

Re-negotiating Social Reproduction, Work and Gender Roles in Occupied Palestine

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ABSTRACT

This article uncovers the crisis of social reproduction in Occupied Palestine in the context of severe economic and political turmoil by specifically highlighting the ways in which impacts have been felt differently by men and women. It does so by considering the interactions of production and reproduction. The article confirms that, as a result of economic hardship, women, particularly married women, are increasingly participating in the formal and informal labour market. These women have been forced to renegotiate their domestic and caring responsibilities alongside paid work, within a context of very limited state or private sector provision of care services. While time-use survey findings suggest little change in men and women's time-use between 1999/2000 and 2012/13 in general, qualitative interviews provide a more nuanced picture. Furthermore, the narrative that responsibility for managing care of children and elderly relatives as well as domestic work lies solely with the wife/mother is near universal. Respondents also did not voice demands for greater investment in child and elder care services by private firms or by the state, suggesting a strong individualisation of responsibility for social reproduction in Occupied Palestine today. What remains to be seen is a) how representative these findings are for other groups, particularly poorer, rural families in Palestine and b) what the longer-term consequences of these changes might bring for societal gender norms in Palestine and in other contexts.

KEYWORDS: Palestine, gender, paid work, unpaid work, employment, occupation, gender norms, social reproduction

1. INTRODUCTION

This article explores the organisation of production, social reproduction and gender relations in Occupied Palestine. It does so by considering how paid and unpaid work in Occupied Palestine have transformed for men and women since 2000, focusing on differences by marital status and for families with children in urban settings. In doing so it reveals the inherent tension between production and social reproduction in a context of deteriorating economic and political conditions and builds on the work of Fraser (2017) and others (Elias and Roberts 2016, Steans and Tepe 2010) in developing social reproduction theory in the context of the Global South, where traditional categories and concepts require some further adaptation.

The tensions between paid and unpaid work, and the commodification, privatisation and individualisation of social reproduction underpinning them, have increasingly been understood by Feminist IPE and Marxist scholars, particularly for contexts in which an established state apparatus is in retreat (Himmelweit 1995; Steans and Tepe 2010; Elias and Roberts 2016; Himmelweit 2017, Fraser 2017). Knowledge of this interplay of spheres of production and reproduction for countries and contexts in which the state's role is minimal

and where broader economic and political tensions underpin these changes, are also now coming to the fore (Kunz 2010; Elias and Louth 2016). Notably absent has been an application of such a framework to countries in the Middle East and North Africa, with Arslan's study of Turkey in this issue presenting a rare exception. This article is a further addition to this gap in research.

The Palestinian economy is one facing a variety of challenges, of which the Israeli occupation stands at the forefront. The economic dependence on Israel as well as a high aid-dependence have defined the structure of the Palestinian economy over the last few decades (UNCTAD 2017), resulting in a failure to generate the much-needed decent jobs (State of Palestine 2014; State of Palestine 2016). Our results confirm that a large proportion of educated, young men and women are not finding paid work and are therefore unemployed. In contrast, married women's participation in the labour market has increased, as a result of deteriorating economic and political conditions, which have forced employed married women to hold on to their jobs rather than exiting the labour market upon marriage (as has been the case in the past).

These women have been forced to renegotiate their domestic and caring responsibilities alongside paid work. It has been previously noted that "married women are finding ways to maintain their jobs and combine their productive and reproductive roles through coping mechanisms." (Al-Botmeh 2013: 33). Through analysis of time-use surveys and interviews with working women in Ramallah, representatives of women's groups and paid and unpaid carers, we further unpack such 'coping mechanisms' for this study.

It does so by building on the work of Nancy Fraser (2017) who identifies the essential contradiction between economic production and social reproduction over time. Three different regimes of reproduction-cum-production are specified by Fraser (2017). The first 'separate spheres', sees men and women respectively responsible for production and social reproduction. This is akin to the social and capitalist organization in industrialized countries prior to the expansion of the welfare state following WW2. In the second phase, 'state-managed capitalism', the state as well as large private sector organisations play a greater role in the provision of welfare and social reproduction responsibilities forging "a novel synthesis of marketization and social protection." (p. 34). Finally, 'financialized capitalism', the current phase being experienced across industrialized countries, has seen the state retreat from social welfare provisioning, leaving this to the market (formal and informal) for those that can afford it and to the private, household sphere for those that cannot. Concurrently, the productive sphere has shifted from a family-wage model towards a dual-earner household model, leading to an overall crisis of reproduction or as Fraser puts it "Thus, it is externalizing care work onto families and communities while diminishing their capacity to perform it." (p.34).

While this framework is very useful in the context of industrialized countries, Palestine, like many other countries in the Global South, does not neatly map on to Fraser's typology. Indeed, the intermediate phase of 'state-managed capitalism', the post-war model of the Global North in which the state and large corporations involved themselves (to differing degrees in different countries) in providing social welfare, was largely skipped by countries in the Global South. Instead, these countries, including Palestine, have gone from a model of

household-level responsibilities for social reproduction, what Fraser (2017) terms ‘separate spheres’, straight to a situation in which social reproduction is in crisis, due to a large part to the consequences of financialized capitalism on breaking-down the single breadwinner model. As political and economic realities have deteriorated the ‘separate spheres’ model has come under attack so that the organization of production and reproduction now more closely resembles that of Fraser’s financialized capitalism, but with some important caveats.

This has been further intensified by political factors in the Palestinian context – namely the occupation and its consequent impacts on production and social reproduction. This has, in turn, led to challenges to gender relations within society that this article will also outline. We know from previous studies (Kunz 2010) that such implications are far from straightforward, and in the case of Palestine are further complicated by the increased role of NGO and religious welfare provisioning that have partially stepped into the void left by the state’s absence and paralysis.

This study relies on 26 interview with mostly middle-class working women in urban Ramallah. Respondents were purposively selected to fit a set of criteria, primarily linked to their need to be working for pay as well as their caring responsibilities, to be included in the study. Beyond this a range of experiences were sought to be reflected and a mixture of snow-ball and purposive sampling was used to achieve this; a further 16 interviews were conducted with women’s organisations and other stakeholders, including government and trade union representatives; and nine interviews with formal or informal care providers, including private nursery workers, domestic carers and grandparent carers.

The study also relies on time-use survey findings that suggest little change in men and women’s time-use between 2000 and 2012 in general, including negligible changes to paid and unpaid work between men and women. The qualitative interviews for this article provide a more nuanced picture. Among a younger generation of middle class and upper-middle class families, men perform a greater share of domestic and caring duties than has previously been assumed. Despite numerous examples of men “sharing the caring”, the perception among women is that such behaviour is the exception to the rule and that their partners are unusual in this regard.

Despite shifting realities on the ground, the narrative that managing such care of children and elderly relatives is solely the responsibility of the woman (and sometimes the extended family) is near universal. Fraser’s (2017) portrayal of the organisation of production and social reproduction under financialized capitalism, which “has reduced real wages, thus raising the number of hours of paid work per household needed to support a family and prompting a desperate scramble to transfer care work to others” therefore fits the situation in Palestine today. However, where Fraser’s analysis fits less well relates to the increased marketisation and privatisation of care and social reproduction in countries in the Global North. Instead, in the context of a non-existent welfare state and reduced donor funds, private care providers (that are expensive, poor quality and largely unregulated) and Islamic welfare organisations (that are often argued to entrench existing conservative views with regards to gendered social norms) have (only partially) taken on the mantle of social and welfare provisioning outside the family in Palestine. As a result, those interviewed, placed little demand on the state to play an active role in increasing the provision of child and elder

care services in Palestine and responsibilities for care have become further individualised.

The article is organised as follows. Section two unpacks the formal labour market developments in the context of occupation, including from a gender perspective highlighting the rise of married women in paid work. Section three discusses Palestine's social welfare provisioning, the impact of neoliberal economic reforms and the role that hegemonic masculinity Middle East-style plays in structuring production and social reproduction. Section four then turns to an investigation of household level divisions of paid and unpaid work, relying initially on time-use surveys and then on interview data to draw its conclusions. This section will highlight the apparent discrepancy between the time-use surveys that indicate no change in paid and unpaid work divisions between men and women and results from interviews that suggest a shift in what is occurring within households. These discrepancies are further explored in section five which asks how social norms around gender have changed given clear material changes on the ground in Palestine, seeking to question whether hegemonic masculinity Middle East-style is under threat. This section will highlight the importance of considering how men's economic roles have changed alongside women's and that the rise of religiously-funded welfare providers does not necessarily support a purely disempowering narrative for women. Further research in this area is required to draw firm conclusion in this regard.

