the Palestinian refugee to get work permit from the Lebanese government. For example the Lebanese laws prevent the Palestinian refugees from being employed in syndication needed and white collar professions such as engineers, doctors, lawyers and the governmental jobs. Those restrictions severely diminish the employment opportunities for the Palestinians. Even though the Palestinian refugees are prevented from the job opportunities in the aforementioned skilled jobs, there are Palestinians who illegally work in such skilled jobs, with low salaries and without obtaining any social security rights.¹²²

When these dynamics are considered, it could be mentioned that the employment opportunities for Palestinians are scarce and limited in low paid sectors, which do not need strict work authorization from the Lebanese government. For example, according to the 2010 August statistics 27 per cent of Palestinians work in trade sector, 19 per cent in construction sector, 12 per cent in health-education sector, 11

¹²¹ Right to Work-Laws & Realities, <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/5cb8fccb-51a8-47f5-a4d3-dbc70d2b805/%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AA--%D8%AD%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A--%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7.aspx>, accessed on May 5, 2012, p.4.

¹²² Jaber Suleiman, "Legal Issues Governing Palestinians' Right to Work and Social Security", No. 03 (April 2008), <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/db385197-c82e-478c-bd72-e08d0e6c9748/Legal-Issues-Governing-Palestinians%E2%80%99-Right-to-Work.aspx>, accessed on June 9, 2012, p. 2.

per cent in agriculture sector, 13 per cent in industry sector, 10 per cent in social services and 7 per cent in other sectors in poor positions.¹²³

Through the marriage opportunity to a Lebanese citizen, Palestinians have an opportunity to access the restricted jobs. According to the resolution 122/1, which was declared on September 23, 2011, if a Palestinian get married to a Lebanese citizen at least for a year, he or she could be employed in the restricted jobs.¹²⁴ Although, it should be critically noted that the conditions and requirements mentioned for the foreigners are changeable according to the political dynamics and balances in the country. The Minister of Labour has the right to give the final approval concerning the exemptions granted to foreigners, thus such approvals are conditional and up to the discretion and goodwill of the Minister himself.¹²⁵

Another development came 2010 through a decision of Minister of Labour, which gave access to more job sectors to the Palestinians who were born in Lebanon and registered with Department of Affairs of Palestinian Refugees (DAPR).¹²⁶ Although this decision still adopts the obligatory work permits, it has a symbolic value because of opening more job opportunities and bringing new facilitating regulations for the Palestinian refugees. For example, while the work permit for the foreigners is regulated with respect to the reciprocity condition as an obligation, which has been declared in Law 129-Article 59¹²⁷ of the Labour Law issued on August 17th

¹²³ Right to Work-Laws & Realities, <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/5cb8fccb-51a8-47f5-a4d3-dbc70d2b805/%D8%AE%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AA--%D8%AD%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%85%D9%84-%D9%84%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D9%8A-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A--%D8%A8%D9%8A%D9%86-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%82%D8%B9-%D9%88%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7.aspx>, accessed on May 5, 2012, p. 3.

¹²⁴ The Resolution 122/1 <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/Decision1-22.pdf.aspx>, accessed on January 15, 2012.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Suleiman, "Legal Issues Governing Palestinians' Right to Work and Social Security", p.2.

¹²⁷ House of the Representatives of the Lebanese Republic, Article 59 of the Labour Law, <http://www.lpd.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/Article-59.pdf.aspx>, accessed on April 25, 2012.

2010, the announcement of the Law 128-Article 9¹²⁸ of the Social Security Code of the same day excludes this reciprocity condition for the Palestinian refugees, among the foreigners.¹²⁹ The Law 128-Article 9 has a great importance because of removing the reciprocity condition for the Palestinian refugees as well as providing compensations for the Palestinian employers by the National Fund for Social Security, if they are fired from their jobs. The Lebanese government regulates the refunding compensation through *the Informational Memorandum No. 437* of May 23, 2011.¹³⁰ According to that, the regulations are implemented by the General Director of National Fund of Social Security, the funding is provided for the Palestinian refugees, who had been fired from work with respect to three conditions; a) if the worker is a resident in Lebanon, b) registered to General Directorate of Political Affairs and Refugees and c) has a work permit from the Lebanese government.¹³¹

4.4 Restrictions in Other Fields

There are other difficulties for the Palestinian refugees, which create more obstacles for the Palestinians. For instance, as mentioned in the previous chapter, rebuilding and repairing in the refugee camps is prohibited and controlled by the Lebanese Interior Ministry through preventing the entrance of construction materials into the refugee camps. In addition in 1995, the right to travel is limited through the decision of Ministry of Interior, Decree No. 478. According to that, the entry and exist of the Palestinians are regulated through the Article 2 of the said Decree, which made it obligatory for Palestinians who were residing outside Lebanon before 1995 to apply for a re-entry visa through the Lebanese embassies and

¹²⁸ House of the Representatives of the Lebanese Republic, Article 9 of the Social Security Law, <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/article-9.pdf.aspx>, accessed on April 24, 2012.

