

**Relations between Palestinian Diaspora
(al-shatat), Palestinian Communities in the
West Bank, and Gaza Strip**

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I. Introduction

The following paper addresses the issue concerning relations between the Palestinian diasporas (al-shatat) and Palestinian society in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, within the historical context in which diasporas were formed (ethnic cleansing, military colonial occupation, statelessness, etc). It situates relations between the shatat communities and communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip within their regional and international socio-economic and power relations. The paper formulates preliminary hypotheses on the political, economic and cultural impact of relations of the diaspora and immigrant communities on the home society.

II. Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza; A Colonized Society

It is necessary before looking at the relations between the Palestinian diasporas (al-shatat) on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBG), to outline their socio-economic features and their political situation.¹ Palestinian society in the WGS has been subject to the longest colonial occupation in modern history. All aspects of life have been qualitatively affected under the impact of the colonial-settler occupation. Israel has had decisive control over the economy, the land, natural resources (particularly water), borders, urban growth and movement of persons and commodities between these territories and the outside. (Abu-Mukh, 2006) The unilateral transformation of the demography (and natural landscape) of

¹ The population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was estimated by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) to be 4,016,416 at mid 2007.

the West Bank can be gauged from the fact that at the end of 2006, the number of Israeli colonialists reached 475,760,² occupying 144 colonies, some of which are large towns.³ The Palestinian economy has been subjected to a process of 'de-development' (Roy; 1995) which indicates a captured economy, the existence of an imposed relationship of dependency, the arresting of its economic growth, the control and the obstruction of the free development of its civil and political institutions. Soon after its occupation of the WBG in June 1967, Israel imposed a customs union and made its markets captive for Israeli products and a reservoir for cheap unskilled and semi-skilled labour a significant percentage of which became, till early this century, highly dependent for employment on the Israeli labour market.⁴

The occupation of the WBG coincided with the establishment of the PLO and its transformation into a resistance movement. As a coalition movement, the PLO played, as I will argue later, a vital role in connecting Palestinian communities together, including the diasporas with the home communities.

Following a period of unrestricted flow of labour from the WBG into Israel starting in the late 1960s till the late 1980s, Israel began, with the outbreak of the Gulf War of 1991, to impose restrictions on that movement. Following the outbreak of second intifada (September 2000), more restrictions were imposed on the entry of Palestinian labour

2 The total population of the WBG is estimated at the end of 2006 at 3.95 million (63% in the West Bank, and 37% in the Gaza Strip). The total number of Palestinians in the world is put at 10.1 million; just over half live in historic Palestine. See; Economic & Social Monitor, Volume 8, March 2007 published by Palestinian Monetary Authority (PMA), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), and the Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute (MAS)

3 Statistical report released by PCBS on Israeli settlements in the West Bank at the end of 2006. (P:\NIZAM\07PRESS\SETTLEMA06E.doc

4 One aspect of the colonization of the WBG has been the marginalization of agriculture through appropriation of land, the control of water resources, the creation of a captive market for Israeli and the opening of the Israeli labour market to Palestinian unskilled and cheap labour. A third of the Palestinian labour force was, in the 1970s and 1980s, employed in the Israeli economy as workers were allowed to commute to Israel on a daily basis. This process turned villages and camps into dormitories for Palestinian workers, with repercussions on public, social and cultural life. Israel adopted clear policies to obstruct Palestinian self-propelled urbanization, and to promote kinship and local-based affiliations and identities in counter-apposition to political parties and national mass and professional organization. It can be argued that Israeli occupation promoted further gender segregation, whereby a sizeable percentage of the men were employed in the Israeli economy, and women were relegated to agriculture, care and household economy.

from the WBG into the Israeli labour market and stringent measures were taken to separate Palestinians in the WBG from Israelis. The building of the Separation or Segregation Wall, fencing Palestinians in the two regions, manifested this materially. Restrictions on movement between the towns and villages of the West Bank and between these and Gaza and Jerusalem area were also tightened, and control on borders of WBG was maintained.

The first decade of the 21st century has seen a decline in the number of enterprises in these areas. The gross domestic product (GDP) of the WBG has declined sharply since the eruption of the second intifada, resulting in record rates of unemployment and poverty (see Economic Monitor; 200x). There were also sanctions taken against the Palestinian Authority (PA) following the electoral victory of Hamas, and the latter's military take over of the Gaza Strip in June 2007. The weakening (or withering) of the PA is likely to have serious repercussions on relations between the diaspora and the home communities.

A recent report (September 2007) by the World Bank⁵ on the conditions prevailing in the WBG states that Palestinian gross domestic product (GDP) has become more dependent on foreign aid and remittances from abroad, and was down a third from its 1999 level. The report warns that in the last two years, the occupied Palestinian territory has seen massive capital flight and little foreign investment. Health and social indicators have also declined.

By 2005, the real value of output produced (GDP) was 9% below what it was in 1999, and unemployment (using ILO definition) averaged 24% of the labour force (twice what it was in mid 2000). Per capita income was down by a third of what it was in 1999. In 2005, deep "consumption poverty"⁶ affected 22% of all Palestinian households (UNRWA, November 2006), and "income poverty" was much higher. But it was not only

⁵ The World Bank, *Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recover*, September 2007. New York. (<http://www.worldbank.org/ps>).

⁶ Consumption poverty is defined as the inability to meet basic human needs (food, shelter and clothing). The individual monthly poverty line was estimated about \$64 (about \$2.10 per day). Income poverty is defined by income that is less than USA\$ 2.10).

at the economic and humanitarian levels that the crisis presented itself. Vulnerability of the Palestinian society in WBG was heightened with the impositions of sanctions against the PA, particularly following the electoral win of Hamas in the legislative elections of January up to July 2007 when this was lifted on the West Bank (but maintained on Gaza) following Hamas's military seizure, and the creation of de facto two separate, territorially distinct, entities (Hamas in the Israeli besieged Gaza Strip, and Fatah in West Bank, which is still under Israeli occupation). Hence these territories witnessed a decline in real per capita consumption levels by 12% in the first half of 2006, relative to the second half of 2005, and income poverty rose from 40.2% of households in 2005 to 55.6% of all households in the first half of 2006. (UNRWA; November 2006; III)

The paralysis of the Palestinian economy together with the rapid demise of the prospects of establishing a viable and independent Palestinian state, led not only to a sharp decline in economic investment in the WBG, but to sizeable investment loss within these areas with many enterprises closing up or moving out.

In short, the PA was unable to act as a metropolis for Palestinian investment, culture, civil society and political debate. In fact, its establishment was accompanied by the marginalizing of PLO institutions which provided Palestinian communities in the diaspora with a multi-layered organizational network and a forum for political discourse and mobilization.

