

**Implications of Bilateral Labour Agreements on the Jordanian
Labour Market**

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Abstract

The Jordanian labour market today faces several severe challenges. Eighty-five per cent of all women in Jordan are economically inactive and the corresponding figure for men is at 35 %. Additionally, the overall unemployment rate is at a historical high at 15 % for the general population. Despite the high unemployment rates, the Jordanian Ministry of Labour each year facilitates bilateral labour agreements in order to recruit migrant workers into the sectors of the Jordanian labour market that are short of labour. The Jordanian Ministry of Labour has since the beginning of the 1970s, when the process of arranging the bilateral labour agreements started, been recruiting workers to sectors, primarily containing unskilled jobs. These jobs are characterised by poor working conditions and low wage levels, which are some of the reasons for why Jordanian workers keep away from these sectors. On the other hand, the Jordanian labour market attracts migrant workers, and the labour force in Jordan, as of 2019, is split evenly between non-Jordanian and Jordanian workers.

The poor working conditions and low wage levels have brought about a bifurcation of the Jordanian labour market, with highly skilled and educated workers placed at the top of the hierarchy and unskilled workers at the bottom, creating a primary and secondary segment in the labour market. This thesis argues that the bifurcation of the Jordanian labour market brings several negative implications. The bifurcation of the labour market and the poor conditions that define the secondary segment of the labour market have caused an emigration of highly educated Jordanian workers. Today 800,000 Jordanian workers have emigrated from the country and the economic performance of the Jordanian economy has fallen drastically since the outflows of workers started back in the beginning of the 1970s.

Negative implications of the bilateral labour agreements have not only been visible in the case of Jordanian workers, but also to a high degree for migrant workers in Jordan. The bilateral labour agreements facilitated by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour includes several distinctive regulations for each agreement, which constitutes the degree of minimum rights and wages for each migrant worker in the Jordanian labour market. The differentiation of rights in the bilateral labour agreements creates a fragmented labour market with workers facing different entry conditions for the same jobs. For example, wage levels differ depending on nationality and labour agreement, even for identical

jobs. Thus, the experience of working in Jordan for migrant workers is highly determined by their respective nationalities. This thesis aims to provide the reader with a deeper understanding of what the implications caused by the differentiation in rights in the various bilateral labour agreements entail for migrant workers, Jordanian workers and the Jordanian labour market in general.

Keywords: Labour migration, bilateral labour agreements, Jordanian labour market, Migrant workers, Jordanian trade union movement

Introduction

During the writing of this thesis, I changed my research question several times. To provide the reader with a better understanding of how the final research question came into being, the following section will describe my work process from when and how the idea of this thesis was conceived to when and how the research question was changed after my fieldwork in Jordan. The whole process is important to describe, as it will become clear later on in this thesis that the research questions and themes, which were considered during this process, all constituted an accumulated understanding and were vital links in deciding on the final research question.

Preliminary considerations before Fieldwork

In the beginning of January 2019, I sat down for a meeting with Mrs Lone Illum Christensen, a programme consultant for the Danish Trade Union Development and Assistance Organisation (LO/FTF Council) who covers the MENA region. The LO/FTF Council is the Danish trade union development and assistance organisation. Starting in September 2018, I had been serving as an intern in the organisation and was now conducting an interview for my internship report. We were discussing the difference between the LO/FTF Council and NGOs in terms of their approach towards migration in the countries in which they work. I recognised that the approach in the LO/FTF Council is quite different compared to that of most NGOs. In terms of their work with migration, the organisation deals with mainly regular migration, particularly with labour migration, and believes that people would like to stay in their own country if opportunities for work are apparent. According to this view, creating a sustainable and well-functioning labour market will result in contained migration.¹ The approach to creating a sustainable labour market and preventing migration outflows through strengthening societies in those areas where migrants come from was as such not a new discovery for me. What caught my interest was

¹ Ulandssekretariatet.dk

² ILO Report 2017: "A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging – Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers

the fact that the organisation is affiliated to the Danish trade union movement and The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC). Therefore the LO/FTF Council's focus is directed towards the labour market.

I started to think about what being affiliated to a trade union movement means for an organisation such as the LO/FTF Council, e.g. in terms of their work with migration. During the interview, I asked further questions about what possibilities and constraints this represents, and Mrs Christensen mentioned several examples of trade union movements around the world that are experiencing issues in dealing with migrant workers.

An example which stood out to me, and which was mentioned as one of the labour markets under most pressure, was the case of the Jordanian labour market. Mrs Christensen explained to me how the Jordanian labour market, which already contains big refugee camps and sees large numbers of migrants entering the country every year, is under immense pressure and that the Jordanian workers are being pushed out of the labour market due to the migrant workers entering the country. The migrant workers accept lower wages and lower standards of working conditions than the Jordanians and are therefore taking over jobs in the Jordanian labour market. This issue is a big concern for the Jordanian trade union movement. Therefore, a major goal for them is to organise migrant workers into trade unions. This will enable them to receive the same wages and enjoy the same working conditions as local Jordanians and thus avoid pushing the Jordanians out of the labour market. This caused me to think that a conflicting issue for trade union movements must be the balance between being immigrant friendly and helping migrant workers obtain better or equal rights in the labour market while at the same time remaining aware of their own existing members and protecting their position in the labour market to avoid outright social dumping. According to what Lone Illume explained to me, this is exactly the issue, which the Jordanian trade union movement is facing now. Additionally, it was mentioned that this particular issue was especially prevalent in the construction sector in Jordan.

She explained to me how one of the tools that had been established to organise migrant workers in Jordanian trade unions was the establishment of a new migrant resource centre in Jordan. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) and The Arabic Trade Union Confederation (ATUC) fund the centre and are in charge of the daily

management. After the first year, the plan is to hand over the coordination and daily management to the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU), which is the umbrella union for all trade unions in Jordan and part of the ITUC and ATUC. Additionally the LO/FTF Council also funds the centre.

The centre's main function is to help migrant workers in Jordan who are facing issues in the labour market. The centre provides legal assistance and information about workers' rights in the labour market and at the same time recommends them to join a trade union in order to improve their labour rights.

This information sparked new questions in my head and a slightly suspicious view towards the intentions of the centre. The migrants go to the centre to get help on legal issues, which is also the intent from the perspective of the centre. However, an underlying intention is also to advocate for migrant workers joining the Jordanian trade union movement, which is affiliated to the centre. You could argue that by joining a trade union, the issues that the migrants experience would not exist to the same degree. Yet in my ears, it still sounded as if the centre was established not only to improve the livelihood and labour rights of migrant workers, but also to improve their own membership numbers.

The centre caught my attention because it embodied my reflections on the fine line between helping own members and migrant workers. By organising migrant workers in trade unions, their labour rights will improve and might create a more stable labour market in which migrant workers enjoy the same conditions and wages as Jordanians, and therefore are not prioritised by employers. On the other hand, the migrant workers' motivation to stay in Jordan for a longer time period, or even permanently, might be higher if they joined a trade union and thus improved their working conditions. Another perspective, in relation to the migrant resource centre, was the intentions of the centre from the viewpoint of the trade union. At the risk of sounding naive, I at first understood the centre as an instrument to help migrant workers and implicitly also help Jordanian workers by organising the migrants. At a second glance, however, the information revealed to me by Lone Illum Christensen showed that the intentions are in a sense three-dimensional, since a desired effect from the facilitators of the centre is also to improve their membership numbers by organising migrant workers. I am not postulating that improving their membership numbers is the only, nor main, intention from the

perspective of the facilitators at the centre. However, to me it seems that some conflicting interests exist between the trade union, migrant workers and Jordanian workers.

The abovementioned process led to my decision for writing a thesis about the Jordanian trade union movement. I wanted to investigate further how the Jordanian trade union movement deals with the large influxes of migrant workers to the labour market on one hand while on the other hand dealing with their own members' grievances about being pushed out of the labour market by migrant workers. The reason for choosing Jordan, as a case study was primarily that I was informed that the particular issue of social dumping that I wanted to study was very current in Jordan. Furthermore, the migrant resource centre is one of the few tangible and more transparent initiatives that the LO/FTF Council has undertaken in terms of their work with migration, and I thought it would be interesting to use the migrant resource centre as an initial analytical unit in this thesis. Additionally, I knew that it would be possible to conduct interviews at the centre through contacts established during my internship and that the staff at the centre hopefully could provide me with more interviews.

This thought process and information gathering led me to a preliminary research question: *"What is the strategy towards labour immigration into Jordan from the perspective of the Jordanian trade union movement?"*

This became my first research question, but not the last. In order to answer my research question, I chose to organise a trip to Jordan to conduct qualitative interviews with people working for the Jordanian trade union movement or with people affiliated with it.

Prior to departure to Jordan

Before my trip to Jordan, a new question came to my mind, which very much shaped the interview guide I had prepared for my fieldwork. Since deciding to go to Jordan, I had arranged four interviews with the coordinator of the migrant resource centre, the project coordinator from the Arabic Trade Union Confederation (ATUC), the general head of the General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU) and the general head of the Jordanian Trade Union for Construction Workers. In cooperation with my guidance

counsellor at the university, we talked about the fact that even though ATUC and GFJTU theoretically are subjected to the International Trade Union Confederation's (ITUC) rules and regulations, it might not be the reality in practice. Additionally, we talked about the political role of a trade union, and how it in many cases can wield political influence on state policies. I realised that my thesis and expected empirical material would contain information from several levels of the "decision ladder". This also meant that the different unions might have different intentions and almost evidently different degrees of power in terms of political influence: ATUC representing the regional level covering the whole Arab region; GFJTU covering the national level by being the umbrella trade union federation for all unions in Jordan; the Construction Workers' Union covering the local level to a certain extent, since they represent a specific sector of the labour market; and the migrant resource centre, facilitated by ITUC, covering the transnational level by being an umbrella union federation for all the abovementioned.

I realised that the answer to my research question most likely would differ from interview to interview, since the strategy and intentions towards labour immigration into Jordan might be different at each interview. On the other hand, the unions are all affiliated and work together, so theoretically they should be following the same rules and regulations and have the same strategy in terms of labour immigration.

The Jordanian Trade Union Movement is part of larger global structures, a factor that directs their strategy in terms of labour immigration. International bilateral labour agreements largely influence national labour markets. Additionally, global decision-makers, to a high degree also affect governmental policies, which the trade union movement is bound to follow. For these reasons, and prior to my fieldwork, I chose to focus my interviews on the different levels of cooperation: How they intertwine; how they differ; what implications their cooperation has for the Jordanian labour market and more particularly for migrant workers in the Jordanian labour market.

At this point, I chose to keep my preliminary research question, since I still wanted to investigate what their general strategy was in terms of balancing between dealing with migrant workers' and their Jordanian workers' concerns at the same time. However, at this point I decided to highlight to a higher degree how their strategies are interlinked. At this point in the process, I was therefore more aware than before that I should treat the

interviewees as separate individual actors with their own agendas and intentions, instead of treating them as one common organisation with different areas of expertise merely because the unions are affiliated with one another.

Fieldwork in Jordan – A new research focus

In the last week of March, I travelled to Jordan's capital, Amman. My plan this far was to conduct four interviews in order to investigate further the Jordanian Trade Union Movement's strategy towards labour immigration into Jordan, and to study the different levels of cooperation between the affiliated unions. Over the course of my fieldwork, I obtained two more interviews: one with the coordinator for Al-Hassan migrant workers centre, facilitated by The International Labour Organization (ILO); and one with the head of the Jordanian Domestic Workers Union, which was newly established.

Already in my first interview with ATUC, it became clear that social dumping of local workers was not as big of an issue as I had been told back in Denmark. My second interview with the Jordanian Construction Workers Union also made it clear to me that social dumping is not a major issue now, since the Jordanian workers actually do not want to work in the low-skilled jobs in sectors such as construction or agriculture. Therefore, the vast majority of Jordanians do not mind that migrant workers take these jobs. However, several other issues became visible during my interviews.

Particularly one issue was repeatedly mentioned as the main reason for rising instability in the Jordanian labour market. In all six interviews, the most frequently mentioned issue was the difference between nationalities in the Jordanian labour market. It was explained to me that each year the Jordanian Ministry of Labour looks at each sector of the labour market and decides where the country is in need of new workers. The Ministry of Labour then contacts a foreign government to make a bilateral agreement, concerning the recruitment of workers. The issue is that from year to year the Ministry of Labour draws up new agreements with different countries and this may be for the exact same work, in the exact same sectors. This means that the labour rights of migrant workers differ depending on their nationalities. Labour rights such as minimum wages, working hours, sick leave and health benefits differentiate in terms of nationality, and it is the government that is actually creating this instability in the Jordanian labour market.

To me, this was quite of a paradox since you would normally think that the Ministry of Labour's role is to create stability in the labour market. Furthermore, another related issue is that the trade unions have requested to be the third party in bilateral agreements to ensure minimum rights, yet they have not been allowed to do so.

It was also interesting to see that it is not only a specific issue for a particular sector, but also an issue for the whole Jordanian labour market. For example in my interview with the office coordinator for ATUC, she mentioned an example with domestic workers. *H: If you are Filipino domestic worker, for example, you don't have the same rights as the Bangladeshi. And this is by law!" (Appendix 1: p.9-10)*

Several other examples were explained to me during the interviews. A prominent discussion related to differentiation between nationalities was also the cost of work permits, which is different for each nationality.

After coding the interviews, it became clear to me that the most prominent theme was the differentiation between nationalities in the Jordanian labour market. The nationality of the worker to a high degree shapes the agency and livelihood of migrant workers operating in the Jordanian labour market. Consequently, from this point onward, I decided to focus on the differentiation between labour rights, depending on the nationality of the worker, and how this fosters an instable labour market in Jordan.

Research question

The above-mentioned process led me to my final research question:

“What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights create for the Jordanian labour market?”

Elaboration of research question

The aim of this thesis is primarily to investigate how a wide range of different nationalities represented on the labour market, all of which have different labour rights, affects the Jordanian labour market. Similar research on the Jordanian labour market has been done before, as the report presented by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2017 called: *“A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging – Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers and Refugees in the Jordanian Labour Market”*.² Additional studies, such as Ragui Assad’s chapter on the dualism of Arab labour markets (Assad: 2014) and Jonas Feldbo’s Kolding PhD dissertation about multiple dimensions of immigrant labour market integration (Kolding: 2018), have provided useful background information. During the process of conducting research for this thesis, the abovementioned ILO report has been a very useful tool in providing statistics and first-hand information from qualitative interviews. This report makes a distinction between migrant workers, refugees and Jordanian workers with a focus on how to avoid displacement of Jordanian workers, how to increase employment rates and how to ensure decent working conditions for all workers. The ILO report highlights some of the same labour market implications, as this thesis will address. However, it was brought to my attention during my interviews that in Jordan obtaining labour rights is not only a

² ILO Report 2017: *“A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging – Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers and Refugees in the Jordanian Labour Market”*

question of being a local worker, a migrant worker or a refugee. Potentially obtainable labour rights are also determined on the basis of the nationality of the worker, as highlighted in my interview with ATUC in Jordan: *“And believe me, each one has a specific regulation different from the other. It’s very different in terms of which kind of migrant worker you are. Yes, the components of the migrants on the labour market are very tangible. Also because it is not only the migrant, refugee and Jordanian worker, but it is also about the nationality”* (Appendix 1:p.10).

