

REVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

2002



Institute of Women's Studies

Attitudes Towards Legal Reform of
Personal Status Law in Palestine
Rema Hammami

Preferences for Employment:
Contrasts Between Daughters and Daughters-in-Law
Lamis Abu Nableh

Between Agency and Necessity:
Palestinian Women Peddlers in the Bireh Market
Riham Barghouti

Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada
Penny Johnson and Eileen Kuttab

Who Lives in Jenin Refugee Camp?
Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Palestinian Women
Eileen Kuttab and Riham Barghouti

*In the Arabic section: Tulkarem factory workers
women and credit, gender and globalization,
and the Palestinian constitution*



BIRZEIT UNIVERSITY

REVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES

Vol.1 • No.1 **2002**



*An annual review of women's
and gender studies*

Institute of Women's Studies
Birzeit University

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Published in 2003 by the Institute of Women's Studies

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For more information:

<http://www.birzeit.edu/centers/wsi.html> or

<http://home.birzeit.edu/wsi>

Cover photo:

Birzeit University faculty member defends student
at Surda checkpoint.

Photo by Subhi Zebeideh for the Right to Education Committee,
Birzeit University.

Price:

20 Israeli shekels (local)

\$8 U.S. dollars (international)

ISBN 9950 - 322 - 00 - 6

Design: Palitra Graphic Design

Printed: Studio Alpha

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of the Arabic Section

The Review of Women's Studies (2002) presents a sample of the recent research and writing of faculty, researchers and graduate students at the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University. The year 2002 was a momentous and difficult one for students and faculty at Birzeit University and for the Palestinian population as a whole. Israel's re-occupation of Palestinian towns in March and April 2002, the intensification of the closure, curfew and siege of the Population population and territory, and the consequent human devastation are the extraordinary events that are the backdrop to the "ordinary" academic work of research, writing and publication. Indeed, some of the work published in the Review comes from scholars writing under curfew and in highly insecure conditions. All of the work was conducted while faculty and students faced a daily struggle to reach the University by the arduous walk through the Surda checkpoint dividing

INTRODUCTION

Ramallah and Birzeit. These sojourns were frequently interrupted by Israeli tanks and soldiers, who harass and sometimes detain Palestinians. Given the dramatic events of 2002, some might dismiss academic research as irrelevant. We hope the articles herein and the subjects they address testify to the contrary. In addition, the struggle to teach and conduct research is part of the determination of Palestinian society to survive, develop and live and work as ordinary human beings, even when under siege. As the poet Mahmoud Darwish wrote: "All we want is to be ordinary."

Some of this work has been published in academic journals or books, but may be inaccessible to interested readers in Palestine. Most works are excerpts from longer articles or documents; the editors' introductory notes to each article or document provide the context and source. Several outstanding seminar papers of graduate students in the Institute's Master's Program in Gender, Law and Development are also excerpted herein, two in

Arabic and one in English. Work is published in its original language and thus the Arabic and English sections contain different material. The Arabic section contains a special forum on the Palestinian draft constitution, exploring not only the text of the latest draft, but the context for constitutional initiatives.

This first issue of the Review concentrates on research conducted at the Institute of Women's Studies, but obviously does not represent the only interesting and serious work been undertaken in women's and gender studies in the Palestinian context. The Institute sees itself as part of a community of researchers and activists investigating critical issues facing Palestinian society. Indeed, exploring how the current political crisis, dynamics of repression and resistance and contemporary social and economic transformations are gendered and how these processes similarly or differentially affect Palestinian women, men and children, the "gender pact" in Palestinian society, and Palestinian national goals for independence and democracy, is a pressing intellectual and public task that requires collaboration among researchers. In this spirit, the editors solicited scholars from outside the Institute to contribute to the forum on the draft constitution. Much of the research published in this Review is collaborative in that it stems from collaborative research projects, research agendas and discussions at the Institute of Women's Studies and with colleagues in the larger community.

The Institute of Women's Studies was founded in 1994 with three overall goals: 1) to establish women's studies as an important and relevant academic discipline 2) to conduct sustained research and scholarship on gender relations in Palestinian society, including debating and discussing the results of such research in seminars, publications and workshops. The aim is to both strengthen such research in the academic community and link research results with community needs and policy formulation, and thus 3) to contribute to developing equitable, gender-aware and effective policies that address the complex social, economic, cultural and political issues confronting Palestinian women, as well as Palestinian society as a whole, in the on-going debate on how to build a democratic society of equal citizens. It is hoped that this first issue of the Review of Women's Studies will contribute to bringing relevant research in women's studies to the wider community, to a greater understanding of gender dynamics and issues in Palestinian society and how they interact with political, economic and social processes, and to stimulating debate and discussion on the many complex issues presented herein.

The Editors
Ramallah, June 2003



ARTICLES

*A longer version of this article is published as a chapter in **Islamic Family Law in Comparative Perspective**, edited by Lynn Welchman and published in autumn 2003 by Zed Press. It is part of a Palestine case study prepared by researchers at the Institute of Women's Studies for the Zed Press volume. Other chapters in the Palestine case study, also published in **Islamic Family Law**, include "Legal Context: Shari'a Courts and Muslim Family Law in the Transitional Period" (Lynn Welchman); 'Palestinian Interim Governance, State Legitimation, Legal Reform, and the Shari'a (Penny Johnson), "Agents for Reform: The Women's Movement, Social Politics and Family Law Reform" (Penny Johnson) and "Is a Women Half a Man?:"*

Attitudes Towards Legal Reform of Personal Status Law in Palestine

Rema Hammami

Diya and the Utilization of Principles of Shari'a in Public and Customary Legal Processes for Compensation for Deaths in a Factory Fire in Hebron," (Fadwa Labadi).

*This is an abbreviated version of Hammami's analysis in her chapter in **Islamic Family Law**. It omits a portion of the conceptual introduction, as well as omitting an extended and interesting analysis of 1990s polling data on women's rights in labor, political participation and marriage, and an analysis of women's use of shari'a courts from a spring 2000 survey. Other questions from that 2000 survey, designed by the Institute of Women's Studies and included in a survey conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center are analyzed below and the full version of Hammami's chapter can be found in **Islamic Family Law**.*

Inasmuch as state sponsored reform of Islamic family law can be understood as part of nation and state building projects (Kandiyoti 1991), mobilizations by social groups for legal reform are also eminently political. In the debates that have taken place over of reform of Islamic family law in the West Bank and Gaza since the mid-1990s, contending claims about the nature of Palestinian society -- or the nature of Palestinian identity -- clearly entered the political field. At the level of the public, powerful assertions were made by Islamist leaders about the Islamic nature of Palestinian society while counter-claims were put forth by secularist political factions about pluralism and democracy as core components of a collective identity that was pre-eminently nationalist (Hammami and Johnson 1999). As such, the debates broke open a long simmering conflict between a long legacy of secular nationalism and a newer resistance identity that was nationalist but based in narrower ethnic and religious terms.

Within the particular reform strategies posed by different groups, identity claims-making was also apparent but often less consciously articulated. Underlying the varying positions were competing claims about the social attitudes towards *shari`a* based on radically different assessments of the nature of Palestinian society.¹ Those representing Islamist visions tended to pose Palestinian society as unanimously committed to the current system of family law, and actually desiring the extension of *shari`a* into other areas of life. Within the women's movement there were two strands of argument. One attempted to pose secular national identity and universal human rights as prime values among Palestinians, and argued that these could be the basis for moving reform in the direction of civil law. Similar to the Islamists, the other strand within the women's movement (largely based in Gaza), posed the society as primarily religious, but importantly, claimed it is cognizant of injustices in the current system. Thus, widening women's rights within the current framework of *shari`a*-based family law was their proposed strategy. Ultimately, the various reform (or non-reform) strategies can be understood as political projects in which varying assumptions about the nature of the society become attempts at constructing an abstract 'social will' to which each party lays claim in an attempt to legitimize its particular vision.

This section attempts to critically assess these varying claims about Palestinian society's attitudes towards reform of family law by juxtaposing them with the analysis of various polling data produced on the population in the West Bank and Gaza since 1995. Due to the peculiarities of the 'peace process', Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza have since the early 1990s become one of the most polled populations, if not in the world, certainly in the Middle East.

Public opinion polling is scarce in the Middle East, where autocratic regimes tend to view the public, as such, as threatening. In contrast, the Palestinian context has seen little direct intervention by the political authorities to limit or censor polling activities

It is the nature of polling in the West Bank and Gaza [discussed further in the full version of this article- eds.] I will argue, which allows one to use its findings, if not at face value, at least as a window into stated values, common sense notions and dispositions of the various sectors of Palestinian society not yet self-conscious of themselves as a 'public'.

This chapter begins by assessing what various surveys suggest about the role of religion in social and political life in Palestine. This is followed by a review of attitudes towards the roles and rights of women in the society as expressed through various survey data. Finally, the findings of a poll on attitudes towards family law reform undertaken by the project team in Palestine in Spring 2000 and conducted by the Jerusalem Media and Communication Center will be reviewed.²

Attitudes Towards Religion

In 1992, in the first comprehensive household survey of the population in the West Bank and Gaza, approximately 65% of respondents were found to be religiously 'observant', another 15% were found to be 'religious activists' and approximately 20% were found to be 'secular' (Heiberg and Ovenson 1993, 260). These categorizations were based on how respondents scored in relation to a series of questions related to religious and political sentiments and actions. While 'measuring' religiosity through a standard survey format is at best highly proximate, the data did provide some indicators about the extent to which religious commitment and identification was a feature of Palestinian social and political life during that particular moment. By comparing these findings to subsequent surveys, the data shows the extent to which various aspects of religiosity are fluid and, to some extent, are influenced by social and political events and processes even within limited time periods. Additionally, as the categorization of the 1992 data above attempts to show, religious beliefs and actions do not simply or automatically translate into politics: in other words, to be observant does not necessarily translate into support for Islamist movements. While this distinction should be obvious, in studies on political Islam, there is often a tendency to conflate the two.

The 1992 survey found slightly higher religiosity in Gaza (78%) than in the West Bank (74%), although it found that religious activism was

higher in the latter area -- 19% in the West Bank versus 16% in Gaza (Heiberg and Ovenson 1993, 260). Three years later in 1995, The Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) attempted to measure some similar issues. Although they did not use the same questions, it is possible to make some overall comparisons. In 1995, CPRS found that 43% of the population unequivocally described themselves as religious; 47% of Gazans compared to 40% of West Bankers (Hammami 1997). Although the absence of the category 'activist' makes comparisons about activist Islam impossible, the overall percent claiming to be religious or 'somewhat' religious shows a decline from approximately 80% to 57% within a period of only three years.³ How can the drop be explained? The intervening three-year period between the two surveys saw dramatic changes in the everyday lives of Palestinians in the occupied territories. In 1992, the population was still experiencing the long, chaotic and debilitating breakdown of the first Palestinian *intifada* and the population was just coming out of the Gulf War. By 1995, a peace agreement had been signed between the PLO and Israel, and the populations of Gaza and Jericho were finally experiencing the first fruits of post-occupation normalcy with the Israeli occupation forces no longer a presence in their immediate communities. Clearly, while religious belief, itself, at the mass level is not so directly and immediately affected by political events and economic shocks, the weight given to religion within everyday life can be.

Role of Religion in Society versus Politics	West Bank	Gaza	Total
The need to promote God's word (strongly agree)	77%	85%	80%
Parting from religion (very important problem)	66%	78%	71%
Willing to sacrifice highest price for Islamic Umma (Always)	55%	60%	57%
Islam is the solution (Yes)	66%	66%	66%
I support political Islamic parties (applies)	37%	31%	35%
Role for religious men in politics (very important)	29%	34%	31%
Candidate's religiosity is (very important) election qualification	37%	41%	38%

Source: (Hammami 1997 based on 1995 CPRS Poll)

The 1995 survey also points to the fact that Islam as politics also needs to be differentiated, between abstract political values (an Islamic state) and concrete support for specific Islamist movements and ideologies. As the table below suggests, in 1995 religion as a positive social value and as an abstract normative political ideal garnered great support. In contrast, actual Palestinian politico-religious groups and their leaders did not.

There was much less political support for political religious leaders or political parties in the concrete with approximately only 34% of respondents claiming to support them. Ultimately, the complexity and contradiction inherent in religious dispositions is also reflected in the fact that only 43% of all respondents in the survey described themselves unequivocally as religious, but a full 80% of them put a high priority on the need to promote God's word. This suggests the power of religion as part of a community's moral identity, but whose ideals individuals often feel unable to fulfill in their everyday lives.

Religious Values and Secular Politics

The 1995 CPRS survey showed that while respondents might put a high priority on abstract religious values, these readily co-exist with a high concern for more mundane and practical issues. In the following table respondents were asked to rank their major priorities in Palestinian society. Although the need to raise God's word came number one, this was the only religious issue that ranked among the top ten:

Critical Social Problem	West Bank	Gaza	Total
The need to promote God's word	77%	85%	80%
Employment/standard of living	65%	75%	69%
Security and order	64%	69%	66%
Equality before the law	63%	73%	67%
Free higher education	61%	69%	64%
Qualifications	61%	67%	63%
Getting rid of wasta ⁴	57%	70%	61%

Source: Hammami 1996

As the table above shows, issues of social and economic well-being also ranked very high. Additionally, what stands out from this table is

the level of priority given to 'equality before the law' which here, given the context, seems topredominantly about general social equality and rule of law, rather than necessarily being about the equality of men and women before the law.

Clearly, 'religiosity' in a society cannot be taken at face value, but needs to be understood as part of a complex array of beliefs and dispositions which are embedded in concrete but changing social, political and economic circumstances.

Support for Women's Rights

The Palestinian context is unique in the Middle East as one in which women's activism has a long history which is both publicly recognized and perceived as socially legitimate up to the present. This is clearly a product of the intertwined histories of women's activism and national resistance; national crisis and resistance demanded new roles for men and women, and the national movement created frameworks in which these new roles could be articulated. In social and political life, one can see the translation of this in the almost symmetrical ratios of male and female at all levels of the education system, as well as in the range of public political positions held by women, and in, for instance, the strong turn-out for female candidates in the 1994 legislative assembly elections.⁵ But attitudes towards women's rights vary according to the specific rights being addressed. In general, poll findings suggest that there are two main pendulums: on the one hand support is higher when rights are abstract rather than concrete; on the other, support is higher for women's rights in the public and narrows in the realm of marriage and the family. Thus, the 1995 CPRS poll showed that more than 90% of men and women surveyed agreed that 'the relation between men and women should be based on equality in rights and responsibilities'. In the same poll more than 80% of men and women asserted that 'women's oppression is an important issue'. However, high support for women's rights does not necessarily translate into support for concrete changes in gender relations in all spheres of life.

In specific, various polls tend to show that there is high support for women's political rights and a similar level of support for women's economic rights, but far less support for changes in property relations between men and women or in the re-distribution of power within the family or marriage. Support for an array of women's rights to political representation and to hold public office is very high - on average more than 70% among men and 80% among women.

Attitudes Towards *Shari`a* Law

Despite the very public debate that emerged over reform of *shari`a* law since the mid-1990s, surprisingly, few surveys have been undertaken on the issue. Prior to the Institute of Women's Studies survey in spring 2000, commissioned by the research team for the purpose of this case study, the sole other such survey assessed only women's attitudes and showed that 85% of women wanted personal status law to be based on *shari`a*.⁶ The same respondents who overwhelmingly supported *shari`a*, simultaneously claimed that the current laws did not ensure equality between men and women (66%) and assessed the current legal systems as negative (79%). Bourdieu's notions of 'doxa' (what goes without saying) and orthodoxy (what cannot be said) are useful in explaining this apparent contradiction (Bourdieu 1979, 168-169). Doxa stands for aspects of tradition and culture which are so internalized that they exist as unquestionable common sense beliefs and dispositions. Clearly, for many *shari`a* is a doxa -- in this case assumed to be an unquestionable good that even the everyday negative experiences of the law and courts cannot undermine. In contrast, orthodoxy is when authority tries to re-impose the 'truth' of a doxa that has been brought into question.

In terms of attitudes, doxa, in particular, represents an obstacle to uncovering more nuanced, complex and varied stances towards *shari`a* as a basis of family law. Thus one way of circumventing this 'naturalized' nature of support for *shari`a* is to pose questions which actually move closer to the level of concrete need and practice and do not directly invoke the concept itself. Based on this understanding, the research team in Palestine undertook a survey in May 2000 designed in ways that may reflect more of the contradictory attitudes towards Islamic family law in order to find openings for change. The survey was a means to probe more deeply into the contradictions between abstract loyalties and commitments and the concrete problems and needs of men and women as they confront the law.

