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Journal: *Refugee Survey Quarterly*
Article Doi: 10.1093/rsq/hdu016
Article Title: EMPLOYMENT OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEE WOMEN
IN LEBANON: OPPORTUNITIES AND HURDLES
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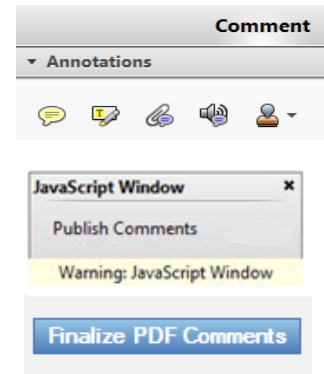
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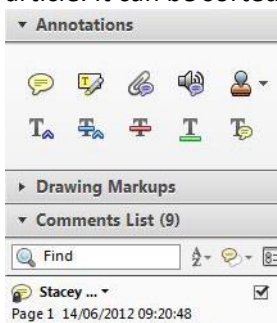
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EMPLOYMENT OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEE WOMEN IN LEBANON: OPPORTUNITIES AND HURDLES

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Sari Hanafi*

5 *For over 65 years, protracted Palestinian refugees have been largely excluded from*
participating in the Lebanese labour market and rare are the studies that examined
the socio-economic implications of such exclusion. This article is concerned with how
the lack of rights for the Palestinian graduate women affects their (un)employment
10 *status. It will use data from a tracer survey among 201 young graduated Palestinian*
women who received the Scholarship Fund for Palestinian Refugee Women in
Lebanon, as well as secondary data from the International Labour Organization
and the American University of Beirut/United Nations Relief and Works Agency
surveys. Our findings reveal that, first, the better is education for Palestinian women,
15 *the more likely they are to be employed; second, while State exclusionary policies have*
not been successful at completely barring Palestinian women from participating in the
Lebanese labour market this participation took the form of segregation into low-paid
segments of the Lebanese economy and into black labour market where work condi-
tions are very harsh.

Keywords: employment, Palestinian refugees, Lebanon, gender, education

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1. Introduction

Palestinians in Lebanon have been refugees for over two-third of century and
should be called more appropriately “protracted refugees”. Their unenviable
situation is caused by the effects of inaction in their country of refuge. The
25 majority of protracted refugees in Lebanon are living in poverty. This can be
observed across a number of socio-economic indicators such as low income and
few assets held by the household, poor housing, poor educational achievements,
poor health, and others. They are indeed deprived of their socio-economic or
civil rights, such as the right to work, practice professions, run businesses, and
30 own property.¹ Nevertheless, in spite of labour regulations hostile to the em-
ployment of the Palestinians, many Palestinian professionals have found ways to
overcome them and gain access to the labour market.

* Professor of Sociology, American University of Beirut. The author would like to thank Rula El-Rifai for her valuable comments in early draft of this article as well as my research assistant Julia Kristina Daley.

¹ S. Al-Natour & D. Yassine, *Insight on the Legal Status Governing Daily Lives of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, Beirut, Human Development Center, 2007.



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In addition to this Lebanese nationalistic posture, in light of globalisation processes and through the politics of structural adjustment and economy liberalisation, refugees' participation in labour market, and particularly that of women, has taken place under harsh conditions of underpayment and within the framework of the informal labour market.² This article deals with the participation of Palestinian women in the labour market, in spite of their lack of rights and their social exclusion, and how this affects their (un)employment status. It analyses the access to employment of young graduated Palestinian women who received the Scholarship Fund for Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon (hereafter, the scholarship). As a multi-donor initiative managed by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) in Canada and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) in Lebanon, this scholarship aims to support Palestinian refugee women in pursuit of undergraduate university degrees in Lebanon.³ The scholarship started in 2000 and ended in 2011. It was granted to 201 students who have all already graduated.

2. Methodology

Rare are the graduate tracer studies in Lebanon.⁴ To fill this lacuna, I conducted three tracer studies of all 201 students who benefited from the scholarship and who graduated from their studies in Lebanese universities in 2011 or before.⁵

The first phase of the planned tracer study was completed with interviews from 99 graduates in January–March 2009. In the second phase, we interviewed 43 graduates; 22 graduates from the 2009 and early 2010 academic year and a random sampling of those who were already interviewed from the previous group of 21 graduates. In the third and final tracer study, we interviewed by phone 85 graduates from all groups, using a new questionnaire that focuses mainly on employment. We still have a certain percentage of missing data that is due mainly to the lack of contact information of the graduates and not to the complication of the phone interview. It represents the past and current history of employment and its characteristics.⁶

² V. Moghadam, *Women, Work, and Economic Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*, Boulder, Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998.

³ Two conditions are necessary to be eligible to the scholarship. Among these, women should be of good academic standing (usually above 60 per cent), whose social and economic circumstances hinder their completion studies.

