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## Chapter 5

### **Itineraries of Palestinian refugees: Kinship as resource in emigration.**

Mohamed Kamel Dorai

A social world is not confined to a particular place or limited by territorial boundaries. Some of the relationships may be very important, but physically distant, while others may be almost insignificant although located close by. What is important is which social relationships play a role in a particular situation (E. Marx 1990: 194).

#### ***I- Introduction: The Development of Emigration.***

Today, even if some Palestinians are still forced to move from their place of residence (e.g. Palestinians expelled from Kuwait in 1991, from Libya in 1995 and inside the Occupied Territories), Palestinian migration develops inside the Diaspora on a more or less 'voluntary' basis, connecting distant poles such as North America or Europe. Parallel to this 'voluntary migration' movement, a 'forced return' movement occurred. For example, Palestinians who migrated to Iraq to work and study had to leave because of war and its economic and political consequences. These different types of migration obey regional and state constraints as well as dynamics generated by Palestinians themselves and rely upon migratory networks set up on local and familial bases. Studies of Palestinian refugees, one of the oldest refugee communities in the world, could contribute to the growing interest on integrating refugee studies to the wider field of migration theory (Koser 2002).

This paper deals with the situation of the Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Since the 1970s, more than 100,000 Palestinians<sup>1</sup> – about 25% of the total Palestinian population residing in Lebanon - have emigrated from Lebanon to the Gulf countries and Northern Europe, mainly Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Considering the organization of Palestinian emigration from Lebanon to Europe, from the 1960s to today, and particularly the migratory networks from the Tyre region in Lebanon to Europe and Iraq, and based on interviews with refugees in south Lebanon and Sweden, a certain picture emerges. Until 1987, many Palestinians fled Lebanon and obtained refugee status in Europe. During the 1970s and the 1980s a smaller group of Palestinians also went to work and study in Iraq. After 1987, Europe gradually closed its borders to Palestinian refugees, while the situation in Lebanon grew worse. The community tensions in Lebanon, which were exacerbated during the Lebanese civil war, culminated in 1985-1987 with the war of the camps<sup>2</sup>. The Amal militia tried to make Palestinians flee the Tyree area, which they wanted to make a Shiite canton. A large majority of Palestinians did indeed flee towards Sidon, the nearest Sunnite city. But most of them came back to Tyre at the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1991. During the 1990s, four main factors led to the development of emigration: (1) the end of the civil war in Lebanon increased the discrimination against the Palestinian community at the political and economic levels, (2) the Oslo agreement did not provide any solution, nor any prospects of one, for the 1948 refugees, (3) the economic situation in Lebanon was getting worse in 1993, and (4) Palestinians were competing with Syrian and Egyptian workers in the labor market. In the absence of the implementation of their ‘right of return’, Palestinians from Lebanon looked for a better economic situation, a recognized legal status, and a country where

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<sup>1</sup> In his statistical overview of Palestinians in Lebanon, Razqallah (1998) gives the number of 100,000 Palestinians from Lebanon living abroad in the mid-1990s. This estimation fits the statistics available on Palestinians in Europe, where about 18,000 Palestinians live in Sweden in 2006 according to the Migrationsverket [<http://www.migrationsverket.se/pdf/verket/statistik/tabe2.pdf>]; 12,000 in Denmark (Danish Immigration Service, 2001); probably 30,000 in Germany (this last number is a personal estimation based on interviews), the majority of these Palestinians hold Lebanese travel documents. The rest of the Palestinians from Lebanon who live abroad are settled in Arabic oil producing countries. However, since most of the recent emigration towards Europe is illegal, it is very difficult to give reliable figures on actual Palestinian emigration from Lebanon since the 1990s.

<sup>2</sup> Between the Shiite Lebanese militia Amal and the Palestinian refugee camp dwellers.

they could build a "normal" life for their children. On a regional scale, due to war, tension and economic closures Iraq became less attractive to new Arab immigrants. Palestinians already settled there began to face economic difficulties but also discrimination.