¹²⁹ Lebanese Republic, Presidency of the Council of Ministers Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee, "Right to Work", <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work.aspx>, accessed on April 24, 2012.

¹³⁰ Informational Memorandum No. 437, <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/Right-To-Work/Round-table,-a-photo-exhibition,-and-a-concert-by-/%D9%85%D8%B0%D9%83%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D8%B9%D9%84%D8%A7%D9%85%D9%8A%D8%A9--%D8%B1%D9%82%D9%85-437--%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-2011.pdf.aspx>, accessed on April 27, 2012.

¹³¹ Ibid.

consulates abroad. The same approval is also needed as exit permit from those who wish to leave Lebanon.¹³² In practice it was clear that due to the lengthy procedures of renewing passports and collecting the visa documents, re-entering into Lebanon is more complicated than leaving the country. In this context the Lebanese government refused giving an entry permit to 15,000 Palestinians who were part of the 30,000 Palestinians who expelled from Libya by the late President Muhammed Gaddafi after the signing of Oslo Peace Accords. The Lebanese refusal resulted in humanitarian crisis for those Palestinians who were stuck on the Libyan borders with Egypt.¹³³ It can be argued that the Decree No. 478, is a direct result of the Oslo Accords and the tough opposition of the Lebanese government to this agreement.

The Lebanese restrictions on the Palestinian refugees increased after the 1975 civil war. For instance, moving freely among the refugee camps was restricted. The Lebanese regulations made it obligatory to get “transfer permission papers” by those refugees who want to leave a camp and enter in another camp. These papers are required and controlled on the sharply determined borders of the camps by the Lebanese patrols, which are responsible for the security of the camp borders.

The Lebanese check points, located around the borders of the refugee camps are another important problem for Palestinians. The strict controls in check points, by the Lebanese patrols, cause a deeper polarization between the Lebanese and the Palestinian societies. The sharply determined borders of the refugee camps prevent integration of the refugees to the Lebanese community, distance them from the Lebanese government and increase the animosity between them. “This has increased the refugees’ feeling of alienation from mainstream society and severed personal ties to local residents, in effect creating an encapsulated refugee existence and identity.”¹³⁴ Moreover despite the strict check points, the insecurity problem in the camps could not be overcome. The Palestinian inhabitants of the camps are

¹³² Suleiman, “Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”, p.15.

¹³³ Wadie Said, “The Obligations of Host Countries to Refugees Under International Law: The Case of Lebanon”, in Naseer Aruri, (ed.), *Palestinian Refugees: The Right of Return*. (European Union: Pluto Press, 2001), p. 136.

¹³⁴ Knudsen, "Islamism in the Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", p. 219-20.

exposed to harrassment, insult and physical violence by the Lebanese patrols in the check points.¹³⁵

Another difficulty for the Palestinians in Lebanon derives from the fact that they are extensively restricted from having property rights on the Lebanese land. “The refugees became the landless proletariat of Palestinian society.”¹³⁶ The right of having property is restricted on April 3, 2001 through the passed law No. 296 from the Lebanese parliament, which amended the first article of decree No. 11617 of 1969, regarding non-Lebanese acquisition of property. The amended clause stipulates that it is prohibited to any person who is not a citizen of a recognized state to own and inherit property in Lebanon.¹³⁷ It is clear that this law targets the Palestinian refugees as they are not citizens of a recognized state.

Through the Legislative Decree No. 11614 of 1969, the Lebanese government put limitations on owning land by foreigners. According to this Decree, the Palestinians in Lebanon had the right to own a piece of land up to a maximum of 3000 square meters in Beirut and 5000 square meters out of Beirut. However it was noted that Article 8 of the same Decree put extra limitations on the Palestinians concerning this land owning right by considering a Palestinian family as one Palestinian individual,¹³⁸ in the sense that if one member of a Palestinian family owns the maximum limit determined by the law, the other members of the same family would not be allowed to own any other land.

In conclusion, it can be said that all the aforementioned difficulties are interrelated to each other in deteriorating the life standards of the Palestinian refugees in

¹³⁵ Peteet, "From Refugees To Minority: Palestinians In Post-War Lebanon", p. 29.

¹³⁶ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p. 189.

¹³⁷ Jaber Suleiman, “Marginalised Community: The Case of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”, *Development Research Centre on Migration, Globalisation and Poverty*, http://www.migrationdrc.org/publications/research_reports/JaberEdited.pdf, accessed on April 25, 2012, p. 18.