Thus, this thesis differentiates itself from other similar research in that its focus to a higher degree is on the distinction between nationalities on the labour market and what that means for the labour market in general and the different actors, rather than the distinction between refugee and migrant.

The main intention of this thesis is to present the implications of the distinction between nationalities for the Jordanian labour market in general, for those local Jordanian workers who are, or could in the future be, affected by it and the migrant workers who are in the labour market. In order to provide a more precise scope for the research, two sub-questions in addition to the main research question have been formulated:

- *“What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights lead to for migrant workers in Jordan?”*
- *What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights lead to for Jordanian workers?”*

The analysis will have a two-tier structure: First, a study of the structural setting and background for the facilitation of bilateral labour agreements. In other words, what creates a labour market that is attractive to migrant workers? The second part of the analysis will study the general implications for the Jordanian labour market and look into the implications for migrant workers and the local Jordanian workers. The divided structure of the analysis will inevitably overlap and intertwine, but the two-tier structure makes for a more precise and manageable analysis.

The following section will contain the methodological approach applied in this thesis. My own position during the interviews and potentially biased perspectives, among other methodological considerations, will be addressed in the following section.

Methodology

Qualitative semi-structured interview

In order to answer the research question I have conducted six semi-structured qualitative interviews. The qualitative interview method places its focus on describing and presenting a first-hand perspective of the interviewee's perception or opinion in relation to a specific topic (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 44 & Aggergaard: 2010:252). The semi-structured interview is based on a freer and more fluent form of conversation, rather than a fixed line of questioning. This means that the interview becomes less formal and enables the interviewee to talk more freely. The semi-structured interview aims to ask a few questions, which are as open as possible, in order to allow the interview to explore new perspectives and conversational paths. This also means that the chronology of questions should only be partially fixed and should be flexible in terms of the chronological order in the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 47-48). The main reason for choosing the semi-structured interview form was that this kind of interview allowed me to be flexible in relation to my research question. Thus, I could change the order of the questions, the actual questions and research focus, in between and during the interviews. The partially fixed interview guide and the relatively open questions also provide the interviewee with more room for own interpretation of the questions. For the same reason, it has also given me more room for interpretation of their answers.

Even though the qualitative semi-structured interview has provided a higher degree of informality to the interviews, it was still obvious to me during the interviews that the interviewees were quite rooted in their professional position, representing their place of work. This also meant that I sometimes had to ask my questions more directly than the actual methodology behind this interview form recommends, in order to pursue a potential conversational path presented during the interview and to break down the professional barriers, which it was obvious that some of the interviewees were used to in

similar situations. However, this also illustrates one of the strengths of this method, namely its flexibility, which allows the interviewer to be able to switch between direct and open questions in order to obtain a more nuanced description from the interview.

This methodological approach has been very useful for my research question and research design. The intention has not been to answer and solve a specific issue, but the main intention has been to provide the reader with a descriptive picture of the implications that the differentiation of labour rights between nationalities brings and the six interviews have opened up for a lot of interesting perspectives, which will be addressed in the analysis.

Presentation and choice of informants

During my fieldwork in Jordan, I conducted six semi-structured qualitative interviews. All interviews were recorded and transcribed afterwards. During two of the interviews, an interpreter assisted me in translating from Arabic into English. Below is listed a description of my interviewees:

- **Hind Ben Ammar, Project Coordinator, Arab Trade Union Confederation (ATUC)**
- **Dr Ahmad Al- Shawabkeh, General Head of General Federation of Jordanian Trade Unions (GFJTU) and Part Time Lecturer/Labour relations expert at Al- Zaytoonah University,**
- **Mahmoud S. Al- Hiyary, President of the General Trade Union of Construction Workers, Jordan**
- **Rajwana Pardo, General Head of Domestic Workers Union, Jordan**
- **Mohammed Mazien, Coordinator of Migrant Resource Centre (ATUC & GFJTU), Jordan**
- **Eluri Suneetha, Project Technical Officer, Migrant Workers Centre (ILO & GFJTU)**

As earlier mentioned, the interviewees are all affiliated to a trade union structure, in one way or another, and therefore their answers are highly affected by their respective positions. I had different reasons for choosing to interview trade union representatives.

First of all, my initial thoughts on this thesis were to examine how trade unions can influence migration flows. Even though the focus has changed, the perspective of the trade union is still interesting in this case. It is in particular interesting because this thesis examines several perspectives on different levels of the Jordanian trade union structure. For example during the interview with ATUC, different issues about the Jordanian labour market were presented, in comparison to the interview with GFJTU, who did not in the same way acknowledge these issues. This exemplifies how the different interviews presented different perspectives, even though all interviewees professionally in one way or another are affiliated with one another, by both being part of ATUC and supporting ILO. Additionally, the trade union movement possesses much knowledge of the labour market and the rights and working conditions of the workers. In many countries, the trade unions exert a large influence on migration policies, for example. Thus, the trade union perspective provides a valuable insight into the Jordanian labour market.

Although this perspective reveals a lot of interesting insights, the trade-union perspective also brings up several methodological considerations. In the next section, my own position and potential biases during the interviews and the whole process of researching and writing this thesis will be presented.

Positioning and bias

My own position in regards to the informants played a big role during my interviews. The fact that I served in an internship for the LO/FTF Council, which is affiliated to the Danish Trade Union Movement and the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), resulted in several of the informants thinking that I either still worked there or that I would inform my former place of internship about the interviews. Phrases such as: “Say hello to them when you get back,” and the informants wanting to take pictures with me, in order to send them back to their foreign colleagues in Denmark, were common situations during my interviews. My own position in relation to the informants, prompted several potential biases, which must be addressed. One of those potential biases was the choice of informants.

In order to establish contacts to informants in Jordan, I received help from my former company of internship. I provided them with a list of people with whom I wished to talk, and through them I was given contact information. However, before they provided me with the contact information, staff at the LO/FTF Council had to make sure that it was all right that I contacted Jordanian informants. They therefore wrote a preliminary email, describing how their former intern was interested in writing a thesis about the Jordanian labour market. One of the potential consequences of this process was that my former place of internship, in theory, could choose my informants. If they thought that it in some way would be inappropriate for me, or present a conflict in terms of their own work, they could actually just avoid establishing the contact, and I would be none the wiser.

Another bias that has been crucial for this research has been the validity and reliability of the interviews. The potential biases here are that the answers provided to me from my interviews may have been directed in a specific direction. The informants could either present the situation worse than is the actual case, in order to obtain more foreign support for their projects, or present the situation as being better than is the actual case, in order to obscure the present state of affairs. This means that the answers provided to me could be biased, and therefore the answers had the risk of not reflecting the actual truth. Additionally, by only interviewing the trade union, there is a risk of the answers speaking in favour of trade union movement's perspective in general. This has therefore been taken into consideration when analysing the empirical data.

Another bias that could affect the research is the cultural difference between the informants and myself. The cultural barriers between informant and the researcher can cause issues affecting the outcome of the interview. It is important as a researcher to become familiar with the culture and the verbal and non-verbal gesticulations, in order not to misunderstand the outcome of the interview (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 164). Additionally, one of the most important factors when conducting an intercultural interview is to be aware of potential social taboos in the culture in which the research is taking place. In some cases, it can be necessary to overcome the taboo by addressing it directly, something this thesis has taken into consideration (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009: 165).

An example was the question of the “culture of shame”, which I was told informally before my fieldwork was an issue in Jordan. In short, the culture of shame concerns the fact that Jordanian workers do not want to work in sectors dominated by unskilled labour, for example: construction, agriculture, domestic work, etc. They would rather work in jobs that to a higher degree are culturally respected. Before the first interview, I decided not to ask directly about the culture of shame, but rather ask questions, which surrounded this theme. However, after my first interview I decided that if I wanted an answer to this question I would have to ask directly. The answers then revealed that the preliminary assumption of Jordanians not working in these sectors because of culture was completely wrong, and it was more an issue of poor labour rights in these sectors and the fact that Jordanian workers are not as willing to accept these conditions as non-Jordanian workers are.

From my position during interviews and potential biases presented by the interviewees, other methodological considerations also became apparent. The next section will address a number of ethical considerations related to this thesis.

Ethical considerations

During and after the fieldwork, some ethical considerations came to mind. The question of gatekeepers in particular became highly relevant. *“Gatekeepers are defined as those individuals in an organization that have the power to withhold access to people or situations for the purpose of research”* (Scheyvens & Nowak & Scheyvens: 2003:153). The following section will describe how specific gatekeepers have created analytical opportunities and restrictions in this thesis. The LO/FTF Council, and especially their programme-consultant for the MENA-region, Mrs Lone Illum Christensen, who helped me establish contacts, has been the main gatekeepers. As mentioned earlier, they actually chose to whom I could talk and therefore opened up the gate for further research in Jordan. Additionally, people working within the Jordanian trade union structure also facilitated the two interviews that were arranged during my fieldwork. At the end of the interviews, I asked if they knew any other people with whom they thought it could be relevant for me to talk. I also asked them if it would be possible to speak to any migrant workers or Jordanian workers in order to represent their perspectives. Unfortunately, it was not possible, since the informants who helped establish contacts during my

fieldwork, ruled out that option. However, they organised two interviews with the Domestic Workers Union and an interview with a Migrant Workers Centre funded and managed by ILO and GFJTU. In that sense, the informants who provided two new interviews have also been gatekeepers. They decided to whom I could talk or not, and thus affected the direction of this thesis. It is also crucial to highlight that my informants have not only been gatekeepers in terms of providing me with new interviews, but they have also been gatekeepers in terms of the information that they have shared with me. They could choose not to answer my questions at any time or answer the questions in a different manner than stated.

The discussion of gatekeepers in this thesis has brought up a number of ethical considerations. The fact that the LO/FTF Council was my former place of internship and that they provided me with a lot of help in the preliminary process of conducting this thesis has in some degree caused a patron-client relationship between the LO/FTF Council, my informants and myself to be created. This relationship has made it tougher to be actually critical towards my informants, since their help and friendliness have made me less inclined to present them in a negative light. This spurred some ethical considerations. Would I endanger the good relationship I had established with my former place of internship if I presented them in a critical light? Would I be able to go to Jordan again for potential further research in the future? And would my informants be open to talk to researchers again in the future?

These are typical ethical considerations that researchers come upon when addressing gatekeepers in research (Scheyvens & Nowak & Scheyvens: 2003:153).

Even though these gatekeepers gave ground for some ethical issues, I was forced to stay critical in order to provide objective research and to actually highlight some of the issues that are apparent in the Jordanian labour market. Several scholars, such as Nancy Scheper-Hughes, have highlighted that the researcher is in a position of privilege, and thus it is the researchers responsibility to speak out in order to help those in need (Scheper-Hughes: 1995:430). By addressing these gatekeeping-issues, the aim is also to show the reader that this thesis has taken these issues into consideration.

Theoretical framework

The purpose of the theoretical framework is to further elaborate upon what kind of implications the Jordanian labour market can experience as a result of the different degrees of labour rights that workers enjoy. The potential obtainable labour rights for migrant workers are determined by the nationality of the worker and the corresponding bilateral labour agreement, which is facilitated by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour and the respective ministry of the migrant workers' native countries. This has several implications for migrant workers, local Jordanian workers and Jordan's economy. These implications will be highlighted in the analysis.

By applying the theoretical framework, the intention is to widen the analysis and answer the research questions with a combination of the theoretical framework and the informants' accounts.

International Political Economy (IPE) – Realist tradition

The International Political Economy Realist theoretical approach to migration is rooted in political science and primarily examines economic implications of migration on a macro level. The IPE approach places state policies as the definitive centre of discussion, in what controls and regulates international migration flows (Talani & McMahon: 2015:19). Hence, the scope of control that the state can apply in terms of regulating migration is a main discussion point. Likewise, a main discussion point is directed towards whether or not migration can have effects on the sovereignty of institutions and how it affects political labour market structures (Ibid: 19). IPE scholar Myron Weiner has argued that an increasingly globalised world with national markets opening up to trade and investments has brought numerous implications for international migration (Weiner: 1999:2). Employers from countries who receive migrant workers have realised that recruiting workers from abroad has become gradually easier, and the cost of hiring the foreign workers might be more affordable than the available local ones. In line with recruitment of workers having become easier, migration has also become easier. People from less developed countries seek to improve their economic situation by migrating to a

country with higher wage levels. Thus, employers and migrant workers share a political vision of a global labour market with free movement (Ibid: 3).

Even though increasing globalisation has caused a decline in the power of the state, governments still seek to control and regulate migration flows. This is done in order to provide local citizens first priority to jobs and social services and maintain political power (Ibid: 3-4). Nevertheless, some governments favour migration at certain times. Recruitment of highly skilled workers can increase the labour productivity and recruitment of low-skilled workers can cover shortages in the labour market, where migrant workers can take over the jobs in which local workers are not willing to work (Ibid: 4). Other IPE scholars, such as Gary P. Freeman, have pointed out that even though the state is the main decision maker in defining state policies and thereby controls migration flows, the state defines the state policies as reactions to socio-economic factors in society (Freeman & Kessler: 2008:657). Freeman argues that a number of socio-economic factors are crucial in the process of avoiding negative implications from migration. Among the most important are to invest capital in the economic sectors of the labour market which can gain from migration. By investing, these sectors can compensate those sectors that lose from immigration, by obtaining a net social gain (Ibid: 658). Freeman highlights that in particular ethnic, economic and political interests are crucial for the discussion of allowing immigrants or not. As earlier mentioned, employers have economic interests in recruiting migrant workers and hence the predominant opinion towards migration is positive. Several political parties also advocate for migration for ideological reasons. Conversely, workers in the receiving country's labour market support a stricter migration policy in order to prevent the loss of their own jobs (Freeman & Jupp: 1992: 84). Freeman argues that local workers' level of influence, in terms of impacting migration policies, is highly dependent on the density of the trade union movement in the given country. In other words, how organised labour is. By being organised, the increase of labour brought by migration will also be easier for the government to manage. Additionally, by having a strong trade union movement, negative reactions to immigration from local workers, can be contained and potential issues can better be addressed (Ibid: 17).

