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The Center for Comparative Immigration Studies
University of California, San Diego

State, Citizenship, and Diaspora: The Cases of Jordan and Lebanon

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Working Paper 146
February 2007

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In July 1995, Hisham bin `Abdallah al-`Alaoui, the nephew of King Hassan II of Morocco, published an article entitled “Etre Citoyen dans le Monde Arabe.”¹ In it, the Moroccan prince discussed several factors that he regarded as having played key roles in thwarting the emergence of full citizenship in the region. Among them was the failure or lack of will on the part of the modern Middle Eastern state to displace or erase previous forms of authority and loyalty, such as tribal, ethnic, and religious ties, and the evolution of a form of state centralization intertwined with these existing authority structures. It was a bold and stinging indictment of the state’s failure to provide full participation or inclusion—citizenship—in the Arab world.

There is no question that Arab states, the successor administrations to the Ottomans as well as the other regimes across the region, have more often undermined than upheld conditions of meaningful citizenship, at least in the traditional Western sense. And few would argue that the state of citizenship in the Arab world has improved in the years since al-`Alaoui published his controversial analysis. Indeed, aside from a few relatively superficial developments in the electoral sphere in a handful of countries, the balance between rights and responsibilities continues to lean heavily to the side of a “citizen’s” duties, the most important of which is often to accept with minimal questioning continuing state repression and even corruption.

Moreover, whatever changes may be underway as a result of globalization, the international system is still one characterized by the presence and interaction of sovereign states, and citizenship is monitored, controlled by, and vested in those states. Only a state can apply and uphold the rights and obligations of citizenship within a particular territory, through attributes and institutions associated with its sovereignty. That said, states do not operate in a vacuum: myriad forces, many internal but others external, affect a range of state policies.

In the realm of citizenship, the examples of the French in Algeria and the British in Palestine are only two of the most striking regional examples of *outside forces* playing a devastating role in shaping the concept and practice of citizenship with continuing effects to this day. Yet most writings on citizenship in the Arab context focus on the domestic scene, on varying access to and practice of citizenship according to gender, ethnicity, religion, and the like. Just as important, aside from works in a variety of disciplines that address the conditions of non-nationals in the Gulf states or that deal with the status of the Palestinians (whether as second-class citizens of Israel, as an occupied population in the West Bank, or as refugee camps dwellers unwanted in Lebanon), there is little consideration of Arab nationals abroad and their relationships to the home state.

The literature broadly classified as part of the field of transnationalism has important insights for those concerned with questions of diasporas and citizenship, but has not had much impact on Middle Eastern studies.² Given the long-standing authoritarianism in the Arab world it is perhaps understandable that little attention has been given to such issues in the Middle East/North Africa context. If civil, economic, and political rights of the average national are given short shrift on home turf, why should one expect the Arab state to engage in substantially different behavior toward nationals abroad? Nevertheless, for a more complete understanding, not only of citizenship in the region but also of the Arab state itself, consideration of how governments with sizeable numbers of nationals abroad deal with these citizens is critical. In the discussion that follows, the cases of Jordan and Lebanon, both of which have significant number of nationals

living beyond their borders, are explored historically for the lessons about state, citizenship and diaspora that they offer.

Jordan: A Diaspora not of its Own

The dismemberment of Palestine in 1948–49 coincided with the real launching of the oil industry in the states of the Persian Gulf region. With small and generally low-skill populations, however, these states lacked the labor power to expand their infrastructures using the new-found oil wealth. The desperate need of the poor and unemployed of the Arab East, especially the recently displaced Palestinians, thus dovetailed with a growing demand for workers in the Gulf. Skilled labor, Palestinian and other, played a key role in building the bureaucracies of the emerging Gulf states, just as the semi-skilled and unskilled contributed to other forms of building and development.

The Hashemite role in the Palestine War had been controversial. Stories abounded of the Arab Legion's (the British-commanded Jordanian military) having fought Palestinian irregulars rather than the new Israel Defence Forces. Rumors of deals struck between King `Abdallah and the Zionist leadership over the partition of Palestine—rumors that later proved to be largely true³—further served to alienate many of the kingdom's new Palestinian subjects from "their" king. Furthermore, there had been no consensus with regard to the process that had led to the West Bank's annexation by Jordan. Some Palestinian notables were supportive, either having been pro-Hashemite from the beginning or believing, after the disaster of 1948, that the only hope for the future lay in throwing in their lot with `Abdallah. For the less privileged, however, there was little attachment to the new administration in Amman.

Indeed, as part of the annexation process, the word *Palestine* disappeared from official Jordanian documents. If `Abdallah's project was to be successful, these people had to be *Jordanians*, not Palestinians. Nevertheless, although these Jordanian Palestinians were all, according to the 1954 Nationality Law, Jordanian citizens, few identified politically with Jordan. From the beginning, there was a question of difference of identity between the West Bank (Palestine) and the East Bank (Transjordan), based not only in historical experience, but also in differential relations with the regime in Amman.⁴ This difference is related to the question of full citizenship and, while not triggering migration, it nonetheless played a key role in its evolution and in the state's interaction with it.

