

## التهجير والهجرة العائدة ودورها في نموّ الشبكات الاقتصادية العابرة للحدود في فلسطين بعد العام 1994

هديل فواضلة

### ملخص

**هدف الدراسة:** تسعى هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور الهجرة في نموّ المدينة الفلسطينية "الحديثة". وتحديداً، توضيح أثر اللجوء عام 1948 والنزوح عام 1967 ثم الهجرة العائدة بعد عام 1994 في إعادة تشكيل النخبة الاقتصادية في دول اللجوء والشتات؛ ومن ثم إنشاء شبكات اقتصادية ساهمت في نموّ مدينة رام الله اقتصادياً. **المنهجية:** استندت هذه الدراسة إلى مجموعة من المقابلات المعمقة التي أجريت مع خمسة عشر مستثمراً من أصحاب النخبة الفلسطينيين الموجودين في الأردن والضفة الغربية وتحديداً في رام الله. **النتائج:** توصلت الدراسة إلى أن التهجير القسري للفلسطينيين عامي 1948 و1967 شتت النخبة الاقتصادية التي تركزت في مدن الساحل، وتحديداً في يافا وحيفا ودمّرت الاقتصاد الزراعي والصناعي فيها. استطاعت النخبة الاقتصادية أن تستعيد ذاتها جزئياً لا سيما في الأردن، وجزء منها بنى نفسه من الصفر؛ إذ إن التعليم العالي والتدريب المهني استطاعا أن يهيئا نخبة اقتصادية من أبناء المدن والبلدات الفلسطينية الصغيرة الحجم. ومع تشكيل السلطة الوطنية الفلسطينية وعودة بعد الفلسطينيين بعد عام 1994، استطاع بعض من أصحاب النخبة العودة والاستثمار في الضفة الغربية لا سيما في مدينة رام الله؛ حيث تركزت مؤسسات السلطة والوزارات والمؤسسات الأجنبية. وقد تميزت استثمارات العائدين بأنها خدماتية تجارية مرتبطة بالسوق العالمي، لكنها تفتقر إلى الإنتاجية الزراعية والصناعية. **الخلاصة:** تعتبر الشبكات الاقتصادية من أهم الشبكات التي تربط بين الشتات الفلسطيني والوطن، إلا أنها تتسم بالضعف لارتباطها بالوضع السياسي في الوطن وسياسات دول اللجوء والشتات. كما أن عملية الهجرة (تشمل التهجير والهجرة العائدة) كان لها الدور الأساسي في إعادة تشكيل النخبة الاقتصادية العابرة للحدود.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التهجير، الهجرة العائدة، النخبة الاقتصادية، مدينة رام الله، النمو الاقتصادي.

## Palestinian Return Migration: Family Networks as a Primary Impetus for Return

*Hadeel Fawadleh\**

### Abstract

**Objectives:** This paper seeks to explore the role of immigration in the growth of the “modern” Palestinian city. Specifically, this paper attempts to clarify the impact of asylum in 1948, displacement in 1967, and return migration after 1994 in re-forming the economic elite in the countries of asylum and diaspora, and then establishing economic networks that contributed to the economic growth of the city of Ramallah. **Methods:** This paper was based on a set of in-depth interviews conducted with fifteen elite investors in Jordan and the West Bank, specifically in Ramallah. **Results:** The paper concluded that the forced displacement of Palestinians in 1948 and 1967 scattered the economic elite that was concentrated in the coastal cities, specifically in Jaffa and Haifa, and destroyed the agricultural and industrial economy there. The economic elite was partially able to recover itself, especially in Jordan, and part of it built itself from scratch, as higher education and vocational training were able to create an economic elite. With the formation of the Palestinian National Authority after 1994, some of the elite’s owners were able to return and invest in the West Bank, especially in the city of Ramallah, where the authority’s institutions, ministries and foreign institutions are concentrated. The returnees’ investments were characterized as commercial services linked to the global market, lacking agricultural and industrial productivity. **Conclusion:** Economic networks are considered one of the most important networks that connect the Palestinian diaspora and the homeland, but they are weak because of their connection to the political situation in the homeland and the policies of the countries of asylum and diaspora. In addition, the migration process (including displacement and return migration) had a primary role in re-forming the Palestinian economic elite.