⁴ There are only two studies: one conducted by the American University of Beirut (AUB) (AUB, *Alumni Survey of 2008–2009, Personal Communication with the Secretary of The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA)*, Beirut, AUB, 2010) and that of the Saint Josef University (C. Kasparian, *La population libanaise et ses caractéristiques*, vol. I, Beirut, Presses de l'Université Saint-Joseph, 2003, 9).

⁵ The tracer study was funded by the IDRC.

⁶ As I experienced disappointing results with tracer studies of an online survey, I opted for phone interviews. We attempted to interview the relevant population but finally collected data from 85 graduates from the period of February to May 2013. The reason for not interviewing all the graduates is a result of poor contact information that we received from UNRWA. This is often due to changes in phone numbers of students and their families. All those with updated contact information responded to our survey. The rate of 42 per cent constitutes singular success for this kind of tracer study.

My analysis produced descriptive data concerning the scholarship, higher education, employment, and working conditions. Comparison between previous surveys I conducted in 2009 and 2010 and the current one is made when it is relevant, especially on employment status and characteristics.

5 The importance of the tracer studies that we conducted in 2009, 2010, and 2013 goes beyond the evaluation of the Scholarship Fund. The primary purpose of conducting these tracer studies was to understand the impact of such programmes on the Palestinian community in Lebanon, where employment conditions are restrictive, as well as to understand how such programmes could be improved. This study sheds light on the involvement of young graduates into the labour market; even if these graduates are among the best female youth and do not represent the average Palestinian students (the average secondary school score is higher than 78 per cent).

10 In Table 1, we find a breakdown of grantees by year of graduation. We note particularly that around a third of them have graduated after 2010.

Table 1. Date of graduation

	Number	Per cent
2003–2004	16	8.0
2004–2005	17	8.5
2005–2006	36	17.9
2006–2007	28	13.9
2007–2008	14	7.0
2008–2009	26	12.9
2009–2010	32	15.9
2010–2011	32	15.9
Total	201	100.0

3. Background information of students

Grantees are distributed between all areas of Lebanon. Less than half of the grantees (43 per cent) were living in Beirut when they got the scholarship, skewing the offered grants in favour of Beirut. More than a third were living in Saida (34 per cent). The other grantees are distributed between Bekaa, Tyre, and Tripoli (Table 2). Looking at the distribution of university holders by region of the 2012 survey of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the Committee for the Employment of Palestinian Refugees (CEP),⁷ one may realise that the percentage of this category is slightly under-represented in Beirut and Tyre (Figure 1).

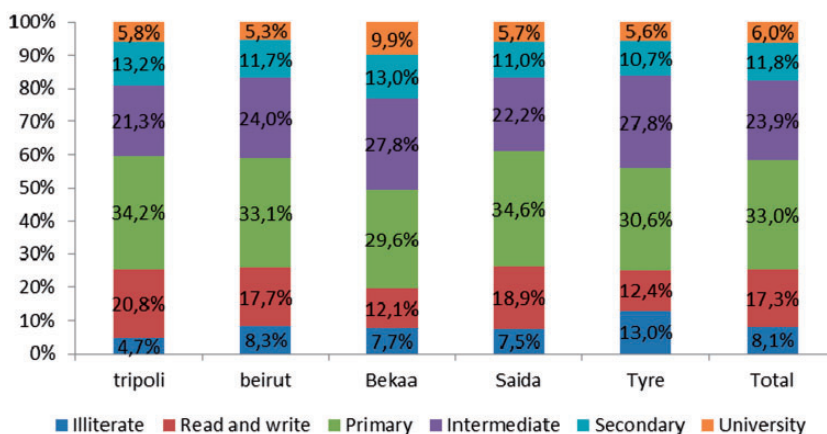
⁷ Between September 2011 and March 2012, a sample of 7,212 individuals aged above 15 years in 2,600 households was surveyed by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics with the technical assistance from the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies.

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Table 2. Area of residence of the grantees when receiving the grant

Area	Number	Per cent
Beirut	28	43.8
Tripoli	2	3.1
Saida	22	34.4
Tyre	9	14.1
Bekaa	3	4.7
Total	64	100.0
Missing	System	
Total	85	

Figure 1. Distribution of Palestinians by educational achievement and region



Source: ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon: Facts and Challenges*, ILO & CEP, 2012, 43, available at: http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---arabstates/---ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_236502.pdf (last visited 24 Sep. 2014).

5 The graduate camp dwellers represent only 29 per cent, making them less represented compared to their ratio in Lebanon (52 per cent).⁸ This ratio may vary if the criteria of selection change. Empowered by their employment, many of these camp dwellers have left the camps, making up only 19 per cent of total graduates (Table 3).

⁸ In Lebanon, there are 12 official camps in which 222,776 Palestinian refugees are registered (52 per cent of the total refugee number in Lebanon). Over 422,188 Palestinians are registered in the country. However, the AUB/UNRWA survey estimates that the total Palestinian refugee population who lives effectively in Lebanon is between 260,000 and 280,000, that is, between 6.8 and 7.4 per cent of the total population of Lebanon (S. Hanafi, J. Chaaban & K. Seyfert, "Social Exclusion of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon: Reflections on the Mechanisms that Cement their Persistent Poverty", *Refugee Survey Quarterly*, 31(1), 2012, 34-53).