The *Shari`a* Family Law Survey

Methodology

The survey was undertaken on March 23 and 24th, 2000. A stratified random sample of 1200 people over the age of 18 was interviewed face-to-face throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. 54% were female and 47% male with 58% residing in the West Bank, 36% in Gaza and 6% in East Jerusalem. A strong majority (65%) were married, with

29% single, 4% widowed and only 1% divorced. Residents of towns constituted 44% of those surveyed, with villagers at 39% and residents of refugee camps at 16%.

Marital Age and Freedom to Choose a Spouse

Various surveys in the past have attempted to assess attitudes towards freedom to choose a marriage partner. In the past, however, it was generally assumed that this was an issue that was relevant only to young women. Although the CPRS survey in 1995 found a high level of support for women's right to choose their spouse -- above 90% for both sexes -- the ambiguity of the question probably accounts for the outcome. The right to choose may simply mean for many people the right of women to refuse someone imposed on them by their parents. This interpretation is supported by the fact that in the FAFO study less than ten percent of men and women thought that choice of spouse should be the daughter's choice alone, while the majority asserted that a decision should be made collectively with the young woman's parents. On the other hand, the lack of freedom to choose a marriage partner is clearly not solely a problem for women. A recent survey by PCBS (1999) found that while 43% of women said they did not choose their spouse by themselves, a lower but significant percentage (28%) of men also claimed they did not choose their spouse by themselves.

The 2000 survey tried to indirectly invoke the contradiction between the minimum legal marriage age and the decision-making power in the marriage process. In specific, did respondents feel that a person might be mature enough to get married but simultaneously not mature enough to decide on whom they married?

Are Women under 17 Years of Age and Men under 18 Years Mature Enough to Choose their Spouse? (Yes's Only)

	West Bank		Gaza		Jerusalem		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes Women Under 17	12%	8%	10%	6%	12%	7%	11%	7%
Yes Men Under 18	13%	11%	19%	15%	21%	6%	15%	12%

Clearly, the findings show the dominant trend in which choice of a marriage partner continues to be seen as an issue in which parents should be involved. When asked whether women under 17 years of age and men under 18 years were mature enough to choose their spouse the survey found the following responses: 11% of men and only 7% of women felt that women under 17 could be considered mature enough to choose their own spouse, and 15% of men and 12% of women felt that men under 18 years could be considered mature enough to choose their own spouse. As such, the overwhelming stance is that neither men nor women are considered at these ages capable of making their own decisions regarding a marriage partner.

Congruent with this was the overwhelming support expressed by respondents for a minimum age of capacity for marriage of 18 for both sexes (86% of males support this compared to 90% of females), as shown by the following responses:

Should the age of marriage be raised for both males and females to 18?

	West Bank		Gaza		Jerusalem		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	85%	89%	87%	88%	79%	97%	86%	90%
No	15%	11%	13%	12%	21%	3%	14%	10%

Divorce

Earlier surveys have consistently found an overwhelmingly negative stance towards women's right to divorce. On closer scrutiny, however, it is not clear whether the findings are about women's rights to do so or represent a larger taboo towards divorce as such. The 2000 survey attempted to clarify the difference by asking under what specific circumstances women should have the right to request a divorce. Posed in this way, only 4% of men and women came out against women's right to divorce under any circumstances.

Acceptable Reason for divorce	Women	Men	Total % who answered "Yes"
Husband is a collaborator	69.1	69.2	69.1
Husband is mentally ill	63.3	68.7	66.0
Husband physically abuses wife	57.8	52	54.7
Husband has abandoned family	58.8	50.7	53.1
Husband has a sexual disease	41.5	43.6	42.3
Husband physically abuses children	35.4	31.6	33.2
Husband marries a second wife	23.7	15.6	19.7
Women should not be allowed to divorce in any circumstances	4.0	4.5	4.2

Significantly, in the Palestinian context, a 'nationalist' justification, husbands being a 'political collaborator' came out as the number one acceptable reason, supported by 69% of respondents. Second was the husband's mental illness (66%) and thirdly spousal physical abuse (55%). Although only a minimal number of respondents (20%) cited polygyny as a legitimate reason, it is significant that there is even this amount of support for divorce on grounds not recognised as such by prevailing personal status law. Overall there was a consistent 5% gender gap between men and women on all of the possible responses, with the latter slightly more responsive to women's need to divorce under the varying circumstances posed in the questions. However, in the case of polygyny there was the most dramatic gap between men and women's responses with 24% of women and only 16% of men citing this as a justifiable cause for women to divorce.

Reform of Personal Status Law

In 1995 the CPRS survey found strong support for reform of existing law as long as it remained within the framework of *shari`a*. In that survey, 61% of males and 57% of females supported the statement that 'the existing Islamic laws (those that relate to social aspects) require re-interpretation in order to become more appropriate to contemporary life.' Between 1995 and 2000 there has been a growth in support for this position with 84% of males and 88% of females responding positively to the statement that 'family law should respond to changes and new needs in Palestinian society.' This suggests that the campaign undertaken post-1995 through the Model Parliament, discussed in the following section had an important impact, not only by opening a public debate about the issue, but also in raising awareness about the need for reform.

Do you think Family Law should respond to changes and new needs in Palestinian society?

	West Bank		Gaza		Jerusalem		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	81%	90%	88%	86%	89%	84%	84%	88%
No	19%	10%	12%	14%	11%	16%	16%	12%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

The 2000 survey was also able to assess what the preferred nature of reform should be: 41% of males and 62% of females supported

change that gave women more rights within family law than presently existed. This represents a significant gender gap of 20% with a greater number of women desiring change that would provide them greater rights.

Do you favour more, fewer or the same level of rights given to women in the family law currently existing in your place of residence?

	West Bank		Gaza		Jerusalem		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
More	46%	67%	35%	57%	24%	55%	41%	62%
Less	6%	2%	11%	5%	6%	2%	8%	3%
Same	48%	31%	54%	38%	71%	43%	52%	35%
Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Significantly, most of those who do not agree with expanding women's rights are not for further limiting them in the law, but are in favour of the status quo. 52% of men and 35% of women feel that the existent level of rights allowed to women should stay the same -- and only 8% of men and 3% of women feel they should be more limited. Finally, it is clear that men hold much more contradictory stances towards the price of reform; the gap between the 52% of men who want the status quo and the 84% of men who earlier claimed to support reform (albeit indirectly) suggests that while supporting the abstract principle, the translation of this in ways that may potentially affect their practical interests is more problematic.

However, if reform is posed as moving in the direction of civil law, once again, the doxa of *shari`a* comes to the fore. Thus when asked in the current survey if they would support the right of individuals to marry under civil law if this did not affect the right of others to marry under *shari`a*, only 26% of males and 21% of females agreed. While this is a significant one quarter of males and one fifth of females surveyed, the overall impression from the responses is the profound commitment to *shari`a* as the basis for family law by both -- but especially by women.

Reactions to Egyptian Divorce Reform: The Case of *Khul`*

In terms of specifying proposed areas of change in the existing law, the survey asked respondents about their reactions to the recent law on divorce enacted in Egypt:

Recently a law was passed in Egypt enabling women to ask for a divorce if they waive their financial rights. Would you like to see a similar law enacted in Palestine?

	West Bank		Gaza		Jerusalem		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Yes	34%	41%	25%	30%	50%	48%	32%	37%
No	66%	59%	75%	70%	50%	52%	68%	63%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The question was not dependent on respondents' actual knowledge of the Egyptian reform, but asked whether they saw a law enabling women to divorce through waiving their financial rights as a positive innovation they would support in Palestine. Only one third of respondents supported enactment of such a law, although a slightly higher percent of women (37%) than men (32%) did. Lowest support for such a law was among Gazan males, while highest support was among Jerusalem females followed by West Bank females. The survey went on to ask why respondents supported or opposed the enactment of such a law:

Why do you support or oppose a law enabling women to ask for a divorce if they waive their financial rights?

Whole Sample	Females	Males
Positive support for women's divorce rights		
Support because allows women to divorce	27%	33%
Oppose because women should not lose property	44%	28%
Total	71%	61%
Negative Support for Women's Divorce Rights		
Support because divorced women should lose property	5%	4%
Oppose because women should not divorce	24%	35%
Total	29%	39%

When one looks at the various positions above, clearly the majority of men and women are responsive to the right of women to divorce, but they differ about the terms and importance of women's property in such circumstances. In particular, we can divide the respondents into those who, regardless of their stance towards the proposed reform, positively support women's right or ability to divorce versus those who regardless of their stand towards the *Khul`* law are negative towards women's rights or ability to divorce. Seventy-one percent of women

support women's rights to divorce as such, but the majority of them (44%) think that women should not lose their property rights in order to do so. Among males, a lesser 61% support women's right to divorce as such, but only 28% of those oppose women losing their property rights in order to do so.

In responding to this question, the majority of men and women reiterate their support for women's right to divorce. However, in comparison to the earlier question regarding under which specific circumstances women should be allowed the right to divorce, there is a dramatic drop in support. Once again, it is also clear from the above responses that women are more supportive of their right to divorce than are men, with an approximate ten percent gender gap.

Who Should Reform the Law?

One aspect of the political conflict that emerged in the Model Parliament campaign was over who had the right to propose reform of existing personal status laws, and who had the right to actually reform it, as discussed elsewhere in this case study. The 2000 survey sought to find out who respondents thought was the legitimate body to decide on reform. The most support was expressed for the statement that 'the society should vote' at 33%. This was followed by *shari`a* court judges only at 26%; the Palestinian Legislative Council at 17%; and the President at 12%. As such, secular state institutions and democratic vote account for 59% of the responses. If presidential decree is added to this, the result is that 72% of respondents put the decision of reform of personal status law in the hands of secular authorities rather than the *shar`i* establishment. Throughout the myriad public opinion polls, Palestinians have consistently shown a strong identification with democratic institutions and forms of governance. The above assertion that the 'people should decide' suggests the degree to which democratic and inclusive decision-making is an orthodoxy within Palestinian society -- one powerful enough to be invoked when addressing the doxa or orthodoxy of '*shari`a*'. It also attests to the degree to which personal status law is viewed as simultaneously of religion and about it, but is also seen as needing to function in relation to society, the state and political institutions. Such dispositions represent an opportunity for the development of a unified Palestinian personal status law through a process which is based on public debate and inclusion rather than one in which the law is marked off as an area for religious specialists with no accountability to members of the society whose lives it will frame.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the tentative picture we can draw from various survey data is that while there is a strong emotional commitment for *shari'a* to remain the framework for personal status law in Palestine, there is a lot of room for negotiating change within this. More specifically, there is a popular legitimacy for an extension of women's rights in family law, although there is clear male resistance in some areas, the most notable being the issue of property claims either in divorce or inheritance.

However, the specific principles of reform, while tending towards expanding women's entitlements, are also marked by a host of conflicting values and interests. For instance, commitments to social equality and justice (framed in the nationalist sentiment of equality and rights) co-exist with strong impulses towards preservation of the family and masculine authority within it. Similarly, contradictory attitudes exist towards the issue of legal authority. On the one hand, support is professed for the expansion of religious authority into wider arenas of life, which coexists with the preference that 'the people' vote to decide on what the letter of religious law should be. The point here is that these contradictory values do not represent discrete contending social groups, but are multiple and contradictory stances within the same individuals and ultimately the population as a whole. As such, a successful legal reform strategy cannot base itself on only one underlying principle, such as equality, without addressing the other multiple and countervailing values with which it coexists.

Notes

¹ For an extended discussion of the different positions see Hammami and Johnson (1999) and Othman (1998).

² Due to lack of space, it is only possible to make a few general comments about the problems of polling data used in the following discussion. I have used the data very conservatively - this means both in assessing the sampling and in taking a critical eye to the ways in which questions were posed. I have omitted questions that were too leading. In addition, analysis of the data has been limited to dis-aggregating by sex and region (West Bank versus Gaza). These two variables, commonly the most significant when assessing differential social attitudes in Palestine, also allow for staying at a greater level of sample size.

³ Given the consistency of the socio-economic indicators between the CPRS and the FAFO surveys, the difference cannot be attributed to sampling error.

⁴ *Wasta* is the popular referent for patronage. In action it means securing a position or accessing a privilege through personal connections.

⁵ Voter exit polls showed that while a large percentage of men and women had voted for female candidates, the regional and first-past-the post electoral system was unfairly stacked against them.

⁶ This was a survey undertaken by JMCC on behalf of the Palestinian Working Women's Society (PWWS) in March 1999.

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*Abu Nahleh's analysis of the preferences Palestinian parents express for employment for their daughters and daughters-in-law is a chapter from **Inside Palestinian Households**, edited by Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson and published in 2002 by the Institute of Women's Studies in cooperation with the Institute for Community and Public Health. The publication presents the initial findings from a 1999 community-based household survey undertaken by the Institute of 2254 Palestinian households in nineteen communities in the West Bank and Gaza. Other issues explored in **Inside Palestinian Households** include demographic and labor force participation of the survey population and heads of households, housing arrangements and conditions, and patterns of giving and assistance*

Employment: Contrasts Between Daughters and Daughters-in-Law

Lamis Abu Nahleh

(Rita Giacaman, Penny Johnson); migrants (Rita Giacaman) parental preferences for male and female children in education, marriage and expectations in old age and perceptions of the cost and benefit of children (Lamis Abu Nahleh, Penny Johnson, Rita Giacaman); and the burden of care and divisions of labor in the household and among household and family members (Rema Hammami, Jamil Hilal).

In the chapter re-published here, Abu Nahleh finds a contrast in both mothers and fathers' attitude towards paid employment for their daughters and daughters-in-law, with both parents more favorable towards the employment of daughters. Attitudes towards female employment, then, are

*conditioned by family position and the chapter goes on to explore other variables that influence parental attitudes. The Institute of Women's Studies launched its investigation into Palestinian families and households with the hypothesis that many unanswered questions about gender relations needed to be explored through understanding household and family dynamics, where men and women, the elderly and the young, struggle to cope with many of the overarching dynamics of Palestinian political and social life, such as the dynamics of military occupation and resistance. Institute researchers are currently at work on a volume of essays, **Palestine At Home**, edited by Lisa Taraki and scheduled for publication in 2004, further exploring these issues. The Institute has also joined with researchers in Egypt and Lebanon in a comparative project on Arab families, the Arab Families Working Group.*

In the IWS 1999 household survey, parents showed a generally positive attitude towards paid employment for both their daughters and daughters-in-law, but were significantly more positive about their daughter's employment. A similar pattern was observed for educational preferences, where we found that only 24% were content with an educational level of *tawjihi* or less for their daughters, while 38% chose this level for daughters-in-law. Thus, our findings strongly indicate that attitudes towards female education and employment are not undifferentiated but influenced by position within the family. In addition to the strong difference in parental attitudes towards daughters and daughters-in-law, fathers were generally more conservative than mothers in attitudes towards both daughters and daughters-in-law's employment.

Parents show a positive attitude towards employment for both daughters and daughters-in-law, but a third (32%) say an unqualified no to daughter's work and a greater 41% to daughters-in-law.

To examine attitudes of parents towards the future of their daughter or son, the respondents were asked about whether they would prefer their daughter and their daughter-in-law to work (Table 1), and under

what conditions. Almost a third (32%) gave an unqualified no to their daughter's employment, while a larger 41% were unqualifiedly negative about work for their daughter-in-law. While 26% of respondents approved of their daughter's employment both before and after marriage, a lesser 20% preferred this choice for daughters-in-law. For those whose approval of employment was conditional on circumstances, marriage, children or financial need were less important than the approval of the husband or the personal decision of the woman that was the decisive factor. Only 1% conditioned work for daughters or daughters-in-law on not having children, while 13% for daughters and 9% for daughters-in-law thought the husband's approval was the important factor, and 15% for daughters and 17% for daughters-in-law affirmed her right to decide.

A generally positive attitude towards women's work, at least among women, is found in FAFO's 1993 living condition survey found 77% of women answering "yes" to the question "Is it acceptable for women to work outside the home?" (Hammami in Heiberg and Ovensen, 306). However, in the FAFO survey, men were substantially more conservative, with only half of men aged 30-39 and 44% of men aged 40-49 approving of women's work outside the home (Heiberg in Heiberg and Ovensen, 254).

