

Migration in Jordan, a Statistical Portrait from a Gender Perspective

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Abstract

Not only has migration become an increasingly noticeable phenomenon across the world today, but it has also triggered the discussion on how deeply particular migration trends and the causes of migration are influenced by gender. To really understand this migration it is important to acknowledge a profounder understanding of this correlation and include a gender perspective to compare and contrast.

This paper analyzes the migration population data as sourced by the Population and Housing Census conducted by the Department of Statistics in Jordan for the year 2015, and focuses on migration in Jordan from a gender perspective, as Jordan is considered to be one of the top 10 countries receiving migrants from Arab countries. More importantly, migrants received in Jordan have increased from almost 8% to 31% between the years 2004 and 2015, where they constituted a significant one third of the population of Jordan in 2015, 42% of which are females.

The analysis showed female migrants in Jordan are mostly economically inactive; and one of every six females is a head of household and illiterate. The paper also highlights that more than half of the migrants in Jordan are due to forced migration, of which 86% consider themselves as refugees. Additional studies conducted on refugee data show that almost 90% of refugees migrated to Jordan in the past 5 years only, more than one third are located in Amman (the capital city), and also half of the refugee population are female. The paper also touches on other types of migration in Jordan, like labor migration and their details from a gender perspective, as well as an analysis of the different comparisons between migrants and Jordanians data.

This paper aims at informing field practitioners about migration in Jordan and its implications on both migrants and Jordanians from a gender point of view.

Introduction

Migration by definition refers to the movement from one part of something to the other¹. The movement of people from their homelands to other countries could either be voluntary – in aims of pursuing a better life, or involuntary – as a result of war and conflict. Today, almost half of all migrants are women², which shed the light on its social, economic and political impacts both on a local and global scale, including how this affects women empowerment, country progress and the working roles of women in society. Given the gender-specific nature of migration, the need for more care in decision making is required in order to avoid the perpetuation of gender inequality, which resulted in the production of guidelines to monitor this process, such as the *International Organization of Migration*'s gender policy, which advocates for equal rights under the laws of employment while ensuring diversity and inclusiveness³. Also, the culture and customs of a certain country can play a chief role in shaping the migration patterns, especially in the scope of an Arab country like Jordan which is led by its strong beliefs and enlightening values.

Feminisation of Migration at the Global and Regional Level

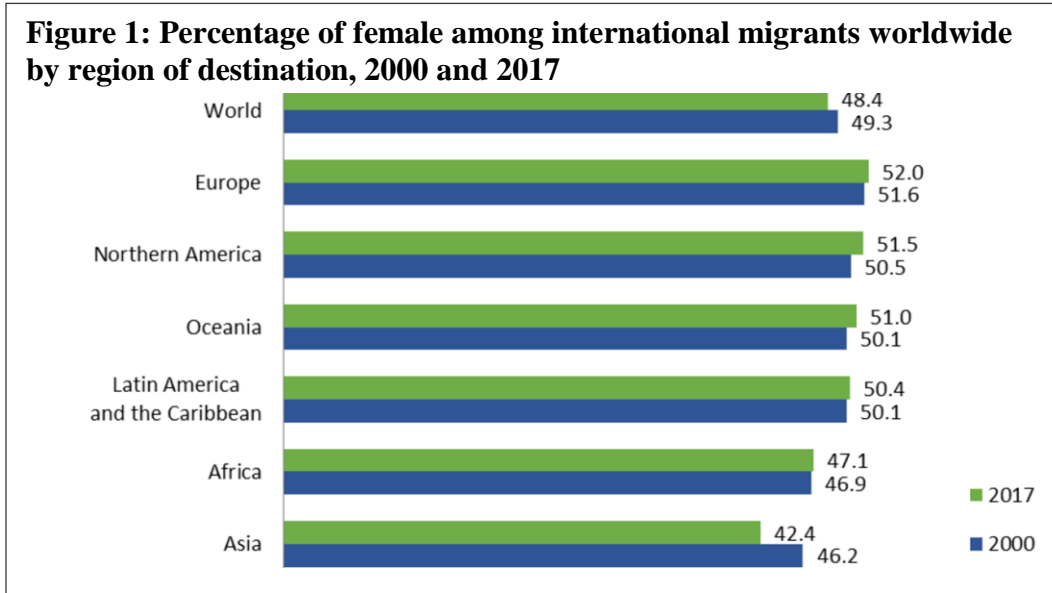
Globally, the common perception is that migrants are predominantly male. In fact, global estimates by sex confirm that since 1960, the numbers of female cross-border migrants reached almost the same numbers as male migrants. By 1960, female migrants accounted for nearly 47 out of every 100 migrants living outside their countries of birth. Since then, the female proportion of international migration has risen slightly, to reach 48 per cent in 1990 and nearly 49 per cent in 2000 (International Labour Organization 2003: 9). While there has been no major change in the percentage of women and men moving internationally overall, there have been changes in patterns of migration – with more women migrating independently and as main income-earners instead of following male relatives (Martin 2005). Thus, it appears there has been a recent trend towards the feminization of migration, which is the first evident migration trend. This is particularly obvious from changes in the proportion of women in total immigration

¹ “English Dictionary, Thesaurus, & Grammar Help | Oxford Dictionaries.” *Oxford Dictionaries | English*, Oxford Dictionaries, en.oxforddictionaries.com/.

² <http://www.oecd.org/dev/migration-development/migration-gender.htm>

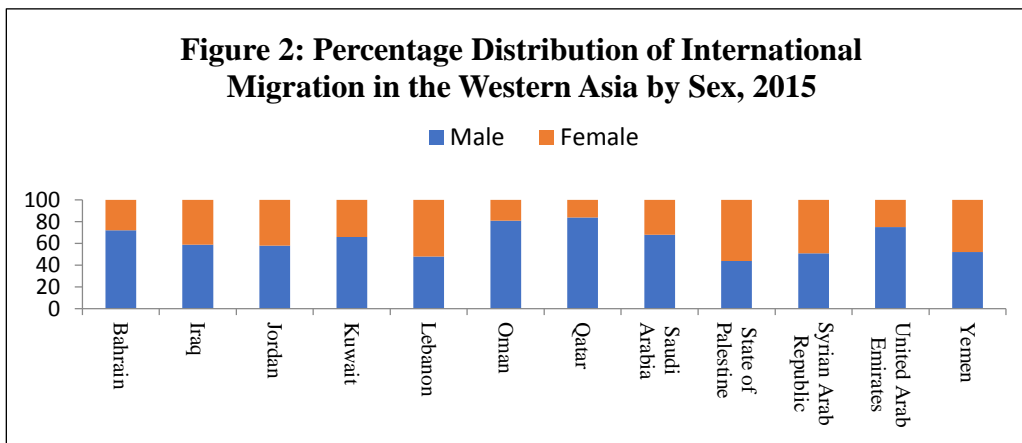
³ “GENDER AND MIGRATION.” International Organization for Migration, 8 Mar. 2018, www.iom.int/gender-and-migration.

flows between 2000 and 2017 were women comprise slightly less than half of all international migrants (figure one).



Source: International Migration Report, 2017

Regionally, figure 2 shows that Arab countries like Jordan seem to share a similar pattern. More than half of the migrants are male. This could be associated to the culture of Arab countries, which usually indicates that females remain at home while males seek work. Locally, Jordan’s rapidly growing population reached 9.6 million in 2015 – a figure which includes a significant number of Syrian refugees and migrant workers. There are now three distinct groups of workers in Jordan: Jordanians, migrant workers and Syrian refugees.



Source: 2015 Situation Report on International Migration, Migration, Displacement and Development, in a Changing Arab Region

Migration in Jordan, a Statistical Portrait

As the numbers in table 1 show, Jordan is considered to be one of the top 10 countries of destination for migrants from Arab countries.

Table 1: Top 10 countries of destination for migrants from Arab countries, 2013

Country of Destination	Number of Migrants
Jordan	2,864,163
France	2,672,746
Saudi Arabia	2,672,746
United Arab Emirates	1,446,560
United States of America	1,049,170
Syrian Arab Republic	1,004,662
Spain	835,952
Lebanon	826,528
Italy	742,827
Libya	633,213

Source: United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Population Division, Trends in International Migrant Stock: The 2013 Revision, United Nations Database (POP/DB/MIG/Stock/Rev.2013). Available from <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/index.shtml> (accessed 30 January 2015).