Outmigration, primarily from the West Bank, began in the aftermath of the 1948 war. In some cases, people moved directly to one of the Gulf shaykhdoms. However, as the Jordanian state began to develop, some movement out of the West Bank much of it abroad but some of it simply to the East Bank, where the regime concentrated its investments as a way of shifting the power base away from important traditional centers like Jerusalem. Migration continued apace, although the numbers were not large, until the 1967 war. The resulting occupation of the West Bank by Israel led many men who had been alone in the Gulf to bring family members out of the occupied territories to join them. Hence a process of family reunification was already underway before the boom in oil prices in the early 1970s began to provide the Gulf states with even greater resources to pay for outside recruitment. In this context it is important to note that the majority of those Jordanians who migrated to the Gulf were of Palestinian origin, a fact that had implications for their relationship to the Hashemite regime and the Jordanian state.

In the meantime, September 1970 witnessed twelve days of bloody battles between the Jordanian army and various Palestinian resistance factions. Black September, as it came to be called, and its aftermath left deep scars. As a result, an "East Banker first" period was initiated during which subsidies to the West Bank (which Jordan had continued to pay even after the occupation) were cut, the percentage of Jordanians of Palestinian origin in the government dropped, and some

Palestinian government personnel were replaced by Transjordanians. The army was also largely Transjordanized. Subsequently, as the emerging Palestinian resistance organizations began to attract increasing attention from Palestinians (wherever they happened to reside), the Jordanian regime, fearful of domestic repercussions, used its internal security apparatus to monitor and harass those involved in related political activities. This surveillance extended beyond the borders of the kingdom to the communities abroad.

Few of these Palestinians would have thought of themselves as part of a “Jordanian diaspora,” a term which, to the best of my knowledge, has never been used.⁵ To the contrary, they considered themselves to be part of another people, the Palestinians, who had been uprooted and dispersed by the 1948 war, and then, in many cases, again by the 1967 war. So, not only did many feel little affiliation with the Hashemite regime, they also identified with another people, some of whom had Jordanian citizenship as they did, but many of whom were stateless residents of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, or Egypt. For all of these reasons, the dynamics and stakes of the Jordanian state-Jordanian expatriate relationship as well as the boundaries of Jordanian citizenship, go to the heart of regime/state security and the kingdom’s territorial integrity

The term long used by the state to refer to Jordanians abroad was simply *al-mughtaribun al-urdunniyyun*. The closest equivalent in English would be “Jordanian expatriates,” but the translation is not exact, nor does it carry the full potential meaning of the Arabic. The root of the word in Arabic (*ghrb*) has the meaning of “to go away or depart” but can also mean “strange.” Hence, *mughtarib* can imply the sense of being both away and out of place, not just out of country. The term does not classify the nature of or the reason for the expatriates’ presence abroad—North African states, for example, referred to their expatriates during this period as Moroccan or Tunisian *workers* abroad. Given the history of its annexation of these people, the Jordanian state’s greatest interest was probably simply in insisting on the use of the adjective “Jordanian,” rather than in focusing on the noun, *mughtarib* or the present participle *‘amil* (one who is working) to refer to these expatriates.

While the terminology used may be insufficient to allow us to draw clear conclusions about the state’s approach, some elements of policy may be discerned from an examination of successive development programs or plans. In the 1962–67 “Five year program for economic development,” the only mention of those working abroad was in relation to the importance of their remittances in providing income to their families in Jordan.⁶ The lack of emphasis on those working abroad probably had to do with the focus on domestic job creation as well as the small numbers of expatriates, since the 1961 census placed the total number of those living, not just working, abroad at only 63,000.

The political context of the time also should be borne in mind. Beginning in the mid-1950s, Jordan had experienced a period of domestic turmoil, which culminated in a coup attempt in 1957 and the subsequent imposition of martial law. Given the crackdown at home, a Jordanian opposition to the regime developed abroad, just as Jordan’s regional rivals sought to cultivate support against the Hashemites within the kingdom. Not surprisingly, control of expatriates was therefore a key concern, and during this period, the government’s main instrument of control was the exit permit, without which one could not travel abroad.⁷ However, as part of a move toward expanding personal freedoms in the kingdom, the exit permit was abolished in 1962, thereby opening the way for easier movement by Jordanians between the kingdom and a host state.⁸

The 1967 war intervened shortly thereafter, and marked a critical, negative turning point on several fronts. In the realm of Jordanian domestic development, it undermined whatever energy or commitment remained to institutionalize a more domestically-, rather than external-aid-driven form of economic development. After 1967, the Arab oil states stepped in to provide aid to Jordan to deal with the immediate military and refugee impact of the war. The effects only a few years later of skyrocketing oil prices, combined with a renewed focus on military spending, meant that

the basic rentier nature of the state was reinforced rather than supplanted by domestic productive forces. As oil states found themselves with unexpectedly large budgetary resources, they dramatically increased their importation of labor, much of which came from Jordan. In this way, an additional, key form of rent that developed for Jordan was that of expatriate workers' remittances.

