



European  
University  
Institute

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

Gender and Migration in the Occupied  
Palestinian Territory  
Socio-Political Perspectives

*Yasser Shalabi*

---

---

**CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2011/44**

---

---

**Gender and Migration Series**  
*Socio-Political Module*



**CARIM**  
**Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration**

**Analytic and Synthetic Notes – Gender and Migration Series**  
**Socio-Political Module**

**CARIM-AS 2011/44**

**Gender and Migration in the Occupied Palestinian Territory**  
**Socio-Political Perspectives**

**Yasser Shalabi**

National Project Manager (Public Sector Development Program),  
Ministry of Planning and Administrative Development

This publication is part of a series of papers on Gender and Migration written in the framework of the CARIM project and presented at a meeting organised in Florence: “Gender and migration in Southern and Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Sahara African countries” (18-19 October 2010).

These papers will be discussed in two meetings between Policy Makers and Experts on the same topic in winter 2011. The results of these discussions will also be published.

The entire set of papers on Gender and Migration are available at  
<http://www.carim.org/ql/GenderAndMigration>

© 2011, European University Institute  
Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies

This text may be downloaded only for personal research purposes. Any additional reproduction for other purposes, whether in hard copies or electronically, requires the consent of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies.

Requests should be addressed to [carim@eui.eu](mailto:carim@eui.eu)

If cited or quoted, reference should be made as follows:

[Full name of the author(s)], [title], CARIM AS [series number], Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, San Domenico di Fiesole (FI): European University Institute, [year of publication].

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED IN THIS PUBLICATION CANNOT IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES BE REGARDED AS THE OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

European University Institute  
Badia Fiesolana  
I – 50014 San Domenico di Fiesole (FI)  
Italy

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/Publications/>  
<http://www.carim.org/Publications/>  
<http://cadmus.eui.eu>

## **CARIM**

The Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration (CARIM) was created at the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), in February 2004 and co-financed by the European Commission, DG AidCo, currently under the Thematic programme for the cooperation with third countries in the areas of migration and asylum.

Within this framework, CARIM aims, in an academic perspective, to observe, analyse, and forecast migration in Southern & Eastern Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan Countries (hereafter Region).

CARIM is composed of a coordinating unit established at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (RSCAS) of the European University Institute (EUI, Florence), and a network of scientific correspondents based in the 17 countries observed by CARIM: Algeria, Chad, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, and Turkey.

All are studied as origin, transit and immigration countries. External experts from the European Union and countries of the Region also contribute to CARIM activities.

CARIM carries out the following activities:

- Mediterranean and Sub-Saharan migration database;
- Research and publications;
- Meetings of academics and between experts and policy makers;
- Migration Summer School;
- Outreach.

The activities of CARIM cover three aspects of international migration in the Region: economic and demographic, legal, and socio-political.

Results of the above activities are made available for public consultation through the website of the project: [www.carim.org](http://www.carim.org)

*For more information:*

Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI)

Convento

Via delle Fontanelle 19

50014 San Domenico di Fiesole

Italy

Tel: +39 055 46 85 878

Fax: + 39 055 46 85 755

Email: [carim@eui.eu](mailto:carim@eui.eu)

**Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies**

<http://www.eui.eu/RSCAS/>

## Abstract

International gender migration has recently sparked worldwide interest. This paper examines such migration in the Palestinian context from a socio-political perspective. It attempts to estimate and compare female to male migration trends in Palestine, levels of women's migration and differing motives. Are these 'modern' motives for modern migration? Is migration linked, instead, to traditional, conservative motives? The paper hypothesises that the displacement, to which Palestinians have been subject, has affected both female and male migration. Displacement has also affected the patterns of social relations in general, and gender-based relations, in particular.

This paper makes references to available, if limited, data and literature. It scrutinises the phenomenon of gender-based migration by categorising it into forced, voluntary and return migration. To understand the factors that drive women's migration in comparison to men's, the paper concludes with a discussion of these different types of migration.

In general, the paper concludes that the migration of Palestinian women compared to men does not differ in quantitative terms from international trends. However, gender-based migration is more associated with political factors in the Palestinian case. It is generated by displacement, the destruction of developed urban centres on the coastline of historic Palestine, and denial of the development of potential urban centres inside Palestine through Israeli policies, which seek to marginalise and annex Palestinian society and its economy to those of Israel. Patterns of gender relations have also been influenced by migration motives, which have been mostly conservative. As a subordinate, not independent migration trend, women migrated in company of either their husbands or their families. General patterns of gender relations were also affected by destination countries, which typically had restrictive social and cultural fields. Accordingly, patterns of conservative relations were effectively maintained. Palestinian migration, especially women's migration, can be described as traditional migration *vis-a-vis* modern, innovative migration, which seeks employment and education opportunities and looks for modernising, renovating and developing lifestyles.