Table 2 points to an increase in the number of migrants in Jordan by seven and half times between the years 2004 and 2015 highlight the role of regional political instability. It resulted from different events. The increase in the numbers of Iraqis between the two dates may be explained by the long-term settlement of refugees from the second Gulf War and especially, its most violent phase in 2006-2007; the current situation in Iraq may have deterred many from returning. The growth of the number of Palestinians (from 115,000 to 634,000) may also be explained by the continuous degradation of the political and economic situation in the Palestine National Authority (PNA). The very high figure of 1.3 million Syrians in Jordan is mainly due to the Syrian war since 2011.

The approximate number of migrants, 2.9 Million, made up 31 per cent of the population in 2015 compared to 8 percent in 2004 (DOS population census, 2004 and 2015), these numbers indicate that Jordan is a major migrant-receiving country. Additionally, Jordan is a migrant-sending

country: an estimated 10 percent of Jordan's nationals (700,000 to 800,000) are expatriated abroad, most of them to the Gulf States⁴.

Table 2: Migrant Population in Jordan by Region / Country of Citizenship, 2004 and 2015

Region / Country of Citizenship	2004		2015		Average annual growth rate (2004-2015)
	Total	%	Total	% of the total migrant population	
Arab Asian Countries	205887	52.5	2061770	70.7	20.9
Syria	38,130	9.7	1265514	43.4	31.8
Palestine	115,190	29.4	634182	21.7	15.5
Iraq	40,084	10.2	130911	4.5	10.8
Yemen	2585	0.7	31163	1.1	22.6
Arab African Countries	113,449	28.9	658970	22.6	16.0
Egypt	112,392	28.7	636270	21.8	15.8
Libya	1057	0.3	22700	0.8	27.9
Other Countries	72937	18.6	197385	6.8	9.1
Total	392273	100	2918125	100	18.2
% of migrants out of the total population		7.7		30.6	

Data presented in table 2 also shows that in 2015, the proportion of migrants relative to the population was significant (31 percent); International migrants came mainly from other Arab Asian countries (70.7%) especially Syria (43.4%), Palestine (21.7%), Iraq (4.5%) and Yemen (1.1%). These results highlight the role of regional political instability in the makeup of migrant communities in Jordan.

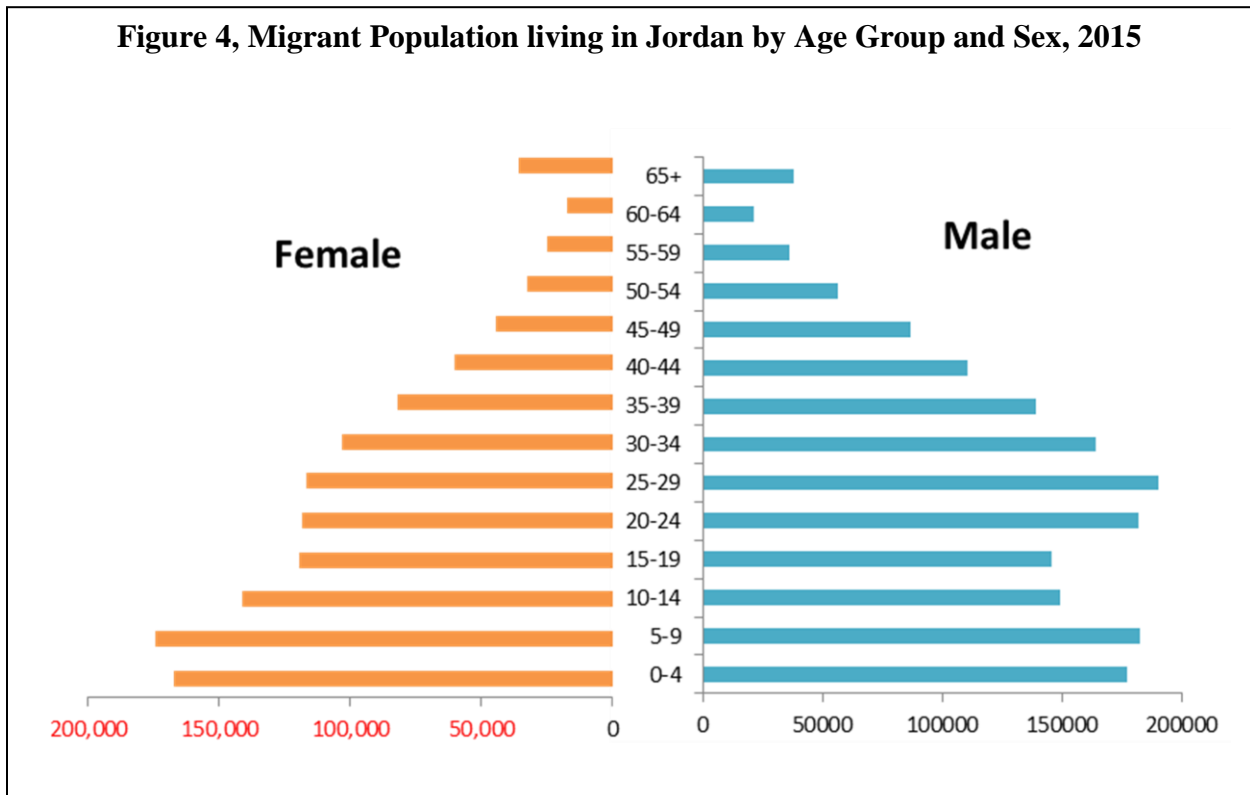
As for the Arab African countries, the percentage was (22.6%) – of which the vast majority was Egyptian nationals (21.8%). On the other hand, the percentage of non-Arab migrants from other countries did not exceed 7 percent.

Demographic Characteristics of Migrants in Jordan by Sex

According to the population pyramid of migrants living in Jordan which is displayed in figure 4, males make up more than half of the migrant population (57.5% for males and 42.5 for females).

⁴ Migration Profile: Jordan, Migration Policy Centre - Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies - European University Institute - Via Boccaccio 151 I-50133 Florence Italy, Issue 2016/06 November 2016

Figure 4, Migrant Population living in Jordan by Age Group and Sex, 2015



Source: Jordan Population Census, 2015

By analyzing the population pyramid of the migrants in Jordan, one can notice that males show a higher percentage in comparison to females in age groups 20-49. This is due to the entrance of Egyptian male workers who help predominantly in construction jobs.

The pyramid also shows that the highest difference lies in the 25-29 age groups, which is within the range of the legally allowed working ages. It is estimated that around 1.4 million Jordanians are currently working in Jordan, with another 210,000 unemployed⁵. Although precise numbers are not available, recent estimates suggest that there may be as many migrants working in the kingdom as there are Jordanians. Jordan recently committed itself to incorporating 200,000 Syrians into the workforce in return for improved access to the European market, increased investment and soft loans. Nevertheless, the entry of Syrians has exacerbated an already challenging situation. Because all three groups are present in significant numbers, it is inevitable

⁵ A challenging market becomes more challenging: Jordanian workers, migrant workers and refugees in the Jordanian labour market / International Labour Organization - Beirut: ILO, 2017, ISBN 9789221303404 (print); 978922130341 (web pdf), ILO Regional Office for Arab States

that the groups impact each other. For this reason, the challenges of any group – including Jordanians – must be addressed within the context of the labor market as a whole.

