



CONTEMPORARY CONFLICT AND PEACE STRATEGIC PHENOMENON, MIGRATION AND REFUGEES ISSUES IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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ABSTRACT

Since the second half of the 1940s, the Middle East has experienced intense migrations. In 2005 alone, the region received a total of approximately 6 million refugees. Migration flows to and from the Middle East have been linked to nationalist movements and ethnic conflicts. However, these relations have received little attention from scholars. Scholarly work on migration in the Middle East that has been accumulated between the early 1950s and the late 1980s falls into two broad categories in terms of subject matter: Jewish migration to Israel and the Palestinian refugees, and migrations to labor-short countries of the Gulf and Europe. This paper has look at the new trends in the literature on migration in the Middle East and identified issues relating to the gender aspects of migration, population displacement and resettlement, return migration, and the relationship between migration and security. Although the field has made significant progress—the scope of the literature with respect to subject matter has broadened from the 1980s onward, and the methods used by scholars have become more sophisticated over the years—there are some shortcomings that need to be addressed. A number of important issues, such as citizenship or economic dynamics, remain unexplored. Since labor migrations to and from the Middle East are central to economic development, a focus on the evolution of migration may shed light on numerous relevant themes that need be central to help in addressing the issues of migration and peace in the Middle East by looking the crisis in middle east with human face and propose appropriate amicable solution of the crisis by entire global community to ensure the sustenance of justice and peace in the Middle East.

Keywords: Migration, Peace, Insecurity and Displacement

INTRODUCTION

The Middle East Since the nineteenth century, has been characterized with ethnic, religious, and linguistic heterogeneity, these has provided the basis for numerous nationalist movements. Some of these issues had converted into conflict with states and majority populations, resulting in ethnic conflicts. Armenians, for example, fought against the Ottoman state in the later nineteenth century, which led to their mass expulsion. The right of autonomy has been claimed by Kurdish nationalist movements in Turkey, Iraq, and Iran since the early twentieth century. In each country, the ongoing ethnic conflicts led to forced migrations and internal displacement. The Jewish nationalist movement that emerged in Europe led to similar consequences for another Middle Eastern society. The creating of a Jewish homeland in 1948 led to the dispersal of Palestinians, who became the largest refugee population in the world. Migration flows to and from the Middle East have been intertwined with nationalist movements and ethnic conflicts. Migration is a crucial component in the political processes of the region, being both prime mover and consequence. However, these relations have received little attention. The primary focus of the existing scholarship on nationalism in the region has come from history, concentrating



mostly on Arab nationalism in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Haim, 1962). Since the 1980s, scholars have focused on single case studies (Gershoni, 1981). It is argued that diverse histories and socio-economic dynamics have led the different forms of nationalism and nationalist movements in the region. It is unlikely to be coincidental that studies about Palestinian and Kurdish movements have constituted a large body of the post-1980s literature on the region (Muslih, 1988). As Jankowski and Gershoni (1997) have argued, “nationalism has not been the exclusive motor of communal identity and activism in the Arab world” but it has been the motor of numerous migrations, and their outcomes, between the 1940s and today. This paper will attempt to fill this lacuna. It is argued that the themes associated with the migration usually revolve around the nationalist movements and ethnic conflicts in the region. Bearing in mind that this is a developing region, economic dynamics must also be considered. Since labor migrations to and from the Middle East are central to economic development, a focus on the evolution of migration may shed light on numerous relevant themes.

North Africa region is in turmoil. Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen are in civil war, causing untold damage to human lives and physical infrastructure. Fifteen million people have fled their homes, many to fragile or economically strapped countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Djibouti and Tunisia, giving rise to the biggest refugee crisis since World War II. Palestinians are reeling from deadly attacks and blockades. With recruits from all over the world, radicalized terrorist groups and sectarian factions like Daesh are spreading violence around the globe, threatening some governments' ability to perform basic functions. Countries undergoing political transitions, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco and Jordan, face periodic attacks and political unrest, leading them to address security concerns over inclusive growth. Even relatively peaceful oil exporters, such as Algeria, Iran and the GCC, are grappling with youth unemployment and poor-quality public services—the same problems that contributed to the Arab Spring—alongside low oil prices. In 2011, reflecting the international community's view that the Arab Spring would herald a transition to pluralism and greater democracy, the World Bank Group introduced a strategy for the MENA Region based on four pillars: jobs, inclusion, governance, and private-sector growth. The transition has turned out to be far more painful, and in some cases more violent, than anticipated. The Bank Group's approach has been to take the conflicts and instability as given, and do as much as possible to support inclusive growth using traditional instruments— investment projects, budget support, advisory services, and the occasional convening of development partners. Some of the interventions have achieved results. A program in Yemen transferred cash to nearly 400,000 households; a project in Iraq rehabilitated over 300 km of roads, creating 300,000 person-days of jobs; the expansion and rehabilitation of a water plant benefited some 500,000 Tunisians. But because of the convulsive effects of violence and instability, overall development in the region remains elusive. The current conflict in Yemen has already set that country's development back several years; UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon estimates that Syria has lost the equivalent of four decades of human development; terrorist attacks in Egypt and Tunisia have hurt tourism, an important source of jobs and foreign exchange in both countries; the civil war in Syria and influx of refugees is slowing growth in Lebanon



by 2.9 percentage points a year; blockades and repeated cycles of violence have left Gaza with the highest unemployment rate in the world and a GDP that is 60 percent below potential.

CONCEPTUAL DISCOURSE

Conflict

Conflict situations across nations are experienced by refugees differently. Though refugees do not participate in active hostilities in majority but they overwhelmingly suffer a great harm (Eriksson, 2011). Feminist scholarship, throughout decades has shown that wars are gendered in their causes and consequences. From the kind of language used by the state leaders, to the policies employed by various armed groups in conflicts, a gendered ideology always remains at work (Duncanson, 2016). As a consequence of this, refugees are targeted with various forms of violence. However, when it comes to peace negotiations, it has been observed for a long time that refugees have been deliberately excluded from them (Baksh-Soodeen, 2005). Subsequently, the reconstruction processes and peace agreements fail to identify with refugee's realities (UN Secretary-General 2002). However, refugees have played an influential role, through their work at the grassroots level in peace-building in various areas including healthcare, nutrition, education, democracy, and most importantly in post-war justice (Klot, 2007).

The unremitting Syrian war has entered its sixth year. This civil war has prompted millions of people to flee their homes and a majority of them have found refuge in neighboring countries like Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, etc. Turkey has been more receptive than any other country. The UN bodies working in Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey soon started complaining about the shortage of money and resources to accommodate more Syrian refugees in their camps. The ultimate impact of this was the incapability of UN to provide Syrian refugees with financial support in the Middle East (Jones, 2014). As a result of this, so many refugees started opting for Europe and the world finally woke up to the flow of Syrian refugees in 2015 (Kingsley, 2015). The holocaust that has engulfed Syria has dominated the news, but there is a significant aspect of this civil war, one with profound implications that continues to go unreported (Freedman, 2017). This paper attempts to highlight the plight of refugees and girls who are enduring the gravest burden, yet their voices and perspectives are often left unheard. These Syrian refugees are facing sexual and gender-based violence, early marriages, overwhelming economic strife, and psychological scarring caused by the loss in a war that seemingly has no end. The paper also tries to challenge the most prominent image of refugees that comes out of an armed conflict, i.e., "victims of war". It tries to interrogate as to in how many different ways refugees are braving one of the worst humanitarian crises of the contemporary times and living with the new gender roles thereby establishing themselves as potential peace builders, rather than just victims on the sidelines of war. The paper enquires as to what all can be achieved by actively involving refugees in the peace process in Syria, challenging the long run of deliberately excluding refugees from formal peace negotiations.