TABLE 1
PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER AND DAUGHTER-IN-LAW TO WORK
(FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE)

Work Preferences for Daughters and Daughters-In-Law	Daughter		Daughter-in-Law	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
No	455	32	604	41
Yes				
Before and after marriage	380	26	302	20
She decides	218	15	249	17
Under Certain Conditions				
Before marriage, and after it is up to husband	185	13	135	9
Before she has children	9	1	11	1
It depends on their financial situation	86	6	148	10
Only before marriage	97	7	23	2
Other or don't know	8	1	8	1
Total	1,438	101%	1,480	101%

This present survey finds somewhat more positive male attitudes and is able to differentiate parental approval according to family position and circumstances. Both, of course, raise the important question of why this preference is not translated into greater actual female labor force participation, even under present labor market restraints. Female formal labor participation remains low, especially in Gaza, despite some rise in local employment in the post-Oslo period. While the systemic constraints of gendered and restricted labor markets are acute (Hammami 1997), other family dynamics may also contribute to the gap between preference and practice.

Interpreting the gap between preferences for son's spouse and daughters

This relatively large gap between preferences for daughters and son's wives is subject to various interpretations. Considerations of the son's status may come into play and parents may feel that their son should be responsible for his wife and that it would be shameful to expect her to contribute to the family earnings. On the other hand, priority consideration for the domestic labor expected from a son's spouse may also contribute to reluctance for the daughter-in-law to engage in outside paid work: Who will take over domestic responsibilities from the mother? Who will eventually care for the elderly and the sick and disabled? That is, working daughters-in-law may be seen as contradictory with her defined role once married and incorporated into the new household, while working daughters may be seen as empowering, given the relationship between income and decision-making abilities in her new household and family setting. Preferences for a lower educational status for son's spouses might also suggest an element of control, as the son's wife and family may well be an integral part of the parents' household, family and future. On the other hand, parents may have felt freer to decide for their daughter and felt that there was nothing wrong if their daughter helped her husband and her family financially. The inequity in perception and the bias against daughters-in-law in education and work is an interesting question for further research.

Another interesting difference between parents' choices for the daughter and the daughter-in-law is one regarding their work before marriage. Although numbers are small, we find that 8% of the respondents preferred that their daughter work only before marriage in contrast to a low 2% who made the same choice for their daughters-in-law. If we factor in the response "yes, before marriage and after that it is up to the husband and the in-law," the figures would yield 21% of the respondents in favor of the daughter's work before marriage while

only 11% were in favor of the daughter-in-law's. Here, parents may want their own daughter to work as long as she is unmarried as they may be in need of her income, while they would not decide for the daughter-in-law before her marriage since that would be up to her and her family, in addition to possible concerns over the son's status after marriage. As the daughter leaves her parents' house, her responsibility would be turned over to her husband and his family. While 13% of parents gave the husband of the daughter the responsibility to make the decision for her work after marriage, only 9% of them gave it to their son to make the decision for his wife's work. If preserving the son's status enters into parents' preferences, his own decision-making power seems relatively unimportant. This is interesting given that the husband's legal power to prevent his wife from working is a contested tenet of prevailing *shari'a*-based family law. These initial remarks, however, are based on very small numbers, and suggest that this may well be an important issue for further investigation, as opposed to being interpreted as major findings.

Financial situation not given as major reason for employment; overall attitude towards women's work and family position seems dominant.

The financial situation of the son's or the daughter's spouse was chosen as a determinant by only 6% for daughter's employment and 10% for daughters-in-law. The relatively unimportant role of finances (at least as articulated by parents) is confirmed by our findings below on the insignificance of wealth status. Children also do not seem to play an important role in determining preferences for women's work, although it may be the case that respondents are both thinking of school-age children and assuming jobs that do not conflict with childcare responsibilities. However, taken together with the relatively low percent of respondents who prefer work only before marriage, it seems that preferences towards women's work stem from an overall positive or negative attitude or interest, rather than perceptions of at what stage in marriage and childbearing such work might be appropriate.

Position in the family is a clear influence, as shown when we recode our "yes" and conditional yes variables and find a strong significance, with 68% of respondents approving their daughter's employment and only 59% their daughters-in-law ($\chi^2=386.643$, $p<.00005$). As Hammami noted in the FAFO living conditions survey, types of occupation may also be significant, with a much higher percentage of women in that survey approving professional work for women than work in business (Hammami in Heiberg 1993, 307).

Male respondents (fathers / fathers-in-law) are more conservative than female respondents (mothers/mothers-in-law) in their attitudes toward work for both the daughter and the daughter-in-law.

As shown in Table 2, 74% of female respondents contrasted with 62% of male were for their daughter's work, and 38% of the males contrasted with 26% of females were totally against work for their daughters ($\chi^2=14.259$, $p<.00005$). Although both male and female respondents were more conservative in their attitude towards their daughter-in-law's work than towards their daughter's work, male respondents were even more conservative than female respondents with 46% of fathers and 36% of mothers against work for their daughters-in-law. That is, only 54% of fathers contrasted to 64% of mothers approved of daughter's working ($\chi^2=22.638$, $p<.00005$).

TABLE 2

PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTERS / DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW TO WORK
BY SEX OF RESPONDENT (PERCENTAGE)

Work prefer daughters / daughters-in-law	Daughter			Daughter-in-law		
	Fathers	Mothers	Total	Fathers	Mothers	Total
No	38	26	32	46	36	41
Yes	62	74	68	54	64	58
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	99%
N=	670	760	1,430	715	757	1,472

Daughter ($\chi^2=22.638$, $p\geq.00005$) Daughter-in-law ($\chi^2=14.259$, $p\geq.00005$)

Age and education rather than employment status is a determinant factor: A majority of illiterate parents are against work; the most educated are in favor of work for both the daughter and the daughter-in-law. Generational factors significant; younger parents are less resistance to paid work for future daughters-in-law.

Choices for both the daughter and the daughter-in-law show that the least educated are the more conservative, although again choices for the daughter's work were less conservative than for the work of the daughter-in-law, with a gap larger than 10%. As shown in Table 3A and Table 3B, a little over half of the illiterate respondents (52%) were against work for their son's wife contrasted with 41% of the same group that were against their daughter's work. On the other hand, 63% of the respondents with secondary education and almost 70% with post-secondary education were in favor of the daughter-in-law's work.

Those who were in favor of the daughter's work and had the same level of education formed about 75% and 77% respectively. Respondents with elementary and preparatory education who were in favor of the daughter's work formed 63% and 69% compared to less than 60% of both who approved of work for their son's wife.

TABLE 3 (A)

PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTERS TO WORK

BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT (PERCENTAGE)

(NONE OF THE OTHER TABLES BREAK DOWN FIGURES INTO TENTHS)

Work Preferences for Daughters	Respondent's Education					
	Illiterate	Elem	Prep	Secondary	Post-Sec	Total
No	41.2	36.9	31.9	23.1	11.9	31.8
Yes	58.8	63.1	68.1	74.5	76.9	68.2
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	97.6%	98.8%	100.0%
N=	216	331	386	275	221	1,429

(x²=25.554, p≤ .00005)

TABLE 3 (B)

PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW TO WORK

BY EDUCATIONAL STATUS OF RESPONDENT (PERCENTAGE)

Work Preferences for Daughters-in-law	Respondent's Education					
	Illiterate	Elem	Prep	Secondary	Post-Sec	Total
No	52	41	43	38	30	41
Yes	48	59	57	64	70	59
Total	100%	100%	100%	102%	100%	100%
N=	237	333	397	266	238	1,471

(x²=25.892, p≤ .00005)

When controlled for age, the relationship between education and higher preferences for daughter's and daughters-in-law's work was eroded, meaning that an over-riding importance here is age, as a cultural attitudinal variable. The relationship between attitude towards work of the daughter and education remained significant for those in the age bracket 35-44 only. For the daughter-in-law, we find a similar pattern. The relationship between education and willingness for the son's wife

to work outside the home disappears except for the age groups 25-34 and 35-44, where the relationship remains quite strong. These age groups, however, are quite important as this group will be influencing choices over the next two decades. Thus, age is an ultimate determinant, but the influence of education on the important younger age groups is stronger in the case of the daughter-in-law (where there has been stronger cultural or social resistance to employment) than in the case of the daughter. Our data thus suggests generational or period cultural or social factors conditioning and ameliorating attitudes towards women's work outside the home, with younger parents more likely to favor paid work, particularly for their son's wives. Education is a linked factor, where there is a consistent declining pattern of resistance to female employment with increasing education, although, when controlled for age, not statistically significant in all age groups.

For respondents in the labor force, mostly male, their employment status had no significance in their choices for their daughters' work and some significance only in the case of the daughter-in-law (Table 4). About 53% of those who were employers or self-employed were totally against their daughter-in-law working compared to 45% of those working in the private sector, and 38% of those who were employees in the public sector, UNRWA and NGOs. Controlling for education, the relationship disappeared, leading to the tentative conclusion that the lesser resistance from public sector employees related to their educational status (and perhaps to their hopes for similar respectable forms of employment for daughters and daughter-in-law) and that the generational and educational factors noted above are probably mediators of attitudes towards women's work in our communities. More detailed analysis of occupational status by class is needed here to further understand how parental labor influences choice.

TABLE.4
PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW TO WORK
BY EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF RESPONDENT (PERCENTAGE)

Respondent's Preferences for Daughters-in-Law	Employment Status			
	Self-employed or Employer	Gov't, UNRWA, NGO Employee	Private Sector	Total
No	53	38	45	46
Yes	47	62	55	55
Total N=	100%	100%	100%	101%
N=	210	162	303	675

($\chi^2=8.715$, $p=.013$)

Returnees show greater preference for paid employment for daughter, but no differences between returnees and non-returnees in attitudes towards employment of daughter-in-law.

While refugee status did not seem to be of influence here, returnee status was found to be important with 19% of returnees categorically against their daughter's work compared to a high of 32% among non-returnees ($\chi^2=4.560$, $p=.033$), yet both returnees and non-returnees responded in similar ways to daughter-in-law's work. These results, however, are probably the influence of the higher educational level of returnees, but the data at hand was too small for adequate controls.

Neither household type (nuclear or extended) nor wealth yield any significant differences and did not appear to be a determinant factor.

Some regional differences, with Gazan and northern households generally more conservative, south and Jerusalem less conservative

That wealth status does not seem to determine the household choices regarding the work of the daughter or the daughter-in-law is also indicated by regional patterns. Although the northern region and Gaza are classified as areas with high poverty rates, respondents from these regions showed the most conservative attitudes among all five regions towards female work. Jerusalem is the least conservative of all in attitudes towards daughters-in-law working, while the southern West Bank again is surprising in being the least conservative in relation to daughter's employment. This is partly due to the high proportion of respondents supporting freedom of decision, as was found earlier in the section on marriage partners, but also may be partially due to the nature of the economy, where about half of house-heads were found previously to be employers or self-employed. This means that the possibilities of acceptance for women's absorption in the traditional petty commodity production economy of household economic production may in fact be compatible with cultural and social practices and not the result of exposure to the outside world.

Regarding the daughter's work, Table 5 shows regions in the following order from the most conservative to the least conservative: Gaza 35%, northern 32% and central West Bank 31%, Jerusalem 27% and the southern West Bank 26%. For daughters-in-law the ranking showed this order: northern West Bank 45%, Gaza 44%, central 41% and southern West Bank 34% and Jerusalem 28%.

TABLE 5 (A)
PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER TO WORK
BY PERCENTAGE OF REGION

Work Preference For Daughter	Region					
	Northern WB	Central WB	Southern WB	Gaza	Jerusalem	Overall Total
No	32	31	26	35	27	32
Yes	66	69	74	65	73	68
Total	98%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	332	139	320	584	56	1,431

($\chi^2=9.984$, $p=.041$)

TABLE 5 (B)
PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW TO WORK
BY REGION

Work Preference For Daughter-In-Law	Region					
	Northern WB	Central WB	Southern WB	Gaza	Jerusalem	Overall Total
No	45	41	34	44	28	41
Yes	55	59	66	56	72	59
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	349	128	336	596	64	1,473

($\chi^2=16.728$, $p=.002$)

As noted in Table 5, the positive attitude of respondents from the southern West Bank is striking, particularly given that this region generally has lower female labor force participation than other regions in the West Bank. Yet, it may be that respondents were not responding to the issue of labor force participation in the general economy but rather within the family-based economies relevant to Hebron. Considering the difficulties women have in entering the labor market due to lack of job opportunities and to requirements for female entry to the labor market, such as a high level of education (Hammami 1997), what respondents may be expressing is an aspiration rather than an actuality. Verbal support for female employment does not necessarily turn into a reality.

Southern and Jerusalem respondents opt for greater freedom of choice for both daughters and daughters-in-law, but more so for the latter

In a related point, southern West Bank respondents are distinguished by their high preference (at 28%) for freedom of choice for the daughter in the decision to work as is their high preference for freedom of choice in choosing a spouse. Whether this "freedom" is related to a higher confidence that daughters will make choices that conform to parental expectations is again at question.

When the positive response "yes" to the work of the daughter or daughter-in-law was broken down into two values-"She decides" and all other forms of "Yes"-we find that the southern region, Jerusalem, and Gaza have the highest rates of households who thought that work should be the choice of the daughter or the daughter-in-law herself (Table 6A and Table 6B). In most regions, the differences between freedom of decision for daughters and daughters-in-law is not substantial, but both Hebron (at 28% for daughters and 35% for daughters-in-law) and Jerusalem respondents gave even higher freedom of choice to daughters-in-law than daughters, although the numbers are small in the case of Jerusalem.

TABLE 6 (A)
WORK PREFERENCES FOR DAUGHTER WITH A "SHE DECIDES" OPTION
BY REGION (PERCENTAGE)

Work Preference	Region					
For Daughter	Northern WB	Central WB	Southern WB	Gaza	Jerusalem	Overall Total
No	33	31	26	35	27	32
Yes	58	62	47	50	66	53
She decides	9	7	28	14	7	15
Total	100%	100%	101%	99%	100%	100%
N=	332	139	320	584	56	1,431

($\chi^2=65.111$, $p \leq .00005$)

TABLE 6 (B)
 WORK PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW WITH A "SHE DECIDES" OPTION
 BY REGION (PERCENTAGE)

Work Preference For Daughter-In-Law	Region					
	Northern WB	Central WB	Southern WB	Gaza	Jerusalem	Overall Total
No	45	41	34	44	28	41
Yes	44	49	32	44	55	42
She decides	11	9	35	12	17	17
Total	100%	99%	101%	100%	100%	100%
N=	349	128	336	596	64	1,473

($\chi^2=103.678$, $p \leq .00005$)

Giving more freedom to the son's wife than the daughter among southern West Bank households may be partly due to certainty that, in the final analysis, the decision would be their son's rather than his wife. It is also possible that this attitude is a reflection of their feeling that they are not to interfere in their son's or his wife's life. On the other hand, both southern households and Gazan households showed favoritism for female freedom of choice when again the structure of the labor market and the scarcity of job opportunities available for females do not allow females to make that free choice. They give the daughter or the daughter-in-law the responsibility to decide, yet at the same time, they surely know that her chances are slim and that she would not be able to exercise the right entrusted in her.

Urban households most conservative, rural households less conservative, particularly for the daughter-in-law

Although the rural-camp-urban divide is not quite as significant as region, the data still reveal significant differences in the respondents' choices when checked by place of residence. As is the case with region, the data showed somewhat more choices for the daughter than for the daughter-in-law (Table 7A, Table 7B, Table 7C)

For both the daughter and the daughter in-law, urban households were the most conservative with respect to female work, disapproving of work respectively at 35% for daughters and 44% for daughters-in-law. In contrast, rural households showed the least conservatism with only 25% opposing daughter's employment and a little over 34% opposing daughters-in-law working. The rates for camp households

TABLE 7 (A)
WORK PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER
BY TYPE OF LOCALITY (PERCENTAGE)

Work Preferences for Daughter	Type of Locality			
	City	Camp	Village	Overall Total
No	35	28	25	32
Yes	65	72	75	68
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	857	232	342	1,431

($\chi^2=14.141$, $p=.001$)

TABLE 7 (B)
WORK PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER WITH "SHE DECIDES"
BY TYPE OF LOCALITY (PERCENTAGE)

Work Preferences for Daughter	Type of Locality			
	City	Camp	Village	Overall Total
No	35	28	25	32
Yes	51	56	55	53
She decides	13	16	20	15
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	857	232	342	1,431

($\chi^2=17.311$, $p=.002$)

TABLE 7 (C)
WORK PREFERENCE FOR DAUGHTER-IN-LAW
BY TYPE OF LOCALITY

Work Preferences for Daughter	Type of Locality			
	City	Camp	Village	Overall Total
No	44	41	34	41
Yes	56	59	66	59
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%
N=	915	211	347	1,473

($\chi^2=9.026$, $p=.011$)

were 28% and 41% respectively-the biggest gap between attitudes to daughters and daughters-in-law in this regard. The rates of households who chose "she decides" for daughters were 13% for urban households, 16% for camp, and 20% for rural households-mirroring the greater preference of choice that rural respondents also showed in the choice of spouses.

