



PALESTINIAN MIGRATION: ANY CIRCULARITY? DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES

Ismail Lubbad

CARIM Analytic and Synthetic Notes 2008/36

Circular Migration Series

Demographic and economic module

Cooperation project on the social integration
of immigrants, migration, and the movement
of persons (CARIM)



CARIM
Euro-Mediterranean Consortium
for Applied Research on International Migration

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Palestinian Migration: any circularity?
Demographic and economic perspectives

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Abstract

This paper will look at circular migration in the case of the Palestinians. Since no surveys have been conducted on Palestinian circular migration, this paper will make use of available data on return migration, in addition to previous studies on related matters. It contains three main sections: The first section looks at the evolution of Palestinian migration, in particular migration towards non-Arab countries, including EU countries, as against the steady decrease in emigration to Arab Gulf countries. The second section, meanwhile, focuses on the demographic and socio-economic profile of the returning migrant particularly those returning from EU countries. The third section looks at the impact of migration on the socio-economic situation in the occupied Palestinian territories in order to evaluate the likely costs and benefits of future Palestinian migration. It has been noticed, for example, that migration remittances have had an impact on improving education and professional skills, helping, for example, with the education of relatives of migrants in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). Unemployment rates decreased too when labour emigration increased. The paper will suggest that sending money to relatives in the home country can be negatively correlated with age and length of stay abroad. Furthermore, as a conclusion, we ask whether circular/temporary migration could not be one way to improve the economy in the oPt.

Résumé

Ce papier aborde la migration circulaire dans le cas palestinien en utilisant les données disponibles et les études précédentes sur le phénomène de la migration de retour et l'intention d'émigrer. Il contient trois principales sections. La première examine l'évolution de l'émigration palestinienne et indique un accroissement de l'intention d'émigrer vers les pays non arabes y compris ceux de la Union européenne contre un décroissement soutenu des flux vers les pays arabes du Golf. La deuxième section met l'accent sur le profil démographique et socioéconomique des migrants de retour en mettant l'accent sur ceux qui sont retournés des pays de l'UE. La troisième section traite de l'impact de l'émigration sur la situation socio-économique dans les territoires Palestinien occupés afin d'évaluer les coûts et les bénéfices d'une éventuelle émigration. Il a été ainsi démontré que les transferts migratoires ont eu un impact d'amélioration de l'éducation et des qualifications des membres de la famille de migrant. Aussi, le taux de chômage baisse avec l'accroissement des flux de l'émigration de travail. Le papier démontre aussi que l'envoi de l'argent aux proches dans le pays d'origine diminue avec l'âge et la durée de séjour à l'étranger. Par ailleurs, la migration circulaire/temporaire pourrait être un stimulant l'économie des territoires Palestiniens occupés.

I. Introduction

Despite the absence of a common definition for circular migration, we are, with this phrase, essentially dealing with the movement of migrants from country A to country B and a subsequent migration back to country A, but with renewable movements between A and B¹. While permanent migration decreases the social and economic link between migrants and migrant-sending countries, circular migration could provide multi-benefits such as social, cultural exchange, transfer of knowledge/experience and remittances for both countries of origin and countries of destination.

In the Palestinian case, demographic statistics have been a political issue in the Israeli/Palestinian conflict since the beginning of the 20th century. And forced migration of Palestinians following the Israeli-Arab wars in 1948 and 1967 has defined the so-called Middle East question. However, Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and Jordan have experienced circular migration to some extent since the 1960s through working in the Arab Gulf countries and then coming back annually to their home country. Nevertheless, not only is the data on emigration and circular migration not available in the Palestinian census but there is also a general lack of surveys on the question.

In this paper we will, therefore, try to track down any circularity in Palestinian migration through what data we have from Palestinian surveys and population censuses on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of return migration and those Palestinians who are willing to emigrate. The paper seeks to describe the impact of Palestinian migration on Palestinian culture and Palestine's socio-economic situation and focus particularly on migration to EU countries.

I.1 Methods and Data sources

Owing to the previously-noted unavailability of data on circular Palestinian migration² the present paper will exploit alternative sources to track the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of expected future emigrants and return immigrants to the oPt. However, because of difficulties in tracking movements of Palestinians outside the West Bank and Gaza, this paper will examine only the migration inside the oPt by employing the following source of data:

1. Return migration

This working paper will concentrate on the immigration data available in the Population, Housing and Establishments Census which was conducted in the oPt in 1997. Another source of data is the national survey conducted by PCBS in 2006 which focused on the impact of unilateral Israeli measures on Palestinian households in the oPt³. The raw data of the previous census and survey were analyzed by using statistical software (SPSS) and benefited from the direct cooperation of the PCBS (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics). The previous survey and population census included questions relating to individual's residences during specific periods, such as residence at birth; current place of residence;

1 Notes presented by Philippe Fargues on circular migration and Alessanda Verturini on circular migration as a job provider for Mediterranean countries during the thematic session of CARIM on circular migration in October 2007 in Florence.

2 As Israel, Egypt and Jordan control the Palestinian borders in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt), the Palestinian Authority (PA) does not register demographic data of departures/arrivals.

Only numbers of Palestinians (departures/arrivals) between 2004 and 2007 are available from the PA.

