

**Formations of Masculinities and Gender Dynamics
in the Palestinian Colonial Context**

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About this Study

Formations of Masculinities and Gender Dynamics in the Palestinian Colonial Context is using the data collected under the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES MENA), a multi-country study coordinated by Promundo and UN Women in partnership with research partners in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine, under the UN Women Regional Programme Men and Women for Gender Equality funded by Sweden.

About the Institute of Women's Studies

The Institute of Women's Studies (IWS) at Birzeit University was established in 1994 as the first women's studies program in Palestine, and one of the only two programs in the Arab world. Since its establishment, IWS has offered different elective courses in women studies for undergraduate students. In 1998, it developed the Master's Program of Gender and Development Studies as the first graduate program of its kind in the Arab region. Later, the institute started offering a minor program in women's studies for undergraduate students.

Since its establishment as an interdisciplinary program, the Women Studies Program has been committed to teaching, researching, and gender-justice community outreach.

During the last decade, the institute has sought to realize its goals, which focused on: contributing to the development of local vision to the study of gender at both bachelor and master levels using an interdisciplinary approach; developing theoretical-analytical frameworks using critical gender-based methodologies and tools; and helping researchers to employ feminist analytical tools in analyzing the technologies of oppression and building transformatory tools.

The institute has also focused on supporting gender justice issues in the Palestinian society, within the colonial context, through academic research, in addition to engaging with feminist and social-political movements as a way to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

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ACRONYMS

GEM	Gender Equitable Men scale
ICRW	International Center for Research on Women
IMAGES	The International Men and Gender Equality Survey
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The reality of Palestinian lives in the occupied Palestinian territory (oPt) – including gender relations and gender dynamics – has been carved out by the prolonged Israeli settler-occupation and new Palestinian post-Oslo political-culture and practice. The Israeli occupation as a settler colonial occupation is characterized as an ongoing structure and not a past historical event or a conflict, or even a post-conflict situation. It controls space, resources and people not only by occupying land but also by establishing an exclusionary regime where a political economy shapes the gender formations of the occupied. It becomes a central structural framework of analysis for all elements of political, economic and social life. The Palestinian Authority, with its goal of building a state and acting as a government that provides services for the population, has created new social-political-legal structures and economy characterized as a “neoliberal” economy. It has impacted gender attitudes and perceptions within society. IMAGES MENA Palestine findings must be understood within the contextual framework of these structures and Palestinian communities’ challenges to them.

Methodology

The IMAGES MENA Palestine survey sampled 2,399 respondents (1,200 men and 1,199 women), representing urban, rural and refugee camp residents in oPt. A qualitative study, based on the combination of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews, was conducted to contextualize the survey data and to deeply explore attitudes, life histories, and practices of various groups. Two focus groups were conducted with university male and female students from various geographical areas. In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve “gender equitable men,” twelve “empowered women,” to explore the life histories that led to these attitudes. And six male ex-political prisoners, and four Palestinian wives of current and former political prisoners were interviewed to understand the effects of political captivity on transformations in gender dynamics and relations.

Attitudes towards Gender Equality

Equitable gender attitudes are constructed by various elements, including the socioeconomic background of the respondents. Respondent attitudes have varied from one issue to another, indicating that there are some achievements in the oPt. Women hold more equitable views than men. Men with higher income, more education, and whose fathers participated in feminine household work show more equitable attitudes. For instance, young educated men with good living conditions from urban areas seem to be less conservative regarding women’s work after marriage. These results demonstrate the possibility of transformation of male perceptions toward this issue among new educated generations.

Attitudes towards gendered division of labor remain common across the oPt, although women hold more equitable views than men. Around 80 percent of men and 60 percent of women agree that a woman’s most important role is to take care of the home. Men with higher income,

with more education, and whose fathers participated in feminine household work hold more equitable attitudes. Notably, there was no difference between younger and older men in terms of gender-related attitudes. There are also glimpses of more equitable views overall. Some three-quarters of women and half of men agree that a married woman should have the same right to work outside the home as her husband.

Also, 59 percent of women and 42 percent of men believe that women should have greater representation in political authority. However, most men and women agree that “women are too emotional to be leaders.”

Data indicates that more than half of male respondents (56 percent) in the West Bank and 64 percent in Gaza do not believe that “there should be more women in positions of political authority.” Among females, the proportion of those who disagree is lower than among males: around 40 percent for both the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, the lower the educational attainment of males, the stronger their disagreement with women’s participation in politics.

A higher proportion of males in Gaza (64 percent), as compared to half of males in the West Bank, disagree with the statement that “women who are in politics can never be good wives and mothers.” Women who strongly agree with the statement comprise one-fifth of respondents, and one-third of them are illiterate.

Many male respondents – and even more female respondents – were particularly likely to support women as voters, leaders of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), heads of professional syndicates, and members of parliament. As heads of states, however, women garner a higher percentage of disapproval from 63 percent of male respondents in the West Bank and 66 percent in Gaza, compared to half of female respondents in both regions. Half of men in the West Bank and Gaza disapprove of a woman becoming the head of a political party, while around 41 percent of women in the West Bank and Gaza disapprove.

Women are much more likely than men to endorse the principle of female quotas in politics and work. Almost 60 percent of men support such quotas, and 80 percent of women are in favor of quotas in parliaments. However, quotas for executive positions are opposed by 47 percent of males in the West Bank and 47 percent in Gaza, while one-fourth of women are against both in the West Bank and Gaza. Findings indicate that one-fourth of men in the West Bank and Gaza are against requiring equal pay for the same position, while one-tenth of women are against the same.

There is strong agreement among men and women that gender equality has not been achieved in Palestine, all the same. Three-quarters of men and nearly 87 percent of women agree that “we need to do more work to promote the equality of women and men.” Respondent attitudes regarding laws related to family including divorce, inheritance, “honor-killing” and gender-based violence still reflect a masculine view, despite numerous attempts by the Palestinian women’s movement and human rights groups to change existing legislation. For instance, survey data reveals that only 37 percent of men are likely to support equal inheritance and that men continue to be resistant to women’s rights to initiate divorce proceedings. Only 49 percent of men, compared to a much higher 81 percent of women, support women’s rights to initiate divorce. Both men and women tend to agree (rather controversially) that current divorce laws such as alimony, child support and housing rights favor women. A possible explanation for these findings is a low level of knowledge about family laws among

respondents. Survey data reveals that a relatively small percentage of men (26 percent) and 34 percent of women (mainly the young generation) report knowing at least one law that protects women and promotes their rights.

At the same time, there are many signs of more equitable views. For instance, 64 percent of men support a law to criminalize domestic abuse, including marital rape, and about 62 percent of men and 76 percent of women said that honor killings should be treated like any other murders. Age was a crucial element in determining respondent knowledge about laws that related to family, particularly for women. Almost all women ages 18-24 years old said that they know at least one law, and only 6.4 percent of women ages 25-34 years old said the same, while knowledge of these laws is almost non-existent among women aged 35 years or older.

Childhood

As children, the clear majority of men grew up in households where there was an asymmetric gender division of domestic labor, which is in turn strongly reflected in adult men's limited participation in domestic responsibilities. However, there is some evidence that men who grew up in households with university educated mothers or with fathers who undertook some household chores as adults undertake a slightly larger share of housework than other men. As well, men who undertook household chores in childhood are slightly more likely to participate in domestic chores as adults.

Only a small minority of men and women grew up in households where there was shared decision-making between their parents, with most of them experiencing fathers as sole decision-makers over major family matters as children. As married adults, both men and women suggest there is more (though still gender asymmetric) decision-making between husband and wife.

As boys, men experienced much higher rates of physical punishment than did women. They were also more likely to suffer more severe forms of physical punishment than did women as girls. There is some evidence that adult men who experienced persistent and severe physical punishment as children are more likely to justify domestic violence in adulthood. Similarly, men who witnessed their mothers being persistent victims of domestic abuse in childhood are more likely to justify domestic abuse of wives in adulthood. In contrast, witnessing persistent abuse of mothers in childhood leads women to take a stronger stand against wife abuse in adulthood.

Parenthood

Many fathers provide meaningful accompaniment and support to their wives during pregnancy, indicating a commitment to fatherhood. According to wives, around half of the husbands in the West Bank and two-thirds in Gaza joined their wives for some or all the visits to antenatal clinics with healthcare providers.

Men and women support parental leave for fathers, even if such leave is not yet an option for most. A substantial proportion of working fathers (almost 64 percent in the West Bank and only 20 percent in Gaza), according to both women's and men's reports, took leave from work within the first six months after the birth of their youngest or most recent child.

Fathers in Palestine do play a role in childcare, but mothers still do most of the daily childcare work. Two-thirds of men say that their role is limited to helping the wife and not sharing equal responsibilities and two-thirds of both men and women think that men's role in childcare is mainly providing financial support.

While women carry out the majority of daily childcare and childrearing, men express a desire to be more involved. One encouraging finding is that over 60 percent of fathers surveyed report talking with their child about important personal matters in their lives, pointing to an emotional intimacy not always associated with masculine expectations.

Fathers share a limited role in caregiving, especially in roles that are demanding, however the qualitative data depicts new trends of husbands adopting additional caregiving roles. This may be due to socio-economic changes occurring within Palestine as more men and women receive higher education, feelings of responsibility from men (especially those raising daughters), or political prisoners who were absent for a while and then want to share responsibility so that they become equal in love and care for their children.

The data showed that mothers and fathers report using high levels of physical discipline with their children. Yet only half of men, compared to two-thirds of women, use physical violence to discipline their children; this could be a result of the greater time women spend on childcare than men. Among both men and women, parents with lower wealth status are significantly more likely to report using physical discipline than other parents.

Men that had been imprisoned by the Israeli security forces pointed to the extraordinary ability of women to bear double or triple the usual responsibilities when they and other men were imprisoned. The ability of women to carry out this larger burden gave many men greater respect and appreciation for women and may have been the driver for some men to carry out commonly female household tasks, such as feeding their children, bathing them, or changing babies' diapers. In the cases of political prisoners' families, the change in women's roles during the husband's absence was met with more appreciation and a reconsideration of women's abilities to perform different roles, while at the same time leading to a reevaluation of their domestic tasks; this is reflected in the willingness of many ex-prisoners to share household tasks with women.

Marriage, Divorce, and Relationship Dynamics in Adult Private Life

Women and men hold different perceptions about a number of marriage-related issues. In general, women tend to hold more flexible views compared to men, however, the data presents a mixed picture. For instance, never-married men have no problems with marrying an older woman (68 percent), as well as marrying a woman of a different religion (37 percent), while men were less likely to marry a divorced woman (26 percent). Women were likely to be very conservative regarding marrying a man of different religion (only 6 percent agreed), but around one-third of them has no problem marrying a younger man, and finds it even more acceptable to marry a divorced man (41 percent). Newly, recent generations prefer to share marriage costs and reduce marriage costs in comparison with previous generations.

There were significant differences between men's and women's attitudes regarding who makes decisions around arranging and planning one's marriage. About 44 percent of men said

that they had the greatest say in their own marriage arrangements, compared to only 5 percent of women. About 25 percent of men and 39 percent of women said that their marriage decisions were shared between the husband and wife. Furthermore, most men (88 percent) and women (82 percent) think that marriage decisions should ultimately be made by the couple, not the family. Men still have great say on decisions related to women, including women's daily mobility and work. Some 42 percent of respondent women indicated that their husbands determined their work status. Yet, data indicates a positive change towards more shared decision-making between men and women. Some 30-40 percent of men said that both husband and wife had the final say in making family decisions.

Women's participation in higher education has been increasing in Palestine, as has women's participation in the paid labor market, compared to previous decades. Still, the division of work within the household falls sharply along gendered lines. This can be linked to the worsening political and economic situation under Israeli occupation. Women report high levels of involvement in nearly all types of domestic work, but men mostly concentrate on activities outside the home. Men whose fathers participated in what is perceived as female household work, as well as men who were taught to do this work as children, are far more likely to contribute in these ways within their own marriages.

Physical Health and Wellbeing

Not only do men use health services less frequently than women, they also tend to use them primarily in cases of urgent medical need rather than for prevention and self-care. Men in unstable work are twice as likely to have workplace injuries than do men in permanent full-time employment.

Men and women expressed very high levels of human insecurity, including fears for their own and their families' physical safety, as well their families' future. Men in Gaza are suffering higher levels of acute human insecurity than are their West Bank counterparts.

In terms of psychosocial health, high numbers of men and women expressed experiencing feelings of unhappiness and depression. Women consistently expressed greater levels of unhappiness and depression than men, although this may be related to gender norms that inhibit men from expressing emotional weakness and vulnerability.

Nearly all respondents are fearful about their personal or family safety. Furthermore, some 70 percent of women and 78 percent of men also worry about not being able to provide their families with daily life necessities. The patterning of these fears and worries show they are directly linked to the experiences of violence and insecurity that is an outcome of living under sustained military occupation.

Gender Based Violence

Nearly one in five men (17 percent) said they had perpetrated any act of physical violence against a female partner; 21 percent of women report having experienced such violence. Men who witnessed violence against their mothers as children and men who experienced physical violence in their childhood homes are statistically significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships.

Political Violence

Most respondents, 65 percent of men and 55 percent of women, report one or more forms of occupation-related violence and experiences within the past five years. Men were more likely than women to report losing land, being harassed by soldiers or settlers, being detained, being injured, having difficulty accessing health services, and having lost opportunities due to the occupation. Occupation-related violence and other experiences are very common among respondents of all genders.

INTRODUCTION

To understand masculinity or manhood in a context of protracted crisis and situation of war, conflict, or settler-colonialism such as Palestine, it is important to understand it first in a global context. Contemporary globalization has become a source for the reconstruction of, and a prerequisite for, understanding local and regional masculinity.¹

Local situated lives have been and are powerfully influenced by the geopolitical struggles of the South against empires, global markets, multinational corporations and labor migration. Change in masculine gender systems historically are caused exogenously. Without those external factors, the systems stably reproduce.² Economic changes and pressures in the last two decades have resulted in a decline of the welfare state, which in turn expanded the gap between the rich and the poor and caused displacement, trauma and devastation for people in different regions co-opted in the global neoliberal market including the Middle East.³ These struggles, which have mobilized large sectors of the South against globalization, have not succeeded yet in changing and reaching a fair economic system that can save people from suffering and exploitation and reconstruct masculinity in a positive manner.

Reconstruction of masculinities varies in different cultures; even understanding those masculinities varies greatly, with diversity in both masculinity and femininity.⁴ The unevenness of any change in reconstructing masculinity is due to the internal complexity of gender relations reflected by both the division of labor and gender dynamics within the family.⁵ It is observed that in any given cultural context, masculinity is never singular. Various models of masculinity coexist, inform one another, are hierarchical and compete for hegemony. Yet, although masculinities are collective, they are enacted and sustained by individuals, and empowered by groups, institutions, culture and the mass media. Readings on masculinity demonstrate that there is no mechanical link between masculinity and men.⁶ Men and women together enact masculine identities, images and ideologies. However, at the level of individual experience, these are likely to affect men more acutely.⁷

In the last two decades, globalization has opened up new markets for women by newly feminizing certain jobs, which has generated employment opportunities for women and in turn

1. Malcolm Waters, "Patriarchy and Viriarchy: An Exploration and Reconstruction of Concepts of Masculine Domination," *Sociology* 7 (1989): 143-162.

2. Ibid.

3. R. W. Connell, "Globalization, Imperialism and masculinities", in *Handbook of studies on men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and R. W. Connell (United Kingdom: Sage Publication, 2005), 71-89.

4. Demetriou Z. Demetrakis "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (June 2001): 337-361.

5. R. W. Connell, "Globalization, Imperialism and masculinities", in *Handbook of studies on men and Masculinities*, ed. Michael S. Kimmel, Jeff Hearn, and R. W. Connell (United Kingdom: Sage Publication, 2005), 71-89.

6. Amalia Sa'ar and Taghreed Yahia-Younis, "Masculinity in Crisis: The Case of Palestinians in Israel," *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, Gender and Diversity in the Middle East and North Africa* 35, no. 3 (December 2008): 305-323.

7. Demetriou Z. Demetrakis, "Connell's Concept of Hegemonic Masculinity: A Critique," *Theory and Society* 30, no. 3 (June 2001): 337-361.

altered divisions of labor and gender dynamics within the family. At the same time, the classical definition of masculinity and its male breadwinner has been affected, transforming certain gender dynamics and opening power relations up for negotiation.

Any understanding of the construction of masculinities in Palestine must incorporate the context of settler-colonial occupation and recognize the area's uniqueness in the region. Palestine has experienced, and still is experiencing, an Israeli settler colonial occupation. Such an occupation – like other colonial occupations – seeks control of space, resources and people not only by occupying land but also by establishing an exclusionary and apartheid regime. This political economy shapes the gender formations of the occupiers and the occupied. The prolonged Israeli occupation and continuous aggression and discrimination have continuously aimed to uproot and transfer the population, which radically reconstructed masculinities and affected various social, political and economic institutions – including gender identities and relations within the household. Displacement, dispossession, economic deprivation and militarism have impaired the social fabrics and identity of the society – particularly in Gaza and East Jerusalem – and accordingly impacted the content and meaning of masculinity through rapid changes in gender formations.⁸

As such, this report analyzes the IMAGES data on Palestinian masculinity, part of a regional study, within the context of colonial occupation. In Palestine, as in other similar countries either in conflict and war or in countries where states are either failing or too weak to perform independently, other communal structures become the main sources of social, political and economic security and stability, (in)forming gender identities accordingly. No source of support is as central to Palestinian life as the family. Yet, addressing masculinity and gender attitudes, roles, and perceptions within the Palestinian family exposes a paradoxical relationship articulated in both conflictive and cooperative relations.⁹ Cooperation between family members and different households is a means of solidarity in crisis, enhancing cohesion and steadfastness. Conflict in the family exists between genders and generations within the household, caused by an imbalance of gender power expressed in terms of roles and responsibilities, gender attitudes and decision-making. When an economy deteriorates, mass unemployment and poverty expand. Characteristic of the Palestinian economy under a neoliberal economy, the situation undermines masculinities identified with work and promotes new gender roles for women. As a result, women attempt to find informal coping strategies or join the labor market to protect the family. It has been clearly shown through different studies that a decline in the power of a man's wage, including in numbers and in the proportion of "male" skilled and unskilled jobs, and the gradual rise in "female" employment in services, changes the traditional meaning of masculinity as breadwinner and creates a new meaning for women's work.¹⁰

Resistance against occupation in Palestine functions as an arena of gender re-formulations, creating diverse masculinities and femininities. Within the longstanding occupation,

8. Patrick Wolfe, *Settler Colonialism and the Transformation of Anthropology: The Politics and Poetics of an Ethnographic Event*. (New York: Cassell, 1999).

9. Amartya Sen, "Gender and Cooperative Conflict," in *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, ed. Irene Tinker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 123-149.

10. Eileen Kuttab, "The Paradox of Women's Work: Coping, Crisis, and Family Survival," in *Living Palestine, Family Survival, Resistance, and Mobility under Occupation*, ed. Lisa Taraki (Syracuse University Press, 2006).

Palestinians maintained cooperation and solidarity as elements of survival and steadfastness. The collective resistance for survival required unity across gender, class, and generation. For instance, in the different historical stages of the conflict, the Palestinian family has shown its strength and ability to preserve coherence, harmony and solidarity in the face of the continuous discriminatory occupation measures, including those related to economic hardships.¹¹ Like any other family, the Palestinian family endures the same paradoxical relationship of conflict and cooperation when it comes to gender relations within the family.

According to the Lebanese sociologist Halim Barakat in his book on Arab society, he describes the Arab family as the basic unit of production and the center for socio-economic activities. He emphasizes the fact that it evolves into a patriarchal pyramid that is hierarchical (particularly in respect to gender and age) and an extended institution.¹² However, this description cannot be generalized for all families and at all historical stages. For instance, currently, most families in Palestine are nuclear families (and not extended). They are regarded as patriarchal mainly in terms of the father's or husband's power and control over female members of the immediate family, and in its cohesion and solidarity. This means in turn that the scope and nature of conflict within the family is determined by its own relation to colonial power, socio-economic situation, and the family's openness to social transformation vis-a-vis gender equality.

Solidarity in order to achieve resistance and survival has not generally resulted in radical transformation of gender relations due to the family's inequitable gender power relations.¹³ In such paradoxical conditions, certain aspects of patriarchal attitudes remain due to continuous resistance, while others necessary for coping and survival are transformed (such as women's employment in formal or informal economic activities). More equitable relations between husband and wife or shared parenting roles can happen in middle-class educated families who have secure jobs and higher education levels. This is not to say that it cannot happen in lower classes or other social categories in society. Families with male and female members who are activists politically or socially have the potential to change the parameters of power relations. The equilibrium between what characteristics have changed and what needs to be maintained creates a formula for preservation and coherence of the Palestinian family under colonial occupation. The Palestinian family is dynamic: it can transform but chooses to preserve certain cultural practices to safeguard its coherence, political and cultural identity as part of its resistance strategy and legacy. However, radical transformation of gender relations as an impact of globalization is not a choice for most Palestinians, due to the ongoing crisis. The subsequent need for solidarity represents a defense mechanism against Israelization, which is a source and extension of globalization.

The IMAGES MENA data on Palestine requires a proper foundation in identifying and understanding masculinities within Palestinian family life under Israeli occupation. Class, education, political affiliation, and gender relations are all factors that affect and define masculinity. Masculinity has no universal definition, nor is it similar in all contexts.

11. Ibrahim Wade Ata, *West Bank Palestinian Family* (London: Kegan Paul International, 1986).

12. Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State*, (University of California Press, 1993).

13. Amartya Sen, "Gender and Cooperative Conflict," in *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, ed. Irene Tinker (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 123-149.

Prior studies show that Palestinian women's resistance against the many effects of occupation and their resilience and ability to cope with continuous crises have served to preserve the coherence of Palestinian families during men's absence as a result of imprisonment or martyrdom by Israeli forces, or due to other reasons like employment or emigration.¹⁴ In this sense, maintaining commitment to certain communal institutions, such as the extended family or a political party, even with their gendered nature, becomes a vital survival strategy and a means for resistance that indirectly enforces patriarchy. At the same time, acts of resistance and struggles for freedom and social justice necessitate social transformation and call for the questioning of social, economic and political forms of discrimination and oppression. The strength and depth of any social transformation contributes to the strength of the collective resistance movement. When restrictions on mobility, house demolitions, violence or arrests affect male family members disproportionately and curtail their ability to protect and provide for the family, women and girls also become restrained from living a normal life. They are socially isolated and economically insecure, hence more vulnerable. Women find themselves thrust into new roles along with their daily resistance against occupation policies. These new roles contribute to women's political and economic empowerment. Women now make strategic decisions and consolidate resources, creating new gender roles and responsibilities. For example, women may engage in informal economic activities to generate income or find financial assistance through different welfare organizations to support the family. Yet other women have no resources or skills and have deepened their dependence on the extended family. These women are perpetuating collective solidarity within the family while reproducing and affirming patriarchy as a defensive and protective mechanism, resulting in further marginalization and vulnerabilities. Here, solidarity becomes a double-edged sword: it can protect the family economically at one level, but at the same time deprive women from attaining their gender identity and independence.

History indicates that when civil society organizations like the women's movement have been powerful, they enhance women's independence and gender identity by creating the circumstances for women's empowerment. For instance, the democratization of the national struggle in the 1970-80s created new mass-based, grassroots organizations that reached and supported women in marginalized rural areas and refugee camps and produced alternative spaces of support for women outside the family.¹⁵ These organizations have opened nurseries, income-generating projects, and new spaces in the form of women's decentralized committees. They supported women and helped decrease their dependency on the extended family. They generated employment opportunities and raised women's political and gender awareness of their rights. They also opened spaces and linked them to networks, empowering women to take new roles and exposed women to new norms.¹⁶ By advocating for, and mobilizing communities and neighborhoods, they provided informal services that enhanced community

14. Eileen Kuttab, "Palestinian Women in the Intifada Liberation Within Liberation," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (Spring 1993).

15. Lisa Taraki, "The development of political consciousness among Palestinians in the occupied territories 1967-1987," in *Intifada: Palestine at the crossroads*, ed. Jammal R.Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1991).

16. Eileen Kuttab, "Palestinian Women in the Intifada Liberation Within Liberation," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15, No. 2 (Spring 1993).

steadfastness and survival.¹⁷ Although women's new political and economic roles were part of the strategy for steadfastness and resistance, they also remained an extension of their traditional roles. Their exposure to different social and political spaces outside the home have had a positive impact. In this context, it is worth mentioning that the absence of the breadwinner has also affected young boys' roles and responsibilities, as some were driven unexpectedly to informal economic activities or the labor market to support their poor families. This is especially true in large families whose female members are unemployable due to limited skills and reproductive responsibilities.

After the signing of the Oslo peace agreement between the PLO and Israel in 1993, the work of the women's committees became irrelevant to the new environment. The Oslo period introduced a new political and economic phase. On one hand, the occupation has intensified its policies of land confiscation and settlement expansion, deeply impacting agricultural land and water resources and limiting productive sectors in developing self-reliance or a resistance economy. On the other hand, the Palestinian Authority (PA) merged into the global neoliberal economy conditioned by the World Bank and adopted a market economy, deepening unemployment and poverty, and privatizing and professionalizing social services, mainly health and education. This has resulted in further impoverishment of vulnerable groups. The professionalization of most local organizations, including women's groups, into non-governmental organizations (NGOs) resulted in further marginalization of women's grassroots and the strengthening of the elite leadership. Professionalization disconnected the leadership from the grassroots and misrepresented their needs and priorities, while responding to new funding policies imposed by international donors.¹⁸

The phenomenon of "professionalization" or "NGOization" of civil society organizations¹⁹ and the social and economic deterioration caused by the neoliberal policies of the PA, including downgrading productive sectors resulted in a deepening poverty, particularly among women. Unemployment and poverty increased due to the new economic models, which were unable to create enough employment opportunities for the national labor market and added new challenges and pressures for women. One example is the increase in women's participation in informal market activities, which is largely secondary, seasonal and lacking in social protection. As such, women's work was invisible and exploited since it had no major impact on the division of labor within the family, nor did it have any impact on social attitudes and perceptions towards gender equality.

It is important to mention that women's participation in the labor market has not exceeded 17 percent on average, the lowest in the region, due to the gendered labor market. Similarly, women's limited representation in the political system has barely met the 20 percent quota for women expressed in the third amendment of the Palestinian Elections Law endorsed by the Palestinian Authority in 2005. Few gains have been made in the last decade despite this overall poor showing. For instance, in 2014 the percentage of women working in the formal labor

17. Islah Jad, *Women and Politics* (Birzeit, West Bank: Institute of Women's Studies Birzeit University, 2000).

18. Eileen Kuttab, "Palestinian Women's Organizations: Global Co-option and Local Contradictions," *Cultural Dynamics* 20, no.2 (2008): 99-117.

19. Ibid; Islah Jad, "The NGOisation of Arab Women's Movement," in *Feminisms in Development: Contradictions, Contestations and Challenges*, ed. Andrea Cornwall, Elizabeth Harrison and Ann Whitehead (New York: Zed Books, 2007).

force rose to 19.4 percent, the highest in the last decade. Other statistics reflect gains but also widespread inequality: looking at some statistical data from PCBS 2016, the unemployment rate among women reached 44.7 percent, compared to 24 percent among men. Moreover, 11 percent of households are female-headed households who receive very limited support from civil society organizations and the PA, thus increasing their vulnerability as women. Some 21.4 percent of women were married before the age of 18, a coping strategy adopted in order to decrease financial burdens on the family. Half of women with higher education are unemployed and only 21 percent of local council members are women: 12.9 percent of legislative council (national parliament) members, 15.6 percent of judges, 16.7 percent of prosecutors, and 5 percent of ambassadors. There was one female governor in 2010 and five women cabinet ministers out of 22 in 2009. Lastly, 42.6 percent of employees in the public sector are women but occupy mainly the lowest paid jobs.²⁰ The scene at home is similar: one-third of women experience domestic violence. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) survey on domestic violence conducted in 2011, 37 percent of women are subjected to violence, 33.5 percent to physical violence, 58.6 percent to psychological violence and 11.8 percent to sexual violence. In Gaza, the percentage of women subjected to domestic violence of any form is 51 percent, compared to 30 percent in the West Bank, indicating a serious comparative difference in conditions for women in the Gaza Strip.²¹

This overview gives the reader an understanding of the complexities and risks that Palestinian families' face. The IMAGES report, which generated new data on masculinity and the deconstruction of gender attitudes and perceptions towards it, ought to take into consideration the unique position of the Palestinian society in crisis when compared with other countries in the region. The IMAGES Masculinity report on Palestine is a first in terms of its subject and its methods, combining a quantitative survey and qualitative methods of research. The regional *International Men and Gender Equality Survey – Middle East and North Africa* (IMAGES MENA) initiated by Promundo and financed and supervised by UN Women is broad in scope, providing a gender lens on the lives of men in their different roles as sons, husbands and fathers, at home and at work and in public and private life. The study was conducted by a team in the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University in Palestine. A summary of selective findings on Palestine was published earlier as part of the regional report produced by different regional teams from Egypt, Morocco and Lebanon and it includes a chapter on Palestine that analyses highlights of the survey findings. The study's wealth of quantitative and qualitative findings is presented in detail in this separate country report.

20. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). *Press conference on the occasion of the International Women's Day on Palestinian women situation*, on 8 March 2016 by director Ms. Ula Awad. 2016

21. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Territory - 2011*. Ramallah, Palestine, 2011.

CHAPTER ONE

Methodology

IMAGES MENA Palestine is part of a regional study on masculinity conducted in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Palestine. The Palestine survey consisted of a sample of 2,399 respondents (1,200 men and 1,199 women) representing urban, rural and refugee camp residents. Although 59 of the original families (20 from Gaza Strip and 39 from the West Bank, mostly from Jerusalem) refused to respond due to special circumstances, these families were substituted with others, keeping the response rate for both men and women at 100 percent. The age group interviewed was between 18-59 years old.

Sampling Frame and Design

The sample was a random representative sample based on a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling methodology prepared according to the PCBS sampling framework. The framework for the sample relies on official statistics from the PCBS, particularly the data of the 2007 census in addition to population projections. The sample represented both the West Bank including East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, and included different socio-economic groups.

A Kish table was used to randomly select the eligible participants (men/women) aged 18-59 years to be interviewed from each household. A total of 1,200 men and 1,199 women were successfully interviewed during the survey. As presented in Table 1.1, out of 2,459 households, 2,399 households were successfully interviewed, representing a response rate of 97.6 percent. Out of those households interviewed, a total of 1,640 were in urban areas, 460 in rural areas and 300 in refugee camps, with a lower response rate in urban (96.5 percent) than rural areas (100 percent) and refugee camps (100 percent.)

A total of 2,027 men were identified as eligible to be interviewed, of which 1,200 men were selected: 820 from urban areas, 230 from rural areas and 150 from refugee camps. A total of 2,446 women were identified as eligible to be interviewed, of which 1,200 were selected: 820 women in rural settings, 230 in urban areas and 150 in refugee camps.