2. CHANGING PATTERNS OF PARTICIPATION IN PAID WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF OCCUPATION

Palestine is a small economy consisting of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, marred by Israeli occupation and periods of intense conflict and war that have severe social, political and economic consequences. The West Bank and Gaza are some of the most densely populated areas of the world with more than half of the population aged 24 or below. Three-quarters of the population can be classified as urban, with the services sector dominating economic activity today. Frequent outbreaks of violence and war have left their mark on the economy of Gaza and West Bank and have resulted in highly volatile GDP growth rates (World Bank 2020; Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018). Since 2010 growth rates have continued to fluctuate, turning negative in 2013 and 2014, following a reduction in aid flows since their height during the global financial crisis (Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018). GDP growth subsequently recovered before being hit by the economic consequences of Covid-19 and the withholding of trade-related clearance revenues by the Israeli authorities in the last 24 months (Palestine Monetary Authority 2020). Increasingly, the economic structures and challenges facing the West Bank and Gaza need to be analysed separately, particularly since 2005 and Israel's unilateral disengagement from Gaza, effectively ending economic ties between Israel and Gaza (UNCTAD 2017; Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018).

The Palestinian economy remains dominated by the services sector, followed by wholesale and retail trade, and public administration and defence. Together these non-tradeable sectors continue to make up the majority of Palestinian GDP (Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018). The above developments, particularly the diminishing size of the productive economy and the stagnant levels of private and public investment, have resulted in large increases in unemployment and underemployment over time, representing some of the highest

unemployment rates in the world (Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018; Palestine Monetary Authority 2020).

The labour market impacts of the occupation and subsequent economic collapse have, however, not been felt by all in the same way and to the same degree. Some consensus in this regard has, however, emerged in recent years. First, Gaza has been more dramatically hit than the West Bank and this includes the labour market impacts, resulting in higher unemployment for both men and women and a heightened search for informal sector work and reliance on remittances (Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018). In both Gaza and the West Bank it has been young people (under the age of 25) that have been particularly severely impacted, with unemployment rates especially high for this group. In addition real wages have stagnated and were lower in 2016 than they were 30 years ago (Flassbeck, Kaczmarczyk et al. 2018).

A gendered perspective on the economy and the labour market in Palestine must consider the impact of occupation and conflict on labour market outcomes and gender roles. Other conflict contexts have revealed that war, occupation and oppression will inevitably impact on women's economic roles and, through this, their societal roles, in a variety of ways. Rather than viewing gender and conflict dynamics in a simplistic way, with men being perpetrators of violence and women being victims, research has become increasingly nuanced (Arostegui 2013).

In some instances conflict has contributed to a positive transformation of gender roles, as women have gained independence and are more informed and empowered as a result of having taken on greater economic responsibilities or taken on new political and community-level roles (Luna et al 2017, Arostegui 2013, Alsaba and Kapilashrami 2016). However, there are numerous examples of external conflict and violence spilling in to the domestic sphere (Hamber 2015; True 2010). Accounts across the Middle East highlight how such impacts intersect with class, ethnicity and refugee status and that the disempowering of men through their lack of access to productive resources and employment often results in men exerting their power over women through acts of violence in the home (Alsaba and Kapilashrami 2016: 12).

Findings for Palestine are similar, with evidence that some Palestinian men turn their frustrations resulting from political and economic disempowerment into violence against female family members. Women (and men) in Palestine are further exposed to the humiliation and direct violence of the Israeli authorities (Holt 2003). For women in Palestine, living under occupation and the political economy consequences of this over the last 70 years, there is evidently no straight-forward answer to the question of their emancipation and empowerment resulting from these processes. However, one piece of the puzzle, the labour market picture, warrants some further examination.

The relatively large increase in female economic participation, over the last two decades in particular, is often missed by a cursory glance at participation data for Palestine¹. Labour force participation rates for women were just 10 % in 2000 but have almost doubled over the last two decades to 19.2% in 2017 for both Gaza and the West Bank (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017). This is rather at odds with the stagnant picture of female

economic participation often drawn for Palestine and the Middle East and North Africa more generally (Hillis, Alaref et al. 2018).

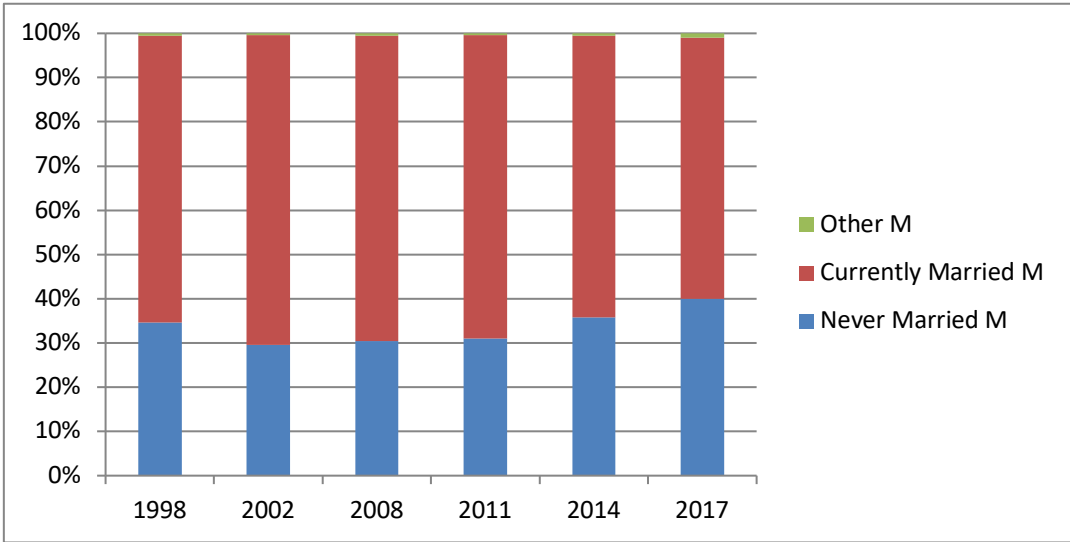
Participation rates have risen sharply for women in the West Bank and Gaza. In the West Bank the increase in women's participation mostly occurred over the 2000s while in Gaza the steep increase in women's participation has happened more recently, particularly since 2011 (Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics various). However, participation needs to be broken down to those in employment and those continuing to search for work and remaining unemployed. Given the economic situation it is clear that unemployment, informality and under-employment have risen dramatically for both men and women in Palestine. Similar parallels can be found in Iraq, where large numbers of Iraqi women found employment in the informal economy following the 2003 US invasion (Looney 2006: 1005).

Unemployment rates in Palestine have been highest for women in Gaza standing at 60% in 2017 while this rate was around 26% for women in the West Bank. This is 50% higher than the equivalent rate for men in both Gaza and the West Bank (Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics various). Again, a further breakdown reveals that it is highly educated women and poorly educated men that are most likely to find themselves out of work in Gaza and the West Bank. Refugee and non-refugee men and women have similar participation rates with slightly higher refugee participation rates among women in Gaza (Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics various).

Differences by age and marital status are also worth noting. Unlike in other countries in the Middle East (Spierings 2014; Sayre and Hendy 2016; Assaad, Krafft et al. 2017), participation rates among married women are relatively high in Palestine and have risen with time. This is unusual given the standard narrative that women tend to leave the labour market upon marriage. Participation rates are highest for the age category 25-34 where participation rates for 2017 were as high as 32.3%, followed by the category 35-44 with a participation rate of 24.1% in 2017 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017).

The figure below highlights the rise in the proportion of married women in the labour market over the last 20 years for both Gaza and the West Bankⁱⁱ. In 1998 51% of all women in the labour market were married while in 2017 this figure had risen to 63%. For men, the trajectory has been in the opposite direction. In 1998 65% of men in the labour market were married compared to 59% in 2017.