3 Source: Palestinian Central bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 2006. Survey of the Impact of the Israeli Unilateral Measures on Social, Economic, and environmental Conditions of the Palestinian Households: Main findings, September 2006, Ramallah, Palestine

previous place of residence (if any); reasons for changing place of residence (if appropriate); and length of time in current residence.

2. Palestinians planning to emigrate/ Future emigrants

Since the previous sources do not contain emigration and circular migration data this paper will make use of the public poll concerning migration issues conducted by Beirzeit University Centre for Development Studies in the oPt in September 2006. The author of this article analysed the question of willingness to emigrate “If you have a chance to immigrate, will you do so?” by gender, age, marital status and other socioeconomic characteristics⁴.

3. The impact of return/ emigration on Palestine

For this section, the paper will make use of the return migration data exploited in source number 1 by tracking certain characteristics (employment status, education status) of the returnees. Furthermore, in order to target the impact of returning migrants/ emigrants on the social and economic development of the home country, 4 case studies have been conducted in the oPt. For remittance data we employed, meanwhile, PCBS national accounts publications.

In order to make use of these sources quantitative and qualitative data, descriptive analysis and comparative historical methods were applied.

II. The dimension/ degree of circularity in Palestinian migration

As mentioned earlier, forced migration has defined Palestinian migration. Another type of movement was the movement of daily workers to Israel, which was considered temporary migration during the discussion at the circular migration thematic session held by CARIM in Florence, October 2007. However, circularity of migration seems to be difficult for many reasons: first, Palestinian refugees (1948) and Palestinians displaced outside the oPt cannot return because of Israeli restrictions; and second, movements of Palestinians in the oPt are restricted according to Israeli rules and regulations, particularly since the second Intifada of 20005. In the oPt, because of Israeli restrictions, to keep the right to live in the oPt, Palestinians working abroad were obliged to visit home country annually, at the very least, once every three years.

Palestinian emigration to Europe started late (the 1970s) compared with the flow of emigrants to Arab countries (Shiblak 2005). Indeed, emigration to Europe increased steadily after the war of 1967 and later after the war of 1982 between Israel and the PLO in Lebanon⁶. Likewise, the Birzeit’ Institute of Women’s Studies (IWS) survey indicated in 1999 that emigration from the oPt to Europe increased while emigration to the Gulf States fell⁷. Emigration from the oPt to Europe has increased

4 Source: Birzeit Center for Development studies: Public Opinion Poll #28 Living Conditions Evaluation of Institutions & Leaders The Proposed Palestinian Government Elections & Palestinian Political Support – Israeli Negotiations with Hezbollah & Hamas: see <http://home.birzeit.edu/cds/opinionpolls/poll28/results.html>

5 For more descriptions of the difficulty of access for Palestinians from and into the oPt in papers written for CARIM by Lena Abu Mokh, ‘Movement to and from the Palestinian Territories Under Israeli occupation after Oslo (1993-2006)’ and a non-published paper by Asem Khalil, ‘Institutional Changes needed to permit/favor circular migration: the Palestinian case’, 2007

6 Israel blocked the return of thousands of inhabitants of the oPt after the 1967 War. Restrictions on Palestinian movements were increased after 1970 clashes in Jordan and the 1982 war in Lebanon encouraged them to look for a safe refuge in Europe.

7 The IWS survey was conducted in 19 communities within the oPt: 14 in the West Bank and 5 in Gaza including 2,254 households (14,866 individuals). It defines emigrants as anyone related to the head of household who spent at least 6 months outside prior to the survey.

since 1967 : from 10% in the period (1968-1987), to 23% during the first *Intifada*, to 24% in the period (1994-1999) and it is expected to be have been higher during the second *Intifada*. In contrast, emigration to Gulf states decreased from 28% to 23% and to 21% in these same periods.

With regard to emigration to EU and other countries, an analysis of Palestinian population data shows that the share of Palestinians abroad out of the total Palestinian population increased form 1% in 1970 to 5% in 2006⁸. This indicates an increase of willingness to migrate towards non-Arab countries. **In Europe**, in 2007, the number of Palestinian might be estimated at 242,000 if we calculate an annual population growth rate of 2% from the figure of 191,000 in 2001, which was estimated by Shiblak. Based on the previous estimate, the number of Palestinians in Europe is about 5.2% of the total of Palestinians abroad (4.6 million), in 2007.

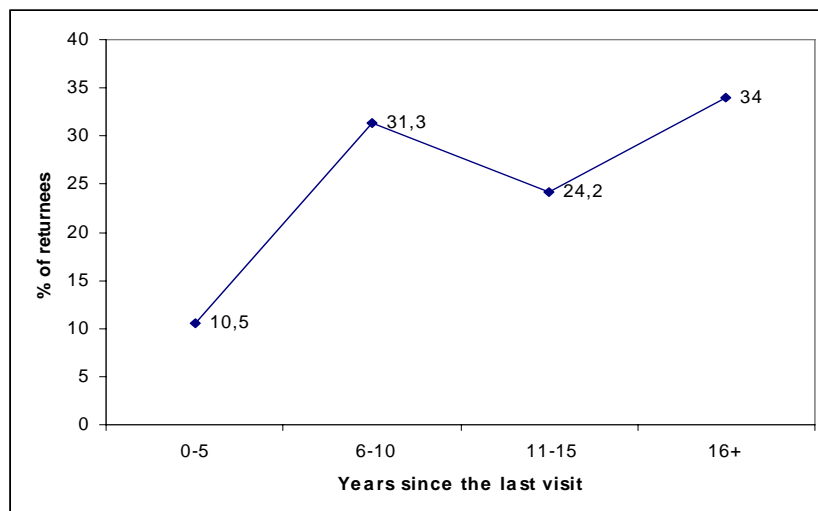
Since data for circular migration is not available, we will present the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of return Palestinian migration, as well as that expected for future emigrants.