Parents who prefer five children or more for daughter are more opposed to her employment

Women's work outside the home is linked to ideal family size: when the desired family size is smaller, opposition to work outside the home decreases. For daughters, parental opposition to working seemed to correspond with the preferred number of children. Only 29% of those who thought their daughters should have four children or less opposed her employment after marriage compared to a high of 43% who preferred five or more children. ($\chi^2=24.988$, $p<.00005$).

The same pattern is observed for the daughter-in-law, with about 37% of those preferring four children or less opposing her employment after marriage compared to a high of 50% of those who thought the daughter-in-law should have five or more children ($\chi^2=14.308$, $p=.001$).

These results can be read several ways in terms of perceptions of women's roles in reproduction and production. While preferences for larger numbers of children restrict women to a greater degree to a primary role in reproduction, it is also true that a strong majority favor daughter's employment even at high levels of child-bearing and a simple majority (at exactly half) their daughter-in-laws. Again, the gap between preferences and practices does suggest the assertion of the care giving and non-remunerated role in actual family practices when contradictions arise between reproduction and production that come in the way of the construction of women as citizens active in public life.

Expectations in old age condition attitudes towards daughter's employment

What is even more interesting is the finding that attitudes towards paid work for daughters also correspond to expectations of family members of their daughters in old age. We find that 45% of those who oppose their daughter's work after marriage have a primary expectation of physical assistance in old age as opposed to a lower 39% among those who favor their daughter's employment. Slightly more (49%) of those objecting to daughters working after marriage expect emotional

support in old age compared to 53% among those who do not object to working.

Only 6% of those who oppose their daughter's working have a primary expectation of financial assistance from their daughter as opposed to a greater 9% who favor their daughter's work ($\chi^2=5.618$, $p=.058$). Although these results are of borderline significance, they are consistent with the other findings: when approving daughter's work, expectations of financial assistance increases and physical assistance decreases. Combining these results with visions of ideal family size, we find that a consistent picture emerges. Women's primary role may be seen in reproduction and care giving, but when the desired family size is low, work outside the home is entertained with a corresponding decline in expectations of physical help in old age. There is, however, a rise in expectations of financial assistance from daughters.

Palestinian women in transition: a triple burden?

The image of the Palestinian woman in transition includes a strong and continued role in biological reproduction and care giving. Work outside the home is emerging as a possibility, if expressed mainly in future preferences by parents rather than present practices. For working women, there is a growing expectation, although still low compared to sons, of a role in providing financial security for parents in their old age. Given the data presented in the next section pertaining to household chores being predominantly completed by women, this transition may place working women under a triple burden-children, home, and parental care. While this transition has many potentially positive elements in increasing women's decision-making power and her roles as citizen and participant in public life, it remains true that the price to be paid by women in the transitional state may in fact be quite heavy, necessitating a serious examination of the ways in which a more equitable distribution of labor inside the household may be achieved, especially in relation to raising issues and awareness through curricula and the schooling of the new generations.

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Riham Barghouti's investigation of women peddlers in the Bireh vegetable market (Al Hisba) was conducted for seminar paper in program the Institute of Women's Studies master's in Gender, Law and Development. We have excerpted introductory sections, and feature her profile of three types of women peddlers, as well as her analysis of women's rationales for peddling. Barghouti's interest in agency - against the backdrop of clear economic necessity - speaks to a central debate in feminist and social theory. By careful attention to the voices of women peddlers, she captures both their own choices and decision-making (agency) and the economic and social forces (structure) that shape their universe of action.

Between Agency and Necessity: Palestinian Women Peddlers in *Al Hisba*

Riham Barghouti

The complete paper also contains a detailed literature review, with an interesting analysis of the gap between international and local conceptual approaches to female peddling and poor women's informal labor in general. Barghouti also offers a useful review of the decline of agriculture in Palestinian economies and a wealth of detail on the operation of Al Hisba itself. We include her complete bibliography here for interested researchers. Most of the books and articles cited, as well as Barghouti's paper can be found in the library of the Institute of Women's Studies.

Introduction

"The life of a female peasant is not as pretty and easy as many may think. It is harsh from the beginning of the planting until the selling of the produce and in the end the market does not provide them with their rights... The women of the market sit and sell all day long... How do they spend their days in this tiresome way." (Al Ayam Supplement, Yakeen 2001).

When I first began to research the topic of women peasants working in Al Hisba, my first impression was similar to the one presented in the article quoted above. I saw a plethora of poor, unrecognized, overworked, struggling women who reflected the poorest of the poor and are forced in the public market sphere to ensure their survival. When I discussed the topic with anyone else, academics or otherwise, the first response was: these poor women. As I began to learn more about these women that choose an 'untraditional' form of work, I began to appreciate the extent to which these women had made a life choice to not accept the abject poverty that their circumstances would surely have placed them in. With few skills, little or no education, limited opportunities and difficult economic and social circumstances, the women were able to find a means to assist their families to survive. These mostly rural peasant women were able, through their work in *Al Hisba*, to provide for their household and at the same time develop an identity as independent workers who are decision makers and who have created a small but significant sphere for themselves in what has essentially become an urban-male market.

This study attempts to look at how women negotiate the existing gender and class relations within Al Hisba to enable them to make a living as peasants, peddlers and petty merchants. Al Hisba is the common name of the Fruit and Vegetable Market in Al Bireh. It is located within the center of the city of Al Bireh and is administered by the Municipality. The Hisba houses mostly male wholesale and retail fruit and vegetable merchants and serves consumers of the city of Al Bireh and the neighboring city of Ramallah as well as inhabitants of the 70 villages and towns that surround the two cities. While having historically been established as a peasant farmers' market, currently peasant peddlers and petty merchants play only a small role in the overall economic activities of the Hisba. Nevertheless, these peasants, and specifically female peasants' work within the Hisba, plays an important role in supporting local farmers, agricultural production, while at the same enabling their families to survive.

While the study agrees with numerous studies which argue that harsh financial circumstance is the predominant catalyst for women's entry into peddling activities (and other informal sector economic activities), the study attempts to identify other factors which affect women's continued presence in Al Hisba. Towards this end, the study attempts to problematize the existing perception of peasant women peddlers as solely victims of harsh economic conditions and lack of alternatives by looking at women's agency. It attempts to reflect how women's own views on work in general, and their work in Al Hisba in particular, as well as their resistance to familial and social restrictions impact on their decision to remain in Al Hisba. This is tied to, among other things, the important economic and social relations that women develop within their place of work, which reflect their acquired 'market smarts' and which are utilized to meet their need for economic and social support.

Economic development of Al Hisba

Over the years, Al Hisba has become a very economically viable entity. In the year 2000, revenues from the fees brought in 1,400,000 NIS [New Israeli Shekel] for the Municipality. The revenues mainly come from two types of fees, which the Municipality collects from merchants and petty merchants. Farming peasants who do not set up stands but sell their produce through the Municipality to a petty merchant or merchant, do not pay either of these fees. They do however pay 7% of the cost of the produce sold through the Municipality to a merchant or petty merchant.

However, alongside the economic development of Al Hisba, various problems have arisen in connection with the changing structure of Al Hisba. While its economic viability has meant that numerous individuals have been able to make a living by working in Al Hisba it has led to a proliferation of vendors vying for space, the number of which increase during time of economic recession.

The struggle over space

When the Palestinian Authority took over the administration of the Municipality of Al Bireh, it attempted to reorganize the marketing activities of peddlers in general and the Hisba in particular. The Municipality characterized the problems of Al Hisba as being overcrowded, dirty and causing too much congestion in the center of Al Bireh. In its attempt to regulate the activities of the vendors, the Municipality prohibited selling outside the Hisba. Further they

reorganized the stalls within Al Hisba so that they could provide adequate space for the largest number of vendors.

The vendors felt that they would lose out if they weren't in the main alley or on the street so there was also strong resistance from the vendors who wanted to remain in these spaces. It took a lot of effort on the part of the Authority and the Municipality to reorganize Al Hisba. For example, a lot of vendors that had stands on the second floor inside had transferred their stands to outside to compete. However, we prohibited them from doing this. [Munif Treish, City Engineer].

These measures however did not solve the major problem of overcrowding in Al Hisba or the problem of the excess garbage and traffic within and surrounding Al Hisba. These issues led to wide-ranging discussions, which are still ongoing, within the Municipality regarding the future vision for Al Hisba. According to Mr. Treish, there were two perspectives among the city planners. There were those who felt that the only solution was to transplant Al Hisba to the outskirts of the city and there were those who felt that the Hisba should remain in the middle of the city. [An expensive project to create an alternative vegetable market on the outskirts of town and its failure to date is described - Eds.]

Instead [of taking the open lot from Al Awqaf] when the PA came they decided that this was not a civilized site - having a fruit and vegetable market in the middle of Ramallah [Al Bireh] so they tried to move the outside vendors to the Samiramis new market... However, this was not practical because it was too far away. Women could not afford to take a taxi to travel there and buy their produce and then come back to Ramallah [Hassan, merchant in Al Hisba].

However, as explained by Mr. Treish, socio-economic changes in the area have presented other solutions to the problem of overcrowding in Al Hisba. Within the past 10 years there has been a proliferation of private fruit and vegetable retail markets opening on the outskirts of the city. These have provided consumers from the increasingly larger middle and upper classes with alternatives to the bustle of Al Hisba. Previously, no one was allowed to open markets that exclusively sold fruits and vegetables. However, when it became apparent that there

was an increasing demand for such stores, the rule was changed and as a result a number of stores opened.

The overcrowding of merchants in Al Hisba has been mainly at the expense of the peasant women and men peddlers and petty merchants who were relocated from the main entrance of the Hisba to one of the secondary entrances to provide more space for the male merchants in Al Hisba. Another issue, which further exacerbates the crowdedness of Al Hisba, and which was an unexpected outcome of the Hisba's establishment, is the influx of people during economically difficult times. Al Hisba tends to act as a sponge for the unemployed during times of political and economic unrest. As Al Hisba provides easy entry with practically no start up costs or complicated skills to acquire, many individuals who lose their previous forms of employment (especially day laborers in Israel) look towards peddling to obtain a source of income during difficult financial times.

With the development of Al Hisba, there has been a major increase in the number of wholesale vendors to the detriment of farming peasants and petty merchants. Currently perhaps only 10% of the vendors who sell in Al Hisba are farmers or peasants selling local farmers' produce. Most of the produce currently being sold within Al Hisba comes from areas other than the surrounding villages and include produce from Israel, the Jordan Valley and Nablus.

The Women's/Peasant Section:

Where are the farmers in the farmers' market?

Most of the women in the study sat or set up stands in an alleyway that branched off a lot connected to Al Hisba but belongs to Al Awqaf. This area was dubbed by different informants as either the women's section or the peasant's section. During the period of the study, this peasant/women's section was moved to another alleyway that was closer to the main entrance of the indoor Hisba. According to the Market Director, Mr. Tawfiq Darasa, the primary reason for the move was in the interest of the peasants themselves; the Ministry of Agriculture had requested the move to accommodate more peasant sellers during the grape season. A Ministry official explained that the peasants had submitted a petition about the size and location of their space. They requested substantially more space. One of the informants had commented about the petition stating that:

"This market is supposed to be for farmers who come to sell the produce that they grow. But now merchants have all the

space. It is not fair. They tried to do something outside the city but it didn't work because it was too far away. The peddlers in the market wrote a petition against Al Baldiya to the Ministry of Agriculture 5 months ago because of the situation and the bad treatment of Al Baladiya. Afterwards the situation got better" [Um Haithem, Dura Al Kari'].

All of the women in the study tended to sell similar types of produce, which centered around: a.) various types of herbs including mint, parsley, basil and *jarjeer* (similar to watercress), *maramiya* (a local herb), *za'ater* (thyme) and chamomile; b.) leafy vegetables such as spinach, *mlokheeya* and *kbbaisa* (both local leafy vegetables) c.) other vegetables such as *yaqteeni*, (a kind of pumpkin), squash, eggplant, *faqous* (similar to cucumbers), radishes, green beans and *lubia* (similar to green beans); and d.) grains such as *freika* (green wheat) and wheat. For the most part the produce sold by women was planted and harvested by local peasants or picked from the mountains. The fact that women sold only peasant produce was tied to their status as peasants and the particular location of their selling in the peasant's section. According to the Market Director, one condition placed on peasants selling within the market is that they sell only peasant produce. Of course this condition is not written anywhere but is enforced by the Municipality workers.

In effect this entails that the women peasants who sell produce in the market meet an otherwise unmet market demand, and provide one of the only means by which local farmers may market their produce, if they do not wish to remain in the market all day to sell it themselves. At the same time it provides the Municipality a method of keeping the original objective of establishing Al Hisba which was to support peasants and small farmers, by providing a space for them to sell the produce. To further support this process the Municipality provides credit for petty merchants. The extent to which and how women benefit from the credit provided by the Municipality depends greatly on what type of marketing activity they carry out.

Picker/peddler, farmer/peddler or petty merchant: differences in women's vending activities

It is important to differentiate between the types of women's selling activities in the market because it assists in constructing a more accurate profile of the women in Al Hisba and their economic activities in the market. Based on the differences in the ways women obtain and sell their produce, the study found there to be three types of female vendors

in Al Hisba. Women would generally obtain their produce in one of three ways: by picking herbs which grew wild in surrounding hills; by planting and harvesting domestic gardens or family farms; and/or by purchasing from peasants who did one of the above activities.

In terms of the ways in which women sold their produce, the study found that while some women sold the produce they picked or planted in the early morning hours to retailers, either peasants or merchants, other women sold by setting up a stall in the market which they generally held for the entire day and on a regular basis. In effect, the method of selling depended greatly on how women valued time and money, i.e. women who did not have the time sold wholesale for less, while women who wanted more profit, set up stalls for the day to ensure they would attain the highest price possible for their wares. For the purposes of the study, the women who sold their produce in the morning and did not set up a stall for the day are called peddlers, while those women who set up daily stalls are called petty merchants.

The picker/peddler

The first type of women vendor is the picker/peddler. This woman tends to be the worst off among the women vendors in the market. As she does not have the means to purchase produce, not even on credit, or the land to plant produce, she wakes up at the break of dawn and goes to the hills to pick wild herbs and bring them to the market to sell. The hills surrounding most villages in the central region are full of various vegetables and herbs that grow wild including *khbaisa*, *maramiya*, and *zaa'tar*.

The picker/peddler is not charged anything by the Municipality for selling her produce. As such, other than the input of her labor, which is not calculated in any of the cases, and transportation she has no overhead costs. This enables the picker/peddler to always make a profit on her sales. However, because this often is the cheapest produce available and there are sometimes many competitors, the prices of her produce is very low and the profit she makes is minimal.

At first I used to sell 'teen' (figs) that I used to buy on credit from my brother in law. However, that got to be too expensive ... because Al Baladiya charges if one sells fruits so now I sell khubaisa, which I pick myself. I wake up at around 5:00 to pick the khubaisa and then I come to the market. I try to sell it as quickly as possible so I don't have to spend a long time here [Khadija, Shukba].

The picker/peddler places her wares around her on a chosen spot on the floor usually at the edge of the open lot that is owned by Al Awqaf. She does not command a stand and is usually able to sell her wares during the morning hours, sometimes to customers and sometimes in bulk to other petty merchants. As she prefers to finish as quickly as possible and as she does not calculate her labor as cost, the picker/peddler is usually willing to accept selling her goods at lower prices rather than staying in the market until she is able to command a higher price. At the same time the picker/peddler doesn't come to the market on a daily basis. She comes when the family is going through a particularly difficult economic situation and she is in dire need for extra income. She cannot and does not depend on the market as a regular source of income and is dependent on the graces of nature to have something to sell when she needs to. Therefore, the intermittent presence of the picker peddler in Al Hisba entails that for her, the Hisba does not constitute a regular means of income. As such, out of the three types of female peddlers, the picker/peddler seems to have the least commitment to Al Hisba.

The farmer/peddler

The second type of female vendor in the Market is the Farmer/Peddler. While the farmer/peddler has more resources than the picker/peddler ensuring a somewhat better financial situation, the farmer/peddler has to work very hard in order to benefit from the sale of her produce. The fact that the farmer plants and harvests produce means that she has land on which to work. Usually, the farmer/peddler plants a limited plot of land, although she and/or her family may have a larger plot. However, due to lack of resources including workers, water and fertilizer she is only able to plant a portion of her land. The farmer/peddler usually farms for home consumption and for the market at the same time, ensuring that some of the family's nutritional needs are met while creating a source for income. The farmer/peddler, like the picker/peddler does not necessarily come on a daily basis to sell her produce. As planting and harvesting are seasonal, she comes to sell when a particular produce is in season. However, she tends to have stronger ties to Al Hisba as it is an integral part of her agricultural producing and marketing life. The farmer/peddler also does not set up a stand but rather places her wares around her on the floor or walks among the merchants and petty merchants to sell her produce. If she sits for a while she may be charged a minimum fee by the Municipality. If she sell her wares through the Municipality she will be charged 7% of the value of her produce.