**Keywords:** Displacement, Return migration, Economic elite, Ramallah city, Economic growth.

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\* Assistant Professor at Geography Department of Birzeit University – Palestine  
E-mail: Hadeel.fawadleh@gmail.com

## **Introduction**

Although Palestinians had been forced to abandon their place of residence (e.g. from Kuwait in 1991, Libya in 1995, Lebanon in 1975 and 1982, and the occupied territories of 1948); the Palestinian migration/displacement to the countries of diaspora and exile, including going back home, particularly to the occupied West Bank, has been developing to become some sort of an option under the growth of family networks that have grown into a woven network of places as far apart as North and South Americas, Europe, Arab countries, and the homeland (Fawadleh, 2017).

These different typologies of Palestinian migration are often subject to territorial and governmental restrictions and procedures created by the countries of diaspora and exile, including going back home, but they are also subject to family and kinship networks created by the Palestinians themselves around the world. The latter, for instance, played a significant role in the influx of the migration of Palestinians to the United States (Fawadleh, 2017), and the migration of Palestinian refugees from Lebanese camps to Europe (Dorai, 2008).

This paper raises a question on whether family and kinship networks can play a role in facilitating and encouraging return migration of Palestinian migrants/refugees to the to their homeland. The paper is set to examine the Palestinian return migrations especially to the occupied West Bank. It also sheds light on the various roles that family networks play, whether at social, economic, or legal levels, in facilitating and encouraging the return to the homeland. In other words, this paper attempts to exclusively evaluate Palestinian return migration to the occupied West Bank, focusing on three main points; namely: Family networks acting as a social capital, the family as an economic, legal, and social institution, and the family as a small homeland. Networks are often seen as something that exists with no need to provide a shred of empirical evidence for the directory of their existence or the existence of concrete cases illustrating the way they act.

## **Methodology**

First of all, this paper started as part of a postdoctoral research, which was titled, "Going Back Home: Towards Analysing the Experiences of

Palestinian Returnees”, which led to the emergence of several articles<sup>(1)</sup>. This paper, in particular, relied on the qualitative and descriptive analytical approaches; the qualitative approach involved conducting in-depth interviews with different groups of Palestinian returnees to the homeland, in order to gain access to information and various details that attempt to thoroughly explain the phenomenon of Palestinian return migration. The descriptive analytical approach, on the other hand, provided a description of the causes, factors and mechanisms of the Palestinian return migration and its relation to familial networks, and then analysed the interviews and categorized them into main results.

Accordingly, in-depth interviews were conducted with Palestinian individuals and families that had returned home to the occupied West Bank during the year 2019. The researcher reached out to these returnees through some friends and municipalities. In some cases, some migrants refused to be interviewed, and some of them considered this study as politically motivated, while others considered it as personal. (See appendix 1)

The dates and places of interviews were set over the phone, and were mostly conducted in the migrants’ houses, while a small number of interviews was conducted in restaurants or the migrants’ workplaces. Each interview lasted 2-3 hours. In terms of interview documentation, the researcher wrote down the answers to the interview questions instead of recording them because some of the interviewees would not consent to having their interviews recorded, fearing that the recordings might later be used for non-scientific purposes (especially the quotations related to their political views).

The researcher deliberately used long texts from the interviews and did not use the statistical method, because through oral narratives, the researcher was able to access off-the-record information not subjected to the censorship of any institution or government authority. In other words, because the interviewees had the chance to express their opinions freely, their narratives turned out to be very objective and reflected their personal experiences. Therefore, the researcher presented the texts of these interviews anonymously, to protect the interviewees’ identity and ensure

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their legal and political security and safety. Hence, only initials were used.

Thus, the study sample was intended to be selective and inclusive, using a snowball approach. This paper is based on five interviews that show the relationship between familial networks and return migration. (See appendix 2).

Finally, the field work was conducted in the occupied West Bank only because the researcher was unable to conduct any fieldwork in the Gaza Strip and the occupied Jerusalem due to the strict measures imposed by the Israeli colonialism.