¹³⁸ House of the Representatives of the Lebanese Republic Date 6002/4/3 6002/696 Law No. C.R. No. 25.Date 6002/4/5, <http://www.lpdc.gov.lb/getattachment/Rights/Areas-of-Work/PropertyRight/%D8%AD%D9%82-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%84%D9%83/%D8%AA%D8%B9%D8%AF%D9%8A%D9%84-%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86-%D8%AA%D9%85%D9%84%D9%83-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%AC%D8%A7%D9%86%D8%A8.pdf.aspx>, accessed on March 17, 2012.

Lebanon. As the low living conditions of the refugees remained same, and the economic, political and social development for Lebanon was slowed down especially by the civil war, the Palestinians' orientation to establish radical political factions, which threatened the stability of Lebanon, was the outcome of such circumstances.

CHAPTER 5

PALESTINIAN FACTIONS AND THE POLITICAL DYNAMICS IN LEBANON

5.1 Political Movements in Refugee Camps

The fragile structure of the Lebanese society, together with the weak institutions of the Lebanese state provided a convenient environment for the rise of the activities of Palestinian factions. In this context it is noted that the Palestinian faction in the other hosting countries were acting within the limits and rules set by these countries-the only exception was the PLO in Jordan, and the PLO had already paid a high price for that-but in the Lebanese case, the hyper activity of those factions endangered the security and stability of the country in different occasions and events.

As a result of the poverty, deteriorated living conditions, the climate of uncertainty, together with the Lebanese government's marginalizing policies and the frequent times of displacement and deportation (75 per cent of the refugees have been displaced more than once, while almost 20 per cent of them have been forced to leave their homes three or more times.¹³⁹) Palestinian refugees opted to organize themselves in Lebanon by establishing sociopolitical and traditional associations such as village associations, insurance companies and credit unions.¹⁴⁰ These associations were formed to provide some services to the inhabitants of the camp and to help managing the daily life of the Palestinian refugees, in light of the insufficient services provided by the UNRWA and the reluctance of the Lebanese government to participate in any kind of assistance or the administration of the camps. These associations played a significant role in solving the daily life

¹³⁹ Sayigh, "Palestinians in Lebanon: Harsh Present, Uncertain Future", *Majallat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniya*, 1993, p. 21 quoted in Suleiman, "Palestinians in Lebanon and the Role of Non-governmental Organizations", p. 400.

¹⁴⁰ Peteet, "The Dilemma of the Palestinians in Lebanon", p. 87.

problems such as school fees and the unexpected medical expenses and funerals. In addition, these associations have been effective in maintaining the historical and ancestral bonds with Palestinians' homeland by asserting the link of pre-1948 kinship.¹⁴¹

It could be argued that although these associations, which are affiliated to Palestinian political factions and movements, are not considered legitimate by the Lebanese government which does not give political rights for the Palestinian refugees, such associations have been playing an important role in keeping order and sustaining daily routine in the refugee camps. Their influence in the refugee camps is evident concerning every activity such as conflict resolution and providing social aid for the refugees. Furthermore, these associations claimed themselves as the representatives of the Palestinian refugees and the mouthpiece for defending their rights against the Lebanese state, Israel and the other international and regional agencies.

Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the authority of the Palestinian political associations in the refugee camps are not formed by any consensus among the Palestinians. It is a well known fact that the Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon represented a convenient pretext for the third parties to interfere into the Lebanese domestic affairs. This interference used to be practiced by influencing the activities of such organizations against the Lebanese state as well as the State of Israel. Therefore it could be suggested that most of those committees are the shadow reflection of the third parties, from which they receive funds. For instance, the Palestinian associations' chairmans in Burj el-Barajneh and Shatila refugee camps have close relations with pro-Syrian parties.¹⁴² The geographical location of the two camps close to Beirut gives Syria a pressure card to destabilize Lebanon. Moreover, the Palestinian animosity against Israel enhances the influence of Syria which escalates the tension by supporting the Palestinian attacks against Israel.

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid.

In conclusion it could be emphasized that; due to the interests of the third parties in Lebanon, their manipulations of the Palestinian factions as well as the ideological differences and internal conflicts among the Palestinian factions, the Palestinian associations failed in bringing unity for the refugees. Moreover they prevented the development of the refugee community and deteriorated the socioeconomic conditions for the Palestinian refugees.¹⁴³

According to Knudsen, interrelated with each other the basis of Palestinian political activism in Lebanon is formed under three pillars.¹⁴⁴ The first pillar is to preserve Palestinian pre-1948 kinship, rather than seeking the Lebanese citizenship. Although the UN Resolution 194 calls for the right of return of the Palestinian refugees as soon as possible, the second pillar of the Palestinian political activism rejects the UN 194 statement concerning the recommendation for the resettlement, and the economic and social rehabilitation of the refugees in the Arab states, for fear that it would lead the abandonment of the right of return of the Palestinian refugees. The third pillar underlines the importance of the right of return and agitates the opposition stance against Israel. Consequently, the three pillars envisage the hope of Palestinian return to their native lands, thus motivating the political activities of the Palestinian associations.