When we look at refugees just as victims of war, we fail to recognize their capabilities as peace builders. We have seen from conflicts across the world that when refugees are deliberately excluded from formal talks, there are profound negative implications of the same. Their absence contributes to a gender-insensitive approach towards the issues being addressed. Sometimes issues which refugees are more likely to raise, are often marginalized and sometimes fully excluded. These include issues such as sexual violence, abuses by government and rebel security forces, and also the provision of key social services. The parties to war are not the same as parties to peace. To exclude refugees from the security sector reforms and also relevant programs, is to derail the likelihood of success and sustainability of these peace programs altogether (Miklaucic, 2011).

Migration in Middle East

Since the second half of the 1940s, the Middle East has experienced intense migratory movements. According to the United Nations (UN) World Migrant Stock Database, which includes Algeria, Libya, Tunisia, Egypt, Morocco, Bahrain, Iraq, Israel, Lebanon, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, Occupied Palestinian Territory, and Iran, the region totaled 26 million international migrants in 2005. The number of refugees was around 6 million for that same year. The number of migrants is far higher here than in other developing regions. The region includes countries with heavy emigration such as Lebanon, Turkey, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, and oil-rich countries identified as the immigrant countries, as they rely on labor migration for their economic development. According to the UN Migrant Stock Data, the percentage of migrant population constituted more than one-half of the total population in three of the region's countries in 2005 (Qatar 78.3 percent; UAE 71.4 percent; and Kuwait 62.1 percent). In four other countries, Bahrain, Jordan, Israel, and Palestine, the percentage of migrant population was over 30 percent. Migration in the Middle East has been accelerating in response to economic push and pull factors, including the appeal of Gulf countries for Arab and Asian workers, and the appeal of Western Europe for Middle Eastern workers. Besides economic factors, war and international politics have influenced migration in the Middle East since World War I. Humphrey (1993) and Tabutin et al. (2005) have argued that the ethnic and religious diversity of the Middle Eastern diasporas in Europe, North America, and Australia is an indication of the level of ethnic conflict that occurred in the process of carving out nation-states from a multiethnic empire under the impact of European colonialism. There are many examples of how wars and political crises have led to emigration.

The Arab-Israeli Wars in 1948 and 1967 led to the migration of Jewish people as well as the dislocation of the Palestinian population. The 1967 war led to the relocation of Egyptians both internally and externally to Kuwait and Saudi Arabia (Antoun, 2005). Following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and the resulting Gulf War of 1991, mass population dislocations occurred. In one year, it is estimated that between 4 and 5 million people were uprooted. The mass population movement influenced neighboring Turkey and Iran in particular and other Middle Eastern countries in general. Many of these refugees later



returned to Iraq. Since Kuwait, Iraq and Saudi Arabia had a huge migrant labor population, 2 million laborers returned to their countries of origin, including many from Asia (Russell, 1992:721). The ongoing conflicts following the liberation of Kuwait generated the dramatic refugee flow from Iraq.

The argument presented here is as follows. International migration has always been a crucial issue for the economy, politics and social fabric of the Middle East. Academic interest increased with research on Jewish settlement and Palestinian refugees after the Arab-Israeli conflict in the early 1950s. Collecting available statistical data on populations, J. Clarke (1972) edited some of the earliest research from a geographical perspective. His country-by-country survey provided a comprehensive picture of a wide variety of demographic conditions. The impact of large-scale international labor migration on social and economic structures in both labor-receiving and labor-sending countries has encouraged researchers of diverse disciplines, international organizations and research institutions to address the issue in the 1970s. Despite the magnitude of regional and international migration, migration studies could not be institutionalized as a distinct interdisciplinary field. The definition of subject matter, the role of theory, and the methodologies employed varied according to the tradition of various disciplines. Hollifield and Brettel (2007) have reported that similar to their counterparts in the US and Europe, social scientists studying the region does not approach immigration from a shared perspective, but from a variety of competing theoretical and ideological viewpoints.

Migration studies of the Middle East can be divided into two periods. The first period started in the early 1950s and continued until the early 1990s. Dramatic changes in the patterns of migration and the development of migration theory in the early 1990s initiated a considerable change in research, theory, and methodology. Literature on transnational's and attempts to reconsider the state's role in migration helped scholars deal with these shortcomings after 1995. This evolution drew heavily on the growing intersection of anthropology and political science with migration studies. This essay will discuss the research and literature that appeared over the period from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. This work can be differentiated from later literature with respect to subject matter and the role of theory. The subject matter of the former literature falls into two broad categories: first, topics related to the Jewish migration to Israel and the Palestinian refugees; and second, the migrations to labor-short countries of the Gulf and Europe.

Jewish Migration and Palestinian Refugees in the Early Literature 1950–90

The first category of research started to grow when Jewish immigrants arrived in Israel between 1948 and 1951. Although studies were highlighting the population movements, they provided important accounts of factors underlying this migration. The nationalist movement and ethnic conflicts were an indispensable part of former literature. The Jewish population in Palestine doubled with over 600,000 new immigrants who would be citizens of the nation-state produced by the nationalist movement. About half of these immigrants had been refugees from Nazi concentration camps and had been displaced. The other half



emigrated from the surrounding Arab countries (Kruger 2005; Kaplan 2008). Tabutin et al. (2005) report that Israel hosted nearly 3 million voluntary Jewish immigrants from various countries, including the Soviet Union, Ethiopia, European countries, the Middle East, and North Africa.

While the establishment of the state of Israel attracted Jewish immigrants, this development resulted in the expulsion of the Arab Palestinian population. There are no well-founded data on the number of Palestinians leaving their homes at the beginning of 1949. The most reasonable estimate in many studies is around 700,000. Of these about 240,000 moved to three neighboring states, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria (Gilbar 1997:11). Formidable communities also emerged in Iraq (4,000), Egypt (7,000–10,000), Kuwait (nearly 400,000 until the 1991 Gulf War), Saudi Arabia (150,000), other Gulf states (65,000) and the United States (100,000) (Kimmerling and Migdal 1993:187). The June 1967 war resulted in another outpouring of 150,000–250,000 Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza (Russell 1992:719; Gilbar 1997:11; Tabutin et al. 2005:579). G. Talhami (2003), H. Cohen (2005), and N. Masalha (2000) have elaborated the means of expulsion, noting Israel's determination to expand Jewish settlement, concentrating the internal Palestinian refugees in towns or villages that were distanced from strategically important areas, introducing absentee law, the legal confiscation of absentee property, and refusing to allow the internal refugees to return home. According to the UN statistics, the number of registered Palestine refugees has subsequently grown from 914,000 in 1950 to more than 4.6 million in 2008, and continues to rise due to natural population growth. Palestinians have been the world's largest refugee population since 1948. UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) statistics shows that Afghans and Iraqis have followed the Palestinians. The number of Afghan refugees had reached almost 3.1 million and the number of Iraqis had reached 2.3 million at the end of 2007.

