



**DANISH INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**  
STRANDGADE 56 • 1401 COPENHAGEN K • DENMARK  
TEL +45 32 69 87 87 • [diis@diis.dk](mailto:diis@diis.dk) • [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

**INTERIM RETURN AND PALESTINE:  
ON POLITICS, TERMINOLOGY AND STRUCTURAL  
INVISIBILITY**

Riina Isotalo

*DIIS Working Paper no 2006/21*

© Copenhagen 2006

Danish Institute for International Studies, DIIS

Strandgade 56, DK-1401 Copenhagen, Denmark

Ph: +45 32 69 87 87

Fax: +45 32 69 86 00

E-mails: [diis@diis.dk](mailto:diis@diis.dk)

Web: [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

Cover Design: Carsten Schiøler

Printed in Denmark by Vesterkopi as

ISBN: 87-7605-156-0

Price: DKK 25.00 (VAT included)

DIIS publications can be downloaded

free of charge from [www.diis.dk](http://www.diis.dk)

**Riina Isotalo**, Institute of Development Studies, University of Helsinki (Visiting Research Fellow at DIIS, February-April 2006)

# Contents

Abstract .....	iv
Introduction.....	1
Research in context.....	2
Refugee issue and the right of return.....	3
Return to place of origin or not.....	5
Exilic vulnerability and return.....	8
Changing the national discourse of return .....	9
Problems of terminology and paradigms .....	12
Structurally invisible return migration: a heterogeneous movement.....	15
Interim return: vulnerable presence and transnational lifestyles.....	18
Conclusions.....	21
References.....	22

# Abstract

Taking its cue from the literature on return migration and repatriation processes as well as the Palestinian refugee problem, this paper looks first at the issue of return to place of origin or not. Return migration to the West Bank and Gaza Strip is then considered in the light of this schema, and stipulations of the politicisation of a transnational paradigm and the structural invisibility of return migration are highlighted. The present paper argues that in the Palestinian context, return is a political issue for all parties concerned and that Palestinian return migration has been structurally invisible. The paper concludes that politicisation of a transnational paradigm should be acknowledged in studying Palestinians' transnational mobility and relations because otherwise the fact that some transnational practises might aim at permanent return can pass unnoticed.

# Introduction

The objective of this paper is to develop and elaborate two arguments: the first concerning Palestinian return in general, and the second about Palestinian return migration. I argue first that 'return' in the Palestinian context cannot be reduced to practices that can be comprehended, promoted – or completely hindered – by merely means related to security, economics and administration. In the Palestinian context, return is a political issue for all parties concerned. However, while return is a political issue for all Palestinians, one can find both 'myth of return' and homeland nostalgia<sup>1</sup> among the diaspora as well as acute practical interest for return movement among migrants and refugees living in constrained and insecure environments. For many 1948-refugees, return has become an abstract dream that has taken on features of salvation (Farah 1997). My other argument is that Palestinian return migration has been structurally invisible. I discuss this structural invisibility in light of paradigmatic tendencies that characterise research on Palestinians abroad and return migration. Finally, I approach structural invisibility by elaborating on the characteristics of return migration to Palestine.

My considerations are in dialogue with recent scenarios about repatriation to Palestine as well as analyses on return dynamics in other settings and my discussion is based on two premises that draw on my earlier work (Isotalo 2003 and 2005). First, Palestinians continue to negotiate many aspects of their social realities in relation to return. Second, Palestinian discourses on return are undergoing transformation that is manifested in a friction between popular understandings of return and certain political initiatives as well as in controversial interpretations among the Palestinians of different refugee repatriation opinion polls.

<sup>1</sup> 'Myth of return' points to the phenomenon that when migrants evoke 'next year in Jerusalem' or 'next year in Havana', the likelihood of actual return seems to diminish with time (Stefansson 2004a: 6). In the Palestinian context, a similar 'myth of return' can be found among certain groups of Palestinians abroad who would have a possibility to return, at least on a temporary basis, but choose not to. In migration literature, myth of return has often been treated as an equivalent of 'ideology of return'. In the Palestinian context, however, ideology of return points to politicization of culture around the notion of 'return' (Isotalo 2003 and 2005) and is therefore not quite the same as the homeland nostalgia familiar in most other migration and diaspora settings.

## Research in context

Post-conflict repatriation is usually (but not always) preceded by a political agreement between the conflict parties or between the state responsible for the expulsion and the UNHCR. After such an agreement, which does not necessarily involve the potential returnees as negotiating partners,<sup>2</sup> the repatriation is more often than not treated as a technical/practical issue also by research, particularly in policy analysis and planning. Looking through the literature, one finds two approaches to post-conflict repatriation and return: a 'hands on' approach, which is often rather developmentalist, and diaspora/transnationalism studies, which I treat as a paradigmatic entity in relation to more problem-oriented approaches.<sup>3</sup>

The problem-oriented 'hands on' approach is common in literature and reports on post-conflict repatriation that focuses on repatriation as a practice instead of return as a political project (for example, Black and Koser 1999; Dumper 2006; Stepputat 2004. For a critical view, see Preston 1999; Hammond 1999; Stefansson 2004a and 2004b). Presumably, the emphasis on how to best facilitate repatriation and promote post-conflict reconstruction and indeed 'transfer best practices' (Dumper 2006), reflects the sedentary thinking of much of the twentieth century refugee regime (Malkki 1997; Hammond 1999; Van Hear 1998b and 2002 about a transition in refugee regime), the tendency to treat refugee issues as humanitarian crises, and the post-cold war and particularly post-2001 policy to prevent permanent refugee settlement in the West. Since the mid-1990s, there has been a growing tendency within this approach to problematize repatriation *per se*, recognizing that it is 'a not so simple optimum solution' (Rogge 1994; UNHCR 1995). Moreover, transnational relations have become a part of what the current refugee regime sees as 'durable solutions' to refugee diasporas (Van Hear 2002).

The literature with diaspora perspective, and analyses with a transnational approach, see repatriation and return migration as part of migratory cycles and processes.<sup>4</sup> This means that return is seen as part of a change in the 'migration order' that may result from a 'migration crisis' so that after the initial move, people often continue lifestyles that span borders even after return

<sup>2</sup> Return movement to Guatemala is a case in point, where returnees, as political interlocutors, defined their terms of return during years of negotiations with the Guatemalan government. See Stepputat 1994 and 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Of course there are examples of studies that do not fall in either category. See for example Essed, Frerks and Schrijvers (eds) 2004.

<sup>4</sup> 'Transnational' indicates also simultaneity.

(Van Hear 1998a; for example Bakewell 2004). Continuance of mobile lifestyles has been called 'cumulative causation' (Van Hear 1998a) and sometimes leads to 'mobile livelihoods' (Stepputat 2004, 2006) becoming a part of 'sustainable return' (idem.). Diaspora/transnational approaches discuss political aspects of return, often from the perspective of long-distance nationalism (for example Glick Schiller and Fouron 2001), a term coined by Benedict Anderson, and as part of diaspora politics (Sheffer 2006; Turner 2006). Such analyses do see return as a political project, but their focus is rarely on permanent return. The relationship between return migration and transnational literature is elaborated on later.