III. The demographic and socio-economic characteristics of Palestinian migration

III.1 Return migration to the oPt

According to the Palestinian population census of 1997, about 10.5% (267,000 individuals) of the total population have changed their previous place of residence, moving outside the Palestinian territories, while this percentage, according to the 2006 survey data, has decreased to 7.7%. The main reason for this decrease is the new situation in the oPt in the last years, for the past decade has witnessed the return of thousands of Palestinians owing to the peace agreements signed with the Israel,. The data indicated that the percentage of returnees has not though exceeded 10.5% of the total abroad during 2001-2006 i.e. only about 31,300 Palestinians; this percentage reached about 31.3% from 1996-2000 i.e. about 93,600 individuals. From 1991-1995, it reached 24.2% i.e. 72,100 individuals⁹ (See figure 1).

Figure 1: Palestinian return migration by year of last visit to the occupied Palestinian territories, 2006¹⁰

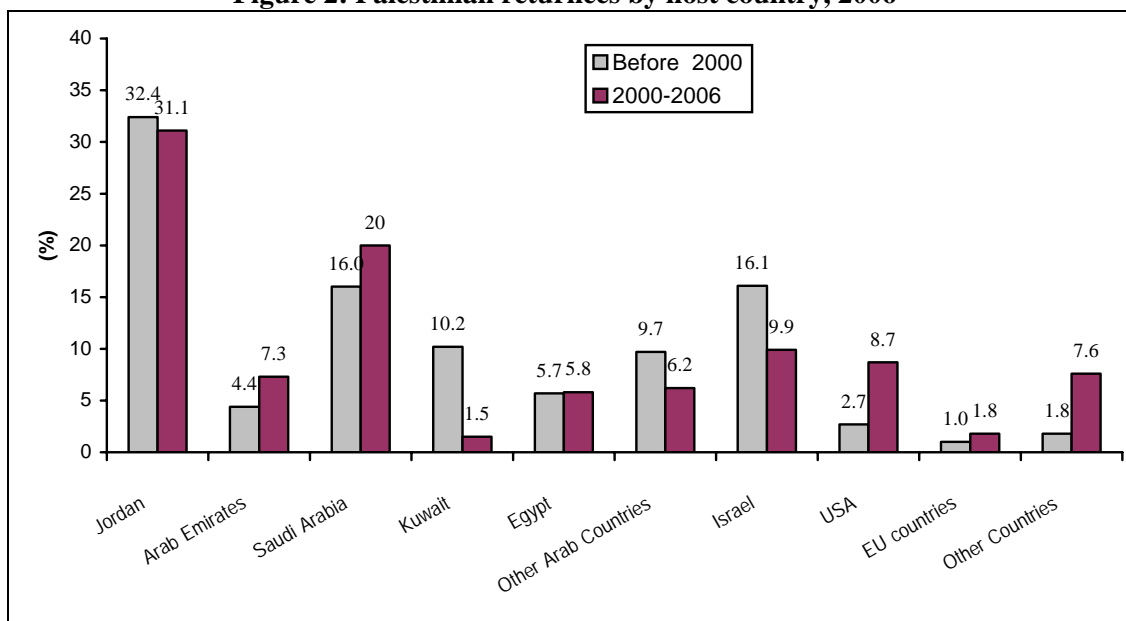


8 Non published paper, Lubbad I, 'Demographic profile of Palestinian migration', 2007

9 Remembering that if the individual returning from abroad has changed his place of residence to another one after his return, he is classified as an internal immigrant and not as a returnee from abroad.

The results of the 2006 survey show that one third of returnees are returning from Jordan followed by Saudi Arabia, Israel and Kuwait (See Figure 2). The situation is slightly different in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. For the West Bank Jordan is in first place as the country where most Palestinians resided before returning with 46% of all returning migrants; while Kuwait and Saudi Arabia are respectively almost equal second and third. In the Gaza Strip, Saudi Arabia was the first host country with a percentage of 23.2%, this owing to the high proportion of Palestinians who have lived and worked in Saudi Arabia, then returned at the end of their labor contracts, while Israel is in second place; the increasing percentage of individuals having a place of residence prior to their current place in Israel is a result of the increase in the percentage of refugees in the territories occupied by Israel in 1948, where their percentage reaches 68% out of the entire population of Gaza, while the percentage of returnees from the EU reached a mere 1.1% of the total number of returnees. And it is notable that there are no significant differences in the order and percentiles of the countries that Palestinians return from according to the data of the census of year 1997: Jordan came in first place with 37%.