Not surprisingly then, the 1973–75 development plan was the first to mention workers abroad in any detail, referring to them as a “not small part” (*juz' ghayr qalil*) of the Jordanian labor force and classifying their financial remittances to Jordan as among the important sources of foreign currency support for the budget. This was also the first planning document to note that the government needed to look after the interests of expatriate workers and to protect their rights. Indeed, to ensure that the workers would benefit as much as possible from the advantages of host country labor laws, the plan proposed that the Jordanian government conclude bilateral labor accords with those countries and charge the relevant Jordanian diplomatic missions with following upon workers' concerns.⁹

The 1973–75 plan also continued to stress the importance of reducing unemployment and underemployment. Although no explicit link was drawn between the government's continued emphasis on vocational education and labor for export, this plan did state under the section on education that developing human resources in the kingdom was one of the most important ways to produce and increase hard currency income.¹⁰ Education and vocational training for export were becoming an integral part of the kingdom's economy. Rather than undertake the structural reforms that might have reduced the need for citizens to seek employment abroad, the state largely abdicated its role of providing this element of Marshall's social citizenship, employment. Again, overwhelming numbers of this “export commodity” were Jordanians of Palestinian origin.

Although the kingdom briefly experienced a period of domestic skill shortages in the late 1970s,¹¹ the government maintained its overall commitment to a largely open-door emigration policy for a number of reasons. First, and probably most important, was the level of remittances and their significance to the Jordanian economy: in a number of years these levels were higher than external budgetary aid. Second, placing restrictions on labor outflows might have had negative effects on the level of external support from the oil states, as the close relationship between foreign aid receipts from these states and the supply of labor to them was noted in several official reports. Third, domestic labor market expansion alone could not for long absorb the growing labor force, given the paucity of resources, the high birth rate, but also the degree of state investment and economic restructuring this would have required. Finally, a restrictive emigration policy would have been difficult to police without increasing the level of repression.¹² In recognition of the importance of the role played by the labor force in the process of economic and social development, a separate Ministry of Labor was established in February 1976. Significantly, concern with expatriate labor was clearly part of the ministry's mission; in 1978, it signed bilateral labor agreements with both Pakistan and Libya and began to appoint labor attachés to key embassies, first among them those in Kuwait and the UAE.¹³

In reviewing this record of policy toward emigration, one cannot but be struck in the Jordanian case by the minimal institutionalized state interest in the *mughtaribin* as Jordanian citizens as opposed to the state's instrumental concern with them as sources of remittances or alleviators of unemployment. Even those government ministries assigned expatriate-related tasks, such as the Ministry of Labor, did little, aside from offering secondment or assisting with placement. Had the Jordanian presence abroad remained small and insignificant, the lack of a broader or more active state interest in the expatriates would be easier to understand. Yet, as time passed, as noted above, the levels of remittances became more important to the balance of payments and by the early 1980s some one-third of the national labor force was employed abroad. How may we explain this underwhelming state response?

One explanation may lie in the fact that unlike the situation of the Maghrebi workers in Europe, the vast majority of Jordanian expatriates lived in *Arab* countries. Thus, they had no problem in maintaining their language, religion, or culture, and consequently there was no need for the home state to provide services or institutions to reinforce these ties. The different cultural atmosphere and political and economic possibilities in the two cases of receiving states (Europe vs. the Gulf) may also explain the Jordanian state's apparent complacency regarding attracting remittances. In Europe, political integration in the form of the acquisition of various rights including, ultimately, citizenship, was possible for the Maghrebis. In the case of the Gulf states, on the other hand, there was no possibility of such political assimilation or integration. Moreover, in the Gulf, non-nationals were not even permitted to own immovable property, and starting a business required at least 51 percent co-ownership by a Gulf state national.

Finally, there was the general political and security situation in the Gulf states. With the exception of Kuwait, which for a number of years allowed socio-political organizing among Palestinians,¹⁴ the Gulf states did not permit expatriate organizing or political activity. Indeed, security cooperation between the Jordanian state and the security services of the Gulf states was as well-known as it was widespread. The Gulf states could not make these Palestinian Jordanians feel more Jordanian, but they certainly could and did attempt to prevent them from acting in any formal way that would have undermined their status as Jordanian citizens or the security of the regime. As a result, while King Husayn did make some moves to court these communities, in general, it must have been understood that even if they were not particularly loyal to Jordan, the Jordanian state faced no serious *state* competition and hence it could invest minimal efforts. Expatriates could be expected to continue sending remittances to the kingdom even if they felt politically marginalized or alienated.

Much has been written of the king's competition with the Palestine Liberation Organization's Yasir `Arafat for the loyalty of Jordan's Palestinians,¹⁵ but for years there were few citizenship-related "carrots" extended to these people. An indication of a change in the state's general lack of institutional involvement came in the mid-1980s. The initiative – the convening of expatriate conferences -- came precisely in the context of declining bi-lateral Gulf state aid to Jordan and, at least initially, of a political rapprochement between Husayn and `Arafat, although relations took a negative turn by the time of the second conference in July 1986. Two rather obvious factors appear to account for the convening of this series of meetings: superficially, to give expatriate Jordanians the opportunity to visit Jordan and discuss their problems with the government so that it might become more responsive to expatriate concerns, thus enabling the Jordanian government in effect to assert greater "sovereignty" over the large Palestinian-Jordanian community in the Gulf states, particularly in Kuwait¹⁶; and, more importantly, to stimulate interest among expatriates in investing in Jordan. Suffice it here to say that this series of conferences produced few results and was terminated after the summer of 1989.