### **Family networks as a social capital**

Emerged during the 1970s, the network analysis of migration has been increasingly developing since the early 1990s. In this regard, Thomas Faist (1989) argued that the analysis had a fundamental weakness, as it did not address the emergence of migration networks. It, however, considered social capital, according to Faist, as a factor that initially hindered freedom of movement, but as migration networks developed, they transformed into a driving force of emigration. This framework is essential and relevant to understand the Palestinian diaspora, particularly in the US and Europe. The settlement of early migrants is a pivotal factor that allows migrants who intensify social capital to develop migration networks. Thus, migration develops when social capital becomes functional at the local and international levels.

This analytical framework is closely linked to the process of understanding the dynamics of Palestinian migration. Although coercive reasons drove some of those migrations (e.g., the returns that were eventuated by the 1980s oil glut and the 1991 Gulf War), the migrants' return in other cases was brought into fruition due to political changes such as the Oslo Accords and the emergence of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994. In all previous cases, the decision to return was based on an array of reasons. Family networks stood and still stand to be the most crucial and are strongly regarded as networks of solidarity and mutual support or assistance. Such networks evolved among the Palestinians themselves in the diaspora, exile, and refugee camps and with their families at home. These return migrations can be classified within the scope of transnational migration (i.e., transnationalism). Such bonds have been instrumental in supporting and accelerating migration. In the same vein, Faist pointed out

that the stability of former migrants is considered a central determinant that allows for the development of migration networks. Migration develops when social capital performs its function not only at the local level but also at the transnational level. This assumption means that the survival of some individuals from the same family or the same kinship residing at home leads to the development of transnational migration networks crossing national borders to the homeland.

In recent years, the relationship between migrants/refugees and the principle of crossing national borders has become the subject of study and research. Studies of transnational migrant/refugee activities have contributed to a more comprehensive approach to the role of the 'state' in the formulation of migration networks and the processes of globalization and facilitation of travel in the contemporary world (Black, 2001). However, as for the Palestinian cause, such migrations/displacements are limited to Palestinians that have a foreign nationality or double nationality, i.e., Palestinian plus foreign identity, which legally qualifies them to return to the homeland, permanently or temporarily. This fact means that Palestinian cross-border migrations, especially transnational towards the homeland, are mostly controlled by the Palestinian-Israeli political context and the asylum policies of the exile countries (Hanafi, 2001).

The Palestine migrants/refugees present a significant sui-generis case for study. They constitute one of the oldest refugee populations of non-state affiliation and, as such, a significant proportion of them still live in refugee camps and informal housing agglomeration (Malkki, 1995). Their geographical concentration and their legal and political status in the host Arab States have sustained the survival and reinforcement of family networks, or both as one of the centers of social organization in the diaspora. Kinship networks provide one of the few means available to migrants/refugees deprived of their fundamental rights (Kunz, 1973). Family networks play the role of a solidarity organization in helping migrants/refugees to integrate in the countries of diaspora/exile, as an economic institution in terms of finding employment opportunities for migrants and cooperating for the success of their businesses, and as a legal institution where through the family networks they get travel visas and nationalities.

The essential characteristic of social capital lies in its translatability into other forms of capital, notably financial (Harker et al., 1999), or in

maintaining its position in society (Coleman, 1988). Thus, the study of networks, particularly those linked to families and households, helps understand migration, according to Boyd (1989: 642) as “a social product—neither as the sole result of individual decisions made by individual actors, nor as the sole result of economic or political parameters, but rather as an outcome of all these factors in interaction”. Alejandro Portes (1995: 22), defined migration as “a network-creating process because it develops an increasingly dense web of contacts between places of origin and destination. Once established, such networks allow the migration process to become self-sustaining and impervious to short-term changes in economic incentives”.

With the use of social capital, the costs and risks associated with the act of migration are reduced, and the prospects of migration are increased. The social capital theorists assume that individuals instrumentally use their networks to generate the highest returns on their investments in human capital. Besides, they help reduce living expenses and provide newcomer migrants with financial assistance upon their arrival. Thus, the mechanism of the family networks contributes to increasing the number of migrants in the diaspora.