The 1982 Israeli invasion triggered Palestinian emigration from Lebanon, but this alone cannot explain its duration nor its size. This paper will analyze how Palestinian refugees, deprived of passport and financial resources, have managed to leave their country of residence and enter Western Europe. One of the key hypotheses is the following: Palestinian refugees in the refugee camps and the informal settlements<sup>3</sup> in Lebanon have reconstructed systems of solidarity based on kinship and local networks. These networks, developed at a local level, have been turned into transnational networks of solidarity by migrant communities, building bridges between Palestinians in Lebanon and migrants abroad. Resources such as money, information on destination countries, legal constraints or opportunities, circulate through these networks, linking potential migrants to Palestinians settled in Europe. These networks facilitate refugees' mobility, in a context of difficult legal constraints in Europe, and a lack of financial resources in Lebanon. Palestinians had to organize themselves to get around those difficulties. They used their transnational resources, such as their close contacts with the Palestinian communities living abroad and the migratory networks they constructed in the 1980s, to facilitate emigration. Transnationalism developed by Palestinian refugees has to be considered mainly as a strategy to escape a highly restrictive regional environment, especially in Lebanon. Migratory networks, based on family ties, are also one of the few resources accessible to return migrants who were forced to leave Iraq and come back to Lebanon without international assistance.

This paper is structured as follows. Firstly, I will explore, in a theoretical perspective, the usefulness of analyzing the diversity of migratory refugee experiences and the building of transnational networks. Secondly, I will present different migratory

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<sup>3</sup> Informal settlements are unofficial refugee camps, built up by the refugees themselves, mostly on private Lebanese land without authorization of Lebanese authorities. Most of them are concentrated in rural areas.

itineraries collected during various fieldwork trips in Lebanon to show the different use of transnational networks and access to resources.

## ***II. Towards a comprehensive approach to Palestinian Diaspora migration.***

Many studies on Palestinian refugees have explored the fields of memory (e.g. Khalidi 1991) and national formation (e.g. Brand 1998). More recently, with the beginning of the peace process in 1991, research has been conducted on the refugee question, their legal status and their number (Abu-Sitta 2001; Tamari 1996; Zureik 1996). Only a few studies have been published on the new forms of social organization in the Palestinian refugee communities abroad (e.g. Hanafi 2001; Radi 1995). Nevertheless, the diversity and the complexity of refugee experiences have to be explored.

### **II.1. From refugees to migrants?**

Network analysis provides an interesting framework that goes beyond the juridical analysis, imposed by the term 'refugee' itself whose origin is deeply rooted in international law. The Palestinian experience is a good illustration of this. More than fifty years of exile have generated a wide range of different situations, from stateless refugees still living in poor refugee camps in Middle East countries to rich investors holding Gulf or Western citizenship. A huge diversity of social, legal and economic statuses and personal backgrounds coexist inside the category "Palestinian refugee". As Liisa Malkki (1995: 496) pointed out:

'Refugees' do not constitute a naturally self-delimiting domain of anthropological knowledge. Forced population movements have extraordinarily diverse historical and political causes and involve people who, while all displaced, find themselves in qualitatively different situations and predicaments. Thus, it would seem that the term

‘refugee’ has analytical usefulness not as a label for a special, generalizable ‘kind’ or ‘type’ of person or situation, but only as a broad legal or descriptive rubric that includes within it a world of different socio-economic statuses, personal histories, and psychological or spiritual situations. Involuntary or forced movements of people are always only one aspect of much larger constellations of sociopolitical and cultural processes and practices.

## **II.2. Refugees and migration theories**

Early attempts to build a general theoretical model of refugee issues have focused mainly on *push* factors to explain refugee movements (Kunz 1973, 1981). More recent studies have emphasized the role of international relations in the production of refugee flows (Loescher 1990; Weiner 1993). If *push* factors as well as international politics are key issues for the understanding of refugee movements, little attention has been paid to dynamics generated by the refugees themselves. The duration of exile and the different kind of interactions with the host societies have also generated different forms of mobility. Richmond (1994: 55) stresses that:

[...] the distinction between free and forced or voluntary and involuntary is a misleading one. All human behavior is constrained. Choices are not unlimited but are determined by the structuration process. However, degrees of freedom may vary. Individual and group autonomy and potency are situationally determined. It would be more appropriate to recognize a continuum at one end of which individuals and collectivities are proactive and at the other reactive.