## Résumé

Les migrations internationales de genre ont récemment été l'objet d'un intérêt mondial. Cet article examine ces migrations dans le contexte palestinien dans une perspective sociopolitique. Il tente de comparer les tendances de la migration des femmes et des hommes en Palestine, le niveau de migration des femmes, et les raisons pour lesquelles les femmes migrent. Ces raisons sont-elles 'modernes' ou, au contraire, traditionnelles et conservatrices ? L'hypothèse avancée est que les déplacements auxquels les Palestiniens ont été soumis ont touché les femmes et les hommes, et ont affecté les formes des relations sociales, en général, et des relations entre hommes et femmes, en particulier.

Cet article s'appuie sur les données et la littérature existantes, qui sont toutefois limitées. Il examine le phénomène de la migration de genre en la catégorisant en migration forcée, volontaire, et de retour. Afin de comprendre les différents facteurs qui déterminent la migration féminine, en comparaison avec celle des hommes, cet article analyse ces différents types de migrations en conclusion.

De manière générale, cet article conclut que, par rapport à la migration des hommes palestiniens, la migration des femmes palestiniennes ne diffère pas des tendances internationales. Toutefois, dans le cas palestinien, la migration des femmes est liée à des causes politiques. Elle a pour cause le déplacement des populations, la destruction des centres urbains côtiers de la Palestine historique, et l'impossible développement des centres urbains en Palestine en raison des politiques israéliennes qui visent à annexer la société et l'économie palestinienne. Les formes de la migration de genre ont également été influencées par des pratiques migratoires qui sont généralement traditionnelles. Les femmes migrent généralement avec les maris et leurs familles, de façon subordonnée et non indépendante. Enfin, les formes générales de la migration de genre ont été influencées par les pays de destination, dont le champ

social et culturel est conservateur. En conséquence, les relations sociales sont restées traditionnelles. La migration palestinienne et, en particulier, la migration des femmes, peut être décrite comme traditionnelle, en opposition aux migrations modernes et innovantes qui visent à trouver un emploi ou à compléter son éducation, et qui tendent à moderniser et à renouveler le style de vie.

## 1. Introduction

In the past years there has been an increased interest in examining international migration in the light of gender. The literature of migration shows that international migration has traditionally been more associated with males than with females. However, with countless changes in the modern world female migration rates have risen, particularly given: more women in education; rising female participation in the labour market; socio-cultural changes that have affected various societies, etc. Some studies indicate that women's migration was lower than that of men in the 1960s, with a ratio of 47 to 100 respectively. Overtime, though, this situation has changed. Internationally, women comprised 48% of migrants in 1990 and 49% in 2000, including 51% in developed countries and 46% in developing countries (Piper, 2005, p. 3).

This paper attempts to scrutinise the socio-political dimensions of the Palestinian gender-based migration. Also highlighting the peculiar Palestinian state of affairs, Palestinian migration cannot be fathomed beyond the framework of any consequences in the Arab-Zionist conflict since the Zionist invasion and subjugation of Palestine to Israeli occupation, renders the Palestinian demographic mobility both a direct and indirect product of the developments of such conflict. Movement and migration of the Palestinian population is an outcome of direct and indirect systematic policies exercised by the Israeli occupation regime. Undoubtedly, Israeli practices have built a relation between migration and gender in the Palestinian context. The majority or, at least, a large proportion of Palestinian migration is forced. Although it extends over centuries, voluntary migration is limited in comparison to the volume of forced migration. Over the past 200 years, Palestine has witnessed return migration, which was also linked to the developments of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as well as to the initiation of the political settlement process, which has not yet reached the desired outcome.

As a point of departure, the paper argues that the socio-political dimensions of gender-based Palestinian migration have been immediately influenced by the displacement of Palestinians and the occupation of Palestine. Migration is, then, a reflection of this displacement. Also affecting the pattern of social relations, in general, and gender-based relations in particular, displacement has affected rates of female migration as well.