5.2 The Role of the PLO

The PLO strengthened its power in Lebanon through partaking in Palestinians' daily life in economic, social and political fields by providing comprehensive central social services for the refugees, together with its contributions in offering assistance to the needy people like the families of the martyrs, the disabled, the orphans and the prisoners.¹⁴⁵ It also worked as service manager of a network of pre-schools, day care services and clinics.¹⁴⁶ In addition to these rules, the PLO appeared as a major employer offering job opportunities to over 3,000 people in

¹⁴³ Although this thesis does not interested specifically in the Palestinian political movements, for a detailed information see Aaron D. Pina, "Palestinian Factions", *Congressional Research Service Report for Congress* (2005).

¹⁴⁴ Knudsen, "Islamism In The Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees In Lebanon", p. 221.

¹⁴⁵ Rashid Khalidi, "The Palestinians in Lebanon: Social Repercussions of Israel's Invasion", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 38, No. 2 (Spring 1984), p. 257.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

social medical and cooperative services along with another another 3,000 regular full time paid combatants in the PLO armed forces.¹⁴⁷ Through having strong relations with the other Palestinian institutions and providing lots of job opportunities for the Palestinian refugees, it managed to motivate the Palestine society as well as its ability to secure good political relations with the regional powers.¹⁴⁸

Through the existence of the PLO, the Palestinian refugees had the right of preserving their national identities, which partly helped them to struggle for their existence during the absence of a state of Palestinians. “It was a magnet to which social and professional organizations were drawn, filling a vacuum created by the lack of a state apparatus.”¹⁴⁹

The establishment of the PLO created a view that, in addition to the UNRWA, there became another organization for Palestinian Arabs, which is established by and for the Palestinian Arabs. As being closer to Palestinians, the PLO managed to provide new socio-economic incomes for its people than the UNRWA could have provided. For example the PLO based socioeconomic factions provided new job opportunities for the refugees that the UNRWA failed to achieve.

As a result of the 1973 and 1975 wars the PLO gained legitimization in different spheres. In 1974 Arab League Summit in Rabat of Morocco, the PLO was recognized as the sole, legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. That recognition ended the claim of King Hussein of Jordan of representing the Palestinians of the West Bank. Yaser Arafat gave a speech in the UN General Assembly on November 13, 1974 and the following year on November 10, 1975 through the adoption of Resolution 3237 the PLO gained observer status in the UN Assembly. As a result of that the PLO has got the diplomatic recognition of most of the UN member states. Along with this the PLO is also a member in other regional and international organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Farsoun and Wingerter, “The Palestinians in Lebanon”, p.106.

¹⁴⁹ Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine*, p. 193.

(OIC), the Non-aligned Movement, and other UN Agencies. It was also addressed as a key player in finding a solution for the Arab-Israeli conflict by the Western powers.

However after the failed assassination attempt on the Israeli ambassador in Lebanon, which is believed to be performed by a Palestinian organization, the Israeli troops invaded Lebanon in June 16, 1982 and destroyed the bases of the PLO in Lebanon. Israeli bombardment greatly damaged Western Beirut in a month. The Habib Agreement of August, 1982 pushed the PLO members to evacuate Lebanon until September, which left behind American guaranty for the protection of the Palestinian civilians. However the assassination of the president elect Bashir Gemayel once more brought the blame on the Palestinian refugees.

In 1982, the PLO received major setback with its forced departure of Lebanon after the Israeli invasion of Southern Lebanon. It is estimated that more than 10,000 PLO members were forced to leave Lebanon.¹⁵⁰ The PLO's departure caused disappointment among the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon who felt that the PLO had escaped itself and left them alone facing Israel. The events in Sabra and Shatila are considered as one of the most tragic Palestinian sufferings, and the most widely known brutality committed against Palestinians.¹⁵¹ The Sabra and Shatila massacres which took place few days after the PLO departure of Lebanon promoted the aforementioned feelings of the Palestinian refugees towards the PLO. The remaining residents of Sabra-Shatila blamed the PLO for the massacres. "...who conspire against us and want to see us live like this and who have taken our children and slaughtered them includes the PLO."¹⁵² Furthermore, the increasing patronage relations of the PLO shattered its trusted throne as well.

¹⁵⁰ Rex Brynen, "The Politics of Exile: The Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol.3, No.3 (1990), p. 210.

¹⁵¹ Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of Commemoration*. (The United States of America: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 171.

¹⁵² "Lebanon's Palestinians", *Middle East Report*, No. 186, After Oslo: The Shape of Palestine to Come (Jan.-Feb. 1994), p.20.