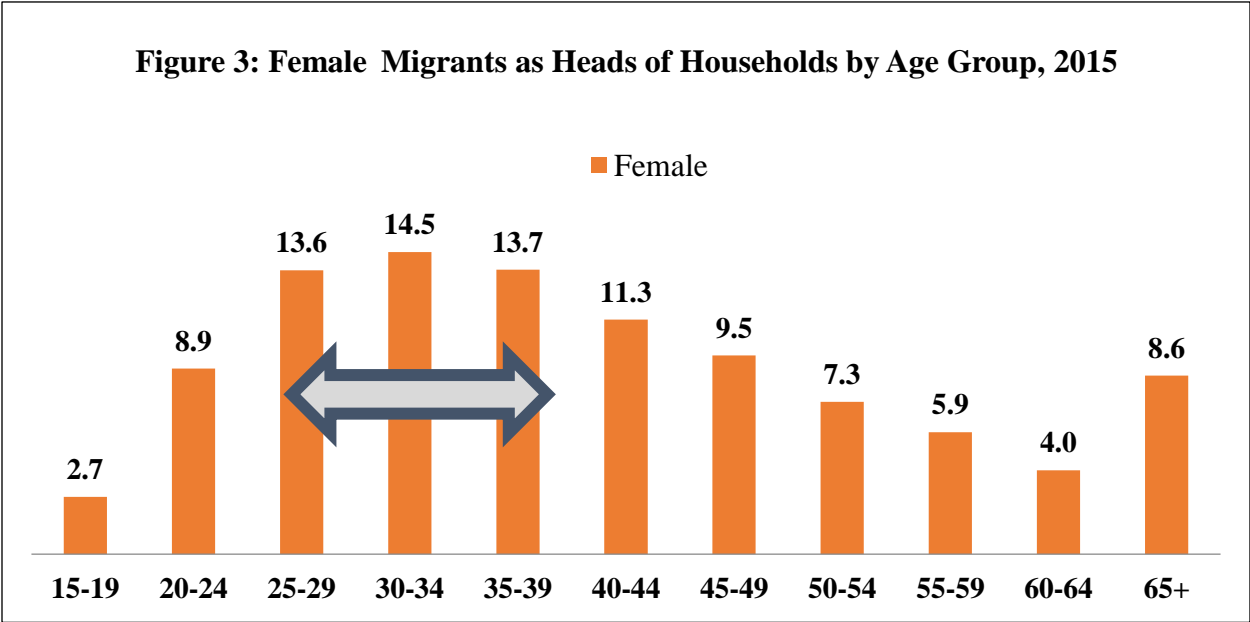
Data obtained from the population census of 2015 displayed in table 3 indicates that the number of women and men migrants from the Arab Asian countries is almost the same; however, migrants from Arab African countries are mainly men. On the other hand, non-Arab women migrants from other countries outnumber non-Arab men by 20 percent (60 percent females and 40 percent males). This may be attributed to the flows of female foreign workers from Asian nationalities such as Philippines, Sri Lanka, Indonesia and Bangladesh who are mostly domestic laborers. Also, the increase in the numbers of female foreign workers from Asian nationalities points to the development of the manufacturing industrial sector in Jordan (the garment sector currently employs over 62,000 workers in Jordan. Of these, 72 percent are women and 73 percent are economic migrants⁶. Manufacturing jobs account for 9.7 per cent of jobs held by Jordanians – 10.4 per cent of jobs held by men and 6.3 per cent of jobs held by women. Meanwhile, manufacturing jobs account for a significantly larger 24.8 percent of Migrants holding work permits).

Table 3: Migrant Population in Jordan by Region / Country of Citizenship and Sex, 2015

Region / Country of Citizenship	Sex			
	Female	Male	Total	% of the total migrant population
Arab Asian Countries	999,707	1,062,063	2061770	70.7
Syria	637,288	628,226	1265514	43.4
Palestine	285,120	349,062	634182	21.7
Iraq	64,892	66,019	130911	4.5
Yemen	12,407	18,756	31163	1.1
Arab African Countries	121,761	537,209	658970	22.6
Egypt	112,636	523,634	636270	21.8
Libya	9,125	13,575	22700	0.8
Other Countries	117,875	79,510	197385	6.8
Total	1,239,343	1,678,782	2918125	100
% of migrants out of the total population	30.6			

⁶ A CHALLENGING MARKET BECOMES MORE CHALLENGING; Jordanian Workers, Migrant Workers and Refugees in the Jordanian Labour Market, ILO publication, 2017

Furthermore, one in every six migrant families has a female as the head of household (16% of migrant households are headed by females compared to only 11.6% among the Jordanian population). Those heads of household are mainly Syrians, in which the men are either involved in the war or have been affected by it. In further detail, figure 3 shows that almost 40% of the females who are the heads of households are in the age groups of 25 to 39 years old. (figure 3)

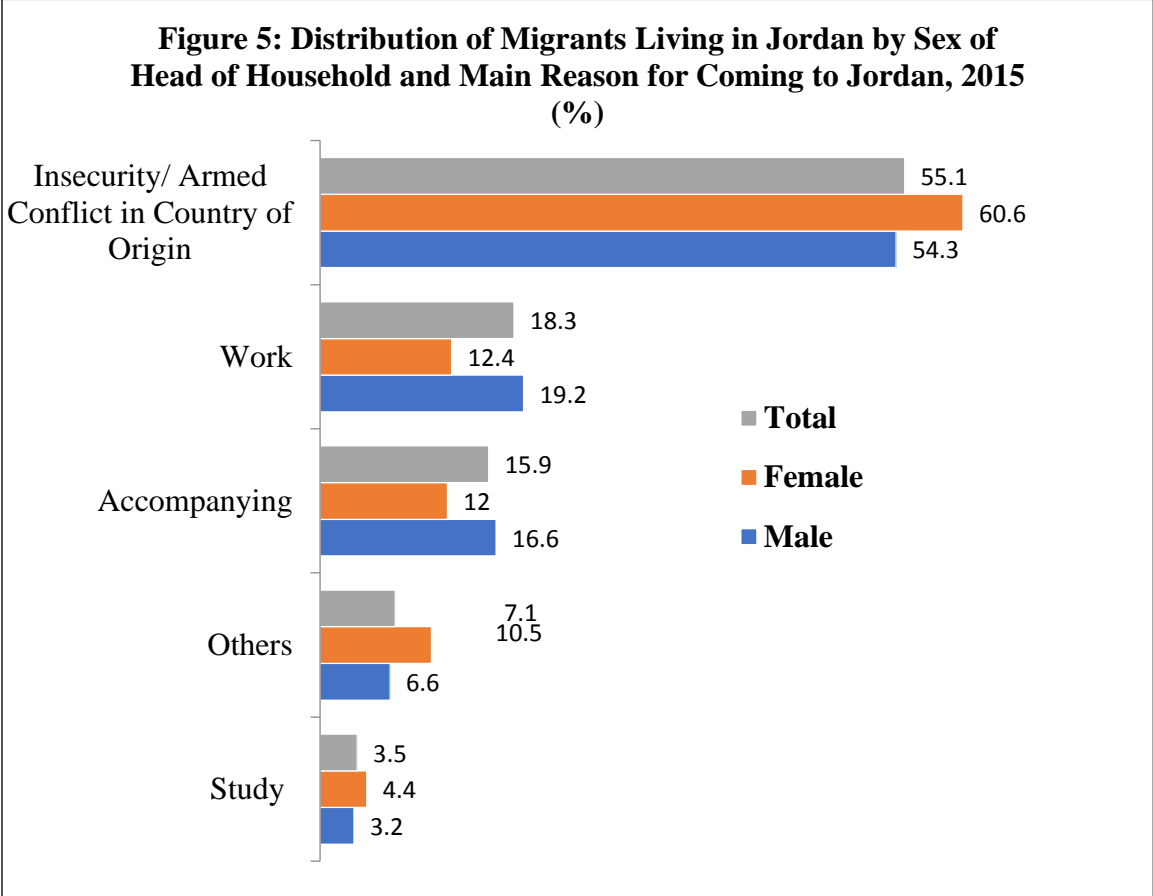


Reasons of Migration to Jordan

Today, three interrelated patterns of migration may be observed in Jordan: labor migration; forced migration; and mixed migration flows. Labor migration amount to 18% of total migrants, forced migration is around 56%, and other flows, like dependents, tourism, study, health and others, reflect 26% of total migrants in Jordan.

Figure 5 points out the distribution of migrants by sex of head of household, and the main reason for coming to Jordan. The data indicates that more than half of females and males who are the heads of their households came to Jordan because of insecurity and armed conflict in their origin countries. In addition, one out of eight migrant females who are the heads of their households and one out of five migrant males who are the heads of their households came to Jordan for work. Almost 17% of male migrants who are the heads of their households and 12 of female migrants who are the heads of their households enter Jordan as dependent persons. It is noted

that a very small percentage of migrants who are the heads of their households from both sexes arrive Jordan for studying, tourism and medication.



