

The drain on skilled and educated cadres, with its conservative consequences for West Bank villages, has been compounded by what seems to be a willful policy on the part of the Israeli military government to block the return of landowners' sons and other family members in order to forestall the emergence of a rural oppositional leadership (Migdal, 1980: 67). In fact, the policy of selective admission of Palestinians abroad under the Family Reunion Scheme has been implemented by the military government in the West Bank with the aim of strengthening and obtaining reciprocal favours from those very traditional elements in rural Palestinian society whose authority was being eroded by the repercussions of migration and wage labour discussed above.

Outmigration in most likelihood will continue to play a major role in transforming the lives of Palestinian villagers in the West Bank. But while its form and destination has been erratic, responding to the general decline in the labour market abroad, internal migration (to Israel) has had a steady pull over peasants and a much more homogeneizing consequences on village social structure over the last 15 years. To these patterns we shall now turn.