It should be noted that any examination of the migration phenomenon in the Palestinian context is limited in light of short data and literature, particularly in regard to voluntary migration. In reference to forced migration, available data on Palestinian refugees in neighbouring countries, especially those registered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), allows a more comprehensive analysis. Addressing migration is intertwined with certain parameters. Most importantly, Palestinians lack control over borders, rendering the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) incapable of making policies on access to and from the Palestinian territory. This capacity is effectively subject to Israeli policies. Hence, a desirable examination, estimation of rates, and analysis of migration for Palestine will be limited, meaning a limited map of demographic mobility from and to the occupied Palestinian territory or design templates of such mobility trends, particularly those based on gender.

For the purposes of this study and for a more in-depth analysis of the linkages between Palestinian migration and gender, this paper is divided into four sections. **Section (i)** addresses forced migration based on the available data about Palestinian refugees abroad, especially in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. It derives from data provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) and UNRWA as well as from a number of surveys conducted by other organisations on Palestinian refugees abroad, particularly in the countries mentioned above. To shed light on voluntary Palestinian migration, **Section (ii)** primarily refers to data derived from a PCBS survey, conducted for the benefit of the Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University. It makes reference to certain trend analyses of migration and respective impact on gender relations. Tackling return migration to the occupied Palestinian territory, **Section (iii)** is based on the PCBS 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census. It should be noted that the second PCBS 2007 Population Census does not include detailed

information relevant to the paper. Finally, **Section (iv)** presents a general analysis of the impact of migration from, and return to, the Palestinian territory on gender-based relations as well as introducing the most significant conclusions of the paper.

## 2. Displacement and Gender Relations

This section addresses Palestinian forced migration with a particular focus on relevant socio-economic dimensions and linkage with gender-based relations. Referring to available sources, we present estimates of the volume of displaced Palestinian persons. We also analyse primary influences that shaped the nature and type of gender relations among displaced Palestinians, as well as the impact of displacement on gender relations and the reproduction of such relations.

By the end of 2008, the Palestinian population stood at 10.6 million, more than half of whom lived outside the historic Palestine. 3.88 million Palestinians resided in the occupied Palestinian territory, comprising 36.6% of the total number of Palestinians internationally. Approximately 1.2 million, or 11.5%, lived inside Israel. 46.3% of all Palestinians, or 4.9 million resided in Arab countries. Approximately 605,000 Palestinians, or 5.7% of the total Palestinian population, resided in Western countries (PCBS, 2009-A).

The figures indicate that more than half of the Palestinian population lived outside the territory of historic Palestine. This is, in fact, a natural outcome of the waves of displacement that Palestinians have been subject to, especially in 1948 and 1967. These have exerted a considerable impact on the percentage of male/female migrants or displaced persons. Waves of displacement affected whole households, both males and females. Displacement also affected the pattern of social and gender relations. It was a process of forced displacement and movement of a large group of people over a short span of time, dramatically different from the normal development of migration in other countries.

According to PCBS 2008 statistics, sex ratio in the occupied Palestinian territory was 103.1 males *per* 100 females and 103.4 males *per* 100 females among Palestinians in Israel. In comparison to Palestinian refugees residing in neighbouring countries, the male to female ratio among the UNRWA-registered Palestinian refugees was 100.8 in Jordan, 100.4 in Syria, and 98.4 in Lebanon (See Table 1 in the Annex).

Though limited, the above data shows that the sex ratio among Palestinians living both outside and inside the territory of Historic Palestine featured disparities. This is primarily because displacement affected whole families. Confirming this, a study on Palestinian refugees in Jordan argues that refugees resided where they did due to political factors. Because their migration had been generated by conflict, it was mainly a family migration. The study also asserts that Palestinian refugees in Jordan are similar to a great extent to those they left behind in their home country (Khawaja and Tiltnes, 2005). So, the displacement of Palestinians included both male and female adults and children, which means that the characteristics of displaced families were the same as families who live inside Palestine, including their sex ratio.

According to these statistics, Palestinian migrants do not differ – in terms of female migration – from the international rates presented above. However, motives and causes do differ. In the Palestinian case, displacement was the major factor that gave rise to migration. Linked to modern migration factors, concerns over employment and education may drive females and males to migrate to other countries. In the Palestinian case, migration is linked to factors of forced migration. According to Hilal, the overall factor that promoted Palestinians to migrate was not a change in their lifestyles, traditions or identity, but rather the hope of improving their lives. Therefore, Palestinian migration can be classified as a form of conservative migration in contrast with innovative migration, which seeks to attain new lifestyles and livelihoods (Hilal, 2008. pp. 233-4).