TABLE 1.1				
Results of Household and Individual Interviews				
Number of households and respondents, number of interviews, and response rates, according to residence				
Household Interviews	Urban	Rural	Camps	Total
Households selected	1,699	460	300	2,459
Households occupied	1,699	460	300	2,459
Households interviewed	1,640	460	300	2,400
Household response rate ¹ (%)	96.50	100	100	97.60
Interviews with Respondents				
Number of eligible men	1,347	392	288	2,027
Number of eligible men interviewed	820	230	150	1,200
Eligible men response rate ² (%)	60.90	58.70	52.10	59.20
Number of eligible women	1,675	455	316	2,446
Number of eligible women interviewed	819	230	150	1,199
Eligible women response rate ² (%)	99.98	100	100	99.99
¹ <i>Households interviewed/households occupied</i>				
² <i>Respondents interviewed/eligible respondents</i>				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Survey Methods and Procedures

The separate questionnaires for men and women were originally prepared by the Promundo team in English, and then adapted for Palestine, excluding questions that either were not relevant to the Palestinian situation or were culturally sensitive and/or had security connotations. Other questions were added that are important to Palestinians: questions about marriage and divorce, migration, honor and honor-related crimes, sexual harassment, gender equality and the law, and women in public life. A section on political violence was added to the Palestinian study.

Some questions were also modified to suit the cultural sensitivities of the country. For instance, questions investigating gender attitudes regarding safe abortion on demand, consensual sex between unmarried people, and civil marriage were not included in the Palestinian survey. The overall survey was based on several standardized instruments on gender-based violence, gender attitudes, childhood experiences, fatherhood and parenting, etc. and partly references the Norwegian *Gender Equality and Quality of Life* survey. The questionnaire followed a standard format with core themes and sections for all regions for comparative analysis. The Institute of Women Studies at Birzeit University that conducted the research translated the questionnaire into Arabic. The report for Palestine also contained a final section on political violence to reflect the impact of occupation on gender attitudes and practices.

The survey in Palestine was a paper questionnaire administered face-to-face by a large team of field workers conducted and supervised by the Development Studies Center at Birzeit University. The team consisted of 56 field workers in the West Bank (36 females and 20 males) and 20 in Gaza (13 female and 7 male.) A four-day training session was conducted by a Promundo specialist prior to data collection in Ramallah and Gaza, each with the cooperation and supervision of the Development Studies Center. The training addressed the following issues: gender, violence, ethical procedures in gender and masculinities research, ways of addressing sensitive questions and responding to respondents in distress. In case they asked questions or there was any concern about possible suicide attempts, respondents were offered contact information for local service providers able to provide care and support.

Prior to full data collection, a pilot questionnaire was tested (100 questionnaires) with respondents from different socio-demographic groups in the West Bank and Gaza. Changes were made to the questionnaire based on the remarks of the respondents and challenges that appeared. Data collection began in October and was completed in November 2016 in Palestine.

Based on the sensitive nature of the survey questions, and in accordance with IMAGES procedures, female interviewers interviewed women and male interviewers interviewed men. However, due to the security situation in Palestine, women accompanied men for each interview to protect male interviewers from being held or stopped by the military. This added additional logistical complications to the collection process, as more field workers were required to do the work. In addition to fieldworkers, there were also supervisors in the various districts who followed up on the daily work of fieldworkers and conducted visits to the teams in the field, to either solve problems faced or prepare daily reports ensuring accuracy and efficiency.

Ethical Considerations

The household survey questionnaire and the qualitative studies were approved by an ethical review committee at Birzeit University. The study followed standard ethical procedures for research on intimate partner violence. Researchers sampled men and women in different clusters to avoid interviewing men and women in the same household. All respondents were fully informed about the purpose of the study and were told that their participation in the survey was voluntary and that they had the right to terminate the survey at any point or to refuse to answer any questions. Confidentiality of interviews was strictly guarded, and some questions related to sexual attitudes and practices were not addressed to respondents due to cultural sensitivities. Questions related to parenting, intimate partner violence, and reproductive health practices and decision-making were asked only of married respondents.

Fieldwork Limitations and Challenges

The large-scale survey research and some aspects of IMAGES MENA Palestine presented limitations and challenges. The questionnaire covered broad but necessary themes and topics in a detailed manner and the survey questionnaire was long (taking more than one hour to complete).

In Palestine, the political situation presented more serious challenges to data collectors. In certain cases, some field workers' movement was restricted, especially when Israeli forces blocked access to and within cities such as Jerusalem and Hebron after settlers broke into the Al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem and Ibrahimi mosque in Hebron. Young people were prohibited from entering these areas. Were they to do so, soldiers and/or settlers might subject them to harassment. In another case, a group of settlers attacked Palestinian civilians on main roads, necessitating additional security measures for the data collectors and thereby delaying the survey process. In addition to restrictions on travel, there was no way for researchers to commute between the West Bank and Gaza and vice versa, which doubled the length of the training period and required the employment of additional field supervisors. In Gaza, three field researchers were held for several hours by local Palestinian authorities seeking confirmation that the survey was a national survey conducted by Palestinian institutions.

Other logistical challenges were related to the date of the training session, which was organized in an unstable period when the university was on a student strike. The research team faced logistical challenges in accessing documents, photocopying draft questionnaires for training, communicating with field workers and so on. Furthermore, the training consumed more time and effort because it was conducted in English, requiring a translator. The training included discussions on social and cultural topics that are sensitive and ways to address or respond or create safe and comfortable situations for all respondents.

Due to the sensitivity of the questions related to sexual relations, respondents were discreet in answering the questions or tried to avoid embarrassment. During the collection process, field workers encountered certain cases of respondents who were depressed and had previously attempted suicide, which added to the responsibility of the field worker to refer them to health

providers or to provide them with hotline support. Likewise, the survey was a breathing space for some who welcomed an opportunity to vent their problems and issues.

Birzeit University's oversight of the survey safeguarded the process, which eased both the facilitation and the respondents' reception. Very few individuals refused to participate. When they did, they cited lack of time and economic pressures. Another set of families in Jerusalem who opted out openly cited fear of results that might be used against them by the Israeli authorities, as they remain under complete control of Israel.

Methodology for Qualitative Research

Conceptual Framework for the Qualitative Research

The qualitative research design and analysis was developed by a research team from the Institute of Women's Studies.

The following conceptualizations and analytical frameworks informed development of the qualitative design:

- Gender: a complex set of social norms, systems of meaning, behaviors and power relations. Gender formations ensue within other fields of power such as class, race and coloniality.
- Masculinity/femininity: a constructed identity continuously reproduced within the intersection of subjective as well as social, political and economic historical contexts.
- Multiplicity of masculinities: (complexities, contradictions): The multiple-masculinities approach has four key characteristics.

First, masculinity is a multiple entity. It is not homogeneous or reducible to a set of simple characteristics. Second, gender is constructed by individuals as well as by societal forces. Individuals do not automatically adopt predetermined gender roles; they are continually active in building, negotiating, and maintaining perceptions of their gender. Third, gender is a relational construct. Boys and men do not construct their versions of masculinity apart from the influences of femininity or other men. Fourth, multiple masculinities diversify hegemonic power structures, rendering them more accessible to rehabilitation.²²

Masculinity is therefore not perceived as a definite stable identity, but rather it is something that is acquired through a series of practices, i.e. it is a process of becoming. From this perspective, "manhood" encompasses struggles and conflicts whose meanings and values are constantly revised, and whose practices and relations are also perpetually redefined. The question therefore is "what institutional or – in a colonized context – non-institutional but collective and individual practices produce and are reproduced by the notion of the masculine?" This conceptualization entails other questions: is there a singular notion of manhood, or is it necessarily a plural one? Which practices produce which notions of manhood? And how do such notions structure certain forms of gender relations?

22. Wesley D. Imms, "Multiple Masculinities and the Schooling of Boys," *Canadian Journal of Education* 25, no. 2 (2000): 152-165.

The Middle East context

In the scope of modernity and colonial realms, Hossein Adibi articulated in his research²³ that during the early twentieth century, masculinities in Middle Eastern societies progressed from diffused ethnic, tribal, rural, and urban masculinities to a national masculinity of independence movements, and then to the diverse masculinities of contemporary times.

Nevertheless, Adibi's work seems to be following a linear developmentalist narrative of the formation of masculinity. The IMAGES study follows a more genealogical tracing of the formation of notions of masculinity. This allows the reader to locate the different forces of social and historical changes that come together in creating notions of masculinity that exist in the present. Rather than being trapped in the binary of traditional masculinities and modernized ones, this study seeks to trace the plurality that defines these notions. It seeks an answer to the questions of how they are produced and reproduced through the intertwining, coming together, and struggling of diffuse notions of manhood.

The discursive field of representation, public discourse and masculinity studies continue to construct the image of Middle East masculinity based on colonial legacies throughout an oppositional binary between two camps, West and East (Arab), the modern and the backward, renaissance and tradition.²⁴ It does this by making use of certain studies of cultural and social formation of masculinities within national(ist) projects, class formation and popular religious and insurgent cultures and inserting them into a weaved narrative and images influenced by Western perspective (norms that foster violence, homophobia, terrorism, militarism, etc.) that have incited the formation of men's identities in the region and also affected the way they are perceived.²⁵

By maintaining the plurality of the notion of masculinity, this study attempts to go beyond binary oppositions that inhibit differentiated knowledge of Arab men. The study accomplished this by investigating masculinity as a field of struggle whose outcomes are constantly contested and challenged and are always subject to certain practices that allow for certain notions of masculinity to dominate others.

The Themes of the Qualitative Research

As a pilot study on the formations of Palestinian masculinities, the qualitative research included four major themes:

1. Exploring perceptions of masculinity among young Palestinian men and women

Conceptions of masculinity in general and in Palestine are not homogeneous or fixed, but are acquired through a series of practices that make them a process of becoming. The goal of this theme was to examine various perceptions and practices of masculinity among young Palestinian men and women. The analysis of this theme focused on manhood as a site of

23. Hossein Adibi, "Sociology of Masculinity in the Middle East," in *Proceedings Social change in the 21st Century Conference 2006*, Carseldine Campus, Queensland University of Technology, 2006.

24. Paul Amar, "Middle East Masculinity Studies: Discourses of 'Men in Crisis', Industries of Gender in Revolution," *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 7, no. 3 (2011): 36-70.

25. Ibid.

struggles and conflicts in which it continually acquires different meanings and values and entails constant redefinitions of practices and relations associated with it.

2. Exploring the attitudes and practices of a group of “gender equitable” men

The goal of exploring those Palestinian men who expressed “gender equitable” views was to highlight the multiplicity within masculinities and analyze the circumstances/life experiences that produce more equitable forms of masculinity in the Palestinian context.

3. Exploring the attitudes and practices of “empowered women”

The goal of this section was to explore the attitudes and practices of empowered Palestinian women. It focused on understanding the life experiences that empower Palestinian women. It also examined the impact of these women’s views on men and masculinities.

4. Analyzing the conceptions of Palestinian masculinity related to the experiences and realities of political imprisonment

Palestinian masculinity shaped within a colonial context has created a condition in which manhood is often linked to practices related to the struggle against the Israeli occupation. The fighter, the one who refuses to be subjected by the occupation, becomes the epitome of what makes a man in the Palestinian colonial context. This in no way means that those who do not fight, who are not imprisoned, tortured or killed by the occupation are lesser men; what it means is that manhood in Palestine is shaped by different standards, the highest of which is those fighting a subjugating force. The popular Arabic maxim that “prison is for men” demonstrates the link between manhood and the rejection of a subjugating power. This maxim becomes more relevant in the Palestinian colonial context.

Since political imprisonment constitutes a formative experience in the lives of a large segment of Palestinian men (and women), this theme in the research explored the constructions of masculinity and gender relations within the experiences of political imprisonment.

The choice of political imprisonment as a site for exploration of the constructions of masculinity stems from the fact that mass incarceration had been employed as a major colonial tool to punish and prevent anti-colonial struggle. Since 1967, more than 800,000 Palestinians have been arrested by occupation authorities (20 percent of the Palestinian population in the 1967-occupied territory and 40 percent of all Palestinian males)²⁶. Thus, mass incarceration and political imprisonment became a formative experience, mainly for Palestinian males.

The current study aims to explore the ways in which the experiences of political imprisonment have affected gender relations and gender roles in the family.

Methodology

The following sections reflect the themes identified above and how they were pursued throughout the qualitative research:

Exploring Perceptions of Masculinity among Palestinian Young Men

Two focus groups were conducted with university students, with ten male participants in the first and nine female participants in the second. The groups of interviewed men and women

26. ADDAMEER, *Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons*. 2014. <https://bit.ly/3ebcos0>

reflected different socioeconomic backgrounds, geography (living in rural, urban, or camp areas) and ideological views.

The general theme of the discussions and their analysis focused on “being a man in Palestine today”: what does it mean, how easy or hard is it to be a man, what are the attitudes and practices associated with being a man, what are the social, religious, political and legal effects contributing to the conception of manhood and what are the implications of conceptions of masculinity for gender relations in Palestine?

To understand this general theme, the following issues were raised in the group discussions: men and relationships, men and laws, policies on gender equality and women in public life, and men and health/wellbeing.

Exploring the Attitudes and Practices of a Group of “Gender Equitable” Men

We conducted twelve in-depth individual interviews with “more equitable men.” The group of interviewed men reflected variations in socioeconomic background, age, geography, education and professions. The interviewed men were selected after their identification as individuals who are more gender equitable than most men in their social background and location.

The interviews focused on the life experiences, conceptions, attitudes and practices that led these men to be more equitable compared to other men.

Exploring the Attitudes and Practices of “Empowered Women”

We conducted twelve in-depth individual interviews with “more empowered women”. The group of interviewed women reflected variations in socioeconomic background, age, geography, education and professions. The interviewed women were selected after their identification as individuals who are more empowered than most women in their social background and location.

The interviews focused on the life experiences, conceptions, attitudes and practices that led these women to be more empowered compared to other women. It also focused on the perceptions of masculinities by these women and the types of men in their lives.

Analyzing the Conceptions of Palestinian Masculinity Related to the Experiences and Realities of Political Imprisonment

We conducted ten in-depth individual interviews with former Palestinian male political prisoners (six interviewees) and Palestinian wives of former political prisoners (four interviewees) to explore their conceptions of masculinity and the ways in which the experiences of incarceration had changed their conceptions of masculinity and transformed gender relations and gender roles in family life.

Analysis of the Qualitative Data

Analysis of the qualitative data was incorporated into the report to inform the quantitative data through more nuanced contextualized analysis when relevant.

CHAPTER TWO

Respondent Socio- Demographic Characteristics

The survey sample comprises 2,399 respondents including 1,200 men and 1,199 women, between 18 and 59 years old, with a mean age of 32 years for both men and women.

This section summarizes the background characteristics of respondents. Demographic characteristics include gender, age, residence, education level, marital status, employment status and household wealth levels. Several of these demographic and background characteristics are used later in the report to draw comparisons between respondents. Comparison based on gender has been presented consistently throughout the report. For all other background characteristics, comparisons have been made only when differences are statistically significant.

The research sample is representative of the Palestinian population according to age and residency/locality. Survey data showed that employment among female respondents was lower than national averages but education level was higher than national averages, as will be discussed in the following sections.

Age

As shown in Table 2.1, the age and gender distribution of the survey reflects the demographic balance in favor of youth that characterizes the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip population.²⁷ Some 32 percent of men and 31 percent of women in the survey were aged 18 to 24; another 32 percent of each gender were aged 25 to 34; and 36 percent of men and 37 percent of women in the sample were aged 35 years old and above.

Age categories	Men		Women	
	(%)	*(N)	(%)	(N)
18-24	32.0	384	31.2	374
25-34	31.8	381	31.7	380
35-49	24.8	297	28.4	341
50+	11.4	137	8.7	104
Age (mean, SD)		Mean 32 SD 11		Mean 32 SD 11
*Total				
SD (standard deviation)				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Residence/Locality

In terms of the survey's sample distribution by locality, the findings resemble those of the PCBS in 2016, where the Palestinian population is overwhelmingly urban. More than two-thirds of the study respondents live in urban areas (at 68 percent). 19 percent live in rural areas, and 13 percent live in refugee camps.

Residence	Men		Women	
	(%)	*(N)	(%)	(N)
Urban	68.3	820	68.3	819
Rural	19.2	230	19.2	230
Camp	12.5	150	12.5	150
*Total				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

27. According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, the population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is young; in 2016, almost 40 percent of the population was below 15 years of age, another 30 percent is between 15-29 years of age and 26.4 percent between 30-59 years of age. The population of the Gaza Strip is younger than the West Bank with the percentage of individuals in the age group 0 to 14 in the Gaza Strip is 43 percent compared to 37 percent in the West Bank. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

Given the distribution by locality, the general findings of the survey more highly reflect the gendered experiences and attitudes of household members located in urban areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. As such, analysis by community types is important to show differences between genders living in rural and refugee camp contexts, given that these shape gender dimensions in Palestine and in the region.

Educational Attainment

In the twentieth century, Palestinian society has consistently been a regional leader in educational achievement for both genders. This was initially motivated by the idea of education as a “portable resource” by what was predominantly a refugee society following the 1948 War and dispersion. Cheap and easy access to education encouraged study, especially among poor and marginalized people. Gender gaps between men and women at the secondary and then university levels were closed only over the last two decades. In wider Palestinian society, men used to be more educated than females; recently, new trends have emerged in Palestinian education. Young generations of women have better access to education compared to men in terms of enrollment in schools and higher education institutions and in terms of levels of education obtained.²⁸ The IMAGES MENA Palestine sample appears to be more highly educated than PCBS data reflects, but this may be because the survey excludes people over the age of 59.

Survey data represented in Table 2.3 shows that more than one-third of both men and women (34 percent of men and 36 of women) surveyed have high education levels (beyond 12th grade). Less than 4 percent of them are likely to have no schooling at all (3 percent of men compared with 2 percent of women).

Education	Men		Women	
	(%)	*(N)	(%)	(N)
No formal schooling	3.3	40	2.3	28
Up to primary grade 5 (ages 6-10)	7.0	84	6.6	79
Grade 6 to grade 12 (ages 11-18)	55.7	668	55.3	663
Beyond grade 12	34	408	35.8	429
*Total				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

28. The literacy rate among women increased from 88 percent in 2004 to around 95 percent in 2015, while increasing from 96.5 percent to 98.5 percent among men for the same period. The percentage of females 15 years old and above with secondary school attainment is high compared to males at 23 percent and 19 percent respectively, while 13.3 percent of females and 12.9 percent of males had a university degree in 2015. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

Marital Status

Given that marriage is the preferred and expected norm for both genders in Palestine, it is no surprise that almost 60 percent of men and 64 percent of women are currently married, resembling figures provided by PCBS in 2016. Survey data shows that 70 percent of women have ever been married compared to around 60 percent of men. As represented in Table 2.4, in Palestine, 31 percent of women are never married compared to 40 percent of men. Women tend to marry younger than men do. Survey data shows that the mean age at first marriage of women is 20 years old, increasing to 25 years for men. This gender gap of nearly 5 years indicates that early marriage (marriage under 18 years of age) is more common among women.

TABLE 2.4
Marital Status
Percentage distribution of men and women respondent marital status

Marital Status	Men		Women	
	(%)	(N)*	(%)	(N)
Single	39.6	475	30.7	369
Currently married	59.8	716	64.0	767
Divorced, separated, or widowed	0.6	8	5.3	63
Ever married	60.4	25	70	830
Man's age of marriage (mean, SD)	4.0	25	6.0	26
Woman's mean age at marriage (mean, SD)	4.0	20	4.0	20
Age difference between husband and wife (mean, SD)	3.9	4.4	4.9	-5.7
*Total				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Divorce, separation and widowhood were infrequent among both genders though significantly more common among women at 5 percent compared to 0.5 percent for men. This difference can be explained by gendered gaps in marriage age, with men being usually older than women at the time of marriage and higher life expectancy rates for women. Furthermore, men are more likely to remarry after the death of their wives, unlike most widowed women.

Parents' Education and Mother's Employment

Most of the respondents are from educated families. Almost three-quarters of men and two-thirds of women reported that their fathers had primary education and more. Mothers received less education than fathers among both men and women respondents, especially in higher education, as shown in the table below.

TABLE 2.5
Parents' Education

Percentage of men and women respondents by father's and mother's highest educational level

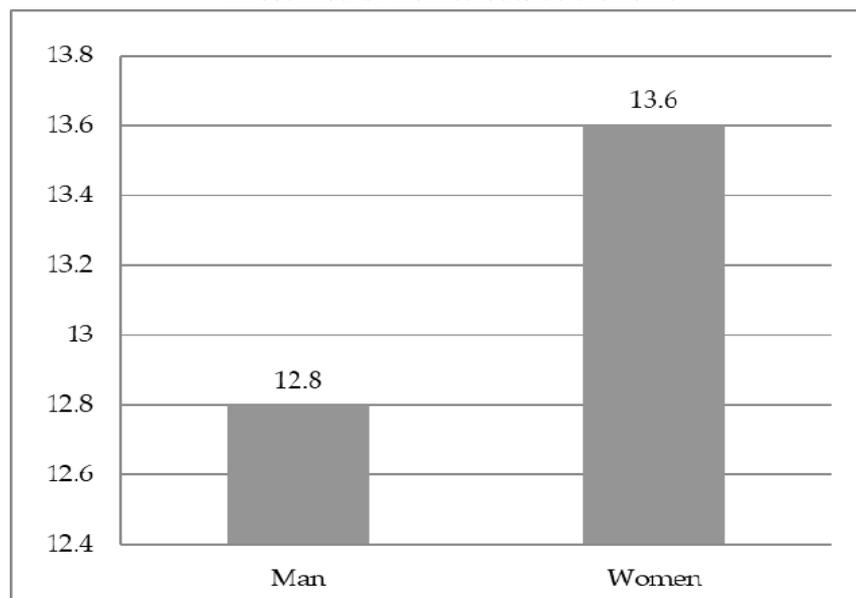
Parents' Education	Men		Women	
	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
No education	26.3	34.4	22.6	31.0
Primary	17.2	16.5	19.2	17.3
Preparatory/Secondary	40.8	41.2	41.8	42.3
Higher	15.7	8	16.5	9.4

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

The clear majority of respondent's mothers had never worked (12.8 percent of men's mothers and 13.6 percent of women's mothers), which is similar to women's participation in the labor market in the previous 20 years.

Figure 2.5
Mothers' work

Percentage of men and women respondents whose mother worked outside the home



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Employment, Source of Income and Income

The Palestinian economy has been structurally shaped and dominated by Israeli settler-colonial policies and practices. As a result, it is dependent on the Israeli economy, unable to grow normally, and thus deprives men and (especially) women of jobs. Women's participation in the labor market is very low – around 20 percent according to recent statistics.²⁹ Only 11 percent of respondent women reported that they are working, which is even lower than the national figures. This may be because participation in the labor force is influenced by seasonal work in some economic activities. This is taken into account in national labor force surveys, in contrast to the current survey, especially for women from the West Bank who work in agriculture.

The percentage of women surveyed participating in the labor market in the West Bank stands at 14 percent while the participation rate of women in the Gaza Strip is much lower (6 percent.) Similarly, regional differences in male employment are enormous; male employment in the West Bank stood at 84 percent compared to only 40 percent in the Gaza Strip.

TABLE 2.6a
Employment Status
Male and female respondents' employment status by region

Employment Status	Men			Women		
	Region		Total	Region		Total
	West Bank	Gaza Strip		West Bank	Gaza Strip	
Employed (%)	83.6	39.7	69.3	13.6	5.6	11.0
Unemployed but has ever worked (%)	3.7	17.7	8.3	3.5	1.8	2.9
Unemployed but has never worked (%)	1.6	16.9	6.6	6.6	5.4	6.2
Outside the labor ³⁰ force (%)	11.1	25.6	15.8	76.3	87.2	79.8
Total (N)	808	386	1,194	800	390	1190
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

The survey data presents a mixed picture of unemployment. For both groups, those who have never worked before and those who have worked, unemployment varies between the regions and according to gender. As Table 2.6a shows, unemployment among men is enormously high in the Gaza Strip: more than four times the rate among men in the West Bank. Unemployment among women in the West Bank is higher than that in the Gaza Strip and compared to unemployment among men in the West Bank. Most female workers in the Gaza Strip are employed in stable and permanent jobs in the public government sector, due to the weakness and inability of the private sector to absorb women's labor after many years of enforced

29. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2016.

30. The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics definition of "Persons Outside Labour Force": The population not economically active comprises all persons 15 years and above, who were neither employed nor unemployed, because they don't have any desire to work, including: student, housekeeping, abstinent from work, guest, old, illness, and retired people.

settler-colonial blockade and systematic destruction. By contrast, a larger proportion of women in the West Bank operate in less stable jobs in the private and informal sectors. Furthermore, a low proportion of male employment and high unemployment in the Gaza Strip reflect the vulnerability and fragility of the Palestinian economy and the limitation of employment opportunities as a result of the Israeli settler-colonial blockade.

Main source of income

According to the data, 60 percent of men and 56 percent of women say that the husband is the main source of household income, while only 0.8 percent of men and 3 percent of women say that the wife is the main source of household income. Only 2.7 percent of men and 4.6 percent of women reported that the husband and wife equally provide the main source of income. This indicates that the man represents the main source of income, even from the viewpoint of the wife.

TABLE 2.6b				
Main Source of Household income				
Percentage distribution of male and female respondents by main source of household income				
Main source of household income	Men (%)	(N)	Women (%)	(N)
Husband	60.0	718	56.2	672
Wife	0.8	9	3.1	37
Husband and wife equally	2.7	32	4.6	55
Parents	29.6	355	23.8	285
Other relatives	2.4	29	5.9	70
Charity or religious endowment UN support or humanitarian aid	0.6	8	1.1	16
Government support	1.8	22	2.3	27
Other	2.1	25	2.8	34
*Total				

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Those in the youngest age group form the majority (29.6 percent of men and 23.8 percent of women) of those who report that “parents” are the main household source of income.

About 1 percent of women and men say that charity is their main source of income. In terms of government support, 2.3 percent of women but only 1.8 percent of men said it is a main source of income. This represents the gender bias in favor of women “without male breadwinners” that underpins the policies of the Palestinian Ministry of Social Development, the main provider of government social welfare in Palestine.

The survey data reflected income levels among respondent households, with monthly household income means at USD \$700-730, approaching the poverty line of about USD \$620 for a family of five. Male respondent households seem to be poorer than female respondent households, where male household income means reach USD \$700 compare to approximately USD \$730 for female respondent households.

Household Wealth

Regarding the Wealth Index of respondent households (see Appendix A), the data reflects general economic hardship: more than 25 percent of respondents fell into the lower Wealth Index category. A higher proportion of women tended to fall into the low Wealth Index category (30 percent) compared with men (27 percent) (see Table 2.7.)

As expected, both men and women from the Gaza Strip are much more likely to fall into the lower Wealth Index with 51 percent of men and 45 percent of women, while only 16 percent of men and 23 percent of women from the West Bank fall into the same. Again, these findings confirm the brutality of the prolonged settler-colonial blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip and its dire economic consequences for Palestinian families there.

TABLE 2.7
Wealth Index
Percentage distribution of male and female respondents by Wealth Index and region

Wealth Index	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	Region		Total	Region		Total
	West Bank	Gaza Strip		West Bank	Gaza Strip	
Low	15.8	51.0	27.3	23.4	44.9	30.4
Medium	62.0	46.4	56.9	62.7	53.3	59.6
High	22.2	2.6	15.8	14.0	1.8	10.0
Total (N)	810	390	1200	809	390	1199

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

According to the survey data, employment is a key determinant of household wealth, where high unemployment rates are associated with low scores on the Wealth Index.

CHAPTER THREE

Attitudes Towards Gender Equality

Attitudes towards Gender Equality in Public and Private Life

Men and Women, Roles and Rights

Inequitable gender attitudes remain common in Palestine. While many gender inequitable attitudes prevail among men and women in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey found that there is a significant gender gap, with women having much more equitable attitudes than men on an array of gender issues. For instance, as can be seen in Table 3.1a below, in terms of gender roles in the family, the survey found around 80 percent of men but only 59 percent of women agree that a woman's most important role is to take care of the home. While 80 percent of men think men should have the final decision in the home, only 48 percent of women support this position. Three-quarters (77 percent) of men but only two-thirds (68 percent) of women agreed that "changing diapers, giving baths to children and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility". However, a much lower percentage of men (19 percent) and women (14 percent) agree with the statement, "I think it is shameful when men engage in caring for children or other domestic work."

In terms of attitudes towards spousal violence, we find low levels of agreement among men and women with the statement, "Sometimes a woman deserves to be beaten" (supported by 34 percent of men and only 26 percent of women.) However, both men and women tend to support the idea that women should accept spousal violence to preserve the family (supported by 63 percent of men and 50 percent of women).

Attitudes towards male control over women also expose a gender gap – though one that is more contradictory. Both genders believe that males are responsible for exercising guardianship over their female relatives (supported by 82 percent of men and a significantly less 64 percent of women). However, for men this extends to a primacy of brothers over sisters with 76 percent of men saying boys are responsible for monitoring their sisters' behavior even if the boy is younger than she is. Only 26 percent of women support this position.

Attitudes associated with younger women's freedoms also are mixed, although still marked by overall gender difference. For instance, 54 percent of men and 71 percent of women feel that women should have the same rights as men to access Internet sites. But a very low 29 percent of men and 39 percent of women support the idea that women should be able to live on their own.

"Society views the man as tough, with a main role as a provider. Yet, from my point of view, men's qualities are loyalty, honesty, and respectfulness. These ethical qualities can also characterize women."

Female, student, 20 years old, Jerusalem

TABLE 3.1a		
Attitudes toward Gender Equality: GEM Scale Questions		
Percentage of respondents who agreed with statements related to attitudes toward gender roles and decision-making, attitudes toward violence, attitudes toward and perceptions of masculinity and femininity		
Attitudes toward Gender Roles and Decision-Making	Men (%)	Women (%)
*A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family.	80	59
*A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.	80	48
*Changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be a mother's responsibility.	77	68
Attitudes toward Violence		
*There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.	34	26
*A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.	63	50
*If another man in my community insults me, I will defend my reputation, with force if I must.	89	+
Perceptions of Masculinity and Femininity		
*To be a man, you need to be tough.	40	20
I think it is shameful when men engage in caring for children or other domestic work.	19	14
*It is a man's duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives.	82	64
*Boys are responsible for the behavior of their sisters, even if they are younger than they are.	76	26
When work opportunities are scarce, men should have access to jobs before women.	83	73
*A married woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.	52	72
If resources are scarce, it is more important to educate sons than daughters.	40	18
*Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men.	29	39
Women should have the same freedom to access sites on the internet as men.	54	71
Attitudes about Relationships, Sexuality, and Reproduction		
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant.	25	31
Men need sex more than women do.	59	71
A husband should not have friends of the opposite sex.	67	62
A wife should not have friends of the opposite sex.	81	67
+This statement was not included in the women's questionnaire.		
* Statements used to construct the IMAGES MENA GEM Scale		

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Men and Men and women tend have contradictory ideas about what it means to be a man in Palestinian society. For instance, they share the assumption that "men need sex more than women do," with 59 percent of men and an even higher 71 percent of women agreeing with this statement. On the other hand, only 40 percent of men and 20 percent of women agree with the statement "to be a man you have to be tough."

However, asking about gender attitudes through general survey questions such as these tends to evoke gender normative responses, rather than the often more nuanced and complex

positions individuals may hold as they negotiate gender issues in everyday life. Throughout the study, the qualitative research tended to reflect a more complex and nuanced set of attitudes, including about gender equality.