III. A Profile of the Palestinian Diasporas (al-shatat)

Given the absence of a political, economic and cultural centre for Palestinian communities in Palestine and in diaspora (al-shatat), the impact of the latter on the West Bank and Gaza Strip (or indeed on Palestinians living in Israel), needs to be viewed differently from other diasporas that enjoy such a centre. The fact that Mandate Palestine remains for Palestinians the paradise that was lost and waiting to be recovered has made the goal of return (al-awda), a central strategic aim. In a sense, given the absence of statehood (where a public sphere exists and culture and schools of thoughts and political

ideologies are produced and evaluated and society re-generated), the lost homeland acted as the imagined metropolis (political-economic, cultural and social).

Given Palestinian history, real and imagined, it is accurate to refrain from using the term Palestine to refer simply and solely to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (that is to the Palestinian territories that were occupied by Israel in 1967), and/or the areas over which the Palestinian Authority (PA) have or had some degree of control. Most Palestinians continue to think of Palestine as the whole territory which was named Palestine under the British Mandate, and on 78% of which Israel established itself by force in 1948. This is the Palestine most Palestinians in al-shatat, particularly those made refugees in 1948 or displaced in the 1967 war (and are not allowed to return), relate to Palestine as their homeland, and draw on their Palestinian identity as an assertion of their right to return to that homeland.⁷ Any resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that does not acknowledge this right will be rejected, first and foremost, by Palestinians in the diaspora, but not only by them.

Palestinians dispersed outside Palestine - those living outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip and within the Green Line (inside Israel) - have differing histories and are found in significantly different socio-political fields. A significant section of them is composed of refugees, and their descendents, who were forced out of Palestine in 1948. A portion of these refugees are found in 58 officially designated refugee camps that are run by UNRWA and are mostly located inside on the outskirts of cities and towns in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (WBG), and in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Camps outside WBG also include the displaced persons of the 1967 war (some of these are second time

⁷ The right of Palestinian refugees to return and to be compensated is acknowledged by UN resolution 194, as well as by human rights conventions. It has been argued that not allowing Palestinian refugees to return while granting Jews the right to settle in the area of Mandate Palestine amounts to a form of ethnic cleansing. A study on the demography of Israel shows that 78% of Israelis are living in 14 % of the country. It argues that if Gazan refugees returned to their homes in southern Palestine, no more than five percent of Israeli Jews would be affected, and if the refugees of Lebanon returned to their homes in the Galilee no more than one percent of Israeli Jews would be affected. The total number of refugees from Gaza and Lebanon equals the number of Russians who immigrated to Israel in the 1990s. Palestinian refugees formed 18% of the world refugees in 2003. (Khawaja, in Fargues, 2006)

refugees).⁸ A sizeable portion of refugees live outside camps and are, in terms of occupations, style of life and standard of living, not different from other Palestinians who are not refugees.⁹

Palestinian refugees living in exile (fi al-manfa) form the major part of al-shatat or diaspora Palestinians. As refugees expelled forcibly from their homeland they have been celebrated by novelists, poets and writers from Ghassan Kanafi, to Jabra Ibrahim Jabra, to Emile Habibi, to Ilias Khoury, to poets like Mahmod Darweesh, Tafeeq Zayad, Sameeh al-Qassim, and many others. The story of their expulsion from their towns and villages, has become part of collective memory and narrative, and has been the main motivating force behind the rise of the Palestinian contemporary resistance movement.

There is another group of Palestinians in diaspora, other than refugees and their descendents, who live and work outside Palestine but who are not refugees of the Nakba, or displaced in the 1967 war. These are emigrants (and descendants) of Palestinians who emigrated from the WBG or other places. Some of these emigrated before 1948 (i.e., the establishment of the state of Israel) and have settled in the Americas and elsewhere

8 The number of registered Palestine refugees grows from 914,000 in 1950 to more than 4.45 million in 2006, and continues to rise due to natural population growth. The number of official camps recorded by UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency) as of 31st December 2006 was 58 (10 in Jordan, 12 in Lebanon, 9 in Syria, 19 in the West Bank, and 8 in the Gaza Strip). Those registered as living in these camps totalled 1,327,772 while the total number of registered refugees was given as 4,448,429. The highest number of registered refugees lived in Jordan (1.86 million), followed by the West Bank and Gaza Strip (1.74 million), but Gaza Strip had the highest number of registered refugees living in camps (approximately 479,000), followed by Jordan with 328,000.

(<http://www.un.org/unrwa/publications/index.html>). According to UNRWA, one-third of the registered refugees live in camps that are UN-run. The majority of the rest live in and around cities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and of neighbouring countries. It is estimated that about a third of a million Palestinians are displaced inside Israel (the part of Palestine occupied in 1948). Despite the fact of holding Israeli citizenship, they have been denied the right to return to their homes or villages. When the West Bank and Gaza Strip were occupied in 1967, the U.N. reported that approximately 200,000 Palestinians fled their homes. These 1967 refugees and their descendants today number about 850,000 persons. The erection of colonial settlements in the West Bank on confiscated Palestinian land and as a result of building the separation wall (which Palestinians refer to as the Apartheid wall), some 75,000 Palestinians have been displaced (see: www.al-awada.org).

9 The dispossession and expulsion of Palestinians in 1948 as a result of the creation of the state of Israel on their land is an issue that raises questions of legitimacy about the morality of that state. This is why Israeli political elite shunned facing the issue of refugees. It was only in the late 1980s that Israeli historians began to look into the genesis of the refugee problem, and to admit the intentional expulsion by Zionist forces of about three quarters of Palestinians (Morris, 1987), a fact that one Israeli historian characterized as the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians (Pappe', 2006). For a Palestinian historical account see; Khalidi, W. 1992.

before the Nakba; others moved from the WBG after 1948 to live in the East Bank (once the West Bank became part of the kingdom of Jordan), or emigrated to the Gulf States and elsewhere for work purposes. Some of the emigrants could return to the WBG (if they obtained the right document from the Israeli authorities) or to the East Bank (if they became Jordanian citizens and retained that citizenship).