The most significant achievement of the PLO in the Arab-Israeli conflict came in 1993 with the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords with Israel. This historical agreement secured the Israeli recognition of the PLO for the first time since its establishment. However this agreement guaranteed an increase in the international recognition of the PLO, it rather caused a boycott to the PLO by some hardline Arab countries like Syria, Libya and Lebanon which refused the Oslo Accords. On the internal level the Oslo Agreement was also refused by the Palestinian refugees who felt that the agreement has ignored their rights. It can be argued that the signing of Oslo Accords created a dissent between the PLO and the refugees and increased the power vacuum in the refugee camps thus escalated the social economic problems of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.¹⁵³

5.3 The Palestinian Political Factions¹⁵⁴

There are different Palestinian political factions. Their political orientations are different from each other according to the regional and international dynamics. For example, especially after the 1980s, the radical Islamist ideas among the Palestinian refugees became much popular. According to Marius Deeb the main reasons for radical Islamist tendency among the Palestinian refugees are the Islamic Revolution in Iran, the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, the Syrian support, and the economic hardships.¹⁵⁵ In general it is noted that irrespective of the background of these political factions, they all have one main aim which is to establish an independent state of Palestine through the strengthening of the Palestinian identity and the military struggle against the State of Israel.

As mentioned above, the orientations of such factions could change according to the regional and international dynamics as well as the source of the funds which they receive. For example, the leftist movement Al-Qawmiyyun al-Arab which was

¹⁵³ Knudsen, "Widening the Protection Gap: The 'Politics Of Citizenship' for Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon, 1948-2008", p. 62.

¹⁵⁴ Although this thesis does not specifically interested in the military activities of the Palestinians in Lebanon, it is important to deal with such organization because of their strong ties with the Palestinians, see Husayni Al-Husayni, "Husayni Al-Husayni on the Palestinians in Lebanon", *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (Winter 1986).

¹⁵⁵ Knudsen, "Islamism In The Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees In Lebanon", p. 223.

founded by George Habash in 1951, based on the nationalist ideas of Nasser, had later changed its orientations to contradict with Nasser's ideas after the 1967 war. For example Habash was a prominent member of the PLO under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, but due to his disagreement with Arafat he quitted the PLO and established a Marxist-Leninist organization called the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). The PFLP also had inner disagreements, which resulted in other groupings to emerge such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) in 1969.

The structures of the political factions are fragile and away from being well-organized. Moreover their political understanding is clientalist and the personal interests are dominant. Although in the beginning they create motivation, glory and enthusiasm among the refugees, these factions later lost the confidence and hope of the refugees in a short time due to their weak structures, personal interests and the interference of the third parties.¹⁵⁶ The fragile structures of these factions and their weakness points which were mentioned above motivated their scatter into several factions. In another context, after the expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon (the expulsion event will be explained in the following parts), and the political vacuum left by the PLO, new political factions were established; such as Jund al-Sham, Usbat al-Ansar, and some years later, Fatah al-Islam.¹⁵⁷

The existence of Palestinian political factions is hindering the Lebanese government from keeping the already fragile stability in the country. It is believed by some Lebanese circles that the Palestinian refugees are responsible for the eruption of the civil war in the country. When the tension between the Christians and Sunni Muslims for centuries is considered together with the increasing number of mostly Muslim Palestinian political factions the atmosphere of disputes in Lebanon is inevitable. Moreover it should be also noted that these organizations could not be controlled by the Lebanese government. For example as a result of the consecutively launched attacks by the Palestinian factions from the southern

¹⁵⁶ Sari Hanafi and Taylor Long, "Governance, Governmentalities, and the State of Exception in the Palestine Refugee Camps of Lebanon", *Journal of Refugee Studies*, Vol. 23, No. 2 (2010), p. 143.

¹⁵⁷ Knudsen, "Islamism In The Diaspora: Palestinian Refugees In Lebanon", p. 220.

Lebanese border against the State of Israel, the Nabatiyeh camp was demolished in 1982 by the Israeli air attacks and in August, 1982, Israel performed the Operation Peace for Galilee, which was ended up with the advent of the French troops and the US marines. Moreover the Israeli Defense Forces established a security zone in South Lebanon until 2000.

Consequently, because of the independent and defying policies of the Palestinian factions, the mutual hatred between the Lebanese people and the Palestinian refugees was escalated. Considered as the aliens of the country, the Palestinians could not integrate with the Lebanese society. For example, due to the disintegration between the Lebanese Shi'a and the Palestinian refugees on the background of the retaliatory Israeli attacks against southern Lebanon, the Shi'a military and political movement Amal attacked the refugee camps from 1985 to 1987 in what is called "the War of the Camps". Another tragic clash happened in 2007, in Nahr el-Bared refugee camp between the Lebanese Armed Forces and the Palestinian factions in the camp.