Doraï (2008) stated that family and kinship networks play an essential role in governing and developing Palestinian migrations, both in the country they leave or the host country. Multiple stages of the migration process determine the modus-operandi of these networks. It allows for the movement of funds needed to pay the journey and provides the necessary information about the country of destination, where the migrants/migrants disseminate information over the network to be accessible. This, in turn, facilitates the adaptation of newcomers to the host country and plays a role in the selection of migrants/refugees from the state of departure to meet specific needs in the host country. Such an arrangement helps avoid legal impediments in the host state and affect the choice of the country of destination by migrants/refugees. Here, family networks are transnational networks, for they provide a geographical extension of family networks in the country of diaspora, exile and refugee camps.

Therefore, return migration could be explained based on two theories:

**First**, the Transnational Migration Theory provides a new avenue to make and understand the strong social and economic ties maintained by emigrants in the diaspora with their mother countries. According to Portes (1999), these ties are understood “by regular and sustained social contacts over time across

national borders". The theory also explains how these ties can be reflected in the identities of migrants, rendering return migration as a circular movement. Migrants maintain strong ties with their motherland and are more prepared to return through regular visits and remittances. Through the act of return, they hold dual identity. On that account, they can negotiate the theme of the identities they embrace in contrast to structuralists' standpoint who prefer to talk about amending the migrants' identity upon return to their native soil. The main determinants that drive transnational activities and the identification of transnational identities are race, common descent, and kinship.

**Second** comes the Social Network Theory, which perceives returnees as owners of intangible material resources, i.e., social relations. Returnees maintain strong ties with their country of origin while they are in the diaspora, which means that they do not necessarily depend on the diaspora. These ties may profoundly help returnees to ensure their return to their mother countries. Therefore, social networks are selectively organized, and joining these networks requires the consent of other members to ensure the influx of social capital and funds. The formation and maintenance of networks require long-term personal relations and regular exchange of mutually valuable elements. Nevertheless, other resources such as the initiatives and projects started up by the emigrants after their return are essential to ensure a successful return.

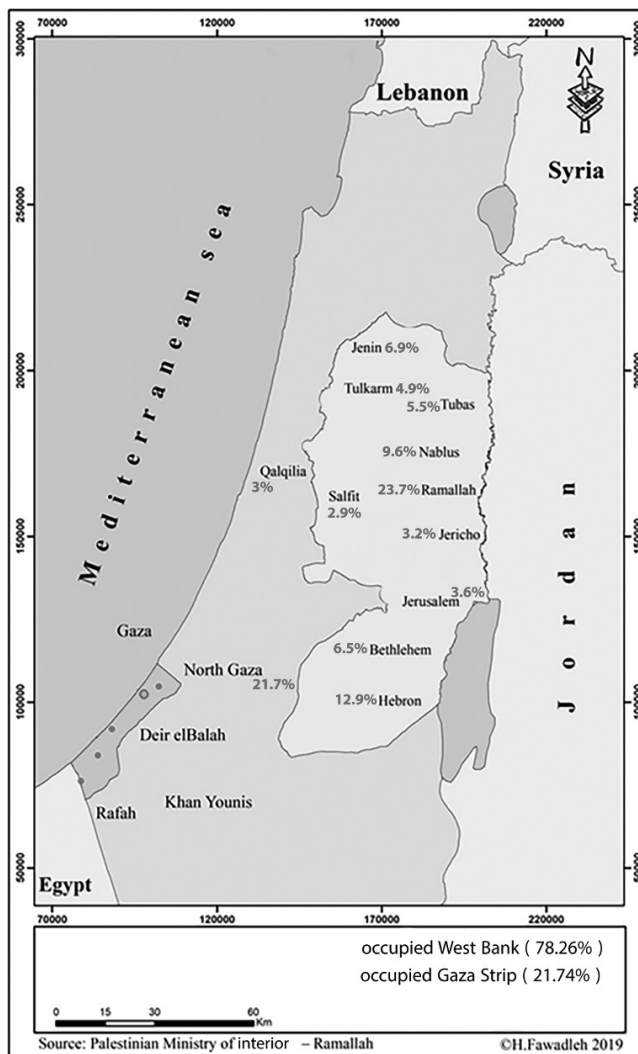
### **Family networks drives Palestinian return migration**

The aftermath of the establishment of the Palestinian Authority in the occupied Palestinian territories of 1967 (West Bank and Gaza Strip) in 1994, a year after the signing of the Oslo Accords, was undoubtedly accompanied by the return of many individuals, families, politicians, PLO cadres and investors. Statistical data issued by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) in 1997 showed that returnees accounted for approximately 10.5 percent of the total population in the occupied Palestinian territories.

