GENDER AND POLITICAL SUPPORT

WOMEN AND HAMAS IN THE OCCUPIED PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Minna Cowper-Coles

‘Cowper-Coles has written a fascinating and insightful book on the gender gap in Palestinian politics. Cowper-Coles finds that women are more likely to support Hamas and are more conservative on multiple issues. Why is this so? Using impressive quantitative data and original qualitative interviews, Cowper-Coles argues that the local political economy creates segmented gendered dis/advantages for women and men which in return shapes political loyalties.’

Amaney A. Jamal, *Edwards S. Sanford Professor of Politics and Director of the Bobst Center for Peace and Justice at Princeton University, USA*

‘As Minna Cowper-Coles writes, research on women and gender in the Middle East has often been seen as unimportant to mainstream political science. Dr. Cowper-Coles makes an impressive addition to scholarly understanding of gendered patterns of political support. With a rich body of interview and survey data, Minna Cowper-Coles highlights the counterintuitive finding that Palestinian women are more likely than men to support HAMAS. Her work further explains why extant theories from the American context are inadequate for explaining the gender gap without an understanding of the role that the authoritarian and clientelistic context plays. I recommend this book for scholars and policymakers interested in comparative politics and the Arab world.’

Lindsay J. Benstead, *Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Middle East Studies Center at Portland State University, USA*

‘This book is the first systematic study of the gendered patterns in political support in Palestine, and offers an essential contribution to the field. Cowper-Coles presents remarkable, surprising, and crucially important findings. Not only is there a gender gap in Palestine, its direction challenges theorizing on the modern gender gap in the existing, largely Western-focused, literature. Why do women tend to support the Islamist Hamas more than men? Cowper-Coles offers answers that would be of great interest to scholars of gender in the Middle East, Islamist movements, and women and politics more broadly across the globe, as well as anyone intrigued by the fascinating tendencies of gendered politics in Palestine.’

Lihi Ben Shitrit, *Associate Professor of International Affairs at the University of Georgia, USA*

Taylor & Francis
Taylor & Francis Group
http://taylorandfrancis.com

Gender and Political Support

This book finds and explores a gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories whereby more women than men support Hamas, and more men than women support Fatah.

The author then shows how economic interests and religion largely explain this gender gap, and explores how the Israeli occupation, the Israel-Palestine conflict, women's rights, nationalism, and political repression impact Palestinian political support. She demonstrates how religion interacts with nationalist discourses, which in turn reinforce differential gender roles in Palestine. She also shows how patronage impacts political support in a gendered way, with Fatah's ability to provide employment opportunities being strongly linked to their support base amongst men. The book concludes with an analysis of similar trends in the wider Middle East, with women across the region tending to prefer religious parties, compared with men.

While making an important contribution to studies of Palestinian politics, this book also has implications for much broader issues, such as explorations of gender and political support beyond the Western context and understanding widespread female support for Islamist parties in the Middle East. It highlights the importance of situating explorations of political support within their wider context so as to understand how particularities of ideologies, economies and social structures might interact in a specific political system.

This book will be of great interest to students and scholars of gender studies, Middle East studies, and comparative politics. It will also appeal to those with a broader interest in Middle East politics and development.

Minna Cowper-Coles is a Research Fellow at the Global Institute of Women's Leadership at King's College London, UK. She previously taught at Birkbeck College, University of London, UK, where she gained her PhD in 2018.

Gender in a Global/Local World
Series Editors: Jane Parpart, *University of Massachusetts Boston, USA,* Marianne H. Marchand*, Universidad de las Américas Puebla, Mexico,* and Rirhandu Mageza-Barthel*, University of Kassel, Germany*

Gender in a Global/Local World critically explores the uneven and often contradictory ways in which global processes and local identities come together. Much has been and is being written about globalization and responses to it but rarely from a critical, historical, gendered perspective. Yet, these processes are profoundly gendered albeit in different ways in particular contexts and times. The changes in social, cultural, economic, and political institutions and practices alter the conditions under which women and men make and remake their lives. New spaces have been created - economic, political, social – and previously silent voices are being heard. North-South dichotomies are being undermined as increasing numbers of people and communities are exposed to international processes through migration, travel, and communication, even as marginalization and poverty intensify for many in all parts of the world. The series features monographs and collections which explore the tensions in a 'global/local world', and includes contributions from all disciplines in recognition that no single approach can capture these complex processes.

Recent titles in the series include:

Violence against Women in and beyond Conflict
The Coloniality of Violence
Julia Carolin Sachseder

The Politics of Trauma and Integrity
Stories of Japanese "Comfort Women"
Sachiyo Tsukamoto

Women, Migration, and Aging in the Americas
Analysing Dependence and Autonomy in Old Age
Edited by Marie-Pierre Arrizabalaga

For more information about this series, please visit: https://www.routledge.com/Gender-in-a-GlobalLocal-World/book-series/GENDERLOCAL

Gender and Political Support

Women and Hamas in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Minna Cowper-Coles

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2023
by Routledge
4 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN

and by Routledge
605 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10158

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

© 2023 Minna Cowper-Coles

The right of Minna Cowper-Coles to be identified as author of this work has been asserted by her in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Trademark notice: Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Cowper-Coles, Minna, author.
Title: Gender and political support: women and Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territories/Minna Cowper-Coles.
Other titles: Gender in a global/local world.
Description: Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2022. | Series: Gender in a global/local world | Includes bibliographical references and index.
Identifiers: LCCN 2022006761 (print) | LCCN 2022006762 (ebook) | ISBN 9781032011448 (hardback) | ISBN 9781032011493 (paperback) | ISBN 9781003177395 (ebook)
Subjects: LCSH: Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-Islāmīyah. | Women, Palestinian Arab–Political activity–West Bank. | Women, Palestinian Arab–Political activity–Gaza Strip. | Sex role–Political aspects–West Bank. | Sex role–Political aspects–Gaza Strip. | Women, Palestinian Arab–Economic aspects–West Bank. | Women, Palestinian Arab–Economic aspects–Gaza Strip.
Classification: LCC HQ1236.5.W45 C69 2022 (print) | LCC HQ1236.5.W45 (ebook) | DDC 305.42095694/2–dc23/eng/20220217
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022006761
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2022006762

ISBN: 978-1-032-01144-8 (hbk)
ISBN: 978-1-032-01149-3 (pbk)
ISBN: 978-1-003-17739-5 (ebk)

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395

Typeset in Times New Roman
by KnowledgeWorks Global Ltd.

Contents

List of Figures ix
List of Tables xi
Acknowledgements xiii
Glossary of Acronyms and Shortened Terms xvi

1 Introduction: The Gender Gap in Political Support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories 1

1.1 *The Gender Gap in the Occupied Palestinian Territories 2*
1.2 *Research Methods 14*
1.3 *Conclusion and Book Layout 21*

2 The Political Context in Palestine 24

2.1 *History 24*
2.2 *Geography 30*
2.3 *Political Parties and Movements 35*
2.4 *Conclusion 42*

3 Economy and Gender 43

3.1 *The Palestinian Economy 44*
3.2 *Socioeconomic Gender Differences in Palestine and Political Support 61*
3.3 *Conclusion 76*

4 Belief, Ideology and Gender 79

4.1 *Gendered Beliefs in the Palestinian Territories 80*
4.2 *Gendered Beliefs and Political Preferences 112*
4.3 *Conclusion 121*

5 Political Violence and Gender: Occupation, Resistance, and Oppression 125

5.1 *Resistance, Negotiations, and Political Support 125*
5.2 *Oppression 145*
5.3 *Conclusion 166*

6 Explaining the Gender Gap in Political Support 169

6.1 *Modelling the Gender Gap 169*
6.2 *Conclusion 191*

7 Beyond Palestine 193

7.1 *Regional Similarities and Differences 194*
7.2 *Gender and Political Support in the Arab World 199*
7.3 *Conclusion 206*

8 Conclusion 208

8.1 *Economy 209*
8.2 *Religion 211*
8.3 *Feminism 211*
8.4 *Oppression 212*

Interviews 214
Bibliography 218
Index 233

Figures

1.1	To show percentage support for Fatah by gender.	3
1.2	To show percentage support for Hamas by gender.	4
1.3	To show the gender gap in political support between Fatah and Hamas between 1998 and 2016.	6
2.1	Landscape near Taybeh, the West Bank, 19th March 2016.	25
2.2	To show political support in the Occupied Territories 1998–2016.	29
2.3	To show the gender gap in political support between Fatah and Hamas for the West Bank and Gaza between 1998 and 2016.	33
2.4	Showing percentage support for Fatah and Hamas by governorate.	34
2.5	Fatah's 'Nationalist Bloc' flag at Birzeit University student elections, 20th April 2015.	37
2.6	Hamas's 'Islamic Bloc' Parade at Birzeit University student elections, 20th April 2015.	40
3.1	Advertisement for Al-Quds Bank in Ramallah, 27th February 2016.	44
3.2	A women's collective making snacks in the West Bank, 27th March 2016.	61
3.3	To show gender differences in occupation.	68
3.4	To show family monthly income levels by gender.	70
3.5	To show education levels by gender.	75
4.1	To show religious self-identification by gender.	80
4.2	To show reported prayer frequency by gender.	81
4.3	Part of a mural in Ramallah showing a traditionally dressed Palestinian woman as emerging from, or constituting part of, the Palestinian landscape, 27th February 2016.	93
4.4	To show the placement of men and women on the Gender Equality Scale as percentages.	100
4.5	To show percentage support for 'leftist' parties (PFLP, DFLP, and PPP) by gender.	102
4.6	Women in a Hamas parade for student elections at Birzeit University, West Bank, 20th April 2015.	118

5.1 A poster for Hamas's Islamic Bloc displayed for the student elections at Birzeit University, 20th April 2015. 126
5.2 Mural of Leila Khaled on the Wall, 27th March 2016. 136
5.3 To show support and opposition to attacks on Israeli civilians by gender. 142
5.4 To show attitudes about the effectiveness of armed confrontations versus negotiations by gender. 143
5.5 To show support and opposition to the peace process by gender. 143
5.6 Mural in Ramallah appearing to show men as victims of torture, 27th February 2016. 146
6.1 To compare gender gaps in predicted probability of support for Hamas and Fatah in Models 1a and 3. 187
6.2 To compare gender gaps in predicted probability of support for Hamas and Fatah in Models 1a and 3 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. 188
6.3 To show 'female' coefficients for support for Hamas and Fatah in Model 1a. 189
6.4 To show 'female' coefficients for support for Fatah and Hamas in Model 3. 190

Tables

3.1 To show average monthly 'household income' for married and unmarried men and women. 70
5.1 To compare men and women's levels of support for attacks on Israeli civilians during the Second Intifada and afterwards during a relatively more peaceful period. 144
5.2 To compare men and women's attitudes towards the effectiveness of armed confrontations versus negotiations for achieving Palestinian aims during the Second Intifada and afterwards during a relatively more peaceful period. 145
5.3 To look at freedom to criticise the PA by gender for the West Bank and Gaza Strip before and after the 2007 split. 165
5.4 To look at negative views of the security services by gender for the West Bank and Gaza Strip before and after the 2007 split. 165
6.1 To compare intended vote with support for Fatah and Hamas for women and men. 171
6.2 To compare the ability of Models 1a and 1b to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas. 175
6.3 To compare the ability of Model 1b with Models 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e which include variables to control for socioeconomic status, to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas. 177
6.4 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e with Model 3, which includes a variable to control for level of religious belief, to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas. 182
6.5 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e, and 3 in the West Bank in the period 2007–2015 to explain the gender gap in political support. 184
6.6 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e, and 3 in the Gaza Strip in the period 2007–2015 to explain the gender gap in political support. 185

7.1 To compare the percentage of male and female support for centrist/nationalist, Islamist and leftist political parties using data from the Arab Barometer surveys. 201
7.2 To compare the percentage of male and female preferences for religious or non-religious parties using data from the Arab Barometer surveys. 202
7.3 To compare the ability of statistical models including socioeconomic status and religious belief variables to explain the gender gap in political support for Islamist and nationalist/centrists parties. 203
7.4 To compare the ability of statistical models including socioeconomic status and religious belief variables to explain the gender gap in preferences for religious and non-religious parties. 205

Acknowledgements

This book would not have been possible without the support and help of so many people.

I must start by thanking the many participants in the research. I was shown such generosity and trust. They shared so much of themselves in the interviews through telling stories, recounting experiences and expressing opinions. Many of the interviews were profoundly moving. I spoke to people whose husbands had been killed, sons tortured, and homes destroyed. My interviewees had faced bullets, tear gas, unemployment, humiliation, and the perpetual difficulties with permits, passports, and checkpoints. Each interview showed me variously the humour, courage or disillusionment provoked by the current situation in the Palestinian Territories. Interviewees and friends connected me with others, took me to meet family and friends in the more far-flung governorates, and provided me with countless cups of tea and delicious treats. I know that this book cannot do justice to even a fraction of what I was told, nor to the warmth and spirit that I was shown. I could write pages thanking each individual but of course cannot do so, so please accept these anonymous thanks.

More specific thanks must go to my interpreter. She was brilliant at translating, but also helped me to navigate the bus systems, and arrange interviews in every corner of the West Bank.

I would like to thank everyone at the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in Ramallah. I am very grateful that the PSR has continued in this valuable work over the years, maintaining integrity and transparency despite the difficult political situation. They introduced me to the polls and answered my questions with patience. Those working at the PSR all made me feel welcome, showing me the fun side of Ramallah and taking me hiking in the desert. I was taken to the polling meetings, given pizza and *knafeh* and, most importantly, taught how to make Arabic coffee properly.

Outside of the research, I was particularly lucky to be surrounded on each visit to the Palestinian Territories by different surrogate families. In Ramallah, I met and stayed with a great group of friends. Whether eating,

cooking, or on expeditions to every part of the West Bank, they included me in everything they did. I was also lucky enough to be invited numerous times to the beautiful home of one of my colleagues during my internship. I met her lovely daughters and ate *iftar* with them on their first year fasting. Near Nablus, I stayed in a guesthouse a number of times and was immediately taken in as part of the family. The owners showed me such a beautiful part of the West Bank, invited me for meals and introduced me to their enormous family. I am grateful also to the Kenyon Institute in Jerusalem for providing me with fantastic last-minute accommodation and the most friendly and eccentric of company.

I would like to thank Dotan and his mother for being my support base in Israel. They let me sleep on their sofa. Dotan also took me on several culinary expeditions through Tel Aviv and Jaffa, and accompanied me to and from Ben Gurion airport.

I would like to thank a number of people in London, who kindly met with me and replied to my emails, introducing me to various friends, colleagues and contacts in the Palestinian Territories. These include Robin and Annabelle Kealy, Sir Vincent Fean, Alan and Sarah Philps, and a Palestinian friend and Arabic tutor, who I will not name. In London I also must thank the brilliant Firas Al-Khawat who tutored me in Palestinian dialect and helped to hone my interview questions.

A special mention goes to Laleh Khalili who supported me in this research. It has been a joy working with such a brilliant scholar. Laleh has been a great help when I was doing my research in Palestine, putting me in touch with her friends in the region and pointing to important texts that I may otherwise have missed.

The most important cheerleader for my research has been Rosie Campbell. She has been relentlessly kind and helpful. I am particularly indebted to her for being able to guide me in this research, which is a considerable way beyond her usual area. But most important of all, in the difficult period between research and book, she has been there to encourage and cajole, always insisting that I do my research justice.

I would like to thank everyone who has read and commented on the various versions of this research and then the final book. These include my PhD examiners Rosie Shorrocks and Emma Murphy and my anonymous reviewers at Routledge. It was fantastic to have such scholarly insights on my work and all of your comments have been very helpful in shaping this final version. My wonderful friend Merryn waded through an earlier version of this book. She corrected all my misplaced commas and dodgy sentences, much of her work I fear I have now undone. Thank you!

I am of course very grateful for the support of everyone at Routledge, in particular my editor Emily Ross who has been enthusiastic about the project from the beginning.

I would also like to thank my parents, who both studied Arabic and introduced me to the Middle East. When living in Tel Aviv, aged 16, my parents, showing their usual irreverence for authority, took us to Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the height of the Second Intifada so we would see what was happening there. Bethlehem was deserted, under curfew and being patrolled by IDF jeeps. It was then that I first saw what life was like under occupation and that experience has remained with me ever since.

Finally, I would like to thank my closest family. My husband Dom has sustained me with warmth, humour, many weekends of solo childcare and a well-stocked cupboard of snacks through an often lonely and frustrating process. My wonderful children have been less of a help, but have provided much needed distractions, cuddles and perspective.

Glossary of Acronyms and Shortened Terms

Al-Mubadara	*(al-mubadara al-wataniya al-filastiniyya)* - Palestinian National Initiative
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
Fatah	(*harakat al-tahrir al-watani al-filastini*) - Palestinian National Liberation Movement
FIDA	(*al-ittihad al-dimuqrati al-filastini*) – Palestinian Democratic Union
Hamas	(*harakat al-muqawamah al-ʾislamiyyah*) - Islamic Resistance Movement
IDF	Israel Defense Forces (the Israeli Army)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PA	Palestinian Authority
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLC	Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PPP	Palestinian People's Party
PSR	Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research

1 Introduction

The Gender Gap in Political Support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Feminist research has historically struggled to make a case for the importance of gender in 'mainstream' politics and international relations. Questions surrounding women and equality have often been seen to be irrelevant or as add-ons to the more serious questions of war and peace, economies and elections. A notable exception has been in issues surrounding the so-called 'gender gap'. The term describes 'a significant difference in men's and women's party, candidate, and policy preferences' (Rinehart 1992, p. 13; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997). The phenomenon of a gender gap is one of the most visible signs of the importance of gender to the study of politics, because even small variations in political opinion between such large groups as men and women can lead to considerable differences in political outcomes (Conover 1988, p. 986). Gender gaps frequently occur in politics. Research shows that women and men often tend to prioritise different policies or favour different political parties.

Although studies of sex differences in voting behaviour date back to the 1930s, the most well-known case of a voting gender gap is in the United States of America where, since 1980, greater female support for Democratic presidential candidates and reduced female support for Republican presidential candidates have been widely reported (Norris 2003). In some elections, the female vote has been decisive in determining the outcome, such as the US 1996 presidential election when women preferred Bill Clinton to Bob Dole, or the 2020 election of Joe Biden over Donald Trump (Carroll 1999, p. 7; Gothreau 2021; Mattei et al. 1998, p. 412; Sigel 1999, p. 5). The 'discovery' of the gender gap in the United States in the early 1980s, and the subsequent media and political attention, means that not only has the study of gender politics become 'fashionable' (Rinehart 1992, p. 13), but the gender gap now 'shapes everything from elite political behaviour to election outcomes and public policy' (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004, p. 527). Political gender gaps, whether in referenda, elections, political support or policy preferences, have been found to exist at different times and across several continents.

While a greater understanding of voting and political preferences is of interest because of the role of voting in determining who has political power, and because of what voting says about the importance of different issues

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-1

and values to members of the public (Tilly 1995, p. 11), studies of the gender gap have also thrown light on how gender inequalities and the 'pressure to conform to gendered roles in society' can mean that women and men have distinct political perspectives (Mattei et al. 1998, p. 415). As such, studies of the gender gap play an important role in connecting the politics of the private sphere with the politics of government.

There are, as far as I can find, no studies explicitly of a gender gap in political support or voting in the Arab Middle East. This means that we are missing an understanding of this connection between the private sphere and political outcomes in a vast, varied, and volatile region. The need for this understanding is all the more pressing when considering that much of the international focus on the Middle East has been in encouraging democratisation and gender equality; but also considering the concern generated by the groundswell of support that has been shown for Islamist parties when democratic moments have occurred, and the violence that has resulted from the confusion and power plays in the wake of these elections.

This book examines how far explanations for the gender gap in western and democratic contexts can explain the Palestinian case, and as such how generally applicable they might be beyond their own context. This book also explores possible factors and explanations for gender differences in support that emerge distinctly from the Palestinian context. In extending research on gender and politics, it shines a light on phenomena that remain underexplored elsewhere, on how corruption, patronage, authoritarianism, Islamism, and nationalism might interact with gender and influence political support. As such, this book also serves to provide a better understanding of the support structures of two of the key political organisations in one of the world's most protracted conflicts. As a final step, I then take a brief look at the wider region to assess whether similar phenomena can be found, as a starting step towards assessing the broader patterns of gender and political support in the Middle East.

1.1 The Gender Gap in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

I found there to be a persistent, statistically significant difference in levels of support between men and women for the two main political factions in the Palestinian Territories. Men are more likely than women to support Fatah and women are more likely than men to support Hamas. Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 illustrate the gender gap using data from 75 Palestinian opinion polls dating from 1998 to 2016, conducted – usually – every three months (Center for Palestine Research and Studies (CPRS) polls 32, 33, 37–47, Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) polls 1–56 and Poll 52.1).

Figure 1.1 shows the percentage of respondents (of each gender) who responded 'Fatah' when asked 'Which of the following movements and parties do you support?' when given a choice of over ten different groups. Figure 1.2

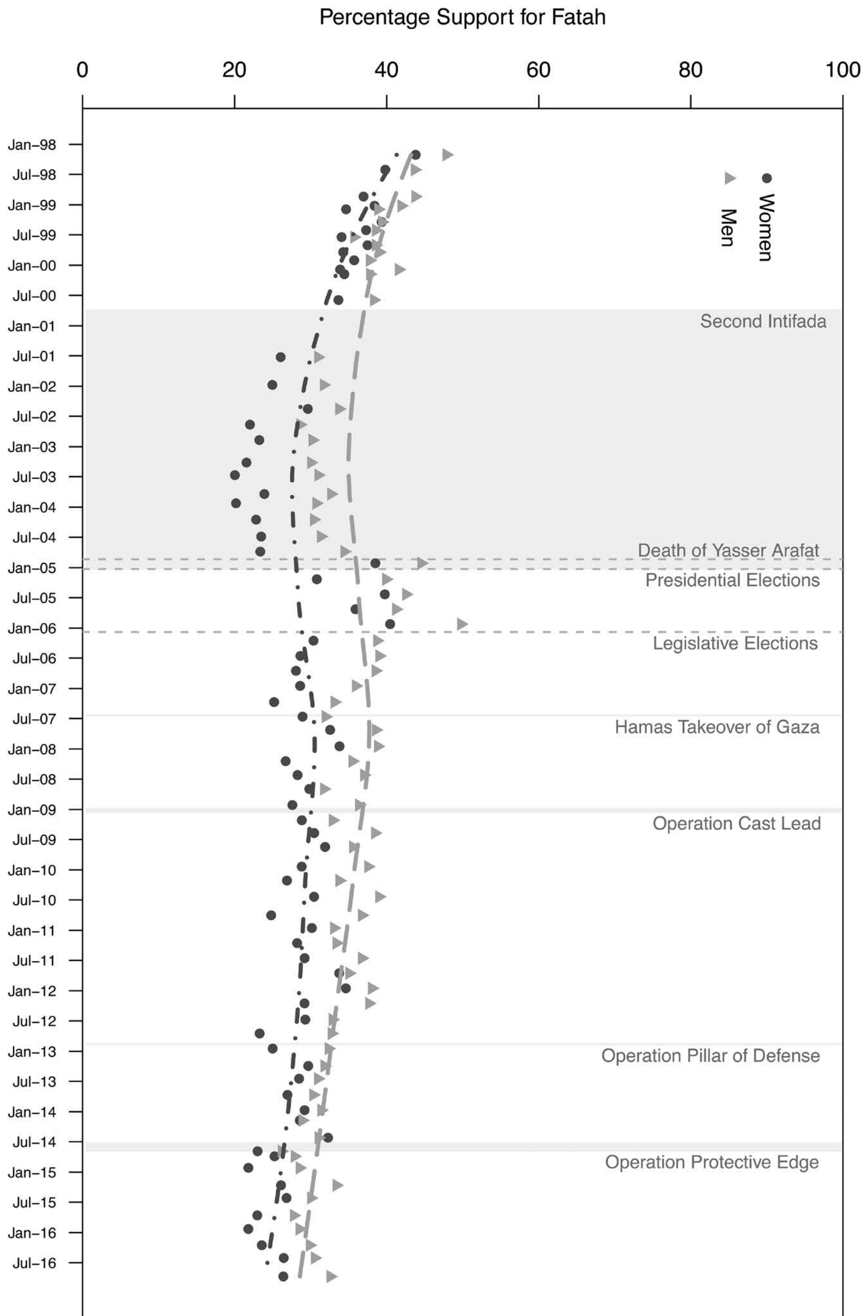

Figure 1.1 To show percentage support for Fatah by gender. Salient political events have been added to aid interpretation.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37–47, PSR Polls 1–61

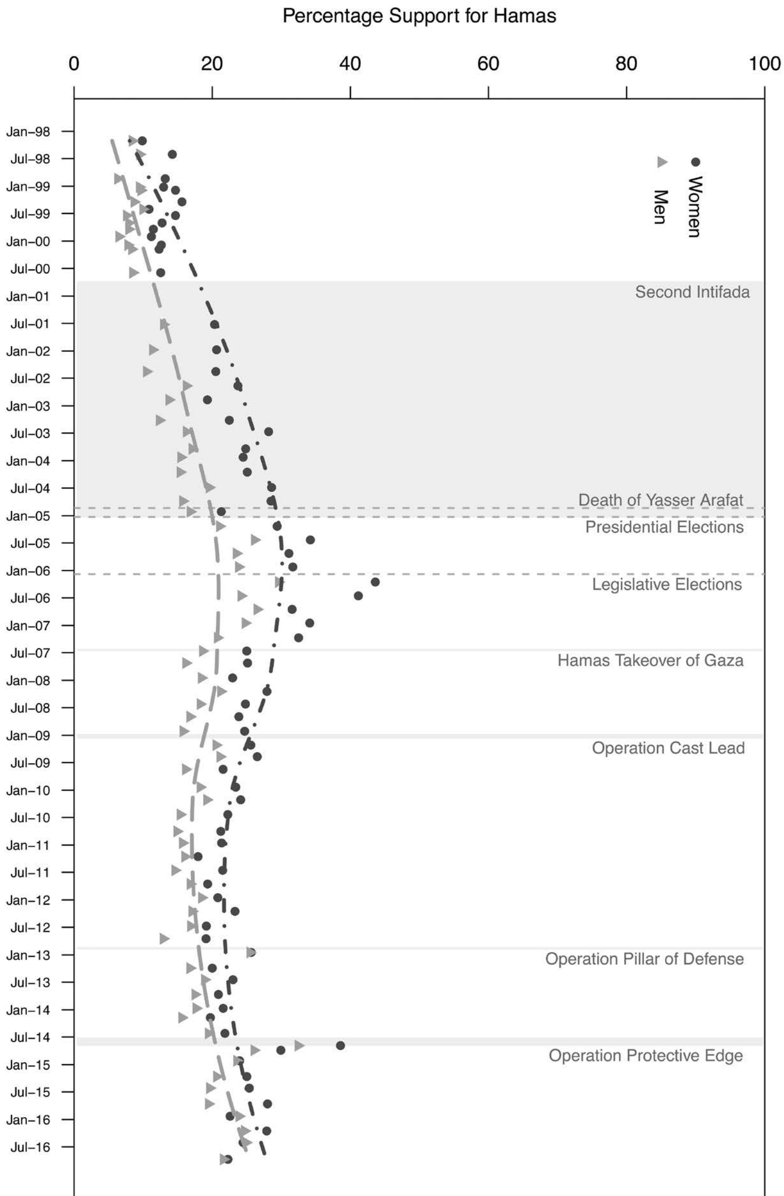

Figure 1.2 To show percentage support for Hamas by gender. Salient political events have been added to aid interpretation.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37–47, PSR Polls 1–61.

shows the percentage of respondents who chose ‘Hamas’. These charts are annotated to highlight different major events and to provide some context for the results. The percentage of women who say they support Fatah or Hamas is indicated with dark grey circles, while the percentage of men

who say they support Fatah or Hamas is indicated with light grey triangles. Smoothed lines in dark and light grey have been added to indicate the general trends for women and men.

These graphs show that from 1998 up to September 2016, men have said they support Fatah more than women (except in June 2014) and women have said they support Hamas more than men (except in June 2016). The percentages fluctuate over time and are clearly impacted by events on the ground in the Palestinian Territories such as Yasser Arafat's death, the legislative elections, and the Israeli assaults on Gaza (operations 'Cast Lead', 'Pillar of Defence', and 'Protective Edge'). Nonetheless, the gender differences in political support exist throughout the polls.

To illustrate and explore this gender gap as an entity in itself, I combined the data used in Figure 1.1 and Figure 1.2 using the following equation, derived from standard equations for measuring the gender gap (Jones 2012):

Palestine Gender Gap = ((% Women support Fatah - % Women support Hamas) - (% Men support Fatah - % Men support Hamas))

Figure 1.3 shows the results. A negative result indicates that women support Hamas more than men and/or men support Fatah more than women, and a positive result would show that men support Hamas more than women and/or women support Fatah more than men. The further a point falls from the zero line, the greater the gender gap. The gender gap is negative throughout the 75 polls but increases and diminishes over time. It reaches a maximum of -27.4 in June 2006 and a minimum of −1.2 in June 2014. As the gap persists throughout the 75 polls, it suggests that this phenomenon warrants further investigation.

From a western feminist perspective, the Palestinian gender gap in political support might seem puzzling. Hamas has a reputation as a violent organisation which, through the imposition of Islamic law, oppresses women, while Fatah is largely considered secular and pro-peace. On both these counts, the idea that women support Hamas more than men jars with feminist beliefs that women should seek gender equality, and that women are largely supportive of peace over violence where possible.

That being said, some gender gap scholars might see the trend in the Palestinian Territories as replicating what has been termed the 'traditional gender gap' which is where women tended to vote to the right of men earlier in the 20th century, before shifting to the left of men from around the 1980s (in the United States at least) (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2003). However, I would argue that the whole left-right schema does not help us to understand the political dynamics of the Palestinian Territories. The left-right spectrum is seen as being formed of 'two dimensions: one has been termed the socialist versus laissez-faire - or left-right - dimension and the other, the libertarian - or liberal - versus authoritarian dimension' (Evans et al. 1996, p. 94). While there are several active 'leftist' organisations in the Palestinian Territories associated with socialist and communist beliefs, the principle differences between Fatah and Hamas cannot be explained in terms of laissez-faire economics and authoritarianism versus redistributive

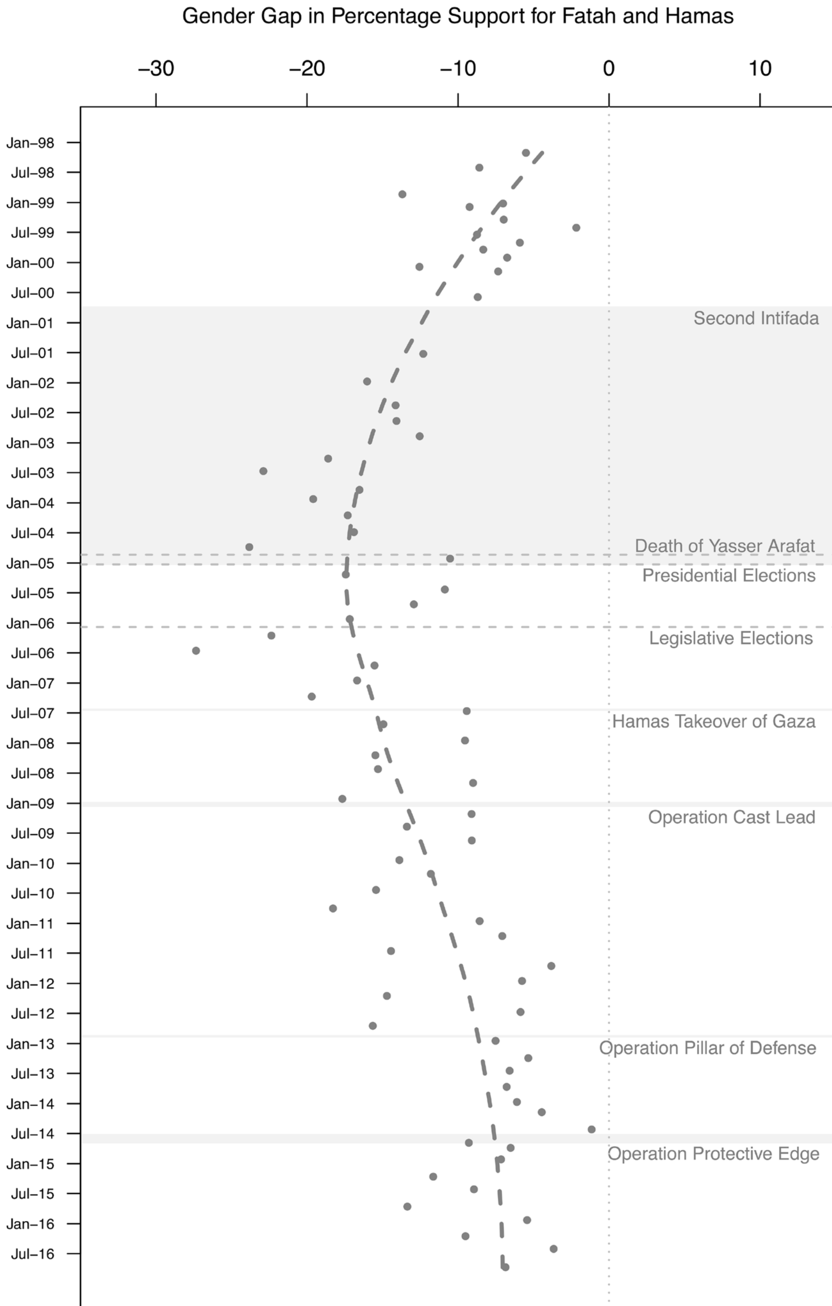

Figure 1.3 To show the gender gap in political support between Fatah and Hamas between 1998 and 2016.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37–47, PSR Polls 1–61

or socialist economics and social liberalism. Simply transporting concepts such as left and right from studies of the United States to Palestine would be deeply problematic.