Since 1948, migration has been a distinctive feature of Palestinian society. Palestinians were subject to collective expulsion from their land, affecting female/male migration rates as well as the pattern of social relations.

Destruction of the cosmopolitan Palestinian coastal cities, including Jaffa, Haifa and Acre which were developing urban centres under the British Mandate, had a tremendous impact on the life of Palestinians. It moved them to internal cities, such as Hebron, Nablus, East Jerusalem, and Gaza, which were still under hegemony of kin networks or associations, known as *Hamula* [extended families], families, and sometimes tribes. In 1967, and well after, Israel had occupied the rest of Palestine and driven a new wave of displacement, the Israeli occupation regime managed to halt the development of Palestinian society. As a result, two major characteristics have emerged in Palestinian society: (1) migration constituted a major dynamic force within the Palestinian society; and (2) familial relations were renewed (Hilal, 2008. pp. 229-31). It should be noted, however, that the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the annexation of the Palestinian economy to Israel's also gave rise to the daily migration of Palestinian workers to the Israeli labour market. This migration was largely male.

Displacement from developed urban centres to areas that had still been governed by kin-based solidarity relations notably affected Palestinian society's development as well as women's potential role in this society. With the second wave of displacement, the subjugation of the West Bank and Gaza, and the imposition of the occupation regime's policies on Palestinian society, socioeconomic development processes were effectively impeded, thereby negatively impacting the shape and pattern of both social and gender relations.

### 3. Voluntary and Forced Migration and Gender Relations

This Section addresses Palestinian migrants. It estimates female migration rates compared to males' and analyses the impact of such migration on gender relations using available sources.

As mentioned above, sex ratio among Palestinian refugees in neighbouring countries and among Palestinians in historic Palestine are virtually the same. However, these estimates may not apply to Palestinians who migrate voluntarily. Despite the fact that accurate data is not in hand, results of a household survey<sup>1</sup> shows that compared to 54.5% of males, female migrants comprised 45.5% of all migrants among surveyed households. Statistics indicate that the sex ratio of migrants among surveyed persons clearly favours males. It should be emphasised that the survey covered forcibly displaced refugee households too, indicating that the male to female ratio among voluntary migrants is in favour of males.

According to the survey results, reasons and motives for migration confirm that voluntary migration is more associated with males than with females. Data marks a clear disparity in migration causes between males and female. Males who migrated in search of employment opportunities comprised 50% of the total number of male migrants: females stood at 5%. Males migrating for education purposes represented 18.5% of the total male migrant population: females stood at 1%. 2.5% of males migrated for marriage in comparison to 61% of females. Also, 2.5% of males migrated as companions compared to 13.5% of females. Deported men and women (forced by the Israeli occupation to migrate or not allowed to return after they left the country) comprised 19.5% and 12.5%

---

<sup>1</sup> Conducted by the PCBS for the benefit of the Birzeit University Institute of Women Studies, the household survey is based on a sample of 2,253 Palestinian households examined throughout 19 residential areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1999. The survey shows high rates of migration among Palestinian households. Approximately half of the surveyed households had one or more relative migrants. It should be noted that these rates might be less than the actual number of migrants. The sample was limited to households, members of which resided in surveyed areas only; it did not cover families who migrated as a whole.

respectively. The number of males and females born abroad was the same though, 7% per each (See Table 2 in the Annex).

The figures above indicate that voluntary migration driven by employment or education is linked to males. Female migration is associated with marriage or accompaniment. In the case of forced migration, such as deportation-driven migration, rates among males and females are identical. These statistics show that the Palestinian voluntary migration is mostly restricted to males. On the other hand, female voluntary migration is dominated by subordination; it is not a cause or motive of modern migration.

This conclusion can be further supported by Hilal, who states that the usual pattern of Palestinian migration in the 1960s and 1970s was interim. Adult males would migrate first, and their families would join them at a later point in time. In the first stage, women who stayed at home lived under the control of their husbands' families. If not married, women lived under control of their own families. In the second stage, women joined their husbands as subordinates: i.e. as companions, not as independent migrants. These women had few opportunities, if any, to get a paid job in the destination countries. Hence, migration consolidated the traditional concept of the man as the breadwinner and of the woman as the housewife. The linkage between migration and social conservatism can be seen. In the West Bank and on the Gaza Strip, restrictions on women's inheritance, as well as the hegemony of paid work, which largely excluded women, highlighted the significance of such an ideology as an increasing number of men from villages and refugee camps joined the workforce in the Israeli labour market, and then in the PNA (Hilal, 2008, p. 234-5).