Academic literature on the economic impact of immigration has been thoroughly studied through empirical studies of economic immigration impact on the labour market in the

United States by scholars such as George Borjas and David Card & (Borjas: 1994) & (Card: 2000).

Borjas draws upon a Realist tradition and has studied the impacts of immigration throughout his whole professional career. Several Realist scholars have studied immigration in relation to national security and have defined immigration as a threat to a society. However, Borjas, on the other hand, tends to favour immigration at particular phases and recommends that states receive immigrants when it favours the state's political position in the international system: "*The decision to allow economic immigrants and refugees by governments is therefore a consequence of the desire to improve their relative position in the system and modify the balance of power*" (Talani & McMahon: 2015:20).

Borjas compares the international immigration market with a regular labour market. He explains how the market of immigrants is a competition between states to attract the best migrant workers, and therefore the state must do its uttermost to attract migrant workers. To exemplify this notion he mentions a concrete example. If it is proven that highly educated labourers increase the productivity of the labour force, then states should make an effort to provide economic rewards to highly educated people in the form of better working conditions or wages (Ibid: 20-21). According to this point of view, immigration is a win-win situation in which the receiving country and the immigrants gain positive benefits, with improved labour productivity, an increase in wages and better working conditions for migrant workers and the overall labour force. It is important to mention, though, that this notion is applicable only if the state chooses to bring in high-skilled labour.

George Borjas is well known for having produced very thorough empirical evidence in his research of labour market effects from immigration. Some of the most crucial empirical evidence Borjas has produced stems from his research paper: "*Native Internal Migration and the Labor Market Impact of Immigration*" from 2006. The empirical evidence presented by Borjas is based on data collection-sets of immigrants entering the US from 1980-2000. This showed that immigration did not affect the wages of the general population. However, the effect of immigration caused a 5-10 % decrease in wages for unskilled workers (Borjas: 2006:225).

Borjas studies the effects of immigration by perceiving the national economy as a whole and examining national trends such as wages and unemployment rates, in order to

create linkages to immigration flows. He also studies how immigration into a country can cause effects on the internal migration in the country. By investigating censuses from 1970-2000 of foreign immigration statistics into the US, he revealed a large decline in internal migration into California (which is the American state with the highest number of immigrants entering each year); a decline of natives migrating internally to other immigrant receiving states; and an increase of native internal migration to those states who did not receive many immigrants. Thus, this reveals quite interesting information. According to Borjas, native people in immigrant-receiving countries geographically try to escape those areas where immigrants settle (Borjas: 2006:76). Other scholars in the same field, as William Frey (Frey: 1995) have also pointed towards native emigration as a direct impact of immigration.

Borjas furthermore brings an interesting perspective concerning wages (Borjas: 2006:78). Today, the low wages for migrant workers is a common discussion in many societies. However, it used to be different. It is highlighted in his studies that earlier generations of immigrants from 1940-1970 actually earned higher wages on average than the rest of the population. Today it has shifted, and Borjas points out that the average immigrant worker's wage is 18-20 % lower than the general population in the United States (Ibid).

In his book, "*Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy*" from 1999, Borjas presents statistical evidence from the American labour market in order to argue that the group of people in society who are most likely to be negatively affected by immigration, in terms of wages, are minorities, who most often have entered the country as immigrants at some point. He argues that the on-going migration into a country specifically lowers the wages among the immigrants who have settled in the country previously. The reason for this is that further competition is created among the lower segmented jobs, which the immigrants usually seek out. This line of argumentation means that increasing immigration causes decreasing wages for minorities in a country (Borjas: 1999:144-145).

To build upon the theoretical framework of this thesis, I have chosen to include the Dual Labour Market Theory. In contrast to the Realist IPE- approach, the Dual Labour Market Theory to a higher degree takes cultural and social elements related to migration-studies into consideration.

Dual Labour Market Theory

Dual Labour Market Theory places its focus away from individual decision-making in terms of international migration and to a higher degree emphasises the labour demands of industrial societies as a decisive factor for international migration. The most recognised scholar within Dual Labour Market Theory is Michael J. Priore, an American economist. In his book from 1980, *"Birds of passage"*, Priore argues that the main reason for people emigrating is not spurred by conditions in the sending country, such as low wages or high unemployment, but rather by pull factors in the receiving country (Priore: 1980:27-28). Priore argues that there are four characteristics in modern industrial societies that shape the demand for immigrant labour. Many scholars who have worked with the concept of The Dual Labour Market Theory highlight that wages are not only decided by the supply and demand of the labour market but that wages are also determined by the status and social prejudices associated to specific jobs (Rubery: 2007). This also means that employers do not have the ultimate freedom to respond to potential changes in the supply of workers in terms of wages. If an employer wants to attract more workers for unskilled labour jobs, a simple method would be to raise the wages. However, raising wages would according to this theory, disturb the socially constructed hierarchy of wages in a labour market. If you raise wages at the bottom of the society, then those people who work in higher positions in the society would also feel that they have the right to earn higher wages (Priore: 1999 32). Institutional practices and socially constructed associations thus keep the wage level equal to what the social expectations are in a given society. Therefore, if wages are raised at one level of the social hierarchy, they have to be raised proportionally throughout the whole hierarchy. This mechanism is known as structural inflation. A consequence of structural inflation is that employers are often bound to look for alternative ways to attract workers. An easier and cheaper solution then is to recruit migrant workers who will accept the lower wages (Massey & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor: 1993: 441). Employers can do this directly or by the government acting on their behalf.

Another factor, which attracts migrant workers to receiving countries, is the motivational problems apparent for native workers. According to Priore, people do not only work to earn money but also to improve their social status. However, problems arise at the lowest rung of the social labour-hierarchy, since it is very difficult to climb up the ladder when at the bottom. The issue becomes inescapable in the sense that there will always be a bottom position on the ladder, and an effort to eliminate this ladder will just create a new ladder just beneath this current one, composed of the jobs that used to be slightly better. Therefore, employers seek workers who do not care about the social status of their work and purely work to improve their economic situation (Priore: 1980: 33-34). Migrant workers often cover these characteristics for several reasons. Migrant workers most often work in order to improve their economic situation at home. The living standards between sending and receiving countries are also often very different. This results in the situation where a low wage in the receiving country still seems like a high wage for the migrant worker in comparison to the wage level in the sending country. Additionally, most migrant workers would not consider themselves as a member of the receiving society but rather perceive themselves as a member of their home-society, therefore not caring about the social status of the job abroad (Ibid: 1980: 35).

A third characteristic of modern industrial societies, which create room for migrant workers in specific labour markets, is the duality between labour and capital. According to the Dual Labour Market Theory, this duality creates a bifurcated labour market.

“Capital is a fixed factor of production that can be idled by lower demand but not laid off; owners of capital must bear the costs of its unemployment. Labor is a variable factor of production that can be released when demand falls, so that workers are forced to bear the costs of their own unemployment. Whenever possible, therefore, capitalists seek out the stable, permanent portion of demand and reserve it for the employment of equipment, whereas the variable portion of demand is met by adding labor.” (Massey: & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor 1993: 442) This means that investing in labour can be done on a seasonal basis when the demand appears, while investing in capital in higher degree addresses the basic demand. This results in a fragmented labour market, wherein the capital primary sector obtains stable and high-skilled jobs with good working conditions and equipment. Furthermore, they have better contracts and are most often organised in a trade union (Harrison & Sum: 1979: 688-689). The jobs done

in this sector require higher skills and experience in order to perform ultimately, and therefore the workers in this sector are also tougher to let go from the perspective of the employers. Thus, the workers in the primary sector become capital for the employers (Priore: 1980: 36).

The remaining workers operate in the secondary sector. In this sector, workers have unskilled jobs and are much more vulnerable in terms of being released from their contracts. In general, employers will benefit more from hiring a new worker in case of sickness or related issues rather than retaining the worker. When times of economic hardship occur, the employers in the secondary sector usually cut the payroll as one of the first things (Harrison: 1972: 691). The dualism between the capital and labour thus creates a segmented labour market with different working conditions and labour rights. As scholar Jamie Peck points out, the rules that create possibilities and restrictions for the workers' agency are determined by being in the one segment of the labour market or the other (Peck: 1996:46).

The poor working conditions and the low chances of climbing up the labour ladder results in the native workers either seeking work in the primary sector with capital and more stable jobs or emigrating out of the country. As a result, employers turn to migrant workers to cover the shortage of labour (Priore: 1980: 37-38).

Theoretical and analytical considerations

This thesis aims to investigate what kind of implications bilateral labour agreements have for the Jordanian labour market and involved actors. The Jordanian Ministry of Labour facilitates bilateral labour agreements, which bring large numbers of migrant workers to Jordan every year. During my interviews in Jordan, I questioned the degree of the Jordanian trade union movement's influence on controlling and regulating immigration into Jordan. It was expressed that the influence is very limited and that it is solely the Ministry of Labour's responsibility. Here is what was expressed in my interview with the Coordinator of the Migrant Resource Centre, facilitated by GFJTU: *"Usually they export migrants here to Jordan through the percentage of needs on the labour market, which the labour ministry clarifies every year"* (Appendix: p.9). The same

statement was articulated in my interview with the general head of GFJTU: “*These bilateral agreements made with other countries. These are the authorities, the ministry of labour*” (Appendix: p.6). Hence, according to the informants, The Jordanian Ministry of Labour is the main decision maker in controlling and regulating labour migration into Jordan. This is the main reason for my choice of applying an IPE-Realist theoretical approach. The IPE-Realist theoretical lens emphasises the state as being the main regulator for migration (Talani & McMahon: 2015:19). Therefore, this theoretical framework is ideal for this thesis, as the main conclusions will be drawn based upon the descriptions presented by the Jordanian trade union movement, whose agency to a high extent is controlled and regulated by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour (Awad: 2017:3). For this thesis, the IPE-Realist approach’s particular strength has been that it sheds light on the socio-economic effects that migration brings and focuses on the state as an analytical starting point (Freeman & Kessler: 2008:657). In reading through the analysis, it will become clear to the reader that the implications of the bilateral agreements are vastly socio-economic. Before the conducted fieldwork in Jordan, the particular aim was not to highlight socio-economic implications. However, the implications presented by the informants, were predominantly socio-economic and thus the IPE-Realist framework has been a very useful analytical tool, in order to find a broad understanding of the implications on a macro analytical level.

To continue this line of argumentation, the whole methodology behind this thesis has pulled the research towards an analytical perspective rooted in political science by keeping the analytical perspective at a macro level (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 10). This is in contrast to anthropological research, for instance, which focuses the research on micro-analytical levels. Here, the focus to a higher degree is on the individual experience. (Ibid: 2014:3) In relation to this thesis, interviewing migrant workers about their experience in the Jordanian labour market, their social ties to the community and their decisions for migration in the first place would be more in line with an anthropological methodology. Additionally, interviews with Jordanian workers would also have been useful. On behalf of the personal experiences some general conclusions could then be drawn. However, by interviewing the Jordanian trade union movement, organisations and not individuals operating at the actual labour market have presented the implications, which the bilateral labour agreement entails, and therefore an anthropological methodology was less ideal.

Sociologists, as is the case for anthropologists, are more interested in the individual experience as a starting point for analysing migration processes. They are more interested in how migration occurs, how it remains over time and how migrants are integrated into a local society (Ibid: 2014:5). Sociological migration-research differentiates from anthropological migration-research in relation to the researched analytical unit. Whereas anthropology emphasises the departure country as a primary analytical unit, sociologists tend to a higher degree to focus on the receiving country. Even though the two disciplines have different epistemological procedures, they also share several similarities. In particular, social relationships are highlighted as factors for migration in both disciplines, which makes the disciplines cross-disciplinary (Ibid: 2014:5).

The applied Realist-IPE theoretical framework is primarily rooted in political science. However, some elements of the research design and other included theoretical approaches have pulled this thesis towards a cross-disciplinary approach, which will be addressed in the following section. Besides the discipline of political science, notions from sociology and economics on migration have been applied to this thesis.

James F. Hollifield points out that the political science of migration primarily touches upon three themes (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 8). The first is the function of the state working as a migration regulator. In other words, to which degrees does the nation state control and regulate migration in order to protect its borders (Ibid: 2014: 8)? This theme has been addressed throughout the analysis. However, the focus in this thesis has to a lesser extent been on who controls and regulates migration but more on the consequences of the migration flows into Jordan, which the Jordanian state controls and regulates. More particularly, the focus has been directed towards the socio-economic implications that the differences between the content in the bilateral labour agreements bring and their possible effects of the agreements on the Jordanian labour market structures. The mentioned content in the bilateral labour agreements is particularly focused on the discovery during my fieldwork, which was that the nationality of the worker defines the worker's labour rights. This analytical path highlights how this thesis crosses into the discipline of sociology by digging further into how institutional practices define labour rights based on the nationality of the worker. The specific institutional focus which sociology has is also highlighted in this quote from Sociologist Ivan Light:

“While anthropologists have emphasized the cultural construction and symbolic markers of ethnic identity, sociologists have emphasized the institutional manifestations of ethnic difference” (Ibid: 2014: 6 & Light: 2006). As the before mentioned quote highlighted, sociologists emphasise the institutional elements in a state as being defining for ethnic differences (Ibid: 2014: 6). Hence, this thesis also points towards a sociological analytical process by investigating how the nationality of the worker defines the experience for workers operating in the Jordanian labour market.

To continue Hollifield’s line of argumentation about what kind of questions define the approach of political science on questions related to migration, Hollifield also points towards the sovereignty of institutions. Hollifield argues that a central question for scholars of political science is how migration influences the sovereignty of institutions and how this affects the livelihood of the native population (Ibid: 2014:8). These are also questions that are addressed in this thesis. The question of sovereignty will be with a specific focus on the sovereignty of the trade union movement in Jordan and will investigate how employers in Jordan have gained increasing power in order to control and regulate migration into Jordan (Wilkinson: 1981:156). The increasing power, which employers are wielding in Jordan, can cause several negative implications for the Jordanian labour market in the future. The increasing unemployment rates, a downward trend in the willingness to join the Jordanian labour market among Jordanian workers and brain drain of highly educated Jordanian workers are among some of the implications presented in this thesis, implications which are related to limited trade union presence in Jordan and increasing power accruing to employers.

These implications also reflect how this thesis is cross-disciplinary. Investigating who has access to labour rights and how labour market structures influence migration is also a sociological discipline within migration studies in itself (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 6). The third and final theme, which is central to political science, is the question of incorporating foreign workers into the receiving society (Ibid: 2014: 8). By researching further the incorporation of workers, political science addresses issues related to ethnicity and legal status. In particular, questions about labour rights and the nationality of the worker are a focal point within the discipline of political science. Nevertheless, these analytical approaches are not only relevant for political scientists but are also applied by economists and sociologists (Ibid: 2014: 8).