Table 3. Place of residence before and after the grant

	Before the grant <i>N (%)</i>	Now <i>N (%)</i>
Camp dweller	20 (29.4)	13 (19.1)
Off camp dweller	48 (70.6)	55 (80.9)
Total	68 (100.0)	68 (100.0)

Table 4. Universities attended by grantees

	Number	Per cent
BAU	171	85.1
LIU	14	7
LU	6	3
LAU	4	2
AUB	3	1.5
Arts, Sciences and Technology Univ.	1	0.5
Balamand	1	0.5
Islamic University	1	0.5
Total	201	100

The majority of the grantees (85 per cent) graduated from the Beirut Arab University (BAU), followed by the Lebanese International University (LIU), the Lebanese University (LU), the Lebanese American University (LAU) and the American University of Beirut (AUB), among others (Table 4). In the social capital market, being graduated from BAU, LIU and LU will translate into much less higher wages compared to those attained by graduates from AUB and LAU.

Around half of the grantees studied sciences (54 per cent). This concentration is meaningful as Palestinian refugees can easily find work as instructors in private schools. The breakdown shows that half of those sciences graduates are specialised in biology and 10 per cent in mathematics. Commerce comes at the second place after sciences (14 per cent), followed by engineering (9 per cent) (Table 5).

With regard to the field of study, grantees from 2009 on cohorts are oriented outside of the classical studies of sciences that often dictate one path of career: teaching. Among the new grantees, more than 20 were looking forward to



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Table 5. Field of study

	Number	Per cent
Sciences	109	54.2
Commerce	31	15.4
Engineering	18	9
Medicine	9	4.5
Dentistry	8	4
Information Technology and Computer	8	4
Pharmacy	8	4
Humanities	3	1.5
English Literature	2	1
Nutrition and Dietetics	2	1
Arts/Mass Communication	1	0.5
Education	1	0.5
Graphic Design	1	0.5
Total	201	100

Table 6. The usefulness of the university degree in grantees' career

	Number	Per cent	
	Highly helpful	54	84.4
	Rather helpful	6	9.4
	Rather unhelpful	3	4.7
	No use	1	1.6
	Total	64	100.0
Missing	System	21	
Total		85	

recruitment outside this career path, that is, in new professions such as graphic design, nutrition, medicine, biochemistry, economics/business, and pharmacy. The choice of studies may be encouraged by the absorption capacity of the Lebanese informal labour market⁹ and the need for teachers in UNRWA schools.¹⁰

The graduates are not representative of the average Palestinian women graduates as more than two-thirds of the graduates have excelled in their studies (11 per cent were excellent and 50 per cent very good) as they declared and benefited duly from the grants.

The vast majority of the grantees (94 per cent) stated that the university degree they earned is helpful (84 per cent qualified it as “highly helpful” and 9 per cent as “rather helpful”). It is interesting to note that some grantees (from the 2009, 2010, and 2011 cohorts) in biology and pharmacy would not encourage

⁹ S. Hanafi & A.Á. Tiltmes, “The Employability of Palestinian Professionals in Lebanon: Constraints and Transgression”, *Knowledge, Work and Society*, 5(1), 2008, 137.

¹⁰ UNRWA runs 86 schools and employs between 40 and 60 teachers in Lebanon.

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Table 7. Employment status

		Number	Per cent
	Employed	65	79.3
	Unemployed	17	20.7
	Total	82	100.0
Missing	System	3	
Total		85	

Table 8. Labour statistics: comparison between different surveys

	Palestinian				Lebanese	
	FAFO 2007	AUB/ UNRWA 2010	ILO 2013	Tracer studies of IDRC/ UNRWA female grantees*	CAS/UNDP/ILO 2008	Yaacoub & Badre 2011
Labor force participation	37%	37%	42%	79%	43.3%	48%
Unemployment	10%	8%	8%	16%	11.3%	6%
Relaxed definition	25%	56% (jobless)	14%	21% (jobless)	N/A	N/A

Source: ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon*, and tracer survey.

others to enter their field of study, most probably due to the difficulty of finding a job afterwards (Table 6).

4. Employment status

5 Currently more than three-quarters are working (79 per cent), which indicates a good outcome after graduation (Table 7). From the remaining 21 per cent who does not work, four are not seeking work (one is pregnant and the others are pursuing a higher education). This reduces the unemployment rate (i.e., for those who do not work and do not seek employment) to 16 per cent. Reasons advanced by our respondents about the difficulty of finding a job range from 10 structural problems related to the legal discrimination against Palestinians when entering the labour market to more personal influences such as being veiled.