Seteney Shami (1993: 12) notes that in the Middle East this distinction between forced migration and voluntary migration is not always relevant. The author suggests that

"displacement often leads to labor migration as a coping strategy." Palestinian emigration from Lebanon fits this analytical framework. Firstly, Palestinians are considered as refugees in Lebanon because they were expelled from their homeland in 1948, and they are recognized as refugees both by UNRWA and the Lebanese state. Then, the Lebanese civil war, economic difficulties, and legal discrimination<sup>4</sup> have led them to emigrate from Lebanon to find work, asylum and/or a stable juridical status in Europe or in other Arab countries, especially oil-producing countries. Palestinian emigration from Lebanon cannot be considered only as forced, but also as the result of new forms of transnational migration between the different scattered Palestinian communities. Interaction with the host society, namely the Lebanese one, is also a key factor in understanding Palestinian emigration. Moreover the important Lebanese emigration for more than one century to South and North America as well as Africa<sup>5</sup>, is a central element to take into consideration while studying Palestinian migratory movements.

### **II.3. 'Forced' transnationalism?<sup>6</sup> The emergence of migratory networks.**

Network analysis of migration is a growing field of interest that developed in the early 1990s after a beginning in the 1970s (see Durand 1994; Fawcett 1989; Kritz and Zlotnik 1992, Massey *et al.* 1988)<sup>7</sup>. Thomas Faist (2000) observes that the analysis of migrations in terms of migratory networks suffers from one main deficiency: it does not tackle the question of the emergence of the migratory networks. He considers that initially social capital<sup>8</sup> is a factor that limits mobility, then, when the migratory networks develop, it becomes a driving force of emigration. This analytical framework is relevant to understand Palestinian migratory dynamics from Lebanon to Europe. Until 1982,

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<sup>4</sup> See for example Al-Natour (1997) and Said (2001).

<sup>5</sup> See for example Hourani and Shehadi (1992).

<sup>6</sup> This expression have been used by Michael P. Smith (2002: xiii) who stresses that studies on "refugee diasporas, has produced such new and useful conceptual categories as ambivalent transnationalism and even 'forced' transnationalism".

<sup>7</sup> For a synthetic approach of network analysis related to migration see E. Ma Mung (1998)

<sup>8</sup> Thomas Faist (2000: 15) defines social capital as following : "Social capital denotes the transactions between individuals and groups that facilitate social action, and the benefits derived from these mechanisms. It is primarily a local asset and can be transferred cross-nationally only under specific conditions".

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon were not very mobile because of the strength of the solidarity networks and mutual aid, based on family and/or local networks, which developed in the camps and the informal settlements. The destruction of these camps during the Israeli invasion of 1982 led to the departure of many refugees towards Northern Europe. New forms of solidarity then developed in a transnational migratory field<sup>9</sup>, which supported and accelerated the emigration. Thomas Faist also notes that the installation of earlier migrants is a central element that permits the development of migratory networks because they condense the social capital. Migration develops when social capital does not function only on a local scale, but also as a transnational transmission belt.

In recent years, the relation between refugees and transnationalism has been the subject of investigation (Shami 1996; Al-Ali et al. 2001; Black 2001; Koser 2002; Wahlbeck 2002). Studies conducted on refugees' transnational activities have contributed to address in a more comprehensive way the role of the state in shaping migrants' networks, and bringing the state back into most of these analyses. As noted by Richard Black (2001: 66): "Focusing on the role played by refugees in transnational activities could help to dispel some of the more idealistic notions of transnationalism from below as a people-led process, which takes advantage of processes of globalization and ease of travel in the modern world."