As there are no simple explanations for the gender gap in the Palestinian Territories, it is necessary to look at past gender gap research and beyond for possible alternative explanations. In this book, the ideas presented in the interviews together with the academic literature on the Middle East and Palestine are used in addition to the literature on gender and politics to generate hypotheses for possible factors which might explain the Palestinian gender gap in political support.

There are numerous academic papers and books which explore the gender gap in the United States, drawing distinctions between different demographic groups, different types of elections, and different time periods and highlighting the issues which they think account for the gender gap in political support and voting (Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Norrander 1999; Howell and Day 2000; Alvarez and McCaffery 2003; Norris 2003; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Kaufmann 2006; Whitaker 2008; Blinder and Rolfe 2018; Harsgor 2018). Following the United States academic literature, several papers and books continue to emerge about gender differences (or similarities) in political support or voting in other countries (Togeby 1994; Studlar et al. 1998; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Hill 2003; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Bergh 2007; Campbell and Childs 2008; Desposato and Norrander 2008; Giger 2009; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Abendschön and Steinmetz 2014; Barisione 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Spierings and Zaslove 2017).

The gender gap literature is based primarily on statistical analyses of opinion polls and exit polls. In almost every study of the gender gap, scholars tend to find 'more similarity than difference' between men and women (Campbell 2017). However, scholars focus on gender differences because of their importance for gender theory and for political practice (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Campbell 2017). Political theory suggests that voters choose parties and candidates 'on the basis of the benefits they think or are told they will derive', these benefits range from material benefits through to simply 'an affirmation of identity' (Evans 2004, p. 3). Studies of voting often have to 'discern common elements in voter choice' to help identify major factors that motivate people, in so doing they simplify and generalise in order to create models of political behaviour (Evans 2004, p. 7). Studying the gender gap helps to identify how and where men and women might perceive different benefits deriving from different political parties. Scholars of the gender gap have suggested several explanations for differences in men's and women's political opinions. These explanations include differences in socioeconomic status, differences in beliefs, such as feminism and religiosity, and differences in attitudes caused by gender socialisation during childhood or through adult experiences.

The gender gap literature is largely based on analyses of how gender interacts with political attitudes in western, European and/or – in Inglehart and Norris' terminology – 'postindustrial' societies. The case of the Occupied Palestinian Territories presents a significantly different political context. The Palestinian Territories are not a 'state', but two territories – the West Bank and the Gaza Strip – occupied by Israel since 1967. They are under the ultimate control of the Israeli military. Within the Occupied Territories, nationalist rhetoric dominates the political sphere and the question of ending the occupation is the overriding political priority. Another feature of the political context in Palestine is the absence of an open and democratic political environment, both in terms of the Israeli Occupation but also within the Palestinian administered territories. Several studies explore the political context of the Palestinian territories bringing nuance, insight, and scholarship (e.g. Sayigh 1997; Pappé 2006; Usher 2006; Gunning 2007; Lybarger 2007; Baylouny 2009; Hilal 2010; Pearlman 2011; Bröning 2013; Jamal 2013; Roy [2011] 2014; Gren 2015; Tartir 2015; Harker 2017; Baconi 2018; Zeira 2018; Dana 2020; El Kurd 2020; Khalidi 2020). A further body of literature looks at women and their political or resistance involvement in the Palestinian Territories (e.g. Abdo 1994; Sharoni 1995; Giacaman et al. 1996; Hasso 1998; Abdulhadi 1998; Johnson and Kuttab 2001; Baxter 2007; Jamal 2007; Richter-Devroe 2011; Jad 2011a; Jad 2011b; Richter-Devroe 2012; Ababneh 2014; Jad 2018; Richter-Devroe 2018). Additionally, there is a vibrant body of research on how gender interacts with politics in the Arab Middle East. There are no studies of gender gaps in political support, although several pieces of research contribute to our understanding, by looking at women, Islamist organisations, clientelism, occupation, and political support (Ahmed 1992; Moghadam 1994; Azzam 1996; Karmi 1996; Taraki 1996; Chatty and Rabo 1997; Al-Ali 2000; Moghadam 2004; Mahmoud 2005; Deeb 2006; Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009; Esfandiari and Badran 2010; Khalili 2010; Blaydes 2011; Deeb and Harb 2013; Ben Shitrit 2013; Bush and Jamal 2014; Benstead and Lust 2015; Benstead et al. 2015; Benstead 2016; Masoud et al. 2016; Ben Shitrit et al. 2017; Benstead 2019). Many gender gap scholars have pointed to socioeconomic status as a possible cause for gender differences in political support (Howell and Day 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Edlund and Pande 2002; Hill 2003; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Bergh 2007; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Barisione 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Spierings and Zaslove 2017). The idea is that there are differences between men and women in terms of income, occupation, and education which explain the gender gap. In the United States, where women tend to vote more than men for the relatively left-wing Democrats, one explanation has been proposed that women are voting this way because they are on average poorer than men and as such benefit more than men from redistributive policies. Women are, in general, less well off than men on a global level. Howell and Day write: 'Women tend to earn less than men and are more likely to live in poverty … Thus, their

relative liberalism could stem from rational self-interest' (Howell and Day 2000, p. 860; Hill 2003). Bergh explains:

> women have a lower average score on almost any measure of socioeconomic status, and, furthermore, that socioeconomic status generally correlates with voting. Those who have a high socioeconomic status are more likely to vote for a right-of-center party than those with a below average socioeconomic status.
>
> *(Bergh 2007, p. 237)*

In Inglehart and Norris's 'developmental theory' (Inglehart and Norris 2000), they hypothesise that economic development and societal modernisation change the direction of the gender gap from being a 'traditional' gender gap (with women voting to the right of men) to being a 'modern' gender gap (with women voting to the left of men) (Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 441; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Giger 2009, p. 475). This finds support in the work of Giger (2009) and partially in the work of Abendschön and Steinmetz (2014). Giger (2009, p. 475) suggests that the changes in family setup, increased female entrance into the labour force and access to education, and the shifting values that have accompanied these changes drive gender realignment. Further, she suggests that these developments make women both more economically vulnerable and more politically autonomous leading to their increased support of left-wing parties (Giger 2009, p. 475).

Many studies look at more specific explanations of how the gendered economy impacts political support. Economic explanations often point to employment status as a possible explanation for supporting one party over another as there tend to be gender disparities both in employment levels overall, but also in terms of type of employment (Manza and Brooks 1998; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Giger 2009; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Immerzeel et al. 2015). Some academics suggest that because women tend to do more 'caring' than men, whether for children, the disabled, the sick, or the elderly, they might prioritise healthcare, welfare, and education (Ruddick 1989; Manza and Brooks 1998; Studlar et al. 1998; Andersen 1999; Howell and Day 2000, p. 860; Campbell and Childs 2015, p. 629). Other scholars consider the role that education levels play in explaining the gender gap (Howell and Day 2000; Campbell et al. 2009, p. 181; Barisione 2014). More educated individuals often have different views on political issues than those with lower levels of education. Howell and Day hypothesise that education increases the gender gap by enabling women to become less 'dependent on men' (Howell and Day 2000, pp. 870–871). Studies in the United States in particular have found that these differences are often moderated and amplified according to generation and racial identity (Harsgor 2018). The role of the family plays a possibly confounding role, as individuals might prioritise the family's economic interest above their

own. In a family unit, both sexes may prioritise policies which benefit the main breadwinner and therefore the family as a whole. Some studies suggest that because of this, rising divorce rates explain increases in gender differences in voting behaviour as individuals become more concerned for their own economic interests over those of the family unit (Edlund and Pande 2002; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006).

While many scholars suggest that 'class stratification does not tell the whole story of the gender gap' (Howell and Day 2000, p. 860), most scholars suggest that how gender interacts with voting is largely mediated by the different ways women and men interact with the economy (see Manza and Brooks 1998; Studlar et al. 1998; Andersen 1999; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Hill 2003; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Bergh 2007; Giger 2009; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Immerzeel et al. 2015).

Gender differences in socioeconomic status seem likely to be particularly salient in the Occupied Palestinian Territories as there are stark differences in the levels of employment and poverty between men and women (Miftah 2013; Hamdan and Bargothi 2014), and the two major political factions, Hamas and Fatah, differ in how they provide (or are expected to be able to provide) economic and employment benefits and welfare and services. Research suggests that the mechanisms connecting private economic status with political support in the Palestinian Territories might differ from those indicated in the gender gap literature, with patronage networks, family structure, and religious networks playing important roles (see, e.g. Esposito 1984/1998; Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2004; Gunning 2007; Jad 2011a; Bröning 2013; Roy 2014; Jamal 2013; Dana 2020; El Kurd 2020). Further, studies in the Arab region have shown that these mechanisms are highly gendered with, for example, women tending to be excluded from political patronage networks more than men (Benstead 2016; Benstead 2019).

Fatah, as the dominant force in the Palestinian Authority (PA), is able, thanks largely to international aid donations, to provide employment in the public sector, and has recently tried to encourage investment in the private sector through promoting stability and a favourable economic environment (Gunning 2007, p. 43; Bröning 2013, p. 93). However, Fatah's reputation has been tarnished by widespread allegations of corruption and nepotism.

Hamas presents very different economic prospects. On the one hand, it has close links to a broad network of Islamic charitable organisations which have provided services and support to the needy (see, e.g. Esposito 1984/1998; Gunning 2007; Jad 2011a; Caridi 2012; Bröning 2013; Jamal 2013; Roy [2011] 2014). Further, it has a reputation as being less corrupt than Fatah. However, it has also been largely shunned by the international community. Their time in control of the Gaza Strip has been characterised by the Israeli blockade and the restriction of goods crossing the borders (Esposito 1984/1998, p. 230; Caridi 2012, p. 277, 308; Jamal 2013, p. 293).

Therefore, Fatah might seem to be a cogent choice for those seeking economic stability, with employment and a vested interest in the status quo,

while Hamas is more likely to appeal to poorer and more vulnerable individuals reliant on welfare provision, and those who feel overlooked in the current economic context.

Family is likely to be more important in areas where there are weak state structures and insecurity, and its role may also be enhanced through the use of patronage networks (Kamrava 1998, p. 45). Therefore, it could be of increased importance in the Palestinian Territories. If family plays a major role in shaping economic interests, then the political impact of gender differences in socioeconomic status might be minimal. However, some studies of the family structure in the Middle East and in the Palestinian Territories indicate that employment is likely to be a much bigger factor for men's sense of self than women's (see, e.g. Kandiyoti 1988; Moghadam 2004; Baxter 2007).

Several academics consider religiosity as a major factor impacting how men and women vote (Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 446; Edlund and Pande 2002; Inglehart and Norris 2003, p. 80; Desposato and Norrander 2008; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Barisione 2014). Scholars have found women to be more religious than men (Edlund and Pande 2002; Desposato and Norrander 2008; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012). Certainly, this was one of the major explanations for the 'traditional gender gap' as women's 'more conservative leanings' were linked to their 'greater religiosity' (Norrander and Wilcox 2008, p. 506).

However, understanding the impact of religion on political attitudes and behaviour is complex. In the literature, women have been found to be more liberal than men on many indicators, yet much of the major scholarship on the gender gap associates religious belief with conservative values (Inglehart and Norris 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2003). Norrander and Wilcox show how in the United States, those who attend church frequently from evangelical denominations are becoming more conservative over time (Norrander and Wilcox 2008, p. 521). However, Howell and Day find that being religious can make people either more conservative or more left-wing (Howell and Day 2000, p. 862). Edlund and Pande find that being religious impacts men and women's political preferences differently, with religious women less likely than religious men to support the Democrats (Edlund and Pande 2002, p. 947).

There are clear differences between Fatah and Hamas in terms of religiosity: Hamas is an Islamist party while Fatah is broadly secular, in that it adheres to a 'soft secularism' (Shikaki 1998; Lybarger 2007, p. 1; Bröning 2013). Therefore, if women are more religious than men, as indicated could be the case above, then this might lead to them supporting Hamas more than men and Fatah less. While religion is certainly likely to play a role in explaining the Palestinian gender gap, especially given Hamas's Islamic identity, the context – where religion is tied up with the nationalist framework and the wider context of Islam in the modern Middle East – is very different from Europe and the United States.

Feminism is also included in many accounts of the gender gap (Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Togeby, 1994; Howell and Day 2000; Hill 2003; Bergh 2007; Campbell 2017). Conover (1988, p. 1005) suggests that women are more likely to be feminist than men and concluded that 'a substantial part of the gender gap can be attributed to the liberal issue positions adopted by feminist women'. Bergh (2007, p. 235) also found that feminism contributes to the gender gap in the United States and Norway. These scholars have found feminist consciousness to explain women being more likely to vote for or support left-of-centre parties than men. Others have found that feminism does not create substantial gender differences, for example, Togeby and Cook and Wilcox have found that 'feminist attitudes seem equally strong for men and women alike' (Cook and Wilcox 1991; Togeby 1994, p. 385). Campbell has suggested that differences in the impact of feminism could be accounted for by considering the positioning of political parties (Campbell 2017).

There is also a difference between Fatah and Hamas with regard to their feminist credentials: Hamas has often been considered as restricting women while Fatah does not have this reputation to the same degree (Hammami 1990; Abdo 1994, p. 165; Jamal 2001, p. 271; Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 189). Therefore, if women are more feminist than men, as indicated might be the case above, then they might support Fatah more than men and Hamas less. Here a tension begins to arise, as if women are both more religious and more feminist than men, then these tendencies might drive women's political support in opposite directions.

Therefore, whether women, in general, tend to support Fatah or Hamas more will be determined by the salience of religion and feminism in Palestinian society. While Inglehart and Norris propose that the salience of these beliefs is determined by the level of societal modernisation, in the Palestinian Territories it might be the case that the pervasive nationalist discourse determines their salience. Indeed, many forms of nationalism have been found to either postpone or deprioritise women's emancipation while emphasising the importance of cultural and religious forms of identity (Kandiyoti 1991a; Kandiyoti 1991b; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010).

Furthermore, the tensions indicated in the literature above might be undermined by the way that many Muslim women see Islam. There are several lines of scholarship and thought which explore the potential for women's rights and female agency to be found within Islam and the Islamist movement (Azzam 1996, p. 222; Karmi 1996; Mahmood 2005; Ben Shitrit 2013). The extent to which this is the case may lead to questions being raised over the usual proposal that religion and feminism pull in different political directions.

There are numerous studies of women's experiences in nationalist, religious, and feminist movements in the Palestinian Territories and the wider Middle East which may help to elucidate the relationship between religion, feminism, and nationalism (see, e.g. Peteet 1991; Ahmed 1992; Sharoni 1995; Azzam 1996; Taraki 1996; Abdulhadi 1998; Abu-Lughod 1998; Hasso 1998;

Al-Ali, 2000; Jamal 2001; Abu-Lughod 2002; Mahmood 2005; Deeb 2006; Jad 2011a; Richter-Devroe 2011; Ben Shitrit 2013; Muhanna-Matar 2014; Jad 2018; Richter-Devroe 2018). Further, there are also a number of studies that describe some of the constraints upon women's behaviour which also might help explain how they interact with different ideologies and opportunities (e.g. Kandiyoti 1988; Azzam 1996; Abdo 1999; Baxter 2007; Gren 2015). As such both religion and feminism as possible explanations for the gender gap should be considered in tandem as the boundaries between these beliefs may not be clearly delineated.

A major consideration when considering the gender gap in the Palestinian Territories, but one that is not in the general gender gap literature, is the role of the ongoing occupation, the conflict with Israel, and the prospects of peace.

Attitudes towards, and social constructs around, the use of force are highly gendered. Men tend to be 'linked' to warfare and the use of violence in a way which women are not (Tickner 1992, p. 6; Segal 2008, p. 21). Women, because of their increased involvement in caring and nurturing roles, or because of how they have been socialised, are often considered to be more compassionate and as having more potential as 'peacemakers' (Gilligan 1982; Kaplan 1982; Ruddick 1989). Many scholars have found that men and women differ in their attitudes towards the use of force in both domestic politics and in foreign policy with women tending to oppose it more than men (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Conover 1988; Howell and Day 2000; Kaufmann 2002; Eichenberg 2003; Blinder and Rolfe 2018). Attitudes towards the use of force have helped explain gender differences in political support, particularly in contexts where this has become a politically salient issue (Kaufmann 2002, p. 296).

In exploring the relationship between gender, violence, non-violence, and support for political parties, Palestine might differ significantly from western political contexts. Fatah and Hamas have different stances with the former favouring negotiations and the latter favouring (or at least aligning themselves rhetorically with) the use of armed or violent resistance (Shikaki 1998; Gunning 2007; Bröning 2013; Baconi 2018). The context of the national struggle is likely to make questions over the use of force for political ends much more salient in determining political support, but it also might reduce gender differences in attitudes. Several studies suggest that in liberatory or ethno-nationalist contexts, or in cases where violence is used against a perceived injustice, women are more likely to support the use of violence (Toby 1994; Eichenberg 2003; Alison 2009). Indeed, in studies in the Middle East, there is little evidence of a gender gap in terms of support for the use of non-violent methods to resolve the Israel-Palestine conflict (Tessler and Warriner 1997; Tessler et al. 1999; Ben Shitrit et al. 2017).

Finally, it is important also to consider the role of political oppression, which is not considered in the gender gap literature. In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, people face potential violence and arrest, among

other possible punishments, for their political actions. The Israeli occupying army, the PA security services, and Hamas all continue to suppress free speech, arrest, and even kill political opponents (Gunning 2007; Blecher 2009; Bregman 2014; Freedom House 2017). There is a very real possibility that an individual will face violence or imprisonment because of their support of one or other political group, as such individuals will have to weigh up this risk when deciding who to support, or whether it is wise to publicly declare their support. This has two implications for this book. On the one hand, political oppression could mean that polling data is unreliable or misrepresenting the true levels of support. On the other, political oppression might also be gendered and as such explain the differences in reported political support in the polls.

1.2 Research Methods

Researching this gender gap means moving beyond the studies which already exist and developing new ideas and explanations, as such it is not enough to simply replicate the methods from the western gender gap research. Therefore, instead of basing my analysis solely on the opinion polls, I also conducted 81 interviews with both experts and with a broad range of ordinary Palestinians. I combine quantitative, opinion poll-based research and qualitative, interview-based research, with the hope that these two different forms should be 'mutually illuminative' (Bryman 2012, p. 628). Indeed, the prominent scholar of the gender gap, Pippa Norris, recommends a 'multi method' approach as a way of furthering research on the gender gap and enabling greater understanding of voting preferences (Norris 2003, pp. 13 – 14). Childs suggests:

> Capturing the contours of women's mass political participation in electoral politics is probably best undertaken by survey research; understanding how women feel about their participation is most likely to be forthcoming in in-depth interviews and in focus groups.
>
> *(Childs 2008, p. xx)*

Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used on the understanding that they are just partial representations of a complex social fabric that, while highly variable, does have some broad trends which help explain power dynamics and the interplay of gender with political support in Palestine.

Opinion poll data can be used to address descriptive questions, as well as to provide evidence to test different explanations. It is this data which establishes the main premise of my research; that there is a gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It also helps to ensure that my research speaks to the broader Palestinian context beyond the individuals that I interview. Further, statistical analysis allows consideration of the ways in which political support has changed over time. This

means that my research can consider the period from 1998 up to 2016 rather than being 'suspended' at the time of the interviews in 2014–2016. Finally, the quantitative research enables this study to speak to the wider literature on gender gaps, political support, and opinion polls. The analysis in Chapter 7 considers whether a gender gap might exist in the Middle East region more broadly.

The interviews are necessary for more in-depth understanding. They provide a better exploration of *how* and *why* gender interacts with political support, through hearing people's own experiences and opinions about societal norms and political parties. The qualitative research also suggests which variables should be used in the quantitative analysis, through interviewees' own theorisations and explanations. Further, the interviews help to show whether and in what ways the opinion polls' results are meaningful. Finally, the interviews provide illustrations and examples to illuminate the quantitative analysis and give voice to the narratives of Palestinians.

As a note on the research methods, I would like to mention my role as the researcher. I do not aim to be neutral, as such, but I do want to honestly present the views which were expressed to me. In terms of my political opinions, I came to and leave this research supporting Palestinian calls for independence and the end of the Israeli Occupation, but without a clear view as to how this is likely to be achieved. Further, I am a feminist, but find narrow understandings of feminism deeply problematic.

I have worried that, by conducting research in Palestine on the subject of gender and political support, I might unwittingly be exploiting or reinforcing global inequalities. Does my research reinforce stereotypes about the Middle East as undemocratic and violent, and Middle Eastern women as weak and voiceless? Is a study so linked to the idea of democracy and gender drawing attention away from the great injustices being enacted daily upon Palestinian people or reinforcing ideas about the unsuitability of democracy for the people of the Middle East? Am I contributing to the exploitation of the 'Orient' by the 'Occident', and the creation of 'orientalist' stereotypes (Said 1995). I am very aware that my research could be portrayed in these ways. Therefore, I have tried to ensure that I conducted my research carefully, transparently, and reflectively. I hope that by taking the opinions, theories, and self-representations of those I interviewed seriously in this research and by fairly portraying their views I am producing work which gives a more nuanced understanding of the political situation in Palestine, and perhaps in the wider Middle East, and I believe that is a valuable contribution to make.

1.2.1 Opinion Polls

The majority of the opinion poll data used is from the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) where I interned in 2015 in Ramallah, in the West Bank. It includes full survey results for 40 polls, which had

been conducted approximately every three months between July 2000 and December 2010 (*Polls 1–38*), in December 2011 (*Poll 42*) and June 2015 (*Poll 56*). I also have, by gender and region, the answers to the question 'Which of the following movements and parties do you support?' for 35 polls conducted between 1998 and 2000 (*CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37–47*) and March 2011 and September 2016 (*PSR Polls 39–55, 57–61* including an extra *Poll 52.1*). Arab Barometer Waves 1–5 are used in Chapter 7 to allow the consideration of gender gaps in the wider Arab world.

As part of my internship, I observed how opinion polls are carried out at the PSR by observing the process that went into conducting *Poll 56*. I made notes and asked questions as the polling was being conducted, joined training sessions for field workers, and spent a day with a pair of field workers carrying out the survey. Then I interviewed four people from the PSR to reflect upon the process (Habib, Hammad, Hassan, and Wahid).

Each poll aimed to survey 1,200 individuals to be representative of the Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem (Hassan). The opinion poll sampling is conducted according to a rigorous method of randomly selecting locations within the 16 Palestinian governorates. In theory, in each area, there are 150 homes, and each pair of field researchers select one home randomly to start with. They then count every 15 homes to get ten homes per location. One issue was that the sampling was based on maps that were old, meaning newer areas in the West Bank, and houses and buildings which had been bombed in Gaza, were not accounted for (Wahid).

All of the field workers that I met were women. Hammad explained that this is the case because they have greater access due to "the cultural situation in Palestine" which means that "usually the man is at work and the woman is at home and she cannot let [a male researcher] inside when she is alone." (Hammad). Research in Morocco has shown that the gender and religious dress of the interviewer can affect responses on issues such as gender equality and religion (Blaydes and Gillan, 2013; Benstead 2014a; Benstead 2014b). In Palestine, as all the field workers were women and most of them (in the West Bank at least) wore a headscarf but not more conspicuous religious dress, there should be little variation in responses due to the gender or appearance of the field workers.

They conduct polls on Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays. Fridays and Saturdays are the usual weekend for Palestinians (although this varies for different jobs and different areas). Spreading the survey over both a workday and the weekend would help with the issue of women being overrepresented during home visits on weekdays, as was the case on the day I spent with the field researchers. In each home, the field researchers note all the adults over 18 and then use a Kish table to randomly select one individual to interview (Hammad; Hassan).

In some interviews, the respondent did not understand or know the answer to certain questions and so repeatedly asked the field researcher for clarification or what they thought. This is probably because of a combination of

the formal language of the questions and a lack of interest in politics on the part of the respondent. The researchers had all attended training workshops before the poll and so any lack of clarity or questions that they may have had would have been addressed then. This should have ensured a degree of uniformity in how the field researchers replied to questions about the survey.

It should be noted that family members often sat with us as the respondent answered the questions, contributing from time to time. The presence of family members and the field researcher is also likely to create a certain amount of 'social desirability bias' in the surveys, meaning that respondents 'provide answers that they deem socially acceptable or that will paint them in a positive light' (Masoud et al. 2016, p. 15).

The issues with housing, women's overrepresentation, and the impact of the presence of family members and the field workers all may lead to bias in the responses. On the whole, though, the sampling system seemed to work well, and all methods of polling have their flaws. The hope is that, due to the scale of the poll, small irregularities are evened out and systematic bias is removed. Certainly, door-to-door polling over weekends is probably the best way of gaining access to a broadly representative sample of the population in Palestine. Digital or telephone polling is likely to be more difficult and exclude poorer and older residents.

There is also the important question of the extent to which the political climate might impact how people responded to the survey questions. Many have told both the opinion polls and me in interviews that they do not consider it safe to express their views in public. The polls try to address this by ensuring the anonymity of respondents, who are only identified with a number. The completed questionnaires were returned to the supervisor at the end of each day in sealed envelopes.

However, there are a number of questions surrounding how well the polls represent Islamists, with there being a possibility that Islamists avoid answering surveys or else may do so inaccurately (Wahid; Gunning 2007, p. 21). I cannot say that I saw any evidence of this bias in the process of producing the polls. I do not believe that polls can ever truly represent the 'truth' of public opinion, nor that public opinion is static, but they can be used, like interviews, as 'evidence' of how people interact with politics. However, it cannot be denied that the focus of my research concerns areas where expressing an honest opinion could be risky. I address this issue further in Chapter 5.

The opinion poll data was initially collected in Arabic, then translated into English for distribution. There is also a difference between the official language used in the polls and the spoken dialect. Between the respondent and the final analysis, there are several points at which meanings of questions and responses may be slightly altered, through interpretations and translations.

To help to understand how the polling questions might be understood, in my interviews I asked about some of the survey questions, surrounding

topics such religion and the economy, allowing me to avoid misconstruing the data. I also try to ensure that I discuss any potential variation and misconceptions from the polling data to be as transparent as possible.

1.2.2 Interviews

I interviewed 81 people between June 2014 and July 2016 in London, Brighton, using Skype to Gaza, in the governorates of Jenin, Tubas, Tulkarm, Nablus, Qalqilya, Salfit, Ramallah, Jericho, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron and one in Tel Aviv. Most interviews were recorded, but a few interviewees asked that I make notes instead.

The interviews fit roughly into two types: elite interviews with 'experts' and 'non-expert' interviews with ordinary people. 'Expert' interviews were unstructured interviews with people with in-depth knowledge on some aspect of my area of research. Some were facilitated through referrals and introductions from academics, journalists, and former civil servants I had met in London, others – particularly for the interviews with Hamas – were arranged through cold calling. The 'experts' included high-level politicians from different political factions, academics, journalists, pollsters, and the directors of three different non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Ramallah. Expert interviews play an important role in providing background understanding of the situation in Palestine and the ideological perspectives and political behaviour of the key players.

The 'non-expert' interviews were semi-structured interviews with people from a range of backgrounds and locations in the Palestinian Territories. My 'purposive sampling' sought to interview people from a broad geographical range of places (from all 16 governorates), as well as ensuring I spoke to a roughly representative number of refugees, men and women, older and younger people, people of different religions, educated and less educated people, and rural and urban dwellers (Bryman 2012, p. 418). Interviews were arranged using a snowball sampling method, meaning they were largely arranged through my friends, and friends of friends. I was dependent on personal relationships, but also on the willingness of someone to be interviewed. Educated or politically active people were more likely to be suggested to me as interviewees. I had to actively seek out people living in refugee camps, older people, less educated people, and Christians to gain some balance. The greatest difficulty I faced was interviewing Gazans. As I was unable to get into the Gaza Strip (you must be either a registered journalist or aid worker to get permission to enter), I therefore interviewed Gazans in the UK and conducted interviews with five Gazans in the Strip by Skype. This necessarily meant there was a selection bias in those I spoke to as they had to be well off, technically savvy enough to have Skype, and a generator to ensure electricity supply, or else have been inclined and able to study or work in the UK. Unfortunately, this has meant that my research is more heavily weighted towards the West Bank. This is a deep regret of mine.

The 'non-expert' interviews were roughly based on the questions used in the survey, but instead of asking for simple answers, I asked for impressions and views, to give interviewees a chance to voice their opinions, experiences, and theories relating to political support in Palestine. The final interview question asked them for their ideas as to what might explain the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Some people I interviewed were surprised that I would want to know their views and were shy about their lack of understanding of the political situation. These tended to be older women with less education. Speaking some Arabic helped go some way to putting those who were uncomfortable at ease, as we could talk about other matters first (usually food and family). To try to address feelings of being ill prepared, I told interviewees about the subject of my research before starting the interview. I gave them an information sheet in Arabic and explained verbally what the interview was going to be about. It was important too to explain that I was looking for opinions and descriptions rather than facts, and that their views were important. I did not push for details of painful experiences, nor forcefully probe for answers. It was important to me that my interviews did not feel like a trial for interviewees but instead might be seen as an opportunity for them to express their views and beliefs.

I worried that interviewees might be afraid of saying certain things due to fear of retribution or retaliation. To minimise these risks, I explained to participants before the interview started that they were anonymous, that identifying details would be removed, and that although I hoped to record the interview, I could take notes instead if they preferred. Here having most of the interviewees as friends of friends helped create a degree of trust between us. It should be noted that all interviewees have been given pseudonyms in this book.

Interviews took place in many different locations: cafés, offices, universities, two clothes shops, and several homes. I would suggest conducting an interview in a quiet spot but usually ended up being invited to join the interviewee wherever best suited them. While isolated quiet locations may appear superficially to be the preferred choice for an interview, it is not practical or fair to interviewees to ask them to travel and this might put off potential interviewees, especially frail people, busy people, or those with dependents. Further, bringing interviewees to official-seeming or 'scientific' settings might also bring an uncomfortable dynamic to interviews and cause a bias of its own. As such, I felt that ensuring the interviewees were comfortable with the location and their company was the best approach.

It was rarely possible to interview everyone individually in a situation where no one else was around. Family members or else waiters, colleagues, phone calls, and secretaries interrupted, overheard, or sat in on interviews. If interrupted, we would pause to ensure greater privacy if necessary. In five interviews, I was asked to interview people together. They were husbands and wives, good friends or in one case twin sisters. In these interviews, there

is a possibility of the interviewee being influenced by those around them, and for some reason not telling the 'truth'. However, they only happened at the suggestion of the interviewee implying they were comfortable with the arrangement.

Further, with the interviews, there is a question of bias in regard to what individuals are happy to say to me, a western, female researcher, who they often knew very little about. Reaction to the interviewer is always going to shape an interview. I felt this dynamic come into play particularly on certain subjects. For example, many of the Palestinians I spoke to were aware of the power of international opinion in the conflict and were keen to distance themselves from the image of extremism and terrorism and wanted to highlight the suffering of Palestinians. In this, Peteet's comments on the interviews for her research thirty years ago, struck a chord with me:

> The women I worked with viewed me as a foreigner to whom by telling their story they would be conveying it to the West. To them the ethnographic experience was an experience in dialogue in international politics. This is not to place fieldwork in the category of public relations; it is to recognize that the subjects of study often have just as much reason for agreeing to be studied as the ethnographer has for studying them. Palestinian women viewed their own lives as commentaries on suffering, as embodying the whole dialectical experience of national dispossession and resistance.
>
> *(Peteet 1991, pp. 16–17)*

Some of the interviewees were fluent and happy to be interviewed in English. I conducted these interviews by myself. A few interviewees spoke English, but not fluently. These interviews tended to be based in English but switched to Arabic whenever we had problems communicating in English. My Palestinian Arabic being conversational but far from fluent at the time meant that any interviews conducted in Arabic required the help of an interpreter.

The use of interpreters was, for the most part, unproblematic. To ensure consistency and accuracy in the translation of my questions, I provided the interpreter with a translation in colloquial Arabic of the English language questions that I intended to ask. Having a conversation translated does interrupt the flow of speech; we had to politely tell interviewees that they may be interrupted for translation as they talked, but sometimes this was difficult. One benefit of speaking Arabic myself was that there were two of us listening, and so I could often pick up where certain aspects or nuances had been missed off the translation. A final concern was the safety of my interpreter. She accompanied me on trips across the West Bank and was involved in interviews with people of all different political perspectives. I made it clear to her that she should not feel obliged to provide any personal information to interviewees or to put herself in harm's way. I ensured that she would be home in good time each evening. She was very professional

at not letting her own views influence her work, even when interpreting for people she strongly disagreed with. On the whole, however, our trips were useful, informative and usually fun.