Voluntary migration has also been affected by the occupation of Palestine and by Israeli policies. According to a study conducted in the period 2002-2003, measures which had been implemented by the Israeli occupying authorities during the second *Intifada* of 2000 forced some Palestinians to migrate either to enable their children to join Palestinian educational institutions or to continue their higher education, as the education process was effectively disrupted by the blockade imposed by Israel on the occupied Palestinian territory (Maliki, Shalabi and Ladawah, 2004. p.161-3). Because employment opportunities were not available in Palestine, others migrated in search of alternative livelihoods abroad. Though this migration pattern involved whole households, it was linked to families with extensions and options available to them outside Palestine.

#### **4. Return to Palestine: Socio-political Dimensions and Gender**

This section examines Palestinian return migration and its association with gender. A census was last conducted in 2007. But this Section concentrates on the PCBS 1997 Population, Housing and Establishment Census.<sup>2</sup> The 2007 census does not provide purposeful data for this paper.

The PCBS 1997 Census shows that a total of 267,000 Palestinians returned to the Palestinian territory, after they had habitually resided abroad, towards the end of 1997. These comprised 19.5% of the total population of the Palestinian territory, who had been enumerated in 1997. Male returnees constituted 53.6% and females 46.4%.

According to the 1997 Census, return was mainly driven by political factors. Two major waves of return were in place. After the PNA had been established, thousands of Palestinians, including employees and recruits of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO), returned to the Palestinian territory. Second, many Palestinians were expelled from some Arabian Gulf states in the wake of the first Gulf War. The latter was a forced return of a large number of Palestinians from the Gulf States to Palestine.

---

<sup>2</sup> Figures in this Section are based on Maliki and Shalabi, 2000, which derives from the PCBS 1997 Census. Figures are taken from the body and statistical tables of the said publication.

Available data does not clearly set out the causes driving both males and females to return to Palestinian territory. However, the majority of returnees (55%) returned as companions. On grounds of male/female returnees' relation to the labour market, companionship-based return was more dominant among women than among men. According to the 1997 Census, economically-active females above 10 years of age constituted 11.1% of the total number of female returnees. In contrast, economically-active male returnees comprised 69% of the total number of male returnees, demonstrating that the return of women to Palestine was intertwined with the return of their families and husbands.

The 1997 Census shows that the education background of male returnees was generally higher than that of women. Compared to 6.6% of females, 20.3% of males completed the first phase of university education. These figures confirm, first, that men's return was more associated with economic factors and, second, it might also confirm that the volume of male migration for education was higher than that of females.

The said Census also demonstrates that a majority of Palestinians returned from Jordan (36.5%) and from the Gulf States (31.1%): the highest portion of Palestinian migrants had left for these two areas. Furthermore, return from the Gulf States was associated with a political factor: Palestinians were expelled from the Gulf State in the wake of the first Gulf War. The other political factor that had a real impact on return to Palestine was the establishment of the PNA, which led to return of the PLO cadres. As will be noted below, it can be hypothesised that the characteristics of Palestinian returnees in terms of gender relations are largely linked to the Palestinian migration to the said countries.

## 5. Concluding Remarks

The data and statistics presented above demonstrate a remarkable similarity between male/female Palestinian migration rates and international trends with some differences between voluntary migration and displacement and forced migration. However, worldwide, migration is typically associated with modern motives, including a search for employment opportunities, education, or innovative lifestyles. On the contrary, in the Palestinian case, migration is particularly generated by displacement. More importantly, Palestinian displacement and migration has promoted a pattern of conservative social relations, particularly in regard to gender relations. This originated with the occupation of developed urban centres on the coastline of historic Palestine in 1948 as well as the obstruction of development processes through internal parts of Palestine in the wake of the 1967 occupation. Destination countries have also contributed to consolidating these conservative social relations. The pattern of social relations in these countries was conservative and restrictive, and maintained the pattern of conservative social relations among the Palestinian migrant population. Typically this meant low female participation in the labour market, for destination countries also affected the pattern of gender-based relations.

