LUISS

Department of Political Science

Master's Degree in International Relations – Global Studies

Chair of Islam: Culture and Politics

INEQUALITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A COMMON PATH TOWARD DISPARITY

PROF. FRANCESCA MARIA CORRAO

THESIS SUPERVISOR

PROF. MARIA RITA TESTA

CO-SUPERVISOR

NICOLA CECCARINI (640292)

CANDIDATE

Academic Year 2020/2021

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank my supervisor Prof. Corrao for her incredible commitment and support throughout the drafting of this final dissertation. Her wisdom, teachings, and precious advice were crucial to provide a deep and multilateral analysis of the issues analysed during the thesis.

I would also like to thank my co-supervisor Prof. Testa for her dedication and interest in this research. Her patience and kindness were crucial for the right conclusion of this analysis, especially during the last weeks of work.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to all the Professors from LUISS and MGIMO Universities for their teachings and the instruments they provide me to grow up as a student, worker, and human being. They will always be a source of inspiration for me.

ABBREVIATIONS

ADF: Arab Deterrent Force

ALP: Arab Liberation Party

CDR: Council for Development and Reconstruction

CEDAW: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women

COVID: Coronavirus Disease

EU: European Union

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

GBV: Gender-Based Violence

GCC: Gulf Cooperation Council

GDP: Gross Domestic Product

GFP: Gender Focal Points

GNP: Gross National Product

GTD: Global Terrorism Database

IMF: International Monetary Fund

INGO: International Non-Governmental Organization

ISIL: Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant

JRP: Jordan Response Plan

LBP: Lebanese Pound

LCRP: Lebanon Crisis Response Plan

LF: Lebanese Forces

MENA: Middle East and North Africa

MNF: Multinational Force

MoSA: Ministry of Social Affairs

MOU: Memorandum of Understanding

NCLW: National Commission for Lebanese Women

NDC: National Dialogue Committee

NER: Net Enrolment Rate

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

NSSF: National Social Security Fund

OECD: Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

OMSWA: Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs

PLA: Palestinian Liberation Army

PLO: Palestinian Liberation Organization

RCRC: Royal Committee for the Revision of the Constitution

SDC: Social Development Centre

SDG: Sustainable Development Goal

TNC: Transjordan National Congress

UAE: United Arab Emirates

UAR: United Arab Republic

UK: United Kingdom

UN: United Nations

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNHCR: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIFIL: United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon

US: United States

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

USD: United States Dollars

WEF: World Economic Forum

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

The concept of inequality has become of interest, especially during the last few years. Indeed, many scholars, ranging from Nobel prize winners such as Amartya Sen to government experts, have started to focus on this dangerous path undertaken globally. Indeed, historically speaking, the world has always gone at different rates and speeds. The most developed countries have been able to conquer, innovate, and invest since ancient times. In contrast, the less-developed have suffered from unsustainable living standards and the impossibility to modernize. Since the beginning of the globalization phenomenon, this process has sharply accelerated, enlarging more than ever the existing gap between the "first world" and the other ones.

The primary purpose of this research is to identify why a less-developed context such as the Middle East has struggled, and still struggles today, to overcome and fill the abovementioned gap. The analysis will focus on a sample of two similar but structurally different countries, Jordan and Lebanon, in order to highlight the existence of endogen factors responsible for this global disparity.

The first chapter aims to provide a complete and profound description of the concept of "inequality," defining its evolution and how it could adapt on a case-by-case basis. In this first section, the research describes the main drivers of inequalities (Foerster and Istvàn Gyoergy, 2015) and highlights the historical development of international responses to the issue of "global disparities." The analysis then focuses on the worst possible evolution of inequalities - the so-called "poverty traps" - representing a scenario in which an individual is unable to escape his or her limited options. Considering that these traps come in a variety of shapes and sizes, the research analyses most of the several factors that could affect their formation, such as the reference environment, the economic, social, and educational opportunities available in a specific community, and the psychological aspects of a single individual, minority, or ethnic group. The chapter then focuses exclusively on the concept of inequality applied to the Middle East context, analysing its historical development, the impacting influence of Islamic beliefs on its interpretation, and the main fragilities of "Islamic welfare states." Finally, the paragraph reports that thanks to the "liberal modernization turn" experienced by all the Middle East during the last century, the region has benefitted from an average reduction of the inequality gap at the global level. Nevertheless, at the same time, the single countries experienced a massive increase in extreme disparities at the domestic and regional level.

Chapter two provides a historical background of the different challenges, conflicts, and domestic crises experienced by the two-sample countries selected to perform this research - Jordan and Lebanon - from the sign of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in 1916 to the current time. Both countries were part of the Ottoman empire since its establishment but, after its dismemberment and the signing of the abovementioned agreement, they fell under Western domination. In Transjordan, Great Britain exerted its mandate until 1946, when the country officially became independent under the name of "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan." At the same time, Lebanon was under the direct rule of France, which exerted its control over the territory until 1943. The chapter will highlight the main events and evolutions that have led to the current situation, designing two contexts where structural inequalities had the possibility to proliferate.

The third and fourth chapters are the focal points and essential elements to provide evidence of common ground and actual presence of structural components leading to substantial inequalities in the Middle East. Both chapters will focus on a specific country, Jordan and then Lebanon, highlighting the main elements characterizing the national environment from a cultural, doctrinal, social, economic, and political perspective. The analysis will thus go through different elements, starting from the peculiar culture present in the two countries, particularly entrenched with religious beliefs, and then providing a clear focus on domestic gender disparities. The research then passes through a comprehensive analysis of the main variables – GDP, unemployment, school enrolment, etc. – affecting the socioeconomic fabrics of Jordan and Lebanon. During this analysis, there is also a specific focus on the impact of armed conflicts on countries' growth and modernization. Moreover, the research reported in these two chapters provides a comprehensive image of the impact of two other crucial variables – namely, migration and international aid support – on the two countries' development and the existing inequalities among their citizens.

Finally, the fifth chapter provides a comparison of the main elements reported in the previous chapters, highlighting the main features and differences between the two sample countries. The analysis is conducted parallelly on a variable-to-variable basis, allowing and providing a detailed image of the structural deficiencies affecting both countries and of the elements having an impact only in one of them. The reporting of the main differences is helpful to understand that, despite some endogen and structural threats that could be highlighted in the Middle East context, the influence of domestic peculiarities will never allow getting a single image universally applicable on a nation-to-nation basis.

Therefore, the final goal of the research concerns the possibility of attributing more significant value to the theory related to this challenging and fascinating theme. It thus suggests that the existence of structural factors leading to massive and threatening inequalities is not theoretical speculation but a remarkably concrete and contemporary issue.

1. THE CONCEPT OF "INEQUALITY": EVOLUTION AND DIFFERENT FACETS

The concept of "inequality" has been severely instrumentalized during the centuries, becoming a highly debated issue, especially right after the average global welfare growth. Indeed, the increased levels of commercial exchanges, health facilities, necessary infrastructures, and more, have led to a double path. From one side, there has been incredible growth in the general welfare. On the other hand, some branches of the population have suffered a lot from the increasing gap. Thus, such global inequality dynamics involve at the same time strong and contradictory forces. The share of top income people reported considerable growth almost everywhere during the last decades. However, the sharp increase in inequalities experienced at various degrees at the worldwide level suggested that country-specific factors, such as policies and institutions, matter considerably. Such different dynamics assumed by the global inequalities are usually analysed by the World Wealth and Income Database, which "*aims at measuring income and wealth inequality on a consistent basis over time and across countries*."[1]

Moreover, a study conducted by the scholar Michael Foerster on the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries recognizes six areas as the main drivers of inequalities[2].

First of all, he focuses on the "structural macroeconomic sectoral changes": based on the previous analysis conducted by Kuznets in 1955[3], he assumes the existence of a sort of inverted U-shaped relationship between inequalities and development. Indeed, this could be connected to a sectoral shift from a less productive "traditional" sector, providing lower wages, to a "modern" one. Thus, at first, development increases the inequalities. However, after a certain amount of time and a consolidation of this "modernization shift," inequalities will tend to a sharp reduction.

The second driver reported by Foerster relates to the phenomena of "globalization and technological change." However, the concept of globalization is a vast one, comprising many elements likely to affect the growth of inequalities: trade and financial integration, technological transfers, firm mobility, etc. Considering the concept of trade, it is possible to evidence that those firms able to enter the exporting market have an absolute advantage

[1] Alvaredo, F., Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E., and Zucman, G. 2017. "*Global Inequality Dynamics: New Findings from WID.world*". World Inequality Lab Working papers n°2017/1.
[2] Foerster, M., and István Gyoergy, T. 2015. "*Cross-country evidence of the multiple causes of inequality changes in the OECD area*". Handbook of income distribution. Pag 1729-1843.
[3] Kuznets, S. 1955. "Economic growth and income inequality". *The American economic review*. Pag. 1-28.

compared to the less productive firms within the same sector. Thus, the most productive firms can employ high-skilled workers by offering higher salaries, which can significantly affect expanded wage disparities within the same industries. Moreover, many studies emphasize the role of "technological change" in enlarging inequality by considering it a driver of wage growth among high-skilled workers and, at the same time, as a significant factor of unemployment among low-skilled ones.

The third area of interest in terms of impact on inequalities comprises the "changes in institutions and regulations." Since the 1980s, several countries experienced massive growth in wage inequality due to significant changes in labour market institutions, as, for example, a smaller role played by trade unions in setting wages. Indeed, during the last few decades, market institutions have become less effective in reducing inequalities due to a general decline of trade union density and collective bargaining coverage[4]. The direct effect deriving from this situation concerns the reducing institutions' equalizing power on the salary's distribution. Moreover, such a modern trend had an indirect effect by provoking a general decline in the promotion of social expenditures directed towards low-income groups.

Furthermore, in shaping the distribution of inequalities among the population, it is impossible to underestimate the role of "politics and political processes" (fourth area). Foerster focuses on how the degree of development in institutions and policies could transform the standard social setting into a new system of disparities. The analysis results in recognition of three main channels of transformation:

- the degree of democratic representation;
- the impact of lobby organizations and other interest groups;
- the effect of governmental redistributive policies.

It is easily understandable that the political parties' electoral programs reflect the main interests of the population. Suppose most voters belong to the group of people with an income above the median, thus not reflecting the portion of the population interested in effective redistributive programs. In that case, it is almost impossible that the government will undertake such policies (with the consequent risk of losing part of its electorate). Thus, rises in inequalities often result from the enlarged gap between the average and the median income. Moreover, there could be a negative effect on redistributive policies and unequal participation in elections. Indeed, for

[4] Baccaro, L. 2008. "*Labour, globalization and inequality: Are trade unions still redistributive?"* International Institute for Labour Studies.

example, if the lower-middle-class can participate more than the poorest one, then political parties will seek consensus and votes among the relatively higher-income voters. However, such a model does not apply in the Middle East. Throughout the region, the political elections are not organized in a "Western manner," being bounded to an electoral system avoiding a political change as expected in the West. Thus, despite remaining a fundamental element for an inequalities' in-depth analysis, all the theories here mentioned are not perfectly suitable for the Middle East context.

The fifth area described by Foerster comprises the "redistribution via taxes and transfers." By comparing pre-and post-distribution inequalities, the scholar Peter Whiteford concludes that an effective reallocation could reduce the starting inequality by nearly one-third. However, in 2011 Immervoll and Richardson[5] showed that the pace of inequality's growth vastly exceeded redistribution during the last twenty years of the 20th century. Thus, during that period, the redistributive power played by taxes and transfers sharply decreased in many countries.

Finally, the last driver of inequality identified by Foerster is the group comprising all the demographic and microstructural changes, known as the "structural societal changes." All the elements comprised in this category could have a double effect on income distribution. On the one hand, there could be a direct effect due to the changes in composition and sizes of different societal subgroups; on the other hand, there is an indirect effect due to the changes in people's behaviour. Forester reports the case of a country characterized by an aging society, where the largest share of the electorate has public expenditure preferences directed towards the elderly. Thus, this could result in a better situation of the oldest branches of the population while the younger generations will suffer from policies and decisions that ignore their income situation.

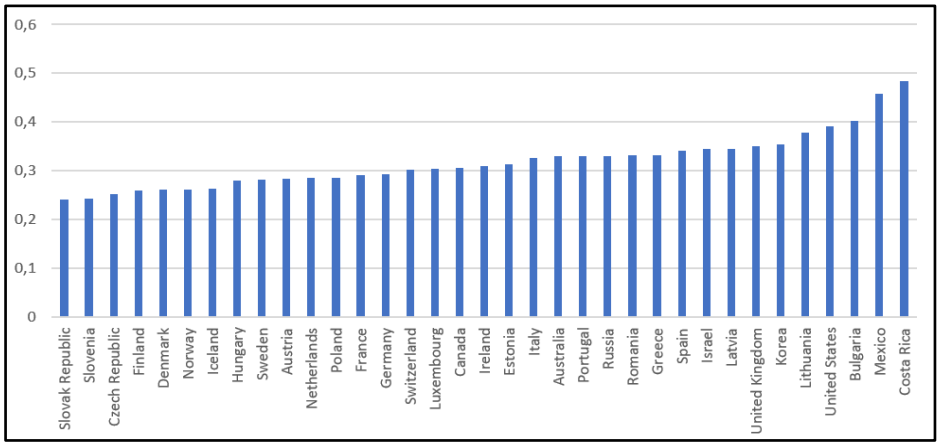
Moreover, several international organizations, such as the World Bank, have started to shift their focus towards "poverty alleviation." However, this has not always led to beneficial outcomes. For example, when in 1968, President McNamara took the leadership of the World Bank Group, he decided to focus on eradicating absolute poverty through urban and rural development. Despite these remarkable efforts, both in terms of commitment and lending, the main effect was to enlarge the already existing gap with the so-called "poorest of the poor."

[5] Immervoll, H., and Richardson, L. 2011. "*Redistribution policy and inequality reduction in OECD countries: what has changed in two decades?*" Luxemburg Income Study working paper N. 571.

Besides, as pointed out by the Development Policy and Analysis Division of the United Nations[6], the concept of inequality can be distinguished in two very general categories: "economic inequalities" and "inequality of rights." The former has also been defined broadening its meaning, leading to the creation of two subcategories: on the one hand, the so-called "inequality of outcomes," in which the individuals "do not possess the same level of material wealth or overall living economic conditions."[7] On the other hand, in the 1970s, Amartya Sen defined the second category as the "inequality of opportunity." Here, welfare should be defined in terms of "*the beings and doings valued by people (functioning) and the freedom to choose and to act (capabilities).*"[8]

The increased interest in the concept of inequality has also led many scholars to establish new mechanisms to analyse it. The best instrument was discovered in the early 1910s by an Italian sociologist and statistician Corrado Gini. The so-called "Gini Index" is a measure of income and wealth allocation among a specific population. The coefficient ranges from 0, representing perfect equality, to 1 (perfect inequality), with the exceptional possibility of values above 1 due to negative income or wealth. By looking to the graph below (Figure 1), it is possible to understand that also across the "developed" countries, the concept of inequality is a dramatic reality. Mainly small countries, especially those in Northern Europe (i.e. Denmark and Finland), appear to have higher equality. In contrast, the scale of countries with substantial inequalities ranges from a group of English-speaking countries (i.e. UK and US) to small European (Bulgaria) and Latin American (Mexico and Costa Rica) countries.

Figure 1: 2016 Gini Disposable Income in OECD Countries



Source: OECD Income Distribution Database

[6] Afonso, H., LaFleur, M., and Alarcón, D. 2015. "*Concepts of Inequality: Development Issues No. 1*". Development Strategy and Policy Analysis Unit in Development Policy and Analysis Division, UN/DESA
[7] *Ibidem*
[8] *Ibidem*

1.1 WORST-CASE SCENARIO: THE CREATION OF "POVERTY TRAPS"

Dramatic inequalities can also lead to the formation of what has historically been known as "poverty traps." This notion describes a situation in which it is difficult, if not impossible, to escape poverty due to the constraints imposed by the peculiar economic system. According to the Nobel prize Amartya Sen, substantial "unfreedoms" foster and limit the number of individual economic opportunities. Thus, an "*expansion of freedom is viewed both as the primary and the principal mean of development.*"[9] The scholar recognizes five main categories of crucial instrumental freedoms that nurture the development process: social facilities, political freedoms, transparency guarantees, economic opportunities, and protective security. Moreover, Sen recognizes that development may improve only by removing substantial sources of unfreedom, such as tyranny, social deprivation, and poor economic opportunities.

The concept of "unfreedoms" analysed by Amartya Sen appears perfectly related to that of "poverty traps." Indeed, also these "traps" may occur in various forms and entities: they could range from the case of a family with scarce economic resources to that of a person belonging to a highly marginalized ethnic group. Moreover, several factors could affect their development.

First of all, a person's socio-economic context, mainly if characterized by a situation of scarce resources, could result in dramatic consequences on her/his opportunities in terms of, for example, education or job positions. As stated by numerous studies carried out between the early 1970s and the late 1990s, the reference environment plays a decisive role in forming these "traps". A first theme on which many authors tend to focus is that of so-called "social polarization"[10]. This expression aims to define the clear division, or "residential segregation," which occurs within the same city. Indeed, on the one hand, there could be people with high skills and wages who can afford to live in the upscale neighbourhoods. On the other hand, other people suffer from limited capacity and low wages, finding themselves having to live in much less well-to-do areas. Of course, an early reason for this polarization lies in the housing costs' difference between high-ranking neighbourhoods (e.g. Tribeca) and neighbourhoods on the edge of the city (e.g. Harlem), as confirmed by a 2013 study of average rental prices in New York state reported in **Table 1**:

[9] Sen, A. 2001. "*Development as freedom"*. Oxford Paperbacks.
[10] Bénabou, R. 1993. "Workings of a City: Location, Education, and Production". *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 108.

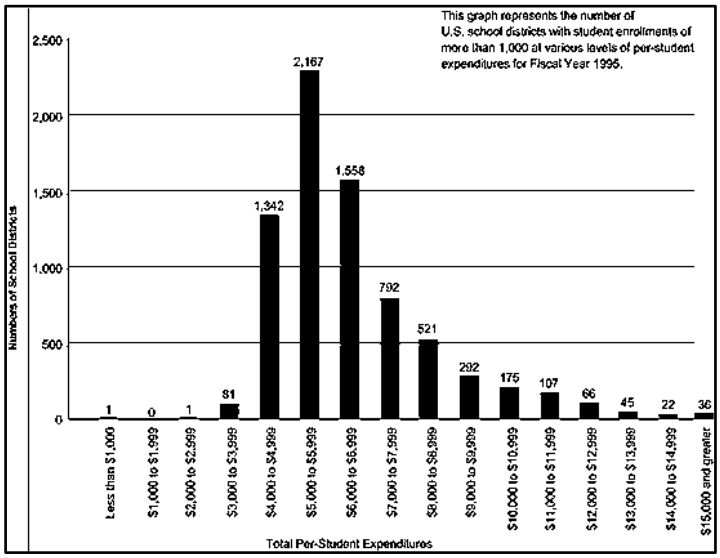
Table 1: Average rental prices by neighbourhood, New York 2013

AVERAGE RENT SUMMARY: June 2013				
Location	**Studio**	**1BR**	**2BR**	**3BR**
Chelsea	$2.550	3.292	4.950	6.051
East Village	$2.042	2.715	3.697	4.700
Gramercy/Flatiron	$2.374	3.206	4.658	5.850
Harlem	$1.250	1.775	2.480	3.025
Lower East Side	$2.152	2.395	3.682	4.271
Midtown East	$2.170	2.657	3.850	4.872
Midtown West	$2.212	3.254	4.567	5.727
Morningside Heights	$1.750	2.173	3.045	4.031
Murray Hill	$2.347	2.966	3.500	4.608
Soho/Tribeca	$2.500	3.949	5.750	8.210
Upper East Side	$1.914	2.409	3.402	5.600
Upper West Side	$1.940	2.638	4.257	6.600
Wall Street/Battery Park	$2.619	3.548	4.310	5.810
Washington Heights	$1.250	1.482	1.813	2.450
West Village	$2.450	3.437	4.735	6.243

Source: Citi-habitats, New York 2013

The first significant negative effect of this "social polarization" lies in its ability to create substantial disparities in education and training opportunities. This form of socio-economic segregation has a substantial impact on available and usable resources in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods, as demonstrated in a 2002 study by Biddle and Berliner on US school districts' financial resources (**Figure 2** and **Figure 3**)[11]. Indeed, as reported in the charts, the two scholars revealed a negative correlation between student poverty rate and financial resources for school districts with more than 1000 enrolled:

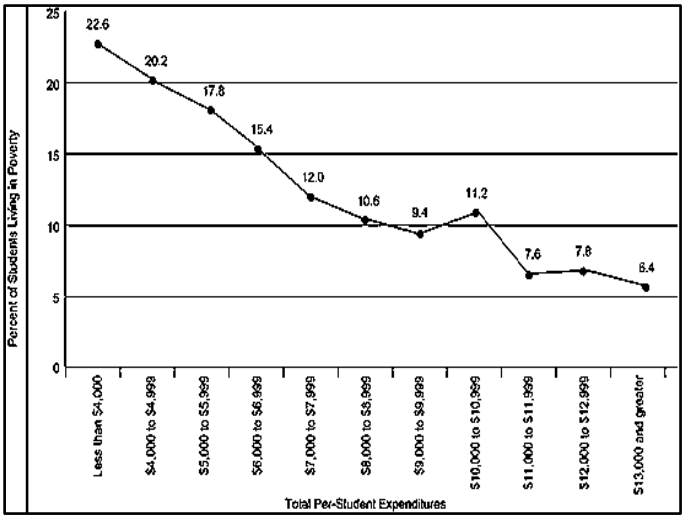
Figure 2: Number of school districts with more than 1000 enrolled and levels of spending per student, USA 1995



Source: US National Centre for Education Statistics, 1995

[11] Biddle, B., and Berliner, D. C. 2002. "Unequal school*". Educational Leadership*. Pag 48-59.

Figure 3: Relationship between percentage of students in poverty and total expenditure per capita, USA 2000



Source: US National Centre for Education Statistics, 2000

Thus, starting from a situation characterized by a detrimental context, especially in terms of financial resources, citizens could get caught up in a vicious cycle[12]:

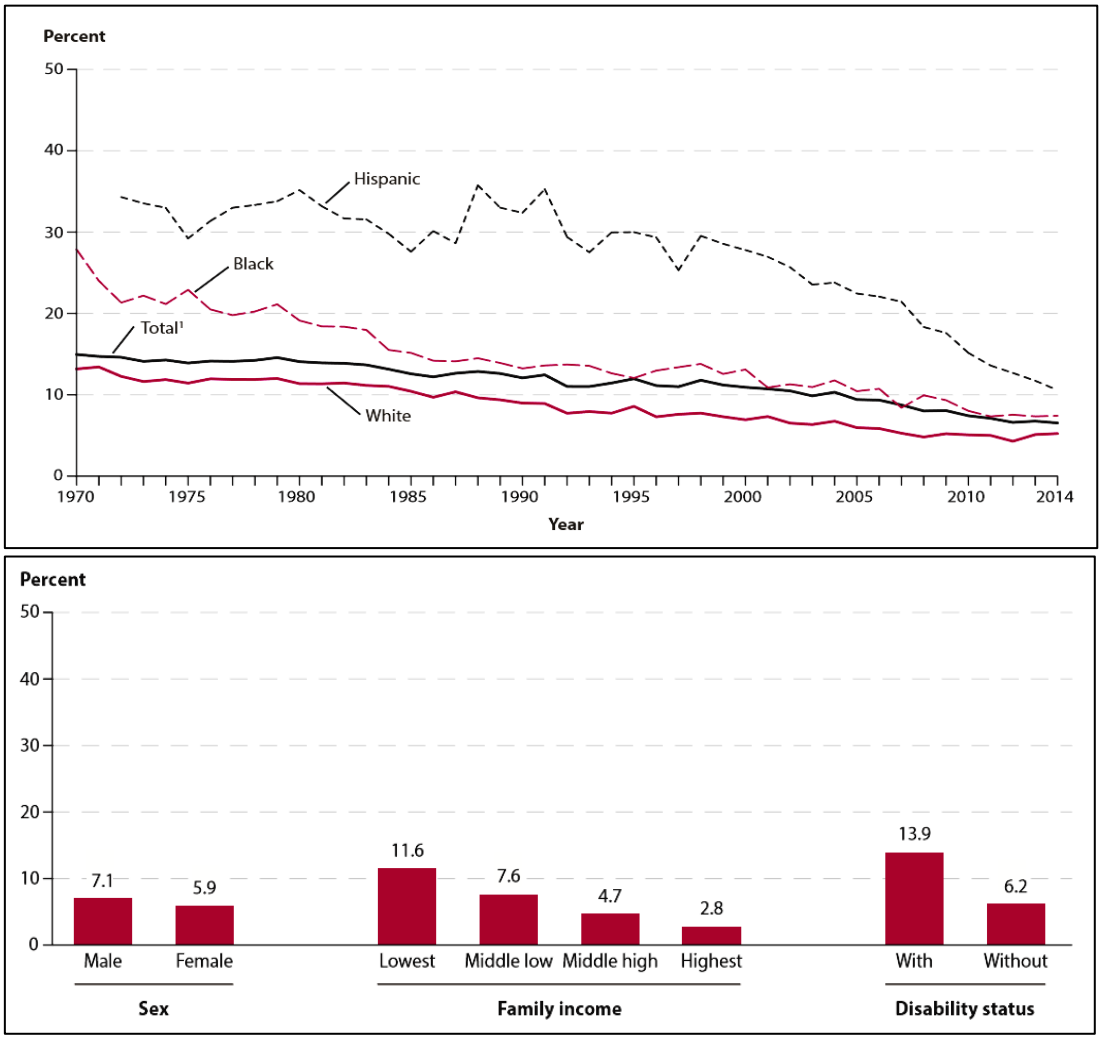
- Inhabitants of "poor" areas could develop lower skills and abilities compared to the ones generated in wealthier areas;
- Then, lower skills lead to the least likelihood of finding well-paid jobs;
- Finally, the lower family income harms children's education, both in terms of graduates per family and school dropout rate, leading to the persistence of a lower economic status between the two generations.

Moreover, another element that could play a significant role in structuring and developing "poverty traps" is the so-called "social influences," mainly exerted by the group to which a person belongs. Indeed, through a detailed socioeconomic analysis, the "membership theory" emphasizes that a group has the power to alter perceptions and behaviours of a single member, thus impacting his decisions and outcomes. Several kinds of research have managed to highlight a close relationship between community attributes and individual behaviours. Many studies from the early 1990s[13] revealed that an individual's likelihood of incurring social problems increases exponentially as the neighbourhood's quality to which he/she belongs decreases. In fact, for example, a boy's ability to drop out of school or commit a crime turned out to be inversely proportional to the quality of the neighbourhood of residence.

[12] Kozol, J. 1991. "*Savage Inequalities*". New York: Crown Publishers.
[13] Crane, J. 1991. "The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing". *American Journal of Sociology*, 96. Pag 1226-1259.

However, the neighbourhood's quality alone does not seem to be the primary determinant of these social issues. The second group of studies[14] managed to empirically demonstrate only the influence of other factors, such as race (**Figure 4**) and income (**Figure 5**), on the behaviour of individuals. Thus, they proved that problematic social factors, such as the drop-out rate, are mainly influenced by factors different from the neighbourhood's characteristics.

Figures 4 and 5: Percentage of unschooled children (16-24 years), US 2014



Source: U.S. Department of Commerce

Finally, social disparities are not always the result of contingent factors in a given context. Many psychologists analyse economic inequalities starting from mental mechanisms of "dominance" and "submission." Studies in this direction have achieved enormous successes from the mid-1990s (Steele and Aronson in 1995) to the present day (Volpato in 2019). The

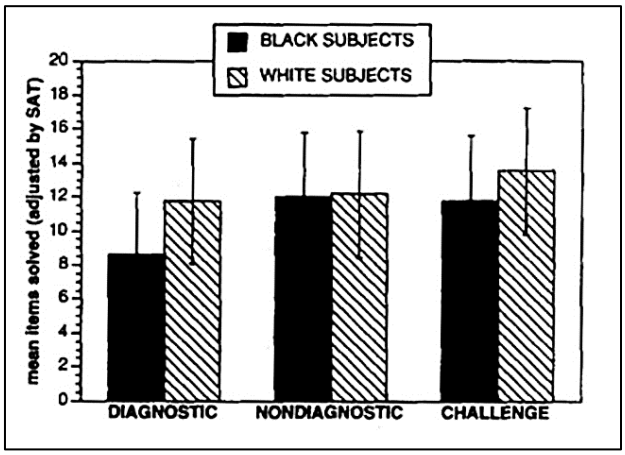
[14] Corcoran, M., Gordon, R., Laren, D., and Solon, G. 1992. "The Association between Men's Economic Status and Their Family and Community Origins". *Journal of Human Resources*, 27. Pag 575-601.

study conducted by Steele and Aronson[15] revealed precise data of what they call "stereotype threat." With this definition, the two researchers intend to describe the uncontrollable state of anxiety created in a black subject when compared to a white. Steele and Aronson conducted a series of experiments in which they carried out three different types of aptitude tests, all three presented as problematic, to randomly chosen groups of people between blacks and whites:

- a diagnostic test of intelligence in which the difficulty of the test was justified as a way to provide a spontaneous indicator of one's limits;
- a non-diagnostic test in which students were told that the difficulty was great for a matter of interest in the study of complex problems;
- a non-diagnostic test – a challenge in which serious difficulty served to justify a challenge against themselves.

The data collected by the two researchers depicted a highly decreasing trend in the scores obtained by black subjects when the goal of the test was to measure intelligence compared to the scores obtained under "non-diagnostic" conditions (**Figure 6**).

Figure 6: Results obtained in Steele and Aronson experiments, 1995



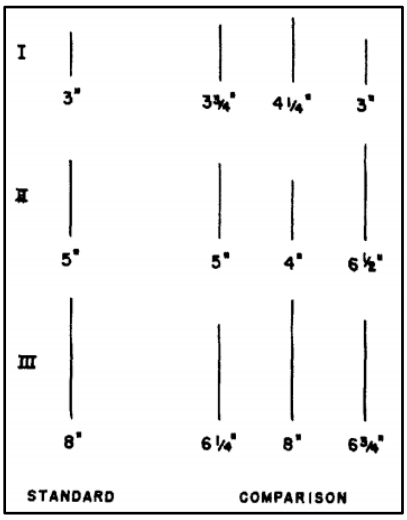
Source: Journal of Personality and Social Psychology

Interpreting these results, Steele and Aronson concluded that these differences were due to the stereotype of "lower race" imposed on their victims from society. Black subjects can feel "threatened" by their negative stereotype in an intelligence assessment test. Moreover, they can even implement a sort of "self-handicap strategy" in which the worry of confirming the stereotype leads to even less performance.

[15] Steele, C., and Aronson, J. 1995. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 69(5). Pag 797-811.

Of course, the psychological effects on marginalisation do not only occur in the presence of racial stereotypes. Indeed, these adverse outcomes can also result in an individual's inability to deviate from the majority's opinion. In this direction, a series of studies conducted by Solomon Asch in the mid-1950s[16], subsequently deepened by Morris and Miller (1975)[17], make it possible to define concretely the concept of "social compliance." This definition describes the ability of specific factors to influence an individual's behaviour, leading him to conform to that of most members of a given social group. Thus, starting from this notion, Asch put in place a series of three experiments capable of demonstrating the influence of a unanimous majority on individual decisions. The basic experiment was straightforward: 8 subjects, of which seven were "piloted" by the researcher, were assigned a sheet (**Figure 7**) in which three lines of different lengths and an additional line, clearly equal to one of the others, were drawn. The subjects were therefore required to identify the line corresponding to the additional reference line.

Figure 7: Asch's Experiment



Source: Psychological Monographs

In the first variant, the collaborators, first to respond, were trained to indicate all the same wrong line, leaving the subject of interest as the last to decide. The results showed that in 32% of the cases, the subjects examined ended up complying with the group's opinions by offering an incorrect answer. In contrast, without conditioning, the percentage of correct answers was about 98%. In the second case study, a second subject of interest was added, lowering the percentage of incorrect responses by about 10% only by providing a correct answer. Finally, in the last

[16] Asch, S. 1956. "*Studies of Independence and Conformity: A Minority of One Against a Unanimous Majority*". Psychological Monographs, 70.
[17] Morris, W., and Miller, R. 1975. "The Effects of Consensus-Breaking and Consensus Preempting Partners on Reduction of Conformity". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychological Research*, 11. Pag 215-223.

variant, the experimental subject was once again only one, but a "collaborator" assisted it. The latter, always providing the correct answer, allowed the percentage of incorrect answers to fall to as much as 5.5%.

1.2 INEQUALITIES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines "Middle East" as the "*lands around the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, encompassing at least the Arabian Peninsula and, by some definition, Iran, North Africa, and sometimes beyond.*"[18] However, it could be wrong to contextualize such a variegated region only through its geographical boundary. The Middle East that we know nowadays is the product of centuries of Ottoman domination, followed by decades of Western administration.

The Ottoman Empire was established in 1299, becoming in just few decades the most powerful authority in all the Islamic world. The Empire reached its maximum expansion during the 16th century when the Sultan's army conquered both the Balkans and the African Horn. However, it became challenging to administrate such an enormous territory, and the Empire started to lose ground to the Western world. While the Christians were developing capitalism and a market economy, the Ottoman remained stuck to traditional trade and agriculture. Moreover, the strict interpretation of the Quran's tenets in all the main spheres of social life, from justice to economy, reduced the possibility of development. Indeed, the Ottoman Empire followed the *Sharia* as the primary guide of its economic model, considering both economy and morality as "part of the men's obligations to God."[19] Indeed, the Islamic economic system was based on a methodical application of God's rules, such as the total condemnation of usury, with the subsequent problem of bank's interest rates. Moreover, the Islamic welfare state was based on the institutionalization of charity's practises such as the *zakat*[20], individual obligation to donate a share of income to charitable causes, and the *wakf,* pious foundations established to provide low-interest loans to the population and to re-invest their profits in charitable activities.

During the 18th century, there was a widespread feeling about the need for reforms. After Napoleon's 1798 invasion of Egypt, the country opened to modernity and embraced the Western culture in both social and economic fields. Such a Westernization flowed throughout

[18] The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2020. "*Middle East*". Encyclopaedia Britannica. Available at: www.britannica.com
[19] Francesca, E. 2013. "*Economia, religione e morale nell'Islam*". Roma: Carrocci Editore.
[20] Encyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition: "the obligatory payment by Muslims of a determinate portion of specified categories of their lawful property for the benefit of the poor and other enumerated classes or, as generally in Ḳurʾānic usage, the portion of property so paid".

the MENA region in just a few decades, reaching the Ottoman side of the Empire also thanks to Christian schools' spread. The Sultan understood the slow but steady decline of the Empire and inaugurated a period of reforms known as *tanzimat* in 1839. The proposals concerned several administrative issues, such as the modernization of the army and the movement towards secular laws (i.e. new penal code, based on the Napoleonic one, putting aside Islamic punishments) rather than religious ones[21]. Moreover, the state became more involved in the economy and its social dynamics, provoking a general decline in the *waqf* and implementing a conventional banking system. However, all these reforms were implemented "too little, too late," favouring the spread of nationalist and independentist movements throughout the Empire and fostering a more aggressive imperialist policy from the Western countries. The Sultan tried to impose a more authoritarian ruling to favour cohesion among the countries. However, liberal and reformist movements (Young Turks) forced the ruler to restore both the Constitution and the Parliament. This revolution fuelled the nationalist claims all over the Empire, setting the stage for its complete dismemberment in 1922.

The economic model imposed by *Sharia* law was based on "*wealth's movement and purification through charity*" (Francesca, 2013). Through the collection of both the *zakat* and the *sadaka*[22], money and wealth could circulate among the population and avoid absolute poverty. However, the Quran recognized that poverty could not be eliminated from the system, being it "Lord's will" to establish a diversified and heterogeneous community. Thus, there were endogenous inequalities among the population, but they were aggravated by the massive corruption affecting the Empire. Moreover, during the *tanzimat*, the decision to abolish *waqf* institutions, which were providing basic and essential services to the community, created widespread turmoil and disappointment among the poorest branches of the population. The subsequent wave of colonisation and the mandate system's introduction surely undermined an Arab identity just deprived of its role model, the Ottoman Empire. However, at the same time, it favoured the Islamic world's integration into modernity and the partial disappearance of its endogenous drawbacks.