Figure 2: Palestinian returnees by host country, 2006



Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 2006. Survey of the Impact of the Israel Unilateral Measures on Social, Economic, and environmental Conditions of The Palestinian Households

Why they decided to go back home? Return to the homeland is the essential motive for most returnees with 50% giving this as their reason: this includes returnees with the national authority or individuals who have returned from abroad so their children need not grow up abroad, and those who have terminated their work abroad (or where contracts were terminated due to their Palestinian status after the Gulf War, 1991) and have returned to reside in Palestinian territories. While about 19.1% of returnees have returned in the company of their households, mostly wives and sons. Marriage was one of the most important motives for Palestinians returning to oPt: 11.8% came back to get married.

Generally, it is clear that political factors and peace agreements were the essential motive for the return of Palestinians during the 1990s, followed by social factors such as marriage, education, and migrants accompanying their families. It is also noteworthy that their return is neither related to clear economic factors, especially in the current difficult situation, nor are there significant differences between the reasons given by West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians. Though it seems that marriage is the second most common reason for females to return to the Palestinian territories.

(Contd.) _____

10 Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), 2006. Survey of the Impact of the Israeli Unilateral Measures on Social, Economic, and Environmental Conditions of the Palestinian Households

III.1.1 The demographic profile of return migration (See Annex 1 Table 1)

More Palestinian males returned than females; 53.3% males compared to 46.7% females, i.e. 114 males per 100 females. This difference comes down to the return of male Palestinians without their households; with the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA); and the return of male Palestinians who recently left Palestinian territories for study or work abroad.

Palestinian returnees can also be significantly differentiated in age terms. The percentage of returnees of 15 years and below has reached 10.4% while 46.0% of Palestinian Society falls into that bracket. Percentage of returnees aged between 25 and 39 years is now at 24.5%, compared to 19% in society as a whole; individuals between 20 and 39 years of age often emigrate so as to return to the homeland, marriage for females, and return to the homeland for males. There are also high percentages of elderly returnees, 17%, return home obviously being the motive for their return.

In terms of refugee status, there is no difference in percentage of returning migrants as against their share of the general population in the oPt, where the percentage of returnees has reached about 47%. Note that their distribution did vary according to the kind of area that they were going to: urban, rural or camps – respectively 53.5%, 30.3%, and 16.2% while it must be remembered that the breakdown for Palestinian society is respectively 56.5%, 28.2%, and 15.3%. Moreover, 29.4% of the returnees are heads of households, since the percentage of returnees classified as a husband or wife head of the household was 26.4%, while within Palestinian society 16.0% are heads of household, and 14.1% husband or wife heads of households, while children of the head of the household were 64.0% in Palestinian society as a whole.

With regard to the marital status of returnees aged 15 and above, about 62.0% were married, compared with 28.0% in the oPt. The percentage of single male returnees is obviously higher than the number of females in the same category.

The returning migrants' education level is also higher than their compatriots in the oPt. Data shows that the percentage of returnees holding bachelor degrees and higher has reached 12.6%, while it stands at only 6.6% in the oPt. In terms of labour status, the majority of employed returnees are waged workers in both the private and the public sector, 6.8% are employers and 15.2% are self-employed.

III.1.2 Returnees from European Union countries (See Annex 1 Table 2)

This section will focus on the characteristics of returnees from EU countries employing the data found in the household survey of 2006, as well as the census data of 1997, offering a comparison when needed.

The data for 2006 shows that the percentage of those who returned from EU countries reached 1.1% of the total number of returnees coming from outside the oPt, while this percentage was 2.1% in 1997. Owing to continuous political and socio-economic deterioration in the oPt since 2000, it is expected that there will now be a gradual decrease in returnees from EU countries in the coming years.

By gender, about two thirds (68.8%) of returning migrants from the EU were male in both 1997 and 2006, and the higher number of male returnees suggests that males are more likely to migrate to Europe for study or work¹¹, and, indeed, most females migrate as companions, not for study or work. With regard to age distribution, 44% of the returnees from the EU were in the 40-54 age group in 2006, while the situation was apparently different in 1997 when 42% of the returnees from the EU were, instead, in the 25-39 age group. This may be a result of the decrease of returnees through 1997-2006, in addition to the fact that the same returnees were covered in the census and the survey and that these were 25-39 in 1997 and 40-49 in 2006. The average age at returning was 38.5 years, while the median age reached 42 years, which means that most of the returnees came back after the age of 25

11 According to Palestinian traditions, females are generally restricted to travel for study or work only in Europe.

years (75% after the age of 25 years and 20% after the age 50 years). This suggests that the returning migrant was returning after finishing their first university degree or higher education more generally or the practical experiences associated with these, not to mention after having achieved a better financial status, and this is borne out by a brief look at the educational status of the returning migrants.