If one compares these results with the current surveys, they clearly reveal that participation in the labour market by female grantees corresponds to the 15 double of the Palestinian labour force's participation for all categories (79 per cent vs. 37/42 per cent) as pointed out in the Fafo Institute for Applied International Studies, AUB/UNRWA,¹¹ and ILO surveys. Female grantees'

¹¹ A national socio-economic household survey of Palestinian refugees living in Lebanon, conducted by the AUB and UNRWA, covering a sample of 2,501 Palestinian households. Data were collected in late July and early August 2010 (J. Chaaban *et al.*, *Socio-Economic Survey of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon*, AUB-

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participation in the labour market is much higher than that of Lebanese citizens (70 per cent vs. 43.3/48 per cent). However, the unemployment rate is almost the double (16 per cent for our grantees vs. 10/8 per cent for other surveys). This demonstrates the eagerness of the grantees to seek employment even within an extremely discriminatory context (Table 8).

Table 9. Employment by gender and occupation

	Distribution of men	Distribution of women	Women headcount
Professionals, legislators, senior officials, and managers	8%	15%	38%
Technicians and associate professionals, clerks	3%	11%	53%
Service workers and shop and market sales workers	16%	24%	33%
Craft and related trade workers; plant and machine operators and assemblers	49%	27%	15%
Elementary occupations	24%	22%	23%
Total	100%	100%	24%
Agriculture	9%	8%	23%
Industry	4%	1%	11%
Construction	21%	6%	9%
Education and health care	5%	14%	50%
Government and NGOs	2%	2%	29%
Other services	59%	68%	28%
Total	100%	100%	24%

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Source: Hanafi, Chaaban & Seyfert, "Social Exclusion of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon", 50.

The 2010 AUB/UNRWA survey offers further explanation as to the high impact of the IDRC/UNRWA grants for female students in higher education by contrasting it with the general situation of employment of all the Palestinian labour forces. A key element in explaining the low employment rate of 37 per cent is that few women work, not only in Lebanon but more broadly in the entire Arab world: only 13 per cent of women between the ages of 15 years and 65 years are employed compared to 65 per cent of men.¹² Indeed, women make up only about 18 per cent of the currently employed workforce (Table 9).¹³

If women work, they generally do in high-status employment. Indeed, slightly more than a quarter of working women do so as professionals, senior officials and managers or technicians, associate professionals, and clerks (Table 10); while only a little more than 10 per cent of men work in these occupational categories. Conversely three-quarters of men work in crafts, as related trade workers or machine operators, as well as in elementary occupations, while

UNRWA, 2010, available at: <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2011012074253.pdf> (last visited 24 Sep. 2014) (AUB-UNRWA survey)). Households in camps as well as gatherings were interviewed in a total of 32 localities.

¹² Middle East Youth Initiative, *Missed by the Boom, Hurt by the Bust. Making Markets Work for Young People in the Middle East. An Agenda for Policy Reform and Greater Regional Cooperation*. A report of Middle East Youth Initiative, 2008, 10.

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¹³ Hanafi *et al.* 2011.

only slightly more than a quarter holds similar positions. However, due to the fact that more men work than women, most occupational sectors are dominated by men. Exceptions are technical, associate professional, or clerical occupations, where more than half of all workers are women. This may be due to the fact that these occupational categories are composed of feminised professions such as secretaries, care workers, or school assistants. In contrast, women make up as little as 15 per cent in crafts, related trade and plant operating professions, probably because these involve manual or physically strenuous work.

Table 10. Employment and education levels for male and female

	Employment rate (23–65 years) (%)	Professionals and associate professionals (%)	Service workers sales workers (%)	Craft and related trade workers (%)	Elementary occupations (%)
Never at school	39	7	16	45	32
Completed primary	40	12	16	47	26
Brevet	38	13	23	49	16
Baccalaureate	44	35	20	34	11
Vocational degree	70	36	22	27	15
University degree	63	70	8	12	9

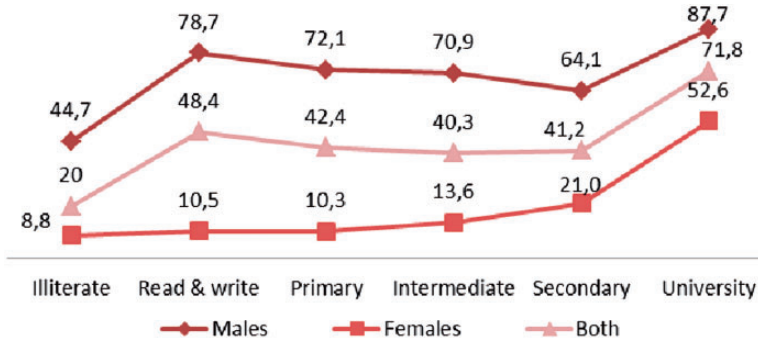
Source: Hanafi *et al.* 2011.

Similarly certain sectors of employment are feminised. More than two-thirds (68 per cent) of women work in “other services” and 14 per cent in health care and education, compared to 59 per cent and 5 per cent of men respectively. Half of the workforce in health care and education is female; conversely very few women work in industry and construction. Interestingly, the share of men and women working in agriculture is very similar (men: 9 per cent, women: 8 per cent).