Even if Palestinians are involved in transnational practices in order to adapt to a new environment in Lebanon and Europe, they are still refugees - and/or asylum seekers - strongly tributary to the political context in the Middle East and asylum policies in Europe. State policies toward refugees remain one of the most important elements in the understanding of refugee movements, their socio-economic status, and the viability of migratory networks both in sending and receiving countries. For the Palestinian refugees,

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<sup>9</sup> "The migratory field is defined as the whole space structured by migratory and relational flows, a space that is traveled through, frequented, lived by the migrant's population". ["Le champ migratoire est, ici, défini comme l'ensemble de l'espace structuré par les flux migratoires et relationnels, espace parcouru, pratiqué, vécu par les populations migrantes."] (Simon 2000).



their transnational activities are strongly determined by their departure and destination countries' attitude, as mentioned by Östen Wahlbeck (2002: 228): “It can be argued that the social relations of refugees create a transnational community not bound by the geographical borders of either the countries of origin or the countries of settlement. [...] However, there are some significant differences between ordinary migrants and refugees in the form and content of the transnational social relations. It can be argued that refugees have a distinctive relationship with both the country they have been forced to flee from and the country in which they have involuntarily settled.”

The factors that led to the setting up and development of these transnational migratory networks are the following: Until the beginning of the 1980s, the restrictive legal context which affected the Palestinians in Lebanon was counterbalanced by the density of kinship solidarity networks at a local scale - refugee camps and informal settlements - and the strong presence of the PLO. The Palestinian institution provided work and welfare to the most underprivileged Palestinians. The Palestinian national movement, then strongly structured, also proposed a political solution to the refugees by making the "right of return" its combat slogan. The dismantling of the PLO and its geographical dispersion in 1982, and more recently the collapse of the peace process, reduced the effectiveness of the networks of solidarity at a local level. Emigration became the only solution for many refugees, because it made possible an escape from a situation perceived as intractable by most of them. Emigrating was considered by refugees as an alternative solution to an increasingly improbable return to their homeland or to a permanent settlement in Lebanon in an increasingly hostile context. This emigration relies mainly upon kinship networks<sup>10</sup>.

#### **II.4. Kinship networks and the transnational migration process**

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<sup>10</sup> I will not emphasize here the role of village networks, which partly include kinship networks. For a more detailed approach on this topic see Dorai (2003a)

Relations between migratory networks and kinship have already been developed by many authors, concerning 'economic' migrants such as Algerians in France and more specifically with the development of family reunification in western countries (Montagne 1954; Choldin 1973; Katuszewski and Ogien 1981, Boyd 1989, Fawcett 1989). Some researchers in the refugee studies field have also pointed out the importance of family networks in the adaptation to host countries of forced migrants (e.g. Hansen 1981). But little attention has been paid to kinship as a key element of the migration process of refugee communities.

Palestinian refugees provide an interesting and singular case study. They are one of the oldest stateless refugee communities, recognized as such, where a significant proportion still lives in refugee camps and informal settlements<sup>11</sup>. Their geographic concentration, as well as their legal and political status in Arab host countries, has led to the permanence and/or the reinforcement of kinship networks in exile as one of the cores of diasporic social organization. Kinship networks are one of the few resources accessible to refugees deprived of their basic rights (Doraï 2000, Doraï and Doraï 2002).

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<sup>11</sup> In June 2003, 57% of the registered refugees in Lebanon were living in one of the twelve refugee camps according to UNRWA figures. There is no official data on those living in informal settlements. According to Mahmoud Abbas (1997) and PCBS figures (Al-Madi, 1996) and personal estimates, a total of 38 000 Palestinians live in such settlements, that is to say nearly 10% of the total Palestinian population.

The kinship solidarity networks play a significant role in the organization and development of Palestinian migrations, in both the country of departure and the host country. Their action is determined by various stages of a migratory process: (1) they permit the mobilization of the funds necessary to pay for the trip, (2) they provide information on the country of destination circulated through the network and spread to potential migrants, (3) they facilitate the adaptation of the newcomer in the host country, (4) they also play a role in the selection of the migrant from the departure country to fit the specific needs of the host country, (5) they contribute to the circumvention of the legal constraints in the host countries, and (6) they influence the choice of destination of migrants (Gurak and Caces 1992; Boyd 1989; Light *et al.* 1993). Transnational migratory networks set up by Palestinian refugees, based on family and village solidarity, are built on the same logic that helped the networks of sociability develop on a local scale in the refugee camps and at Palestinian gatherings. It is a geographical extension from these networks, from a local to a transnational field. The Palestinians who were settled in Europe since the 1960s were used as a spearhead for the migratory networks, which developed in the 1980s. This migratory strategy has been developed to circumvent the legal border closures in Europe. This phenomenon can also be observed for Palestinians going to Iraq, but in a less systematic way, due to the legal possibility of circulating between Lebanon and Iraq.