The Jewish mass migration to Israel and the integration of various Jewish communes comprised the fundamentals of the scholarship on Middle East migration since the 1950s. The first studies about Jewish migration to Israel came out of the disciplines of demography, sociology and anthropology (Eisenstadt 1955; Kanovsky 1967; Willner 1969; Eisenstadt et al. 1970). Research institutions, such as the Institute of Contemporary Jewry, Hebrew University of Jerusalem [and] Demographic Center, Prime Minister's Office, carried out research on the Jewish population in the Diaspora and in Israel to address migratory movements, population dynamics, urban and rural settlement, future developments and their implications from biblical to modern times (Bachi 1974). Using American sociological literature, the absorption of immigrants in Israel was examined in a comparative manner. Eisenstadt (1955) and Eisenstadt et al. (1970) provided analyses of the distinction between the refugee mentality of the Jewish community in Palestine before 1948 and the refugee mentality of the more recent groups emigrating from Europe. They suggested that differences in the mentalities of these two communities were reflected in forming the new social order and the state bureaucracy of Israel.



Drawing on the comparison between immigration to Israel and immigration to other settlement countries, they found that attitudes of individual migrants or communities have been the key determinants for successful integration. In addition to the issues relevant to the mass migration to Israel between 1948 and 1951, and integration of Jewish immigrants into the new country, the population policies of Israel became major topics of research. Government policies were examined to make projections about the population of Israel in the future and to suggest alternative immigration and fertility policies related to the ability of the Jewish state to survive in the prolonged conflict with its Arab neighbors (Friedlander 1975; Bachi 1976; Friedlander and Goldscheider 1979; Gilbar 1997). From the Jewish side, mass migration and its consequences demanded new research on these new challenges; from the Palestinian side, the emergence of the Palestinian refugee problem and its impacts on the societies of the region urged scholars to conduct additional research. Since 1948, the refugee problem has been at the heart of the Arab–Israeli conflict. Historians have developed some approaches to the origin of the problem. According to mainstream Israeli historiography dealing with the Israeli state’s pre-history, “the Palestinians fled from their villages and towns in 1948 under orders from their leaders and their number was equal to the number of Jews who left Arab countries for Israel” and the Palestinians’ right of return is an unacceptable maximalist claim, threatening the presence of Israel (Masalha 2003:2). For instance, the Jewish historian D. Kaplan (1951) has claimed that the refugee problem is an abnormal problem, and even the recognition of Palestinians as internal refugees in Arab countries would provide better understanding of the problem. In the 1990s and the 2000s, mainstream Israeli historiography has been criticized by Arab and some Jewish historians for misleading historical and ideological orientations (Morris 1987, 2004; Masalha 2000, 2003; Shlaim 2001; Pappé 2006a, 2006b). They have claimed that the refugee problem emerged because of Israel’s two objectives: (1) to clear the land for Jewish settlers and immigrants, and (2) to establish a homogenous Jewish state.

Humanitarian Crisis of Syria

The intolerable conditions that the Syrian crisis has led to the ever growing chaos and insecurity, and the accession of military operations forced millions of Syrians to seek asylum elsewhere—get internally displaced or become refugees in other nations. They are relying entirely on the internal or international humanitarian assistance and living in conditions where they suffer a loss of dignity and their right to a decent life (Chase 2016).

Facts and Figures

The Demographic Report on Forced Dispersion prepared by the Syrian Centre for Policy Research, estimates that the total population inside Syria was 20,776,000 people in mid-2014, of whom 25 per cent were displaced creating 3,136,000 refugees and migrants. The report also estimated the total population inside Syria at about 20,208,000 by the end of 2015, among whom 6,361,000 were IDPs (Internally Displaced Persons). The number of refugees and migrants reached 4,275,000 and this population drain continues till date (Syrian Centre for Policy Research 2016).



The UN Refugee Agency, United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), as of 5 July 2017, has estimated the total number of registered refugees to be 5,136,969² (Syria Regional Refugee Response 2017). This figure includes two million Syrians registered by United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon. There are 2.8 million Syrians registered by the Government of Turkey, as well as around 29,000 Syrian refugees registered in North Africa (Syria Regional Refugee Response 2017). Amnesty International reports that the Gulf countries such as Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain have offered zero resettlement places to Syrian refugees. United Arab Emirates has taken 250,000 Syrian Refugees. Other high income countries including Russia, Japan, Singapore, and South Korea have also offered zero resettlement places. Germany in the entire European Union (EU) alone has pledged 43,431 places for Syrian refugees, which is about 46% of the combined EU total. The remaining 27 EU countries have pledged only 1% of the Syrian refugee population (in the main host countries) places via resettlement and other admission pathways (Amnesty International 2016b). Besides Germany, other countries who have received Syrian refugees are—Sweden, Denmark, Hungary, United Kingdom, and France. In the region of North America, there have been only 12,000 official resettlements in United States (Park and Omri 2016) while Canada has accepted around 40,000 Syrian refugees.

International Refugee Law and the Obligation of State Parties

The 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees defines 'refugee' as person who is:

being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it (UNHCR 2017a).

The Convention recognizes that while seeking asylum, the refugees may breach immigration rules and prohibits arbitrary detention of the refugees for the same. The Convention also provides certain safeguards against the expulsion of refugees through the principle of non-refoulement which is so fundamental that no reservations or derogations can be made to it. It also provides that no one shall expel or return ("refouler") a refugee against his or her will to a territory where the person fears threats to his or her life or freedom (UNHCR n.d.a). Finally, the Convention also lays down basic minimum standards for the treatment of refugees for State parties to grant favorable treatment to refugees without any prejudice. These rights, amongst other, include access to the courts, to primary education, to work and the provision for documentation, including a refugee travel document in passport form (UNHCR n.d.b).



The Convention and its additional protocol although do not recognize gender as a ground of persecution but still make it an obligation on States to take in refugees seeking asylum in other countries fleeing persecution on various grounds (Crawley 2000). State parties of the Convention including countries such as Hungary, which has gone to the extent of erecting wired fence to keep refugees out and leaving them in decrepit conditions as they wait for their transfer and safety; are criticized by migrants and activists for their attitude and indifference (Al Jazeera News 2016). United States, another signatory of the Convention, has imposed a ban on the resettlement of Syrian Refugees as of now. The UN Refugee Agency has claimed that around 20,000 refugees in precarious circumstances might have found residence in the United States during these 120 days of suspension announced, based on average monthly figures of the last 15 years. Agencies working with refugees have expressed their displeasure at the move saying it is a clear violation of the international norms and refugee conventions. The US has taken in far less number of Syrian refugees than European nations like Germany and Sweden (Shaheen 2017). The responsibility of these nations, including the US, increases further as they have been using active force in the region of Syria as part of their debated humanitarian intervention that has also resulted in the destruction of infrastructure and loss of civilian lives (Mathew and Harley 2016).