Beyond its work to secure compensation for those expatriate Jordanians who were forced from Kuwait in 1990-91 by the Iraqi invasion of the emirate, the Jordanian state did not manifest any renewed institutional interest in the communities abroad until 1998. This time, however, it was in conjunction with the private sector, and the initiative was to revive the series of expatriate conferences, this time for businessmen only. (The meetings in the 1980s had been open to any expatriate, and many of those who attended were educators or employees in government offices, not a group likely to have a lot to invest.) Jordan had been struggling with a series of economic shocks: debt rescheduling in 1989; the devastating impact of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent 1991 war; the impact of sanctions on Iraq, its most important pre-1990 trading partner; and by the late 1990s, the failure of its peace with Israel to bear economic fruit. Clearly, the re-initiation of expatriate conferences was prompted by the state's desire to increase investment at a time of continuing economic difficulties.

Jordan's expatriate communities today contain proportionally a larger percentage of Transjordanians (although with increasing intermarriage the distinction is not always easy to substantiate) than they did in the past. This owes both to the decreasing ability of the Jordanian state to absorb Transjordanians into its employment ranks and to the massive return to the kingdom of the overwhelmingly Palestinian communities in the Gulf as a result of the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Moreover, the retreat of the worst excesses of the authoritarian state that characterized earlier periods and from which Jordanians of Palestinian origin suffered disproportionately, combined with the regime's relinquishment of claims to the West Bank, have certainly changed the views of many Jordanian Palestinians about the kingdom and their relationship to it. Nevertheless, state policy still falls far short of embodying King Husayn's famous line "*al-insan aghla ma namluk*" (the human being is the most precious thing we have), unless precious is translated into dinars or dollars.

Lebanon: A Bird with Two Wings

Lebanese emigration began under the Ottoman Empire, well before the demarcation of a Lebanese state. Indeed, the earliest emigrants from the territory of present-day Lebanon often referred to themselves as Syrians. This "pre-state" emigration was, not surprisingly, undertaken on individual initiative, not on an Ottoman-organized work-contract basis.¹⁷ Such a framework certainly helped shape a different kind of relationship between these emigrants and the subsequently established state, one which explains at least part of Lebanon's laissez-faire approach to emigration. The political authorities were not involved from the beginning, and the type of state that ultimately did evolve was of a minimalist nature, certainly by regional standards. A second factor distinguishing the Lebanese case is that, although perhaps a third of those who left for the Americas ultimately did return home, the sheer distance between Lebanon and this part of the *mahjar*¹⁸ was so great as to render the experience and subsequent relationship quite different from that between, for example, Maghrebi emigrants and their home countries. Indeed, one of the striking features of the Lebanese case is that many of the original emigrants acquired the nationality of their adopted countries, often allowing their Lebanese citizenship to lapse. Depending upon how one counts or defines "Lebanese," a majority of them and their descendants are no longer citizens, speak little or no Arabic, and have never been to Lebanon.

Another difference deriving from history and political development is that emigrants have long been an important theme in Lebanese political, economic, and cultural life. Writers, publishers, and politicians in the *mahjar* have had a continuing impact; émigrés, particularly those living in West Africa and in the Gulf, have continued to send remittances back to their home villages to build or support relatives; Lebanese political and religious leaders often visit the diaspora; and representatives from communities of Lebanese origin frequently travel to Lebanon. Nevertheless, despite a clear recognition of the emigrants' and their descendants' real and potential contributions, the Lebanese *state* has largely failed to marshal their energies. The limited political and economic reach of the state has not deterred emigrants from transferring substantial levels of remittances back home—indeed its limited nature may well have been a key factor in encouraging such activity. However, these monies and other energies have been overwhelmingly directed to more particularistic, rather than public, projects.

The question of Lebanese citizenship and its relationship to the emigrant communities was both sensitive and topical during the late Mandate and early independence periods. This is largely because the emigrants up to that point were overwhelmingly Christian. Whereas the Maronite Christians formed a majority in the smaller Mt. Lebanon area, the establishment in 1920 of a Greater Lebanon that included much more territory but also many more Muslims meant that the Christian majority in the larger entity was tenuous at best. The emphasis on maintaining or restoring Lebanese citizenship to emigrants, therefore, had everything to do with the confessional and political balance in Lebanon as it moved toward and then beyond independence.