5.3.1 The Conflict between the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and Fatah al-Islam (FI)

The Fatah al-Islam (Islam's Conquest) was established as an underground movement in Nahr el-Bared on 29 November 2006. It is a Sunni radical Islamist group, inspired from the al-Qaeda and Salafism.¹⁵⁸ The FI claims that from Marxism to nationalism, Palestinians have tried every kind of ideology, which always resulted in failure, thus FI suggests that Islam can be the only solution.¹⁵⁹ In fact the movement emerged from the secular movement Fatah al-Intifada, though its Islamic based ideology made FI different from Fatah al-Intifada. The purpose of the movement is to encounter Israel and the role of the US in the Middle East, and to bring Islamic sharia rule to the Palestinian refugee camps of Lebanon. The movement has a different structure because its members are from several countries of the Middle East and North Africa as well as from Russia, Albania and

¹⁵⁸ Simon Haddad, "Fatah Al-Islam in Lebanon: Anatomy Of A Terrorist Organization", *Studies In Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 33, No. 6 (2010), p. 553.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

Afghanistan.¹⁶⁰ Although FI is a new movement, its composition of different identities together with its unclear ties with other powers made the movement difficult to be handled by the Lebanese government.

The clashes in Nahr el-Bared were sparked when the Lebanese Internal Security attacked an apartment, in the city of Tripoli, which was believed to be a hide out of FI militants who robbed a bank. The group of militants opened fire against the Lebanese Internal Security and the situation escalated by the military attacks by the LAF against the Nahr el-Bared camp, especially after the massacre of 27 Lebanese soldiers on the camp gate after they have been attacked while sleeping by the LAF militants. The mass clashes between the two sides continued for about three months and resulted in with the total destruction of the camp.¹⁶¹ In a diplomatic endeavour to put an end to the bloody clashes between the FI and the LAF a conference was held in Vienna in September 2007 under the auspices of the Austrian government, and the UNRWA. It was agreed in the conference that the will provide financial support for the reconstruction of the camp and that all the refugees should return back to their homes in the camp by June 2011, the target which has not been realized yet. However the tendency of the Lebanese government to gain trust of the Palestinians started to be seen after the events in Nahr el-Bared especially that during the conference the Lebanese government had pledged for the first time to participate with the UNRWA in providing services for the camp. In this context, after the Nahr el-Bared crisis the former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora said:

“In earning [the Palestinian refugees’] trust and showing them that they are not the targets but the unintended victims of this crisis we have pledged to them that their evacuation is temporary, their return to Nahr el-Bared is guaranteed and the reconstruction of their homes is assured.”¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ Adam Ramadan, "Destroying Nahr El-Bared: Sovereignty And Urbicide In The Space Of Exception", *Political Geography* 28, (2009), p. 154.

¹⁶¹ Gary Gambill, 'The Rise of Fatah al-Islam', *Mideast Monitor*, Vol. 2, No. 1, June-July http://www.mideastmonitor.org/issues/0705/0705_5.htm, accessed on July 27, 2012.

¹⁶² International Crisis Group, "Lebanon's Palestinian Dilemma: The Struggle Over Nahr al-Bared ", *Middle East Report*, N°117, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/egypt-syria-lebanon/117-lebanons-palestinian-dilemma-the-struggle-over-nahr-al-bared.aspx>, accessed on March 1, 2012 and "For Nahr al Bared Humanitarian Flash Appeal Lebanese Republic Presidency of the Council of Ministers Lebanese-Palestinian Dialogue Committee"

According to some Lebanese politicians, the FI movement had strong ties with Syria. Former Lebanese Prime Minister Fuad Siniora declared on June 11, 2007 that the Fatah al-Islam fighters are linked to Syrian intelligence services¹⁶³, also the Druze leader assured that the Fatah al-Islam has no connections with al-Qaeda and it was made in Syria.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, since the beginning of the rising tension in Nahr el-Bared, the Syrian officials denied “that it had links to Fatah al-Islam militants”¹⁶⁵ and rather confirmed that the Syrian government in 2002 had charged Shaker Al-Absi, the founder of FI, and jailed him until 2005.

On the other hand, according to some other views, FI was linked with Saudi Arabia and it was established in order to encounter the increasing Shi’a Hezbollah in Lebanon. “There were political allegations that the group was funded by Saudi Arabia and backed by the Lebanese authorities as part of an effort to support Lebanese Sunnis and counterweight Shi’a Hezbollah rising power.”¹⁶⁶

Regarding the eruption of the conflict in Nahr el-Bared and the total destruction of the camp, inculpatory ideas emerged among some of the Palestinian factions that the clashes were preplanned events by the Lebanese government in order to get rid of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. They highlighted the tough stance of the Lebanese government against the Palestinian existence in Lebanon and the poor living conditions imposed in the camps, and argued that the regulations and strictions of the Lebanese state enhanced the feeling of the Palestinian refugees that they are unwanted guests in Lebanon. The torture of several Palestinian civilians

<http://www.lpd.gov.lb/Media-Room/Speeches/for-Nahr-al-Bared-Humanitarian-Flash-Appeal.aspx>, accessed on March 1, 2012.