We do not know whether their first departure was from the camps or not: however, it does seem that returnees from the EU preferred to reside in urban areas after they returned. Localities classified as urban contain about 81% of the returning migrants from EU countries, while those in the camps did not exceed 3.5% of the total in 2006. The percentage of the returning migrants to the West Bank reached 63%, while the percentage of the returnees to the Gaza Strip reached 37% and this percentage is close to the actual population split between the two. Another variable is religion: Christian returning migrants reached 17.5%; whereas Christians make up only 3% of the Palestinian population in the oPt according to the census data of 1997. There is also the question of relation to the head of household. Here the results showed that 54.6% of the returning migrants from the EU were heads of households in 2006, while in 1997 the number was 44.5%. On the other hand, the head of households in the oPt did not exceed 20%. And here the difference must be due to the fact that most returnees are married and heads of household, and, in fact, the results showed that the percentage of married returnees reached 82% in 2006, while it was 71% in 1997. This high percentage of married returnees from the EU can be explained, in turn, by their motives for return; the percentage of the returnees aiming for homeland and stability was 56%.

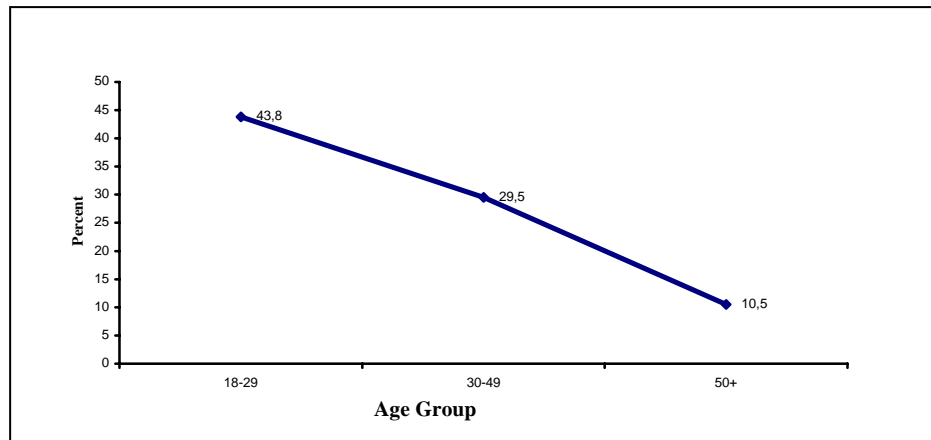
Data showed that those of the returning migrants from the EU aged ten or over who had a university degree reached 40.9%, and 9.4% of them had a PhD according to the 2006 survey, while this percentage was 5.8% in 1997, and these percentages are high given that in the Palestinian Territory those who are 10 years old and over and have a bachelor degree or higher constitute a mere 6.6% of Palestinian society .

With regard to labor status, unemployment among those who return from the EU seems to be low compared with the Palestinians in the oPt and this might be due to the higher educational level of returning migrants and past working experiences and their easy use of foreign languages. In any case, among returning migrants from the EU of ten years of age or over 42% are employed, whereas the equivalent in Palestinian society was only 23% in the survey of 2006. Returning Migrants from EU countries are typically employed in the private sector or in the public foreign sector. Accordingly the main employment conditions for returnees from the EU, of 10 years old or over, the data suggests, are self-employment or management. Indeed, the data showed that 15.8% are employers and 22.5% are self employed while employers and the self employed reached 22% for the total returnees and 27% for oPt employed persons.

III.2 Palestinians planning to emigrate

Taking into account the state of siege, poverty, and unemployment that Palestinians currently live with and have lived with for most of the last decade; it is obvious that there is a trend of emigration among the young and the unemployed young particularly. According to an opinion poll conducted by Birzeit university in September 2006, the percentage of individuals aged 18 years and above, who prefer emigration from the Palestinian territories has reached 32.4% (i.e. slightly less than one third of this category). The data also indicates that males are keener to emigrate than females: 42% for males as against 23% for females.

Figure 3: Distribution of Palestinians (Aged 18 Years and above) planning to Emigrate by Age Group, September 2006



Source: Birzeit University, Center for Development Studies, 2006. Poll No.28

Furthermore, the survey data indicates that the young are the category keenest for migration; since the percentage of individuals aged between 18-29 years who prefer migration has reached 44%, while it reached only 30% for the category 30-49 years, and it has not exceeded 11% for individuals aged 50 years and above: this breakdown is reasonable and predictable (See Figure 3). Although the data does not reflect whether the desire to emigrate relates to circular, temporary or permanent migration, the data shows that that desire is high for the young, which might match the demand for employment in EU countries. Because of the delay in finding a first job, coupled with a consequential delay in marriage age young adults (20-30) are freer to experience circular/ temporary migration from MENA countries to EU countries (Fargues 2005). In the Palestinian case, it could be a solution to chronic unemployment (the economic dimension) and a means of cultural and social exchange with EU countries.

The same opinion poll shows that education level has a significant bearing on the desire for migration; about 36% for those with secondary school and university level education, while only about 26% for individuals holding preparatory certificate and below. Furthermore, data shows that singles were the category keenest on emigration: about 54% of the total persons who want to emigrate as against 26% for married people and 15% for divorcees and widows. Contrary to expectations, employed individuals were keener to emigrate than unemployed ones; 41% as against 28% for the unemployed. The fact that persons employed and persons with high-educational levels are planning to emigrate is a nice pointer to the degradation of the economic situation and the general absence of hope for peace in the oPt.