## Refugee issue and the right of return

The Palestinian return refers to the coming back of those Palestinians who were directly or indirectly forced to leave the country against their own will as a result of the war that followed the founding of the Israeli state in 1948, and later as a consequence of the war of 1967, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In international law, political negotiations and public parlance, 'return' and 'right of return' are part of 'the Palestinian refugee issue' or 'the Palestinian refugee problem'. Thus, the return is perceived as concerning first and foremost Palestinian refugees, even though its actual implications are far more complex. The Palestinian refugee issue has remained unresolved for almost sixty years, and its longevity makes the plight of over four million UNRWA-registered refugees, non-registered refugees and displaced persons – altogether almost seven million people – the largest unresolved mass displacement problem in the world (BADIL 2005).

'Right of return' refers to the international community's current consensus on voluntary repatriation as the most desirable solution for any refugee problem, and in the Palestinian context specifically, to the UN General Assembly's Resolution 194 of 11 December 1948, which proclaims that 'refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date'. The implementation of this resolution was entrusted to the United Nations Conciliation Commission for Palestine, which made numerous attempts to promote the repatriation of the refugees (Takkenberg 1998: 318). Israel, however, has consistently barred the return of refugees either to the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) or to Israel except in small numbers. As pointed out by Lex Takkenberg (1998: 318), the right of return is at least as contentious an issue as the question of the responsibility for the refugees' plight, and the two are closely related. Several analysts in international law find the individual right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes, or to

their own country, i.e. Palestine, to be firmly established in international law. As long as there is no Palestinian state, this right applies in principle to the entire territory of the former British Mandate. The right of return is anchored in the law of nationality as applied to state succession, humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law (see particularly Boling 2001).

The implementation of the right of return is another issue. Apart from Israel's refusal to accept any repatriation of Palestinian refugees to its territory, most 'original homes' of the Palestinian refugees inside today's Israel no longer exist. Furthermore, by having recognised the state of Israel, the PLO implicitly recognised it as a Jewish state. Thus, it would be next to impossible for any Palestinian negotiator who is affiliated with the PLO to press for a large-scale return of Palestinians to their former towns and villages inside Israel.

Serious attempts at finding a durable solution to the Palestinian refugee problem were suspended by the mid-1950s (Takkenberg 1998: 318). By the late 1950s, refugees were generally no longer called returnees, either by themselves or by the surrounding societies in the Arab host countries. Until then, refugees had been called returnees because of the popular conviction among them and the host populations that return would be possible in the not too distant future (see, for example, Sayigh 1979). The issue was brought back to the negotiation table after several decades by the Middle East peace process. It was first taken up in secret and unofficial discussions between Israel and the PLO in the late 1980s (Klein 2006) and officially in the 'Madrid' conference in 1991. The Oslo Accords in 1993 and the interim agreements that followed did not resolve the refugee problem, which was one of the issues left for the permanent status negotiations.

According to some analysts (Exeter Refugee Study Group 2001; Takkenberg 2003; Brynen 2006; Dumper 2006; Hanafi 2005 and 2006; Klein 2006); alternative resolutions that would not allow return to today's Israel could be (individual or collective) compensation combined with joint or Israeli recognition of the refugee plight, citizenship rights for Palestinian refugees in current host countries or third countries as well as a possibility for dual citizenship (of Palestine and the country of residence), at least for a limited time, together with a possibility to repatriate voluntarily to the West Bank or Gaza. However, even scenarios that circumvent return movement to Israel touch upon certain dimensions of the right of return, thus bringing the attempt to reduce return to a practical resolution back into politics. The intertwined issues of recognition and compensation have huge political and economic consequences not only for Israel but also for the international donor community and the Arab countries which most of the Jewish communities left (both by choice and by circumstance) during and after the war of 1948, leaving property such as houses behind. According to a number of Israeli interpreta-



tions, moral recognition or symbolic apology would leave the door open for future legal claims of return.<sup>5</sup> Palestinians' fragile status in many host countries reflects the failure or unwillingness of the conflicting parties and the international community either to realize some form of repatriation or agree upon an alternative resolution.

## Return to place of origin or not

Israel has refused to accept refugee return to its territory, and as elaborated further below, the Palestinian leadership<sup>6</sup> is gradually bringing to the Palestinian public's attention that it is giving up the demand for right of return to the 1948 areas. Thus, in practice, refugee repatriation in the Palestinian context means mainly returning elsewhere than the place of origin. In the literature, one finds several examples of such return moves. Some examples of return to places of origin and elsewhere are discussed briefly in order to develop my argument that return is a political project by showing that the question of whether the destination of return is the original place or not does not determine either the 'sustainability' or content of the return experience. More important is the relationship between return and communality and whether potential returnees are included in, or at least accept, the process of defining the terms of return.

Nicholas Van Hear (1998a) has analysed both involuntary and voluntary cases of 'de-diasporization'. Some of these return movements took place after a prolonged diasporization, as in the case of ethnic Turks in Bulgaria and ethnic Germans in the former Soviet Union. Others concerned large numbers of people, such as the 800,000 or so Yemenis returning from Saudi Arabia in the early 1990s. Neither ethnic Turks nor Germans returned to their 'original homes'. Turks were expelled from Bulgaria without a preceding political agreement with Turkey. Although the involuntary return was not an economic catastrophe and returnees were able to reintegrate, returnees expressed bitterness and resignation about the circumstances of

<sup>5</sup> The topic 'Israel and the Palestinian refugee problem' is analysed from several angles, for example in Benvenisti, Gans and Hanafi (eds) (forthcoming) *Israel and the Palestinian Refugees Problem*. Heidelberg: Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law.

<sup>6</sup> I refer to the PLO and the period before Hamas' victory in the Palestinian elections in January 2006. I also exclude other factions of the Islamist movement among the Palestinians, mainly Islamic Jihad, from my present discussion.

their repatriation, which they did not configure as 'homecoming'. The Volga Germans migrated to Germany under an agreement with the German government after the dissolving of the Soviet Union. Yemenis were more or less forced to leave Saudi Arabia as a result of different restrictions placed upon them. Migrants from North Yemen did return to their original highland villages, where they had maintained connections during their periodic migration, whereas returnees to Tihama coastal plain in South Yemen, since they no longer had networks with their place of origin, often moved to Aden or Hadramawt after their return (idem.).

Laura Hammond (1999, 2004a and 2004b) studied Tigrayan refugees who returned to lowlands instead of their former highland villages. Their move was initiated and controlled by the Ethiopian government after eight years in refugee camps in Sudan, a period refugees regarded rather positively after overcoming the initial trauma of departure during war and severe famine. The refugees studied by Hammond returned collectively and were in *de facto* terms prevented from returning to their original villages. The Ethiopian government justified this policy by the scarce agricultural resources in the refugees' home areas, a reason well-understood by the returnees. In their new areas of settlement, returnees did not organise their lives along the familial spatial structures from the original home villages but made active use of new ways adopted during the stay elsewhere (idem.). Hammond noticed that different notions of home and belonging are not mutually exclusive in the context of return. Returnees suffered from hunger, diseases, extreme climate and sometimes lack of water. However, return was a future-oriented social project, and returnees made a conscious decision to make the new place their home.