### ***III- Migratory Itineraries of Palestinian Refugees.***

Family migratory networks are the main supports for the emigration from Lebanon to Northern Europe, as well as the only resource for Palestinian return migrants from Iraq. In the Palestinian case, they play a significant role in four principal fields: collection of the funds necessary to emigrate, the "family reunification" migratory strategy, information flow between country of destination and country of departure, and the adaptation of the newcomers and/or the returnees. This point is raised by Nicholas Van Hear (2006 :10):

"As scholars of transnationalism have been arguing for some time now, people at home and abroad may operate in a single social field, or at least in linked social fields. This applies as much in the context of forced migration as with other forms of migration. What was a single household in a conflict area may subsequently have members 'at home' in the country of origin; in neighbouring countries of first asylum; and in the wider diaspora, in countries of asylum and resettlement: we might term this a transnational household."

I will reconstitute through five migratory itineraries the importance of the networks, and more specifically kinship networks, in the Palestinian migration process. These itineraries are reconstituted through interviews collected during fieldwork in south Lebanon from May 1999 to June 2003. Networks are often considered as something that exists, without empirical evidence of their existence being proffered, nor concrete cases of their way of functioning.

### **Case study #1: Family migration**

The story of Ayman<sup>12</sup> is a common one, but it points both to the strength of family ties and their limits due to restrictive state policies. Ayman's father emigrated from South Lebanon to Iraq in 1979. He was working for a Lebanese company. He moved back and forth, staying in Iraq for short periods. In 1981, he found a stable job in Iraq and decided to stay there, where incomes were higher. He managed to bring his family from Lebanon the same year. They rented an apartment in Baghdad where he used to work. At this time, Palestinian refugees were granted residency permits and were allowed to work. Ayman arrived in Iraq when he was 9. He went to school, like all his brothers and sisters. They are all graduated from the University of Baghdad. In 1991, after the Gulf War, his father lost his job, and restrictions on Palestinian rights – as well as on other Arabs and foreigners – appeared. Ayman's brother, who was an engineer, went to Abu Dhabi and found work there. His father also tried to find a job there, but incomes were too low to support a family, so he decided to stay in Iraq. The whole family lived on the remittances sent by Ayman's brother during this period, about \$200 to \$300 per month. When asked why they did not choose to leave Baghdad and come back to

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<sup>12</sup> All the names used in this paper are pseudonyms.

Lebanon after 1991, Ayman's father answered: "All my children were studying at the university at this period, in Iraq it was cheap and open to Arab students. Here in Lebanon, it would have been impossible. Fees are too expensive for Palestinians. So we decided to stay there until they all got their diploma".

Until 2000, Ayman's family rented an apartment for \$30 a month, and the money sent by his brother was sufficient to live on. But by 2001 rent dramatically increased for foreigners, and shot up to \$150 a month. His younger sister graduated in 2001. His parents decided to come back to Lebanon, since living in Baghdad had become both more difficult and more expensive. In Lebanon, they settled in Al Buss camp where Ayman's grandmother had a house. Ayman decided not to come back with his family because he had just married an Iraqi. He tried to find a job in the Baghdad hotels, but faced discrimination: "Once, I entered an hotel and I asked for a job. The manager told me: why do you look for a job here in Iraq? Aren't you Palestinian? Why don't you go back to your country. You have signed the Gaza and Jericho agreement..."