There are many Palestinians who have obtained the nationality of the countries they migrated to (unlike Palestinian refugees in Arab states – apart from Jordan prior to 1988 - who are not entitled to citizenship) and who have the rights of citizens of these countries. These could travel to Palestine if they obtain an entry visa from Israeli authorities. But their stay is restricted, and is conditional, particularly if their Palestinian origin is known. Palestinians with Israeli passports can, up to this moment, travel to the West Bank but are required since the second intifada to obtain special Israeli permits; they are not allowed to travel to Gaza since Israeli unilateral withdrawal from that territory in autumn 2005. Palestinians in the WBG, apart from those with Jerusalem identity papers, are required to have a special Israeli permit to enter Jerusalem, or to areas designated by Israel as security zones, which included Jewish colonies in the West Bank, and the crossing the Separation Wall. They also need special permits to travel between Gaza and the West Bank. All these permits are difficult to obtain.

In 2007, there were some 1.3 million Palestinians with Israeli passports. These are mostly second and third generations of Palestinians who remained in Palestine in 1948. These have been demanding the right to be treated as equal citizens as well as to be acknowledged as a national minority.

IV. The Bounded Relations between the Palestinian Diasporas (al-shatat) and Palestinian Communities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip

The shape, form and intensity of relations and interactions between Palestinians in the diaspora and those in the WBG need, in order to make sense, to be historicized¹⁰. The following five points are meant to provide a overview of the historical context of the relations between diaspora communities and home communities in the WBG.

1. Following the Nakba, the West Bank was annexed by and became a part of Jordan. The Gaza Strip came under Egyptian rule and was forced to depend to an important degree on exporting labour as a consequence of harsh socio-economic conditions. A high rate of emigration continued after the two areas fell, in June 1967, under Israeli occupation. Migration remained unidirectional apart from a short respite in the early 1990s following the expulsion of Palestinians from Kuwait, the return of the PLO cadres, the period following the Oslo accords (1993) and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (1994).

2. Forced emigration has not been limited to the Nakba (when it took the form of ethnic cleansing) or a direct repercussion of war (as in the June war of 1967), but has also been experienced by Palestinian communities and camps in *al-shatat*. Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since 1982 (and as recently as the summer of 2007 in Nahr al-Barid) have been subjected to forced emigration inside Lebanon as well as countries outside Lebanon. Palestinians in Kuwait were expelled from the country following the second Gulf war in 1991, and Palestinians in Iraq have been harassed, and many have been forced to leave their homes (most cannot find refuge outside Iraq), by armed Iraqi militias following the country's occupation by American and allied forces in 2003. Forced emigration through state action has also been experienced by Palestinians in Libya (in 1995).

3. Palestinians in *al-shatat* are found in communities located in differing social and political fields. Refugee camps, erected as temporary habitats, represent a new type of settlement that is run by UNRWA with the consent of host states. Refugee camps are not solely a *shatat* phenomenon, as they exist in the WBG (27 out of a total 58 official refugee

¹⁰ There are networks between Palestinian communities in *al-shatat* and Palestinians living in 1948 area (in Israel) and between these and those in the WBG. Such relations are outside the scope of this paper.

camps). Camps, since they are inhabited mostly by Nakba refugees form part of the large body of refugees outside Palestine (and a significant percentage of refugees are found in Palestine), are relevant to any discussion on the relationship between the *shatat* and Palestinian communities in the WBG as well as those in 1948 areas (Israel). An association like Al-Awda (which means the return in Arabic with its network of activists in Europe, North America, the Arab countries and Palestine, has been active in promoting the right of return for refugees, and in linking Palestinians in the diaspora with those in Israel and with those under occupation in the WBG (see: www.al-awda.org).

4. Palestinians in *al-shatat* (camps and outside camps) live in multifarious political and socio-economic fields and have different networks with Palestinians in the WBG (and with Palestinians with Israeli citizenship), and vice versa. In some socio-political fields (as the case in Lebanon), Palestinian refugees are barred, formally or informally, from employment in specified occupations and/or from ownership of land and dwelling, even if they and their parents are born and raised in the country. In Syria, Palestinians - although they are not granted Syrian nationality - enjoy the rights of those with permanent residency. In Jordan, Palestinians from the West Bank were granted Jordanian nationality (up to 1988), unlike their compatriots in Gaza under Egyptian administration. In the Gulf States, Palestinians formed communities through migration for work purposes and tended to have different occupational structure, social networks or “social capital” and educational qualifications (“cultural capital”). They have acquired some features of “ethnic” minorities although they share with their host countries, the language, the Arab identity and the general culture (Islamic mainly). Smaller communities were formed in Europe and North America, although in an altogether different culture, but had easier access to permanent residency and citizenship, at least until the 11th of September 2001.

5. In other words, Palestinians in diaspora inhabit socio-political and economic fields that impose limitation on their social networks, with Palestinian communities in the WBG and elsewhere. They vary in their degree of vulnerability, access to the WBG, and in the resources and assets they possess and can transfer to WBG (as investments, or as assistance to family, or to the community). Palestinian communities have to negotiate

their rights and life chances in conditions of diaspora, Israeli occupation and the absence of a Palestinian state.

Despite the very different socio-economic and political conditions in which Palestinian refugee communities live around the world, "one can immediately note certain key commonalities in our current Palestinian discourse: the desire for direct elections to the Palestine National Council (PNC), for the reactivation and democratic reform of the PLO institutions, for the implementation of the Right of Return."¹¹

In the 1970s and 1980s the PLO provided political networks connecting Palestinian communities in diasporas and Palestine. The PLO presented itself as a movement representing all the Palestinian people. Because of the Israeli colonial occupation, the PLO was forced to develop its national, administrative, military, cultural and other institutions outside the WBG. To manage resistance to the Israeli occupation, the PLO's main political factions encouraged the formation of mass, professional organizations and trade unions to act as fronts for its political activities and as tools of mobilization.

The acknowledgement of the PLO by Palestinian communities, during the 1970s and 1980s, as their representative has had significant impact on both Palestinian communities in *al-shatat* and in the WBG. It provided a multifarious network that connected dispersed Palestinian communities in the Gulf, to those in Lebanon, to those in Syria, and to those in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, as well as to communities in North America, Europe and Australia. This was done through the creation of national institutions (particularly the Palestinian National Council), and mass and professional organizations (women, workers, students, teachers, writers, etc) with branches in all main Palestinian communities. Main Palestinian political organizations established their own branches (underground in the WBG) in these communities and by doing so provided linkages between individuals from diverse communities. The PLO and its main factions fashioned, up to early 1991, the Palestinian national field with its distinct discourse and programme. This organizational network went hand in hand with the transfer of financial resources to the WBG to support

¹¹ See Nabulsi, K. (2006). P.i.

families of imprisoned, martyred, and injured militants, and full-time cadres, and cover the cost of running various institutions (kindergartens, health, etc) and activities (eradication of illiteracy campaigns, publications, pamphlets, etc).