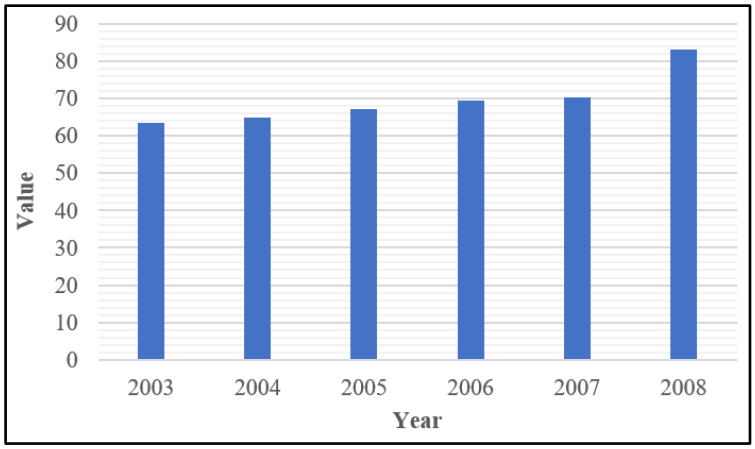
The many improvements in the Middle East during the last decades of the 20th century and in the early stage of the 21st were mainly due to the post-independence development model adopted by many Arab countries. Such a model was characterized by import substitution

[21] Corrao, F.M. 2017. "*Islam, religion and politics*". Roma: Luiss University Press.
[22] Enclyclopedia of Islam, Second Edition: "*Sadaka* has among its meanings that of voluntary alms, often referred to in Islamic literature as *ṣadaḳat al-taṭawwuʿ* "alms of spontaneity", or *ṣadaḳat al-nafl* "alms of supererogation", in distinction to obligatory alms, frequently also termed *ṣadaḳa*, but more commonly known as *zakat"*.

policies, nationalization of private and foreign assets, and the implementation of several subsidies in the population's basic needs. All this resulted in sustained economic growth, especially in terms of GDP. However, the main reason behind such extraordinary growth relied on the increased degree of international openness and economic liberalization. Nonetheless, such development exposed the Middle East economies to a considerable risk of contagion in an international crisis, and that occurred in 2008. At that time, two main factors played a primary role in the outbreak: the considerable increase in food prices and the growing unemployment.

Considering the first variable, a relationship can be quickly established between food prices growth, social unrest, and violent riots. Indeed, in the past, some Arab countries already experienced different episodes of "bread riots." For example, the 2008 protests in Lebanon coincided with a peak in food prices (**Figure 8**)[23]. The link between food prices and food riots is mediated by the regulation of political power, which tends to administrate prices to create consent in the populations. However, the drawback of this pervasive control is that price controls can amplify the negative perceptions of restrictive fiscal policies on people's welfare.

Figure 8: Consumer Prices, Food Indices, Lebanon (2003-2008)



Source: FAOSTAT

Talking about unemployment, it is relatively easy to understand that reducing production levels implies reducing employed people. Nevertheless, this is not enough to explain the outbreak of violent revolts such the one occurred in 2011. The social causes must be found in the composition of unemployment. At that time, youth unemployment, particularly female, was very high, and it led to widespread juvenile dissatisfaction. The detrimental effect of unemployment is particularly significant when considered together with the population's education levels, including those of women, which have notably improved in the two decades

[23] Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2021. "*Consumer Price Indices*". FAOSTAT. Available at: www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/CP

before the revolts. Besides, this education progress was not matched by an improvement in income and living standards, showing all Arab countries characterized by deep social and economic inequalities.

Thus, deteriorating living standards, growing unemployment, this youth's perception of exclusion, and a growing dissatisfaction on governments accountability were the main reasons that led to the outbreak of the so-called "Second Arab Awakening." The revolts led to a further deterioration of the economic and social situation, fuelling also growing disparities among the region's people. The perception of a sort of "regional inequality" and an enlarging gap between the rural and the urban population exacerbated the Middle East's instability, undermining the likelihood of implementing efficient reforms.

However, according to the analysis conducted by the World Bank Group in 2018[24], the renewed positive economic environment, the stability reached by the oil-market prices, and the resumption of reconstruction activities in countries afflicted by conflicts have led to a return of economic growth in the Middle East and North African (MENA) region (**Table 2**). Moreover, most countries are taking over comprehensive social programs to safeguard the poorest branches of the population from some of these reforms' adverse effects.

Table 2: MENA's Macroeconomic Outlook, 2015-2020

	Real GDP Growth, %						Fiscal Balance, % of GDP						Current Account Balance, % of GDP					
	2015	2016	2017e	2018f	2019f	2020f	2015	2016	2017e	2018f	2019f	2020f	2015	2016	2017e	2018f	2019f	2020f
MENA	**2.7**	**4.3**	**2.0**	**3.1**	**3.3**	**3.2**	**-9.2**	**-10.5**	**-6.2**	**-5.4**	**-3.8**	**-2.6**	**-3.6**	**-4.4**	**-1.4**	**-1.0**	**-0.6**	**-0.4**
Developing MENA	**1.4**	**6.6**	**3.8**	**4.1**	**4.1**	**3.8**	**-9.4**	**-9.6**	**-6.1**	**-5.8**	**-4.4**	**-3.4**	**-5.2**	**-5.2**	**-4.0**	**-3.8**	**-3.1**	**-2.7**
Oil Exporters	**2.5**	**4.6**	**1.6**	**2.9**	**3.1**	**2.9**	**-9.3**	**-10.8**	**-5.7**	**-4.8**	**-3.0**	**-1.6**	**-3.1**	**-3.6**	**0.3**	**0.6**	**1.1**	**1.3**
GCC	**3.7**	**2.4**	**0.4**	**2.1**	**2.6**	**2.7**	**-8.9**	**-11.5**	**-6.3**	**-5.0**	**-3.3**	**-1.7**	**-2.1**	**-3.6**	**1.2**	**1.8**	**2.0**	**2.1**
Bahrain	2.9	3.0	2.5	1.7	2.1	2.1	-18.4	-17.8	-13.2	-11.5	-10.2	-8.8	-2.4	-4.7	-4.5	-4.1	-3.5	-2.7
Kuwait	0.6	3.5	-1.0	1.9	3.5	3.0	5.8	0.5	3.5	3.7	2.9	2.2	7.5	-3.4	3.3	4.7	5.1	4.1
Oman	4.7	5.4	0.7	2.3	2.5	2.9	-17.5	-20.6	-13.3	-11.3	-10.1	-9.1	-15.5	-18.4	-11.7	-10.4	-9.2	-8.2
Qatar	4.0	2.2	2.2	2.8	3.2	2.8	1.4	-8.3	-5.0	-3.7	-2.0	-0.4	8.5	-7.5	2.6	3.8	3.3	3.2
Saudi Arabia	4.1	1.7	-0.6	1.8	2.1	2.3	-15.8	-16.9	-9.0	-7.6	-4.9	-2.4	-8.7	-4.3	1.7	2.1	2.3	2.4
United Arab Emirates	3.8	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.2	3.3	-3.4	-4.3	-3.1	-2.0	-1.0	-0.3	4.7	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.5	2.7
Developing Oil Exporters	**0.0**	**9.0**	**4.0**	**4.3**	**4.0**	**3.4**	**-9.9**	**-9.7**	**-4.6**	**-4.5**	**-2.6**	**-1.3**	**-4.9**	**-3.6**	**-1.2**	**-1.5**	**-0.5**	**-0.1**
Algeria	3.7	3.3	2.1	3.5	2.0	1.3	-17.5	-15.7	-8.2	-11.4	-5.2	-1.9	-16.5	-15.6	-14.7	-16.1	-12.7	-10.2
Iran, Islamic Rep.	-1.3	13.4	4.3	4.1	4.1	4.2	-1.7	-2.2	-2.4	-2.5	-2.7	-2.6	2.3	3.9	4.1	5.4	5.1	4.7
Iraq	4.8	11.0	-0.8	2.5	4.1	1.9	-12.3	-13.9	-2.2	0.9	1.7	1.4	-6.5	-8.6	0.7	-0.2	-0.1	-1.3
Libya	-8.9	-2.8	26.7	14.9	9.4	7.5	-76.9	-63.1	-26.0	-13.2	-7.1	0.2	-31.4	-14.6	-9.4	-7.2	-3.0	0.6
Syrian Arab Rep.	-15.8	1.7	...	...	...	...	-20.2	-18.2	...	...	...	...	-8.4	-9.9	...	...	...	...
Yemen, Rep.	-37.1	-34.3	-13.8	-0.5	17.9	16.3	-11.5	-16.5	-7.6	-14.0	-8.6	-2.7	-6.5	-5.2	-1.0	-6.5	-3.8	0.3
Developing Oil Importers	**3.5**	**2.7**	**3.5**	**3.7**	**4.1**	**4.4**	**-8.8**	**-9.4**	**-8.2**	**-7.6**	**-6.7**	**-6.0**	**-5.5**	**-7.5**	**-7.9**	**-6.9**	**-6.3**	**-5.8**
Djibouti	6.5	6.5	7.0	6.5	6.4	6.3	-20.7	-15.2	-3.1	-2.9	-1.4	-1.1	-30.4	-22.2	-5.5	-5.2	-4.6	-4.2
Egypt, Arab Rep.	4.4	4.3	4.2	5.0	5.5	5.8	-11.4	-12.5	-10.9	-9.8	-8.4	-7.3	-3.6	-6.0	-6.6	-4.9	-4.4	-4.1
Jordan	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.4	-3.6	-3.2	-3.4	-2.4	-1.9	-1.9	-9.1	-9.5	-8.8	-8.7	-8.6	-8.6
Lebanon	0.8	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0	-7.8	-9.6	-6.6	-8.3	-8.9	-9.3	-16.3	-19.9	-21.2	-21.6	-20.4	-18.2
Morocco	4.5	1.2	4.0	3.0	3.5	3.7	-4.2	-4.0	-3.5	-3.3	-3.0	-3.0	-2.1	-4.4	-4.0	-4.2	-4.4	-4.5
Tunisia	1.1	1.0	2.0	2.7	3.3	3.7	-5.6	-6.0	-6.3	-5.6	-3.7	-2.7	-8.9	-8.8	-10.2	-9.5	-7.8	-7.2
West Bank & Gaza	3.4	4.7	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	-5.1	-4.0	-2.8	-2.8	-2.9	-2.9	-16.3	-10.4	-12.4	-12.6	-12.5	-12.0

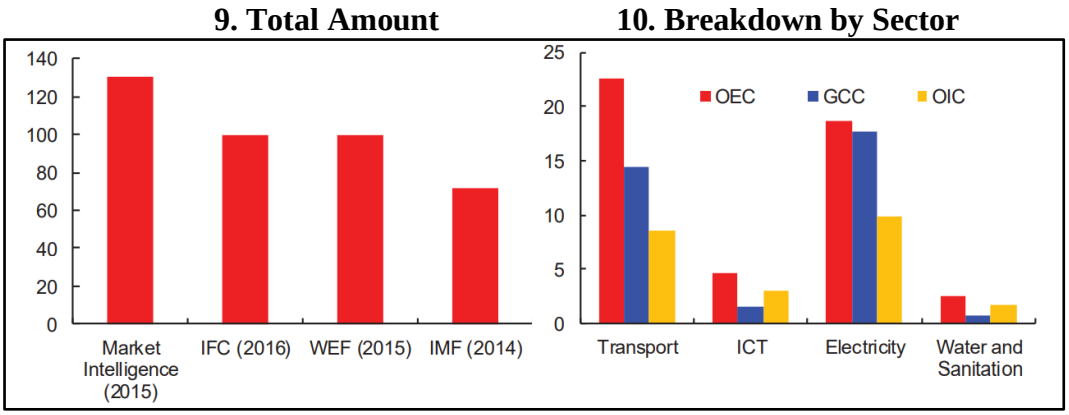
Source: World Bank data

Nevertheless, the MENA region is benefitting far less than others in terms of economic recovery. Indeed, the region is still characterized by several recurrent shocks, especially those

[24] Arezki, R., et al. 2018. "*Middle East and North Africa Economic Monitor, April 2018: Economic Transformation"*. The World Bank.

concerning oil prices (controlled by the Gulf monarchies), and the refugee crises caused by the numerous armed conflicts. Moreover, the region need for necessary infrastructures is always large, estimated to be around 100 billion USD per year (**Figures 9** and **Figure 10**).

Figure 9-10: Annual Infrastructure Investment Needs in the MENA region (Billions of US dollar)



Source: World Bank and International Monetary Found

Despite being characterized by extreme disparities, during the decades before the riots' outbreak in 2011, the Middle East has enhanced a lot in terms of the World Bank's goals of eradicating extreme poverty and boosting shared prosperity. Indeed, the Millennium Development Goal related to poverty reduction and availability of essential services, such as access to drinking water, was addressed with a relatively good performance by the region. Moreover, countries made essential efforts in reducing hunger, child mortality (**Table 3**)[25], and school enrolment.

Table 3: Global rank order of MENA countries for reduction in child mortality

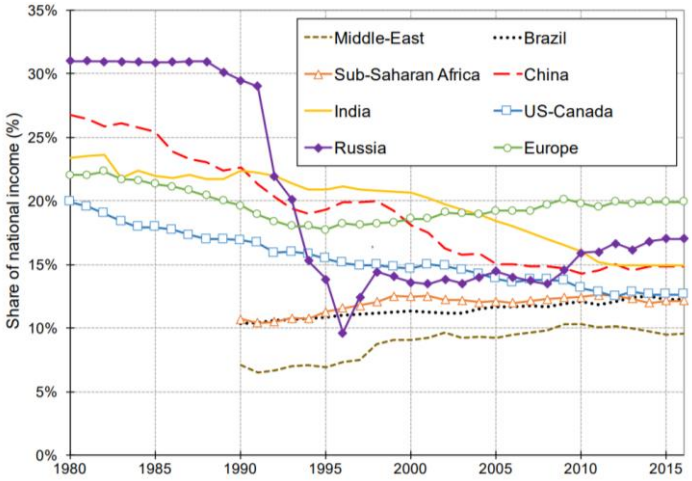
Country	Child mortality (1970)	Child mortality (2010)	Percentage Reduction	Rank (N=165)
Oman	226.8	11.9	94.88	2
Saudi Arabia	160.4	9.9	94.63	3
Iran, Islamic Rep.	226.1	19.2	92.21	7
United Arab Emirates	99.7	8.8	91.57	8
Algeria	235.4	21.5	91.50	9
Egypt, Arab Rep.	237.3	23	91.15	10
Tunisia	177.1	17.5	90.90	11
Libya	138.9	16.9	88.91	16
Qatar	63.7	8.1	88.38	20
Bahrain	75.4	10.1	87.26	23
Syrian Arab Republic	107.2	15.2	85.91	37
Kuwait	71.1	11.2	84.52	47
Lebanon	58.6	10.2	84.12	49
Morocco	187.3	33.5	83.39	54
Yemen, Rep.	320.6	64.3	81.28	71
Jordan	89.3	20.3	78.61	84
Iraq	113.7	36.2	69.74	126

Source: World Bank

[25] Iqbal, F. and Kiendrebeogo, Y. 2015. "*The reduction of child mortality in the Middle East and North Africa: A success story*". World Bank Policy Research Working Paper No. 7127.

Thus, despite a general trend of increasing disparities worldwide, the Middle East income inequality levels have remained relatively stable at massive levels since 1990[26]. An analysis conducted in 2007 by the scholar John Page portrays an interesting picture. The Middle East region during the period 1980s-1990s had among the lowest levels of income inequality in the developing world. However, in terms of household expenditures, the region has always been at the highest level of the inequality frontier compared to the rest of the world. The chart below (**Figure 11**) represents the 2018 national income distribution within the bottom 50% of the population (the poorest half). As easily understandable by the graph, at that time Middle East was the only region in the world where the poorest half of the population had around only 10% of the disposable income.

Figure 11: Bottom 50% national income shares



Source: AEA Papers and Proceedings Vol. 108

Moreover, the Middle East is also characterized by massive within-country inequalities in education and health facilities[27]. Many scholars evidenced that one of the main drivers of such disparities is the community location characteristics, an issue developing alongside the enlarging urban-rural gap. Such inequality of opportunities severely affects the region, leading to the dramatic outcome of creating "extreme inequalities."

Two primary sources characterize the existence of such extreme disparity across most developing countries worldwide, especially in the Middle East[28]. First of all, there is historical social and racial segregation, as for example the one occurred in South Africa during Apartheid.

[26] Alvaredo, F., et al. 2018. "*The elephant curve of global inequality and growth*." AEA Papers and Proceedings, Vol 108.
[27] Hassine, N.B. 2015. "Economic inequality in the Arab region". *World Development*, 66. Pag 532-556.
[28] Assouad, L, Chancel, L., and Morgan, M. 2018. "*Extreme inequality: Evidence from Brazil, India, the Middle East and South Africa*". American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings.

The second element is related to the modern economic institutions and policies, which are extremely difficult to implement for countries and economies relatively “young” and with limited opportunities compared to the developed world.

Considering the region as a whole, the Middle East suffers from extreme inequalities, primarily due to huge disparities between the member countries themselves. Indeed, within the same region, it is possible to distinguish many different situations, ranging from the wealthiest oil-producing countries to the starving ones. However, within-country inequalities are also enormous. The main reason is the existence of too rigid social disparities that characterize several countries of the region, especially the Gulf ones, where many migrant workers are forced to operate under severe exploitative conditions. Moreover, the region is characterized by a complex and low-efficient tax system with only some elements directed towards a “progressive taxation,” which is one of the first paths to achieve a cost-effective policy reallocation of resources. Of course, all this leads to understanding the need for efficient policy responses to tackle such extreme inequalities. These must include several reforms in terms of lands and fiscality, implementation of efficient regional redistribution mechanisms, and aid program (in education, infrastructure, and health) directed towards the low branches of the population.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND: JORDAN AND LEBANON

2.1 JORDAN: FROM THE BRITISH MANDATE TO THE MODERN TIME

The turning point for Jordan's history was the British Empire's decision to separate the mandates in Palestine and Transjordan in 1920 (meeting in Salt on August 21). The April 1923 Agreement governed and defined Britain's relationship with the Emir's government in Transjordan. As a result, the country developed into an independent colonial state under the British administration, necessitating establishing a unique colonial capital. As a result, Amman was recognized as the Emirate of Transjordan's capital in 1928[29]. The city soon became the main activity centre of the newly established state.

Great Britain's solution was to undertake the plan proposed by Thomas Edward Lawrence in 1918, known as the "Sharifian Solution."[30] The project comprised the appointment of the sons of Hussein bin Ali Al-Hashimi, former Sharif and Emir of Mecca and King of the Hejaz, as heads of the newly established states in the Middle East. Thus, on the 11th of April 1921, the British authorities appointed Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein, Sharif's second son, as the first Emir of Transjordan. Britain promised to provide Abdullah with a financial subsidy and appoint a British resident to advise him on administrative concerns as part of the deal. For its part, Abdullah accepted Britain's conditions to prevent attacks on the French from Transjordan's soil and embrace Britain's policy in Palestine, including recognizing the Balfour Declaration and Jewish immigration into the region[31].

At the beginning of its mandate, Abdullah viewed the Transjordan as a "base camp" to extend the Hashemite domains. Hence, Abdullah implemented short-term reforms that increased the disparity among the population (i.e. he appeased the most potent tribal groupings while imposing harsh taxation on the socially inferior communities). Thus, he became viewed with suspicion by the British authorities in Amman and Jerusalem. Furthermore, some of the Emir's reforms caused resentment and social unrest, forcing Great Britain to extend its role in the country, both from a political and a military point of view. Since 1924, Great Britain started to oversee every decision made by the Emir, which was only left with the power of representing an "Arab leadership." In October 1924, the al-Saud clan conquered Hijaz, forcing the Hashemites to flee. In November 1925, Transjordan, supported by the British that allowed a

[29] Rogan, E. L. 1996. "*The Making of a Capital: Amman 1918-1928*". Amman: The City and Its Society. Beirut: CERMOC. Pag. 89-108.
[30] Robins, P. 2019. "*A history of Jordan"*. Cambridge University Press.
[31] Anderson, B. S. 2005. "*Nationalist voices in Jordan: The street and the state*". University of Texas Press. Pag. 33-42.

series of territorial concessions, signed an international treaty (Hadda Agreement) with the newly established state of Saudi Arabia to preserve the country's stability.

Moreover, the British provided the country with aids and resources, building infrastructures and establishing a Westernized economic model. During the first years of Abdullah's mandate, Great Britain released massive annual subsidies as Grant-in-Aid (**Table 4**)[32], but the Emir squandered most of them. The new chief British representative Henry Cox threatened Abdullah of removing him in case of refusal of a new system of financial regulation and failure in expulsing from the governmental arena the political opponents[33]. Thus, in 1924 he drafted an Ultimatum to Abdullah, which the Emir accepted to sign on August 20th. Afterward, the Transjordan enjoyed a period of stabilization that favoured the country's process of state-building. British officials held the leading policy-making positions, characterizing the following years with numerous reforms in the financial, labour, judicial, and political fields.

Table 4: British Grant-in-Aid allocated to Transjordan (£)

1921/2	1922/3*	1923/4	1924/5
180,000	100,000	150,000	80,000

Source: British official reports

On the 20th of February 1928, it was signed the "Agreement between His Majesty and the Amir of Trans-Jordan" at Jerusalem. The document stressed that Great Britain should be represented in Transjordan by a "British Resident acting on behalf of the High Commissioner for Transjordan."[34] Moreover, the Emir accepted to be "guided" by the Commissioner in all the decisions affecting international and financial obligations affecting Great Britain's interests. By summing up, the document stressed the unequal distribution of power between the two parties, highlighting the role of His Britannic Majesty as the ultimate authority in Transjordan. The agreement provoked increased resentment among the population, emphasizing the idea of a "puppet government" under British rule. However, the arrangement also had a positive facet from the economic point of view. Indeed, Great Britain agreed to provide an annual subvention to favour the economic development of Transjordan, allowing it to create the structure of a modern state.

[32] *Ibidem*
[33] Kamal, S. 1993. "*The Modern History of Jordan*". London, New York, IB Tauris.
[34] Great Britain-Transjordan. 1930. "*Agreement between His Majesty and the Amir of Transjordan*". Jerusalem, 20th February 1928. Treaty Series no. 7. The Agreement recognised the existence of an independent government in Transjordan, guided by the Emir, defining and limiting its powers under the authority of the British High Commissioner.

The Agreement was followed by the promulgation, in April 1928, of the first Transjordan's constitution known as "Organic Law." The main achievement was establishing a Legislative Council, responsible for the country's executive power, despite being subjected to the British authority. During the 1930s, several Council deliberations focused on the issues of taxation and citizenship. However, such an organization's establishment was also the first step towards constructing developed formal institutions in the Emirate. The dramatic economic situations affecting the population's most deficient branches led to the establishment of the first real Transjordanian political movement: the Transjordan National Congress (TNC). Indeed, the gap between centre and periphery was enlarging, both due to uneven central reforms and rural impoverishment, especially after the drought started in 1927.

The British authorities found several difficulties during the process of the Transjordan state-building. The main issue that they had to face was the growing disparity between the centre of the emirate, where Amman was developing as a Western organized city, and the periphery. Moreover, many tribal groupings were sceptical about the British ruling over the country and Great Britain failed to understand that imposing "borders" on semi-nomadic tribes could result in economic and social failures. A sort of stability was reached only in the 1930s when the British appointed the army major John Glubb, who succeeded in ensuring stability on the borders and became the arbiter of tribal law[35]. Glubb's strategy was to create a military organization, the "Desert Mobile Force" (November 1930), also composed of the sons of several tribes *shaikhs*, providing massive subsidies to the poorest groups, both in terms of finances and basic infrastructures (i.e. access to health facilities). In this way, he "*absorbed the tribes into the state*"[36] and safeguarded the development of the Transjordan's state-building process by removing its last socioeconomic obstacle.

The 1930s were a period of substantial stability and consolidation for the country. The economy started to increase, the social grievances declined, and political activism flourished. However, the 30s were also characterized by the increased, unsuccessful, interest of Emir Abdullah to include Syria under his authority. Moreover, the Emir's interests did not stop only in Syria, but they were also captured by the detrimental situation occurring in the nearby Palestinian state[37]. However, Abdullah's nurturing relationships with the Palestinian Arabs nationalists and the Zionist organizations created great resentment on both parties, provoking his union proposal's

[35] Lias, G. 1956. "*Glubb's legion"*. London, Evans Bros. Pag 29-30.
[36] *Ibidem*
[37] Nevo, J. 1996. "*King Abdallah and Palestine: A territorial ambition"*. Springer. Pag 13-14.

failure. Abdullah tightened his relationship with the Zionists during the 1930s when he proposed to the Legislative Council to sell lands to the Jewish on the east Jordan soil (territory of Transjordan). However, in June 1933, the Council strongly rejected the idea, proving its support to the Palestinian cause, isolating Abdullah and increasing discontent towards the Emir both at home and throughout the Arab world. Nonetheless, the unrest in Transjordan during the 1930s remained marginal, due to the country's developed economic situation, helped by the abundant harvests in 1937-38 and by the average increase in workers' salaries.

During the Second World War, the relationship between Great Britain and Transjordan enhanced, creating the path towards an (uneven) partnership rather than tutelage[38]. This equilibrium suffered turmoil after France's fall in 1940, and the coup d'état sponsored by the Axis powers occurred in Iraq in 1941. Many in Transjordan, including the Emir, started to think about the impossibility of an Allied victory and decided that it was "*high time to get in touch with the new conquerors and to make terms.*"[39] However, the British decided to use the Glubb's Arab Legion to stamp out the Iraqi revolts. In doing so, they provided the Legion with massive financial resources that flowed into the poorest regions of Transjordan, having a positive impact on the periphery economy. All these subsidies provided the poor-south with the instruments to implement an extensive programme on public works, developing economic infrastructures, and agricultural and health facilities.

By the end of the war, the decolonization process was starting throughout the Middle East. In 1945, only Transjordan was still under a foreign ruler between the founding members of the Arab League (established in March 1945), and such a situation was detrimental for the country's relationships in the region. However, considering the impossibility of oversight anymore on the Middle East, the British decided to concede a new Anglo-Transjordanian treaty that formally terminated the mandate, while maintaining tight relationships between the two countries (Robins, 2019). In May 1946, the Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan was officially declared, being constitutionally renamed "Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" only in 1949.

On the 14th of May 1948, right after the British Mandate's official end in Palestine, the Jewish People's Council declared the establishment of the state of Israel. The announcement created turmoil within the Arab states, leading to the First civil war outbreak and the start of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Transjordan, as the nearest country, was forced to play a leading role in the war.

[38] Pundik, R. 1994. "*The Struggle for Sovereignty: Relations Between Great Britain and Jordan, 1946–1951*". Blackwell, Oxford. Pag 30-31.
[39] Kirkbride, A. 1956. "*A crackle of thorns: Experiences in the Middle East"*. J. Murray. Pag 131-133.

The conflict forced many Arabs to flee to the neighbouring countries (*Nakba*), including Transjordan, marking one of the most dramatic episodes of Palestinian history. By 1949, the Arab Legion was able to take most of the United Nations' territory designated for the establishment of an Arab state in Palestine[40]. The war came to an end with the signing of the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Thanks to the armistice, Transjordan assumed control over the West Bank territories, with Abdullah proclaimed as "King of Palestine." On the 20th of July 1951, King Abdullah was assassinated in Jerusalem by a Palestinian extremist in response to the rumours regarding the King's willingness to sign a separate peace with Israel[41].

When Abdullah was killed, considering that his firstborn Talal was suffering from schizophrenia, his second son, Nayif, was nominated as regent. However, the British showed their unwillingness to support his aspirations to the throne. Thus, when Talal was declared recovered from his illness, Nayif ambitions were cancelled forever. On the 6th of September 1951, Talal was proclaimed King of Jordan. After his appointment, Talal implemented a significant reform of the 1946 constitution to "clean it" from a pervasive British influence. Thus, in 1952 Jordan enacted his new "liberal" constitution, characterized by a more defined separation of powers between the Legislative Council and the King. However, the health condition of Talal was aggravating, and in August, the Legislative Council voted for the King's deposition, ending what became known as the "Talal interlude."[42] Indeed, on the 11th of August 1952, his eldest son, Hussein, was appointed as Jordan's King, despite being too young to assume the power. When he turned eighteen, on the 2nd of May 1953, he officially started a reign that will last for almost 47 years.

At that time, the country was living a period of evolution due to the conflict in nearby Palestine. Indeed, Jordan's population increased because of almost 500.000 refugees, generating a general decline on country's average wages and the influx of several humanitarian aids. The rest of the country was living in a completely different situation[43]. Indeed, Amman was becoming an excellent pole for investments and activities, an economic and political power centre able to

[40] United Nations General Assembly. 1947. "*Resolution 181*". New York, 29th November 1947. Resolution aimed at creating two independent states within the Palestinian territory with Jerusalem under a Special International Regime

[41] Satloff, R. B. 1994. "*From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition"*. Oxford University Press on Demand. Pag 32-33.

[42] Abidi, A. H. H. 1965. "*Jordan: A Political Study, 1948-1957"*. New York, Asia Publishing House. Pag 85-108.

[43] Gharaibeh, F. A. 1985. "*The Economics of the West Bank and Gaza Strip*". Boulder, Westview Press. Pag 15-16.

incorporate the West Bank into the Jordan administration. By 1965, the East Bank comprised industries and activities responsible for three-quarters of Jordan's total industrial output.

From the political point of view, the beginning of Hussein's reign was characterized by several threats, especially the one posed by Gamal Abdul Nasser's advent as Egyptian leader and the subsequent spread of political radicalism throughout the Middle East.[44] After the Suez Canal crisis of 1956 ended with the Egyptian General's victory, Nasser's nationalism became even more appealing, and many Jordanians started to watch at it as the best possible solution for the country's future. Moreover, in 1955 the British proposed an alliance in the Middle East to contain the Soviet influence in the region (Baghdad Pact). To preserve his relationship with Egypt, please all Jordan's political parties, and avoid any claim for West Bank secession, Hussein decided not to join the Pact. Such an event fostered the radical movements present within the country, which succeeded in the 1956 Jordan's general elections. The biggest winner was the National Socialist Party of Sulaiman Nabulsi, who first aimed at safeguarding Jordan's budget security, especially after the interruption of British subsidies. The solution was to sign an Arab Solidarity Agreement in January 1957 together with Syria, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt to satisfy the country's budget needs.

Meanwhile, US President Eisenhower was implementing what became known as the "Eisenhower Doctrine" to assist any state threatened by Communism through military and financial means. However, this meant also to limit the expansion of Nasser's radicalism throughout the Middle East. Hussein found himself in a difficult situation, but the country's financial needs forced him to accept the US financial aids (about $30 million) and firmly oppose the communist ideas (Robins, 2019). Nabulsi strongly opposed such King's decision, and Hussein responded to his attacks by dismissing the cabinet on the 10th of April 1957. This event opened a period of riots and social unrests culminated with the martial law's introduction on the 25th of April. All the political parties were banned, radical groups were suppressed, and subversive publications closed. Both United States and Saudi Arabia appreciated Hussein's decision, guaranteeing Jordan with massive aid payments.

Jordan's domestic politics completely changed during the 1960s when the King repudiated the senior ruling class by appointing, in January 1962, a new and controversial figure: Wasfi al-

[44] Dann, U. 1989. "*King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955–1967"*. Oxford University Press, in cooperation with the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University. Pag 216-217.

Tall.[45] First, the Prime Minister had a deep hatred towards Nasser and his beliefs, considering them as a significant threat to the Arab world. Moreover, at the domestic level, Tall implemented several reforms both in the social field (i.e setting basic educational levels to enrol in the civil service) and in the economic one (labour reform of wages and working hours). The main focus of Tall's cabinet was shifted towards the economy, considered the main instrument to enhance the country's prosperity. Such a perspective was first initiated during the early 1950s with the Jordan Development Board's establishment (1952).[46] To do so, in 1952, the Board released a five-year programme for economic development aimed at increasing the gross domestic output, reducing unemployment, and improving Jordan's balance of trade. However, such a plan necessitated efficient institutions to guarantee success, and in 1964 the Jordan Central Bank was established.

The new government also aimed at establishing an inclusive (comprising West Bankers) institutional politics, planning a new free general election in November 1962, and agreed to adopt an anti-Nasserite line in the Yemeni civil war. However, the complicated relationship between Tall and the West Bankers, together with the renew threats arising from Iraq and Syria (coup d'états in 1963), forced the King to dismiss the cabinet and search for appeasement with Nasser. Indeed, since 1963, the Egyptian leader set aside his radical speeches and beliefs, favouring instead several discussions with both Arab conservatives and radicals. Indeed, Nasser promoted three Arab summits between 1964 and 1965. During the first one (January 1964 in Cairo), the Arab command was united under Egypt's responsibility. Moreover, all the countries agreed to establish the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), a decision that will profoundly impact Jordan. Indeed, despite the PLO's acceptance to respect the "*territorial integrity of all Arab states*," the organization's claims of an independent anthem and flag worried Hussein. Starting from 1965, the newly established Palestinian national movement, Fatah, fostered guerrilla operations throughout the West Bank. In response to these activities and to secure Jordan's right to represent the Palestinians, in June 1966, King Hussein decided to arrest the PLO's dissidents and to close all their offices in the country.

The major drawback posed by this destructive relationship between Jordan and the PLO concerned the country's partnership with Nasser. Indeed, at that time, Egyptian-Jordanian relations were at an all-time low, and King Hussein was forced to find a solution to contrast

[45] Susser, A. 2017. "*On both banks of the Jordan: A political biography of Wasfi al-Tall* (Vol. 2)". Routledge.
[46] Brand, L. 1995. "*Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance-Making"*. Columbia University Press. Pag 74-75.

Israeli's expansionist ambitions. On the 30th of May 1967, Nasser and the King signed a Joint Defence Agreement. However, this strategy was implemented "too little, too late," and the outbreak of the so-called "Six Days War" in June 1967 was a clear example.

The result was a massive migration flow (almost 300.000 people) from Palestine into Jordan's borders, with subsequent problems in terms of humanitarian aids and assistance. Moreover, after the West Bank territories' loss, Jordan's economy missed almost half its industrial capacity and 40% of its GDP. King Hussein, supported by Nasser, understood that the best solution to stabilize the Middle East was to seek a fruitful dialogue with Israel. Thus, when the UN Security Council approved Resolution 242 (November 1967), calling for an immediate Israel withdrawal from the West Bank based on the "*principle of the inadmissibility of acquiring territory and the right of all states to exist,*"[47] both Jordan and Egypt supported it. Nonetheless, Israel never wholly abandoned its claims over the West Bank.

After the disaster of 1967, the Palestinian national movement was convinced that it could realize its political aspirations only through its own efforts. The turning point occurred in February 1969, when Yasser Arafat was appointed as leader of the PLO. At that time, the radical groups were impossible to control, confirming that "*a sovereign revolution and a sovereign state could not continue living under the same roof*." (Kamal, 1993). King Hussein was convinced that many Palestinians in Jordan would discredit the radical groups' guerrilla activities. However, after an assassination attempt against the King in June 1970 and an hijack of four international airlines in September, Jordan was forced to react. Hussein declared military rule, marking one of Jordan history's most dramatic pages: the Black September. The Palestinian forces were harshly repressed and forced to flee into nearby Lebanon. By July 1971, there was only one state left in Jordan.

After the civil war, Hussein tried to rehabilitate and stabilize his relationship with Fatah. Indeed, the leading Arab countries introduced sanctions against Jordan during the conflict, and the country could not develop without foreign financial aids. In October 1974, the Rabat Arab Summit marked a turning point: King Hussein recognized the PLO as the unique legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, acknowledging the right to establish an independent

[47] United Nations Security Council. 1967. "*Resolution 242*". New York, 22nd November 1967. The resolution calls for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the occupied territories, acknowledges the claim of sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the region and calls on the UN Secretary-General to appoint an Envoy to facilitate an acceptable solution to the conflict.

national authority. In exchange, Jordan was rehabilitated and was included in the summit's $1.369.000 annual military aid allocation (Robins, 2019).

After the end of the 1973 Yom Kippur War (Third Arab-Israeli conflict), the Kingdom promoted a three-year development plan (1973-1975) to revitalize the economy and promote a coordinated approach to economic development. During that period, the leading role was played by the explosion in oil-producing countries' revenues. Indeed, the increased profits in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait favoured an enhanced distribution of grants and aids towards the other Arab countries in the region and created a significant demand for skilled labour. Thanks to this growth in available funds and Jordanians' remittances, between 1973 and 1980, Jordan experienced high growth rates in all the macroeconomic indicators (i.e., GDP) and a sharp decrease in unemployment. However, the unequal economic growth generated numerous problems, ranging from the appearance of an inflationary spiral to massive flows of rural-urban migration.

In September 1978, the Camp David Accords concluded between Egypt and Israel created a wave of discontent throughout the Arab world. However, King Hussein refused to condemn the Egyptian decision, soon provoking a series of Palestinian demonstrations and threatening Jordanian relations with the Arab rejectionist. Thus, despite being convinced of a diplomatic solution's need, Hussein decided not to join the peace talks. With Egypt ostracized by the other Arab countries, the regional leadership was conquered by the Ba'thist Iraq of Saddam Husayn. Indeed, during the 1978 Arab Summit, Iraq proposed a ten-year aid programme to the states more involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict, with Jordan's share consisting of $1.25 billion per annum. Saddam Husayn and the King developed a close and robust relationship, resulting in substantial economic interdependencies between the two countries.