After conducting the interviews, I transcribed them myself. I then coded all the interviews to build themes from the interview data, so as to allow concepts that I had not previously considered to emerge.

All the interviewees treated me very politely and generously and I am deeply grateful to them for giving up their time to share their knowledge and experience with me.

1.3 Conclusion and Book Layout

This book explores a question which stretches and deepens our understanding of gender and political support. It is, as far as I know, the first study of its kind in looking at a gender gap in political support in the Arab Middle East. As such, it can broaden our understanding of the social pressures and political appeal that might lead men and women to support different political parties, by bringing a different range of issues and interactions to the fore. Using a combination of data from almost two decades of opinion polls and 81 interviews, this book explores how economics, beliefs, and the differential involvement of men and women in aspects of the occupation and resistance might explain the gender gap. As a final analysis, it explores whether this gender gap reaches beyond the Palestinian Territories to the wider Middle East region.

The commonalities between this case and the existing literature can shed light on whether there is such a thing as distinctive approaches to politics for each gender, due to similarities in socialisation and experiences that cross cultures and political contexts. This finding would give weight to feminist claims that there is a distinct 'women's politics' and that women could, and should, organise around issues which they have in common. The contrasts and differences between this case and previous research throw light onto areas and issues that require more research and show the limitations of the current gender gap literature.

This book also has important implications for increasing understanding of political behaviour in other locations. It finds that the Palestinian case has some parallels in other states in the Arab World, with surveys showing that women are more likely than men to express support for religious parties, and men more likely than women to express support for non-religious parties across the region. While the causes cannot be confirmed at this region wide level, it is possible to speculate that there may be some similarities in terms of the interaction between gender and political support in the wider Middle East region to the Palestinian case. This understanding is particularly important in the context of increasing demands for democratisation and greater gender equality in the Middle East, and in light of the support that has been shown for Islamist parties in elections in the region.

Most importantly and profoundly, this study highlights the interactions between gender, economics, beliefs, and violence in the Palestinian Territories and how these interactions create very real political outcomes. The gender gap in the Palestinian Territories may even have shaped one of the most surprising and politically significant electoral victories in the history of the region, namely, the victory of Hamas in the 2006 legislative elections. Building upon the substantial gender gap literature as well as the decades of research on gender and politics in these contested territories, this book makes a case for the inclusion of gender within more traditional political analyses.

In the following chapters, I bring together the research of scholars of the gender gap and scholars of Middle East politics with the data from interviews. In so doing, I hope to provide a rich understanding of the mechanisms and complexities of each potential explanation before analysing statistically, using the data from the opinion polls, how far they can account for the gender gap, and whether this gender gap might extend to the wider region.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the political context of the Palestinian Territories, giving a brief outline of their history and geography and how political support may vary across time and space. It then provides a short description of the two political factions being explored in this research, Fatah and Hamas.

Chapters 3–5 focus on various prominent possible explanations for the gender gap in political support. These chapters draw upon the academic literature and the interviews for these broad explanations. Chapter 3 explores the role of the economy in determining political support. In particular, it looks at the close connection between support for Fatah, patronage and employment opportunities, and how Hamas's broad network of Islamic welfare provision might appeal more to women – who are both on average poorer than men and also more likely to have a close connection with these services, because of their greater duties of care – than men. Chapter 4 highlights the importance of ideology and belief in determining political support in Palestine. I look at religion, nationalism, and feminism, explaining how the nationalist context undermines the role of feminism in determining political support and emphasises instead the importance of religion. This chapter also explores the ways in which nationalism, religion, and feminism can interact, such as in the increasing Islamisation of nationalist rhetoric and in the emergence of women's rights discourses within Islam. Chapter 5 looks at the various ways violence and oppression may impact support for Fatah and Hamas. First it considers attitudes towards the Israel/Palestine conflict and how and where these might be gendered. I find that ideas about women being more likely to oppose violence and support peace might not hold up as explanations for the gender gap, as might be expected, due to the nature of the conflict. Then, I deal with the difficult question of political oppression. The threat of reprisals from the Israeli armed forces, or the security services of the Palestinian Authority or Hamas are likely to

make some individuals reluctant to declare political support for an opposition group. I consider it both as something that might be gendered and as a factor which might warp our understanding of political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Chapter 6 statistically tests the hypotheses from previous chapters and finds that the gender gap in political support can largely be explained by accounting for the gender differences in employment status and in levels of religious belief.

In Chapter 7, I explore the extent to which these findings have implications for broadening the scope of gender gap research and throwing light upon the relationship between gender and political support elsewhere in the Arab Middle East using data from the Arab Barometer. It shows that there are gender differences in support for Islamist and centrist parties across the region with women prefering religious parties to men. It suggests that some of the same factors may explain this finding as the gender gap in Palestine.

Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter which highlights the important findings and draws them together. It also highlights the implications of this research for academics and practitioners of politics.

2 The Political Context in Palestine

In this chapter, I briefly outline the political history and geography of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Political and social contexts are liable to change over time and space. Variations in context impact upon the political behaviour of individuals. Several scholars caution against generalising or making projections from 'static data' (Wirls 1986, p. 317; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004, pp. 519–520; Campbell 2017). In Palestine, the political differences are particularly striking in different geographical areas and historical periods, and they can make it a difficult place to do research (Al-Malki 2011). In this chapter, I aim to provide some context as to how historical events and geographical locations might have impacted political support so as to better understand the gender gap, its fluctuations and impact. I will also provide a brief overview of the two political organisations studied in this book, namely, Fatah and Hamas.

2.1 History

In the year 1948, the British mandate in Palestine ended and Israel declared its independence, but it also marks the Nakba or 'catastrophe' when many Palestinians fled or were forced out of their homes in what is now the state of Israel (their descendants still have refugee status and large communities live in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon as well as in the West Bank and Gaza Strip), and the Palestinian political establishment was destroyed. The Palestinians who remained became Palestinian Israelis, and have faced discrimination as citizens within the state of Israel.

During the 'Six-day war', in 1967, Israel invaded and occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip (as well as the Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula). This was the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Accordingly, from 1967 until the implementation of the Oslo Accords in the 1990s, the entirety of the Occupied Palestinian Territories was administered by Israel.

During these early years, the main hubs of Palestinian political activity, centred around Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) all of

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-2

Figure 2.1 Landscape near Taybeh, the West Bank, 19th March 2016.

Source: Photograph by author.

which operated under the umbrella of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO). The PLO was based in Jordan, and later in Lebanon and then Tunisia. These organisations carried out armed raids, attacks and hijackings against Israel as part of the armed struggle for Palestinian liberation. Israeli settlement building in the Occupied Territories also began in this period.

After decades of armed struggle, spearheaded by Fatah and the PFLP based outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip, political momentum shifted to inside the Occupied Palestinian Territories in the First Intifada. This was, for the most part, a grassroots uprising against the occupation forces, following years of discontent and building on the ground-level organising by various political factions. It began with mass demonstrations in the Gaza Strip in December 1987 and lasted for several years involving much of the Palestinian population, through strikes, boycotts, demonstrations, stone-throwing against soldiers, and tanks with an emphasis on Palestinian self-sufficiency. It continues to be considered a time of great creativeness and national solidarity and was defined, for the most part, by non-violent resistance. The year 1988 also saw the founding of Hamas out of the Muslim Brotherhood (Pappé 2006, p. 261).

Following the First Intifada came the Oslo Accords in 1993. These were a series of negotiations and agreements, starting with the Declaration of

Principles. The Oslo Accords altered the face of Palestinian politics allowing the PLO into the Palestinian Territories leading to the formation of the Palestinian Authority (PA), which was permitted limited powers of governance over areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The Islamic bloc and many of the 'leftist' parties opposed the Oslo Accords (Pappé 2006, p. 260; Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 166). Fathi (the pseudonym I have given to a senior member of Fatah that I interviewed) explained the mixed emotions that surrounded the revelation of the Oslo Agreement, and then the establishment of the PA. He said that Oslo was "a major blow to the aspirations of many who thought that … Palestine was the whole map of historic Palestine" but that it was also imbued with excitement and hope: "The joy of a Palestinian … stepping foot on Palestine, establishing the Palestinian Authority, issuing the Palestinian passport, working on the Palestinian airport, carrying the flag that was banned, in Palestine, was, to Palestinians, yet another positive shock."

The Oslo Accords were popular as long as the public maintained faith that peace and a Palestinian state remained possible (Shikaki 1998, p. 34). Many Palestinians, however, with the prospect of a peace settlement still distant, now see Oslo as a 'sell out' by their leaders. Nasrin, an expert interviewee, described Oslo as "a disaster" because they later found "Israel had no intention of withdrawing". If the First Intifada was the golden age of Palestinian resistance, the Oslo Accords are now seen by many as its betrayal.

In September 2000, the Second Intifada erupted. The Second, or Al-Aqsa, Intifada was a violent uprising in protest at the failed peace process and the provocative walk by Israeli politician, Ariel Sharon, with a heavy security presence, on the Haram al-Sharif, the compound containing the Al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. 'Palestinian casualties during the first three months nearly totaled those of the entire first year of the first Intifada' (Pearlman 2011, p. 150). Instead of stone-throwing and strikes, this Intifada was characterised, on the Palestinian side, by suicide bombings and shootings by multiple militias and, on the Israeli side, a harsh re-occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where the Israeli military carried out mass arrests, imposed curfews, destroyed houses and fields, shelled neighbourhoods, and assassinated suspected militants - sometimes using helicopter gunships (Pappé 2006, p. 262; Pearlman 2011, p. 150). Within four and a half years, over 4,500 people had been killed and 35,000 people had been wounded, the large majority of both dead and wounded were Palestinians (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006, p. 570; Pearlman 2011, p. 150).

Fatah was divided between the two positions of 'resistance' and the 'peace process' (Klein 2003; Baylouny 2009). Some sections of Fatah, such as the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, espoused resistance, while others continued to try to negotiate a settlement. In contrast to Fatah's ambivalence, Hamas's resistance and anti-Oslo rhetoric resonated with popular sentiment and gained Hamas wider appeal.

During and after the Second Intifada, the physical fragmentation initiated in the Oslo Accords became more acutely felt, and Israeli 'security

measures' including the reoccupation of the West Bank began to seriously hamper transport and communication (Baylouny 2009).

In November 2004, during the Second Intifada, Fatah leader Yasser Arafat died after a prolonged siege of his compound by the Israeli military. Arafat's death provoked widespread mourning among Palestinians (Fathi). His death also triggered the need for presidential elections, and subsequently and partly as a result of Arafat's death, various groups halted hostilities and the Second Intifada reduced to a simmer. The 2005 presidential elections confirmed Mahmoud Abbas – also known as Abu Mazen – as successor to the recently deceased Yasser Arafat.

Following the Fatah victory in the 2005 presidential elections, the legislative elections of 2006 saw Hamas win a surprise victory, gaining '76 of the 132 seats of the legislative council relative to Fatah's 43' (Baconi 2018, p. 95; Caridi 2012, p. 195). This has widely been considered as the result of a protest vote by the population against Fatah corruption and the failure of the peace process, although it remains a matter of debate among scholars (Caridi 2012, pp. 195–196; Jamal 2012; Jamal 2013; Baconi 2018, p. 97). Israel, the international community and Fatah were stunned and appalled by the results (Caridi 2012, p. 195; Jamal 2013, p. 273). Israel and the international community then set out the terms on which they considered it acceptable for Hamas to form a new government (Usher 2006, pp. 28–29). Hamas refused these terms (Hilal 2010, p. 35). In reaction, the international community in the form of the Quartet (the UN, US, EU and Russia), despite having judged the elections free and fair, cut aid and support to the Hamas government for not complying with their demands (Hilal 2010, p. 35; Jamal 2012, p. 191). The international community also allowed the consolidation of power by Fatah and ignored the arrest and imprisonment of several Hamas parliamentarians. Powers over the PA's security forces, information, and finance ministries, the appointment of a new nine-judge constitutional court and over the hiring of PA staff, were given to the (Fatah) president, Mahmoud Abbas, in what Usher (2006, p. 28) describes as a 'bloodless coup'.

In June 2007, after over a year of mounting tension, a civil war of sorts broke out between Fatah and Hamas leading to a Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip. The exact nature of this civil war/Hamas takeover is disputed by different parties, with some seeing it as a military coup and others as a pre-emptive strike (Koshy 2007, p. 2871; Baconi 2018, pp. 122–134). These events, of course, impacted how people viewed Fatah and Hamas. Many people were horrified by the killing involved in the coup. Habib, an interviewee, explained that "the internal fights within Fatah and Hamas, and the fact that there was blood in the process, … made Hamas less popular".

The 2007 split between Hamas controlled Gaza and the Fatah dominated West Bank has led to both organisations increasingly shutting down criticism or political opposition within their territories. In the Fatah controlled West Bank, Hamas has been suppressed and many members arrested, while

the opposite has been the case in Hamas controlled Gaza. Blecher (2009, p. 66) documents in detail the PA's ban, from 2007 'on any public manifestation of support for the Islamic movement'. Jamal points to the development of creeping authoritarianism in the Palestinian Authority. She writes 'political opponents are detained without charge and basic laws and court orders are not enforced' (Jamal 2012, p. 201). Scholars also relate how Hamas has used violence against political opposition in the Gaza Strip (Gunning 2007, p. 183; Sayigh 2011, p. 40; Baconi 2018, p. 138).

The period since the split has been violently punctuated by three Israeli assaults on Gaza. First was 'Operation Cast Lead' from December 2008 to January 2009. This was followed by 'Operation Pillar of Defence' in November 2012 and 'Operation Protective Edge' in the summer of 2014. Each of these wars or assaults on Gaza involved the severe bombardment of the Gaza Strip by the Israeli armed forces on one side and Hamas-launched rockets landing in Israel on the other. The death toll and destruction has been heavily weighted on the Palestinian side in each war. In the summer 2014 assault, over 2,100 Palestinians were killed compared to 73 Israelis (BBC 2014).

Since the Gaza wars, violence resurged with a 'Third Intifada' that never quite materialised in 2016 but involved, on the Palestinian side, several stabbings and drivers deliberately running down Israelis, mainly in Hebron and Jerusalem, and harsh reprisals and killings by the Israeli army.

Over the 18 years which are covered in the opinion polls, the Occupied Palestinian Territories have experienced a number of episodes which provoke a response in the opinion polls, shifting support from certain parties to others. As Al-Malki (2011) warns, the rapid shifts in the political scene could make longer term assessments more difficult. For this reason, this research conducts analysis across the 40 opinion polls available so as to ensure any findings are not restricted to a single year or opinion poll.

Figure 2.2 illustrates the trends in support for the different political parties over this time. Until the outbreak of the Second Intifada, support for Fatah, the party of the peace process, remains high. This support then declines during the Second Intifada, while support for Hamas increases. Support for Fatah rises sharply after the death of Yasser Arafat. Support for both Fatah and Hamas increases in the lead up to the elections, with support for Hamas being slightly higher than support for Fatah in the poll after the legislative elections. However, political support reduces again after the election, with support for Hamas dipping after the Hamas takeover of Gaza. The wars have also impacted levels of political support. The main trend that I found was that the wars increased support for Hamas, perhaps due to sympathy for them and the resistance. Some interviewees, having supported Hamas through the war, lost their support for Hamas after the war when life continued, more difficult than ever, in its aftermath (Habib; Hassan; Waleed).

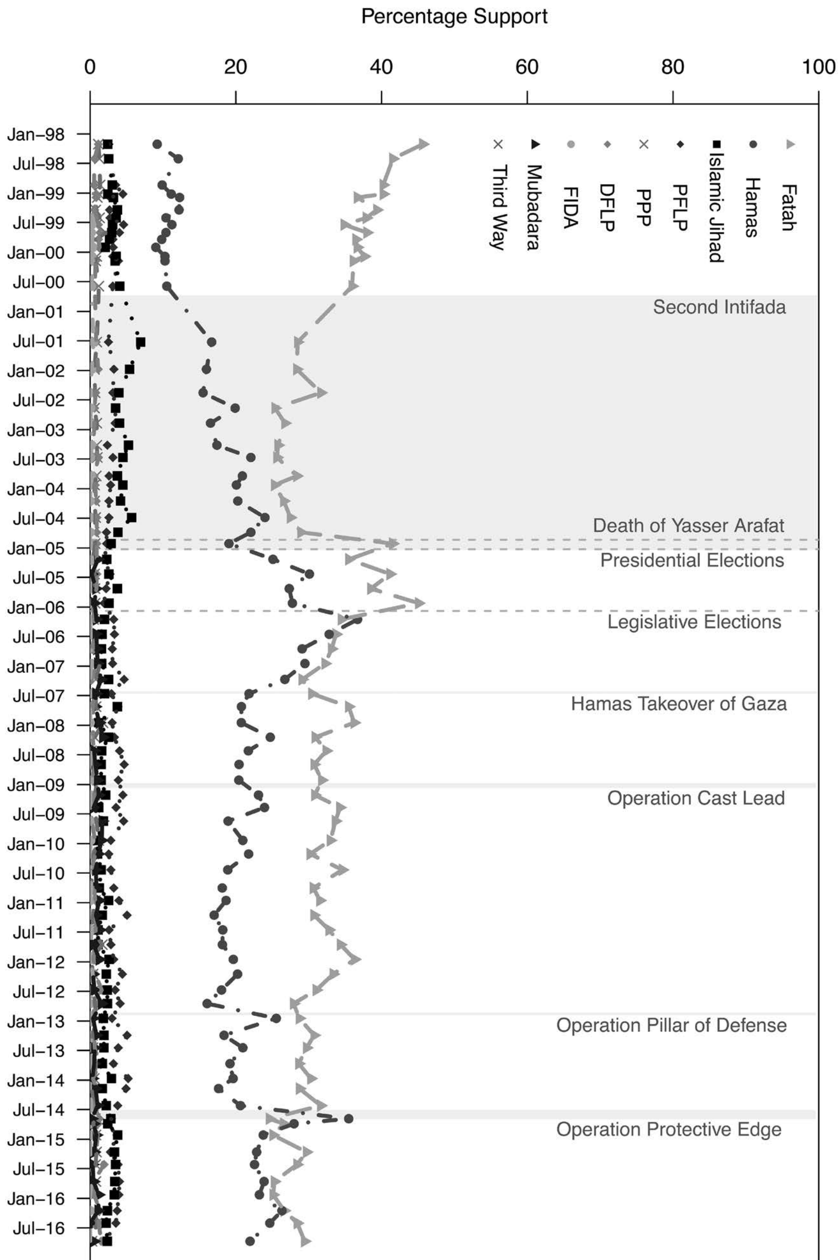

Figure 2.2 To show political support in the Occupied Territories 1998–2016.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37-47, PSR Polls 1–61

2.2 Geography

The Palestinian Territories are deeply fragmented. There are major geographical, political, demographic, and social differences in the territory within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. They comprise urban areas, refugee camps and rural villages; humid coastal plains, mountains, and deserts. However, the major differences have been in their relation to and experience of the Israeli occupation.

The major geographical fracture in the Palestinian Territories is between the West Bank and Gaza Strip. There are stark economic differences between these two areas, with Gaza having almost double the rate of unemployment (Freedom House puts it at over 40 percent) significantly lower GDP per capita, and, reportedly, over 80 percent of the population being dependent on aid (House 2017, p. 616; Khalidi 2010, p. xxxiii).

The Gaza Strip and the West Bank only came into existence as distinct territories in 1948. But the Gaza Strip absorbed so many refugees during the 1948 war that its population tripled. The West Bank and Jerusalem also absorbed refugees, but the proportion of refugees in relation to the rest of the population and land size was not as large. The demographic changes to the two territories which took place during the 1948 war have meant that the issues of poverty and overcrowding have been much more serious in the Gaza Strip than in the West Bank (Miftah 2013, p. 16).

While Israeli settlements were removed from the Gaza Strip in 2005, since 2007, life has become increasingly difficult for Gazans. As a result of Hamas's takeover, the whole area has been blockaded by Israel, 'hermetically sealing' the Strip, heavily controlling and restricting which items and people are allowed to enter and exit the territory (Caridi 2012, p. 260; Baconi 2018, p. 135). Egypt has also often closed their border with Gaza. The effect of the restrictions has seriously hampered development in the area, despite the emergence of a faltering 'tunnel' economy smuggling produce from Egypt which continued for several years (Baconi 2018, p. 142). As a result, the unemployment rates and poverty rates have soared and life for many Gazans has become increasingly insufferable under Hamas rule.

The three assaults on Gaza since 2008/9 have accelerated the 'de-development' of the Gaza Strip, increasing poverty and the displacement of people (the term de-development was coined by Roy 1999). Zahra, a Gazan I interviewed, told me that "the situation was bad before that but now it is very, very bad", describing how they only have electricity for six hours a day. Rana, the director of an aid organisation, informed me:

> I don't think anyone can do any development work with the conditions in Gaza, especially with the closure and inability to bring material into Gaza … So, from 2007, the last 10 years, our main focus has been humanitarian assistance, emergency response, reconstruction, construction of

> social facilities and so on. We had to more or less do the minimum, due to the restriction on bringing commodities into Gaza.
>
> *(Rana)*

The West Bank has had a different experience of occupation. The political agreements of the Oslo Accords, together with the settlements and checkpoints has created what Hilal calls a 'process of "bantustanization"' (Hilal 2010, p. 31). Since the Oslo Accords, Palestinian self-government in the West Bank has been limited to certain – usually highly populated – 'islands'. In 'Area A' Palestinians have 'full' authority, in 'Area B' they have joint control with Israel (these are usually villages) and Area C – the spaces and rural communities in-between – remain under full Israeli control (Farsakh 2005, pp. 239–240; Baylouny 2009, p. 52). Jerusalem has remained under Israeli direct governance and has been treated as part of Israel. Hilal and Taraki show how the fragmentation process has highlighted the inequalities between the different regions of the West Bank, and between towns, villages, and refugee camps; for example, some regions have suffered from segregation with businesses leaving and unemployment, while Ramallah/Al-Bireh has become more cosmopolitan and thrives as the new centre (Hilal 2010, p. 32; Taraki 2008).

In the West Bank, the building of illegal Israeli settlements continues apace. Roy (2004, p. 371) wrote that 'although built-up settlement areas comprise 1.7 percent of the total area of the West Bank, they actually control 41.9 percent of the area of the West Bank' through municipal boundaries and regional councils. In 2010, Khalidi (2010, p. xxi) suggested that the number of settlers had grown to nearly half a million. Israeli settlements, with their separate roads, checkpoints, and Israeli military bases, punctuate the West Bank land so as to make travel unpredictable at best, and impossible at worst (Roy, 2004; Weisman, 2007; Hilal 2010).

Throughout the West Bank, the settlements and checkpoints, together with the temporary closures, roadblocks and controls and various ID types imposed by the Israeli occupation, serve to 'systematically shatter the Palestinian social fabric and impede social continuity' (Dana 2017, p. 212). These settlements and the checkpoints surrounding them affect different areas to different extents. The situation is worst in Hebron where settlements exist in the very centre of the Palestinian city, leading to increased tensions and Israeli military rule over the old city, with 2,000 or so soldiers posted to look after 500 or so settlers (Samah).

Settlements particularly impact those living in rural areas. Interviewees complained about roads being blocked for settler use (Hiba), settlements dumping sewage on farmland (Shadia; Tarek) and described a general fear of the aggressive behaviour of settlers (Farida; Samah; Ramy). The physical fragmentation serves to restrict access to commercial centres, employment, and to institutions and services such as hospitals and universities.

A further development has been the Israeli construction of a 'security fence' or 'apartheid wall', which cuts into the Palestinian territory occupied

by Israel in 1967. It separates numerous villages from their land and has transformed travel for certain neighbouring Palestinian villages and towns, most notably Qalqilya, Habla, and Abu Dis, which are effectively surrounded by the wall. The wall and checkpoints now cut off Jerusalem from the rest of the West Bank. Palestinians resident in the West Bank must be granted permission by the Israeli authorities before they can enter Jerusalem.

Figure 2.3 shows the gender gap in political support in the West Bank as compared with the Gaza Strip. Distance from zero again indicates a greater gender gap, and a negative result indicates where women support Hamas more than men and/or men support Fatah more than women. The gender gap in the West Bank has remained relatively stable, moving around the -10 to -15 mark. Whereas in the Gaza Strip, it increased through the Second Intifada and into the elections, and has reduced considerably since. This suggests that the political context of these two regions is important for understanding the gender gap in political support. As such, the final analysis of the Palestinian opinion poll data will be divided by territory and within Gaza into pre- and post- the 2007 Hamas takeover.

Figure 2.4 shows the percentage support for Hamas and Fatah across the different governorates of the Palestinian Territories. Jerusalem (at 22 percent) and Gaza City (at 31 percent) have the lowest levels of support for Fatah, while the rural areas of Tubas and Salfit, as well as more populous Qalqilya and Bethlehem, have the highest levels of support for Fatah. In terms of support for Hamas, the highest levels are found in the Gaza Strip and Hebron, and the lowest levels are in Jericho and Bethlehem. While local political leaders, governance systems and the demographic make-up of different areas (such as the relatively high percentage of Christians living in Bethlehem) are likely to be strong influences in determining the regional levels of political support, there is substantial evidence in the literature for rural and urban differences explaining the varying levels of political support.

Hamas has tended to be more popular among urban populations and Fatah to be more popular in rural areas. Gunning (2007, p. 149) linked Hamas's success in urban spaces to their increased organisational presence and the higher concentration of (Islamic) charities in towns and refugee camps. He further suggested that Hamas was stronger in Gaza than the West Bank primarily because of the presence of 'charismatic leaders' in Gaza, such as Ahmed Yassin, but also the 'concentrated poverty, an emerging lower middle class, and conservative culture' meant the population were receptive to the Islamist ideology and the population density meant it was 'easier to concentrate resources' (Gunning 2007, p. 31). Gunning (2007, p. 148) suggests that this fits with the thesis that 'Islamism is a modern phenomenon, facilitated by the twin processes of modernisation and urbanisation'.

In explaining Fatah's rural support, Sayigh and Gunning agree that the PA was largely successful in incorporating the rural population under its control through 'massive expansion of the salatariat and the out-reach of 'government' departments, utilities, and civilian services, and the proliferation

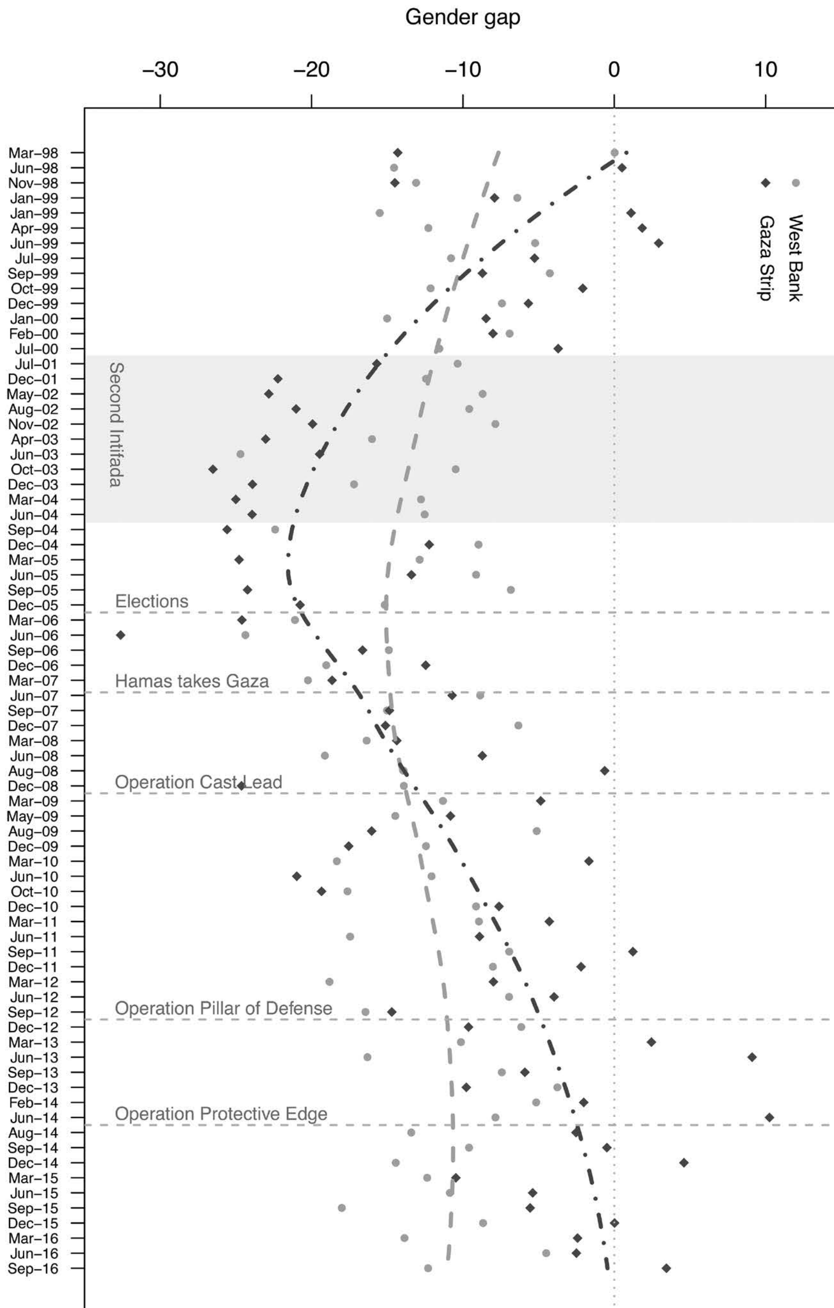

Figure 2.3 To show the gender gap in political support between Fatah and Hamas for the West Bank and Gaza between 1998 and 2016.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37-47, PSR Polls 1-61

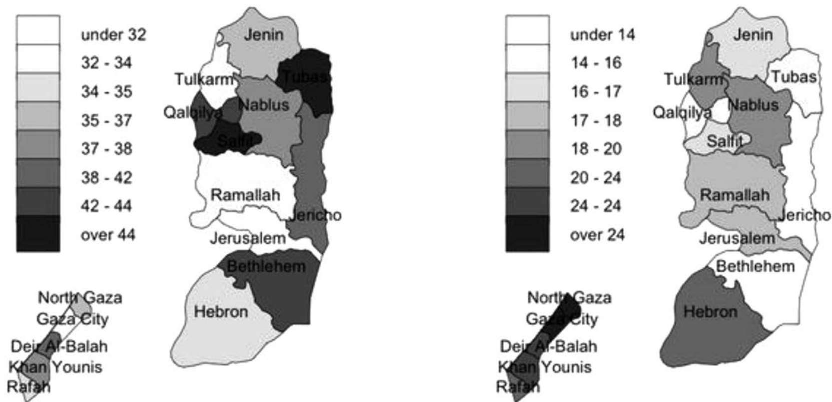

Figure 2.4 Showing percentage support for Fatah (left) and Hamas (right) by governorate.

Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (dated 2000-2010, 2011, 2015, Merged Dataset)

of security agencies to rural areas' (Sayigh 1997, p. 661). Fatah also has well established connections to the traditional elites and clans who tend to control the religious and charitable networks within the villages (Gunning 2007, p. 149).

Beyond these generalisations, there seem to be specific factors leading to certain parties having more support in one area than another. For example, I was told by a Tubas resident: "Fatah made us a governorate … Before 2008, Tubas was a town with a small city, which was linked to Jenin, and after 2008, they became what they are now [a governorate]. Fatah worked to achieve this." (Majed).

In other places, party support was linked to a particularly prominent individual who came from the town or village. It might be the case that a resistance fighter or politician from a village becomes "a symbol" who in turn "starts to mobilise the village", this effect can be inflated when the individual is a member of a large or prominent family (Jamila). While many of those I spoke to did not know the party representatives in their local area and thought that the parties played almost no local role apart from at election time, there were some instances when this effect seems to have been the case. For example, interviewees Lana and Maha had prominent members of Hamas and Fatah from their areas and told me that because of that, the whole area now supported those parties.

Geographical variation in political support is caused by all kinds of different factors. These include having a particular experience of the occupation or of political control and the influence of prominent individuals within the local area. These differences are important in shaping political support. If an individual grows up in an area where Fatah, Hamas or the PFLP dominate, they may remain loyal to that party for the rest of their lives because

they have formed a 'party identity' at a young age. Research in the United States suggests that these identity formations do not shift easily but 'once they take root in early adulthood, they often persist'. Even if a group's reputation is damaged by recent events, they may 'assimilate new information about the parties and change their perceptions of the parties without changing the team for which they cheer' (Green et al. 2002, p. 8). They even argue that ideological stances do not affect party identity because 'When people feel a sense of belonging to a given social group, they absorb the doctrinal positions that the group advocates' (Green et al. 2002, p. 4).