Migrants and Jordanian Educational Characteristics

The findings of the Census indicate that Jordanian males have higher percent of high school level and higher education compared to migrants. There is a higher percentage of illiteracy among migrant males compared to Jordanians. (Figure 6)

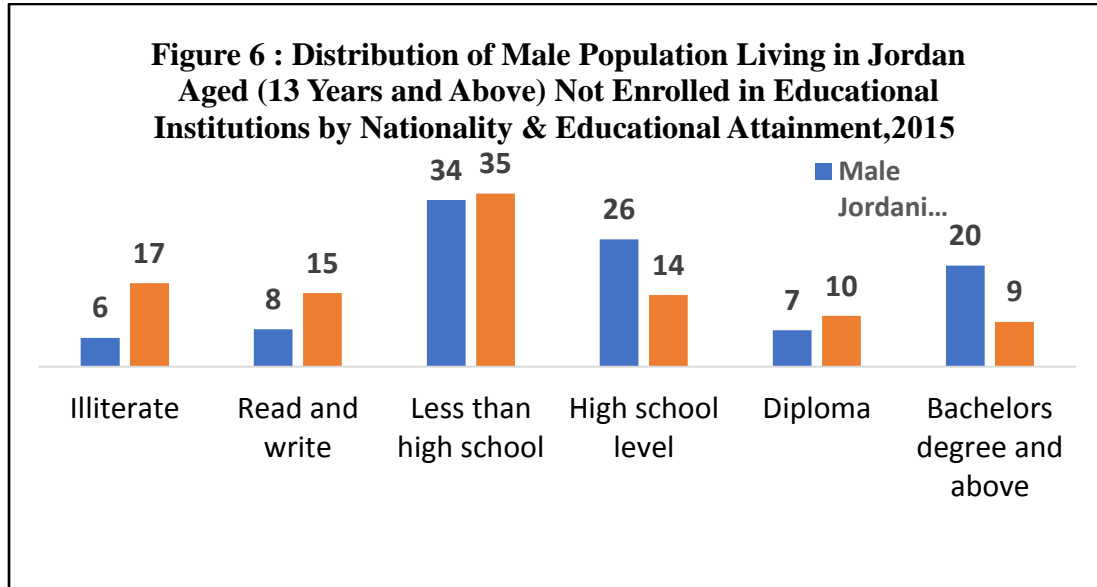
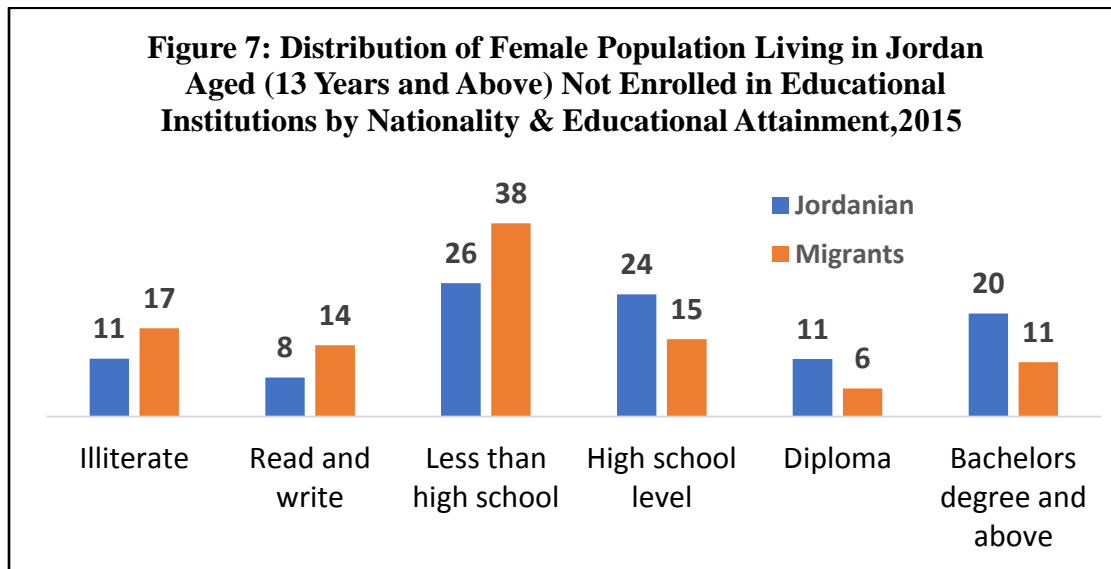
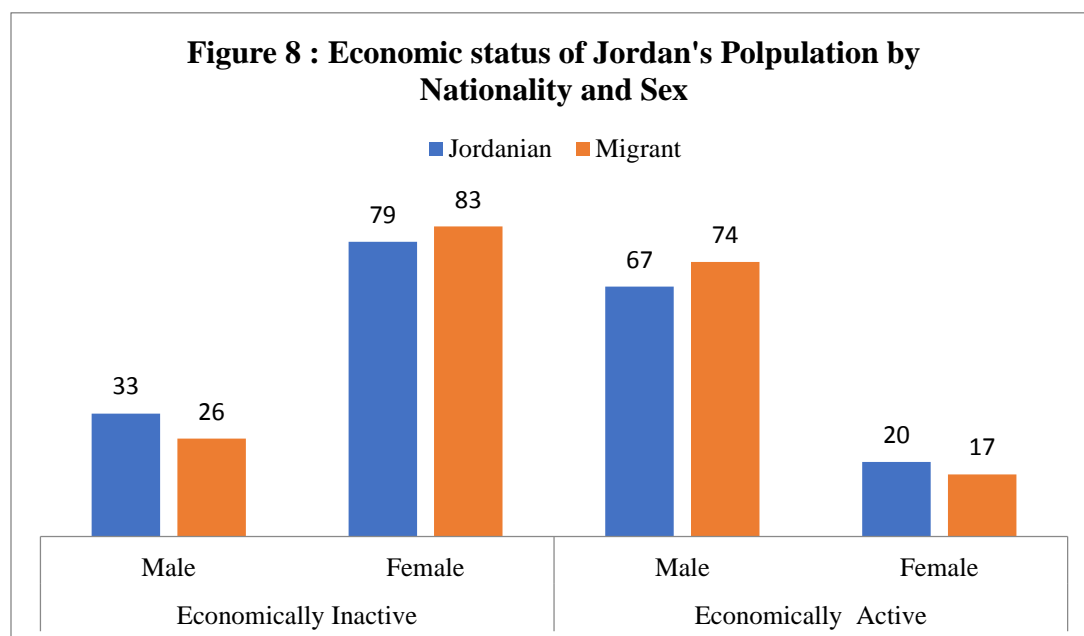


Figure 7 shows the same pattern exists among the female population in Jordan.



Migrants and Jordanian Economic Status in the Labor Market

Figure 8 outlines that female migrants are mostly economically inactive⁷, where 83 percent of migrant females are not active- (not active population are persons who were not employed or unemployed during the brief reference period and hence not currently active for diverse reasons (education, retirement, infirmity, etc) which may be specified. This comprises the following categories: students, homemakers, income recipients (pensioners, renters, etc.), and others⁸). The remaining 16% of females, who are migrants in Jordan, are considered economically active (economically active population comprises all persons above a specified age whose main activity status, as determined in terms of number of weeks or days during a long specified reference period (such as the preceding 12 months or the preceding calendar year), was employed or unemployed.⁹).



On the other hand, male migrants in Jordan are mainly active in the labor market. Additionally, figure 8 show a recognizable percentage of around 26% are inactive in the labor market.