Following independence, according to a law promulgated at the end of 1946, anyone of Lebanese origin living abroad who had not yet chosen Lebanese citizenship had the right to claim it upon his or her definitive return to Lebanon. Nonetheless, whether because of degree of integration into the new host society, the weakness of Lebanese consular representation or the lack of initiative in making emigrants aware of the benefits of Lebanese citizenship, few ever exercised this option.¹⁹ There are numerous examples of memoranda and published articles calling for the extension of the deadline for applying for citizenship and for better facilities abroad so that Lebanese could take advantage of the possibility of acquiring or maintaining their nationality.²⁰

The number of Lebanese abroad remains a highly political issue. As with the domestic population (for which the last census was carried out in 1932 and which registered 793,396 resident citizens and 254,987 emigrants),²¹ there are few reliable statistics on these communities today. Instead, one finds widely (or wildly) varying numbers ranging from three to fourteen million (including descendants), although most serious analysts lean toward the lower figures.²² The 1932 census found a slight Christian majority in the country. However, in determining the subsequent allotment of seats in the parliament, a 6–5 Christian-Muslim formula was agreed upon, based upon the presence of a large Christian population abroad. In this way, the confessional balance upon which the country came to “rest” clearly included considerations of the large expatriate population. Lest one underestimate their importance, expressions referring to Lebanon make clear that this expatriate presence was integral to the composition of the country and to its glory. There is the image of “Lebanon as a bird with two wings, resident and expatriate” (*ta'irah bi-jinahayn, al-muqim w-al-mughtarib*); of “the Lebanese imperium” (*al-imbiriyaturiyyah al-lubnaniyyah*); of “the Lebanese world” (*al-'alam al-lubnani*); of “the Lebanese presence in the world” (*al-hudur al-lubnani f-il-'alam*); and so on.

In the late mandate period, the government of December 1941 through July 1942 included a Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Interests of the Lebanese Abroad. However, at this stage, interest in expatriates was most consistently expressed by two prominent political parties, both of which drew their members overwhelmingly from Lebanese Christian communities. The Syrian Social Nationalist Party (SSNP) of Antun Sa'adeh (who himself had spent eleven years in the Americas) had repeatedly expressed its concern over the loss to the homeland of those who went abroad.²³ However, it was the Kata'ib or Phalange Party of Pierre Jumayyil (who had also lived outside of Lebanon, in Egypt) that called in September 1945 for holding a conference to discuss how Lebanon's relations “*avec ses absents*” should be structured.²⁴

In a meeting only a few days later, on 6 October 1945, the Lebanese cabinet adopted the following resolutions regarding the émigré question: to create a special section in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) to address questions regarding émigrés; to restore Lebanese nationality to any émigré returning definitively to the country and to secure other accords to safeguard Lebanese nationality among the communities abroad; to extend consular representation; to conclude international agreements to protect émigré rights; and to provide financial assistance to repatriate émigrés. Clearly, however, this governmental response fell short of the Phalange's call for the establishment of a separate ministry; only an authority/division (*maslaha*) of Expatriate Affairs was established as part of the MFA.²⁵

Financial constraints alone may explain the decision simply to add an Émigré Directorate to the MFA and change the name to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates (MFAE) rather than establish a separate ministry. However, in discussing this issue at the time, several writers also mentioned the need to overcome sectarianism (*al-ta'ifiyyah*) or other narrow partisan intrigues if émigré institutions and policy were to succeed.²⁶ This was a veiled way of expressing concern that the vast majority of Lebanese expatriates were Christians (hence the Phalange and the SSNP preoccupation with the issue) and that the establishment of a separate ministry to deal with them would have raised Muslim concerns in the context of a Lebanese political system sensitive to

challenges to the careful (precarious) confessional balance. The sensitivity related, not just to the fact that such a ministry would have been seen as the preserve of a particular confessional group, but also to the demands that such a ministry was likely to encounter. One of the recurrent themes, and one that featured prominently in the Kata'ib's recommendations, was that Lebanese abroad were unjustly excluded from participation in the political system at home. In other words, the expatriates deserved the right to vote in Lebanon²⁷—a demand that would have upset the balance established by the 1943 National Pact.

Successive post-independence governments took steps that suggested concern with, if not a full-fledged policy toward, expatriate communities. Perhaps most important from the point of view of institutional development was the 1960 convening of the first world conference of Lebanese emigres in Beirut. The outcome of this meeting was the establishment of the Lebanese World Union (LWU; *al-Jami'ah al-Lubaniyyah f-il-'Alam*). In his address to this meeting, President Fouad Chehab called upon the participants to set ambitious goals in order to achieve plans for economic, cultural, and social development from which both the mother country and the country of residence would benefit and to strengthen the ties of friendship between Lebanon and the host countries.