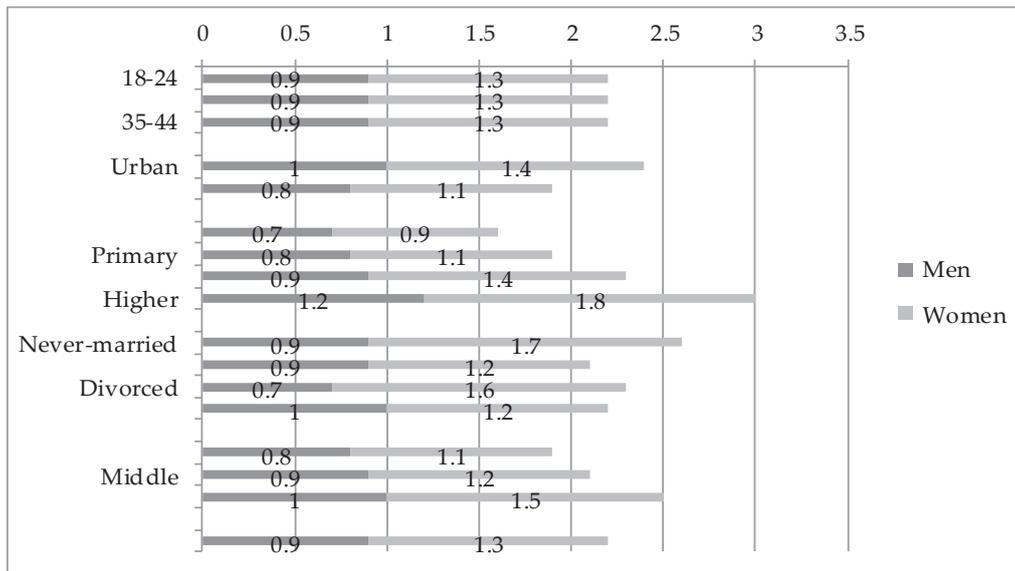
“There is no such thing as ‘man’ or ‘woman’; there is a human being. There are no qualities limited to men and qualities limited to women. Masculinity and femininity are bodily qualities that should not be reflected on roles and behaviours.”

Male student, 23 years old, Nablus

IMAGES MENA selected ten of the attitude statements (marked by * in the table above) to be included in a regionally adapted GEM Scale (Gender Equitable Men Scale, which presents scores on a scale from 0 to 3 (where 0 reflects the lowest gender equitable attitudes to all the statements and 3 reflects the highest gender equitable attitudes). In other words, the higher the score, the higher the level of gender equity in attitudes.

Gender equitable attitudes closely correlate with rising education and income in Palestine. When disaggregating GEM scores by various demographic and other indicators within Palestine, some strong patterns emerge. For both men and women, socio-economic status significantly impacts their attitudes, with those at higher economic levels showing more gender equitable attitudes. The pattern is similar with education, with a systematic relationship apparent between higher levels of education and an increase in gender equitable attitudes among respondents of both genders.

FIGURE 3.1
Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale
 GEM Scale for men and women by select background characteristics



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

TABLE 3.1b
GEM Scale for Men and Women by Selected Background Characteristics
 GEM scoring on gender equitable attitudes by gender and selected characteristics

GEM scoring on gender equitable attitudes	Characteristics	Men	Women
Overall average score		1.17	1.52
Wealth index	Rich	1.35	1.67
	Middle	1.24	1.48
	Poor	0.93	1.40
Education	Higher	1.30	1.65
	Preparatory/Secondary	1.13	1.46
	Primary	1.04	1.38
	No education	0.84	1.21
Locality type	Rural	1.21	1.58
	Urban	1.17	1.49
	Camps	1.10	1.56
Age	45-59	1.19	1.36
	35-44	1.19	1.46
	25-34	1.15	1.53
	18-24	1.18	1.61
Father's participation in housework	Did not participate	1.11	1.49
	Participated	1.24	1.55
* bold and italic numbers indicate a statistically significant relationship at p < .05			

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Contrary to expectations, men and women in rural areas have the highest levels of gender equitable attitudes by locality (although among women, refugee camps come a very close second in their degree of gender equitable attitudes). However, one needs to keep in mind that these designations for locality types are administrative and do not necessarily reflect the reality in which it is increasingly difficult to distinguish an urban/rural divide in the oPt. Many village communities have, through urban growth, been absorbed into surrounding towns or serve predominantly as bedroom communities, with their population working in nearby urban communities. Thus, these findings by locality should be treated with care.

Finally, growing up with a father who participated in housework has a clear impact on raising adults with relatively more equitable gender attitudes – particularly in the case of males. Men whose fathers participated in household chores when they were children have a GEM level of 1.24 versus 1.11 among males who grew up in households where their father did not participate in household chores. Among women, there is also an increase in gender equitable attitudes if fathers participated in domestic chores in their childhood, but at a less significant level (from 1.49 to 1.55). Generationally, young women and young men are opposites in terms of their gender equitable attitudes.

As other studies have shown³¹, the relationship between age and gender attitudes in Palestine is complex. IMAGES MENA Palestine found that among women in Palestine there is a clear-cut and consistent relationship: the younger the woman, the higher her level of gender equitable attitudes. Women aged 18-24 have the highest level of gender equitable attitudes (1.61) but this diminishes with each older age cohort, until we reach the oldest age group of 45 to 59 years, whose GEM score is 1.36. Among men, the relationship is almost the opposite; the two youngest age categories have the lowest GEM scores. Young men 18 to 24 years old have a score of 1.18 and those aged 25 to 34 years hold the lowest overall gender equitable attitudes at 1.15. Older men aged 35-59 have the highest level of gender equitable attitudes among men in Palestine at 1.19.

As research undertaken by the Birzeit University Institute of Women's Studies has shown, the massive changes to the structure of the Palestinian labor market over the past two decades and the related situation of crisis and conflict have had some very unexpected consequences for gender relations at the household level.³² For men, the closure of the Israeli labor market at the turn of the twenty-first century that had previously enabled them to marry young and quickly set up independent homes where they were sole breadwinners with dependent wives has been devastating to the previous norm in Palestinian young men's life trajectories. This historic loss of access to the Israel market and the inability to find adequate levels of alternate work inside the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip that could enable the gender regime described above has had major impact on the gender and the generational order within Palestinian households since the late 1990s.

In contrast, for younger generations of women, the collapse of the old gender regime (where they left school young, married young and became mothers and housewives dependent on a young male breadwinner) has had some positive outcomes. Young women's enrollment in higher education has more than doubled over the past two decades, and in the West Bank they consistently outnumber young men in higher education. Families' investments in young women's higher education has been motivated by the growing recognition that to have adequate household income now demands that both spouses work. Studies show that young men now consistently prefer a working wife. Greater levels of higher education have the impact of deferring women's marriage ages as well as deferring the onset of motherhood. There has been an increase in women's employment in the West Bank over the past two decades and an increase of young women in Gaza trying to join the labor force but instead finding themselves unemployed. In sum, the changed gender order over the past two decades has had some very positive effects for younger generations of women in comparison to their mother's and grandmother's generations.

31. Rema Hammami, *Gendered Youth/Occupied Lives: Attitudes and Experiences of Palestinian Male and Female Youth in West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab Jerusalem 2013, Analytical Report* (Birzeit: Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2014); and Rema Hammami, "Introduction: A Decade of Catastrophe," in *A Dangerous Decade; the 2nd Gender Profile of the Occupied West Bank and Gaza, 2000-2010* (Birzeit: Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2011), 5-14.

32. Rema Hammami, *Gendered Youth/Occupied Lives: Attitudes and Experiences of Palestinian Male and Female Youth in West Bank, Gaza Strip and Arab Jerusalem 2013, Analytical Report* (Birzeit: Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, 2014).

For young men, on the other hand, there has been no social or material compensation for the collapse of the previous gender regime in which they grew up. While there has been some growth in young men's higher education, it has not translated into better paying jobs for the majority. Younger generations of men have the highest rates of unemployment among males and now must postpone getting married to a substantially higher age than their father's generation. Most face a major challenge in finding income adequate to set up an independent household. In sum, young men and young women in Palestinian society are on almost opposing life trajectories – young men increasingly feeling they have lost out in relation to previous generations, while young women feel that their life chances and choices have significantly widened in comparison to their mothers' generation.

Most men and women tend to have a moderate level of support for gender equality as expressed by their responses to a range of gender issues.

Another way of expressing the different degrees of attitudes held by men and women towards gender equity issues is by analyzing them based on high, middle and low GEM scores. In the following table low levels of gender equitable attitudes are those with an overall GEM score ranging from a 0 to less than 1, medium levels of gender equitable attitudes are an overall GEM scores ranging from 1 to less than 2, and a high level of gender equitable attitudes are those with an overall GEM score of 2 and higher.

When looking at gender equitable attitudes, neither men nor women are extremely supportive or opposed to gender equality. Instead, the majority (67 percent of men and an even higher 83 percent of women) tend to have a medium level of acceptance of gender equitable attitudes.

TABLE 3.1c				
Levels of Gender Equitable Attitudes				
Level of acceptance of gender acceptable attitudes by percentage among men and women				
Gender	Low (%)	Medium (%)	High (%)	Total (%)
Men	29.5	67.3	3.3	100
Women	5.7	83.4	10.9	100

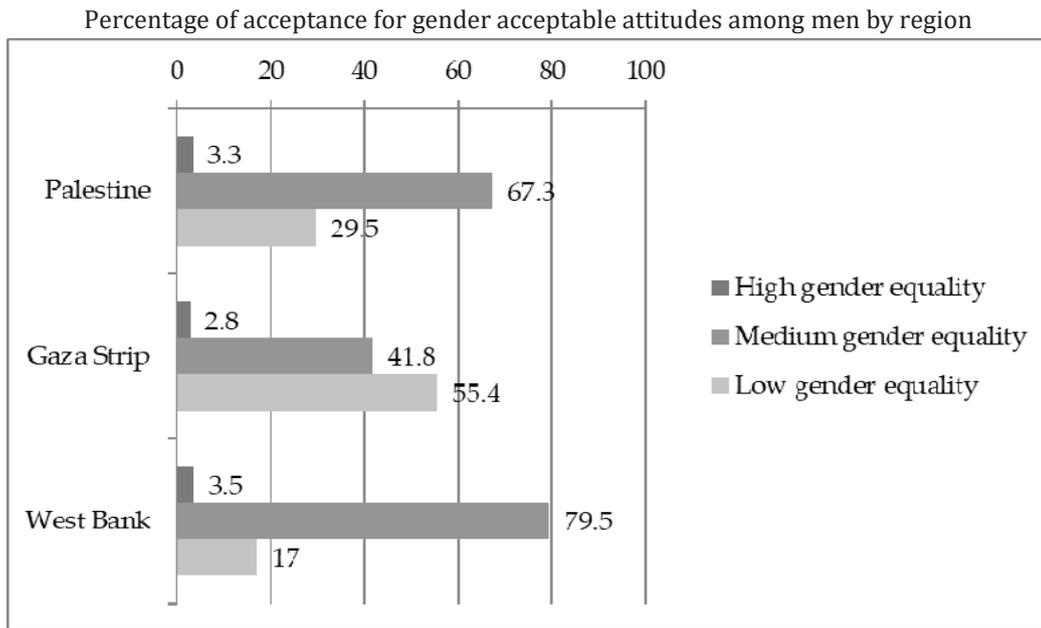
Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

However, more than a quarter of men (29 percent) have low levels of acceptance for gender equitable attitudes compared to only 6 percent of women.

By region and gender, men in Gaza express the lowest overall levels of acceptance for gender equitable attitudes.

When comparing the West Bank and Gaza, there are not strong differences between women's attitudes towards issues of gender equality in each region. However, there are some stark disparities between men. More than 50 percent of men in Gaza express low levels of acceptance for gender equitable attitudes, while only 17 percent of men in the West Bank express a similarly low level of acceptance.

FIGURE 3.1b
Male GEM Levels by Region



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

While more than three-fourths (79 percent) of men in the West Bank express medium levels of gender equality in their range of attitudes, most men (55 percent) in Gaza express the lowest levels of gender equitable attitudes. Within Gaza, this means that there is a very wide disparity between male and female attitudes towards gender equality issues, with only 8 percent of women expressing similarly low levels of support for issues of gender equality. Clearly, this is linked to the way the overall crisis environment in Gaza has differentially impacted men and women. Male long-term structural unemployment, continued dependence on humanitarian aid, and the inability to protect their homes and families from repeated Israeli military aggression have created a situation where men cannot achieve the most basic requirements of their socially ordained gender roles and responsibilities. These high levels of gender conservative attitudes thus likely are expressions of the overall “crisis of masculinity” that is an outcome of the on-going overwhelming crisis environment in Gaza. As studies have shown, women have been forced to adapt to both the crisis environment and undertake new gender roles, while at the same time attempting to negotiate the crisis of masculinity and the gender normative order that do not so quickly adapt.³³

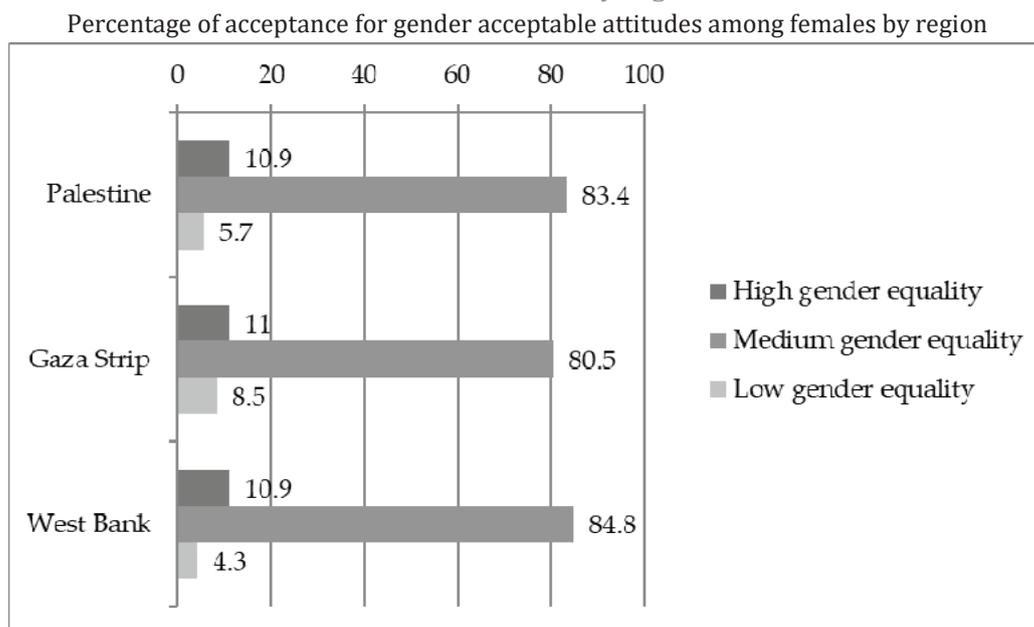
33. See the following studies on how the ongoing siege, sanctions and military destruction have affected gender roles in Gaza:

Aitemad Muhanna, *Agency and gender in Gaza: masculinity, femininity and family during the second intifada* (London: Ashgate, 2013). and UN Women. *Who Answers to Gazan Women? An Economic Security and Rights Research*, 2011. and UN Women. *Towards Gender Equality in Humanitarian Response: Addressing the Needs of Women and Men in Gaza. A Guidebook for the Humanitarian Sector*, 2010.

Women in the occupied West Bank and Gaza show remarkable similarities in their levels of acceptance for gender equitable attitudes even though the two areas have been cut off from each other for almost 20 years.

The symmetrical distribution in gender attitudes between women in the West Bank and Gaza suggest the degree to which women in both regions share some overall common gender experiences despite the differences in how they have fared under different degrees of Israeli state violence and coercive policies. Younger women in both regions have found the collapse of the gender order of their parents' generation has led to attitude and actual changes that have opened new possibilities for them (into higher education and employment). Older married women have passed through periods when male breadwinners have become vulnerable to unemployment or have been unable to play their normative gender roles of male protectors. Women's attitudes cannot be separated from how they experience the society's normative gender order, but more importantly, how they experience gaps and contradictions between these norms and the actual roles and responsibilities that men undertake in the real world. Palestinian women are clearly on a path of transition toward new, more equitable gender norms. For Palestinian men, especially in Gaza, the transition appears to be much harder.

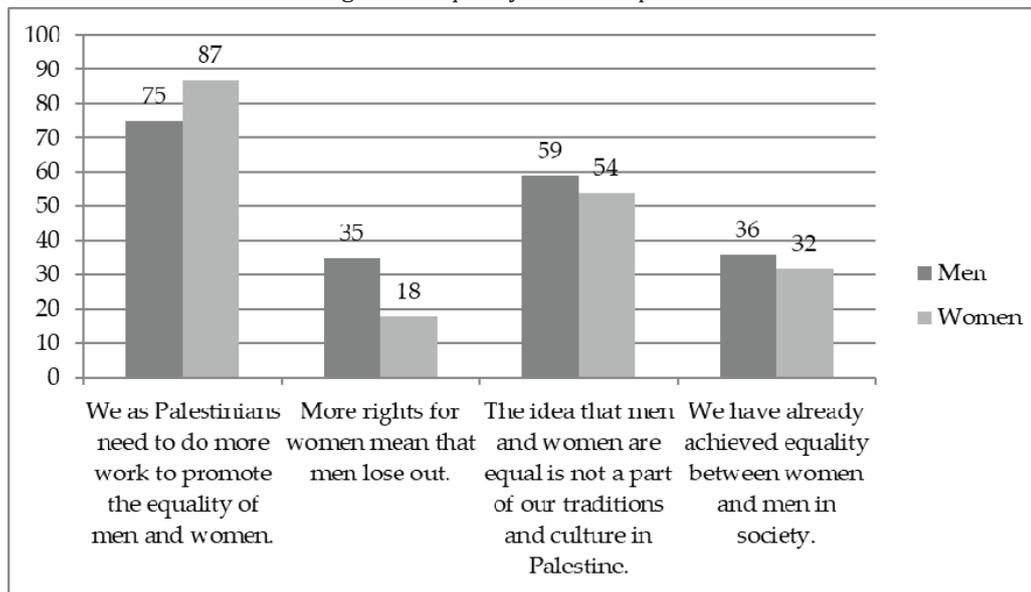
FIGURE 3.1c
Female GEM Levels by Region



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

A third of men believe that more rights for women come at the expense of men. There is strong agreement among men and women that gender equality has yet to be achieved in Palestine. Three-quarters of men and nearly 87 percent of women acknowledged that, "We as Palestinians need to do more work to promote the equality of women and men." However, men are threatened by what gender equality may mean for their rights and roles: they are twice as likely as women to agree that "more rights for women mean that men lose out."

Figure 3.1d
Attitudes toward Gender Equality and its Implications
 Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with statements
 on gender equality and its implications



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Qualitative findings show that both Palestinian men and women tend to respond more positively regarding gender equality in the abstract but are more conservative when asked about the specific content of equality.

Women in Public Life

Palestinian women have been active in the national liberation struggle since the beginning of the twentieth century. They were an integral and an inevitable component of the struggle and eventually joined political parties. Although the percentage of women in parties was relatively low, it has increased gradually.³⁴

Specifically after 1948, the higher and middle-class elite, particularly women, established urban-centered charitable organizations. The number of charitable organizations increased again after the 1967 war. These charitable organizations provide services for the poor and the devastated.³⁵ From the 1970s, educated middle and lower-class women active in political parties established women's committees and grassroots organizations through an outreach approach. The purpose of the organizations is to mobilize women in villages and refugee camps through programs and activities that enhance their social, economic and political

34. Ellen L. Fleischmann, "The Emergence of the Palestinian Women's Movement, 1929-39," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29, no. 3 (1999/2000).

35. Islah Jad, *Women and Politics* (Birzeit, West Bank: Institute of Women's Studies Birzeit University, 2000).

wellbeing, especially in times of aggression, war, conflict and uprisings.³⁶ Women's experiences in the struggle have turned them into protectors of families and activists in the different uprisings. Their resistance and resilience have enhanced the steadfastness and survival of the community. They have created alternative strategies for steadfastness, opportunities for employment of women in productive projects and cooperatives and safe spaces for children in nurseries and neighborhood committees. Their efforts have enhanced community-based or popular education due to school closures within the continuous crisis.³⁷

Throughout the struggle, women have promoted different coping strategies to manage their households. The General Union of Palestinian Women, an extension of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), provided social services and training to enhance women's well-being, which in turn enhanced the steadfastness of Palestinian households. Women committees generated employment opportunities, advocated for women's rights and provided specialized services like counseling and legal aid for women who were continuously subjected to political and domestic violence. These committees served as a backbone for different Palestinian uprisings, mainly the first Intifada in 1987 and the 2000 Al Aqsa Intifada. Yet, not all different national and social roles, including the struggle for women's rights, have materialized at a strategic representational level in formal and informal political structures at large. Although women's status has improved and they have been politically empowered through the realization of the quota system, they still maintain marginal positions in the decision-making process. Through civil society organizations, they provide welfare and advocacy activities for equal gender rights. While through their own women's organizations and certain ministries, especially the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Ministry of Social Development, women provide specialized services and social assistance to unprivileged women, prisoners and martyr's families.

The IMAGES MENA Palestine survey presents data on attitudes and perceptions of men and women toward women's positions and roles in public life. The data regarding all questions related to women's political participation indicate a gender and regional gap, while on certain issues correlations with educational attainment, employment status and age become significant in some cases.

The following section of the survey discusses the responses of women and men on issues and statements related to political participation and representation. It indicates the degree of approval and disapproval of both genders on statements related to roles and positions in the political system.

Attitudes on Political Participation

Men and women in Palestine agree or disagree on whether women should occupy more political positions and roles in public life.

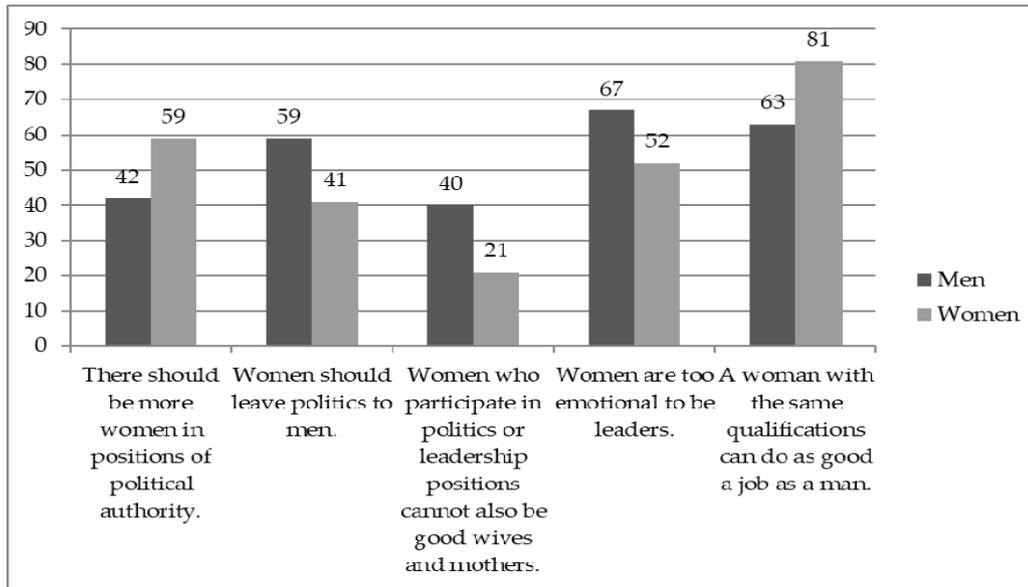
Based on the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey, more women (59 percent of the sample) than men (42 percent) believe that women should have greater representation in political authority

36. Eileen Kuttub, "Palestinian Women in the Intifada Liberation Within Liberation," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 15, No. 2 (Spring 1993).

37. Ibid.

(Figure 3.2a.) However, more than half of men (59%) and almost two-thirds of women (41%) agree that “women are too emotional to be leaders,” suggesting mixed views on women’s accession to public power.

FIGURE 3.2a
Political and Professional Leadership
 Percentage of men and women who agree, or strongly agree, with selected statements related to women’s participation in politics and leadership positions



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Women in Positions of Political Authority

There is a gender gap and a regional divide between attitudes in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The findings indicate that 42 percent of men in the West Bank and 36 percent in Gaza agree that “there should be more women in positions of political authority.” This indicates that male-dominated society does not recognize the importance of women in politics, despite women’s role in the national resistance. Among women, 59 percent of females in both the West Bank and Gaza agree with the statement. Although the level of agreement is higher than for men, the data describes a negative attitude by women themselves.

IMAGES data shows that men in the West Bank are more positive than those in Gaza toward expanding women’s roles in political authority. One reason may be the degree of visibility of women in public life and the political system in the West Bank. Such comparably positive attitudes may be due to the relative degree of political stability in the West Bank versus Gaza. Women of the West Bank are using political space more efficiently, while in Gaza, especially in the last decade, women’s activism in politics and public life has passed through difficult times, due mainly to continuous Israeli aggression and wars in 2008-2009, 2012, and 2014. Women bear the brunt of wars and try to cope with the consequences. At the same time, the political division among the Palestinian political parties, namely Hamas and Fatah in Gaza where Hamas holds power, has marginalized women further. They have had to handle tensions and violence within the community. Furthermore, as a result of deep poverty and high

unemployment, women had to find coping strategies to deal with the fact that most male breadwinners were unemployed and thus unable to satisfy the basic needs of the family.

Male agreement becomes higher when asked a question such as: “there should be more women in political positions.” This question does not indicate which political position women should take. Data shows that when a certain strategic position is referenced, male agreement is less common. Likewise, female agreement decreases when certain strategic positions are proposed, as illustrated in the following analysis.

Findings show a correlation between educational attainment among men and the degree of agreement or disagreement regarding female participation in politics. The lower the educational attainment, the more common is disagreement in accepting women in political positions. The same can be said about employment, where approximately two-thirds of males who are unemployed and have ever worked do not think that there should be more women in positions of political authority.

Findings confirm that most men and women agree with the stereotypical position that women are emotional and therefore unable to be leaders. Some 67 percent of men agree with this statement in both the West Bank and Gaza. Half of these men are pursuing secondary education and outside the labor force. Half of respondent women agree that they are emotional and cannot be leaders. Half of these women have attained secondary education and are unemployed but have worked. Even women believe in gender stereotypes to justify their marginalization.

The data also explores the relationship between political participation of women and their ability to be good wives and mothers, asking whether a woman can do both. The findings show that 40 percent of males in the West Bank agree with this statement, a slightly higher proportion than their peers in Gaza at 35 percent. Most of those who disagree are illiterate, unemployed but have worked, and are middle-aged. Some 21 percent of women in the West Bank and 23 percent in Gaza strongly agree that women can do both. Half of those who disagree are illiterate, unemployed but have worked, and are of middle age (ranging from 35 to 49 years old). Gender and regional gaps exist. It is obvious that those who disagree from both genders are mostly illiterate and unemployed.

Can women political leaders be good wives? “Good wives” is commonly understood as wives who stay at home, cook every day and give full time care to their children and their husbands. It is assumed that women who participate in politics are engaged in public roles and are visible at public events, and therefore cannot be good wives since they spend too much time outside the home. Some 40 percent of men in the West Bank and 35 percent in Gaza agree that female political leaders can be good wives. However only 21 percent of women in the West Bank and 23 in Gaza agree; this position can be correlated with educational attainment.

When asked if women should leave politics to men, 59 percent of men in both the West Bank and Gaza agree. In this case, however, respondents’ level of education was not regarded as playing a role in their response. Of those who agree, 40 percent of respondents are unemployed but have worked. Among women, 40 percent in the West Bank and Gaza combined agree that women should leave politics to men. The group that is most oft approving is that of illiterate women (58.3 percent) and those who finished elementary education. At the same time almost half of them (48.5 percent) are unemployed but have ever worked. The age

group that was most likely to agree was middle-aged women from 35 to 49 years old, at 49 percent. As such, reasons for the agreement correlate with education and employment.

Lastly, men and women were asked if “a woman with the same qualifications can do as good a job as a male political leader.” Sixty-three percent of men in the West Bank and 63 percent of men in Gaza agree – a high rate. Eighty-one percent of women in the West Bank and 76 percent in Gaza agree. Most affirmative respondents of both genders are of the younger generation aged 18 to 24, indicating that the new generation has a different outlook on their capabilities and performance. This may reflect the higher rates of education among younger generations, given the general correlation between positive attitudes towards female participation and higher educational attainment.

In general, the findings show that, although men have some positive reactions to female political engagement, their viewpoints appear to ignore the active role that women have taken in the political system. What is also surprising is that women themselves express reluctance when asked about women adopting important roles. Contradictions exist in the women’s responses, although more than half of female respondents believe that women should play more roles in political authority. Half of women respondents strongly agree that they are too emotional to be leaders. At the same time, 20 percent of them believe that if they engage in politics they cannot be good wives and mothers. Some 40 percent of women think that women should leave politics to men. Most of these traditional responses women came from middle-aged women. On the other hand, the younger generation (ages 18-24), which has higher educational achievement, is more likely to believe that if women have the right qualifications, they can be as good as men in leadership positions. Although more than half of the women in the sample have positive views about political involvement and seek to confirm their right to political participation, other women view their role as outside the political space and they are not certain that they can combine both public and private roles and excel in both. This is true for women in other countries for a variety of reasons.

Male and female respondents similarly support women as voters, leaders of NGOs, heads of professional syndicates and members of parliament. The participation of women in the Palestinian liberation struggle may have resulted in many changes in the attitudes (and practices) towards women’s political participation, especially from men in the national movement. However, women’s participation in the form of representation and decision-making has not kept pace, as seen in the following data.

TABLE 3.2a

Women and Public Leadership

Percentage of men and women who agree or strongly agree with selected statements related to women’s participation in public positions.

Can women participate in politics? (Response is yes.)	Men (%)	Women (%)
Women as heads of political parties	46	59
Women as members of parliaments/assemblies	66	78
Women as government ministers	59	69
Women as heads of state	36	47
Women as voters	79	87
Women as demonstrators in political protests	53	70
Women as police officers	57	69
Women as leaders of NGOs	73	90

Women as leaders of professional syndicates	66	85
Women as leaders of trade unions	57	76
Women as judges	52	66
Women as soldiers or combatants in the military or armed forces	40	54
Women as religious leaders ¹	57	71
¹ <i>But not imams or priests</i>		

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Table 3.2a illustrates that there are gender gaps concerning women in various leadership positions and political roles.

The data, disaggregated by region, shows that 51 percent of men in the West Bank and 58 percent in Gaza disapprove of having women as heads of political parties (compared to 41 percent of women in the West Bank and 40 percent in Gaza that disapprove). The fact that nearly half of men approve indicates that men have become accustomed to having women take on various roles within the political parties. Some women have lengthy experience in politics through their participation in the national resistance. However, in practice the gender gap remains large. Of late, only one political party has a female head. Female party membership in Gaza is small when compared to that in the West Bank. This reality may be due to the current lack of political stability, the blockade, and the continuous threat of Israeli aggression in Gaza. Although disapproval of female political leadership in the West Bank is lower than in Gaza, it is still surprisingly high, considering that in some parties, women's membership has been relatively high. The community is used to seeing women active in political parties throughout the national struggle.³⁸

Another position that appears to be less prestigious in men's eyes is that of parliamentarian. The role of the Palestinian parliament has been consistently undermined, both by internal Palestinian politics but more significantly by Israeli authorities, who have arrested many of its members and prevented its functioning in recent years. Some 66 percent of male respondents in the West Bank and 67 percent in Gaza approve of women in parliamentary positions, while women's approval is higher (79 percent in the West Bank and 77 percent in Gaza). Although the proportion of disapproval among both genders is not high, one-third of men continues to disapprove and is an obstacle towards integrating women in parliament or political life.