He moved with his wife from Baghdad to Mosul, her city of origin where life was cheaper and where he could find help from his wife's relatives. He found a precarious job as a dried fruit salesman. Up until 2002, he could get his residency permit because his wife was Iraqi. In 2003, when he asked to renew his permit, he was told that the law had changed and that he had to obtain a work contract first, and then ask for a residency permit. He managed to find a work contract in Mosul but never got the residency permit. In February that year he had to leave Iraq with his wife and two children and come back to Lebanon. Once there, he went to his family's house in Al Buss camp, the only place he could live. However, he did not find a job. As a Palestinian refugee in Lebanon, he is not allowed to work<sup>13</sup>. He tried to find a job in Beirut and in other cities in Lebanon. His

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<sup>13</sup> Palestinian refugees face huge difficulties in entering the Lebanese labor market. "The prohibition for Palestinians from occupying certain job functions originates in the ministerial dated December 15, 1995 [that is] itself an update of previous decrees, the first being apparently decree n°1/289 dated December 18, 1982. [...] The list given by the ministerial decree of December, 1995 of the salaried professions reserved to the Lebanese workforce by the Ministry of Labor, is long: 72 jobs and professions according to some people and 46 to others, such as

wife, as an Iraqi citizen, has to pay for a residency permit and has to ask for a work permit to be allowed to work. Both of them are unemployed, like all Ayman's family who came back to Lebanon. Ayman, as a Palestinian refugee, is not entitled to obtain any kind of aid from the UN High Commission on Refugees, and his wife is also not considered as a refugee because she left Iraq and entered Lebanon as Ayman's spouse.

Ayman's story clearly illustrates the complexity of refugee migrations. He left Lebanon for family reunification purposes, after his father emigrated because he found a better position in Iraq. In periods of heightened restrictions and difficulties, Palestinians are often rejected as their refugee status conflicts with states' policies, as was the case for this family. They thus came back in Lebanon as refugees seeking a country where they would be allowed to reside. Family networks can be the main motive of emigration, but it also remains the main mechanism of adjustment in case of difficulties (e.g. joblessness, looking for accommodation). When state protection is absent, as is the case in Iraq since 1991, or in Lebanon, the only resource accessible to refugees - whose basic rights are denied – is family solidarity.

### **Case study #2: From economic migration to refuge**

Ahmed's case slightly differs from Ayman's. In the early 1970s, Ahmed left Lebanon to study in Iraq, like many other young Palestinian students. He settled in Baghdad and studied civil engineering. After he obtained his diploma he decided to stay in Iraq, where job opportunities were better than in Lebanon. He first worked in an Iraqi company as an engineer, then later he opened a small business. During this period, he was going back and forth from Iraq to Lebanon to visit his family but also for trade. When asked if he sent remittances to his family in the Rashidiyyeh camp in South Lebanon after 1982, when the situation was getting difficult there, he responded that he never sent money and that he regretted his attitude... He met his wife - a Palestinian with Jordanian citizenship - in a Palestinian organization in Iraq. She too came to study. They married and settled in Baghdad. He then directed his trade also towards Jordan. In 1991,

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hairdresser, concierge, cook, and pharmacist, accountant, teacher, as well as other independent professions" (FIDH 2003). A more detailed analysis on the legal context is in Al-Natour (1997).

the situation became more difficult and he had to stop his trade activities as circulation was getting very difficult. After a short stint of unemployment, he re-opened a small shop selling leather goods. He managed to survive especially as a result of trade with Jordan. During the 1990s, the social and economic situation for Palestinians was getting worse but he did not consider coming back to Lebanon for the situation there was even worse. In 2003, when the war began, he left Baghdad with his wife because it was no longer safe. He first decided to go to Jordan, but the Jordanian border was closed to refugees, and many Palestinians had been detained at the border and were not allowed to enter (Doraï et al. 2003). After several attempts, he managed to cross the Syrian border and enter Lebanon.

He returned to his family's house in Rashidiyyeh, the only place he could reside. His wife, as a Jordanian citizen has to pay annually for her residency permit. Because she does not have enough money she never leaves the refugee camp to avoid any police checkpoints. Together, they have opened, with the help of Ahmed's family, a small shop where they sell fruits and vegetables. They lost all their money and assets in Baghdad, and they receive no help from international organizations nor from the Lebanese government. The only help he received came from his family who accommodated him. Here family solidarity is limited to accommodation, because political and legal constraints predominate.

These two first case studies show clearly that the "return" to the first country of asylum (i.e. Lebanon) is due to the difficulty or the impossibility of staying in the country of emigration (i.e. Iraq) because of insecurity, war, or discrimination. "Return" is then the only viable solution and is perceived as a temporary option. They also show that at the individual level this migration can be considered as a "return" - Palestinians originally from Lebanon coming back in their first country of asylum - but if one considers the household level, it can be considered as an emigration movement towards a new country of residence, due to marriage with non-Palestinian women (i.e. Iraqi) or women coming from another part of the Diaspora (i.e. Jordan).