Between 1983 and 1988, the perception of economic stability convinced the Jordan government to promote a series of liberal reforms, including a significant wave of privatization (since 1985). As a result, throughout the 1980s, many Jordanians of Palestinian origin lost their employment in the public sector and the media, transferring and conquering the newly expanded private sector. At the same time, because of King Hussein's new "nationalist" ideology, "pure" Jordanians began to dominate the bureaucracy and the army. Another liberal reform promoted by the government led to a massive growth of current spending. However, in 1988 the Jordanian dinar suffered a tremendous contraction, generating the re-emergence of unemployment and a sharp fall in per capita incomes and living standards. The dramatic situation forced the

Kingdom's government to default on its foreign debt in 1989. Right after the default, King Hussein agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank to re-stabilize Jordan's economy through a series of austerity reforms[48], provoking a wave of riots and social unrest throughout the country. In November 1989, King Hussein scheduled the first free and fair general elections in years to curb the rioters. The results were surprising, with significant success for the Islamist groupings, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. Following the elections, the King promoted an initiative to adopt a Jordanian National Charter (*al-mithaq al-watani*) to develop the political liberalization process. Indeed, the idea was to restore democratic, participatory, and pluralist politics, legalizing the political parties, with some exceptions, and lifting the martial law in force since 1967. On the 9th of June 1991, the Charter was finally adopted.

In April 1987, the London Agreement's conclusion between King Hussein and the Israeli Foreign Minister represented the first step towards a "maturation" of the peace process. However, the Palestinian First Intifada outbreak in December 1987 led to a stop in the negotiations. Moreover, the Iraqi decision to invade Kuwait (August 1990) seriously threatened the regional peace process and put King Hussein in a problematic situation[49]. Indeed, in January 1991, right after the outbreak, Jordan condemned the Arab coalitions for attacking Iraq, meanwhile refusing to support Saddam in his invasion. After the end of the war, a considerable flow of Iraqi citizens moved to Jordan, establishing a new middle class and enlarging the existing disparities between the poorest branches and the rest of the country (i.e. after country's default almost 40% of Jordan's population was living under the poverty line).

Despite the unstable situation in the Middle East, the United States and other international actors convened an international peace conference in Madrid on the 30th of October 1991. King Hussein viewed this event as an essential turning point in his Israeli strategy. Indeed, right after the Oslo Accords signing (August 1993), Hussein implemented a new Jordan's bilateral peace diplomacy. Thus, on the 13th of September 1993, Jordan and Israel agreed on setting an agenda for negotiation based on the principles of peace and regional development cooperation. In July 1994, the two countries agreed on ending the hostilities, and on the 26th of October, they promulgated the Jordan-Israel formal peace treaty[50]. Such an event created turmoil both outside,

[48] Harrigan, J., El-Said, H., and Wang, C. 2006. "*The IMF and the World Bank in Jordan: A case of over optimism and elusive growth*". The review of international organizations, 1(3). Pag 263-292.
[49] Lesch, A. M. 1991. "Contrasting Reactions to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians". *Middle East Journal*, 45(1). Pag 30-50.
[50] Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and State of Israel. 1994. "*Treaty of Peace*". Wadi 'Araba, 26th October 1994. The treaty guaranteed Jordan the restoration of its occupied land, as well as an equitable share of water from the

with general disapproval by the neighbouring countries, and domestically, where demonstrations and protests started to afflict Amman. With the failure of both the Syria-Israel, due to the issue of the Golan Heights, and Israel-Palestine peace negotiations, stopped after Rabin's assassination in 1995, Jordan remained the only country, except Egypt, with a bilateral accord with Israel. Such accord emerged as one of the last achievements of King Hussein's reign. On the 7th of February 1999, Hussein died of cancer, with his eldest son Abdullah who succeeded and inherited the Kingdom taking the name of King Abdullah II.

Most of the people in Jordan thought that the new King's army background would have led him to a new belief in Transjordanian nationalism. However, his Palestinian wife, Queen Rania, played a significant role in counterbalancing Abdullah's nationalism. At the beginning of his reign, King Abdullah suffered from two main reasons: Jordan spending more than it could, according to its annual budgets, and his inability to speak fluent Arabic. From a political point of view, since the King's appointment, in 1999, to 2012, the country suffered from structural instability, reporting ten cabinets' succession (Robins, 2019). The most affected political party was the Muslim Brotherhood, directly and openly criticized by the new King, despite its charity activities throughout the country (i.e. the Islamic Centre Society and the Islamic Hospital in Amman).

During the first years of his reign, King Abdullah faced several crises in the international relations field. The King's internal and foreign strategy, in reaction to all of these challenges, can best be summed by the regime's slogan (launched in 2002): "Jordan first" (*al-Urdun Awalan*)[51]. While this implies a substantial nationalist foreign policy, it has also been used to fight "foreign" influences in Jordanian domestic politics. As a result of this reinforced regional foreign policy role, after the 9/11 attack in 2001, he tried to persuade the USA to avoid a military intervention in Iraq, Jordan's only source of oil. Despite his failure, the King built a strong and efficient relationship with the United States, also cemented to fight the recurring terrorist threat. Moreover, King Abdullah established a worthy relationship also with Russia, with the two countries coordinating their military actions in Syria after the outbreak of the "Second Arab Awakening." At that time, such a movement also affected Jordan, forcing King Abdullah to implement significant reforms on both monarchy and the political elite. The first solution was establishing a National Dialogue Committee (NDC), aimed at finding an agreement about a

Yarmouk and Jordan rivers. Moreover, the treaty defined Jordan's western borders clearly and conclusively, putting an end to the dangerous and false Zionist claim that "Jordan is Palestine."

[51] Ryan, C. R. 2004. "Jordan first: Jordan's inter-Arab relations and foreign policy under King Abdullah II". *Arab Studies Quarterly*. Pag. 43-62.

new electoral law. It was then instituted a Royal Committee for the Revision of the Constitution (RCRC) that succeeded in increasing the quota of female parliamentarians and reducing to sixteen the age limit to vote.

Meanwhile, the increased violence in nearby Syria generated a considerable flow of refugees seeking peace, and Jordan offered shelter to most of them. According to the data, Jordan welcomed more than a million Syrian citizens between 2012-2016. The international Arab community supported Jordanian efforts by offering almost $5 billion during the first five years of the Syrian crisis, but this was not enough. Indeed, the economic crisis resulting from this migration flow forced King Abdullah and the government to refer once again to the IMF. The social impact of this "Jordan Spring" was detrimental, with women resulting as the most affected category, also due to a disinclination of a – at least partially - patriarchal economy to support them. Moreover, the excess of labour supply forced a sharp decline in wages and affected the main social provisions, in health and education, on the country's periphery. Finally, the crisis widened the existing inequalities within the population, especially in the urban areas, and, above all, it increased the number of people fallen below the poverty line (15.8% in 2018)[52].

2.2 LEBANON: FROM THE SYKES-PICOT AGREEMENT TO THE CURRENT SITUATION

After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and the Sykes-Picot Agreement's ratification, Lebanon fell under the French "mandatory" administration. Despite the Lebanese expectations of a certain autonomy under French protection, the High Commissioner Henri Gouraud, representing the French government in the Middle East, imposed a direct rule on the country. Indeed, he appointed a Frenchman, Major Trabaud, as governor of the Greater Lebanon, gathering the administrative powers all in French hands[53]. In 1924, the newly appointed High Commissioner Maurice Sarrail proposed a series of ambitious reforms, all rejected, ranging from the unification of the fiscal system to reducing inequalities between Lebanese and inhabitants of the annexed territories. Pressures from the League of Nations and the Syrian people forced France to grant a constitution to its mandate countries. On the 23rd of May 1926, the renamed Lebanese Republic finally adopted its constitution. The text established both a Chamber of Deputies and a Senate (this abolished in 1929) while legalizing the French mandate

[52] The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators. The national poverty headcount ratio is the percentage of the population living below the national poverty line(s).
[53] Traboulsi, F. 2012. "*A history of modern Lebanon"*. Pluto Press.

and control over foreign and military affairs. The text designated the Senate as representative of sects and regions, incorporating and re-elaborating the Ottoman "millet system." Such a model appeared in Lebanon in 1516, when the Caliph decided to appoint officials responsible for specific religious communities rather than for territory's portions[54]. The French rulers tried to adapt this vestigial system to the Western idea of "political representation," designating the leaders of each "millet" (i.e. religious or ethnic group) as senators.

Meanwhile, the country was struggling due to a massive migration flow from Armenia. The first wave started in 1922, and in 1924 the country decided to naturalize all the Armenian refugees, increasing the Lebanese Christian community. In 1929, almost another 40.000 Armenian fled to Lebanon, an event that, together with the Great Depression, aggravated the Lebanese general living conditions and posed a severe threat to the country's economic and social stability[55]. Simultaneously, the Lebanese political arena was endangered by the continuous struggle between Christians and Muslims. Indeed, in 1932 the prospect of seeing a Muslim as head of state, al-Jisr first candidate since 1920, forced the High Commissioner Ponsot to suspend the constitution and break up the Chamber of Deputies. Other than politics, the French influence was also pervasive in the country's economy. Indeed, France held a monopolistic control over the economy's main sectors, from commerce to the tertiary. Moreover, French influence and support favoured an expansion of education that helped in creating a more potent and cultured middle class.

The French decision to suspend the constitution in 1932 generated great political turmoil, with the opposition faction led by Bishara al-Khoury (Constitutional Bloc, Maronite liberal nationalist party) claiming a reactivation of the legislative text and the signing of a new bilateral agreement with France. Khoury aimed at establishing a multi-ethnic and proactive State, willing to collaborate with both Arab and Western countries. However, at that time, the citizens were critics of the French abuses of power. Indeed, the French domination over Lebanese administration and security, together with its economic monopoly and its several violations of citizens' liberties, generated violent uprising throughout the State. The general strikes that started in early 1935 in Lebanon and Syria defined the path to negotiating the two countries' independence[56]. In 1936 the independentist revolts reached their peak. While Syria received a promise of independence, Lebanon obtained only a mere "*alliance of friendship and an internal*

[54] Barkey, K., and Gavrilis, G. 2016. "The Ottoman millet system: Non-territorial autonomy and its contemporary legacy". *Ethnopolitics*.
[55] Owen, R. 1976. "*Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*". London: Ithaca Press. Pag 24-25.
[56] Ziadeh, N. 1957. "*Syria and Lebanon*". London: Ernest Benn Ltd. Pag 111-195.

independence." The subsequent negotiations in Paris guaranteed the Lebanese independence based on 1920s borders in exchange for a continuation in the countries' military and economic alliance. On the 13th of November 1936, the "Treaty of Friendship and Alliance between France and Lebanon" was officially signed.

The outbreak of World War II curbed the process of independence because of the French collapse in 1940. Despite Free France's (against Vichy administration) attempts of reformulating the agreement's terms, both Lebanese and Syrian governments refused to sign a new treaty. Meanwhile, several countries, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Britain, and the US, recognized their independence. Lebanese politicians called for new elections to finally accomplish their detachment from France, but General de Gaulle refused the idea (1942). Thanks to Egypt's support, a new round of negotiation talks started in Cairo in June 1942, when President Khoury declared Lebanon's claim of integral independence while rejecting France's future privilege. When de Gaulle approved the proposal of new general elections, it was necessary to decree a new electoral law that recognized all the ethnic groups and minorities present in the country. In early 1943, the law passed with a ratio of 6:5 (i.e. 30 Christians and 25 Muslims), which remained the sectarian quota until 1990. On the 21st of September, the Khoury's Constitutionalist, who became President of the Republic, clearly won the elections. On the 8th of November, the Chamber formally abolished French mandatory authority. Three days later, Khoury and his government, guided by Riad al-Sulh (Constitutional Bloc), were arrested. However, the international pressures both from the Arab world, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and the Western one, especially from Churchill, forced the French authorities to liberate Khoury. On the 22nd of November 1943, France officially declared the end of its mandate in Lebanon.

The 1943 constitution guaranteed the equity of all Lebanese citizens, confirming the sectarian ratio of 6:5 and establishing an "equal" division of the three government's significant powers: a Shia speaker, a Sunni Prime Minister, and a Maronite President[57]. Thus, the text favoured better Muslim participation in Lebanon's decision-making. To affirm its independence and curb the Hashemite aspirations towards the country, Lebanon, guided by the Sulh government, became a founding member of the Arab League (25th of September 1944). In the aftermath of

[57] Article 24 of the Constitution: "The Chamber of Deputies shall be composed of elected members; their number and the method of their election shall be determined by the electoral laws in effect. Until such time as the Chamber enacts new electoral laws on a non-confessional basis, the distribution of seats shall be according to the following principles: a) Equal representation between Christians and Muslims; b) Proportional representation among the confessional groups within each of the two religious communities; c) Proportional representation among geographic regions."

World War II, the French government tried again to achieve a privileged status with its former mandate countries by proposing a new bilateral treaty. However, the US recognition of Lebanon's complete independence in September 1945, soon followed by the USSR, favoured Lebanese rejection of French claims. France reacted by bombarding Lebanon and, especially, Syria, but the British intervention curbed the attack. In December 1945, the parties reached a compromise to evacuate all the foreign troops from the two countries; a result fully achieved only a year later.

In 1948, Lebanon played only a marginal role during the First Arab-Israeli conflict. However, from an economic point of view, the country became one of the primary beneficiaries of Israel's boycott from the Arab world. The downside was a massive Palestinian' migration flow towards the country's southern part that threatened the State's stability. After the military coup occurred in Syria in March 1949, many opposition parties started to create turmoil in Lebanon. The Lebanese government viewed with suspicion the new Damascus administration. However, thanks to the mediation of both Egypt and Saudi Arabia and the proposal of establishing a complete economic union with Syria, the two countries' relationship came back to normal. Lebanon became an "intermediate" commercial and financial centre in the Middle East, able to link the wealthy Western world with the developing economies of the region and the oil economies of the Gulf. Thus, during the first years after the war, the country enjoyed massive economic growth. However, starting from 1950, Lebanon registered an unprecedent economic and social crisis, characterized by a sharp increase in unemployment (almost 5%) and living costs (Ziadeh, 1957). The subsequent wave of demonstrations and strikes forced the Khoury's administration to resign in September 1952.

The new administration, guided by the pro-West Kamil Sham'un (Constitutional Bloc), benefited from a period of economic prosperity thanks to the incredible rise in revenues of the Gulf countries. The Lebanese GDP registered record rates and basic commodities' prices came back to sustainable levels. However, the unequal distribution of profits during that period aggravated the social and economic inequalities characterizing Lebanon, enlarging the urban-rural gap. During his government, Sham'un established a sort of autocracy, subordinating the role of legislature and gathering all the administrative powers in his hands. Meanwhile, the US administration feared the expansion of Nasserite beliefs in the region. Thus, Lebanon was selected as one of the "American pillars" against the spread of Arab nationalism, receiving in

exchange conspicuous economic aids and a preferential commercial treaty[58]. However, such a choice, together with the decision not to adhere to the Baghdad Pact of 1955, had a detrimental effect on the Egypt-Lebanon relationship. In March 1957, the Lebanese President formally adhered to the Eisenhower doctrine, provoking unrest and demonstrations throughout the country.

After the creation of the United Arab Republic (UAR), establishing the union of Syria and Egypt, in February 1958, the revolts evolved in an armed insurrection against the government. The next months were characterized by several struggles and attempts of negotiation, but the Sham'un refusal of accepting an amnesty curbed every hope of finding a peaceful solution. In July 1958, the US troops entered in Lebanon with the final aim of resolving the conflict and impose a successor to Sham'un. In September, the President was forced to resign, leaving his place to Fu'ad Shihab (Maronite Independent Party) and his new government guided by Rashid Karami (Sunni Independent Party, associated to the Lebanese National Movement), one of the rebellion's leaders. By October, all the American troops had left the country.

The first years of Shihab's administration were turmoiled, also characterized by a failed coup d'état attempted by the nationalist forces. Moreover, the shift towards a more "Muslim" administration generated hostility by the Christian community, which at that time passed from the 50% of administrative seats experienced under Sham'un to a mere 33%[59]. During Shihab's presidency, the state started to play an active role in the economy, enhancing its social and regional development initiatives. Indeed, several reforms allowed the construction of new infrastructures (roads and basic facilities) and significant public education upgrading. During the 1964 general election, the Christian community complained about a possible Shihab's second mandate. Thus, the solution was to appoint a compromise President, and the choice fell on Charles Helou. His mandate was characterized by the regional division between the Nasserite beliefs and the Saudis conservatism, with the latter that tried to persuade the Lebanese government through economic and financial aids[60]. The internal unrests continued throughout the entire Helou's mandate, reaching their peak right before the Six Days War's outbreak in June 1967.

[58] Gendzier, I. L. 2006. "*Notes from the minefield: United States intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958"*. Columbia University Press. Pag 178-209.
[59] Salibi, K. 1966. "Lebanon under Fuad Chehab 1958–1964". *Middle Eastern Studies*, 2(3). Pag 210-215.
[60] Kerr, M. H. 1971. "*The Arab cold war: Gamal 'Abd al-Nasir and his rivals, 1958-1970 (Vol. 358)*". Oxford University Press.

The tremendous defeat of 1967 generated a new wave of migrations, with the Lebanese government forced to face the problem of "outsider's" citizenship. Many branches of the population started to blame Palestinians, and migrants in general, for the detrimental social and economic situations. However, the monetary and financial crises were the product of the Lebanese Central Bank's declaration of insolvency in October 1966. Indeed, the Intra Bank crisis put an end to the Lebanese intermediary role between oil-producing countries and Western ones. Nonetheless, the defeat in June 1967 harmed the Lebanese society by favouring Palestinian fighters' (*fedayeen*) entry into the country. Lebanese Prime Minister Rashid Karami and his Arab Liberation Party (ALP), ideologically based on anti-Zionist views and Pan-Arabism, favourably welcomed the PLO and its anti-Israeli crusade. Such an event marked the beginning of a period of clashes and violence between the *fedayeen* and the army, enlarging the fracture between Maronite and Muslim's communities and resulting in several pro-Palestinian demonstrations. Moreover, many neighbouring countries, especially Syria, reacted against the Lebanese decision to fight the *fedayeen* by imposing severe economic sanctions. The crisis was resolved only in November 1969, when the two parties agreed in signing the Cairo Accords, which recognized the fedayeen's right to stay in Lebanon.

The 1970s started with massive growth in regional economic development thanks to the Gulf countries' ability to attract petrodollars. Lebanon reacquired its role of intermediary between West and oil-producing countries by recycling most of these revenues. Such a financial flow favoured rapid industrial growth in the country by allowing massive foreign investments. However, many other sectors were struggling. One of them was agriculture, which was still based on small-family businesses and had lost almost 30% of its workforce in 25 years. Moreover, the number of Lebanese emigrants enjoyed a sharp increase, which enlarged the share of remittances to almost 30% of the Gross National Product (GNP) in 1974. Such an increase in emigration was due to the detrimental standards of living characterizing many Lebanese citizens. Indeed, the cost of living doubled between 1967-1975, and almost 79% of the population lived with less than the minimum income (Traboulsi, 2012). Most of these citizens lived outside Beirut, displaced in many camps, especially Palestinians, which became known as the "poverty belt."

Moreover, many of the disparities were between the two main religious groups, with most Muslims working in industries and the leading businesses under Christian control. All this resulted in several discrepancies, such as discrimination in opportunities and a significant educational system gap, also reflected at the administrative level. Such a disparity fostered

increasing turmoil among the Lebanese Muslim community. Besides, many other social groups (i.e. farmers and industrials) gathered in social movements demanding a country's deep economic, social and political reform. A new wave of demonstrations and strikes afflicted the country, mobilising the population suffering from the increased living costs, alongside a Lebanese student movement (started in 1968). The political elite tried to curb the unrest by convoking new general elections in 1972, but the resulting Salam's government appeared unable to carry on the revolution claimed by the citizens.

Furthermore, Israeli incursions in the country increased after the inflow from Jordan of many PLO's members in 1970. However, the army appeared more active in curbing the demonstrations rather than facing the foreign enemy. Lebanon was on the verge of collapse, with the government refusing advice from the many intellectuals living in the country since the "Lebanese Renaissance" of the 1960s. The continuous battles between PLO and the army worsened the country's relationship with its neighbouring countries, especially Syria. Only the outbreak of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war favoured reconciliation with the Arab world. However, the struggle against the PLO *fedayeen* was prosecuted during the following years, leading, in 1975, to the outbreak of a civil war that lasted for 15 years and enlarged the existing fracture between the different sects. From an economic perspective, this dramatically affected those living along the "poverty belt" and citizens on the southern border, the lowest population branches, drastically enlarging the existing inequalities present in Lebanon.

The first years of the conflict, known as the "Two Years War", were characterized by the armed confrontation of Christian and Palestinian factions. The conflict comprised many factions: pro-Syrian parties, Zionist-leftists, the nationalist's Phalange, the Sham'un's "Tigers," aimed at expelling all the Muslims from the Christian territories, and the Palestinian *fedayeen*. In January 1976, Beirut was divided along a "Green Line" guarded by the Palestinian Liberation Army (PLA). When the Muslim extremists requested military assistance from Syrian President Assad, Israel reacted by threatening an invasion on Lebanese soil[61]. In April 1976, Syrian troops entered Lebanon and attacked the pro-Palestinian organizations, an intervention "covered" by the Arab League's decision to send an Arab Deterrent Force (ADF) to Lebanon. By October, all the Syrian troops were renamed ADF. Moreover, Egypt, Syria, and Saudi Arabia controlled all the country's major decisions, such as Iliyas Sarkis' crowning as "king of the Arabs" in

[61] Evron, Y. 2013. "*War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue"*. Routledge. Pag 19-40.

Lebanon. The Israeli government's response was to mark a "red line" on the Litani river, denouncing that every Syrian advance over that border would constitute a threat to Israel.

The 1978 Camp David Accords undermined the newly established Sarkis regime, provoking an Israeli counter-offensive against Syrians and Palestinians in Lebanon. The Israeli offensive escalated in 1978, forcing the UN to send an international troop, the so-called UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), as guardian of the Lebanese southern border[62]. The advent of Bashir Jumayil as chief of the Phalange's army led to the outbreak of the "100 days battle". The confrontation ended with a Syrian defeat and withdrawal from East Beirut, leaving Bashir as the Christian territories' sole leader. Meanwhile, the PLO's *fedayeen* gained control of all Lebanese Muslim regions ("Fakhani canton"), perpetrating several missile attacks against the Israeli settlements on the southern border. In July 1981, Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Begin agreed on a cease-fire that lasted almost one year. On the 6th of June 1982, Israeli troops invaded Lebanon. In August, United States, France, and Italy agreed to establish a Multinational Force (MNF) to supervise the PLO exit from West Beirut. In September, the Israeli troops conquered West Beirut. In the following days, together with the Lebanese Forces (LF), one of the cruellest Christian factions during the civil war, the Israeli troops committed the massacre of more than 1000 Palestinians in the two refugee camps Sabra and Chatila. The main goal of the Christian forces was to provoke a general exodus of Palestinians not only from West Beirut, but from all over the Lebanese territory. Such a dramatic event forced US President Ronald Reagan to recall the MNF to the Lebanese capital, provoking a partial Israeli retreat[63].

In September 1982, the new Phalange's leader Amin Jumayil was elected as President. A year later, he ordered his troops to reconquer West Beirut, forcing the MNF to leave the capital in 1984. Meanwhile, the Israeli occupation of the South was struggling due to several strikes and insurrections. Thus, both Jumayil and the new Israeli Prime Minister Sharon agreed on the need for a bilateral peace treaty, declaring the end of hostilities in May 1983[64]. However, Israel announced that it would withdraw its troops only after a total Syrian retirement. In February 1985, thanks to the Iranian revolutionaries' support, the Islamic group Hezbollah was officially

[62] UNSC. 1978. "*Resolutions 425 and 426*". UNIFIL mandate: 1) confirm the withdrawal of Israel from southern Lebanon; 2) restore international peace and security; 3) assist the Government of Lebanon in ensuring the return of its effective authority in the area.
[63] Shultz, G. 1993. "*Turmoil and Triumph: My Years As Secretary of State*". New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.
[64] Government of the State of Israel and Government of the Republic of Lebanon. 1983. "*Treaty of Peace*". Beirut, 17th of May 1983. The agreement included the end to the state of war between Israel and Lebanon, a mechanism for treaty supervision, military cooperation and the establishment of an Israeli mission in Beirut. Never ratified by Lebanon due to strong Syrian opposition.

established. The group recognized the Syrian legitimation to intervene in the conflict and called for the withdrawal of all the other foreign forces (Israel and MNF). Thanks to the US mediation, in February 1985, the Israeli troops withdrew from the South, leaving its control to the Shia Amal movement, and the Syrian troops agreed not to invade the southern part of the country.

Meanwhile, Lebanon was on the verge of economic collapse due to the war massive destructions and the withdrawal of PLO finances. Thus, the cost of living sharply increased, generating turmoil and unrest among the population. The following years were characterized by a partition of Lebanon among various sectarian cantons, and Syria wanted to have its share. Indeed, in February 1987, the Muslim leaders, especially Hezbollah, invited the Syrian troops to come back to Beirut. The period 1985-1990 resulted in continuous struggles between armed mafias and militias interested in dominating the territory's share in which they were the effective rulers. Their efforts in sectarian, political and ethnic cleansing of the respective territories provoked huge waves of internal displacement and migration. At the end of the war, there were almost 157.500 displaced Muslims and 670.000 displaced Christians (Traboulsi, 2012). When the result was reached, the war shifted from an "inter-sectarian" struggle to a fight for community's control.

In October 1988, Jumayil's mandate ended, abandoning the country with a vacant presidency. Before leaving the office, he appointed the Christian General Awn as the new Prime Minister, a position usually held by a Sunni, provoking a severe Muslim reaction. Nonetheless, Awn's power appeared undisputed, leading him to launch an initiative to "liberate" West Beirut from Syrian troops. On the 22nd of October 1989, thanks to an Arab League initiative, the Lebanese parliamentarians signed the Ta'if Agreement, officially declaring the end of the civil war and posing the basis for Lebanon's reconstruction[65]. Awn strongly opposed the agreement, claiming for a complete Syrian withdrawal from Lebanese territory. When the Parliament elected the new President, Iliyas Harawi (Maronite Independent Party), the army defeated Awn's military insurrection. Harawi designated Umar Karami (ALP, Sunni Arab nationalist party) as new Prime Minister, who ordered the disarmament of all the Palestinians, recognized Hezbollah's role in fighting against Israeli occupation, and signed a Common Defence and Security Agreement with Assad.

[65] Lebanese Parliament. 1989. "*National Reconciliation Accord*". Ta'if, 22nd October 1989. The Agreement, ratified in November 1989, provided the basis for the ending of the civil war and the return to political normalcy in Lebanon.

On the 21st of September 1990, the Lebanese Parliament approved a new constitutional law to amend the original legislative text by incorporating the Ta'if reforms. The system was reformed, recognizing a need for social justice and equal development among the regions and imposing a balance of power's parity between Christians and Muslims. The President's powers were curtailed in favour of the Parliament. However, the main novelty consisted in the concession of a sort of "mandatory" power to Syrian President Assad over Lebanon's central policies. The country's government shifted towards pro-Syrian positions. The complete withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon did not occur until 2005. The peace negotiated with the Ta'if agreement was unstable due to both the civil war's nature, characterized by sectarian struggles still present in the country, and the choice of a foreign "guarantor" (Syria) of the peace consolidation process.

The early 2000s were a turning point for the Lebanese social and political environment[66]. Indeed, the complete Israeli withdrawal from the south in May 2000 and a growing widespread criticism against the Syrian military presence forced the country to change. The outbreak of the Cedar Revolution in February 2005 forced a complete withdrawal of Syrian forces, leaving the Parliament as the country's sole legitimate ruler[67]. In July 2006, the Israel-Hezbollah War outbreak triggered the country's new stability and drastically curbed its economic growth. Indeed, the armed confrontation was devastating for Lebanon, generating a considerable number of casualties, mainly Shiite Muslims, and the destruction of numerous infrastructures. Hezbollah's activities continued during the following years, especially in 2008, forcing the political elite to accept a national unity government. The outbreak of 2011 revolts had a marginal impact on Lebanese politics, already triggered by the Special Tribunal inquiry against Hezbollah. Despite the widespread sense of peace, both massive migrations flow from Syria and the continuous sectarian political struggles still condemns Lebanon to a structural and potentially detrimental instability.

[66] Ghosn, F., and Khoury, A. 2011. "Lebanon after the civil war: peace or the illusion of peace?" *The Middle East Journal*, 65(3). Pag 381-397.
[67] Knio, K. 2005. "Lebanon: Cedar Revolution or Neo-Sectarian Partition?" *Mediterranean Politics*, 10(2). Pag 225-231.

3. JORDAN

3.1 THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

3.1.1 CULTURE & RELIGIONS

From a sociological perspective, it seems impossible to pursue a deep and valuable analysis of a country's development without considering its cultural background and the historical, ideological, and ethnic influences affecting its growth. Indeed, culture may always play a role in promoting or blocking reforms, as it could foster social revolts and general unrest. The concept of culture is a transversal one, affecting politics, social life and norms, and the economy in general. In the Middle East, the idea of "culture" cannot be divided by "religion," being the concepts intermingled and affecting each other. Indeed, as pointed out early in this text, Islam is not only about religion itself but affects every aspect of Muslims' lives, ranging from conduct to traditions. In this context, religion enslaves all aspects of political, economic, and social life. Islam develops into a moral and behaviour model for the organisation and management of a specific form of society funded and influenced by religion[68].

Another characteristic shared by most of the countries in the Middle East, including Jordan, is an ancient tribal culture. According to belief and custom, a tribe is a group of families who are all patrilineal descendants of one common ancestor. Each tribe is a socially homogeneous unit with native members who are socially equal. Like most of the countries in the region, also Jordan inherited several elements from its tribal past. For example, the "family" represents the base of the tribes' social structures. Such a social system influenced the typical Middle Eastern society, fostering an idea of patrilocal, patrilineal, patriarchal, and extended family[69]. This social structure also affected the states' economic development, which for years considered the "extended family" as the basic unit. Moreover, since its first days, Islam permeated the tribal system, creating the cultural background for the Middle East nation-building process.

In Jordan, there is another aspect that must be considered. According to country's traditions, the royal family inherited some religious authority thanks to their lineage from the Prophet Muhammad. Although established religious elites did not directly challenge the Jordanian regime, it faced pressure from the Muslim Brotherhood and other autonomous religious actors over time. As a result, the government has taken a range of steps to change the religious

[68] Piturca, A. and Popescu, A.P. 2005. "Islam - religion and politics". *Revue des Sciences Politiques Nr. 8*. Pag 69-74.
[69] Antoun, R. T. 2000. "Civil society, tribal process, and change in Jordan: an anthropological view". *International Journal of Middle East Studies, 32*(4). Pag 441-463.

landscape in various ways, including establishing a new religious bureaucracy or "official Islam." The concept refers to all the aspects of religious authority under the direct or indirect control of the government[70]. Nowadays, Jordan is characterized by three pillars of "official Islam": *Ministry of Awqaf,* which supervises the shrines, mosques, and holy sites; *Qadi al-Qudah,* which oversees the Jordanian *Sharia* courts; *Dar al-Ifta* (National Fatwas Committee), established in 2006 to issue religious rulings.

Nevertheless, Jordan is not only an Islamic country but a heterogeneous one. Indeed, since the Ottoman dominion of the area, there was a small percentage of Christians within the population. In the 19th century, most of these groups belonged to the Greek Orthodox, affiliated with the Patriarchate in Jerusalem. At the beginning of the 20th century, the Greek Catholic Church also entered the country, favoured by the tribal refusal of some limitations (i.e. in matters of marriage) imposed by the Greek Orthodox Church. As in almost all the Region, Christians in Jordan enjoyed a privileged life both in resources and education. As a result, especially after Jordan's independence, they were required as clerks and administrators in the new government, explaining the massive Christians' migration flows from villages to the cities. After the revision of the Constitution in 1952, Article 2 of the renewed legislative text specified that: "Islam is the religion of the state and Arabic is its official language." However, Article 14 of the Constitution expressly protects freedom of worship for all religions according to existing traditions in the Kingdom, as long as it does not disrupt social order or contradict morality[71]. In addition to the Constitution, there are electoral laws that treat Christians as a minority and allocate them, along with other minorities, a specific proportion of seats (quotas) in Parliament.

Despite such a presence of minority groups in the government, their impact on Jordan reforms and normative development has been relatively marginal. Indeed, their possibility to exert a particular influence on new laws was (and still is) minimal, especially on issues of Muslims' interests (i.e. divorce). However, the two ethnic groups' conflicts at the political level are not illustrative of their peaceful coexistence at the social and economic levels. A practical example is that during the last 15 years, the growing influence of Arab fundamentalists had a significant impact on the social balance between Christians and Muslims. In 2008, Al-Qaeda attacked a Latin church and a Christian cemetery in Irbid, escalating the episodes of jihadi violence in

[70] Robbins, M., and Rubin, L. 2013. "The Rise of Official Islam in Jordan". *Politics, Religion & Ideology, 14*(1). Pag 59-74.
[71] Article 14 of the Constitution: "The State shall safeguard the free exercise of all forms of worship and religious rites in accordance with the customs observed in the Kingdom, unless such is inconsistent with public order or morality".

Jordan. However, the state Security Court's response reinforced the idea of a peaceful relationship between Sunni and Christians, condemning 12 alleged Jordanian members of Al-Qaeda to 20 years of jail. The Jordanian trials of jihadists began in the early 1990s, but there was no evidence that Christians were among the jihadists' targets until 2004 when plots involving al-Zarqawi began to emerge. Before these attacks, the country had no records of sectarian violence against Christians, considering them as founding members of the country's culture[72].

More than on the division between Christians and Muslims, the analysis of Jordan's development could be deepened by focusing on the role of civil society. The Encyclopaedia Britannica defines civil society as a "*dense network of groups, communities, networks, and ties that stand between the individual and the modern state*."[73] Recent studies provide evidence about the role of civil society in favouring transition to democracy and active political participation. Starting from the 1990s, rather than risk uncontrollable mass opposition and collective action that could destabilize the political system, regimes like Egypt's, Morocco's, and Jordan's provided new, though restricted, opportunities for the formation of civil society organizations. Nonetheless, these organizations were soon bounded into a system of bureaucratic procedures and legal norms that enabled those in the government to control and regulate collective behaviours. Civil society institutions became more a tool of state social control than a means of collective empowerment[74]. Jordan's administrative control and regulation of civil society reflects a regional shift away from direct repression and toward more subtle forms of social control.

In the Middle East, civil society could become the driver for social and political empowerment, and that is why the state needs to control and oversee it. During the last thirty years, several nongovernmental organizations have proliferated in the region. The states started to consider them a serious threat to their stability and imposed numerous boundaries and normative limitations on their empowerment. Indeed, some scholars reported that the growth of civil society might threaten political freedom by facilitating sectarian and exclusive divisions among the society. However, more recent studies demonstrate that NGOs could be powerful

[72] Al-Shishani, M. B. 2009. "Neo-Zarqawists Target the Arab Christians of Jordan". *Terrorism Monitor*, *7*(34). Pag 4-6.
[73] Kenny, M. 2016. "*Civil society*". Encyclopedia Britannica.
Available at: www.britannica.com
[74] Wiktorowicz, Q. 2000. "Civil society as social control: State power in Jordan". *Comparative politics*. Pag 43-61.

instruments for political participation and profitable drivers of socioeconomic development[75]. Most of the Middle Eastern democratic transition's reasons relate the process of political change to the economic crisis of the '90s. Such an event harmed states' ability to provide essential goods and services to their citizens, forcing the government to implement political liberalization reforms to curb the broke out of social unrest and violence.

At that time, this new wave of social and civil activism provoked the proliferation of many nongovernmental organizations. Most of them had an Islamic background to combat the intrusion of Western values and beliefs ("westoxification")[76]. Islamic nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) are non-profit, grassroots organizations that offer essential goods and services to communities in ways considered compatible with Islamic principles and practices. These organizations, sometimes referred to as "social Islam," represent an increasing functional synthesis between socioeconomic needs and religious values. Islamic NGOs do not engage in overt activism or participate in formal political institutions, being committed to sustainability and cultural understanding issues. This limited emphasis is the product of legal codes governing NGO's work in the Middle East, which explicitly forbid political transgressions. Thus, these NGOs try to address socioeconomic issues by imposing an Islamic framework, while remaining under the State's normative control.

Therefore, cultural and social movements could play a role in addressing the mounting disparities within Jordan. Indeed, the Islamic roots of many of these organizations, strictly following the Quran's precepts and "norms of behaviour," could pervade several spheres of society (from economy to civil conduct) except for the political one. Most of these groups and associations opt to become "charitable organizations," thanks to a normative text favouring the establishment of this category. The institutionalized organizations may become *waqf*, pious foundations established to collect the *zakat* and provide low-interest loans to the population. On the other hand, the private institutions may cover several supplementary issues, ranging from marriage costs (an expensive practice in Jordan) to households' financial insurances[77]. Thus, there is undoubtedly a sectarian way to address income disparities among the Islamic group, but is this sufficient to solve, at least partially, the problem? Charity could be effective for poverty alleviation?