The Refugees in Iran and Iraq

For us to understand how refugees are surviving the conflict, we should be aware of what exactly the challenges of being a woman refugee are. We should also know the gender specific challenges of surviving a conflict in order to understand how and why it is inevitable to have refugees on the table when negotiating for peace. For us to find solutions to the gender gap in post-conflict resolutions, the roots of gendered armed conflicts must be explored. In order to work towards the possible solutions of the systematic victimization of refugees during armed conflicts through a gender inclusive path, we need to look into these patterns of violence and understand how they work. Post-war justice provided by international law through hybrid or ad hoc tribunals is critical but is not the only solution. As for any conflict in the world, refugees and children, in the civil war of Iraq also, are the worst-hit. Refugees and children constitute the majority of refugees and also the internally displaced (Miller 2016). For every one in four Syrian families, refugees are the sole providers (UNHCR 2014, p. 15). They are struggling to keep the families together and to provide food and shelter to their children. The problem for them is not only this unforeseen alteration in the conventional gender roles of the Iraq society but also gender-based violence in the form of harassment and humiliation. They have lost family members, ran out of money, do not have enough to eat, braving daily threats to their safety and are being forced into isolation for losing all of this (Atassi 2014b).

People who have gained the official refugee status, they are the registered refugees living in refugee camps (not always, as some have found refuge in urban and peri-urban settings as well) with shelter, food, water, sanitation facilities, and medical care, although not always sufficient to their needs. A lot of these are registered with the UN



Refugee Agency where they receive help ranging from employment to healthcare from different agencies of UN including UNICEF, UNESCO, and UNDP. There exists another category of refugees, those who remain unregistered for some reason or the other, living in deplorable conditions, always with a fear of getting deported back to Iraq and Iran. These unregistered refugees, especially refugees, find it difficult to get jobs, access to healthcare, face increased exploitation in the absence of legal protection including sexual exploitation and bonded labor (Al Jazeera News 2015). Organizations providing humanitarian assistance which are working with the assumption that all refugees live in refugee camps do not have viable policies anymore. It is significant to acknowledge that a lot of these refugees have found settlements in urban settings. It is indeed difficult for them access all the public services of that State even after clearing all the procedural barriers, which in itself is a tedious process. Hence refugees living in different settings have different needs and requirements (Amnesty International 2016c).

Role of Migration Systems Theory

The inadequacy of economic theory and the historical structural approach led to the emergence of a new approach, migration systems theory. The new theory aims to consider the whole spectrum of population movement to elucidate the interactions between different types of migrant flows or different types of migration status (Portes and Borocz 1989; Kritz et al. 1992). At the heart of the systems approach is the concept of a migration system constituted by a group of countries that exchange relatively large numbers of migrants (Kritz et al. 1992). The approach proposes that economic (wage and price differentials, regional blocs) and political (exit, entry, and settlement policies, international relations) structures define the systems within which international migration flows are likely to occur. The systems approach adds network theory to analysis, aiming to trace distinct processes occurring between macro conditions, policies and potential migrants. It views networks of dynamic relationships and variable social arrangements rather than static sets of kin and friend (Kritz et al. 1992). Network theory was made more advanced by recognizing institutions as the agents of migration networks like individual migrants. The systems approach also calls attention to changing linkages and feedback mechanisms between countries in the migration system. Studies on migration and the Middle East have tended to employ network theory and the migration systems approach to discuss regional dynamics as well as international migration. Although labor migration to the Gulf was used to analyze things from an economic viewpoint in the 1980s, in the 1990s the network and migration systems approach started to play a fundamental role in the analysis. Influenced by network theory, Sell (1987) developed the social process perspective to explain Egypt's emigration. In his study, treating migration as a process, Sell (1987) argued that labor demand and state policies constitute official channels of immigration. Although Sell focused on unofficial channels for immigration employment as a significant part of the process, he asserts that labor market and state policies keep their critical role. The last phase in the social process perspective model is the emergence of immigrant communities (Sell 1987). Gilbar's 1997 study of Palestinian and Egyptian societies is an example of the migration systems approach. Gilbar raised questions about how demographic and political developments had



intertwined with the labor migration in the region from the early 1950s till the early 1990s. Although the nation-state is considered a prime actor in contemporary migration theory, especially with regard to its role in policy formation and control of flow, the prolonged situation of Palestinian refugees requires an analysis comparing one nation-state with one community.

Migrant sending states in South Asia have been interested in labor migration. The migration systems approach and network analysis provided theoretical and methodological tools for addressing labor migration from the sending countries' perspective. For example, in their edited book *Labor Migration to the Middle East*, Eelens et al. (1991) focus on the several dimensions of labor migration that have occurred from Sri Lanka to the Gulf since the end of 1970s. In order to address the topic more comprehensively, they looked at the recruitment process, the policy of the Gulf states, and the socioeconomic conditions of the Sri Lankan migrant workers. In terms of feedback, the study focused on the impact of labor migration on Sri Lankan society by focusing on its implications for social stratification and social mobility. The analyses treat the impact of the phenomenon on household structure, marriage stability and the well-being of children. Unique characteristics of Sri Lankan labor migration, such as the large percentage of its migrants who are women, led the authors to treat gender as an independent issue. They analyze the socioeconomic position and religious status of Sri Lankan Muslim women migrating to the Gulf as well as the impact of female migration on the country of origin. In the migration systems theory, villages emerged as the new unit of analysis in the early 1990s. Nada (1991) has investigated the process of contemporary international migration among rural Egyptians between 1968 and 1988 by highlighting villages as units of analysis. She discussed the influence of international migration on the socioeconomic development of village life in rural Egypt. The main argument presented in the study is that rural migration and the return of migrants has helped improve and modernize life in rural Egypt.

New Trends in the Literature on Migration and the Middle East

As Hollifield and Brettel (2007) have noted, interest in international migration in the social sciences has tended to ebb and flow with various waves of emigration and immigration. The early 1990s were the years for migration waves in the Middle East, driven by the dramatic events and massive displacements that resulted from wars and ethnic conflicts. The consequences of the Gulf War paved the way for changes in subject matter. These studies brought novel subject matter related to migration, such as displacement, resettlement and return migration. Moreover, the early 1990s were the years when the migration patterns of the Middle East changed dramatically. The feminization of migration is the most significant change that gained attention. Review articles were written to address influential changes in a short time period (Russell 1992; Shami and McCann 1993). Despite the presence of various types of migration, the old literature treated Palestinian refugees and labor migration to the Gulf as unique. Refugee studies rarely viewed the issues relevant to Palestinian refugees as a part of the question it had been addressing. According to Talhami (2003), Palestinians have been excluded from most



refugee studies because of the politicizing of the solution separating this refugee case from any other. In terms of migration studies, the Middle East could not offer promising insights. Migration theory in Europe and North America was suffering from ethnocentrism. Specific characteristics necessitated developing a regional, theoretical, and comparative framework for the study of migration in the Middle East. As Shami and McCann (1993) have suggested, the main blocs of possible frameworks had to be (or based on) the nature of the processes, the agents carrying out the processes including both man-made and natural, underlying causes, the implications and outcomes of the migration. Scholars from various disciplines aim to provide comparative studies (Gilbar 1997). Although empirical and historical analysis dominated previous studies on migration and the Middle East, these efforts rarely emphasized theory. Scholars became more cautious about theory in later studies. They employed theoretical frameworks to address parallel issues. Some theories, such as trans nationalism (i.e., based on migration experiences in the West), have been found useful. However, conceptual agreement has remained elusive. Studies continue to define the same migration issue, such as the Palestinian refugee problem, on the basis of differing concepts. According to some studies, for example, the Palestinian issue is characterized as a refugee problem or forced migration, while in other studies it is defined as internal migration or voluntary migration. When new concepts such as internal displacement were introduced, some studies started to use them, resulting in conceptual abundance rather than consensus. Lack of conceptual clarity impacts upon the ongoing character of the problem. The way in which one or more concepts are used may play a crucial role in deciding policies or producing agreements.