Women's appointment as a cabinet minister has a higher rate of opposition among men, reaching 40 percent in the West Bank and 43 percent in Gaza. Although the regional difference is not great, for a woman to hold this strategic and powerful position garners greater opposition among men, who apparently see it as a male role. Most government ministers are party-affiliated, while there are fewer women participating in party politics. In addition, government roles are demanding and require long hours of work, while women are expected to have childcare duties and therefore be too busy to take on the role. Disapproval among

38. Islah Jad, *Women and Politics* (Birzeit, West Bank: Institute of Women's Studies Birzeit University, 2000); Eileen Kuttub, "The Many Faces of Feminisms: Palestinian Women's Movement Finding a Voice," in *Voicing Demands: Feminist Activism in Transnational Contexts*, ed. Sohela Nazneen and Maheen Sultan (London: Zed Books, 2014), 219-187.

women is lower (around 20 percent) in both regions. Respondents in both areas believe that women can perform well as cabinet members.³⁹

Women as heads of state are viewed even more frequently with disapproval, with around 63 percent of males in the West Bank and 66 percent in Gaza voting “no.” Likewise, almost half of all women respondents disapprove in both regions, a self-defeating position. Hence, men and women themselves are unable to see women holding such a high position. Clues to this rejection can be found in the survey response where half of women and almost 66 percent of men think that women are emotional and hence cannot hold high office. Other assumptions could be the obstacle of women’s assumed caretaking role, or that women don’t feel at ease in such positions due to their limited experience in public office.

Only one woman in Palestinian history has been courageous enough to run for the presidency. In the first Palestinian general elections, Samiha Khalil ran as a presidential candidate against former president Yasser Arafat. She is a well-known and strong national leader, a woman activist who played different roles in the national struggle, and one of the founders and presidents of the General Union of Palestinian Women.⁴⁰ Although she did not win, she set a precedent for other women to follow.

Most men and women approve of women voting. Women candidates are very few, and this could explain the high rate of male acceptance – they think women *should* vote for the mainly male candidates. The percentage of male approval is 77 percent in the West Bank and 83 percent in Gaza, a high rate with only a slight regional difference. As many as 87 percent of women approve, affirming that they have the right to vote and express their voice.

Another instance where males largely approve of female participation (garnering 71 percent in the West Bank and 78 percent in Gaza) is women leadership of NGOs. Women’s approval rate is even higher, reaching 90 percent in the West Bank and 88 percent in Gaza. Again, disapproval is more common concerning in strategic positions, while less frequent concerning positions that do not have a clear political impact on politics. Men’s approval is also likely connected to women’s historical role in NGOs and the long history of women’s activism in civil society organization. At the same time, civil society work from the male perspective is considered either welfare or developmental, hence “apolitical” and an extension of women’s traditional caregiving roles.

A significant finding concerns male attitudes towards women’s participation in political protest. Nearly half of men disapprove of women participating in political demonstrations or protests (46 percent in the West Bank and 49 percent in Gaza). About one-third of women disapproved (31 percent in the West Bank and 28 percent in Gaza). Because protests can be dangerous or can result in detention, men may consider them as out of bounds for a “good woman.”

Women in combat or military resistance roles are controversial, among men and women and in by region. Male respondents in both regions disapprove of this role for women in high percentages (61 percent in the West Bank and 59 percent in Gaza). This is likely based on the assumption and gender attitude that women are physically weaker and cannot tolerate the

39. Islah Jad, “Women in the First Legislative Elections,” *Palestinian Politics* 3, no.10 (Spring 1996) (in Arabic).

40. Ibid.

harsh military life of a fighter. It could also be culturally related, as training for combat means that one needs to be outside the home and perhaps with male strangers, not an accepted practice for women in much of society.

Among women, however, 47 percent in the West Bank and 25 percent in Gaza disapprove of women engaging in fighting – significantly fewer proportionally than men. It is worth noting in this context that historically Palestinian women have participated in military operations in different countries in the region, as a part of their role in the national struggle. There have only been a few women active at this level but their role as soldiers or freedom fighters has been acknowledged and praised as women being courageous, taking risks and breaking the dominant stereotype of what is feminine.⁴¹

Disapproval of women police officers follows these trends. Overall, some 43 percent of respondents disapprove in the West Bank and 41 percent in Gaza of women serving as police officers. Disapproval of a policing role is higher among men, while among women disapproval is at 31 percent. Traditionally, there was no police force pre-Oslo and the public is not accustomed to policing, except from Israeli occupation forces. However, female police officers are increasingly visible, performing a variety of desk and other roles.

The prospect of women adopting the leadership of professional syndicates/unions is not widely rejected, with those who disapprove not exceeding one-third of the sample. Disapproval of a woman becoming a judge is high, however – around 48 percent for both regions. This attitude likely reflects the belief that women do not have the capability to judge due to their “emotional” and “weak nature” or because of the long hours that judges work.

Based on the findings, male respondents who don’t approve of women in strategic roles such as head of parties, head of states, participating in demonstrations and protests, or in service as police or fighters are mostly either illiterate or have attained only elementary education. In terms of employment, most of the negative responses came from men who are unemployed but have worked. Correlations by age were less clear. For instance, regarding participation in protests, younger age groups disapprove more commonly than older age groups, but the reasons for this are not clear. Ages 55 and above were most likely to disapprove of other female participation roles but no explanation for this is apparent.

Like among men, among women, the highest rates of disapproval towards female participation roles comes from the illiterate, those aged 50 and above, and those are either permanently outside the labor force or unemployed but formerly working or within the working category. One can conclude that tasks that have strategic impact, such that women will have a role in decision-making at the level of policy, draw disapproval from both genders with slight differences due to gender stereotypes. Less important tasks taken up by women are more commonly approved of by men; these positions are not regarded as competitive and do not have strategic impact.

Quotas and Colleagues

Another issue researched in the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey is the public’s attitudes towards quota policies. In general, women are much more likely than men to endorse female

41. Some of these women have been given name of streets in Palestine by the PA, which indicates appreciation. See: Leila Khaled, *My People Shall Live: The Autobiography of a Revolutionary* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1973).

quotas (Table 3.2c.) The last two parliamentary and local elections held in Palestine adopted quota systems for women candidates with 20 percent of seats reserved for women candidates.⁴² While only 60 percent of men support such quotas, 80 percent of women are in favor.

Respondents who support...	Men (%)	Women (%)
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women in parliament or cabinet	57.0	79.0
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women to study in universities	70.0	89.0
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women in executive positions	52.0	76.0
Equal salaries for men and women in the same position.	75.0	90.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Based on the table above, the findings illustrate a large gender gap. More than half of men approve of a quota for women in parliament and this confirms the previous finding that men are more likely to approve of women taking on positions that have no strategic impact (given the current low regard for, and inactivity of, the Palestinian parliament). Among women, the approval rate is higher, reaching 81 percent in the West Bank and 78 percent in Gaza. Most of these women have attained an educational level beyond secondary school, are employed and are mostly aged 18 to 24 (the same as men who approved.) This indicates that the new generation sees the quota policy as an important tool for ensuring the integration of women in politics, at least as a transitional stage.

A quota for women in executive positions is controversial and not acceptable for men. Most executive positions are determined by political affiliation, one variable that was not included in the survey. Findings indicated that 53 percent of men in the West Bank and Gaza approve having a quota for women in executive positions, while three-quarters of women in the Palestinian territories approve of these quotas. Men have a greater rate of opposition to quotas than women do. At the same time, quotas for women may affect men's chances in cabinet appointments. Looking at the profile of men who opposed a quota in executive positions, half of them are illiterate, unemployed who have worked, and most are within the middle age range of 25 to 34 years old. It could be assumed that middle-aged men do not desire any challenge or competition. Among women who disapprove, one-third are illiterate and unemployed but have worked, and one-fourth are 50 years and above.

Addressing the issue of equal salaries between both genders, findings indicate that one-fourth of men in the oPt are opposed to paying the same salaries to women in the same position, compared to one-tenth of women. Women feel that having equal pay for equal work is their right. For both genders, age was a more significant factor than education or employment. Men who oppose equal pay are younger than women who oppose it.

42. Islah Jad, "Local Power and Women's Empowerment in a Conflict Context: Palestinian Women Contesting Power in Chaos," in *Women in Politics: Gender, Power and Development*, ed. Mariz Tadros (London: Zed books, 2014).

Nevertheless, qualitative research affirms that men and women appear to hold more positive views towards women's rights in terms of equal roles in the public sphere than in private life, as described in the previous section on gender equality at home.

Respondents who accept...	Men (%)	Women (%)
Working with women as lower-level colleagues	77.0	90.0
Working with women as colleagues at the same level	79.0	94.0
Having a female boss	63.0	83.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Both men and women are largely comfortable with interacting with women in the workplace. More than three-quarters of men and four-fifths of women report they would accept working with women who are subordinates. However, survey findings showed that 4 percent of men in the West Bank and 17 percent of Gaza do not approve of such a situation, while 7 percent of women in the West Bank and 88 percent in Gaza do not approve.

Two-thirds of men in the West Bank and Gaza approve of having a female boss, while 85 percent of women in the West Bank and 88 percent in Gaza also approve. However, male disapproval of having a female boss is higher in the West Bank than it is in Gaza where there is more competition over employment. Age categories are significantly different as men who disapprove are largely young, while women are mostly of the oldest age category.

In conclusion, one can say that women's position in the public sphere has improved if compared to two decades ago. However, they still face structural and cultural obstacles blocking their participation. Mainstreaming gender policies within the institutions can give more space and opportunities for women to advance.

Gender Equality and the Law

Three areas of gendered law represent highly emotive issues in the Palestinian context: inheritance, "honor-killing" and divorce.

Inheritance, "honor killing" and divorce are clear reflections of masculine power and control over women and have been the subject of numerous attempts by the Palestinian women's movement and human rights groups to change existing legislation.⁴³

43. Family law matters for Muslim residents of the West Bank and Gaza are governed by the Jordanian Law of Personal Status (1976), the Egyptian Law of Family Rights (1954), and Israeli law. Issues of probate and inheritance considered by the sectarian courts of Christianity are subject to the law applicable to Muslims, unlike all personal status matters, which are subject to the special laws of these courts, except for the Catholic court.

TABLE 3.3a
Legal Disputes
 Percentage of respondents who agree with prospective new laws

Respondents who agree that there should be a law...	Men (%)	Women (%)
Criminalizing domestic violence, including marital rape.	64	81
Allowing fathers to write a will that gives equal inheritance to sons and daughters	37	55
Treating honor killings like any other murders	62	76
Allowing women and men the same right to initiate divorce	50	81

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Inheritance

Islamic *shari'a* gives women rights in inheritance, while stipulating that a daughter inherits half of her brothers' share. Not surprisingly, the survey data shows that men are less likely to support equal inheritance rights (37 percent of men) compared to 55 percent of women who support a father's ability to equally pass his inheritance to sons and daughters (see Table 3.3a above.) Qualitative findings suggest that, while religion is often used to defend the practice of inequitable inheritance laws, economic interests are frequently at the core. In fact, women often do not even inherit their share as stipulated by *Shari'a* Islamic law. As in any other patriarchal societies, men manipulate the implementation of *shari'a*-based laws that give women rights in inheritance, especially when it comes to land. What determines inheritance is, in fact, men's economic interests. Increasing land prices due to colonial-settler control over wide areas of Palestinian land also increase male relatives' attempts to keep control over family land.

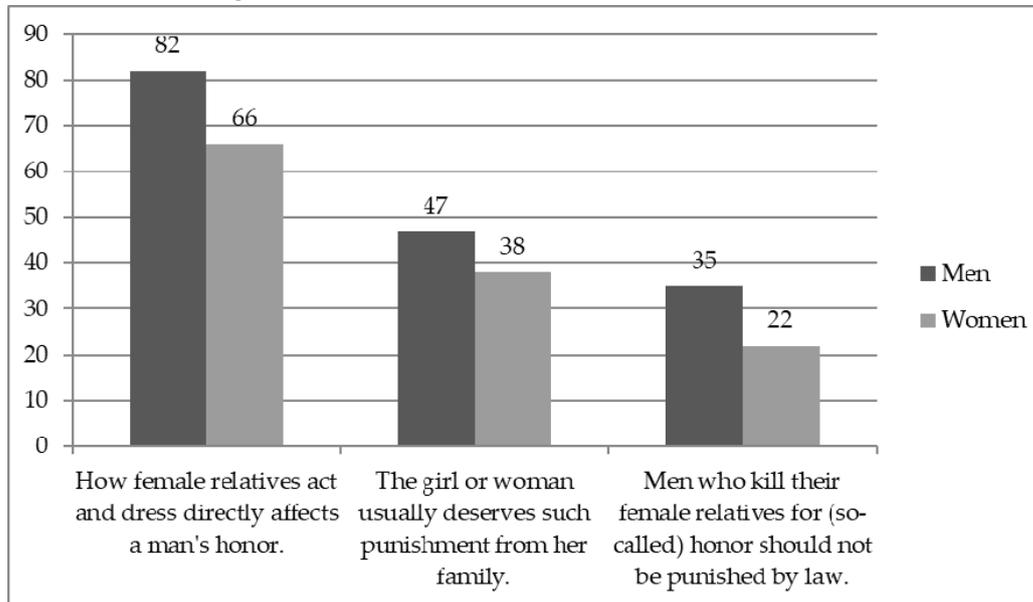
"Inheritance is a right that the Islamic religion guaranteed to women, and women should be encouraged to receive their inheritance. Yet, male family members discourage women from receiving their inheritance out of their [own] material interests."

Man, shopkeeper, 50 years old, Nablus

"Honor Crimes"

Approximately half (53 percent of men and 54 percent of women) of respondents have heard of incidents related to "honor killings" (i.e. when a female is killed because her family believes that her actions have somehow shamed them) in their community over the past year. Such high numbers could suggest that respondents were recalling media reports. Most men and women support the general notion that how women dress and act directly affects a man's honor (Figure 3.3b). Support for the idea of women as bearers of male honor was much higher among men (at 82 percent compared to 66 percent of women). However, fewer men (47 percent) and even fewer women (38 percent) believe that "the girl or woman usually deserves such punishment (being killed) from her family." Even fewer men (35 percent) and women (22 percent) felt that honor killings should *not* be punished by law. Furthermore, as shown in Table 3.3a above, 62 percent of men and 76 percent of women said that honor killings should be treated like any other murders.

FIGURE 3.3a
Attitudes on “Honor Crimes”
 Percentage of respondents aged 18-59 who agree or strongly agree with selected statements related to honor crimes



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Recently, two so-called “honor killings” by male relatives of women on grounds that had nothing to do with the so-called precepts of “honor” motivated strong negative public reaction and were an opportunity for activists to demonstrate that the majority of such cases have been family-perpetrated murders otherwise motivated (jealousy, covering up incest, conflicts over property etc.).⁴⁴ Palestine’s first national coalition to eliminate violence against women was established in 2003 and since then has mobilized major public awareness campaigns around the issue in Palestinian communities and other related issues such as domestic abuse and marital rape. The fruit of this and comparable efforts is the fact that 64 percent of men support a law to criminalize domestic abuse, including marital rape. Interestingly, although 81 percent of women support such a law, the fact that nearly one in five women reject the legislation suggests that there is a segment of women who prefer that such private matters be kept out of the public domain, or simply (because they did not recognize the importance of such legislation) do not believe they have the right to criminalize domestic abuse.

Divorce

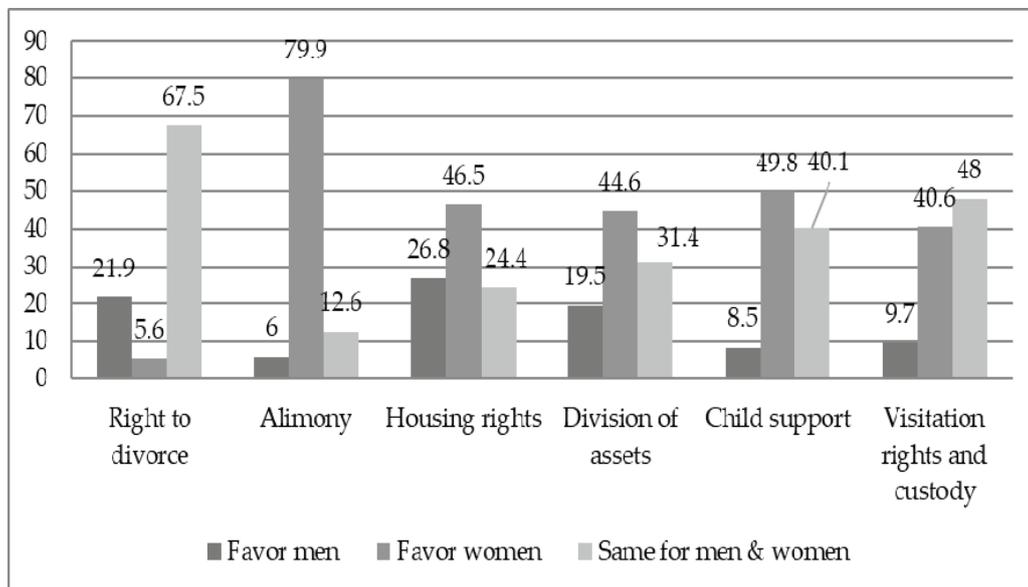
Men, much more so than women, continue to be resistant to a woman’s right to initiate divorce proceedings. Only 50 percent of them believe in the woman’s right to initiate divorce, compared to a much higher 81 percent of women (see Table 3.3c.) Surprisingly, both men and women tend to agree in terms of the different ways that current divorce laws are said to favor women (68 percent of men and 69 percent of women claim the current law treats men and women equally). The exception is the right to initiate divorce, which is seen by men and

44. Ahmad Melhem, “Palestinian activists press Abbas to outlaw honor crimes,” *Al-Monitor*, March 12, 2014. <https://bit.ly/3g9Eft6>

women as favoring men (see Figures 3.3a, 3.3b below and Table 3.3a above)⁴⁵. In terms of alimony (which in Islamic law is limited to monthly “maintenance payments” rather than a share of household assets or wealth accrued over the course of the marriage), almost 80 percent of men and 69 percent of women state that the current laws favor women over men.⁴⁶ This assumption may be due to the fact that only women have legal rights to receive maintenance on the dissolution of marriage.

Similarly, child support laws are deemed by 50 percent of men and women to favor women (with another 40 percent of men and women claiming the laws are same for both women and men). This contrasts with the findings of other surveys⁴⁷ and belies the reality of low levels of child maintenance payments and weak enforcement.

FIGURE 3.3b
Men’s Attitudes on Laws Related to Divorce
 Percentage of men respondents according to their views on divorce laws



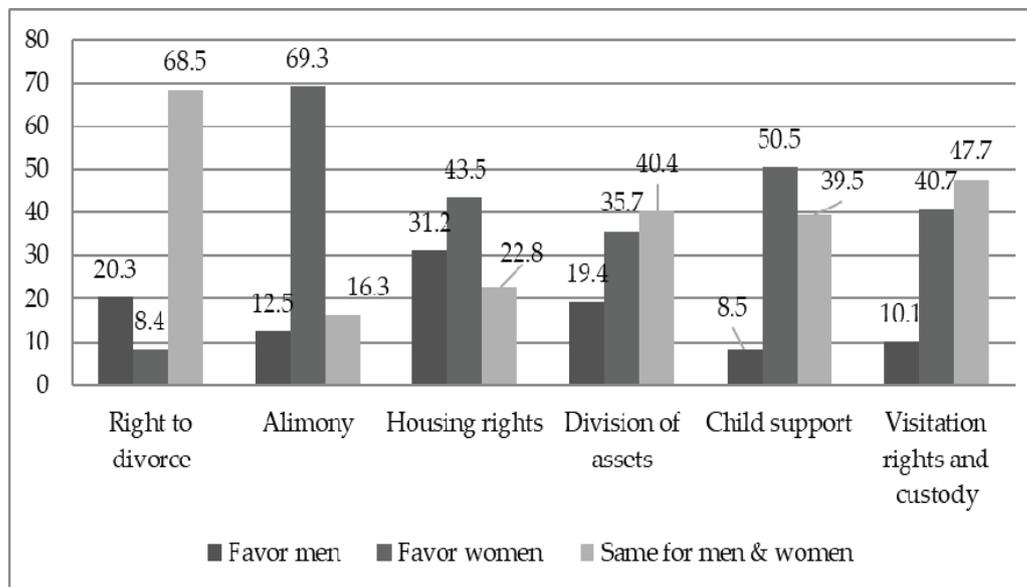
Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

45. According to articles 102-112 of the Jordanian Personal Status Law No. 61 of 1976, which is in force in the West Bank, women can initiate divorce through khula'.

46. Rema Hammami and Penny Johnson, *Change and Conservation: Family Law Reform in Court Practice and Public Perceptions in the Occupied Palestinian Territory; Summary and Report of 2013 Family Law Survey Findings* (Birzeit: Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University, May 2014).

47. Ibid

FIGURE 3.3c
Women's Attitudes on Laws Related to Divorce
 Percentage of women respondents according to their views on divorce laws



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Along the same lines, both men and women claim that visitation and custody rights either favor women (at 41 percent for both men and women respondents) or equally favor both genders (at 48 percent of both sexes.)⁴⁸ A possible explanation for these findings is a low level of knowledge about family law among respondents, or alternately that respondents feel unable to criticize the law.

Knowledge about the law

A relatively small percentage of men (26 percent) and women (34 percent) report that they know at least one law that protects women and promotes their rights. The findings indicate that difference between regions is not significant on this issue, as reported by both men and women, although women in the Gaza Strip (36 percent) are more familiar with these laws than women in the West Bank (35 percent.) On the contrary, men in the Gaza Strip (25 percent) were less well acquainted than men (27 percent) in the West Bank.

The findings show that education has no significant effect on women's knowledge about law, yet their educational level shapes men's knowledge of laws significantly.

48. In the West Bank, the mother is awarded the custody of male and female children until they reach the age of puberty, after which custody is granted to the father. In the Gaza Strip, the mother is awarded custody of girls under the age of 11, after which the father is granted custody.

Table 3.3a**Knowledge of Family Law**

Percentage and number of respondents according to their knowledge of at least one law that protects women and promotes their rights

Region	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	NO	YES	Total	NO	YES	Total
West Bank	73.3	26.7	100.0	65.3	34.7	100.0
Gaza Strip	75.1	24.9	100.0	64.0	36.0	100.0
Total (N)	836	295	1131	756	410	1,166
	73.9	26.1	100.0	64.8	35.2	100.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Qualitative research confirms these findings. Many men and women interviewees indicated that they do not know much about the current laws. Interviewees who are more knowledgeable about family laws point to the practical limitations of more equitable legislation. A male interviewee explained that a “woman’s resort to the courts requires time, effort, and expense, which obliges many poor women to give up.” Other interviewees questioned the ability of the law to solve issues related to social and domestic matters.

CHAPTER FOUR

Childhood

Men's and Women's Childhood Experiences

The survey asked a range of questions about respondents' childhood with the aim of understanding how early experiences of gender norms, roles, and practices might shape attitudes in adulthood. Three main areas of childhood were touched upon: the gender division of housework, household decision-making and experiences of violence.

Overwhelmingly the most significant male figure in the childhood of both men and women was their father. More than two-thirds of both men and women cite their father as the most significant male figure in their childhood, followed by brothers at 5 percent among males and 10 percent among females. Grandfathers were cited as the most important male figure among only 3 percent of both sexes. The singular significance of fathers in childhood is a product of the transition to nuclear families in Palestine that occurred over the 1970s and 1980s, which reduced the central role previously played by other older males within extended family structures. The greater significance of brothers cited by women, at 10 percent versus 5 percent among males, shows some continuity in the gendered kinship system in which brothers are considered critical figures of support to sisters throughout their lives. Until only recently, it was the norm for women to waive their inheritance rights in favor of their male siblings. Just over 5 percent of men reported no significant male figure in their childhood, possibly the result of growing up in a female-headed household.

Gendered Restrictions on Movement and Leisure in Childhood

As boys, men enjoyed greater freedom of movement and more free time than did women in their childhood. However, slightly more than half of men said as children they had to engage in paid work to help their families.

More than 90 percent of men said it was easier for them and their brothers, as compared to their sisters or other girls, to go outside the house when they were children, and 75 percent said they had more free time than their sisters because they did not have to do household chores. In contrast, 63 percent of women responded they had less ability to go outside the house in childhood than their brothers and only 43 percent said they had less free time due to having to do chores. Over half of male respondents, 55 percent, reported they had less free time as children because they had to earn income for the family. Approximately 39 percent of women made this same observation about their brothers. Overall, men remember having more privileges than their sisters, while women recall experiencing relatively more freedom of movement than men recognize.

Gender Division of Housework in Childhood

Most respondents' childhood homes exhibited inequitable gendered divisions of labor.

"I was raised in a traditional rural household with a strict gendered division of labor. Gender equality was not part of my upbringing. Yet, this changed in my current family as my wife and I had agreed from the beginning to form a more just and equitable family."

Male schoolteacher, 30 years old, Ramallah

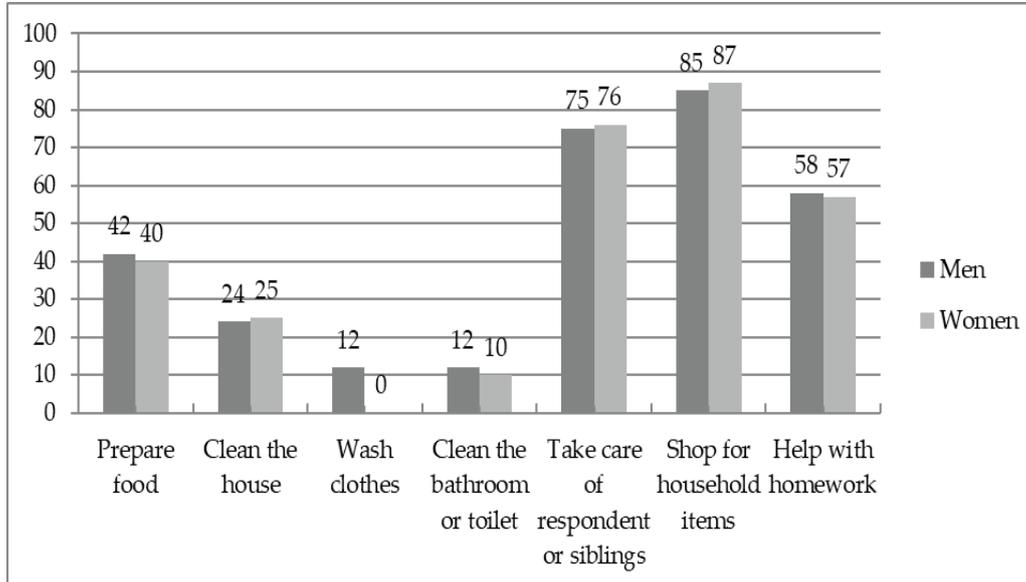
Fathers and Housework

More than half of male respondents reported that their fathers *never* prepared food (58 percent), cleaned the house (76 percent), washed clothes (88 percent), cleaned the bathroom/toilet (88 percent), and never helped with the children's homework (42 percent.) The most common task that fathers were reported to undertake was shopping for household items (only 15 percent cite fathers as not having done this), followed by fathers' taking care of the respondent or her/his siblings (25 percent of fathers were cited as never having done this.)⁴⁹

FIGURE 4.3a

Fathers' Participation in Housework and Childcare

Percentage of male and female respondents reporting that their father or another man (excluding male domestic workers) ever performed specific household work



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

49. These percentages are consistent with findings from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics Time Use Survey 2012/2013, which reported that around 90.8 percent of females aged 10 years and above performed household chores (preparing and serving food, cleaning, vacuuming, shopping and home care for house purposes) versus 44.6 percent of males (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2014). PCBS, *Time Use Survey*, 2012/2013.

When looking at regional and other correlates as to why some fathers were more likely in men's childhoods to take part in domestic chores, the role of the mother emerges as an important factor as illustrated in the following table:

TABLE 4.3a	
Men Whose Fathers Never Did Domestic Tasks	
Percentage of men whose fathers never did the following domestic tasks	
Never Prepared Food (%)	
All men	58
West Bank	58
Gaza	57
Mother worked	53.0
Mother had higher education	49.0
Never Cleaned the House (%)	
All men	76.0
West Bank	76.0
Gaza	75.0
Mother worked	72.0
Mother had higher education	71.0
Never Washed the Clothes (%)	
All men	88.0
West Bank	89.0
Gaza	84.0
Mother worked	79.0
Mother had higher education	83.0
Never Cleaned the Bathroom or Toilet (%)	
All men	88.0
West Bank	90.0
Gaza	85.0
Mother worked	80.0
Mother had higher education	85.0
Never Took Care of You or Your Siblings (%)	
All men	25.0
West Bank	28.0
Gaza	20.0
Mother worked	29.0
Mother had higher education	28.0
Never Shopped for Household Items (%)	
All men	15.0
West Bank	16.0
Gaza	11.0
Mother worked	22.0
Mother had higher education	13.0
Never Helped You with Your Homework (%)	
All men	42.0
West Bank	42.0
Gaza	41.0
Mother worked	45.0
Mother had higher education	34.0

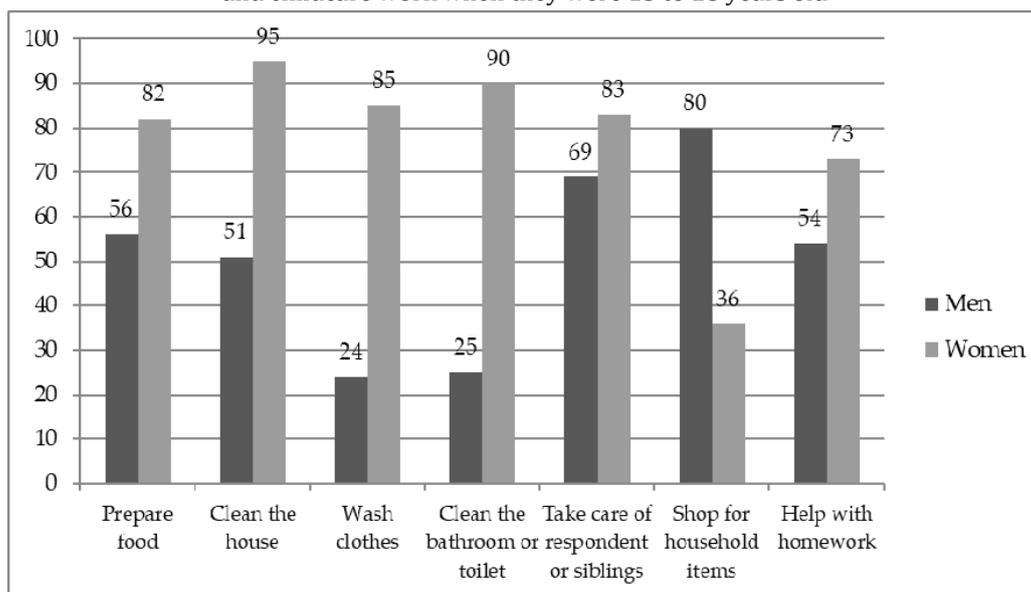
Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Among men who grew up with working mothers, there is a small but consistent increase (ranging from 3 to 9 percent depending on the specific chore) in fathers having participated in domestic tasks when they were children. The pattern is as consistent but even stronger when mothers had higher education. On a range of chores, there was an 8 to 9 percent increase in father’s participation when their wife had higher education. Why an educated mother might have a greater impact than a working mother in terms of their husband’s involvement in housework is congruent with findings on gender role expectations towards housework among dual working spouses. Many global studies have found that working women and their spouses continue to have stereotypical assumptions about gendered housework roles. Women’s own gender ideology continues to play a critical role in determining how much housework they undertake.⁵⁰

Childhood Domestic Responsibilities

As children, both men and women in the survey experienced highly gender-unequal distribution of domestic duties. In comparison to men, women overwhelmingly carried the responsibility of most domestic tasks in childhood.