More mixed and ambiguous were the experiences among returning Muslims and Croats who had fled from the war that erupted in Bosnia and Herzegovina following the break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Those who came back, returned to new ethnically organised nation-states in different stages during the years following the Dayton agreement in 1995. This movement includes both returns to original homes and returns elsewhere. In 1997, the Reconstruction and Return Task Force highlighted that many refugees and displaced people were returning to the areas of their pre-war homes but were prevented from returning to their actual homes (Prettitore 2006: 185). 439,631 refugees and 555,644 displaced persons had returned to their pre-war homes by May 2004. However, only less than 441,970 of the returns were considered 'minority returns' (Prettitore 2006: 198), a notion that carries some relevance for the Palestinian problematic. 50% returned to their original places in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Klein 2006: 203).

Important with respect to my argument about the contested shift in Palestinian return discourses is the fact that many ambiguities in Bosnian return experiences were related to *from-above-defined political definitions of the relationship between return and communality*. The Dayton agreement allowed the creation of a single country, but within this country, there are series of cantons under the responsibility of either the Muslim-Croat Federation or the Serb Republic. Return to areas controlled by the 'other side' is not a simple issue. It can evoke traumatic war memories and affect the balance of power in the area. Return to Bosnia and Herzegovina after the war by people who belonged to an ethnic minority in their original home was often opposed by nationalist leaders, and 'minority' returnees feared for threats to their security and livelihoods under the authority of another ethnic group (Kelly 2004: 130). Problems occurred between returnees and those who stayed about the property that refugees had 'abandoned' while fleeing ethnic cleansing (Prettitore 2006). Refugee host countries adopted different policies toward refugee repatriation; therefore, one cannot speak categorically about either voluntary or forced repatriation.

In Sarajevo, those who had remained during the war had strong opinions about returnees because of the returnees' alleged lack of suffering, while returnees considered themselves to be modern in comparison to those who stayed: Flight and refugee status became a source of mutual stereotypes and even hostilities (Stefansson 2004b). Al-Ali documented similar comments among Bosnian Muslim refugees in the UK and Netherlands (2002). Despite these frictions, many returnees experienced their voluntary, albeit constrained return move as empowering (Stefansson 2004b). Such tensions have parallels to Palestinians' antagonistically-constituted subject-positions vis-à-vis being a Palestinian (Bowman 1994) and vis-à-vis return (Isotalo 2005).

Guatemalan experience from the early 1990s has important similarities to Palestinians' ideas of return and the importance of space politics in a state-formation context (Stepputat 1994, 1999 and 2006 about different aspects of Guatemalan repatriation). The first collective return from Mexico was an extremely politicized struggle between the Permanent Commission of the refugees and the Guatemalan government. Refugees made a clear distinction between return as a voluntary self-defined move and repatriation as a top-down initiated, government-controlled movement. Prior to return, refugees envisioned return communities. They insisted on not returning to their original homes and wanted to establish their own settlements. For older refugees, it was almost an obsession to regain access to farmable land. Guatemalan refugees returned in waves under different administrative labels. Consequently, they had different access to entitlements such as generous loans, income-generating programmes and landownership. This caused plenty of tensions between returnees who had come at different times as

well as between the privileged returnees and local residents, many of whom were returnees' former co-villagers and even relatives. Returnees' attempts at self-government (i.e. return communities) were neither very successful nor long-lasting. A few years after return, many returnees had abandoned the new settlements and moved back to their original villages, mainly for economic reasons. Many were engaged in seasonal migration.

## Exilic vulnerability and return

As mentioned earlier, Palestinians continue to negotiate many aspects of their social realities in relation to return. This assertion is in many ways tied to return being a political issue for all Palestinians; a question of cohesion and dispersion. For different groups of Palestinians, both abroad and 'inside' alike, 'return' may point either to concrete return movement or to different dimensions of the right of return. The reason behind the central role of return is not only the exegesis of the Palestinian diaspora, i.e., the alleged uniqueness of the Palestinian case and the refugee problem that should consequently be resolved *sui generis* or even the elements of justice and recognition embedded in Palestinians' understandings of the right of return. Acknowledgment and recognition that relate to moral and legal rights are important for all Palestinians. However, the reasons for the centrality of return in numerous Palestinians' cognitive spaces and their respective social realities are continuously reproduced through their vulnerable status in host countries – and through the perpetuation of the occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Many Palestinians abroad experience an ephemeral condition that is passed down through the generations. For example, the League of Arab States has issued instructions barring the Arab states from granting citizenship to Palestinian refugees or their descendants to avoid dissolution of their identity and protect their right to return to their homeland (Shiblak 1996). Numerous Palestinians continue to negotiate many aspects of their social realities in relation to return because of different kinds of 'othering' in the host countries due to being a Palestinian and the fact that host countries constantly reconsider their policy toward their Palestinian communities according to developments in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. 'Othering' takes different forms, from a ban on working in the public sector (Palestinian refugees in Lebanon) to exclusion from political participation on the municipal level (camp-resident refugees in the West Bank and Gaza) or national level (practically all host countries), terrorist-labelling and/or ethnic profiling (Israel and practically all host countries) and differentiation at the level of

marriages and business partnerships. In Egypt, Palestinians have chosen to hide their Palestinian origin due to a strong assimilation policy (El-Abed 2003).

Examples of sudden changes in host countries' and the international community's policy toward Palestinian communities for reasons related to the Israel-Palestine conflict are numerous. Let me mention a few. Palestinian refugees from Lebanon were accepted as asylum seekers in most European countries during one era of the Lebanese civil war in the 1970s and early 1980s. Moreover, one could mention the more or less involuntary mass-departure of Palestinians from Kuwait in the early 1990s as a consequence of Kuwait's reaction to the PLO-leadership's support to Iraq in the Iraq-Kuwait war. Finally, Palestinians in Libya were expelled in 1995 as Libya's political protest to the PLO peace treaty with Israel.

## Changing the national discourse of return

Palestinian discourses on return are currently undergoing a painful transformation. This transformation is characterised by controversies and disputes, because political initiatives and refugee repatriation scenarios that touch upon the right to return to Israel have made the political processes of inclusion/exclusion visible at many levels. One can make the generalisation that there is friction between popular understandings of return and political initiatives and policy-scenarios in which return has been decoupled from the elements of identity, history, recognition and different notions of rights in order to promote a notion of return as practice (see Isotalo 2003 and 2005).<sup>7</sup> In essence, this contested shift in the content of return means replacing return to the original hometown or village, whether in today's Israel or

<sup>7</sup> See also Brynen 2006 for a policy-oriented repatriation scenario analysis, and Klein 2006 for Israeli interpretations of Palestinian refugee repatriation that differentiate between 'forbidden' and 'allowed' modes of return.

today's occupied territories, with repatriation to the Palestinian state.<sup>8</sup> Why is this considered so problematic among many Palestinians? After all, returning to the same country or area from which one fled, was expelled or emigrated instead of one's original village or town is not very unusual.