Migration studies within sociology have primarily investigated how migrants incorporate into the native society by predominantly addressing labour market structures (Ibid: 2014: 9). Similarly, this thesis also places special emphasis on the Jordanian labour market structures. This is done with specific attention to how bilateral agreements can change the Jordanian labour market structures, how the agreements affect the experience for migrant workers in Jordan, and how the current Jordanian labour market is structured in a way that attracts migrant workers to Jordan.

The IPE theoretical framework has primarily been applied with an emphasis on socio-economic factors. The theoretical considerations presented above have indicated that even though the IPE framework traditionally is rooted in the discipline of political science, the applied theoretical framework crosses into more than one academic discipline. So far, I have argued that this thesis addresses questions related to both political science and sociology. Yet to be mentioned is the discipline of economics, which also has been a part of the assembled theoretical framework.

Migration studies conducted by economists tend to focus on the micro analytical level, with a focus on the question of who migrates and why (Ibid: 2014: 6-7). The analytical focus is here directed towards the economic advantages offered by migrating and the fact that the decision of migrating or not is based on a personal cost-benefit analysis (Sjaastad: 1962:82) Nevertheless, even though the traditional analytical unit within economics of migration studies is found at the micro level, many economists who lean into the discipline of sociology have studied economic impacts of migration on a macro level: *“Economists have not only theorized about how wage or employment opportunity differentials between sending and receiving societies affect general flows of populations, but also about how such differentials influence individual or household cost-benefit and utilitarian decision making about migration.”* (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 10) Throughout this thesis, the analytical focus related to the economic discipline has been directed towards the economic implications on a macro level. Several scholars have contributed to the economical theoretical lens, such as George Borjas (Borjas: 1994) & (Borjas: 2006), David Card (Card: 1990: 256) and Frank Wilkinson (Wilkinson: 1981:156), providing different analytical perspectives. George Borjas and David Card have primarily been applied as an evidence-based empirical framework, where I have compared the economic implications caused by migration in the Jordanian labour market, with the

empirical evidence presented by the two scholars. To mention an example from the analysis, economics scholar George Borjas has presented empirical evidence from the American labour market based on surveys from 1980-2000 (Borjas: 2006:225). Here, Borjas argues that immigration did not lower the wages of the general population in the US but that it lowered the wages of unskilled workers with less than a secondary education (Ibid: 2006: 226). By the same token, the analysis will investigate if the same tendency has occurred the Jordanian labour market.

Some critical remarks related to the IPE-approach should be mentioned here. This theoretical approach sheds a light on the socio-economic effects that migration brings, with special attention on the economic implications and focuses on the state as an analytical starting-point (Talani & McMahon: 2015:19). However, the focus on the institutionalism of migration also moves the analytical focus away from other factors and implications such as culture, ethnicity and personal interests. As Gary P. Freeman points out, the IPE approach disregards the interaction between the native population and immigrant population, which can generate numerous complex outcomes (Freeman & Kessler: 2008:673). Dimensions related to culture and identity is also highly relevant when examining implications of migration and understanding why or why not people choose to emigrate (Ibid: 2008: 673). Consequently, notions of subjectivity are overlooked, with the justification of immigration being determined on the basis of the political and economic motivations for the receiving country, rather than the actual personal motivations for the people who choose to emigrate. In order to build upon the IPE theoretical approach and include a further range of dimensions into the analytical discussion, the Dual Labour Market Theory will be applied in this thesis (Priore: 1980). Cultural prejudices associated to specific jobs, different perceptions of labour rights, and an affiliation to the home country are, among other reasons, important to study to provide a full picture of why migrant workers are attracted to the Jordanian labour market (Priore: 1980: 33-34). Moreover, by arguing for a two-split structure of labour markets with highly skilled workers at the primary segment and low-skilled workers in the secondary segment, the Dual Labour Market Theory provides a suggested overview of a labour market, which is suitable to the Jordanian labour market (Ibid: 1980: 35). The Dual Labour Market Theory is traditionally an economic theory. Nonetheless, this theory also leans into the discipline of sociology as well as economics. By looking into

dynamics such as cultural prejudices and different perceptions of labour market structures between Jordanians and foreign workers, the Dual Labour Market Theory also takes sociological questions into account. As mentioned earlier, the traditional theoretical methodologies behind economics of migration primarily examine micro levels of analytical units by exploring the individual decision making for migration (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 7). However, as sociologist Douglas Massey points out, the distinctions between economic migration theories are commonly divided by the question of examining the individual or examining the decision for migration as a household/family decision (Massey & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor: 1993: 438). This is the theoretical distinction, which reflects the difference between the neoclassical economics of migration and new economics of migration theory (Ibid: 1993: 438-439.). This economic theory highlights how economic theories also consider sociological questions and reflects the cross-disciplinary notions between the two disciplines. In similar fashion, this thesis has also been a cross-disciplinary endeavour, combining an economic and sociological approach. The research questions stated have to a high degree leaned towards a sociological framing of questions, focusing on analysing a broader perspective rather than individual experiences. Thus, even though the Dual Labour Market Theory is primarily an economic theory, the theory also takes sociological questions into account. As Brettel & Hollifield highlight: *“Economists asking a different set of research questions that are shared with sociologists often focus on other units of analysis – the labor market in the receiving society or the economy of a sending society. These generate different bodies of theory about dual and segmented labor markets, about aggregate income and income distribution, about the impact of capitalist development, about the political implications of emigrant remittances, or about global cities. In all cases, the needs and interests of entities other than the individual are of interest here.”* (Brettel & Hollifield: 2014: 11)

In order to sum up this section, these theoretical and analytical considerations have primarily been presented in order to highlight how this thesis is cross-disciplinary and why the applied theoretical frameworks have been chosen for this exact thesis. By applying a Realist-IPE theoretical framework, this thesis has represented the discipline of political science. The analytical emphasis on the institutional structures and how they influence the Jordanian labour market and the involved actors operating in the market

represents an analytical focus anchored in political science and sociology. Moreover, by applying the Dual Labour Market Theory, the economic discipline comes forward together with a sociological perspective by placing analytical emphasis on socio-economic dynamics at the Jordanian Labour market. Hence, this section about theoretical and analytical considerations has illustrated how this thesis has been cross-disciplinary between political science, sociology and economics.

Limitations

This thesis aims to highlight the implications of the bilateral labour agreements, which are facilitated by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour. In particular, this thesis brings attention to the differentiation of labour rights between the bilateral labour agreements, and thus provides a different perspective than similar research. However, this particular focus also brings about some limitations, which have been left untouched, and which provide possibilities for further research.

One question throughout the thesis will remain unanswered. The question of why high numbers of unemployed Jordanian workers are not willing to join the labour market and operate in the unskilled jobs that non-Jordanian workers do remains to be answered definitively. However, the analysis will provide several possible explanations related to the structural setting of the Jordanian labour market and other characteristics related to the non-Jordanian and Jordanian workers. These potential explanations can hopefully provide the reader with a greater overview of the current state of the labour market in Jordan, which is characterised by a high scarcity in available jobs.

An additional limitation of this study is connected to the theoretical framework, which contains a number of limitations. Even though the Dual Labour Market Theory has provided a very useful toolbox in understanding the Jordanian labour market as segmented between highly skilled and unskilled labourers, the theory also brings obvious limitations. The segmentation of the labour market, which is a main argument

for the Dual Labour Market Theory scholars, creates a division of the market with good jobs at the top of the ladder and poor jobs at the bottom. However, a critique brought towards the theory is the question of what defines a good and a poor job (Wachter: 1974:691). The characteristics with which the dual labour market theory defines good jobs are mainly: Good and stable working conditions, good wage-levels and a professional relationship to employers. These are all characteristics that are based on rewards and not the function of the job. The critique is directed towards the fact that the personal preference of the worker is ignored in the Dual Labour Market Theory (Ibid: 174).

Another limitation related to the Dual Labour Market Theory is the lack of addressing the primary segment of the labour market in this thesis. In this thesis, I have primarily studied the secondary segment of the labour market. The reason for the focus on the secondary segment of the labour market has been due to the high degree of migrant workers in this segment, which was my initial analytical unit. The interviews conducted in Jordan also showed that the concerns that were raised in relation to the Jordanian labour market almost exclusively concerned the secondary segment of the labour market. Thus, the focus naturally shifted towards the direct implications mentioned in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market. The notion of dividing the market into two might also seem as a simplification of the Jordanian labour market, which inevitably is more complexly structured. However, the empirical data drawn from my fieldwork led me towards analysing the Jordanian labour market in two segments. Limited information on the labour market structure in Jordan also placed incentives to remain with this theoretical structure of two segmented labour markets. In order to address the complexity to a higher degree, for potential further research, scholars such as Rumberger and Carnoy (Rumberger & Carnoy: 1980) have suggested a three-split structure of the labour market, and Lee & Wrench have argued for a quadruple-split labour market structure (Lee & Wrench: 1980). Another limitation, which to a certain extent has been overlooked in this thesis, is the cultural associations and labels that some Dual Labour Market Theorists stress to be highly crucial in terms of the segmentation of labour (Smith: 1989), (Sibley: 1995). The cultural labels associated with certain groups of people or labour is constructed through the social and political discourse in the given country. J.K. Anderson has provided an excellent example through his case study of Chinatown in Vancouver (Anderson: 1991:30). Anderson studied the

cultural perceptions associated to the Chinese population in Vancouver. The local population held a number of cultural perceptions of the Chinese population and regardless of how the Chinese people in Vancouver perceived themselves; they were looked down upon by society and received lower earnings for the same jobs as compared to other nationality groups in the city (Ibid: 1991:30). This example demonstrates the extent to which cultural associations play a large role in the economic situation of certain population groups (Agnew: 1987:33). As the reader will sooner acknowledge, the cultural labels associated with certain jobs are not disregarded in this thesis. Cultural associations related to jobs and nationalities of the worker in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market have been investigated through the interviews. However, the cultural labels, which were outlined in relation to labour, were described as general for jobs in the secondary segment of the labour market and the answers did not differentiate between the particular jobs within this segment. Therefore, a limitation of this thesis is that it does not distinguish in particular between the separate job characteristics within the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market but rather generalises the job-characteristics as being general for the secondary segment of the labour market.

A final limitation, which is important to acknowledge, is the fact that the empirical data from the interviews are presented from a certain perspective. All the interviewees are affiliated to a trade union structure, which also defines their answers. Hence, it is also important to highlight that the empirical data presented in this thesis will be based on data presented by trade unions and will represent their point of view on the research questions. The theoretical framework applied in the analysis, therefore, has been an essential instrument in order to analyse the research questions through a different lens. Additionally, similar research on the Jordanian labour market has provided useful quantitative information and several first-hand accounts from Jordanian workers and migrant workers in Jordan.

Before the analysis begins, some general statistical information about the Jordanian labour market will be presented in the following section.

The Jordanian labour market

The total population of Jordan is 9.7 million. The present Jordanian labour market consists of several nationalities. The latest official statistics, presented by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour from 2015, reveals that 1.4 million Jordanian people are employed and 210,000 workers are unemployed.³ A critical amount, of slightly more than 2 million Jordanians, are economically inactive in the labour market, which means that they are not actively looking for employment. A figure of 1.4 million non-Jordanian workers is also employed in the Jordanian labour market. Thus, the labour force consists of even numbers of non-Jordanians and Jordanian workers.⁴ Yet, when looking through the historical lens of the Jordanian labour market, it has not always been like this.

Before 1970, the Jordanian labour market consisted of exclusively Jordanian workers in all kinds of jobs. In the beginning of the 1970s, large groups of Jordanian workers started to migrate to Gulf states in order to maximise their income. This left room for migrant workers in the Jordanian labour market, and the improved economic situation caused by emigration to the Gulf States also created economic incentives to bring in migrant workers to those sectors in which Jordanians themselves did not want to work. This spurred a large inflow of migrant workers over the next 15 years and the amount of migrant workers in the Jordanian labour market tripled during this period.⁵ Additionally, in 2016, 200,000 Syrian refugees were measured to be present in the Jordanian labour market. In an effort to avoid a lost generation of refugees as a consequence of the Syrian refugee crisis, the Syrian refugees have been given opportunities to participate in the Jordanian labour market by the Jordanian government.

The combination of several nationalities on the labour market has created a fragmented and complex labour market. The latest available statistics measuring the division of nationalities in the Jordanian labour market showed that 62 % of migrant workers in Jordan are Egyptian, 23 % are South-Asian, 5 % are Chinese, 4 % are Filipino and the remaining 6 % consist of other nationalities.⁶ Today the unemployment rate in Jordan is at 15 % for the total population above age 15, and at 37 % for youth between ages 15

³ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.6

⁴ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.24

⁵ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.7

⁶ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.26

and 24.⁷ These are the highest unemployment rates over the past 20 years, which indicates that the Jordanian labour market is heading in a negative direction. There is a general consensus that the vast majority of migrant workers and refugees in Jordan work in sectors with unskilled labour. The sectors in which migrant workers in Jordan mainly operate are: domestic work, agriculture, construction work, manufacturing, accommodation and food services.

Unemployment among migrant workers in Jordan is an almost non-existent phenomenon with an employment rate of 98 % for all migrant workers in Jordan.⁸

The historically high unemployment rate and the large numbers of migrant workers makes one wonder why the Jordanian Ministry of Labour continues to facilitate bilateral labour agreements each year in order to recruit migrant workers to the Jordanian labour market. Why are they not trying to facilitate Jordanian workers in these sectors and why do the Jordanian workers not enter these sectors when they need work?