The political-organizational impact initiated and maintained through the PLO institutions and leading political organizations on the communities of WBG has not been sufficiently studied. The PLO (as the expression of the Palestinian resistance movement) was instrumental in forcing Israel to acknowledge the existence of a Palestinian people, in getting Jordan to disengage itself (in August 1988) from the West Bank. The impact was not unidirectional, particularly after the PLO was forced out of Lebanon in 1982. The political branches and civil organizations in the WBG developed mechanisms to convey their ideas and voice their opinions to the political leadership in the diasporas. The impact of the first intifada on the resolutions of the PNC held in Algeria in autumn of 1988 (including the endorsement of the two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict) is an example of such impact.

A decisive change in the diaspora-homeland relationship took place with the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) in 1994, and the marginalization of the institutions of the PLO institutions in the hope (some would say illusion) that a Palestinian state is in the offing. The demise of the prospect of statehood, the weakening of the PA and the rise of new political forces (represented by political Islam) that challenged the PLO had affected the existing and future diasporas-homeland relations. The prospect of a Palestinian viable and independent state waned further, with the political polarization in the homeland turning into Palestinian-Palestinian infighting and the power struggle materializing into a territorial division (between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank).

V. The Socio-Economic Dimensions of Relations between the Diasporas and Palestinian Communities in the West Bank and Gaza

There is an abundance of data that shows emigration has been a persistent and salient feature of community life in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.¹² But studies on the ramification that emigration has left on a society already shattered through dismemberment and ethnic cleansing, forced emigration, external rule, colonial occupation, are still rare. (Hilal, 2007) The WBG have been recipients of large numbers of refugees, and a large number of refugee camps. (MAS, Social Monitor, May 2005)

The absence of a fully-fledged Palestinian state that can institutionalize and promote networks between home communities and communities in diasporas is a major feature of the Palestinian condition. This feature is related to two other features: the existence of a refugee problem and the continued colonial occupation of the WBG. There is the additional factor of the territorial fragmentation of WBG (and since June 2007, also political polarisation).

This condition has meant the absence of a Palestinian geo-political, economical and cultural centre or focal point. One aspect of the absence of a centre is the constant loss of the home communities in the WBG, through constant out-migration, of human, social and cultural capital. Out-migration has heightened the vulnerability of Palestinian society in the WBG, without necessarily empowering the Palestinian diaspora.

VI. Disjointed Class Formation with Conservative Repercussions

12 Jordanian official figures reveal that the difference between the number of those who left and those who entered Jordan (both Banks) during the period 1962 and 1967 amount to 292,000. It is estimated that 80% of these were Palestinians with Jordanian passports. (Hilal, 1975; 105-6) According to Abu Shukur (1990; 5) there were, in 1966, about 120,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and 45,000 from the Gaza Strip abroad. Between the 6th of June 1967 and September 1967 some 200,000 left the West Bank and some 40,000 left the Gaza Strip (Shunari, 1994) to become “displaced persons.” Some estimate that a total of 320,000 emigrated from the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the period starting June 1967 (the beginning of the Israeli occupation) and 1992 (on the eve of the Oslo agreement; 171,000 from West Bank, 35,000 from annexed Jerusalem, and 114,000 from the Gaza Strip. (ibid; 145) Regardless of the exact numbers of emigrants there is no doubt that they constitute a significant and important social phenomenon

Out-migration has been a major mechanism in creating and maintaining large Palestinian middle classes, albeit outside their own home communities.¹³ Most of this middle class (as well as the business class formed in diaspora) remained marginal to the political decision-making processes of the host country. This is particularly true where immigrants and refugee communities are barred from permanent residency and citizenship. Even where they are not barred from citizenship (as in North America and Europe) they are excluded, or exclude themselves, from public life. Attempts made by many Palestinian communities in diaspora to organize themselves in support of Palestinian national struggle, and to assert rights of refugees, did not alter the fact of their political marginality in their host countries.

A survey which was carried out in the mid eighties reported that 56% of the emigrants were employed in white-collar occupations (i.e., as "specialists, technocrats, supervisors,, managers, and administrators"), and another 21% were classified as secretariat jobs which form the lower section of middle class. (Abu Shukr, 1990; 62) This means that three quarters of emigrants were employed in middle class occupations.

A sizeable number of Palestinians in Jordan, the Gulf, the United States and Europe accumulated sizeable amounts of wealth. The establishment of the Palestinian Authority did open opportunities for this group of Palestinians to invest in the Palestinian economy. This was, though cautiously, done by some wealthy expatriates during the period 1995 to 2000. The waning of the prospects of statehood, and increasing political instability with the eruption of the second intifada, ended these investments. Most of the big Palestinian businessmen made their wealth not in Palestine, but abroad, and most of them stayed on the margins of the contemporary national movement whose leadership has been dominated by the professional middle class.

13 The term middle class is used here to refer to those employed in "white-collar" occupations, or to put it differently to those with "cultural" capital, and thus have different work conditions, terms of employment, and market situation than manual workers and those which composed the classical petit-bourgeoisie (small peasant, shop keepers, craftsmen and so on).

In the 1967 occupied Palestinian territories, a sizeable section of the working class was formed through employment in the Israeli labour market that turned most villages and refugee camps into dormitories for male commuting workers. This situation continued up to the eruption of the second intifada when they became unemployed or turned to low paid jobs and gained subsistence income in the informal structure dominated by very small and family enterprises. The Israeli colonial occupation led to the marginalization of agriculture, through confiscation of large tracks of land, by-pass roads, colonial settlement construction, turning the WBG into a captive market for Israeli goods including subsidized agricultural products, and through the control of water. Agriculture was a sphere where women played a significant and productive role.

The social and political conservatism and the politicization and the behavioural codification of religion has been a strong feature of many states in the Gulf and this affected emigrant communities, among them Palestinian communities, in these countries, and the conservative impact was channelled back home through the visits by emigrants, funding – by states, charitable organizations and individuals - of Islamic societies and organizations in the WBG¹⁴ as well as among Palestinians living in Israel. A somewhat similar situation was faced by Palestinians living in the East Bank of Jordan -- a large percentage are emigrants from the West Bank—where Palestinian identity was suppressed and the Moslem Brotherhood was the only organization allowed to function in both the West Bank (till June 1967) and in the East Bank (till late 1980s). The weakening of the PLO, and its factions in the late 1980s and 1990s, deprived these communities from a once powerful frame of reference.