Since the 'Madrid' conference on the Middle Eastern peace process in 1991, the informal 'Track Two' discussions (Brynen 2006; Klein 2006) within the Refugees Negotiations Group, between the parties in conflict, have made the distinction between return of the refugees to their original homes and repatriation, understood as a large-scale return of refugees to the Palestinian state, i.e., to the West Bank and Gaza. EU, World Bank and other donor-initiated policy-oriented studies of 'absorption capacity' (for example Tsardanidis and Huliaras 1999) and 'mid-term agenda' scenarios on refugee repatriation to the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Brynen 2003, 2006) have been conducted since the late 1990s. The failed permanent status negotiations in Taba, January 2001, approached the refugee issue also from the perspective of 'joint narrative' regarding the responsibility for the refugees' plight (Moratinos 2001). In so doing, the negotiators acknowledged the question of moral responsibility and recognition. For example, Palestinian diaspora historian Rashid Khalidi, a Track Two negotiator, claims that the question of moral responsibility for the plight of the refugees is so central for the Palestinians that any approach to find a solution which tries to sweep history under the rug will fail (Khalidi 1994: 22).

In absence of a political resolution, the above mentioned 'hands-on' approach is difficult to apply to the Palestinian refugee problem, because the majority of the Palestinian general

<sup>8</sup> Admittedly, this process was begun by the PLO already in the late 1980s. However, as I have argued elsewhere, it has only recently been brought to the attention of the Palestinian public in terms of the right of return. George Bisharat (1997) proposed that this shift would have already taken place – spontaneously from the bottom up and not more or less top-down as I am suggesting – in the late 1980s and early 1990s when young refugees in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the lead in initiating the first *intifada*. For him, this indicated a generational shift from prioritizing Palestine as geography to Palestine as a nation, an argument he developed in terms of 'sense of place'. Other scholars, for instance Rosemary Sayigh (1979), have documented much generational critique against *nakba*-generation's territorial localism among the refugees in Lebanon since the 1970s. For Bisharat, refugees' role in the first *intifada* reflected a change in their social identity, and consequently, their political priorities, from 'return' to the Palestinian state in the occupied territories. These two issues, however, are not entirely separate in Palestinians' minds although the hierarchy between the two differs among Palestinian individuals and groups. The right of return has proven to be an important term of reference in defining the Palestinian state-to-be and its relation to diaspora.

public refuses to configure return as a practical matter that can be disassociated from its political genealogy. The reason is not only the longevity and the size of the refugee population, but the popular perception among Palestinians that the right of return and the refugee issue concern everybody, not only 1948-refugees whose origins are in today's Israel. Right of return is, or has been until recently, associated not only with the refugee problem but is also a dimension of the national liberation movement. Return is sometimes considered a more neutral term than repatriation (Preston 1999: 27), but not for Palestinians. In the Palestinian context, any form of return can therefore be seen as political, even when shifting the centre of life to Palestine would be a part and continuation of normal life, as it is for those transmigrants whose families have been leading transnational lifestyles for generations (Isotalo 2005).

As mentioned earlier, the distinction between return and repatriation at the practical level has recently been brought to Palestinians' attention in the guise of various political initiatives, such as the permanent status negotiations in Camp David, 2000, and in Taba, early 2001; the 'Nusseibeh declarations' in late 2001, followed by 'People's Campaign' in 2001 and 2002 drafted by Sari Nusseibeh and Ami Ayalon; and the unofficial 'Geneva Accords' in December 2003. Also survey-research among Palestinian refugees about different repatriation scenarios (particularly one conducted by Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, see PSR 2003 and Shikaki 2003) was interpreted as a political initiative by many a Palestinian.<sup>9</sup> These initiatives have caused heated debates among the Palestinians 'inside' and 'outside'. Numerous Palestinians tend to see, albeit for different reasons, the attempt to give up the right of return to Israel as a serious threat to their substantive and political membership in the Palestinian so far supra-local nation. While the many dimensions of return relate to different domains of Palestinians' lives and identities, it is important for the present discussion to emphasise that neither opponents nor protagonists in giving up the right of return to Israel can be regarded as homogeneous groups. For example, camp-resident refugees are divided on this issue (see for example, PSR 2003 and Jarrar 2003). Moreover, most refugees willing to give up *return* to Israel would never compromise their moral and legal *right* to do so.

The political processes at stake include not only privileging the rights of 'displaced people' (1967 refugees) at the expense of the 1948 refugees, but also the questions of representation and defining relations between diaspora and the Palestinian state and the political weight given

<sup>9</sup> The PSR survey (2003) indicated that while more than 95% of the refugee respondents held the right of return 'sacred', only 10% were willing to return to Israel if they had to take Israeli citizenship and live under that country's rule.

to interlocutors' different interests. Transformation in Palestinian discourses on return runs parallel to the drafting of the Palestinian constitution, which in its 2003 draft tackles the issues of diaspora representation and to an extent decouples nationality and citizenship.

Some analysts have predicted the crafting of a Palestinian extra-territorialized nation-state (Hanafi 2002). It remains to be seen whether the processes of inclusion and exclusion are rather attempts to re-territorialize the Palestinian nation by codifying, in the legal and political sense, the space of return (compare Stepputat 1994). It is not insignificant that the discussions and debates discussed briefly above took place in an interim period of a staggering peace process, marked by an uprising.

## Problems of terminology and paradigms

In the two following sections, I argue that the contemporary return migration to Palestine is structurally invisible. The reasons for this *structural invisibility* are related both to the conundrums of researching Palestinian mobility and the characteristics of return migration. Researching Palestinians abroad and their mobility is marked by rigid and politically charged terminology and the 'uniqueness' of the Palestinian case. Research is also influenced by the current paradigmatic power of transnationalism accompanied by its politicisation.

The *politicisation of the transnationalism paradigm* is a multidimensional phenomenon. In the present context, I understand it both as a precondition and a consequence of a shift in the refugee regime: Transnational relations are seen as a part of durable solutions to refugee diasporas (see, for example Van Hear 2002). This influences how different forms of transnational relations and mobility are interpreted in a context that features an unresolved refugee problem, protracted conflict and a state-project. Finn Stepputat (2004) suggests that 'sustainable return' may involve continued mobility within and across borders, i.e., 'mobile livelihoods'. In the same spirit, Sari Hanafi (2002, 2005 and 2006) draws on the contemporary Palestinian transnational mobility and return migration to suggest that future repatriation of Palestinian refugees may involve continuance of returnees' to-and-fro lifestyles being embedded in regional economies. Indeed, it is difficult to avoid looking at Palestinian return migration as a test case for future refugee repatriation patterns and state-crafting. Research on the dynamics of return and reintegration has even posed the question whether return that takes place before the resolution of the conflict, i.e., repatriation under conflict, could actually be seen as the first step in a reconciliation process (Stepputat 2004). However, this suggestion



draws on the Guatemalan experience, which can be considered a case in point of a politically resolved refugee problem.

The 'Palestinian case' usually refers to both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian refugee problem. The 'unique' aspects of the Palestinian refugee problem are its longevity, number, legal complexity, the nature of conflict and lack of territoriality (Dumper 2006). The widespread tendency to emphasise the particularities of the Palestinian context at the expense of its similarities to other conflict-constituted diasporic settings has overshadowed attempts to examine different forms of Palestinians' lifestyles and mobility outside the framework of refugeehood. Problem-oriented and policy-oriented paradigmatic tendencies, for instance, sometimes make it difficult for refugee studies to accept concepts that could be interpreted as making the studied case 'less valid' in some legal or political framework. While problem-oriented studies often put emphasis on the technical and practical aspects of repatriation, their awareness of the legal and policy-relevant connotations of analytical concepts is paradoxically one manifestation of the political character of return. On these grounds, 'diaspora' and 'migration' are the kinds of concepts that have been avoided when it comes to studying Palestinians abroad.