MEN:



WOMEN:

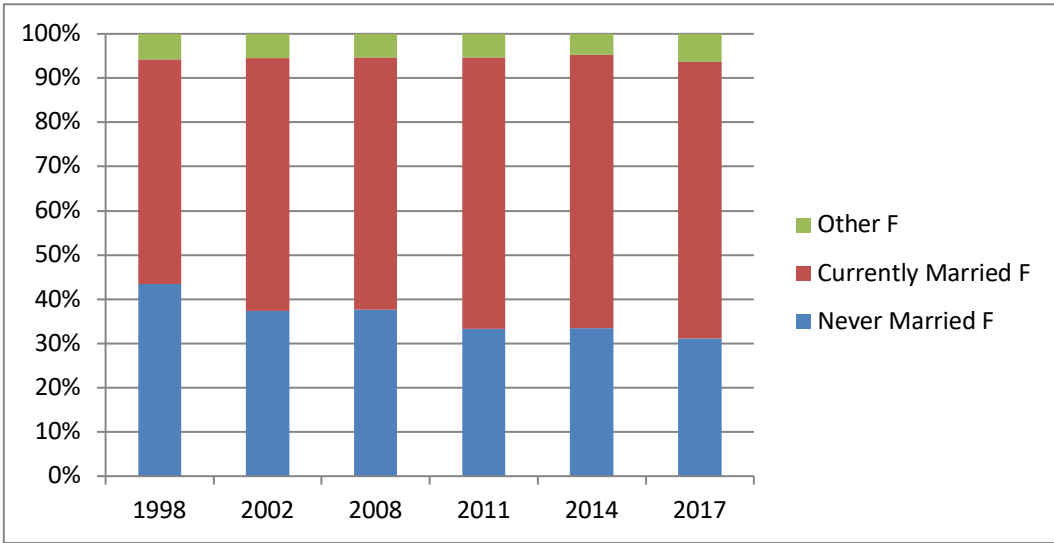


Figure 1: Labour Force Participation by Martial Status and Sex (1998-2017, selected years)

Source: PBCS Labour Force Surveys 1998-2017, available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>

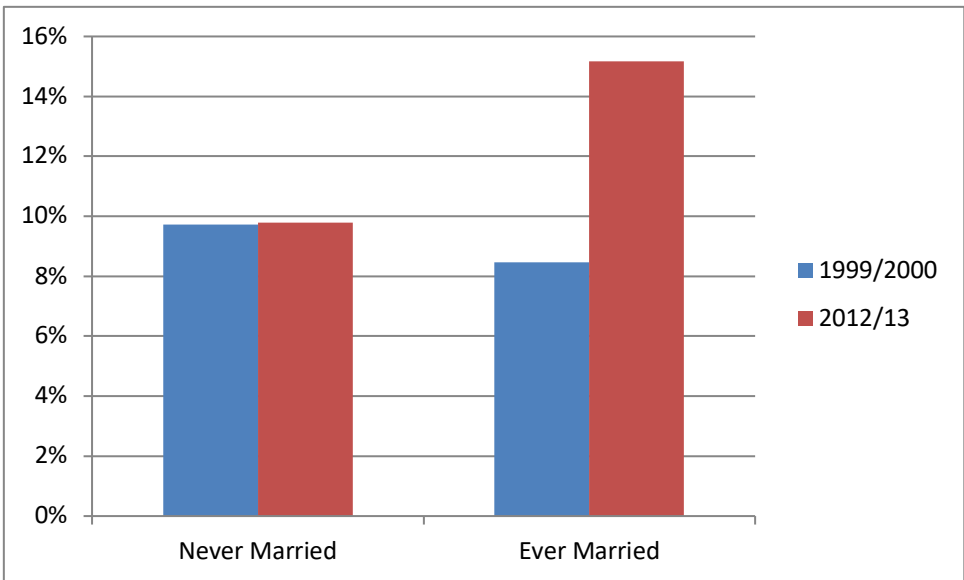


Figure 2: Proportion of Married and Never Married Women in Paid Workⁱⁱⁱ

Source: PCBS Time-use Surveys 1999/2000 and 2012/13, available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>

2.1 WHY ARE MORE MARRIED WOMEN WORKING?

While some have argued that the increase in the proportion of married women working can be linked to rising educational attainment (Khattab and Miaari 2013), our research indicates that the current economic and political situation has been a significant driver. Interviews with women workers and representatives of women's organisations for this article reflect a similar pattern in Palestine. The common narrative emerging from these interviews is captured by the following quote, from an interview with a manager of a private nursery.

"It is not enough for one person in the household to work anymore. Women's work has become necessary to sustain a living."

This is supported by other recent studies of the drivers of female labour force participation in Palestine (Al-Botmeh 2016). Traditionally, most married women, particularly educated, middle-class women dropped out of the labour market once they had married, taking on unpaid domestic and caring responsibilities instead (Karshenas, Moghadam et al. 2016; Hillis, Alaref et al. 2018). However, the lack of job opportunities for both men and women in Palestine has resulted in those that have secured work (particularly formal sector jobs) holding on to these jobs or taking on new work in the informal economy.

This phenomenon is not unique to Palestine and has been witnessed across countries experiencing economic crisis or recession resulting in pressures on household finances. Rubery and Rafferty's research into employment patterns following the 2008-09 financial crisis in the UK, for example, show an increase in dual earner households "as a means of keeping the household afloat in a period of recession" (Rubery and Rafferty 2013: 426). Others have found similar counter-cyclical patterns of female labour force participation in emerging and developing economy contexts (Khitarihvili 2013; Kabeer 2017), usually as a result of necessity rather than choice (Casale and Posel 2002; Kabeer 2012).

What contrasts experiences in other contexts is the fact that it is mainly married women that are (re)entering paid work in the Palestinian context. Instead, in South Asia, young, unmarried women have been driving the increase in female labour force participation (Rahman and Islam 2013; Pande, Moore et al. 2017) while in sub-Saharan Africa it has traditionally been divorced, widowed or separated women who have engaged in paid work outside the home (Sender and Smith 1990; Oya 2009). Those interviewed for this research were primarily middle-class, working, married women and mothers in an urban conurbation in the West Bank. For most of these women their motivations for working outside the home differed, although almost half mentioned financial need as a major driver. A similar proportion, given the choice, would prefer to reduce their working hours and spend a greater amount of time at home with their children but saw the need to supplement family income as the main obstacle to making such a change.

Crucially, the Israeli occupation has left its marks on both the economic and social fabric of society and has had numerous consequences in relation to paid work and social reproduction outcomes. The stifling of economic and job opportunities domestically and the lack of mobility as a result of the occupation have led young men, in particular, to either seek work overseas or remain, and find themselves impacted by violence in the form of harassment, temporary or longer-term imprisonment, injuries and longer-term adverse health outcomes, both physical and psychological (Akesson 2018). Since 1967 over 750,000 (overwhelmingly male) Palestinians have been arrested by Israeli forces (Abu Khalid 2012). It has led to a rise in female-headed households, whether permanently or temporarily, with many more women supporting families economically and as primary income earners (Kuttab and Heilman 2017). Interviews for this study, limited to urban areas of the West Bank, supported the rise in female breadwinners as a result of imprisonment or injury of their husbands.

The reasons for the rise in married women's labour market participation are evidently manifold. Importantly, these shifts in the patterns of labour market participation require some deeper analysis because of the implications for responsibilities for combining paid and unpaid work, particularly for married women with caring responsibilities. In this regard the reliance on labour force surveys limits our analysis and the consultation of two time-use surveys and qualitative interviews can shed further light on these missing aspects of gender, social reproduction and paid work in Palestine. Before doing so a brief diversion into the organisation of social reproduction in Palestine is, however, warranted.

3 PROBLEMATIZING SOCIAL REPRODUCTION IN PALESTINE

Social reproduction has multiple meanings, including within the Marxist-Feminist literature (Fraser 2014; Bhattacharya 2017; Federici 2019; Mezzadri 2019; Munro 2019). Within these debates on social reproduction, consensus exists that this should encompass the production of goods and services (paid and unpaid) necessary for the daily, generational and biological reproduction of life. While traditional Marxist analysis has focused on solely on the production of goods and services, Marxist-Feminists working within a social reproduction framework argue that the production of goods and services cannot be extricated from the production of unpaid care and domestic work conducted within the home or provided via market and non-market actors (Elson 1998; Bhattacharya 2017). There is then a need to trace how the organisation of social reproduction has changed over time.