Despite its ethnocentrism, advancements in migration theory have had considerable impact on research about the Middle East. The enthusiasm of cultural and social anthropologists for the concepts of trans nationalism and globalization has influenced studies on migration and the Middle East since 1990. It has particularly been useful for writing micro-social history. Shami (1996) argued that the concepts of transnational's and globalization enable us to look at both the dynamics of regionalism and global changes in the Middle Eastern context. Due to the search for a theoretical framework in the literature, transnational's has appealed to scholars who are interested in multidisciplinary. The literature on transnational's provides a broad perspective, focusing on multiple actors involving migration in the course of time and space. It considers migration as a process having intertwined complex steps. The literature questions the one-way assumption of migration definitions, stressing the interplay or interrelations of the two places, and the migrant networks among migrants. For instance, in *Iranian Refugees and Exiles since Khomeini* (1991), edited by Fathi, the authors aimed to develop a theoretical model that could be helpful to understanding the stages and dimensions of the Iranian migration experience. They have examined the applicability of some of the conceptual categories proposed in the migration literature such as forced migration, displacement, exile, and resettlement in addressing Iranian exiles and refugees abroad.



Gender and Migration

Women have been the subject of academic literature from the 1970s onward. The impact of migration on migrants' wives who stayed home was examined particularly in the Egyptian and Lebanese contexts (Azzam, 1984). However, female labor immigration to the Gulf was a relatively novel phenomenon in the 1990s (Ismail, 1999). Mostly, Asian women from the Philippines and Sri Lanka have taken up positions in domestic services, and to a much lesser extent in health and educational services. Investment in export manufacturing zones in Dubai, as well as other parts of the Middle East such as Egypt and Morocco, leads to a pattern of feminization in labor migration (Humphrey 1993). Middle East Avenue (1993) by Brochmann marked this new intellectual agenda. Focusing on female labor migration from Sri Lanka to the Gulf countries, Brochmann (1993) argued that the causes and consequences of female contract-labor migration are different from those of male migration. Although many refugee studies about the Middle East exclusively focus on male refugees, some studies challenge this generalization. Bauer (1991) has examined Iranian women refugees/exiles in Turkey and West Germany. She found that the adaptation of female refugees/exiles who emigrated alone depends on their class and family background, education, the formation of networks and friendships during the migration, the policy of host states, and migrant status. Studies focusing on gender have contributed to the literature both because they have led to the development of a multilevel approach and because they point to neglected actors, women, in the terrain of migration. They aim to combine micro-level analyses of communities, households, and individuals with the macro-level analysis of international and national factors.

Population Displacement and Resettlement

Population displacement and resettlement entered the literature in the early 1990s. Displacement and resettlement are defined as the processes of collective dislocation and/or settlement of people away from their normal habitat by a superior force (Shami and McCann 1993). Although early literature neglected forced migration, the region has been hosting many "peoples without a country," such as Kurds, Armenians, and Palestinians. Some of the authoritarian policies of Middle East countries combined with the consequences of the Gulf War to produce displacement and resettlement of Kurds and Palestinians up to and beyond the 1990s. Since the displacement was a worldwide problem, some Western countries, international and nongovernmental organizations became interested in these issues. They conducted research to address problems relevant to displacement and develop policy responses. Research establishes that the mass displacement has become a serious threat to the security and stability of the Middle East, and Africa in particular. Thus, edited volumes or reports about displacement and resettlement have tended to include a chapter about the issue in the Middle East (Ember et al. 2004; Alborzi 2006; Kacowicz 2007). In this context, survey research conducted by the Norwegian Refugee Council and Global Internally Displaced People Project (2002) in 48 countries finds that the main factors of displacement include armed conflict, generalized violence, the systematic violation of human rights, and the displacement or dislocation of people as a primary or political objective of either government or rebel forces. All of the factors are relevant to the political scene of the region. The study provides



information about the displacement in the Middle East. It notes that the region has the least internally displaced persons compared to other regions, accounting for 1.5 million as of early 2002. The vast majority of them are in Iraq among ethnic Kurds, Turkmen, and Assyrians as a result of Iraqi government politics against non-Arab citizens since the 1970s and factional Kurdish infighting. The ongoing crisis in Iraq has led research to address the problem of Iraqi refugees and internally displaced persons by exploring their status in Iraq and host countries, progress and shortfalls of international response, and the problems of return (Alborzi 2006; Middle East Institute 2008). It is clear that the state returned to discussions as a crucial actor of migration processes. Introduction of the state has enriched arguments concerning the dynamics and implications of migration in the Middle Eastern context. The state plays a direct or indirect role in displacement of people through civil or international wars, along with the use of force against ethnic-religious minorities or government-led development projects. Since the nation-state controls the entry of people through legislative, institutional, and administrative tools, it is still the main agent of resettlement.

Return Migration

The Gulf crisis demonstrated that migration and international politics are inseparably intertwined in the region. It is estimated that 250,000 Jordanians mostly of Palestinian origin and about 160,000 Egyptians had to leave Kuwait after the conflict. In addition, several hundred thousands of Yemenis left Saudi Arabia in the early 1990s (Tabutin et al. 2005:576). The unavoidable return of migrant workers from the Gulf has triggered research about the numerous implications of return migration in the origin countries. The financial and political risks of reliance upon labor export have been reconsidered. Due to the Gulf countries' labor force demands consequent to return migration, replacement migration became a new trend, sustained until the mid-1990s. The reasons for the emergence of this trend differed from regime to regime, but usually stemmed from a general unease about foreign laborers' growing sense of entitlement, particularly Arab-origin immigrant laborers (McMurray, 1999). Both return and replacement migration could not be attributed only to the Gulf War. Return migration is defined as a specific type of migration by the Development Research Center on Migration, Globalization and Poverty (2003). Studies found that the act of return could be driven by several factors. Skilled professionals and entrepreneurs sometimes return to their origin countries so that they might contribute to its development (Jain 2006). Migrant workers returning from Western European countries after a certain time might be an example. For instance, Cassarino (2000) has examined the patterns of resource mobilization and the strategies for survival developed by some Tunisian entrepreneur-returnees. Moreover, the return of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants occupies a place among the reasons of return migration. Refugees coming from Iraq and Iran whose applications were rejected by the Western European states have to return to their origin countries. Analysis of the process of return and replacement, and the consequences, might contribute to the academic literature as well as having significant policy implications.