Abbas Shiblak (2005) and Sari Hanafi (2004) note that in the literature on Palestinians, the term 'Palestinian refugees' rather than 'diaspora' or 'migration' has been used extensively, because such notions as 'diaspora' or 'forced and voluntary migrants' are seen as inadequately stating or as weakening the case for the defence or 'the cause' of this population. Basma Kodmani, for instance, in writing about the Palestinian diaspora herself, claims that when using the term 'diaspora', the need for resolving the question of refugee return is set aside, whereas the term 'refugee' means that the population and its return remains an issue to be resolved by juridical means (Kodmani-Darwish 1997 cited in Hanafi 2004). Thus, for her, the two terms negate each other. While being a 'refugee' can play a tremendous role in a person's self-identification, as a concept it also points to legal and administrative rights and duties that are implied by its definition and which the international community has agreed upon within the framework of United Nations' declarations and international legislation. In the chaos of the Palestinian exodus, some wealthier refugees demanded identity cards from UNRWA (United Nations Relief and Works Agency), arguing that they 'should be issued to all refugees regardless of their need for relief, for they were a symbol of separatism' (Plascov 1981: 49 cited in Bisharat 1997: 211). George Bisharat asserts that these 'better off' refugees sought an identity card not as proof of entitlement to relief benefits but as a signifier of a temporary, unique status and a tangible representation of UN commitment to effect their return to Palestine (Bisharat 1997: 211).

The rigid ideas about using the concepts 'refugee', 'migrant' and 'diaspora' are interesting in the face of the fact that for Palestinians, the refugee problem was never a separate issue of 'care and concern' (compare Malkki 1997). Rather, it was an integral part of the national liberation movement like the right of return (Klein 1998 and 2006). The PLO, as an umbrella-organisation for Palestinians worldwide, aimed to unite and did not wish to separate different groups of Palestinians. On the contrary, its rhetoric often underlined the common sufferings and interests of all Palestinians.

'Diaspora' has no administrative or legal connotations, and it has been given multiple interpretations in research: Since its resurgence in the early 1990s, it has been characterised as a sociological ideal type, a mode of consciousness or a mode of cultural production, process, or a form of social organisation. In its broadest definition, the term includes 'expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants and ethnic and racial minorities' (Safran 1991). During my fieldwork among returned Palestinians, the fact that the idea of a homeland is a central part of diasporic consciousness helped me to understand how different people – from political returnee refugees to second-generation labour migrants born abroad – who had never set foot in Palestine could nurture strong presuppositions about it prior to moving there. They very often perceived of their 'return' regardless of whether the place of return was considered 'homeland' (*al-balad*) or not.

Apart from conceptual problems that are linked to the uniqueness of the Palestinian case, there are some general paradigmatic problems in researching return migration. Recent analyses of return migration claim that it has been neglected in research to the extent that it is called 'the great unwritten chapter in the history of migration' (King 2000: 7 cited in Stefansson 2004a: 5). Stefansson (2004a) suggests that the analytical neglect (see also Brettell 2003: 47-57) has been caused by the fact that the conceptual and practical issues of 'homecoming' are marginal to the grand narratives of migration research: assimilation, multiculturalism/diaspora and transnationalism/globalization. Another suggested reason for this neglect is tied to the logic of sedentary thinking throughout much of the twentieth century that homecoming is an act of unproblematic and natural insertion into the local or national community once left behind (Stefansson 2004a: 5). Some decades ago return migration slowly started to gain attention as a topic of analysis, but the existing research tends to focus on the 'problems of return' (Stefansson 2004a: 4). These framings and reasons contributing to return migration's structural invisibility partially overlap with mainstream refugee studies and research on post-conflict repatriation, which in *de facto* terms is often return migration rather than return to 'original homes at earliest possible date'.

## Structurally invisible return migration: a heterogeneous movement

The most important point in Stefansson's review on return migration research is the overall argument about the structural invisibility of return migration – and I mean also empirically. It can be applied to the Palestinian return migration at two levels: research on and the character of the movement. Structural invisibility of Palestinian return migration is not contradictory to return being political in the Palestinian context. In addition to lacking political conflict resolution, the characteristics that result in the structural invisibility of Palestinian return migration are related to its heterogeneity.

In the early stages of my field research in the West Bank I was often asked what I was doing. My standard responses were two: I would either say that I was studying Palestinian return or that I was studying Palestinian return migration. Regardless of which response I gave, the comment made very often was, 'There's no such thing'.

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics conducted a census in late 1995, and the preliminary results were published in 1997. In February 1999, I went to the PCBS hoping to obtain the approximate regional figures for return migration. By that time, the expulsion in the early 1990s of more than 300,000 Palestinian migrants from Kuwait, estimated 40,000<sup>10</sup> of whom then returned to the West Bank and Gaza, had been discussed and studied and become a non-issue that was erased from the general audience's and analysts' minds in the face of more important political events, such as the Oslo Accords (Nour 1993). Moreover, the Palestinian authority was practically built on the presence of a very visible group of political returnees. My question about the contents of the so-called PLO lists, referring to returnees who came by political means, caused a combination of embarrassed looks and hearty laughter wherever I posed it: They were most certainly not public documents. At the Central Bureau of Statistics, I was told that the census had not covered questions related to return migration. Nevertheless, I was given the census questionnaire. To me, it seemed possible to draw several conclusions – for instance, from the questions concerning respondents' previous places of residence, place of birth and nationality – and interestingly, from the free choice respondents were given to

<sup>10</sup> My estimations are higher, because for many people the return took several years to accomplish. Moreover, according to Israeli rules and regulations, some returnees were staying illegally.

define their own nationality. The latter indicated that the census decoupled nationality and citizenship.<sup>11</sup> After several uninvited visits from me, the PCBS accepted drawing the answers on the census material, and some weeks later I received the results, i.e., the tentative return statistics. Approximately 260,000 people had returned.<sup>12</sup>

Palestinian return refers to all those Palestinians who were forced to leave the country against their will owing to the founding of the Israeli state and the Israeli occupation, and again when Israel occupied the Gaza Strip and the West Bank in 1967. However, the return migration I am discussing in the present context is the return to the self-governing territories. The Oslo agreement did not enable a large-scale return of refugees or any other group of Palestinians. Instead, post-1967 mobility to and from the occupied territories in general and post-Oslo return movement in particular was and remains limited to migrants, deportees and individual refugees returning to Gaza and the West Bank from various countries and by various means.

As mentioned earlier, the total expected number of returnees had amounted to approximately 260,000 by the year 2000 (Malki and Shalabi 2000/ 2002). From the vantage point of early 2006, research (Isotalo 2005) shows that the last three years have witnessed a substantial out-migration of the formerly returned people; however, the numbers remain difficult to estimate accurately due to the persistent political tension implicit in the concepts 'return' and 'returnee', the relative lack of comprehensive statistics, the partial illegality of the move, some people's back-and-forth lifestyle, as well as political developments that influence people's life-strategies. *The fact that no consensus prevails about who can be called a returnee is an important characteristic of the Palestinian return move.*

Returnees to the West Bank and Gaza form several categories with regard to their residential and legal status (Isotalo 2005, Appendix 1). Return migrants who hold a Palestinian identity card have usually obtained it through one of three channels. First, they may have been on one of the so-called PLO lists, i.e., 'national numbers'. This returnee category is part of the Oslo

<sup>11</sup> Before the self-government, West Bankers carried Jordanian passports and Israeli-issued Palestinian identity cards, while Gaza residents carried Egyptian travel documents and Palestinian identity cards. Since the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, Jordanian passports and Egyptian travel documents are gradually being replaced by Palestinian 'passports', which, in the absence of a Palestinian state, are not actual passports. Also, many legal and illegal return migrants are citizens of other countries (Isotalo 2005).