They pester me everyday about paying the customs but a lot of people come and sell and they don't get taxed. Besides which they take too much. I sold for 200 NIS and that they took 15 NIS as customs [Na'eema, Beit Liqya].

To ensure a somewhat regular income, some farmer/peddler plant a variety of produce that is harvested at different times of the year.

I sell produce, which I plant in my own garden. It differs according to the season. Sometimes I have spinach, green onions, and eggplant to sell, other times I have askadinya, grape leaves and grapes [Um Haithem, Dura Al Kari].

When the farmer/peddler has a large piece of land, family labor and a source of water, she may have one or two 'cash' crops, which she sells during their season in quantities that are enough to provide for the family for the remainder of the year. At the same time, the farmer/peddler is always at risk of her crops being destroyed for whatever reason. Of course, the farmer/peddler has been the most adversely affected by the degrading status of the agricultural sector in Palestine, which includes the confiscation of land, limited water resources, influx of Israeli produce and the decreased amount of male peasant labor available to assist in farming.

We have one dunum of land on which we plants mint, ba'kly, spinach, squash, cucumbers and tomatoes. We used to have much more land but the Israelis took 25 dunums of land in 1967. They haven't planted it, nor built on it but they put a fence around it so that we can't get to the land. We still have the original papers. It used to be filled with grapes this land... We have a spring which enables us to plant more because we are not dependent on rain water like other peasants... [Um Fuad, Dura Al Kari].

Although, the farmer/peddler takes great pride in her produce, which after all is the fruit of her and her family's labor, she exerts exceptional physical labor in planting and harvesting her produce and usually with no or little support from male relatives. Although the major absence of the male peasant farmer is often linked to his taking on wage labor inside Israel, one informant explained that this was not necessarily always the case.

The men in Dur Al Kari' don't work the land. The women do. We must because after all land is honor. So we work the land and we come and we sell the produce. The men are lazy. They don't want to work [Um Fuad, Dura Al Kari'].

Aside from wage labor in Israel and Palestinian towns, the absence of male peasant farmers seems to be caused by numerous factors including their lack of interest in working the land, the growing perception that farming is women's work and the process of deskilling of the peasant class in agricultural production. Another issue tied to the decreasing presence of male farming peasants is the increasingly negative perception within the society of farming which has become socially frowned upon due to the fact that being comfortable has become the ideal.

In general, the value of work has gone down with happiness and good living being tied to lack of physical labor and physical comfort. In fact young men prefer to sit at home and not work, rather than work in the fields. Not working has become a good trait with manual labor being a symbol of decreased social status [Saker Nazal, Department of Agriculture].

As a result, many of the female farmer/peddlers tend to have full responsibility for planting, harvesting and selling the produce and therefore prefer not to spend their entire day at the market. As the farmer/peddler sees any money that she gets in the sale of her produce as profit, she usually prefers to sell her produce for a reduced price to merchants, petty merchants and or customers within the first few hours of the morning. However, as one petty merchant explains, time is not the only factor that comes into play in a farmer/peddler's decision to sell her produce wholesale rather than set up a stall.

Falaheen (Peasants) who come to sell their produce in the market to other vendors are probably ashamed or they don't want to sit all day and sell so they are willing to take a reduced price for selling their goods all at once [Um Basim, Kufr Nu'ma].

The feeling of being ashamed to sit and sell may explain why, while some farmer/peddlers will stay on until they sell their produce, others may leave if they don't find a buyer by a certain time taking their produce back to the village with them. During an interview with one of my

informants, Um Al Abed, another woman approached us. Um Al Abed asked her if she had found someone to buy the grape leaves that she was selling. She said no and that she probably wouldn't be able to sell them that day because it was getting late (it was 10:00 in the morning) and she needed to leave. When I asked her why she didn't sit and sell her produce she said she didn't know how. After some discussion she stated that she had small children at home, which she had to return to and in the end she finally said that only a woman with no male breadwinner would sit and sell in Al Hisba. The reluctance of many women to sit and sell in the market is understandable to everyone in the Market including the women who set up regular stands.

During certain times of the year and especially in spring when there is a plethora of agricultural activity, the farmer/peddler becomes a major actor in the Market. From the first month of spring, a line of local agricultural produce is harvested starting with the '*faqous*', green cherries and plums, red cherries and plums and raspberries, and then grape leaves followed by the grapes and watermelon. Further, during these months many male merchants begin to purchase from the farmer/peddler in addition to their other purchases made directly in villages and from other towns. This is partially tied to the very positive image in the eyes of consumers of the '*baladi*' produce that the farmer/peddler offers. Further, it is probably currently being further supported by the Ministry of Agriculture's decision to prohibit the sale of any Israeli produce for which there is a local alternative. These periods in which there is increase peasant production and marketing activities entail that a farmer/peddler may become a petty merchant for a specified part of year when their '*cash*' crop is in season.

Petty Merchants

The third type of woman peddler in the Market is the petty merchant. First of all, it is important to note that women petty merchants often obtain their produce from a mix of the three origins, meaning they sell produce which they have picked, planted and/or purchased at the same time or at different times. However, most of the produce sold by the petty merchant tends to be that purchased from other peasants. In addition, the main difference between the petty merchant and both the picker/peddler and farmer/peddler is that the petty merchant sets up a stand on a daily basis throughout the year in the Market. Due to their constant presence, these women tend to have stronger ties to the Hisba and the strongest sense of identity as workers.

While there are some male peasant petty merchants, most petty

merchants are women whose year round presence in Al Hisba has entailed their becoming well established in the Market. They have developed relations with the various actors in the Hisba including the Municipality workers, the picker and farmer/peddlers, the other petty merchants and the merchants as well as the customers. In addition, they have created relations with various owners of stores surrounding Al Hisba with whom they have made arrangements to assist in their work including storing food or providing a resting place during the day. Once you enter the Hisba you realize that these woman have created a physical space, as well as a market for themselves and their products within Al Hisba, which is recognized by all the various actors within Al Hisba. As they are continuously moved around for different reasons, customers come and ask 'where are the woman peasants' and people are directed to them for specific 'baladi' produce.

Although these women have stable market stalls in a space within the women's/peasant section of the market which they consider theirs, they recognize that any prolonged absence may put their 'ownership' of the stands in peril. In the case of the 'ownership' of the stalls in the market, as discussed above, possession is 100% of the law.

Its important anyway that someone stays on the stall in all cases so that we don't lose it. If I left the stand for a day or two and someone else took it over then when I came back I could remove the other person. But if I didn't come for a long period of time I would not be able to take back my stall and I would lose it [Um Basim, Kufr Nu'ma].

Women petty merchants take advantage of the times in the year when there are very few vendors in the women/peasant's section of the market to spread their wares over two or three stall places while only paying for one 20 NIS stall space. These women sell a variety of produce, which they have either bought, with their own money or through the Municipality, picked or planted. They tend to engage the labor of other family members, both male and female members, in picking, harvesting or transplanting produce. Two women have in effect become quasi employers of male family members; in one case it was a woman's husband and son and in another case it was a woman's three sons. Although these family members are not paid wages, the women decide how, when and where they work. Further, the male members' presence in the Market does not subtract from the women or the men referring to the stands as belonging to the women. While this is positive in some ways, it entails that these women are the ones primarily

responsible for the stands and their male relatives are merely 'helping out'. One woman, referring to her husband's presence at the stall states:

I am the face of the stand. He helps in bringing stuff and in weighing things, but he can't take over the stand because he has to go pray and eat during the day. Anyway, he can't deal with customers the way that I do [Um Basim, Kufr Nu'ma].

Although their produce is limited to that which is sold by peasants or raised locally, most of the women petty merchants augment their produce with a few boxes of purchased goods such as cucumbers and tomatoes that are not produced locally. The Municipality realizes this and allows it 'for the sake of the women'. This entails that sometimes the interests of the various types of female vendors in Al Hisba are contradictory. While it is in the interest of the picker/peddler and the farmer/peddler that petty merchants only be allowed to sell Palestinian peasant produce, this is not always in the interest of the petty merchant.

Um Al Abed used to buy from me but now she only buys the Israeli products. More people used to buy from the peasants but they have stopped buying from the peasants [Um Fuad, Dura Al Kari'].

I no longer sell the produce of the peasants because is not enough to meet the need and it is also not regular. It is not always readily available like Israeli produce' [Um Al Abed, Ramallah].

As we have seen, differences in women's peddling activities arise from the resources women have upon entering the market, their interests, the way in which they balance between the values of time and money, and their personal feelings above the acceptability of their presence in Al Hisba. Further, the different activities they carry out affect the extent to which they become committed to the Hisba and how they view themselves as workers.

The dual role of necessity and agency

The following section of the study looks at mainly women petty merchants' motivations for working in Al Hisba. It argues that while

¹ The reason why Um Al Abed is allowed to sell non-peasant produce is because Um Al Abed does not sit in the peasant/women's section of the market.

economic need and lack of viable alternatives are by far the major reasons for women's entry and continued presence in Al Hisba, other factors such as women's need for freedom and independence and the fulfillment they receive from their work induces them to remain in Al Hisba even if their primary financial concerns could be met through other means.

The women interviewed for the study had entered Al Hisba at different times and for different reasons. In most cases a major life event prompted them to utilize Al Hisba to increase the family income. Most of the women began peddling either in Al Hisba or elsewhere, when the main male breadwinner got sick, died or abandoned them. Nevertheless, despite the reason for their entry into Al Hisba, the women petty merchants seemed to be very committed to their work in Al Hisba. The women's insistence in remaining in the Hisba in spite of their family and the society's stated disapproval of their presence in the market and their own contradictory perspectives on the acceptability of women working was one indicator of this. Another indicator was the women's adamancy about remaining in Al Hisba even when their economic contribution to the household was no longer as vitally needed or when alternative opportunities for financial stability presented themselves.

Economic need:

Why women enter and most remain

Most of the women started working as a result of a significant event that happened in their life that entailed a need for a source of income for the family. This mainly had to do with the inability of the main male breadwinner to continue supporting the family.

I had to come and sell because I have a very big family. 23 people live in the household. I have eight boys and five girls and my daughters in law and their children. My husband doesn't work. He used to work in a masonry workshop, breaking rocks. But he stopped working 10 years ago because of health problems. A friend told me to come start selling in Al Hisba. She told me 'there is nothing shameful in feeding your family'. So I decided to come [Um Ma'moun, Dura Al Kari'].

Two other women in the sample had been drawn into the Hisba by male relatives who had stalls in the indoor part of Al Hisba. Both these

women were single and living in Ramallah and had commented as to the fact that before they started working in Al Hisba they had never entered the Market because their brothers would supply them with all of the groceries.

Some of the women claimed that they had to work because their sons were unable to get permits to work in Israel or find work in the villages due to the current political situation. However, the length of time they had been working in Al Hisba entailed that they had begun working long before the current political unrest. It was obvious that in all cases, the women petty merchants' work in Al Hisba provided a regular source of income for the family even when other members of the family were able to find jobs.

As such, severe economic difficulties and the lack of viable alternatives, due to the women's limited education and lack of skills, acted as the main catalysts for bringing them into Al Hisba. However, with time their work became essential to them to ensure their freedom and as a form of escape from what they perceived to be the tedious alternative of remaining at home and being cared for by male relatives.

Perspectives on women and work:

A women's proper place is in the home, so long as she doesn't have to depend on a man

For most of the women, the economic need for work is what provided legitimacy for their working in the public sphere of the market. Women utilized this economic need as an argument to quiet male family members and others opposition to their working. Many of the women worked despite their relatives disapproval of their work in Al Hisba arguing that others, including their male relatives, were unable to take care of them and/or their children and as such could not control their decision to work.

My brother, when we were still on good terms was very upset about my coming to work in Al Hisba, but at the same time he didn't have the ability to help me. I told him there is no one to help me take care of my children so I have to take care of them. I have to feed my children and there is no shame in this [Um Ma'moun, Dura Al Kari].

My sisters see my working in Al Hisba as bad. Other women in the village keep saying that I should just accept my fate. In the beginning, no one could believe that I went to sell in

Ramallah. But I think that it is better for a woman to be smart and work than work in the house and not have money [Um Basim, Kufr Nu'ma].

In effect, many of the women expressed the idea that women could work only if there was a dire economic necessity for work, or if there was no capable male-breadwinner. Further, women felt strongly that if a woman had young children, she should not work. However, there were various contradictory comments that implied that the women could accept women working even when the above conditions were not met. For example, although Um Al Abed, a 70-year-old, single woman who had been working in Al Hisba for over 14 years, felt that women should only work if there is a need, she also felt that women should not have to depend on anyone.

"A woman works only when 'fi haja' there is a need, because they have to. A woman will sit and sell only if she absolutely has to because she has no alternative. Otherwise it is 'aib' shameful... A women's proper place is in the home... but no one should have to depend on anyone, it [working] is better than depending on someone.... For women teachers and secretaries it is different because they are educated. Why else does a woman get an education if not to work. An educated woman should work. [Um Al Abed, Ramallah]

As can be seen, Um Al Abed also provided another acceptable reason for women to work, which was if they were educated. Several of the women stated that not only was it acceptable for educated women professionals to work but that this was in fact one of their responsibilities.

Some women legitimized their work in Al Hisba as the most respectable means for an uneducated woman to attain the needed income to ensure her family's survival.

Many may look down at me but "work is not shameful, it is better than begging" [Muhji, Ramallah].

It [working in Al Hisba] is better than working inside homes [as a domestic servant]. That is shameful, right? [Um Ma'moun, Dura Al Kari].

The fact that working in Al Hisba was perceived as better than working as a domestic servant is interesting in light of the fact that work in Al Hisba places women in the public male sphere while working in a home is closer to what would be considered a woman's traditional role and would take place in the private sphere. However, this could be explained by the fact that while in theory women's work in Al Hisba directly challenges existing male and female gender roles, in practice, peddling produce is actually an acceptable gender role for a 'lower-class, elderly peasant woman' within Palestinian society.

Finally, some women commented that it was not work in itself that was 'aib', but it was the disrespectful treatment of men, vendors and customers, that made working problematic. This disrespectful male treatment of women was not only seen as a problem for female vendors but also a problem for female customers. As such, these women did not feel that there was anything inherently wrong in women working in the Hisba or elsewhere, just like there was nothing inherently wrong in women coming to buy from the Hisba. However, because a woman vendor was in a more sensitive position than a woman customer, a woman vendor had to be very strong and resourceful woman to deal with the male vendors and customers.

"When a woman is 'ad halha' (strong enough to take care of herself), she can handle herself in any situation. Even with these men. 'Al tujar' (the vendors) realize they are bad. They say they wouldn't allow their mothers, sisters, daughters to come sell in Al Hisba....And then there are the young boys who are disrespectful and who make rude comments. They are the reason why you see less women buying in Al Hisba. What man would send his wife, daughter or sister to the Hisba when they see how the boys act. But because they make the Hisba not comfortable for women buyers, they are only ruining it for themselves." [Muhji, Ramallah]

As such, while the Hisba presented a relatively more acceptable income-generating activity than other alternatives, such as begging or domestic work, it was only acceptable for a certain type of woman. Work in Al Hisba would not be acceptable for a younger urban or rural woman. This was confirmed by the fact that most of the women were adamant about the fact that they would never bring their daughters to work in Al Hisba. Further, it could be seen by the demographic profile of the women peddlers who were interviewed for the study.

The other side of the coin: work as a source of fulfillment

Despite the stated economic need that acted as a catalyst for bringing women into the Market, and the financial difficulties, which resulted in their continued presence in Al Hisba, many of the women were very vocal about their expressed desire to continue to work. This was the case even when a family's financial situation had improved or when male members of the family had been able to attain paid employment and wanted the women to stop working. It was apparent that many of the women who had been provided the option to discontinue working did not in fact want to leave their work to stay at home and be dependent on a male family member.

I can't stop working. I don't have any children and I don't want to depend on anyone. My brother and his sons would take care of me, praise be to god, but I don't want to depend on anyone" [Um Al Abed, Ramallah].

In the case of one woman, Um Basim, the family's financial situation had changed somewhat for the better between my first interview and the second. During the second interview, while the situation had changed slightly, her commitment to her continuing to work had not.