2.3 Political Parties and Movements

Most Palestinian political factions cannot be easily defined as 'parties'. Many started as social movements or armed liberation groups and few have fully evolved into political parties. Fatah, Hamas and the PFLP, and other political groups provide services and welfare, and, in some cases, continue to engage in armed operations (Bröning 2013). Indeed, Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and the PFLP continue to be considered, in the eyes of the international community, as terrorist organisations, making analysis of their political behaviour particularly contentious (Herzog 2006, p. 83). Bröning, who has written in depth about Palestinian political parties, contends their unorthodox methods are a reflection of the unorthodox political climate in which they work. On this point, he writes:

> most factions that continue to define political life in the Palestinian Territories have until now eschewed the label of political party. Instead, they have chosen to identify as political "movements," or "liberation fronts." This is not merely a semantic particularity but a highly relevant indicator of their self-perception … Redefining "movements" as streamlined political parties would entail restricting ambitions to electoral politics, identifying government responsibility or the role of a "loyal opposition" within the existing political framework as their exclusive political objective. Any such step would essentially confine the scope of political movements to the limitations of the status quo.
>
> *(Bröning 2013, pp. 2–3)*

Below, I give brief overviews of Fatah and Hamas, their ideological positions and history. The other parties and movements in Palestine have not been included. Most of the smaller Palestinian organisations can be seen as broadly the 'leftists', but the opinion polls also ask about Islamic Jihad and nationalist and Islamist independents. The 'leftists' are made up of historical socialist and communist parties, and the factions that have split from them, often to become more moderate. They used to be a serious force in Palestinian politics, but their power has reduced significantly in the last few decades, partly due to the demise of the Soviet Union (Jamal 2013,

p. 285). All these organisations have only low levels of support with few having reached over 10 percent support in the entire period being considered in this book.

2.3.1 Fatah

Fatah is a nationalist 'movement' which has morphed into the 'mainstream nationalist' political party. Ideologically, they have been called 'semi-secular pragmatists' (Shikaki 1998, p. 30) or more often secular nationalists (Lybarger 2007, p. 1). Bröning (2013, p. 57) describes how, for many Palestinians, Fatah is the 'embodiment of secular Palestinian nationalism' and that they are 'global symbols of the Palestinian cause'. The people I interviewed variously described it as a "nationalist party" (Hani), "a national movement" (Jihan), and "the nationalist, patriotic, Palestinian group" (Fouad). Fatah is the 'mainstream' political organisation in the Palestinian Territories as well as the party of government (in the West Bank).

Fatah has always tried to avoid defining its political position beyond a broad Palestinian nationalism 'within which all social classes and ideological currents could fit' (Sayigh 1997, p. 680). For decades, it has led the Palestinian people through organisations such as the PLO (Fouad; Sayigh 1997, p. 680). It has gained a reputation for being open-minded and inclusive, and for "unifying the Palestinians" (Nasrin). Although nominally associated with socialism (Bröning 2013, p. 57), Fatah has increasingly promoted economic liberalism. Indeed, its 2009 political platform had a strong emphasis upon investment in the private sector (Bröning 2013, p. 93).

Fatah, or the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, was set up in the late 1950s, becoming more firmly established in the 1960s (Bröning 2013, p. 1; Fathi). Fatah soon became the majority organisation in the PLO with Yasser Arafat – or 'Abu Ammar' – assuming the dual roles of Chairman of the PLO and leader of Fatah. At that time, Fatah carried out regular guerrilla raids into Israel and was a militaristic liberation movement. Many of those who joined the movement during these early years remain important in the organisation today, and a great deal of the rhetoric and imagery that the party uses is based on the heroes and martyrs of the early years of the nationalist struggle. Up to the end of the 1970s, the idea of liberating Palestine had a "real sense of glamour" (Suleiman). However, in time, Fatah and the PLO became increasingly out of touch, as it was brutally forced out of both Jordan and Lebanon and moved its centre to Tunis (Khalidi 2020).

In 1988, the First Intifada shook the Occupied Territories and took the Fatah leadership by surprise. To regain the initiative once more, Arafat took the opportunity to press for peace negotiations with Israel. This ultimately led to the Oslo Accords, which Arafat signed in 1993. Since Oslo, Fatah has transformed into "a peace movement" (Tarek) as it has sought to 'establish a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza through the Oslo peace process' (Shikaki 1998, p. 30).

Figure 2.5 Fatah's 'Nationalist Bloc' flag at Birzeit University student elections, 20th April 2015.

Source: Photograph by author.

However, when the Oslo Accords failed to produce the prospect of a Palestinian state or peace, the Second Intifada broke out in September 2000. This time, Fatah conspicuously played a double game; the leadership called for peace or moderation, while its membership fragmented 'into numerous

competing groups acting against each other and against their own superiors' (Baylouny 2009, p. 41). These groups, made up of local organisations including the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade associated with the Fatah offshoot the 'Tanzim', returned to the use of violence against Israel, including, this time, the use of suicide bombers against Israeli citizens (Baylouny 2009, pp. 55–56).

Even since the Second Intifada petered out, the status quo has continued to deteriorate regarding the 'peace process', and Fatah is still seen as largely to blame. Settlements have been built in the West Bank at increasing rates since the Oslo Accords, while a full peace and Palestinian state remain elusive (Bröning 2013, pp. 62–63).

The Oslo Accords moved the centre of gravity for Fatah back to the Palestinian Territories and into the newly established Palestinian Authority, where it has become 'a state party without a state' (Bröning 2013, p. 57; Dana 2019, p. 44). According to Bröning (2013, p. 57), 'The overlap is such that it has been at times difficult to distinguish Fatah's institutions from the other established forums of Palestinian political life, the PNA [PA] and the PLO.' Fatah's focus has moved towards 'the national project of state-building' (Bröning 2013, p. 62) and in the process it has been 'stripped of structures, functions, and characteristics typically associated with national liberation movements' (Dana 2019, p. 39). However, despite taking over the Palestinian Authority and with it the focus on 'negotiations, state-building, and public order', Fatah still likes to portray itself in certain spheres as the 'liberation movement that inaugurated a radical phase of anti-colonial struggle' (Dana 2019, p. 45).

The current Fatah leadership faces growing accusations of corruption, nepotism, and a 'despotic ruling style' (Bröning 2013, pp. 62–64; Dana 2019, p. 46). Fatah is blamed for the PA's 'much-reviled security cooperation with Israeli armed forces', and the increased use of the Palestinian security services to target Fatah opponents (Bröning 2013, p. 62, 67; Tartir 2015; Tartir 2018). Further, since the 2006 elections, the PA has been ruled mostly by presidential decree; the Palestinian Legislative Council has hardly been convened. The PA is increasingly suffering from 'a notable lack of democratic legitimacy' (Bröning 2013, p. 67).

Fatah's authoritarian rule is based on 'neopatrimonial networks' (Dana 2019, p. 46). Due to its dominant position in the PA, Fatah has been able to 'offer its supporters access to positions of influence' (Bröning 2013, p. 62). Palestinian family – and/or clan – based social structures have been accommodated and reproduced within Fatah (Sayigh 1997, p. 680). The nepotistic tendencies of the regime have on the one hand cost Fatah a great deal of 'political legitimacy' but on the other have also meant that Fatah now has a great deal of 'loyalty based on patronage' (Bröning 2013, p. 68).

Most of the finances of the PLO and PA come from external sponsors, such as aid from the international community. Fatah is largely not dependent on the population for its revenue and so does not feel very acutely popular pressure for democratic practices. Instead it can distribute money to key

supporters, which helps to perpetuate its authority and resembles the 'rentier-state' model of governance (Parsons 2005, p. 126). The rumours of corruption, which include allegations against Abbas's sons, have hardly been addressed by the regime despite public calls for investigations (Bröning 2013, pp. 71–75). The current leaders were criticised in interviews because "they only think about money" (Faisal). Scholar and former government minister, Suleiman, described the decline in popularity of Fatah after Oslo. He said: "After the establishment of the Authority … Abu Ammar … and all of those leaders, they came over here and … we saw how they live … their sons and daughters, and corruption and all of this. The halo effect vanished."

The role of iconic Palestinian leaders has been key in maintaining support for Fatah. Yasser Arafat, the leader of Fatah until his death in 2004, was a "charismatic leader" in the eyes of some of my interviewees, and remains "the symbol of Palestinian nationalism" (Suleiman; Fathi; Fouad). He gained 87.1 percent of the valid votes in presidential elections in 1996 (Ghanem 1996, p. 526). Although, since replaced by Mahmoud Abbas as President of the Palestinian Authority and Chairman of the PLO, Arafat is still referred to in an overwhelmingly positive light today as a unifying symbol who is popular beyond the Fatah membership. His face is iconic, printed on flags, and spray-painted on walls, as seen in Figure 2.5.

Fatah's popularity, even at its lowest ebb, tends to hover around 30–40 percent support in the polls. Shikaki (1998, p. 30) suggests its supporters are disproportionately 'young, male, and less educated'.

2.3.2 Hamas

Hamas is an Islamist resistance organisation which has begun to participate in mainstream Palestinian politics and has governed the Gaza Strip since 2007. Hamas is 'at one and the same time a religious organization, a political organization, and a militia' (Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 165; Esposito 1984/1998, p. 229). Hamas, led by the late Ahmed Yassin, evolved out of the apolitical Muslim Brotherhood in the late 1980s as an Islamist resistance organisation with the aim of liberating Palestine (Gunning 2007; Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010; Bilal; Ghassan). Hamas grew in strength during the First Intifada, building upon the Muslim Brotherhood network of mosques, schools, clinics and unions (Ghassan; Gunning 2007).

The Hamas Charter (which many see as being redundant or misleading, see e.g. Gunning 2007, p. 19) takes the view that Palestine is a *waqf*, or Islamic religious endowment, and as such 'Palestine is a permanent Muslim territory' and the defence of Palestine is 'a *jihad* incumbent upon all Muslims' (Esposito 1984/1998, p. 229; Hamas 1988; Herzog 2006; Suleiman). Whether the Hamas Charter should be considered relevant or not, the interlinking of Islam and Palestinian nationalism embodied in the idea of Palestine as *waqf* is broadly representative of Hamas's ideological stance.

Figure 2.6 Hamas's 'Islamic Bloc' Parade at Birzeit University student elections, 20th April 2015.

Source: Photograph by author.

A Hamas PLC member I spoke to described Hamas as "religion and state, resistance next to the Qur'an." (Ruwaida)

The extent to which Islam informs Hamas's political ideology has varied over time, and there is no consensus among scholars as to how to interpret its position. Some scholars describe Hamas as embracing an expansionist and violent 'radical Islam' (Schanzer 2008, p. 5), while others suggest it aims to control people's behaviour and wants to establish an 'Islamic state' (Shikaki 1998, p. 32). The most nuanced scholarship, however, suggest that although 'Hamas self-consciously portrays itself as having a religious identity', the way Islam 'is interpreted is influenced by the wider socio-economic and political context within which Hamas operates' (Gunning 2007, p. 161, 167; Baconi 2018). Hamas's 2006 election manifesto is given as evidence of its less radical and more liberal and pragmatic use of Islam. Its manifesto was 'light years away' from the Hamas Charter, and contained explicit policy proposals for education, health, housing, and agriculture which were not 'ostensibly influenced by religion' (Gunning 2007, p. 167; Caridi 2012, p. 186). It proposed that *sharia* should be the 'principal' but not sole source of legislation and explicitly called for political pluralism, citizen's rights and equality, the alternation of power and a separation of judicial, executive and legislative powers (Caridi 2012, pp. 186–187). Gunning (2007, p. 95) argues that rather than 'pursuing a Taliban-style theocracy', Hamas's political theory and practices show a dedication to representative authority alongside

religion. As Hamas has tried to gain approval from the international community, it has repeatedly emphasised that it has no intention of creating an 'Islamic state' (Caridi 2012, p. 261). Bröning (2013, p. 22). suggests that it was after taking power in the Gaza Strip, when faced with the difficulties of ruling, that Hamas began 'resorting to political pragmatism and *realpolitik*'. For example, it did not implement *sharia* law. Therefore, while Hamas *is* an Islamist organisation, its political methods and manoeuvres, and the way in which it interprets Islam, are decided according to the broader political context in which it works (see also Mishal and Sela 2006).

Hamas's attitude towards violence and peace is equally contested. It has been characterised as a 'violent, totalitarian organisation' which has killed many Israelis and Palestinians and is likely 'to continue down the same path' (Schanzer 2008, p. 4). It is true that for a long while Hamas has opposed the peace process and refused to recognise Israel as a legitimate state and has championed armed resistance (Shikaki 1998, p. 32; Usher 2006, p. 20). Hamas became notorious during the Oslo period when it tried to derail the peace process with a series of bombings (Baylouny 2009, p. 55; Baconi 2018, pp. 32–33). Then, during the Second Intifada, Hamas coordinated several suicide bombings, killing many Israeli civilians in what it referred to as the 'Balance of Terror' approach (Baconi 2018, p 42). It is labelled as a terrorist organisation by Israel, the United States and the European Union.

However, its stance seems to have changed over time. Hamas's attitude to peace has softened in recent years. Baconi (2018, p. 40) notes that even early in the Second Intifada, Hamas publications were suggesting ceasefires and accepting 'the notion of a Palestinian state on the 1967 borders'. In its 2006 election manifesto, armed resistance was not mentioned (Caridi 2012, p. 187). It has accepted several ceasefires and scholars suggest that some of those within Hamas would accept a two-state solution (Gunning 2007, p. 206, 221; Sayigh 2011, p. 13). Since taking over the Gaza Strip in 2007, its resistance activities have been mainly limited to the rocket attacks into Israel during the Israeli assaults on the Gaza Strip.

Since Hamas entered mainstream politics, its organisation has become more complicated with its leader, Khaled Meshaal, based in Syria then Qatar, while the victor of the elections – Ismail Haniyeh – was in the Gaza Strip. Many interviewees complained to me about the division between the leadership within and outside of Palestine, and between the political and military wing (Maha; Fathi; Fouad; Ibrahim; Yahya).

Hamas entered the electoral process and won the 2006 legislative election. Its victory is at least partially due to good organisation and effectively using the electoral system (Jamal 2013, p. 282). It 'ran on a platform stressing reform and good governance rather than ideological struggle' positioning itself against Fatah which was increasingly associated with corruption, poor governance, and the failure of the peace process (Herzog 2006, p. 87; Usher 2006, p. 21; Chehab 2007, pp. 4–5; Baconi 2018, p. 97). Indeed, its appeal is/was largely based on its reputation as an 'organisation of pious,

upright citizens who defend the interests of their grassroots constituency' (Gunning 2007, p. 95). The network of mosques, schools, charities, and other Islamic institutions associated with Hamas has been credited as one of the fundamental sources of its political support (Esposito 1984/1998, p. 229; Sayigh 1997, p. 632; Roy [2011] 2014; Baconi 2018, p. 97). Its popularity in the polls over the last decade has tended to range between about 25 and 35 percent (Wahid).

Since the 2007 Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, many Palestinians are now seeing a different side to Hamas. On the one hand, they are using many of the same techniques of repression as Fatah, arresting those who speak out against it, but on the other, their defiance of Israel and the peace process has meant that Israel has designated Gaza as 'hostile territory' (Baconi 2018, p. 140). The fallout has been the brutal blockade and multiple Israeli assaults on Gaza. These have killed thousands of Palestinians, and destroyed homes, infrastructure, and the economy. As a result, the unemployment rates and poverty rates have soared and life for many Gazans has become increasingly insufferable under Hamas rule.

2.4 Conclusion

Politics is not static. How power and influence is exerted – and support for political parties – varies across time and place. The political context of the Palestinian Territories is perhaps more fractured than most and has certainly changed radically over even the short period studied here. As this book focuses on how the 'constant' of gender interacts with political support in the widely varying Palestinian Territories over a tumultuous period, it must inherently make certain generalisations, assumptions, and use certain short hands. However, based on the context outlined above, it is important to take into consideration the geography and history in any analysis of the gender gap. This can be done by incorporating data on geographical location and the timing of the poll into the statistical analysis. Beyond this, it is important that the stark differences between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and within Gaza before and after the Hamas takeover in 2007, are taken into account in any analysis.

The Palestinian case is situated within a historical and geographical context unlike any other, however, there are likely to be, in the following chapters, many ideas, explanations, and contexts that may have weight beyond the Palestinian Territories but which are not addressed in the gender gap literature. These may include the impact of occupation, authoritarian government, Islamism, questions around the use of political violence, and nationalist rhetoric and the role of the international community in political support through aid provision and intervention. Palestine is not a classic 'case' of the gender gap, but rather its value lies in its dissimilarity from the western gender gap cases, meaning that it allows space for alternative theorisations about gender differences in political behaviour derived from the interviews and other academic literatures.

3 Economy and Gender

Women and men tend to occupy different positions within any given economy. More often, men are expected to earn money – and on average they earn more than women – while women are expected to take on more of the unpaid labour, in the form of domestic duties and care for children, the sick and the elderly – and on average they earn less than men. These differences have often been found to explain, at least partially, gender differences in political preferences (Howell and Day 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2000; Edlund and Pande 2002; Hill 2003; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006; Bergh 2007; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Barisione 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015; Spierings and Zaslove 2017). This idea fits in with many of the most long-lived theories of voting such as rational actor theories which see individuals as seeking to gain what is best for them out of the political environment (Downs 1957), or else with ideas about class identity as the driving force behind voting choice (e.g. Pulzer 1967). In this chapter, I will explore and refine the following hypothesis:

> ***Hypothesis 1: Gender differences in socioeconomic status explain (reduce) the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories***

This chapter looks at how gender differences in socioeconomic status in the Palestinian Territories might impact political support. In looking at the Palestinian context, it is clear that the economy does not fit the same moulds as many western states: The economy is warped by the effects of the occupation and aid, the party system does not fit into a clear left-right divide, and there is little explicit class consciousness. Therefore, this chapter takes into account both the western gender gap theories as well as the nuances of the Palestinian political context. It does so by first giving an overview of the Palestinian economy, before exploring whether there are gender differences in socioeconomic status in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and how these differences might impact political support.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-3

Figure 3.1 Advertisement for Al-Quds Bank in Ramallah, 27th February 2016. It reads "Al Quds Golden Deposit Account: Start today for immediate rewards and banking benefits".

Source: Photograph by author.

3.1 The Palestinian Economy

The economy in the Palestinian Territories is "a disaster" (Nasim). The United Nations summed up the situation in 2017 after 'five decades of de-development' as an economy 'incapable of employing one third of its workforce and featuring extremely high unemployment among women and youth' (UNCTAD 2017). Almost two-thirds of Palestinians live under the poverty line, with about half the population being 'food insecure' (Al-Adili et al. 2008; Miftah 2013, p. 16; UNCTAD 2017, p. 6). What development there has been recently has largely been linked to external aid donations (UNCTAD 2017, p. 7).

The main problems facing the Palestinian economy are due to the Israeli Occupation (Miftah 2013, p. 7; UNCTAD 2017; Arafeh 2017). The Israeli Occupation has impacted the Palestinian economy in three major ways: First, through the linking of the Palestinian and Israeli economies (which inflates prices on the Palestinian side); second, Israel has actively stifled and destroyed Palestinian economic prospects through 'closures', bombardments, and control over Palestinian resources; and third, by providing employment in Israel and the settlements.

Since the Oslo Accords, Israel's and Palestine's economies have been tied by a 'de facto customs union' under the 'Paris Protocol' (Roy 2004, p. 367).

The Palestinian economy is tied to the Israeli economy and restricted by the Israeli Occupation. It is a captive market for Israeli products (Arafeh 2017). This drives up costs without having the same beneficial impact on salaries (Iyad). Ayman told me: "Imagine how much the Israeli is taking as salary … 3,000 dollars monthly, and the Palestinian man is taking 300 dollars. And the economy is the same and the prices are the same and we have to pay the same."

The Israeli policies of closure are, according to Roy (2004, p. 367), 'the primary measure affecting the Palestinian economy and society during the Oslo period and beyond.' By closure she means 'Israeli-imposed restrictions on the free movement of Palestinian goods, labor, and people across internal and external borders'. The effects of closure have been 'devastating' bringing about high unemployment due to the loss of labour and the damage done to Palestinian trade (Roy 2004, pp. 367–8).

On top of the closures, Israel has destroyed much of the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip during the repeated assaults, and it tightly controls Palestinian natural resources. This has made it much more difficult for Palestinians to develop economic opportunities within the territories. The lack of infrastructure means that, for example, in Gaza access to electricity is often limited to a few hours a day, and access to clean water is not guaranteed (UNCTAD 2017, pp. 6–7; Zahra). Without these fundamental provisions, an economic recovery is hard to envision. Further the building and repairs required to fix the infrastructure has been hampered by Israeli policies of closure. A lack of control over natural resources means further restrictions to economic prospects for Palestinians within their territory. For example, in the West Bank, over 60 percent of the land is designated as 'Area C', and so controlled by Israel. This means that the opportunities for job creation using that land, through 'agriculture, tourism, cosmetics, construction, mining, and quarrying' are stymied (UNCTAD 2017, p. 3).

Unemployment remains high, estimated at over 40 percent in Gaza in 2011–2016 (Sayigh 2011, p. 3; UNCTAD 2017). Ayman said: "There are many people who don't have jobs. Many. They are educated and finish their studies but there are no places for jobs". Sayigh (1997, p. 608) described, even over 20 years ago, how the numbers of Palestinians gaining a tertiary education has soared but only 20 percent of graduates and high-school leavers can find employment. Many of those who were employed found themselves in a vulnerable unstable job in Israel or the settlements.

Employment in Israel, or in Israeli settlements, often as illegal wage labourers, has historically been one of the staple sources of income for thousands of Palestinians (around 125,000 in the 1980s); but this type of labour is vulnerable to the political situation and variations in the Israeli economy (Sayigh 1997, p. 607; Arafeh 2017). Many Gazans who used to work as labourers in Israel are now unable to do so, due to the Israeli closures of the borders with Gaza. Saleh lives in a village near to the Palestinian West Bank border with Israel, and many people in his village work in Israel

because “if you want to make money you’ve got to work in Israel”. He found, for instance that he earned more as an illegal wage labourer in Israel than as a merchandiser in a food company in the Palestinian Territories. Many Palestinians are in a similar situation where, because of high costs and unemployment in the Palestinian Territories, they are dependent on irregular and/or illegal work in Israel or the settlements to make ends meet. As has been seen in Gaza, these opportunities can rapidly vanish when the political context changes and as such are not a basis for stable employment or skill development at the individual level nor do they contribute to the creation of a self-sufficient Palestinian economy.

These factors have led to the impoverishment of the Palestinian Territories and undermined attempts at reviving it through industry and external investment.

Further, the Palestinian economy is highly reliant on external income through foreign aid (Jamal 2012, p. 191; Bröning 2013; UNCTAD 2017). On the one hand, this makes the Palestinian economy particularly vulnerable to changes in international diplomacy – such as Donald Trump’s cuts in aid to Palestine (UNCTAD 2017; Sampathkumar 2018). On the other hand, it has led to a situation which scholars have associated with the ‘rentier state’ model (Suleiman; Parsons 2005, p. 126). The idea of a ‘rentier state’ is most commonly associated with Gulf states where vast incomes derived from the sale of oil and natural gas have allowed the government to function without accountability to their citizens, that is ‘no representation without taxation’. The term ‘rentier state’ has also been used to describe other economies where the government is not dependent on taxing the population for its income. Many economies which receive large sums in aid from international donors fall within this bracket. This dependency on aid often leads to increased levels of corruption, patronage and nepotism which in turn is often used to gain political support (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, p. 408).

Overall, the issues facing the Palestinian economy are of great importance to the Palestinian population, and have been for decades. This comes through in the polls. At the time of the 1996 election, 28.5 percent of those polled were ‘concerned with economic problems’, a greater proportion than those worried about democracy and free speech or security and order (Ghanem 1996, p. 524). Many of the Palestinians I interviewed explained their political support in terms of money, with corruption and services playing an important role in colouring their views of different groups (Maha; Mona; Munira; Rola; Zainab; Faisal; Mousa; Raafat; Saleh). Several interviewees told me that after (or sometimes before) the “Palestinian cause”, the main issue for them when choosing to support a political organisation was “the economy and giving job opportunities” (Mousa), “fix[ing] the economic situation” (Saleh) or getting “a better life than this and social status” (Munira). Rola told me the factors which determine political support are “services presented, the political situation, the improvement of the

situation in the negotiations, checkpoints, employment, the economy, and projects".

3.1.1 Palestinian Political Organisations and the Economy

Fatah, the major political faction in the Palestinian Territories, has become almost synonymous with the Palestinian Authority. When the PA was established it incorporated 'patterns of patronage' that 'largely obscured the distinctions between Arafat's personal political machine, the Fatah party, and the institutions of the proto-state' (Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 166). Two interviewees explicitly told me that "the [Palestinian] Authority is basically Fatah" (Suleiman) and so "when you say Fatah it is Palestinian Authority" (Hussein).

There are, of course, benefits to this in terms of gaining support. The PA is the recipient of domestic taxes (via Israel) and international aid funding and it controls the institutions of government, giving them power and money in these areas that has 'far outstripped' Hamas (Gunning 2007, p. 43).

Fatah's position as the dominant power in the PA has allowed them to forge alliances with the traditional elite and the middle class through 'financial and employment incentives' (Gunning 2007, p. 43). Connections with the elite have been manifested in what Dana (2020) calls 'crony capitalism' with members of the business elite serving within the government. Dana gives the example of PADICO Holding, the most influential holding and investment company in the Palestinian Territories, which was founded by Munib al-Masri. One of his cousins, and Fatah member Maher al-Masri acted as the PA's Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry from 1996–2002. Another cousin, Sabih al-Masri runs PalTel – the Palestinian mobile phone network – which in turn is partially owned and controlled by PADICO. This network was granted a monopoly over Palestinian telecommunications by the Palestinian Authority from its establishment in 1997 until (due to international pressure) a rival network was allowed to enter the market in 2012. These types of connections bolster patron-client networks and ensure the 'compliance of the elite' and the 'stabilisation of the Oslo political status quo' (Dana 2020, p. 259).

Fatah also provides financial incentives to a wider slice of Palestinian society. The PA employed 22 percent of the Palestinian workforce in the public sector in 2015 or 89,947 public sector workers (Jamal 2007; Palestinian Trade Center; Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 65), including tens of thousands of members of the security forces (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 23; Gunning 2007, p. 44; Pearlman 2011, p. 132; El Kurd 2018; Tartir 2018). Employment in the public sector is sought after because it is seen as a better (or more reliable) source of income than the private sector (in that families dependent on a private sector income are poorer than those dependent on a public sector income) (Rana; Miftah 2013, p. 17). With the PA dominated by Fatah, the connection between supporting the party and gaining employment is quite clear. Even those who may disagree with the PA's policies may feel unable to

challenge them because they are 'dependent on them as a source of income' (El Kurd 2018, p. 387; El Kurd 2020, p. 1).

The theme of Fatah being able to provide employment and opportunities came up again and again in my interviews. Yousef, a Fatah activist, told me: "We used to help our members to secure jobs after they graduate from the university". As some interviewees said: "maybe you have people who are affiliated to [Fatah] because it is giving access to the *sulta* [PA] and employment and other things" (Fouad) or "if you are Fatah they give you support to get a job, and to go to up" (Samer).

There was a particularly strong link between employment within the security apparatus and Fatah membership. Azza said: "Fatah is the government and most of the people who have jobs have jobs in the government. All the ministries, all the police". The two individuals that I interviewed in the security services were both pro-Fatah. Hussein said: "inside of the Palestinian Authority, police, intelligence … soldiers: [they] all are Fatah", and Karim explained:

> The security apparatus is part of the PA and Fatah is the biggest part of the PA, so it is normal that Fatah is the security forces … Legally [recruits] cannot belong to a party and be in the security apparatus, but previously, because of the conflict between Fatah and Hamas, a blind eye was turned to political recruitment.
>
> *(Karim)*

While being associated with Fatah "opens doors", Hamas supporters in the West Bank "will find obstacles and problems, with his situation, his future" (Majed). Samer said: "Nowadays if you support Hamas and I say that, maybe I apply to a job and they know this, maybe they will refuse me". People who are known to support Hamas may also find it difficult to look for work outside of the Palestinian Territories because "he will have problems if he wants to travel outside of Palestine" (Majed), because people associated with Hamas are often blacklisted for travel and prevented from crossing borders by Israel.

Hamas have now had over a decade of experience ruling the Gaza Strip. The impact of their rule on the economy and political support is more complex than Fatah's role in the West Bank. There is no doubt that Hamas does extend, to some extent, the same kinds of employment and support to their supporters. However, their resources are less reliable than those of Fatah and the PA in the West Bank. Sayigh (2011, p. 3) writes that the Hamas government is reliant on 'over $1.4 billion annually paid by the rival, donor-supported government of Prime Minister Salam Fayyad in the West Bank for public sector salaries, welfare payments, and public utility subsidies' but they also get money from private and religiously affiliated donations from abroad (and often the Gulf states), and they had – while they were operating – gained some income from taxing goods coming through the illegal tunnels from Egypt (Hollis 2010). Even accounting for these sources of income

the Hamas government is 'subject to periodic shortages of liquidity due to Israel's refusal to ensure a regular supply of money to local banks, as part of its general restrictions on Gaza' (Sayigh 2011, p. 3). Hamas's dependence on external sources of income has sometimes reflected badly on them. In particular, they have drawn criticism from Salafist groups among others who take offence at their gaining support from 'Shia' Iran (Maha; Ayman; Ghassan; Sayigh 2011).

One particularly odd phenomenon in the Gaza Strip is the duplication of government employees. The PA – and so Fatah – paid the wages of government employees up until the 2007 Hamas takeover of Gaza. At this point, President Mahmoud Abbas told most government employees not to work for the Hamas government, at risk of prosecution, while reassuring them that they would continue to receive their wages (Sayigh 2011, p. 7; Baconi 2018, pp. 136–137). Hamas then recruited a full, second staff to administer the Gaza Strip. The end result of this is that there are '19,500–27,900 civil servants and 34,500 PASF [Palestinian Authority Security Forces] personnel' who are abstaining from work but continuing to receive a salary from the PA (Sayigh 2011, p. 8). Those on the Hamas payroll have often had to go without their salaries. Waleed told me: "Hamas employees have not been paid for the past two years … some 40,000 employees were recruited and working with Hamas, they are not paid their salaries on time, they were paid a thousand shekels [≈$285] every two months which is very, very little". Zahra explained:

> For Hamas employees, they go to work at 8am to 3pm and they don't have salaries because Hamas suffers from a financial crisis. Sometimes Hamas pay them 200 dollars, 300 dollars which is nothing actually. It is not their real salaries because Hamas don't have the money, especially after the crisis in Syria and Lebanon when they lost the support of Hezbollah and the Syria government and so, now they don't have any financial resources, and because [Egyptian President] Sisi destroyed the tunnels and the tunnels were one of the main resources for Hamas.
>
> *(Zahra)*

Despite the problems of employment by the Hamas government, in the context of the high unemployment of the Gaza Strip, it would seem that providing some kind of employment does gain them political support. Waleed suggests that Hamas does have a similar relationship with its employees as Fatah: "The people that support Hamas are the people who work in the government of Hamas, or if one of their relatives or their son or father works in the government".

The smaller political parties may provide employment but, as they do not have access to resources on anywhere near the same scale of Fatah and Hamas, they do not provide it to the same extent.

The use of employment to gain support should be seen within the context of patronage (Miguel et al. 2015, p. 2) and 'clientelism' (Jamal 2007, p. 14).

It works through what in many of my interviews, is described as "*wasta*" or connections (Azza; Dena; Fatima; Wafaa; Zahra; Ashraf; Bassam; Raafat; Suleiman). Jamal describes clientelism as follows:

> clientelism provides clients with paths to exclusive services and influence in return for the support of their patron. It subverts the democratic process: the client who receives money to vote in a certain way; the individual who is granted political access because he supports the party in power; the woman who pays lip service to the state in return for benefits-the list is endless.
>
> *(Jamal 2007, p. 14)*

This phenomenon plays an important role in explaining how socioeconomic status relates to political support in the Palestinian Territories. But, it must be noted that clientelism 'is not foreign to democratic countries' (Jamal 2007, p. 15), and I certainly do not consider this phenomenon to be in any-way exclusive to Palestine or the Middle East.

The formation of clientelist networks in Palestine dates back decades. Arafat 'distributed funds freely to individuals in all spheres and areas and encouraged the emergence of a large and uncoordinated network of beneficiaries who reported directly to him' (Sayigh 1997, p. 689). Arafat's 'unstructured and constantly shifting coterie' were given 'substantial cash sums … ostensibly to pay recruits and purchase weapons, but in reality to secure the loyalty of the Fateh constituency' (Sayigh 1997, p. 635).