<sup>12</sup> Drawing on the census material collected during late 1995 and Population, Housing, and Establishment Census 1997, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics provided these numbers to the author in March 1999. They were published by Malki and Shalabi in 2000 (in Arabic) and in 2002 (with a summary in English).

interim agreement and refers to lists of individuals whose entrance to the Palestinian territories was agreed upon by Israel beyond other quotas. Second, they may have obtained the residency right through family reunification. This process is usually very slow and extremely unpredictable, owing to the fact that Israel does not recognise Palestinians' right to family unification as such, and to changes in policy at different periods of time - for instance, from an annual quota of 2,000 families (1,200 families to the West Bank and 800 families to Gaza Strip) to a complete freezing of the process. Israel's policy towards Palestinian family unification is based on preventing the use of family reunification as a means of return. Third, some return migrants have obtained Palestinian identity cards for themselves and their families as 'special cases'. This refers mainly to certain experts and some investors.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, in addition to the above-noted channels, some return migrants with a to-and-fro lifestyle between Palestine and their host country have been able to maintain the legal right to reside in Palestine by not being absent for more than three consecutive years. Therefore, their identity cards have remained valid. Upon the birth of a child, each migrant parent has to come to Palestine to register her child on her identity card, if she also wants the child to have the right to reside in Palestine.

Not all returnees have Palestinian identity cards in their possession, and thus, they do not have legal status as permanent residents. Those returnees who do not have the legal right to reside in Palestine permanently have differing residential and legal statuses, for instance, as a visitor or long-term visitor. These categories usually relate to people who are either married to a permanent resident or who have close kin living permanently in Palestine. Many of them have applied for family unification but have failed to obtain a positive answer. Most of them are citizens of an Arab country, often Jordan. If these visitors remain either in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip or Jerusalem after the expiration of their visas, they become illegal returnees. Yet another category consists of 'tourists', returnees with citizenship in a country that has a visa agreement with Israel that states that its citizens do not have to apply for a visitor's visa; a visa is regularly granted them upon their arrival at the Israeli border. Those Palestinians who live in Jerusalem form a separate category with respect to legal and residential status.

<sup>13</sup> Interview with Hassan Alawi, Department of Civil Affairs, Ministry of Interior, Ramallah, 28 January, 1999.

## Interim return: vulnerable presence and transnational lifestyles

The fact that returnees form several categories with regard to their legal status, resident status and means of return makes Palestinian return migration heterogeneous. As pointed out by Van Hear (1998a: 53), heterogeneous minorities or migrant communities, indeed, those consisting of persons with different legal and residency status, are vulnerable to dislocations. During the second *intifada*, tens of thousands of former return migrants have emigrated from the West Bank, or from another perspective, continued their transnational lifestyle. In the spirit of transnational studies, this is a most natural thing for them to do. But not all departures should be interpreted as a continuum of back-and-forth lifestyle or as a natural reaction to the depressive economic and political situation accompanied by conflict and occupation. Instead, I believe that some who left had intended their return to be permanent. That can be deduced for example from migrants' return strategies, which were often complicated and made with a long-term perspective (Isotalo 2005).

Ostensibly, the majority of those return migrants who emigrated again did so because of deteriorated conditions, such as loss of job opportunities, obstacles to mobility and violence. For some, though, emigration from Palestine, despite the intention of permanent return, was partially a result of lacking returnee-identity that would have justified their stay in political terms. They were not political returnees. They were neither agents in the uprising or embedded in its social tissue, but merely suffered from its circumstances. The heterogeneous consistence of return migration further hindered return migrants from developing a group identity<sup>14</sup> as returnees, and this, I believe, made it easy for some migrants to shift their lives again away from Palestine.

Yet another reason for the precariousness of returnees' presence in the current political context is inherited insecurity (compare Van Hear 1998a: 53), which, to an extent, is a

<sup>14</sup> Stepputat and Nyberg Sørensen (2001) analysed the emergence of personal and group identities in relation to a legal/administrative status because of its temporary practical benefits and empowering stipulations. Their ethnographic data was collected among internally displaced persons in Peru. See Sayigh 1979, Farah 1997 and Bisharat 1997 for refugee status and social identity in the Palestinian context. Hammer (2005) has analysed young Palestinian exile-born return migrants' experiences from an identity point of view, and I reflect on her study below.

common denominator for otherwise different returnees. For some, return to an interim situation reflected the ephemeral conditions of exile. Insecurity that is passed down through generations is familiar among Palestinians in exile, whose legal status is vulnerable or whose social citizenship is limited. In the return context, one could sometimes notice insecurity even among returnees whose status was guaranteed by a Palestinian identity card, which certifies the right to permanent residency. Some political returnees with refugee background who had experienced a series of involuntary relocations did not consider it impossible that they would be expelled once more: Their parents had also been expelled from Palestine. Some returned migrants who possessed a Western passport and a Palestinian identity card indicated that they would leave Palestine if their 'life was made impossible'. 'Impossible' referred mainly to economic insecurity. These migrants had often led to-and-fro lifestyles. Experiences of racism or liminality in addition to some economic hardship had caused them to shift their lives to Palestine. However, they often expressed their return in political and national terms, saying 'I came to help my people'. Regardless of certain moments of insecurity, return - even when it was non-permanent - was an empowering experience for them, because they had been able to carry out their decision to return.

Not all return migrants expressed insecurity, even when their status had been very vulnerable abroad. Some former Kuwait migrants whom I interviewed expressed relief upon return, saying, 'This is our country and nobody will kick us out of here'. These respondents were elderly men who had regained their right to legally reside in Palestine after going through a long process. Many of them were economically on shaky ground. They had, however, returned to their home village, even though some of them had never lived there, at least not permanently, since early childhood.

Reasons for the absence of common group identity for all return migrants were many. Return migrants did perceive their move as a return, but they were simultaneously aware of the wider connotations of 'return'. Moreover, they had returned at different times. In the early post-Oslo years, the term returnee (*Aiduun* in colloquial Arabic) indicated political returnees and those whose return could be associated with the peace process. After the initial warm welcome by the other members of society, political returnees were soon criticised for nepotism, corruption, jet-set lifestyles and the entire shortcomings of the Oslo process. Furthermore, a wave of return migration after the Oslo accords stipulated a phenomenon not very dissimilar from Bosnia. Many abroad-born return migrants from the West whose families had led transnational lifestyles for generations were targets of sarcasm, because they had inadequate

language skills, did not contribute to the first *intifada*, and were a particular sort of stranger: Western foreigners.<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the restrictions against permanent return to Palestinian territories imposed by Israel, the heterogeneous character of return migration results partly from the overlapping of two or more 'migration orders', to use the term coined by Van Hear (1998a). The Palestinian expulsion can be regarded as a migration crisis on a major scale that, among other things, almost completely interrupted Palestinians' pre-1948 migration patterns. However, Palestinians' locality-specific migration traditions were not totally interrupted by the area's political changes. Although there was a substantial increase in return movement owing to the Oslo peace process, a flow of return migration and back-and-forth movement between different host countries and the West Bank (and to a lesser extent, Gaza) has continued throughout the years. For some families, commuting between two or more countries had been a fact of life for several generations. Their practices vis-à-vis return can be seen as a residue, albeit not a direct historical continuance, of mobility and migration trends that precede *nakba*. For them, homecoming was not an 'issue' but a part of normal life. Conflict and occupation that were taken-for-granted parts of life made their 'natural' homecomings political ones. At the individual level, even these transmigrants sometimes perceived their move as one-way return, since commuting often reflects age and different stages in family life.