[75] *Ibidem*
[76] Wiktorowicz, Q., and Farouki, S. T. 2000. "Islamic NGOs and Muslim politics: A case from Jordan". *Third World Quarterly*, *21*(4). Pag 685-699.
[77] *Ibidem*

As previously highlighted, the institution of long-lasting forms of charity is one of the elements that characterize the Islamic culture. Indeed, both the *zakat* and the *sadaka* represent efficient instruments to address low-income issues. However, as poverty must be considered a multi-dimensional phenomenon, also these means could challenge other issues, such as non-income factors (health and education) or lack of opportunities (essential facilities, resources, etc.). If a person meets all his basic needs and has a surplus of income and resources that are less than *nisab*[78], he is considered a poor person and is thus qualified for receiving the *zakat*. Hardcore poverty is described as a situation in which an individual is unable to meet his basic needs. In this way, the Islamic idea of poverty and its approach to eradicating poverty is multi-faceted and systematic. Islam offers a holistic structure for overcoming suffering in society. It recommends a rapid-response program to address hardcore poverty and a systemic approach addressing even *nisab*-defined general poverty. The Islamic system's poverty-alleviation methods can be categorized to correspond to our earlier classifications of poverty phenomena: income enhancement, improving non-income aspects, and increasing access to opportunities. Thus, during the last 25 years, Jordan, like many other countries in the region, has reduced its poverty rate by almost 30% (passing from an estimated 45.30% in 1997 to 15.7% in 2018)[79], also thanks to the proliferation of charitable organizations.

To conclude, the Islamic culture plays an incredible role in poverty alleviation in Jordan, mainly thanks to the numerous charitable organizations spread across the country and the *Ministry of Awqaf*, appointed with the *waqf*'s functions. Indeed, after absorbing the institution of *waqf*, the Jordanian Ministry may become a tool for the common welfare[80]. The organization could promote social well-being, generate wealth for the poorest members of society, and sustainably distribute property. Moreover, the Islamic tenets and beliefs will become the pillars of a sustainable model based on charitable practices. Every form of corruption will be strictly prohibited, and modesty in consumption will be required. On the other hand, the minority groups, especially those of Christian origin, will not have access to such a profitable model. Historically among the richest in Jordan, these groups will remain formally accepted and included among the population, despite being practically excluded and segregated on this aid level.

[78] *Nisab* refers to the minimal quantity of wealth and assets that a Muslim must possess in order to be compelled to pay *zakat*. In other words, if one's own wealth is less than the *nisab* for a lunar year, no *zakat* is due.
[79] The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators.
[80] Sadeq, A. M. 2002. "Waqf, perpetual charity and poverty alleviation". *International Journal of Social Economics.*

3.1.2 ROLE OF WOMEN

The role of women has always been a highly debated issue in the Middle East. There are several reasons for this topic's concern, especially considering the widespread patriarchal beliefs of tribal origin affecting Jordan. Promoting gender equality is a vital aspect nowadays. Women's empowerment is a critical step to achieve this goal, recognizing and resolving power imbalances and allowing women more control to handle their own lives. Jordanian women accomplished several results during the last few years, both in public involvement and essential opportunities. However, their power is still far behind the targeted and desired objectives, indirectly curbing the country's growth possibilities. According to a recent United Nations (UN) survey on the role of women in society, economic development is inversely proportional to women's empowerment. Economic growth has been steady in countries where women have achieved better roles in economic activities[81]. Thus, Jordanian women's advancement is critical for the country's realization of all human rights and long-term growth.

Even though the proportion of women in the workforce has risen in recent decades, women in the Arab world remain disproportionately underrepresented in roles of leadership and decision-making. Nowadays, Jordan nominates just two women out of every 27 ministers, six women out of every 50 director generals, and one woman out of every 25 governors. After the 2020 elections, women hold just 15 of the 130 seats in Jordan's Parliament (i.e., 15.54%)[82]. Although Article 6 of Jordan's Constitution firmly excludes every discrimination practice based on gender, the Islamic tribal and patriarchal interpretation of an "appropriate" female status still plays a significant role in Jordan. The choice of the term "interpretation" is not casual. Indeed, there are several verses in the Quran advocating for gender equality practices. However, Islam's textual flexibility is often exploited to justify and maintain control of this particular social structure. Through this misinterpretation of Islamic teachings, actually favouring gender justice, the dominant patriarchal society in Jordan, and in other countries, still forces women to struggle for work and equal recognition.

Jordan's patriarchal practices limit women's career advancement and maintain gender-segregated workplaces. In Jordan, women's employment and progression are heavily influenced by tribal traditions. For example, in Bedouin communities, women are required and encouraged to behave honourably to preserve the tribe's and family's reputation. Many scholars

[81] Kharmeh, S. S. A. 2012. "Gender empowerment in Jordan". *Canadian Social Science*, *8*(2). Pag 201-208.
[82] Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. "*Jordan Majlis Al-Nuwaab (House of Representatives)*".
Available at: www.ipu.org

claim that Bedouin and Islamic cultures are different because tribalism influences certain people's attitudes and values in ways that contradict specific Islamic or *Sharia* rules. The World Bank estimates that the obstructive social and cultural norms are a central justification for women's restricted participation and continuing discrimination in Jordan[83]. Thus, tribalism results in the continuation of the patriarchal order and increasing disparities.

Women in Jordan suffer for evident injustices also at the legislative level, despite 1992 Jordan's ratification, with some reservations, of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). For example, the 1996 Labour Code allows women to take a year off without pay to care for their children. Furthermore, the mother is only allowed to nurse her child for one year after birth for a total of one hour per day (Article 71). This law reflects a patriarchal culture that views parenting as exclusively a women's duty. Moreover, these legal requirements may also act as a deterrent to employers hiring women. Indeed, in 2013 Jordan had one of the lowest economic participation rates for women in the world. According to the data (World Bank, 2013), at that time, Jordan's female economic participation rate was stuck at 22%, roughly a quarter of that of men (87%). Moreover, women with low levels of education made up most of the inactive population, and only 10 percent, or less, succeeded in joining the workforce. Finally, women faced high unemployment rates (20.7% compared to 9.5% of men) that have tended to rise during the following years (24.12% in 2019 versus 15.45% of men)[84].

Interestingly, Jordan has almost closed the gender gap in school enrolment and access to health facilities during the last three decades, showing remarkable equity in the two sectors' outcomes. Indeed, today Jordan is placed among the top five MENA countries for gender parity in literacy, also registering the incredible phenomenon, unbelievable thirty years ago, of the "reverse gender gap" (more women than men) in university enrolment. However, as previously mentioned, women's economic involvement has not increased in lockstep with advancements in human growth. Over the last decade, the rate of change in Jordanian women's average economic participation has remained relatively stagnant, in stark contrast to the country's economic growth rate. Indeed, despite the strong economic performance and impressive improvement in human development indicators, the growth in women's participation in the

[83] World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department Middle East and North Africa. 2013. "*Country gender assessment: economic participation, agency and access to justice in Jordan (English).*" Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.
[84] The World Bank Group. 2019. "*Jordan Unemployment (national estimate)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

labour force has been sluggish. As a matter of fact, the 2021 World Economic Forum ranks Jordan 131st out of 156 countries for its *Global Gender Gap Index*, lagging well behind many other middle-income countries[85].

Another factor contributing to low female labour force participation is the distribution of female jobs in low-productivity industries[86]. Women's returns to work are likely to be lower if they are "constrained" to work in low-productivity jobs with no potential. Thus, as a result, non-participation becomes a more appealing choice for women. Furthermore, low-productivity industries are likely to have lower growth rates, which has long-term consequences for female labour force participation. Consequently, the migration of labour, especially highly skilled female employees, from low to high productivity sectors has a significant potential for further productivity growth. Nonetheless, social norms and regulations must enable women to compete with their male counterparts in these sectors. Indeed, companies tend to employ men rather than women also to avoid these normative constraints.

From a microeconomic and macroeconomic standpoint, increasing women's economic activity is the best possible choice to enhance Jordan's development. Indeed, women's access to paid jobs, whether in the form of employment or entrepreneurial income, would help to alleviate poverty and expand the middle class by allowing households to rely on multiple sources of income. Furthermore, it can be costly to exclude half of the population from economic and social life, renouncing to a large share of GDP generated by increasing female participation to the men's levels (growth of almost 30% according to the World Bank estimation)[87]. Thus, an efficient and drastic reform of old social norms and legal barriers must be implemented while ensuring enough jobs in the labour market able to attract women due to safe environments and the removal of gender discrimination.

It must be highlighted that during the last three years, Jordan's government has further strengthened its commitment to women's economic and social empowerment. Indeed, gender inequalities in jobs, entrepreneurship, and access to finances result in significant economic losses not only for women but also for households and entire communities. As a first resolute response, in 2018, Jordan's administration released a project called "Jordan Renaissance Plan

[85] World Economic Forum. 2021. "*Global Gender Gap Report*". WEF Insight Report.
[86] World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department Middle East and North Africa. 2013. "*Country gender assessment: economic participation, agency and access to justice in Jordan (English).*" Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group
[87] Ait Ali Slimane, M., Lundvall, J., Mohindra, K., Al Abbadi, S., Kurshitashvili, N., and Hisou, O. 2020. "*Women's Economic Empowerment in Jordan*". MENA Knowledge and Learning.

2019-2020" in partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), outlining the government's goals for that period of improving: productivity, the rule of law, and solidarity. Besides, more recently, Jordan's government launched the "Women's Economic Empowerment Action Plan," aimed at increasing female participation in the workforce by 24% in a maximum of five years. After this time, the hope is that women's opportunities to become business owners will have increased and that the plan will have achieved the creation of safe and inclusive work environments (Ait Ali Slimane et. all, 2020).

The Nobel Prize's winner, Amartya Sen, pointed out on several occasions the potential of female participation in boosting socioeconomic development (Sen, 2001). Indeed, he stresses that women's agency and independence are crucial components of progress. According to the data reported in the Human Development Index[88], countries with increased educational and employment opportunities for women and girls during the last few decades have considerably achieved greater prosperity and social progress while registering moderated population growth and limited infant mortality. Finally, Sen highlights that women are vital advocates for the triple-win strategy of sustainable development, including economic growth, social development, and environmental sustainability. Thus, Jordan's potential for development forcibly passes through an increasing openness towards women empowerment in all the spheres of public life: political participation, social freedoms, and economic opportunities.

3.2 THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT

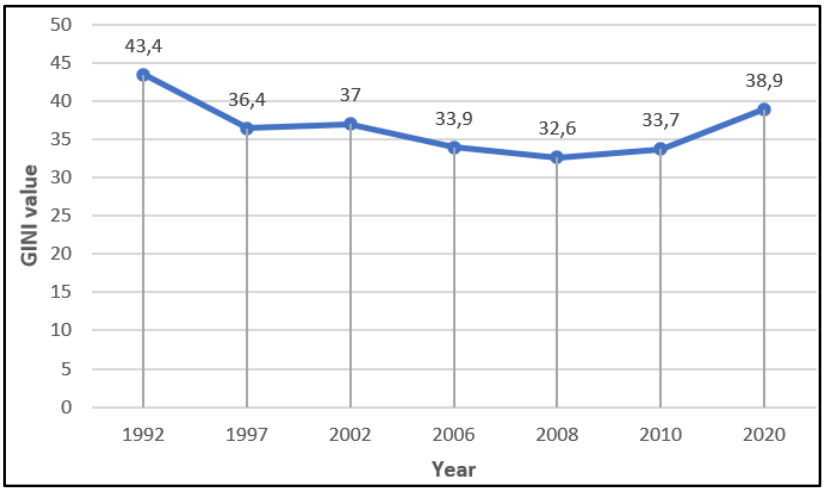
The social and economic balance in a population must be evaluated only according to data. The socioeconomic environment is usually described through charts and graphs concerning territory, population, GDP, and the employment/unemployment rates (divided between women and men). However, many more factors could impact a country's development, such as the school enrolment and dropout, poverty rate and income distribution, and the effect of conflicts on state indicators. The Jordan context appears to be, under certain aspects, sharply in contrast with the rest of the Middle East. Indeed, Jordan remained relatively neutral during the most recent regional conflicts, assuming the reputation of a "safe place" where to migrate (as analysed in the following paragraph) and invest. However, such a flow of people and money

[88] UN Development Programme. 2020. "*Human Development Index (HDI)*". Human Development Reports. Available at: www.hdr.undp.org

caused massive growth in the Jordanian workforce and financial assets, enlarging the already existing disparities among the population[89].

Considering the first variables, it is essential to note that the major disparities occurring among the population, for Jordan and the rest of the world, affect three main categories: 1) women; 2) local communities; 3) migrants. As previously mentioned, the third variable (the impact of migration) will be further analysed in the third paragraph. Jordan's actual economic growth has been spurred in recent decades by market-oriented reforms and a favourable external environment. This increase in economic activity has resulted in significant increases in consumption and household welfare, with poverty incidence numbers showing a significant decrease (as reflected by the lower value of the Gini Index reported in **Figure 12**), with the exception caused by the COVID-19 outbreak. Over the last few decades, population migrations and the resulting internal movement from rural areas to urban centres, particularly the capital, have resulted in an uneven distribution of wealth. Despite this, the combined effect of changes in sector productivity and employment perspective (more jobs in rural areas) as well as government programs focusing heavily on rural areas curbed the negative impact of these new trends on enlarging the existing gap between rural and urban centres.

Figure 12: Jordan Gini Index (time series 1992-2020)



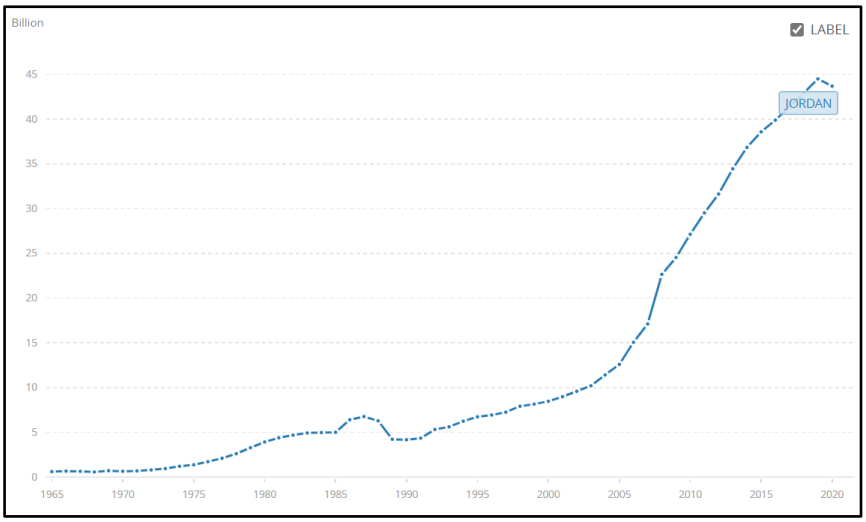
Source: World Bank estimate

Looking at the other variables describing Jordan's socioeconomic context, it is possible to see the considerable evolution and changes that occurred during the past decades in terms of economic growth[90]. Indeed, looking at the levels of GDP (**Figure 13**), we could see an

[89] Shahateet, M. 2006. "*How serious is regional economic inequality in Jordan? Evidence from two national household surveys*". Munich Personal RePEc Archive.
[90] The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

incredible growth during the last fifteen years, despite a slight decline as a response to the lockdowns and restrictions imposed to fight the pandemic.

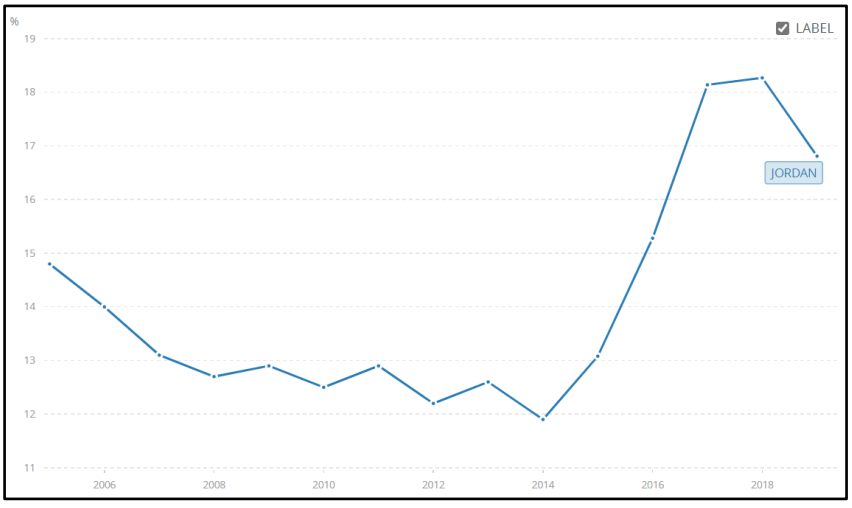
Figure 13: Jordan GDP (Current US$) (time series 1965-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

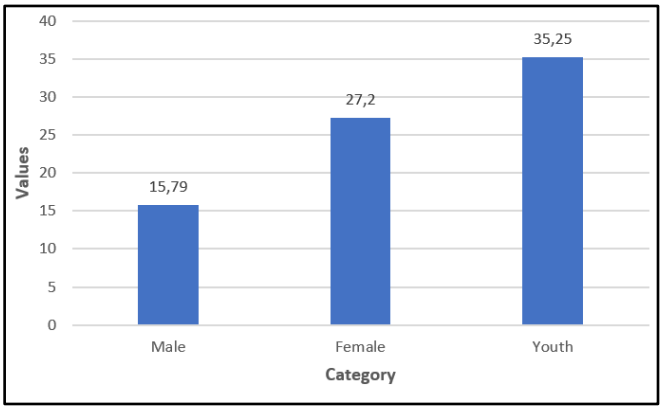
At the same time, the economic boom has not been reflected on the unemployment levels (**Figure 14**), dramatically increasing since 2014. Thus, it is not difficult to say that there has been an uneven country's development, where only a marginal share of the population enjoyed the benefits of increased richness. On average, women and youth suffered the most due to this unequal growth. Indeed, in 2017, the unemployment level (**Figure 15**) was 15.79% for males, compared to an enormous 27.2% for females and 35.25% for the youth population (ages 15-24).

Figure 14: Jordan Unemployment, total (% of total labour force) (time series 2005-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

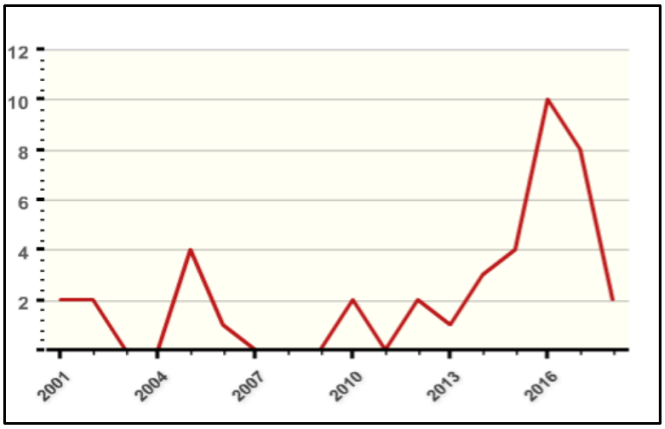
Figure 15: Comparison of Jordan unemployment levels (2017) – male, female, youth (15-24)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

As previously mentioned, another trigger factor able to disrupt the socioeconomic balance is the outbreak of armed conflicts. Contrary to other countries in the region, Jordan remained almost neutral during the main disputes that exploded in the Middle East. Above all, it decided to sign a peace agreement with Israel in 1994 to avoid future engagements in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Despite all these mitigating circumstances, there are more typologies of armed conflicts, namely "terrorist attacks," that have impacted Jordan's neutrality in the last two decades. Indeed, by looking at the Global Terrorism Database[91] (**Figure 16**), between 2001 and 2018, Jordan reported 44 incidents, of which nineteen were without fatalities, and just a few of them reported injuries.

Figure 16: Jordan number of incidents (time series 2001-2018)



Source: Global Terrorism Database

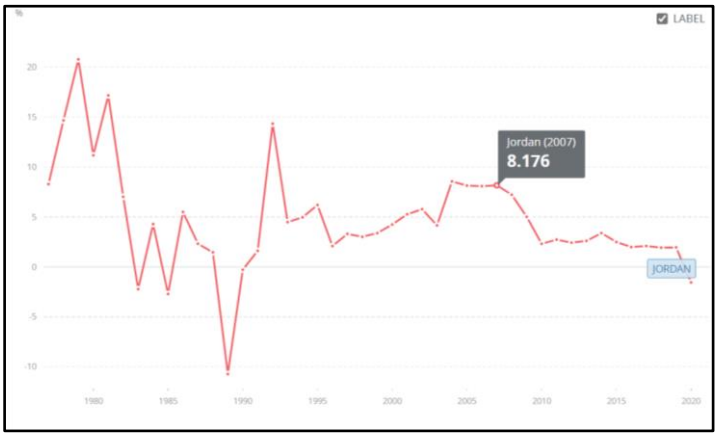
Looking at the line chart, the prominent peak in Jordan was reached in 2016. The data could be explained by the increasing violence promoted by the ISIL group around the country that year (i.e., the cruel attack on the 18th of December). In 2016 migrants were fleeing from the Syrian

[91] Global Terrorism Database. 2021. "*Number of incidents in Jordan (2001-2018), criterion II*". GTD Advanced Search.
Available at: www.start.umd.edu/gtd/

conflict towards Jordan, and the main reason was the increased cruelty against civilians from the *Daesh* group. To deal with this massive crisis, the Jordanian government opted to strengthen the anti-*Daesh* coalition (formed in September 2014) to stabilize its neighbouring countries. Thus, the Islamic State intensified its activities throughout 2016. The main types of terrorism that affected Jordan during this time frame were strictly related to religious and ideological motivations. In fact, most of the incidents have been committed by Muslim extremists and jihadist groups.

However, the small number of incidents reported in the country, despite slightly affecting the national GDP growth (2.49% in 2015 compared to 1.99% in 2016), cannot be considered the main obstacles to Jordan's development. On the other hand, many other factors could have played a significant role in impacting the country's growth right after the outbreak of the Second Arab Awakening in 2011. Indeed, Jordan remained marginally committed to the uprisings, but the civil revolts destabilized some of its main economic partners, especially Lebanon and other neighbouring countries. As reported by the Jordan Department of Statistics[92], the instability suffered by some countries in Africa and the Middle East indirectly affected Jordan's trade flows. Indeed, in 2010, Lebanon, Oman, and Congo figured among the top five countries to which Jordan exports were directed. Almost ten years later, in 2019, none of them was still able to purchase considerable quantities of products from Jordan, and the new top five was composed mainly of developed countries (Germany, USA, and China). Thus, starting from 2007, the curbing of a high-intensity MENA regional cooperation has slowed the country's development, especially in terms of GDP growth (**Figure 17**).

Figure 17: Jordan GDP growth (annual %) (time series 1977-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

[92] Jordan External Trade Division. 2021. "*External Trade*". Jordan Department of Statistics. Available at: http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/economic/externaltrade/

The evident interconnectedness between Arab countries, and its subsequent impact on domestic development, should not divert attention from the structural setbacks present within the Jordanian borders. Indeed, mounting obstacles could be traced to three other different variables: the gender gap, the declining school enrolment, and the enlarging disparities among different governorates. Considering the first variable, in part already analysed in paragraph 3.1.2, women continue to lag well behind men's standards in terms of employment and job opportunities. Indeed, women are usually employed in low-quality and low-salary jobs, where the opportunity to grow is almost always given only to men. In such particular industries, women appear to be overrepresented, creating a vicious cycle in which the growing supply of women's labour gives the possibility to lower their wages. In 2014, in order for Jordanian women and men to have the same employment distribution across occupations, 184.000 people would have to shift jobs, corresponding to almost 100.000 from each sex. While, at that time, this was a modest fraction of male work, it accounted for nearly half (47%) of female employment in Jordan[93].

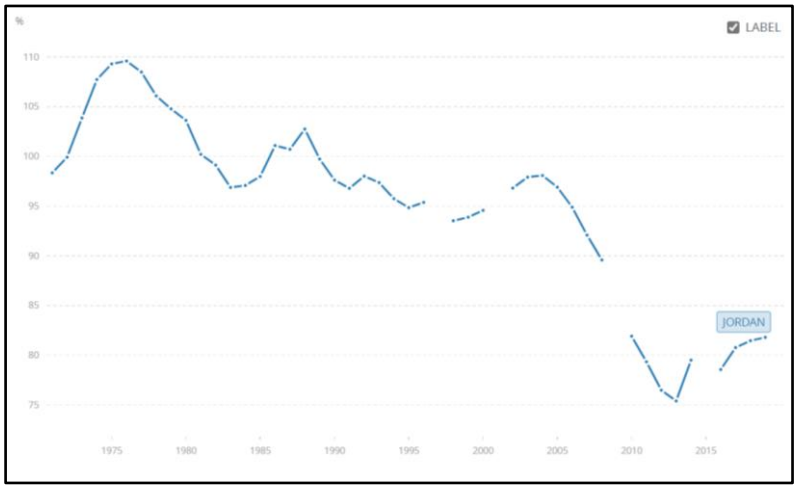
As previously mentioned across the text, the population average educational level (second variable) must always be considered a significant indicator of a country's development. Indeed, education is also considered among the primary aspirations for the African plan of sustainable development, Agenda 2063, as stated in paragraph 14:

"*Africa's human capital will be fully developed as its most precious resource, through sustained investments based on universal early childhood development and basic education, and sustained investments in higher education, science, technology, research and innovation, and the elimination of gender disparities at all levels of education. Access to post-graduate education will be expanded and strengthened to ensure world-class infrastructure for learning and research and support scientific reforms that underpin the transformation of the continent*."[94]

Thus, the last decades declining trends in Jordan's rate of primary school enrolment (**Figure 18**) are among the best explanations of its limited growth.

[93] Tzannatos, Z. 2016. "*Effects of Gender Inequality in Employment and Pay in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Three Questions Answered*". International Labour Organization.
[94] African Union Commission. 2015. "*Agenda 2063, the Africa we want*". African Union.

Figure 18: Jordan School enrolment, primary (% gross) (time series 1971-2019)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

Considering the third and last factor, the inequalities among different governorates, it is crucial for the outcome of this analysis to highlight which are the less developed ones. The first aspect of significant interest in examining these disparities is the average household earnings in the lowest parts of the country (**Table 5**). These areas of interest, for the most part, correspond to Jordanian governorates with reduced drinking water availability, a problem that plagues the whole Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, making it the world's second-largest country in terms of drinking water scarcity[95].

Table 5: Jordan Percentage distribution of average incomes by household (values in JOD) by governorate of residence (2018)

Governorate and Urban\ Rural	Groups of Annual Current Household Income (JOD) فئات الدخل الجاري السنوي للأسرة (بالدينار الأردني)					
	15000>-12500	12500>-10000	10000>-7500	7500>-5000	5000>-2500	2500>
Governorate						
Amman	8.5	11.3	15.2	17.5	15.7	4.2
Balqa	8.8	11.3	13.9	19.4	17.7	4.4
Zarqa	9.9	12.5	17.4	24.6	17.3	4.4
Madaba	10.1	11.6	15.5	21.4	16.9	3.6
Irbid	10.3	12.2	17.3	23.8	14.0	3.6
Mafraq	8.6	13.1	18.3	22.9	17.5	6.6
Jarash	9.5	11.1	17.8	25.4	17.4	5.7
Ajlun	11.7	9.2	15.5	21.0	13.7	8.3
Karak	8.4	10.7	14.4	17.1	15.4	4.9
Tafiela	10.4	14.8	19.8	22.3	13.2	3.2
Ma'an	9.5	14.2	17.3	21.1	17.6	4.8
Aqaba	8.7	15.7	17.4	21.5	14.8	4.2
Urban\ Rural						
Urban	9.1	11.7	16.0	20.3	15.9	4.2
Rural	9.6	12.5	17.4	22.1	15.5	5.3
Kingdom	9.2	11.8	16.1	20.5	15.8	4.4

Source: Jordan Department of Statistics

[95] Ambasciata d'Italia in Giordania. 2021. "*Giordania*". Info Mercati Esteri, Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale.

As can be seen from the 2018 data, the percentage of Jordan's annual family income below 5000 Jordanian dinars (JOD), almost €6000, is close to 20%, with some peaks represented by Mafraq (24.1%), Jerash (23.1%), Ma'an (22.4%) and Ajlun (22%). Moreover, the data reported seem to be in line with the data on the poverty rate measured in 2010 (**Table 6**).

Table 6: Jordan Poverty rates by governorate (2010)

	2010
Amman	11.4
Balqa	20.9
Zarqa	14.1
Madaba	15.1
Irbid	15.0
Mafraq	19.2
Jerash	20.3
Ajloun	25.6
Kerak	13.4
Tafileh	17.2
Maan	26.6
Aqaba	19.2
Kingdom	14.4

Source: Jordan Department of Statistics

Finally, it can be easily affirmed that Jordan's development was marginally affected by conflicts and de-stabilizing riots. However, the combined impact of a discrete gender gap, a declining trend of educational level, and the existing disparities among different governorates curbed its growth during the last two decades. Thus, considering the relationship between growth and disparities, it is not wrong to affirm that a limited socioeconomic context is one of the main drivers of existing and enlarging inequalities.

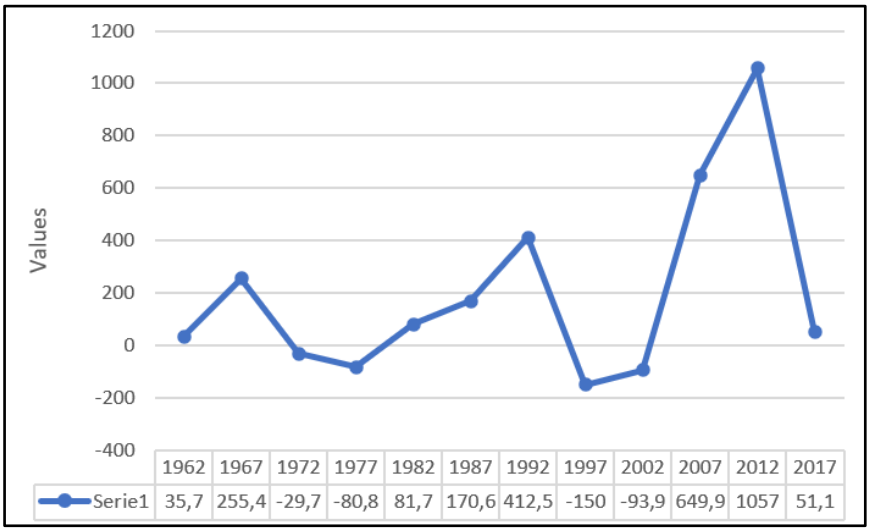
3.3 THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

Jordan's policy approach to migratory flows is defined by its socio-political history and geopolitical objectives, as the country has historically been a regional migration crossroads. This openness to Arab migrants initially bolstered the reigning Hashemite dynasty's pan-Arabist claims, but it was accompanied by a push for refugees to return to their homeland. Jordan's public support for refugees' right to return also led to the regime's rejection of the 1951 Geneva Convention on refugee status (or its 1967 Protocol). Nonetheless, the basic principles of international protection, including the definition of a refugee and the principle of *non-refoulement*, were outlined in a 1998 Memorandum of Understanding (revised in 2014)

agreed by UNHCR and the Jordanian government[96]. The accord stipulated that asylum seekers may remain in Jordan pending refugee status determination (RSD) and permits mandated refugees to continue in Jordan for a maximum of six months following recognition.

From a historical perspective, since the 1948 Palestinian exodus, migration to, from, and across Jordan has played an essential role in the country's politics, economy, and society. Jordan has also hosted displaced people from other Middle Eastern countries, including Lebanon during the 1975-1991 civil war, Iraq since the 1991 Gulf War and after the 2003 Anglo-American military intervention, and Syria following the outbreak of the Second Arab Awakening. Indeed, by looking at the chart below (**Figure 19**), there are three major peaks (1967, 1992, and 2012) all associated with three significant events in conflicting neighbouring countries (1967, Six Days War; 1992, post-Kuwait invasion, and end of Lebanese civil war; 2012, outbreak of Syrian conflict). There are various underlying, interacting patterns in these movements. The most important are related to regional geopolitics, variations in the Persian Gulf oil industry, and efforts by the Kingdom's Hashemite monarchy to maintain its stability. Migration has provided a continuing challenge to Jordan's administration due to the unsolved question of Palestinian statehood. Simultaneously, it has contributed to the country's economic progress[97].

Figure 19: Jordan Net migration (time series 1962-2017)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

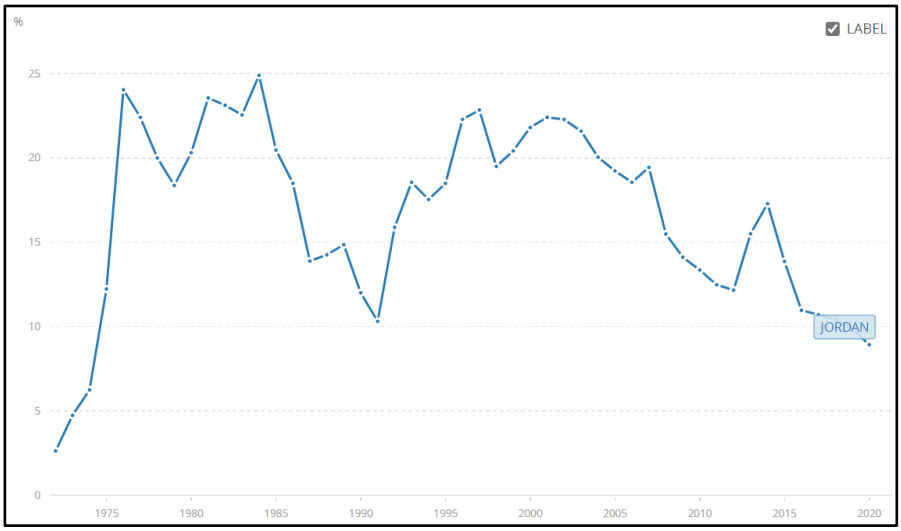
[96] Article 2 of the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of Jordan and UNHCR, April 1998: "[…] no refugee seeking asylum in Jordan will be returned to a country where his life or freedom could be threatened because of his race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion".
[97] Chatelard, G. 2010. "*Jordan: A Refugee Haven*". Migration Information Source.
Available at: www.migrationpolicy.org

Thus, Palestinian refugees, displaced people, and returnees can be regarded to have played a crucial role in Jordan's nation-building process[98]. As a result of their integration into the country's citizenship and polity, Jordan gained a diplomatic role at the regional and international levels. It also gave the Hashemites' pan-Arabist agenda considerable political weight. Emigration to Gulf countries compensated for some citizens' exclusion from the capital redistribution policies (mainly Palestinian refugees and displaced individuals), thus removing potential dissent from the country. Rising needs for services (such as domestic labour) arose due to the new private wealth, while state "rentier" income was channelled into infrastructure development. As a result, work immigration to Jordan increased dramatically in the 1970s, with Egyptians and Southeast Asians, in particular, flocking to the country to work. Low-skilled immigration raised Jordanians' status through a job-ladder effect, and foreign labour became a component of the clientelist redistribution of assets to citizens. Jordan's demographic, economic, and political existence, as well as the country's impact and endurance, were all dictated by open-door migration policies.

As previously mentioned, Jordan's economic development is inextricably linked to mobility dynamics. On the one hand, this entails the acceptance of Palestinian migrant workers. On the other hand, labour exports have met the demand for foreign workers in the oil-producing Gulf states. Together with development aid from the international community to help refugees resettle and assimilate, remittances from Palestinians who moved to the Gulf in search of work significantly influenced Jordan's public and private sectors' growth. Indeed, these personal remittances, together with those received by country's expatriates, (**Figure 20**) have aided Jordan's economic growth by providing start-up funds for Jordanian firms and significant government-sponsored projects. Moreover, remittances received by migrants' families influenced the establishment of a consumption-driven, non-productive economy and manner of wealth accumulation. As reported in the chart below, the prominent peaks of personal remittances inflows, which measure the sum between personal transfers and employee compensation[99], match the most significant inflows of migrants of the last forty years. Indeed, the three most considerable increases were experienced: in 1972, after the Lebanese civil war's outbreak, in 1992, following the Gulf crisis, and in 2012, next to the Syrian conflict's escalation.

[98] De Bel-Air, F. 2016. "*Migration Profile: Jordan*". Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
[99] The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan Personal remittances received (% of GDP)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators.
Available at: www.data.worldbank.org

Figure 20: Jordan Personal remittances received (% of GDP) (time series 1972-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

However, in the mid-1990s, the Gulf's desire for Arab employees shifted: currently, only highly qualified Jordanians migrate abroad, while the less skilled face unemployment rates up to 30% in Jordan. Men working in agribusiness or construction come from more populated or less prosperous Arab nations like Egypt and Sudan. In contrast, female domestic workers come from Southeast Asia, in a Jordanian labour market that has grown sharply fragmented along ethnic and gender lines. Since 1994, when Jordan and Israel signed a peace treaty, joint Jordanian-Israeli industrial ventures (known as Qualified Industrial Zones) have been importing male and female labour from India, Bangladesh, and other Southeast Asian countries[100].