Voluntary migration was also directly or indirectly influenced by the policies of the Israeli occupation regime. Motives of female migration were typically traditional; most women migrated in company of their husbands or for the purpose of marriage. By contrast, males migrated for economic or social reasons, mostly relating to a search for employment or education opportunities. At the same time, migration itself has contributed to promote the pattern of prevalent conservative social relations, which also dominated destination countries.

Migration, both forced and voluntary, played a major role in promoting social conservatism, including gender-based conservative relations, throughout Palestinian cities, villages and refugee camps. This social trend was further generated by the daily migration of male workers to the Israeli labour market or to the countries, to which Palestinians were displaced or migrated.

According to Hilal, the Palestinian daily journey to the Israeli labour market and migration to Jordan and Gulf States have promoted the pattern of conservative relations among Palestinians – a pattern that highlights the significance of traditions, identity and kinship solidarity (Hilal, 2008. p.

232-3). It can be argued that migration's contribution to promoting social conservatism has also preserved traditional gender relations and reaffirmed men's hegemony over women.

Countries, to which Palestinians migrated or were displaced, exerted a remarkable impact on the nature of social and gender relations. The majority of Palestinians travelled to neighbouring countries or to the petroleum-producing Gulf States in light of available employment opportunities. The pattern of conservative relations in these countries has promoted conservative social trends among Palestinian migrants, reflecting on the status of women and the type of gender relations. Women's low participation in the official economic sectors in the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as in several destination countries with a patriarchal culture and deep-rooted conservatism, particularly the Gulf States and Jordan, have rendered female migration dependent on males, namely husbands and fathers (Hilal, 2008. p. 267-8).

Rates of female participation in the labour market, both in Palestine and in destination countries, highlight the promotion of gender-based conservative relations in these regions. A relatively old study indicates that only 12% of Arab female migrants, including Palestinian women in the Gulf States, had paid jobs in the 1980s – a rate that was similar to employment rates in the West Bank and Gaza Strip in the 1990s (Russel, 1995. p. 259). This means that the overwhelming majority of female migrants were subordinate to their husbands or close relatives. Accordingly, gender relations have been reproduced and reaffirmed as a result of the migration process itself.

The low participation of women in economic activity in comparison to men also visibly demonstrates that female migration and return is associated with conservative social factors. In other words, women's migration is subordinate to, not independent from, that of men.

Although it can be said that Palestinian migration is generally traditional and not linked to factors of modern migration, including the search for employment opportunities, education or innovative lifestyles, there are disparities between males and females. Males do migrate in search of employment opportunities in the Gulf or Western States or to continue their higher education. Still, the figures and trend analyses above indicate that women migrate as subordinates to their husbands or families. They do not migrate independently.

To sum up, the paper concludes that the migration of Palestinian women compared to that of men is not different in quantitative terms from international rates. However, it is more closely linked to political considerations in the Palestinian context. It is generated by displacement, destruction of developed urban centres on the coastline of historic Palestine, and denial of the development of potential urban centres inside Palestine through Israeli policies, which have sought to marginalise and annex Palestinian society and the Palestinian economy to Israel. Patterns of gender relations have also been influenced by migratory motives, which were mostly conservative. As a subordinate, not independent, migration trend, women migrated in company of either their husbands or their families. General patterns of gender relations were also affected by destination countries, which were characterised by restrictive social and cultural fields. Accordingly, patterns of conservative relations were effectively maintained. Palestinian migration, especially women's migration there, can be described as traditional migration *vis-a-vis* modern, innovative migration, which seeks employment and education opportunities and looks for modernising, renovating and developing lifestyles.

## 6. Policy recommendations

In general, available data do not provide accurate estimates of the number of the Palestinian population around the world and their socio-economic characteristics including the distribution between men and women. At the end of each year, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) publishes estimates of the number of Palestinians around the world. These estimates are marred by serious shortfalls, which the PCBS itself admits. The PCBS cannot precisely estimate the number of Palestinians abroad since relevant data is not accessible. Then too, to estimate the number of

Palestinians, PCBS hypothesises that the net international migration rate is equivalent to zero because data on the movement of the population from and into Palestine is unattainable.

It is also worth mentioning here that estimates of Palestinian refugees vary between UNRWA and other Palestinian sources, including the Palestine Liberation Organisation. At the beginning of 2010, UNRWA estimated the number of refugees at approximately 4.7 million – all registered by that organisation. In contrast, other Palestinian sources estimated that refugees amounted to 7.5 million. This parity is mainly generated by the different definition of ‘refugee’ that each side use. Whereas the Palestinian definition of refugee is broader than that of the UNRWA, it also covers individuals not registered by UNRWA as refugees.