Since the Oslo Agreement, it seems that clientelism has been an increasing problem in the Palestinian Territories. After Oslo, Arafat and 'several thousand PLO cadres and their families' (Jamal 2001, p. 274) returned to the Palestinian Territories where they 'reforged political ties based on family and place of origin' (Sayigh 1997, p. 661), and made up the PA. In the ensuing years, the PA expanded, further strengthening clientelistic structures. Indeed, Jamal (2007, p. 21) writes: 'Since the emergence of the Palestinian National Authority in 1993, clientelism and patronage have defined state-society relations in the West Bank'. The government payroll expanded to 'some 75,000 by 1997' (Sayigh 1997, p. 661). This 'opened the door for political leaders to create their own circles of political supporters' leading to 'patronage and clientelism' (Jamal 2001, p. 274). Clientelism meant that for ordinary Palestinians: 'It was far easier, for example, to obtain the necessary paperwork to build a house by seeking the help of a clientelistic tie (or wasta) that it was to go directly to the government' (Jamal 2007, p. 41).

Clientelism is effective in buying political support through directly and indirectly offering benefits to supporters. Raafat, a middle-aged man from Qalqilya, explained the situation to me:

> In order to make their life and issues easy to handle, [people] support the party in control. Work and opportunities are better if you support the party in charge. For example, to get health insurance you need to

> support the authority – you need wasta or loyalty to a certain party, you cannot oppose it. For example, for joining the [group not disclosed to ensure anonymity] institute I needed a paper of good behaviour which is basically to show that you are not against the Authority.
>
> *(Raafat)*

For many Palestinians, especially those not benefitting from clientelistic relationships, their existence is a cause of concern. They have led to serious mismanagement, squandered resources, and corruption. On an individual level, qualified people might be overlooked for employment, benefits or promotion; while those with the right connections get ahead. Many of those I spoke to who were struggling to find jobs resented the privileges granted to those with 'wasta'. You need connections to get a job, or at least it gives you a better chance (Azza; Mona; Naimeh; Abdel; Amjad; Bassam; Bassel).

At a territories-wide level, the implications of clientelism are even more serious. Sayigh describes how Arafat's 'reliance on planned corruption prevented rational planning, minimized learning and accumulation of experience, and impeded coordination of resources' (Sayigh 1997, p. 691). Klein describes how Arafat established a 'chaotic system' through a lack of coordination within the PA, duplicate authorities, a lack of systematic planning and the 'personification of the political and ruling systems … centered on a chain of patron-client' relations (Klein 2003, p. 200). This has led to a non-meritocratic, inefficient and largely corrupt bureaucratic structure.

There are several personal instances of conspicuous spending, and allegations of corruption which have continued to surround Fatah (Sayigh 1997, p. 635). Arafat himself was accused of spending public funds on his wife's expensive lifestyle in Paris and on buying the support of politicians (Abrams 2012, pp. 1–2). Abbas, despite his pledges to tackle corruption, has failed in his task. The PA's anti-corruption court has a very poor record of convicting corrupt politicians (Abrams 2012, p. 3). What Abrams calls the 'apogee of corrupt practices' was the reselling of almost 20,000 tons of Palestinian cement, intended for rebuilding Palestinian homes in the Gaza Strip, to the Israelis for the building of the 'apartheid' wall (Abrams 2012, p. 2). This incident demonstrates how explicitly corruption in the upper levels of the PA can work in conjunction with the Israeli occupying forces.

This corruption has not gone unnoticed by the Palestinian population. Indeed, Fatah's 'record of corruption' certainly was a contributing factor to its electoral defeat in 2006 (Gunning 2007, p. 153; Jamal 2013, pp. 283–284; Baconi 2018, p. 97). Abrams cites that 82 percent of Palestinians believed there was corruption in the PA in 2012 (Abrams 2012, p. 1).

Clientelism also impacts political support because of the way in which it reinforces family structures. This has contributed to the conception of political loyalties as being almost hereditary. Fatah's patronage networks build upon already existent clan and family networks. Fatah has a long history of working with large middle-class families and the traditional elite in the Palestinian Territories (Sayigh 1997, p. 608). These developments have

meant that 'clan- or family-based loyalties … elders, mukhtars, and other persons of traditional social standing' maintain much of their prominence (Sayigh 1997, p. 680).

With the establishment of the Palestinian Authority 'The family was re-empowered as a political network for individuals who seek to enter the public service' (Jamal 2001, p. 274). Those with power have tended to act 'not just as a patron to his clients but also on behalf of a clan or a home-town' (Klein 2003, p. 200). Clan membership certainly impacts political support (see Ghanem 1996). Gunning credits clan structures with having a significant impact on support for Fatah and shows how family pressure ties together with the geographical factors described in Chapter 2. He writes:

> Fatah enjoyed better access than Hamas to the traditional elites who were more likely to be still in control of the local religious and charitable networks in the villages than in the towns. This differential access to the traditionally powerful clans may also help to explain why Fatah did considerably better in the villages-and less well in the towns … During elections, clan members face considerable pressure to vote according to the wishes of their clan elders who make tactical alliances with a particular political faction. In the villages, Fatah's alliance with some of the more powerful clan elders is strong. At the same time, clan elders are more likely to be powerful in the villages than in urban centres where people are subject to a far greater variety of political influences and networks.
>
> *(Gunning 2007, p. 149)*

The importance of family on political support was highlighted in my interviews. Several interviewees described how party allegiance is something that children 'inherit' from their parents or described how their own family's preferences were important to them (Azza; Farida; Mona; Bassam; Fouad; Hassan; Jalal; Kamal; Majed; Yousef). The idea of party support as an identity generated from your social upbringing and as something which shapes an individual's political views rather than forming as a result of rational political calculations, is also important in the United States literature on voting. The 'Michigan model' of voting emphasises the importance of 'party identity' in this way (Campbell et al. 1960). Karim told me: "Just as children of Christian parents are brought up Christian and children of Muslim parents are brought up Muslim so are political parties passed from parents to children". A few interviewees explained to me how their families had influenced them, such as Kamal, a Hamas activist, who had been brought up to support Hamas. Zahra had even altered her vote to fit with her father's wishes.

The extent to which party identity is important to the family can be seen by two Gazans' comments about marriage. Tahani told me: "When a guy goes and asks for a girl's hand, the family goes to the mosque and asks, 'Which political party is this guy affiliated to?', as the mosques know about

every mosque that the [parties] are affiliated to". Zahra said: "In 2009, for example, I went to see a girl for my brother – her family asked which party he was in as they just gave their girls to marry Hamas supporters". Suleiman stated that the major form of political recruitment is "familia":

> When you look at families, even nuclear families, you will find that all of the members belong to a faction, because the father is that way … it is family, connections … you start thinking of political factions as clans … So, I belong to Fatah. It is my clan … This political clan gives me benefits and protects me, and after I finish and graduate, maybe the wasta will find me a job through the connections within the clan, within the political clan.
> *(Suleiman)*

As such, the clientelism reinforces the patriarchal family structure by distributing employment and opportunities through traditional, hierarchical patterns.

When considering the connection between political parties and employment, it is worth also considering the wider impact of Fatah and Hamas's policies on the economy in general, and, as such, the impact of their rule on employment in the private sector.

Fatah's policy of seeking a resolution to the conflict through negotiations has the support of the international community and has gained it a great deal of financial support and generated investment into the region. Furthermore, Fatah is seen as bringing stability and relative economic security to the West Bank and smoothing relations with Israel and as such facilitating Palestinian labour in Israel. For some, Fatah's rule has brought a kind of "economic security for social stability" (Fathi). Fatah politician, Fathi, put it that voting for Fatah is like "holding the hands for the future". Recent technocratic governments, with the endorsement of (Fatah) President Abbas, have brought about a more 'liberal' economic system, encouraging the banks to give loans and creating a boom in housing in areas like Ramallah (Suleiman). When paired with Fatah's support for the peace process, these policies position Fatah as the party for business and stability.

Connected to Fatah's investment and stability policies – and particularly the liberal economic policies of the Salam Fayyad government – there is an interesting relationship developing between debt and support for Fatah. Personal debt in Palestine has been increasing rapidly, with Palestinian consumer debt in 2014 at $1.391 billion (up almost six-fold since 2008) (Harker 2014). The number of people taking loans are often using them to build a house, buy a car or to pay for a wedding (Suleiman). Harker does not directly link indebtedness to support for Fatah but suggests 'debt fuelled consumption is actively promoted by a range of institutions as a kind of economic peace initiative, a form of pacification that replaces political struggles for national liberation with the promise of a good life defined

by capitalism' (Harker 2014). Debt, of course, gives a long-term interest in 'stability' (Ghassan). Ghassan observed that people who have taken loans:

> They are afraid … they want stability, and they want to receive their salaries, because their salaries are important to pay the debt. If there is chaos, people will lose jobs. And they will lose maybe their own properties. Because this apartment for example is in the name of the bank … you will not own it until you pay the money. So, if there is instability you will lose your home.
>
> *(Ghassan)*

Hence, the economic strain would, for many people, encourage them to support Fatah, the party which promises peace and stability (Habib).

Hamas's economic reputation is markedly different. It has largely been boycotted by the international community and blockaded by Israel. Under Hamas, 'Gaza's borders remained closed' meaning life in Gaza was 'like a prison' (Caridi 2012, p. 277, 308). Some of those I spoke to in Gaza saw Hamas as responsible for the deteriorating economy. Yasmin accused Hamas of stockpiling products, and blamed Hamas for the bad economic situation. The benefit of Fatah rule is beginning to appeal more to certain people in Gaza who believe that if Fatah were in control, the economic situation would improve as the siege would be lifted. Waleed told me:

> In the beginning people believed that Hamas would get them out of the poverty and the hard conditions socially, economically, politically that they were living in … Now after ten years, it is very evident that [Hamas] have done nothing concerning poverty, unemployment and the situation … A lot of people realised that after ten years of Hamas being in control they haven't been able to accomplish much so that is why they are looking for an alternative …
>
> *(Waleed)*

Zahra told me:

> I voted for Hamas in 2006, but after they controlled us and I have lived under their control, I felt that 'no, most of the political parties are the same: they only care about their interests'. They have corruption. Hamas has corruption as does Fatah also, but at least in the days of Fatah our life was better because Fatah has the support of the international community. That is why at that time we had life, we had open borders, we had job opportunities. But because of Hamas, most of the people and especially the donors boycott the Hamas government, and that is why we don't have any resources in Palestine.
>
> *(Zahra)*

Subsequently, for a person with connections, or desiring a job and improved economic conditions Fatah would seem a better political choice than Hamas. A strong political association with Fatah might help improve job prospects, and at least their policy of negotiations has mostly encouraged support, aid and investment from the international community and ensured relative stability. Hamas on the other hand do not have as many resources so cannot offer the same kind of employment and their time in control of the Gaza Strip has seen it blockaded and bombarded by Israel and the economy and infrastructure have greatly suffered as a result.

Hamas and Fatah also often provide welfare and services. The extent of this provision is wide-ranging, and it varies considerably. Waleed, an interviewee, told me some of the things provided by parties include food, university fees, equipment such as wheelchairs, furniture, clothes, gas in winter, kitchen accessories, assistance with the cost of marriage, cash and medical assistance.

The provision of welfare by political organisations dates back to well before the establishment of the PA. Sayigh (1997, p. 612) in his historical account describes how, from the beginning, the mainstream PLO, effectively the Fatah leadership, 'viewed the population as a target audience to be co-opted through the provision of services and public goods'. They arranged this through the allocation of, among other things, '$463 million in steadfastness funds by the end of 1986' (Sayigh 1997, p. 612). These 'steadfastness funds' were meant to support and encourage the Palestinian population to remain on the land despite the difficulties of living under occupation. The 'steadfastness funds' were made up of a variety of welfare provisions and between 1979–86 included 'housing loans ($77 million), grants to educational institutions ($121 million), and various social benefits ($26 million)' (Sayigh 1997, p. 611).

Since the foundation of the PA in the 1990s, Fatah's service provision infrastructure has largely become integrated into the infrastructure of the PA (Bröning 2013, p. 2). As the party merged with the government, work that used to be done by the party began to be done through government institutions. Efforts that had been effective tools of party recruitment became (unsatisfactory) government services. A Fatah minister, Fathi, told me:

> Fatah had made a big mistake upon establishing the Palestinian Authority … I feel that this inability to differentiate between what a political party does and what an authority, what a state is supposed to be doing, meant that a lot of Fatah has been diluted in the Palestinian Authority … The grassroots work became something that should happen through the ministries and no longer through party lines, so we stopped providing healthcare we stopped providing educational support we stopped providing rations … we have lent and delegated part of our services to the Palestinian Authority, because it was something logical to do but then we could not differentiate what is the party and what is the state, it all became … merged … to the extent that … we woke up in 2006 and what the vote was, a landslide and it was representing at

> the time the wish of the Palestinian people and could well be the very people we divorced because whatever rations they got, they got under the banner of the ministries and not Fatah.
>
> *(Fathi)*

This account describes the general trend of Fatah services being subsumed into the structure of the proto-state. The Palestinian Authority is now a 'primary funder of the social protection sector' through the Ministry of Social Affairs, however, 'this sector does not constitute a priority compared to other sectors, such as the security sector' and its services have suffered as a result (Miftah 2013, p. 7). Rita Giacaman et al., however, found that the PA had not given much time or thought to 'central aspects of public policy usually designed as social welfare issues-social and income security, old age benefits, social services, public housing, unemployment and occupational welfare' nor was there a philosophy of 'citizen's rights to basic social welfare services' (Giacaman et al. 1996, p. 12). That being said, the numbers of those who benefit are not insubstantial. Miftah (2013, p. 24) documents that, in 2011, 93,946 families received regular cash transfers and around '66,000 families receive[d] health insurance services and 45,000 families benefit[ed] from regular food aid'.

Fatah has not, however, fully given up its social work to the Ministry of Social Affairs. In my interviews, I was given several examples of Fatah providing services for Palestinians such as: how Fatah provides food for *iftar* during Ramadan (Zainab; Hussein), and had provided charity to victims of war (Zainab), provided food and care for the poor (Basima; Lina; Hussein), provided inflatable boats, food and water when Gaza flooded (Yahya), drawn the portraits of local 'martyrs' on the walls of refugee camps (Lina), organised marches, demonstrations, workshops, and lectures on subjects such as women's rights and prisoner hunger strikes (Lina; Nadia; Louay; Mostafa; Ramy). In this way, Fatah reaches out to individuals at a local level, trying to connect them with the Palestinian cause and Fatah. However, in the provision of welfare services, their role has become diminished and subsumed within the PA.

Hamas has also played an important role in welfare provision, including in healthcare, kindergartens, schools, libraries, clubs, scholarships, and the distribution of basic goods and food (Esposito 1984/1998, p. 230; Jad 2011a, p. 178; Jamal 2013, p. 293). The Muslim Brotherhood's focus, long before the establishment of Hamas, was the Islamisation of society, through mosques, education and the provision of welfare (Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 163). The Muslim Brotherhood 'sought to encourage observance of Islam and widen its social base by establishing religious schools, Islamic libraries, childcare centres, vocational training centres for young men, and sports clubs, usually attached to local mosques' (Sayigh 1997, p. 628). They built mosques and established Islamic colleges and other public institutions such as the Islamic University in Gaza and the Maqasid charitable hospital in Jerusalem which both helped Palestinians and provided them with

employment. Much of their work was funded with official and private donations from the Gulf states (Sayigh 1997, p. 629).

> The focus of the Brotherhood's activity in the 1970s was the mosque. By 1979, there were 750 mosques in the occupied territories, twice as many as there had been in 1967. The mosques attracted the lower socio-economic strata of society: workers, the unemployed, refugees, teachers and students, peasants and city dwellers. They provided economic aid, social contact and religious preaching. The more the national leadership failed to ease the burden of the occupation, the more the mosque became the refuge for those suffering from it the most.
>
> *(Pappé 2006, p. 261)*

These mosques formed a network which provided a sound basis of support for Hamas when it was established (Sayigh 1997, p. 632). Gunning (2007, pp. 45–46, 149) argues that this network was fundamental to their grass-roots appeal and their 2006 electoral success. Indeed, of the 74 Hamas legislators elected in 2006, many had been involved with their local mosques (Gunning 2007, p. 162).

Hamas distributes welfare services mostly through the religious charity sector. This has been the subject of much speculation and academic (and not so academic) writing (Levitt 2006; Caridi 2012; Bröning 2013, p. 2; Jamal 2013; Roy [2011] 2014). However, linking Hamas directly to the Islamic social institutions would be an oversimplification of the reality on the ground. First, there are many Islamic social institutions which operate in competition and disagreement with those more closely associated with Hamas (Roy [2011] 2014, p. 168). Further, it must be noted that although Hamas is connected to many of these institutions there are rarely any 'direct institutionalized links to activist political groups' but instead the connection is not 'organizational but philosophical, one of shared principles and values' (Roy [2011] 2014, p. 164). Nonetheless, it is clear that Hamas does benefit politically from their association. Hamas's welfare provision and its 'extensive infrastructure of charitable social services' are the expression of its 'social action theory' which specifies that the Palestinian struggle 'must be waged by a "fortified society"' and that this is achieved 'through religious education and a commitment to Islam' (Hroub 2000, p. 234). Compared to Fatah, which has largely incorporated their services into the infrastructure of the PA, Hamas has a substantial history of welfare provision through civil society, built upon the charity, welfare and education networks, and institutions of its predecessor, the Muslim Brotherhood. Hamas's charities gained Hamas support 'by offering services that made people beholden to Hamas' (Gunning 2007, p. 153).

Through their schools, mosques, orphanages, childcare centres, and sports clubs, Hamas has developed a close connection to the Palestinian people. They were described by interviewees as having "a kind of social services network" (Fouad), which meant they were "closer to the people"

(Ghassan). I was told that Hamas care about poor people, children's and women's health, and would give people food or clothes and help to access education or medical assistance (Jamila; Jihan; Mona; Ayman). Several interviewees explained how Hamas used the *zakat* system. Ruwaida, a PLC Hamas member, described the *zakat* system, which is run by the *zakat* committees, often dominated by Hamas members: "everyone who is rich has to pay 2.5 percent of their income to who? To the poor, the unfortunate, the homeless, for the sake of God". In this way, Hamas members are in charge of distributing charity to the needy. This system, however, is not officially run by Hamas, although, it has often been dominated by people sympathetic to them (Ruwaida).

The extent to which Hamas has continued in its role as 'welfare provider' has perhaps diminished somewhat after taking control of Gaza. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas's resources are on the one hand expanded because of being in power there, and on the other, curtailed by the restrictions imposed on them by the Israeli siege. Indeed, Sayigh suggests that the Hamas government 'has been able to leave meeting a very large part of the humanitarian needs of its population to others' such as the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees, which provides schooling, healthcare, food rations and employment to thousands of refugees, and other smaller charities and NGOs (Sayigh 2011, p. 7).

Bassam, Bilal and Nidal told me that after the 2007 violent confrontations between Hamas and Fatah "the services provided by Hamas stopped in the West Bank" (Nidal). However, some interviewees said that, although Hamas had largely been closed down in the West Bank, its charitable arm was still operating, albeit covertly. Hussein explained how all the political parties give food boxes, "they give meat, they [provide food] for Ramadan for families to eat." He also said that Hamas do this, but "under the table, because it is not allowed for them to do this … For example, they go to the house, they know they are poor, they put the box [then knock and run] … they say from … al-haraka al-islamiya [the Islamic movement], and the green [Hamas] flag". When speaking to me in 2014 in a Nablus refugee camp, Bassel suggested that Hamas was seen as doing more for the poor. He explained to me how they do it without being explicitly Hamas: "They are not saying that they are Hamas. But everyone knows that Abdullah is Hamas, and Abdullah is helping the people, and they know and believe that he is Hamas, but he is not saying that this is from Hamas, that they donate this".

It should be mentioned that 'leftist' organisations have also played a role in providing services. They have tended to do so through voluntary and non-governmental organisations (Bröning 2013, p. 2; Taraki 2000, p. 18). These organisations' goals tend to be social and economic development, and they work in 'the areas of literacy, women's skills, and early learning, among others.' (Sayigh 1997, p. 612). What is clear is that the political parties behind these ventures have 'utilized these bodies primarily as a means to recruit new members … The Palestinian Left may not have employed patronage in the manner or scale of Fateh, but it, too, operated 'rent'' (Sayigh 1997,

p. 613). These organisations sometimes have promoted radical agendas, in that they have 'sought consciously to alter conventional methods of political action, and … they strove to involve all sectors of the population in participatory forms of political organization' (Sayigh 1997, p. 612). However, these agendas have changed after the fall of the Soviet Union and as they became more dependent on foreign funding from western aid programmes. This has, according to Jamal, been problematic for their support long term as 'these groups became accountable to the donors who support them, rather than the communities they are supposed to serve' (Jamal 2013, p. 287; Jad 2018, pp. 60–63). These NGOs are, according to Allen, 'popularly regarded as self-serving, self-promoting, corrupt and corrupting *"dakakin"* (stores), serving mainly to line their directors' pockets' (Allen 2002b, p. 40). This has created a distance between them and the people and may have even contributed to the drop in support for the 'leftists' over recent decades (Jamal 2013).

The provision of goods and services is also used by political parties to recruit university students. In Palestine, universities are highly politicised spaces and can be a crucible for creating activists. Zeira (2018, p. 1133) found that education level was a key determinant of participation in resistance behaviour – she suggests that this is because educational institutions provide 'institutional and organizational advantages for collective action'. Certainly, many student activists from the 1970s and 1980s went on to lead the resistance (Taraki 2000, p. 18). Student elections are hotly contested and are widely commented upon and are seen as important indicators of the strength and support for different parties (e.g. Sayigh 1997, p. 628). As such, parties put a great deal of effort into eliciting support from students. The importance of student elections has meant that the different political parties target university students in particular with their recruitment strategies, including the provision of certain services. Waleed describes the role of universities for recruitment in Gaza:

> The university is the main kitchen, or the main platform to recruit … because university has a lot of possible members … [there] are five big universities and many colleges where Gaza youth go and get an education, so it is a place for both to meet: political parties and the youth.
>
> *(Waleed)*

Most of the major political parties are active at universities even if they have little presence elsewhere in the Palestinian Territories. Interviewees spoke of seeing Fatah, Hamas, the PFLP, Al-Mubadara, FIDA among other groups at university (Farida; Ghadah; Hanan; Iman; Lana; Lina; Maha; Mona; Naimeh; Nour; Rana; Rasha; Rawda; Reem; Rola; Zahra; Abdel; Ibrahim; Iyad; Kamal; Louay; Majed; Mostafa; Mousa; Nasim; Ramy; Saleh; Yousef). University campuses at election times are an opportunity for different parties to demonstrate the extent of their following and their influence through demonstrations, parades and entertainment events. Hamas would parade with cardboard rocket launchers around the campuses while

Fatah supporters carried banners showing Arafat wearing the black and white *kufiya* which symbolises Palestinian nationalism (see e.g. Figures 2.5 and 2.6) (Maha; Reem; Rola; Yousef). I visited Birzeit University at election time and was astonished by the profusion of flags and posters decorating the grounds and managed to see Hamas supporters parade in military fatigues to the sound of drums.

I was told by many of those I interviewed that political organisations at university frequently offered students money or phone cards to entice them into voting for them or supporting them. Students, recent students, and professors told me that Fatah gave out 300 shekels [≈$85] and a credit card (Abdel), a 50 shekel [≈$15] phone card (Hanan; Jamila; Lana) and free taxis to vote at student elections (Lana). Saleh said that in one day before elections at Birzeit University, he collected "300 shekels [≈$85] and 100 shekels [≈$30] of credit for my phone" from "FIDA and Fatah and Hamas and Mubadara" but that he did not vote for anyone.

Outside of the election rush, parties offer students discounts and services throughout the year. Shabiba, Fatah's youth organisation, plays an important role in recruiting young people into the organisation. They are highly active in student politics. Several of those I interviewed said they had been members of Shabiba (Rola; Ramy; Yousef). Many of the younger interviewees saw Fatah mainly through the prism of student politics. Fatah offered half price on stationary items and helped out with university fees (Mona; Waleed). Yousef told me what he did when he was a Fatah activist at university:

> We always paid the fees for students … We used to help them pay the rents … Helping students sometimes if they have any difficulties. Like, let's say a student he has a problem with his lecturer or a problem, so we used to go bring these people together, try to settle the problems and make them become friends or something.
>
> *(Yousef)*

Hamas also gives financial support to students, they "give books for free or with discounts" and also help students with "coupons for tuition so they can graduate" (Hanan; Kamal; Saleh). Maha agreed that they had "a lot of services to give for the students". I was told that they had bought an ambulance for Birzeit University (Mona), they provided materials, support, events, and trips to people with disabilities at Birzeit (Rasha; Rawda). Rasha and Rawda both supported Hamas in university elections because of the services that they provided. Maha told me why she voted for Hamas at a student election:

> As a first-year student I voted for Hamas … because I felt like they had the most organised agenda and they had a lot of services to give for the students … They had a very organised academic exhibition with a lot of books and this huge library. They gave some things for free. They did this really, really nice and organised parade which was … really interesting. And when I went to the table and talked to them about it, they

> were really helpful … that's something I really appreciate in a party, someone who is really … committed to their job and they really want to make a change in the university, and it's been proven that [with] Hamas in Birzeit … students had better services.
>
> *(Maha)*

Some of Hamas's provisions have a distinctly Islamic character. Rawda said: "Hamas would hold competitions for people who memorise the Qur'an and they would give courses for memorising the Qur'an. And they would do celebrations for [these] talents at university".

These descriptions of Hamas at universities and in welfare provision in the West Bank indicate that while Hamas may have been severely curtailed, its service provision and recruitment activities have certainly not ceased completely. Nonetheless, it is clear that 2007 has acted as a turning point in both Gaza and the West Bank for how Fatah and Hamas might behave in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and this must be considered in the analysis below.

3.2 Socioeconomic Gender Differences in Palestine and Political Support

There are differences between men and women's position in the economy and society in the Palestinian Territories. These differences primarily tend to be created by the 'traditional' division of labour where men are expected

Figure 3.2 A women's collective making snacks in the West Bank, 27th March 2016.

Source: Photograph by author.

to earn money, and women are expected to do the caring. To understand gender differences in the economy, it is important to start by looking at the main location of these differences, the family.

While women and men often occupy different positions in the economy, this may not necessarily mean that their interests are served by different policies. Men and women are often intimately linked to each other through marriage and other family ties. It could be that what is best for the family as a whole is more important to its members than what is best for them as individuals. The 'problem' of the family has often been pointed to by feminists. Simone de Beauvoir wrote of women:

> They live dispersed among men, tied by homes, work, economic interests, and social conditions to certain men - fathers or husbands - more closely than to other women. As bourgeois women, they are in solidarity with bourgeois men and not with women proletarians … The tie that binds her to her oppressors is unlike any other.
>
> *(De Beauvoir [1949] 2010, p. 28)*

Academic studies of the gender gap often make similar points. Edlund and Pande, in their explanation of the gender gap, suggest that women and men within a stable family should, logically, vote the same way. They write – rather bleakly - that 'within marriage men transfer resources to women in exchange for sex and for access to children' and that therefore (a stable/secure) marriage draws a husband and wife's political preferences closer together because they share economic interests (Edlund and Pande 2002). Manza and Brooks (1998, p. 1241) make a similar point writing that the 'interdependence of men and women in traditional marriages may thus give them common material interests'. The role of family and shared economic interests might explain why, for the most part, there is such similarity between men and women's political and voting choices (Campbell 2017).

In the Palestinian Territories, the literature suggests that more traditional family structures are likely to be prevalent. Scholarship points both to Middle Eastern society as being dominated by traditional family structures, and also see instability and poor governance as increasing the importance of family in society. Some scholars directly link family structures to the wider political context. For example, Norris and Inglehart argue that in societies with 'high levels of insecurity', traditional authority, family structures and social status are of increased importance (Inglehart and Norris 2003). They describe how in these contexts, 'the traditional two-parent family, with its division of sex roles between male breadwinner and female caregivers, is crucial for the survival of children' (Inglehart and Norris 2003, p. 16). Kamrava contributes to this idea when he suggests the family remains such an important social structure in the Middle East in part because states have proven to be both authoritarian and unable to deliver on their promises. As a result, Kamrava suggests: 'people have clung

to the social ties that were always trusted and relied on in times of hardship', their families (Kamrava 1998, p. 45). Whatever the reason for it, in the Middle East, as elsewhere, family is an important, even *the* most important social structure (Kamrava 1998, p. 49).

The family in the Middle East is designated by feminist scholar Kandiyoti, among others, as a 'classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988). In the classic patriarchy, power tends to be vested in men, particularly in the father. Barakat describes the family as 'traditionally' being dominated by the father, who 'owned family property and provided the family's livelihood' and as such held authority over other members (Barakat 1985, p. 1994, p. 32). Kamrava describes the authority of the father as 'virtually absolute' (Kamrava 1998, p. 50). In this structure, women are responsible for reproduction, childcare, and domestic labour and are in return provided with economic and physical security by their menfolk, whether husbands, brothers, fathers or sons (Kandiyoti 1988). In this view, family structure in the Middle East is often considered to be held together through mechanisms of 'honour' (Kamrava 1998, p. 43). This can be thought of in terms of behaviour and sexual propriety, but also in terms of economic obligations, where male responsibility for taking care of their family is closely concerned with questions of honour and is fundamental to the patriarchal 'bargain' (Kandiyoti 1988). According to Baxter (2007, p. 747), male financial provision to their family, and appearance of generosity plays an important part in raising the prestige of the family.

Of course, family structures and specific set ups vary across time, class, and place. As has been seen, there are considerable differences across the Palestinian Territories, and within particular social groups and for people of different levels of education, different family norms will be in place. Views which portray the family in the Middle East as a monolithic, 'traditional' institution have increasingly been challenged in the academic literature as reductive and harmfully creating and perpetuating stereotypes (Doumani 2003). Further, Barakat and Moghadam suggest that the patriarchal family is changing. With increased female employment, education, and the necessity of migration for many in the Middle East to make a good salary, there is the start of a 'democratization of husband-wife and father-children relationships' where more often, 'fathers are tending to relinquish their grip over family life and to share authority and responsibility with other family members' (Barakat 1985, p. 1994, p. 32; Moghadam 2004). Further, many family forms in the Middle East are now more similar to the 'bourgeois nuclear family' rather than the extended families usually considered pervasive in the Middle East (Moghadam 2004, p. 157). Nonetheless, Moghadam concludes 'the patriarchal gender contract remains in place, but economic changes and women's collective action may undermine it in the years to come' (Moghadam 2004, p. 157). However, it is important to be aware that family is a 'slippery concept' and as such should be placed in historical context as much as possible (Doumani 2003, p. 2).

There was certainly plenty of support for the idea that most family members are likely to support similar political parties in the interviews – as is described in some detail above – even if this was not linked specifically to the idea of them sharing economic interests (Azza; Farida; Mona; Tahani; Zahra; Bassam; Fouad; Hassan; Jalal; Kamal; Majed; Yousef).

If membership in a family unit, or marriage, draws men and women's political preferences closer together, then those outside of these structures might express greater differences in political views. Indeed, scholars suggest that in the US, as divorce rates have increased the number of female-headed families which are dependent on government benefits and welfare services, has also increased (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997, p. 3).

In the Palestinian Territories, women who do not form part of a traditional family group or else are the heads of a household without a primary male breadwinner, may be more likely to express different political views from men, because they tend to occupy different socioeconomic positions and are not tied to male priorities in the same way by their interdependence. Female headed households account for almost 10 percent of all Palestinian households and are poorer than male-headed households (Al-Adili et al. 2008, p. 113; Miftah 2013, p. 17; Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 20;). Miftah (2013 p. 19) explains the causes of female headed households and the increased likelihood of female poverty include not getting married, the death of a husband (because of women's greater life expectancy and frequent marriage of older men to younger women) and polygamy where 'the first wife and her children are often deprived of the father's resources'. Child marriage and widowhood are often two sides of the same coin, meaning there are much higher numbers of female than male widow(er)s and high levels of female child marriage (Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 22, 50). Single women are 'seen to be of less worth in the eyes of the community' and are often 'constrained in her daily activities and her social interactions and relationships' (Al-Adili et al. 2008, p. 113). In these cases, women suffer considerable difficulties. A survey of recipients of Ministry of Social Affairs services shows that poorer, less educated and single women are the most vulnerable and reliant on welfare (Miftah 2013, p. 8). As such, women in these groups might be more likely to support political parties which prioritise care and services for the poorer and vulnerable in society. Whereas, single men and members of male-headed households might be more likely to support parties which emphasise employment opportunities (as described below).

The persistence of patriarchal structures has economic and gender implications. If the family is, as Barakat describes it, 'an economic and social unit' where 'all members cooperate to secure its livelihood and improve its standing in the community' (Barakat 1985, p. 1994, p. 28; Kamrava 1998), then women within a family might be bound to the family and so may hold political views which support or encourage the increase in family income and status even if it constrains their individual progress. Gender differences in income or education level for those within the marriage or

family might make no difference to political support. Whereas, the different situations for unmarried women and unmarried men, mean their political views and where they turn to for support are likely to be more at variance.

Therefore, it could be expected that being married or not might impact the gender gap because married people share economic interests. And if the family unit is as tight as some scholars suggest above, then the gender gap in political support will be attributable for the most part to those who are not married. On the other hand, it might be that within marriage men and women are more likely to adopt more differentiated gender roles, with greater pressure for women to take on caring roles and for men to act as the breadwinner (as shall be explored in more detail below) compared to single, divorced and widowed men and women who may have to take on a greater share of both the breadwinning and caring roles. As such it is worth exploring the two hypotheses in the analysis below.