Regarding the place of residence, populations in rural areas are keener to emigrate than urban and camp residents; as the percentage has reached 35% for villagers, 31% for urban Palestinians, and 32% for camp residents. Likewise, data indicates that the percentage of refugees wishing to migrate has reached 30.3% versus 33.8% for non-refugees.

In the same way, in November 2006, about 33.2% of interviewees expressed a wish to emigrate; 35.4% in the Gaza Strip compared with 31.5% in the West Bank. They explained the reasons for their potential emigration as follow: 44% lack of security, 24% the poor economic situation¹².

12 A survey conducted by the State Information Service, November. (Poll No.5/2006, <http://www.sis.gov.ps>)

Overall, then the profile of a person who is planning for emigration from the oPt – be that emigration circular, temporary or permanent – is *young single male, holding a university degree, employed* regardless of his/her refugee status or place of residence.

Most Palestinian migrants from the oPt would prefer circular or temporary to permanent migration if guarantees and agreements could be made between Israel, the PA and the recipient countries. Given that the cost of living is high in the oPt, one might guess that labor migration might tend towards the US and the EU rather than Arab countries where the wages are lower than in the oPt.

IV The socio-economic impact on the home country

The Palestinian Authority did not take measures and policies to organize labor migration in the oPt. Since the 1970s, labor migration was organized directly between migrants and destination country. For example, Palestinians working in Israel who have a direct relationship with Israeli employers and labor migration to Arab Gulf countries, to the US and Europe has been organized by relatives, friends or individuals¹³.

Since migrants are not an economic good, the impacts of migration on a society are not only economic but also cultural and social. In this section, we will present the impact (both benefits and cost) of Palestinian migration on Palestinian society in the oPt. Furthermore, we will make use of characteristics of Palestinian returnees and we will analyze the remittances of migrants and their role in socio-economic development.

IV.1 Cost on home country

Palestinians lost their homes and property rights because the forced migration of 1948 by Israel led to the destruction of Palestinian society and the separation of Palestinians amongst various refuge countries, making contact between different Palestinian communities difficult. Any other cost after that is marginal. However, we will discuss some of the negative impact of migration on Palestinian society. Since the majority of Palestinian emigrants or Palestinians thinking of emigrating have a university degree or are skilled laborers, we are well within our rights to speak of brain drain on Palestinian society, while the emigration of employers has a negative impact on the Palestinian economy.

The permanent emigration of Palestinian males decreases the opportunity for Palestinian females to get married, the number of females of marital age will, therefore, be higher than the number of males. In addition, in the case of labor migration, the absence of household heads could lead to the weakness of family relationships. It leads as well to the creation of nuclear households abroad, which affect the construction of the family in and outside the sending country.

IV.2 Benefits

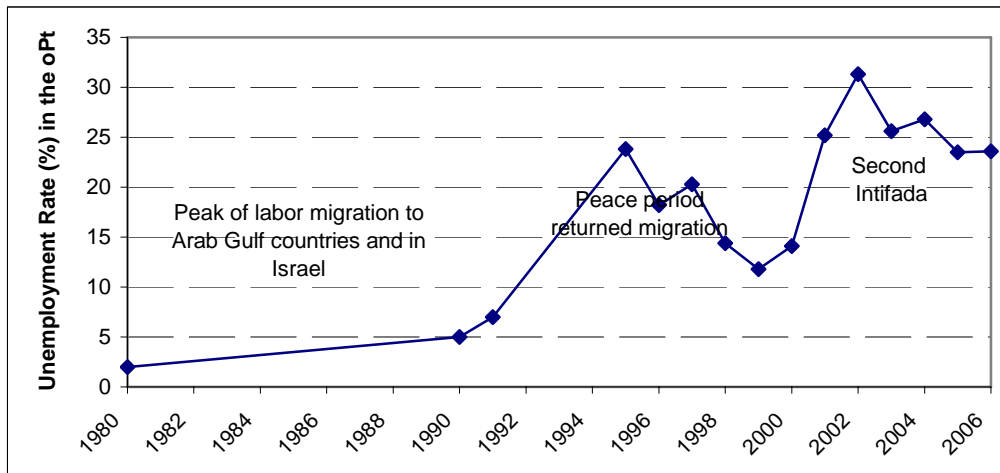
Circular migration has two parts: emigration then return. Despite the lack of data on circular migration, the following analysis will track the positive impact of emigrants or those thinking of emigrating and returned migrants on Palestinian society in the oPt. The analysis will try to answer the following questions: Is temporary or circular migration a solution for unemployment in the oPt? What is the effect of remittances on social and economic development in the oPt?

¹³ After 1994, there were agreements between the PNA and other countries regarding education scholarships and the professional training of Palestinians abroad. These initiatives come in general from the US and European and Arab countries so as to increase the professional skills of the Palestinian people so as to support the work of the PNA.

IV.2.1 The impact on education and the labour market

With regard to return migration and the impact on the Palestinian economy of what these returnees have gained in education and professional skills, the data reveals that returnees education level is higher than their counterparts in the oPt. This is why they get jobs more easily than the general population in the oPt. Nevertheless, their contribution in creating jobs are limited as the majority of them work as waged workers while only 6.8% are employers. Regarding returnees from EU countries, the situation is different, as, in addition to their education level, they contribute to economic development by creating jobs for others (15.8%) or working as the self-employed (22.5%).