Statelessness (and its concomitant lack of institutional social security) and the vulnerability of Palestinian communities in many countries facilitated emphasis on kinship networks as a source of social security. The decline of the standing and effectiveness of the PLO institutions, and the weakening of the grip of political organizations and

14 This is exemplified in the rise of Hamas' popularity during the late 1980 and 1990s, culminating in its electoral victory in the legislative elections in January 2006, and its military control of Gaza Strip in June 2007.

movements since the early 1990s, enhanced the significance of kinship networks. In North America, Europe and Australia, the Palestinian *shatat* had to re-articulate their cultural and national identity (this became urgent following the 11th of September 2001). Certain sectors of Palestinians in North and South America tended to emphasize their re-invented (or re-interpreted) home community norms, as imagined existing at the time of emigration. Such “traditional” norms and values tended to be reinforced through marriage from the Palestinian emigrant community, or by marrying from home. The spread of village and town associations among Palestinian emigrant communities, including in camps and towns in al-shatat, illustrates the ongoing reconstruction of social and cultural links between diasporas and Palestinian communities in the home country. The Palestinian communities in the WBG have witnessed in recent years the activation of customary law in settling disputes and the re-activation of hamula diwans (places where members of the hamula meet or hold joint activities) as the central authority (PA) weakened. The mosque began to play an active role in political mobilization, and polarization.

VII. Declining Remittances

Some studies have estimated that remittances from diaspora to the West Bank and Gaza Strip reached their peak in 1984 with 97.4 million Jordanian Dinars (JD)¹⁵ for the West Bank and 57 million JD to the Gaza Strip (that is a total of 154.4 million JD) compared to 9.7 million JD and to 2.9 million JD for the Gaza Strip in 1974 (a total 12.6 Million JD). The increase is attributed to increasing numbers of Palestinian immigrants to the Gulf States that followed the increase in oil prices in 1974. After 1984, remittances began to decline as prices of oil dropped and the impact of the Iraqi-Gulf conflict on the Gulf States began to be felt. Remittances to the West Bank did not exceed 50 million JD in 1986.¹⁶ In 1997, the PCBS put the amount of financial remittances to family members in the West Bank and Gaza Strip at 96.4 million USA dollars (Hanafi, 2001; 200) which is

15 The U.S.A dollar equalled (in 2006) approximately 0.70 Jordanian Dinar. The Jordanian Dinar was devalued significantly in the late 1980s.

16 An economic recession in the oil economies began in 1983 and peaked in 1986, the sharp decline in oil prices decreased the demand for skilled and unskilled foreign labour, including Palestinian labour. The labour importing countries in the region started with the decline in revenue from oil to shift their demand from Arab to Asian workers who accept lower wages and present lower political risk.

much less than it was a decade earlier. The decline in remittances was compensated by new forms of public funding by the PA since 1994, and NGOs whose spending became significant in the 1990s and since 2000. (Shalabi, & others, May, 2001)

The PLO and its constituent political factions used to fund various political, social and cultural activities in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, and this funding greatly decreased after the first Gulf war (1991) with the cutting of aid from the Gulf States, and the expulsion the Palestinian community from Kuwait.¹⁷ The role of the PLO in subsidizing services and infrastructure was taken over by the PA following its establishment in 1994.

Remittances from emigrants abroad formed 8% of the GDP of the West Bank, and 7.1% of the GDP of the Gaza Strip in 1974. This share rose to 33.2%, and 56.4% in 1984 in the two regions respectively, and declined in 1986 to 20.9% and 45.2% respectively, but remained much higher, at that time, than remittances to Egypt and to Jordan which did not exceed 9% (for Egypt), and 22% (from Jordan) of their GDP. (Abu Shukr, 1990; 24)¹⁸ However, the 1990s saw a decline in remittances from relatives to their kin in the Palestinian territories. Following the Gulf war (1991), and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (1994), the situation changed as both remittances and wages from work in Israel dropped, and the Palestinian Authority became a major employer of Palestinian labour. For the first times in decades the West Bank and the Gaza Strip became, in the first half of the 1990s, home to tens of thousands of returnees. This lasted, however, although in smaller numbers, till the end of 1990s. Emigration from these areas resumed soon after the eruption of the second intifada.

17 Some estimate that 85% of those with Jordanian nationality in Kuwait on the eve of the 1991 Gulf war were Palestinians, or Jordanians of Palestinian origin. In 1958-59, an agreement was concluded between Jordan and Kuwait which allowed any Jordanian to enter Kuwait as long as he or she had a valid Jordanian passport. This enabled Palestinians from the West Bank to seek work in Kuwait. (Brand, 2006; 182-3)

18 One study estimates that remittances from Palestinian workers in Israel to have constituted 30% of GDP in the West Bank and Gaza Strip before the outbreak of the second intifada and following the sharp decline of remittances from the Gulf States where some 600,000 Palestinians lived. (Shtayyeh, 1998; 34)

A recent survey (April 2007) found that just over 15% of households in the WBG reported the emigration (outside Palestine) of, at least one member of the household between the beginning of the second intifada and April 2007. The highest percentages were from villages (17%), followed by towns (14%) and camps (13%). Of the districts Ramallah, in the centre, was the highest (25%), followed by Tulkarim (22%) in the North, Bethlehem in the south (20%), and was 15% for Gaza city some emigrants (34.7%) sought emigration to find employment, and 10% to improve their life condition.¹⁹

A household survey carried out by the Institute of Women Studies at Bizeit University in 1999 showed a very low level of remittances by persons abroad to their relatives in the WBG. 15.5% of the households with close relatives living abroad had a regular (that is at least once every two months) financial exchange with close kin abroad, but only 8.5% of households with close relatives abroad were receiving regular financial support from their close kin in diasporas, while 6.5% of households with emigrants were sending money regularly to their close relatives abroad, and roughly 1% said they were both sending and receiving money, as demanded by the situation. (Hilal, 2007) The survey showed that financial support from individuals abroad to relatives in WBG decline as the years of staying abroad increase. It also revealed that the younger the emigrant is the more likely he/she (in most cases it is a male) will transfer money regularly to his/her resident close kin in WBG.

Despite the fact that a large majority of households in WBG has *close* (direct descent) relatives in diasporas²⁰, only a very small minority has a regular remittance relationship with them. Some 84% in the households surveyed in 1999 by the Institute of Women Studies said that they neither received remittances from relatives abroad, nor sent them money transfers. The data covers only regular transfers and does not cover remittances that possibly take place in emergencies (such as in cases of illness, unemployment or

19 Information obtained from data provided by Near East Consulting, Ramallah (www.neareastconsulting.com).

20 In 2000, 66% of heads of refugee households and 59% of non-refugees had close relatives in al-shatat. In the Gaza Strip, the percentages were 56% and 47% respectively. (Khawaj, in Fargues, 2006; 246)

death of main provider). The same data revealed that emigrants to Jordan have the lowest supportive interaction with their close relatives in the WBG. Less than 3% of the migrants in Jordan send remittances regularly to their close kin in the Palestinian areas, while double that percent sent money to close relatives in Jordan from WBG (probably for health or education reasons). Similarly only 6% of the households which had close relatives in Arab countries did receive regular remittances, while a similar percentage of households in the WBG sent regular remittances to close relatives in these countries (probability to students).