Hypothesis 1a(i): The gender gap in political support is smaller among married people (due to shared economic interests).
Hypothesis 1a(ii): The gender gap in political support is greater among married people (due to more divergent gender roles).

In the Palestinian Territories, within the patriarchal family structure, as described above, men are given the responsibility of providing for their family. If a young man wants to marry, they are expected to pay for the wedding, which may amount to around $50,000 (Baxter 2007, p. 755). They are also expected to 'earn' social status, Gren (2015, p. 155) suggests in her study of Dheisheh Camp, by 'displaying generosity'. Therefore, men in Palestine are under intense social pressure to earn money but live in an area with cripplingly high unemployment and low wages. Several scholars emphasise the strains that the occupation places on families, particularly in terms of the difficulty of finding work, which, some suggest, amount to a 'crisis of masculinity' (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, pp. 33–34; Roy 2004, p. 384; Baxter 2007, p. 749; Aweidah and Omar 2013). Johnson and Kuttab and Roy connect this crisis to the inability of fathers to provide for their families, the difficulty for men of accumulating enough money to marry through to rising levels of violence in schools and domestic violence (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, pp. 33–34; Roy 2004, p. 384). Aweidah and Espanioli (2007, p. 29) in their study, suggest that the lack of employment leads to men becoming 'nervous, violent, frustrated, desperate, and depressed'.

The pressure on men to earn money came through in my interviews. I was told that men are not just expected to "financially support the family" (Ibrahim), but they should also "build a house" (Maha) and when they get married, they are expected to "pay for all the costs of the wedding which are huge" (Ibrahim). Many of the young men I spoke to, felt that they would never be able to afford to get married or maybe in "a hundred years" (Nasim; Saleh; Yahya).

This pressure is exacerbated by the failings of the Palestinian economy. With low salaries some people are obliged to work multiple jobs. One young mother's husband "is currently working two jobs – in a centre in the day and in a store in the evenings where he sells products" (Rola). Others work, illegally or legally, in Israel. Despite being a graduate, Saleh earned double the salary working in construction in Israel (5,000 NIS [≈$1,400]/month) than he did as a merchandiser for a food company in the West Bank. This might show the dynamics of the patriarchal family working in a different way to those described above. Men are under intense pressure to find good employment, in a way which women are not. The patriarchal expectations for men to provide financially for their families suggests that men are more likely than women to support a political party that will increase their chances of being able to earn a living and provide for their family.

The way that Fatah is seen to support peace and economic development, as described above, and has proven to be a major provider of employment, is likely to mean that it appeals particularly to men who are under pressure to provide for their families. Nour observed the benefits of proximity to Fatah and saw these as particularly gendered. She said:

> To acquire the appropriate work for example, Fatah gives this sustainable constant work … you can get privileges from working with Fatah … just following them opens doors for you, whether it is in your own family or in your workplace and so on. I think women don't need that. The pressure on men to sustain … their status and their family or whatever is more … than women.
>
> *(Nour)*

Feminist scholar and interviewee, Jamila, expressed the same view:

> Men have more benefits and privileges, and Fatah gives them that, you know, Fatah mobilises people through benefits and they co-opt them through the system, through all these privileges, you know. The women are not in the public sector, who reaches them is Hamas … Fatah has the PA, you see. So it is the power. I mean Fatah is the ruling party, so if you really want to reach somewhere you have to go through Fatah.
>
> *(Jamila)*

As has been described above, Hamas supporters are less likely to be able to find work or be able to travel. These problems are much less likely to affect women, who are not only less likely to seek employment but also are less likely to travel than men (Majed). It seems that men are more likely than women to feel pressure to gain employment, and the best way to do that is through the use of the clientelistic networks and employment opportunities open to supporters of Fatah. It is notable also that men are more likely to

enter into debt to fund, for example, weddings, and so are subjected to these additional pressures (Harker 2014; Harker 2017).

The international and Israeli reaction to Hamas has usually been to restrict funds to them, and when they took control of Gaza, Israel imposed a siege. Therefore, Hamas might be seen as incredibly disruptive of the economy. One Gazan directly linked this view to gender and political support: "Hamas was seen as the number one reason why there are no jobs in Gaza and men are usually the ones who are responsible [for providing for the family]" (Zainab).

The literature and interviews show that Fatah and the PA are seen as able, relatively reliably, to provide employment, and their policies are acknowledged to be better for a stable and growing economy, at least in comparison with Hamas. Men are under more pressure to gain employment and so this may lead them to support Fatah. Chapter 1 shows that men do indeed support Fatah more than women (see Figure 1.1).

This is, of course, not to say that women do not participate in the world of paid employment. However, they do so at a lower level, and without as great a degree of pressure from their family and society to provide financially. Women's participation in the labour market is lower than 18 percent (17.3), while men's participation is four times as high at 69.3 percent (Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 56; Miftah 2013, p. 17). Jihan told me, the difference is not just that "in the labour force, women are less than men" but that many women are "working informally in service sectors and they don't enjoy any of the benefits of those who work in the formal sector". Women work more often in the informal sector or doing agricultural work which lacks legal protection, or in low-paying, low-status jobs (Miftah 2013, pp. 17–18). Rosemary Sayigh (1981, p. 8) documents women's involvement in women's unions, crèches, and craft work. Many women are, or have been, involved in income-generating projects which 'are geared to women working at home' and so do not significantly disrupt women's other domestic duties (Sayigh 1981, p. 18). These projects increased somewhat in the First Intifada when women founded cooperatives and small-scale manufacturing projects to avoid economic dependence on Israel. However, the impact of the Intifada was far from revolutionary for women and their role in the economy (Pappé 2006, p. 239). Women remain, for the most part, excluded from the formal workforce. This is partly due to 'discrimination' in favour of men in the labour market and social pressures for child-rearing. Further, if women have young children, then the costs of transport, kindergarten and/or daycare often mean it does not make financial sense to go to work as the wages tend to be low, in addition to social pressures, they might face to stay looking after their children (Miftah 2013, pp. 17–18).

Figure 3.3 confirms that women and men have very different occupations in the Palestinian Territories. Almost 80 percent of women polled said they were housewives compared to only 0.3 percent of men – notably the term used for housewife in the polls is a feminine noun – while men have a much

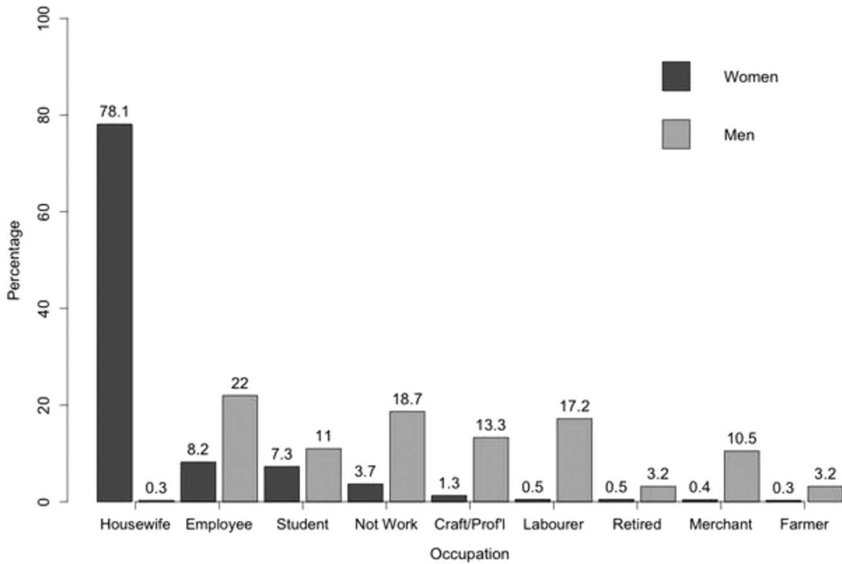

Figure 3.3 To show gender differences in occupation.

Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset), χ^2 (8) = 34085.93, $p < 0.001$), n = 51172

broader range of occupations. As mentioned above, these charts may not give an accurate view of economic role because many women are involved in the informal and agricultural economy, however they do show that the main difference in men and women's employment is that women are much less likely to be employed.

In order to test that it is in fact Fatah's ability to provide employment that explains its increased levels of support among men in the Palestinian Territories, it might be expected that when employment levels are held constant, the gender gap in support for Fatah decreases.

> ***Hypothesis 1b: The gender gap in support for Fatah can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female employment levels.***

There are two dynamics arising from the gendered division of labour that occurs within these family groups which might lead women to support organisations which provide welfare services and support to the poor and vulnerable in society.

Globally, women tend to have, on average, to be poorer than men. This is linked, primarily, to their underemployment compared to men. They are more likely to not be in paid employment, or to have part time jobs and lower salaries than men (Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 446; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006, p. 1; De Beauvoir [1949] 2010). Women's lower economic

status is often given as an explanation for the gender gap in several different states (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Mattei et al. 1998; Studlar et al. 1998; Howell and Day 2000; Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 860; Bergh 2007; Giger 2009; Campbell 2017). People who are poorer or with lower incomes should, out of 'self-interest', be more likely to support parties which would provide them with economic benefits or support (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997). In gender gap studies, women's lower incomes have tended to be used to explain their greater likelihood of supporting more left-wing parties. Bergh writes in his study of the US, the Netherlands, and Norway that the only finding that 'can be generalized to other western societies with a fair degree of confidence' is that:

> Women in western countries tend to have a lower average income than men, and lower incomes tend to correspond with support for left-of-center political parties.
>
> *(Bergh 2007, p. 251)*

Palestinian women are less likely to be in employment than men, but they also tend to be poorer than men in terms of assets and capital. This is because they usually are not entitled to their 'dowry', and they rarely claim their inheritance (although this has been changing in recent decades) (Jamila). Further, Muslim inheritance laws usually allocate daughters half the portion allocated to sons. Kandiyoti explains: 'In Muslim communities, for a woman to press for her inheritance rights would be tantamount to losing her brothers' favor, her only recourse in case of severe ill-treatment by her husband or divorce.' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 279) Therefore, women tend to be poorer on an individual level than men.

This seems to be confirmed by looking at the polling data, as displayed in Figure 3.4. I combined the various different questions asking about household income from the polls (there were no questions on individual income). These questions included various scales in Israeli Shekels and Jordanian Dinars, but I combined them so that '1' would mean a household income of the lower tier, less that 300 Jordanian Dinar a month, '2' shows a household income of 300–600 Jordanian Dinar and '3' indicates a monthly household income of more than 600 Jordanian Dinar. Interestingly, although the income being reported here is for the family, women tended to report lower incomes than men.

This is likely because women-only households were polled who had lower income levels bringing down the average for women, as suggested by the literature and interviews above. However, an alternative explanation might be that there is a gender difference in perceptions of household income. To explore this, I compared the mean household incomes for men and women who are married and 'not married' (which may include being single, widowed or divorced etc), using the household income scale described above.

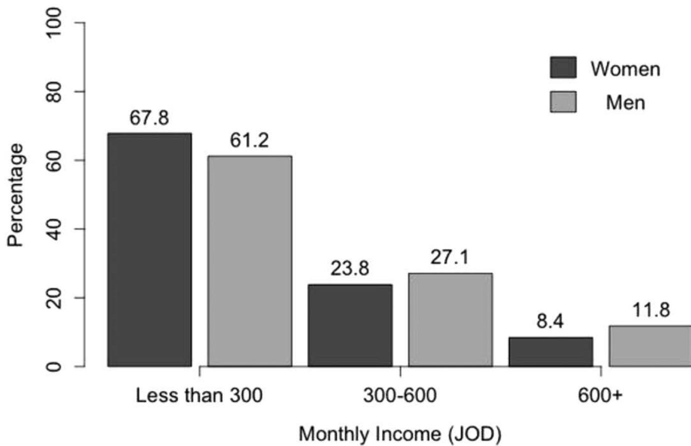

Figure 3.4 To show family monthly income levels by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset), n = 5 1367, Mean (women) = 1.4, Mean (men) = 1.5, ANOVA = [F(1, 51365) = 291.96, p = 0.000]

Table 3.1 shows that while there are differences in reported mean monthly household income for married men and women in the Palestinian Territories, these differences are greater among men and women who are not married. When also considering the difficulties faced by women-headed households and single women, as described above, these findings give additional weight to the suggestion that women might, for reasons of economic self-interest, be more likely to support parties or organisations that support or provide welfare and services to the poor and vulnerable in society. And that the differences in political support for unmarried men and women might be greater than for married men and women.

As shown in Figure 1.2, women are more likely than men to support Hamas, which is perceived in the literature and in the interviews as providing greater levels of welfare and support to Palestinian people than Fatah. This discussion, together with the description of Hamas's role as outlined

Table 3.1 To show average monthly 'household income' for married and unmarried men and women.

		Mean household income (scale of 1-3)	*n*
Married	***Men***	1.49	18387
	Women	1.41	20256
Not married	***Men***	1.56	7020
	Women	1.39	5704

Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42, 56.

above, suggests that women's lower income might account for their greater support for Hamas.

> ***Hypothesis 1c: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female income levels.***

The other gendered impact of most family structures that should be taken into account regards the role of care. Globally women are more likely to take on unpaid caring roles than men, whether for children, the elderly, the sick or the disabled (Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 446; Iversen and Rosenbluth 2006, p. 1; de Beauvoir [1949] 2010). This might be an explanation for men and women having different political views (Ruddick 1989; Manza and Brooks 1998; Studlar et al. 1998; Howell and Day 2000, p. 860; Campbell and Childs 2015). Andersen suggests that in the US women have more interaction with and reliance upon the welfare, education, and day-care provision offered by the state. She calls this 'the experience gap' (Andersen 1999, pp. 17–19). She finds that women and their families are more likely than men and their families to receive government payments and that those who receive these payments were more likely to have supported the democratic presidential candidate – Bill Clinton (Andersen 1999, pp. 17–19).

Howell and Day found the gender gap to be non-existent among people without children but seems to increase with more children. They suggest 'Given the childcare responsibilities of women, those who have large numbers of children are more likely to see a need for or to actually rely on social welfare programs' (Howell and Day 2000, p. 869). This gives an example of how men and women's different experiences within a family might lead to different political views rather than similar ones. In the UK, studies have shown that education and healthcare are priority issues for women while the economy is the most important issue for men (Campbell and Childs 2008, p. 12).

In the Palestinian Territories, there also seems to be an association between the provision of welfare services and women's political support. Hamas, as described above, is well known for its distribution of services (Jamal 2013, p. 293), and these services often converge with women's greater responsibility for care. Tahani told me about the situation in Gaza:

> The economic situation is very bad and that means there is no work and so the result is they get aid from institutions. And men find it very difficult to go to institutions for their family and ask for money. So that is the woman's role now. She goes to institutions, she goes to those institutions and asks for money and she votes for those institutions that provide her with money.
>
> *(Tahani)*

Some of those I spoke to thought that Hamas deliberately targeted women with their service provision so as to be able to "influence the voters within

the household" (Fathi; Ayman). The implication here was that women are more impressionable and, therefore, easier to influence than men. Ayman, who was strongly opposed to Hamas, told me:

> The Islamic people usually they work really well on the women … because they are helping her family with food, by saying she will go to heaven, by giving many, many … things, saying that it will be okay. They are very clever, the party people. They work professionally in their small committees and in their organisations. For example, in [his village] they work very professionally in healthcare, better than the ministry, to get the people to say, 'oh look at the way they work!' People see. So, they make the people feel comfortable. For these reasons they succeed very well.
>
> *(Ayman)*

Habib reinforced this view of Hamas using their welfare provision as a way of recruiting women supporters. He said:

> Women who support Hamas will go help other women, so they can get food for example, they help them open a business, like simple, like a cooking business or embroidery, so giving economic empowerment … they are more on the ground. They go to each house and talk to the women there and tell them why do you want to vote for that, he is corrupt, and then they help them financially.
>
> *(Habib)*

It must be remembered, of course, that Hamas is not the only welfare provider. Fatah also provides welfare through the PA, but the failings of the PA system have 'serious implications for women' (Giacaman et al. 1996, p. 12). Giacaman et al. (1996, p. 13) explain that in the absence of PLO/PA welfare provision, access to social security is unequal and inadequate. The support which was available was subject to 'an irregular and politicized system of claims and favors' which often work through 'family-based networks' (Giacaman et al. 1996, p. 13). Giacaman et al.'s findings seem to hold true 17 years later when Miftah found that the Ministry of Social Affairs seems to distribute its services mainly to men. This is because it assumes that families are "unified nuclear units headed by men" and only in a few cases where "a man is proven incompetent or unfit to care for his family, the resources are given to the woman in the family" (Miftah 2013, p. 18).

While all of the political parties provide welfare services, Hamas's welfare network is the most widespread, has the best reputation and is more closely associated with the party than the PA institutions are associated with Fatah. Therefore, those members of society who are more dependent on welfare and services might be more likely to support Hamas over Fatah and the 'leftist' parties. Further, it has been suggested that Hamas particularly targets women with its welfare provision. The studies above show that

women are more likely to support political parties that provide or are seen to provide better welfare support and services because women tend to rely on or see the need for these services more than men because women tend to do more 'caring' than men. As shown in Chapter 1, women are more likely to support Hamas than men, so bringing this all together suggests the following hypothesis.

> ***Hypothesis 1d: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by women's greater role in care provision.***

When considering the three hypotheses above (***Hypothesis 1b, Hypothesis 1c, Hypothesis 1d***), it will be important to distinguish between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and between the periods before and after the 2007 Hamas takeover of Gaza. As described above, there may still be similar patterns of association between Fatah with employment and stability and Hamas with welfare provision in Hamas controlled Gaza, but these associations are likely to be more muted, and as such the gender gap in political support might be reduced in Hamas controlled Gaza.

It is worth noting, however, that it is difficult to measure fully the impact of women's caring role on political support as often it exceeds their own direct 'interests' and many studies find evidence of a broader 'female compassion'. Only one study I came across did measure female compassion using psychometric measures but these are hard to replicate (Blinder and Rolfe 2018). Women and men often have different views on government spending and taxation, sometimes leading to a gap in political preferences. Taken as a whole, the pattern tends to show women as more in favour of spending money on education, support for the unemployed and social welfare issues than men and to care more than men about the economy as a whole rather than their own economic interests (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Chaney et al. 1998; Howell and Day 2000; Kaufmann 2002; Alvarez and McCaffery 2003; Norrander 2008, p. 14). In sum, 'women feel more warmly than men toward the disadvantaged in society' (Conover 1988, p. 988). Norrander, for example, found in surveys from the United States from 1982–2004 that 'on average, 34 percent of men and 45 percent of women favored more government services' (Norrander 2008, p. 15). Scholars have suggested that this is 'feminine compassion' extends beyond their own interests because of the long-term impacts of their 'caring roles' or childhood socialisation (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997; Conover 1988; Chaney et al. 1998; Norris 2003; Campbell and Childs 2008, p. 9; Norrander and Wilcox 2008, p. 504; Blinder and Rolfe 2018).

Scholars of the gender gap often refer to the work of Sara Ruddick and Carole Gilligan in their explanations of these differences in 'feminine compassion' (Conover 1988; Cook and Wilcox 1991; Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997; Manza and Brooks 1998; Howell and Day 2000; Campbell and Childs 2008). Ruddick in her book highlights the potential impact of 'mothering' on

women's beliefs and politics and suggests that women's thinking is shaped by their practices, and so parenting produces a type of thinking – 'maternal thinking' which prioritises care (Ruddick 1989). Ruddick suggests that this care extends, or has the potential to extend, beyond the direct family (Ruddick 1989, p. 78). This view has been critiqued by Andersen who suggests that the 'maternalist' explanation 'unacceptably essentializes gender differences' (Andersen 1999, p. 17). Gilligan has suggested that women feel more responsible than men for the needs of others due to their childhood socialisation (Gilligan 1982). Socialisation explanations suggest that 'it is differing early life experiences of men and women, especially their learning of 'appropriate gender roles,' that may explain the dissimilar voting patterns between men and women' (Studlar et al. 1998, pp. 782–783). The wider implications of gender socialisation will be explored further in later chapters. Determining the extent to which socialisation or 'feminine compassion' explains the gender gap is difficult, instead it is often seen to account for gender differences which remain after socioeconomic status has been taken into account (Manza and Brooks 1998). It may be the case in the Palestinian Territories that women perceive Hamas as providing care and support it for doing so, even if they do not personally gain from it. This is difficult to measure in a survey and so may contribute to the 'unexplained' element of the gender gap.

Education is key in determining an individual's socioeconomic status and also might make a difference to their political views. It is included in many explanations of the gender gap, but its importance is often less clear cut than income and employment. Inglehart and Norris suggest that 'education is consistently associated with more liberal attitudes on a wide range of issues, including feminist attitudes' (Inglehart and Norris 2003, p. 90; Inglehart and Norris 2000, p. 446). The role of education and increasing levels of female education in the United States is given as one of the main changes which has led to the 'modern gender gap' in political support (Inglehart and Norris 2003). The literature also seems to suggest that different education levels not only change attitudes but that they change differentially for men and women.

At higher levels of education, the gender gap in the United States seems to be greater. Howell and Day found that among people with higher levels of education, the gender gap in attitudes towards social welfare was the highest. They suggest education has a greater impact on women than on men, presumably because it 'increases their awareness of the economic inequities, their feminist attitudes, and their autonomy from men.' (Howell and Day 2000, p. 869). Box-Steffensmeier et al. support this claim suggesting that higher education levels allow women to 'discern interests that may be different from those of men' and that 'this behavior translates into an expression of preferences, partisan or otherwise, that may not be shared by men' (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 2004, p. 521).

Often there are gender differences in the type and level of education achieved. In Italy, for example, women have lower education levels than men and Barisione found that this impacts their political views as people with lower levels of education are more likely to vote for Berlusconi (Barisione 2014, p. 121).

There are also disparities between men and women when it comes to education in the Palestinian Territories as shown in Figure 3.5. Although, broadly similar, women tend to average lower education levels than men, with fewer women than men completing a secondary level education or above. This difference is statistically significant.

Overall, literacy in Palestine is higher among men (98.4 percent) than among women (94.1 percent) (Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 24), but it is likely that this disparity is due to differences among older generations where men received more education than women. There seem to be greater numbers of old women who are illiterate (Jamila). Among younger generations, the picture is less clear cut. Many women attend university in Palestine these days, often more than men (Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 30), however they are less likely to be supported by the family to travel overseas for their education, unlike men, which might account for the greater number of female students in Palestine (Jamila).

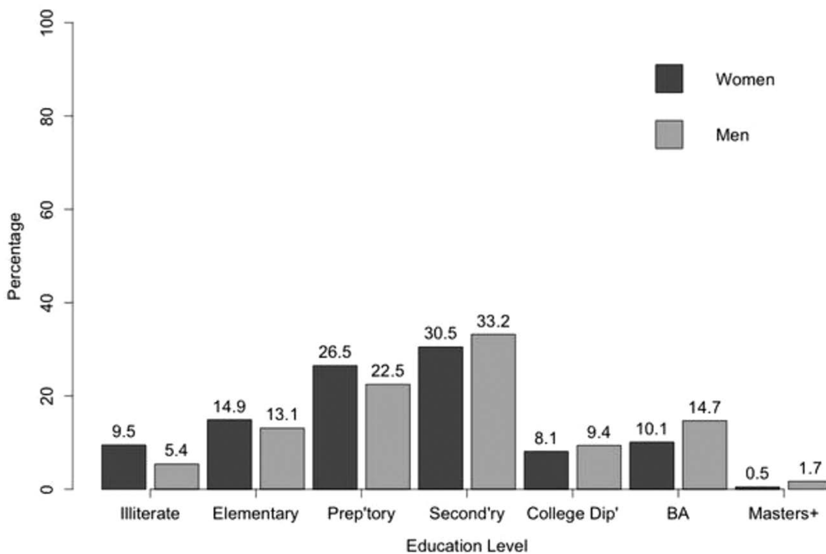

Figure 3.5 To show education levels by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset), Mean (women) = 3.45, Mean (men) = 3.79, ANOVA [F(1, 51391) = 738.9, p = 0.000], n = 51393

The discussion above has shown that exposure to university education might politicise an individual, through introducing them to the different factions. As such, if there are gender differences in levels of education, this might impact political support, although, there is no clear indication from the literature or interviews as to which faction might see greater support among the more educated. It might be that Fatah has better resources so is able to persuade more students to support them at university, or it might be that education and exposure to Hamas at university creates more Hamas supporters than would otherwise encounter it.

This suggests that education should be explored as a possible factor in explaining the gender gap.

> ***Hypothesis 1e: The gender difference in education levels (partially) accounts for (reduces) the gender gap in political support.***

3.3 Conclusion

This chapter explores the relationship between the economy, gender, and political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The literature and interviews show the way gender and the economy are likely to interact in Palestine. Fatah's use of a clientelistic hierarchy and Hamas's historical charitable network, place them in almost oppositional spaces within the Palestinian economy, and ones which may appeal differentially to women and men. The hypotheses that came out of this chapter are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Gender differences in socioeconomic status explain (reduce) the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

Hypothesis 1a(i): The gender gap in political support is smaller among married people (due to shared economic interests).

Hypothesis 1a(ii): The gender gap in political support is greater among married people (due to more divergent gender roles).

Hypothesis 1b: The gender gap in support for Fatah can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female employment levels.

Hypothesis 1c: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female income levels.

Hypothesis 1d: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by women's greater role in care provision.

Hypothesis 1e: The gender difference in education levels (partially) accounts for (reduces) the gender gap in political support.

The gendered analysis first looked at the role of family ties, and whether these might mean that gender gaps are less likely because an individual's interests are closely aligned to that of their family. This would suggest that

the gender gap can be attributable for the most part to those outside of traditional family structures, or in female headed households, through widowhood, divorce, being single or losing male family members to war or imprisonment.

Within family units, there is a great deal of pressure upon men to be able to provide for their families. Although, this is similar to the context in most of the world, in the devastated economy of the Palestinian Territories this pressure intensifies. These pressures are less likely to affect women as directly, as women are not always expected to find employment, particularly if they are married or have children, whereas men feel the pressure to find and maintain employment much more and so would benefit from the right 'connections' to organisations which are able to provide them. This pressure might explain differences in male political support for Fatah and Hamas. Fatah's greater resources mean that it is able to employ, through the Palestinian Authority, a large number of men in its many branches including the large security services. Further, Fatah's strong association with liberal economics and the peace process mean that it is more likely than, say, Hamas, to be able to secure a relative buoyancy for the Palestinian economy. On the other hand, Hamas holds far fewer resources and is less able to provide employment opportunities. Even in the Gaza Strip, where Hamas has a governmental role, Fatah still pays a large number of salaries to people on the ground. Further, since Hamas has taken control of Gaza it has been devastated by an Israeli imposed blockade of many essential goods, and has been subjected to numerous violent assaults, where many homes and much of the Gazan infrastructure, not to mention thousands of lives, have been destroyed. Support for Hamas is clearly unlikely (in the short term) to bring about better employment opportunities.

There are two economic explanations that might suggest why women seem to support Hamas more than men. First, women are less likely to work, and less likely to get a share of capital. This means women tend to be poorer and may be more reliant on organisations which give provisions and support to the vulnerable in society, such as the many Islamic organisations, often connected with Hamas, which offer aid, money, food gifts, childcare etc to those in need.

Further, as a result of the division of labour, women tend to do more of the 'caring' than men. With women being more responsible for caring for the vulnerable in society, whether children, the elderly or the infirm, this is again more likely to mean they are favourably disposed towards those organisations which are best able to support them in providing that care. Fatah has largely devolved its responsibilities to the inefficiently run Palestinian Authority welfare services, while Hamas continues to provide welfare services, often covertly and since 2006/7 reduced throughout the West Bank, through good works provided by Islamic organisations. This would explain a greater connection between women and the Islamic organisations connected with Hamas.

Whether education explains gendered political support in the Palestinian Territories is less clear cut. While differences in education level have been found to impact political support in the West, there is not an obvious correlation with gender and education levels in Palestine. Although, women still tend on average to be less educated than men, this increasingly does not affect the younger generations to the same degree. Further, with both Hamas and Fatah active at the universities and offering similar benefits, it is unclear if this would have an impact upon political support. Nonetheless it is certainly worth considering the way education was seen as differentially impacting women and men in the West.

The differences between Fatah and Hamas highlight the way clientelism, corruption, aid and welfare provisions can contribute to gender differences and warp political outcomes. Understanding how gender interacts with them is important for increasing insight into politics in a quasi-democratic and authoritarian settings on a much broader scale.

4 Belief, Ideology and Gender

A person's beliefs shape the way they see the world, and the way they would wish for it to be. Beliefs and ideologies are likely to shape our perceptions of and support for different groups. We are more likely, of course, to support organisations and candidates whose beliefs resemble our own (see e.g. Benstead et al. 2015). If there tend to be substantial differences in the beliefs or the intensity of beliefs of men and women then they could lead to men and women supporting different organisations.

The gender gap in political support has frequently been attributed to the differing levels, or types of belief between men and women. Scholars variously find women to be more religious and/or feminist than men and suggest this tends to make them more conservative or liberal (Conover 1988; Edlund and Pande 2002; Inglehart and Norris 2003; Bergh 2007; Desposato and Norrander 2008; de Bruijn and Veenbrink 2012; Barisione 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015). Many scholars suggest that these gender differences in beliefs lead men and women to vote for different political parties. This chapter looks at how belief and ideology might interact with gender and political support.

In the context of the Palestinian Territories, while there is certainly a case for exploring religious belief as an explanation for the gender gap, and also considering whether feminism might play a role, there are also suggestions that the delineanation between the two might not be as clear cut as in other studies. Many scholars and interviewees suggest that Islam might offer avenues of empowerment to some women. Further, in Palestine the heavily nationalist framing of political discourse alters the salience of ideologies according to the national priorities of the moment. This chapter surveys interview data and literature on religion, nationalism, feminism, and politics in the Palestinian Territories and the wider Middle East, and together with the literature on the gender gap, explores how beliefs might interact with gender and political support in the Palestinian context.

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-4

4.1 Gendered Beliefs in the Palestinian Territories

4.1.1 Religion

Religion came up as the primary explanation for the gender gap in political support in the Palestinian Territories in my interviews. I was told repeatedly that women are more religious than men and that this was why women were more likely to vote for Hamas and less likely to vote for Fatah than men (Azza; Farida; Lana; Nadia; Naimeh; Rana; Zahra; Ashraf; Dawood; Fouad; Hassan; Karim; Majed; Suleiman; Yousef). As such I suggest the following hypothesis:

> ***Hypothesis 2: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female levels of religiosity.***

It seems to be the case that women are – or identify as being – more religious than men, from looking at data from the polls on religious self-description and prayer frequency. Figure 4.1 shows gender difference in religiosity, using the self-description question from the polls. It shows that women are more likely to consider themselves religious than men. Measuring religiosity is complex and varies according to context. Certain indicators must be used to approximate or signify differing levels of religious devotion, and of course the data available in the polls is limited to the questions asked. Figure 4.1 displays responses to a question which asks respondents to self-identify as 'religious', 'somewhat religious' or 'not religious'. This variable is complex as it is highly contextualised. Indeed, in my interviews,

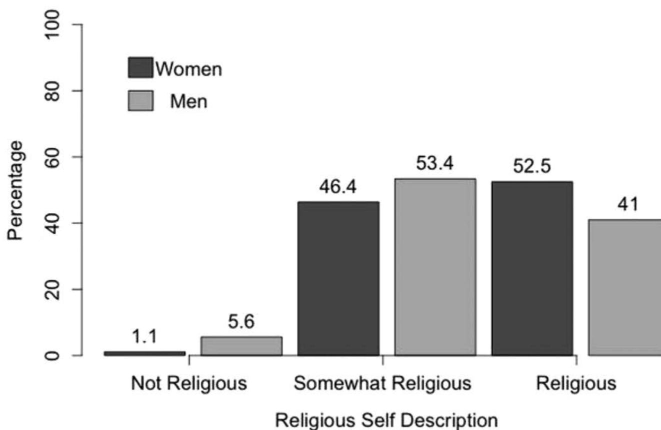

Figure 4.1 To show religious self-identification by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 19-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset). χ^2 (2) = 635.45, p < 0.001, n = 26,348

I found that when I asked whether the interviewee considered themselves religious, some responded defensively that they were not like Daesh (ISIS) but that they were religious. This was no doubt a reflection on how they feel that Islam is mis-portrayed in the West. While this issue of playing down religious belief, or defensiveness about Islam, would have less of an impact in the polling data, as the polls are gathered by Palestinians. It is still worth checking other indicators of religious identity rather than just relying on self-identification.

Figure 4.2 shows differences in prayer frequency by gender. Here, I have recoded the options from being '5 times a day', '1–2 times a day', 'Only on Friday', 'Occasionally', 'Rarely', 'Never' to being 'Never', 'Sometimes', and '5 times a day', because, overwhelmingly, respondents answered '5 times a day' and so there was not much meaningful variation across the other options. Again, women pray more often, and as such might be seen to be more religious than men by this measure.