In a study conducted by Mohammed Dridi in 2006, he found out that the percentage of returning migrants dropped from 10.5 percent to 7.7 percent and was distributed as follows: 65.3 percent in the West Bank and 43.7 percent in the Gaza Strip with the largest percentage of them (33%) settling in the northern governorates. They returned from four countries, namely Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Kuwait.

Relevant statistics obtained from the Palestinian Authority of Interior in Ramallah in 2019 showed that the number of Palestinian returnees after 1994 was around 46,448 persons, but since the data has not been updated, it is unknown whether the returnees continued to live at home or left again. The following map shows the distribution of the returnees in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip:

**Map: The distribution of Palestinians returnees after 1994 in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip by main district**



## **Main Findings**

Since this paper deals with the relationship between family networks and return migration, it presents five patterns of pathways of Palestinian returnee migration, linking between the decision of return and the existence of family networks. These tracks presented through narratives and stories by Palestinian families that returned home in different periods after 1994, had been chosen for this purpose. It is worth mentioning that the names of the families and persons mentioned are not real for confidentiality and privacy purposes.

### **1 - Familial networks as a key factor in obtaining the Palestinian nationality**

The Palestinian migrations were forced due to political and economic circumstances resulting from Al-Nakba in 1948 and Al-Naksa in 1967. On the whole, these emigrations mostly involved families; many Palestinian families were forcibly displaced from their hometowns. As a result of previous and current circumstances, these families, or at least some of their members, continued immigrating. They began as forced emigrants and became transmigrants, or their migration started as forced and continued as such, and a lot of them obtained foreign nationalities. This suggests that each forced emigration might turn into another type of migration that enables migrants to take action, get employment opportunities, receive education and new nationalities, which help them travel to their homeland. Accordingly, the role of the family (Kinship networks) here is to provide the required documents that guarantee a return. Thus, the Palestinians' return to their permanent homeland required repossessing their Palestinian nationality/ citizenship.

This confirms again the fact that the stay of some members of the same family at home is a vital reason for other individuals residing in the exile to obtain visas (from Israeli embassies) to visit the country or to obtain the so-called "reunion" through which such Palestinians can reclaim their Palestinian nationality later. (See Appendix 3)

Accordingly, the Palestinians fill out "reunification" applications and send them to the Israeli authorities, which means a request for an identity card in accordance with strict Israeli measures, including: 1) Palestinians who were separated from their families and forced to leave their homes during the June 1967 war, or were outside the country at the time of the June 1967 war, and were not counted in the census, and were therefore

prevented from returning; 2) Palestinians demanding to join their spouses and/or children; 3) Palestinians who lost their right to return because their identity cards were confiscated; 4) Loss of residence permit due to obtaining a foreign citizenship or residing elsewhere; 5) Loss of residence because of the military ordinances and regulations applied by Israeli forces after the 1967 war.

## **2 - Familial networks as providers of social legitimacy to returnees**

It was very surprising to find that many returnees to Palestinian countryside were women and their children who were living away with their husbands, who continued working overseas, particularly in the USA. There were also instances of grandparents living with their grandchildren, while the parents were living overseas. This discovery implied that the returnees were predominantly young children and women. However, how do such return migrations occur when they involve only a part of family members? In this regard, it becomes necessary to find out whether this information is a result of economic, social, or cultural factors. In a similar vein, it is imperative to find answers to the following questions: Why is it acceptable for women to live away from their husbands and for children to live away from their fathers? When did they return to settle down in their motherland? Is their return temporary or permanent? Answers to these questions were sought through interviews with a group of women living such conditions. (See Appendix 4)

Whether by choice or otherwise, it seems that immigrant mothers are obliged or socially encouraged to return along with their children to their motherland. Despite living the experience of migration and learning about new cultures, returnees continue to live in a patriarchal society that embraces the belief that the mother's role is to be a child-raiser and the father's role is to be the breadwinner. Since the decision to return is familial or patriarchal, women's (mothers') right to decide is absent. These women are only taught to raise children on traditions and religious principles, to stay at home and not to work in any profession outside the home, and for that purpose their working husbands usually send wire transfers monthly to sustain the living of their families.