<sup>15</sup> This assertion is based on my observations. Juliane Hammer (2005) has examined this group closely. She analysed the social identity of young exile-born Palestinian return migrants in the 1990s and elaborated on folkloristic and literate responses to diaspora experiences. Drawing on Turner, she used 'liminality' to identify five chronological steps during which 'each and every individual' returnee 'rewrites' her/his identity. Hammer divides returnees into two main categories, 'returnees' as pointing to so-called PLO returnees who return to *al-watan*, patria or state, and 'Americans', i.e., migrants who return to what is for them *al-balad*, understood as cultural homeland. According to her, return migrants from the Gulf countries are not perceived as returnees either by themselves or the surroundings. She argues that notwithstanding difficulties of adjustment between the returnees and the locals, return resulted in strengthening return migrants' Palestinian identity. Her study deserves a substantial discussion that is not possible within the scope of this text. Interestingly, Hammer's study was criticised for avoiding the use of the term refugee, which according to one review, set its 'legal and political ramifications' (see book review in *Journal of Palestine Studies*, Number 3, Issue 138, Winter 2006).



## Conclusions

Given the heterogeneous character of return migration and the absence of political resolution of the refugee problem, there is a tension and yet a mutually constitutive relationship between political return-consciousness and contemporary return migration.

Bringing a transnational approach to the study of Palestinian return migration and to the study of the relationships between Palestinians abroad and the centre of diaspora has helped to circumvent the demarcation lines set by legal and political status. However, the current paradigmatic power of transnationalism accompanied by the shift in refugee regime toward the transnationalisation of refugee problems takes on additional meanings when brought to the 'unique' Palestinian context.

One could speak of politicisation of a transnational paradigm. Transnational lifestyles take on multifaceted political and economic consequences when actors such as the World Bank expect migrants' remittances to make the thrust of post-conflict economies and refugees are expected to turn into transmigrants. In the context of such a political and economic agenda, the fact that some transnational practices might aim at permanent return can pass unnoticed. Politicisation of a transnational paradigm should be explicitly acknowledged in studying Palestinians' transnational mobility and relations. If its becoming part of the refugee regime is overlooked, it may be difficult to avoid unintended policy consequences that contribute to sidelining potential returnees from defining their notions of return.

## References

- Al-Ali, Nadjé and Khalid Koser (2002) *Transnationalism, International Migration and Home*. In Nadjé Al-Ali and Khalid Koser (eds) *New Approaches to Migration? Transnational Communities and the Transformation of Home*. London and New York: Routledge.
- BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugees' Rights (2005) *Annual Report*. Bethlehem: BADIL.
- Bakewell, Oliver (2004) Repatriation: Angolan Refugees or Migrating Villagers? In Essed, Frerks and Schrijvers (eds) *Refugees and the Transformation of Societies: Agency, Policies, Ethics and Politics*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Benvenisti, Eyal, Chaim Gans and Sari Hanafi (eds) *Israel and Palestinian Refugees Problem*. Heidelberg: Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law.
- Bisharat, George (1997) Exile to Compatriot: Transformations in the Social Identity of Palestinian Refugees in the West Bank. In Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds) *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham and London: Duke University Press 1997.
- Boling, Gail (2001) *The 1948 Palestinian Refugees and the Individual Right of Return: An International Law Analysis*. Bethlehem: BADIL Resource Center.
- Bowman, Glen (1994) "A Country of Words": Conceiving the Palestinian Nation from the Position of Exile. In Ernesto Laclau (ed.) *The Making of Political Identities*. London: Verso.
- Brettell, Caroline (2003) *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity and Identity*. Walnut Creek: Altamira Press.
- Brynen, Rex (2003) *Refugees, Repatriation, and Development: Some Lessons from recent Work*. Paper presented at IDRC Stocktaking II Conference on Palestinian Refugee Research, Ottawa, 17-20 June.
- Brynen, Rex (2006) Perspectives on Palestinian Repatriation. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Dumper, Michael (2006) Introduction: The Comparative Study of Refugee Repatriation Programmes and the Palestinian Case. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- El-Abed, Oroub (2003) *Palestinians in Egypt: An Investigation of Livelihoods and Coping Strategies*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Essed, Philomena, Georg Frerks and Joke Schrijvers (eds) (2004) *Refugees and the Transformation of Societies: Agency, Policies, Ethics and Politics*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

- Exeter Refugee Study Group (2001) *Study of Policy and Financial Instruments for the Return and Integration of Palestinian Displaced Persons in the West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Unpublished study prepared for the EU Refugee Task Force.
- Farah, Randa (1997) Crossing Boundaries: Reconstruction of Palestinian identities in al-Baq'a Refugee Camp, Jordan. In Bocco, Destremau, Hannover (eds) *Palestine, Palestiniens: Territoire National, Espaces Communautaires*. Les Cahiers du CERMOC. Beyrouth : Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur le Moyen-Orient Contemporain.
- Glick Schiller, Nina and Fouron, Georges (2001) *Georges Woke Up Laughing: Long Distance Nationalism and the Search for Home*. Durham: Duke University Press.
- Hammer, Juliane (2005) *Palestinians Born in Exile: Diaspora and the Search for a Homeland*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.
- Hammond, Laura (1999) Examining the Discourse of Repatriation: Towards a more Proactive Theory of Return Migration. In Black and Koser (eds) *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation & Reconstruction*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Hammond, Laura (2004a) *This Place Will Become Home: Refugee Repatriation to Ethiopia*. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press.
- Hammond, Laura (2004b) Tigrayan Returnees' Notions of Home: Five Variations on a Theme. In Fran Marcowitz and Anders Stefansson (eds) *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*. Lexington Books.
- Hanafi, Sari (2002) *Flexible Transnational Survival Practises of Palestinian Transmigrants/Returnees, and Inflexible State Policies: Crafting the Palestinian Extra-territorialized Nation-State*. Paper presented at the Third Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting, Florence, March 20-24, 2002, Mediterranean Programme, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute.
- Hanafi, Sari (2004) Rethinking the Palestinians as a Diaspora: The Relationships between the Diaspora and the Palestinian Territories. In Andre Misho (ed.) *Anthropology of the Diaspora*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hanafi, Sari (2005) The impact of Social Capital on the Eventual Repatriation Process of refugees. Study of Economic and Social Transnational Kinship Networks in Palestine/Israel. In Ian Lutsic and Ann Lesch (eds) *The Predicaments of Palestinians and Jews: The Meanings of Catastrophe, Historical Knowledge, and the Return of Exiles*. Pennsylvania University Press.
- Hanafi, Sari (2006) Palestinian Return Migration: Lessons from the International Refugee Regime. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Isotalo, Riina (2003) *Palestinian Return: Reflections on Unifying Discourses, Dispersing Practices and Residual Narratives*. Paper presented at an International Conference on Israel and the Palestinian Refugees. Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International