It is worth considering also how prayer frequency might relate to religious belief. When I asked many of those I interviewed, if they considered themselves religious, and what that meant, prayer was frequently mentioned. Farida explained the importance of prayer in Islam – she said: "Praying is the main thing in Islam. Like if you are a Muslim you have to pray". This view was reflected in the answers of many of those I interviewed. Prayer was often the first thing that interviewees answered when I asked what being religious means. Many said, for example "I pray, I fast …" (Fatima; Ghadah; Hiba; Lana; Mona; Munira; Hani; Louay; Majed). Faraj explained that he considered himself religious and this meant: "First of all, I must pray …". Prayer was also used to indicate a lack of religiosity. Maha reversed the

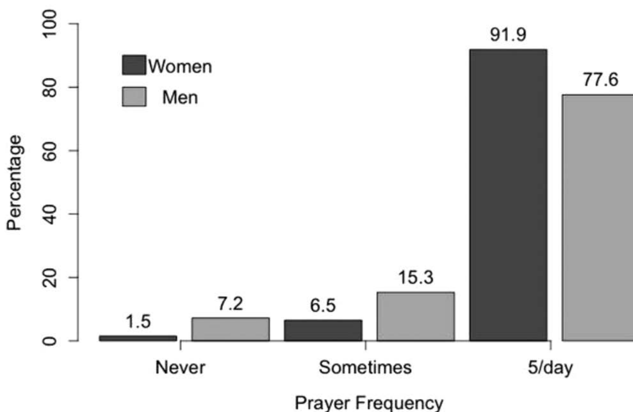

Figure 4.2 To show reported prayer frequency by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 9-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset). χ^2 (2) = 1647.02, p < 0.001, n = 39098

normal response by telling me that she was not religious and “I don’t pray. I don’t fast”. Bilal pointed to his lack of prayer as an indication of his lack of religiosity. He said: “I pray, but not regularly, not five times a day. I fast in Ramadan, but I don’t consider myself a religious person”.

Prayer is, however, a behaviour and may not reflect actual belief. It forms part of the architecture of expected social conduct, and may be adopted by those who do not have religious faith, particularly as it is often a social and/or visible activity. While this may be problematic as a test of belief, however it may still be a good way of measuring religiosity for the purposes of how religion interacts with politics. As such, I think that prayer frequency, together with self-identification may be adept as a shorthand for indicating religious belief for this purpose.

As such, it is possible to say with a degree of confidence that more women perceive themselves to be religious than men in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. This finding echoes those of several scholars of the western gender gap (Conover 1988; Howell and Day 2000; Edlund and Pande 2002; Desposato and Norrander 2008; Barisione 2014; Immerzeel et al. 2015). Edlund and Pande found women 13 percent more likely to attend church regularly than men (Edlund and Pande 2002, p. 934). Conover found women to be on average higher on her scale of ‘religious fundamentalism’ than men, concluding that ‘religion plays a bigger role in the daily lives of women than it does in the lives of men’ (Conover 1988, p. 995). Barisione finds that Italian women present ‘significantly higher levels of religiosity’ than men (Barisione 2014, p. 121).

To explore in more depth explanations as to this gender gap in religious identification and behaviour, and to understand how religiosity might impact political support it is important to look at the role of religion in Palestinian society and how it might be gendered.

The majority religion in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is Islam. Christians form a small but significant minority (around 2–3 percent), and there are a tiny number of people from other religions (excluding the Israeli settlers who live in the Occupied Territories but do not make up a part of its social network but part of the occupation) (Seidel 2006). The role of Islam in Palestinian society should be seen within a wider trend of a religious ‘revival’ in the Middle East, that has taken place in the last few decades partly due to ‘widespread disillusionment’ with secular nationalism (Moghadam 1994, p. 8). Religion plays such an important role in Palestinian society that it might be considered as ‘sacralized’ in that it ‘displays visible, audible, outward, and otherwise expressions of religiosity’ as has been found to be the case in Kuwait (González 2011, p. 340). This is not to say that there is no room for non-belief – indeed, I met several devoted Palestinian atheists – however society, in its broader sense, is ‘religious’. In this context, it is more difficult to distinguish private belief from public religious identity (González 2011, p. 349).

While faith and personal belief should be readily accessible to both sexes, a gendered social context might encourage religious behaviour more in

one sex than the other. The academic literature rarely explains why women might be more religious than men. Scholars hint at explanations, which tend to point to gendered social roles. Women's religiosity might represent their traditional role as 'guardians of the emotional and moral well-being of their family members' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 63). Scholars have found women to be more concerned with morality. Shapiro and Mahajan (1986, p. 52) found that women in the United States had more conservative values than men regarding issues such as pornography, use of marijuana and issues around sex education and provision of birth control to teenagers. Campbell and Childs (2015, p. 632) found that among Conservative party members in the UK, there was a large gender difference in attitudes towards censorship, with 20 percent more women than men agreeing with the statement 'Censorship of films and magazines is necessary to uphold moral values'. The suggestion that women are more religious as a result of their greater social role in reinforcing moral behaviour is rather circular and could be both a symptom of and explanation for gender differences in religiosity.

In the Palestinian Territories, the literature and interviews suggest that an explanation for women's increased religiosity, or at least their desire to appear more religious, could be explained by the greater pressures women face in terms of their behaviour. Barakat (1985, p. 1994 p. 28) describes how women's reputations reflect upon the family: 'The sexual misbehaviour of a girl, for example, reflects not just upon herself but upon her father, her brother, her family as a whole' and accordingly they are sometimes violently policed. The most upsetting and extreme examples of this pressure is the probably underreported phenomena of women attempting suicide or even being killed by relatives when they have been perceived to have breached what some scholars term 'family honour' (Baxter 2007, p. 753; Al-Adili et al. 2008, pp. 119–120). Abdo writes:

> In general, within the context of Palestinian social relations, customary laws continue to predominate over written laws, particularly with regard to gender relations and the issue of woman's body and sexuality. "Honor killings," for example, in which male family members are justified in killing a female relative judged to have besmirched the family honor, continue to occur.
>
> *(Abdo 1999, p. 44)*

While this threat certainly may exist in some contexts in Palestine, fear of reprisals is not the whole story. Some scholars suggest that many women may actively support the patriarchal system. Baxter suggests that, what she calls 'honor ideology', is not just about males threatening females, but is a system which can bestow benefits on both men and women.

> Holding honor translates into being respected and this brings rewards of various kinds: psychological/emotional, as individuals have the approval

> of their community and of living by a set of standards they themselves (usually) regard highly; familial, in that tensions among members are reduced as their expectations of each other are generally met; political, particularly in that males whose honor is intact are eligible for various types of advancement; economic, since community members choose to do business with those of honorable repute; and socio/econ/political, in that the critical issue of arranging marriages for family members is highly contingent on the reputation of prospective in-laws.
>
> *(Baxter 2007, p. 746)*

Baxter's description of the honour system points to why women would want to conform to codes of behaviour as individuals even if the system might be restrictive for them as women. Baxter (2007, pp. 738–739), in a challenge to feminist conceptions of agency and selfhood as only being achieved when women resist or deviate from traditional social structures, contends that women within the honour system have scope for agency as well as 'rights/claims/privileges' in terms of being provided for and looked after by men. Kandiyoti's concept of patriarchal bargaining provides another explanation for why women might support traditional elements of the status quo in places where there is gender inequality. She argues that in most patriarchal societies younger women undergo the 'deprivation and hardship' of being a young bride with low authority because they know they will eventually gain prestige and power as a mother, and then mother-in-law, leading to a 'thorough internalization of this form of patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 279). Acting with propriety in this context grants women respectability, security and stability. She suggests that when poverty or change threatens to break down the patriarchal system, some women resist because they have already experienced the difficult side of the patriarchal bargain and are being denied the prestige of the later stages; these women's resistance may take the form of the 'intensification of traditional modesty markers, such as veiling' to 'signify that they continue to be worthy of protection' (Kandiyoti 1988, p. 283). She sees 'female conservatism as a reaction to the breakdown of classic patriarchy' (Kandiyoti 1988). González's study of Kuwaiti students finds women to be more religious than men and she suggests that this might be because women have a greater 'stake in social conformity' (González 2011, p. 343). These scholars have highlighted the role of social prestige and respectability granted to women who observe religious and modest behaviour, and the possible risks of not conforming.

In Palestinian society, social pressures suggest particular forms of behaviour, particularly for women. These include 'modesty in dress' (Baxter 2007, p. 751; Gren 2015, p. 155). Wearing a headscarf or covering clothing is 'a visual marker of compliance' (Baxter 2007, pp. 751–752). As more and more women wear the hijab, the social and psychological pressure means that for many women 'it becomes more comfortable and more secure to follow suit' (Azzam 1996, p. 226). Indeed, the social implications of not portraying

oneself as a good Muslim can be life-changing as, for instance, many men 'will only marry a woman who is a muhajjaba' [wears the hijab/headscarf] (Azzam 1996, p. 226). Beyond dress, women must take care to protect their sexual reputation, with not only 'virginity until marriage, and sexual faithfulness' but also ensuring their public demeanour should 'demonstrate indifference to non-relative males and avert unnecessary interactions with them', sometimes women even take 'care not to move about on their own' (Baxter 2007, pp. 751–752; Gren 2015, p. 155). Finally, Gren also suggests that that women's morality is tied to their performance as housewives and mothers, with a clean and tidy house, the preparation of good food, tea and coffee, and the education of their children being important social priorities (Gren 2015, p. 155). While these restrictions and forms of behaviour are neither unprecedented or extreme – and they will change between social groups and over time – however, they do (as is often the case in most societies) amount to clear pressures upon women to emphasise their modesty and propriety of behaviour. Interestingly, the lines between religious morality and social behaviour are not clearly defined, suggesting social pressures might be equivalent to pressures for religious behaviour among women.

In my interviews, I was told frequently that women and girls were held to higher moral standards than men and boys. I was told by Lana that people in her village knew her schedule and would call her parents or gossip if she was seen coming home late. She also told me that smoking "is still not as accepted for a girl as it would be for a guy, they'll still talk about the girl that smokes", and that if a couple are seen on a date "the first thing they'll do is call the girl's mum not the guy's mum, because it's okay for the guy". The implications of being caught behaving in this way were bad: "She'd be the tramp of the village … it definitely affects her long-term". Naimeh explained that "most of [women's] problems are from the society. Because society is always with men". Using the example of getting drunk, she said that for men "society forgive[s] him everything" but for a woman it stays with her "for the rest of her life. No one will marry her". This view came through in several other interviews, usually those with young women and in one case the father of a young woman who said he would not let her travel abroad because of what people would say (Lina; Rasha; Faisal).

Women's morality is watched and safeguarded more than men's in Palestinian society and women risk losing greater status by breaching these norms. Accordingly, adopting a religious identity, which would reinforce an image of morality would bring particular benefits for a woman over a man. Karim thought that "If women are religious, they get more respect from people. For example, parents are happier when their daughters wear the hijab and memorise the Qur'an rather than getting good grades".

Women's greater religiosity could also be linked to the regulation of spaces that women can occupy, echoing the arguments above. Describing the wider Middle East, Kamrava suggests 'men tend to socialise in mosques, tea houses, bazaar shops, and sports clubs, whereas women gather in private

homes and bathhouses and at religious charity events' (Kamrava 1998, p. 47). Deeb and Harb, in their book *Leisurely Islam* comment on women having less flexibility than men when it came to engaging in leisure activities. They found women more concerned about transgressing the boundaries of morality (Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 9). The patriarchal nature of Palestinian society means that there are restrictions on women's movement, and these are intensified because of the Israeli Occupation and the very real threats it poses.

Several interviewees found that they were not welcomed in certain spaces. Rawda told me: "I went to the Bank of Palestine to work and one of the guys said to me, 'You can't come and work here. I can as a man' and he said, 'You can't work here at the Islamic bank or anywhere because as a female you should be at home'. Another interviewee said that "the streets are male dominated" and "I do get a lot of guys hitting on me, throwing words at me" (Maha). Other women were restricted in their behaviour by their families, because of traditional restrictions. Mona explained the control that a father normally had over his daughter, her father had died when she was younger. She said:

> For example, my father [would] have to choose for me what to work as, what not to work as, where to study, where to go, what time I should go home. I should be married for example at a certain age … I wouldn't be free to work as I want, to be late and invest in myself as much as I want, to go to faraway places, because I am just a girl and that's part of the tradition to not be away, to be always with the family, to be always with the male member of the family.
>
> *(Mona)*

Reem told me that one of the major problems that women face is "free movement" and explained the reasons women usually had to travel accompanied:

> It is not so easy for a woman to move between cities without a *mahram* … a man from the family … because it is not safe. That is why they take someone with them … [If] you are a woman by yourself someone might go and rape you and that's why you do need someone with you … For the jobs, if you are a pharmacist [for example], it is better for you to work in a pharmacy than as a sales manager, because you [would] have to go with your car from one city to another until it is so late … [Also, a woman] who does a lot of work with men, [people say] 'you have to beware of her! We don't know what she is doing late at night with men.'
>
> *(Reem)*

In Gaza, many interviewees found their freedom of movement was constrained by Hamas's policy that women should have a male family member to accompany them or their permission when travelling (Tahani; Wafaa;

Yasmin; Zahra). Wafaa explained, "whenever we get a training outside of Gaza for study or work there has to be a male with us, a guardian". Zahra described how at a Hamas checkpoint leaving Gaza they made her call her father to give her permission to leave.

The Israeli occupation has made women's movement even more limited. Fear of soldiers has made families all the more protective of women (Baxter 2007, p. 750). Jamila told me that a major impact of the occupation for women was mobility:

> checkpoints, siege … all this is isolating women, because they are afraid to go out and be humiliated by soldiers or attacked by soldiers … with the restrictions, with these gates which close at four [pm] … men can go through the mountains … women cannot do that. With the wall, families have been separated - inside and outside the wall. And this has isolated the women further. They have been isolated even from their social networks … because they don't work, they are more poor so they cannot even socially connect. Because social connection means presents, gifts, going to weddings and they can't do it anymore, so they are more and more separated from the real world … [it is] like a routine, systematic, structural violence, that is with her all of the time, because she is isolated, separated, marginalized.
>
> *(Jamila)*

These restrictions, in comparison to the relatively freer life of men, may mean that women are exposed to fewer ideas, views, and experiences than men, as Waleed expressed it:

> The men in Gaza they go out to meet, they go to the coffee shop, they are influenced by other opinions and the women are not … I think the social structure [means] women in Gaza are more conservative, so they are closer to the mosque, they are closer to the social network. Men can go out, talk to somebody else, travel, or they go to their work in society, participate in the activities of civil society so they are open to other ideas.
>
> *(Waleed)*

Even virtual spaces are often unfriendly for women. Women's presence online is often limited and subjected to double standards. A young woman I spoke to said, "A guy can have both female and male friends on his Facebook while the girl shouldn't have male friends on Facebook" (Rasha). Statistics also show further discrepancies in connectivity, for example in 2014, in Palestine '65.3 percent of women 10 years and above own a cellular phone, compared to 81.8 percent of men in the same age group' (Hamdan and Bargothi 2014, p. 44).

Clearly, 'women are subject to social constraints that impede their movement more than men,' (Miftah 2013, p. 18). The social restrictions on women's

work and movement, and on the places they are able to comfortably occupy, has, some of my interviewees suggested, given them more opportunity to become religious because women have more 'time' for religion by being at home. Women 'have more time' because they 'have less space'. Ashraf said: "they don't have work or other things to do so they become more religious". Lana explained:

> women … in general are given the role of staying at home and being a mother and staying home and cooking so they have that free time to focus on more spiritual things, on more relaxing and reading Qur'an and practicing religion whereas men are always out or hanging out or working … I think women explore religion because they have the time for it, whereas men can occupy themselves with either going to smoke shisha or going to play cards or something like that, whereas a woman she can't do that.
>
> *(Lana)*

Another implication of women's restricted access to certain areas of public space is that women spend more time at home consuming media in the form of television and radio. This came through in the interviews (Jihan; Bassel; Yousef). Yousef told me: "[Women] are sitting at home most of the time so they are watching … these kind of programs … some stories [from] Mohammed's time, during Abu Bakr's time and so it is always easy for the media to affect the women's mentality rather than the men's". It makes sense that an enforced smaller sphere of physical space, and ability to contact other people and other ideas, may encourage a narrower and deeper sphere of mental and spiritual reflection. This supports the idea that women's religiosity is somewhat inversely connected to their access to the public sphere.

Women might be more religious than men as a result of their morality and movement being policed, meaning, on the one hand that they have the time and space to develop their religious understanding, while their exposure to contrasting viewpoints is restricted; while on the other, social pressure to behave in a certain way may mean that it is beneficial to overtly show religious belief. These findings reflect other studies which seem to point to where women go – or rather do not go – as affecting their views. For example, some studies suggest that housewives, in particular, are more conservative than both men and working women (Barisione 2014, p. 118; Norrander and Wilcox 2008). The suggestion is that women are more religious as a result of having less access to the public sphere. However, this argument could be rather circular because it might be the case that religious women are more likely to become housewives rather than housewives are more likely to become religious.

Further to the arguments set out above, in the Palestinian Territories, the role of nationalism has highlighted and re-emphasised many of the factors which have encouraged women to adopt greater levels of religious belief and behaviour than men.

4.1.2 Nationalism, Religion, and Women

Nationalism is not included in most western explanations of political gender gaps. However, it does play a role in terms of anti-EU or anti-immigration sentiment in explanations for support of radical right and populist parties (e.g. Spierings and Zaslove 2017). This may be because most of the literature deals with states where, while nationalism is certainly present, it is perhaps not as pervasive as it might be in a colonial or post-colonial context. However, I consider nationalism to be a powerful shaper of Palestinian politics. It plays an important and complicated role in mediating between how gender and belief might impact political support.

Yuval-Davis has written an important book on gender and nationalism. She points out that gender has usually been excluded from analyses of nationalism, but that nationalism is in fact inherently gendered. She contends that all 'constructions of nationhood usually involve specific notions of both 'manhood' and 'womanhood'' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 1). Different contexts and movements tend to espouse various 'types' of nationalism, which either see the nation as something to do with people sharing ethnicity, religion or culture, or else in terms of civic duties and rights.

Ethnic nationalisms, which emphasise blood, genealogy and 'kinship', often generate policies that control women's bodies and reproduction (Moghadam 1994; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010). This has been the case in several nationalist projects where 'some or all women of childbearing age groups would be called on, sometimes bribed, and sometimes even forced, to have more, or fewer, children' in order to increase, decrease or improve the 'national stock' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 22). These forms of nationalism that conceive of women's role 'primarily as reproducers' have tended to be viewed negatively by feminist scholars who see them as having the potential for both sexist and racial discrimination (Abdo 1994, p. 150).

In cultural nationalisms, women are portrayed as the symbols of the nation and are given responsibility for reproducing the ideas that define it and passing them on to successive generations (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 23). Yuval-Davis (1997/2010) explains that in the search for 'cultural authenticity', women are often forced into what the leadership perceive to be traditional, apparently 'authentic' female roles. These nationalist discourses are problematic for women because they also become constructed as 'the bearers of the collectivity's honour' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 45). Women are often used to determine the 'us' and 'them' of nationalist movements, by embodying the 'nation' and performing the role of symbolic border guards or boundary markers (Kandiyoti 1991b, p. 441; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 23). Meaning that, 'Women, in their 'proper' behaviour, their 'proper' clothing, embody the line which signifies the collectivity's boundaries' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 46). Women may signal the cultural difference of the nation or group through their dress and deportment (Kandiyoti 1991b, p. 435).

Often gender relations are seen as the bedrock of a culture, with a particular emphasis on the domestic. Yuval-Davis writes:

> The construction of 'home' is of particular importance here, including relations between adults and between adults and children in the family, ways of cooking and eating, domestic labour, play and bedtime stories, out of which a whole world view, ethical and aesthetic, can become naturalized and reproduced.
>
> *(Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 43)*

Sometimes religious markers are used in definitions and perceptions of the nation. Yuval-Davis (1997/2010, p. 42) argues that when this happens, religious symbols 'can become some of the most intractable and inflexible symbolic border guards of specific collectivity boundaries and cultural traditions'. Deeb (2006, p. 31) in her study of the Shia community in Lebanon, describes how 'the burden of cultural authenticity and the markers of public piety fall more heavily on the shoulders of women than men'. In order to demonstrate their public piety, women 'perform' their religious identity, 'in what jewelry is worn, which clothing is chosen, or how a scarf is pinned' (Deeb 2006, p. 36). Moghadam (1994, p. 9) highlights that in nationalist Islamist movements, 'women assume the onerous burden of a largely male-defined tradition and are cast as the embodiment of cultural identity and the custodians of cultural values'. She suggests that women diverge on whether they view this as 'an exalted position' or as 'a form of social control' depending on their attitudes towards the Islamist movement (Moghadam 1994, p. 9). In the Palestinian case, as will be explored below, women's dress can be used as a boundary marker in this way.

Where culture and religion are privileged parts of the discourse of a national project, the implications of religious or cultural non-conformity are much higher. To break away from cultural expectations is, somehow, to fracture or betray the national project. Taraki (1995) and Jad (2018) in their studies of Islamist movements in Jordan and Palestine describe similar phenomena where nationalist discourse has become imbued with religion. Jad writes:

> Within this formulation, any act that detracts from the struggle is considered sacrilege, if not treason… Once again women's purity has become a mainstay of the ethos of suffering, sacrifice and struggle; immodest dress and conduct dishonour the memory of the martyrs and unwittingly aid the enemy's designs to corrupt the nation, while women's preoccupation with trivia and fashion is an insult to those who fight for liberation
>
> *(Jad 2018, pp. 103–104).*

Therefore, transgressions and 'deviant' or defiant behaviour can provoke often violent reprisals from the collective, and conforming behaviour can be coercively imposed (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, pp. 45–46). For example,

campaigns of forced veiling in post-revolutionary Iran and the use of the veil in Algeria after the civil war might be seen as examples of this (Moghadam 1994, p. 6; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 61). Al-Ali (2000, p. 1) finds that in Egypt, as in many other post-colonial societies, women are at the centre of tensions between 'the pursuit of modernization, attempts at liberalization, a pervasive nationalist rhetoric of 'authenticity' and ongoing imperialist encroachments'. She suggests that these tensions impact women activists who fear 'transgressing the norms' of their society, particularly regarding issues of national identity (Al-Ali 2000, p. 2).

Kandiyoti (1991b, p. 435) also strongly condemns cultural nationalism and suggests that 'Wherever women continue to serve as boundary markers between different national, ethnic, and religious collectivities, their emergence as full-fledged citizens will be jeopardised, and whatever rights they may have achieved during one stage of nation-building may be sacrificed on the altar of identity politics during another'. Cultural nationalism reinforces the pressures on women to conform to social norms.

Even civic nationalism, the most inclusive type, is gendered, often through the intimate links between nationhood and the military (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 89). Women have historically been excluded from accessing state power and authority, with lower levels of women in most legislative, executive and judicial positions, although this is changing. Kandiyoti writes that 'The apparent convergence between the interests of men and the definition of national priorities leads some feminists to suggest that the state itself is a direct expression of men's interests' (Kandiyoti 1991b, p. 429).

Although nationalism has often been seen by feminists as bad for women's rights, several nationalist movements, particularly those that were revolutionary or 'liberation struggles', have espoused women's emancipation, because 'women's emancipation is seen to symbolize the emancipation of the people as a whole' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 101).

While some scholars praise the social transformations precipitated by liberatory nationalist movements (Barakat 1985, p. 1994, p. 35), or find a generally productive relationship (Al-Ali and Tas 2018) other scholars have warned that even when movements have espoused the rhetoric of women's emancipation, this does not inevitably lead towards it (Jayawardena 1986; Abdo 1994, p. 150; Moghadam 1994, p. 2; Jamal 2001, p. 257). Indeed, as Jamal warns, in most cases, women are not granted their due, even when they have been actively involved in the nationalist struggle. She describes how, 'In many cases, women experienced a "backlash" or retreat in their position after independence was achieved' (Jamal 2001, p. 257).

More often, nationalist movements deprioritise women's emancipation. In the context of occupation or of a struggle against colonialism, the nationalist cause is put above all else. Those who seek to promote their own interests are seen as distracting from, or even a risk to, the more important issues and nationalist movement as a whole (Kandiyoti 1991b, p. 433; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 117).

Nevertheless, it should be noted that many women join and actively support nationalist movements and organisations. In contexts of 'nationalist mobilization', the nationalist struggle is, for most women, more important than the struggle for women's rights (Alison 2009, p. 218). Even feminist women participate in nationalist movements but often it is difficult to maintain and balance the two priorities (Alison 2009, p. 218). Those involved in the nationalist movement suggest that 'equality between men and women cannot be realised under conditions of oppression' (Ness 2008, p. 15). This view may however be seen as an excuse given by nationalist leaders who are reluctant to challenge the structure of gender relations and potentially divide the nationalist movement (Ness 2008, pp. 15–16).

Jayawardena (1986, p. 257) suggests that participation in nationalist movements has been a crucial step in the development of feminist movements in the 'third world' because it 'pushed [women] into participating in the political life of their communities' even if ultimately some of their newly found freedoms ended up being circumscribed by the male leadership.

Nationalism, then, interacts in complex ways with gender. Where nationalist discourses embrace a revolutionary, emancipatory discourse, there may be an opportunity for women to secure and obtain greater social, economic, and political freedom. However, the above discussion suggests that overall, in a political context dominated by a nationalist discourse, there will be less scope for women to adopt potentially socially divisive behaviours. If women's emancipation has not been embedded within the rhetoric of national liberation, feminism could be seen as 'divisive' and as such discouraged. This might result in gender equality being relegated as a political priority and therefore playing a smaller role in determining political support.

Where national projects use cultural or religious rhetoric, it is likely that women will be encouraged to conform to certain 'proper' behaviours. Accordingly, depending on the prevalent framing of nationalist rhetoric, it may encourage religious and conservative behaviour, particularly among women, who are often expected to protect and promote the national culture.

In the Occupied Palestinian Territories, nationalism is the 'overall guiding meta-frame for Palestinian politics' (Aggestam 1999, p. 68); it pervades not just the political but also the social realm (Richter-Devroe 2008, pp. 36–37). There is no one kind of Palestinian nationalism, it is made up of revolutionary, ethnic, cultural and religious elements and has changed over time.

Early revolutionary forms of Palestinian nationalism, particularly those promoted by the PFLP and other 'leftist' groups, emphasised active participation in the struggle for both women and men. Several women took part in the guerrilla activities during the 1960s and 1970s. Most famous among them is Leila Khaled, who hijacked airplanes with the PFLP. She is memorialised in Palestine where her face is still painted on walls urging others to keep fighting (Irving 2012, see also Figure 5.2). Early resistance slogans include 'Women must carry a gun', and a prominent Palestinian National

Figure 4.3 Part of a mural in Ramallah showing a traditionally dressed Palestinian woman as emerging from, or constituting part of, the Palestinian landscape, 27th February 2016.

Source: Photograph by author.

Council member wrote 'In the revolution we need women comrades who are intelligent and educated; we cannot reach victory flying on one wing' (cited in Antonius 1979, p. 26). This early revolutionary nationalism seemed to have the potential to further the struggle for women's equality.

Many activist women hoped that by participating in the national struggle, they would be taking a step towards gender equality. Some Palestinian women's rights activists have tried to tie women's position in society to the question of the national struggle (Peteet 1991, p. 97; Aweidah and Omar 2013, p. 14). They maintain that 'Palestinian women experience oppression not only due to their national identity but also based on their gender and class identities' (Sharoni 1995, p. 78). The idea of interlocking oppression has led to the suggestion that as long as women participate in the struggle, women's emancipation will come with national liberation (Sharoni 1995, p. 88). Peteet (1991, p. 72) also describes a 'specifically Palestinian feminist perspective' which sought to link nationalist and feminist behaviour. This idea was borne out in my interviews. Many women expressed their belief that women's liberation and Palestinian liberation should go hand-in-hand (Maha; Nadia; Nasrin). Nadia, an activist with Fatah, told me that women's liberation and Palestinian liberation should come "together, because

the freedom of people is the freedom of the nation". Nasrin, who had also been an activist, said that the two used to be linked and that the women's movement's slogan used to be "partner in the struggle".

For the most part, however, the nationalist context has tended to eclipse the feminist movement (Abdulhadi 1998, p. 656; Aweidah and Omar 2013, p. 14). Even the more radical elements of the Palestinian national struggle prioritise the 'potency and unity of the nation' over the issues faced by individuals and social subgroups (Sharoni 1995, p. 36). This has meant that throughout Palestinian history few women have labelled themselves as explicitly feminist (Peteet 1991, p. 97, 172; Sharoni 1995, p. 2; Richter-Devroe 2008, p. 40). As Jamal (2001, p. 258) writes: 'The primacy of the nationalist discourse has rendered women's rights secondary'. Richter-Devroe (2008, pp. 36–37) describes how most Palestinian women identify 'first of all, as Palestinians resisting the occupation, before their status as women in patriarchal society can be discussed'.

Scholars suggest that women's involvement in the nationalist movement might have achieved small transformations in 'women's lives and perceptions of their societal roles' (Massad 1995, p. 482), often as 'an accidental consequence of their determination to carry out some political action, such as a demonstration, which entailed a flouting of conventional mores' (Antonius 1979, p. 26). However, it has not 'significantly changed the way Palestinian nationalist thought conceives [of] Palestinian women. They are still considered subordinate members of the nation' (Massad 1995, p. 482).

After the high point of the First Intifada, where women of all ages and classes participated alongside men, women became increasingly aware that 'their full participation in the struggle for national liberation did not necessarily guarantee improvements in their social and political status' (Sharoni 1995, p. 88). This disappointment became concrete with the formation of the PA in the early-mid 1990s, which was seen to undo a lot of the work women had put into the struggle. Women's roles were not acknowledged in the founding of the institutions of state (Sharoni 1995, p. 49). Nor were they equally represented. Women constituted, for example, only 3 percent of the PA government (Jamal 2001, p. 274). Scholars such as Abdo, Jamal, Giacaman, Jad and Johnson all argue that traditional patriarchal structures became entrenched within the Palestinian Authority (Giacaman et al. 1996, p. 12; Abdo 1999, p. 40; Jamal 2001, p. 274). Abdo (1999, pp. 40–41) describes the non-meritocratic and non-democratic appointment of positions within the PA to those with the right connections rather than 'the necessary qualifications' as reinforcing clan structures and blocking women's access to the public sphere. She also examines the legal bases of social relations under the PA, such as definitions of citizenship which benefit men and husbands at the expense of women and wives (Abdo 1999, pp. 43–44). Abdo and Jamal also criticise the continued presence of sharia law as the basis for family law in Palestine under the PA – laws which Karmi suggests 'unquestionably discriminate against women' (Karmi 1996, p. 75; Abdo 1999, pp. 43–44;

Jamal 2001, p. 266). Jamal (2001, p. 271) describes how the PA would often refuse to work with the women's movement, 'in order not to alienate conservative religious sentiments and not to strengthen the Islamic opposition'. She suggests that the formation of the PA has led to the fracturing of the women's movement (Jamal 2001, pp. 263–264).

Women who wanted to continue to seek equal rights after the First Intifada often joined or founded women's rights NGOs. These are often seen to have strayed from the nationalist cause and grassroots women's movements because of their dependence on international donors and their need to address western feminist concerns to get funding. Richter-Devroe (2008, p. 43) writes that 'most urban-based professional women's NGOs have gradually lost and continue to lose their constituencies, leaving the huge burden of responding to women's practical needs to smaller local women's groups and charitable organizations'.

In this context, more conservative biological, ethnic, cultural and religious forms of nationalism have had an increased influence on the political scene.

Palestinian nationalist discourse often emphasises women's role as the 'fertile mother' (Abdulhadi 1998, p. 655). The emphasis on women as mothers has been shaped in response to Israel with whom a 'demographic race' has been developing over the decades (Abdo 1994, p. 151; Sharoni 1995, p. 34; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, pp. 30–36; Abdulhadi 1998, p. 655). Yasser Arafat is reputed to have called on women to have 12 children each (Abdulhadi 1998, p. 655). In her ethnography of Dheisheh Camp, Gren (2015, p. 191) describes how this was problematic for inhabitants of the camp: '[A] dilemma was that of childbearing: should one have many children in response to nationalist calls to outnumber Israelis and to a kin ideology demanding many men, or should one have few so as to be sure of being able to support them?' Abdo (1994, p. 151) cites the slogan that 'Israelis beat us at the borders but we beat them in the bedrooms' and famous Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's poem which includes the lines: "Write down I am an Arab … I have eight children and the ninth will come next summer … Are you angry?" as evidence of the significance of the 'demographic war' where Palestinian Arab's increased fertility is considered a threat by Israel. One interviewee, Maha, told me: "in our struggle even pregnancy is something important … because it's an existential struggle".