Figure 4: Unemployment rate in the occupied Palestinian territories, 1980-2006¹⁴



As mentioned in this section, the majority of persons planning to emigrate are young. Looking at the unemployment figures in the third Quarter (Q3) of 2007, the data reveals that one third (33%) of those aged (20-29) are unemployed and about one quarter (24.4%) of the population spending 13 years or more in education are unemployed. In addition, as mentioned in figure 4, the unemployment rate decreased during the period of labour migration to Gulf coupled with the easy access of daily workers to Israel, while unemployment increased with the decrease of labor migration, coupled with restrictions on access to Israel for Palestinian workers.

In general, based on the previous analysis, temporary or circular migration has a positive impact on the education and professional skills of returnees which enhance socio-economic development in the oPt.

IV.2.2 Impact on relatives

Investment in relatives' education was one of the major impacts on human and social capital. But there was also an increase in social solidarity between Palestinians in the oPt and their relatives abroad.

Traditionally, Palestinians abroad have helped their relatives in completing higher education as it was expensive especially before the emergence of the PNA where the number of universities were very limited in the oPt which demanded students travel abroad to follow up their higher education. However, face-to-face contact is very important for economic transactions and especially for receiving and giving help; a family living in the Palestinian territories typically relies on family-members abroad, but the lack of physical communication hinders transactions (Faf0 2003).

¹⁴ Source: from 1980 to 1991: Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, while from 1995 to 2006: PCBS labour force survey, annual book 2006

In view of the fact that we do not have a general profile regarding investments in the education of relatives, we will refer to a survey done by Hanafi which contains information on certain communities in the oPt. According to Hanafi, for Ramallah, about 82% of interviewees were receiving financial assistance from their relatives to support their secondary-level education, while this percentage reached only 65% for those holding a first university degree and only 9% for those holding a Masters degree. Of this category more than 82% have at least a financial partner abroad.

With regard to supporting relatives financially in the home country, money transfers for relatives has decreased steadily since the expulsion of some 300,000 Palestinians from the Arab Gulf following the Gulf War in 1991. The IWS survey reveals that about 84% of the households did not receive remittances from their relatives abroad¹⁵. According to the same source, sending remittances from abroad is negatively correlated with age of the emigrants and the period of stay abroad (Giacaman, 2002: 36-38). Again, it demonstrates that temporary and circular migration is more valuable than permanent migration in the Palestinian case.

IV.2.3 Remittances in the oPt

Remittances have played a crucial role in the Palestinian economy especially during the 1980s. Additionally, thanks to an agreement between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Arab Gulf countries, about 5% was deducted directly from salaries of those Palestinians working in the Gulf till 1991 and was transferred directly to the PLO fund. As mentioned above, following the Gulf War, the remittances of Palestinians to the oPt declined gradually. They increased from 9.7 million Jordanian Dinars (JD) in 1974 (about 7.5 of the GDP in the oPt) to 97.4 million JD in 1984 (about 56% and 33% of the GDP in the West Bank and Gaza) while they declined to 96.4 million US dollars in 1997 (only 3% of the estimated PCBS GDP) (Hilah 2007)¹⁶. In 1999, according to IWS survey, 8.5% of Palestinians receive money from emigrants abroad while 6.5% send money to emigrants abroad.

Other type of remittances comes from workers in Israel, which has also decreased since the second *Intifada* in 2000; as a result of external closures nearly 80,000 Palestinian workers have lost their jobs in Israel¹⁷. According to the PCBS, in 2000 remittances from workers in Israel equaled 600 million US dollars (14% of Palestinian GDP) three times its level in 2005 (220 million US dollars which was only 5% of the GDP)¹⁸ (See Table 1).

**Table 1: Current Transfers From the Rest of the World, And GDP in the oPt, 2000 -2005
(Value in million US\$)**

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Current transfers including transfers from Israel	728.3	1,000.3	1,115.0	876.9	857.6	1,225.5
Transfers from workers in Israel	600.8	179.0	106.1	167.5	161.5	220.8
GDP	4,261.1	3,988.5	3,838.9	4,165.3	4,247.7	4,502.6
Current transfers as % of GDP	17%	25%	29%	21%	20%	27%

Source: PCBS upon special request from author

15 After the second Intifada, despite a continuous economic collapse, Palestinians did not change how they received money from their relatives abroad

16 1 JD = 3.3 US\$ before 1988 & 1 JD = 1.4 US\$ after 1988

17 See PCBS, 2007 labor force survey (July-September) Quarter 3, Ramallah, Palestine.

18 There was no share in the Gaza GDP from remittance of workers in Israel in 2006 and 2007, as no Palestinian workers went to work in Israel from Gaza in these years.

Since the table does not differentiate between remittances from Palestinians abroad, remittances are included in the previous categories and international aid to the PNA, which has increased since 2000, making the Palestinian economy dependent to a certain degree on international aid and work in Israel.