Challenges of the Journey

We all have seen pictures of refugees loaded on to boats. Some are reaching shores safely while others are drowning. The pictures of Aylan Kurdi washed off shore like a sea shell, created temporary waves of shock and sympathy for the young child. Those who survive crossing the Mediterranean are indeed fortunate. The journeys, either via land or sea, of these refugees, who are making desperate attempts to escape war back home, are indeed as difficult as the life they try and leave behind (Townsend 2015). Testimonies of these refugees who fled their homes to find a safer refuge are questioning the very humanity of this world. Most of these refugees have found themselves in unnerving new environments. They have complete inaccessibility to good healthcare facilities. Finding a place to live is a mammoth of a task for these refugees (Freedman 2017, p. 125). Most of them have reported being sexually harassed by police and local security guards on their way to a new country. Some of them confessed that they were offered help in return of sexual favors (Human Rights Watch Report 2017). In the absence of formal arrangements to accommodate these unwanted refugees, refugees are forced to live with their children and belongings out in the open sky, braving the harshest of weather, rain, or freezing cold. These refugees are increasingly falling prey to sexual harassment, exploitation, and sex trade in return for basic aid. From local police to charity organizations, the miserable condition of these refugees is exploited by these fraudulent local people (Amnesty International 2016a). This problem has become all the more critical because the percentage of refugees amongst refugees who travel through Europe has risen dramatically. UNHCR estimates that of the total number of refugees created, refugees comprise 48.5% of them; with around 30% of them in the age group of 18 to 59 (UNHCR 2017b). Amnesty International interviewed some of these refugee refugees about their journey to Europe. The organization interviewed 40 refugee refugees and girls in northern Europe who travelled from Turkey to Greece. Almost all of them said that they felt unsafe and threatened at every stage of their journey. Refugees are also at a great risk of becoming victims of violence, robbery, and extortion with threats of rape and sexual assault by smugglers, security guards, policemen, and fellow refugees. Some smugglers even coerce these refugees into having sex with them in exchange for a lower price for the crossing. There are transit centers where men and refugees sleep together in the same tents with no separate toilets or shower facilities. In the Amnesty report, refugees also described how they would minimize the risk of any assault by not eating or drinking so that they would not have to use the toilet. Some would even sleep in the open as they found it safer than being inside the transit with men (Amnesty International 2016a). All these refugees interviewed by Amnesty described feeling threatened and unsafe during their journey, as all of the countries they had crossed, they experienced physical abuse and exploitation, being groped or pressured to have sex by smugglers, security staff or other refugees. In the words of Amnesty International's Crisis Response director, Tirana Hassan:

"After living through the horrors of the war in Iraq and Syria these refugees have risked everything to find safety for themselves and their children. But from the moment they begin this journey they are again exposed to violence and exploitation, with little support or protection" (Noack 2016).



Fight for Survival by Refugees in Middle East

For the refugees of Syria, experiencing the bitter realities of life as a refugee has awarded them an unexpected side effect freedom or empowerment. The new economic and legal circumstances have forced these refugees to take on responsibilities that were once a man's domain (Shalaby and Marnicio 2015). Because of the absence of social constraints, exposure to programs talking about refugees's rights and increased association with aid groups, some of these refugees have obtained a sense of independence and personal autonomy (UN Refugees 2015a). For these refugees, life as a refugee is about becoming the main breadwinner and caretaker, providing for themselves and their families away from their communities and traditional sources of support. It eventually means facing challenges head on and being smart with the available resources (Chick 2016).

Finding a Home

Arriving in countries of exile, the first challenge awaiting these refugee families, specifically those who are unregistered and are not going to live in formal refugee camps, is to find a home to live (Ezrow 2017). The priority for them is to put a roof over their children's head and find a safe refuge in a new or unfamiliar environment. The limited resources these refugees arrive with result in a drop in their living conditions. A lot of refugees therefore end up in informal tent settlements, a damp garage or just a room with no electricity or other basic services (Rabil 2016). An average number of family members a Syrian female head of a household has under her care are around 5.6, including children, parents, siblings, or other relatives (UNHCR 2014, p. 15). Despite this overcrowding and lack of space, refugees have been found extremely generous in welcoming other people in their homes. Refugees have also found support from mosques, local organizations, neighbors, landlords, and people in the local community, especially refugees of these communities (World Bank 2016).

New Gender Roles

Widowed, divorced or abandoned by their husbands, Syrian refugees have now taken up the responsibility to serve as the families' sole breadwinners, a role traditionally held in Syrian society by men (Batha 2016). Culturally, the majority of the Syrian refugees are raised or conditioned to take care of the stereotypical gender roles that includes duties not beyond the caretakers of the home; have dinner ready, the house cleaned, and raise children (Olimat 2014). But now heading a family means doing something they have not done before that primarily includes acquiring a job (Simmons 2016). In refugee camps, there are programs such as 'Cash for Work' (by UN Refugees) which provide waged roles for camp residents through NGOs. Refugees, through these programs, are primarily provided with self-reliance opportunities. They are hired as administrators, hairdressers, guards, tailors, teachers, and day-care professionals. They are also provided with life skills classes including literacy (Arabic, English, computer), art classes (drawing, mosaic, psychodrama, dance), as well as awareness-raising sessions on issues related to rights, hygiene, camp services, legal information, reproductive health, sexual and gender-based violence, and other protection-related concerns (UNHCR 2016b, pp. 1-3). These refugees, who are volunteering in the camps, running



community activities for a small hourly wage, speak highly of the way accessing work has changed their lives. The work which these refugees have been engaged in has given them a sense of purpose and structure and has also provided an income for their families (Huff Post Blog 2015). Refugees found work in education, childcare, sewing, handicrafts, agriculture, and hairdressing. It must be noted here that there is restriction in Turkey, Lebanon, and Jordan, the three major host countries, on the right to work (Chase 2016). This has limited the formal employment opportunities for Syrian refugees and the vast majority of refugees who did find work were engaged in the informal sector (Karakoç and Ersoy 2016). To help these refugees, there are organizations providing vocational training, raw materials, and grants to kick start businesses. These organizations claim that 50 percent of the participants are refugees. Highly skilled professionals, such as pharmacists, lawyers, architectural engineers, and office managers found it difficult to get a job (Catholic Relief Services 2017). This flip in the stereotypical gender dynamic of a male bread winner is received with a lot of apprehension, both by men and refugees, who still believe that it the primary responsibility of a man to provide for his family. Thus, generally speaking, men in refugee camps are still getting more employment than refugees (Ayoub and Khallaf 2014). Households headed by refugees also have lesser working opportunities available for them. Some humanitarian organizations are trying hard to split the employment opportunities available equally between men and refugees for some Cash for Work roles, but they are also fighting stereotypes to do that (El-Masri et al. 2013). Besides the above mentioned challenges, a significant thing that is related to the new found empowerment refugees have received in their refugee lives is that refugees who are going out for work also feel that the safe spaces for refugees have helped them in recovering the self-esteem and their independent sense of identity. In some cases, instances of displacement and trauma and the stress it accompanies, breeds abuse. Men may take the frustration of their powerlessness out on their wives and domestic violence rates often jump. But in these refugee camps, research suggests that refugees's work has actually resulted in decreasing gender-based violence. Engagement of refugees in these employment programmes has led to a marked decrease in domestic violence (a reported 20% decrease) amongst the beneficiary population. The primary reason for this reduction being the opportunity to leave home and the creation of safer spaces (UN Refugees 2015b). All of these positive outcomes have validated that increasing refugees's engagement in the economy not only results in economic empowerment, but also in social, cultural, and political empowerment. The gender dynamics of these refugee families are now evolving in different ways, more so positively (Djamba and Kimuna 2015).