⁷ Source: 2015 Population Census

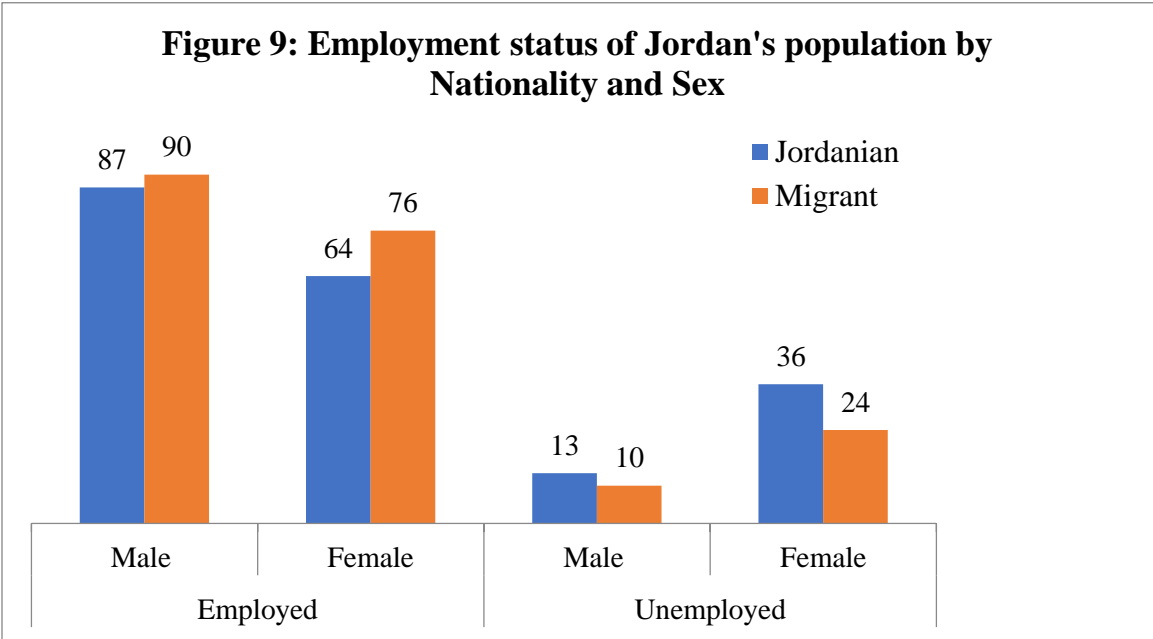
⁸ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/presentation/wcms_304686.pdf

⁹ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---americas/---ro-lima/---sro-port_of_spain/documents/presentation/wcms_304686.pdf

In regards to Jordanians and their economic status, the percentages are close to each other. Figure 8 shows that the majority of Jordanian females are economically inactive with a percentage of 79%, where the other 20% are active.

For men, the records show less percentage of Jordanian men who are active in the labor market. By comparing Jordanian population with migrants one, figure 8 also indicates that Among economically inactive females, there is little difference between Jordanians and migrants. For economically inactive males, Jordanian have a higher percentage of being economically inactive compared to migrants.

Figure 9, details the employment status by sex and nationality, for migrants. It reflects that more than 90% of the males in the labor market are employed, comparing to a lower percentage among females with a percentage of 76%.

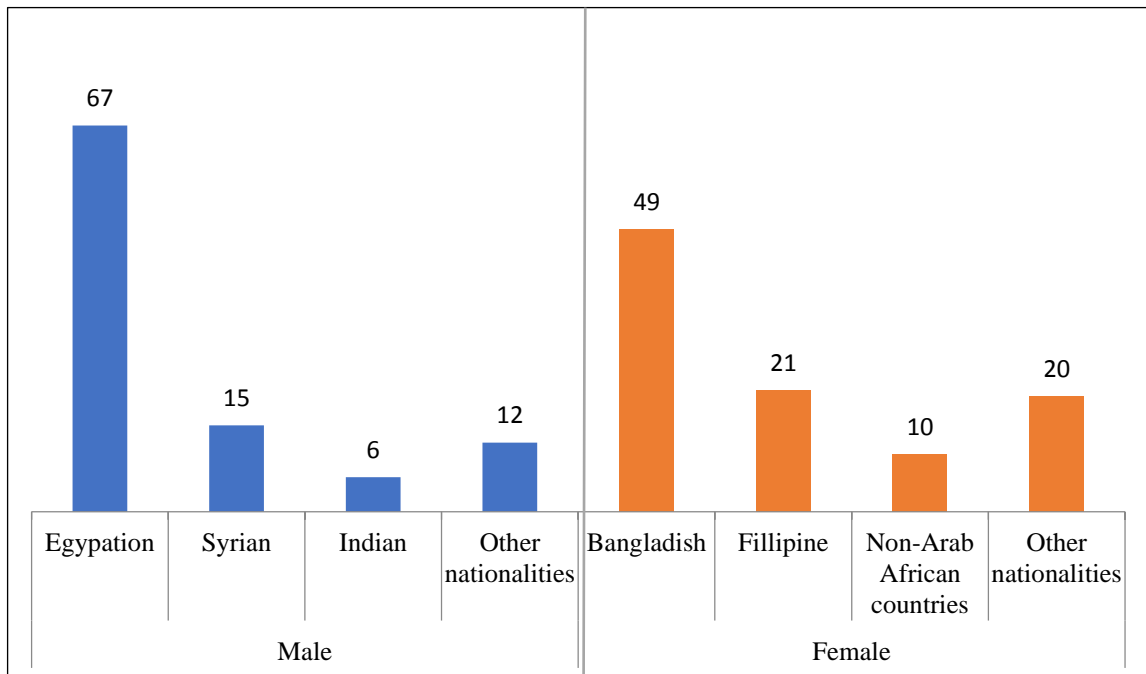


When putting side by side these figures with the Jordanians, it shows that migrants have better results than Jordanians. Jordanian males who are employed are 87%, and for females the percentage reached to 64%. It shows a negative difference for Jordanian by 3% for men, and around 9% for women.

Labor Migration in Jordan with work Permits

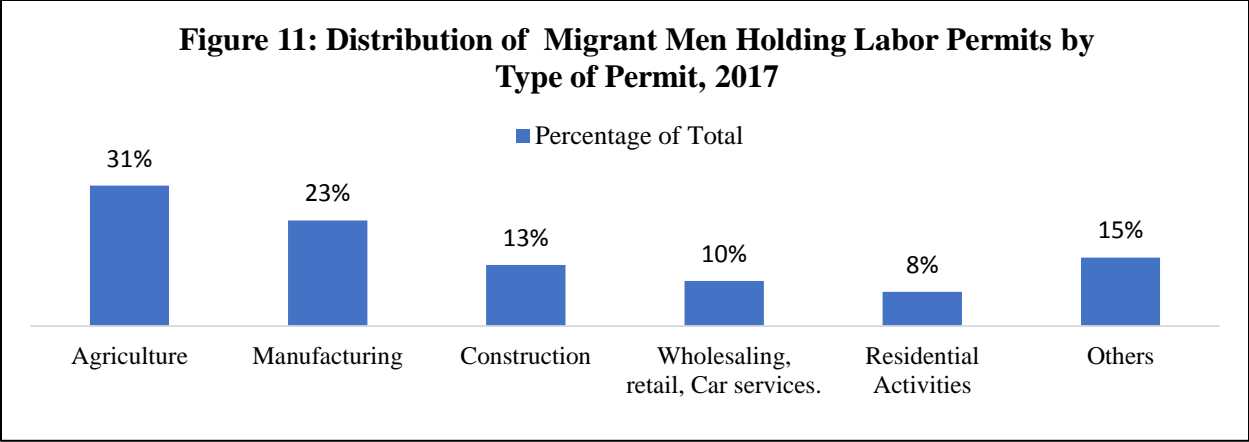
As of 2017, Migrants holding a valid labor permit stood at 340,995, the majority are men reaching a percentage of 76. Ministry of labor records displayed in figure 10 shows that the vast majority of labors permit holders were Egyptian nationals: 51 percent of all foreign workers and 67 percent of all males among them. Bangladeshis, meanwhile, made up 15 percent of all permit holders and 49 percent of females among them, followed by Filipinas and nationals of Non-Arab African countries such as Ethiopia, Uganda, Ghana and Kenya (respectively 21 and 10 percent of legal female workers).