As for state planning, unlike its Jordanian counterpart, the Lebanese government did not produce successive economic or development plans through which one might trace or piece together a coherent state policy toward émigrés. Nevertheless, in his study of Lebanese migration policy, Hamdan insists that successive governments did realize the importance of the role of the emigrants, both in Lebanon and abroad. His evidence includes the establishment of the special directorate for expatriates in the MFA, the expansion of the country's diplomatic and consular networks as well as the role of the Ministry of Tourism in increasing ties with the expatriates and in providing them services. Nevertheless, after surveying these efforts he concludes that they were superficial and uncoordinated. Successive governments devoted no attention to learning the specifics of the communities or to the forms of their integration into host state labor markets with an eye to organizing the labor exodus or signing agreements regarding work conditions with receiving countries.²⁸

As for the LWU, according to its constitution, it was to be a nongovernmental, apolitical, nonconfessional, and nonlabor organization. It was to include Lebanese expatriates as well as resident Lebanese returnees who had spent at least five years abroad.²⁹ Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, the outbreak of civil war in Lebanon in 1975 had a serious and continuing impact on the organization. Several years passed before the problems manifested themselves institutionally, but once they did, the LWU found itself in a situation of increasing internal contestation and, as a byproduct, paralysis, when it came to its primary functions. As an already weakened state that had never given much more than superficial attention to questions concerning its émigrés, Lebanon was hardly in a better position to implement a coherent policy during a period when it was paralyzed, riven by factionalism, or captured by one of the militias. Despite numerous attempts by the state at reconciliation within the WLCU,³⁰ the fracture lines were never repaired, and it subsequently effectively split. Although personal interests and turf wars played a role, the basic and continuing target of the conflict was the Syrian presence and role in Lebanon.

Another Lebanese state initiative that involved the expatriate communities was the establishment of a separate Ministry of Expatriates following the end of the civil war. Fifteen years of fighting had taken a terrible toll, in terms of destruction, loss of human life, and population displacement. To rebuild, the country needed all the human and financial resources it could muster. Lebanon's strategic reserves—so critical during such a period—lay with its expatriate communities. Thus, in order to organize clear and targeted relations between the two wings of Lebanon (resident and expatriate), a new tool was needed: an authority that would take on the task of marshaling diaspora contributions.³¹

However, whenever it came to questions of institutional development, among the obstacles were domestic, confessional, and political considerations. The internal balance of power had been affected by the years of civil war, and its settlement, in the form of what are known as the Ta'if accords, laid the basis for a somewhat reconfigured political system. The post civil-war parameters of power apportionment in the country then played a key role in the decision to create several new ministries during the first government of Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri,³² among them a Ministry of Expatriates. Those in government circles, close to the then-new prime minister, insisted that the ministries responded to a set of tangible societal needs. However, others charged that they were established simply part of a strategy to create sufficient spoils to satisfy all the political and confessional groups who were party to the Ta'if accords.

As a result, opposition to the new ministry arose immediately from within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and from the already fractionalized WLCU.³³ MFA opposition was largely a question of turf. From within the WLCU, however, the resistance was confessionally and politically based. It had been the Christians who had long called for a Ministry of Emigration, yet when the ministry was finally established, the minister and director-general chosen were Shi'ites, thus alienating many Christians. In such circumstances, they preferred that responsibility for the diaspora be returned to the MFA.³⁴

Although a change in ministers alleviated the problem somewhat, turf wars continued until 7 August 2000, when the Ministry of Expatriates, with all its employees and property, was formally reintegrated into the MFA (to become again, the MFAE) under a new prime minister, the veteran politician Salim al-Huss. The reasons given were the continuing problems with dualities of function and the unwillingness of the MFA to cede responsibilities.³⁵ According to al-Huss's counselor for expatriate affairs, Ahmed Tabbara, the hope was that this step of reintegration would reactivate the ties between expatriates and their country and put an end to the ghosts of past differences through the implementation of a comprehensive emigration policy through the MFAE.

Conclusion

What can these brief examinations of state-expatriate community relationships tell us about the status or evolution of citizenship in the Arab world?

In the first place, it is clear that both states viewed their populations abroad first and foremost as exploitable resources—either as workers who alleviated domestic employment and sent back remittances or as potential investors—rather than as citizens. The Jordanian state did play a role in arranging secondment of government employees and established a separate Ministry of Labor, one of whose functions was to address the issue of expatriate labor. Aside from the brief periods in the 1960s, however, there was no real emphasis on developing indigenous productive forces so that more of Jordan's population could achieve economic/social citizenship *at home* through absorption in the domestic labor market.

In the case of Lebanon, official noises were made periodically about the importance of attracting expatriate investment, but the state itself did little, apparently satisfied with the fact that monies were coming in and unwilling to challenge the confessional balance, even if the money went overwhelmingly to projects with little direct public benefit. The state did open numerous diplomatic missions for reasons related to the presence of sizeable expatriate communities, rather than the significance of political bilateral relations, and several of these missions did intervene when the expatriate communities were in danger—as happened several times in African countries. However, such missions did not generally maintain continuous and direct involvement with the communities, and hence they could not provide the state the information needed for constructing a fully developed policy toward the diaspora.

Although neither of these largely economically based approaches suggests exclusion, the Lebanese approach suggests a hands-off stance, whereas the Jordanian one seems to proceed from what has been characterized as the “milk cow” understanding of expatriates, rather than one based on a concern for their rights as citizens. Not until aid from the Gulf states began to drop in the early 1980s and expatriate contributions took on an even greater importance did the state initiate its first serious attempts to listen to the concerns of its communities abroad, but again, with an eye to further economic benefit.