Findings from the earlier mentioned ILO report on the Jordanian labour market reveal that Jordanian workers at an average have higher education levels than migrant workers in Jordan. This might explain the motivational issues that make Jordanian workers abstain from entering these sectors. However, the report also reveals that among the unemployed Jordanian workers, the educational level is not higher than among migrant workers.⁹ There is a definite skill-mismatch in Jordan, with highly educated Jordanian workers seeking jobs that are not available. At least 75 % of the Jordanian migrant workers have a bachelor's degree or higher.¹⁰ The skill-mismatch has resulted in 800,000 Jordanian workers emigrating to mainly the Gulf states, in order to gain employment that matches their education.¹¹

⁷ Ilostat-ILO statistical database

⁸ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.26

⁹ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.26

¹⁰ Jordan Times, 25 April 2019, "Labour migration and the Jordanian labour market"

¹¹ Jordan Times, 25 April 2019, "Labour migration and the Jordanian labour market"

Analysis

“It is the law that differentiates between nationalities. This is the Ministry of Labour who makes governmental bilateral agreements. The government has made a law that the Filipino get 400 dollars a month, for Bangladeshi it is only 200!”(Appendix 1: p.10)

As this quote from my interview with the project-coordinator for ATUC in Jordan illustrates, the possible obtainable labour rights for migrant workers in Jordan is highly dependent on the nationality of the worker. The Jordanian Ministry of Labour enters into bilateral labour agreements, made once a year, which means that the working conditions and wage levels of each migrant worker is dependent upon the labour agreement entered into by the Jordanian government and the migrant workers respective government. The discovery of how the nationality between workers in Jordan decides their economic situation and livelihood, has led to the following research question and two secondary questions:

Main research question: *““What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights create for the Jordanian labour market?”*

- *“What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights lead to for migrant workers in Jordan?”*
- *What kind of implications does the nationality-based distinction of labour rights lead to for Jordanian workers?”*

In connection to this thesis, six interviews were conducted in Jordan. The interviews will represent the perspective of the Jordanian trade union movement, with an interview with the General Head of GFJTU, which is an umbrella-organisation for all trade unions in Jordan. Moreover, two interviews with two general heads of Jordanian trade unions, affiliated to GFJTU have been carried out. These two trade unions are the Jordanian Domestic Workers Union and the General Trade Union Of Construction Workers. Additionally, two interviews with two managers of two migrant resource centres have been conducted. The “Tamkeen” Migrant Resource Centre, which is financially funded by ILO and GFJTU. The second migrant resource centre is a migrant centre funded by the GFJTU and ATUC. At last, an interview with ATUC office coordinator in Jordan has also been conducted. In order to challenge the statements from the interviews and to present further perspectives beyond the scope of the Trade Union Movement, the analysis will integrate a theoretical Realist- IPE theoretical framework. Moreover, The Dual Labour Market Theory will be incorporated into the analysis with a specific focus on scholar Michael J. Priore’s research.

To understand the implications of the bilateral labour agreements entered into by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour, it is important to understand why these bilateral labour agreements come into being. Therefore, the following section investigates what sets the background for the bilateral labour agreements in the Jordanian labour market. In other words, what are the pull factors that attract migrant workers to the Jordanian labour market? And what creates incentives for the Jordanian government to facilitate bilateral labour agreements? This will be the first part of the analysis. The second part of the analysis will look further into what the implications of the bilateral agreements are for involved actors in the Jordanian labour market. A particular focus on how the nationality of the worker determines the worker’s labour rights will be a focal point.

Analysis- Part 1

Background for bilateral labour agreements in Jordan

Economist-realist scholar George Borjas has throughout his academic career, provided several elements of empirical evidence on the implications of labour immigration (Borjas: 2006:225). One of the main arguments drawn from his studies is the fact that

states should do their best to attract highly educated migrant workers, because everyone in society benefits from them. Borjas argues that states should go about attracting highly educated people by providing economic rewards that make the labour market attractive for those labourers (Ibid: 2006:225). This will increase the wage levels and labour productivity, for both the local labour market and the migrant workers.

If this approach is applied to the case of the Jordanian labour market, interesting perspectives arise. The Jordanian government actually has a quite different approach to labour migration. As earlier mentioned, the government each year negotiates new bilateral labour agreements to cover the absence of workers in specific sectors in Jordan. Nevertheless, the government only recruits workers into the sectors of the labour market, which are in need of more labourers. These sectors of the Jordanian labour market are almost exclusively characterised by unskilled labour. This was also illustrated in my interview with the office coordinator from ATUC: *“For example they say, next time we need migrant workers in construction or in domestic work, in agriculture. But if you are a migrant and you are a super good doctor, they do not give you a work permit, because this is not a needed profession.*

U: So, it is only the sectors where they need workers?

H: Yes. And then when they do this, they make a bilateral agreement with the government from for example Sri-Lanka or Bangladesh how to recruit migrant workers” (Appendix 1:8).

Hence, the Jordanian government recruits workers to cover the holes in the labour market rather than trying to attract highly educated workers, who according to Borjas would improve labour productivity and the wage levels (Borjas: 2006:225).

When looking into the Jordanian labour market statistics, one statistic stands out. The unemployment rate in Jordan is high, with the latest official statistics from the ILO showing a total unemployment rate at 15 % in 2016 and among the youth from 15-24 it was at 36 %.¹² At the interview with GFJTU, the unemployment rate in the country was also mentioned as an increasing problem and was expressed to be at 18 % in 2019: *“We have a growth in the numbers of people entering the labour market and they are facing a huge lack of job opportunities and investments, so it will be difficult. So, there will not be enough for those who are joining the labour market. So, this will contribute in raising the*

¹² Ilostat- ILO statistical database

employment level. So, to maintain the unemployment level, which is around 18 % now, every year there should be 60,000 new job opportunities to maintain this level. So when the government announces 50,000 job opportunities it does not cover the needs, so the unemployment rate will be increasing”(Appendix 3:p.7). As this quote illustrates, the Jordanian labour market is facing issues concerning a lack of job opportunities.

With the increasing unemployment rates, it calls attention to why the government is not making an effort to attract Jordanian workers to the jobs that they are recruiting foreign workers for every year through bilateral labour agreements. The notion of structural inflation is a possible reason for the absence of domestic recruitment efforts.

Structural inflation in the labour market

According to the Jordanian Union of Construction Workers, an easy solution to the unemployment issues in Jordan would be to raise the wage levels in the sectors that Jordanians don't work in: *“We have a problem in the salaries in some sectors are better, if the government wants to solve this issue they should increase the salaries. If they increase the salaries I would ensure you that all Jordanians would do these jobs. Why, because they have a rent to pay, a family to provide for and social dues that we have in Jordan. So, these issues are economic. Even marriage is expensive. So, if they had the salaries I would ensure you Jordanians would do these jobs.”(Appendix: p.4-5).* However, the Dual Labour Market Theory challenges this assumption and explains why a government cannot necessarily raise the wage levels at the bottom of the labour market without further consequences. Priore argues that in any society there are social statuses associated to certain jobs, and it is not only the supply and demand that constitutes the wage levels of labour. This also means that there is a social hierarchy in the labour market against which the local workers compare themselves. The social hierarchy makes it tough to raise wage levels at the bottom of society, since the people who work in jobs that are higher in the social hierarchy would feel that they also should have a raise in wages (Priore: 1980:32). Thus, the wages would rise proportionally throughout the whole labour market if they are raised from the bottom and therefore the cost would be much higher than alternative methods of attracting labour. One of these alternative methods is to recruit migrant workers, who accept the low wages because they are not necessarily aware of the social hierarchy (Massey & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor: 1993: 441.)

The imaginable structural inflation of a Jordanian labour market might explain why the Jordanian government is making bilateral labour agreements instead of attempting to allocate Jordanian workers into these jobs by raising the salaries, as the Jordanian Union of Construction Workers suggested as a solution to the many unemployed and economically inactive Jordanians.

Motivational issues for Jordanian workers

Besides the institutional setting of the labour market, which sets the basis for recruitment of migrant workers, motivational issues for Jordanian workers also foster a society that attracts migrant workers. A reason for Jordanian workers not entering the sectors comprised by unskilled labour is the limited prospects of advancing in social status. Dual Labour Market Theory argues that it is very tough to advance in the social hierarchy of the labour market if one starts at the bottom (Priore: 1980: 33-34). Starting at the bottom of the ladder will create an inescapable labour narrative. There will always be sectors that comprise the lowest rung of the ladder, and if the social prejudices associated with these jobs are eliminated, by for example providing better working conditions, a new ladder will appear with the jobs that used to be just above in the previous labour-hierarchy. Therefore, if the aim is to climb the ladder and improve the social status, this theory suggests not entering the labour market at the bottom of the social hierarchy. This finding was also presented in the report: *"A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging – Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers and Refugees in the Jordanian Labour Market"* by ILO from 2017. In this report one of the key findings was that the lack of future advancement, in terms of starting at the lowest rung in the job-hierarchy, is one of the main reasons for Jordanian workers not entering these jobs, even though the unemployment rate is high. In an interview from the ILO report, a young unemployed Jordanian worker states: *"Youth going into any job have expectations to progress up a career ladder. Jordanian youth will be willing to work in manufacturing if they can feel that the assembly line is only the beginning and not the end, and that there is a*

chance they will be promoted to a more administrative or managerial role if they keep improving their skills and experience.”¹³

These findings demonstrate that Jordanian workers would rather stay unemployed than enter these sectors, since there are motivational issues related to advancement of the Jordanian labour market hierarchy. The tremendously high number of approximately 2 million economically inactive Jordanians is a factual argument, which suggests that there are strong motivational issues to join the labour market for the Jordanian population. So why are migrant workers then attracted to these sectors? Economic advantages and different perceptions between migrant workers and Jordanians are possible explanations for this certain attraction.

Different perceptions between Jordanian workers and non-Jordanian workers

The majority of migrant workers in Jordan are not there permanently, and their main reason for migration is to improve their economic situation. This was also highlighted in the above-mentioned ILO report: *“The majority of migrant workers are in Jordan without their families and for a limited period of time. Among Egyptians, for example, 97 per cent are in Jordan without their families.”¹⁴*

Furthermore, a migrant worker’s national identity is most regularly connected to their country of origin rather than their host country, and therefore what may be important at home may not be important when living temporarily in another country (Priore: 1980: 35). Hence, workers not engaged in the host community, without social relationships, are more likely to enter into the sectors of the labour market comprised by unskilled labour, without any personal reservations. This was also exemplified in my interview with the Migrant Resource Centre, facilitated primarily by ATUC, which highlighted that most migrant workers in Jordan are not trying to establish social relationships and avoid engaging with society; *“Because most of them get into cultural miscommunication, which is a big problem, and as I see there is like 50 % of them feeling homesick after 2 months.*

¹³ ILO Report 2017: “A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.8

¹⁴ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.26

This is because there is no connection with the others and the environment around them.” (Appendix 2: p.5).

The Dual Labour Market Theory also highlights that the living standards between sending and receiving country most often differ a lot (Priore: 1980: 35). In the context of the Jordanian labour market, this is also the case. Even though Jordanian workers express that wage levels are too low in certain sectors, the perception of wage levels is different for migrant workers in Jordan. The majority of migrant workers are used to even lower wages and worse working conditions, and therefore they possess a different perception of wages than the Jordanian workers. As a result, the migrant workers accept the low wage-levels, which many Jordanian workers will not accept (Ibid: 1980:35).

This was also illustrated in my interview with Rajwana Pardo, a Philippine woman, who is in charge of the newly established Domestic Workers Union in Jordan. She expressed that Filipino domestic workers are more than happy with the minimum wage in Jordan, since the economic situation in the Philippines is even more difficult: *“But when you see at the economics in the Philippines, they are having a hard time. Let’s say Philippine people, if they get the minimum wage here they will be fine with that” (Appendix 5: p.5).*

Thus, the different perceptions of social status, national identity and living standards in the country of origin could be factors that attract migrant workers to the Jordanian labour market.

So far, possible explanations have been presented to explain the factors that foster a Jordanian labour market that attracts migrant workers and keeps the native Jordanian workers away from the sectors of the Jordanian labour market comprised by unskilled labour jobs. The lack of motivational factors, which prevents Jordanians from joining the labour market, creates incentives for the Jordanian Ministry of Labour to recruit foreign workers to these sectors.

As described earlier, according to the Dual Labour Market Theory, the social status of a job in society also constitutes the incentives for people to enter these particular jobs (Priore: 1980: 33-34). Nevertheless, the former mentioned motivational reasons connected to social status have to a high degree focused on how the institutional practices in Jordan structure and regulate the social status of particular labour in society. The following section will focus on the social stigma of unskilled labour jobs in Jordan in relation to the cultural understanding of social status in Jordan.

“Culture of shame”

According to the Sociologist G. Esping Andersen, the examined country's institutional structure and cultural surroundings control and regulate the degree of segmentation in the labour market (Andersen: 1990). Other scholars, such as J.F. Rosenbaum, have through empirical studies in the United states examined cultural associations in relation to the geographical position of a migrant workers' destinations (Rosenbaum: 1991) Prior to my fieldwork in Jordan, I was told informally that a phenomenon known as “ The Culture of Shame” exists in Jordan. This phenomenon concerns how Jordanian people do not want to work in unskilled labour jobs because of their own personal pride and the negative social stigmas associated with these jobs. Sociologist Jill Rubery, who particularly has studied impacts of segmented labour markets, has pointed out that prejudices and social stigmas associated to specific jobs are important aspects in order to understand why certain people choose to stay unemployed (Rubery: 2007).

Before the interviews, I decided to include a question about whether or not the absence of Jordanian workers in these particular jobs for unskilled laboured is due to negative social stigmas associated with these jobs. However, I found that it was more a question of lacking minimum labour rights than cultural associations. This was, among other interviews, highlighted in my interview with Dr Ahmad Al- Shawabkeh, the General Head of GFJTU.

“So now, with the case of Jordanians. Now days, they will not think about this stigma of shame. But, they want a suitable work and they want any work with the current economic situation.

So, they want to work. But, working in these sectors where health insurance is not provided will not be giving them the safety in case of injury in the working environment. So, Jordanians do not really go to the construction field because a Jordanian wants to work 8 hours. But, in the construction field you need to work 12 hours, and they don't take days off. So that is why Jordanians do not really touch the construction work.” (Appendix 3: p.8).

This opinion was also backed up in my interview with ATUC: *“No, no. I don't believe this. I have heard about this that they call it the culture of shame. But, no. Because in the municipality for example, the cleaning guys are Jordanian. Now in Jordan, people are doing everything to get these jobs. Because, they give them good salary, good social security. But*

they don't work as domestic workers, for example, because they don't want to be trapped. They don't want to work with these rights. They don't work in the agriculture because they don't have the minimum rights. Not because they have a culture of shame, it is because there are no basic rights in these sectors. This is why." (Appendix 1:p.9)

Thus, the culture of shame was inevitably denied to be present in the Jordanian labour market. The absence of minimum labour rights in these sectors was described as more plausible causes.

The analysis so far has several times implied how the Jordanian labour market is bifurcated into a primary and secondary sector, with high-skilled jobs at the top of the ladder and unskilled jobs at the bottom. The following section will further elaborate on the bifurcation of the Jordanian labour market and the implications that this brings for the involved actors in the labour market.