To attain more accurate data on the number of Palestinians around the world, their socio-economic characteristics and their movements, all of which should help make knowledge-based policies and decisions, this paper proposes the following:

1. Develop a computerised system to track entry and exit at Palestinian crossing points in the West Bank. Effective and accessible as it should be, the system will necessarily cover data to monitor the population movement and trends as per certain social characteristics. It should be noted that this process will not be sufficient to track the movement of a portion of the population; it will not be capable of monitoring the movement of Jerusalem inhabitants because they do not access Palestinian crossing points. Therefore, cooperation will be needed with the competent Jordanian authorities in order to attain comprehensive data on the movement of the Palestinian population.
2. Develop a computerised system to track entry and exit from the Gaza Strip. This will enable the provision of comprehensive data on population movement in light of full Palestinian control over Rafah International Crossing. As every Palestinian who exits or enters the Gaza Strip must access Rafah Crossing, inclusive data might be collected.
3. Coordinate with competent authorities in the UNRWA countries of operation in order to attain data from respective administrative registers about the number of refugees abroad. Summed together with the data provided by UNRWA on the number of registered refugees, this may help us provide more precise information about the number of Palestinians in these countries. Should this option be untenable – if for example some countries might not be cooperative, surveys carried out by specialised international organisations in countries where Palestinians concentrate will contribute to producing estimates for the number of unregistered refugees. Accordingly, more accurate estimates about the number of Palestinians residing outside Palestine can be obtained.
4. Enhance the role of Palestinian embassies and representative offices in relevant countries by developing a system to register Palestinian communities. Community members will be encouraged to register via various means, including IT, media, etc.

## References

- Hilal, Jamil (2008). “*External Migration, the Production of Conservative Behavior and Class Formation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*”. In: Taraki, Liza (Editor) (2008). *Living Palestine: Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility under Occupation*. Beirut: Institute For Palestine Studies. (Arabic)
- Khawaja, Marwan and Age A. Tiltnes (eds.), (2002). *On the Margins: Migration and Living Conditions of the Refugee Camp Population in Jordan*. Oslo: FAFO.
- Maliki, Majdi and Yasser Shalabi (2000). *Internal Migration and Palestinian Returnees in The West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute. (Arabic)
- Maliki, Majdi, Yasser Shalabi and Hassan Ladadweh (2004). *Towards a Sociology of Civil Resistance: Palestinian Society During the Second Intifada*. Ramallah: The Palestinian Institute for the Study of Democracy (MUWATIN).
- Piper, Nicola (2005). *Gender and migration*. Geneva: Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM). Available at: <http://www.gcim.org/attachements/TP10.pdf>
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCPS), (2009A). *Press Release: 2008 Main Issues*. Ramallah, Palestine. Available at: [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/PressRelease/end2008.pdf](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/end2008.pdf)
- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), (2009 B), *Statistical Abstract of Palestine 10*. Ramallah, Palestine.
- Russell, S. S. (1995). *Policy Dimensions of Female Migrants to the Arab Countries of Western Asia: International Migration Policies and Status of the Female Migrant*. New York: United Nations, Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis, Population Division.

**Annex****Table 1. Number of Palestinians in Selected Areas and Sex Ratio**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Number of persons</b>	<b>Sex ratio</b>
Occupied Palestinian territory	3,825,512	103.1
Israel	1,172,000	103.6
Jordan*	1,930,703	100.8
Syria*	461,897	100.4
Lebanon*	416,608	98.4

Source: Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), (2009 B), Statistical Abstract of Palestine 10. Ramallah, Palestine.

\* Figures in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon cover UNRWA-registered refugees. Unregistered refugees or voluntary migrants in any of these states are excluded.

**Table 2. Causes of Palestinian External Migration by Sex**

<b>Cause of migration</b>	<b>Males (%)</b>	<b>Females (%)</b>
Employment	%50	%5
Education	%18.5	%1
Marriage	%2.5	%61
In company with another migrant	%2.5	%13.5
Deportation	%19.5	%12.5
Born abroad	%7	%7
<b>Total</b>	<b>%100</b>	<b>%100</b>

Source: Hilal, 2008. p. 254