### **Case study #3: Emigration and family reunification**

Kinship migratory networks also became a very significant resource for migrants who today want to obtain legal residency in Europe, for family reunification is one of the easiest ways to settle in Europe. Certain Palestinians, who settled in Europe in the 1960s, but more especially during the 1970s, founded families in their host countries. Most of the parents I met preferred that their daughters married Muslims, and preferably Palestinians from the same camp or settlement in Lebanon. This kind of marriage is facilitated by the fact that daughters carry German, Swedish, or Danish passports. During a summer visit to Lebanon they marry and their husband returns with them to settle in Europe.

Jalal is a young refugee born in the beginning of the 1970s in a camp in the Tyre region. Because of the situation in Lebanon he was thinking of emigrating. His uncle, who had settled in Germany in the early 1960s, had a daughter born there, with German citizenship. In the summer of 1994, they came back to Lebanon and Jalal decided to marry her. She returned to Germany and arranged all the documents for him under the family reunification procedure. He obtained a one-year residency permit and found employment in the construction sector in Berlin. His experience, however, was not a happy one. His wife left him and took their daughter with her. He could not renew his residence permit, and in March 1999, he had to leave Germany and return to Lebanon. This shows the legal precariousness of the newcomers. He appealed the decision not to renew his residency permit, arguing that his daughter held German citizenship and was still living in Germany. He managed to obtain a new residency permit and went back to Germany a few months later.

It should be noted that the local effects of emigration through this channel on the country of departure are significant: family structures are deeply modified by emigration increasing gender inequalities in poor Palestinian areas. Emigrants are often young men. Therefore, in South Lebanon there are more young women than men of marriageable age.



Many young Palestinian women do not get married and often remain in their parents' houses working in the agricultural sector.

**Case study #4: the role of information flow and the adaptation of newcomers.**

Farid left Lebanon after being wounded during the 1982 Israeli invasion. He was transferred by the ICRC (Red Cross) to Cyprus and then Greece to be treated. From there, he went to East Berlin, where entry for Palestinians was easy. But he decided to go to West Germany and ask for asylum there with the help of his brother, who already lived there. When he arrived, he found accommodation at his brother's place and stayed there for over a year. At this time it was forbidden for those in his situation to work and to study or to have access to social assistance. His brother, who was well integrated in the Palestinian and Arab community there, helped find him an illegal job in the restaurant sector. After a year, Farid did not get refugee status in Germany and began to think about leaving and going back to Lebanon. His family, who still resided in Lebanon, advised him to stay, and through the Palestinian refugee network, he heard that Scandinavian countries were giving refugee status to Palestinians escaping the Lebanese civil war. He decided to go to Malmö, where he asked for asylum. A few months later he was granted refugee status and settled in Göteborg.

Farid's case is interesting because it indicates the role of the family network in facilitating the arrival of a new migrant, in the adaptation to the host society, and the diffusion of information. But it also points out the limits of kinship networks. Legal barriers in the host country remain obstacles that cannot always be circumvented.

**Case study #5: kinship network as a financial resource.**

The collection of the funds necessary to emigrate is also one of the main functions of kinship networks. The sums concerned are significant, since they represent several thousand dollars for each individual (from \$4,000 to \$8,000). The extended family, or even anyone from the village of origin, must pool together to gather the necessary money, which amounts to a collective loan. Once he has gathered the money, the debtor migrates

and lives abroad. The only guarantee available to creditors is the membership of the migrant in a family or community network strongly structured and identified. Arriving at his destination, the migrant refunds his debt by sending money back to his creditors. Generally, the money is sent with a relative or a friend visiting from Lebanon. The importance of the relationship between the sending community and the expatriate group is of prime importance in the operation of this system of financial solidarity. The mechanism is very efficient when the basis of the network is family. The broader the basis is, the less the effectiveness. The case most commonly observed is the following: the father leaves to work in Germany, then, when his income allows, his elder son comes, followed by the other sons (or brothers), before the rest of the family comes, i.e. the spouse (or mother) and daughters (or sisters).