Figure 10: Migrants holding Labor Permits by Sex and Nationality, 2017



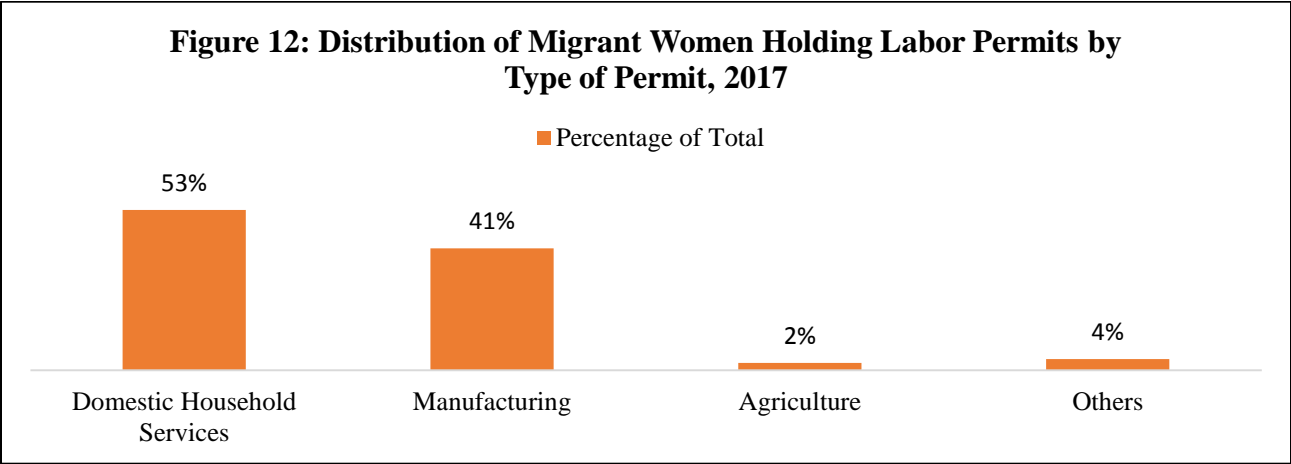
Source: Ministry of Labor, 2017

Figure 11 shows that male migrants are mostly employed at agriculture, construction, and manufacturing services, 31%, 23%, and 14% respectively.



Source: Ministry of Labor, 2017

Additionally, as shown on figure 12, females dominated household domestic work with more than half of the work permits (53% in specific), and manufacturing (apparel and garment) industries with a percentage of around 40 percent. It is also worth mentioning that the manufacturing services are also dominated mainly by Bangladeshi women (69%). Those women are often located within Qualifying Industrial Zones (QIZs) where workers are housed in compounds.



Source: Ministry of Labor, 2017

In Jordan, irregular labor for both men and women prevails; recent governmental estimates suggested that foreign laborers numbered around 800,000 as of mid-2016, including about 300,000 holders of regular working permits. Of the guest workers employed in the agricultural sector, for instance, only 40 per cent were said to have permits and of these, more than 60 per cent had purportedly moved to work illegally in other sectors.

For instance, going back to the data mentioned in Figure 12, the most feminized sector for female labor migrants is domestic work (more than 50%). It is estimated that there were 44,027 domestic workers in Jordan in 2017. However, a large number of domestic workers may be undocumented - either because they entered illegally, have overstayed or have failed to inform the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) about change of employers - means that this is a sector where the estimates are unlikely to be inaccurate. Household employment or domestic work is a major source of employment for both documented and undocumented female migrant workers.

As for Syrians, who were granted only 41,921 work permits in 2017, estimates of informal workers range between 42,000 and 150,000 (World Bank), and 160,000 to 200,000 (Jordan's Ministry of Labor, 2015). Syrians allegedly working without permits were said to be in the construction, retail and wholesale stores, restaurants, services and agriculture sectors.

Although Syrians comprise only 12% of the total number of migrant workers holding work permits (15% males of total males holding work permits, and 3% females of total females holding work permits), the presence of Syrians has introduced a new dynamic in the labour market. Challenges have emerged. Unlike other migrant workers, Syrians have their families with them and are unable to work under some of the conditions feasible for migrant workers who come to Jordan alone. Also, social tensions have emerged as the increased labour supply appears to have suppressed wages. Despite these challenges, new opportunities have emerged. First, whereas migrant workers send the bulk of their wages back home as remittances, Syrian wages are spent inside Jordan. Second, recruitment costs can be dramatically reduced because Syrians are already in the country. Third, despite generally low levels of education, many Syrians have strong entrepreneurial skills as well as skills in trades. Fourth, Syrians living in camps are available to work, including in nearby manufacturing zones.

Thus, it is believed that many migrant workers do not hold work permits for different reasons. Also, among those who hold work permits, a significant share rely on black market work permits, purchased from Jordanian sponsors without having a true employment relationship.

Despite the fact that the sponsors control the work permit process, migrants are aware that they themselves are held accountable and they see the primary benefit of work permits as protection from deportation. Although some individuals see work permits as a means to improve working conditions, many others believe that work permits affect working conditions negatively because sponsors control the worker's mobility and are able to engage in extortion.

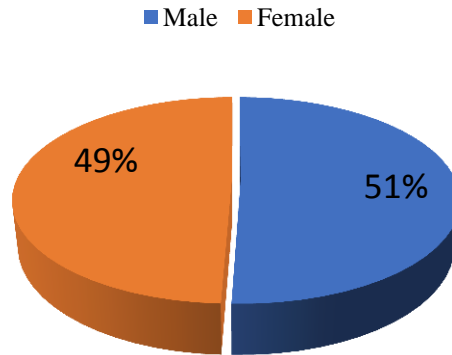
As a result of the disconnects between the principles of the system and today's economic reality, the Government's ability to monitor the migrant workforce is constrained; there are shortages of workers in some areas but excess supply in others; Jordanian workers feel that working conditions are not effectively enforced; and migrant workers feel vulnerable vis-à-vis deportation and exploitation.

Forced Migration in Jordan

The Population Census of year 2015 shows that 56% of total migrants came to Jordan as result of the armed conflicts in their countries. When those people were asked about their Refugee status, 86% confirmed that they consider themselves Refugees, 10% considered themselves as non-refugees – as they perceive that they are not in need of Government or Donor support, or for other reasons, while the remaining 4% do not know if they should be considered as refugees or not

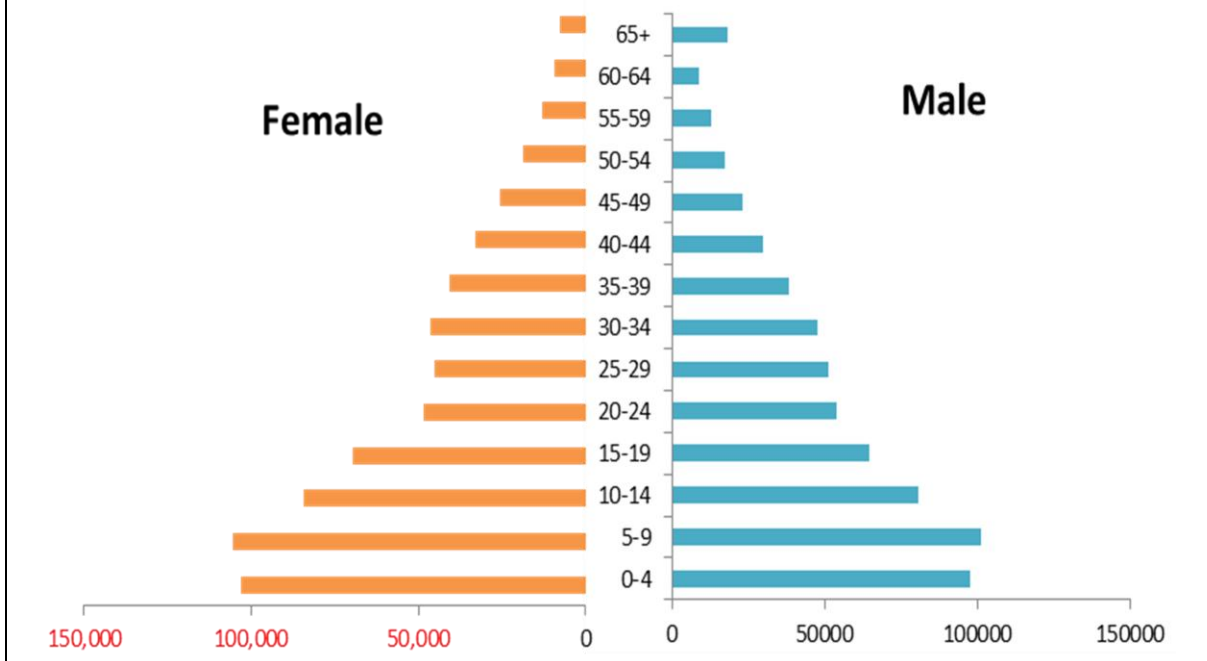
The pie chart in figure 13 represents the distribution of the 86 percent of those who considered themselves as refugees (1305350 as total, 660009 male, 645341 females); it shows an almost equal distribution of refugees in relation to their gender.