A bifurcated labour market

The existence of a primary and a secondary sector in the Jordanian labour market was implied several times during the six interviews. The labour market was not mentioned directly as being bifurcated into two sectors, but the fact that Jordanians are not working in specific unskilled labour sectors, and migrant workers are occupying these jobs instead, could point towards a tendency in the Jordanian labour market that reflects a bifurcation. The majority of the interviews conducted in Jordan revealed that Jordanians would rather work in offices and in jobs that provide better working conditions: *"When you work at an office for example you get the rights, you work 8 hours and then you close. Then you have Eid, vacation, you get your monthly salary. You get your rights you know. This is what Jordanians want. Even in the holidays the domestic workers are inside the houses, they work more than necessary. They work you know even during Eid. You know sometimes they don't even sleep because of working."* (Appendix 5: p.3). The absence of minimum rights in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market is one of the main factors that reproduces a bifurcated labour market, with unskilled workers in the bottom of the ladder and highly educated workers at the top. According to Michael J. Priore, the duality between labour and capital creates a divided labour market. Priore's argument is that employers who operate in the primary sector have more capital in their employees, rather than an employer who operates in the secondary sector (Priore: 1980:

36). In other words, the costs of unemployment for employers who operate with skilled labour are larger, since the employees are tougher to find. Additionally, the employers dealing with the primary sector are also more willing to invest in their business in terms of new equipment or educating their employees. Hence, they have a higher degree of capital (Ibid: 1980: 36). On the other hand, the employers dealing with unskilled labour are more dependent on the actual labour, rather than the skills of the employee. This means that employers operating with the secondary sector are not that dependent on their employees, since it is easy to find new ones. Demand for employees becomes seasonal, with employers investing in employees only when the demand is there. This makes the employees' situation very vulnerable when operating in unskilled labour jobs. The employer would benefit from hiring a new employee in case of sickness or job dissatisfaction rather than retaining the employee (Ibid: 1980: 37). As a result, labour in the capital-strong sector is typically protected in terms of good working conditions, social security and higher wage levels. The secondary sector is characterised by poor working conditions, no or limited social security and low wage levels. Native workers then search for jobs in the capital-strong sector, which leaves room for migrant workers, who are more willing to take the jobs in the secondary sector of the labour market (Ibid: 1980: 38). One might argue that the Jordanian Ministry of Labour is reproducing a bifurcated Jordanian labour market, by following the same procedures explained by the Dual Labour Market Theory.

During my interview with the coordinator of the Migrant Resource Centre, Mohammed Mazien, facilitated by ATUC, he explained how the Jordanian government invests in labour through bilateral labour agreements, when there is a demand for labour:

"Most of them are working in those fields where Jordanians refuse to work in. So, the migrants do not steal jobs from the Jordanians. And the Jordanians know that. But there is like a handling for this case, so most of the migrant workers are not stealing jobs from the Jordanians because they are working in those sectors the Jordanians don't want to work in. For example, factories for textile, construction and agriculture. There are not a lot of Jordanians working in these fields. And usually they export migrants here to Jordan comes through the percentage of needs on the labour market, which the labour ministry clarifies every year." (Appendix 2:P.9).

With the high unemployment rates in the country, it is questionable why the Ministry of Labour has not made efforts to integrate and make unskilled labour more attractive to Jordanian workers in the secondary segment of the labour market, instead of recruiting migrant workers. The duality between labour and capital can explain the current situation. The same way as employers do not invest capital in the secondary segment of the labour market and rather wait for the demand to appear, it seems like the Jordanian government is following the same line of strategy. The absence of minimum rights, by which these jobs are characterised, and Jordanian workers' unwillingness to work in the secondary segment of the labour market, could point towards a strategy from the Jordanian Ministry of Labour of focusing more on the demand for labour rather than investing capital in the secondary segment of the labour market. By reinvesting in new foreign labour, the Ministry of Labour keeps reinforcing this duality every year. This indicates that it is easier to meet the demand of labour each year when it appears, rather than implementing large structural changes in the labour market (Harrison: 1972: 691). The yearly recruitment of workers and the differentiation of wage levels and working conditions for each bilateral labour agreement reflect that the Jordanian Ministry of Labour acts on a seasonal basis. Since the Jordanian Ministry of Labour facilitates the bilateral labour agreements, it would make sense to consider that one of the responsibilities of the ministry is to make sure that workers doing similar jobs should enter the labour market on similar conditions. Nevertheless, the bilateral labour agreements have very different conditions, dependent on the nationality of the worker, which was highlighted several times during my fieldwork in Jordan. For example, in one of my interviews with the ATUC office coordinator, Hind Ben Ammar, she stated: *"First of all. It is a matter of social security. They don't have social security. They don't have. It also depends on which nationality. If you are talking about Asian, for example. There are many in textile and domestic workers. And here they have issues on their rights. If you talk about the Arab migrants, which are mostly Syrian and Egyptian, they have mining and construction, restoration, and they have different rights all of them."* (Appendix 1:p. 6)

The absence of equal minimum rights for the workers in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market reflects the duality between the two segments and why the Jordanian Ministry of Labour keeps reinforcing this duality. If the workers in the secondary segment of the labour market start to complain about their rights or to leave Jordan, it is easy for the employers and the Ministry of Labour to find new workers.

Therefore the Jordanian Ministry of Labour considers it a smaller risk to recruit new workers every year, rather than changing the internal structure of the secondary segment of the labour market (Beck & Horan & Tolbert: 1978: 709).

During my fieldwork in Jordan, a common statement was that Jordanians are a very highly educated people and therefore want jobs that match their educations, rather than enter the secondary segment of the labour market. For example, in my interview with the head of the Domestic Workers Union: *“Because what I see is that most Jordanians are really educated. They prefer to work in an office”*(Appendix 5: p.3). It was also mentioned in my interview with Mahmoud S. Al- Hivary, President of the General Trade Union of Construction Workers: *“But generally speaking, heavy-duty work, the majority of them are migrant workers, because the majority of Jordanians are highly educated, but we still have 19-20 % unemployment”*(Appendix 4: p.4). The skill-mismatch between education and job opportunities sounds like a reasonable explanation as to why Jordanian workers hesitate to join the secondary segment of the labour market. However, findings from the report *“A Challenging Market Becomes More Challenging – Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers and Refugees in the Jordanian Labour Market”*¹⁵, by ILO, reveal that unemployed Jordanians do not have higher education levels than non-Jordanians working in Jordan. Thus, the question still remains: Why do the unemployed Jordanians not join the secondary sector of the labour market? Even if the conditions are poor, is it not better than being unemployed?

The analysis so far has presented several reasons for why the Jordanian labour market, and particularly the low-skilled jobs, is appealing to migrant workers. Structural inflation, motivational barriers and the duality between labour and capital have been presented as factors, which create a labour market that attracts foreign workers and prevents Jordanian workers from joining the labour market.

Youth and women in the Jordanian labour market

¹⁵ ILO Report 2017: “A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.6

As pointed out earlier, the unemployment rate in Jordan is historically high with 15 % of the total population being unemployed. Especially among the youth aged 15-24, the rate is significantly high at 37 %.¹⁶ When looking further into the gender division among the unemployed population in Jordan, interesting statistics are revealed. In terms of the total unemployment rate, 23 % of the total population of women are unemployed, while the total proportion of unemployed men is 13 %. Among the youth population in Jordan, the number is even higher, with 33 % unemployed men and 55 % unemployed women.¹⁷ The high numbers of unemployed youth and women illustrates a specific demography in the Jordanian labour market, which translates into the high unemployment rates of the total population. An academic journal called: *“Theories of International Migration: A Review and Appraisal”* written by Douglas S. Massey, Joaquin Arango, Graeme Hugo, Ali Kouaouci, Adela Pellegrino and J. Edward Taylor has reflected upon the youth and women’s roles in international labour markets throughout history. Michael J. Priore’s studies and the Dual Labour Market Theory inspire the authors to seek to explain how the demand of labour has shifted throughout time within the secondary segment of labour markets. The authors describe how the secondary segment of the labour market in the past has consisted of mainly women and the youth, since the working conditions and wage levels suited these two population groups (Massey & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor: 1993: 443). Throughout history, women have been a part of the labour force until their first pregnancy. Labour force participation rates then drop significantly after their children are grown up. The income of the women has mainly been an additional “side income” in relation to the man of the household, to provide for the family. Thus, the social identity of the women has not been tied up with their career but rather the status of being a wife, mother or sister. As a result, women in the past were more willing to accept low wages and poor working conditions, since they did not see their work as a permanent situation (Ibid: 1993: 443). By the same token, youth have historically also been more willing to enter the secondary sectors of the labour market in order to maximise their income, gain experience and experiment with different forms of labour. The youth believed that they would obtain better jobs in the future and therefore did not consider the opportunities of rising up the job ladder as an

¹⁶ Ilostat- International Labour Organization statistical database

¹⁷ Ilostat- International Labour Organization statistical database

issue. A job was to a higher degree seen as a way of earning spending money rather than providing for a family or obtaining a social status. These combined dynamics motivated the youth to join the secondary segment of the labour market, prevalent with low-skilled jobs. According to the Dual Labour Market Theory, the entrance of these particular groups of workers has decreased over time because of three socio-demographic tendencies in modern societies (Ibid: 1993: 443-444):

“In advanced industrial societies, however, these two sources of entry-level workers have shrunk over time because of three fundamental socio-demographic trends: the rise in female labor force participation, which has transformed women's work into a career pursued for social status as well as income; the rise in divorce rates, which has transformed women's jobs into a source of primary income support; and the decline in birth rates and the extension of formal education, which have produced very small cohorts of teenagers entering the labor force. The imbalance between the structural demand for entry-level workers and the limited domestic supply of such workers has increased the underlying, long-run demand for immigrants.” (Ibid: 443-444) In the western part of the world, these three socio-demographic trends are well recognisable. However, in the case of Jordan, the socio-demographic trends are not similar. Findings from the latest official Labour Force Survey from 2015, conducted by the Jordanian Department of Statistics, reveal that the rates of people who are not active on the labour market in Jordan is extremely high.¹⁸ The survey reveals that approximately 35 % of all Jordanian men working in Jordan are not active in the labour market. The same statistic in terms of women in Jordan shows striking results with approximately 85 % women being inactive in the Jordanian labour market. The Jordanian Labour Force Survey from 2015 reveals that Jordanian men tend to step out of the labour force quite young. This is mainly due to early retirement as a result of life-long, psychically demanding labour. A lot of women do not enter the Jordanian labour market at all. If they do, the vast majority of women end their careers due to marriage or childbirth.¹⁹ The earlier mentioned ILO report also presents cultural issues in Jordan, related to gender, which explain the labour force participation for women. A Jordanian male manufacturing worker stated: *“As long as I am alive, I will never*

¹⁸ Jordanian National Statistical Database

¹⁹ Jordanian National Statistical Database

*let my sister work in manufacturing. The employers are very rough. I don't trust them to not yell at my sister or harass her."*²⁰ Working in hotels was also mentioned as an issue for females by unemployed Jordanian women: *"I'd be willing to work in a hotel if the job was in the reservations, at the front desk or in food service. Of course, I can't work in housekeeping or room service because it is near the bedrooms."*²¹

These answers imply that there are cultural factors in Jordan that keep women inactive in the Jordanian labour market. Factors related to women's vulnerability in jobs where they work alone with men were highlighted as a main reason for women not entering jobs in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market. Women in Jordan also have a lot of household responsibilities and therefore another main concern was the time spent away from home. Additionally, 96 % of the migrant workers in Jordan are male and therefore an absent space of the labour market with jobs that could be carried out by women remains untapped.²²

The poor working conditions, which permeate the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market, create even tougher conditions for the Jordanian women and youth who want to join the labour market. The bilateral labour agreements are upholding these conditions and creating several negative implications for all involved actors in the market.

The implications of the bilateral labour agreements will be addressed in the following, second part of the analysis.

Analysis – Part 2

The bilateral labour agreements that the Jordanian Ministry of Labour enters into every year create several implications for different actors in the Jordanian labour market. As

²⁰ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.9

²¹ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.9

²² ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.9

described earlier in this thesis, there are big differences between the labour rights to which workers are entitled, depending on the bilateral labour agreement entered into by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour and the government of the foreign workers' countries of origin. As a result, the foreign workers migrating to Jordan enter the labour market under different conditions. In particular, the minimum wage that foreign workers receive differentiates depending on the bilateral labour agreement in question. However, the bilateral labour agreements do not only affect the wages of the non-Jordanians but also affect the wages of the Jordanian workers. The first subsection will in particular look further into the implications of the wage levels for Jordanians and non-Jordanians in Jordan.

Wages

During my interview with GFJTU, it was expressed how different wages are awarded, dependent on the specific agreement: *"So, it depends on the agreement. Because the minimum wage for a Filipino is different than a domestic worker coming from Kenya or Ghana". (Appendix 3: p. 7)*. In my interview with Mr Mazien from ATUC-facilitated Migrant Resource Centre, it was also explained how the minimum wages differ between nationalities in Jordan: *"There is a minimum wage for the local and there is a different minimum wage for the migrant, depending on where they are from. But basically this difference in the minimum wage is because of an agreement between two governments. This is the biggest issue here. For example, the minimum wage for Bangladeshi is like 175 JD, meanwhile the minimum wage for the local 210 JD. So there is a gap of 30-40 JD."* (Appendix 2: p.8-9).

The different wage levels between nationalities creates an internal labour market concentrated in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market, where foreign workers compete for jobs against each other and against the unemployed Jordanians. The vast majority of foreign workers in Jordan operate in the secondary segment of the labour market, and therefore this sector mainly consists of foreign workers who compete against each other. Whereas the majority of the Jordanian workers do not even apply for these jobs.

Scholar George Borjas has presented a similar line of argumentation in his book: *"Heaven's Door: Immigration Policy and the American Economy."* Borjas presents

empirical evidence from the American labour market to explain how minorities working in the secondary segment of the labour market are the ones who are mostly affected by lowered wage levels, when new immigrants enter the labour market (Borjas: 1999:144) Other scholars, such as Economic Realist scholar David Card, have also studied the impact of minorities' wage levels in relation to immigration. Card has examined the Miami labour market and the impact of a large influx of Cuban refugees in 1980. The influx of Cuban refugees increased the Miami labour force with 7 %. Statistical information drawn from the American Population Survey revealed that the influx of Cuban refugees had no impact on the wages of minority groups represented on the Miami labour market (Card: 1990: 256).