Aside from serving as a safe haven, the Kingdom has also served as a regional hub for transit migration. Since the early 1970s, Jordan has seen a lot of this type of migration[101]. Palestinian refugees, for example, produced a reservoir of low-cost labour that arrived in the Gulf via Jordan. A large number of people expelled from Kuwait in 1991 exploited Jordan as a gateway to the West Bank. Many Iraqi refugees also intend to depart Jordan once they obtain a visa from the United States or a European country. Domestic politics, on the other hand, has resulted in a limited trend of displaced people to other Arab countries or Europe, including members of illegal political movements seeking to avoid confinement, such as the Communists in the Cold War period, members of antimonarchical Islamic parties, and PLO guerrillas who were expelled after September 1970.

[100] Saif, I. 2006. "*The Socio-Economic Implications of the Qualified Industrial Zones in Jordan*". Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan.
[101] Arouri, F. 2008. "*Irregular Migration in Jordan, 1995-2007*". Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Irregular Migration Series.

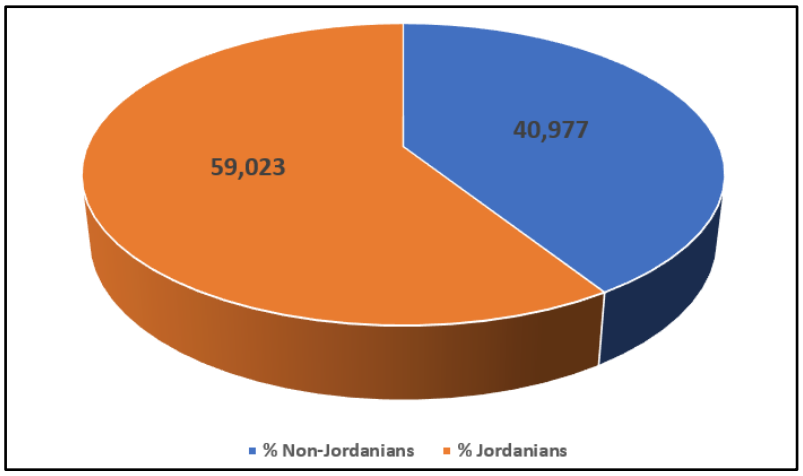
Jordan experienced all three types of irregular migration: 1) irregular labour migration, 2) refugee migration, 3) transit migration. Having already analysed both the second and third types, it must be taken account also the first aspect. Irregular labour migrants who do not respond to a formal labour need and do not meet all of the legal requirements for admission, stay and employment may be labelled "undesirables" by the relevant government. However, due to the open-door legislation implemented after the independence, some non-Jordanians living in the country do not need a work permit to find a job (i.e. Palestinians who have lived in Jordan since at least 1967). Especially after the last Syrian crisis, the number of people entering Jordan without working permits has increased consistently. Indeed, the Ministry of Labour, the only institution responsible for managing the labour market in the country, reports that the number of permits issued is only a modest share of the total number of migrants entering. Syrian refugees, like Iraqi and Palestinian refugees before them, almost primarily worked in Jordan's informal economy. In 2013, according to the data gathered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the informal economy accounted for around 44% of Jordan's GDP, and informal employees are far more exposed to abuses, low salaries, and exploitation[102].

The cost of doing business in the informal sector can be summed up by the fact that it entails being unable to use government services available to the formal economy. Thus, considering that in 2015, latest data available, a substantial share of the Jordan population was composed of non-Jordanians (**Figure 21**) and that most of these citizens and refugees were employed in the unregulated informal market, a significant number of citizens had access only to a restricted level of welfare and benefits. Therefore, there was a vast and growing disparity within the Jordan's border. During the last few years, the lack of pull factors to migrate from neighbouring countries curbed the migration flows towards Jordan, maintaining quite identical the number of non-Jordanians residing in the country. However, most of the time, people succeeding to flee to Jordan are not highly qualified or educated. According to the Jordan Department of Statistics, in 2018, non-Jordanian citizens unemployed, those officially recognized living in the country, had an average educational level below the secondary school in 74% of the cases. At the same time, the same variable for Jordanian accounted for 49,1%[103]. The incredible difference among

[102] United Nations Development Programme. 2013. "*The Informal Sector in the Jordanian Economy*". UNDP Report.
[103] Jordan Department of Statistics. 2021. "*Unemployed Persons Age 15+ Years by Sex, Educational Level & Nationality (Percentage Distribution). First Round -2021*". Labour Force Survey.
Available at: www.dosweb.dos.gov.jo

the two groups explains the difficulties for migrants to be employed in high-salary jobs and reveals their interest in looking for works in the informal market.

Figure 21: Jordan population (% of Jordanians and non-Jordanians) (2015)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

After the last massive inflow of migrants following the Syrian crisis of 2011, the Kingdom's governments decided to take a step towards a more inclusive and regulated labour market. In February 2016, at the London donor conference (*Supporting Syria and the Region Conference*), Jordan took an extraordinary move among refugee host countries by pledging to give official work possibilities for Syrian refugees[104]. In exchange for favourable rates on international loans, trade benefits, and investments from donor countries, the Kingdom of Jordan agreed to support and facilitate education and employment opportunities for Syrian refugees. This extraordinary measure took the name of "Jordan Compact." Such a work permit initiative aims to give Syrians the ability to support themselves without relying on help while also capturing the economic benefits of an expanded official labour force in Jordan. Under the terms of the deal, King Abdullah II agreed to generate five employments for Jordanians for every job established for Syrian refugees, totalling 1.2 million jobs[105].

In June 2015, more than 620.000 Syrians were registered with the UN Refugee Agency in Jordan, 84% of whom preferred to live in host communities instead of residing in refugee camps. According to the latest UNHCR estimates, nowadays, Jordan registers almost 665.000 Syrian refugees, but the Kingdom's government affirms that there are up to 1.3 million Syrians living in the nation. Before the Jordan Compact, there were an estimated 120.000 to 160.000 Syrian refugees working informally in Jordan. Even though the work permit project has

[104] Kelberer, V. 2017. "*The Work Permit Initiative for Syrian Refugees in Jordan*". Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies, Policy Paper.
[105] Sweis, R. F. 2016. "Jordan Struggles Under a Wave of Syrian Refugees". *New York Times*, *13*.

received widespread support from government leaders and foreign and domestic actors, during the first year of the Jordan Compact's implementation (2016), only 35.000 work permits had been awarded to Syrian refugees (Kelberer 2017). This appears to be a real pity, considering that the initiative to provide formal employment for Syrian refugees (aim to release 200.000 work permits) while also promoting development in the host communities could have an incredibly positive impact on Jordan's domestic growth.

Nevertheless, according to a recent poll conducted by the ILO, 95% of Jordanians believe Syrians have grabbed employment that would otherwise belong to Jordanians[106]. Thus, the beneficial impact of an enlarged regular workforce is curbed by the discontent of the national population. Moreover, the public's attitude toward Syrian migrants harms the government's ability to respond effectively to the surge of refugees. The Jordanian perception of migration inflows has been entirely different in the case of Palestinian and Iraqi refugees. Indeed, the strong connection with the West Bank neighbours since 1948 and the fact that almost 1/6 of the current Jordanian population has Palestinian origin has allowed always maintaining an open-door policy towards them. In the case of Iraq, the first wave of refugees in 2003, which arrived after Saddam Hussein's dictatorship deposition, was perceived by the population as a reasonably wealthy group of people with considerable social capital. Despite becoming more mixed, the subsequent Iraqi flows were still viewed as being made up of middle-income groups, making them more readily acceptable[107]. Thus, the problem with Syrian refugees is that of trust, with many Jordanians viewing those groups as low-qualified, poorly educated, and less wealthy people willing to offer their services at lower costs and thus exploiting possible job opportunities.

In conclusion, these massive migration flows have had two significant effects on Jordan's socioeconomic environment. First, considering that only a minimal percentage of these migrants could pursue a job, the Jordan unemployment rate consistently grew right after the principal migration inflows, diverting the state policies to combat this devastating trend. On the other hand, the possibility to employ a significant number of people, especially young single males, in low-salary and low-skilled jobs allowed massive exploitation of the workforce, favouring new business opportunities while enlarging the gap between rich and poor citizens.

[106] Stave, S. E., and Hillesund, S. 2015. "*Impact of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market*". Geneva: ILO. Pag. 110-111.
[107] De Bel-Air, F. 2009. "*Iraqis in Jordan since 2003: what socio-political stakes?*". Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, CARIM Research Reports 2009/10.

3.4 INTERNATIONAL AID AND SUPPORT

The goal of an international aid program for developing countries like Jordan is to accelerate their economic development to the point where they can attain a satisfactory pace of growth on a self-sustaining basis. Furthermore, the Middle East's unique environment, which includes vast volumes of South-South migration, has necessitated assistance to the most impacted countries. This support has been provided by several international actors and public/private stakeholders, but the main objectives and goals have been quite different. Indeed, when aid arrives from neighbouring and similar countries, in this case, Arab countries, it is more likely that it does not entrenches conditionalities regarding domestic and constitutional policies of the receiving country. By contrast, most international programs from Western countries and agencies and issued by an international organization (World Bank, IMF, etc.) entail a certain degree of goals and objectives that the receiving country has to meet to receive the aid. Jordan exhibited many characteristics of a conventional "rentier state" by the end of WWII. Indeed, it was characterized by economic protectionism, weak taxation structures, distributive state institutions, and conniving links between the central administration and the private sector[108]. As a result, it was heavily reliant on the Gulf States' budgetary support, as well as bilateral and multilateral Western development contributions.

3.4.1 ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

Especially after independence, Jordan's nation-building and socioeconomic development were aided by considerable financial help from its Arab neighbours. Moreover, its proclivity towards an open-door policy with Palestinian refugees, after the *Nakba*, and Lebanese citizens during the civil war was favourably viewed by its regional partners. The Arab League provided considerable finances and investments, especially after the massive oil-producing countries' revenues growth. Several Arab countries, including Iraq and Saudi Arabia, also contributed directly. According to many scholars, the financial cooperation's breaking point was the sign of the Jordan-Israel peace agreement in 1994. Indeed, before that time, Jordan's dependence on other region countries contributed to King Hussein's apprehension about participating in the Middle East peace initiatives that might anger the donors. For example, an Arab leaders' conference in Baghdad in 1978 committed Arab League countries to give Jordan $1.25 billion per year for the subsequent decade due to Jordan's refusal to participate in the Camp David

[108] Peters, A. M., and Moore, P. W. 2009. "Beyond boom and bust: external rents, durable authoritarianism, and institutional adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan". *Studies in Comparative International Development*, *44*(3). Pag. 256-285.

accords between Egypt and Israel, perceived as a betrayal of the Arab cause in the Arab world[109]. However, when the international community and various stakeholders worldwide started to invest and contribute to Jordan, especially as a response to its peace efforts to stabilize the region, such a dependence relationship loosened. Aids from MENA countries decreased, and Jordan development started to be based on several other sources.

The outbreak of the second Gulf war was another major blow to Jordan's cooperation with regional Islamic countries. Indeed, during the 1980s and 1990s, Iraq became Jordan's primary economic supporter. For example, in 1981, Saddam Hussein promised Jordanians $147.5 million in interest-free non-repayable loans. Moreover, at the time, Iraq was given Jordan an additional $250 million per year in outright gifts or interest-free loans, in addition to what it had committed through the Arab League[110]. Therefore, the social and economic collapse following the US troops' invasion of the country affected Jordan's economic system directly, with a massive migration flow of people (paragraph 3.3), and indirectly, cutting the significant transfers continuously provided by the former dictator. The Jordanian government was forced to adjust the projected development spending due to the subsequent deficits in aid allocations.

As previously reported, due to its open-door policy, Jordan regained regional support to deal with the increasing number of refugees living in the territory. Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, and all the other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) reaffirmed their commitments toward the Kingdom by revitalizing the pre-1994 economic partnerships. Jordan continued to receive full support also from the North African Islamic countries, especially from Egypt. This has never stopped its financial collaboration with the Hashemite Kingdom, being the only country already enjoying a peace agreement with Israel since the 1978 Camp David Accords. As a result of the Syrian catastrophe, which displaced about 1.4 million Syrians in the neighbouring Kingdom, Jordan experienced one of the most significant economic downturns it has ever suffered. In order to overcome such a disaster, Jordan's government needed the full assistance of the wealthy Gulf governments. However, Kuwait provided Jordan with not regularly aid, while Qatar, the region's wealthiest emirate, was not eager to send money to a country that does not support the Muslim Brotherhood.

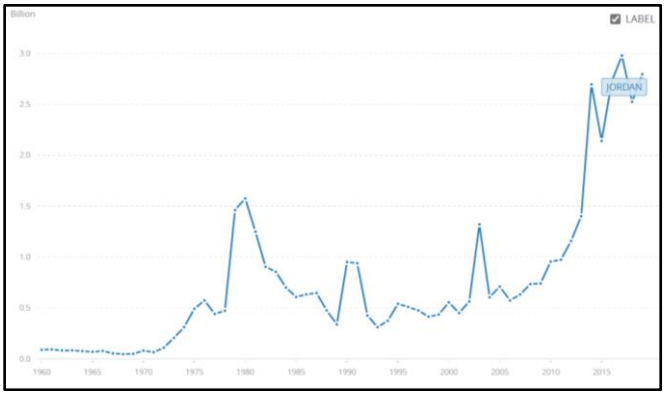
[109] Pace, E. 1983. "Aid To Jordan From Arab Nations Said To Fall". *The New York Times*, October 9, 1983, Section 1, Pag 7.
[110] Gupte, P. 1981. "Regions Middle East: Jordan's Growth Spurred by Aid From Arab States". *The New York Times*, February 8, 1981, Section 12. Pag 47.

Luckily for Jordan, in June 2018, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), three GCC countries, agreed to provide the country with $2.5 billion in financial help[111]. However, existing regional humanitarian financing and programming are insufficient and unsustainable, necessitating a more development-oriented strategy in order to build resilience and lessen Jordan's reliance on humanitarian aid over time.

3.4.2 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

Considering the international community, Jordan has benefitted from massive humanitarian aids and financial investments to curb the negative migration trends affecting the country (**Figure 22**). However, the role of outside capital in a development program is not to directly enhance living standards in recipient nations but to enable them to shift from economic stagnation to self-sustaining growth[112]. As a result, the overall goal of aid is to offer a positive incentive for each undeveloped country to put forth maximum effort to raise its pace of growth. Increased income, savings, and investment, all favoured by aid, will reduce the time to attain self-sustaining growth. With this objective in mind, Western institutions and organizations, such as World Bank, IMF, and USAID, have the ultimate goal of addressing Jordan's key difficulties, incentivizing changes, and increasing citizen-state trust while assisting Jordan's stability and self-reliance. Thus, their programs are usually characterized by some specific targets, such as economic growth through market-based solutions, development of essential services such as health and education, and constitutional, democratic reforms based on the principle of good governance and respect of human rights.

Figure 22: Jordan Net official development assistance received (current US$) (time series 1960-2019)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

[111] The Economist. 2018. "Jordan to receive financial aid from Gulf Arab states". *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, Jordan, June 11, 2018.
[112] Rosenstein-Rodan, P. N. 1961. "International aid for underdeveloped countries". *The review of economics and statistics*, Vol. 43, Nr. 2. Pag 107-138.

Western countries and international organizations have sustained Jordan since the first Arab-Israeli conflict and the subsequent massive Palestinian diaspora. Indeed, some countries such as Great Britain and France had financial and trade interests due to their colonial ties, valuing as critical a possible collapse of the Jordan socioeconomic fabric. Indeed, Jordan's economic and security needs were met by the United Kingdom until 1957. After that time, the outbreak of the Cold War drastically changed the international environment, also in terms of humanitarian aids and capital flows. The US, therefore, accepted responsibility for the pledge, giving economic and military assistance under the so-called "Eisenhower Doctrine."[113] It consisted of the US making a significant commitment to the Middle East's security and stability. The Doctrine reflected Washington's expanding influence in international affairs, growing concern about the Soviet Union's ability to expand into the Third World, and mounting fear about the ally governments' declining strength.

Despite these large flows of financial aids, during the period 1970-1990, Jordan was primarily supported by its Islamic partners (previous paragraph). After signing the 1994 Jordan-Israel peace agreement, the diminished help received from Gulf countries and neighbouring states was counterbalanced by the expanded sustain from the international community. The latter, indeed, welcomed with favour the Jordan efforts to stabilize the region by recognizing the Israelian State. Moreover, Jordan demonstrated its proclivity towards a more democratic environment through constitutional reforms and its refusal of a sectarian setting in the decision-making sphere. Thus, both during the crises of the late '90s and, above all, early 2000 (Second Gulf War and Second Intifada), Jordan created a sort of dependence on Western aids. Such a partnership strengthened through trade market and financial reforms aimed at increasing exchanges and investments from foreign firms and stakeholders, and it reached its peak after the 2011 outbreak of the Syrian conflict.

Since 2012, the USAID strengthened its collaboration with the Government of Jordan to address the country's core challenges[114], especially concerning:

- sustainable economic growth;
- lack of water, which has the potential to upend progress in other areas;
- health, education, and income assistance to the poorest branches of the population;

[113] Hahn, P. L. 2006. "Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957". *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, *36*(1). Pag 38-47.
[114] U.S. Agency for International Development Jordan. 2020. "*Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), June 30, 2020 – July 1, 2025*". USAID Strategic Approach Report.

- full integration of youth and women both into the society and workforce.

The Syrian conflict in 2011 had a significant impact on the attainment of these long-term goals. Indeed, rapid population growth has put a strain on labour markets, raised living costs, and impacted the quality and access to water, healthcare, and education. Furthermore, trade with Jordan's traditional economic partners, Iraq and Syria, was severely hampered, leading to a massive decrease in trade revenues and affecting the whole Jordan socioeconomic context (paragraph 3.1). The arrival of so many people in such a short period of time had a considerable impact on the host countries' political, economic, and social environments. While the long-term effects of these trends are still being felt, small countries like Jordan will be impacted for decades[115].

Aside from the United States, Jordan has benefited from increased economic assistance since the European Union's founding. Indeed, following pledges made at a London conference in 2016 and the five annual Syria conferences in Brussels since 2017, effective in securing international financial assistance for Syrians and their host communities, the EU and Jordan have strengthened their mutual commitments. Since the start of the Syrian crisis, the EU has provided Jordan with around €3.2 billion in humanitarian, development, and macro-financial aid[116]. Humanitarian aid accounts for over €390 million of this total. People in Zaatari, Azraq, and Emirati Jordanian camps and Syrian and non-Syrian refugees in urban areas received the majority of EU humanitarian assistance. Various programs cater to the needs of women and children, who account for more than half of the refugee population. In doing so, essential services were provided to vulnerable Jordanian families in villages and towns across the country. Finally, the EU is assisting the UNHCR and a group of partner organizations in helping to regularize the status of refugees who have not been properly registered.

The COVID-19 pandemic has recently made life more difficult for refugees and underprivileged Jordanians, compounding previous vulnerabilities and increasing Jordan's need for humanitarian aid from various donor countries. Essential services have been reinforced in refugee camps, and health safety precautions have been implemented to combat COVID-19. However, urban refugees and host communities face difficulties in obtaining essential services and earning a living. Some refugee children are forced to labour or marry at an early age rather

[115] Kelberer, V. 2017. "Negotiating crisis: International aid and refugee policy in Jordan". *Middle East Policy*, *24*(4). Pag 148-165.
[116] European Commission. 2021. "*European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – Jordan*". European Union Facts and Figures.

than attend school. The EU has already committed €15 million in humanitarian aid for 2021, primarily in health care, food and water, monetary support, sanitation, and education[117]. USAID has also recently stepped up its efforts, unveiling its new 2020-2025 strategy to strengthen the US-Jordan governments' cooperation (USAID 2020). In this context, Jordan will be able to overcome the past and current crises, building on its assets and providing opportunities for its young and rising population as a result of this.

Thus, international and humanitarian aids have favoured the launch of the Jordan Response Plan (JRP) for the Syrian crisis 2020-2022, which aims to establish mechanisms to meet the abovementioned difficulties, defending the welfare of Syrian refugees and vulnerable Jordanians affected by the Syrian crisis. Following the launch of the first JRP in 2015, numerous goals have been achieved. However, the situation of many of those people impacted, directly or indirectly, by the Syrian crisis remains precarious. Since its establishment, the JRP has become the only national comprehensive plan through which the international community has provided financial assistance in response to the Syrian crisis. The international partners mutually agreed its goals and objectives, recognized as universal purposes in line both with the Global Compact on Refugees and the Agenda 2030[118].

Thus, Jordan sustained growth after its independence has been deeply influenced by its reliance and a solid commitment to its international partners, both Islamic and not. The country's nation-building process and the establishment and designing of its socioeconomic environment were primarily based on donors' goals and objectives. Therefore, most of the existing endemic challenges present in the country respond to an uneven dislocation and repartition of funds among the different activities and branches of the population. Especially during the 20th century, funds and partnership were stipulated on a "mutually beneficial base," where the donor country could have obtained something in exchange for its support. Most of the time, this corresponded to enhanced growth of business activities, financial institutions, and industrial resources. Humanitarian programs were seen only as a "relief" for the most vulnerable communities, avoiding creating space for effective development and poverty eradication. Nowadays, this pattern seems to have finally changed, but it appears that the structural deficiencies and inequalities among the Jordan population will need far more efforts to be finally deposed.

[117] *Ibidem*

[118] The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2020. "*Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020-2022*". Jordan Response Platform for the Syria crisis.

4. LEBANON

4.1 THE CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND

4.1.1 CULTURE & RELIGIONS

As previously highlighted for Jordan, it is difficult to conduct a comprehensive and valuable study of a country's development without considering its cultural context and historical, ideological, and ethnic factors. Moreover, the religious influence on a country's culture makes the two concepts impossible to be separated. Lebanon is one of the most interesting examples in the Middle East of this special relationship between these two pillars. Indeed, the country's culture is strongly affected by the historical confessional assortment characterizing Lebanon.

Since the Ottoman dominion of the area, the Lebanese society was profoundly divided by persistent ethnic-religious/sectarian cleavages. Moreover, under the *Mutasarrifiyya* government in 1861, the sectarian fractures of the country started to affect not only social and everyday life but also the Lebanese political system[119]. Indeed, the Ottoman rulers imposed a Lebanese administration based on proportional confessional representation, distributing political power on sectarian criteria. After the independence, this power-sharing mechanism was incorporated by the constitutional system, equally distributing the major responsibilities and political positions among six communities: Sunnites, Shiites, Maronites, Greek Orthodoxies, Greek Catholics, and Druzes. However, until the signing of the Ta'if Agreement in 1989, there has always been constitutional supremacy of the Maronites.

In Chapter 2, it was reported that, following the abolition of the ancient power-sharing mechanism, the Lebanese administration established a new "equal" arrangement known as "the rule of three presidents." Such a system elevated to the same rank the Maronite President of the Republic, the Sunnite Prime Minister, and the Shia Speaker of the House[120]. The confessional structure coexists in tension with a parliamentary system, complete with parties and elections, by officially recognizing the political powers of communal representatives through the distribution of public offices, parliamentary seats, and ministerial portfolios proportionally among the country's major sects. Thus, while Lebanon appears to have found a compromise solution at the political level, the society still suffers from significant disparities that originated during the unequal and privileged nation-building process.

[119] Weiss, M. 2009. "The historiography of sectarianism in Lebanon". *History Compass*.
[120] Reyhan, C. 2011. "The Ottoman Origins of Political Culture in Lebanon". *TODAİEs Review of Public Administration.*

Nevertheless, deep social divisions pose a severe challenge to democracy, making it harder to create and sustain democratic governments in fragmented countries than homogeneous ones. Thus, in the case of Lebanon, the ambiguity before democratization emerges from its "confessional structure," which reproduces deep social discord at an ethnic-religious/sectarian level and is nourished by historical roots. The issue stems from the fact that the concept of "representation" in Lebanon is founded on a tribal principle. Such a tenet recognizes pre-nation ethnic, religious/sectarian commitments of belonging and the share of political power based on these commitments, rather than on the principles of secular citizenship at the national level. According to Lijphart, the versatility required for majoritarian democracy is likely to be lacking in plural societies deeply divided along religious, ideological, linguistic, cultural, or racial lines, especially if separated into sub-societies with their political parties, interest groups, and media of communication[121]. Majority rule is undemocratic and often dangerous in this kind of plural society since minorities consistently denied access to power would feel marginalized and discriminated against, consequently losing their loyalty to the regime.

Furthermore, the abovementioned sub-societies of a divided society become "narcissistic" within themselves and "intolerant" outside themselves, leading to a sort of "closure" and "outsiders' exclusion" at the national level, often resulting in social tensions. The psychological and cultural aspects characterizing the divided Lebanese population created a society based more on the principle of "community" rather than on that of "nation." Such a distinction is still visible in every aspect of society, including the abovementioned political sphere. Here indeed, the few existing parties identify themselves through sectarian backgrounds and beliefs, remaining disentangled by a more significant national identity and sense of belonging to a secular and civic nation. They usually fail to mobilize the entire population for a larger national purpose, fostering sectarian and ethnic interests instead (Weiss 2009). However, as previously mentioned, the Lebanese factions have been able to find a subtle balance in this fight of interests, at least at the administrative level, while continuing to register inequalities and marginalization at the societal one.

At this societal level, a considerable role was played by civil society throughout history. Above all, it grew significantly during the early 1960s, with the establishment of voluntary-run organisations that attempted to avoid sectarianism while pursuing broad development goals. Civil society returned to its original focus during the civil war period, providing relief and

[121] *Ibidem*

essential services to all the people in need. With the signing of the Ta'if Agreement, this segment of the population expanded significantly, broadening its scope of action to include human rights and advocacy. Following the Syrian Army's withdrawal from Lebanon in 2005, the state adopted a more liberal approach to the civil society sector, reverting to a "soft power" and less repressive approach. In comparison to other countries in the region, Lebanon's legal framework looks freer, allowing civil society organizations to flourish. For example, article 13 of the Lebanese Constitution[122], essential to civil society organizations, is one of the few clauses dealing with public freedoms. Despite this seemingly liberal legal environment, the legislation gives government officials much discretionary power, which they employ to prevent "illegal" councils.

Nowadays, in Lebanon, civil society actors such as NGOs, activists, journalists, and individuals utilize social media to disseminate information, protest or raise awareness about issues, express political ideas, and organize collective actions. However, state security agents are increasingly using repression to muzzle activists, contributing to narrow the space for freedom of expression in Lebanon[123]. While the Lebanese Constitution guarantees freedom of speech and press "*within limits established by law*," the penal code is frequently used to silence critics by incriminating individuals for simple jokes, sarcastic comments, or any criticisms directed at government officials or religious figures. Thus, such a normative framework significantly facilitates the State's control over civil society organizations, especially those complying with the country's law. The Ministry of Interior must officially register every organization. However, whenever the theme is deemed "controversial" or "dangerous," the time needed to complete this legal practice considerably stretches. Thus, while official registration provides these organizations with legal privileges such as opening a bank account, many collectives prefer to function without it.

Because of Lebanon's relatively liberal environment and lack of a welfare State, elites (political, social, and economic) have long been able to build and maintain informal dependency networks that help to maintain the country's socio-political status quo. As a result, civil society must refocus its advocacy efforts on manipulating dependence dynamics to obtain sporadic advocacy objectives. In this light, civil society actors appear to play a role in the regime's

[122] Article 13 of the Constitution: "The freedom to express one's opinion orally or in writing, the freedom of the press, the freedom of assembly, and the freedom of association are guaranteed within the limits established by law".
[123] AbiYaghi, M. N., Yammine, L., and Jagarnathsingh, A. 2019. "*Civil Society in Lebanon: the Implementation Trap*". Civil Society Knowledge Centre.

survival rather than in its transformation. However, without a balanced exchange of benefits between these organizations and the Lebanese elites, it appears challenging to imagine their capacity to play at least a small role in citizens' needs and rights. In the face of an increasingly constrained functional space, horizontal solidarity networks among civil society actors may appear to be a viable option. Small associative networks and "civil movements," centred primarily on advocacy and characterized by a relatively homogeneous base, arose in the post-war period. While these helped the increase of public space, their political significance was limited, being unable to develop autonomous linkages with the state while instead relying on confessional and sectarian networks[124].

It is not an exaggeration to say that the development of civil society organizations in Lebanon is a sign of fragmentation rather than a sign of a vibrant civil society. Indeed, in a climate of restricted cooperation and rising competition, this fragmentation is having a direct influence on these organizations' long-term development and policy influence. This, together with the lack of a welfare state and the resulting provision of fundamental social rights and services, led to the development of a charity mentality that fostered sectarian and communal instincts rather than a civil and civic spirit[125]. Thus, civil society played a role in Lebanese discrepancies and challenges at the societal level. However, in Lebanon, charitable organizations are the most common social actors initiating welfare movements.

Charitable activities are decisive in addressing Lebanon's citizens' fundamental and essential needs, focusing on the central issue of poverty alleviation, often tragically connected to that of social exclusion. Indeed, poverty in Lebanon is almost all income-related, meaning fulfilling acceptable living standards for everyone and the freedom of access to essential social services. Therefore, the poor are always active members of specific sectarian groups, transforming "poverty" into a political matter[126]. Indeed, in Lebanon, a person's degree and level of engagement in society are guaranteed and limited by their group identity. The politicization of social services is a significant source of concern in the country. It may be difficult to reconcile the various ideas of social welfare articulated by Lebanon's various sectarian/ethnic groups, as most of them are customized to advance each community's political aspirations.

---

[124] Kingston, P. W. 2013. "*Reproducing sectarianism: Advocacy networks and the politics of civil society in postwar Lebanon"*. Suny Press. Pag 55- 84.
[125] AbiYaghi, M. N. 2014. "*Social Protection in Lebanon between charity and politics*". Arab Watch 2014, Arab NGO Network for Development.
[126] Jawad, R. 2002. "A profile of social welfare in Lebanon: Assessing the implications for social development policy". *Global Social Policy*, *2*(3). Pag 319-342.

The government denial of funding poverty alleviation strategies for specific ethnic groups, especially Muslims, contributed to the active participation of charitable organizations, most of the time of Islamic background, in the country's social welfare system. For example, the two most crucial welfare-providing organization in Lebanon are Hezbollah and the Rafic Hariri Foundation, both of Islamic background. On the one hand, local actors involved in Lebanon's welfare system include primarily wealthy persons who establish philanthropic foundations to support the growth of their religious communities. On the other hand, there are ideologically motivated movements that, after the end of the civil war, have begun to develop a more strategic vision for their position in society, resulting in social welfare involvement. As a result, religious welfare remains a viable and contentious underpinning for social justice in the country. It undermines state credibility while also serving as the foundation for good social development in various places[127].

Nevertheless, the complex political culture of Lebanon has also interfered in the field of charitable organizations, limiting their proliferation and constraining their scope. For example, the Hariri Foundation's early attempt to introduce the experience of the private realm, based on philanthropic contributions, into the public realm proved unsuccessful due to political intervention. The main reason was that religious morality influenced the foundation's social welfare activities, and there is a critical lack of a sense of the common good among the Lebanese administrative elite.

To conclude, the Lebanese culture continuously intertwines with the State's socioeconomic and political aspects, affecting, directly or indirectly, the development of a flourished and efficient welfare state. In doing so, it enlarges the existing disparities characterizing the Lebanese population, refusing to implement multilateral and "national" poverty alleviation strategies and denying access to essential services to some marginalized groups of the society. Moreover, alongside a strict governmental oversight, the normative and legal framework slightly constrains the development of social welfare activities by independent organizations, transforming the common good of the Lebanese population into another issue of political debate.

4.1.2 ROLE OF WOMEN

As in the case of Jordan, the women's role is considered a multifaceted and thorny issue also in Lebanon. Indeed, the question of "gender" in the country has a long history of evolutions and

[127] *Ibidem*

changes. Lebanon was one of the first Arab countries to grant women equal rights to engage fully in politics in 1953. Despite this step forward, women were nevertheless barred from voting in Parliament until 1991. In 1996, Lebanon ratified the CEDAW, despite making some reservations on articles related to women's nationality rights and personal status laws. In doing so, the Lebanese state effectively denied women the same rights as men in family, marriage, and divorce problems. The Lebanese legal system is regarded as progressive compared to other Arab countries, especially if considering that there are no legal prohibitions on women engaging in income-generating enterprises. However, despite these benefits and rights, Lebanese women continue to endure discrimination on various levels, making gender equality in Lebanon an elusive goal.

The State's weakness is felt in civil affairs and personal status, particularly in connection to women's civic rights, family concerns, and gender relations. As part of the Lebanese confessional system, such matters have been explicitly delegated to religious authorities, especially those concerning the issue of "personal status"[128]. However, through this mechanism, the Constitution detaches itself from its position as a protector of equal rights by placing family problems under the jurisdiction of religious tribunals[129]. Thus, overarching restrictions such as the confessional system of administration, which has been seized by elites, as well as national and regional conflict dynamics, have created severe structural disparities and deficits. Laws and regulations, sectarianism and a rise in social conservatism, administrative structures, public reforms, ongoing conflict, and security problems are all structural constraints that foster discrimination and women's vulnerability. As a matter of fact, Lebanon places itself 132nd out of 156 countries for its *Global Gender Gap Index*, lagging well behind many other middle-income and less-developed countries (World Economic Forum, WEF, 2021).

Despite the perception of progressive reforms and achievements during the last decade, Lebanon experienced a deterioration of its Gender Gap Index's results, losing 16 positions since 2010. Moreover, also the other indicators reported in the WEF 2021 depict the image of a country well behind the global average for women's empowerment and participation. Indeed, the *Economic Participation and Opportunity* subindex places Lebanon at the 139th position, while the country's figures for *Educational Attainment* and *Political Empowerment* are quite

[128] Article 9 of the Constitution: "There shall be absolute freedom of conscience. The state, in rendering homage to the God Almighty shall respect all religions and creeds, and guarantee, under its protection the free exercise of all religious rites provided that the public order is not disturbed. It shall also guarantee that the personal status and religious interests of the population, to whatever religious sect they belong, shall be respected."

[129] Avis, W. 2017." *Gender equality and women's empowerment in Lebanon*". Governance and Social Development Resource Centre.

more positive, placing Lebanon respectively 113th and 112th out of 156 countries. However, the last two years registered a sharp increase in the share of women ministers, with the percentage in Lebanon passing from 3,4% in 2019 to 31,6% in 2021. Nonetheless, these numbers remain quite low, highlighting the need for reforms and public policies to favour women's empowerment and political participation in the country's decision-making.

The patriarchal nature of Lebanese society, which is regulated by customary rather than codified laws, is the main driver for the lack of women in decision-making positions. Indeed, the conventional principles governing the political system impose this, regarding politics as a male monopoly and branding women's opinions on political affairs as irrelevant. Moreover, the current sectarian and tribal system of power-sharing draws on the representational base of numerous sects and religious communities, which is often dominated by male members of leading families, thus undermining women's participation. Such a Lebanese administrative drawback appears in sharp contrast to the principles discussed during the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Indeed, the declaration resulting from the discussion affirms that achieving the goal of equal involvement of women and men in decision-making will create a balance that more correctly reflects society's makeup, which is necessary to improve democracy and encourage its proper functioning[130].

Most of the time, gender discrimination and violence result from a cultural and social entitlement for men to exert their authority over women, expecting that women will accept this sense of inferiority. Cultural oppression patterns are not only interconnected but also bonded together and influenced by society's intersectional systems. Race, class, gender, and ethnicity are all examples of this. Lebanon remains clearly stuck to these patterns of discrimination, despite the Constitutional principles of equality among all citizens (Article 7)[131] and the right for all Lebanese people to occupy public office, with no preferences other than merit and competence (Article 12). However, women continue to face discrimination in the job market, as indicated by the fact that their incomes are still much lower than those of men with comparable qualifications. In a study conducted by A. Dah, Ben Sita and M. Dah in 2009, after controlling for criteria such as education, experience, and job category, men earn 16% more

[130] UN Women. 1995. "*Bejing Declaration and Platform for Action*". Fourth World Conference on Women.
[131] Article 7 of the Constitution: "All Lebanese shall be equal before the law. They shall equally enjoy civil and political rights and shall equally be bound by public obligations and duties without any distinction."

than women in the Lebanese labour market. Moreover, the scholars addressed another issue at that time, proving that men are more likely to be promoted than Lebanese women[132].