One of my sons has bought a Ford and is working on the Ramallah - Kufr Nu'ma line as a taxi service. My other son set up a stand one month ago in Al Hisba. He is doing it secretly because he is not supposed to be working. Now they are telling me to stop working. That I don't have to work anymore. But I can't leave my work. I can't leave my stall [Um Basim, Kufr Nu'ma].

In addition to the sense of independence and freedom which work provides the women, some of the women expressed the fact that their work was an escape from the trappings of a very difficult home life. As such, the long hours and back-breaking work was preferable to sitting at home all day.

See I have become like a 'abda' [literally slave but meaning black from sitting in the sun all day]. (It was around 2:00 o'clock and the midday sun was beating down on our heads) but its not all bad, it's better than staying at home ... I don't

like staying at home. My husband is always nagging because he is sick and the children are nagging and I can't deal with it. On Friday's when I am sitting at home, it is really bad [Um Ma'moun, Dura Al Kari'].

As such, while economic need is certainly a main impetus for bringing women into Al Hisba, and while the difficulty entailed in carrying out peddling activities is well documented here and elsewhere, certain types of female vendors and especially, as was shown above, petty merchants, tend to become committed to their work for reasons other than financial concerns. One important element of the women's connection to the Hisba is the relationships which they develop with other merchants and petty-merchants as well as customers and store owners. These relations take on a social and economic significance for the women and create a sort of network for the women to assist them in solving problems and attaining necessary resources to assist in their work in Al Hisba or in other components of their life. However, the characteristics of the relations developed between the women and the various other actors in Al Hisba greatly differ and develop in response to a range of interests and needs.

Conclusions

While the study finds that economic circumstances play a major role in propelling women to work in the fruit and vegetable market, understanding that their social status, education, and peasant background provides few or no alternatives, the study also finds that peasant women make the choice to remain in the Market even if there are other possibilities for financial security. The study shows that women are committed to remaining in Al Hisba for reasons outside of financial security, including the fact that their work provides them with a sense of independence, which they would lose if forced to depend on male members of the family. Further, the Hisba provides an escape for some women from a difficult home life. This entails that even if women's primary financial concerns could be met through other means, they choose to remain in Al Hisba. The women's insistence in remaining in the Hisba comes in spite of their family and the society's stated disapproval of their presence in the market and their own contradictory perspectives on the acceptability of women working. Women's commitment to Al Hisba and their work within it was tied to the type of activity women undertake within the Hisba. The economic activity undertaken by petty merchants entails their daily presence within Al

Hisba. As such they have become identified as part of Al Hisba, and have developed a commitment to their work in Al Hisba. They have also developed important social contacts and at least a basis, if not an actual, support network.

Nevertheless, this is not meant to present an overly positive picture of women in the Hisba. Their work and their presence in the Market continues to be criticized by society and even by family members who benefit from their work. Further, their work is extremely strenuous, providing few if any opportunities for rest, and also unstable, entailing a constant possibility of entry into even more severe financial circumstances. They have no legal rights as workers and their presence, let alone their rights, within the Market is not even acknowledged in existing codes which regulate the activities of the Market. As a result, their place in the Market is constantly changed and is always in the periphery. Further, they have no redress if they are exposed to abuse by merchants, municipality workers and customers or even other merchants.

Finally, women petty merchants are taking on activities that their male counterparts are no longer willing or able to carry out, entailing that they are forced to deal with an ever increasing workload with little or no support from their families, while at the same time they are almost solely responsible for ensuring the continuing presence of farming peasants within the area.

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This is an abbreviated, and slightly revised and updated, version of an article first published in Feminist Review No. 69 (Winter 2001) in an issue edited by Amal Treacher and Hala Shukrallah entitled "The Realm of the Possible: Middle Eastern Women in Political and Social Spaces." It is an initial attempt to understand the gendered forms of Palestinian activism during the second intifada, and, crucially, the crises men, women, and youth face in meeting their gender roles and responsibilities, including the responsibilities of mothering and fathering, in circumstances where protection of children is almost impossible. Dynamics in the family, in the authors' framework, are integrally linked and interact with political dynamics and processes. These linkages are of crucial interest to a number of research projects at the Institute of Women's Studies.

Where Have All the Women (and Men) Gone?: Gender and the Intifada

Penny Johnson and Eileen Kuttab

These reflections were largely written in January and February of 2001, as the initial phase of the second Palestinian intifada, characterized by largely unarmed Palestinian demonstrators, mostly men and boys, confronting Israeli soldiers and tanks at Israeli checkpoints that border and enclose Palestinian towns, was coming to an end. The authors claim no special prescience in predicting a turn towards increased militarism in the next stages of the intifada; the consequences of Israel's excessive and illegal military action against Palestinian civilians and civil life, however, lay beyond the bounds of prediction. Despite the virtual absence of checkpoint confrontations, in 2002 Palestinian children continue to be killed as "collateral damage" rather than as demonstrators. Israel's re-occupation of West Bank towns brought a dramatic escalation in Palestinian suffering. However, it is the underlying failures addressed

in this article — in politics and in protection of the Palestinian civilian population — that need to be addressed if violence is to cease. The urgency of saving lives and making peace with justice attests to, rather than diminishes, the relevance of understanding the multiple effects of the intifada on the gendered roles and responsibilities of Palestinian women, men and children for it is in their lives, relations, violence, daily activities and interaction that the effects of resistance, repression, militarism and "politics" are inscribed. These effects will endure beyond the dramatic events of the present, shaping Palestinian society and gender relations within it.

Over two months after the second Palestinian intifada against Israeli occupation erupted on 28 September 2000, the Israeli Chief of Staff issued an order unusual even by the military logic of excessive force that has dictated Israel's response to Palestinian rebellion. The order banned "travel on West Bank roads by Palestinian men in private vehicles." (Harel and Hass, 2000, 3) Soldiers must return such "male only" cars to their villages or towns or origin; only if a woman passenger was present would travel be permitted. This particular order proved relatively short-lived, although it was followed by many permutations: at the checkpoint near Khan Yunis in Gaza, for example, Israeli soldiers had standing orders to fire on cars with a lone male driver, causing a brisk, if risky, business among poor Gazan children who hire themselves out for as "human shields" for the duration of the checkpoint crossing. (Steele, 6 August 2002, 2)

These orders, and the spatial regimes of discrimination that they enforce, are perhaps first of all an exemplar of the apartheid logic of the Oslo period, both in Israel's application of the interim agreements but also, we would argue, embedded in the agreements themselves. At the heart of the interim agreements is an avoidance of the discourse of rights for a series of arrangements based not on equality, but on difference, discrimination and unequal distribution of resources. These unequal arrangements included the division of Palestinian territory into non-contiguous areas, Israel's continued military occupation and control of borders and a majority of Palestinian territory, the continued presence and expansion of Israeli settlements, and the non-sovereign and limited powers of the Palestinian Authority. While the Palestinian leadership believed these discriminatory arrangements were temporary — to be rectified by principled stands during final status negotiations — their effects, including the almost doubling of the Israeli settler population in the Oslo years (1993-present), are both etched on the physical and political landscape and all too clearly seen in the explosion of the second intifada. Perhaps less visible, but also important, is how these

inequalities *between* Israel and the Palestinians, conditioned the relation *among* Palestinians, in particular between the emerging state and its "citizens." (see Hammami and Johnson, 1999) Here gender issues are a good example. For example, the 1994 Women's Charter issued by the Palestinian women's movement as the transitional period began, asserted a range of rights for women — such as freedom of movement and the right to full nationality — that were in fact to be denied to all the population.

Apartheid and Gender

It is telling that this apartheid logic finds one of its expressions in gender. In the order cited above banning male travel, gender is clearly an organizing principle of Israeli repression - the accompanying question is whether it also an organizing principle of Palestinian resistance. The endless death toll of young men - and male children - attests to both. Indeed, the order was an immediate subject for a joking, but meaningful response from Palestinian women activists who quipped: "at last a role for women." As we will discuss below, while women have been active in a number of ways during the intifada - and have taken on increased burdens in care and coping in the household and wider community — their activities are both seemingly invisible to actual and virtual publics and widely seen by women leaders themselves as inadequate and marginalized.

This invisibility is exemplary of a larger absence of civil society in the present intifada. By this we do not mean that civil society organizations are completely inactive, but that their activities to date do not have a direct effect on the politics of the intifada. They are marginal, rather than constituting that "public sphere of civil society" (Calhoun 1992, 14) — to use a concept of Jurgen Habermas - where public democratic and critical discourse is translated into an authority for politics. The marginalization of women and of civil society from the public and political sphere are strongly linked. As the course of the present intifada suggests, when women are absent from the public arena, most men are excluded as well.

The second intifada underlines another sobering, reality: whatever the success of women's movement in developing initiatives for gender equality in the Oslo period — whether a year-long model parliament, lobbying against discrimination, media initiatives, violence against women, and so forth — these initiatives, like much of NGO and even ministerial projects that addressed social and developmental problems and processes were in essence sequestered from the real locus of political

power. Ironically, the women's movement began to use the fashionable discourse of "empowerment" when it was in reality losing power. A comparison of the two Palestinian intifadas will offer us insight into these dynamics.

Comparison Between Intifadas

Despite the intervening twelve years, the Palestinian uprising launched in December 1987 and the current uprising have the same essential cause, namely the continuation of the Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza and the occupation's oppressive policies. However, the new socio-political reality in the wake of the Oslo agreement both triggered the second (Al Aqsa) intifada, and shaped its distinctly different features. The new political reality includes the presence, style of rule and political culture of the Palestinian Authority, the existence of formal relations, cooperation and negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organization (and the Authority) and Israel, new modes and mechanisms of participation and exclusion, a change in the style of Israeli military oppression and the phenomenon of Palestinian militarism. Their interaction both created a climate of profound instability and forged a new image of Palestinian political activism which marginalized much of society and women in particular.

The eruption of the 1987 Intifada occurred in the context of more than a decade of democratic activism led by Palestinian mass-based organizations in the West Bank and Gaza and strongly linked to the Palestinian national movement (more detailed discussion can be found in Taraki 1991 and Kuttub 1993). These organizations mobilized large sections of the community, including students, women, workers and professionals, who in turn became the major actors in mobilizing and sustaining the intifada. Their programs tried to integrate political, social and cultural features and addressed both the aspirations and the concrete needs of the population (in the case of the mass-based women's committees through income generation and day care centers, for example). In comparison, the Al-Aqsa Intifada erupted in a period where democratic political activism has been diminished and replaced with formal and often closed political structures, marginalizing civil society.

In the 1987 uprising, the women's movement like other mass-based organizations were able to respond to people's aspirations for independence with decentralized forms of organization and mobilization that integrated national and social liberation. Neighborhood and popular committees mobilized the community to

meet its own needs — teaching children after schools were closed by military order, guarding neighborhoods, encouraging home economy and organizing food supplies to those in need. The committees also served as vehicles to promote social and political consciousness to sustain the Intifada.

These forms of participatory democracy can be "conceived broadly as a political system and culture that allows for the fullest realization of human creative potential." (Bystydzienski, and Sekhon 1991). Here, democratization is a process of which supports the development of values and structures that give people a direct voice in matters that affect their lives and where the voices of ordinary people find increasingly organized expression. In turn, these organizations have the potential to mediate between people and the state, expanding public space to include space autonomous from the state. The erosion of these mass-based organizations in the transitional period left an elite leadership that is not responsible to specific constituencies — but rather seeks legitimacy from "the people" for its symbolic role as guardians of national liberation and historic role as representatives of the Palestinian cause. The fragile left opposition parties have not been able to maintain their activity and viability, debilitated by their own internal conflicts and structural weaknesses, particularly the absence of internal democracy, as well as the growing hegemony of the Palestinian Authority. Only the Islamist opposition has succeeded in maintaining a popular base.

The embryonic "state" has thus transformed the terrain of politics and resistance, diminishing the avenues of participation people in general and women in particular, as formal politics largely replaced informal forms of mobilization, and the "outside" leadership took power from the "inside" leaders in the West Bank and Gaza. The resulting duality between strong formal political activity versus weak informal activity was *first step in marginalizing the civil society and limiting the participation of women*. The erosion of mass organizations and the failure of left political parties meant that public space in the transitional era was virtually monopolized by the Authority (and particularly by its security services), despite the occasional emergence of "counter-publics" (Marshall 1994, 144) where political and social issues were contested.

The new political terrain presented the women's movement, and other social movements as well, with difficult dilemmas in developing a strategy that addressed both gender issues in the emerging state and linked to the very real conditions of occupation and colonialism that men and women faced as daily realities.

A Gender Contract On Hold

National unity and cohesiveness were basic features of the first intifada and, as in other national liberation struggles, the importance of unity tended to subsume direct political expression of class and gender issues. However, at the intersection between the first intifada and the peace process, gender issues began to emerge more strongly. An achievement of this period that drew on the strength of the women's movement during the intifada was the Women's Charter of 1994, endorsed by the General Union of Palestinian Women and all major Palestinian women's organizations after extended and wide participation in discussions and debates. Citing the principle of "equality between the sexes" enshrined in the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence, the Charter affirmed national, political, social and economic rights for women, thus putting forward a new gender (and social) contract for Palestinian society. But this important achievement did not translate into a process of mobilization, as the grassroots women's committees, the vanguard of women's activism and linked to Palestinian political parties, were unable to coordinate due to political fragmentation in the wake of the Oslo Accords. In addition, the Charter's demand for equal rights was vitiated by the lack of national and citizen's rights to the whole population during the transitional period.

The dilemma of the Palestinian women's movement in the interim period - of addressing both gender issues in the emerging state and Israel's continued colonial oppression and the real needs of women and men for independence - was in many ways unsolvable, despite the best efforts of some women's movement activists to develop dual strategies. The nature of Palestinian governance as one of the core issues for democratic transformation was not seriously addressed. (Hammami and Kuttub, 1990). As a result, the emergence of gender equality issues into public space was made much more difficult by the isolation of these issues from issues of governance and the political system. Even the potential agents of democracy, such as the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) were paralyzed due to the authoritarian nature of governance. This demobilization — and consequent popular alienation - are sufficient reasons why women in particular and people in general are not actively participating in the current Intifada.

Borders Versus Communities

The sites and nature of Palestinian resistance in the two intifadas are also crucial to understanding the marginalization of women and civil society. In the first intifada, the site of struggle was the community,

its streets, neighborhoods and homes, the "stone" was the main weapon in defending the dignity of the community, and women participated in direct confrontations with the Israeli army, whether as demonstrators, stone-throwers, or protectors and rescuers of young men. Home and community environments were daily sites of conflict with the Israeli soldiers: as Yuval-Davis notes, "clear sexual division in war, however, usually disappears when there is no clear difference between 'battlefront' and the 'homefront'..." (Yuval-Davis 1997)

In the first phase of the current uprising, the confrontations took place at border and crossing points between areas in the Oslo checkerboard. These checkpoints are at the limits of Palestinian "sovereignty" (such as the borders of Palestinian towns) and controlled by the Israeli army. At these sites, Israeli has exercised authority over the years to deny Palestinians access to livelihoods, social contact and national unity. In this context, women's roles in direct resistance was minimal, given the absence of community context, the militarized environment, and the differential impact of restrictions on mobility on women. The greater the level of militarization and militarized violence, the less participation from women and the wider community.

As in other societies, the construction of combatants versus non-combatants is also gendered, resting on ideological constructs of femininity and masculinity in society, rather than actual combat ability (Yuval-Davis, 1997). The extension of women's roles in the first intifada was possible because the division between combatants and non-combatants was very fluid. In the second intifada, "combatants" are highly defined by gender and age. As a result, women's reproductive role as bearers of the fighters, a politicized role already present in Palestinian political culture, is heightened, and the mother of the martyr became a potent symbol of resistance. (Peteet, 2001), while actual mothers, as we explore below, face acute and agonizing dilemmas. Indeed, we will be exploring three related crises generated or brought to light by the levels, forms and sites of Israeli excessive force and Palestinian resistance in the second intifada: a crisis in masculinity, a paternity crisis, particularly in paternal roles of protection and provision for families, and a crisis in maternity, as mothers face painful contradictions in their maternal responsibilities towards children.

Masculinity in Crisis

While Palestinian women and men have not substantially differed in their support or non-support of resistance and the use of different forms of violence (Jerusalem Media and Communication Center 2001),

women and men's differential participation in violent confrontations is another story — although in fact most Palestinian men over twenty-five were also not participants in either the initial stages of demonstrations or the later stages of armed conflict. The nature of the popular confrontations that dominated the first months of the intifada were strongly gendered and restricted by age. If war is the "most direct" site for the construction and reproduction of masculinity (Morgan in Brod and Kaufman 1994, 165), particular wars or conflicts do so in highly specific ways, reminding us that "patriarchy is reproduced both within and between genders" and thus "requires much closer attention to those institutions which are crucially responsible for the production of masculine identity." (Kandiyoti 1994, 199) In the confrontations we are examining, the high level of death and injury of Palestinian demonstrators and militants, and the location, form and consequence of violent confrontation expose a crisis of masculinity that deserves careful attention.