FIGURE 4.3b
Childhood Participation in Specific Tasks
 Percentage of respondents who report participating in specific domestic and childcare work when they were 13 to 18 years old



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

The domestic task that men as children were most likely to undertake was shopping for the household, 80 percent of men having done this as boys compared to only 35 percent of women. Otherwise the gaps between male and female household duties as children are striking. As children, more than three-fourths of adult men never washed clothes (76 percent) or cleaned

50. For an overview of this literature see:

Mylène Lachance-Grzela and Geneviève Bouchard, “Why do women do the lion’s share of housework? A decade of research,” *Sex Roles* 63 (2010): 80-767.

the bathroom (80 percent). Close to half of them never participated in cleaning the house, helping brothers or sisters with homework or preparing food (ranging from 44 percent to 49 percent). One-third of them, 31 percent, never looked after siblings.

In contrast, more than 90 percent of women cleaned the house and bathroom as children, over 80 percent of them prepared food, washed clothes, and took care of siblings. Some 70 percent helped siblings with their homework. Clearly, very few men undertook domestic duties in childhood and instead experienced housework and childcare as the responsibility of their sisters and mothers.

The differences between West Bank and Gaza respondents in terms of childhood domestic duties are few; only on a few tasks do males in Gaza report a one or two percentage greater participation in childhood than do men in the West Bank. What does more significantly raise the degree of male participation in many household tasks as children (although by 11 percent or less) is whether their mother worked and whether she had higher education. In the following table, the lower the percentage means the greater the male respondent participated as a child in the specific task.

TABLE 4.3b	
Domestic Chores of Men in Childhood	
Percentage of men who never did the following chores when they were 13 to 18 years of age	
Never Prepared Food (%)	
All men	44.0
Mother worked	41.0
Mother had higher education	37.0
Never Cleaned the House (%)	
All men	49.0
Mother worked	42.0
Mother had higher education	39.0
Never Washed the Clothes (%)	
All men	76.0
Mother worked	66.0
Mother had higher education	71.0
Never Cleaned the Bathroom or Toilet (%)	
All men	75.0
Mother worked	67.0
Mother had higher education	78.0
Never Took Care of Siblings (%)	
All men	31.0
Mother worked	33.0
Mother had higher education	31.0
Never Shopped for Household Items (%)	
All men	20.0
Mother worked	21.0
Mother had higher education	19.0
Never Helped Siblings with Homework (%)	
All men	46.0
Mother worked	37.0
Mother had higher education	35.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Again, a mother's higher education (compared to her working outside the house) had a notable impact on increasing men's childhood participation in several domestic tasks. For example, having a highly educated mother raised men's childhood participation in preparing food by 7 percent, in cleaning the house by 10 percent, washing clothes by 5 percent and helping siblings with homework by 11 percent. In contrast, having had a mother who worked outside the house raised men's childhood participation in preparing food by only 3 percent, housecleaning by 7 percent, laundry by 5 percent and helping siblings with homework by 9 percent. The possible explanation for this is like the findings mentioned above, that women's gender ideology proves to be more important in defining household roles than does the fact of their working.⁵¹

Links with Contemporary Trends

"In my family we are seven, and my grandmother lives with us. My grandmother and mother do everything. why? Because this is the way they are, because this is how they taught us. It's not that my brothers don't work in the house too. They tidy their rooms, but [of the chores that are] for the whole house, like washing the dishes, they do not do anything."

Female FGD participant, university student, Ramallah

Due to the organization of the data, it is not possible to make direct correlations between men's childhood participation in domestic duties and their current level of participation in domestic tasks and childcare.⁵² However, what can be concluded is that the overall low proportion of men undertaking domestic duties as children is mirrored in the continuing very low proportion of men saying they have carried out various domestic tasks over the previous month.

TABLE 4.3c

Men and Domestic Duties in Adulthood

Percentage of men who did not do domestic tasks in the month prior to the survey

Type of domestic tasks	Male respondents (%)
Prepare food	61.0
Clean the house	83.0
Wash clothes	73.0
Clean the bathroom or toilet	83.0
Wife does most of the housework	89.0
Men who are satisfied with current division of domestic duties at home	98.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

51. Due to the question being asked of men about their mothers in childhood, it is not possible to investigate the role of mother's gender ideology and its impact.

52. The survey questions ask respondents whether they "ever" undertook the various tasks in childhood, but adult men are asked whether they undertook them only over the past month. The time scales are therefore incommensurate and cannot be compared.

TABLE 4.3d
Gender Equality Attitudes of Men whose Fathers Did Domestic Chores
 Percentage of gender equality attitudes of men whose fathers participated in domestic chores in childhood

Father Participated in...	Low Gender Equality (%)	Median Gender Equality (%)	High Gender Equality (%)	Total (%)
Preparing food	43.0	42.0	51.0	42.0
Cleaning house	28.0	22.0	33.0	24.0
Washing clothes	15.0	10.0	23.0	12.0
Cleaning the bathroom	14.0	10.0	23.0	12.0
Helping with homework	57.0	58.0	62.0	58.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Over the month before the survey was implemented, more than 83 percent of men reported *not* participating in cleaning the house, including the bathroom or toilet. Almost three-fourths did not participate in doing the laundry and nearly two-thirds did not participate in preparing food. Eighty-nine percent of men said their wives do most of the housework, while 96 percent of women reported themselves as doing most of the housework. Almost all (98 percent) men said they were satisfied with this domestic gender division of responsibilities as were 92 percent of women. However, 81 percent of men said they were “very satisfied” with this distribution of household work, while only 64 percent of women responded the same. Clearly, men’s childhood privileges of being virtually exempt from domestic duties have a major and continuing impact on their domestic roles and attitudes in adulthood.

Commenting on the current situation, some respondents in the qualitative research said that mothers tend to assign girls more household tasks than boys, and only give boys more individually oriented jobs such as making their own beds or washing only the dishes they themselves used. In cases where there are no daughters in the family, however, some interviewees suggested that boys are given tasks that may otherwise be assigned to girls. Some remarked that the presence of an older family living in the household (usually a grandparent) played a role in sustaining inequitable gender distributions of household tasks.

On a more positive note, there is evidence that men whose fathers took part in domestic tasks when they were children tend to have more equitable gender attitudes in adulthood.

Men with higher acceptance of gender equitable attitudes in adulthood are more likely to have had a father who participated in the five household chores listed in the above table. Almost 10 percent more men with the highest level of gender equitable attitudes had fathers who cooked in their childhood, 11 percent more of them had fathers who cleaned the house, 10 percent more of them had fathers who cleaned the bathroom and 13 percent more of them had fathers who washed clothes in their childhood. Also, 4 percent more of them had fathers who helped them with their homework as children.

The pattern is similar but not as strong in terms of men who undertook household chores themselves in childhood. Men with high gender equality attitudes in adulthood were 3 to 4 percent more likely to have helped cook in childhood, 7 percent more likely to have helped with laundry, 9 percent more likely to have cleaned the bathroom, 5 percent more likely to have taken care of siblings and 8 percent more likely to have helped siblings with homework compared to men with lower gender equitable attitudes.

Gender and Family Decision-Making in Childhood

A minority of men (ranging from 13 percent to 26 percent) grew up in households where there was shared decision-making between their parents on some issues. Instead, men generally perceived their father as having had the final say on significant family decisions in childhood. Two-thirds of them report their fathers decided on large family purchases, close to half (47 percent) report their father had the final say on schooling for them and their brothers, and 42 percent say their father had the final say on their marriage. Fathers were cited as having a greater say on daughters' marriages at 52 percent but less on their schooling at 42 percent having the final say.

TABLE 4.4
Decision-making
Percentage of men on who made the final decision on the following issues

Who made the final decision	You and brothers' schooling?(%)	Your sisters' schooling?(%)	Your and your brothers' marriages?(%)	Your sisters' marriages?(%)	Large Investments such as buying a house or care?(%)
Mother	8.0	8.0	6.0	5.0	6.0
Father	47.0	42.0	42.0	52.0	66.0
Parents Equally	14.0	13.0	19.0	26.0	17.0
Myself	25.0	23.0	30.0	6.0	8.0
Other	4.0	13.0	5.0	10.0	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Interestingly, women's experiences of family decision-making were different. They consistently see fathers holding slightly less decision-making power than do male respondents. Some 10 percent less say the father had the final decision in a brother's schooling, 7 percent less on sister's schooling and 20 percent less on their and their sister's marriages. However, women tend to see "others" as having greater decision-making (probably senior figures in the extended household or the father's male relatives) rather than citing more equal decision-making between parents or greater power in the hands of their mother.

Qualitative interviews produced more nuances in the distribution of household decision-making, revealing processes of negotiation and a slightly better balance of power in practice between husbands and wives.

"In my own household, as in most traditional households, the father had the final say in most family matters. Yet, my mother's influence on the decisions of my father was critical. Myself, as well as my other sisters used to approach our mother in our issues, so she would talk to our father and influence his decisions."

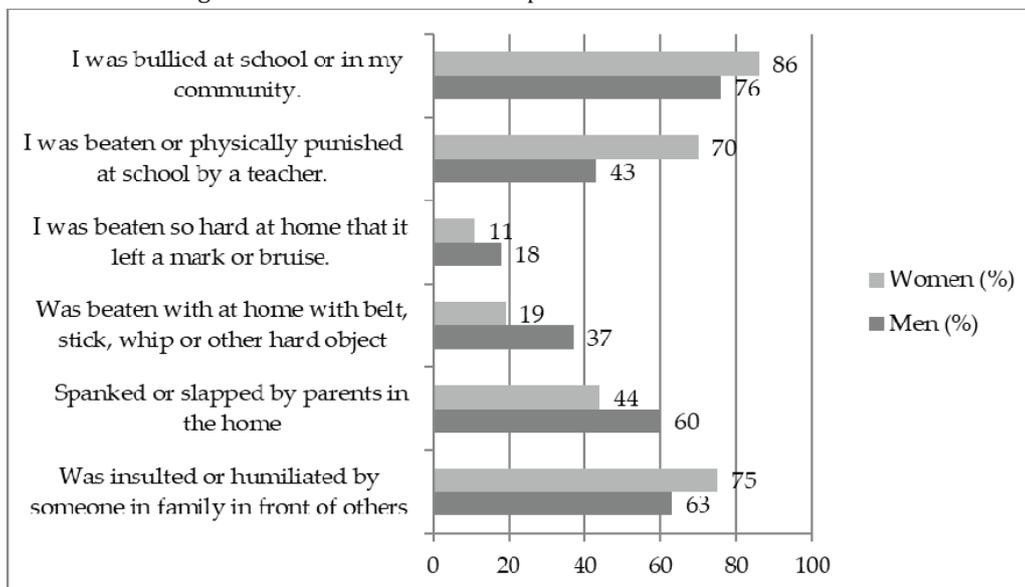
Female bank employee, 25 years old, Jerusalem

Childhood Experiences of Violence at Home and School

Men report experiencing more physical violence at home as children, while girls report experiencing more physical violence at school.

A high three-fourths of women and nearly two-thirds of men report being publicly insulted or humiliated as a child by someone in their family. However, men as children experienced higher levels of physical punishment in the home than did women. Some 60 percent of men and 44 percent of women were spanked or slapped by their parents. As children, men suffered greater levels of severe physical punishment at home than did women, with 37 percent of men saying they were beaten with a belt or stick (compared to 19 percent of women) and 18 percent of men saying they were beaten so badly at home when they were children that it left marks (compared to 11 percent of women).

FIGURE 4.5
Childhood Experiences of Violence at Home and School
 Percentage of men and women who experienced violence at home and school



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

However, in contrast to contemporary studies that found that boys experienced greater violence than girls by teachers at school,⁵³ women in the IMAGES survey reported facing more violence from teachers at school during childhood than did men. Some 70 percent of women say they were beaten or physically punished by a teacher compared to 43 percent of men in their childhood. Given that studies on the contemporary situation show that young boys rather than girls are more likely to be victims of physical violence from teachers, a potential explanation for the change is that campaigns by both United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and the Palestinian Ministry of Education to stop teachers from using physical punishment in schools over the past decade and a half may

53. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society*, 2011.

have had more of an effect on mitigating female teachers’ use of violence against girls, than on male teachers’ use of violence against boys. Sex segregated schools are the norm in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip. Also surprising is that more women (86 percent) than men (76 percent) report that they were bullied at school or in their community during childhood. Perhaps fewer men are willing to admit to these experiences in adulthood.

Men’s childhood experiences of physical violence in the home can have an impact on adult attitudes towards domestic violence. Men who repeatedly experienced harsh physical violence at home as children tend to legitimate wife abuse in adulthood.

TABLE 4.5a
Men’s Childhood Physical Abuse and Adult Attitudes
 Percentage of men’s childhood experiences of physical abuse and adult attitudes towards wife abuse

Number of times beaten so hard at home left a mark	Never or Once (%)	2-10 times (%)	Often (%)
Agree there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	34	35	57
A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together	62	69	71

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

For instance, men who say they often experienced harsh physical treatment as children (being beaten so hard at home it left marks or bruises) express a 23 percent higher level of support for the statement, “a woman sometimes deserves to be beaten” than those who experienced one or no incidents in childhood. Similarly, men with the same level of abusive experience in childhood are also 9 percent more likely to support the statement that “women should tolerate violence to keep the family together” than do men who experienced once or never experienced the same abuse in childhood.

Childhood Witnessing of Violence against Mothers

“During my adolescence, at the age of 14, I witnessed my father’s violence towards my mother. It was a stressful period and it affected my siblings and myself. I felt fear and oppression mainly because I was helpless. I felt very weak and could not intervene. This experience had affected me immensely and I still have flashbacks from that period. My view of my father has been negatively affected till now.”

Woman, unemployed, 28 years old, Ramallah

One-quarter of men and 22 percent of women say they saw their mother being beaten by their father or another male relative during their childhood. However, as the global literature on intimate partner violence (IPV) has found, the severity of impacts of abuse on victims, including children who witness it, varies greatly depending on whether it was a rare or single incident versus whether it was a repeated form of abuse.⁵⁴

54. John K. Cochran, Christine S. Sellers et al., “Repetitive Intimate Partner Victimization: An Exploratory Application of Social Learning Theory,” *Deviant Behaviour* 32, no. 9 (2011).

TABLE 4.5b
Childhood Experience of Abuse of Mother
 Percentage of men and women who, before the age of 18, witnessed or heard his or her mother being beaten by father or another male relative

Childhood Experience of Abuse of Mother	Men (%)			Women (%)		
	West Bank	Gaza	Total	West Bank	Gaza	Total
Never or once only	86	86	86	85	86	86
2-10 times	12	12	12	11	8	10
Often	2	2	2	4	4	4
Witnessed any incident	26	22	25	22	21	22

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

When broken down by number of incidents, 86 percent of men and women saw their mother being attacked only once or not all. Between 12 percent to 10 percent of men and women witnessed multiple incidents (from 2 to 10 incidents), while 2 percent of men and 4 percent of women witnessed their mothers beaten often.

There is some correlation between childhood witnessing of different degrees of intimate partner violence (IPV) and adult attitudes. Men who experienced more severe instances of their mothers being abused by their fathers hold contradictory attitudes towards spousal abuse in adulthood. As the table below shows, men who witnessed their mothers being abused often as children are 11 percent more likely to agree that “sometimes a woman deserves to be beaten,” compared to men who witnessed one or no incidents as a child.

TABLE 4.5c
Men’s Childhood Experience of Abuse of Mother and Adult Attitudes
 Percentage of men’s childhood experiences of domestic abuse correlated by adult attitudes

Number of times witnessed mother beaten in childhood	Never or Once	2-10 Times	Often	Total
Agree there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	33	38	44	34
A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together	64	58	59	63

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

However, men who witnessed their mothers being frequently abused in childhood are 15 percent *less* likely as adults to support the idea that women should tolerate violence to keep the family together than do men who witnessed one or no incidents in childhood.

Among women the pattern is more consistent: the more severe the childhood experience, the less likely that adult women accept spousal abuse in adulthood. Only 15 percent of women who witnessed their mothers being abused *often* in childhood agree that “Sometimes a woman deserves to be beaten,” a 7 percent drop compared to women who witnessed no or one incident in childhood. Similarly, among women who witnessed their mothers’ frequent abuse in childhood, 10 percent fewer think women should tolerate violence to keep the family together.⁵⁵

55. Among other issues raised by these findings is the critical importance of disaggregating repetitive instances and experiences of domestic or family violence from single or few incidents, both when analysing victims as well as possible impacts of violence.

CHAPTER FIVE

Parenthood

Parenthood and masculinity in relation to gender roles and attitudes should be viewed in the context of the uniqueness of the Palestinian family under colonial occupation and the continuous changes in the socio-economic and political situation. Parenthood roles have been affected by transformation of the majority of extended families to nuclear ones due to the destruction of the agricultural land, the proletarianization of the peasants, and fragmentation of the Palestinian household due to the Separation Wall, and an expansion of settlement. This has created a situation where the family had to utilize different coping strategies, adapting to new transitional roles and rearranging gender roles in certain cases where women faced more challenges.

In certain cases, women have become the main breadwinners, in other cases, men had to work far from home (in Israel or abroad), thus abandoning their traditional roles. However, although some roles and attitudes to parenting have changed, this change has not been radical and has continued to adapt according to the crisis and socio-economic changes, while maintaining certain cultural patterns in the division of labor.

Nevertheless, it is important to realize that in all the different stages of the Palestinian conflict, the family has always been a key socio-economic and political institution. It has sustained and maintained itself as a coherent unit and enhanced its capacity to cope with continuous crisis and colonial aggression. The IMAGES data reveals some new trends in parenthood roles where certain changes happen for some fathers. Structural constraints facing the family, especially economic and cultural beliefs, continue to be an obstacle.

The rapid social, political and economic changes in Palestine, especially post-Oslo accords, have increased unemployment and poverty due to the nature of the new economy. The neoliberal approach has imposed tremendous pressures on the family, weakening the fathers' and other male family members' ability to protect, care and provide for their household. The occupation imposes further pressures on fathers as they may be imprisoned or martyred, losing their breadwinner's role. A new trend is emerging: more women are searching for any employment due to the absence of the breadwinner and the deterioration of the economic situation. Women are entering the labor force in small numbers (not exceeding 17 percent of the labor force) or taking on informal employment (jobs that are insecure in order to alleviate poverty). This has not been accompanied by changes in gendered notions of men as co-caregivers. For younger parents, research findings suggest that more fathers embrace the idea of active parenting and are willing to engage in the care of their children. Despite these changes, there has been almost no discussion among policymakers about the need to support men's equitable caregiving in Palestine.

The IMAGES survey questions on parenthood or fatherhood concentrated mainly on the youngest child raised, focusing on the father's attitude towards antenatal care and childbirth. Questions focused on different issues such as if the husband had accompanied his wife to an antenatal health care visit or to a clinic during her pregnancy. Other questions posited concerned where he went in the clinic, if he was present during birth or if he took any leave within the first six months after his wife's delivery, in addition to attitudes on child care.

In general, as observed, fatherhood starts early in Palestine. Three-quarters of men who have a biological child report that they accompanied their wives to antenatal health care visits (Table 5.1a). However, only about 30 percent of fathers reported accompanying their wives to every visit. When fathers did attend antenatal care visits, most were significantly involved. Slightly more than half of men and women reported that the husband (father) joined his wife for the actual visit with the healthcare provider, while smaller proportions of fathers (according to reports by men and women) only dropped off the mother of the child or sat in the waiting room. Survey data shows that correlating several factors with husbands' involvement in prenatal visits, including his and her socio-demographic background, age, education, wealth and employment status, all have an effect on whether the husband accompanies his wife to an antenatal care visit. Younger men who are educated, or who were employed and had higher incomes, were more likely to have accompanied their wives to a prenatal visit.

TABLE 5.1a**Frequency of Husband Accompanying Wife to Antenatal Visit**

Percentages of men and women who reported that the husband accompanied his wife for antenatal care

No' of visits	Men (%)	Women (%)
Every visit	30.0	29.0
Some visits	66.0	67.0
One visit	5.0	4.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Palestinian men are interested in having children, especially boys, based on the society's assumption that boys will be the future breadwinners, and that they can support the household in times of crisis and economic need.⁵⁶ This increases husbands' interest in caring for their wives during pregnancy. Findings have shown that the frequency of a spouse accompanying his wife for antenatal care during pregnancy in every visit is higher in Gaza (34 percent) than in the West Bank (28 percent.)

When asked about joining their wives in the delivery room, survey data indicates that few husbands have been present in the delivery room for the birth of their most recent child. Findings show that around three-quarters of husbands were present at the hospital, but only rarely were they in the delivery room. Palestinian delivery rooms are usually occupied by more than one woman, and as such it is not possible or culturally acceptable (nor, often, is it possible in terms of physical space) for men to be present during childbirth. In qualitative interviews, however, both men and women emphasized the importance of men's presence in the delivery room. According to female respondents sharing their delivery, men get a glimpse of the pain and hard work that women go through when giving birth and this promotes a greater spirit of solidarity and sharing between spouses. It is possible that the regulations of some hospitals do not allow men's attendance, or cultural traditions prohibit husbands who are embarrassed and see delivery as a private matter for wives/women.

According to reports from both women and men, a substantial proportion of working fathers took days off work within the first six months after the birth of their youngest or most recent child.

Half of all fathers and 38 percent of mothers report that the father took some amount of time off from work to help care for the new child. These men reported taking an average of five unpaid days off work. Some 44 percent of the West Bank fathers took days off compared to only 26 percent in Gaza. The clear majority of respondents said that they'd like a paternity leave option of (a) up to one week or (b) one to two weeks. The table below indicates that there is a big regional gap between the West Bank and Gaza. Men in the West Bank are more inclined to take leave than those in Gaza. This may be due to the economic conditions in Gaza.

56. Halim Barakat, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State*, (University of California Press, 1993).

TABLE 5.1b
Paternal Leave After Childbirth
 “If you were working regularly at the time of your most recent child's birth, did you take any leave or time off within the first six months to help?”

		West Bank	Gaza Strip
Male (%)	NO	35.9	79.3
	YES	64.1	20.7
Female (%)	NO	56.1	73.8
	YES	43.9	26.2

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Perceptions of Fatherhood

Respondents in general appear to balance the pressures of being breadwinners and caregivers. Over three-fifths of respondents feel that the father's role in childcare is primarily as a 'helper' rather than as a primary co-caregiver. Women are less inclined to agree with this perception. However, half of men also report that they do not spend enough time with their children because of the burdens of work.

TABLE 5.1c
Perceptions of Fatherhood
 Percentage of respondents that agreed with statements on work and childcare

Statements on work and childcare	Men (%)	Women (%)
[Father] spends too little time with the children because of his job or the time [father] spends looking for work.	69.0	68.0
[Father's] role in caring for the children in home is mostly as their financial provider.	77.0	65.0
[Mother] wishes to spend more time with children but is overburdened with other work.	*	51.0
* Not asked in men's survey		

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

TABLE 5.1d
Perceptions of Fatherhood by Region
 Percentage of respondents that agreed with statements on work and childcare by region and sex

Male (%)	Region		Female (%)	Region			
	West Bank	Gaza Strip		West Bank	Gaza Strip		
I spend too little time with the children at home because of my job or the time I spend looking for work.	TRUE	70.5	63.7	My spouse spends too little time with the children in our home because of his job or the time he spends looking for work.	TRUE	73.2	58.2
My role in childcare work is mostly as a helper, meaning that I do my part to help someone else who does the majority of childcare.	TRUE	72.5	83.8	My spouse's role in childcare work is mostly as my helper, meaning that he does his part to help me, even though I do the majority of childcare.	TRUE	79.4	79.4
My role in caring for the children in my home is mostly as their financial provider.	TRUE	73.4	84.0	My spouse's role in caring for the children in our home is mostly as their financial provider.	TRUE	62.6	68.5

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

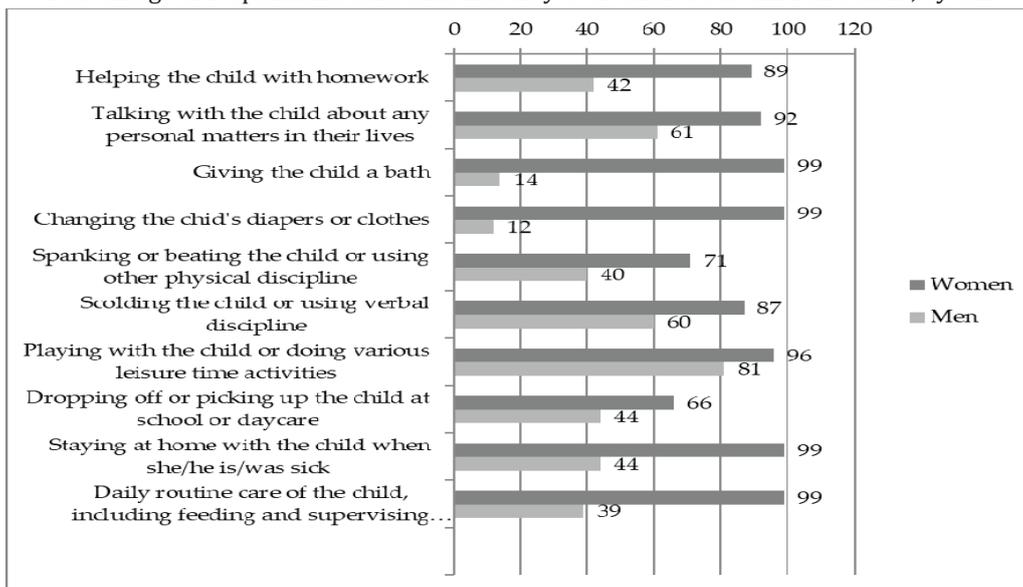
Data above indicates that time spent with children is little in both regions. Almost two-thirds of women in the West Bank and 58 percent in Gaza agree to this statement, justified by their spouse's job or his time spent looking for work. While caring for children has a larger agreement (around 80 percent of women in both regions), their spouse's role is more of helper than caregiver or partner. This attitude is based on an economic fact that men are the breadwinners, in addition to a cultural assumption that caring for children is the responsibility of women due to the emotional bond between mothers and children. This is confirmed by a finding that emphasizes the husband's role as a financial provider. More than half of females in both regions agree with this statement that men are household providers.

At the same time, most female respondents who agree that they wish they have more time with their children are employed, half of respondents in both regions. Among males, 86 percent in the West Bank and 66 percent in Gaza wish to have more time with their children but are employed. This is an indicator that men would like to spend more time with their children, but work is an obstacle or justification. It is also true that in the Palestinian cultural setting, fathers are expected to be an important resource for children in terms of financial and emotional needs.

Childcare Roles

Fathers’ involvement in the day-to-day tasks of childcare, as shown in the figure below, is less understood in the research literature. Data indicates that mothers outpace fathers in fulfilling all childcare tasks, sometimes by vast margins. Respondents answered questions as to the performance of childcare tasks for the couple’s youngest child (under 18) when she/he was living at home.

FIGURE 5.2
Childcare Roles Adopted by Fathers and Mothers
 Percentage of respondents who said that they ever carried out childcare tasks, by sex



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine, 2016

Mothers’ involvement in all elements of childcare is extensive, perhaps as expected. However, certain compelling trends emerge in relation to fathers’ position in participating in various tasks. Only 14 and 12 percent of fathers report that they are involved in giving the child a bath or changing their diapers or clothes respectively. For five additional elements of childcare, approximately 39-44 percent of fathers report some level of involvement like helping the child with homework, dropping off or picking up the child at school, or staying at home with the child when the child is sick, in addition to daily routine care of the child.

Based on female responses about routine care of the child, including feeding and supervising, 97 percent of female respondents in the West Bank and 89 percent of Gaza report that they usually do the routine care (“usually me”). Most women who said “usually me” were employed, and age was not significant, i.e. most women of all ages said that they are the ones who provide childcare.

Only 3 percent of women in the West Bank and 11 percent in Gaza report that the couple shares equally in childcare. This confirms that childcare is almost entirely provided by women. Only 7 percent of men in the West Bank and 6 percent of men in Gaza said that they are the ones who usually care for the child. This gender gap in perceptions may be either due to a man’s overestimation of his involvement and his definition of care, or women’s underestimation of the fathers’ role. There were no significant correlations of these attitudes with education and employment status.

In conclusion, we see that care for a child is mostly a woman’s role. Very few males share this task equally. Those who do are spouses that are mostly in the labor force who believe that they should support their wives to relieve the burden on women.

Qualitative interviews also show that fatherhood, or becoming a father, changes men’s attitudes towards household roles in two ways: first, they feel the need to be more involved or present in their children’s lives in a way that would become complementary or like that of the mother. Second, fathers, especially those with daughters, start realizing the importance of creating a new model of fatherhood that is more involved in child upbringing. They expect that their daughters, after growing up with a different model, will in the future expect their husbands to play a more equitable role in carrying out family tasks.

“When I was first married, and even after we had our second daughter, I never lifted my plate from the table. My wife never complained or made me feel that she needed help. But honestly when I see my girls growing up, my love and fear for them grows, and I start to think that they will marry, and their destiny will be to serve others. This will be a normal thing for them if they grow up seeing that all their mother does is clean and cook. [...] I started to think how I should care more and teach them that their role in life is much more than this, but it is not about words. They should see how the man respects his wife in practice by helping her. I started to realize how unfair I was to my wife. I started to realize the huge load of work she does. I was shocked: women are great, never complaining. I, on the other hand, complain of one extra hour of work. I even started to think of my mother who had to manage alone with five children.”

Man, bank employee, 34 years old, Ramallah

Findings also showed that mothers are more involved in speaking with children about personal matters in their lives. For instance, 57 percent of female respondents in the West Bank and 70 percent in Gaza say that they are the ones who engage with their children on personal matters. Some 28 percent of men in the West Bank and 21 percent in Gaza say that they speak to their children about personal matters. Responses of both genders indicate that women do this more often than men. It is a pattern that is repeated in all different tasks: mothers are more involved in the socialization of their children in all aspects of life. They daily guide their children, especially their daughters, to ensure that their behavior on personal matters is culturally appropriate. Mothers are socially responsible for training their children

and are blamed by husbands and society for a child's misbehavior. This is a major factor in their deep engagement.

Another factor in Palestinian society that was shown to change husbands' attitudes about parenting roles is the experience of prison. Qualitative data showed that fathers who are political prisoners and are physically separated from their children are more involved when they are released because they have been deprived of fatherhood. With the absence of fathers due to imprisonment, mothers ensure the importance of the father by emphasizing the father as the head of and key person in the family who thus has a continuing role in making important decisions concerning any change or events in their lives.