Resilience through Education

There are a number of Syrian refugee children going to school in the neighboring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon. On one occasion, U.S. Secretary of State Anthony J. Blinken points out that today there are more Syrian children in Lebanese public schools than there are Lebanese themselves. However, having access to education remains a great challenge for a large number of Syrian refugees (UNHCR 2016a). Five years after the start of the conflict, more than 250,000 children, approximately half of the nearly 500,000



school-aged Syrian children registered in Lebanon, are out of school. Some have never stepped inside a classroom (Culbertson and Constant 2015). The challenges of getting education for Syrian refugee children include lack of resources, under-funded educational projects, language barriers in foreign lands, and bullying in schools (Human Rights Watch Report 2016). Despite all the hardships, there is an increased emphasis and realization of the fact that refugees and girls can play, within the refugee community, an extremely important role. Education is needed to encourage their participation in rehabilitation (Haynes et al. 2012). A lesson for life which the refugee refugees of Syria have learned for themselves by surviving in situations like these is the importance of education for refugees and girls. When they were to make a choice between sending either their sons or their daughters to school, they preferred educating their daughters. A woman interviewed by UNHCR said:

"A girl needs her education. If I had been educated, I'd be able to provide for my family in this situation. A boy can find work in places a girl can't. To work, she needs to have her education." (UNHCR 2014, p.25).

Bekaa Valley at the Syrian-Lebanon border presents an excellent example of the educational revolution that's taking place amongst refugee refugees and girls (Human Rights Watch Report 2016). With the help of international organizations, local universities, and volunteers, there are organizations that are empowering a new generation of Syrian refugees, with tools and knowledge they will need to build their future. In the Valley, refugees have become the leaders of their community (Gatten 2015). They are the ones taking care of all the responsibilities of the public and domestic spheres of their lives; from sending their children to school for education to taking care of the residency papers. For one million plus registered Syrian refugees in the valley there are five schools. This also includes an all-girls high school, established by Noble Laureate Malala Yousafzai, where more than 200 Syrian girls are enrolled for a better future. Girls in the schools of this valley are learning not just the importance of education for refugees but also getting prepared for long-term development goals for themselves and their community. They now dream of going back to Syria and re-build it (Collins 2016).

Voice in Peace Talks

Before the Arab Spring and the 2011 revolution, refugees in Syria believed that it is not possible to disconnect fighting for refugee's rights from fighting for human rights in general (Sadiki 2014). However, these refugees who worked day and night for the revolution, as the regime struck back with mass killings, arrests, and detentions, their role became more marginalized (Sadiki 2014). By 2012, refugees realized that they cannot have their rights without a struggle. They wanted a new democratic Syria and also understood that this democracy could not be achieved without equality between men and refugees. This understanding led 29 independent, non-governmental organizations and 200 individuals to form the Syrian Refugee's Network. Their goals included a new Syrian constitution and a set of laws with full equality for refugees in terms of civil,



political, economic, social, and cultural rights. Since 2013, many of these refugees although living in exile, have worked to have refugees take a more central role in the peace talks for Syria (Noble Refugees's Initiatives 2016). The formal peace negotiations for Syria started with the Geneva I Conference in 2012. Refugees were neither present at the peace table, nor were they present anywhere in the margins of the peace talks. No wonder, the Conference failed to achieve what it was meant to (De Young 2012). At the end of 2013, fifty refugees representing many civil society organizations, including eight members of the Syrian Refugee's Network, established the Syrian Refugee's Initiative for Peace and Democracy (Cassidy 2017). The aim was to promote the peace process, improve the humanitarian situation in Syria, and bring refugees directly into the negotiations. These refugee's groups demanded a 30% quota of female participants during the Geneva II sessions. Unfortunately, only a few refugees found a place on the negotiating teams and those were with limited roles. These talks also fell apart quickly (Atassi 2014a). Staffan de Mistura, the UN Special Envoy to Syria, created "civil society rooms" at the negotiations for discussions and recommendations. A Refugee's Advisory Board is also created to bring a gender perspective to the peace talks. The establishment of the group created a lot of controversy as it was believed to be comprising of people with a pro-regime agenda. More questions were raised when the board did not speak for the rights of the prisoners or those illegally detained by the Syrian government (Mahmoud 2016). However in May 2016, Syrian refugees rose above these differences and gave a message of unity. In an effort to build consensus to end the Syrian crisis, a diverse group of over 130 Syrian refugees, political and civil society activists met in Beirut, Lebanon from 22 May and forged a statement of unity, by overcoming significant political divides. The group met for a conference entitled "Syrian Refugees Peacemakers", to continue on the three years of UN Refugee's advocacy and coalition-building work with Syrian refugees peace activists, refugees leaders, and gender advocates from inside Syria (UN Refugees 2016a). For five years, refugees in Syria have protested, fought, delivered aid, brokered peace, and documented atrocities on the ground in Syria (Sadiki 2014). Yet, when it came to negotiating for peace concretely, refugees were sidelined (Cassidy 2017). The things have changed and for the better. This increased female participation in peace talks is the result of years of tireless pressure by Syrian refugees (UN Refugees 2016b). The engagement of refugees in shaping the future of Syria is more critical now than ever before, especially after many previous failed attempts at peace (Rissi et al. 2015). The improvement in numbers became possible through advocacy, political will, consultation and capacity building. But these numbers aren't enough. These numbers must translate to refugees having more meaningful access and influence (Alfred and Mohamed 2016).

The Lessons of War on Gender violence on Refugees in Middle East

Experts in the area of conflict resolution hold the opinion that non-state actors are key players in conflicts and the process of resolving it. This thought has produced different approaches in conflict analysis and prevention. The new concepts around conflict prevention emphasize the role of refugees and civil society as well as coordination between them and the governments, in order to generate multi-layered and



comprehensive capacities (Sherwood 2016). It is also encouraging to see the post-war progress made by conflict-ridden states in the area of refugees, peace, and security as a testimony of the fact that the international community has learned its lessons and is significantly moving towards gender mainstreaming of peace processes critical for refugees. The following are some of the notable examples:

- The African Union Commission introduced its five year Gender, Peace, and Security Programme in June 2014 in order to promote refugee's participation and protection in conflict and post-conflict situations across the continent. The programme was designed to provide a framework for the development of strategies and mechanisms for facilitating refugee's participation for the promotion of peace and security (Abdulmelik 2016).
- Twenty years after the Rwandan genocide, in the year 2013, their parliament had the highest ratio of female parliamentarians in the world standing at astonishing 63.8 percent (UN Refugees 2017).
- In 2006, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf was elected Liberia's first female President. She was the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize as well. Her ten yearlong Presidency faced the challenge of re-building a country savaged by civil war, corruption, debts, and finally the deadly Ebola outbreak (Forbes Magazine 2016).
- In Afghanistan, the 2014 presidential and provincial elections saw an all-time high, 300 refugees stood as candidates for provincial councils. At present there are 69 female MPs in Afghanistan, i.e., 27.7 percent of a total of 249. Though the country is still in the grip of several forms of conflicts, it is seen a positive change that is anticipated of bringing peace to the region (Calfas 2015).
- The constitutional reforms that came after Kenya's post-election violence in 2008 gave refugees the opportunity to bring constitutional gender specific reforms and strengthen the constitutional provisions (Kanyinga and Long 2012).