In the context of Palestine and the changing patterns of paid work discussed above, a full social reproduction analysis must address the relationship between such paid work and unpaid work (both domestic and care work). In order to undertake such an analysis the unpaid work itself must be further unpacked. On the one hand the main actors involved, at the level of the state, the private sector, civil society and within households and families must be delineated. On the other hand societal norms and traditions around social reproduction and responsibilities for different forms of unpaid work need to also be discussed, considering here the role of hegemonic or emergent masculinities (Inhorn 2012) in the context of conflict and violence. With these in mind, potential changes and challenges to social reproduction can then be analysed and the limits of social reproduction frameworks that centre on experience of the Global North highlighted.

This section provides a brief overview of the overall structure of social reproduction in Palestine, although the focus here is on social welfare in particular, and on policies and interventions that relate to child (for children under 5 years) and elder care. Other domestic work will be discussed with reference to family and household arrangements and social norms in the subsequent section, where time-use surveys can shed further light.

The so-called crisis of social reproduction or the care crisis are frequently referred to in relation to the Global North, with far less attention given to an analysis of the organisation of social reproduction (and changes to this) in low and middle-income countries (Fraser 2017, Razavi 2011). There are some important empirical exceptions such as the study by Kunz on Mexico (Kunz 2010) and Elias and Louth's study of migrant domestic workers in Malaysia (Elias and Louth 2016) but similar research on Palestine and the Middle East and North Africa more broadly remains scant.

Some have argued that the crisis of care and social reproduction in industrialised countries can be causally linked to increasing women's employment in paid work and demographic shifts resulting in an ageing population (Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2003). Feminist IPE scholars go one step further to argue that the roots of today's 'crisis of care' lie in capitalism's inherent social contradiction and its current financialized form (Steans and Tepe 2010; Fraser 2016; Fraser, 2017; Bhattacharya 2017; Himmelweit 2017).

In many countries in the Global South, particularly those of the Middle East and North Africa, where social norms and family structures remain traditional and conservative, and female labour force participation rates low, such a crisis of care may seem a distant concern. The assumption here is that the historic lack of state provisioning for care-related services is not an issue because societies rely instead on a patriarchal gender contract which "is realized within the family and codified by the state" (Moghadam 2003: 126-7). Using Fraser's (2017: 34) framing such an organisation of production and reproduction fits the "heteronormative male-breadwinner/female-homemaker model of the gendered family" that most industrialized countries conformed to until the 1970s.

As this article will, however, show Palestine has been experiencing its own crisis of social reproduction, driven in the first instance by the lack of supply for child and elder care services outside the household with very scant state provisioning and reduced donor funding in this area. In their place are poorly regulated (and very few) private providers and welfare support provided via religious organisations. The latter of which entrench existing societal norms and responsibilities surrounding social reproduction. The implications of this on family and household organisation of social reproduction and on societal norms will be discussed in the subsequent section.

Furthermore, relatively high fertility rates have combined with improvements in life expectancy, resulting in the highest dependency ratio in the region (World Bank 2017). Despite such high dependency ratios at the national level, the constitution of the family has been changing, with recent data reflected a shift towards nuclear families. In 2013 nuclear families constituted 82.1% of all families compared to 73.2% in 1997 (UN Women and

Institute of Women's Studies Birzeit University 2014: 60). These demographic changes have intensified the pressures on social reproduction and contributed to the care crisis.

From the perspective of theorising social reproduction it is evident that Fraser (2017)'s framing requires some extension and does not neatly map on to the current contexts in many countries in the Global South. While countries in the Global North are now facing a financialized capitalism with a "dualized organization of social reproduction, commodified for those who can pay for it and privatized for those who cannot" and where the dual-earner family has become the norm (Fraser 2017: 34), this is not the case across the Global South and certainly not in Palestine.

That is not to say that financialised capitalism and associated neoliberal economic policies have not impacted Palestine in general and Ramallah specifically – quite the opposite. Private debt and indebtedness have increased over time, particularly in urban centres such as Ramallah where families and individuals increasingly turn to bank credit and consumer loans (Harker 2014, 2019), and where such consumerism has taken over from national liberation as the measure of having a 'good life' (Harker 2014, Taraki 2008).

Given the historic reliance on familial management for unpaid domestic and care work in Palestine, the state's role in social reproduction has historically been minimal, especially when compared with countries in the Global North. The already limited state involved in welfare provisioning has, however, been further eroded by the adoption of policies that have stripped back the role of the state (Olmstead 2005; Karshenas and Moghadam 2009). As Adam Hanieh (2016) accounts, in recent years there has been a discursive shift towards notions of empowerment of the local and the individual that, in practice, do not break with earlier neoliberal economic policies. Instead "[t]his shift to localism sets the individual (or the community) in opposition to an inherently predatory state, making it easier to legitimate calls to disable state interventions in the market. Any increase of state spending for social programs, for example, can be portrayed as inefficient and as an affront to the freedom of markets and individuals" (p.34). Today, the delivery of such services is led by NGOs and civil society organisation rather than the state, frequently with support from Islamic organisations, under the guise of citizen empowerment. (Hanieh 2016).

Today, four main actors in social welfare provisioning in Palestine (apart from families) can be identified. First, the Ministry of Social Development (MSD) (partially funded by donors), second civil society and NGO-led support of which Zakat committees stand out as the most important, third international initiatives of which UNWRA plays the most significant role, and fourth private paid providers of care services of which very little is known.

Given the limited support for child and elder care, as well as broader social services, from donors and the Palestinian state, the role of market-based private care provision needs to be considered, particularly given the domestic and international support for its expansion (Ameta 2015). In industrialized countries the marketization of social reproduction has frequently been proposed as the solution to the crisis of care, with very mixed results (Himmelweit and Land 2008; Brennan, Cass et al. 2012). Information on private child or elder care providers in Palestine is very limited. The lack of formalisation, limited

registration and regulation of such private provision by official authorities makes reporting on this difficult.

We are left with a picture of very scant formalised private provision of child and elder care services, despite a growth in demand for such services, particularly in towns and cities such as Ramallah. Elder care is particularly scant across the West Bank and Gaza and where it is available the cost is prohibitive. (Esim 2002; Kiswani 2016; Samman, Presler-Marshall et al. 2016; State of Palestine 2017). With growing demand and lax regulation, concerns of the quality of care, particularly in relation to privately run nurseries and child-care service providers have naturally arisen (Kiswani 2016).

Evidence from interviews with childcare providers and families in Ramallah further support the claim of increased demand for private care services, highlighting the lack of affordable childcare as a particular concern for working families. The prohibitive cost means that the use of formal nurseries and residential care for older people is limited to wealthier families. Among these, demand for additional spaces and longer opening hours are frequently reported.

In contrast to the situation in its regional neighbours (Jureidini and Moukarbel 2004; Moukarbel 2009) the proportion of families relying on private domestic help, particularly via migrant workers is far smaller in Palestine, although accurate data on this is hard to obtain and there are suggestions that this is now on the rise, albeit from a relatively low base and limited to affluent families in towns and cities (Esim 2002; Madi 2017). Interviews with working women and carers for this study suggest limited reliance on informal paid carers and domestic workers outside of the extended family. The few women that did employ outside labour did so on an ad-hoc basis, for example, employing a cleaner once every two months. Such help was generally limited to domestic tasks and did not cover child or eldercare. Roughly a third of the women interviewed highlighted a preference for such domestic and care-giving help but for almost all of them financial constraints would not permit this.

Overall, the picture painted of social reproduction in Palestine is one in which very little public, private or civil society support is present. Naturally this picture needs to be completed with a clearer understanding of how paid and unpaid work is negotiated within the family. Traditionally, the stark gendered division in paid work has been matched by the opposing gendered division in unpaid work, or as Kuttub and Heilman (2017: 226) neatly surmise: “men make the money, and women clean up the mess”.

Such a gendered division of labour can be seen as a part of a wider, particularly Middle-Eastern gender hegemony, with particular ideal-types of roles and relationships assigned to men and women in society (Connell 1995). The particular shape this takes sees man’s role traditionally (by both men and women) as patriarch and bread-winner and a woman’s (particularly a young married woman’s) role as nurturing, docile housewife. The particular “hegemonic masculinity Middle-Eastern style”, as Marcia Inhorn (2012: 31) puts it sees family life as organised in a patrilineal and patrilocal fashion, so that men retain control through their family ties and women “buy into patriarchy” (Inhorn 2012: 31), with in-marrying women holding a particularly vulnerable position in the gender and extended

family hierarchy. This form of hegemonic masculinity is further entrenched through Islam and in the context of Palestine, through a particular form of nationalism and the occupation (Achilli 2015).