Discipline of Children

Mothers and fathers report using physical discipline with their children. Gender stereotypes assume that men, as part of their masculinity, are more violent than women. IMAGES data indicate that 49 percent of men and 72 percent of women report using some physical form of discipline with their children (Table 5.3.). Women's greater use of physical discipline correlates with the greater amount of time they spend with children at home. In datasets of men and women, parents with less wealth are significantly more likely to report using physical discipline than other parents.

Disciplining Children	Men (%)	Women (%)
Explained why your child's behavior was wrong	89.0	97.0
Took away privileges, or forbade something your child did or did not allow your child to leave the house	61.0	75.0
Shouted, or yelled at or screamed at your child	80.0	91.0
Spanked or slapped your child on any part of her/his body	47.0	70.0
Hit your child on the bottom or elsewhere on the body with something like a belt, or stick or another hard object	25.0	37.0
Used any physical discipline (total spanked or hit child)	49.0	72.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine, 2016

Spanking or beating the child is also considered by respondents as a means of discipline and a symbol of care, teaching wrong from right. One encouraging finding is that over 60 percent of men report talking with the child about important personal matters in their lives, pointing to an emotional intimacy not always associated with masculine expectations. Otherwise, only in the areas of scolding the child or using verbal discipline do fathers rise to a level above that of a mere "helper" regarding caring for their own children.

While to some degree discipline in the Palestinian context might be meted out by the wider community, the study sought to determine who in the nuclear family is responsible for disciplining children, the mother or the father.

Small proportions of fathers, not exceeding 11 percent in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, do *not* explain to their children that their behavior was wrong. Only around 4 percent of mothers in both regions do not. The disparity can be explained by the greater amounts of time the average mother spends with the children. While fathers do resort to violence, mothers use violence more often, and this is truer in Gaza than in the West Bank. It seems also that mothers' increased time with the children results in greater incidence of physical discipline. Violence in the Gaza Strip permeates all settings due to the highly stressful environment and repeated military violence; this could help explain why mothers there more commonly use violence to discipline their children.

Qualitative research shows that, from the perspective of sons and daughters, fathers remain authority figures but not necessarily always coercive ones. Many respondents indicated the constraints on men's ability to be involved as caregivers because they work long hours away from home, social rules and norms, or political imprisonment. Some women who described their fathers as dominating figures who abused their mothers said they did not want to repeat this with their children or practice this power dynamic in their own marriages. In this case, the father figure was a reference of how things should *not* be. The interviewee below, however, had a gender equitable father:

"My father had the biggest influence on my life; he put my foot on the road. If it were not for him, I would not have finished my studies or be where I am now. He pushed me to study although he never finished his own education, but he had a great mentality. He respected reading and culture and women, this had an important role in shaping my personality."

Woman, university professor, 58 years old, village near Ramallah

CHAPTER SIX

**Marriage, Divorce,
And Relationship
Dynamics
In Adult
Private Life**

Marriage

Palestine has high overall marriage rates and the average age of marriage is increasing. According to the PCBS, the crude marriage rate in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is among the highest in the Arab states. The median age at first marriage for men and women in the Palestinian society is increasing. The median reached 25 years old for men and 20 for women in 2015, a two-year rise over the past two decades. Early marriage (first marriage before age 15) among women aged 15-49 years is relatively high at 1.8 percent in the West Bank and 2.6 in Gaza Strip. Early marriage rates are higher in lower income areas of Palestine.

Some 70 percent of women and 60 percent of men in the current survey sample have ever been married. The figure of median age at first marriage for male respondents varies from that of women. Ever-married men's median age at first marriage is 25 years old and the median age of their wives was only 20. According to ever-married women, the median age at first marriage was 20 years old for themselves and 26 for their spouses. This indicates that the median age at first marriage for ever-married male respondents is higher than it is among the Palestinian public; the converse is true for female respondents. The large disparity in marriage age between the West Bank and Gaza Strip shows a strong link between early marriage and poverty, where poverty rates and early marriage are high in Gaza compared to the West Bank.⁵⁷ Decreasing the percentage of early marriage necessitates dealing with issues of poverty and education rather than only concentrating on changing attitudes.

"The main obstacle I faced in my life was my early marriage at the age of 14. I was raised in a family with lots of girls and our economic situation was very bad. Moreover, my mother's disease, God have mercy on her and forgive her, worsened the situation. When she knew she is sick, she started to marry us one after the other, so no one tyrannizes us after her death."

Woman, official at Ministry of Social Affairs, 43 years old, Nablus

Marriage Attitudes and Perceptions

Survey data indicates that women and men have different perceptions of various marriage-related issues, with women tending to hold more flexible views compared to men. A high percentage of respondents, both men and women, agree and strongly agree that marriage decisions "ultimately, should be the couple's decision, not the family's decision" (88 percent and 82 percent respectively). Regarding women's contributions to household expenses, about 81 percent of men and 92 percent of women agree and strongly agree with the statement "if wife is working, she should contribute to household expenses." Men's attitude on this subject is more easily understood if we remember that about two-thirds said that they prefer to marry a working woman who can contribute to household expenses. Women's attitude to women's work is compatible with most recent local studies, which found that Palestinian women spend most of their income on household expenses.⁵⁸ Men and women from the Gaza Strip agree

57. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2015, *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey*, 2014. Ramallah/Palestine. <https://bit.ly/2YLRj1K>

58. Nida Abu Awwad, "Informal economy, gender and power relationships within a settler-colonial context: the case of the Palestinian West Bank following the Second Intifada." PhD diss., (University of Exeter, Exeter, UK, 2012).

more frequently that working women should contribute to household expenses (84 percent and 96 percent respectively), despite holding generally more conservative views on gender roles. Over two-thirds of men and 63 percent of women from Gaza agree with the statement “It is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career,” for example. These conflicting attitudes may reflect the impact of poverty and economic difficulties on the construction of male and female attitudes and perspectives on gender roles, rights and relationships.

TABLE 6.1
Attitudes toward Marriage
Percentage of respondents who agree with selected statements about marriage

Selected statements about marriage	Men			Women		
	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)	Total (N)	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)	Total (N)
If a wife works, she should contribute to household expenses	78.9	84.4	81	90.3	95.9	92
A man should not marry a woman who has been previously engaged	27.5	28.5	28	12.3	27.2	17
If a man does not marry, he is not a man	17.7	15.6	17	7.1	18.7	11
It is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career	72.4	81.2	75	45.7	62.5	51
Informal marriages (<i>'urfi, misyar, mut'a</i>) are a solution to the high cost of official marriage	8.9	3.3	7	2.9	6.2	4
A man should not marry a woman who is more educated than he is	22.5	22.9	23	15.4	24.9	19
Ultimately, it should be the couple's decision, not the family's decision, to get married to each other	87.1	90.8	88	84.5	78.0	82

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine, 2016

Informal marriage has become a growing phenomenon in some Arab countries, such as customary marriage in Egypt and marriage of *misyar* in Saudi Arabia. The survey results presented in Table 6.1 above show that Palestinian men and women have conservative opinions regarding informal marriage, with some differences between men and women. Only 7 percent of male respondents report that they agree and strongly agree with the statement that “Informal marriages (*'urfi, misyar, mut'a*) are a solution to the high cost of official marriage,” and only 4 percent of female respondents agree with the previous statement. On the contrary, a higher proportion of women (6 percent) and a lower proportion of men (3 percent) from Gaza agree with the previous statement. This indicates high awareness among women of their rights, which they may lose in the case of informal marriage. It may also result from more conservative attitudes among women from the West Bank and men from the Gaza Strip.

One-third of men believe that a man should not marry a woman who has been previously engaged or a woman who is more educated than him (28 percent and 23 percent respectively), and only a few think that “if a man doesn’t marry, he is not a man.”

Qualitative research affirms respondents’ relatively flexible views on marriage-related issues, particularly the readiness of men to marry women who are more educated than they.

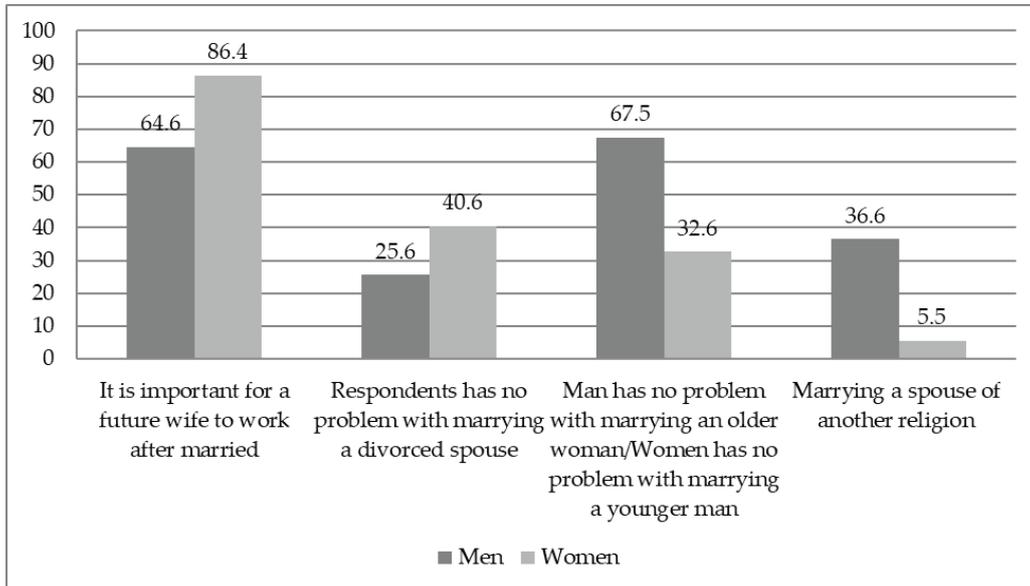
“I finished high school but was not able to continue higher education because of the economic situation. I still feel regret for that. My wife though, had attained higher education and fulfilled my dream. When we got married she had her bachelor’s degree, and a year and half later she was employed as a teacher. My wife enjoys studying and I was so glad when she stated her intention to get a master’s degree. I supported her as I respect her achievements. I hope she continues for a PhD degree.”

Man, shop employee, 42 years old, Nablus

Despite that more than half of respondents, married and unmarried men and women, agree that “it is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career,” men are far more likely to agree with this statement (80 percent) than women (59 percent.) However, never-married men (65 percent) and women (86 percent) agree and strongly agree that it is important for the wife to work after marriage. Nevertheless, men are less likely than women to agree that it is important that a wife work after marriage.

FIGURE 6.1
Marriage Perceptions

Percentage of never-married respondents who agree with selected statements about marriage



Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine, 2016

As illustrated in Figure 6.1, most never-married men have no problem marrying an older woman (68 percent) or marrying a woman of a different religion (37 percent) – although they were less willing to marry a divorced woman (27 percent). Women, on the other hand, were likely to be very conservative concerning marrying a man of a different religion (6 percent),

while around one-third had no problem marrying a younger man, and even more were accepting of marrying a divorced man (41 percent.)

Never-married men from the Gaza Strip are less receptive to the notion of marrying an older woman, a divorced woman or a woman of another religion and even less receptive to women's work after marriage when compared with men from the West Bank. This contrasts with all men, 86 percent of men from the Gaza Strip compared to 83 percent from the West Bank, believe that it is important for a future wife to work after marriage (see Appendix Table 1).

Socioeconomic background has a significant impact on respondents' attitudes toward marriage and the characteristics of the future partner. Survey findings illustrate that respondent attitudes vary because of personal backgrounds. Young educated males living in urban areas seem to be less conservative regarding women's work after marriage compared with the eldest generation, those with a low level of education and from poor families in rural areas and refugee camps. These results demonstrate the possibility of transforming male perceptions among new educated generations (see Table 6.1).

Marriage Planning Decisions

Marriage and the decisions that surround it typically are not left solely to the wife and her husband; other people are involved in making the decisions and arrangements. The survey findings show significant differences between ever-married men and women regarding who makes decisions around arranging and planning their marriage. Some 44 percent of men said that they had the greatest say in their marriage arrangements, compared to 16 percent of women. Only 1 percent of men said that women had the greatest say, but 5 percent of women said they had the greatest say. More women (38.6 percent) said that the marriage arrangements were jointly made, compared to 24.7 percent of men. About 28 percent of men said it involved one or more people in the husband's family, while 19 percent of women said the same.

TABLE 6.2a

Marriage Planning

Percentage of respondents reporting various answers to the question "Who had the greatest say with regard to arranging and planning your most recent marriage?"

Responses	Men			Women		
	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)	Total (N)	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)	Total (N)
Mostly the husband	40.6	51.6	44	14.9	18.2	5
Mostly the wife	1.7	0.0	1	5.3	5.5	16
Husband and wife together	33.5	5.5	25	46.7	24.1	39
One or more people in wife's family	0.8	0.9	1	18.5	18.9	21
One or more people in husband's family	22.0	40.6	28	13.7	33.0	19
Someone else	1.5	1.4	1	1.0	0.3	1

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

There were significant differences between respondents from the West Bank and Gaza Strip for both men and women regarding who makes decisions around the arranging and planning of their own marriages. Only about 6 percent from the Gaza Strip report that decisions were made by the husband and wife together compared to 34 percent of men from the West Bank, 47 percent of women from the West Bank and 24 percent of women from Gaza Strip. The husband's family was more involved in the arrangements for marriage in the Gaza Strip compared with the West Bank for both women and men, as shown in Table 6.2a, where the ratio in the Gaza Strip was approximately twice as high as that in the West Bank. The conditions of the blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, high unemployment and limited work opportunities have increased family solidarity on the one hand and the dependence of children on their families on the other. These and other findings show how much greater agency men (and men's families) hold in making marriage arrangements than women (and women's families), partly as a result.

One-quarter of ever-married men say that they had to wait longer than they wanted to get married after their initial engagement, while only 16 percent of women report the same. This is largely related to the political and socioeconomic difficulties and constraints that limit the ability of young people to start their family life, including obstacles associated with the costs of marriage.

Cost of Marriage

Perceptions on cost of marriage were extremely different between ever-married men and ever-married women. Among Palestinians, men bear most of the costs of marriage. The survey found that 61 percent of men agree or strongly agree with the statement "the cost of their marriage was a burden to them and to their family." Around 22 percent of men preferred that the costs of the marriage be shared equally between the spouses' families or be reduced. On the contrary, a very low percentage of women (12 percent) were compatible with men on the issues of sharing and reducing the costs of marriage, even among the young generation. This suggests that women still consider the cost of marriage the fundamental responsibility of the man. Women's perception may be related to the fact that about 90 percent of female respondents are not working, and therefore marriage is an opportunity for them to achieve financial gains that are otherwise out of reach.

Respondents agree or strongly agree with the following statements...	Men		Women	
	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)
The cost of my marriage was a burden to the husband and his family	60.7	422	25.9	209
I would have preferred for the costs of my marriage to be shared equally between my family and my spouse's family	22.0	151	12.1	98
I would have preferred fewer marriage costs, but the wife's family insisted on an expensive wedding and associated costs	18.4	128	5.4	44

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Overall, high percentages of men and a relatively high percentage of women from different backgrounds agree that the cost of marriage is a burden to the husband and his family. A new perspective among younger generations regarding marriage arrangements has emerged. More prefer to share marriage costs and accumulate fewer marriage costs, as compared to elder generations. There is otherwise no significant difference among respondents related to education, residence or employment regarding sharing and decreasing marriage costs, with some exceptions for respondents from refugee camps (see Appendix Table 3).

In a focus group discussion, university students explained the economic pressures placed on men related to marriage. As one young man, perhaps facing these pressures himself, said:

“The man has to produce a house and a dowry and a car and has to have a job, he needs to have established himself to be able to marry. This would mean he might be 70 when has achieved all this. How do you as a woman’s father expect a young man who has just graduated to be established at this stage? How do you expect him to provide all this, unless someone helps him, that his father has money or that he had already worked, or he studied something that allows him a job with a good salary, or that he stole. Maybe there are other ways, but how do you expect a man to do all this at a certain age...? This is also a pressure on the man.”

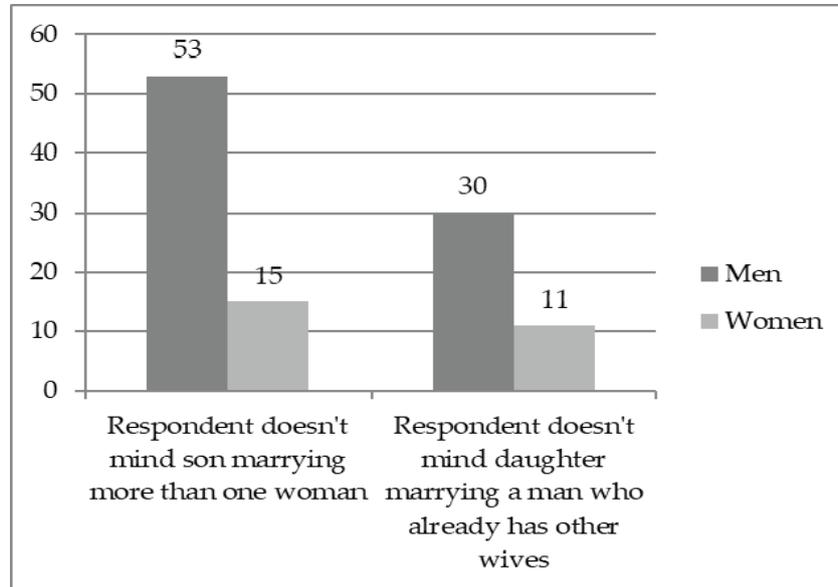
Man, university student, 20 years old, Ramallah

Polygamy

According to the PCBS (2003), polygamy used to be more common in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but is declining.⁵⁹ In the IMAGES MENA Palestine sample, 1 percent of men said they have more than one wife, while less than 1 percent of women said that their husbands had more than one wife.

59. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). *Marriage and Divorce in the Palestinian Territory (1996-2001) Comparative Study*. Ramallah-Palestine, 2003. (in Arabic). <https://bit.ly/2NGqYfl>

FIGURE 6.3
Attitudes toward Polygamy
 Percentage of Muslim respondents agreeing to polygamous unions for their sons or daughters



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Among survey respondents, men are far more open to polygamous practices than women are for both their sons and daughters. A relatively high percentage of men (53 percent) and 15 percent of women would approve if their son marries more than one woman (Figure 6.3). Both men (30 percent) and women (11 percent) were less accepting of the idea of polygamy when it concerned a daughter.

Perceptions of Divorce

Men and women widely agree on questions related to divorce, except when it comes to the basic right to initiate proceedings. In Palestinian society, divorce is not a common practice. According to 2013 research by PCBS, only 0.3 percent of men and 1.6 percent of women had ever been divorced.⁶⁰ A recent study noted studies from 1997 and 2006 that remarked on “the low proportion of divorcees, notably in comparison with Jordan” (where much of the population is of Palestinian origin).⁶¹ The Crude Divorce Rate for the period 2000-2010 reflects high marital stability.

In the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey sample, 3 percent of men and 1 percent of women report ever being divorced. Low rates of divorce in Palestinian society are perhaps linked to the nature of the struggle for survival in the Palestinian context of colonialism. Facing these

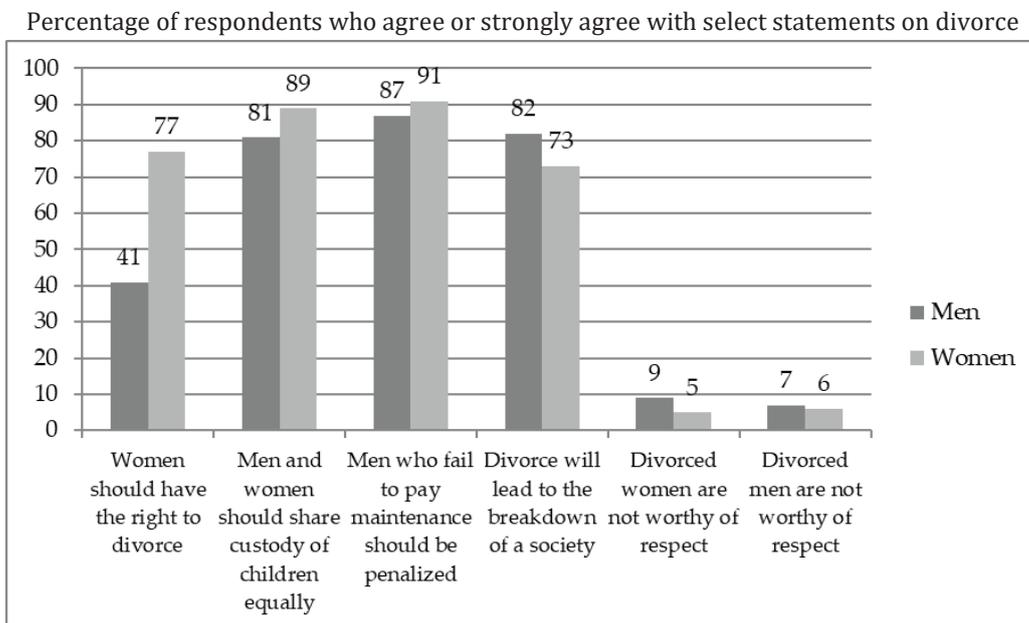
60. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. *Women and Men in Palestine. Issues and Statistics*. Ramallah-Palestine, 2014.

61. Youssef Courbage, Bassam Abu Hamad, and Adel Zaghera. *Palestine 2030 Demographic Change: Opportunities for Development* (December 2016). UNFPA Palestine.

structural forces, family solidarity becomes especially important. The high cost of marriages and the frequency of marriages to close relatives may also be a deterrent.

Men and women have different perspectives on divorce. Women considering divorce must weigh not only economic security considerations but also stigma and a loss of status they might experience. Indeed, 41 percent of Palestinian men agree that a woman should have the right to divorce, as shown in Figure 6.4 below. By contrast, 77 percent of women in the survey agreed that women should have the right to divorce. Notably, large majorities of both men and women agreed that “divorce will lead to the breakdown of society,” 82 and 73 percent respectively. Responses overwhelmingly suggest that divorced women or men should be treated with respect.

Figure 6.4
Attitudes toward Divorce-Related Issues



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Recently, administrative steps were taken by Palestinian authorities to make it easier for women to file for divorce, easing what had been previously prohibitive terms that risked her economic independence and mandating the faster processing in order to circumvent any pressure tactics by the husband.

“We now have the law of khul’. I am very happy that we have such a law because when a woman wants to be divorced from her husband, now she can divorce him even if she has to give up her dowry, because she does not want to live with him, she is not comfortable with the man she is living with. That the woman can divorce her husband... at least I have a say that I do not want this person.”

Woman, unemployed, 28 years old, Ramallah

The Position of Women in Marriage and Divorce

An Illustrative Story

Qualitative research found that among older generations, there are still women who were married off by their families and accepted this because they wanted to please their parents, mainly their fathers. In one such case, a woman (who is now divorced, with three daughters) said that she and her ex-husband (selected by her father) wanted different things. He wanted to live abroad while she wanted to live in the West Bank. She made the decision to leave the relationship. However, the price of her autonomy was an informal separation. What is interesting here, as in many other cases of separation, is that the woman preferred not to tell anyone about it, including her own family, especially her father. Her main fear was that she would be obliged to live in her parents' or brother's house and lose the independence she had acquired after separating from her husband. This decision, however, meant that she had to manage economically on her own, and with a lower standard of living than what she had been used to. She opted for the latter because she did not wish to lose her own and her daughters' freedom.

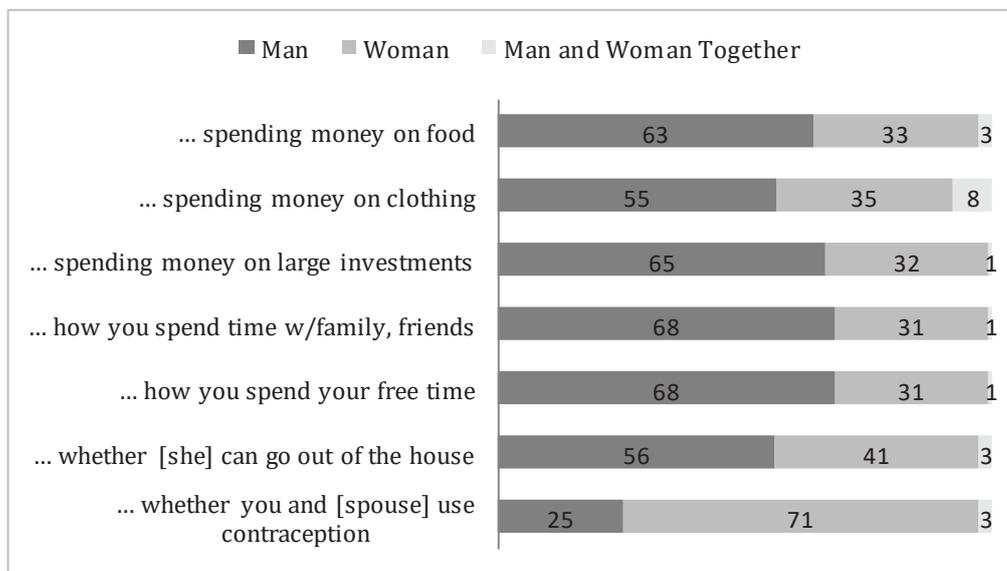
Household Decision-making

Men and women hold different views about decision-making power within their households, though both point to major restrictions on women's agency and mobility.

Decision-making is an important issue of power within the household. Several studies have demonstrated that intra-household decision-making still mainly depends on masculinity (decisions are still made by men). The literature discloses that there are different patterns of decision-making power within the household, depending on the household member's social background. IMAGES MENA Palestine findings show that men and women make a significantly different contribution to decision-making in the household. Men make nearly all decisions, save a few that are made jointly (ranging from one-third to about half of respondents reporting joint decisions in some cases, such as the decision to use contraception). A small proportion of men and women report that some decisions are made solely by the wife, but fewer men than women say that women make decisions alone. Survey data shows that men still have a great say in decisions related to women's daily mobility, how they spend their time, and if they will work. Around 42 percent of respondent women indicated that their decision to work was made by the husband. Around half said that it was made jointly and only 10 percent said the wife's decision to work was hers alone.

These findings, presented in Figures 6.5a and 6.5b suggest that household decision-making power remains contested among Palestinian couples, even with significant evidence of patriarchal power structures in place. On every decision apart from contraception, most men feel that they themselves hold *sole* decision-making power. Hardly any men report that their wives have sole decision-making power over *anything* included in the survey, with only 3 percent of men reporting that their wives have independent decision-making power over *whether she can leave the house*.

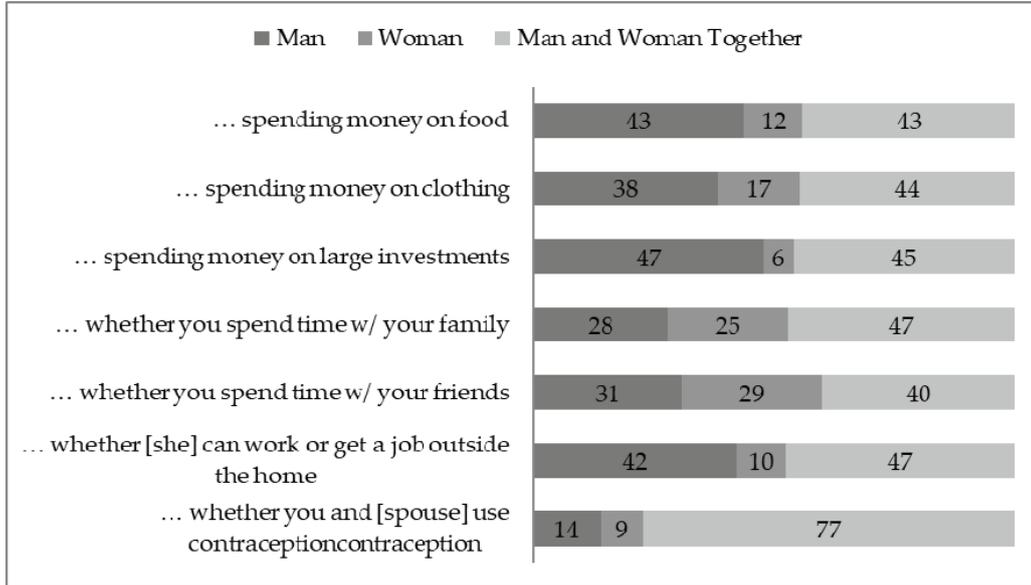
Figure 6.5a
Men’s Responses: Who Has the Final Say On:
 Percentage of men’s responses concerning household decision-making on key issues



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Nevertheless, women are more likely to claim that the husband and wife have final decision-making authority together. However, it is still a small proportion of women (29 percent and 25 percent, respectively) who feel that they have sole decision-making authority over such basic issues as mobility and whether they can spend time with friends or family. These restrictions on women’s agency, particularly regarding mobility, reflect a fundamental power imbalance in the home. Furthermore, only one in ten women reported that she has sole decision-making authority over whether she can work or get a job outside the home.

Figure 6.5b
Women’s Responses: Who Has the Final Say On:
 Percentage of women’s responses concerning household decision-making on key issues



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Survey data shows that men say that many decisions are solely theirs and that women’s role in decision-making is almost non-existent, even as women give a seemingly opposite picture, telling us that they had a greater role in making decisions on a shared basis rather than solely. The apparent contradiction could be explained by the difference between the real processes of deciding, which usually entails some form of negotiation as compared to a sole figure of authority.

Some data in the two tables above indicates a positive change towards more shared decision-making between men and women. About 30-40 percent of men said that both husband and wife had the final say in making family decisions. As to who has the final say in the question of contraception, double the percentage (79 percent) of men said the decision is shared. From the women’s perspective, 40-47 percent of women said that family decisions are shared and 77 percent of women said that decisions about contraception are shared.

Contextual Analysis and Focus on Household Decision -making

Qualitative findings confirmed that household decision-making continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of men's control and power over women and girls in Palestine, and is the source of considerable couple conflict. Women's lives are severely constrained, including restrictions related to control over whom they marry, something that women said their fathers mostly controlled, with input from mothers. Women perceived themselves as having some decision-making ability for running the household. Women's emphasis on autonomy in performing household tasks can be understood as women's way of re-appropriating house work as "their" work, rather than performing it as unpaid employees in their households or families. In general, when it comes to decision-making, women said they had a role in decision-making through dialogue and reaching an agreement with the husband after discussing their different views. Even then, however, women said this depends on the degree of "understanding" on the part of the husband.

The perception of women as partners in decision-making, one interviewee has said, expresses a real change in gender relations and attitudes towards women. When women are regarded as partners in making important decisions related to the family, then women are not seen as mere obedient wives who are there to fulfill men's desires.

For women from younger generations, decisions related to how they raise their children are one area of frequent conflict with their husbands. Other decisions that may lead to conflicts between the spouses, from the women's perspective, include those that relate to household work as well as those that relate to their personal dress. Women's work or education were not mentioned as areas of conflict.

Marriage, on the other hand, seemed to remain (as mentioned above) something that is decided by fathers, with differing degrees of influence, both direct and more informal, by the mothers. In fact, one way of defining manhood was by connecting it to the power of decision-making, which is usually the father's. One female interviewee referred to this fatherly masculine role as "the monarch who should know and control all." According to respondents, whatever role mothers had in decision-making remained marginal and informal compared to that of fathers.