The result of the tracer study concurs, generally speaking, with some indicators we found in other surveys conducted in Lebanon concerning the employment of the Palestinian refugees. The positive relationship between employment and education was confirmed. Our survey as well as the AUB/UNRWA survey set evidence that those with better education are more likely to be employed. Indeed around two-thirds of those aged of 23–65 years with a vocational or university degree are employed, compared to less than 40 per cent for those with educational levels of Brevet or lower, or 44 per cent for those in that age group that only hold the Baccalaureate (Table 10).¹⁴ This indicates that continued education increases chances for employment. Passing the Brevet and Baccalaureate respectively opens access to further education which increases employment opportunities. Baccalaureate pass rates are already good, improving Brevet pass rates and facilitating access to university and vocational schools are likely to enhance the employment prospects of Palestine refugees in Lebanon.

¹⁴ Hanafi, Chaaban & Seyfert, “Social Exclusion of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon”.

Figure 2. Economic participation by sex and educational levels



Source: ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon*, 53.

Employment, in particular occupational status, is closely linked to education (Table 10). Better education is significantly linked with higher status employment. Of those with a university degree, 70 per cent work as professionals or associated professionals. Those with a Brevet or less work mainly in crafts and elementary occupations. Table 10 shows that, though vocational training increases the chances of employment, university degrees lead to higher status of employment, explaining the observed preference of Palestinian students for university courses rather than vocational training courses. If we look at the Palestinian women participation using another survey (ILO survey), we realise that, although Palestinian women show significantly lower rates of economic participation compared to men at all educational levels (Figure 2), the gender gap is attenuated for women with university education. The stereotypical idea that there are strong gender norms in Palestinian society that favour relegating all women’s contributions to domestic work is misleading. Data from our tracer studies, AUB/UNRWA, and ILO clearly show that higher education over-ride such idea. From here one can reiterate the importance of giving grants to Palestinian students, even if many of the professions associated with particular academic subjects are barred for Palestinians, forcing the Palestinian employee to accept lower salaries.

5. Work conditions

According to the tracer study, unemployment rates among Palestinian refugees and Lebanese are almost the same. What significantly differs, however, are the conditions under which Palestinian refugees work.

Concerning the relatedness of employment to the field of study, the vast majority of the grantees (86 per cent) confirms this relationship. Only 13 per cent do not feel their work is related to their studies (Table 11).

More than half of the grantees (56 per cent) did not change their job. This shows a sort of employment stability, compared to the average employed

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Palestinian.¹⁵ Yet many have spent up to 1 year to find their first employment opportunity. Forty-three per cent of grantees changed their job at least once since graduation (Table 12).

Table 11. Relatedness between the field of the study and the type of work

		Number	Per cent
	Yes	51	86.4
	No	8	13.6
	Total	59	100.0
Missing	System	26	
Total		85	

Table 12. Grantees' changes in job

		Number	Per cent
	0	34	56.7
	1	18	30.0
	2	6	10.0
	3	1	1.7
	4	1	1.7
	Total	60	100.0
Missing	System	25	
Total		85	

Table 13. Grantees' employment status

		Number	Per cent
	Full-time employment	47	81.0
	Part-time employment	8	13.8
	Full-time self-employed	1	1.7
	Part-time self-employed	2	3.4
	Total	58	100.0
Missing	System	27	
Total		85	

The average number of months grantees have worked since their graduation is 55 months (four and a half years during which they worked an average of 3 years and 3 months; i.e., grantees worked almost three-quarters of their time (71 per cent). Concerning the nature of the work, the vast majority of the grantees (81 per cent) works as full-time employees under their current or

¹⁵ According to the AUB/UNRWA survey, employed Palestinians changed jobs on average 0.56 (conf. interval 0.35–0.77) times in the past 6 months, demonstrating the fragility of their employment (Hanafi, Chaaban & Seyfert, "Social Exclusion of Palestinian Refugees in Lebanon").



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Table 14. Grantees' place of work

		Number	Per cent
	Inside the camp	12	20.3
	Outside the camp	47	79.7
	Total	59	100.0
Missing	System	26	
Total		85	

Table 15. Grantees' place of work outside Lebanon

Country	No
UAE	11
Germany	3
Saudi Arabia	3
UK	2
US	2
Bahrain	1
Total	22

only job. In addition, a very small percentage of them (14 per cent) works as part-time employees. Only 5 per cent work as self-employed. These self-employed women are not exercising entrepreneurial activities but simply giving tutorials to students in need (Table 13).

The place of work is not confined to the Palestinian labour market and conquers the Lebanese black labour market. More than three-quarters of respondents (80 per cent) work outside the camps and the rest works inside the camps (Table 14).

Approximately one-quarter of the grantees have migrated and are either working outside Lebanon, currently seeking employment, or are housewives who joined their spouses. The favourite destination is the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (half of the migrants) (Table 15).

From Table 16, it is clear that more than a third of the respondents (34 per cent) work as teachers. However, the rest stand in for many different jobs like (programmers, social workers, pharmacists, and doctors).