A study on social capital in the West Bank found that more than three-quarters of adult individuals in the West Bank have relatives outside Palestine, some 40% of these keep in touch with their relatives by phone or electronic post at least once a month. The same study revealed that two thirds of adults in the West Bank have friends abroad, and about a fifth was in touch with their friend at least once a month.²¹ This fact, together with what is mentioned in this paper, suggest that we need to look at the dynamics of individual and family interaction between diaspora and home communities.

VIII. The Elusive State

The establishment of the Palestinian Authority created high hopes that an independent and sovereign state was on the way. One consequence was the rapid expansion of the middle class in the WBG. With the establishment of public institutions, the activation of the private sector through infusion of expatriate capital with local capital, the increase in the number of NGOs, and the expansion of Palestinian universities came the need for white-collar and specialist cadres to man and operate. Nearly 30% of the active labour force in the two regions was classifiable, in 2004, as white-collar occupations. (Hilal, 2006a; 88)²² This change in class composition was facilitated by the return of some

²¹ From a study on social capital in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that will be published by MAS early in 2008. The author is a co-researcher.

²² A middle class (those employed in white-collar occupations) was now established in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It formed 20% of the labour force at the end of 1997 (at the time of the general census of population), and reached 28% in 2004. In the 1980s and up to the early 1990s, it did not exceed 12% of the total active labour force, (Hilal, 2006c; 58).

Palestinians to the WBG in accordance with the Oslo agreement. Higher education at home and out-migration/in-migration have been the two main mechanisms in the production and maintenance of the Palestinian middle class.²³ 37.5% of the returnees (males and females) to the West Bank had middle class occupations²⁴ before they returned, and in the Gaza Strip the percentage was as high as 68%. (Maliki & Shalabi, 2000; table 26)²⁵ In terms of higher education, 14% of all returnees, aged 10 years old, had university education compared to 4.5% among the resident population.

The survey of the Institute of Women Studies found that three quarters (or 73%) of Palestinians who emigrated to the Gulf States were employed in white-collar jobs. Those who migrated to the US and Canada had the lowest percentage (44%) of Palestinian emigrants in white-collar occupations. Half (or 51%) of Palestinians who left the WBG to live in Jordan were employed in white-collar occupations.

Returnees in the 1990s; a Transitory Change in the Relation between Palestinian Territory and Diaspora

The foundation of the Palestinian Authority and the impact of the Gulf War in 1991 brought a wave of repatriation to the WBG. Returning expatriates formed at the end of 1997 about 10.5% of the total population of the WBG.²⁶ 36.5% of the returnees²⁷ came from Jordan, 31.1 % from Gulf States, 21.5% from other Arab countries, 4.9% from the United States, and 6% from other countries. (Maliki & Shalabi, 2000; tables 18 - 20)

²³ Out-migration was reported to have played a similar role in the making of the middle class in Lebanon (see; Khater, 2001).

²⁴ The following are what the writer defined as middle class occupations; legislatures, managers, administrators, specialists, technicians, professionals, teachers, academics, secretarial workers.

²⁵ There are other distinguishing features of returnees, compared to residents, in addition to occupational composition, educational attainments and age structure. But these follow mostly from the above features e.g.; having a higher percentage married (61.5% compared to 54.6% in the general population), having a smaller rate of refugees (38.6% compared to 41.6%), and having a higher percentage that is economically active (42.4%, compared to 35.7% aged 10 years old and more) (see; Maliki & Shalabi, 2000; 60) .

²⁶ 65.3% of the returnees went to the West Bank, and 34.7% went to the Gaza Strip. 53% of returnees were, at the end of 1997, living in urban areas, 33.2% in villages, and 13.8% in camps. (Maliki & Shalabi, 2000; 54) At the end of 1997, Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were distributed by type of settlement as follows; 53.1% in urban areas; 15.9% in refugee camps; and 31% in village communities. MAS, May 2005; xii) This means that returnees were evenly distributed by type of settlement.

²⁷ Returnees, as defined by PCBS in its census of population in 1997, are those who returned to Palestinian areas after having been normally resident outside these areas (i.e., West Bank and Gaza Strip).

Many of those who returned worked in the fields of culture and journalism, a fact that was reflected in the enhanced activities in these fields, as witnessed in the large number of newspapers, journals, research centres, television and radio stations that were established in the 1990s in the WBG.

The percentage of the labour force employed by the government sector rose from 17.6% in 1996 to 23.7% in 2005. (MAS, May 2005; xiii, and MAS, July 2007; 7) The Palestinian Authority found itself facing an economy that has been de-developed under a prolonged colonial occupation. Many of the returnees to the West Bank and Gaza Strip had become used to an urban style of living (having lived and studied for years in Beirut, Damascus, Tunis, and European cities) a fact that created, in the 1990s, tension between the returnees and sectors of the resident population reflecting in one aspect the conservative impact of the long labour force emigration, particularly to the Gulf States.

VIII. Palestinian Authority; Thwarted Attempts to Create a Focal Point for Expatriate Capital Investment

An attempt was made by the Palestinian Authority to establish a rudiment of a national economy, by issuing new laws regulating the economy and investment, and by improving the basic infrastructure. The second part of the 1990s saw the creation, simultaneously with a Palestinian stock exchange, and in the space of few years, of over thirty holding companies that provided alternative forms of economic and financial activities to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where for decades the economy was dominated by small family owned and informally run enterprises, and where Israel had total control over imports and exports, banking, credit and insurance activities, imposed a system of heavy taxation, neglected the infrastructure and imposed restrictions on industrial and agricultural production. (World Bank, 1993; Vol.3)

The Palestinian Authority responded to demands to facilitate the entry of financial capital, by providing financial assistance given by donor countries and capital investment from the business expatriate community. To this end, it granted monopoly concessions on

the basis of personal contacts, favouritism, and kickbacks. These included known expatriate investors. The business community, invigorated by large expatriate capital and the prospect of statehood, began to articulate business interests. Thus, shortly after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, the Palestinian Trade Centre (Paltrade) was established to articulate the interests of large business composed mostly by expatriate capital. In 1993, a holding company under the name “The Palestinian Development and Investment Company Ltd” (PADICO) was established by a number of wealthy Palestinians with a declared capital of \$1 billion with the aim of attracting “investment that will help rebuild the economic infrastructure of the Palestinian economy and create jobs.”²⁸ Another group of wealthy Palestinian expatriates established “The Arab Palestinian Investment Company, Ltd” (APIC). (Nasr, 2004; 174-175)

Many of the 22 banks (9 were locally chartered) that were operated in the WBG soon after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, were owned wholly or partially by Palestinian expatriates. To induce investment in a high risk situation the Palestinian Authority granted monopolistic concessions to large firms (with large expatriate capital investments). In other cases it went into partnership with private capital (including expatriate capital), and thirdly it monopolized the import and distribution of certain strategic products, such as cement and petroleum (Nasr, 2000; 176).