Among the younger generations, and in relation to their husbands, women said that they have important roles in decision-making, referring mainly to decisions having to do with the household. As noted earlier, the one major exception when women were regarded as having greater decision-making power often occurred when a husband was imprisoned. In many of these cases, women proved that they could make all necessary decisions concerning the family and women in these cases were seen to be more reliable in making decisions concerning their families than other partners. Therefore, changes in material situations and practices, as in the case of prisoners' families, allowed for changes in the position of women in household decision-making.

"I feel equality in my family, and sometimes I feel I am more advantaged. I am the one who makes the decisions or influences the decisions in the household."

Woman, bank employee, 25 years old, Ramallah

Couple Satisfaction and Communication

Ever-married respondent couples are in general satisfied with their marital relationships, while data shows that men are more so than women.

Around three-quarters of men described their relationship with spouse overall as very good compared to 61.5 percent of women. Furthermore, they said that always talked about their problems (around 73 percent of both of men and women) weekly.

TABLE 6.6a				
Couple Satisfaction and Communication				
Percentage and number of men and women who express satisfaction with their marriage				
	Men		Women	
	(%)	(N)	(%)	(N)
Characterization of relationship with spouse overall				
Very good	74.0	531	61.5	469
Good	24.7	177	30.7	234
Neither good nor bad	1.1	8	4.7	36
Bad	0.3	2	2.0	15
Very bad	0.0	0	1.0	8
When was the last time you and spouse talked about problems in your life?				
Never	4.9	35	6.8	52
This week	73.8	530	73.2	558
1-2 weeks ago	13.4	96	12.6	96
2-4 weeks ago	2.5	18	2.5	19
More than a month ago	5.4	39	4.9	37
How would you describe your sexual relationship with your spouse?				
Very good	53.3	382	49.5	377
Good	40.6	291	38.2	291
Not good not bad	4.5	32	9.2	70
Not good	1.5	11	2.8	21
Not sure	0.1	1	0.3	2
How easy is it for you and your wife/partner to talk about your sexual relationship?				
Easy	53.1	381	58.9	449
Somewhat easy	27.8	199	21.8	166
Neither easy nor difficult	9.5	68	8.7	66
Somewhat difficult	5.3	38	5.0	38
Difficult	4.3	31	5.6	43

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Overall, ever-married respondents both men and women are satisfied with their sexual relationship; almost all of them reported that they have very good and good relationship. However, as data represented in the table, it seems that men are less flexible than women to discuss their sexual relationship.

In addition to restrictions on women's mobility, all respondents acknowledge an array of controlling behaviors by men over their wives. Almost 90 percent of men and women agree or strongly agree that the husband (speaking about their own marriages) needs to know where his wife is all the time (Table 6.6b.) Confirming that men needed to know where the wives were all the time does not necessarily mean that they knew or that their wives always told them. Beyond this indicator of controlling behavior, men and women show much less symmetry in attitudes.

Table 6.6b

Controlling Behaviors

Percentage of ever-married respondents who agree or strongly agree with the following statements reflecting controlling behaviors by husbands

statements reflecting controlling behaviors by husbands	Men	Women
[Husband] needs to know where [wife] is all the time	88	85
[Husband] will not allow [wife] to wear certain clothes	91	77
[Husband] decides when [wife] can leave the house	85	63
[Husband] lets [wife] know that she is not the only partner he could have	45	29
When [husband] wants sex, he expects [wife] to agree	87	80

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Apart from the emotionally controlling item, "husband lets wife know that she is not the only partner he could have," ever-married men were unabashed in reporting their controlling behaviors, with upwards of 85 percent of men agreeing with all remaining statements (see Table 6.6b above). Women's reports of experiencing these controlling practices are somewhat lower, which may indicate a gap between some respondents' expressed attitudes and real-life practices.

Despite these trends and discrepancies, a clear majority of ever-married respondents report satisfaction with their marriages. Over 90 percent of both men and women characterize their relationship with their spouses as "good" or "very good," and nearly three-quarters report talking to their spouses about personal problems within the last week.

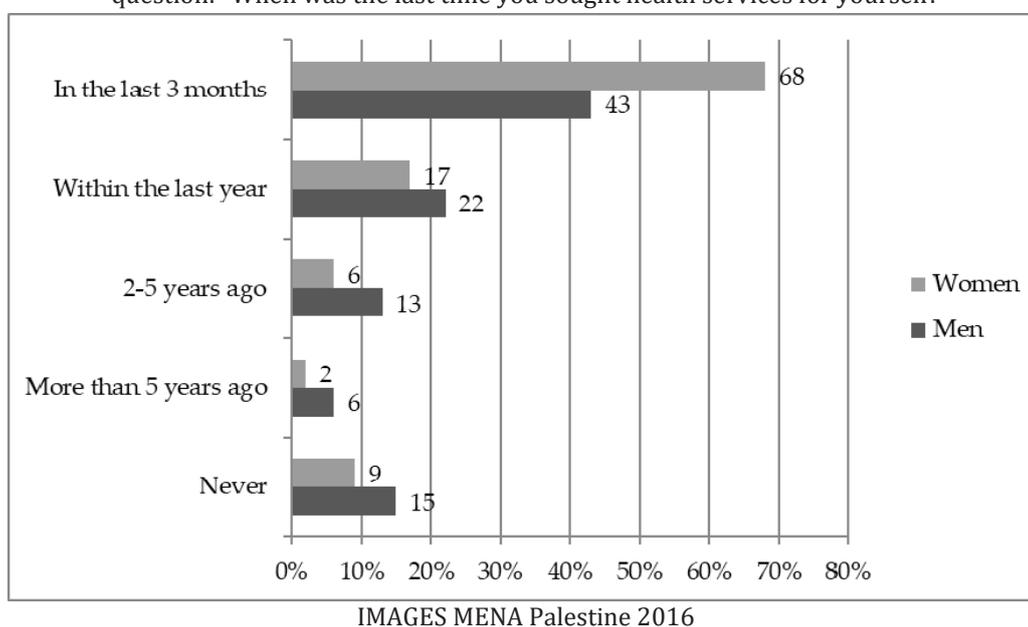
CHAPTER SEVEN

Physical Health And Wellbeing

Health and Health-Seeking Behaviour

Global studies have shown how certain norms of masculine identity relate negatively to men's health. In various cultural and subcultural contexts, masculine expectations lead men to practice risk-taking behaviors that are detrimental to their physical health and safety.⁶² Behavior such as not wearing work safety equipment, smoking, or taking undue physical risks are common examples of risk taking behavior through which men seek to assert their masculine identity. In addition, local norms of masculine behavior can lead men may to ignore or treat their own health issues only if they reach a crisis stage.

FIGURE 7.1a
Frequency of Seeking Health Services
 Percentages of how frequently women and men use health services, answering the question: "When was the last time you sought health services for yourself?"



The IMAGES MENA Palestine survey found that women use health services more frequently and consistently than men. More than two-thirds of women (68 percent) and less than half of men (43 percent) sought health services in the three months prior to the survey. As many as 15 percent of men had never sought health services in their life, compared to 9 percent of women. Older men aged 50 and above were the most likely to say they had never used health services.

As indicated in the following table, the reasons men and women seek health services are highly gendered. Women's reproductive role leads to their greater overall use of health services in comparison to men. At the same time, their use of services tends to be limited to those related to maternal health. More than 50 percent of female respondents' use of health services can be related directly to maternal health such as a check-up, sexual health, and 'other'.

62. Raewyn Connell and James W. Messerschmidt. "Hegemonic masculinity: rethinking the concept." *Gender & Society* 19, no.6 (2005): 809-828.

TABLE 7.1a**Reasons for Seeking Healthcare**

Percentages of men and women reasons for seeking out healthcare services

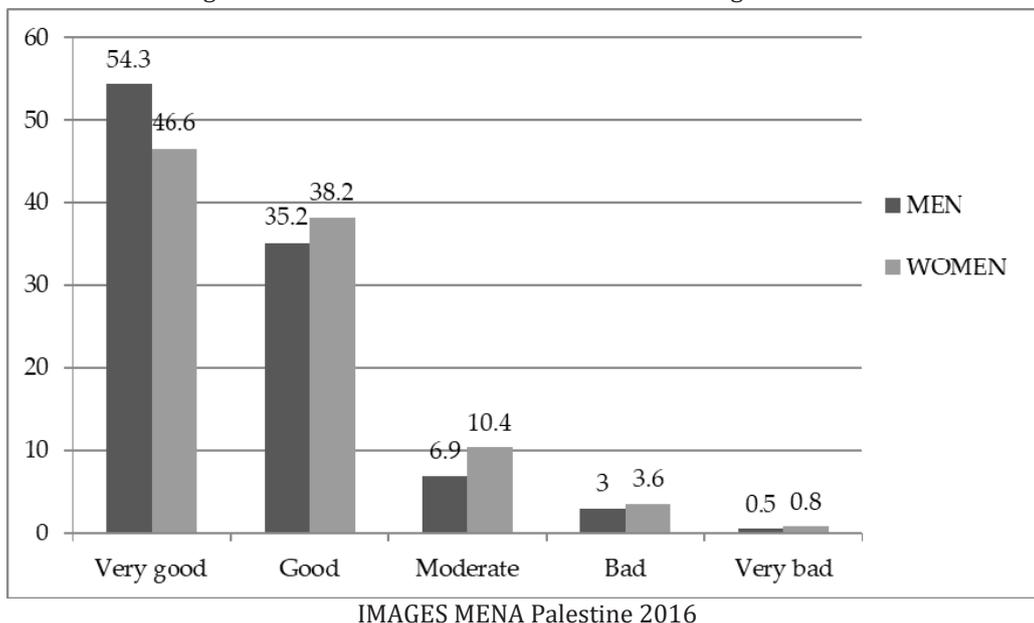
The last time you sought healthcare services, what was the principal reason that led you to seek medical attention?	Men (%)	Women (%)
General check-up/injury certificate	26.0	31.0
Injury	11.0	3.0
Accident	7.0	1.0
Physical fight or Assault	2.0	1.0
Acute illness (such as fever or sudden sickness)	40.0	28.0
Chronic illness	6.0	8.0
Sexual health issue	0	10.0
Other	0	9.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

In contrast, men's use of health services is overwhelmingly related to an emergency, usually a one-time need. For instance, acute illness such as fever or other sudden sickness accounts for 40 percent of men's use of health services. If we add other emergency reasons for seeking treatment such as injury, accident, or assault, 60 percent of male use of health services was due to treating a one-time sudden medical issue as opposed to systematic treatment and self-care. Regionally, men in Gaza are 10 percent more susceptible to physical injury, assault and accidents. Twenty-six percent of men in Gaza versus 16 percent of men in the West Bank sought health services for these incidents.

Men's health is also more susceptible to occupational health and safety issues, given the limited number of women in the labor force as well as men's concentration in manual professions. Only 5 percent of women, versus 16 percent of men in the West Bank and 17 percent of men in Gaza, stated that they suffered a work injury in the previous year that required them to seek medical treatment. Moreover, of those injured at work, men with unstable employment were more susceptible to on the job injury than those with full-time work. One-third of men who work less than 34 hours per week suffered work injuries over the previous year compared to only 15 percent of men who had full-time employment. The latter are more likely to be in professional occupations involving little manual labor or physical risk. Overall, both men and women tend to self-assess their physical health positively. Men rate their health even better than women do.

FIGURE 7.1b
Male and Female Self-Assessment of Health
 Percentages of men and women who see their health as good or bad



The survey found that 54 percent of men and 47 percent of women rate their health as “very good” in comparison to others of their age and sex, while another 35 percent of men and 38 percent of women rate it as “good.” In other words, 90 percent of men and 85 percent of women consider their current health positively. A potential reason for such a high positive response is the framing of the question, where respondents are asked to compare their own health to that of others of their own age and sex. The common reply to being asked about one’s general situation and wellbeing in Palestinian culture is: “I’m doing better than others.” Due to the particularly dire nature of everyday life in occupied Palestine, the normative cultural response is to assert that there’s always someone facing worse circumstances than one’s own. This may also be the case when respondents were considering the state of their own health in relation to others.

Smoking

More than half of men in the sample, 55 percent, report that they are cigarette smokers, compared to less than 8 percent of women. Smoking is higher among youth and among Gaza males. Almost two-thirds of men aged 18-24 reports that they smoke, while smoking is the lowest among men aged 35 to 49 with only 44 percent reporting that they smoke. In Gaza, 54 percent of men report smoking compared to 46 percent of men in the West Bank. By wealth categories smoking is higher among men of low income, 59 percent of them saying they are smokers, as well as among men of the highest income, 57 percent of them report smoking (compared to a lesser 51 percent of men of middle income.) Almost two-thirds (64 percent) of male smokers feel they smoke too much, and 22 percent report have had a health problem related to smoking

Body Image

Most respondents say that they are happy with their bodies, though more than half of women, 52 percent, say that they would like to lose weight. A similar proportion of men, 56 percent, say that they would like to have a more muscular body.

Body Image Satisfaction	Men	Women
The respondent is happy with (his/her) body	85.0	75.0
The respondent would like to lose weight	32.0	52.0
I would like to have a more muscular body	56.0	-

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Like other national contexts, men's desire for more muscular physiques and women's desire for a slender figure reflect stereotypical notions of idealized male and female bodies.⁶³ It is often taken for granted that these are historically fixed body image preferences, but in fact they have been influenced by a more recent era of global images of gendered attractiveness and desirability. Just a few generations ago in Palestine, women's desirability was culturally associated with weight rather than slimness, while men having muscles was associated with being engaged in manual labor (rather than working out at a gym) and thus was not an ideal body image due to the social class associations it carried.

Human Insecurity and Psychosocial Health

The IMAGES MENA Palestine survey used several measures of the psychological dimension of human security based on frameworks developed in various studies by the Birzeit University Institute of Community and Public Health (ICPH).⁶⁴ The concept of human security addresses the fact that war and violence have impacts on individual and communal wellbeing that cannot simply be measured in terms of loss of livelihoods, homes and physical injury. Especially in prolonged crisis situations such as Palestine's, political oppression and military violence have wide and long-term effects on an individual's sense of security and psychological wellbeing. To measure these, the survey asked about individuals' levels of fear about threats to personal safety and that of their families, as well as their fears about the future.

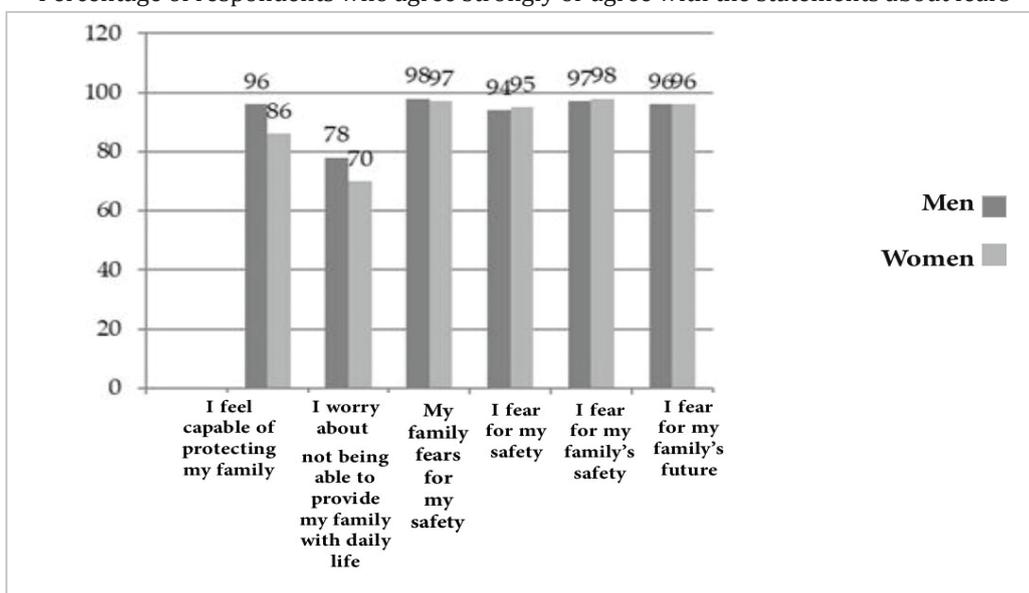
63. Alexandra A. Brewis, Amber Wutich et al., "Body Norms and Fat Stigma in Global Perspective." *Current Anthropology* 52, no.2 (2011). 269-276.

64. Maisa Ziadni, Weeam Hammoudeh et al., "Sources of human insecurity in post-war situations," *Journal of Human Security* 7, no.3 (2011): 23-36. and Niveen Abu-Rmeileh, Weeam Hammoudeh, and Rita Giacaman, "Humanitarian crisis and social suffering in Gaza Strip: an initial analysis of aftermath of latest Israeli war." *The Lancet* online, (July 2010).

Men and women expressed high levels of human insecurity. More than 90 percent of men and women had some level of fear for their own safety, as well as fear for their family’s safety. They also felt the fear of others, more than 90 percent of both said that they felt their family also feared for their safety. A high 96 percent of men and women expressed some level of fear about their and their family’s future. In addition, a high (though lower) 78 percent of men stated that they feared not being able to provide for their family. The pressure that men feel due to expectations that they be financial breadwinners also shows up in another survey question, where more than half of Palestinian men (54 percent) agree or strongly agree that “I am frequently stressed or depressed because of not having enough work or income.”

FIGURE 7.2
Human Insecurity

Percentage of respondents who agree strongly or agree with the statements about fears



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Although expressing a general sense of fear for their families, it appears that men’s normative role as family protectors makes it difficult for them to admit fears of not being able to achieve this signal role of masculinity. A high 96 percent of men assert that they feel capable of protecting their families in total contrast to the fears they express about their safety and future.

Particularly among men, when the study disaggregates the human insecurity measures by region and degree of fear (i.e. those who strongly agree as opposed to any degree of agreement as in the previous table), particularly Gaza men are experiencing higher, more acute levels of human insecurity than their West Bank counterparts. The following table shows these more acute levels of human insecurity based on male respondents expressing high agreement (rather than any level of agreement) in their responses to the various indicators.

TABLE 7.2
Men's Acute Levels of Fear and Insecurity
 Percentage of men with acute levels of fear and insecurity in Gaza and the West Bank

Men Who "Strongly Agree" with the following:	West Bank (%)	Gaza (%)
I fear for my safety.	48.0	61.0
My family fears for my safety	50.0	62.0
I worry about not being able to provide my family with daily life necessities.	39.0	43.0
I worry about my family's safety.	52.0	60.0
I worry about my future and my family's future.	55.0	61.0
I feel capable of protecting my family.	50.0	56.0

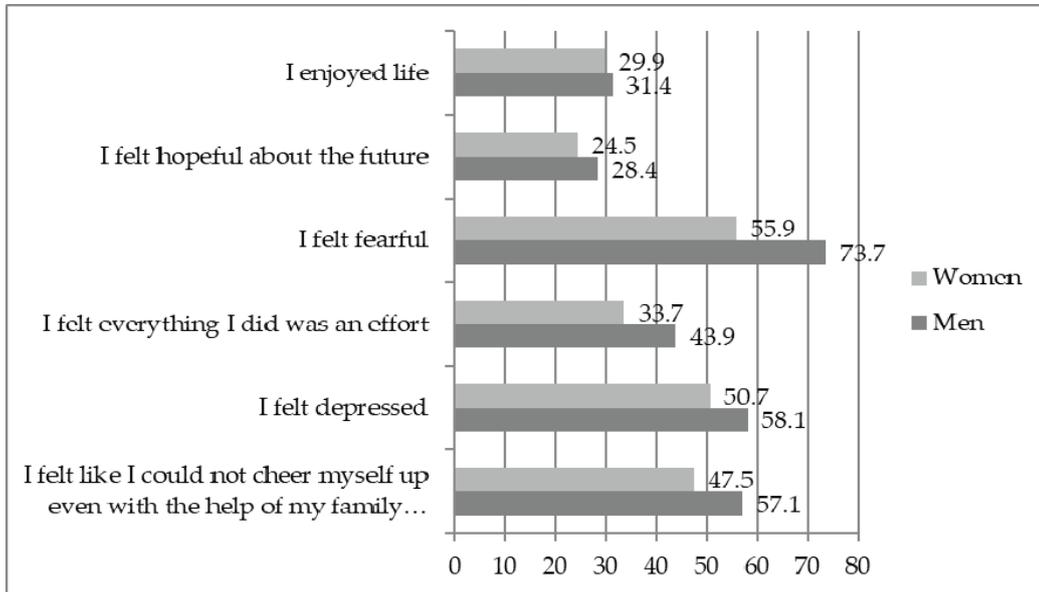
Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Men in Gaza have more acute levels of fear and insecurity about themselves and their families on almost every indicator. More than 60 percent of men in Gaza have acute levels of fear for themselves, for their family's safety and future. In comparison to men in the West Bank (who still have high acute levels of fear and insecurity) 13 percent more men in Gaza acutely fear for themselves, 12 percent more acutely fear for their families, 8 percent more acutely worry for their family's safety and 6 percent more acutely worry about the future. In addition, 4 percent more of them acutely worry about providing for their families. Only on the highly emotive masculine expectation of being able to protect their family do Gazan men claim relatively less fear than their West Bank counterparts.

Depression and Psychosocial Health

Overall, women expressed greater levels of unhappiness, depression and hopelessness than did men. Respondents were asked whether and how often they felt a range of negative feelings in the week leading up to the survey.

FIGURE 7.3
Feelings of Depression and Psychosocial Health
 Percentage of men and women who did NOT experience the following feelings in the previous week



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Over the week prior to the survey, 53 percent of women and 43 percent of men stated they could not cheer up even with the help of family and friends, while a similar number said they had feelings of depression. Two-thirds of women (66 percent) said everything they did felt like an effort compared to 54 percent of men. Three-quarters of women (75 percent) and more than two-thirds of men (72 percent) said they did not feel hopeful about the future and approximately the same said they did not enjoy life. Finally, 44 percent of women felt fearful the previous week while only 26 percent of men did.

The findings on high levels of human insecurity and weak psychosocial health of Palestinian men and women are indicative of the long-term effects of their politically induced social suffering.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Gender-Based Violence

IMAGES MENA Palestine included a series of questions about male and female experiences of spousal or intimate partner violence, as both perpetrators and victims of such violence. Survey questions addressed four distinct types of such violence with multiple acts representing each of the four types: emotional, economic, physical and sexual violence.

Interviewing men who perpetrate spousal or intimate partner violence is unprecedented in Palestine; PCBS's two previous national surveys on the subject (in 2005 and 2011) assessed only women's attitudes and experiences.

Reporting on Spousal/Intimate Partner Violence

Reports of women experiencing violence are somewhat more common than reports of men perpetrating violence. Almost 40 percent of men said they had ever committed an act of emotional violence against their wives, while 46 percent of women said they had experienced the same. Some 26 percent of men and 33 percent of women reported this form of violence within the last year. Nearly one in five men (17 percent) said they had “ever perpetrated” any act of physical intimate partner violence against a female partner, while 21 percent of women report “ever having experienced” such violence. In terms of economic violence, 12 percent of men claimed to have ever perpetrated any such act, while nearly 18 percent of women report experiencing such abuse. Prohibiting one’s spouse from working and throwing one’s spouse out of the house were the two most commonly cited forms of economic violence. Only 4 percent of men said they had ever perpetrated sexual violence against their spouse but 11 percent of women said that they had experienced this form of violence in their lifetime.⁶⁵

The responses of women to the questions if they had ever used three forms of violence against their husbands illustrate that 8 percent of women report ever slapping their spouses or throwing something at them, 2 percent of women report ever pushing or shoving their spouses and 2 percent of women reported ever hitting their spouse with a fist or something else that could hurt them.

Forms of violence	% Men perpetrated (N)		% Women experiences (N)	
	Ever (A)	In last year (B)	Ever (A)	In last year (B)
EMOTIONAL/PSYCHOLOGICAL VIOLENCE				
Insulted your spouse or deliberately made her feel bad about herself?	31.5 (247)	19.7 (142)	40.0 (332)	25.8 (214)
Ever belittled or humiliated your spouse in front of other people?	9.4 (68)	5.4 (39)	19.8 (164)	12.4 (103)
Ever done things to scare or intimidate your spouse on purpose, for example by the way you look at her or by yelling and smashing things?	15.4 (39)	10.8 (78)	24.0 (199)	15.8 (131)
Ever threatened to hurt spouse?	7.3 (53)	4.2 (30)	14.1 (117)	8.3 (69)
Ever hurt people your spouse cares about as a way of hurting her or damaged things of importance to her.	3.0 (21)	2.1 (15)	11.0 (91)	7.2 (60)
TOTAL: Any emotional intimate partner violence	39.8	25.8	45.9	32.9

65. IMAGES findings on experiences of violence are broadly consistent with the 2011 national survey assessing women’s experiences of violence (PCBS, 2011). It is important to note, however, that IMAGES MENA Palestine differs from the national survey in its sample size, geographic scope, age range, as well as differences in the items included in the definition of spousal violence.

ECONOMIC VIOLENCE				
Ever prohibited a spouse from getting a job, going to work, trading or earning money?	5.7 (41)	2.1 (15)	8.1 (67)	4.5 (37)
Ever taken your spouse's earnings against her will?	1.0 (7)	0.6 (4)	5.9 (49)	3.1 (51)
Ever thrown your spouse out of the house?	5.1 (37)	1.7 (12)	11.9 (99)	5.7 (47)
Ever kept money from earnings for personal use when you knew your spouse was finding it hard to afford her personal expenses or needs for the household?	2.6 (19)	1.5 (11)	5.1 (42)	2.5 (21)
TOTAL: Any economic intimate partner violence	12.3	5.4	18.2	9.6
PHYSICAL VIOLENCE				
Ever slapped your spouse or thrown something at her that could hurt her?	12.7 (92)	5.0 (36)	14.9 (124)	9.4 (78)
Ever pushed or shoved your spouse?	7.2 (52)	4.2 (30)	14.0 (116)	8.1 (67)
Ever hit your spouse with a fist or something that could hurt her?	5.8 (42)	2.9 (21)	12.7 (105)	7.3 (61)
Ever kicked, dragged, beaten, choked or burned spouse?	1.4 (10)	0.7 (5)	8.4 (70)	4.9 (41)
Ever threatened to use or did use a gun, knife or weapon against spouse?	0.3 (2)	0.1 (1)	2.7 (21)	1.1 (9)
TOTAL: Any physical intimate partner violence	16.8	8.2	21.2	12.8
SEXUAL VIOLENCE				
Ever forced your current or former spouse to have sex with you when she did not want to?	4.3	2.6	11.3	7.0

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

As survey data shows, many respondents feel that these forms of violence are normal or justified. One-third of men and one-quarter of women in IMAGES MENA Palestine agree that “there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten” and more than half of men and women agree that “a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.” As discussed in the introduction to the report, this urge to “keep the family together” rises to the level of a survival strategy in the Palestinian context.⁶⁶ According to this research, when women tolerate violence, they believe it results from men’s curtailed opportunities and identities resulting from long-reaching effects of the occupation. As argued in the introduction, conflicts within the household do not block cooperation but exist alongside it. Moreover, women see in the family a realization of specific interests, even while it may threaten others.

66. Institute of Women’s Studies. “Checkpoints and Barriers: Searching for Livelihoods in the West Bank and Gaza Gender Dimensions of Economic Collapse,” Report No 49699-GZ, World Bank, 2010.

Intergenerational and Wealth Links

IMAGES MENA Palestine data demonstrate intergenerational links between acts and experiences of violence, as found in much of the literature on intimate partner violence. Men who witnessed violence against their mother as children and men who experienced some form of physical violence as children are more likely to report perpetrating emotional, economic, and physical forms of intimate partner violence in their adult relationships. Men with lower household wealth are also significantly more likely to report perpetrating emotional and physical forms of intimate partner violence.

Qualitative Analysis

The qualitative research describes negative attitudes towards violence among both male and female interviewees. According to some interviewees, the use of violence against women is a symptom of weakness. From this male perspective, violence against women is not an indication of a man's power but is an indication of a man losing control.

"It is unacceptable to resort to violence for solving problems. Violence is a sign of weakness not strength. Controlling woman's life regardless of the relation with her is inadmissible and constitutes injustice [...] I do not talk about beating only, but also insult, not only physical violence [...] he would be very weak if he lays a hand on her or insult her, for it means that he cannot reach to her, he cannot communicate..."

Man, 45 years old, Engineer, born and raised in Kuwait and lives in Ramallah

While referring to their mothers' experiences of violence from their fathers in the in-depth interviews, some respondents did not see their mothers as passive victims. Some said their mothers even justified their fathers' use of violence against her to preserve the integrity of the family. Respondents also saw how their mothers reacted to this violence by protecting them when they were children. Respondents who had witnessed such violence said it left them with a feeling of resentment towards their mother's helplessness as well as towards the father, whose actions made them realize their own helplessness. A few women who experienced violence were able to describe how they were able to stand up to a violent partner, even though they often remained with their violent husband:

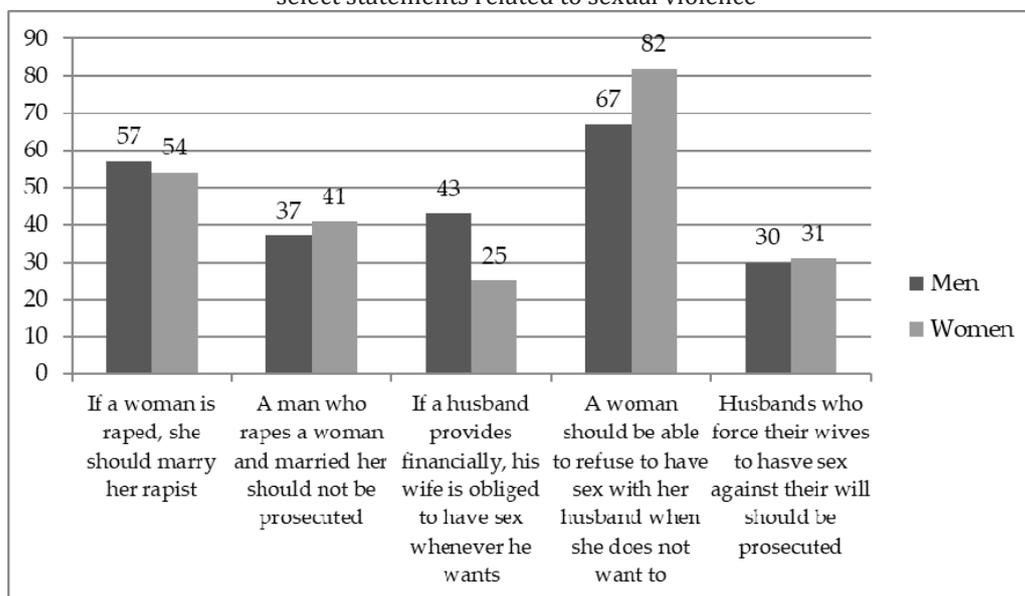
"My husband was used to me, that I would cry a little [after he used violence against me], lock myself in my room, and then calm down, and go back to performing my household duties. But when there was an instance of violence in a phase where I was really strong, I made things spiral to reach divorce. Even my husband was shocked by my position. He said, 'You became strong, and now you want to be strong over me.' Men do not like it when women are stronger than them...now it [violence] vanished, because in that episode of violence I stood up and spoke and had a position. I was able to say 'No, this is a red line, and should never happen; because [violence] happened, many things are broken between us.'"