More than half of the grantees are satisfied with their work. This question is per se analytically weak; in order to assess work satisfaction multiple questions are required. Those who are satisfied are those who work with UNRWA and other international organizations, as well as the NGOs. This will be explained when looking at salaries.

Only 11 grantees pursued higher education. However, the vast majority of respondents did not do so.

Scrutinising the types of employer, we see that more than half of the grantees (57 per cent) work for private companies, only a quarter of them (27 per cent) work with UNRWA, and other grantees (13 per cent) work in international or local NGOs (Table 17).

Table 16. Grantees' occupation

Occupation	Number
Teacher	32
Administrative work	4
Accounting	2
Doctor	2
Research assistant	2
Pharmacist	2
Programmer	2
Social worker	2
Assistant for a doctor	1
Assistant of a pharmacist	1
Dentist	1
Designer	1
Educational supervisor	1
Instructor in Univ.	1
Production officer	1
Salesman	1
Total	56

Table 17. Types of employer

	Number	Per cent	
	UNRWA	15	26.8
	NGOs/INGOs	8	14.3
	Private company/business	32	57.1
	Family business	1	1.8
	Total	56	100.0
Missing	System	29	
Total		85	

The type of employer will reflect the type of labour market insertion for these grantees. Around half of the grantees (43 per cent) work without signing a contract in their jobs (these are mainly working in the private sectors). They report that this leaves them in a state of insecurity concerning their job, confirmed by a qualitative survey I conducted in 2006 among Palestinian professionals.¹⁶ Comparisons should be made with Lebanese graduates, but unfortunately there are no statistics or surveys in this regard.

About a quarter of grantees (22 per cent) signed a contract with a duration period of more than 1 year (Table 18).

To understand why nearly one half of grantees are without contract, we should analyse the income of these employees. The average income of those who have worked an average of 3 years in Lebanon is \$637. The high figure of the standard deviation (\$385 representing 60 per cent of the average income) indicates a very poor distribution of income.

¹⁶ Hanafi & Tiltneš, "The Employability of Palestinian Professionals in Lebanon", 134–140.

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Table 18. Relationship between job and contract

	Number	Per cent
Without contract	25	45.5
With less than 1 year contract	6	10.9
With 1 year contract	7	12.7
With more than 1 year contract	13	23.6
Unlimited contract	4	7.3
NA	2	3.6
Total	55	100.0
Missing System	30	
Total	85	

Table 19. Income of the grantees

		Income of the first job	Income of the second job	Income of third job	Income of the fourth job
Num.		56	23	7	1
	Missing	29	62	78	84
Mean		637.45	636.00	857.14	900.00
Std. Deviation		384.855	227.594	269.921	

Let us examine the subject more closely. From the tracer survey, we realise that there is a correlation between the income and the type of employer. The monthly salaries which are above \$1,000 are for those who work for UNRWA or international organizations and almost rarely with NGOs or a private company. There is also correlation between the income and the field of study: those who studied engineering, sciences, and commerce have the highest income among grantees. Of course when it comes to science, some are UNRWA teachers who earn a higher income compared to other grantees.

Our tracer studies of 2009 and 2010 showed an average monthly wage for a 2009 graduate of \$500. Now, the situation is better (\$637) as salaries increased and graduates have more experience (Table 19). Yet, many employed graduates are earning an income that is less than the Lebanese minimum wage (\$366.6). In addition, the income for the grantees working outside of Lebanon has also increased. It is particularly striking that Palestinian graduates in most professions have very low incomes compared to Lebanese nationals because professions in Lebanon are highly regulated by professional unions and are very restrictive to Palestinians and foreigners. Due to this fact, graduates accept work in the informal sector at lower rates.¹⁷

The arguments deployed by the State and the professional associations to justify the current treatment of Palestinians in Lebanon are weak when

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 138.

considering the liberal and democratic premise of the Lebanese society, as well as its political system. The corporatist ideology that emerged in continental Europe at the beginning of the 20th century to protect liberal professions soon spread to the rest of the world – including Lebanon, where, as we have
5 seen, professional associations have by-laws to impede the non-Lebanese from exercising their profession. The corporatist influence combined with local dynamics took on a national form. However, the control of the professional market of Lebanon does not reflect the “development project” established by the State but rather reflects a blend of two logics: the logic of a neo-liberal
10 market, which allows only “legitimate” experts to exercise the professions and creates a second category of professionals exposed to exploitation, and the logic of the Lebanese Nation-State formation – almost biologically defined by patrimonial lines and in which there is no room for refugees.