The above portrayal is perhaps rather a caricature of gender relations in Palestine (Inhorn 2012), and notions of masculinity and femininity and the associated performance of this (Butler 1990) are constantly in flux, impacted by changing socio-economic and political circumstances (Inhorn, 2012, Achilli 2015). This article will further explore some of the tensions between the traditional hegemonic masculinity Middle-Eastern style and socio-economic and political change resulting in shifts in gendered employment practices and associated social reproduction arrangements, considering if this results in changes in the perception and performance of gender and what the potential consequences of this might be. Can the crisis of social reproduction presented so far be extended further when we consider household-level and familial paid and unpaid work arrangements? It is to this that we now turn. We will subsequently, in section 5 then discuss the implications for gendered roles and the position of hegemonic masculinity Middle East-style more broadly.

4 SOCIAL REPRODUCTION WITHIN HOUSEHOLDS: TIME-USE SURVEYS AND INTERVIEW EVIDENCE

This section will begin by discussing the results from time-use surveys for Palestine to gain general insights into paid and unpaid work arrangements at the household level. A discussion of findings from qualitative interviews will follow this, separating findings in to the following: i) performance of care and domestic work; ii) the responsibility for such work; iii) the role of the state.

4.1 Time-use Survey Results: Highly Gendered Divisions of Labour

Two time-use surveys are consulted here. They rely on 24-hour activity reporting for 8,038 randomly selected individuals (4019 households) in 1999/2000 and 11,806 individuals (5903 households) in 2012/13 split between the West Bank (64 %) and Gaza (35 %) (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2001; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2014)^{iv}.

According to the survey results, women and men spend roughly equal amounts of time on work. For men, however, such work is predominantly paid while for women it is unpaid (domestic, community and care work). In 2012/13 women spent on average 276 minutes per day on unpaid work while their male counterparts spent just 44 minutes per day on unpaid work. In contrast men spend 203 minutes and women just 34 minutes per day on paid work in 2012/13 (see figure 3).

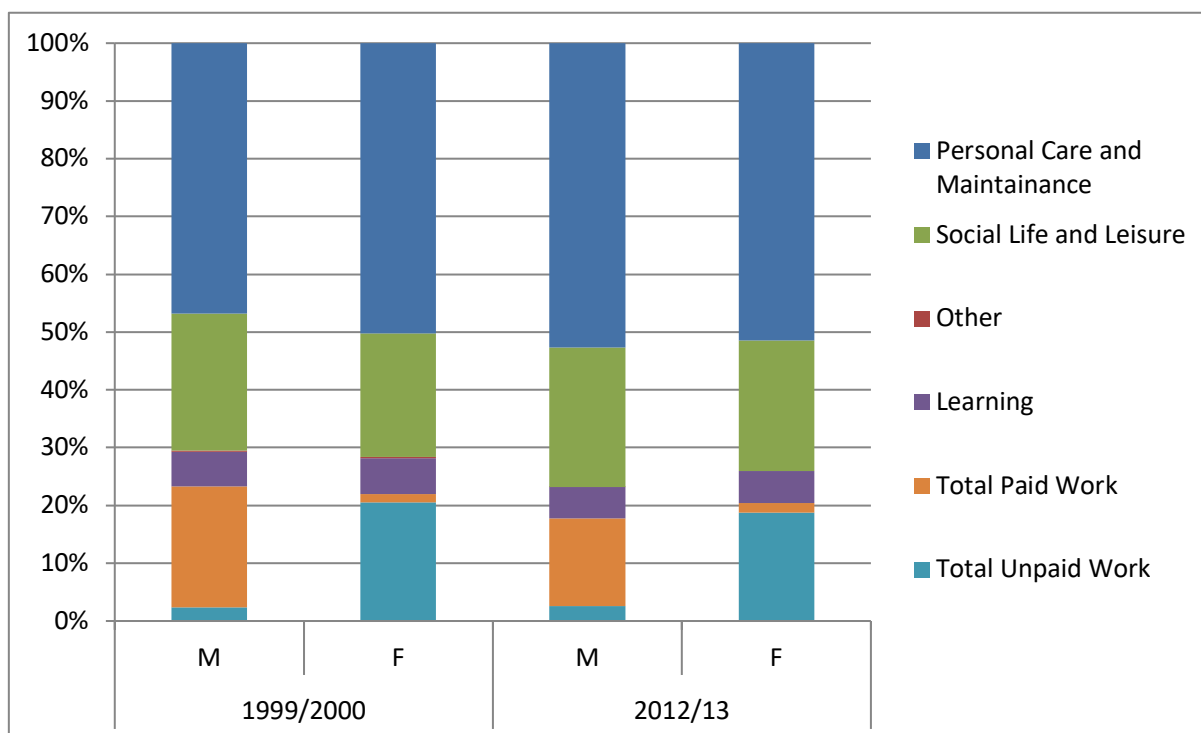


Figure 3: Time use for Men and Women in Palestine, 1999/2000 and 2012/13

Source: PCBS Time-use Surveys 1999/2000 and 2012/13, available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>

Breaking down the 2012/13 survey results for married and non-married women reveals the overall heavier work burden placed on married women in Palestine, with this sub-group spending the highest proportion of their time on the combination of paid and unpaid work (see figure 4). The category ‘ever married women’ spent on average 402 minutes per day on a combination of paid and unpaid work, compared with just 206 for the category ‘never married women’ and 247 minutes per day for men (married and unmarried). Part of this difference is explained by the category of ‘never married women’ spending more time in education eating both into their paid and unpaid work time. Overall, from the 2012/13 time-use surveys we can conclude that Palestinian married women are shouldering the burden of work to a greater degree than other groups in Palestine. This holds true across refugee and non-refugee status women and for those in urban and rural areas.

According to the time-use surveys, the gendered division of paid and unpaid work has remained largely unchanged between 1999/2000 and 2012/13, although men’s paid work has reduced significantly (from 307 minutes per day in 1999/2000 to 203 in 2012/13), due to the deterioration of the labour market over this timeframe (see discussion above). According to the time-use surveys the reduction in paid work has not been matched by an increase in unpaid work performed by men over this time. Such a heavily gendered division of labour is stark but is not dissimilar to other countries in the region for which time-use surveys exist (Charmes 2015). It is, however, important to note that such surveys provide an average picture for the country as a whole, and potential gaps in sampling mean further investigation is warranted.