However, the heightened political uncertainty as to the future of the Palestinian territories, once the Palestinian Israeli negotiations broke down, made expatriate investment increasingly cautious, and as the political future looked increasingly bleak, expatriate capital began to leave the Palestinian territories. In short, the Palestinian Authority was not empowered sufficiently to provide the haven needed by Palestinian expatriate capital.

Expatriate capital created and ran relatively large holding companies, insurance and catering companies, as well as banks and financial markets. Palestinian expatriate

²⁸ Arafat described the founders of the company as the tigers of the Palestinian economy who were expected to play a major role in rebuilding the Palestinian state.” (Nasr, 2004; 175)

businessmen were motivated - as a reaction to their politically marginality in the host countries - to influence political and economic policies of the Palestinian Authority as they wagered on the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. (Hilal, 2002; 86-93 & Nasr, 2004) Their aim was (and remains) to ensure a leading role for the private sector in the economy, and to secure a say for the business community in politics. The fact that a Palestinian IMF economist was appointed as prime minister in June 2007 is an acknowledgement, by the Palestinian Authority, to the legitimacy of this aim.

X. No Hong Kong for Palestinians

In two studies researched before the outbreak of the second intifada, one on the relationship between Palestinian businessmen in the diaspora and the emerging Palestinian Authority (Hanafi, 1997, 2001);²⁹ and the other on the relationship between Palestinians in *shatat* and the territories under the limited control of the Palestinian Authority. The author argued that there was a utilization (though limited) of the international economic networks that Palestinian businessmen and communities possess in aid of the Palestinian state-building project. The author acknowledges that investment by Palestinian businessmen in the Palestinian territories remained, in the 1990s, limited and selective (Hanafi, 2001; 115-115), and argues that the relevant factors in determining the return of businessmen and investment are: first, the political and economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza; second, the kind of relationship that exists between the Palestinian Authority and the country hosting the Palestinian community; and third, the socio-economic structure of the Palestinian communities in the diasporas. (Hanafi, 2001)

It is clear that the involvement of the Palestinian communities outside Palestine in the Palestinian economy and communal support remained ostensibly below the resources they possess (in terms of financial capital, and also in terms of the expertise and experience in many fields). Hanafi argues that the Palestinian diaspora contribution was

²⁹ The research was based on interviews held during the period 1994 to 1996 with Palestinian businessmen in USA (33 persons), Canada (25 persons), in Egypt (62 persons), in Syria (25 persons), United Arab Emirates (45 persons), Lebanon (15 persons), Britain (24 persons), and France (7).

limited but significant, and calculates the value of “large scale” direct investments (mostly by expatriate Palestinians) to have totalled \$134 million in 1996, and \$114 million in 1997, or about 5.5% of GDP. These figures (relative to the size of GDP) are smaller than external direct investments in Arab countries (which are not less than 15% of GDP) at the same period. If small investment in construction (houses or villas for expatriates families for vacations or blocs of flats as investments), are added to the large scale investments, the percentage of total value of investments in the Palestinian economy does not exceed 11%.

The demographic and historic connection, and the factor of contiguity between the West Bank and Jordan, and between Gaza Strip and Egypt is reflected in the fact that investments by Palestinians in Jordan and Palestinians in Egypt were much higher than investments of Palestinians in the Gulf countries and much higher than investments from Palestinians in both North and South America. (Hanafi, 2001 ;203)

In addition to direct or indirect investment by Palestinians in diasporas, some \$96 million in 1996 and \$91 million in 1997 were estimated by PCBS to be the value of remittances (in kind and in cash) to Palestinians in WBG from abroad. (Hanafi. 2001; 200) In addition, some \$8 million were spent annually in humanitarian aid in these areas (half of which was provided by Welfare Association) by Palestinians and associations abroad. The total direct and indirect investments, of remittances and transfers, including humanitarian aid by Palestinians from diasporas to their compatriots in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, totalled \$408 million in 1996, and \$410 million in 1997 (compared to \$549 million in 1996, and \$432 million in 1997 given by the donor countries).

The above figures do not present a significant rate of remittances and investments from Palestinians in diaspora to those in the WBG. In Jordan, for example, the figures are about three times those available to West Bank and Gaza, and in Israel the amount is many times more than in WBG, after taking the size of population into consideration. Diaspora transfers do not meet the basic needs of the very poor in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In 2004, no less than 27% of families in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were

living under the poverty line using a consumption criterion, and 54% were under the poverty line (2.10 dollars per capita per day) using income criterion (PCBS, May 2005).³⁰ But, one should take into account the fact that a significant percentage of the Palestinians in diaspora is composed of refugees. Nevertheless, there are significant numbers who are professional classes and wealthy capitalists.

A majority of Palestinian businessmen in diaspora informed that they have relatives in most Arab states, and many in North America. Sectors of the Palestinian community in Canada said that they have strong economic and social relations with the West Bank and Gaza (remittances, marriage connections, visits, investing in property, sending children to study Arabic), but, at the same time, they took steps to strengthen their ties with the host country; e.g.: establishing businesses, buying houses in the host country, educating their children in the host country. The Palestinian community in the United States tended to feel discriminated, and alienated from government institutions because of its foreign policy, and this kept its interests and pre-occupations focused on Palestine. (Hanafi, 1997; 32-6, & 2001; 83-94) In Latin American countries, particularly in Chile where there is a large and multi-generational Palestinian community, most Palestinians are well integrated in the host societies there.