This case in point reflects the continuity of the role of the extended family in facilitating migration, including return migration. The extended family has been serving as the primary incubator for receiving returnees and

smoothing their socialization in the absence of a husband, the integration of returning family members, and their acceptance into society. In a nutshell, the extended family secures the social legitimacy of the returnees' presence in the absence of their father/husband.

### **3 - Familial networks as an impetus for constant border-crossing, and then re-settlement.**

The continued settlement of parents (i.e., grandparents) at home stands to be a considerable impetus for children in the diaspora/exile to visit them regularly. This step requires the children to continuously cross the border, which sometimes strengthens their relationship with their homeland, forcing them to put down roots back home later and possibly invest as well. Moreover, parents' settlement at home was a crucial factor of the return of some of the children to look after the parents despite their economic success abroad. It seems that the moral and social impetus is stronger than the economic one when it comes to return decisions. (See appendix 5)

In her thesis, Fawadleh (2017, 215-216) found that the presence of family, particularly first-degree relatives, was the greatest motivation for immigrants to visit their home country, as such visits also had other social, cultural and sometimes religious dimensions. Migrants do not come to their homeland only to see their parents and relatives, but also to participate in some social occasions, especially weddings. Accordingly, most immigrants prefer to visit their native country in the summer when special social events, trips, and family gatherings are more frequent, which thus enables them to communicate with the largest number of family members, fellow villagers, and friends.

The existence and persistence of some key symbols may significantly contribute to the sustainability of the familial networks. The family's big house is one and the most important of all, as it is the physical space where immigrants can gather with the rest of family members to exchange social issues and to discuss problems and future plans, which makes them feel and enjoy the sense of unity. The second important symbol is represented in the properties and assets passed down to emigrants from their relatives. Such properties may often not exceed plots of land with olive trees or shares in the family big house. Immigrants still feel connected to these properties, even when they are not worth much money. For them, the retention of the big family house and inherited land parcels represents their adherence to the land, their right to return, and the continuity of networks.

#### **4 -Familial networks reduce economic losses of returnees**

It is beyond the bounds of denial that the economic factor played a critical role in cementing family ties through providing job opportunities for migrants and making successful investments in diaspora/exile countries. This factor also provides support to the remaining family members at home through remittances or financial contributions in cases of marriage, construction, or education.

This example demonstrates the role of family networks in supporting other family members economically to stay at home. At the same time, this economic support, embodied in investments, provides an impetus for the rest of the family members in the diaspora to return home even if for a short time. (See appendix 6)

#### **5 - Familial networks are necessary to prevent the feeling of alienation**

The economic success of the migrants/refugees in the diaspora/exile, does not prevent them from returning home, as they may return home in pursuit of stability, which is often common when parents (i.e. parents of migrants) continue to reside in the home country. The presence of fathers, brothers, and sisters is considered a social capital that has helped and encouraged migrants to return (Church et al., 2002, 23).

If any, this means that social capital is a significant drive for both return and migration (Coleman, 1988, 110). Social and financial resources provided by a family are perceived as responsible for driving the performance of returning migrants. Social capital is related to the resources that could be beneficial to returnees. Therefore, social capital needs to be taken into consideration. The Social Networks Theory examines two levels of study. Jean-Pierre Cassarino (2004: 267) deemed returning migrants as social representatives who participate in relational branching (networks). These networks serve as structures that offer various opportunities with different directions and strategies through which actors (migrants) are allowed to pursue their interests. (See appendix 7)

### **Conclusion**

Despite the political and economic situation in the homeland and the fact that not all the Palestinians in the diaspora have the Palestinian citizenship, the return still flows but in small numbers. Therefore, their return should not be analysed in terms of coercion. This return migration

is linked to a multitude of factors related to the social, economic, and political status of the Palestinians that is also associated with the situation in the countries the Palestinians leave, voluntarily or forcibly.

Whatever option is chosen, Nicholas Van Hear (2006) argued that what seems to be forced migration may turn into other forms of mobility when individuals and families decide to go or send family members abroad for reunification, to earn money, to get scientific qualifications, or to seek other forms of improvement.<sup>18</sup> The idea of repatriation can be considered as a migratory movement.