The National Commission for Lebanese Women (NCLW) is the primary official body in Lebanon representing women's interests. In addition, the Lebanese government has mandated the appointment of Gender Focal Points (GFP) in all ministries and public institutions. The NCLW and the GFPs are Lebanon's official structures for addressing gender issues, and they reflect the Lebanese government's efforts to institutionalize gender equality (Avis, 2017). However, the lack of an overarching commitment to women's empowerment across sectors and a consistent lack of adequate legislation to prioritize gender equality limit GFPs' potential. Besides, the NCLW's capabilities are further constrained by its consultative orientation, as it cannot directly propose legislation or reforms. Thus, gender relations in Lebanon continue to be characterised by disparities in areas other than personal status laws, despite recent progress in favour of women's rights in spheres such as the Labour Code and the Social Security Code. For example, Lebanon repealed Article 562 of the Criminal Code, which stipulated that the crimes committed for the sake of "honour" would be punished less harshly.

Until 1998, the Women's Affairs Department of the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs (MoSA) was the sole official branch dedicated to women[133]. Nowadays, the MoSA oversees local Social Development Centres (SDCs), which provide essential social services and community support to needy Lebanese families, such as primary health care and immunizations. Moreover, in June 2020, MoSA, UNICEF, and EU agreed on the launch of the 2020-2027 Strategic Plan for the Protection of Women and Children, aimed at strengthening the Ministry's role in the areas of child protection and contrast to gender-based violence. The Plan also aims to ensure efficient coordination between the public and private sectors, the delivery of inclusive and high-quality services to target groups, thereby strengthening the national system for preventing and responding to child protection violations and gender-based violence.

Finally, another body extremely active in Lebanon is the Office of the Minister of State for Women's Affairs (OMSWA)[134]. Established in 2016, the Office oversees coordinating actions among governmental and non-governmental institutions, as well as international and national

[132] Hejase, A., and Dah, A. 2014. "An assessment of the impact of sticky floors and glass ceilings in Lebanon". *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 109*. Pag 954-964.
[133] Ferreras Carreras, E. 2017. "*Gender Analysis in Lebanon*". European Union's FWC LOT 9 Beneficiaries 2013 Situation Analysis Report.
[134] *Ibidem*

organizations, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders, to ensure that the Lebanese National Gender Strategy 2018-2022 was implemented efficiently. Moreover, OMSWA is responsible for achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) n°5 on gender equality. Currently, the ministry is putting together various action plans based on a national gender strategy, mainly focusing on gender-based violence (GBV), women's access to public health, and gender equity at work.

To conclude, as for Jordan, it must be highlighted that Lebanese government efforts have increased during the last few years in terms of women's economic and social empowerment. Indeed, as previously mentioned, large gender disparities in labour opportunities result in significant economic losses for the entire nation. The studies conducted by Amartya Sen on the issue are easily applicable also in Lebanon, showing that increased female participation in decision-making, workforce, and socio-economic opportunities could boost Lebanese development (Sen, 2001).

4.2 THE SOCIOECONOMIC CONTEXT

Historically speaking, the Lebanese economy experienced exponential growth right after the Great Depression of 1929 (high growth rates, influxes of foreign capital, and GDP growth per capita). However, the economic development was uneven, failing to reduce social and economic disparities in various communities and leading to the outbreak of the civil war. The conflict had a significant impact on State's economy, hit both directly (i.e., lack of financial support from the central State, etc.) and indirectly (i.e., decrease in the Lebanese workforce due to battle-related deaths and increased emigration).

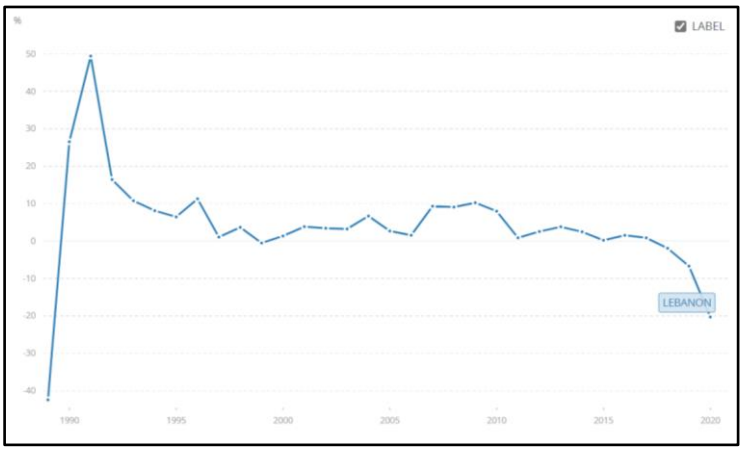
It is interesting to note that there are some similarities between the economic crisis and the civil war. One of the main weaknesses of the Lebanese economy was the fragmentation characterizing the country at that period. As we know, the civil war was caused by several factors, but the most important one was the social fragmentation of Lebanese citizens. This society's dichotomy has always been a point of friction inside Lebanon, with the tension that reached its peak right after the Palestinian militant relocation into the South of the country. This fragmentation in Lebanese society resulted in the establishment of several economies in the late 1980s. The areas controlled by the Christian Maronites militias appeared ready to become independent ministates, exerting the essential governmental functions of taxation and defence.

Despite this unofficial fragmentation, the central government tried to maintain a specific control over the national economy, but the effects were minimal. The Central Bank of Lebanon suffered

a lot during the 1980s due to a sharp decline in financial reserves. At the same time, the central budget experienced huge deficits due to the government's attempt to maintain some social services and finance its security forces. Unfortunately, data are some of the most challenging things to get in Lebanon. The reason is that most of the activities and institutional work in the country are still manual or recently automated and getting information back to 1975 is even much more difficult. It is almost impossible to find reliable data regarding the period of the Lebanese civil war. However, the general downward trend of the country's economy appears clear. In May 1986, the Lebanese National Social Security Fund (NSSF)[135] reported an unemployment level of 40% in the private sector and a loss of 60% of potential capacity in the industry.

Moreover, the per capita income was five times lower than eleven years earlier, with a level around US$250 a year, and the real GDP was less than half of the one in 1974. The Lebanese currency followed a different path compared to the GDP. While the latter started its collapse with the civil war's outbreak, the exchange's fall began much later, and by 1986 the nation was on the brink of hyperinflation[136]. Thus, it is easily assertable the impact of the confrontation on Lebanon. Nevertheless, it is interesting to notice that some of the effects that emerged during the war period also affected the following years. By the end of the conflict, the government regained central control over several elements (taxes, facilities, industries, ports, etc.), giving a boost to the economy, which during the 90s reached an annual growth of more than 350% (**Figure 23**).

Figure 23: Lebanon GDP growth (annual %) (time series 1989-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

[135] Lebanese National Social Security Fund: "The NSSF covers employees with insurance for illness and maternity care. Family allowances, end-of-service pensions, and work-related accidents and sickness are also covered".
[136] Collelo, T., and Smith, H., H. 1989. "*Lebanon: A Country Study*". Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division.

Despite this, the internal fractures and divisions of the country were not wholly overcome. The internal disparities increased, leading to an even more significant gap between rich and poor people. By influencing the "de-development" of rural areas and other already poor areas, the outbreak of the civil war has played a significant role in enlarging inequalities between Lebanese citizens. Thus, the socio-economic development of the country really affected only a share of the total population.

Although these disparities were present and potentially dangerous, during the 1990s, the country enjoyed a period of internal stability that allowed constant growth and tourism (a sector that in 2016 contributed to 19% of total GDP[137]). This period of development and substantial peace lasted until 2006, when the outbreak of the Israel-Hezbollah War forced Lebanon to stop its growth. Indeed, the armed confrontation was devastating for Lebanon, generating many casualties, mainly Shiite Muslims, and the destruction of numerous infrastructures. Hundreds of industries were seriously damaged, and thousands of Lebanese people were forced to displacement. However, the prompt answer of the international community, especially the United Nations with the implementation of the UNIFIL Mission (better analysed in paragraph 4.4), helped limit the damages on the national economy. Indeed, the humanitarian assistance received by the country during that period almost made up for the enormous losses resulting from the conflict, and the development indicators remained almost steady. Thus, in 2006 there was not growth in national GDP, but not even a sharp decrease as occurred with the previous, longer, confrontation.

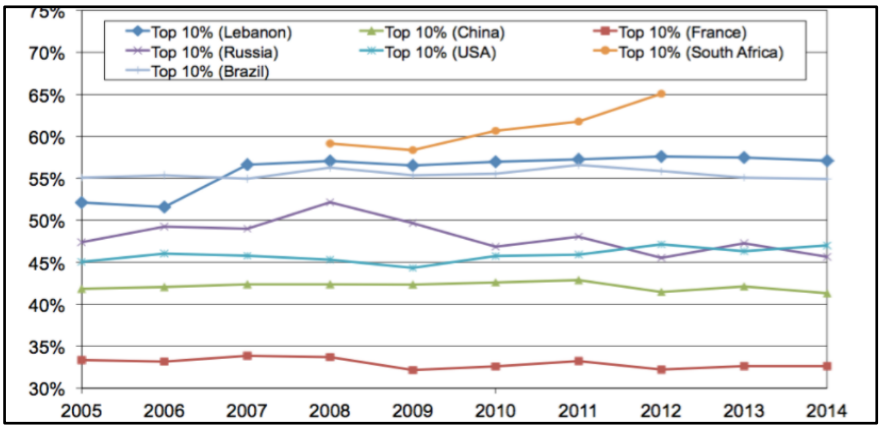
Having analysed the impact of armed conflicts on Lebanese development and enlarging disparities, it is now possible to discuss the magnitude of these inequalities in detail. As previously mentioned, the best instrument to highlight the existing economic disparities among a population is the Gini Index. Considering the difficulties of finding accurate and acceptable statistical figures for Lebanon, it is not a surprise that only a few data were reported for the Lebanese Gini Index. Indeed, the only detailed figures available of this variable, report only two acceptable approximations, from 2011 (31.8%) and 2020 (36.5%).

However, there is another way to have empirical evidence of the income inequalities present in the country. Such a statistical device, known as the 90/10 ratio, which measures the gap between rich and poor as the ratio between incomes at two points in the entire distribution, is chosen to

[137] Soueid, M., Hariri, Z., Nehme, R., and Abdel Fattah, N. 2017. "*Analysis of Lebanon's Travel and Tourism Sector*." Bankmed Report.

represent "high" and "low" incomes. It depicts the ratio of the 90th income percentile (a level of income that only 10% of the population exceeds) to the 10th percentile (the level which only 10 percent have less than). If this ratio rises, the wealth gap between rich and poor will widen. As reported in the chart below (**Figure 24**), in Lebanon, income appears to be significantly concentrated. The top one percent and top ten percent of the adult population obtain roughly 25 and 55 percent of national income, respectively. This places Lebanon among the world's countries with the most significant wealth disparity[138].

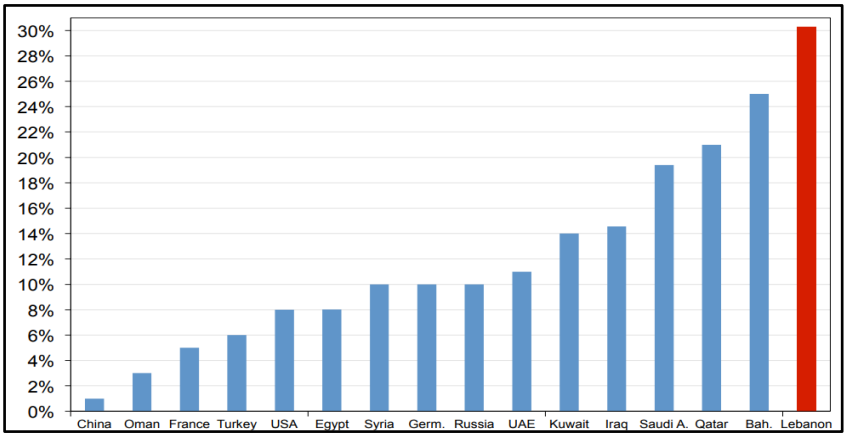
Figure 24: Top 10% income share – Selected countries vs Lebanon, 2005-2014



Source: World Inequality Database

In addition, over the period 1990-2016, billionaires' wealth accounted for 30% of total national income on average, considerably beyond what we see in other countries using the same data (**Figure 25**). This significant volume of billionaires' wealth as a function of national revenue shows that wealth in Lebanon is more concentrated than in other countries[139].

Figure 25: Lebanese billionaires' wealth as share of national income

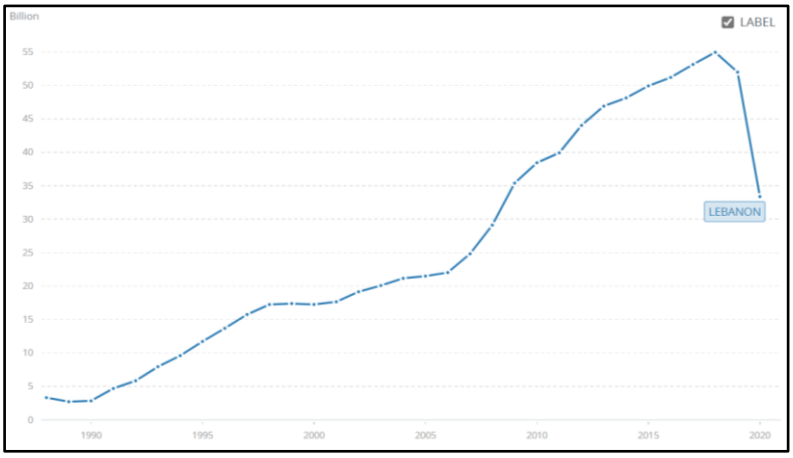


Source: World Inequality Database

[138] Assouad, L. 2021. "*Rethinking the Lebanese economic miracle: The extreme concentration of income and wealth in Lebanon*". World Inequality Lab.
[139] *Ibidem*

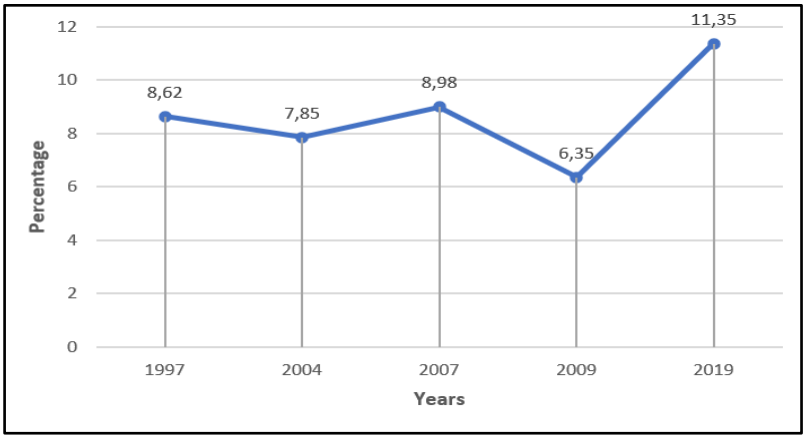
In 2020, most MENA economies contracted at their fastest rate in decades. The restrictions and drawbacks of the fight against the COVID-19 had a significant impact also on the Lebanese economy. The pandemic's economic blow is notably visible in the sharp fall of GDP level in 2020 (**Figure 26**), primarily due to the negative effect on the transportation and tourist industries, both of which account for a significant portion of Lebanese GDP[140]. Furthermore, the country has been caught in an economic crisis since 2018, marked by the untethering of the lira from the dollar in the parallel currency market and restrictive banking policies, the most harmful of which are restrictions on sending money abroad and issuing credit facilities. Many business owners and managers have lowered employee salaries and working hours as the crisis has unfolded over the last three years, with some even sacking employees to save money. Thus, the unemployment rates had been on the rise since 2018 (**Figure 27**), but the difficulty to find reliable data in Lebanon make it impossible to analyse the pandemic's effects on this variable.

Figure 26: Lebanon GDP (Current US$) (time series 1988-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

Figure 27: Lebanon Unemployment, total (% of total labour force) (time series 1997-2019)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

[140] The World Bank Group. 2021. "*Global Economic Prospects. June 2021*". World Bank Group Flagship Report.

Having considered the main effects of the civil war and the pandemic on the Lebanese socioeconomic framework, it is now important to analyse the same three variables reported for Jordan: the gender gap, the enlarging disparities among different governorates and their declining school enrolment rates. Considering the first factor, if everything was equal between men and women on the labour demand and supply sides, and there were no institutional variations in how women and men were treated in the family, economy, and society, one would expect women and men to be equally dispersed across sectors. However, as for Jordan, this is not the case for Lebanon, where, in terms of occupation, women are still overrepresented in low-paying jobs and underrepresented in managerial positions (Tzannatos 2016). According to the data, the only sector in which women appear to be overrepresented is that of services, despite being usually concentrated in job positions not related to decision-making. Thus, the women's average salary lags well behind that of men (**Table 7**).

Table 7: Lebanon Employment and Wages (2012)

	Women		Men	
	Employment	Wages	Employment	Wages
Agriculture	14	370	45	1,012
Industry	25	711	131	1,130
Trade	66	704	222	1,085
Transport, post and telecommunications	4	652	75	983
Services	263	833	336	1,152
Others*	30	1432	115	1,139
Total	**402**	**831**	**924**	**1,112**
Relative (female to male)	Employment 43.5%		Wages 74.7%	

Source: Central Administration of Statistics based on the Household and Budget Survey 2011- 12

Considering the second factor, the inequalities among different governorates, it is crucial for the outcome of this analysis to highlight which are the less developed ones. According to the analysis conducted by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation in 2017[141], 85% of the population is concentrated in cities (half in the capital alone). Thus, it is in the city that most of the Lebanese GDP is produced. Indeed, in 2017 the agricultural sector contributed marginally to the formation of GDP, only about 6%, explaining why most of the governorates relying consistently on rural resources are those experiencing, on average, the lowest household income levels (**Table 8**). Moreover, there is another common ground characterizing all the regions affected by a high share of citizens living with less than 650.000

[141] Ambasciata d'Italia in Libano. 2021. "*Libano*". Info Mercati Esteri, Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale.

LBP (almost €360) per month. All these governorates (Akkar, Bekaa, Baalbek-Hermel, South Lebanon and Nabatieh) share their borders with the two Lebanese neighbouring countries, Syria and Israel, thus being the first reception centres of refugees' flows. In the last few years, those sharing their borders with Syria appear to suffer the most.

Table 8: Lebanese Household income range in thousand LBP (2018-2019)

Governorate	Less than 650	650-1200	1200-2400	2400-5000	5000+
Beirut	13,4	22,6	30,3	22,8	10,8
Mount Lebanon	13,9	21,0	31,0	25,5	7,9
North Lebanon	18,4	25,1	31,1	20,2	4,9
Akkar	26,8	24,2	28,4	17,6	3,0
Bekaa	26,1	25,9	30,2	15,1	2,3
Baalbek-Hermel	30,8	27,5	26,0	14,2	1,4
South Lebanon	18,6	31,2	28,1	16,9	4,6
Nabatieh	23,8	31,5	27,0	15,6	1,9
Country	21,5	26,1	29,0	18,5	4,6

Source: Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics

Finally, in order to evaluate the last variable, the educational level of Lebanese citizens within the different governorates, it is useful to analyse the Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of the population. The NER is defined as the: "*total number of students in the theoretical age group for a given level of education enrolled in that level, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age group. A high NER denotes a high degree of coverage for the official school-age population. The theoretical maximum value is 100%.*"[142] Looking at the chart (**Table 9**), it appears clear that those governorates characterized by the lowest levels of welfare and income, such as Akkar, are also those with the lowest rates of citizens enrolled in secondary education. It is not a surprise that Beirut experiences the lowest levels in the entire country. Indeed, the enormous share of the population living in the capital, despite having on average quite high-income levels, is also experiencing the highest level of inequalities. While many people could easily enrol their children in school and live with a high standard of welfare, thus increasing the average income of the whole governorate, many others are unable to follow such a path.

[142] Lebanese Republic Central Administration of Statistics. 2020. "*Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019 in Beirut*". Central Administration of Statistics.

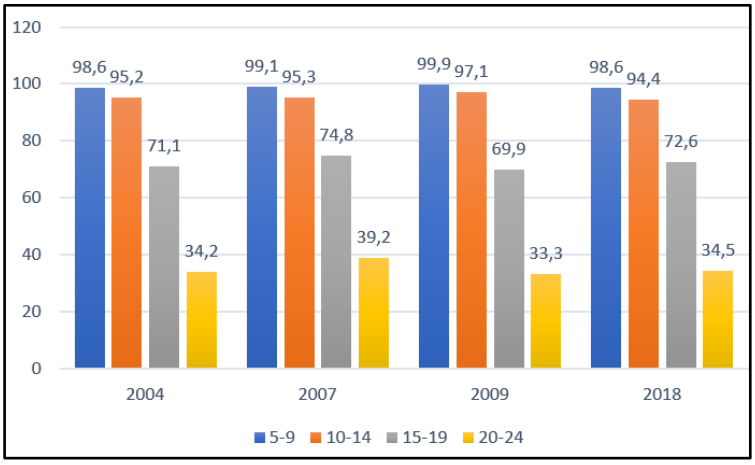
Table 9: Lebanese Net enrolment rate by level of education (in %) (2018-2019)

Governorate	Elementary level	Intermediate level	Secondary level
Beirut	83,9	59,0	51,7
Mount Lebanon	86,8	68,9	59,6
North Lebanon	90,1	70,3	58,8
Akkar	91,5	74,1	46,1
Bekaa	88,2	68,1	58,5
Baalbek-Hermel	91,4	73,7	51,5
South Lebanon	87,1	70,1	57,4
Nabatieh	87,3	69,4	58,6
Country	88,3	69,2	55,3

Source: Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics

Finally, according to a restricted number of data, the last few decades saw a fluctuating trend in school enrolment (**Figure 28**), remaining relatively stable and limited compared to that of Jordan. However, the data reported by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics during the civil war indicated a considerable number of overage children enrolled in each grade because of repetition or late entry[143]. Thus, the educational rebound after the armed confrontation could explain the discrepancies between the two countries and their massive difference in terms of growth during the last two decades.

Figure 28: Lebanon Rate of school enrolment by age (2004-2007-2009-2018)



Source: Lebanese Central Administration of Statistics

Thus, Lebanon has recovered well from the several crises that occurred during the last few decades. Indeed, it registered steady growth rates that were among the highest of the whole region. However, some elements still need time to ensure an acceptable level of socio-economic

[143] UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2020. "*Lebanese School enrolment, primary (% gross)*". Reported in the World Bank Development Indicators Data Bank.
Available at: www.data.worldbank.org

development. For instance, as long as such details, which range from social discrimination of women and refugees to the constant political instability, continue to persist within the country, Lebanon will remain stuck at modest modernization rates and will continue to register high levels of economic inequalities. The state will need far more time to overcome such drawbacks, generated mainly by armed conflicts, to return to pre-civil war growth levels. However, the likely post-pandemic rebound could represent an incredible opportunity to exploit the economic and social potentialities of the country, becoming more realistic the idea of a modern and equal Lebanon for all its citizens.

4.3 THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATION

In terms of migration flows, the case of Lebanon appears a little bit more complicated than that of Jordan. Indeed, while the latter has experienced mostly inflows of people, Lebanese history has been characterized by alternating waves of immigration and emigration since the Ottoman Empire rule. Thus, the country's development has been severely affected by these continuous changes, both in terms of social and labour force composition.

Lebanon has had waves of emigration throughout its contemporary history[144]. The country has been sending its citizens overseas to seek better fortunes for more than a century and a half. This is primarily due to a combination of unequal economic growth and undemocratic communal politics. During the last decades of the 19th century, due to commercial capitalist advances in Europe and religious ties, many Christians immigrated to Egypt and the primary centres of trade in Europe. A new wave of emigration occurred as the local economy was integrated into the European capitalist market. At the same time, Lebanon began to reap the benefits of the first wave's favourable impacts. Indeed, those who had left Lebanon to seek wealth elsewhere endowed the country with a source of social and economic capital. Moreover, after some years providing remittances that boosted the local economy, a third of the migrants returned to Lebanon. These return migrants made a significant contribution to the emergence of a middle class, which was crucial to the growth of the tertiary sector (tourism, trading, and construction) as well as the foundation of the modern Lebanese state.[145]

Between 1945 and 1975, the third wave of emigration from Lebanon occurred. The number of emigrants averaged 3.000 each year between 1945 and 1960. Between 1960 and 1970, 8.000

[144] Tabar, P. 2010. "*Lebanon: A country of Emigration and Immigration*". Institute for Migration Studies, 7. Pag 6-26.
[145] Khater, A. F. 2001. "*Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870- 1920*". London: University of California Press.

people per year fled Lebanon, rising to 10.000 between 1970 and 1975. This emigration was fuelled by the demand for workers in the Gulf states, whose revenues surged dramatically due to the oil sector growth. At the same time, the Lebanese economy was severely impacted by the outbreak of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war and its consequences for the country's political stability. Indeed, the increased surge of Palestinian refugees and the PLO settlement in the country favoured mounting instability and discontent. Together with all the factors analysed in the previous chapters, all these elements favoured the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. During that period (1975-1989), the number of people fleeing from Lebanon reached almost 990.000, accounting for 40% of the entire population[146]. As a result of the events between 1975 and 1990, people were internally displaced, economic businesses were disrupted, and insecurity was increasing. The socioeconomic framework was entirely devastated by the considerable number of people from various Lebanese communities and economic backgrounds departure.

Thus, Lebanese people have emigrated for a variety of reasons (Tabar 2010). The first is marked by relative stability, whereas the second is marked by conflict and strife. Those who emigrated in relatively stable circumstances were motivated mainly by economic considerations. Unskilled, semi-skilled, and skilled laborers all departed Lebanon due to a lack of job prospects or an income that could not keep up with the country's escalating cost of living. Since the 1980s, one prominent trend in Lebanese migration has been an increase of skilled migration. This has coincided with a shift in demand for skilled labour from receiving nations, as well as the political instability that has plagued Lebanon since the 1980s. Some Lebanese relocated to underdeveloped nations, notably in Africa, because they saw opportunities to engage in commercial operations, such as the black market, resulting in large sums of money in the short period. However, several reports show that, contrary to what happened in the previous century, only a tiny percentage of individuals who emigrated eventually returned to Lebanon.

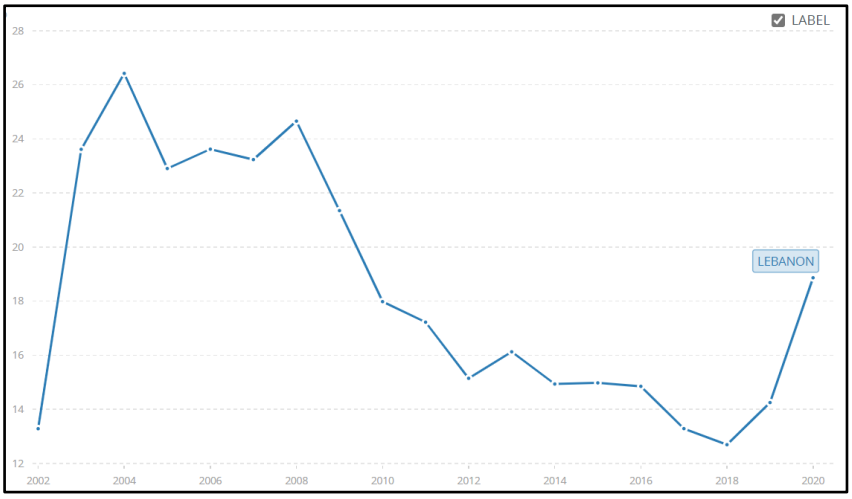
As a result, when the civil war broke out, the demographic of Lebanese migrants shifted dramatically. Traditionally, as previously stated, migrant outflows were primarily made up of Christians and, to a lesser extent, Druzes. Following the outbreak of the civil war, more Muslims (both Sunni and Shiite) left the Western part of the country, pushed out by the fact that towns were becoming battlegrounds. Moreover, South Lebanon, largely rural and populated by Shiites, was constantly attacked and occupied by the Israeli army, experiencing a massive wave of people migration. At the same time, the end of the civil war in 1990 drastically

[146] Tabar, P. 2009. "*Immigration and Human Development: Evidence from Lebanon*". Human Development Research Paper.

changed the image of Lebanon. Indeed, at that time, Lebanon experienced a significant brain drain and replacement migration, shifting from emigration to a significant influx of migrants and establishing itself as a "receiving" country[147]. Indeed, it absorbed large flows of both Arab and non-Arab migrants. Refugees and migrants from countries such as Iraq, Syria, Palestine and Ethiopia flocked to Lebanon in large numbers, threatening the job market's stability.

When the civil war ended and the violence eased, Lebanon offered various work opportunities, but many Lebanese in exile were hesitant to return, fearing for their safety. Moreover, most of these occupations required manual labour, which many Lebanese migrants, usually more educated and qualified, disliked. As a result, there was an influx of international migrant workers eager to risk their lives to come to Lebanon and work[148]. People living outside the country continued to provide the domestic market with a massive amount of remittances. In 1990, when Lebanon was re-emerging after the long civil confrontation, remittances accounted for an incredible 64.7% of the whole national GDP. When the economy began to recover, remittances' percentage of GDP started to fall, registering a value of 26.4% in 2004 (**Figure 29**). Looking at the chart, such a percentage, after more years of declining trend, due to internal stability and subsequent repatriation of many Lebanese emigrants, appears to be in sharp growth now. However, the amount of remittances has relatively declined during the last five years, but the fall of the Lebanese GDP due to the economic crisis has made their impact on this variable much more visible.

Figure 29: Lebanon Personal Remittances received (% of GDP) (time series 2002-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

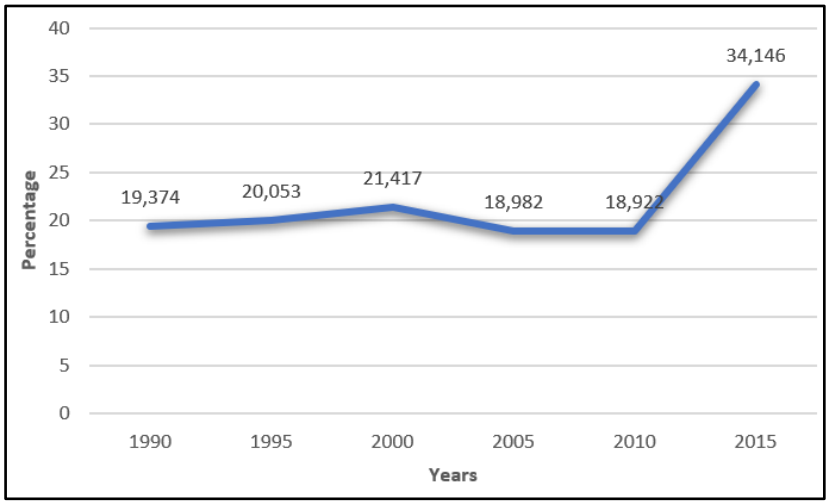
[147] Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2006. "*International Migration in the Arab Region*". ESCWA Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Publications.
[148] Sussman, A. L. 2009. "No magic wand for Lebanon's migrants". *The Guardian.*

As mentioned in the previous chapters, the lack of data is one of the most significant issues while analysing Lebanon. However, in the case of migration numbers, this lack is primarily political[149]. Indeed, the constitutional system in Lebanon allocates political functions based on sectarian affiliation. As a result, the numbers of Lebanese residents, expatriates, and foreign citizens qualifying for Lebanese citizenship have significant political ramifications: they would impact the country's sectarian makeup and, thus, sect-based power-sharing arrangements. The extent of the migration's potential is problematic since it could disturb the population's sectarian structure, tipping the power balance. Such an interpretation explains why the latest Lebanese census is dated back to 1932, the year in which the numerical dominance of Christians (including Maronites) over Muslims was established. Moreover, it explains the Christian resistance eruption when, on June 22, 1994, the Rafik al-Hariri's government awarded citizenship by decree to an estimated 150.000 stateless and foreign inhabitants (about 5% of the country's population at the time)[150]. These opposition groups regarded such a decision as a danger to the idea of cohabitation (*ta'ayush*) amongst the various Lebanese sects, as it sought to end the long-standing exclusion of diverse groups of people and of who had settled for numerous generations in the country.

Due to a lower impact on domestic politics, the number of migrants entering Lebanon is easier to be found. Indeed, despite not having more recent figures and considering the uncertainty about the exact amount of people who entered Lebanon, especially after the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, the chart below (**Figure 30**) shows why Lebanon could be considered a migrant-receiving country[151]. Nonetheless, labour migration into the country is highly regulated. To be eligible for residency, foreign workers must be sponsored by a Lebanese citizen. As for Jordan, the majority of these Arab and non-Arab people work in the informal sector, where they are not required to have a work permit. Moreover, a large share of them is employed in the agricultural and construction sectors, with many women working in domestic and cleaning services. The harsh working conditions and abuses suffered by many of these workers, particularly female domestic workers, have prompted awareness campaigns by various Lebanese NGOs, and it has had an impact on enlarging the disparities among the population.

[149] De Bel-Air, F. 2017. "*Migration Profile: Lebanon*". Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.
[150] Jaulin, T. 2014. "Citizenship, migration, and confessional democracy in Lebanon". *Middle East law and governance, 6*(3). Pag 250-271.
[151] The numbers reported in the chart indicates the amount of international migrants residing in Lebanon as percentage to the Lebanese population.

Figure 30: Lebanon International migrants' stock (% of population) (time series 1990-2015)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

Moreover, Lebanon is neither a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees nor its 1967 Protocol. In addition, it has not passed any domestic legislation dealing with the issue of refugees. The only instrument to assess refugee status is a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) negotiated between Lebanon and the UNHCR in 2003[152]. Indeed, the MOU allows for the issuance of temporary residency permits to asylum applicants for a period of three months, during which the UNHCR reviews the asylum claim. Thus, the rights of refugees are usually not institutionalized or covered by the Lebanese normative framework, becoming easier to exploit their services for self-interest purposes. As a result, economic competition with Lebanese workers is also a current issue. Because of industries and individual enterprises preferentially selecting low-cost Palestinian or Syrian workers, the unemployment growth among Lebanese workers has sparked discontent. In order to curb these negative trends, the Lebanese government finally announced in October 2014 that Syrian refugees would be admitted only due to extreme humanitarian causes. These, for example, included single mothers fleeing with their children, those in need of immediate medical attention, and children separated from their families. Indeed, a visa for displaced people may be provided only in extraordinary conditions determined by the Ministry of Social Affairs case by case. Those people not fitting into any of the pre-determined categories had to be sponsored by a Lebanese citizen, as previously stated.

Moreover, the Syrian crisis has had another indirect effect on Lebanese development, deteriorating the already fragile socioeconomic fabric. Lebanon, as previously mentioned, is a

[152] The UN Refugee Agency Regional Office in Lebanon. 2014. "*Country Operations Plan: Lebanon*". UNHCR Operations Plan.

key exporter of human resources, primarily to the Gulf states. Given the deterioration of the Gulf states' bilateral relations with Lebanon since the start of the Syrian conflict, it is easy to understand how there could be significant consequences for the estimated 400.000 Lebanese expatriates in the Gulf states[153]. Furthermore, one of the most critical aspects of the bilateral relationship between Lebanon and Gulf countries has been the contribution of Lebanese expatriates to these countries' prosperity, which has, in turn, boosted Lebanon's GDP. The new geopolitical environment in the Middle East, characterized by national and regional security issues and the increasing Hezbollah's role in the main matters of the area, has threatened the economic cooperation between Lebanon and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The worsening of Lebanon's bilateral relationship with the GCC has caused economic sanctions, the expulsion of Lebanese expatriates, and the closure of Lebanese enterprises. Moreover, it provoked more selective rules for Lebanese being barred from working in GCC states, as well as GCC investors and governments withdrawing investments from Lebanese institutions.

Thus, many families supported by the monthly allowances and remittances sent by expatriate members fell into a massive economic crisis. Despite the trend reported in the previous Figure 30, since 2013, the Lebanese government has registered a decline of personal remittances in absolute terms. Indeed, in 2013 the value was around $7.57 billion, while in 2020, the government reported a value of almost $6.3 billion, registering an absolute loss of more than 1 billion dollars[154]. Many people had to come back to Lebanon, where they had to face higher unemployment, significant issues of labour mismatch, and an imbalance between the skills acquired and the possibility to apply to well-paid jobs. These people had to face an adverse environment, adapting, when possible, to low-salary jobs and suffering for evident inequalities compared to those who had decided to remain in Lebanon while they were in the Gulf. The uneven distribution of social and economic opportunities generated growing discontent, where: Lebanese citizens blamed migrants for exploiting the job market; returning Lebanese migrants suffered from an imbalance of treatment compared to their compatriots; refugees and migrants lived and worked experiencing abuses and discrimination.

To conclude, Lebanon experienced unusual migration flows, alternating waves of consistent emigration to periods of significant immigration. However, the recent events in the

[153] Hourani, G. 2014. "Bilateral Relations, Security and Migration: Lebanese expatriates in the Gulf States". *European Scientific Journal*, 1st Mediterranean Interdisciplinary Forum on Social Sciences and Humanities. Pag 671-685.