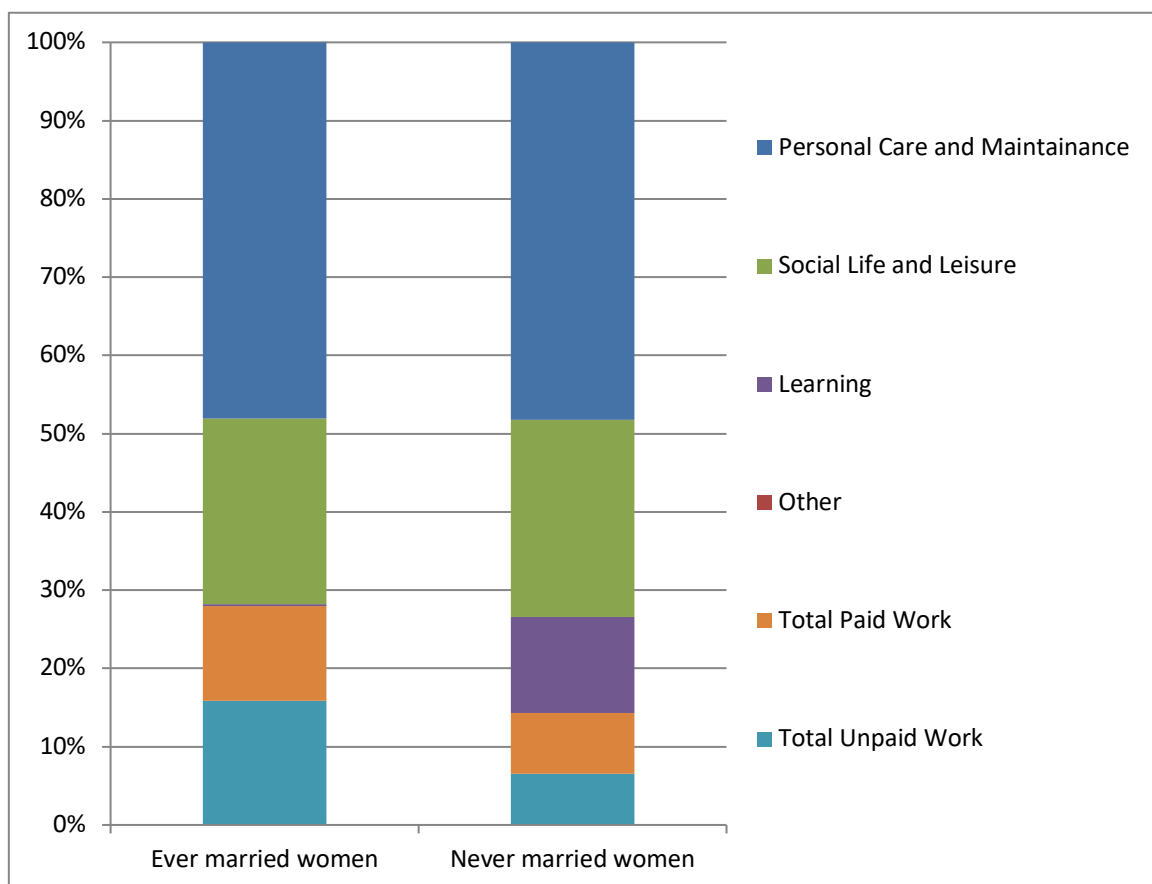


Figure 4: 2012/13 Time-use Survey 24 Hour Break-Downs for Ever Married versus Never Married Women

Source: PCBS Time-use Survey 2012/13, available at <http://www.pcbs.gov.ps>

Unfortunately, the time-use breakdown presented for married and unmarried women in figure 4 for 2012/13 is not available for the 1999/2000 survey, making it difficult to draw conclusions concerning how particular groups have been impacted over time. However, the general conclusions we can draw from the time-use survey analysis is that the gendered division of paid and unpaid work has remained largely unchanged over the period 1999/2000 and 2012/13 in Palestine. The time-use surveys confirm the declining paid work opportunities for men over time and the overall high burden of paid and unpaid work for married women.

4.2 Qualitative Interviews: Performance of Care and Domestic Work

Beyond the time-use survey results there is a need to further unpack the everyday practices around caring and domestic labour in Palestine, bringing in aspects of responsibility and performance that are not always captured by time-use surveys.

First-hand interviews were conducted by one of the authors of this study with women with caring responsibilities, child and elder-care providers (informal and formal) and women’s organisations on the issues of changes to paid and unpaid work over time. The interviews were conducted in Ramallah, the de facto capital of the West Bank, because the tensions surrounding paid and unpaid work are heightened among working women in Ramallah for a

number of reasons, permitting a deeper analysis. Women's labour market participation levels in Ramallah are relatively similar to the rest of the West Bank, having roughly doubled between 2000 and 2015 (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 2017). The process of family nuclearisation is more acute in Ramallah than in rural areas and smaller towns, where unpaid domestic and care work is often still organised within extended family arrangements. While women's work outside the home is socially more acceptable in a larger city such as Ramallah problems surrounding the provision and availability of child and elder care quickly became apparent through the interviews.

The interviews were conducted in Arabic in the interviewee's home, by one of the authors who closely matched (in terms of class, religious and professional background) the women being interviewed. The interview discussion was then transcribed and discussed further with the other authors of the study. Whilst inter-personal and uneven power dynamics in fieldwork interviews cannot be avoided, even when interviewer and interviewee are closely matched (by educational background, class and gender) (Hall 2004, Mellor et al 2014), given the nature of the questions and topics, it was important to make respondents feel as comfortable as possible about sharing their experiences. As such, ensuring the interviewer was a Palestinian woman, fluent in Arabic and with a strong cultural understanding of the setting, permitted the interviews to be as informative as possible.

Of the working women interviewed all were married, apart from one divorced woman. Two further women had husbands in Israeli prisons and were therefore primary breadwinners. The women were largely middle class, most had a Bachelor's degree at a minimum and worked in professional occupations. Only four of the 26 women worked part-time although more than half of those working full-time were seeking greater flexibility in their working hours or would have preferred to do less paid work. Only three of the working women were the sole breadwinners in their families with the remainder sharing this with their partners.

Interviews confirmed that women were primarily responsible for domestic and caring labour within the household, independent of their (or their partner's) paid work situation. As summarised by Fatima (age 41, married with six children), who works as a head nurse and whose husband works as a taxi driver "I am a mother and I have duties to take care of my children and do the house work, the fact that I have a job doesn't change my responsibilities in the household". Similarly, Manal (age 45, married with three children) who has a full-time job in HR, receives some help from her grown-up daughter, but is ultimately in charge of all domestic and caring labour for the household, despite working full-time.

Turning to the performance of care and domestic work, there was a distinction here between women's perceptions of responsibilities and who actually carried out such work. Most self-reported that they shared such work within the household and relatively few (only around a third) reported the employment of professionals or reliance on extended family help at any time). This is surprising given the high proportion of full-time work among those interviewed. For example, Suhaila (age 33, married with two children) works full-time as a teacher. They employ a professional cleaner once every two months to help clean their apartment.

Of the remaining two-thirds, fewer than five women reported performing all domestic and care duties on their own while the vast majority reported a sharing of duties between husband and wife, although the degree of such sharing was quite uneven. Of those that shared domestic and caring labour with their husbands, men were just as likely to conduct childcare as they were domestic duties, primarily shopping but in some cases also cooking and cleaning. As Hiba (age 29, married with one child and living with her mother-in-law), a sports nutritionist, who works part-time, explained: "After his mother moved in with us, he started helping me more around the house. I have so many responsibilities. And she is his mother after all – he has to help!"

This was supported by interviews with child and elder-care providers (both formal and informal) where the increased role of fathers in caring for their children was also noted.

The owner of a private nursery in Ramallah made the following remarks. "I have noticed that more men (fathers) are interacting with family duties. Fathers are more involved even in special activities we hold at the kindergarten. They come and give classes to the kids sometimes. Men are helping more. They pick up and drop their kids off. They help their wives in the morning preparing their kids for the nursery."

This view was echoed by other professional care providers and stakeholders when asked about major changes that have occurred over time. Consistently the response was one of men and fathers becoming more involved in domestic and caring tasks in Ramallah, particularly in light of increasingly nuclear families with little help from the extended family and the growing need for dual incomes.

The first major finding from consulting the qualitative data is therefore at odds with the time-use surveys that find a very stark gendered division of paid and unpaid work that has remained unchanged over time. Instead the amount of unpaid work done by men, particularly married men in dual-income households with children appears to have increased over time.

While there was a clear case of husbands and fathers increasing their involvement in domestic and caring duties, the *perception* among those women who shared such tasks was that their cases were an exception to the rule and their partners were unusual in this respect. As Hala (age 27, married with two children) and working full-time as a dental nurse states: "I thank God every day that my husband helps me around the house. Not all men are like him. I can see that from my friends' husbands."

The narrative of 'my husband helps more than other men; he is different' was deeply entrenched among the women that shared parts of their unpaid work. This mismatch between women's perception of their partners as exceptional on the one hand, and the repeated experience of men performing domestic and caring labour on the other hand, is not unusual, given the particular form of hegemonic masculinity seen in the Middle East (Inhorn 2012) where shame, honour, work and gender roles have historically intertwined to create a particular form of gendered expectations of roles (Peteet 2000). While women are comfortable with their husband's new partial role in the home, it is not clear that they would be as happy if their partners took on full-time domestic roles. There also appears to

be a delay between individual performances of gendered tasks and the broader societal acceptance of such shifts (Segal 2007). We return to this below.

4.3 Separating Performance and Responsibility for Care and Domestic Work

A near universal issue raised by the working women interviewed was the lack of balance in their home and paid working lives. The major constraint on their ability to make changes to their working patterns was seen to be financial. In other words while they may have wished to either work less outside the home or obtain additional help with their domestic and caring duties, financial constraints on the household made this impossible. Raja (age 30, three children) complained "I would rather work for fewer hours, because that would give me more time to spend with my children. I have to cook and teach my children and I don't have enough time to do my duties." This was echoed repeatedly by other interviewees.