The sacrifice and struggle of Palestinian young men and children in demonstrations at Israeli checkpoints placed at the borders of Palestinian towns and areas cannot be reduced to a simple crisis of masculine identity — crises in national, class and ethnic identity are deeply entwined. In this second intifada, young men and male children coming to the checkpoints are first and foremost protesting the confined conditions of their lives and futures, whether unemployed workers, refugee children who have never left Gaza, or even security and police personnel who have been patrolling these borders while they cannot themselves leave them. But they confront there a power that has defined them as marginal and constrained them as lesser beings. And they confront as well an absence of a national government that is theoretically present, but practically powerless and unable to lead. The political and cultural resources available to the young men in rebellion in many ways allow their resistance but not a resolution.

Rites of Passage or a Closed Circle?

Writing on the violence perpetuated on Palestinian young men by Israeli soldiers both on the street and in prisons during the first intifada, Peteet believes that "the beatings (and detentions) are framed as rites of passage that become central in the construction of an adult, gendered (male) self with critical consequences for political consciousness and agency." (Peteet 2000, 103). Young men who are recipients of Israeli violence pass through an initial phase of separation from the community, then through a dangerous liminal stage "outside of social time" where

physical violence is applied and withstood and a final stage of re-entry into normal social life, often verified by community telling of the experience and accompanied by heightened "masculine and revolutionary credentials and capital, which the young man often utilizes by moving into cadre roles in political organization." (Peteet 2000, 112)

More empirical investigation is needed to contrast the "rites" of the second intifada, but we would suggest that there are significant differences. First, there is the much greater presence of death and injury at the relatively stationary "flashpoints" where demonstrators in effect expose themselves to Israeli fire. The ground of confrontation thus expresses the harsh political realities of the post-Oslo years. In is this, more than the religious cast of the intifada, that produces the emphasis on martyrdom. Although the first intifada also honored its martyrs, its images were guerilla in character, where protestors and stone-throwers emerged from the community, hurled their messages and missiles, and then returned to the community, living for another day. In the confrontations of the second intifada, the community is not a sustaining and protecting environment, but rather, eerily, an audience, both literally at the checkpoint and virtually whereby national and satellite television bring live minute by minute coverage into the home. In the later stages of the intifada, the young men who carried out suicide bombings only came home in another media form - posters plastered on the walls of refugee camps and urban main streets.

But there also may be an important difference in the re-entry into the community and masculine credentials and political capital acquired, given that for most of the young demonstrators, there is not forward movement into cadre roles or wider community leadership. Here, the system of rule that we have termed "authoritarian populism" comes into play, a system which depends on "the people" or "the street" for legitimation, but constrains democratic politics and democratic participation. Whether the Authority itself, or Fateh, the dominant political party which is both the leading force in the intifada and the government, political leaders both use and are hostage to the power of insurgent young men - but without changing the relations between them. There is much to explore here, including a resonance with the degradation of the public sphere noted by Habermas in quite a different cultural context, where "the public responds by acclamation, or the withholding of acclamation, rather than critical discourse." (Calhoun 1992, 26) Because of this dynamic, we would argue that the crisis in masculinity was not resolved through popular resistance — and indeed increased militarism is perhaps the only "solution" that was offered and it is certainly the direction that was taken.

A Crisis in Paternity?

The crisis in gender identities is also produced by a series of related crises, both in Palestinian nationalism after Oslo on the political level, and the multiple economic, social and humiliating effects of the Oslo apartheid system (as well as the long-term effects of occupation on the economy) which has marginalized some groups of men as providers and breadwinners, and destabilized male roles as heads of households. Even before the intifada, the vast majority of the heads of poor households are both male and labor force participants, but unemployment, underemployment and low wages as compared to prices mean that male breadwinners may not be able to truly provide for the families. For many young males, entry into the labor force and establishing a household are difficult challenges. At the same time, young male roles as heroes and agents of national resistance have also been destabilized by the humiliating conditions of Oslo.

In an earlier context, the gender crisis described by Thompson in Syria and Lebanon in the wake of the ravages of World War I and consequent colonial systems is relevant. Thompson notes:

"the profound dislocation suffered by family households during and after World War I, second, the creation of new, theoretically, national states; and third the imposition of French rule. In their combination, these three conditions encouraged linked reactions to the microlevel stress of shifting household economies and gender roles within the family and to the macrolevel reorganization of community and polity."
(Thompson 2000, 6)

Thompson calls the linked reactions to stress in household, community and polity a "crisis in paternity." (Thompson 2000, 6) Palestinian dislocations at these three levels — in households coping with shocks and in community and polity living in the tension between a weakened national authority and a dominant Israeli colonialism - also produce stress in gender roles that have been highly accentuated in the current intifada.

A national participatory poverty assessment, carried out in the West Bank and Gaza in the summer of 2001 and winter of 2001-2002 by Palestinian research teams, clearly shows the stress in gender roles and responsibilities as poor men, women and children describe their lives. An underlying and urgent theme, voiced over and over again, by poor men and women as they describe the reasons and conditions of their impoverishment and vulnerability, is a profound crisis in the ability of

male breadwinners to support their families. This crisis is an intensification of a trend clearly visible in the National Poverty Report 1998 where labor force participation did not prevent poverty for the three-quarters of poor households who were headed by a labor force participant, mostly male. (National Commission for Poverty Alleviation 1998, 43-44)

Two voices from the participatory poverty assessment tell the story:

"The worst thing for a worker, other than his tiredness, is the day he is laid off. Because he doesn't know when he goes to bed how he is going to earn the bread for his family the next day." [A male laborer from Jabalya refugee camp, who used to work in Israel.]

"My husband was so good, but once he became unemployed and stayed at home, his morale became so low, because of all our demands and needs." [A woman from the Gaza district.] (Johnson 2002, 3)

These and other voices of the poor point to the important truth that unemployment may be caused by labor market distortions in the public sphere but the actual experience of unemployment takes place to a large extent in the domestic sphere. The crisis of the male breadwinner is a gendered crisis and a family crisis. The effects of unemployment - whether psychological problems, loss of self-confidence, disruptions and tensions in family life, a rise in illness and morbidity or the "hardening of gender asymmetries" (Sen 1999,9) are effects that occur in the family and among its members and which place enormous stress on gender roles.

Two Boys, Contradictory Symbols

It is also telling to consider the two most popular images of the second intifada. The first is well-known worldwide: a young father in Gaza futilely attempts to shelter his son, 12-year old Mohammed Durra, as repeated Israeli fire takes his young life. Among the many ways this image, repeated in all Palestinian media, resonate is as a drastic, and tragic, image of a "crisis in paternity" (Thompson 2000, 284), denoting not simply a failure in paternal authority, but in paternal protection. The second image is of another slender young boy, Fares Odeh, also in Gaza, looking perhaps twelve but actually two years older , standing

defiantly in front of an enormous Israeli tank, stone in hand, a picture that is ubiquitous in Palestinian shops, offices and homes. In an examination of these "two poignant pictures [which] have dominated the visuals of Palestinians over the last three months," Zakariyya Muhamed writes that "Mohammed Durra gave us our symbol in his death; Odeh gave us our symbol in his challenging stand." (Muhamed 2001, 10).

Muhamed's view is in fact more nuanced — he notes that twelve-year old boys still conceive of war as play and refuses to call them martyrs because this assumes "the victim is aware of the meaning of war and knows what it means to die for a cause." (Muhamed, 2000, 9) However, the fact that the young boy in front of the tank is in a hopeless situation is not consciously acknowledged in his analysis, or indeed in popular responses to this image, although there is additional poignancy, given that Fares Odeh was shot in the neck by Israeli soldiers in another demonstration ten days later and bled to death at the Karni crossing. The contradictory significance of the poster begs for an exploration — a "challenging stance" to be sure, but one which seems doomed to failure, and where a highly vulnerable male child is the symbol of a national struggle. While youth, particularly the "children of stones", were symbols of the first intifada, they tended to stand for hope in the future and a realization of independence. Here both images graphically demonstrate both Israel's brutal and unchecked power through an exposed and unprotected child and resonate with a failure of adult politics and resistance. Indeed, the symbol of Fares Odeh dissolves into Mohammed Durra - two children whose "fathers" are unable to protect them - both their actual fathers and the community and polity as well. These linked failures in protection, we suggest, produce a crisis of paternity of the first order.

Women's Activism and a Crisis in Maternity

An exploration of women's activism during the intifada could perhaps begin with women's participation in a range of informal activities, from directly assisting the *shabab* (young men) in demonstrations, to widespread participation in funeral marches, to support for families and the injured. Another place to begin, however, is with the mother of Fares Odeh, the boy who defied the Israeli tank. Amna Odeh, according to newspaper reports, was deeply worried about her son, who had sworn to avenge the Israeli army's killing of his cousin. His mother not only talked to Fares, but attempted to find him at the checkpoints: "I must have gone looking for him 50 times," she told a

reporter from the Washington Post. Indeed, she was such a familiar site at the Karni crossing that boys teased Faris saying "Hey, Faris, what's that SWAT team after you?" (Hockstader, 12 December 2000, 2).

In both intifadas, informal women's activism has taken the form of an extension of women's roles, particularly "mother activism," most visible in the first intifada when older women sheltered youth and defied soldiers. In the second intifada, this "maternal" protection is almost completely inadequate, and it is symptomatic of a less visible "maternity crisis," that accompanies the paternity crisis described above. While media images tend to focus on mothers' blessing their sons' martyrdom, the case of Amna Odeh suggests that the real dilemma of mothers is much more agonizing and that maternal blessings are also a way of coming to terms with terrible grief and unsolvable contradictions. If, as Ruddick notes, maternal practices are governed by "the three interests of preservation, growth and acceptability of the child" (Ruddick in Meyers 1997, 589), these interests can be in painful contradiction. Preservation may conflict with growth (political understanding and involvement) and most particularly with community acceptance when "state" and society - or social group - honor resistance even at impossible odds. The relative powerlessness of mothers to resolve these contradictions in their own terms adds to the dilemma.

In this framework, it makes sense that one of the most sustained initiatives of the Palestinian women's movement has been to counter allegations that Palestinian mothers are sending their children to die at the checkpoints — one of the more blatant cases of the aggressor (Israel) blaming the victim for their deaths. . In the initial months of the intifada, the Palestinian women's movement also organized almost the only public demonstrations that were neither funeral marches or militarist displays by political factions, but these well-attended demonstrations, several candlelight vigils in Ramallah and Gaza and another public demonstration in Jerusalem, both received little publicity and were geographically and temporally limited. Nonetheless, the fact that men, as well as women and children, flocked to attend them signaled that much of the public needed, and mostly did not have, an address for political and community expression. Here the women's movement served as a venue for civil society as whole, albeit in a limited form. In the largest vigil in Ramallah in October 2000, several groups of young men heading for the checkpoint mingled with the crowd. The young men were highly charged for the coming confrontation; some were pleased by the crowd while others scoffed at the candles and encouraged all the crowd to go to the checkpoint. Initially, the young men clearly were enclosed in their

own revolutionary world with its own peer-centered ethics. The youth occasionally attempted their own slogans — both more fiery and less political than those of the crowd. Interestingly, women tried successfully to quiet the young men in the name of democracy, perhaps one of the few public discussions between the combatants and the public in an intifada where the "public sphere" has been more evident in the virtual space of satellite television than on the streets of Ramallah and other Palestinian towns.

Strategies of Women's Activism

Many activists in the women's movement are deeply aware of the contrasts in women's roles in the two Palestinian intifadas and clearly articulate the urgent need to develop new strategies that link their gender agendas to national goals and struggle. In a 16 December 2000 meeting, activists from most women's organizations took part in an initial forum in Ramallah aptly titled "The Women's Movement and the Current Situation: Towards Integrating Nationalism and Feminist Agendas."

A number of discussants stressed the difference between the two intifadas, particularly in relation to the visibility of women's participation in the first intifada, given that the "occupation was everywhere," and its wide-spread grassroots participation. In the second intifada, the burden of women has increased, due for example to the higher human cost, including thousands of permanently disabled persons needing care, but this form of participation is hidden in the household.

A speaker with a leading role in the first intifada termed its leadership a "civil leadership rooted in society and responsive to its needs, a framework in which women fitted and could participated." While recognizing that the devolution of these responsibilities, including welfare responsibilities once partly the province of women, to the Palestinian Authority was part of state-building, activists were deeply troubled that women's roles had been "taken away." Interestingly, a number of women, mostly returnees (PLO cadre and families returning in the framework of the Oslo agreement) from the General Union of Palestinian Women, contested the validity of the comparison between the two intifadas and also challenged the view of women's limited participation. In their view, the participation of women cadre in official municipal coordinating committees and in their own political parties, as well as women's role in "encouraging their children" to resist, were valid and important forms of participation. A related line of thought led several participants to advocate a strategy of encouraging young

women to participate in checkpoint demonstrations. This argument follows logically from a view that defines the mode of nationalist participation as already given — and, we would argue, highlights a line of thought that is a strategic dead-end for the women's movement.

A concept paper from an activist in an NGO deeply involved in legal reform initiatives and legal aid to women during the Oslo period, strongly argued that nationalist and feminist issues were deeply interlinked and urged the movement not to close windows that have been opened in the transitional period where issues of women's rights, children's rights and human rights have been brought into the Palestinian arena. While her argument rang true in many ways, another leading activist reminded the audience of a central failing of much of non-governmental work during the Oslo period, which lay in the failure to recognize both that politics means power and that the absence of democracy in the Palestinian context must be addressed politically, rather than simply through NGO activity.

Indeed, as another speaker argued, the missing link between feminism and nationalism is democracy, involving not only women, but the whole society. Here, a strategic direction was outlined which countered the narrowing of women's roles not by advocating, for example, that young women take on the militarized roles of young men, but by widening the framework for participation through an alternative politics. These needs are strongly linked to the national aspirations of the Palestinian people - but it is up to civil society to make this link visible and a real force in politics. In the complex situation of the intifada, developing an alternative politics is not an easy challenge, but it is a main avenue not only for women's participation and gender equality, but for democratic transformation in an independent Palestine.

Endnotes

Area A (under full Palestinian control, constituting West Bank towns, with the exception of East Jerusalem, within narrow boundaries and two divided blocks of Gazan territory), Area B (under joint Israeli-Palestinian control, constituting most West Bank Palestinian villages) and Area C (under full Israeli control, constituting all settlements, military installations and bypass roads).

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DOCUMENTS

Written under curfew during the April 2002 Israeli invasion of Palestinian towns and distributed widely by email, the authors use data from the Institute of Women's Studies household survey to develop a statistical portrait of the women, men and children of Jenin refugee camp, then under a massive Israeli military attack. Email and other forms of electronic media were important sites for testimonies, appeals and reports from writers under occupation and curfew in Palestinian towns: of the Institute's faculty, Islah Jad's letters from Ramallah and Rema Hammami's documentation of the destruction of Palestinian institutions are particularly noteworthy. The profile of Jenin refugee camp was also published by the Electronic Intifada (www.electronicintifada.net) and in the Al Ahram English weekly newspaper.

Who Lives in Jenin Refugee Camp? A Brief Statistical Profile

Rita Giacaman and Penny Johnson

The international media has begun to show some of the tragic human consequences of Israel's assault on Jenin refugee camp: from one BBC report alone¹ images flash of an old woman in a wheelchair abandoned in a field, dislocated families streaming towards neighboring villages, a woman weeping by the roadside for her husband shot while tending sheep, an injured man huddling in bed surrounded by his family who has called repeatedly for an ambulance. Yet Israeli officials persist in a rhetoric that brands Jenin refugee camp as a "terrorist camp," with its all of its inhabitants, men, women and children of any age thus also marked as terrorists and all actions taken against them thus justified.

¹ BBC World Service, 11 April 2002, Report by Olga Guerin.

Who are the people who live in Jenin Refugee Camp? Using data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics 1997 national census, UNRWA information and a 1999 community-based household survey by the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University, in cooperation with the Institute of Community and Public Health, which included Jenin camp among the nineteen communities surveyed therein, we can glimpse a human community working and living in difficult circumstances, with particular vulnerabilities and with aspirations for a better future for their children.

The 1997 national census recorded a population of 9104 in Jenin refugee camp, living in 1614 households. UNRWA reports a larger population of registered refugees at 13,055, suggesting that some households live outside formal camp boundaries which are quite restricted. Jenin camp lies within the municipal boundaries of Jenin, and was established in 1953 on 373 dunums of land, roughly a square kilometer. The dense population of the camp and the crowding of houses and facilities contributes to the dangers to innocent civilians, particularly when Israeli airpower (Apache helicopter gunships) and tank fire were used against the camp.