[154] The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Lebanon, Personal remittances received (current US$)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators.
Available at: www.data.worldbank.org

neighbouring countries, especially Syria, and the subsequent developments in international and regional cooperation, especially with the GCC, have led to a massive deterioration of the country's socioeconomic environment. The rising of unemployment, the increased number of people forced to work in the informal sectors, and the mounting abuses suffered both by returning Lebanese people and by refugees has driven the country to the worst crisis in decades and directly affected the existing inequalities among the population.

4.4 INTERNATIONAL AID AND SUPPORT

Since the 1970s, Lebanon has received considerable international aid in both the development and humanitarian spheres[155]. Due to alternating periods of large-scale violence and more minor clashes, aid priorities have shifted between, or at times mixed, those spheres. The core stakeholders in international aid have mostly remained the same since the civil war (1975-1990). Western states (particularly the US and some European countries), Gulf countries such as Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Iran have all been major bilateral donors. Moreover, international organizations within the United Nations system, as well as various NGOs, have consistently been essential aid contributors in the humanitarian, refugee, and development domains.

4.4.1 ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

As for Jordan, also Lebanon benefited from massive support from its Arab neighbours, especially after the civil war and the beginning of the reconstruction period[156]. However, after the signing of the Ta'if Peace Accords in Saudi Arabia in 1989, the early promises of enormous sums of foreign aid from Arab sources did not materialize as the post-war governments had planned. In the post-Ta'if period, Syrian hegemony over Lebanese political issues prompted most Arab countries to refuse to provide funding as promised. As a result, in 1992, the Lebanese government opted to take a two-pronged recovery strategy: using foreign funding for immediate reconstruction projects and relying on domestic funding for deficit and exchange rate stabilization. The major contributors were the Arab Gulf countries, still benefitting from the increased revenues generated during the oil sector growth of the 1980s. However, also other countries in the region, such as Jordan, fully assisted Lebanon during its reconstruction.

The main issue for most of the Islamic donors was the increasing role played by Hezbollah in Lebanese politics and decision-making. Indeed, being Hezbollah a Shiite movement and

[155] Combaz, E. 2013. "*International aid to Lebanon*". GSDRC University of Birmingham Research Report.
[156] Dibeh, G. 2007. "*Foreign Aid and Economic Development in postwar Lebanon*". United Nations University Research Paper Nr. 2007/37.

paramilitary organization, many neighbouring countries, most of whom are Sunni, have some restrains in investing in the country. Nonetheless, the possibilities provided by a flourish and financially appealable Lebanon overcame these doubts, with many Islamic countries eager to donate for infrastructure and market systems reconstruction in Lebanon. Channelling all these financial and capital flows, in the post-1992 period, the Lebanese government conducted a significant infrastructure restoration program through its primary reconstruction institution, the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR). The focus on infrastructure development reflected the extensive damage and loss sustained by numerous infrastructures, particularly those delivering essential services, during the civil war. The lack of these services increased the divide between different segments of society and forced many individuals into poverty. Thus, it threatened both Lebanese stability and potential, making the country less likely to attract public and private investments able to enhance its growth[157].

The subsequent crises affecting Lebanon, the 2006 conflict and the outbreak of the Syrian crisis in 2011, represented another occasion for increased financial collaboration with its regional partners. However, despite more significant assistance came from Arab governments and Iran between the 1970s and the early 2000s, and contrary to the case of Jordan, the Lebanese situation was not characterized by alternating periods between funding from Islamic countries and aid from Western institutions/states. Indeed, every crisis benefitted from a joint effort from the international community, gathering funds from Western and Eastern partners and channelling them through strategy-oriented development and recovery programs. Thus, in order to better analyse the real effects and impact of aid on the Lebanese nation-building process and the establishment of its current socioeconomic fabric, it appears crucial to consider international support as a whole.

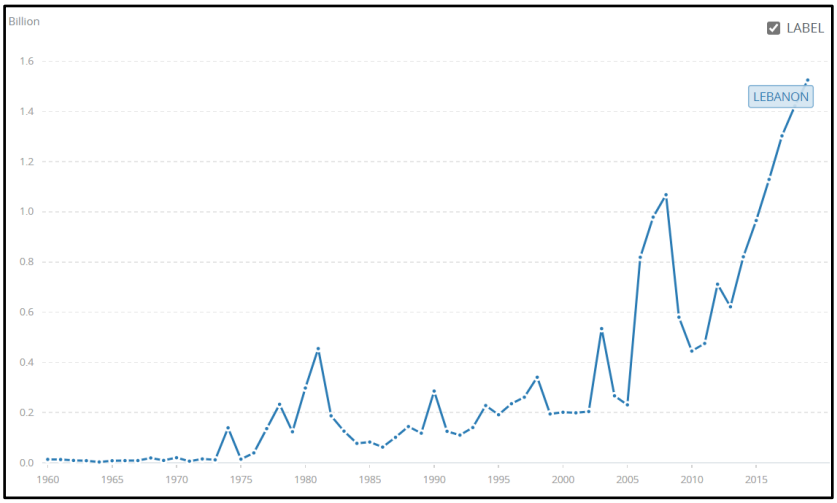
4.4.2 INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

In post-war Lebanon, foreign aid followed two different paths. In the first one (1992-1997), foreign assistance was primarily used to fund wartime rehabilitation projects. From 1997 to the present, there has been a qualitative shift in foreign aid from reconstruction requirements to financial stability and national account balance. Lebanon benefited from the necessary liquidity and confidence due to this radical turn, allowing it to continue pledging funds from local investment banks and foreign investors and leading to an era of constructive development (Dibeh 2007). However, between 1999 and 2003, the uncertain political situation in Lebanon,

[157] *Ibidem*

characterized by the deployment of Syrian forces on local territory, resulted in a shortfall in money received (**Figure 31**). Indeed, even from supposedly supportive Arab countries, international aid was not flowing due to mounting political pressure on the Lebanese government to send the army to the south.

Figure 31: Lebanon Net official development assistance received (current US$) (time series 1960-2019)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

During and after the 2006 conflict, there was a split between the main actors involved in emergency and reconstruction/development provisions[158]. At that time, local communities were mainly instrumental in the delivery of emergency help. Indeed, Jihad al-Bina (Hezbollah's recovery wing), the Lebanese Red Cross, and other NGOs all made significant contributions. At the same time, during the reconstruction process, external actors grew more significant. UN agencies and international NGOs, as well as major Western donors such as the UK, the EU, and the US, were among the main protagonists. While aid was dominated by non-Western actors, with Saudi Arabia, Iran, Kuwait, and Qatar playing vital roles, Western countries, international organizations, and financial institutions provided significant financial and political support for government-sponsored reconstruction. Moreover, multilateral organizations provided military and political security to allow this reconstruction to take place.

For example, since August 2006, the UNIFIL mission started to play a crucial role in ensuring Lebanese socio-economic stability, allowing the lowest branches of the population, especially Syrian migrants after 2011, to get secure access to essential services and assistance[159]. As

[158] Harmer, A., and Martin, E. 2010. "*Diversity in donorship: field lessons*". Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Pag 39-48.
[159] Makdisi, K. 2014. "Reconsidering the struggle over UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon". *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *43*(2). Pag 24-41.

detailed in Chapter 2, in March 1978, Israeli forces invaded Lebanon and captured nearly the whole southern section of the nation in a few days. The Lebanese government lodged a strong protest against the Israeli invasion at the United Nations Security Council. The Council passed two resolutions, 425 and 426, on March 19th, calling on Israel to end its military activity and withdraw its forces from all Lebanese land forthwith. It also decided to set up the UNIFIL interim force, bearing three primary objectives: confirming the withdrawal, restoring peace and stability, and supporting the Lebanese government in regaining effective control over the territory. However, on August 11th, 2006, the Security Council passed Resolution 1701 (2006), which expanded UNIFIL's mandate to include aid in ensuring humanitarian access to civilian populations as well as the voluntary and safe return of displaced persons. Since then, the humanitarian response has progressed from early recovery operations and short-term interventions to assisting the estimated one million displaced Lebanese, becoming crucial in addressing the most recent crises.

The outbreak of the Syrian conflicts highlighted several deficiencies in the Lebanese management of international funds[160]. In the early stages of the crisis, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies took the lead. Local governments, who were at the forefront of the response, lacked the necessary resources to respond and were thus active in a disorganized manner. Overall, poor coordination among foreign actors, the central government, and local authorities hampered the humanitarian response, resulting in unequal and dispersed relief delivery. Indeed, humanitarian organizations find it challenging to sustain long-term relationships with local governments and municipal unions due to financing restrictions and limited program timelines. Furthermore, to avoid local bureaucracy, assistance groups frequently chose to bypass public bodies during the implementation phase. After these first problematics, during the last few years, UN agencies and INGOs are increasingly converting short-term relief programs into longer-term development projects, and they are making substantial attempts to adjust their responses to address local conditions better.

As the situation progressed, Lebanon's government got more active, finally formulating the Lebanon Crisis Response Plan (LCRP) in collaboration with UN agencies in 2015[161]. In order to perform proactively in the recovery process, the Lebanese Council of Ministers provided the Ministry of Social Affairs with the primary responsibilities of fundraising and aid management,

[160] Boustani, M., Carpi, E., Gebara, H., and Mourad, Y. 2016. "*Responding to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon*". Collaboration between Aid Agencies and Local Governance Structures, Working Paper.
[161] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair. 2015. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015*". UNHCR Annual Report.

as well as the leading role in the implementation of the LCRP. This two-year strategy established an integrated humanitarian and stabilization framework to address Lebanon's difficulties holistically while also considering the vulnerability of all persons affected by the crisis, particularly Syrian refugees. On the one hand, it strived to provide humanitarian aid and protection to the most vulnerable Syrian refugees and most impoverished Lebanese. Another primary purpose was to bolster the capacity of national and local service delivery institutions to increase quality and access to essential public services. Finally, it also contributed to the economic, social, environmental, and institutional stability of Lebanon.

Despite being a crisis exploded outside the Lebanese borders, the Syrian conflict's consequences for the country's internal affairs and the region had a direct impact on the living conditions of both Lebanese communities and Syrian refugees. Furthermore, economic collapse, as a result of deteriorating security, greatly impacted on livelihood options in the various hosting areas. Even during periods of prosperity, Lebanon was unable to provide enough jobs for its own population, thus suffering from structural unemployment. Despite the massive aid flows received, since the crisis outbreak, governing institutions are not uniform in many places of Lebanon. The long-term ineffectiveness of government structures at the central and governorate levels resulted in a proliferation of local actors delivering services to the citizens. Another example of this state failure is the uneven capacity of Social Development Centres (SDCs), managed at the governmental level by the MoSA throughout Lebanon, to perform efficiently and constructively, especially in connection to social service delivery and poverty reduction[162].

As previously mentioned, a new phase began in late 2019 with the onset of a sudden and rapid economic downturn in October, which sparked significant civil discontent and resulted in demonstrations across the country. Since then, government debt default, severe inflation, extensive business closures, currency failure, and banking collapse have characterised the macroeconomic landscape[163]. Poverty has risen drastically in Lebanon as the country's economic system deteriorated. More than half of Lebanon's population is currently in severe conditions. In addition, COVID-19 and the catastrophic explosion on August 4, 2020, which killed over 200 people, aggravated Lebanon's already precarious state. As welfare funding became increasingly scarce, such economic hardship was, and continues to be, a danger to

[162] Hourani, G., and Van Vliet, S. 2014. "*Regional differences in the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*". Civil Society Knowledge Centre and Lebanon Support.
[163] International Organization for Migration. 2021. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2021*". UN Migration Working Paper.

social stability across the country, causing escalating tensions between refugee and host communities. Furthermore, the situation of Lebanon's migrant workers is becoming more and more perilous, with thousands of people losing their employment and many others stranded in the nation.

The latest LCRP reported that Lebanon had received almost $8.807 billion in aid during the last ten years, most of which was channelled through this holistic and official strategy[164]. The Syrian conflict, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Beirut explosion, on the other hand, have all taken a tremendous economic, environmental, and social burden on Lebanon. The problems have taken a significant toll on Lebanon's natural resources, which are already constrained (water, air, land, and ecosystems). Multiple crises have exacerbated social unrest, with tensions rising as people compete for limited resources to ensure their essential existence. Tensions are still primarily fuelled by rivalry for jobs and services, exacerbated by COVID-19 preventative measures, and catalysed by the deteriorating socio-economic environment and political divides. Poverty levels among displaced populations and Lebanese are drastically rising under the ongoing crisis, which has seen the Lebanese pound (LBP) lose 80% of its value. It is believed that around 23.2% of Lebanese are now living in extreme poverty, although more data is needed to comprehend the issue due to existing data gaps. Furthermore, approximately 91% of displaced Syrians live on less than $3.8 per day. According to the most recent LCRP, massive efforts will be required in 2021 to meet the country's growing needs, particularly for the 1.5 million displaced Syrians (51% women and 54% children), an estimated 257.000 Palestine Refugees, and 1.5 million vulnerable national citizens. Moreover, in Lebanon, there are also 16,631 Iraqi, Sudanese, and other refugees.

Establishing systems to coordinate the delivery of emergency services would benefit both local and international entities. Such agreements would also improve municipalities' ability to pick and manage foreign funding based on long-term planning concerns and provide a chance for the Lebanese government to model the benefits of better domestic collaboration. By sharing a common view between local government and international humanitarian organizations, as well as foreign agencies and private stakeholders, the relief work would become more effective. However, in Lebanon, this kind of dialogue between local institutions and local communities remains challenging due to highly politicized decision-making and the lack of inclusive consultations with the most affected branches of the population. Inequalities, poverty, and

[164] United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair. 2021. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021*". UNHCR Annual Report.

ineffective measures to tackle them both will remain a Lebanese structural deficiency unless decision-making and administrative systems will be finally able to overcome the current and steady political influence acting on them.

5. DIVERGENCE vs CONVERGENCE PATHS

5.1 COMMON FEATURES

Despite talking about different countries, there is a common ground on which some of the structural deficiencies leading to the formation and growing of massive inequalities lie. Indeed, the whole Middle East has been through a similar historical path, facing common challenges and encountering many different cultures. For example, since their declaration of independence, both Jordan and Lebanon undertook public reforms and policies addressing and benefitting only a share of their population. Such a development slightly influenced the countries' responses and actions in structuring their modernization. Thus, a portion of citizens, whose size varies on a nation-to-nation base, remains usually excluded by programs and developing projects. For Jordan, this depends on the interest to favour the most familiar and commonly accepted belief. On the other hand, Lebanon was driven by the willingness to dismiss specific minorities from the national welfare system.

These forms of discrimination affect not only the population as a whole but also profoundly impact the most vulnerable members of it, especially women. In that case, as previously mentioned across the text, both Jordan and Lebanon decided, despite some years of difference, to ratify the CEDAW with some reservations on the women's personal status laws. It is not difficult to understand that the quite common cultural background of the two countries, influenced by a patriarchal, patrilocal, and tribal vision, has played a primary role in depicting this fragmented and uneven situation. Indeed, the presence of such a primitive tendency is still limiting and, most of the time, precluding women's access to administrative and decision-making positions. Although Jordan and Lebanon are trying to address such a challenging issue differently (paragraph 5.2), they are both working to build up a credible women's social and economic empowerment. As pointed out in the text, this is not difficult to believe, considering that a well-conducted strategy could be an actual trigger for a steady and concrete country's development.

Moreover, both countries are characterized by a fragmented and unstable socioeconomic context, affected by several tragic events and threatening deficiencies. Some of them, especially the challenging issue of migration, still affect many regions within the countries' borders. Indeed, both Jordan and Lebanon report that the first-recipient regions, those sharing borders or closely connected to Syria, Palestine, and other "sending" countries, are those registering the highest levels of poverty and inequality. In addition, the negative impact of the migration crisis

during the last few decades, especially after the Syrian conflict's outbreak, provoked a sharp deterioration of the labour sector in both countries. Thus, migration threatened and increasingly deteriorated the Jordan and Lebanese already unstable socioeconomic contexts, fragmenting the national workforce and enlarging the existing disparities.

Moreover, both countries benefitted from international and regional support and aid. Despite being focused on addressing different issues from time to time, these funds have given hope and boosted Jordan and Lebanon's development both during their nation-building processes and after the significant events threatening their stability. However, using a euphemism, such a massive amount of finances and resources has not always been managed proficiently and strategically. Both countries invested in short-term programs and immediate reforms instead of implementing strategic approaches to eradicate the structural deficiencies at the base of these challenging situations. Such an approach has resulted only in temporary solutions, sometimes drove by highly politicized decision-making and sectarian interests, useful more to "survive" than to establish and implement a sustainable growth.

Finally, the two countries reported shifting school enrolment trends and educational openness, despite always being stuck at low levels. The difficulties reported in the previous chapters to enter and complete an educational path are some of the most impacting challenges threatening Jordan and Lebanon's development. Indeed, the efficient and strategic exploitation of populations' human capital could be crucial for concrete advancement in several fields, ranging from research and innovation to labour competitiveness and women empowerment. The lack of straightforward and multilateral strategies to face such a dramatic issue is another point in common among the two countries, but it could also apply to the entire Middle East. Jordan and Lebanon have continued to address the challenge only marginally, avoiding focusing on the root causes of such a dramatic trend.

5.2 MAIN DIFFERENCES

After analysing the common paths affecting both Jordan and Lebanon, it must be stressed that every country enjoys peculiarities and details that could have played a more or a less impacting role in establishing endogen inequalities. For example, starting with culture, it must be understood that the Lebanese context is highly more complicated and fragmented compared to the Jordan one. Indeed, the latter registers a broad and almost universal majority of Sunni Muslims, depicting a more homogeneous environment, at least from the "doctrinal" point of view. Such a stable context has favoured the proliferation of governmental and semi-

independent actors (always overwatched by the central administration) able to implement universal national strategies for development and poverty alleviation. At the same time, fragmented Lebanese reality has been the primary obstacle to form an efficient welfare state. The normative constraints imposed by the sectarian balance have led to the establishment of a "mixed" legal framework, in which the only possible actor accepted is the central administration. In practical terms, this has constrained the establishment and activity of institutions and organizations such as the *waqf*[165] and other charitable organizations, valuable agents for the creation of a sustainable and equal development model.

Moreover, there is a slightly different approach followed by Jordan and Lebanon in facing women empowerment. Indeed, the Jordan government has been more interested in favouring women's social and cultural integration, providing them with essential services and favoured access to education. As previously mentioned in paragraph 3.1.2, this has led to an outstanding outcome: placing Jordan among the top five countries in the MENA region for gender parity in literacy. Such an approach could also be highlighted considering the "Jordan Renaissance Plan 2019-2020", aimed at improving, among other aspects, also the rule of law and solidarity to women. At the same time, Lebanon has registered a more "economic-oriented" focus, stressing the importance of women's participation in the workforce and labour market. Indeed, gender inequalities in jobs and business opportunities could lead to significant losses for the entire country's economy. That is why, contrary to Jordan that still presents some constraints for women enter into the labour market due to a primitive tribal perspective and influence on the theme, Lebanon has removed all the legal prohibition on women engagement in income-generating enterprises and has implemented some progressive reforms both in the Labour and the Social Security Codes.

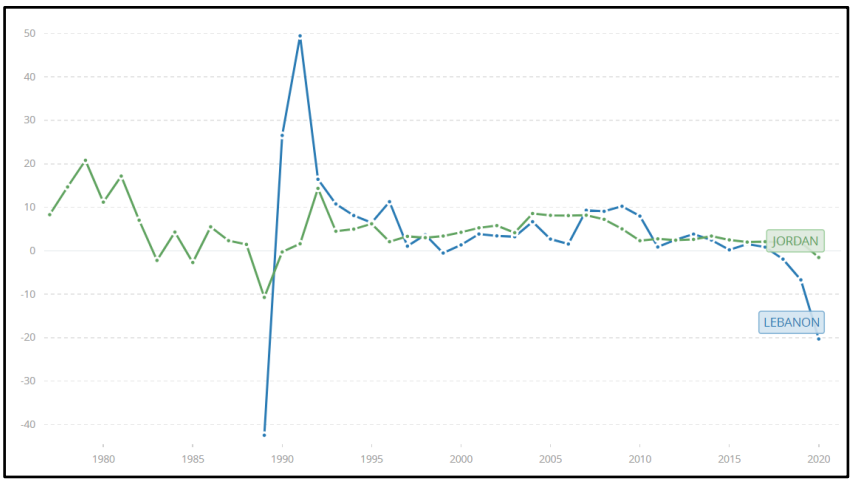
However, during the last few years, there has been a sort of convergence trend in the two countries' approaches to the issue of women empowerment. Indeed, while Jordan was launching its "Women's Economic Empowerment Action Plan," primarily aimed to increase female participation into the workforce, Lebanon presented its new "National Gender Strategy," focused on women's access to social life and essential services, gender equity, children protection and GBV.

Another difference between Jordan and Lebanon characterizes the two countries' socioeconomic fabrics. Indeed, while Lebanon was dramatically impacted in modernization and

[165] Description at page 43.

development by the two deadly conflicts that exploded on its territory (1975-1990 civil war and 2006 conflict), Jordan remained relatively stable, facing only small terroristic attacks with marginal effects on its growth. It is thus undeniable how the outbreak of significant confrontations could drastically affect a developing State's growth. Indeed, it destroys basic infrastructures and human capital (both directly, through battle-related deaths, and indirectly, because of migration), thus imposing massive reconstruction costs. However, the conflicts have also provoked a stimulating effect on the two countries' growth trends. Indeed, as reported in the chart below (**Figure 32**), the two lines follow a completely different path in correspondence to the most important critical junctures (1990 and 2006), with the Lebanese one characterized by wavering periods of peaks and collapses. After the conflicts' conclusion, such a "rebound effect" boosted the Lebanese economy due to massive flows of international funds for the reconstruction. Thus, regardless of experiencing a general decline since the COVID-19 outbreak, both countries have registered a growth in the last forty years in absolute terms, despite following completely different paths to achieve it.

Figure 32: Lebanon and Jordan GDP growth (annual %) (time series 1977-2020)



Source: World Bank Development Indicators

Moreover, Lebanon and Jordan differ also on the distribution of poverty among their citizens and the various governorates. Indeed, despite the previously discussed common factor of first recipient areas, Jordan's less-developed regions are characterized by lack of water and average scarcity of resources. In contrast, Lebanese ones are more affected by the issue of citizens' education. Such an issue has been historically connected to the outstanding migration outflows characterizing Lebanon throughout the 19th century. Indeed, contrary to Jordan, which has experienced more immigration than citizens outflow due to its social and economic stability, the two abovementioned conflicts have been a significant push factor for Lebanese citizens fleeing the country. In addition to refugees' flows, many educated and skilled Lebanese people

managed to leave the country, alongside those who had enough resources to afford a new life outside the country. This harmed the already existing inequalities and the country's development, depriving Lebanon of the major engine for sustainable growth and reconstruction: its qualified human capital.

The outbreak of significant conflicts has also led to different responses in the two countries' international and regional communities' programs. Indeed, from the Western donors' perspective, Jordan has always been seen as a "safe investment" in the Middle East. Moreover, it represented a good partner in MENA regional cooperation due to its efforts in the Palestinian cause. However, as previously mentioned, the signing of the peace accords with Israel in 1994 slightly changed this trend, provoking loosened support by the Arab community that lasted up to the outbreak of the Second Gulf War and the more recent Syrian crisis. Thus, Jordan experienced alternating periods between regional fundings and aids from Western partners. At the same time, Lebanon has always benefitted from multilateral support, although this was curbed by the increasing influence of Hezbollah in the country's decision-making. As a result of this new trend, Western donors and Sunni allies slightly loosened their support.

Having all said, the main difference lies in the different aims of these country-specific aids. Indeed, while Lebanon benefitted primarily from humanitarian and reconstruction assistance, Jordan was invested by a more "development-oriented strategy." In Jordan, the international community structured a more "mutually beneficial" cooperation. The significant donors limited the humanitarian assistance and appeared primarily interested in establishing a good and economically appealing environment rather than an equal one. By contrast, Lebanon attracted almost exclusively humanitarian and essential assistance fundings, primarily aimed at ensuring subsistence and reconstructing the essential services destroyed during the conflicts. Nonetheless, the inefficient Lebanese decision-making and administrative system, both characterized by sharp contrasts and discriminations, have led to enlarging disparities and to the exclusion of a population's branch from the Lebanese development process.

CONCLUSIONS: IS THERE A COMMON PATH TOWARD INEQUALITY?

Inequalities are undeniable, and, as confirmed in this thesis, they are a global problem, not a regional one. However, it is impossible to underestimate the differences between various contexts (see developed, developing, and underdeveloped countries) and between individual nations. It is thus true and unavoidable to consider and recognize the existence of peculiarities at a domestic level. Nonetheless, the analysis confirmed the presence of a sort of thread definitely more impactful between categories of countries falling within the same context or sharing a comparable historical, social, and economic development path.

In these contexts - in the specific case: the Middle East - not only the late development (relatively "young" countries compared to the more developed Western ones), but also the troubling growth path, have led to the formation of endogenous and structural inequalities among the population. The numerous conflicts, migrations, and all the previously mentioned problems have led to the deterioration of the socio-economic fabrics of these states, benefiting a part of the population and leaving some branches excluded from the development process. Furthermore, it was seen how the impact of religion (mainly Islam) has led to actions, policies, and responses of governments, often in contrast with a universal welfare strategy.

A great example can be the response of governments to the problem of migration, a phenomenon that is not new in a region tormented by numerous flows of economic migrants (both South-South and towards the West) and of asylum seekers following the outbreak of a conflict. The most logical conclusion is that the impact of massive migration flows on countries already experiencing deteriorated socioeconomic fabrics, such as those characterizing the Middle Eastern context, provokes a dramatic fragmentation of the national workforce. Thus, the influx of primarily unskilled people leads to a radical enlarging disparity between people employed in stable and well-paid jobs and those forced to find low-salary, informal and insecure positions (sometimes suffering abuses and facing the lack of essential social and legal benefits).

Another example of a structural problem in the Middle East is access to education, the primary driver for creating inequalities in terms of opportunities. As exposed in the study conducted in the first chapter, there is a strong link between the lack of education and the possible creation of "poverty traps," as it is not possible to access high-profile and well-paid positions with inadequate qualifications. Furthermore, it was highlighted that education is also a powerful "medicine" against an "exploited" interpretation of religion, thus being the first pillar for the fight against ignorance and, consequently, all forms of fanaticism. Education, therefore, leads

to eradicating ignorance and constructing knowledge, skills, and critical thoughts, necessary starting points for a country's credible and sustainable growth. The contexts analyzed in the text showed declining numbers about school enrollment and enormous differences between families able to afford an education and families unable to do so. Such contexts should put young people and their schooling on the frontline in designing every possible effort for the countries' modernization and their fight against poverty and inequalities.

The theme of the role of women is also linked to the issue of education. As we know, even in more developed countries, women suffer from numerous injustices and different treatment (especially in terms of administrative and leadership positions) compared to men. However, the phenomenon appears even more marked in the Middle East. Despite the numerous initiatives recorded in recent years, the influence of a retrograde tribal culture and the extremist applications of religious dictates played a considerable role in Jordan and Lebanon. Indeed, both countries reported severe inequalities between genders, albeit with considerable differences. As explained in the previous analysis, this leads to two types of problems. The first one is of social nature, where the exclusion of women from administrative and decision-making positions often leads to "unbalanced" policies favoring the male population. The second problem is purely economic. The exclusion or restriction of participation by half of the population (female) leads to a significant loss in terms of growth, profit, and generation of wealth. Furthermore, favoring the full participation of women in the national workforce would enlarge the middle class present in the various countries. Thus, such a decision would sustain the fight against poverty both directly, thanks to the greater opportunities offered by the labor market, and indirectly, by redirecting the policies of support for a smaller percentage of people.

It was also highlighted how the forms of support and financing from abroad (regional or global) have indirectly influenced the creation of a rift among the population. For example, in Jordan, we have seen how the will to create a thriving market and a credible trading partner has led to a notable development of the upper-middle class, leaving the poorest populations behind and, consequently, increasing the gap. In Lebanon, this result appeared less marked due to fewer development funds and more humanitarian aids. However, the politicization of the decision-making/administrative area, especially in the management of reconstruction funds, has mainly favored a branch of the society, increasing the economic rift and the social frictions present among the population. Thus, being the Middle East the first recipient region in terms of the amount of international aids, it is clear that they have played a primary role in defining this common regional path towards disparity.

Finally, there is a psychological component within every type of inequality, be it ethnic, social, or economic. The studies conducted in the first chapter highlighted how specific categories of people tend to limit themselves due to a feeling of inferiority with respect to the context they have to face. Moreover, some studies show how many people continue to have a perception of de-growth and recession in their country despite facing a period of economic and social prosperity. Therefore, it would be interesting to investigate the issue of endogenous causes leading to inequalities in the Middle East by submitting a sample of people to a questionnaire or a series of interviews evaluating their perception about respective countries' key development factors, such as those reported in the text (example of a questionnaire: **Annex 1**). Such an analysis would demonstrate how one of the fundamental problems of the gap created between the Middle Eastern context and the developed world lies precisely in the people's lousy perception of the region. All this, therefore, leads to the establishment of a regional "poverty trap." In this case, people feel they have less or no opportunities, in terms of social or economic growth, compared to other branches of the population or different regions of the world. Thus, this "psychological inequality" leads people to resort only to interlocutory and subsistence solutions, while they may actually have sufficient resources to relaunch themselves and contribute to the general growth of their community.

Moreover, the research took into account also the main differences present among the two countries' populations. These differences made it possible and appeared extremely helpful to draw a line common to all countries, especially developing ones. Although the discrepancies between the two countries analysed were numerically significant, weighing them to assess their actual impact is necessary. Indeed, it must be borne in mind the existence of country-specific factors that will never allow a perfectly functional analysis at a universal level. Above all, it is essential to recognize that many of these phenomena are usually of a general nature, having a transversal impact on all countries, albeit sometimes with different intensities. For example, the greater proclivity of a given context/country to fall into armed conflicts (be it domestic clashes, with other countries, or with independent organizations) clearly leads to impoverishment and more significant fragmentation of the social and economic context of the area. As already seen in the analysis and many different studies, the Middle East has been the world's area with the highest number of active conflicts for decades. These confrontations resulted as the root causes of most of the problems reported previously in the text (creation of extremisms, attachment to the original culture, migration, and the influx of economic aid). Therefore, it is easy to relate some of the significant inequalities present within the population to these harmful effects.

Moreover, the impact of armed conflicts on the gap created between this area of the world and the more developed one appears quite clear. The fact that Lebanon and Jordan followed a slightly different path in the evolution of inequalities may therefore be ascribed to the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war. However, it cannot be excluded that, if the same conflict had happened in Jordan, they would not have followed more easily comparable trends.

Another difference reported in the text concerns the two countries' social/cultural nature, with Lebanon much more fragmented than Jordan. However, the fact that a country has a strongly or marginally different history, culture, and doctrine has a limited impact on the ultimate goal of this analysis. Indeed, the different doctrinal trends of the two countries have undoubtedly led to different responses from the respective governments and the specific populations. Nevertheless, it is easy to see how the similar historical background, interaction with the same regional partners, and need to respond to the same problems (i.e. conflict in Syria) have created a convergence between the two contexts. For example, the community's role, rooted in the tribal culture of both countries, has often led to public policies and decisions aimed at excluding branches of the population considered as "external." Another example is that, despite the different responses to the problem (more of a social nature in Jordan and more of an economic nature in Lebanon), both countries have been plagued by the issues of women's emancipation due to a retrograde patriarchal background.

Many other examples were and could be highlighted in the Middle East. However, the important thing to understand is only one: the differences found are inevitable, but their effect is marginal compared to that of the commonalities reported in the previous analysis. Therefore, it seems plausible to affirm that the existence of a common path in the creation of inequalities in the Middle East is not simply theoretical speculation but an extraordinarily concrete and current matter. The identification of these structural causes and their subsequent eradication would finally make it possible to bridge the gap between the Middle East and the developed world, starting a path of credible, sustainable, and, finally, fair growth.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LITERATURE ON THE CONCEPT OF INEQUALITY

GENERAL

Afonso, H., LaFleur, M., and Alarcón, D. 2015. "*Concepts of Inequality: Development Issues No.1*". Development Strategy and Policy Analysis Unit in Development Policy and Analysis Division, UN/DESA. New York, USA.

Alvaredo, F., Chancel, L., Piketty, T., Saez, E., and Zucman, G. 2017. "*Global Inequality Dynamics: New Findings from WID.world*". World Inequality Lab Working Papers N°2017/1.

Asch, S. 1956. "*Studies of Independence and Conformity: A Minority of One Against a Unanimous Majority*". Psychological Monographs, 70.

Baccaro, L. 2008. "*Labour, globalization and inequality: Are trade unions still redistributive?*" International Institute for Labour Studies.

Bénabou, R. 1993. "Workings of a City: Location, Education, and Production". *Quarterly Journal of Economics,* 108. Pag 619–652.

Biddle, B., and Berliner, D.C. 2002. "Unequal school". *Educational Leadership*. Pag 48-59.

Corcoran, M., Gordon, R., Laren, D., and Solon, G. 1992. "The Association between Men's Economic Status and Their Family and Community Origins". *Journal of Human Resources,* 27. Pag 575–601.

Crane, J. 1991. "The Epidemic Theory of Ghettos and Neighborhood Effects on Dropping Out and Teenage Childbearing". *American Journal of Sociology,* 96. Pag 1226–1259.

Foerster, M., and István Gyoergy, T. 2015. "*Cross-country evidence of the multiple causes of inequality changes in the OECD area*". Handbook of income distribution. Pag 1729-1843.

Immervoll, H., and Richardson, L. 2011. "*Redistribution policy and inequality reduction in OECD countries: what has changed in two decades?*" Luxemburg Income Study Working Paper N° 571.

Kozol, J. 1991. "*Savage Inequalities*." New York: Crown Publishers.

Kuznets, S. 1955. "Economic growth and income inequality". *The American economic review*. Pag. 1-28.

Loury, G. 1977. "*A Dynamic Theory of Racial Income Differences*". In Women, Minorities, and Employment Discrimination. Lexington Books. Pag 153–86.

Morris, W., and Miller, R. 1975. "The Effects of Consensus-Breaking and Consensus Preempting Partners on Reduction of Conformity". *Journal of Experimental Social Psychological Research,* 11. Pag 215–23.

Sen, A. 2001. "*Development as freedom"*. Oxford Paperbacks.

Steele, C., and Aronson, J. 1995. "Stereotype Threat and the Intellectual Test Performance of African Americans". *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 69(5). Pag 797–811.

The Editors of Collins English Dictionary. 2020. "*Inequality*". Collins Cobuild advanced English Dictionary.

Volpato, C. 2019. "*Le radici psicologiche della disuguaglianza*". Bari: Gius. Laterza & Figli Spa.

MIDDLE EAST

Alvaredo, F., et al. 2018. "*The elephant curve of global inequality and growth*". AEA Papers and Proceedings, Vol 108.

Arezki, R., et al. 2018. "*Middle East and North Africa Economic Monitor, April 2018: Economic Transformation"*. The World Bank.

Assouad, L., Chancel, L., and Morgan, M. 2018. "*Extreme inequality: Evidence from Brazil, India, the Middle East and South Africa*". American Economic Association Papers & Proceedings.

Corrao, F.M. 2017. "*Islam, religion and politics*". Roma: Luiss University Press.

Francesca, E. 2013. "*Economia, religione e morale nell'Islam*". Roma: Carrocci Editore.

Hassine, N.B. 2015. "Economic inequality in the Arab region". *World Development*, 66. Pag: 532-556.

Iqbal, F. and Kiendrebeogo, Y. 2015. "*The reduction of child mortality in the Middle East and North Africa: A success story*". World Bank Policy Research Working Paper N° 7127.

Sadeq, A. M. 2002. "Waqf, perpetual charity and poverty alleviation". *International Journal of Social Economics*.

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2020. "*Middle East*". Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Weir, T.H. and Zysow, A. 2012. "Ṣadaḳa", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*". Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

Zysow, A. 2012. "Zakāt", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*. Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

GENERAL LITERATURE ON JORDAN

Abidi, A. H. H. 1965. "*Jordan: A Political Study, 1948-1957"*. New York: Asia Publishing House. Pag 85-108

Al-Shishani, M. B. 2009. "Neo-Zarqawists Target the Arab Christians of Jordan". *Terrorism Monitor*, *7*(34). Pag 4-6.

Amadouny, V. M. 1994. "*Infrastructural development under the British Mandate*". Village, steppe and state: The social origins of modern Jordan. Pag 128-161.

Ambasciata d'Italia in Giordania. 2021. "*Giordania*". Info Mercati Esteri, Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale.

Anderson, B. S. 2005. "*Nationalist voices in Jordan: The street and the state*". University of Texas Press. Pag. 33-42.

Antoun, R. T. 2000. "Civil society, tribal process, and change in Jordan: an anthropological view". *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *32*(4). Pag 441-463.

Brand, L. 1995. "*Jordan's Inter-Arab Relations: The Political Economy of Alliance-Making"*. Columbia University Press. Pag 74-106.

Dann, U. 1989. "*King Hussein and the Challenge of Arab Radicalism: Jordan, 1955–1967"*. Oxford University Press, in cooperation with the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, Tel Aviv University. Pag 216-217.

Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. "*Jordan Majlis Al-Nuwaab (House of Representatives)*".

Kamal, S. 1993. "*The Modern History of Jordan*". London, New York, IB Tauris.

Kirkbride, A. 1956. "*A crackle of thorns: Experiences in the Middle East"*. J. Murray. Pag 131-133.

Lesch, A. M. 1991. “Contrasting Reactions to the Persian Gulf Crisis: Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and the Palestinians”. *Middle East Journal*, 45(1). Pag 30-50.

Lias, G. 1956. “*Glubb's legion”*. London: Evans Bros. Pag 29-30.

Mutawi, S. A. 2002. “*Jordan in the 1967 War* (No. 10)”. Cambridge University Press. Pag 141-142.

Nevo, J. 1996. “*King Abdallah and Palestine: A territorial ambition”*. Springer. Pag 13-14.

Piturca, A. and Popescu, A.P. 2005. “Islam - religion and politics”. *Revue des Sciences Politiques Nr. 8*. Pag 69-74.

Pundik, R. 1994. “*The Struggle for Sovereignty: Relations Between Great Britain and Jordan, 1946–1951*”. Blackwell, Oxford. Pag 30-31

Robbins, M., and Rubin, L. 2013. “The Rise of Official Islam in Jordan”. *Politics, Religion & Ideology, 14*(1). Pag 59-74.

Robins, P. 2019. “*A history of Jordan”*. Cambridge University Press.

Rogan, E. L. 1996. “*The Making of a Capital: Amman 1918-1928*”. Amman: The City and Its Society. Beirut: CERMOC. Pag. 89-108.

Ryan, C. R. 2004. “Jordan first: Jordan’s inter-Arab relations and foreign policy under King Abdullah II”. *Arab Studies Quarterly*. Pag. 43-62.

Saif, I. 2006. “*The Socio-Economic Implications of the Qualified Industrial Zones in Jordan*”. Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan.

Satloff, R. B. 1994. “*From Abdullah to Hussein: Jordan in Transition”*. Oxford University Press on Demand. Pag 32-33.

Shahateet, M. 2006. “*How serious is regional economic inequality in Jordan? Evidence from two national household surveys*”. Munich Personal RePEc Archive.

Susser, A. 2017. “*On both banks of the Jordan: A political biography of Wasfi al-Tall* (Vol. 2)”. Routledge.

United Nations Development Programme. 2013. “*The Informal Sector in the Jordanian Economy*”. UNDP Report.

Wiktorowicz, Q. 2000. “Civil society as social control: State power in Jordan”. *Comparative politics*. Pag 43-61.

Wiktorowicz, Q., and Farouki, S. T. 2000. “Islamic NGOs and Muslim politics: A case from Jordan”. *Third World Quarterly*, *21*(4). Pag 685-699.

GENERAL LITERATURE ON LEBANON

AbiYaghi, M. N. 2014. “*Social Protection in Lebanon between charity and politics*”. Arab Watch 2014, Arab NGO Network for Development.

AbiYaghi, M. N., Yammine, L., and Jagarnathsingh, A. 2019. “*Civil Society in Lebanon: the Implementation Trap*”. Civil Society Knowledge Centre.

Ambasciata d’Italia in Libano. 2021. “*Libano*”. Info Mercati Esteri, Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale.

Assouad, L. 2021. “*Rethinking the Lebanese economic miracle: The extreme concentration of income and wealth in Lebanon*”. World Inequality Lab.

Barkey, K., and Gavrilis, G. 2016. “The Ottoman millet system: Non-territorial autonomy and its contemporary legacy”. *Ethnopolitics*. Volume 15(1). Pag 24-42.

Collelo, T., and Smith, H., H. 1989. “*Lebanon: A Country Study*”. Washington, D.C.: Federal Research Division.

Evron, Y. 2013. “*War and Intervention in Lebanon: The Israeli-Syrian Deterrence Dialogue”*. Routledge. Pag 19-40.

Gendzier, I. L. 2006. “*Notes from the minefield: United States intervention in Lebanon and the Middle East, 1945-1958”*. Columbia University Press. Pag 178-209

Ghosn, F., and Khoury, A. 2011. “Lebanon after the civil war: peace or the illusion of peace?” *The Middle East Journal*, 65(3). Pag 381-397.

Jawad, R. 2002. “A profile of social welfare in Lebanon: Assessing the implications for social development policy”. *Global Social Policy*, *2*(3). Pag 319-342.

Kerr, M. H. 1971. “*The Arab cold war: Gamal ’Abd al-Nasir and his rivals, 1958-1970 (Vol. 358)*”. Oxford University Press.

Kingston, P. W. 2013. "*Reproducing sectarianism: Advocacy networks and the politics of civil society in postwar Lebanon"*. Suny Press. Pag 55- 84

Knio, K. 2005. "Lebanon: Cedar Revolution or Neo-Sectarian Partition?" *Mediterranean Politics,* 10(2). Pag 225-231.

Makdisi, K. 2014. "Reconsidering the struggle over UNIFIL in Southern Lebanon". *Journal of Palestine Studies, 43*(2). Pag 24-41.

Owen, R. 1976. "*Essays on the Crisis in Lebanon*". London: Ithaca Press. Pag 24-25.

Reyhan, C. 2011. "The Ottoman Origins of Political Culture in Lebanon". *TODAİEs Review of Public Administration, 5* (3).

Salibi, K. 1966. "Lebanon under fuad chehab 1958–1964". *Middle Eastern Studies,* 2(3). Pag 210-215.

Shultz, G. 1993. "*Turmoil and Triumph: My Years As Secretary of State*". New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. Pag 106-110.

Traboulsi, F. 2012. "*A history of modern Lebanon"*. Pluto Press.

Weiss, M. 2009. "The historiography of sectarianism in Lebanon". *History Compass. 7*(1). Pag 141-154.

Ziadeh, N. 1957. "*Syria and Lebanon*". London: Ernest Benn Ltd. Pag 111-195

LITERATURE ON THE ROLE OF WOMEN

Tzannatos, Z. 2016. "*Effects of Gender Inequality in Employment and Pay in Jordan, Lebanon and the Occupied Palestinian Territory: Three Questions Answered*". International Labour Organization.

UN Women. 1995. "*Bejing Declaration and Platform for Action*". Fourth World Conference on Women.

World Economic Forum. 2021. "*Global Gender Gap Report*". WEF Insight Report.

JORDAN

Ait Ali Slimane, M., Lundvall, J., Mohindra, K., Al Abbadi, S., Kurshitashvili, N., and Hisou, O. 2020. "*Women's Economic Empowerment in Jordan*". MENA Knowledge and Learning.

Kharmeh, S. S. A. 2012. “Gender empowerment in Jordan”. *Canadian Social Science, 8*(2). Pag 201-208.

World Bank Poverty Reduction and Economic Management Department Middle East and North Africa. 2013. “*Country gender assessment: economic participation, agency and access to justice in Jordan (English).”* Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

LEBANON

Avis, W. 2017.” *Gender equality and women’s empowerment in Lebanon*”. Governance and Social Development Resource Centre.

Ferreras Carreras, E. 2017. “*Gender Analysis in Lebanon*”. European Union’s FWC LOT 9 Beneficiaries 2013 Situation Analysis Report.

Hejase, A., and Dah, A. 2014. “An assessment of the impact of sticky floors and glass ceilings in Lebanon”. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 109*. Pag 954-964.

LITERATURE ON MIGRATION ISSUE

Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia. 2006. “*International Migration in the Arab Region*”. ESCWA Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Publications.

JORDAN

Arouri, F. 2008. “*Irregular Migration in Jordan, 1995-2007*”. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, Irregular Migration Series.

Chatelard, G. 2010. “*Jordan: A Refugee Haven*”. Migration Information Source. Retrieved 07/08/2021.

De Bel-Air, F. 2009. “*Iraqis in Jordan since 2003: what socio-political stakes?*”. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, CARIM Research Reports 2009/10.

De Bel-Air, F. 2016. “*Migration Profile: Jordan*”. Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Kelberer, V. 2017. “*The Work Permit Initiative for Syrian Refugees in Jordan*”. Boston Consortium for Arab Region Studies, Policy Paper.

Stave, S. E., and Hillesund, S. 2015. "*Impact of Syrian refugees on the Jordanian labour market*". Geneva: ILO. Pag. 110-111.

Sweis, R. F. 2016. "Jordan Struggles Under a Wave of Syrian Refugees". *New York Times, 13*.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation. 2020. "*Jordan Response Plan for the Syria Crisis 2020-2022*". Jordan Response Platform for the Syria crisis.

LEBANON

Boustani, M., Carpi, E., Gebara, H., and Mourad, Y. 2016. "*Responding to the Syrian crisis in Lebanon*". Collaboration between Aid Agencies and Local Governance Structures, Working Paper.

De Bel-Air, F. 2017. "*Migration Profile: Lebanon*". Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Hourani, G. 2014. "Bilateral Relations, Security and Migration: Lebanese expatriates in the Gulf States". *European Scientific Journal*, 1st Mediterranean Interdisciplinary Forum on Social Sciences and Humanities. Pag 671-685.

Hourani, G., and Van Vliet, S. 2014. "*Regional differences in the conditions of Syrian refugees in Lebanon*". Civil Society Knowledge Centre and Lebanon Support.

International Organization for Migration. 2021. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2021*". UN Migration Working Paper.

Jaulin, T. 2014. "Citizenship, migration, and confessional democracy in Lebanon". *Middle East law and governance, 6*(3). Pag 250-271.

Khater, A. F. 2001. "*Inventing Home: Emigration, Gender, and the Middle Class in Lebanon, 1870- 1920*". London: University of California Press.

Sussman, A. L. 2009. "No magic wand for Lebanon's migrants". *The Guardian*.

Tabar, P. 2009. "*Immigration and Human Development: Evidence from Lebanon*". Human Development Research Paper.

Tabar, P. 2010. "*Lebanon: A country of Emigration and Immigration*". Institute for Migration Studies, 7. Pag 6-26.

The UN Refugee Agency Regional Office in Lebanon. 2014. "*Country Operations Plan: Lebanon*". UNHCR Operations Plan.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair. 2015. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2015*". UNHCR Annual Report.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affair. 2021. "*Lebanon Crisis Response Plan 2017-2021*". UNHCR Annual Report.

LITERATURE ON SOCIAL, ECONOMIC AND DEVELOPMENT VARIABLES

African Union Commission. 2015. "*Agenda 2063, the Africa we want*". African Union.

Citi Habitats. 2013. "*New York Average Rent Summary 2013*". Citi Habitats Residential Rental Report 2013.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2021. "*Consumer Price Indices*". FAOSTAT.

Gharaibeh, F. A. 1985. "*The Economics of the West Bank and Gaza Strip*". Boulder, Westview Press. Pag 15-16.

Global Terrorism Database. 2021. "*Number of incidents in Jordan (2001-2018), criterion II*". GTD Advanced Search.

Hahn, P. L. 2006. "Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957". *Presidential Studies Quarterly, 36*(1). Pag 38-47.

Kenny, M. 2016. "*Civil society*". Encyclopedia Britannica.

Rosenstein-Rodan, P. N. 1961. "International aid for underdeveloped countries". *The review of economics and statistics*, Vol. 43, Nr. 2. Pag 107-138.

The World Bank Group. 2021. "*Global Economic Prospects. June 2021*". World Bank Group Flagship Report.

U.S. Department of Commerce, Census Bureau. 2014. "*Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States: 2014*". Current Population Survey October 1970 through 2014.

U.S. National Centre for Education Statistics. 1995. "*Number of school districts with more than 1000 enrolled and levels of spending per student, USA 1995*". Digest of Education Statistics 1995.

U.S. National Centre for Education Statistics. 2000. "*Relationship between percentage of students in poverty and total expenditure per capita, USA 2000*". Digest of Education Statistics 2000.

UN Development Programme. 2020. "*Human Development Index (HDI)*". Human Development Reports.

Whiteford, P. 2008. "*How much redistribution do governments achieve? The role of cash transfers and household taxes*". Growing Unequal: Income Distribution and Poverty in OECD Countries. OECD Publishing.

JORDAN

European Commission. 2021. "*European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations – Jordan*". European Union Facts and Figures.

Gupte, P. 1981. "Regions Middle East: Jordan's Growth Spurred by Aid From Arab States". *The New York Times*, February 8, 1981, Section 12. Pag 47.

Harrigan, J., El-Said, H., and Wang, C. 2006. "*The IMF and the World Bank in Jordan: A case of over optimism and elusive growth*". The review of international organizations, 1(3). Pag 263-292.

Jordan Department of Statistics. 2021. "*Unemployed Persons Age 15+ Years by Sex, Educational Level & Nationality (Percentage Distribution). First Round -2021*". Labour Force Survey.

Jordan External Trade Division. 2021. "*External Trade*". Jordan Department of Statistics.

Kelberer, V. 2017. "Negotiating crisis: International aid and refugee policy in Jordan". *Middle East Policy*, *24*(4). Pag 148-165.

Pace, E. 1983. "Aid To Jordan From Arab Nations Said To Fall". *The New York Times*, October 9, 1983, Section 1, Pag 7.

Peters, A. M., and Moore, P. W. 2009. “Beyond boom and bust: external rents, durable authoritarianism, and institutional adaptation in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan”. *Studies in Comparative International Development, 44*(3). Pag. 256-285.

The Economist. 2018. “Jordan to receive financial aid from Gulf Arab states”. *The Economist Intelligence Unit*, Jordan, June 11, 2018.

The World Bank Group. 2019. “*Jordan Unemployment (national estimate)*”. Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

The World Bank Group. 2020. “*Jordan Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)*”. Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

The World Bank Group. 2020. “*Jordan Personal remittances received (% of GDP)*”. Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

U.S. Agency for International Development Jordan. 2020. “*Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), June 30, 2020 – July 1, 2025*”. USAID Strategic Approach Report.

LEBANON

Combaz, E. 2013. “*International aid to Lebanon*”. GSDRC University of Birmingham Research Report.

Dibeh, G. 2007. “*Foreign Aid and Economic Development in postwar Lebanon*”. United Nations University Research Paper Nr. 2007/37.

Harmer, A., and Martin, E. 2010. “*Diversity in donorship: field lessons*”. Overseas Development Institute (ODI). Pag 39-48.

Lebanese Republic Central Administration of Statistics. 2020. “*Labour Force and Household Living Conditions Survey 2018-2019 in Beirut*”. Central Administration of Statistics.

Soueid, M., Hariri, Z., Nehme, R., and Abdel Fattah, N. 2017. “*Analysis of Lebanon’s Travel and Tourism Sector*.” Bankmed Report.

The World Bank Group. 2020. “*Lebanon, Personal remittances received (current US$)*”. Data Bank: World Development Indicators.

UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2020. “*Lebanese School enrolment, primary (% gross)*”. Reported in the World Bank Development Indicators Data Bank.

WEB REFERENCES

Chatelard, G. 2010. "*Jordan: A Refugee Haven*". Migration Information Source. Retrieved 07/08/2021. Available at: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/jordan-refugee-haven

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. 2021. "*Consumer Price Indices*". FAOSTAT. Retrieved 11/02/2021. Available at: http://www.fao.org/faostat/en/#data/CP

Global Terrorism Database. 2021. "*Number of incidents in Jordan (2001-2018), criterion II*". GTD Advanced Search. Retrieved 01/08/2021. Available at: https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/search/

Inter-Parliamentary Union. 2016. "*Jordan Majlis Al-Nuwaab (House of Representatives)*". Retrieved 02/05/2021. Available at: https://www.ipu.org/parliament/JO

Jordan Department of Statistics. 2021. "*Unemployed Persons Age 15+ Years by Sex, Educational Level & Nationality (Percentage Distribution). First Round -2021*". Labour Force Survey. Retrieved 08/08/2021. Available at: http://www.dos.gov.jo/owa-user/owa/emp_unemp.list_tables

Jordan External Trade Division. 2021. "*External Trade*". Jordan Department of Statistics. Retrieved 03/08/2021. Available at: http://dosweb.dos.gov.jo/economic/externaltrade/

Kenny, M. 2016. "*Civil society*". Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 29/04/2021. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/topic/civil-society

The Editors of Collins English Dictionary. 2020. "*Inequality*". Collins Cobuild advanced English Dictionary. Retrieved 01/02/2021. Available at: https://www.collinsdictionary.com/it/dizionario/inglese/inequality

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. 2020. "*Middle East*". Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved 09/02/2021. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/Middle-East

The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan Personal remittances received (% of GDP)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators. Retrieved 08/08/2021. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.DT.GD.ZS?locations=JO

The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Lebanon, Personal remittances received (current US$)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators. Retrieved 11/08/2021. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/BX.TRF.PWKR.CD.DT?locations=LB

The World Bank Group. 2020. "*Jordan Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty lines (% of population)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators. Retrieved 10/03/2021. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SI.POV.NAHC?locations=JO

The World Bank Group. 2019. "*Jordan Unemployment (national estimate)*". Data Bank: World Development Indicators. Retrieved 03/05/2021. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.UEM.TOTL.NE.ZS?locations=JO

UNESCO Institute of Statistics. 2020. "*Lebanese School enrolment, primary (% gross)*". Reported in the World Bank Development Indicators Data Bank. Retrieved 07/08/2021. Available at: https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.PRM.ENRR?locations=LB

UN Development Programme. 2020. "*Human Development Index (HDI)*". Human Development Reports. Retrieved 04/05/2021. Available at: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/human-development-index-hdi

ANNEX 1

Country's Development Perception

The survey is ANONYMOUS, and all the information gathered will be utilized only for academic purposes. Furthermore, the data collected in the context of this survey are protected by statistical confidentiality. Therefore, they cannot be communicated or externalized except in aggregate form to make no individual reference.

COUNTRY *

- Jordan
- Lebanon

AGE GROUP *

- 16-24
- 25-34
- 35-44
- 45-60
- Over 60

SEX *

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

RELIGION *

Testo risposta breve

HOUSEHOLD SIZE *

Testo risposta breve

EDUCATIONAL LEVEL *

- Elementary
- Preparatory
- Basic Education
- Vocational Apprenticeship
- Secondary Education
- Diploma Intermediate
- Bachelor & Above

REGION OF RESIDENCE *

- Capital
- Rest of the country

PRE-COVID-19 PERCEPTION

When specified, 1 indicates the lowest value while 5 indicates the highest one.

1. PERCEPTION OF COUNTRY'S OVERALL WELFARE *

- Poor
- Low
- Medium
- High

2. PERCEPTION OF YOUR REGION'S OVERALL WELFARE *

- Poor
- Low
- Medium
- High

3. PLEASE INDICATE THE MOST PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR REGION *

	1	2	3	4	5
Unemployment	○	○	○	○	○
Lack of basic s...	○	○	○	○	○
Ethnic discrimi...	○	○	○	○	○
Economic ineq...	○	○	○	○	○
Economic ineq...	○	○	○	○	○
Job quality	○	○	○	○	○
Criminality	○	○	○	○	○
Corruption	○	○	○	○	○

4. DURING THE PRE-PANDEMIC DECADE, HAS THE COUNTRY IMPLEMENTED POLICIES TO FIGHT THESE ISSUES? *

	Yes	No	Not able to answer
Unemployment	○	○	○
Lack of basic services/in...	○	○	○
Ethnic discrimination	○	○	○
Economic inequalities (w...	○	○	○
Economic inequalities (r...	○	○	○
Job quality	○	○	○
Criminality	○	○	○
Corruption	○	○	○

5. BEFORE THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL PERCEPTION OF YOUR COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT ? (In terms of basic infrastructures/services; economic and social opportunities; etc.) *

- ◯ Declining
- ◯ Steady
- ◯ Increasing
- ◯ Not able to answer

6. PLEASE INDICATE THE MAIN OBSTACLE/S FOR YOUR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *

	1	2	3	4	5
Women empow...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Youth unemplo...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Income inequal...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Ethnic discrimi...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Criminality	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Corruption	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
State policies	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. PLEASE INSERT SOME EXAMPLES OF OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING ON COUNTRY'S GROWTH

Testo risposta breve

8. PLEASE INDICATE WHAT YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNTRY'S GROWTH *

	1	2	3	4	5
State aids	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Regional aids (f...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
International ai...	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

CURRENT PERCEPTION

When specified, 1 indicates the lowest value while 5 indicates the highest one.

9. PERCEPTION OF COUNTRY'S OVERALL WELFARE *

- Poor
- Low
- Medium
- High

10. PERCEPTION OF YOUR REGION'S OVERALL WELFARE *

- Poor
- Low
- Medium
- High

11. PLEASE INDICATE THE MOST PROBLEMATIC ISSUES AFFECTING YOUR REGION *

	1	2	3	4	5
Unemployment					
Lack of basic s...					
Ethnic discrimi...					
Economic ineq...					
Economic ineq...					
Job quality					
Criminality					
Corruption					

12. DURING THE CURRENT PANDEMIC PERIOD, HAS THE COUNTRY IMPLEMENTED POLICIES TO FIGHT THESE ISSUES? *

	Yes	No	Maybe
Unemployment	○	○	○
Lack of basic services/in…	○	○	○
Ethnic discrimination	○	○	○
Economic inequalities (w…	○	○	○
Economic inequalities (r…	○	○	○
Job quality	○	○	○
Criminality	○	○	○
Corruption	○	○	○

13. AFTER THE COVID-19 OUTBREAK, WHAT WAS YOUR OVERALL PERCEPTION OF COUNTRY'S DEVELOPMENT ? (In terms of basic infrastructures/services; economic and social opportunities; etc.) *

- ○ Declining
- ○ Steady
- ○ Increasing
- ○ Not able to answer

14. PLEASE INDICATE THE MAIN OBSTACLE/S FOR YOUR COUNTRY'S ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT *

	1	2	3	4	5
Women empow...	○	○	○	○	○
Youth unemplo...	○	○	○	○	○
Income inequal...	○	○	○	○	○
Ethnic discrimi...	○	○	○	○	○
Criminality	○	○	○	○	○
Corruption	○	○	○	○	○
State policies	○	○	○	○	○

15. PLEASE INSERT SOME EXAMPLES OF OTHER FACTORS IMPACTING ON COUNTRY'S GROWTH

Testo risposta lunga

16. PLEASE INDICATE WHAT YOU CONSIDER IMPORTANT FOR THE COUNTRY'S GROWTH *

	1	2	3	4	5
State aids	○	○	○	○	○
Regional aids (f...	○	○	○	○	○
International ai...	○	○	○	○	○

SUMMARY

The primary purpose of this thesis is to provide the eventual readers the structural factors explaining why a less-developed context such as the Middle East has struggled, and still struggles today, to overcome and fill the existing gap between the so-called "first world" and the other ones. All this work was done by analysing the concept of inequality and its concrete application in two sample contexts of the MENA region, such as Jordan and Lebanon. The choice of two similar but structurally different countries has been helpful to highlight the existence of endogen factors responsible for this disparity.

As explained in the introduction, the concept of inequality has become a hot topic during the last few years, with many scholars that have started to focus on this dangerous disparity path undertaken globally. Indeed, historically speaking, the world has always gone at different rates and speeds. However, since the beginning of the globalization phenomenon, the process has sharply accelerated, with several countries lagging well behind their modernized counterparts.

The first chapter provides a deep description of the concept of "inequality," defining its evolution and how it could adapt on a case-by-case basis. In the first section, the research describes the six main drivers of inequalities (Foerster and Istvàn Gyoergy, 2015). In addition, the first paragraph highlights the historical development of international responses to the issue of "global disparities." The research then focuses on the worst possible evolution of inequalities - the so-called "poverty traps" - representing a scenario in which an individual is unable to escape his/her limited options. Considering that these traps come in various shapes and sizes, the research analyses most of the several factors that could affect their formation.

The first variable examined was the reference socioeconomic context of a person, often characterized by the phenomenon of "social polarization" (Bénabou, 1993), meaning a distinct distribution of people between upscale and less well-to-do neighbourhoods. This usually leads to substantial disparities in education and training opportunities, creating a vicious cycle (Kozol, 1991) in which inhabitants of these "poor" areas are unable to find well-paid jobs due to their scarce skills and qualifications, and "trapping" their children in this condition of scarce opportunities. The analysis then reports that social influences could be another trigger of this vicious cycle. The so-called "membership theory" demonstrates that a group has the power to modify the perceptions and decisions of a single individual, altering his/her outcomes and leading him/her to commit actions not in line with personal willingness. Finally, existing inequalities can also originate from the psychological roots of a single individual, minority, or

ethnic group (Volpato, 2019). The analysis shows that thanks to the numerous studies conducted during the last century (Ash, 1956, and Morris and Miller, 1975), it is possible to underline psychological disparities originating from the mental mechanisms of "dominance," "submission," and the so-called "stereotype threat" (Steele and Aronson, 1995).

The chapter then highlights the main fragilities characterizing the "Islamic welfare states" (Francesca, 2013). The research thus focused on the concept of inequality applied to the Middle Eastern context, analysing its historical development since the establishment of the Ottoman Empire (1299), and evaluating the impacting influence of Islamic beliefs on its interpretation. The paragraph provides examples of the leading Islamic instruments to face inequalities, such as the institutionalized charity practises of *zakat* and *sadaka* and the pious foundations, the so-called *waqf*, providing low-interest loans to the population. Finally, after centuries of enlarging disparities between the whole Middle East and the rest of the modernized world, the paragraph reports that the "liberal modernization turn" experienced by the whole region during the last century has led to an average reduction of the inequality gap at the global level. However, at the same time, the region experienced a massive increase in within-country inequalities, with single states facing an enlarging gap both at the domestic and regional level.

Chapter two provides the historical background of the different challenges, conflicts, and domestic crises experienced by the two-sample countries - Jordan and Lebanon - selected to perform this research. Both countries were part of the Ottoman Empire since its establishment but, after the signing of the Sykes-Picot agreement, they fell under Western domination.

The first section analysed the Jordan historical development, starting from the separation between Palestine and Transjordan and evaluating the impact of Hashemite expansionist ambitions in the region. Great Britain provided the country with aids and resources, building infrastructures and establishing a Westernized economic model, thus playing a crucial role in designing the country as we see it today. The British mandate in Transjordan lasted until 1946, year in which the country officially became independent under the name of "Hashemite Kingdom of Transjordan." Since then, the country had to face several crises, ranging from the massive migration inflow of Palestinians to the four Arab-Israeli conflicts. Moreover, in its early stages, the country suffered from an unstable political situation, resolved only thanks to the appointment of King Hussein in 1953. The second half of the 20th century was characterized by an outstanding country's development, with Jordan experiencing significant growth in essential services and facilities, alongside increasing inequalities. The research thus provides

historical evidence of how the subsequent crises – Black September, First and Second Gulf wars, the Syrian conflict, etc. – further deteriorated this issue of mounting disparities.

The second part of the chapter highlights France's "mandatory" administration and influence on Lebanon. The paragraph points out how the French upper hand on the main fields of Lebanon administration curbed the sectarian divisions' impact on the country's social, economic, and political level. In November 1943, France officially declared the end of its mandate in Lebanon. The analysis then highlights the sectarian character of the 1943 constitution, one of the trigger motives leading to the outbreak of the dramatic civil war. The two decades before the conflict's outbreak were characterized by political instability and an unprecedented economic and social crisis, generating growing discontent among the population, especially throughout its lower branches (mostly living in the so-called "poverty belt"). The growing discontent and the struggle between the different sects led, in 1975, to the civil war's outbreak. The conflict dramatically affected those living along the "poverty belt" and citizens on the southern border, enlarging the existing inequalities present in Lebanon. The Ta'if Agreement signed in 1989 ended the civil war and posed the basis for a new constitutional law, recognizing a need for social justice and equal development among the regions and imposing a balance of power's parity between Christians and Muslims. Despite the apparent peace, the following years were characterized by other crises, proving that both massive migrations and the continuous sectarian political struggles still condemns Lebanon to a structural and potentially detrimental instability.

The third and fourth chapters are the key factors to provide evidence of common ground and actual presence of structural components leading to substantial inequalities in the Middle East.

Chapter three focuses on Jordan, starting its analysis by evaluating the impact of cultural background and the historical, ideological, and ethnic influences on the country's growth. The research shows that the Islamic culture is crucial in designing and affecting poverty alleviation strategies in Jordan, both due to institutionalized institutions (*Ministry of Awqaf*) and practises (*waqf* activities) and thanks to the considerable number of charitable organizations spread across the country. However, the strict implementation of Islamic tenets has led to the exclusion of minority groups, especially those of Christian origin, from this doctrinal welfare state, fostering growing disparities within the country's borders. Moreover, the analysis focused on the role of women as a potential engine for concrete and sustainable growth (Sen, 2001). Indeed, Jordan still lags well behind the most developed countries in terms of women's inclusion into the workforce, directing its primary efforts towards the issue of female empowerment at a social

level. Thus, Jordan's potential for development and fight against inequalities forcibly passes through an increasing openness towards women empowerment in all the spheres of public life.

The research then analyses the main variables – GDP, unemployment, school enrolment, etc. – affecting Jordan's socioeconomic fabric. The analysis reports that the reputation of a "safe place" in the unstable Middle East area provided Jordan with considerable investments and massive people inflows, at the same time boosting some development variables and enlarging the existing inequalities, especially in three main categories: women, local communities, and migrants. Moreover, considering the small number of incidents in the last few decades in Jordan, the analysis shows the marginal impact of armed conflicts on national socioeconomic indicators. By contrast, the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic proves to be dramatic for Jordan's socioeconomic environment. Finally, the research demonstrates that three other different variables played a considerable role in curbing Jordan domestic growth: the gender gap, the declining school enrolment, and the enlarging disparities among different governorates.

The third paragraph focuses on the effects of migration on Jordan's development. The research shows that Jordan has historically been a regional migration crossroads since the 1948 Palestinian exodus (*Nakba*). Migration has contributed both to Jordan's nation-building process and its subsequent economic growth, due to massive development aids from the international community and considerable amounts of remittances. Nevertheless, the legal requirements for admission and work permit diverted most of the refugees' workforce towards the economy's informal sector, suffering from abuses, unhealthy working conditions, and low salaries. Therefore, massive migration flows have had two significant effects on Jordan's socioeconomic environment. First, Jordan's unemployment rate consistently grew right after the principal migration inflows, diverting the state policies to combat this devastating trend. On the other hand, the abovementioned massive exploitation of refugees' workforce drastically enlarged the vast and growing disparities within the Jordan's border.

The last section of chapter three focuses on the international aids' impact on Jordan's economic development, dividing the analysis into regional and global support. The research showed that Jordan received vast amounts of aids from its Arab neighbours during its nation-building process and to deal with the significant trigger events affecting the region. However, the support received from its Islamic partners has not always been consistent and predictable, especially after the 1994 peace agreement with Israel, forcing Jordan to redesign its projected development spending. All this forced Jordan to seek help outside the Middle East. The research thus

demonstrates that Jordan created a dependence on Western aids, strengthening these partnerships through trade market and financial reforms aimed at increasing exchanges and investments from foreign firms and stakeholders. Thus, Jordan's more recent development in terms of the socioeconomic environment was primarily based on donors' goals and objectives. Therefore, the research demonstrates that most of the country's existing endemic challenges respond to an uneven repartition of funds among the different activities and branches of the population made to foster the "mutually beneficial" relationship with Jordan's leading donors.

The fourth chapter, focusing on Lebanon, follows the same path as the third one, starting the analysis from the cultural and religious background of the country. Since the Ottoman ruling, the research shows that Lebanese society was profoundly divided by ethnic-religious/sectarian cleavages, affecting social life and the country's political system. The analysis then reports that while Lebanon appears to have found a compromise solution at the political level, the society still suffers from significant disparities that originated during the unequal and privileged nation-building process. The research shows that such "politicized" socioeconomic and political aspects affected, directly and indirectly, the development of an efficient Lebanese welfare state, avoiding multilateral and "national" poverty alleviation strategies and denying access to essential services to some marginalized groups of the society. The analysis then focuses on the role of women, highlighting that, despite a legal system relatively progressive, Lebanese women continue to endure injustices on various levels. Indeed, despite the Lebanese central administration efforts on ensuring women's participation in the workforce, the sectarian and tribal background affecting the country's central policies and decisions, together with primitive laws and regulations, still foster significant inequalities and women discrimination.

As for Jordan, the second paragraph focuses on the comprehensive analysis of the main factors affecting Lebanon's socioeconomic development and environment. During this analysis, there is also a specific focus on the civil war's influence on the country's growth, showing that the conflict had a significant impact on the state's economy, hit both directly (i.e., lack of financial support from the central state, etc.) and indirectly (i.e., decrease in the Lebanese workforce due to deaths and emigration). Moreover, the study demonstrates that most of the effects that emerged during the war also affected the following years, with existing internal fractures leading to enlarged disparities among the population. Finally, having analysed also the dramatic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the already fragile Lebanese economy, the research focuses on other three main obstacles to the country's growth – gender gap, disparities among different governorates, and their declining school enrolment – showing that the structural

difficulties to overcome such endogen deficiencies force Lebanon to remain stuck at modest modernization rates and to be unable to exploit all the potentialities present in the country.

The research then analyses the main effects of migration on Lebanese development, highlighting that the country's history has been characterized, contrary to Jordan, by alternating waves of immigration and emigration (Tabar, 2010). Emigration characterized the pre-independence period, with people fleeing to Europe providing the country with significant amounts of social and economic capital. Moreover, those who came back to Lebanon ("return migrants") made a significant contribution to the emergence of a middle class, which was crucial for the foundation of the modern Lebanese state. Another significant wave of emigration started during the 1970s when the entire socioeconomic framework was devastated by the departure of a considerable number of people. At the same time, Lebanon experienced massive migration inflows from nearby Palestine, Iraq, Syria, and Ethiopia, threatening the job market's stability. Despite the central government's attempts to regulate the labour migration, the research shows that the rising of unemployment due to the increasing number of refugees unable to work, the growing number of people employed in the informal/unregulated sector, and the mounting abuses experienced at the workplace has driven the country to the worst crisis in decades and directly affected the existing inequalities among the population.

The fourth chapter concludes its analysis by reporting the role of international aids and NGOs' activities on Lebanese socioeconomic growth. The research reports that, contrary to Jordan, the Lebanese situation was not characterized by alternating periods between funding from Islamic countries and aid from Western institutions/states. Indeed, every crisis benefitted from a joint effort from the international community, gathering funds from Western and Eastern partners and channelling them through strategy-oriented development and recovery programs. The analysis points out that the primary deficiency leading to substantial inequalities among the population consists in the Lebanese incapable management of international funds. The long-term ineffectiveness of government structures at the central and governorate levels has led to a state failure, performing inefficiently in social service delivery and poverty reduction. Thus, the research shows that inequalities, poverty, and ineffective measures to tackle them both would remain a Lebanese structural deficiency unless decision-making and administrative systems would be finally able to overcome the current and steady political influence acting on them.

Finally, the fifth chapter compares the important characteristics discussed in the preceding chapters, emphasizing the main similarities and differences between the two sample countries.

The analysis was carried out in parallel on a variable-by-variable basis, allowing and offering a detailed picture of the structural deficiencies that affect both countries and the aspects that only impact one of them. The differences' analysis helped to understand that, despite some endogenous and structural threats that may be highlighted in the Middle Eastern context, the influence of domestic peculiarities will never allow getting a single image universally applicable on a nation-to-nation basis. However, it was demonstrated that common issues (migration, school enrolment decline, the role of women, impact of international aids, etc.) have a much more powerful impact compared to the domestic peculiarities abovementioned. Thus, the analysis of these variables allows highlighting a "common ground" in the Middle East on which structural deficiencies leading to the formation and growth of massive inequalities lie.

In conclusion, the research confirms a sort of thread definitely more impactful between categories of countries falling within the same context or sharing a similar historical, social, and economic development path. The numerous conflicts, migrations, and all the previously mentioned problems have led to the deterioration of the socio-economic fabrics of these states, benefiting a part of the population and leaving some branches excluded from the development process. Furthermore, it was seen how the impact of religion (mainly Islam) has led to actions, policies, and responses of governments, often in contrast with a universal welfare strategy. Education and the role of women, both structural problems affecting the Middle East, proved to be among the primary drivers for a country's limited development and impossibility to implement credible and sustainable growth. Finally, the analysis emphasizes that the Middle East appears to suffer from a "psychological inequality" fostered by the people's lousy perception of the region, especially in terms of opportunities. Thus, the idea is to further analyse the psychological component within every type of inequality, be it ethnic, social, or economic, to demonstrate if people in the Middle East tend to limit themselves due to a feeling of inferiority with respect to the context they have to face.

Many other examples were and could be highlighted in the Middle East. However, the important thing to understand is only one: the differences found are inevitable, but their effect is marginal compared to that of the commonalities reported in the previous analysis. Therefore, it seems plausible to affirm that the existence of a common path in the creation of inequalities in the Middle East is not simply theoretical speculation but an extraordinarily concrete and current matter. The identification of these structural causes and their subsequent eradication would finally make it possible to bridge the gap between the Middle East and the developed world, starting a path of credible, sustainable, and, finally, fair growth.