There are compelling arguments that after three generations in Lebanon
15 Palestinian refugees should not simply be considered “foreigners” and temporary migrants. Although most, if not all, Western countries distinguish between foreigners and permanent residents, the disparity in rights between a citizen and a permanent resident is usually negligible.¹⁸

Let us compare the tracer studies’ data with that of the 2012 ILO and CEP
20 survey. This survey reports that the average monthly income of a Palestinian worker is 80 per cent lesser than that of a Lebanese. Households average five members (one member more than Lebanese households), relying on 1.14 workers per household. Earning an average income of 537,000 L.L. per worker, or 612,000 L.L. per household, it is clear that their current income is hardly sufficient to cover household expenses, therefore maintaining a large percentage of
25 the population (over 66 per cent) below the poverty line.¹⁹

Palestinian refugees also work longer hours – an average of 47 hours, although it should be noted that 67.4 per cent of the labour force either work less than 35 hours (22.4 per cent – with 12 per cent of those seeking an
30 additional job), or work above 50 hours, which is considered an unhealthy number of working hours (45 per cent of the Palestinian labour force work over 55 hours). This is worrying when compared to the average monthly income, currently estimated at 468,000 L.L. (the lowest) in Tripoli, 514,000 L.L. in Tyre, 573,000 L.L. in Saida, and 583,000 L.L. in Beirut (the highest
35 average). In addition, Palestinian workers rarely have written work contracts (attributable to the requirement for a work permit), and do not receive the same benefits as their Lebanese colleagues – only 5 per cent of employed Palestinians receive health care coverage, compared to 53 per cent of Lebanese.²⁰

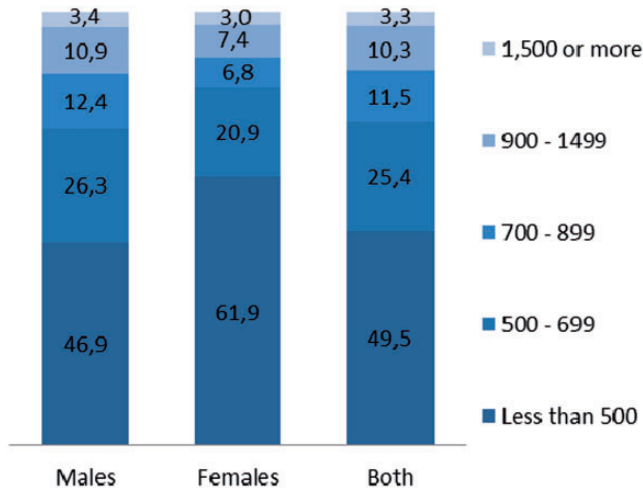
¹⁸ For more details about union regulations, see *ibid.*

¹⁹ ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon*, 63.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 81.

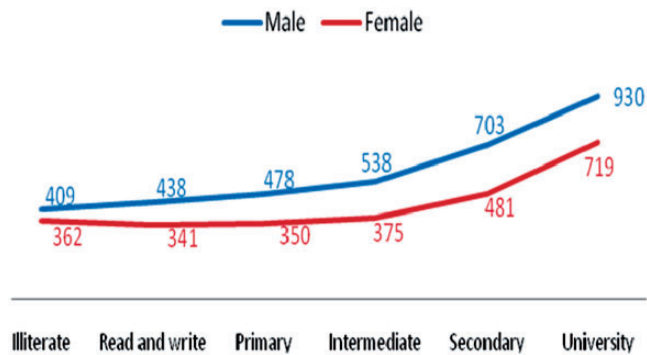
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Figure 3. Wages earn by sex



Source: ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon*, 94.

Figure 4. Wages by educational level



Source: ILO & CEP, *Palestinian Employment in Lebanon*, 96.

The ILO and CEP survey, however, shows that Palestinian women who work earn lower wages compared to men (Figure 3): 63 per cent of women compared to 47 per cent of men earn less than 500,000 L.L. (less than minimum wage), whereas 17.2 per cent of women compared to 26.7 per cent of men earn more than 900,000 L.L. To explore whether wage differences are due to gender differences in education or occupation, comparisons were drawn at every educational level and occupational category. Figure 4 shows that Palestinian men earn higher wages compared to Palestinian women in Lebanon at every educational level. More so, the gender gap in wages steadily increases with increasing education (see the below two figures).

Table 20. Employment status of grantees (second job)

		Number	Per cent
	Full-time employment	16	64.0
	Part-time employment	8	32.0
	Full-time self-employed	1	4.0
	Total	25	100.0
Missing	System	60	
Total		85	

Table 21. Location of the second employment (second job)

		Number	Per cent
	Inside the camp	4	15.4
	Outside the camp	21	80.8
	Outside Lebanon	1	3.8
	Total	26	100.0
Missing	System	59	
Total		85	

Table 22. Types of employer in the second job

		Number	Per cent
	UNRWA	5	20.8
	Other, NGO	3	12.5
	Private company/business	14	58.3
	Public sector	1	4.2
	NA	1	4.2
	Total	24	100.0
Missing	System	61	
Total		85	

According to [Table 20](#), those who changed their employment once (hold second job) around two-thirds of them (64 per cent), were also employed as full-time employees. Also, around one-third (32 per cent) were employed as part time.

5 Like the first job, most respondents (80 per cent) work outside the camps and less than a quarter (15 per cent) work inside the camps ([Table 21](#)). The vast majority of the grantees (91 per cent) work in the private sector. However, their second place of work is not UNRWA, but an NGO for which around a third of the respondents work. Less than a quarter of the grantees worked for UNRWA
10 ([Table 22](#)).