- Law. Heidelberg, 11-13 July, 2003. Forthcoming in Eyal Benvenisti, Chaim Gans and Sari Hanafi (eds) *Israel and Palestinian Refugees Problem*. Heidelberg: Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public and International Law.
- Isotalo, Riina (2005) *Many Routes to Palestine: The Palestinian Return, Forged Transnationalism and Gender*. Interkont Books No 12. Helsinki: University of Helsinki.
- Jarrar, Najeh (2003) *Palestinian Refugee Camps in the West Bank. Attitudes Towards Repatriation and Integration*. Ramallah: Palestinian Refugee and Diaspora Centre Shaml.
- Kelly, Lynnette (2004) A Community Empowered? The Bosnia project in the U.K. In Essed, Frerks and Schrijvers (eds) *Refugees and the Transformation of Societies: Agency, Policies, Ethics and Politics*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Khalidi, Rashid (1994) The Palestinian Refugee Question: Toward a Solution. In *Palestinian Refugees: Their Problem and Future. A Special Report*, pp. 21-27. Washington, D.C.: Center for Policy Analysis on Palestine, October 1994.
- King, Russell (2000) Generalisations from the History of Return Migration. In Ghosh (ed.) *Return Migration: Journey of Hope or Despair*. Geneva: UN and IOM.
- Klein, Menachem (1998) Between Right and Realization: The PLO Dialectics of 'The Right of Return'. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 11(1), 1-19.
- Klein, Menachem (2006) The Palestinian Refugees of 1948. Models of Allowed and Denied Return. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kodmani-Darwish, Basma (1997) *La Diaspora Palestinienne*. Paris: PUF.
- Koser, Khalid and Richard Black (1999) The End of the Refugee Cycle? in Black and Koser (eds) *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation & Reconstruction*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Malki, Majdi and Shalabi, Yasser (2000/2002) *Internal Migration and Palestinian Returnees in West Bank and Gaza Strip*. Ramallah: MAS.
- Malkki, Liisa (1997) National Geographic: The Rooting of Peoples and the Territorialization of National Identity among Scholars and Refugees. In Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (eds) *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham and London: Duke University Press.
- Moratinos, Miguel (2001) *The EU Non-paper on Taba Talks*. At <http://www.ariga.com/traties/taaba.shtml> (5 January, 2004)
- Nour, Amer (1993) *Coming Home: A Survey of the Socio-Economic Conditions of the West Bank and Gaza Returnees Following the 1991 Gulf War*. Jerusalem: PHRIC.
- Plascov, Avi (1981) *The Palestinian Refugees in Jordan, 1948-1957*. London: Frank Cass

- Preston, Rosemary (1999) Researching and Reconstruction: Who is Researching What and Why? In Black and Koser (eds) *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation & Reconstruction*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Prettitore, Paul (2006) Refugee Return in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- PSR – Survey Research Unit (2003) *Press Release 18 July 2003: Results of PSR Refugees' Polls in the West Bank/Gaza Strip, Jordan and Lebanon on Refugees' Preferences and Behaviour in a Palestinian-Israeli Permanent Refugee Agreement, January-June 2003*. Ramallah.
- Rogge, John (1994) Repatriation of Refugees. A not so Simple 'Optimum' Solution. In Allen and Morsink (eds) *When Refugees Go Home. African Experiences*. UNRISD in association with London: James Currey and Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Safran, William (1991) Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return. *Diaspora*, 1 (1), 83-99.
- Sayigh, Rosemary (1979) *From Peasants to Revolutionaries*. London: Zed Press.
- Sheffer, Gabriel (2006) *Diaspora Politics: At Home Abroad*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Shiblak, Abbas (1996) Residency Status and Civil Rights of Palestinian Refugees in Arab Countries. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 25 (4).
- Shiblak, Abbas (2005) Reflections on the Palestinian Diaspora in Europe. In Abbas Shiblak (ed.) *The Palestinian Diaspora in Europe: Challenges of Dual Identity and Adaptation*. Palestinian Refugee and Diaspora Center – Shaml and Institute of Jerusalem Studies: Refugee and Diaspora Studies Series, No. 2. Al-Ayaam Press (in Arabic); SAMA production (in English on CD).
- Shikaki, Khalil (2003) The Right to Choose, *Al-Ahram Weekly* 28 August - 3 September 2003.
- Stefansson, Anders (2004a) Homecomings to the Future: From Diasporic Mythographies to Social Projects of Return. In Fran Marcowitz and Anders Stefansson (eds) *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Stefansson, Anders (2004b) Sarajevo Suffering: Homecoming and the Hierarchy of Homeland Hardship. In Fran Marcowitz and Anders Stefansson (eds) *Homecomings: Unsettling Paths of Return*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Stepputat, Finn (1994) Repatriation and the politics of space: The Case of the Mayan Diaspora and the Return Movement. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 7(2-3), 175-185.
- Stepputat, Finn (1999) Repatriation and Everyday Forms of State Formation in Guatemala. In Black and Koser (eds) *The End of the Refugee Cycle? Refugee Repatriation & Reconstruction*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

- Stepputat, Finn (2004) *Dynamics of Return and Sustainable Reintegration in a 'Mobile Livelihoods' – Perspective*. DIIS Working Paper 2004/10. Copenhagen: Danish Institute for International Studies.
- Stepputat, Finn (2006) 'Sustainable Returns': State, Politics and Mobile Livelihoods – the Guatemalan Case. In Michael Dumper (ed.) *Palestinian Refugee Repatriation: Global Perspectives*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Stepputat, Finn and Nyberg Sørensen, Ninna (2001) The Rise and Fall of 'Internally Displaced People' in the Central Peruvian Andes. *Development and Change*, 32, 769-791.
- Takkenberg, Lex (1998) *The Status of Palestinian Refugees in International Law*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Takkenberg, Lex (2003) *The Search for Durable Solutions for Palestinian Refugees: A Role for UNRWA?* Paper presented at an International Conference on Israel and the Palestinian Refugees. Max Planck Institute for Comparative Public Law and International Law. Heidelberg, 11-13 July, 2003.
- Tsardanidis, Charalambos and Huliaras, Asteris (1999) The Economic and Social Absorption Capacity of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Unpublished study prepared for the EU Refugee Task Force.
- Turner, Simon (2006) *Inside-Outside: Political Transformation in Burundi and its Diaspora*. AMID Working Paper Series 50/2006.
- UNHCR (1995) *The State of the World's Refugees 1995*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Van Hear, Nicholas (1998a) *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus, Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities*. London: UCL Press.
- Van Hear, Nicholas (1998b) Refugee Studies and Refugee Regime in Transition: Introduction. *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 11(4).
- Van Hear, Nicholas (2002) *From "Durable Solutions" to "Transnational Relations": Home and Exile among Refugee Diasporas*. CDR Working Paper 02/9. Copenhagen: Center for Development Research.