Palestinian entrepreneurs in Jordan and Egypt found it easier than others to invest in the Palestinian areas because of peace agreements made with Israel by the two countries, and because both countries have borders with Palestine. Syria and Lebanon stood against the Oslo accords, and did not allow travel to or investment in Palestinian areas as the borders of these areas remained under Israeli control. For Palestinian businessmen in Europe, North America, Jordan and Egypt the question to invest or not to invest was determined mainly by economic considerations. (Hanafi, 1997; 73)

³⁰ A survey carried out in 1996 showed that only a quarter of heads of households who described their socio-economic situation as difficult or very difficult said their households received regular assistance (in kind or in cash) from resident and non-resident relatives or neighbours, or friends. (Hilal, and Maliki, 1997; 25) This does not exclude the possibility that there are all sorts of remittances which are not regular, and that these do not go necessarily to needy families either because they do not have well-to do emigrants or they do not have relatives living abroad.

Individuals from the business community in the United States had a hand in arranging dialogue between the American Administration and the PLO in the late 1980s; it remains, however, of little influence. Palestinian businessmen working in Arab States had, on occasions, played a part in smoothing relations between Arab states and the PLO. However, some contend that in fact that Palestinian businessperson in diaspora tended to pressurize the Palestinian Authority to modify its political stance rather than the contrary. In any case, one should be cautious in reporting as true what the business community says about its political role or philanthropic role (as does the Welfare Association which spends about 5 million dollars a year in the WBG).

The Palestinian Authority has been able to free itself from the tentacles of the Israeli occupation and has not been able to gain control of its borders and natural resources. This fact, and the freezing of the PLO institutions, together with its mass and professional associations and trade unions, left the Palestinian people with no political, economic or cultural centre.

Continued Impoverishment of Palestinian Human, “Cultural” and “Social” Capital

As mentioned earlier emigration since the early 1960s have had a conservative influence on Palestinian society in the WBG. (Hilal, 2006 & 2007)³¹ Emigration, on the scale witnessed in the WBG has represented a continuous impoverishment of the “cultural capital” of Palestinian society there depriving it of individuals with high qualifications, skills and talent.³² The “social capital” manifested in networks of relations that

³¹ Other researchers have noted the existence among Palestinians in the West Bank, in the early 1990s, of a disparity between “political radicalism” and “conservative social conduct and outlook” and linked this, partly at least, to the impact of migration to the Gulf States. (Rosenfeld, 2004; 198)

³² A recent public opinion poll (September 2007), revealed that the number of adult individuals wishing to immigrate to other countries has increased from an already high 28% in June 2007 (during the Hamas military takeover of the Gaza Strip) to 32% in September 2007 (37% in the Gaza Strip compared to 29% in West Bank). The percentage wishing to emigrate among residents of refugee camps reached 39% compared to 30% among residents of towns and 31% among villages. The rate among supporters of Fatah (40%) is twice that of the supporters of Hamas (20%). It is highest rate was among holders of BA degree (44%) compared to illiterates (13%), and higher among men (38%) compared to women (27%), and reaches 53% among students compared to 10% among farmers and 25% among housewives, and reaches 46% among the youth between ages of 23-27 years and 44% among the ages of 18-22 years compared to 8% among those over 52 years of age and 26% those between the ages of 43-52 years. (See: The Palestine Centre for Policy and Survey Research (pcpsr@pcpsr.org). Public Opinion poll, no. 25 (September 2007).

Palestinians have through their dispersed communities, they cannot utilise or mobilize in state-building or development because of the colonial situation that part of the Palestinians live under, and the conditions surrounding communities in diaspora.³³ Emigration also represents impoverishment because of the conditions many Palestinian communities (particularly refugee camps) face in their host societies.

In other words, the evaluation of the overall relations of the diaspora communities with home communities has to be viewed within the context of the political economy of the Israeli occupation, the socio-economic and legal situation of diaspora communities, and in the context of the changing regional and international situation.

The absence of a Palestinian metropol, or a unifying and galvanizing centre for cultural, artistic, journalistic, economic, intellectual and political interactions, has also stunted the growth of Palestinian society, culture and economy and has kept Palestinian communities in diaspora in a state of relative weightlessness and subject to the diverse influences of host states' cultural, economic and political fields. The destruction of Palestinian society in 1948 had its impact not only on the development of Palestinian art and high culture but also on Palestinian crafts, which lost a great deal of their vitality and creativity through work in Israel, and through out-migration. (see ; Mohamed, 2002)

The economic potentialities (in remittances and investments) of diaspora communities have remained underutilised. The Palestinian Authority in the WBG could not utilize the considerable cultural and social capital accumulated by individuals in diaspora (including in Jordan and in the Gulf states) sufficiently because these areas remained under colonial occupation.

XI. Some Concluding Notes

1. Migrants and refugees need to be situated in the context of wars, conflicts and de-development.

³³ The terms social and cultural capital are used as in Bourdieu (1986).

Functionalist paradigms (see, for example; Hovedenak, 1997; Al-Ali, 2004; Cainker et al, 2004) in explaining migration are of limited analytical value. They tend to ignore war, occupation, repression and conflict as the main moving forces behind migration. They tend to draw attention away from the situations of vulnerability (risks of marginality, of cultural alienation, loss of social capital, ethnic or religious discrimination, repression, d, etc), or the new situations of conflict (cultural, ethnic, political, etc) that immigrants get exposed to in the host country.

There is a need to examine the strategies that communities in diasporas develop (e.g., resistance, conformity, integration, etc), and why certain strategies are preferred. Forms of resistance, assimilation or conformity by immigrant communities are mediated through the politics of identity (religious, sectarian, nationalist, ethic, etc), and/or the politics of citizenship (demand for equality and justice), and/or the politics of interests (bettering of wages, work conditions, housing, health facilities), or a combination of these.

2. Migrants and refugees as carriers of traditions (of home societies) and as actors in the host societies.

There is a need to focus more on what happens to the migrants and refugees in their host societies as well as their relation with their home society of origin. Refugees and immigrants (who carry with them traditions, collective memories and aspirations) have to enter into negotiations with host society (with the authorities, with employers, with neighbours, with one's emigrant community, with the home community, with political affiliation, and so on).

3. Migrants and refugees need to be viewed in the context of social class, kinship networks, and identity construction, in relation to both home communities and host societies.

Migrants and refugees exit in socio-economic and political contexts, where dimensions of class, gender, religion or ethnicity and age are relevant. They exit in what some social scientists called “diaspora space.” (Brah, 1996: 208-10)

Kinship networks, and social class dynamics and identity formation are pertinent in explaining both home and communities in diaspora. Migration has social class ramifications and in redefining both kinship relations (as social capital) and identity formation (national, cultural, religious, ethnic, gender, etc). Social class, kinship and identity formation (as interpreted and reinterpreted in a situation of statelessness and insecurity) are pertinent to refugee and migration studies.

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