V. Conclusion

The presentation of different sources for population and migration figures indicated that circular migration was a factor for labor migration to and from the Arab Gulf countries from the 1960s to the early 1990s. However, no data is available in the population census to measure the demographic and socio-economic profile of the population in question. Additionally, the Palestinian authorities do not have an effective registration system to record departures and arrivals at their borders as Israel still controls these registrations. It is recommended that a survey be undertaken to measure these phenomena and their impact on the Palestinian economy.

As a result of political events in the Middle East, especially the Gulf War in 1991, more than 267,000 Palestinians from the Gulf countries, Jordan and elsewhere returned to the West Bank and Gaza. Since they have higher education and professional levels than their compatriots in the oPt, they have better access to jobs than the rest of population. Returnees from the EU countries have the highest education level amongst returnees and the general population of the oPt. In addition, they are more active in economic development than the rest of the population as a majority of them are employers or self employed.

However, since the political and socio-economic indicators have deteriorated significantly since the start of the second *Intifada* 2000, Palestinian emigration has increased steadily especially to non-Arab countries. About 32% of the respondents expressed their desire to migrate, reflecting an increase on past years. About 44% of young people between 18 and 29 years would prefer to emigrate if they could find an opportunity to travel. The majority of these are single males.

Regarding remittances, we find that migration remittances have had an impact on increasing education and professional skills, helping with the education of the relatives of migrants in the oPt and also that unemployment decreased while emigration increased. Interestingly, we noticed that sending money to relatives in the home country are negatively correlated with age and period of stay abroad. Furthermore, the papers founds that circular/temporary migration could lead to a more general improvement in the economy of the oPt. Since temporary and circular migration is more valuable than permanent migration in the Palestinian case, therefore, temporary/ circular migration could be one of the solutions to reduce unemployment rates in the oPt. Hence, it is recommended that the PNA, Israel and EU countries take measures to facilitate circular/ temporary migration for Palestinian youths.

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19 CARIM Euro-Mediterranean Consortium for Applied Research on International Migration

Annex 1

**Table 1: Palestinian Returnees to the Palestinian Territories by Selected Variables
And Region, 2006 (%)**

Variables		West bank	Gaza Strip	Palestinian Territories
Sex	Male	47.1	45.9	46.7
	Female	52.9	54.1	53.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Type of locality	Urban	48.3	62.8	53.5
	Rural	45.3	3.4	30.3
	Camps	6.4	33.8	16.2
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Age Group	14-0	11.1	9.1	10.4
	24-15	23.7	24.0	23.8
	39-25	26.2	21.5	24.5
	59-40	26.2	20.9	24.3
	+60	12.8	24.5	16.9
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Refugee Status	Refugee	30.6	76.7	47.0
	Non refugee	69.4	23.3	53.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Returned Period	5-0	9.8	11.6	10.5
	10-6	34.0	26.6	31.3
	15-11	21.8	28.4	24.2
	+16	34.4	33.4	34.0
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0
Marital Status	Never Married	28.8	26.7	28.0
	Engaged	1.8	.8	1.4
	Married	63.1	60.2	62.0
	Divorced	0.7	1.7	1.1
	Widowed	5.3	10.3	7.1
	Separated	0.4	.2	.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Educational Level	Illiterate	5.8	16.9	9.8
	Can read and write	9.6	8.4	9.2
	Elementary	17.3	10.8	15.0
	Preparatory	27.7	18.0	24.2
	Secondary	20.5	24.5	21.9
	Intermediate level diploma	8.3	5.6	7.3
	Bachelors degree	9.5	14.4	11.2
	Higher diploma	0.2	.4	0.3
	Masters degree	0.8	.9	0.8
	Ph. D.	0.3	.3	0.3
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2: Palestinian Returnees to the Palestinian Territories from EU countries by Selected Variables (%)

Variables		Census 1997	Survey, 2006
Region	The West Bank	72.6	63.0
	The Gaza Strip	27.4	37.0
Sex	Male	68.1	68.6
	Female	31.9	31.4
Total		100.0	100.0
Religion	Muslim	82.4	-
	Christian	17.5	-
	Others	0.2	-
Total		100.0	100.0
Type of locality	Urban	68.8	80.8
	Rural	22.6	15.7
	Camps	8.6	3.5
Total		100.0	100.0
Age Group	14-0	16.2	9.7
	24-15	9.3	14.9
	39-25	42.0	19.7
	54-40	19.3	44.0
	+55	13.2	11.7
Total		100.0	100.0

Marital Status	Never Married	23.5	17.6
	Engaged	1.2	0.0
	Married	70.6	82.4
	Divorced	1.2	0.0
	Widowed	1.5	0.0
	Separated	2.0	0.0
Total		100.0	100.0
Educational Level	Illiterate and Can read and write	11.3	9.3
	Elementary	7.8	6.5
	Preparatory	8.7	16.3
	Secondary	17.7	21.6
	Intermediate level diploma	8.7	5.3
	Bachelors degree	25.8	24.4
	Higher diploma	1.5	0.0
	Masters degree	11.0	7.1
	Ph. D.	5.8	9.4
	Not stated	1.8	0.0
Total		100.0	100.0
Employment status	Employer	12.4	15.8
	Self employed	17.1	22.5
	Wage employee	67.1	61.7
	Un paid family member	1.2	0.0
	Others	1.9	0.0
	Not stated	0.3	0.0
Total		100.0	100.0