Similar to the first job, around half of the grantees (52 per cent) work without any contract. Also, around quarter of them (20 per cent) work with more than 1 year contract ([Table 23](#)).

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Table 23. Relationship between work and contracts in the second job

	No	Per cent
Without contract	13	52.0
With less than 1 year contract	4	16.0
With 1 year contract	2	8.0
With more than 1 year contract	5	20.0
Other	1	4.0
Total	25	100.0
Missing System	60	
Total	85	

In brief, the tracer studies show a less rosy image concerning the work condition and the wage graduate grantees earn compared to the ILO survey and this concur with the study of Sawsan Abdulrahim and Marwan Khawaja.²¹ The two authors reveal that, while exclusionary policies have not been successful at completely barring Palestinians from participating in the Lebanese labour force, this participation takes place at a cost. Palestinian refugees are segregated into less-desirable segments of the mainstream economy and earn lower wages than Lebanese in virtually all educational and occupational categories. The predominance of low-paid jobs available to these graduates contributes to a vicious cycle whereby poverty is exacerbated and perpetuated. This cannot be seriously redressed without opening the possibility of enrolment in the syndicated professions.

6. Conclusion

The basic research question was how the lack of rights for the Palestinian graduate women affects their (un)employment status. I used data from a tracer survey as well as secondary data from ILO/CEP and AUB/UNRWA surveys. The results were mixed: first, the better education for the Palestinian women, the more likely they are to be employed; second, while State exclusionary policies have not been successful at completely barring Palestinian women from participating in the Lebanese labour market, this participation took the form of segregation into low-paid segments of the Lebanese economy and into the black labour market where work conditions are very harsh.

This last issue has serious consequences on deterring the new generation from pursuing not only their higher education but also their education *tout-court*. The Palestinian community has experienced a high number of drop-outs at UNRWA schools according to the studies of Anies Hroub and Jihad Makhoul *et al.*²² The reasons that have been advanced are above all related to the general

²¹ S. Abdulrahim & M. Khawaja, "The Cost of Being Palestinian in Lebanon", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 37(1), 2011, 151-166.

²² A. Hroub, "Drop-Outs among the Palestinian Pupils in Lebanon", *Idafat: the Arab Journal of Sociology*, 2012 [in Arabic]; and J. Makhoul *et al.*, "An Ethnographic Study of Social and Structural Forces on Children: The Case of Two Low-Income Beirut Suburbs", *Environment and Urbanization*, 15, 2003.

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socio-economic situation as well as the legal restrictions imposed on Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Programmes such as the Scholarship Fund for Palestinian Refugee Women in Lebanon are of extreme importance to redress this situation and to give hope for Palestinian pupils that continuation to higher education is possible. In addition to this fund, the Palestinian Student Fund²³ and UNRWA have allowed people to pursue university studies by offering loans and grants. The scholarships typically cover part of the tuition (approximately USD 700–900 annually). However, in recent years UNRWA support for higher education has been significantly cut back. Families end up having to cover the remaining tuition costs as well as the living expenses of the students. My previous study on the employment of professionals in Lebanon indicates that families often cannot afford such support.²⁴ In fact, the families of more than half the interviewees in the Fafo study, in particular those living in refugee camps and in the South, could not afford to pay for higher education, forcing students to join the labour market. Recently, other funds have emerged such as the “President Abbas Fund”, Kaddoumi Foundation, but the most important fund is Lebanon United Youth Fund which is funded by the Nimer and Welfare foundations. In spite of the importance of such funds, they can only cover the need of small portion of the Palestinian community.

Between the tracer survey and other surveys I used for this study and the end of the writing of the present article, the Palestinian labour market in Lebanon has become harsher. As of March 2014, there were approximately one million Syrian refugees and 53,000 Palestinians from Syria in Lebanon. About half of these Palestinians reside in the existing refugee camps, which were already overcrowded and in need of major infrastructure overhauls prior to the Syrian uprising. According to UNRWA, an average of 12.8 people lives in each resident. Syrian Palestinians do not have the same right to work in Lebanon as Syrian refugees and must apply for work permits as other foreigners, which are of a prohibitive cost. Unemployment is extremely high among Syrian Palestinians due to increased competition caused by the refugee influx and limited opportunities as the economy has been severely affected by the Syrian crisis.²⁵

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon have long been the most legally discriminated and socio-economically marginalised compared to those residing in Egypt and Jordan (and historically in Syria), and the influx of refugees and provision of assistance targeting Syrian Palestinians has exacerbated tensions between both the pre-existing Palestinian population in Lebanon as well as other host communities.

²³ It is mainly funded by the EU and private Palestinian companies (particularly CCC).

²⁴ Hanafi & Tiltnes, “Employability of Palestinian Professionals in Lebanon”.

²⁵ The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS), *Palestinians from Syria. Syria Needs Analysis Project*, Mar. 2014, available at: http://www.acaps.org/reports/downloader/palestinians_from_syria_march_2014/77/syria (last visited 23 Sep. 2014).