Given this finding, it is worth exploring how they expressed their demands for change. Financial constraints were a clear factor across the board, resulting in women working more outside the home than they desired or preventing them from acquiring the help they needed at home. When asked about how such changes might look if financial constraints were lifted, women reported the need for domestic help (such as hourly paid cleaners that could come regularly), and better private provision of nurseries and care homes for elderly relatives. Tamara (age 34, two children) stated "If I could I would bring someone to help me with the housework, a woman who lives with us and does the domestic duties." Only one of the interviewed women explicitly stated that she wished her husband contributed more to the domestic and caring work at home.

Unlike narratives in industrialized countries surrounding 'sharing the caring' where the responsibility for such sharing is increasingly to come from greater equality between the sexes at home (Castro-García and Pazos-Moran 2016; Brandth and Kvande 2018), no such demands were placed by women on men in the Palestinian context. Instead the responsibility for care and domestic work remained firmly with the woman and it was therefore up to her to negotiate the tension between paid and unpaid work.

Such findings are similar to previous research on the MENA region where 'bargaining with patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988) takes on different forms and depends both on the type of employment and pre-existing gender relations. While economic necessity may mean there is little resistance to women participating in paid work outside the home, men's reluctance to take responsibility for domestic work and care work is well documented (Pearson 2000; Chant 2008; Kabeer 2008; Kabeer 2011; Kabeer, Mahmud et al. 2011; Salem, Cheong et al. 2018). Chant (2008) describes this process as one of feminine deference where women are perhaps less likely to voice their grievances surrounding their own double burden and instead attempt to conform to idealised norms of 'good wives' and 'dutiful daughters' "maybe to defuse the conflict which so often erupts when men feel threatened by women's 'encroachment' onto 'male terrain' such as paid work" (Chant 2008: 181). This will be discussed in greater depth in section 5 below.

In the case of Palestine it is clear that there is a need to separate the performance of unpaid domestic and caring tasks (where the qualitative interview findings suggest that men are doing more) and the perceived responsibility for such tasks (where the evidence suggests this has remained unchanged and firmly with the woman and mother).

The second major finding from the qualitative interviews is therefore that there is a gap between perceived ideas and norms concerning men and women's responsibilities and roles in paid and unpaid work, and the execution of such tasks. While men's involvement in domestic and caring duties is welcomed and has increased with time, it is not expected by their partners. Furthermore, women's participation in paid work does not appear to have altered responsibilities for such work. One might assume that these go hand-in-hand i.e. increased performance and responsibility go together. However, this is not supported by the qualitative data.

4.4 The Notable Absence of the State

When discussing the demands for change, it is striking that none of the women interviewed viewed the state or public sector as a major actor in the provision of care services, both child and elder care, in the past and today. In fact, despite financial constraints, the role of the state did not arise in conversations with either the women themselves, or with childcare providers (formal and informal). Entitlements in relation to state benefits or receipt of support from other means for purposes of child or elder care were also not raised by working women or childcare providers. Sara (aged 34, divorced with 2 children) summarised the situation succinctly: "I don't get help from anyone. If you want someone to look after your children you have to have the money to pay for it."

Such findings may be related to the characteristics of those interviewed, with the majority being middle-class and therefore less likely to have encountered NGO or state support services. Beyond discussions with working women themselves, only one interview with an academic researcher did broach the lack of government support stating that the lack of public provisioning of childcare is a growing concern.

Furthermore, while interviews across the board confirmed the increase in demand for child and elder care, as well as the prohibitive cost and patchy and unregulated quality of care, the role for the state in either bringing costs down or regulating private provisioning did not arise. As an NGO representative stated: "In the past, the extended family used to take care of the older family members and children but nowadays there are more nuclear families and most families send their children to the day care and nurseries, if they can afford it. But it is so expensive. The salaries of the working women are often not enough to cover the cost."

The third and final finding from the qualitative data therefore relates to the lack of demands placed on the state to correct for the limited availability and poor quality of existing formal child and elder care provisioning. *Responsibility* for care and domestic work is therefore both highly gendered (i.e. primarily the woman's to negotiate) and individualised (i.e. to be managed by individual women within their households rather than the responsibility of society or the state). Such a lack of expectations in relation to social provisioning placed on the public sector is indicative of how entrenched the individualised nature of care in

Palestine. Similar findings have been found by Kunz for Mexico, where she concludes that beyond a mere re-privatisation of social reproduction there has been an “increasing ‘responsibilization’ of citizens for welfare and development” in Mexico (Kunz 2010: 934).

Below the findings from the qualitative data are explored further in relation to their implications for whether or not prevailing gender norms are being challenged by women’s increased inclusion in the labour market. Once again Kunz’s findings in relation to rural Mexico highlight the tension between the “em-powering and disempowering effects of the social reproduction crisis” (Kunz 2010: 934)

5 CHALLENGING PREVAILING SOCIAL NORMS AND PROMOTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE CONTEXT OF OCCUPATION

This final section is devoted to a discussion of the broader implications of the above findings, specifically in relation to how changes to women’s and men’s paid and unpaid work time and responsibilities are challenging prevailing gender norms in Palestine. A fundamental question that arises from the findings discussed so far is to what degree the patriarchal gender contract is coming under attack from changing material realities? It is known from many other contexts that women’s economic participation, particularly in formal paid employment that is relatively ‘decent’, tends to have the greatest scope for increasing their voice and agency and for ultimately, over the longer term, challenging prevailing gender norms (Seguino 2007; Khosla 2009; Ansell, Tsoeu-Ntokoane et al. 2015).

Based on the information provided here it is not possible to draw firm conclusions on outcomes relating to gender norms, given these are notoriously slow and disinclined to change (Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2003; Spierings 2014; Segal 2007). However, a combination of other factors can be discussed when assessing the potential challenges to gender social norms in Palestine. These are worth exploring as they can help to explain some of the findings and implications of the qualitative research presented above. Two important issues stand out.

The first relates to concurrent decrease in male primary breadwinners and the increase in women’s economic participation in Palestine. This is supported by the evidence presented here and is a result both of a combination of economic decline and due to occupation-related violence and male imprisonment. At times this has led to a rise in female breadwinners, particularly in cases of prolonged incarceration of men in Israeli jails, but the context is one of political turmoil and economic decline, and as such impacts on gender relations and social norms must be seen within this context.

It is also known from other contexts of conflict and war that the impact of these on gender roles and women’s economic empowerment are not necessarily straight-forward (True 2010, Alsaba and Kapilashrami 2016). While, in general the ‘women as victims, men as perpetrators’ narrative is increasingly questioned (Arostegui 2013), a number of studies do show that with situations of conflict outside the home, the diminished economic power of men, can create a backlash within the home (Alsaba and Kapilashrami 2016; Hamber 2015).

Recent research on the consequences of such imprisonment and the return to family life in Palestine are summarised by Kuttab and Heilman (2017) as part of a broader multi-country effort to assess women and men's attitudes towards gender equality via the International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) (International Center for Research on Women and Instituto Promundo 2010).

“Several men... who had been imprisoned by the Israeli security forces for political reasons pointed to the extraordinary ability of women to carry a double or triple burden at home during the men's imprisonment.... This newfound respect contributed to some men carrying out commonly female household tasks, such as feeding, bathing or changing babies' diapers. In the cases of these 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.” (Kuttab and Heilman 2017: 198)

The psychological impacts of occupation-related violence on male family-members and fathers is analysed further by Kuttab and Heilman (2017). Victims of occupation-related violence are more likely to suffer from depressive symptoms and have been associated with greater likelihood to perpetrate physical or sexual intimate partner violence. More generally they find that many young men report difficulties in finding a job, and as such, they struggle to achieve the socially recognized sense of a man as financial provider (Barker and Pawlak 2011).

Discussions with NGOs and childcare providers in Ramallah provided diverse views on the impact of women's double burden and men's domestic involvement on gender relations within the home. On the one hand a women's organisation representative summarised “I believe that, yes, marriages are negatively affected, because of the amount of exhausting responsibilities that falls upon the women. It's only natural with this amount of tiredness for people to start acting and reacting in a negative way which will directly negatively affect the marriage relationship, as well as the mother's relationship with her kids. I actually believe this is one of the main reasons for divorce nowadays.” But on the other hand, a trade union representative stated that “I think that men's involvement in domestic duties is leading to better and healthier relationships, and that is reflected in the children and in the society”.