Moving to the political side of the ledger, the departure from full citizenship is even more glaring. In the case of Lebanon a combination of bureaucratic inefficiency combined at times with political malevolence practiced by members of one confessional community against others has meant that many Lebanese have lost their citizenship (or allowed it to lapse) or their property while abroad. Many of the earliest emigrants had opted for citizenship in their new host states according to a rational cost-benefit analysis, but others were in fact deprived of their rights and property. Worse, these communities became an integral, if at times unmentioned, part of the long-standing competition between confessional elites over power in the republic. The large number of Christians abroad was used in the period leading up to independence as an argument for giving Christians in Lebanon proper a greater share of the political pie. Hence a system emerged in which large numbers of former or potential citizens had no political or other rights, but were nonetheless in effect used to help maintain the power position of their co-religionists in Lebanon, as the threat of renewing their citizenship or offering them the franchise was periodically raised to prevent a serious reassessment of the confessional balance in the country. Thus we have an inclusion of “les absents” in a way which in effect assigns them political power, but which allows this power to be appropriated by elites in the country.

The case of Jordan on this count is completely different, although contradictions between inclusion and exclusion may be observed as well. The majority of the expatriates were of Palestinian origin but held Jordanian citizenship—a political benefit that many of their compatriots in other parts of the diaspora did not enjoy. Nevertheless, because of their historical relationship to the regime and the evolution of Palestinian politics, Jordanians of Palestinian origin were forcibly included in a “passport citizenship,” a step that was key to Abdallah’s territorial ambitions; however, most were distinctly of second class citizenship when it came to political and economic rights. Of course, the authoritarian nature of the Jordanian state—as attested to by, among other things, the exit permit required during the late 1950s and early 1960s—rendered citizenship for any Jordanian, regardless of origin, highly circumscribed. Moreover, during periods of Hashemite-PLO confrontation or feuding, political involvement by Jordanians of Palestinian origin was at best carefully monitored and at worst punished. Hence, while denied full citizenship in Jordan, they were also blocked in their attempts to contribute to self-determination as Palestinians.

This brief comparison demonstrates that the Arab state’s projection into its communities abroad resembles closely its practices at home. A laissez-faire Lebanese state interacts with its communities abroad along largely laissez-faire lines. On the other hand, a “security state” like that of Jordan, has, through most of its history, employed much the same methods abroad as it has/does in the kingdom. Only crises of the state—the growing deficits in Jordan in the 1980s and the need to rebuild in Lebanon after the civil war—seem to have provided openings for changes in approach to the expatriates.

Having said that, it would be wrong to conclude that a consideration of these communities adds little to our analysis. The very structure of the Lebanese system can in part be traced to the presence of the large diaspora communities; and in the case of Jordan it is difficult to imagine that the state would have remained stable without the departure of large numbers of Jordanians of Palestinian origin and without their remittances. These two diasporas are in effect the hidden

other, a key element without which the political and economic evolution of these two countries would have looked markedly different. Much as feminists have argued for the need to look for the women as the excluded other, who nonetheless plays a major role in the explanation, so expatriate communities, distant but not blocked from view, must be fully incorporated if our analyses of the evolution of the Arab state are to be complete and sound.

Endnotes

¹ *Le Monde Diplomatique*, July 1995.

² For the work that in effect launched the field, see Linda Basch, Nina Glick Schiller, Cristina Szanton Blanc, *Nations Unbound: Transnational Projects, Postcolonial Predicaments, and Deterritorialized Nation-States* (Langhorne, PA: Gordon and Breach, 1994). For a critique of the field's definition, scope and problematique, see David Fitzgerald, *Negotiating Extra-Territorial Citizenship: Mexican Migration and the Transnational Politics of Community*. CCIS Monograph 2 (La Jolla: University of California, San Diego, Center for Comparative Immigration Studies, 2000).

³ See Avi Shlaim, *Collusion Across the Jordan: King Abdullah, the Zionist Movement, and the Partition of Palestine* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).

⁴ For a discussion of the identity issue, see Laurie A. Brand, "Palestinians and Jordanians: A Crisis of Identity," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 4 (1995): 46–61.

⁵ In the first place, the numbers of Jordanians of Transjordanian origin abroad was quite small. Second, the word used for the Palestinian diaspora in Arabic is *al-shitat*, which implies a scattering, not of the subjects' making. In the Lebanese case, in contrast, the word most often used today is *al-intishar* (which has gradually replaced *al-ightirab*, expatriateness), which implies a broad expansion or spreading out and does not imply forced movement.

⁶ Al-Mamlakah al-Urdunniyyah al-Hashimiyyah, Majlis al-I`mar al-Urdunni, *Barnamij al-Sanawat al-Khamis l-il-Tanmiyah al-Iqtisadiyyah, 1962-67* (n.p., n.d.), p. 37.

⁷ Adnan Abu-Odeh, *Jordanians, Palestinians, and the Hashemite Kingdom in the Middle East Peace Process* (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 1999), pp. 83–84.