¹⁶³ The Daily Star Lebanon. “Siniora says Fatah al-Islam fighters linked to Syria”, posted on June 11, 2007, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Politics/Jun/11/Siniora-says-Fatah-al-Islam-fighters-linked-to-Syria.ashx#axzz1pP0Ap800>, accessed on April 17, 2012.

¹⁶⁴ Yalibnan. “Jumblatt: Lebanon's Fatah al Islam was made in Syria”, posted on May 28, 2007, http://yalibnan.com/site/archives/2007/05/jumblatt_lebano_3.php, accessed on April 17, 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Reuters, “Syria denies links to Fatah al-Islam militants”, posted on May 21, 2007, <http://www.reuters.com/article/2007/05/21/us-lebanon-fighting-syria-idUSOWE13853720070521>, accessed on April 17, 2012.

¹⁶⁶ Haddad, "Fatah Al-Islam In Lebanon: Anatomy Of A Terrorist Organization", p. 550.

during the skirmishes in Nahr el-Bared, promoted the aforementioned idea among some Palestinians concerning a hidden plan to expel the Palestinian refugees by the Lebanese government.

“What is more revealing is the fact that the interior of many homes inside the camp resembled Lebanese homes in south Lebanon, where one found homes looted, where soldiers had defecated on furniture, painted racist graffiti in the interior of homes, perched flags (Israeli flags in the case of southern Lebanon, Lebanese flags in the case of Nahr el-Bared) on top their destroyed homes, and shot bullets through refrigerators and Qur'ans alike.”¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁷ Tamara Keblaoui, “Open Letter to PM Siniora”, Electronic Intifada, (October 30, 2007), quoted in Marcy Newman, “The Ongoing Nakba in Lebanon: The Case of Nahr l-Bared Refugee Camp”, BADIL-Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, <http://www.badil.org/fr/visites-detudes-comparatives/item/1513-art06>, accessed on May 25, 2012.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

In conclusion it could be argued that partly due to the Lebanese state's exclusionary policies against the Palestinian refugees, since 1948 the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon live under severe conditions. It could be stated that the political culture of Lebanon together with its civil wars, undeveloped economic conditions, divided society and the instability in the region have role in creating harsh Lebanese policies towards the Palestinian refugees. Although the relations between the refugees and the Lebanese based on alienation, the tense interaction between them could not be disregarded. Therefore the thesis tried to handle the incontrovertible impact of the Palestinian refugees on the Lebanese politics.

The Palestinian refugee problem in Lebanon was complicated by the special nature of the political, social, and demographic structure of the Lebanese state. The thesis reached out that the complications of that situation made the existence of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon one of the major political problems of the country and this problem has evolved from being a political problem to being a humanitarian problem as well.

Firstly, the unique structure of the Lebanese regime was reflected on the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. In the sense that the traditional political fiber; the confessionalism-the basic pillar of the Lebanese political regime, was explained, which made the Lebanese state very cautious and sceptical against the Palestinian existence in the country for fear that they would interfere and destabilize the fragile structure of the Lebanese institutions.

The Palestinian refugee problem is a chronic and long lasting phenomenon and thus, secondly in order to reflect its importance together with its great impact in the

Middle East, the reasons behind it were clarified as well as referring to the disagreements among the historians and scholars. From that point, the settlement of the refugees in Lebanon has been dealt with the heavy living conditions in the refugee camps, where the Palestinian refugees live. According to that thirdly it could be suggested that the basic necessities in the camps such as; the infrastructural problems, over crowdedness, poverty, destitution, unemployment, limited access to educational, health and governmental services, should be dispelled from the camps as soon as possible.

It is significant that according to the demographic structure graphs of the refugee camps, the young population is high. Therefore it could be stated that the lack of basic necessities in the refugee camps cause the young Palestinians to hate from the Lebanese, and to join military Palestinian factions, which threatens the stability of Lebanon as well as its position in the region. Although the UNRWA plays a significant role in the daily lives of the refugees, the thesis underlined that these services are inadequate, not comprehensive and not strong enough to be maintained.

The cautiousness of the Lebanese against the Palestinian refugees are reflected on different Lebanese laws and regulations which are biased against the Palestinian refugees and depriving them from some rights which are already given to other foreigners in the country. Fourthly, the thesis handled this topic by underlining the situation concerning the labor laws, land property rights and some other public rights and freedoms which all showed the systematic policy of marginalization practiced by the different Lebanese governments against the Palestinians.