Figure 13: Percentage Distribution of Refugees by Sex, 2015

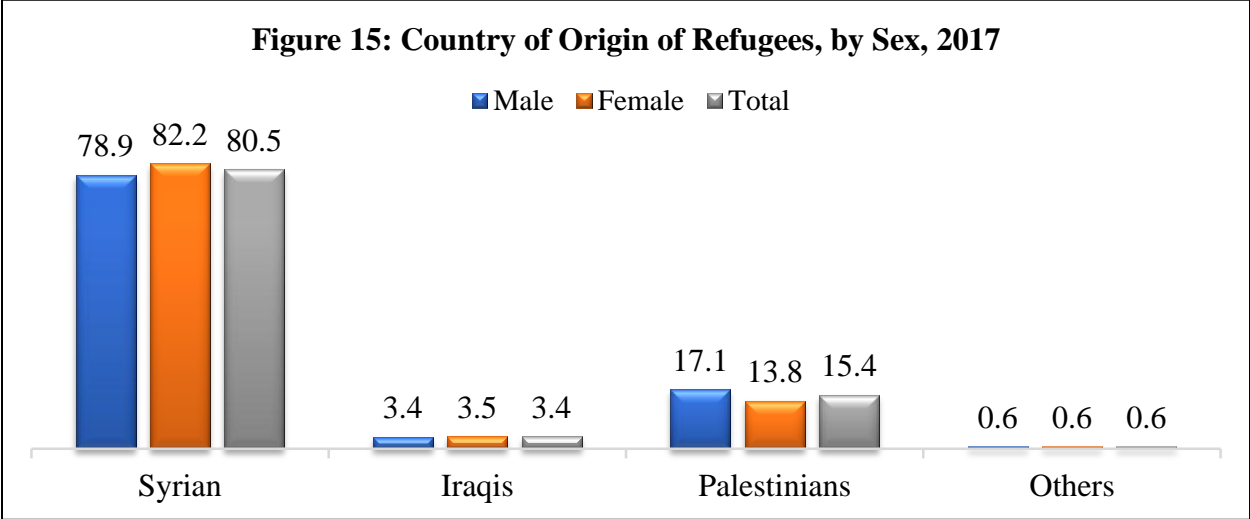


The Pyramid in figure 14 also shows a rather even distribution of the refugees by sex taking into consideration the different age groups of those refugees in Jordan. However, it can be seen that the number of women is slightly higher than men in certain age groups. This can be explained that in armed conflict situations, it is usually the females that migrate with their children while the males stay in the country in order to fight in war or they are widowed because they lost their husbands in the armed conflict.

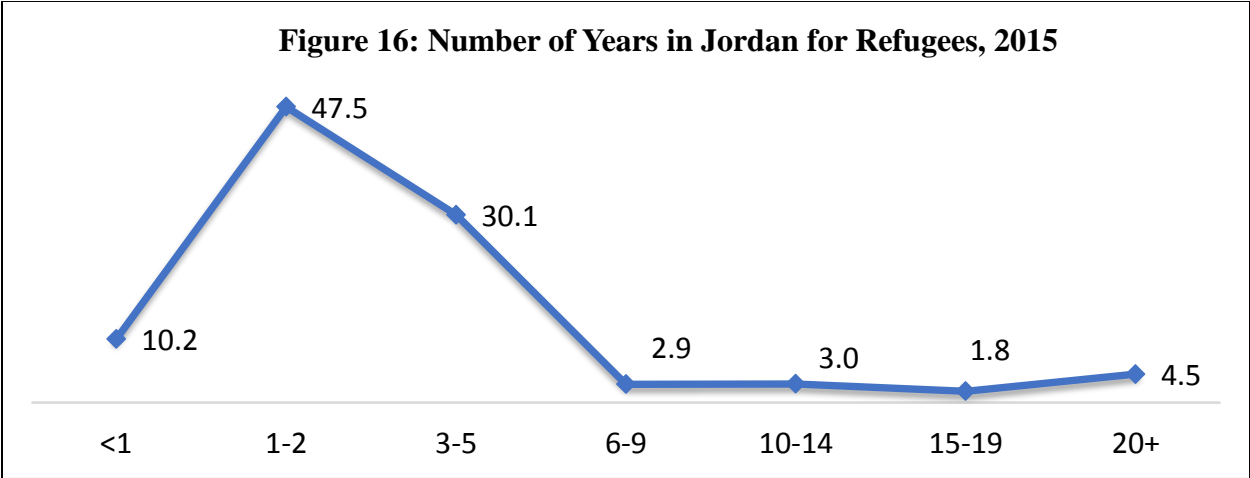
Figure 14: Refugee Population Living in Jordan by Sex and Age Group, 2015



The nationality of refugees, as detailed in figure 15, reflects that around 81% of refugees in Jordan are Syrians, where 15% are Palestinians, around 3% are from Iraq, and the rest, below 1% are from other countries, such as Yemen, Libya, and others.



Additionally, figure 16 points out that most of the refugees in Jordan, (more than 77%) have arrived to Jordan in the last 1 to 5 years (prior to 2016). Approximately, 10% have arrived in a period of fewer than 12 months only, as per the census (2015). The drawing in figure 18 below reflects these percentages in comparison with the number of years of arrival to Jordan.



The multiple diagrams below will also provide more details about the profile of refugees in Jordan in terms of their residency, education level, literacy, and coverage of health insurance.

Figure 17: Percentage Distribution of Refugee Living in Jordan by Sex and Governorate, 2015