⁸ Paul Kingston, "Rationalizing Patrimonialism: Wasfi al-Tall and Economic Reform in Jordan, 1962-67," in Tariq Tell (ed.), *The Resilience of the Hashemite Rule: Politics and the State in Jordan, 1946-67. Les Cahiers du Cermoc*, no. 25 (Amman: Centre d'Etudes et de recherche sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain, 2001), pp. 120–21.

⁹ Al-Mamlakah al-Urdunniyyah al-Hashimiyyah, Al-Majlis al-Qawmi l-il-Takhtit, *Khittat al-Tanmiyah al-Thulathiyah, 1973–75* (n.p., n.d.), p. 271.

¹⁰ *Ibid*, p. 223.

¹¹ Ian J. Seccombe, "Labour Emigration Policies and Economic Development in Jordan: From Unemployment to Labour Shortage," in Bichara Khader and Adnan Badran (eds.), *The Economic Development of Jordan* (London: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 122.

¹² Ibid., pp. 123–124.

¹³ Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, National Planning Council, *Five Year Plan for Economic and Social Development 1981–1985* (Amman: Royal Scientific Society Press, n.d.), p. 295.

¹⁴ See Laurie A. Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World: Institution-Building and the Search for State* (New York: Columbia University, 1988), chapters 6–8.

¹⁵ See, for example, Arthur Day, *East Bank/West Bank: Jordan and the Prospects for Peace* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 1986); and Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, pp. 168–185.

¹⁶ Brand, *Palestinians in the Arab World*, pp. 175–76.

¹⁷ I am grateful to both Salim Nasr and Farid el-Khazen for pointing this out and discussing its implications.

¹⁸ This is a particularly Lebanese term, and it refers to the place to which one migrates. It became the common word used to refer particularly to the diaspora communities in the Western Hemisphere.

¹⁹ Jihad Nasri Al-‘Aql, *Al-Hijrah al-Hadithah min Lubnan wa-Ta`ati al-Mu`assasat al-Rasmiyyah w-al-Ahliyyah ma`aha 1860-2000* (Beirut: Dar wa-Maktabat al-Turath al-Adabi, 2002), p. 158.

²⁰ See, for example, Pierre Gemayel, “Libanais de l’Etranger: Le Congrès des Emigrés,” *Cahiers de l’Est* no. 2 (1945), pp. 171–73; and Georges Moannack, “Libanais de l’Etranger: Point de Vue d’un Emigré,” in *Cahiers de l’Est*, no. 4 (1946), pp. 176–86.

²¹ Rania Maktabi, “State Formation and Citizenship in Lebanon: The Politics of Membership and Exclusion in a Sectarian State,” in Nils A. Butenshon, Uri Davis, and Manuel Hassassian (eds.), *Citizenship and the State in the Middle East: Approaches and Applications* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2000), p. 161.

²² Questions over numbers and who to count are in fact highly political issues. As Labaki has written: “comme tout ce qui a trait à la demographie au Liban, ces chiffres sont des instruments dans la compétition politique multiforme.” [Like everything which concerns demography in Lebanon, these numbers are instruments in a multifaceted political competition.] Boutros Labaki, “L’émigration depuis la fin des guerres à l’intérieure du Liban (1990-1998),” *Travaux et Jours*, no. 61 (Spring 1998), p. 83.

²³ See *Zad al-Muhajir* (Beirut: Dar Fikr l-il-Abhath w-al-Nashr, 2002), a collection of articles written by Antun Sa`adeh.

²⁴ Gemayel, pp. 171–73.

²⁵ “Resolutions adoptées par le gouvernement libanais en Conseil des Ministres le 6 Octobre 1945,” *Cahiers de l’Est*, no. 3 (1945), p. 150.

²⁶ See Moannack, p. 177.

²⁷ Moannack argued that considerations other than those of democracy and fairness had led to opposition to this point. These considerations had nothing to do with the general interest or with equity. A government of national union should be able to move beyond/above the opposition and take the decisions that are warranted. (Ibid., p. 184) While not disagreeing with the Phalange recommendations regarding the state’s facilitating émigré investments, he argued (p. 185) that one of the best means of attracting the émigrés was to reform existing political practices.

²⁸ Kamal Hamdan, “Lebanon: Emigration Policies, Trends and Mechanisms” [Lubnan: Siyasat al-Hijrah w-al-Tayyaratuha w-al-Anthimatuha]. A paper presented at the ILO/UNDP Seminar on Migration Policies in the Arab Labor-Sending Countries, Cairo, 2–4 May 1992, pp. 14–15.

²⁹ Al-`Aql, p. 351.

³⁰ The name of the WLU was changed to add the word “cultural” (*thiqafiyyah*) in the late 1960s.

³¹ Al-`Aql, p. 270.

³² *Al-Diyar*, 9 April 2000.

³³ See al-Jumhuriyyah al-Lubnaniyyah, Majlis al-Nuwwab, *al-Dawr al-Tashri`i al-Thani ‘ashr; al-`Aqd al-`Adi al-Awwal*, 16 March 1993.

³⁴ Al-`Aql, p. 292.

³⁵ Ibid., pp. 336–37.