The cases of Palestinian return migrations to the homeland show that studies on migration, refugee and diaspora should include different levels of analysis. As the Palestinians leave their homeland due to Israeli wars and the economic and political hardships under the Israeli colonial occupation, they all participate in a wide scale migration movement starting from home, refugee camps and diaspora countries which affects all the Palestinian society at large. Meanwhile, it is imperative to point out the links that connect between the external migration and the return migration movements, which is the existence of joint cross-border family networks. On the one hand, it facilitates and accelerates the external migration movement, and contributes to the repatriation of some migrants to the homeland on the other. Being deprived of citizenship and passports, Palestinians resort to the family and kinship resources that allow them to migrate, return and move from one country to another, creating a transnational solidarity matrix.

### **Recommendations**

Based on what was presented in this paper from the initial ideas that described and analysed the role of family networks in encouraging and supporting the returning Palestinian emigration, the researcher recommends the following:

- Expanding the circle of work on family networks and return migration, to include the Gaza Strip, occupied Jerusalem, and the Palestinian territories occupied in 1948, to know the differences and similarities between the roles of family networks in light of the different political authorities governing these areas.
- Comparing the role of family networks in encouraging migration

back to the Palestinian countryside compared to the cities, given that the effectiveness of family networks is deeper in the countryside than in the cities.

- Study of family networks at a smaller level: case study of families whose members had returned to the homeland, with the aim of identifying the characteristics of individuals who had returned in terms of gender, age, qualification, reason, and generation, in order to identify the most willing individuals to return.
- Submit relevant papers and reports to the concerned authorities to encourage return migration, especially family divans and village/city clubs in cities and municipalities, which can activate the role of family networks and encourage individuals to return through their annual meetings and festivals.

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## Appendix 1: Interview questions

### 1) Talk about your experience of migration or displacement:

Why did you decide to migrate? When did you migrate? With whom: alone or with family? Where? Why did you choose this country? Did you stay there or moved between several countries?

### 2) Talk about your experience in diaspora or asylum:

What did you do/study in the diaspora country? What did you get as profits? What did you lose? What problems did you face? How did you create a family there?

### 3) Talk about your experience of returning home

Why did you decide to return? What were the reasons? How did you come back? What difficulties did you face upon returning? And how do you evaluate the return experience? What are the positive results that you achieved through return, whether on the personal, family, or societal level? What could have been lost due to the return?

## Appendix 2: Interviewees specifications

	Interview no. 1	Interview no. 2	Interview no. 3	Interview no. 4	Interview no. 5
<b>Name</b>	Mahmoud	Dalal	Issa	Wajeeh	Samar
<b>Age</b>	63 years old	35 years old	37 years old	47 years old	35
<b>Social status</b>	Married (6 children)	Married (6 children)	Married (2 children)	Married (2 children)	Married (2 children)
<b>Current Profession</b>	retired	housewife	restaurant owner	investor	Employee
<b>Year of migration</b>	1967	2001	2000	Did not migrate	2000
<b>Country of migration</b>	Venezuela	The USA	The USA-Norway	-	Chile
<b>Year of return</b>	2009	2015	2012	-	2016
<b>place of residence</b>	Ramallah	Jerusalem	Beit Sahour	Ramallah	Beit Jala

### **Appendix 3: Interview with Mahmoud, 63 years old, returned in 2009**

In 1955, my father travelled to Venezuela to work in fabrics. After five years, he came back to the country, took my mother, and left again. There and then, I stayed in my grandfather's custody to learn my mother tongue, customs, and religion. I studied in the town school until 1967 when the war broke out between the Arabs and Israel. My father returned to Jordan after hearing that the Israelis took over and ruined the country. During my father's stint in Venezuela, he built us a house and bought land for investment. I left the country to Jordan because of the June War, and my grandparents stayed at home, I was 12 years old. I stayed with my parents for about six months; it was not easy to come back. We decided to travel to Venezuela through Lebanon and Syria. When I arrived in Venezuela, my Jordanian passport was stamped, and I received the Visa and the Venezuelan nationality all at once. After completing my high school, my father decided to send me to Colombia to study medicine. However, he had an incident in 1973 that made the beginning of my stint at Syria's Largest Textile Stores, which belonged to my father and uncles. I used to visit my country using my Venezuelan passport. However, I had to issue a Colombian passport because of the bad relationship between Venezuela and Israel. I returned to the homeland in 1975, got married, and obtained a visa for my wife. I built a house in my hometown in 1983. In 1988, I decided to bring my wife, two daughters, and four sons back home. For my part, I stayed working in Venezuela and sent the family a monthly stipend until I decided to return and finally put roots down back home. I applied for the visa, but it was rejected. I had to forge my documents to be allowed to make it home. Then my wife applied for a family reunion to obtain my Palestinian ID back in 2009.