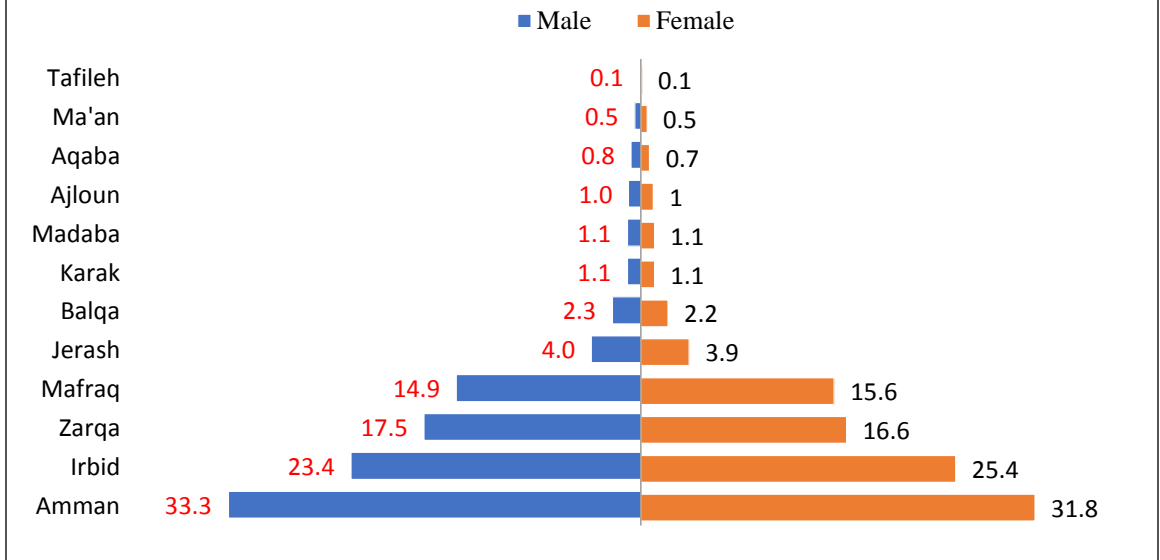
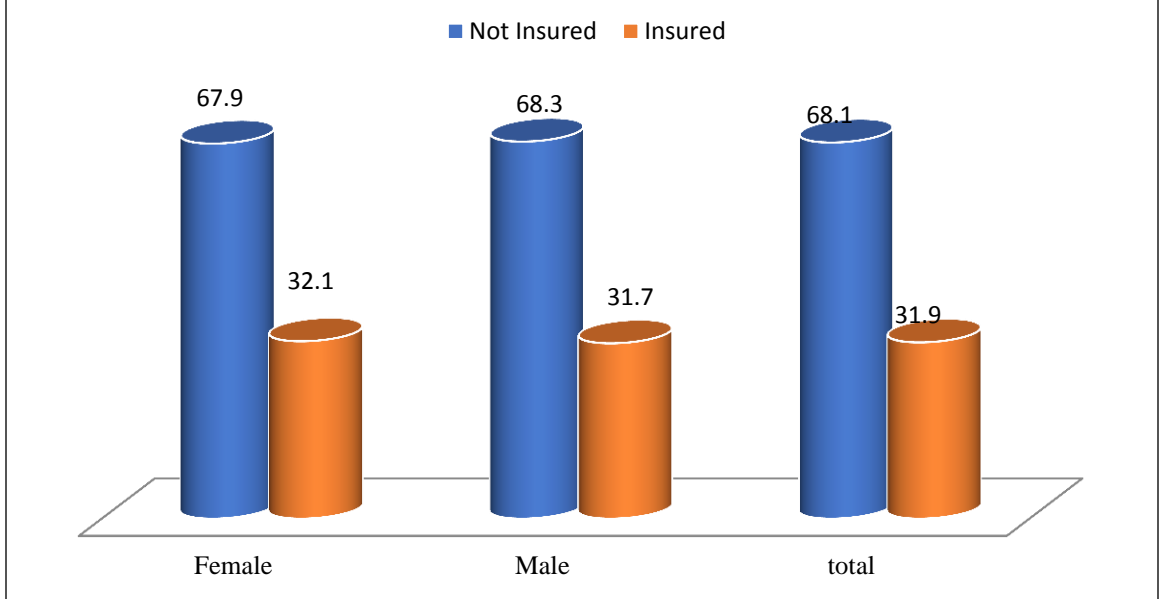
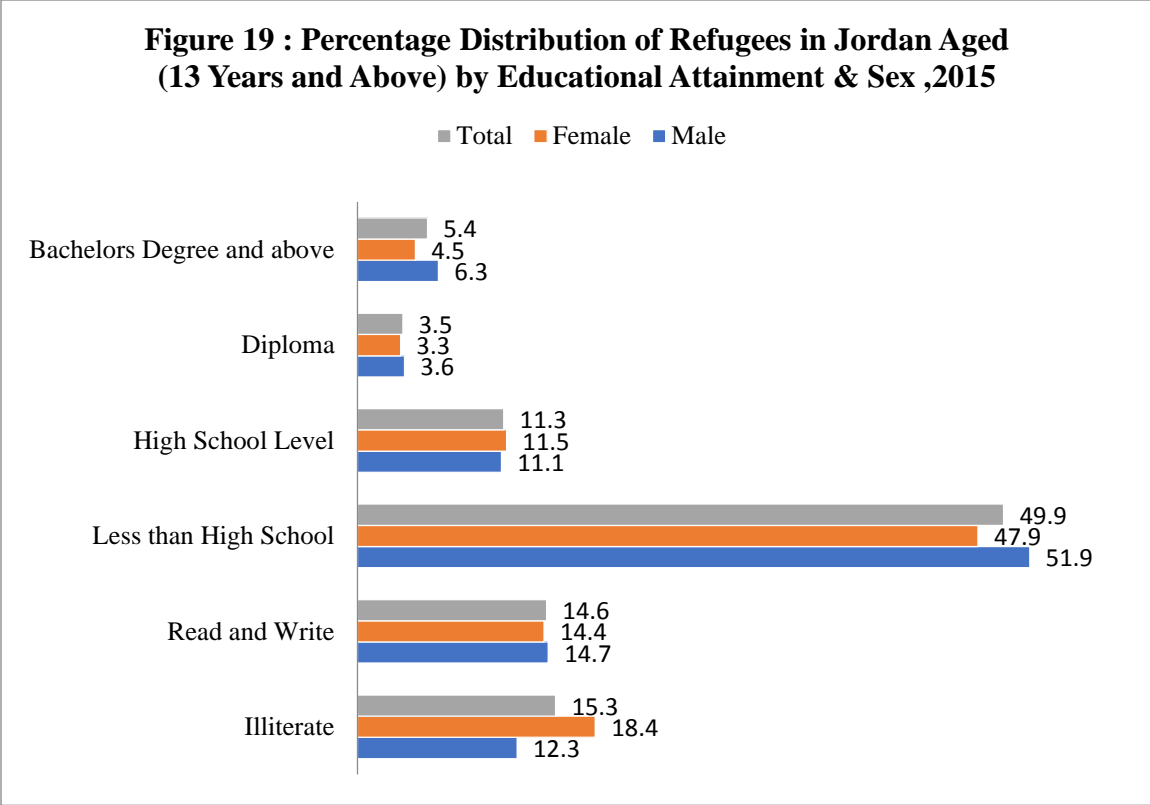


Figure 18: Percentage Distribution of Refugees in Jordan by Health Insurance Status & Sex, 2015





Based on the above diagrams, it is reflected that the large number of refugees are living in the capital city of Amman, where most of the companies, head offices, and government offices are located, as well as the highest percentage of Jordanians. This reflects the direct effect of refugees on the country and the economy as a whole.

In addition, most refugees in Jordan, more than 68%, do not have health insurance, which increases the burden on the Jordanian government and economy to provide health services, with the support of the international community.

Finally, 15% of refugees are illiterate and another 65% have less than high school education. This mainly supports that many refugees are involved in the labour market, mainly retail, wholesale, restaurants, construction, where little education is required and where most can be employed without a work permit due to lower costs on business owners and liability. It is noteworthy that no gender differentials were noticed in the above diagrams

Conclusion

Statistics on migration by gender that make it possible to identify the characteristics of migrants are scarce and hard to obtain. However, they can be evaluated with varying degrees of accuracy and consistency using census data and employment statistics. In addition, statistics on migration have their limitations. Irregular migration (that does not conform to legal requirements) is hard to document. The predominance of women migrating as “dependent spouses”, the invisibility of women’s labour (e.g. domestic labour), restrictions on their right to work and involvement in activities that are deemed to be criminal offences or against public order (e.g. sex work) mean that a higher proportion of women are statistically invisible and undocumented (UNRISD 2005). The trend towards feminization in fact affects all components of migration flows. Refugee flows, on average, consist largely of equal numbers of men and women. The importance of migration to women is rather immense. Migration can help raise women and men from the lower to the lower-middle class socio-economic ranks (ILO, 2004; De and Ratha, 2005). Many migrant women seize the opportunity to buy land or real estate with their earnings in their countries of origin (e.g. Indian and Filipina migrants). Many tend to remit more of their earnings than men, and to exercise control of their household income by ensuring the remittances are spent on food and clothes for the family back home (IOM, 2005b).

This working paper shows that women are present in all migratory flows, however a closer inspection of each channel of entry reveals very different proportions of men and women. For example, whilst women have formed an increasing proportion of all labour migration, some sectors are heavily female dominated and with fewer social and economic rights attached like the domestic and household sector.

Family-related migration (formation and reunion), although the dominant category of settlement, is also highly feminized has hardly received any attention.

The evidence presented in this paper suggests not only that the proportion of women in all migration flows is increasing, but that their modes of entry are increasingly complex and diversified.

This paper highlights the available statistical data on migration for a better understanding of gendered migrations and policy making; to understand the changing nature of contemporary gendered migrations.

To summarize, although gender disaggregated data is increasingly being collected, it is not always published or analyzed. Ease of availability of data has however, led to some extremely promising analysis. The study of labour market performance which pays due attention to gendered outcomes is one example. Some analysts have also used these diverse data sets to trace gendered adaptation profiles including employment, participation, self-employment and wages (Dustmann et al. 2003).