It was highlighted that the Lebanese state follows exclusionist policies against the Palestinian refugees. Due to the economic, social and political problems in the country which have been influenced by the sectarianism for centuries, the refugees in Lebanon were exposed to isolation, exclusion and alienation. The Lebanese government clarified the Palestinian refugees as the greatest menace to national security, which is tremendously explosive to destroy the whole Lebanese political system.¹⁶⁸ Concerning the marginalization against the Palestinian refugees, the

¹⁶⁸ Haddad and Jamali, "The Politics of Refugees' Non Integration: The Dilemma of Palestinians in Lebanon", p. 5.

translation of the Lebanese laws from Arabic to English, facilitated to support my arguments in a good way. As a result of these sanctions, it was clarified that the Palestinians in Lebanon are debarred from having the Lebanese citizenship, and thus they were excluded from basic rights such as the social security rights, right to vote and to be easily employed.

I also gave examples from the daily life about the Lebanese discrimination against the Palestinian refugees. It was noted that the Lebanese tendency for such contemptuous policies against the refugees increased especially after the 1975 Lebanese civil war, due to the general Lebanese perception that the Palestinian refugees were responsible from the civil war as well as the assassinations of the Lebanese political figures. As a result for example they were harshly humiliated in the borders of the refugee camps and their right to travel is restricted as well. The former Sunni Muslim Prime Minister, Shafiq Wazzan explains the bilateral relations between the Palestinian refugees and Lebanese people in a summarized way.

“There were two brothers living near each other. A guest arrived and asked for shelter. One brother closed the door; the other was more tolerant, and invited the guest in. The guest stayed longer than anticipated. He then brought his wife, and then his cousins, and then even his friends. While originally he had occupied a little corner of the three bedroom house, he soon took over most of the house and was knocking at the master bedroom. This is our story with our brothers the Palestinians.”¹⁶⁹

Fifthly it was argued that due to the difficulties of the Palestinian refugees in the Middle East, the Palestinian factions were established. Although the legitimacy of these factions could be argued, it could be said that they played a great role in alleviating the humiliation that the Palestinians were exposed to especially in Lebanon. It was emphasized that the UNRWA led programs are inadequate to meet the basic needs of the refugees. On this regard, the Palestinian political and military factions provided many facilities for the refugees such as creating job opportunities and vital health services.

¹⁶⁹ Elie A. Salem, *Violence and Diplomacy in Lebanon*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 1995), p.60 quoted in Michael C. Hudson, “Palestinians and Lebanon: The Common Story”, p. 254.

It was argued that among many other factions, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) had a pivotal role in guarding the Palestinian refugees. The chapter also explained how the PLO attracted the retaliatory attacks of Israel against the Lebanese state and as a result it weakened the authority of the Lebanese government, which escalated the tension between the Palestinian refugees and the Lebanese society.

It could be suggested that the PLO filled the lack of motivation among the Palestinian refugees. Moreover because it was established by the Palestinians and it provided assistance for the Palestinian refugees, which could not be adequately met by the other NGOs and the UNRWA, it gained the trust and support of almost all of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon.

However it could be argued that the mobilization among the Palestinian refugees, which was created by the PLO weakened due to the mistrust created by the eviction of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982. On this regard in the same year another kind of discrimination of the Lebanese government appeared by means of the massacres in Sabra and Shatila. This example could be regarded as one of the hateful example of the Lebanese state against the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. The following events after the massacres were reflected in the context that the Palestinian existence in Lebanon has always been resisted by the Lebanese.

It is expected that no positive change would happen to such stance of the Lebanese state against the Palestinians especially that the Lebanese structures and institutions are still based on the same fragile confessional regime and the Lebanese people perceive the Palestinian existence as a threat to the stability of the country. It is also apparent that the international community does not have any mechanism to put pressures on the Lebanese government to change its tough stance against the Palestinian refugees as the Lebanese government is so stick to the principles of sovereignty to encounter such calls for improvements thus the situation of the refugees would probably remain the same on the long run.

With the current developments in the neighboring Syria, Lebanon has witnessed some incidents of religious tension recently and clashes between the sects of the

society. These events reveal that the sensitivities between the different religious groups are still so high in the country. The situation which makes Lebanon keep its suspicion and cautious against the external factors and its potential impact on the internal situation. On this regard the Palestinian existence is the most apparent factor which Lebanese are keen to avoid.

Also with the developments in the Arab Spring countries, it is expected that some Palestinians, who live in the Arab Spring countries, would be willing to return back to settle down with their families in Lebanon. The situation would face with the Lebanese resistance against such Palestinian wishes and would create a potential crisis in the region.

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APPENDIX

TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı: KÖSE

Adı : HANDAN HİLAL

Bölümü : ORTADOĞU ARAŞTIRMALARI

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : THE IMPACT OF THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES
ON LEBANESE POLITICS

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası

Tarih