Further work is therefore required to untangle these opposing views and findings and to combine the information concerning *political* impacts on gender roles and masculinities (Kuttab and Heilman 2017) with an evaluation of the role of changing economic realities.

What can be deduced is that to understand the impacts of women's increased participation in paid work on gender equality and social norms, this needs to be set within the broader economic and political landscape, rather than in isolation. This is particularly acute in a context such as Palestine where women's economic participation has risen alongside men's diminished economic role, dampening the potential positive impact on broader gender equity goals and social norms. There are important lessons from this study for other research on processes of change that affect men and women differently and impact both production and social reproduction processes. Covid-19 and the gendered labour market consequences of the pandemic are yet to be understood. Where men and women's

productive and reproductive roles have been challenged it will be important to assess the broader consequences on gendered social norms and gender equity goals.

The second factor influencing changes to gender norms in Palestine relates to the absence of the state in welfare and social provisioning, both historically and today. Across the globe, but particularly in the Global South, gender equality through the market (via women's productive role) is increasingly celebrated (Ostry et al 2018), yet this has come at the cost of support and financing of social reproduction. The process, however, differs from Fraser's (2017: 35) description of the new organization of production and social reproduction in the Global North as one in which "emancipation joins with marketization to undermine social protection." This is largely because the process of marketization is not one that is *replacing* activities and institutions previously present, such as in the Global North. Instead, the lack of centralized or collective provisioning has left gaps to be filled in a largely ad-hoc way.

In Palestine, the increased involvement of NGOs and welfare organisations funded by Islamic organisations is important as it raises questions of whether or not particular gender stereotypes are further entrenched through their support. This assumes that religiously-funded NGOs or civil society organisations come with more conservative views of gender equality and the family than state-funded provisioning. In the context of Palestine this is not yet clear (Jawad 2013) and the interviews for this article did not broach the subject of Islamic welfare support in opposition to alternatives. However, one interview with a religiously-funded elderly care home provider did highlight gender-bias in terms of access to their services. "One of the rules of the centre is that if the elderly mother has a daughter we don't accept her in the centre because her daughter is capable of taking care of her. But if she only has a son we accept her in the centre." Elderly care home manager, Ramallah.

The fact that there are so few alternative formal care providers with negligible state-funded nurseries and elderly care homes, makes such a finding particularly significant. However, further research is required to understand whether such a finding can be generalised. Jad (2003; 2010) and Ababneh's (2014) recent works have examined the tensions between feminist, secular and Islamic movements and their goals in relation to female empowerment and gender equality in Palestine. These have highlighted the need to move away from a static view of Islam as having an entirely negative effect on women. The perception that "women's rights can only stem from a secular ideology and that religiously-inspired frameworks will invariably oppress women" (Ababneh 2014: 49) needs updating. Instead the tensions between Islam and feminisms need to be viewed through the lens of political factionalism and class politics in Palestine (Ababneh 2014).

Similarly rather than focusing on Islam as an oppressive force in isolation, Jad (2003) highlights how the process of NGO-isation itself, through the transformation of collective concerns to more individualised or project-specific interventions, has not been empowering for women. "It also denotes a shift in women's activism from voluntarism to dependence on foreign funding; a shift in the personnel dealing with women's empowerment from grassroots rural and refugee cadres to middle class urban elites of professionals." (Jad 2003: 12).

For the purposes of this study we can conclude the following in relation to gender roles in Palestine. Women's economic participation has increased over the last two decades, much of this increase being a result of economic (and to a lesser degree political) necessity and occurring concurrently with men's shrinking economic role. To understand the impact of women's economic participation on gender roles therefore needs to be situated within the overall economic and political context and particularly set against men's diminished economic roles. Furthermore, arguing that the rise of Islamic-funded welfare provisioning simply entrenching existing conservative values family values and gender norms is too simplistic. Instead these need much closer analysis in the Palestinian context, taking deeper political and class-based factions into account. Overall, the fact that social welfare provisioning outside the household is of inconsistent quality, has various conditions attached to it, and is poorly regulated, with very little centralised state support, has further entrenched individualised notions of responsibility for care provisioning in Palestine. Parallels to this development are to be found in the Turkish context, as outlined by Arslan in this issue.

6 CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study had three major objectives. The first was to uncover how men and women's paid and unpaid work has changed for particular sub-groups in occupied Palestine. The second was to then reveal, how, as a result of these changes, social reproduction, domestic and caring work and responsibilities have evolved. Finally, in relation to the broader implications of such findings for gender roles and norms, some observations and opportunities for future research were made.

The article has shown that women, particularly married women, are economically more active today than they were at the start of the millennium, with this largely being driven by economic necessity. Furthermore men have witnessed a decline in paid work opportunities and, middle class married men and fathers in an urban setting, are taking on more duties at home than in the past. These changes are largely driven by necessity than choice, and a context of economic decline and political repression, rather than economic growth and expansion of new paid work opportunities for women.

In this context, in combination with the lack of state support for social reproduction as well as a nuclearisation of the family, married women's work burden has increased overall. Furthermore, married women's perception of responsibility for social reproduction has become increasingly individualised with few demands placed on male partners or the state to step up. It is not possible to draw firm conclusions on the impact this is having on gender norms more broadly, but the twin challenges of economic decline and a fragmented piece-meal privately-funded welfare system do not bode well for longer-term gender equality goals in occupied Palestine.

It is important to finally say some words regarding how far these findings can be generalised beyond the urban setting of Ramallah in the West Bank and beyond the middle-class sample in this study. Patterns of paid and unpaid work are likely to look quite different in rural settings and among poorer, working class families. Poorer families and those in rural areas are likely to be more entrenched in the patriarchal gender bargain with a more distinct

gender division of labour (Chung and Das Gupta 2007; Boudet, Petesch et al. 2012; Evans 2019). Demographic shifts and the nuclearisation of the family are also more acute in urban settings in Palestine (UN Women and Institute of Women's Studies Birzeit University 2014; UNFPA 2017). As a result some of changes explored in this article are likely to be less extreme in rural areas and among poorer working class populations. It is precisely because the tensions surrounding paid and unpaid work, demographic change and employment, as well as gender roles are intensified in the Ramallah context and for this subset of middle-class families, that this case study was selected. However, its broader relevance should not be underestimated, especially given that evolving norms in towns and cities often filter down to other areas over time (Chung and Das Gupta 2007; Evans 2018). In this regard, the case study presented here, may indicate what might lie ahead for Palestinian society in general, if trajectories of demographic and economic change and processes of urbanisation continue on their current path.

The findings are also relevant for other contexts in the Global South, where social reproduction remains a largely private affair and where the state's involvement in welfare provisioning and social protection has historically been minimal. There are also lessons here for other conflict-affected settings, particularly where these have resulted in changing the gender balance between productive and socially reproductive labour and responsibilities. In these settings it is crucially important to analyse 'who does what?', 'who is responsible for what?' and 'who is demanding change and from whom?'. Finally, the case study highlights how Fraser's (2017) typologies require some adaptation to understand the interplay of production and social reproduction and the gendered outcomes of changing political economy circumstances in the Global South in general.

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Notes

ⁱ This analysis relies on secondary data from the Palestinian Labour Force Survey, for which disaggregated data is available for selected years, dating back to 1998 (Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics various).

ⁱⁱ Disaggregated data for the West Bank and Gaza by marital status is only available for the most recent years. Given this indicates very little difference in participation rates by marital status between Gaza and the West Bank, national level data is reported here.

ⁱⁱⁱ [The definition of paid work differs between Labour Force surveys \(used in figure 1\) and time-use surveys \(used in figure 2\). Labour Force surveys categorise those within the labour market as individuals in employment \(self-employed or salaried employees in the formal labour market\) as well as those seeking employment, classified as unemployed. Anyone not fitting these categories is counted as outside the labour force. In contrast time-use surveys categorise activities individuals have engaged in over a 24 hour period. Here paid work covers the following categories: formal sector work; informal work or](#)

[provision of household services for income. It excludes unpaid caregiving services to household members and unpaid domestic services for own final use within the household.](#)

^{iv} The non-sampling error in 2012/13 was relatively high at 22 % of which 12 % included households where nobody was present to complete the survey. This may indicate an under-sampling of households in which more than one adult is working outside the home. The results presented below should therefore be interpreted with these limitations in mind.

^v Names have been changed to protect the anonymity of those interviewed.