The increasing immigration into Jordan should according to Borjas decrease the wages of the already settled immigrants in Jordan (Borjas: 1999:144). In the case of the Jordanian labour market, Borjas seems to have a valid argument. The increasing immigration has lowered the wages on the labour market and created further competition among the migrant workers. This was also agreed upon in my interview with ATUC. The interviewee described how the wage levels between Syrians and Egyptians differ in the construction sector, which has resulted in competition between the two nationalities: *"For example, Egyptian migrant workers in the construction sector were working for 50 dollars and then the Syrian refugees come and work for 25 dollars. So the employers are accepting this"* (Appendix 1: p.10). The Interviewee also explained how the definition of wages differs between foreign workers and Jordanian workers, resulting from bilateral labour agreements. Here she uses the example of Asian workers in the Jordanian textile sector: *"Let's take the example of Asian in textile. When you go to the textile, you have this, famous national sectorial agreement. That said that Asian... First of all, they don't have the same minimum wages, and it is an agreement that the union did. They have less than the minimum wages in Jordan. And also they work more than 8 hours. And then the definition for wages for them is different than the definition of wages for other workers. For the Asian migrant workers, the wages include, or the salary includes, food, a place to live, and the cost of the work permit, which is very critical. So, they give them this, but it includes everything. But they give more to the Jordanians because this is not included in the Jordanian salary. So this is another discrimination, which we don't like."* (Appendix 1: p.7)

As highlighted in this interview, the wage levels also differ because of the definition of wages in particular sectors. This was mentioned as a negative consequence of the

bilateral agreements and a political discrimination in relation to nationality, in all six interviews.

Through empirical studies presented in: *"Native Internal Migration and the Labor Market Impact of Immigration"* from 2006, George Borjas has presented empirical evidence in relation to the general population's impact on immigration on wage levels (Borjas: 2006:225). The evidence is based on data collection from official surveys published by the American Ministry of Labour from 1980-2000. The Statistical material revealed that immigration into the United States did not have a direct effect on the wages of the general population but caused a decrease in wages for unskilled workers with less than secondary education (Ibid: 2006: 226). Earlier mentioned scholar David Card agrees on this assumption in his article: *"Is the new Immigration really so poor."* He argues that there is no particular evidence of the lowering of wages or an increased unemployment rate for native workers, as a cause of immigration (Card: 2006: 25). However, he disagrees with Borjas on his argument of native unskilled workers and points to evidence that shows that in his earlier mentioned case study of the Miami labour market, unskilled workers' wages were not affected by immigration (Card: 1990:257). There is no official statistical evidence on the lowering of wages among unskilled workers in Jordan; however, evidence of the equilibrium wage being affected has been clear. Given that the supply of labour keeps rising among unskilled and low-waged labour, the equilibrium wages are pushed down, affecting the wage levels for both non-Jordanian workers and Jordanian workers. This also further adds to the lack of motivation for unemployed and economically inactive Jordanians to join the labour market, since it has been established in the first part of the analysis that one of the main reasons for the unemployed Jordanians with low levels of education not entering these jobs are the low wage levels. Thus, neither one of the arguments that Borjas or Card brings to the table is directly applicable to the Jordanian labour market. The immigration into Jordan is affecting all workers in the labour market. The low wage-levels that the foreign workers accept are not enough for most Jordanians, and as a consequence many Jordanians choose not to work at all, which was illustrated in my interview with the Jordanian Construction Union: *"Yes. Some migrant workers, when they work they charge less money than Jordanians. And this will annoy Jordanians; I cannot work for this amount of money they say. So migrant workers work for longer hours and more services and they*

have commitment. This happens, so there is competition when it comes to salaries” (Appendix 4: p.5).

This section has provided an overview of the implications that the bilateral labour agreements have in relation to wages at the Jordanian labour market. During my fieldwork, the lack of decent working conditions was a commonly mentioned consequence of the bilateral labour agreements. The following section will present the implications for the involved actors on the Jordanian labour market, with a focus on working conditions and labour rights.

Working conditions and labour rights

During my fieldwork, it was declared several times that foreign workers in Jordan are much more willing to accept poor working conditions and accept the lack of certain labour rights, in comparison with Jordanian workers. At the interview with GFJTU, I asked whether employers in Jordan prefer to hire Jordanian or foreign workers. The answer was: *“Honestly speaking they prefer non-Jordanians. Because non-Jordanians approve to work in more difficult conditions than Jordanians.” (Appendix 3: p.6).* This statement was agreed upon, during the interview with the Jordanian Construction Union: *“To be honest with you. The majority of contractors in Jordan, they love migrant workers more. For many reasons, first migrant workers do not have a family with them. Jordanians go to work 8 hours a day and go back to their family. Migrant workers can work 5 or 6 hours more during the day or during the night. So migrant workers work for longer hours and more services and they have commitment” (Appendix 4: p. 4).* The quotes above illustrate the willingness that foreign workers demonstrate in order to enter the secondary segment of the labour market. Nonetheless, a significant point in relation to the willingness was revealed during my fieldwork. A frequently revealed argument was that the non-Jordanian workers were not necessarily accepting the working conditions, but another actual issue was that they were not actually aware of their own minimum labour rights.

The combination of a higher degree of willingness to work under tougher conditions and a lack of knowledge of minimum labour rights brings several negative implications for the foreign workers operating in the Jordanian labour market. At my interview with Eluri Suneetha, Project Technical Officer for “Tamkeen Migrant Centre”, the interviewee

described several examples of how foreign workers end in a clash with the law due to a lack of knowledge concerning their minimum labour rights in Jordan: *“So, that kind of information is really important to inform them about. Inform about the national labour legislations. For example, there is one kind of workers system here, where workers enter Jordan on different labour contracts, the work permit. But, one thing they often will do here is that they will sign a contract with one company. So, they are supposed to work at one employer. But, when they get to the country they will try to make you do other work at another employer. So, in that case, it is legally not correct. And then the migrant workers end up in jail because labour inspectors see that they work at a work place without a contract. So, the labour legislations in this country are tough. So the workers need this awareness.”*(Appendix 6: p.2).

As this quote illustrates, the foreign workers who enter Jordan on different labour contracts are often not aware of their own minimum labour rights. This brings several negative consequences for the foreign workers, who end up in adverse situations that may clash with the Jordanian national labour legislations. The lack of awareness about the minimum labour rights also brings incentives for employers to manipulate and take advantage of the foreign worker. In order to secure the minimum labour rights for a foreign worker and protect people from these particular threatening situations, joining a trade union could be a possible solution for the worker. Nevertheless, Jordanian trade unions today are poorly represented among the population in Jordan, with only 6% of the total workforce organised in trade unions.²³ The following section will look further into the labour market regulators in Jordan and how the employers have gained increasingly more influence on the Jordanian labour market.

Labour market regulators: A shift from the trade union to the employers

In his book “The Dynamics of Labour Market Segmentation”, economics scholar Frank Wilkinson describes how the evolvement of the UK industrial sector illustrates a shift in the control of workers entering the labour market from the trade union movement, who to a high degree controlled the inflow of labour, to the employers, who according to

²³ ²³ Labour market Profile 2018, Jordan. LO/FTF Council Analytical Unit (P.1)

Wilkinson now are the main regulators of the industrial sector (Wilkinson: 1981:156). Economic-realist scholar Roger Moore argues that the shift in the UK industrial sector was determined by a rise of “Workforce Casualization”. The casualization of the workforce is a result of a fragmented industrial sector. According to Moore, the sector is fragmented because of several reasons relating to the nature of the work (Benson: 2003: 192). The one-off nature of the work can be explained as seasonal, given that when the one project is done, you begin on a new one and hire new workers. This creates a larger degree of instability for the workers. The method of producing the product in unorganised production sites and the differentiation of wages and conditions from project to project further creates incentives for casualization-work and a fragmented labour market (Wilkinson: 1981: 158). Additionally the nature of hiring different contractors and workers for each part of a larger industrial project creates competition and a fragmented industry sector (Bull: 1980:31). A fragmented labour market serves tough circumstances for trade unions to organise workers and further adds to the challenge of protecting their own members’ interests. According to Moore and the case study of the UK labour market, the control of the labour market has shifted into the hands of the employers, who control the demand and through that demand they are able to have much effect on the working conditions and labour rights of workers (Wilkinson: 1981:157). The absence of trade unions organising members in this case study was and has been highly due to a labour market with high numbers of workers operating with casualization-work (Wilkinson: 1981: 158).

When considering the theoretical conclusions from the case study of the industrial sector in the UK and applying them to the formerly described secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market, several similarities appear. At first, the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market is in high degree fragmented by a large range of actors involved on the market. The one-off nature of contracts and the seasonality described by Moore is in many ways similar to the operational method used by the Jordanian Ministry of Labour, i.e. facilitating bilateral labour agreements each year for unskilled labour. The work for foreign workers thereby becomes temporary and non-permanent. The seasonal nature of the secondary segment of the labour market is also reflected in the high turnover rates of foreign workers in Jordan. As an example, statistical surveys from the Jordanian Ministry of Labour display that among Egyptian foreign workers, 97% are working and living in Jordan alone without their families. Additionally, in 2015 the

Ministry of Labour found that 33 % of the work permits issued were for workers staying in Jordan for the first time.²⁴

Following Moore's argument, industrial work today is characterised by unorganised production sites and a variation of working conditions and wages from project to project, which creates instability and competition among workers (Wilkinson: 1981: 158). This line of argumentation is relevant for this particular study of the Jordanian labour market. As established earlier in the analysis, the differentiation between wage and conditions in each bilateral labour agreement creates an instable and fragmented labour market with workers entering on different conditions.

A casualization of the Jordanian workforce has been on the rise over the last decades and the rate of economic inactivity is at 85 % for Jordanian women and 35 % for men.²⁵ This implies that the Jordanian workforce has shifted from permanent jobs to temporary short-term jobs or to no jobs at all (Bull: 1980:32). The casualization of the workforce has led to a situation in which Jordanian employers to a higher degree can regulate the secondary segment of the labour market by, for example, imposing worse and worse working conditions or abusing the lack of awareness of labour rights that the different bilateral labour agreements do contain. This was also illustrated in my interview with ATUC, who described how employers keep imposing a decrease in wages and impaired working conditions: *"The problem will be that the employers will offer less and less conditions for work. And this is more my concern. Because we felt that when the Syrian refugees came here to Jordan – for example, Egyptian migrant workers in the construction sector were working for 50 dollars and then the Syrian refugees come and work for 25 dollars. So, the employers are accepting less and less conditions. They can't do that."* (Appendix 1: p. 10) As highlighted by Moore, the high numbers of casual workers and a fragmented labour market make it tough to organise workers in trade unions (Wilkinson: 1981:157). With Moore's example of the UK industrial sector in mind, the following section will examine the implications of the bilateral labour agreements in relation to the lack of trade union presence in Jordan.

Implications of limited trade unionism in Jordan

²⁴ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.26

²⁵ ILO Report 2017: "A challenging labor market becomes more challenging" P.24

The Jordanian Trade Union Movement has throughout history obtained very limited political influence and achieved low membership rates.

Researchers of the Jordanian labour market have pointed out that in order to avoid a complete fragmentation of the labour market, the movement of independent Trade Unions is a missing link (Awad: 2017: 6). The General Jordanian Trade Union has since the mid-'90s been used as an actual governmental instrument to serve the wishes of the government and business interests, rather than protecting the interests of its own trade union members (Awad: 2017:3). This has led to a very low trade union density in Jordan. Six per cent of the total workforce are organised into trade unions and 7.1 % of the total employees are organised.²⁶ According to Realist scholar Gary P. Freeman, local workers' level of political influence is determent by the density of trade union movements, with a high density resulting in high measures of political influence and similarly low density brings low levels of influence (Freeman & Jupp: 1992: 17). Hence, the low trade union density in Jordan reflects limited influence for the Jordanian workers. Freeman argues that a high trade union density will bring a higher degree of governmental control. This will simultaneously bring more political influence to the local workers, since an implicit governmental task is to meet the wishes of the native population (Ibid: 1992: 17).

Paradoxically, GFJTU has to a higher degree been used as an governmental instrument to satisfy the government's and business elite's interests, and it seems that mistrust among the Jordanian population towards trade unions is apparent, illustrated by the low density rates. The Jordanian Ministry of Labour is the main immigration regulator for the Jordanian labour market, but they are not using their influence to protect the native workers' interests by not improving labour rights (Awad: 2017:3). The non-existing option of forming independent trade unions creates a dead end for the native workers, since joining a trade union might seem meaningless for the Jordanian worker, as their own political interests are ignored. Therefore, the majority of Jordanian workers see no point in becoming a member of a trade union. On the other hand, not being member of a trade union also entails a higher degree of vulnerability, in terms of the workers' position in the labour market. The option of forming independent trade unions could open up for a more democratic political landscape, where trade unions could gain more political influence so as to advocate for the native labourers' interests by not being restricted by

²⁶ Labour market Profile 2018, Jordan. LO/FTF Council Analytical Unit (P.1)

governmental interests. Moreover, a complete fragmentation of the Jordanian labour market could be avoided (Ibid: 2017: 6).

Another issue that explains the low trade union density in Jordan is the absence of minimum labour rights, which the trade union does not assure for their members. The right to organise new trade unions and the right to collective bargaining was among other missing labour rights, presented as a critique towards GFJTU, at the interview with ATUC. The interviewee, however, presented the density measures as slightly higher: *“Because, there is GFJTU, for them the structure and how many people are organising in the GFJTU. When we did our research, they only reached 10 % of the Jordanian labour market. And the right of organising is not open. The right of having collective bargaining without the union is not open; they don’t open the window on the freedom of association. That means that 90 % of the Jordanian workers don’t have the right to organise.”* (Appendix 1: p.5). Additionally, the interviewee from ATUC highlighted that in order to spread freedom of association, the trade union movement in Jordan has to open up for new categories of sectors on the labour market: *“And we have another remark on these 17 sectors. These sectors have been there since 1917. So, now the labour markets have changed a lot. And we have new jobs and new skills, we need a new structure. We can’t stay with these 17. They have to open the windows for new categories, new sectors to have the right to organise. They have to open for the new trade unions and other trade unions for the right to organise. We can’t spread the umbrella of freedom of association in other ways.”*(Appendix 1: p.6)

As described, the lack of trade unionism in Jordan prevents the workers from obtaining their minimum labour rights. As a result, the labour market’s rules and regulations are controlled by the employers (Wilkinson: 1981:157). The space for collective bargaining and other labour rights, which is normally connected to the role of the trade union, is absent in Jordan. Therefore foreign workers in particular end up in threatening and uncomfortable situations in violation of the law. The lack of knowledge of their own minimum rights and the absence of trade unions create incentives for employers to abuse the foreign workers’ situation. In my interview with the Tamkeen Migrant Centre, an example of how employers abuse the lack of knowledge was described: *“For example that workers need to give 14 days’ notice to declare strike in a factory. So, this is not the same condition as in other countries. So, a lot of workers are very upset when the working*

conditions and living conditions are not in line and they are not aware of it. And then often the employers will use the opportunity to if workers strike without 14 days' notice to get them in jail or get them arrested because to prevent the strike" (Appendix 6: p.2). In my interview with the Domestic Workers Union, it was also described how employers of domestic workers in Jordan exploit the workers situation: "But they are also abused, not psychically abused. But a different form for abuse you know. Financially and they are getting too much excessive working hours, let's say they are working from 6 in the morning to late at night. So, this is what I see. And in most cases they are not allowed to go out. They don't even carry their cell phone." (Appendix 5: p.2)

As this section has illustrated, the lack of trade union presence in Jordan creates several negative implications for the workers operating in and around the Jordanian labour market.