Almost half of camp children or elderly

Using PCBS figures, average household size is thus 5.6, slightly larger than the adjoining city of Jenin but lower than the national average of 6.1. 42.3% of the population of Jenin refugee camp is under fifteen years of age and 4.3% over sixty-five years of age; about 47% of the population are thus children and the elderly and particularly vulnerable in times of armed conflict and war. There are roughly equal numbers of males and females.

Both Jenin camp and city are refugee populations

Over 95% of the residents of the camp are registered refugees according to the national census. UNRWA reports that "Most of the camp's residents came from villages which can be seen from the camp and which lie today inside the Green Line in Israel. Many of the refugees still maintain close ties with their relatives in those villages.² Also of interest is that half (49.7%) of the population of Jenin city (population in 1997: 26650) are also refugees. Israel's assault on Jenin is thus an attack on a largely refugee population.

² See <http://www.unrwa.org/refugees/wb/jenin.html>

One-third work as unskilled laborers; unemployment high even before intifada

In the 1997 national census, about 70% of Jenin refugee camp males 15 and over were economically active in the formal labor force and another 20% were students. About 14% of refugee camp women 15 years and over were economically active in the labor force, which is higher than the national average, while 21% were students and 53% were home-makers. For the male labor force, as UNRWA points out: "while many camp residents find employment in the agricultural sector around many are still dependant on work inside Israel."

Following the 1967 Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the close proximity of Palestinian communities inside Israel to communities in the Jenin District, as well as social and cultural links, encouraged an increase in commercial activities across the borders. An increasing number of workers, formerly absorbed in local agriculture began working inside Israel and local agricultural activities declined with a consequential serious deterioration in agricultural productivity. More recently, conditions which emerged during the first and particularly the second uprising, the tightening of Israeli restrictions of movement, and the cutting off of relations between the town and even its villages led to serious economic crisis. The inability of laborers to travel freely for employment led to very high levels of unemployment there, and a severe drop in family incomes.

Patterns of occupation and employment, as found in the IWS survey, also indicate chronic deprivation, with 48% of those living in the town being employers or self employed, in contrast to 25% in the camp. Almost a third of the camp labor force are unskilled workers, most of these are among the third of the labor force that works irregularly as day laborers. The IWS household survey revealed a relatively high unemployment rate in the camp, even before the beginning of this uprising. For those in the labor force, we found that only 64% of camp dwellers were working regularly, compared to a higher 81% in the town. We also found that the unemployment rate was around 10% in the camp, compared to 4% in the city. Looking at unemployment by household, we found that 94% of households in towns have at least one member working, compared to only 85% in the camp. Even before the invasion, one can assume that the quarter of the camp labor force that worked outside the Jenin District was largely unable to reach their work sites, and unemployment must have soared to at least half the work force.

Home economy sustains families, but women under heavy burden

The home economy in Jenin camp seems to be an important means to sustain families, and indicative of under-development, deprivation and poverty, takes up significant amounts of women's labor. In this day and age, a high of 52% of Jenin camp's women respondents reported baking bread on a daily basis, compared to 23% in Jenin town. Nine percent in the camp still process dairy products, 23% preserve foods, 15% raise poultry, 17% bake pastries and sweets always and 9% sometimes, and 4% always, sell poultry and livestock products for money. In contrast, these home production activities especially in the towns of the West Bank, are by now almost extinct. When asked about why they engage in these activities, 27% reported that this cuts down on family expenses.

Both in situations of chronic deprivation and vulnerability and in times of crisis, there are particularly heavy burdens on women. In the IWS survey, 14% of the married female population between 15-65 had married before the age of 15 and 28% under the age of sixteen. Drop-out rates in the Jenin district are also particularly high. Pressures for girls to leave school for marriage and boys for work arise from difficult economic circumstances in the family. These difficult circumstances also affect health: a large 48% of women in the 15-65 age group, for example, reported at least one miscarriage.

Chronic poverty in refugee camps

In available data for 1996-1998, residents of refugee camps are generally poorer than residents in villages and cities. In the West Bank, where camp residents make up about 6% of the population, 19% of refugee camp residents were under the poverty line in the relatively prosperous year of 1998, while 16.5% of villagers and 10.4% of urban residents were.³ Levels of deep poverty were also higher in camps. In addition, the Jenin and Hebron Districts are the poorest of the West Bank eight districts, with three times as many households under the poverty line in 1998 than households in the Ramallah/Bireh district, for example. Given PCBS's estimates of a 48% drop in median household income nationally after six months of closures and siege during the second Palestinian intifada,⁴ we can assume that Jenin camp

³ PCBS 2000. Poverty in Palestine (January-December 1998), table 4.

⁴ PCBS April 2001, "Impact of Israeli Measures on the Economic Conditions of Palestinian Households. Also see UNSCO reports on the Palestinian economy during this period.

households were already struggling to survive even before the Israeli assault on their homes.

The poorest of the poor:

Special concern for those who depend on social assistance

Of special concern are those households already surviving on special hardship assistance from UNRWA or the Ministry of Social Affairs, primarily female-headed households (mainly widows) or households whose head is elderly, disabled or chronically ill. In 1999, the Ministry of Social Affairs reported that 7.4% of households in Jenin camp (120 households) were receiving social assistance and UNRWA reports 307 households in Jenin camp receiving special hardship assistance, for a total of 877 beneficiaries. In the Jenin camp sample from the Institute of Women's Studies (IWS) 1999 survey, 20% reported receiving formal social assistance from MSA, UNRWA's or NGOs, compared to only about 2% in the city of Jenin, itself a relatively poor environment. Using the wealth index in this survey, 47% of Jenin camp residents were poor, while only 23% in Jenin city fell into this category. Only 3% of camp residents owned any land. Tellingly, 70% of camp respondents in the IWS survey reported food as the biggest expense for their children, compared to only 24% in the city, an indication of lives where basic needs continue to be a struggle. It is highly unlikely that the Ministry of Social Affairs is able to operate under current conditions and UNRWA also faces restrictions in reaching those poorest of the poor who are dependent on a monthly stipend for survival.

Jenin camp was also poorer than the adjoining city in census data, as measured by possession of durable goods. Only 36% of Jenin households had a phone line and 14% a private car, as opposed to 45% in Jenin city with a phone line and 33% with a private car. In times of war, these indicators of poverty are also indicators of increased vulnerability, blocking routes of escape and communication.

Education: low rates in present; high aspirations for future

The national census reports that a third of women in Jenin camp over 12 (33.4%) are illiterate or have no formal schooling but some basic skills, while 20.9% of males are in the same category. As is true nationally, illiteracy is mostly among the older population. Still, only 22% of males and 18.9% of women have achieved secondary education or higher.

The Institute of Women's Studies household survey of 1999 also investigated aspirations for male and female children. Despite the relatively low educational rates of the adult population in Jenin refugee camp - or perhaps because of them - mothers and fathers have high educational aspirations for their children. Almost 90% (69%) wanted their sons to achieve post-secondary education at a bachelor's degree level and 67% wanted this same level of higher education for their daughters. The current destruction in Jenin refugee camp of homes and lives is also an assault on these hopes for a better future.

The following is the Executive Summary of an April 2002 report by researchers Eileen Kuttab and Riham Barghouti of the Institute of Women's Studies, for a project initiated by UNIFEM and UNDP (Programme of Assistance to the Palestinian People). The project aimed to assess the impact of violence during the Al Aqsa intifada on Palestinian women and Palestinian households. Valuable information was garnered from the reports and documents of international human rights bodies and local non-governmental human rights organizations: Palestinian women's organizations, in particular the Women's Center for Legal Aid and Counseling (WCLAC) provided rich documentation and insight in their own publications.

The Impact of Armed Conflict on Palestinian Women

Eileen Kuttab and Riham Barghouti

However, at the heart of the project was a new survey of 401 households, in particular the wives and mothers within them, who had been adversely affected by Israeli military violence, whether the death, injury or detention of a family member or house demolition. The report aims to break the invisibility of both women's suffering and their contribution to family and individual survival in difficult and repressive circumstances. The full report, slightly updated, will be available from Unifem in the summer of 2003.

Executive Summary

Project Objectives

This research project was initiated by UNDP/PAPP and UNIFEM and conducted by a team of local researchers from the Women Studies Institute at Birzeit University. Its objective is to assess the impact of political violence within the current Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the Al-Aqsa Intifada, on Palestinian women in particular, and Palestinian households in general.

Research Methods

A combination of research methods were used to conduct this research mainly:

- 1- Review and utilization of information on the present conflict from different resources, namely local and international reports and documents from human rights organizations and human rights commissions. In addition, the researchers utilized different reports and documents from women's committees, research institutions, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, and UN documents assessing the impact of conflict and losses caused by the direct violations on both the human and economic levels.
- 2- A survey of 401 households in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, conducted between July and December 2001, sometimes in difficult conditions. The sample chosen represented different categories of human rights violations i.e. martyrs, injured, imprisoned, loss of employment, house demolitions, and physical and mental illness due to the conflict, among other variables. The survey was not representative of the population as a whole, but focused on families identified as been affected directly in one of the identified categories..
- 3- Focus group meetings with women activists, grass-root committees and practitioners to understand more in depth the different coping strategies that women and other organizations have promoted to enhance survival and steadfastness.

Impact on Women

Palestinian women have been severely effected as a result of being subjected to various violations to their human rights including:

- forced displacement,
- death of close relatives including heads of households and primary breadwinners,

- loss of employment,
- destruction of homes and agricultural lands
- prolonged curfew
- the lack of proper health services.

Further, women's access to education, health services, place of work, and sometimes food and other basic supplies has been totally disrupted through the extensive closures imposed within the West Bank and Gaza Strip and between the Palestinian territories and the rest of the world. As women's socio-economic position has deteriorated significantly, the opportunities and resources available to her to improve her situation have decreased as well, while her roles and responsibilities within the household have expanded.

Socio-economic Conditions of Surveyed Households

The findings from this study have shown that those households that were affected severely from the Intifada, tend to be already suffering from poor socio-economic conditions and the present situation has greatly deteriorated their conditions. The households surveyed were large in size with 58% of households having over 7 members. The already poor financial situation of this household has been significantly affected. On average the number of individuals working within the household has dropped in half entailing that the households have lost half of the usual income during the present conflict. Whereas prior to the Intifada, 21% of the households earned less than 1000 NIS monthly (US\$217), in late 2001, 43% of households are earning less than 1000NIS monthly. In most cases within the survey sample, the person directly affected by violence was a male member of the family, the husband or one of the sons and were in many instances primary providers for the household. Further, the majority of those martyred, injured, or imprisoned were young adults between the ages of 20-29 years of age, mainly males. In spite of the active role of women in protecting and safeguarding the family unit through their different activities as care providers and shock absorbers or being the only protectors who ensured the survival of the family and made life more livable, their role was not visible, hidden in the domestic sphere and hence marginalized.

Major findings:

- 1- 27% of the families in the sample had a martyr in the family, 25% were the husbands, and 71% were the sons and most have been the main providers working either as workers, employees or students. Over and above the burden of grief, women thus bear new burdens either female headed households, or as dependent on relatives hence losing their autonomous identity.
- 2- 10% of the homes of the surveyed households were either demolished or destroyed by shelling, and 50% of these had to transfer to a new residence, The rest had to move at night due to continuous shelling and return in the daytime, and a few moved to homes of relatives. In houses where partial destruction occurred, rearrangement of rooms, and use of rooms were among coping strategies chosen. This enforced displacement imposes heavy responsibilities on women, while available means of coping are highly inadequate. For women to cope with, as they have often been the main providers, they had to find a way to cope.
- 3- 37% of households had a person injured, most of them were the sons, followed by the husbands. In 56% of the cases, the main provider of care was the woman in the family mainly the wife, followed by the mother. An average of 10 hours of care was given to the injured on a daily basis, so most of the burden of care was endured by women, in addition to the housework which added more psychological and physical pressure on her general health.
- 4- 12% of the households had a prisoner. In 51% of the cases, the prisoner was between the age of 21-29 years old, and in 31% of the cases the prisoner was married, while in 28% he was the eldest son. Thus, these families were left with no main provider, which have put more pressure on women to find an alternative option for the loss of main income.
- 5- 50% of the households said that the family has suffered from physical or mental illness due to the political violence and economic deterioration. Although most of them had health insurance coverage, it is important to notice that quality of treatment is poor for mental illness due to the lack of specialized institutions and the nature of limited insurance coverage. It is worth noticing that women constitute the majority of the mentally ill persons, due largely to the pressures and strains of their lives.
- 6- 64% of the households had a family member who lost his/her job due to the political situation. Families making less than I.S. 1000 increased from 21% to 43%, which make almost half of the sample,

hence living under poverty line.

- 7- Women prisoners were also a category that has been worth noticing. Although they are few, it is important to know that they have been subjected to extreme brutal and violent conditions, deprived of basic human needs and prisoner's rights like men.
- 8- Closure of schools due to the closure policy, and the deterioration of economic conditions have been affecting female students more than men which has increased the percentage of drop-outs or even the inclination of leaving schools due to the daily difficulties and financial pressures especially of school girls in secondary classes or higher education institutions.
- 9- Social, financial and material assistance has been limited and unable to satisfy even the basic needs of most households that have been affected. Further, many initiatives have focused on the needs of men including for example types of employment generation opportunities, distribution of financial assistance relevant to the way in which the present conflict has been reported or envisioned, leaving women unattended.

Coping Strategies: Institutional and Individual Responses

- 1- In response to the direct effects of the current conflict local and international governmental and non-governmental organizations have implemented a range of initiatives aimed at meeting immediate needs of the local population including provision of emergency financial assistance, provision of food and shelter, provision of health services through mobile medical clinics and first aid satellite stations at confrontation sites, mental support counseling, repair of damaged homes and other buildings, generation of employment opportunities, in addition to regularly monitoring, documenting and reporting on the current situation.
- 2- Until now, responses to the situation tend to address only emergency needs rather than short or long term strategic and developmental needs of the society which will have a negative impact on women on the long term policies.
- 3- In addition to various forms of external assistance from local and international organizations, Palestinian households and specifically women have adopted various coping strategies aimed mainly at increasing household income and food supplies through development of the domestic economy, i.e. planting, bartering and selling foodstuffs. In most cases women have had to bear the brunt of the additional burdens that have arisen due to the various violations.

Women are the primary care takers within the family and have had to take care of those that have been injured. Women's work within the house as care takers has also increased due to the increased presence of men and children within the home due to unemployment of male members of the household, school closures, and during times of curfew. Women have had to find means to financially, physically and emotionally support children in addition to finding means to cope themselves.

- 4- Further, communities have come together and provided support for one another during the current crisis. For example, households who have lost their homes have moved temporarily into a relative's or neighbor's home until they could find more permanent living accommodations.
- 5- Another interesting popular coping strategy that the women in particular have promoted was bartering goods among households according to needs. Households that had a surplus of any vegetable, or fruit, or dairy or animal products would barter goods and services with each other to maintain their survival. It is women who promoted such a strategy that although seem to be d traditional yet its practice needed a great deal of organizational and communication skills.

Recommendations

While recognizing that Palestinian women will continue to be in a vulnerable position so long as the Israeli occupation continues and that sustainable development is not possible under occupation, the study puts forward short and mid-term recommendations to improve women's current situation and provide her with the adequate resources to strengthen her capacity to cope with the crises.

A summary of some of the major recommendations include:

- 1- Recording properly women's current situation and collecting information about different women's needs in order to integrate women into future development plans. A PRA approach could be a successful tool to investigate women's needs.
- 2- Strengthening civil society institutions to assist these institutions in developing programs expand women's opportunities
And empower them to be able to affect the decision- making process.
- 3- Empowering women with a focus on their legal and political rights and status.
- 4- Improving women's economic situation through income and

employment generation projects that are holistic and take into consideration the range of women's needs especially in light of the current closures. Responding to realistic pressures should not neglect the fact that such women practical needs have to be tied to strategic needs in order to transform current benefits into far-fetched democratic changes that can affect positively the political process.

- 5- Improving women's access to physical and mental health services through financial support.
- 6- Providing to the most affected and marginalized groups within the society their basic needs for survival including food, water, electricity and shelter.
- 7- Supporting female education through financial assistance policies has become a necessity for two reasons, to stop the phenomenon of female drop-outs from school or universities and to empower women in order to strategically affect women's position in the society. It is important to tie practical needs of women to their strategic needs that can have an impact on women's status in the future Palestinian state.