### **Appendix 4: Interview with Dalal, 35 years old, returned from the USA**

My father married a young Palestinian lady descending from a Palestinian father from Mukhmas (a Palestinian village east Ramallah) and a Spanish mother, who used to visit Mukhmas from time to time. After marriage, they immigrated to Philadelphia in the 1970s and kept travelling back and forth. They had two sons and three daughters. After a while, my father dispatched my brothers back home to live with my grandmother and learn the ]Palestinian[ culture. My father at that time had built a small house in Mukhmas, where we could stay during visits.

Afterwards, my mother, my sisters, and I returned to the village in 1988. As for my father, he used to visit us every three to five months. Meanwhile, he opened three supermarkets in partnership with my uncles in Philadelphia. After completing high school (Tawjihi) in 2001, I travelled once again to Philadelphia, where I married kin of mine and held American citizenship. We had a traditional marriage per se and lived there for around four years. In 2005, I made a return visit [along with my two daughters] back to my hometown. I made another return visit with my five daughters and two sons [to my hometown] in 2015. It was easier said than done to live abroad. Despite all the efforts we made in raising our children abroad, we failed to teach them Arabic and instill in them the traditions, customs, Islamic religious teachings and the sense of patriotism. I do not mind living and raising my children far from my husband. Life here is easier; I am familiar with the residential area, which is not vast. Here people help one another. Besides, I am lucky to have my father-in-law living next door, and my husband sends monthly remittances to me. Having been used to this pattern of living since the 1970s, I do not face any social problems in living alone and away from my husband.

### **Appendix 5: Interview with Issa, 37 years old, returned in 2012**

In 2000, I travelled to Greece to pursue my study in electronic engineering which I did not complete due to a problem with my scholarship. There and then, I decided to go back to America and stay with my brothers and sisters to complete my education. But then again, the spill overs of September 11 dictated my leave from the US to Norway in 2004, where my brother was married to a Norwegian and settled there. I also went to help him in his restaurant business. After a short stint, I made it home [Palestine] in 2006, married and then travelled back to the US with my wife. The plan was to return to Palestine once I have a good amount of money [wealth]. And so, I did; in 2012 I returned to in Bethlehem area in Palestine. I opened a bowling alley. I had problems with the customers in my works, which made me sell the shop with a loss of money that forced me to go back to Norway. Concerned about my father's health condition, I decided to return again to Palestine. Of note, my brother and I opened 24 branches of our restaurant in Sweden and Romania. By the same token, when I returned, I opened a new branch of our restaurant, worked in the real estate industry, and opened a supermarket and a restaurant for my wife.

**Appendix 6: Interview with Wajeeh, 47 years old, resident in the homeland**

I was a prisoner in the jails of occupation between 1989 and 1994. At that time, all my brothers were working at restaurants in America. After a while, they opened a supermarket and later a chain of supermarkets. My mother lived with me in our town. Given the difficult economic and security situation, lack of job opportunities for ex-prisoners, and the ban on travel, my brothers sent me money to start up some investment here. Indeed, we constructed housing and residential towers in Ramallah. We also bought a piece of land and built an amusement park. Although my brothers were working in America, they used to visit the country regularly. For my part, I stayed in the country with my wife and children and managed the investments.

**Appendix 7: Interview with Samar, 35 years old, returned home in 2016**

After my husband finished his study in America in 2000, he decided to return. We were able to buy an old house in the town, and thus decided to go back, but he could not find a job due to the start of the second Popular Uprising (Intifada). As a result, he immigrated to Chile to stay with his aunt and work in a textile factory. He returned home in 2009 to repair the house and live in it, but the main reason for our return was longing to our family and solitude in the diaspora without brothers or sisters near us though life there was fun and simple.