The following and final section of the analysis will contain an examination of the implications of the bilateral labour agreements for the Jordanian Economy and in particular the case of potential "brain drain" of Jordanian workers.

Economic implications and brain drain of highly educated workers

The labour immigration into Jordan has had noticeable effects on the economy and on the Jordanian population in general. According to the Dual Labour Market Theory, the length of the stay in the receiving country determines whether or not the workers establish more permanent communities (Priore: 1999:99). The established communities create labour structures, which are complementary to the labour of native workers, rather than being in direct competition. Migrant workers are also commonly target earners and therefore push down minimum wages, which creates incentives to extend the stay (Ibid: 1999: 99)

Nevertheless, in the case of the Jordanian labour market, it has earlier been concluded that the vast majority of foreign workers' jobs in Jordan are characterised by temporary positions, and 1.5 billion US Dollars in wages are sent as remittances out of the country

each year.²⁷ This is money which otherwise could have been reinvested in the economy if spent inside the country. An implication of the increasing lowering of minimum wages is potentially that foreign workers extend their stay in Jordan and establish more permanent communities. Instead of positioning the Jordanian workers in competition, it would complement the Jordanian economy (Ibid: 100). This line of argumentation, though, stands in stark contrast to the former concluded evidence that Jordanians do not enter the secondary segment of the labour market because of too low minimum wages, among other reasons. In relation to this argument, a lowering of the minimum wages would only prevent even more Jordanians from entering the Jordanian labour market and attract more foreign workers.

One implication of the increasing immigration and labour investment in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market has been the outflow of highly educated Jordanian workers. This development speaks in favour of George Borjas' evidence-based empirical framework of the American labour market. One of his main conclusions was that native workers try to escape their own labour markets in search for employment as a consequence of immigration (Borjas: 2006:76). The same thing has happened in Jordan, with around 800,000 Jordanian workers living abroad. Seventy-five per cent of Jordanian workers living abroad have an academic education.²⁸ The outflow of highly educated Jordanian workers and influx of uneducated foreign workers has spurred a "brain drain"- process of the Jordanian labour market. The process of sending highly educated workers to countries with employment opportunities is called "brain drain" since the country loses a part of the workforce that could contribute highly to the development of the labour market (Manashi: 2012:1). Brain drain happens only when the two elements of losing highly educated workers and economic consequences of that loss occurs (Lowell: 2003). The brain drain process creates a loss of human capital and slows down labour productivity.

In Jordan, the process of "brain drain" has had large impacts on the economy. Statistical surveys found that since 1970, when the emigration seriously began to rise, Jordan's Economic Complexity score has fallen drastically.²⁹ The Economic Complexity score

²⁷ Jordan Times, 5 February 2017, "Million illegal guest workers in Jordan – ministry"

²⁸ Jordan Times 25 April 2019, "Labour migration and the Jordanian labour market"

²⁹ ILO Report 2017: A challenging market becomes more challenging (P.32)

illustrates: “ *The measures of the relative knowledge intensity of an economy or product.*”³⁰

In other words, the economic opportunities the country contains in terms of available knowledge. The drastic fall on the rankings from No. 14 in 1973, down to number No. 65 in 2017, implies that Jordan is losing high numbers of well-educated people every year, who otherwise could positively contribute to the economy and production.

Thus, by maintaining the labour supply of foreign workers to the secondary segment every year, the Jordanian Ministry of Labour is reinforcing and indirectly advocating for “brain drain” of their own country.

³⁰ Economic Complexity Rankings (ECI)

Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to highlight the implications brought about by the bilateral labour agreements entered into by Jordan. Drawing upon the theoretical framework of the Dual Labour Market Theory and an International Political Economy Realist approach, this thesis in particular has aimed to highlight how workers operating in the Jordanian labour market have different labour rights based on the nationality of the worker. In combination with the theoretical framework, this thesis provides insights into the implications supplied by six interviews, conducted with organisations affiliated to the Jordanian trade union movement. A cross-disciplinary analytical approach between political science, sociology and economics has been applied to answer the research questions.

The discussion, which this thesis has addressed, is a very complex discussion from which numerous conclusions can be drawn. However, this thesis has attempted to grasp the most essential implications of the bilateral labour agreements. As indicated in the introductory section of the thesis, the intention to begin with was not to investigate implications of bilateral agreements. The initial intention was to investigate how the Jordanian trade union movement influences migration flows into Jordan and learn more about their strategy. Nevertheless, the focus quickly changed during my interviews, as a new discovery caught my attention. I discovered that the Jordanian Ministry of Labour facilitates annual bilateral labour agreements, bringing migrant workers into Jordan every year. These bilateral agreements contain a number of different labour rights. These rights are determined by the nationality of the worker and the time that the bilateral agreements are in force. Hence, the nationality of the worker affects the potentially

obtained labour rights. The differentiation of labour rights between workers creates disharmonic labour-dynamics in the Jordanian labour market, which brings several negative implications.

The first part of the analysis has presented the structural setting of the Jordanian labour market and argued how the structural setting creates a labour market that is attractive to foreign workers and keeps Jordanian workers either economically inactive or motivated to emigrate.

A central discussion throughout the first part of the analysis has been related to the high unemployment rates and numbers of economically inactive individuals among the Jordanian population. Throughout the thesis, I have considered why the Jordanian Labour of Ministry continues to facilitate migrant workers into the Jordanian labour market rather than trying to bring down the rates of economically inactive and unemployed Jordanians by attracting them to the jobs for which the ministry recruits migrant workers. For this particular question, the Dual Labour Market Theory has been very useful in providing some possible motives. Even though it was expressed several times during my interviews that economically inactive and unemployed Jordanian workers would join the Jordanian labour market if the wage levels for unskilled jobs were raised, this thesis has argued why the Jordanian Ministry of Labour prefers to recruit migrant workers instead. A possible structural inflation of the wage levels in the Jordanian labour market prevents the Jordanian Ministry of Labour from raising the wage levels for those jobs for which they recruit migrant workers (Priore: 1980: 32). If the wage levels for the jobs at the lowest social-hierarchy level of the Jordanian labour market were raised, the workers operating with jobs at higher social-hierarchy levels would feel that they should also receive raises. Therefore, it remains cheaper for the Jordanian Ministry of Labour to recruit migrant workers instead (Massey & Arango & Hugo & Kouaouci & Pellegrino & Taylor: 1993: 441.)

By the same token, different motivational issues remain between Jordanian workers and migrant workers. Jordanian workers, who enter the Jordanian labour market, typically have prospects of advancing their social status. However, rising in social status from the bottom rung of the ladder in the labour market is very tough (Priore: 1980: 33-34).

Migrant workers, however, usually work in Jordan on a temporary basis, and therefore they are not as motivated to rise in social status in the labour market. Additionally, they also have less social ties to people living in Jordan and therefore their social status is not

as important. Migrant workers working in Jordan have one main goal, which is to improve their economic situation and therefore they do not emphasise the social perceptions (Ibid: 1980: 34). The different motivations between Migrant workers and Jordanian workers, also reflects the different living standards to which they are use to Migrant workers working in Jordan are most likely use to even to lower wage levels and worse working conditions. Hence, the migrant workers in Jordan are satisfied with their economic income and how they are treated. However, this thesis has illustrated that on many occasions, migrant workers in Jordan choose to ignore unfair working conditions because the prospects of economic advantages trump the hardships.

The Dual Labour Market Theory has throughout this thesis provided a suggested overview of the Jordanian labour market as being dual, in that it is divided into primary and secondary segments (Priore: 1980: 36). The duality of the Jordanian labour market has helped illustrate and provide understanding for how the Jordanian Ministry of Labour keeps investing in labour in the secondary segment of the labour market, rather than investing in capital in the primary segment. Hence, the on-going recruitment of migrant workers to Jordan every year instead of recruiting Jordanian workers to the jobs seems to indicate a strategy that keeps reinforcing this duality between the two segments of the labour market. This indicates that the Jordanian Ministry of labour is following a strategy focused on meeting a seasonal demand of labour when it appears, rather than investing in capital and making larger structural changes to the Jordanian labour market (Harrison: 1972: 691). The argued bifurcation of the labour market with highly skilled workers at the top rung of the Jordanian labour market and respectively unskilled workers at the bottom rung creates a labour market that attracts foreign workers and disregards the Jordanian ones.

Additionally, cultural elements in Jordan have an effect on especially women. For example, Jordanian women stay away from domestic work because the culture of working close to or inside bedrooms is seen as degrading.³¹

³¹ ³¹ ILO Report 2017: “ A challenging labor market becomes more challenging”P.9

The abovementioned dimensions of the Jordanian labour market have been revealed as structural settings. These structural settings attract migrant workers to Jordan but prevent large numbers of Jordanians from entering the labour market and create incentives for the Jordanian Ministry of Labour to recruit migrant workers. The structural setting of the Jordanian labour market have brought a number of negative implications for several involved actors, which have been presented throughout the second part of the analysis.

The second part of the Analysis has provided a more evidence-based analysis, which aims to present the implications, which bilateral labour agreements in Jordan bring about. The implications have been presented through the theoretical insights in a combination with the empirical data conducted in Jordan. The main finding in this thesis has been the presentation of how labour rights and working conditions differ from each bilateral agreement, determined by the nationality of the worker. Thus, the nationality of the worker in Jordan constitutes the rights and conditions in the labour market: *“It is the law that differentiates between nationalities. This is the Ministry of Labour who makes governmental bilateral agreements. The government has made a law that the Filipino get 400 dollars a month, for Bangladeshi it is only 200!” (Appendix 1: p.10)*

As this quote from my interview with the Jordanian office Coordinator for ATUC illustrates, a main implication of the bilateral agreements is that the wage levels differ largely between workers operating in the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market because of their nationality.

The different wage levels spur a fragmented Jordanian labour market, which in the future may lead to controversies between the government and population, contribute to increasingly lower wages and bring a general disharmony to the internal labour market structure.

An implication related to the wage levels in the Jordanian labour market is the argumentation put forward in the analysis, which shows that equilibrium wages have been pushed down. By maintaining the recruitment of migrant workers into the sectors of the Jordanian labour market, which Jordanians do not want to work in, the competition for these jobs among the migrant workers is increasing. This has resulted in employers imposing employees- accepting lower wage levels and worse conditions.

Thus, the equilibrium wages are being pushed down for both the Jordanian workers and migrant workers. Additionally, this also further adds to the lack of motivation in Jordanian workers, who hesitate to join the Jordanian labour market because of low wage levels and poor working conditions.

Moreover, the wages and the working conditions in the Jordanian labour market illustrate the same tendency. The employers keep imposing increasingly worse conditions in order to maximise their income. As a result, the Jordanian workers who are economically inactive or unemployed stay away from jobs in the secondary segment of the labour market because the conditions are non-acceptable. On the other hand, migrant workers in Jordan are willing to accept poor working conditions. As a consequence, the Jordanian employers, in the secondary segment of the labour market, prefer migrant workers over Jordanian workers. This points to a negative trend, which in the future could make the working conditions and wage levels even worse.

Throughout the interviews with the Jordanian trade union movement, it was highlighted numerous times that the willingness to accept poor working conditions is not always the reason for the poor working conditions in the unskilled jobs in Jordan, but it is also because a lack of awareness of minimum labour rights from the perspective of the migrant worker. This again illustrates the difference between Jordanian and migrant workers. Jordanian workers are perfectly aware of their minimum labour rights, but the migrant workers in Jordan are not always aware of their minimum rights. This has resulted in many employers taking advantage of the situation and abusing migrant workers' willingness to work long hours and under poor conditions. Additionally, many migrant workers in Jordan end up in jail or in difficult legal situations due to a lack of awareness concerning their minimum labour rights.

In the analysis, I have argued that the Jordanian workforce has experienced a casualization with the increasing economically inactive Jordanian workers. Economic scholar Roger Moore has argued that new industrial societies are fragmented because the jobs today have taken on an increasing one-off nature (Benson: 2003: 192). By one-off nature, Moore means that hiring employees on a seasonal basis when they are needed is an increasing trend in international labour markets. This creates a feeling of instability for the workers, with new production sites every time and new working conditions and

wage levels (Wilkinson: 1981: 158). This one-off kind of work also creates further competition between the workers and the employer's gain increasing power over the labour market. A crucial argument in this theoretical mind-set is also that the international trade union presence has been on a downward trajectory, which places more power in the hands of the employers (Bull: 1980:31).

In this thesis, I have argued that some of the same tendencies are happening in the Jordanian labour market. A historically low trade union presence with only six per cent of the total Jordanian population organised in trade unions has brought a fragmented Jordanian labour market with power increasingly accruing to the employers. This can be seen as an evidential consequence through the seasonal recruitment of workers to the secondary segment of the Jordanian labour market. The employers favour the seasonal basis of recruitment, since they can lower their wages and working conditions, and thus earn more money and possibly improve labour productivity. In conclusion, the increasing power to the employers can potentially create an even more fragmented Jordanian labour market with migrant workers competing for unskilled laboured jobs, and with Jordanian workers who are either unemployed or choose to stay economically inactive. Hence, as a consequence of the bilateral labour agreements and a limited trade union presence, the power of controlling and regulating the Jordanian labour market is increasingly turning to the hands of the employers. This also means that the workers will gain less political influence, worse working conditions and will be more vulnerable to being exploited by employers in the future when operating in the Jordanian labour market.

A fragmentation of the Jordanian labour market with several different nationalities operating on different contracts and under different working conditions has already led to a number of negative socio-economic implications for the Jordanian labour market. The bifurcation of the labour market in Jordan has caused an outflow of highly educated workers, since job opportunities that match the high education levels in Jordan are very limited. The Jordanian government's economic investments into the Jordanian labour market is primarily in the secondary segment of the labour market, which has led to approximately 800,000 high-skilled Jordanian workers emigrating out of the country. Consequently, a key finding from this thesis is that the Jordanian Ministry of Labour, who are facilitating these bilateral labour agreements, are actually reinforcing the bifurcation

of the labour market and maintaining a brain-draining process by not making economic investments into producing more highly skilled jobs in Jordan. Lastly, this has also caused negative economic implications for the Jordanian economy, illustrated by the low scores on the Economic Complexity Index.³²

³² ³² Economic Complexity Rankings (ECI)

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