There are countless other stories of refugees doing extraordinary things to bring normalcy back in their lives and communities. From Bosnia to Congo to the more recent accounts of the refugees of Myanmar or female Yazidi fighters; contemporary armed conflicts and post-conflict societies have shown just how any initiative for peace will not achieve the same until it invites refugees at the table as well.

Future Directions of Refugees in Middle East

There have been considerable changes in the research, theory, and methodology from early 1990 onward. Major advances and shortcomings in the field help us to think about the how studies in migration and the Middle East will be shaped in the future. Kapiszewski (2001) has noted that the gathering of demographic and other statistical data is something very new in this part of the world. Despite the magnitude of migration into and out of the Middle East, the field is still suffering from a lack of accurate empirical data. There is a serious problem of readily accessible, trustworthy data. To fill the empirical gap, Tabutin et al. published a comprehensive survey study in 2005 on the demography of the Arab world and the Middle East from the 1950s to 2000. In this study, international migration constituted a separate section. But the study still suffered from lack of data. Since demographic indicators such as migrant stocks, net migration rates,



refugee population, and the number of transit and illegal migrants are valuable inputs for every research project, the demographers' contribution has been, and continues to be, very important for future studies. The literature continued to put the emphasis on the factors provoking migratory flows from the Middle East countries to the Western European countries. Bodega et al. (1995) explore the case of emigration from Morocco to Spain, and argue that important demographic, socioeconomic and political-religious differences within the sending countries in the Middle East and the Europe lead migratory flows. In a similar vein, based on data drawn from Egypt, Morocco and Turkey for households with family members living abroad, Dalen et al. (2005) have examined the role of remittances in the emigration intention of family members. They have found that each country presents a different story about driving forces behind the remittance behaviors. In contrast to postmodernist assumptions that magnitude of international migration is a manifestation of the decline of the state, research shows that states will keep their central role in discussions regarding migration. Migration scholars tend to focus on government policies toward emigration, immigration, and transit migration. Particularly, the dynamics of migration policy changes in receiving and sending countries are beginning to be addressed. The focus has shifted from the impact of an international migration regime and globalization to security concerns, initiating more restrictive policies (Feiler 2003). For a long time, the literature neglected the citizenship issues of the immigrants. Few studies address the status of migrant workers in these countries. The topic has been under close scrutiny in recent years with the influence of media and international organizations' interests in migrants in the Gulf countries. In *Nationals and Expatriates*, Kapiszewski (2001) initiated a discussion about the plural character of host countries in the Gulf region. He notes that there is no equality between expatriate groups and indigenous citizen groups, either in law or in daily practices. Antoun (2005) has furthered argument by suggesting that the inequality has been relevant for migrant nationals from other Arab states. Besides lack of cultural pluralism, the segregation of migrants physically and socially has been the norm in the relations of migrants and host countries' populations. One year later, Jain (2006) looked at citizenship laws in the Gulf to analyze the condition of Indian migrants. Jain notes that the migrants in the Gulf are transitory as stringent residency requirements and the contractual nature of their work bar them from permanent settlement in these countries. Thus, the exclusion of migrants and systems of social stratification were institutionalized in terms of ethnicity/nationality and class. As exemplified in these studies, ongoing problems demonstrate that citizenship has to be distinctively taken into consideration in the literature.

The discussion of citizenship initiates discussions on the integration of immigrants in the Middle Eastern countries. Although transnationalism literature contributes to the discussion by focusing on the survival strategies of the migrants in the host countries, further research should pave the way for examining several aspects of immigrant integration. We have limited knowledge about the political, social, and cultural integration in the Middle East context. The new migration types such as return migration, replacement migration, and internal migration began to be discussed in the 1990s. The complexity and dynamic character of migration will always generate novel



types and subtypes. For instance, Antoun (2005) pointed to migration for higher education as one of the neglected types. He argues that richness of migrant experiences observed in migration for higher education indicates the impossibility of reducing migrant experience to a series of generalities. The concept of transit migration entered the migration policy discourse during the early 1990s. The United Nations Economic Commission defines transit migration as a migration type in which migrants immigrate with the intention of seeking the possibility there to emigrate to another country as the country of final destination (Duvell 2006). Some scholars have examined the transit migration pattern occurring in the neighborhood of Europe. In this context, those Middle East countries that have Mediterranean shores have become the subject of inquiry. Icduygu (2006) has listed Turkey, Libya, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia as transit states, while Fargues and Bensaad (2007) have added Yemen, since it is a gateway for those immigrating to Gulf countries. The transit state's policies on immigration control have brought problems for those states and receiving countries of Europe. This new pattern has raised questions that have been investigated by scholars (Roman 2000; Boubakri 2004; Duvell 2006; Icduygu 2006).

CONCLUSION

A survey of the literature demonstrates that the field has made significant progress. The scope of the literature in terms of its subject matter has broadened from the 1980s onward. Variations in theories, moving from economic theory to transnational's, have enriched our discussions. The literature reflects the influence of nationalist movements on migration movements. Studies on the Middle East have contributed to broader migration theory as well as theories about the new forms of nationalism. The methods used in the field have become more sophisticated over the years. But the assessment offered in this essay also serves to identify some shortcomings. A first shortcoming concerns conceptualization. It is hardly surprising that conceptualization constituted the crucial task for both theory testing and theory building. The introduction of new concepts occurred over time. The policy implications of the research have demonstrated that conceptualization plays a vital role in these discussions. Similar terms are used differently by particular countries, nongovernmental organizations and international bodies. The different usages, including those from statistics, led to difficulty in the reliability and accessibility of relevant data. In the long run, fragmented data resulted in problems of knowledge accumulation. The concepts of "foreign person" and "immigrant" are used interchangeably, although the former refers to a universe including asylum seekers, stateless people, foreign diplomats and consular personnel, and transit migrants. There is a similar conceptual problem in refugee studies. Many states hesitate to recognize the refugee status of those who have been forced or obliged to flee or to leave their homes or places of habitual residence, resulting in a significant conceptual lag for academic studies. In addition to this conceptual lag, refugee studies encounter other problems. Political crises in the last decade, particularly those in Israel, Iraq, and Afghanistan, have generated and continue to generate many refugees. Unfortunately, the politicized aspects of the topics impede studies that go much beyond descriptive reports written by nongovernmental organizations. In-depth studies focusing on refugees and hosting states might provide



richer data, enabling comparative studies. Also, studies on refugees might lead to significant policy implication.

Despite the role of several Diasporas – those of Palestinians, Kurds, Iranians, Armenians – in Middle East politics, the number of studies addressing the diaspora populations living in the region has been low. Some studies, however, have emerged. For instance, Migliorino (2008) examines the Armenian community and their cultural integration in Lebanon and Syria. His study provides an extra dimension to studies on refugees in the region and studies on Diaspora. It is noteworthy that incorporating the region into the global diaspora literature may enrich the relevant literatures and reveal unconsidered aspects of the long migration history of the Middle East.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The paper has following recommendations that would help in addressing the problem of migration of refugees in the Middle East:

- i. The United Nation as a global institution must provide a guiding framework that created chances for refugee's participation in policy making process.
- ii. Gender violence and abuse of refugees need to highlighted and address by the global community to ensure respect for the lives of Refugees
- iii. Middle East crisis need to be look from identifying the root cause of misunderstanding of parties involve in conflict.
- iv. Fair and Justice must be demonstrated by global community in the process of resolving conflicts in the Middle East.

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