In a context of high restrictive immigration and asylum policies in the destination countries, the cost of migration is increasing and the opportunities offered to new immigrants to cross borders are very limited, especially because immigration and asylum laws are changing rapidly in European countries. Collecting money and having access to information are the two key problems for Palestinian refugees. I have observed that the most efficient networks are based on the nuclear family's ability to collect funds as well as to obtain proper information on the destination countries, in case of emigration towards Europe. The nuclear family often gives concrete help, whereas extended families give a more diffuse help. The only situation in which the extended family and village solidarity play the major role is when marriage and family reunification is used to emigrate.

#### ***IV. Conclusion.***

Even if Palestinians in Lebanon are refugees, their emigration should not be only analyzed through the forced migration schema. Palestinian migration responds to a multiplicity of factors that are linked to their refugee status – and can thus be considered forced – but also to a wide range of economic and social factors related to the departure

and the destination countries – and can be related to a more or less voluntary process. As argued by Nicholas Van Hear (2006:9-10) "Whichever option is chosen, what began as forced migration may transmute into other forms of movements as individuals and households decide to go or to send members abroad for family reunion, or to earn money, seek education, or search other forms of betterment. These new or mutated flows may merge with prior migratory streams of labour and trade." The notion of "return" (e.g. from Iraq to Lebanon) may be considered as form of "alternative return", due to specific geopolitical situation.

A comparison of Lebanese and Palestinian emigration rates shows that both groups are strongly affected by emigration. According to the UNDP<sup>14</sup> "the potential for Lebanese to emigrate remains high today, particularly in view of the prevailing economic slowdown and high unemployment. In the absence of official statistics, estimates vary and the figure of outflows of more than 100,000 persons per year in the last part of 1990s is cited as conservative." The demographic profile of Lebanese emigrants is quite similar to the Palestinian profile and concerns mainly young males. As pointed out by the UN Development Program, the main reason to leave is employment. The high rate of emigration of both groups illustrates the blurring border between forced and non-forced migration. Lebanese and Palestinians suffer from economic difficulties as well as regional tensions. In this context, the position of Palestinians refugees is more precarious, discriminated against as they are by Lebanese opposition to any form of *tawtin*<sup>15</sup>. Emigration is not to be considered only as 'forced' but also as a coping strategy in a restrictive context.

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<sup>14</sup> "Men constituted the majority of people who migrated during this period (85%), and this applied to all age groups. Emigration affects more the skilled and better-educated segment of the population. Lebanese youth, who form more than one fifth of the population and almost one third of the labor force, are affected disproportionately by international migration. [...] The most important reason for this youth migration at present is the pursuit of economic opportunities abroad in view of high rates of youth unemployment in the country. Taken as a whole, the most frequently reported reason for migration is work (62%), followed by study (21%). Other cited reasons are joining family members abroad and marriage" (Source : <http://www.undp.org.lb>).

<sup>15</sup> Arabic term for "settlement" or "integration".

The Palestinian case in Lebanon demonstrates that a comprehensive study of refugee migration should integrate different levels of analysis as well as contextual elements. While Palestinians leave Lebanon because of legal, political, and economic forms of discrimination they also participate to a larger movement of emigration from Lebanon that concerns the entire Lebanese society. Connections between these two emigration movements have to be explored in order to understand the possible existence of common networks. Some migratory itineraries of Palestinians migrating to Europe pass through West African countries where large Lebanese communities are settled. Palestinians also use Lebanese intermediaries to migrate both in Lebanon and in the transit countries (see Dorai 2003b).

Ordinary Palestinians do not use the same kind of transnational resources (i.e., economical, juridical, or educational) as the élites. Deprived of nationality and passport, they do not enjoy the same freedom of movement. Therefore, they use transnational family and village resources that allow them to migrate. This “know-how” does not rely on economical or juridical bases but on family and village ties that cut across national borders. They use their dispersion throughout different nations as a resource. In this case, transnational resources are not only used to minimize risks and maximize benefits but to permit the international mobility of refugees, building a transnational system of solidarity.

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