Woman, unemployed, 28 years old, Ramallah

Sexual Violence in Private and Public Spheres

Most men and women agreed that “if a woman is raped, she should marry her rapist.” Men were more likely to normalize and justify rape, including marital rape, in all cases. Differences between men and women are greatest in the assertion that, “If a husband provides financially, his wife is obliged to have sex whenever he wants.” Some 43 percent of men but only 25 percent of women agree.⁶⁷ Although most male and female respondents see marriage to the rapist as the “solution” for victims of rape, this is in contradiction with a high percentage of both genders that asserts that rapists should be prosecuted.

FIGURE 8.4a
Duty-bound?: Statements on Sexual Violence
 Percentages of respondents aged 18-59 who agree or strongly agree with select statements related to sexual violence



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Some two-fifths of women in Palestine report experiencing one or more forms of street-based sexual harassment, and about as many men report perpetrating this harassment (see Table 8.4.) Ogling is by far the most common such harassing behavior, but one-fifth of women also report being subjected to catcalls and sexual comments and being stalked or followed in a public place.

⁶⁷ Sexual violence has a complex legal context in Palestine. So-called ‘rape marriage laws’ continue to exist in the penal code in Gaza (based on the previous Egyptian penal code) and in the West Bank (based on the continuing Jordanian penal code) in which a rapist can be exempted from punishment if he marries his victim. Rarely invoked or implemented in Palestine, these laws represent long-held beliefs about the nature of rape.

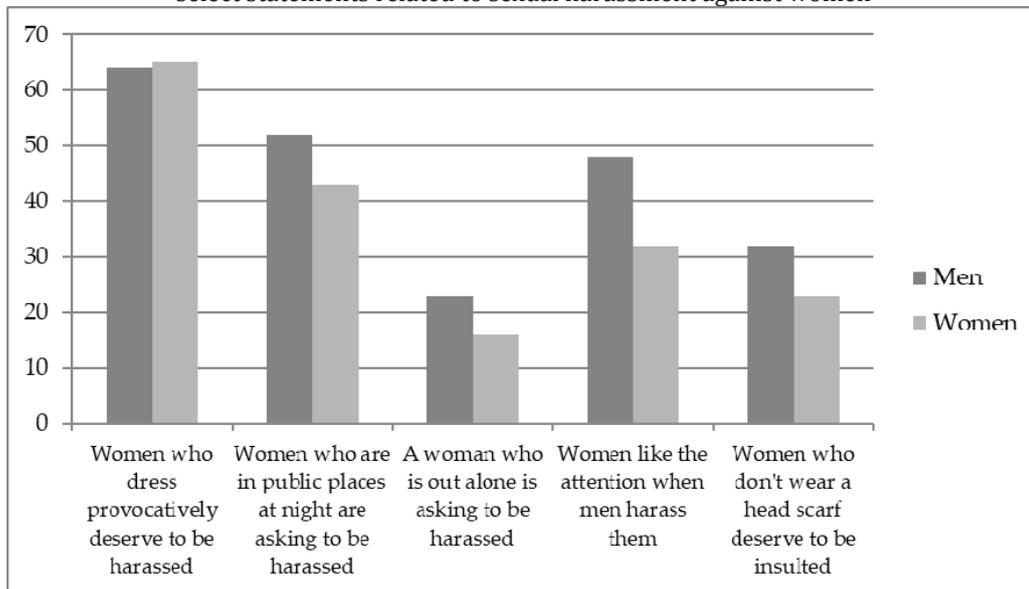
TABLE 8.4
Street-based Violence against Women
 Percentage of men who have committed specific acts of sexual harassment against women, and women who have experienced such acts, in public spaces, by lifetime and 3-month prevalence

Type of Sexual Harassment	Men (Committed, %)		Women (Experienced, %)	
	Lifetime	Past 3 months	Lifetime	Past 3 months
Ogling	34	20	31	20
Catcalls or sexual comments	10	4	19	13
Stalking or following	10	5	19	12
Obscene phone calls or text messages	4	2	9	6
Online harassment	5	3	8	6
Any of the above acts of sexual harassment	37	22	40	28

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Younger men are more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment. Data indicate that sexual harassment connects with perpetration of other forms of violence: men who report any of the four forms of intimate partner violence are also more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment at a statistically significant level. Men who experienced physical violence as children are also significantly more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment.

FIGURE 8.4b
Duty-bound?: Statements on Sexual Violence
 Percentages of respondents aged 18-59 who agree or strongly agree with select statements related to sexual harassment against women



IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

As Figure 8.4b shows, victim blaming in relation to sexual harassment is common, though men are more likely than women to lay the blame for sexual harassment on women. Almost two-thirds of both men and women agree that “women who dress provocatively deserve to be harassed,” and rates of agreement with other similar items are also very high. For the remaining four harmful attitudes, women’s rates of agreement are much lower than the rates of men.

CHAPTER NINE

Colonial Violence Gender And Household Relations

“Gender and colonialism” has emerged in recent decades as a new field of scholarship. A multitude of studies have examined the violence inherent in colonial systems⁶⁸ and colonial governance. Previous studies illustrate the ways in which colonialism restructures sexualities, gender dynamics, and constructions of masculinity and household relations.⁶⁹

68. For a comprehensive account on how Europeans have used violence to conquer, coerce, and police in pursuit of imperialism and colonial settlement, see: Dierk Walter, *Colonial Violence*. (Hurst C & Company Publishers, 2017).

69. For a historiography of the field of gender and colonialism, see: Durba Ghosh, “Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or Marginalization,” *The Historical Journal* 47, no.3 (2004): 737-755.

Studies on gender and colonialism in the Palestinian context have examined a range of issues such as gender, settler colonialism, agriculture, femicide and colonization.⁷⁰ To address the gendered effects of colonization and its restructuring of masculinities and gender dynamics, the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey included questions about a range of experiences that the respondents and their household members had over the past five years resulting from Israeli settler occupation practices. It also included questions about the experiences that the respondents and their household members had resulting from the practices of security forces in the Palestinian Authority.

The research team posits that Palestinians are not mere victims of colonial practices but are also active resisters, engaged in anti-colonial resistance that has resulted in political imprisonment, among other consequences. As such, the study includes qualitative research that explored conceptions of Palestinian masculinity and gender dynamics related to the experiences and realities of political imprisonment. The current chapter outlines the findings of the survey and the qualitative research on these themes.

Contextualizing Israeli Settler Colonial Violence

The questions included in the survey referred to the experiences of the respondents and their family members over the past five years due to Israeli settler occupation practices. To comprehend and analyze these experiences, we need to contextualize them and their cumulative effects within the long-lasting Zionist settler-colonial project in Palestine. The beginnings of this project go back to the late nineteenth century, culminating in 1948 with the Palestinian *Nakba* ('Disaster') and the establishment of Israel on 78 percent of the lands of Mandate Palestine. The *Nakba* resulted in the expulsion of more than 800,000 Palestinians. The Zionist settler colonial project resulted in massacres, killings and the importation of Jewish immigrants to replace Palestinians.⁷¹ Some 530 towns and villages were depopulated and destroyed. In 1967, the Zionist project expanded by occupying the remaining 22 percent of the areas of Mandate Palestine (the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem) resulting in the displacement of 300,000 Palestinians.

Since the beginning of the Zionist settler colonial project in Palestine, Palestinians have been subjected to multiple modalities of structural violence⁷² including dispossession, appropriation of lands, expulsion and displacement.⁷³ This structural colonial violence has continued in

70. Nida Abu Awwad, "Gender and Settler Colonialism in Palestinian Agriculture: Structural Transformations," *Arab Studies Quarterly* 38, no. 3 (2016): 540-561; and Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian, and Suhad Daher-Nashif, "Femicide and Colonization: Between the Politics of Exclusion and the Culture of Control," *Violence Against Women* 19, no. 3 (2013): 295-315.

71. Salman Abu-Sitta, *Atlas of Palestine: 1917-1966* (London: Palestine Land Society, 2010).

72. Etienne Balibar defines "structural violence" as the essential component of a repressive system, that maintains unequal social relations while defending the interests, power positions, and forms of social domination. Etienne Balibar, *Politics and the Other Scene*. (VERSO, 2002).

73. Omar Jabary Salamanca, Mezna Qato et al., "Past is present: settler colonialism in Palestine," *Settler Colonial Studies* 2, no. 1 (2012): 1-8.

recent years, affecting every aspect of Palestinian lives. The colonial violence also instigated its own opposition, the Palestinian anticolonial resistance.

A PCBS survey from 2013 exposes some aspects of continuing colonial violence and the resulting hardships suffered by Palestinians. According to the survey, more than 750,000 Palestinians (including 10,000 women) have been arrested by Israeli security forces since 1967.⁷⁴ Half of Palestinian households were exposed to some form of direct violence by Israeli military forces or by Israeli settlers prior to July 2010, with slightly higher exposure in the Gaza Strip. The past few years have seen an escalation of occupation-related violence against Palestinians, during the 2012 and 2014 Israeli wars aggressions against the Gaza Strip. This resulted in the loss of thousands of lives, tens of thousands of injuries and billions of dollars in total damage and losses. Recently in the West Bank, hundreds of people have been killed.⁷⁵ These violent experiences reflect ongoing modes of structural colonial violence that aim to subjugate Palestinians, dispossess and displace them, and prevent any form of resistance. Yet, as qualitative research findings show, occupation practices often fail to subjugate Palestinians and instead encourage resilience, *sumud* ('steadfastness') and resistance.

Occupation-Related Experiences

Among IMAGES MENA Palestine respondents, 65 percent of men and 55 percent of women report experiencing one or more of 12 forms of occupation-related violence within the past five years, presented in Table 9.2. Men were more likely than women to report having lost land, being harassed by soldiers or settlers, being detained, being injured, having difficulty accessing health services and having lost opportunities due to the occupation. These findings underscore the widespread effects of ongoing Israeli settler occupation on Palestinians and allude to the gendered effects of occupation. Male and female experiences under occupation are affected by their gender roles and the gendered division of labor. Despite the higher rate of reporting by men on experiencing various forms of occupation practices, it is important to note that the consequences of these experiences affect the living conditions of the whole family. When male members are detained or injured, the female family member assumes their responsibilities.

74. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013.

75. Ibid; Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. World Bank, May 2015.

TABLE 9.2**Occupation-related Violence and Experiences**

Percentage of men and women respondents reporting various occupation-related violence and experiences within the past five years

Occupation-related Violence and Experiences	Men (%)	Women (%)
Our house has been demolished because we were denied a building permit by Israeli occupation ⁷⁶	8	9
Our family is vulnerable to violence from Israeli settlers	24	18
I have been harassed by Israeli security forces including settlers	36	19
We have been forced to leave our home temporarily by Israeli security forces	22	22
We lost access to all or some of our land (due to confiscation/fear of violence/buffer zone) due to Israeli practices	25	14
Someone in my household has been detained for at least one day by Israeli security forces	33	23
Someone in my household was injured due to violence by Israeli security forces or settlers	29	21
I was injured due to violence from Israeli security forces or settlers	20	7
Someone in my household was killed due to violence from Israeli security forces (soldiers and settlers; in Gaza due to war)	15	11
Because of the occupation, we have had difficulty accessing health services	28	16
We visit our family and friends less than we want to due to the occupation restrictions including the wall and checkpoints	27	20
We lost the right to choose the suitable educational institution due to occupation restrictions	20	9
<i>Any one or more of the above</i>	65	55

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Restrictions on mobility due to sieges, checkpoints, the separation wall and closures affect all dimensions of life in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory. They hinder access to health services, educational institutions and workplaces, family visits and participation in weddings and burials. Each of these activities are sometimes cancelled, postponed or delayed. Nearly one-third of men and one-fifth of women said they had difficulty accessing health services due to the occupation. Similar percentages of men and women said that occupation forces had limited their ability to visit friends and family, leading to social isolation, especially for women.

76. Palestinian properties in the West Bank are subject to demolition or confiscation as part of the Israeli-imposed planning and zoning regime in Area C and East Jerusalem parts of the West Bank, and to punitive demolition or sealing following attacks on Israelis. In some areas, properties are also destroyed by settlers, who engage in politically-motivated attacks and, for example, set agricultural land on fire, leading to reduced access to services, loss of income and more. The destruction of property in an occupied territory is prohibited under international humanitarian law, unless absolutely necessary for military operations. Although the humanitarian response by the international community to such practices includes the delivery of shelters, these have also been often subject to demolition or confiscation by Israeli authorities. For more information, see: <https://bit.ly/3eMzRjw>

The most extreme effect of the occupation violence is death, which not only results in the permanent loss of a family member, but also changes family gender dynamics. If the person killed is the breadwinner, as is often the case, families face serious economic hardship. IMAGES MENA Palestine shows that this occurs to no small number of households: 15 percent of men and 11 percent of women said that someone in their household had been killed due to violence from Israeli occupation forces and settlers. This finding shows that death has become part of the daily life of Palestinians. Yet, from the perspective of *smut* and resistance, death has been re-signified through the image of the *shahid* (“martyr”), reflecting the double simultaneous positionality of the Palestinian as “victim/hero”.⁷⁷

The multiple forms of violence, coercion and intimidation by the Israeli occupation affect daily life for Palestinians in multiple gender-related ways. Both women and men feel threatened and live in a heightened state of fear. Expelled from their homes, they are forced to leave their familiar social environment and are obliged to search for alternative schooling and work. Children are uprooted and families suffer economically, since they must rent housing and pay additional money to dwell in less than adequate conditions. Men in particular are subjected to daily checks and harassment from Israeli occupation security forces and settlers because they have greater mobility and are presumed to be part of the armed resistance. All these forms of violence are designed to disrupt Palestinians’ lives and their social fabric. What the quantitative data fails to capture is the resilience of Palestinians, which enables them to endure colonial practices.

Divided Palestinian Colonial Geography

IMAGES MENA Palestine survey findings reflect the variation of Palestinians’ realities as constituted by the divided and fragmented colonial geography. As Table 9.3 below illustrates, Palestinian men from the Gaza Strip report a higher rate of various occupation-related violence and experiences over the past five years.

77. Lena Meari, “Sumud: A Palestinian Philosophy of Confrontation in Colonial Prisons,” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113, no. 3 (2014): 547-578.

TABLE 9.3**Occupation-related Violence and Experiences**

Percentage of West Bank and Gaza Strip male respondents reporting various occupation-related violence and experiences in the past five years

Occupation-related Violence and Experiences	West Bank (%)	Gaza Strip (%)
Our house has been demolished because we were denied a building permit by Israeli occupation	8.4	6.4
Our family is vulnerable to violence from Israeli settlers	22.6	27.8
I have been harassed by Israeli security forces including settlers	34.6	39
We have been forced to leave our home temporarily by Israeli security forces	22.2	22.6
We lost access to all or some of our land (due to confiscation/ fear of violence/ buffer zone) due to Israeli practices	22.6	30
Someone in my household has been detained for at least one day by Israeli security forces	30	39.4
Someone in my household was injured due to violence by Israeli security forces or settlers	27.2	32
I was injured due to violence from Israeli security forces or settlers	19.4	20.8
Someone in my household was killed due to violence from Israeli security forces (soldiers and settlers; in Gaza due to war)	13.9	18.2
Because of the occupation we have had difficulty accessing health services	25.4	33.4
We visit our family and friends less than we want to due to the occupation restrictions including the wall and checkpoints	26.7	30.3
We lost the right to choose the suitable educational institution due to occupation restrictions	19.9	21.3
<i>Any one or more of the above</i>	63.1	69.7

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Men from the Gaza Strip were more likely than men from the West Bank to report being vulnerable to violence, being harassed by Israeli security forces or settlers, having lost access to land, that someone from their household has been detained, injured and killed, having difficulty accessing health services, visiting family and friends, or having lost opportunities to choose educational institutions due to the occupation. The high rate of reporting various violent occupation-related experiences among men from Gaza Strip can be understood by the living conditions in Gaza Strip due to the Israeli siege on Gaza held by Israelis and backed by Western countries since 2006. Three years ago, between July and August 2014, Israel waged its fourth devastating war attack on Gaza, leaving more than 2,000 Palestinians dead (including 521 children and 97 women) and over 10,000 injured (including 3,312 children and 2,120 women), At least 10,920 houses were damaged or destroyed during this period, of which 2,853 were destroyed.⁷⁸

Palestinian clinical psychologist Said Shehadeh contends that the deliberate measures used by Israel to induce feelings of helplessness, uncontrollability, horror, persistent life-threatening fear and sleep deprivation constitute mass torture.⁷⁹

78. Al Mezan Center for Human Rights. 2014. <https://bit.ly/2VxhY0l>

79. Said Shehadeh, "The 2014 War on Gaza: Engineering Trauma and Mass Torture to Break Palestinian Resilience," *International Journal of Applied Psychoanalytic Studies* 12, no. 3 (2015): 278-294.

Violent Encounters with Palestinian Security Forces

Table 9.4 shows that one-fifth of men and six percent of women report having been harassed or threatened by Palestinian security forces within the past five years. Across the board, men are more likely than women to report any such experiences. Some 8 percent of men and 6 percent of women report that someone in their household was injured due to violence by Palestinian security forces within the last five years. A previous PCBS survey on public sphere violence shows that around 6 percent of youths were exposed to modest physical violence by Palestinian security personnel and 5.4 percent were exposed to psychological violence by the same.⁸⁰

The violence perpetrated by Palestinian security forces should be contextualized within the Oslo agreements that constitute the Palestinian security forces as protectors of 'Israel's security', through maintaining close coordination between Palestinian security forces and Israeli security forces.⁸¹ This coordination leads to mistrust by Palestinians of the Palestinian Authority's security structures, which seem intended to suppress them and prevent their struggle against the occupation.

TABLE 9.4

Interaction with Palestinian Forces

Percentage of respondents who report experiences of violence by Palestinian security forces within the past five years

Interaction with Palestinian Forces	Men (%)	Women (%)
I have been harassed or threatened by members of the Palestinian security forces	20	6
I have been detained for at least one day by Palestinian security members	15	1
I was injured due to violence practiced by Palestinian security members	7	1
Someone in my household was injured due to violence practiced by Palestinian security members	8	6

Source: IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Political Imprisonment

Since political imprisonment constitutes a formative experience in the lives of a large segment of Palestinian men and women, qualitative research explored the constructions of masculinity and gender dynamics within the experiences of political imprisonment. The choice of political imprisonment as a subject for exploration of the constructions of masculinity and gender dynamics stems from the fact that mass incarceration has been employed as a major colonial

80. PCBS, *Press Release: Main Findings of Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society*. 2011. <https://bit.ly/2Vs90GA>

81. For details on the security arrangements established in the Oslo agreements see Article xii of the agreement that concerns the 'arrangements for security and public order'. The third section of the article states: 'A Joint Coordination and Cooperation Committee for Mutual Security Purposes (hereinafter 'the JSC'), as well as Joint Regional Security Committees (hereinafter 'RSCs') and Joint District Coordination Offices (hereinafter 'DCOs'), are hereby established' (Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, 1995).

tool to punish and prevent anti-colonial struggle. Since 1967, more than 800,000 Palestinians have been arrested under Israeli military orders. This number constitutes 20 percent of the Palestinian population in the 1967 occupied Palestinian territory and 40 percent of Palestinian males. It also includes 10,000 Palestinian women.⁸² Thus, mass incarceration and political imprisonment had become a formative experience, mainly for Palestinian men. The study explored the ways in which the experiences of political incarceration affect gender relations.

Political Imprisonment and Gender Dynamics

Detention of men and women, especially young men, is a practice that is often used to suppress and subject younger generations from resisting. According to IMAGES MENA Palestine findings, 33 percent of men and 23 percent of women had been detained for at least one day by Israeli security forces.

Findings from the investigation into Palestinian families' experiences with political imprisonment show that the struggles of men inside prison walls were mirrored on the outside by women's struggles to carry the burden of household responsibilities without a male partner. The interviews testify to the perseverance of women and illustrate a strong appreciation for their sacrifice by their previously-imprisoned husbands. The ex-prisoners interviewed remarked on their wives' impressive steadfastness, patience and resilience. Most ex-prisoner men in the qualitative research said they knew they could trust their wives' ability to manage the household without them, as the following quote illustrates:

"[Women whose husbands are imprisoned are subject] to blackmailing, weakness, and social, economic and emotional needs that should be filled by the life partner, the husband. [...] One should invest in a relationship based on trust. When there is trust, one is able to feel all the huge responsibilities that fall on the woman's shoulders instead of fearing for her or confining her [...] Our reality has shown that the women are able to play an enormous role on the level of the household and family, socially and economically. One would ask if it were the man who stayed with the family and the woman [were] the one imprisoned, in certain cases you would have more challenges and the man may be faced with more forms of helplessness in relation to balancing responsibilities inside and outside the house."

Man, 40 years old, ex-prisoner, employee, village near Ramallah

This is not the case with all prisoners' wives. Women may become more vulnerable with the imprisonment of their husbands. They may be regarded as weak and unable to take care of themselves or their children. This attitude may subject them to attempts of control by their families or their husbands' families or leave them threatened with abuse and exploitation from different social parties.⁸³

82. ADDAMEER. *Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israeli Prisons* (2014). <https://bit.ly/3ebcos0>

83. A previous study by Giacaman and Johnson (2013, 54) illustrates how the wives and mothers of Palestinian political prisoners "mediate between prison and family life by navigating through the multiple dynamics of Israeli securitization and geographic incarceration, political invisibility in the Palestinian field, and social isolation in their communities". Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson, "Our Life is Prison: The Triple Captivity of Wives and Mothers of Palestinian Political Prisoners." *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies* 9, no. 3 (2013): 54-80.

Concerning the issue of household decision-making, another form of separation between fathers and their children is the political imprisonment of fathers. Mothers in this case play an important part by taking on the father's role in the family when he is physically absent because of imprisonment. Mothers usually emphasize the father's role in decision-making concerning important changes or events in the lives of the children. It is precisely this issue of fatherhood that the findings of IMAGES MENA Palestine underscore as a promising path for men towards embracing gender equality in their everyday lives. The following quote (which also appears earlier in the report) illustrates an example for men's perceptions of their active role in parenthood:

"I prayed that she gives birth when I am outside the prison, and thank God my wish was realized, and I was released four days before she gave birth. A woman in this circumstance [giving birth] is weak... she is going into a new phase of which she does not know enough, pregnancy and labor involve changes in which she needs support, especially from the husband. If he is not there for his wife in this phase, she may feel more vulnerable, but thanks God; we were able to communicate during this period."

Man, bakery employee, ex-prisoner, 41 years old, village near Ramallah

Men's Political Imprisonment Drives Positive Gender Attitudes and Practices

Several former political prisoners, imprisoned by occupation forces, remarked on the extraordinary ability of women to bear double or triple the usual responsibility when they and other men were imprisoned. Imprisonment, according to one political prisoner, throws the burden of household life, including income generation, on the wife. The husband in this case came to reject the inequitable division of household labor and began to believe in cooperation. Some former political prisoners were less worried or had less to say about who carried out which tasks and were more concerned that these tasks had fallen to their wives while they were in prison. The ability of women to carry out this larger burden gave many men greater respect and appreciation for women and may have been the driver for some men to carry out commonly female-held household tasks such as feeding, bathing or changing babies' diapers, as the following quote illustrates:

"Each time I was able to see that the woman is a cornerstone in your life as a Palestinian, she maintains your presence by maintaining your identity, your secrets, yourself, also maintaining your family tradition... her role was more important than that of the father, the mother. [...] She achieved much more than I expected and more than is usually expected from the man, I am talking physiologically during pregnancy, and morally during labor, I also talk about other responsibilities that has to do with managing the house, working and taking care of the imprisoned husband, the woman is an embodiment of an enormous power to achieve all these tasks that fell on her shoulders."

Man, former prisoner, village near Ramallah

One wife of a political prisoner who was interviewed, also a working mother and an activist, affirmed that having the extra burden when her husband was in prison served to affirm her own strength in herself. She said she was in no way calling for women to carry the full burden of a family, but that she found positive affirmation in her own abilities in this experience:

“There is always a positive side. I have no doubt that having to hold responsibilities had benefitted me and had a critical role in forming my professional and social personality. The role of the wife of a political prisoner is to balance between all relationships with her husband in prison, with her children, and with her own family and the family of the husband.”

Woman, wife of a Palestinian political prisoner, village near Ramallah

This positive example does not negate the multitude of challenges that the families of imprisoned men face, especially in relation to their own and their husbands’ families who usually want to take responsibility for the prisoners’ wives and children.

What happens when a former political prisoner returns home? Some women said that men are quite appreciative of their wives when they return from imprisonment. Others report tensions when men want to “assume control” again. They encounter resistance by women who don’t want to give up the responsibilities they have assumed during his absence. One interviewee responded that such tensions could be resolved by men showing greater appreciation for their wife’s ability to take on responsibility and to appreciate the confidence that she has acquired, while stressing the necessity of sharing tasks.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Any change in attitudes and perceptions of individuals and groups, in gender power relations or in men's attitudes and behaviors towards women, should comprise a comprehensive transformation at different levels based on an integrated political, economic and social approaches. Change includes freedom and independence from occupation to achieve full sovereignty and control over resources, an economic system with a human face that provides opportunities and expanded choices for all, a social contract based on a social safety net providing social protection and social justice to vulnerable groups, and positive socialization that promotes justice, cooperation and partnership between genders. These are all primary requirements. Together, these changes will enhance a positive attitude and perceptions of men towards women and achieve gender justice and equity. The recommendations below are targeted to all stakeholders, governments, NGOs, academics and researchers and social movements, especially the women's movement.

1. Transforming Structures

Real changes necessitate structural changes. For deep, radical, positive change in power relations to happen, structural changes at the political, economic and social levels are necessary. Such changes can only happen if Palestine is liberated from occupation, as occupation remains a structural obstacle, a source and a justification for maintaining power structures and relations including patriarchy as an institution of control. The occupation allows certain voices in Palestinian society to justify patriarchal social structures as means of protecting and defending women and the family.

2. Promoting Changes in the Private and Public Spheres

IMAGES MENA Palestine findings indicate that the division of labor in the household still reflects inequitable, gendered power relationships. This inequitable division of housework puts a greater burden on women, hindering their involvement in social or political spheres and puts double burden on them in case they work. Therefore, change in household gender roles and division of labor toward male and female sharing of domestic work can be a starting point toward expanding women's opportunities to access work, education and resources. Such transformations will require shifts in the formal labor market to accommodate and allow for a re-ordering of the division of household labor and in the educational system. National curriculum can change gender stereotypes and transform social norms, aiming to give a new image of women and men that can affect social change positively.

3. Engaging Men in the Struggle for Gender Justice

Data shows some changes in gender-related attitudes and practices among certain men who have come to appreciate women's abilities and equal status. Men, including men who have experienced political incarceration, reported recognizing women's ability to manage all the responsibilities – including economic responsibilities – of the household. It is time to encourage progressive Palestinian men, who hold positive gender attitudes, to join the struggle for true gender justice in Palestine. Women's organizations need to build links and alliances with men who also support a more equitable gender order in Palestine. Men often can be more effective communicators of gender issues to their male peers. Currently, activism and programming on gender equality does not include them as a resource, but rather a potential obstacle. The survey results show that it is not enough for Palestinian men to hold positive attitudes, they must also translate them into practice in both public and private spaces, and in so doing so, set an example for future generations.

4. Going Beyond the Limited Focus on Legislative Reforms

Gender equality and gender justice cannot be achieved through new legislation alone, especially when legal changes are perceived as being against men's interests. Therefore, any legal strategies for change should try and overcome the zero-sum gain mentality that persists among many men and attempt to convince them that change enhances the potential of all society's members. As findings demonstrate, the Palestinian legal and judicial system is governed by patriarchal norms that are legal and social. As such, even when rights for women exist they can be manipulated by the larger context of masculinist social norms that block their actual implementation. In many cases, women's low legal literacy, poverty and few material resources also limit access and effectiveness of this avenue.

These insights emphasize that change should also come in the day-to-day struggles and experiences of regular people, not only from top-down interventions in the form of law or state policies (which in Palestine are ambiguous and lacking in legitimacy).

Any real change in the legal framework must be accompanied by structural changes at the social, political, and economic levels to enforce laws, expand legal literacy especially for marginalized women who are exploited and are denied their rights (including inheritance rights), and boost confidence in the legal system. Education is one of these key structural changes. The study shows that men with higher education levels were more likely to report having recently carried out conventionally female domestic tasks. Qualitative data also show that younger couples with higher levels of education may be able to become catalysts for changes in the attitudes and perceptions of future generations. However, any change in behaviors and legal practice can be facilitated through collective agency and in this context the women's movement and specialized civil society organizations should be empowered to address these issues and mobilize women to enforce legal practice or improve legal frameworks. Individual women are unable to face the social and economic pressures alone.

5. Entering Social Change from the Gateway of Parenting

IMAGES MENA Palestine data shows that change begets more change, and it needs to start at home. Men whose fathers participated in conventionally feminine household work, as well as men who were taught to do this work as children, were far more likely to contribute in these ways within their own marriages. Parents would do well to realize these insights and make the relevant adjustments in their attitudes toward division of labor, decision-making, freedom of expression and equal treatment of genders in the home. This can become a starting point for meaningful progress toward more equitable gender relations. When positive, equitable attitudes and behaviors are practiced within the household, change can become a reality.

It is important to encourage fathers to engage in caregiving roles as an effective means of changing gender role perceptions. Re-arranging gender roles, with men undertaking traditionally female roles, can be a vital tool for change and creates national legitimacy and acceptance.

6. Focusing on Men's Health as a Requirement

The survey uncovered some concerning findings regarding Palestinian men's health and their accessing of services. Data shows that not only do men use health services less frequently than women, but they also tend to use them primarily in cases of urgent medical need rather than for prevention and self-care. Hence, it is important to promote males' health seeking behavior. As well, the survey found men's psychosocial distress (particularly in Gaza) to be very high. Current programming in psychosocial and mental health tends to overlook men as a target group, and men are often reluctant to seek mental health or other types of psychosocial and emotional support. Existing psychosocial programming (especially in Gaza) needs to find ways to address these concerns among men.

7. Integrating Women into Public Life Sphere

The survey results demonstrated a need to work on enhancing women's participation and representation in the Palestinian political life in its formal and informal spheres. The absence of women from public life marginalizes their voice and their roles and their concerns go unanswered. Important mechanisms of change are women's social movements and other social justice movements.

8. Positing Gender-Based Violence as a Societal Problem

There exists a need to employ public discussion and awareness campaigns to help men understand why combating gender-based violence is important to all family members and for the well-being of their communities.

9. Promoting Positive Models of Masculinities

There is a need to partner with all forms of media and art to build an alternative discourse and image of a positive and progressive male to become a reference for the new generation. This includes progressive males who have legitimacy in the Palestinian society such as political prisoners.

10. Developing a Research Agenda on Masculinity and Men

There exists a need to develop research agendas that can produce critical knowledge on men and masculinities focusing on participatory action research that produce deep understanding of the material contextual constructions of Palestinian masculinities, as opposed to studying Palestinian masculinity from a pure culturalist approach.

11. Make youth a target for change

Work on youth through popular education, to campaign and lobby for women's rights to become agents for change. Through formal and informal education, teach youth how to become critical thinkers able to transform negative attitudes and perceptions towards gender justice. Introduce courses on masculinities in universities and include the issue of masculinities at all levels of gender training in the NGO sector.

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