Giacaman et al. (1996, p. 15) have found pro-natalist policies enshrined in policy documents such as the General Program for National Economic Development which provides birth allowances of $90 per child (while limiting maternity leave to two months rather than the UN's recommended three months). Jamal (2001, pp. 258–259) describes how women activists were confronted and restrained by nationalist ideology: 'Palestinian women were ideologically defined to suit the official priorities of the PLO and had to bear the burden of being "mothers of the nation." They were encouraged to concentrate on grassroots activity leaving the main battlefield – military

or political – to "real soldiers"'. The role of women as mothers has been most controversial with the rise to prominence of mothers of suicide bombers during the Second Intifada. Chehab (2007, pp. 85–87) describes Umm Nidal who had three sons who died as suicide bombers and herself became a Hamas icon and member of the PLC. She saw women's most important role in the conflict as giving birth to children willing to fight and die for the cause (Chehab 2007, p. 87). Other scholars have emphasised women as mothers in a more protective role, defending boys from the Israeli forces, acting as witnesses and remonstrating with soldiers (Peteet 2000, p. 119). For the most part, Palestinian nationalism's focus on women as mothers has restricted and marginalised women (Jamal 2001, p. 275).

Culture plays an important role in conceptions of nationalism in Palestine. The connection between culture and the national struggle came through in my interviews. Samira told me: "If we lose part of the culture, we could be losing part of being Palestinian". Reem suggested the importance of "food, culture, songs, dresses". Cultural symbols, such as *dabke* dancing, the *kufiya* and the embroidered Palestinian woman's *thobe* [dress] have all been used in explicitly nationalistic ways at demonstrations against the occupation, and often came up in interviews (Peteet 1991, p. 107, 200; Sharoni 1995, p. 64; Hiba; Lina; Maha). While these symbols and their prominence do not serve explicitly to restrict women's roles, instead it is the more general emphasis that nationalist rhetoric places upon women's cultural roles and the subtler insistence on certain culturally appropriate forms of behaviour that has encouraged the relegation of women 'to the domestic sphere' (Abdo 1999, pp. 42–43).

Culturally appropriate nationalist behaviour for women, in accordance with boundary-marker, mothering and domesticated roles, tends to be encouraged by the nationalist movement. Women have often been encouraged to participate in the national struggle through '*sumud*' which is 'steadfastness in the face of adversity'. This is usually understood to manifest itself in 'stubbornly and defiantly' remaining on the land in the face of attacks and hostility (Peteet 1991, p. 153). Women in East Jerusalem have conceptualised the wearing of the headscarf as an act of *sumud* (Alayan and Shehadeh 2021, p. 1058). Richter-Devroe (2018) pays tribute to the way women's politics in Palestine takes place 'on an informal, individual, and everyday level' through small steps of defiance of the occupation needed to maintain their lives and providing opportunities for joy for their families and friends. This form of nationalism plays an important part in giving the message that the Palestinians will not be forced off their land. Peteet and others equate the qualities of *sumud* with the characteristics associated with femininity: 'silent endurance and sacrifice for others'. *Sumud* has meant that the non-action of many ordinary women has been deemed a nationalist act (Peteet 1991, p. 153; Sharoni 1995, p. 35). Although, some scholars argue for a more active understanding of the concept (Ali 2019).

Other forms of gendered nationalist behaviour include involvement in charitable or social work, raising awareness, or increasing self-sufficiency

through economic projects, care or education (Sayigh 1981). The attraction of these roles is that women can perform them, and support the national cause, without breaking with societal norms and avoiding the risks associated with non-conformist behaviour. Their effect is to reaffirm traditional forms of women's behaviour, such as embroidery, caring or food production, with only slight alterations to include community work or political awareness.

In the last few decades, Palestinian national culture has been reinterpreted through an Islamist lens. Shalhoub-Kevorkian describes how the national struggle has 'stressed the importance of the role of the family and the need to preserve Islamic constructions of female sexuality' (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2002, p. 583). The Islamic framework replicates and supports the gendered roles proposed by nationalist rhetoric. Hamas has successfully promoted the idea that there is a 'causal relationship between victory and adherence to Islamic faith' (Hroub 2000, p. 237). This has led to some individuals seeing 'living a religious life as a mode of political resistance' (Abdo 1994, p. 165).

Several interviewees described the nationalist project in this way to me. Azza told me: "we have this belief that our Palestine will be free if we believe in the right Islam and we achieve good values". This view was repeated by Munira when she said: "Religion is the base of the society, and we pray to God, so he will be with us and give us a solution. God asks us to defend our home and our land and our self, our honour, our everything and our dignity". Naimeh explained that "People connect *al-watan* [the nation] with religion … 'Why are you protecting the homeland?' 'Because we need to fight for God – because God ordered us to fight in Palestine'". According to these views, moral behaviour contributes to the national struggle, and participating in the resistance is religiously sanctioned. These Islamist conceptions of nationalism have 'offered an alternative "authentic" space for women who could now organize without having to worry about violating social norms' (Abdulhadi 1998, p. 659).

The Islamisation of Palestinian society has reflected a growing Islamisation in the region and has been signalled through the women's 'increasingly modest dress code', with the veil becoming more and more prevalent (Caridi 2012, pp. 91–92). Initially promoted during the First Intifada, modest dress and behaviour was seen to reflect the view that 'Palestine was in mourning' and a degree of solemnity and respect was expected from the population (Caridi 2012, p. 91). The promotion of modest dress seems to have gained considerable traction with men and women; it has extended beyond Islamists and Hamas supporters (Caridi 2012, p. 92). The many roles of the hijab has recently been highlighted in a study by Alayan and Shehadeh (2021). They look at the motivation Palestinian women have for wearing the hijab in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, with many respondents linking it to the national context and wearing it as 'a defiant symbol against the Israeli occupation', although others wore it due to religious reasons, social pressures or as a way to facilitate their daily activities (Alayan and Shehadeh 2021,

p. 1051). Jihan told me how the "Islamisation of women" started after "Khomeini's revolution in 1979" until "even women who are not Hamas nor very religious, are obliged to wear the veil in certain areas". Interestingly, although I did not ask about the hijab in my interview it often came up. Many, particularly older, interviewees described how the popularity of the hijab was a new phenomenon (Jihan; Laila; Maha; Fouad). Often, wearing it was seen as a way of conforming with society, rather than a specific indicator of religious belief. The pervasiveness of the headscarf was seen as a result of the pressures to conform and avoid harassment. Women want to wear these clothes "to be part of society. It is confirmative of the society" (Fouad). They "want to declare, at least symbolically, that they are part of the mainstream, and part of the mainstream is adhering to the religious practices or the nationalist practices" (Laila). Many interviewees suggested that wearing the hijab does not necessarily mean that the wearer is religious (Hanan; Jihan; Mona; Rola; Abdel; Fouad). I was told, you might think, "'They wear hijab, they must be religious'. But they are not religious. This issue, the hijab issue, it is one of the traditions issues" (Abdel). Hanan told me: "I am not very religious … I wear a scarf, but I don't pray". Rola said: "It is rare to find someone without a scarf here … They do not wear the scarf here because of religion but because it is *'aib* [traditionally shameful] to not wear the scarf". I was told in interviews that even adamant feminists and "female comrades" in left-wing organisations had started wearing the hijab (Laila; Hani; Suleiman). Certainly, there was societal pressure to wear it. If they do not wear the hijab "neighbours start saying things … like I'm impolite. I'm not that good of a person if I don't wear a scarf" (Mona). Others cited pressure from men to cover up (Iman; Jamila). The issue and pressures seemed contingent on the surroundings (Jihan). Some women, mostly from cosmopolitan or 'leftist' areas, said that they themselves did not feel pressure to wear the hijab (Maha; Samira), whereas Gazans told me that only 1 percent of women do not wear the hijab now (Zainab; Wahid).

Biological, cultural, and religious conceptions of women's roles in Palestinian nationalism have both reinforced traditional gender structures (which emphasise the gendered division of labour), while making it particularly important for society to police women's morality and women's bodies. If women's morality represents the integrity of the nation, and a woman's body represents the potential for the nation to reproduce, violation could be seen as an attack on the nation. For women in this context, the risks of nonconformity are high. Shalhoub-Kevorkian describes how domestic violence and 'honor crimes' 'are linked to the national honor in the context of a national struggle' (Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2002, p. 583). This has meant that there is a greater motivation for women who care about the national struggle to abide by social norms and commit themselves to pious behaviour.

As nationalism continues to take priority, and with the secular versions of nationalism presented by the 'leftists' and, to a certain extent by Fatah,

losing credibility, it is likely that the Islamic version of nationalism will hold sway for the time being. In this nationalist context, there is also a greater need and emphasis placed upon restricting women's movements. If women's bodies need to be protected, and their morality guarded, then it is the duty of society to ensure that women will not be placed in situations which could put them at risk. By restricting women's movements and guarding their morality, and equating piety with national struggle, the nationalist discourse gives a greater opportunity, space, and power to women's piety.

4.1.3 Feminism, Islam, and Women's Empowerment

The discussion on Palestinian nationalism above shows that the current Islamic version of nationalism in Palestine has deprioritised women's rights agendas. The outcome being that pursuing women's rights is increasingly perceived as working *against* the national struggle. I found this view clearly reflected in my research. When I asked interviewees about their opinions on, or the situation for women's rights, a number of interviewees said that women's rights were not a priority because of the occupation (Lina; Maha; Nadia; Samira; Zainab; Bilal; Ibrahim; Iyad). Lina told me: “For me priorities are different, for me the priorities are not women's rights, children's rights, for me priorities are Palestine and liberation and then comes women's rights and children's rights and homosexuals' [rights]”. Iyad said: “So the priority now for all Palestinians for women or men is the conflict with Israel, not the rights … all other things will come after”.

An effect of the gendered nature of Palestinian nationalism is that it has served, for the most part, to minimise the influence of the feminist and women's movement and to prioritise female behaviour which conforms to traditional gender norms in terms of domesticity and morality. As such, it is particularly difficult to become a feminist in Palestine. A feminist scholar herself, Jamila, explained the obstacles that women who seek to “be empowered” face in Palestine. They can expect “a big sacrifice … a fight within the family”, then they are talked about as “women who are deviants … who are not abiding by the customs and traditions, so they are bad women, so they become stigmatised”. She explained that because of the cost, in most cases women do not make this sacrifice.

And while women's rights may not be a priority, I found that views on women's rights were gendered. In the interviews, both men and women tended to express the same kinds of views when I asked about women's rights or gender equality, but women more often than men acknowledged that there were problems with the status quo and that it should change. Although, I do not want to derive quantitative results from my interviews, I noticed that double the number of women to men (and I am reading the male answers in the most feminist light possible here) thought that the situation needed to improve, with 18 women (Azza; Basima; Farida; Hanan; Iman; Lana; Maha; Mona; Munira; Nadia; Nour; Rasha; Reem; Sahar; Samah;

Tahani; Wafaa; Zahra) and 9 men (Abdel; Ashraf; Bilal; Faisal; Hussein; Nasim; Nidal; Raafat; Wahid) suggesting this.

To see whether women are more supportive of women's rights than men, I created a measure of attitudes towards gender equality taken from PSR Poll 24 (June 2007), the only poll with detailed questions on attitudes towards gender equality. Seven questions, intended to measure general attitudes towards gender equality rather than sexual equality or other specific feminist values, were included in the poll. Respondents were asked to choose between 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'disagree' and 'strongly disagree' in response to seven statements. The statements were: 'A woman can be a president or prime minister of a Muslim country', 'A married woman can work outside the home if she wishes', 'On the whole, men make better political leaders than women do', 'A university education is more important for a boy than a girl', 'Men and women should have equal job opportunities and wages', 'Men and women should receive equal wages and salaries' and 'A woman can travel abroad by herself if she wishes'. I recoded the responses to the statements so that the more 'pro-equality' attitude was given a higher ranked response and so that the highest score per question was '3' and the lowest score was '0'. These seven statements had a Cronbach's Alpha of 634. I combined the statements to produce a Gender Equality Scale between 0 and 21 where higher scores imply a higher level of support for gender equality.

Figure 4.4 shows that women tend to be higher on the scale than men. The mean placement on the Gender Equality Scale for women is 12.1 and for

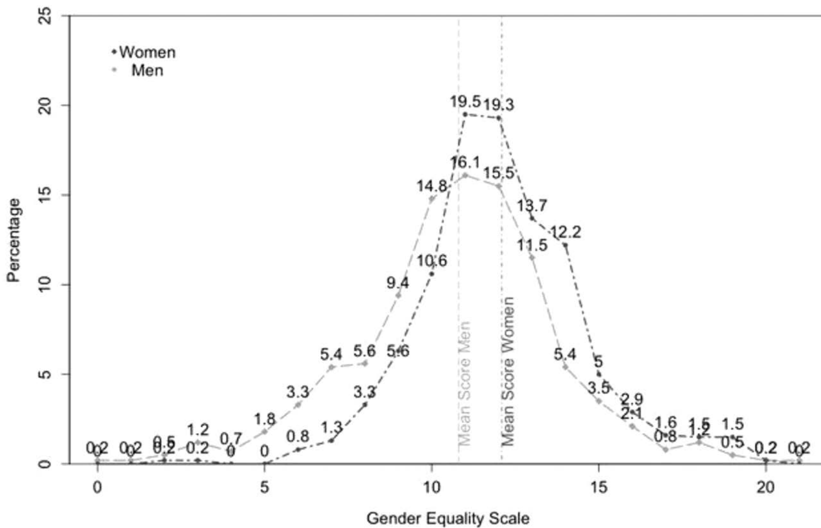

Figure 4.4 To show the placement of men and women on the Gender Equality Scale as percentages.

n = 1222, Data = PSR Poll 24 (Merged Dataset) ANOVA [F(1, 1228) = 66.36, p = 0.000]

men it is 10.8, showing that on average women are 1.3 points higher on the scale than men. This fits with studies which find women to be more supportive of gender equality than men (Manza and Brooks 1998, p. 1260; Campbell et al. 2009, p. 180), but not others that have found that gender differences on attitudes towards women's issues are relatively insubstantial or non-existent (Edlund and Pande 2002, p. 934; Norris 2003; Norrander 2008, p. 13). It should be noted that the population is not very in favour of gender equality even on the not very provocative questions asked as part of the scale.

In my interviews, feminism or support for women's rights rarely came up as an explanation for differences in political support between women and men. This finding fits with studies of gender gaps in the West, which often find feminism does not have much of an impact. Only a few studies find it to be at all relevant in explaining gender gaps in political support (Manza and Brooks 1998, p. 1260; Inglehart and Norris 2003, pp. 91–92; Bergh 2007, p. 235). Cook and Wilcox (1991, p. 1121) find that feminism does not uniquely effect women's values and, as such, '[f]eminism does not explain the gender gap'.

The few mentions of women's rights as impacting political support were from Lina and Mona, who suggested women might support the PFLP or the PPP more because "it supports women's rights" and Yahya who suggested women wanted "to be more liberal". Indeed, the only political factions that have a clear women's rights agenda are these 'leftist' organisations, such as the PFLP, PPP, and DFLP.

In my interviews, I found that when discussing the women who support the PFLP, a 'leftist', 'revolutionary' organisation which explicitly supports gender equality, I was told that it was "for women's rights" but also there was a "stigma" attached to PFLP women (Lana). I was told that the PFLP only cared about "making parties and girls dancing all over the place" (Faraj), and that PFLP women "are the ones that smoke, and that drink and go out with the guys … it's like they are super free and can do whatever they want" (Lana). One interviewee said that the 'leftists' are "told to date boys" (Yahya). Maha, who was sympathetic to the PFLP and had herself found that as a party it was "easier for women" to be a member, told me that the stereotype was that it was a party for "sexual" people. Yousef said that PFLP women do not care about going "against the culture" and that they might say "I drink. I don't care" or "Why should I get married in order to have sex". These examples of the stereotypes of 'leftist' women show the social criticism which women who might opt for supporting these secular groups might face. While it is unclear as to whether these views have emerged recently, they do tend to confirm that the tide has turned on the emancipatory radical nationalism, and that espousing gender equality is seen more as a threat to Palestinian culture rather than a fundamental part of the struggle for liberation.

To examine this question of whether women might support these leftist parties, I created a graph to analyse levels of support for the 'leftists' in general, for men and women. Figure 4.5 shows that women support 'leftist'

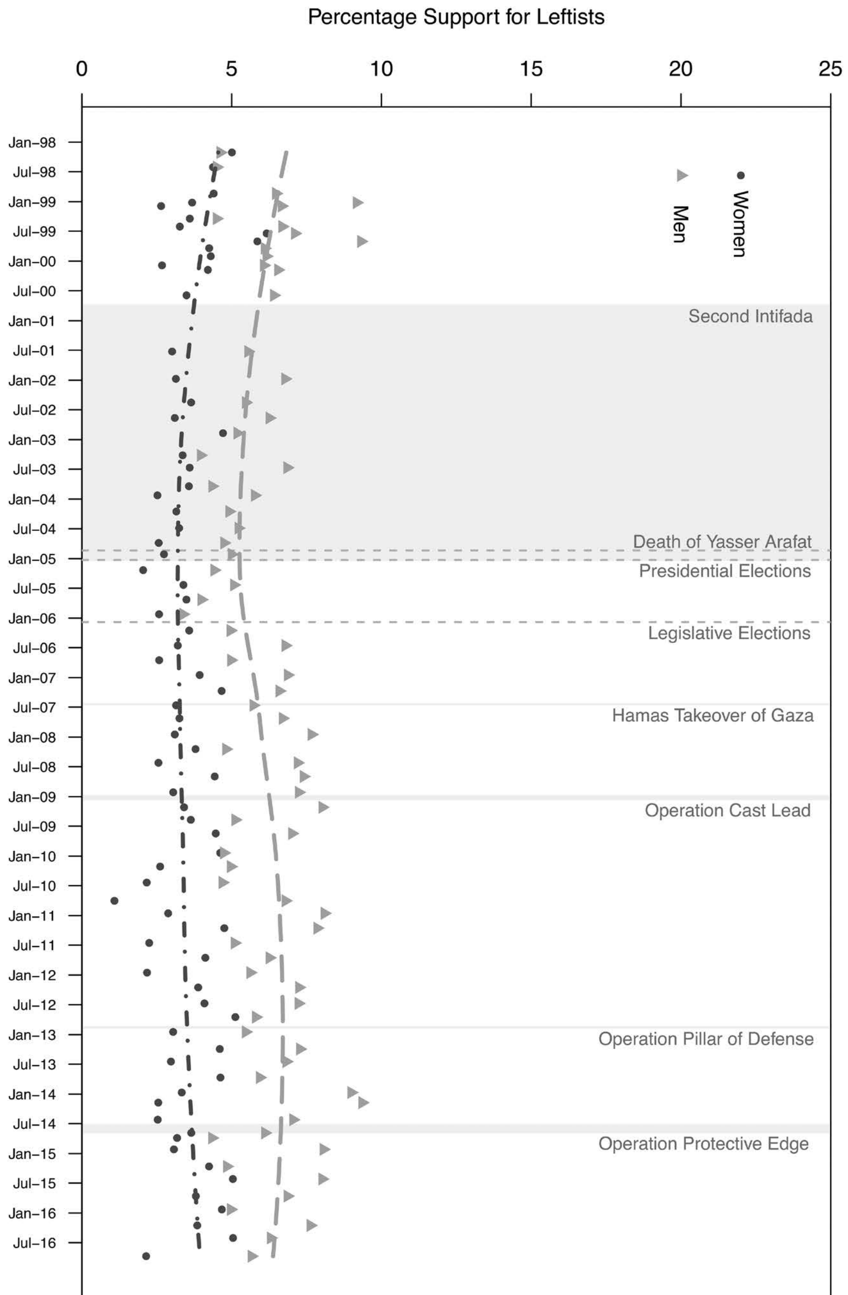

Figure 4.5 To show percentage support for 'leftist' parties (PFLP, DFLP, and PPP) by gender. Salient political events have been added to aid interpretation.

Data = CPRS Polls 32, 33, 37-47, PSR Polls 1-61

parties less than men, despite these parties advocating gender equality. As described above women who support the 'leftists' are stigmatised as being 'sexual' and going 'against the culture'. In the Palestinian political context, achieving greater gender equality is not, for most women, worth risking one's reputation and cultural cohesion.

A clue in this puzzle of how to fit women's slightly higher support of gender equality with political support – and in particular women's greater support for Hamas, comes from within the interviews. When I asked about gender equality, a number of interviewees told me that 'Islam gives women all their rights' (Munira; Ruwaida; Zahra; Faisal; Mousa; Nidal; Tarek). This might be seen to demonstrate the role of an emerging discourse that finds women's empowerment within Islam.

This conceptualisation fits with Kandiyoti's suggestion, that where nationalism is framed in Islamic terms, feminist discourse can only take two forms, without risking alienation, 'either denying that Islamic practices are necessarily oppressive or asserting that oppressive practices are not necessarily Islamic' (Kandiyoti 1991b, p. 433). Historical experience and distaste for the more socially contentious forms of feminism have encouraged the articulation of a women's rights discourse within an Islamist nationalist framework. Islamist rhetoric can be used both to reinforce traditional values or to critique them in a way which does not undermine the national project in the same way that feminist and secular rhetoric might be seen to do.

In my interviews, I came across ideas around Islam as being a space for women's empowerment. I heard from a number of Palestinian women who subscribed to the 'rights discourse' within Islam, saying that Islam granted them more rights than traditional society. Most of these women supported Hamas. They criticised 'tradition' because of the restrictions it places upon women, and they did so in the name of religion. Islam was often placed into comparison with "traditions" which "play a big role in limiting [women's] roles in society" (Tahani). Munira told me: "Religion gives women every single right that they deserve but society never gives them a right". I was given many examples of the much greater rights accorded to women in Islam compared to the rights traditionally granted them (Nadia; Nasrin; Rasha; Reem; Ruwaida; Tahani; Bassel; Faisal). I was told that, while traditions disapproved of women working, Islam permitted it (Rasha; Nidal); tradition said a woman caught behaving inappropriately with a man should be killed, but Islam suggested a lesser punishment (Bassel); while 'traditionally' women had no inheritance, Islam gave women half that of their brothers (Ruwaida; Tahani; Nasim). Rasha explained this idea further when she told me:

> Our religion is not complicated. It is not backwards. But society is what makes it complicated and backward. For our religion, it is alright for a girl to go outside, work, work beside males and work with them, within

> certain limits. But [the problem] is from society, not from religion itself … So basically the society will tell you, 'You are a female, you shouldn't be working with males.'
>
> *(Rasha)*

This fits with recent developments in scholarship on women and Islam from the wider Middle East region. For the most part, scholarship has pointed to mutual distaste and rejection between feminism and Islamic movements. There are, however, an increasing number of scholars who question the tendency to position religion, and especially Islam (which is 'so often seen as justifying the subordination of women in the Arab world' (Masoud et al. 2016, p. 1)), and women's empowerment as contradictory (Ahmed 1992; Taraki 1996; Al-Ali 2000; Abu-Abu-Lughod 2002; Deeb 2006; Ben Shitrit 2013; Al-Labadi 2014; Masoud et al. 2016).

First, it is worth pointing to the apparent antagonism between feminism and Islamism. A rejection of feminism has been particularly strong in the Islamist movement. Akhami and Friedl (1997, p. xii) describe how Islamists were able to reject gender equality commitments as being against 'authentic Muslim traditions'. Abu-Lughod (1998, p. 243) suggests Islamists are 'the best examples of those who condemn feminism as Western'. Salime looks at the Islamist women's movement in Morocco and finds that Islamist activists reject the feminist label because of their 'understanding of feminist politics as secular and Western in origin, and therefore hostile to Islam' (Salime 2011, p. xxv). She finds that Islamists see feminism as setting men and women in competition and conflict rather than acknowledging 'their mutual responsibilities toward each other and their mutual obligations to honor their commitments vis-à-vis god … [they reject feminism] because it stresses women's rights independently of their obligations, and because it eliminates the mediating dimension of the divine' (Salime 2011, p. 137). Islamist women activists see feminism as focusing on men as 'the enemies within' while ignoring broader issues of economic exploitation, colonialism and despotism (Salime 2011, p. 138). There is also a broader Islamist discourse which frames feminism as an assault on the cohesion of the Muslim family (Salime 2011, p. 140).

This hostility is reciprocated by feminists who object to Islamist women's politics. Feminists have tended to assume that, as Mahmood (2005, pp. 1–2) puts it, 'women Islamist supporters are pawns in a grand patriarchal plan, who, if freed from their bondage, would naturally express their instinctual abhorrence for the traditional Islamic mores used to enchain them'. Salime describes how in Morocco feminists view Islamist women as 'mere followers of male politics' with no 'genuine concern about women's rights'. She says that feminists see these women as being used by Islamist movements to engage with women (Salime 2011, p. xxii). Yuval-Davis does not think women benefit from involvement in Islamic fundamentalist movements. She writes: 'the overall effect of fundamentalist movements has been very detrimental to women, limiting and defining their roles and activities and

actively oppressing them when they step outside their preordained limits' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 63). This antagonism has been visible in the fall-out of the Arab Spring, when democratic moments led to the advancement of Islamist groups. This has led to disappointment and a sense of failure for some women's groups and observers (Sjoberg and Whooley 2015; Allam 2018).

However, to frame Islamists as being 'against' women's rights and feminists as 'for' them, is overly simplistic. Dichotomies such as 'traditional-modern' and 'indigenous-western', which are 'conspicuous' in academic accounts of gender in the Middle East and make up powerful oppositional discourses by both feminists and Islamists, are problematic and are increasingly being unsettled and questioned (Al-Ali 2000, p. 2; Jad 2011a). Calling for an end to these polarisations Abu-Lughod writes:

> My point is to remind us to be aware of differences, respectful of other paths toward social change that might give women better lives. Can there be a liberation that is Islamic? And, beyond this, is liberation even a goal for which all women or people strive? Are emancipation, equality, and rights part of a universal language we must use? … might other desires be more meaningful for different groups of people? Living in close families? Living in a godly way? Living without war?
>
> *(Abu-Lughod 2002, p. 788)*

Several scholars have emphasised how for women being religious or part of a religious movement is not necessarily an anti-feminist position. Mahmood (2005, p. 2) questions whether it is right to assume that women should 'oppose the practices, values, and injunctions that the Islamist movement embodies'. Mahmood studied a women's mosque movement in Cairo, where women read, studied and taught Islamic scripture. In her study, she challenges the idea that agency must be seen as resisting the dominant structures of power (Mahmood 2005, p. 14). Instead she suggests that:

> what may appear to be a case of deplorable passivity and docility from a progressivist point of view, may actually be a form of agency-but one that can be understood only from within the discourses and structures of subordination that create the conditions of its enactment.
>
> *(Mahmood 2005, p. 15)*

Deeb, in her book *An Enchanted Modern* which studies the Shia community in Lebanon, describes how modern piety is entangled with feminist discourses, and that by measuring the status of women against western models ignores emerging understandings of 'an ideal modern woman, one based in public piety'. She describes this alternative ideal:

> This ideal entails demonstrating knowledge and practice of authenticated Islam, being dedicated to self-improvement, and participating actively in

> the public life and betterment of the community. Rather than an individualized self, this modern self is embedded in social relationships. In addition to the "emancipated woman," who is imagined as selfishly abandoning her family and community, or as demanding an irrational absolute equality (understood to mean identicality) with men, this pious modern woman is set in opposition to two other ideal types in Lebanon: the "traditional" person, who practices religion improperly or without true comprehension and who believes that her only role is a domestic one; and the "empty modern" and "westernized" person, who is selfish, materialistic, and obsessed with her appearance and social status.
>
> *(Deeb 2006, p. 30)*

Deeb (2006, p. 217) finds that these pious, modern women are pushing gender boundaries. They emphasise the importance of women's education and ability to read and interpret religious texts. They are committed to community service work and are happy to be outspoken, while remaining 'pious and committed to her faith, family, and community'. In so doing, they challenge traditional views of women, and push for a greater presence of women in employment and the public sphere.

Ben Shitrit (2013, p. 81), in her study of women in Jewish and Islamic movements in Israel, finds that for 'many women religious movements offer real liberation from oppressive socioeconomic realities and limiting cultural norms'. Ben Shitrit (2013, pp. 84–97) shows how, although, the Islamic movement in Israel adheres to a gender ideology which promotes a sex-based division of labour and the strict control over women's bodies, behaviour and appearance in public, it presents women members with emancipatory narratives through the lessons and lectures given by senior women in the movement. Islam is perceived as helping to guide an individual to achieve their 'true self-interest' and overcome desire and ignorance (Ben Shitrit 2013, pp. 91–92). She suggests that women within the movement 'associate customs, traditions, norms, and social coercion with the internal and external elements that prevent the individual from achieving true self-realization' (Ben Shitrit 2013, p. 92). In her discussions with women in these movements, they emphasised the importance of 'intention' and conscious decision making in religious actions and behaviours, rather than merely following social customs (Ben Shitrit 2013, p. 93). Women with knowledge of Islam are empowered to resist 'customs and traditions that they view as oppressive to women, as un-Islamic and therefore un-authoritative' (Ben Shitrit 2013, p. 97). She gives the example of women opposing pressure (and the tribal customs) that encourage them to marry their cousins. Nonetheless, Ben Shitrit (2013, p. 103) emphasises that these liberatory narratives 'should not be confused with a feminist consciousness' and that women within the movement do not seek religious leadership roles.

Beyond Mahmoud's, Deeb's and Ben Shitrit's work, several other scholars find that Islamist movements have space for female empowerment. Many

scholars highlight the importance of a rights discourse within the modern Islamic resurgence, which suggests Muslim women are given 'superior rights' in Islam, 'when compared with their sexually exploited Western counterparts' (Karmi 1996, p. 72). According to this view, Islam grants women not equal rights with men but different rights centred around 'an enhanced position that demands that they be honoured as wives and mothers as an integral part of religious duty' (Azzam 1996, p. 228). Muhanna-Matar (2014, p. 10) finds that Islamist women use 'women's rights discourses similar to their feminist counterparts' and she found that they shared many aims with feminists. Kandiyoti (1997, p. 6) also suggests that 'a significant female constituency may find not only solace and solidarity in Islamic militancy but a legitimate route to greater empowerment'. Azzam (1996, p. 228) concludes that 'by turning to Islam for legitimisation and to the legacy of learned women throughout Islamic history for inspiration, Muslim women today are attempting to authoritatively extend their roles beyond the home'.

An important nuance to these ways of thinking is how embracing Islam is often coupled with the rejection of 'backwards' traditions. Deeb (2006, p. 4) argues that Islam is neither static and monolithic nor is it incompatible with modernity. She argues that both material and spiritual progress is seen as necessary to modern-ness for those trying to avoid the 'emptiness' of modernity in the West (Deeb 2006, p. 5). She describes how spiritual progress is seen to be 'a move 'forward,' away from 'tradition' and into a new kind of religiosity, one that involves conscious and conscientious commitment' (Deeb 2006, p. 5). It is, she asserts, women who play the key role in this process 'as women's practices and morality have often been constructed as necessary to collective identities' (Deeb 2006, p. 5). By picking apart what is meant by modernity, she shows how a group of Shia women's views of development and progress are juxtaposed with ideas of ignorance and tradition (Deeb 2006, p. 19). In their view, a conscious committed piety is a rejection of tradition, not an expression of it.

The way Islam is framed as a rejection of traditions in Deeb's account, resounds with the views I heard in my interviews as described above. The religious Palestinian women (and men) I spoke to saw women's rights within Islam as much better than those given to women as part of Palestinian traditions (Munira; Nadia; Nasrin; Rasha; Reem; Ruwaida; Tahani; Bassel; Faisal; Nasim; Nidal).

Further, Islamic movements can enable women to access 'a legitimate place in a public sphere which otherwise might be blocked to them, and which in certain circumstances they might be able to subvert for their purposes' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 63). Taraki (1996, p. 154) finds that Islamists in Jordan supported women's education and employment outside the home by justifying it in terms of educated women making better mothers, and employment being justified if it 'agrees with women's nature'. Further, she describes women participating in election rallies and charitable activities connected to the Islamist movement. Azzam (1996, p. 222) emphasises

that women's active participation in Islamic movements, which even though it does not amount to a 'radical shift' in their social position, does make women more visible in society and gives them a greater opportunity to participate in public life. Here she suggests that women might find public life more accessible 'under the umbrella of Islam' than through other means, as long as they adhere to rules about the approved forms of appearance and range of subjects and opinions which they are expected to stick to (Azzam 1996, p. 222). Cherifati-Merabtine (1994, p. 57) describes how women in the Islamist movement in Algeria 'engage in socio-educative activities' such as visiting the poor and providing extra classes for children. Therefore, Islamic movements can help women to gain access to the public sphere and conduct public engagement activities which they might not have been able to do in other contexts.

There are also important anti-colonial ideological associations with women's religiosity in the Middle East which bestow a sense of 'authenticity' upon Islamic movements, rendering them particularly attractive in post-colonial and colonised states (Azzam 1996, pp. 217–218). The way that Islam has in some cases become associated with anti-western sentiment makes adherence to Islamic goals an act of subversion of the global political elite and can bestow extra significance to adopting markers of piety. When Islam is rhetorically counterposed with a 'morally corrupt and imperialistic West' and 'privileged local elites seen as aping the West' as it often is, then political Islam becomes imbued with the appearance of 'moral rectitude and cultural integrity' (Kandiyoti 1997, p. 6). In many Muslim societies, a narrow elite have adopted a westernised lifestyle complete with feminist ideology, and in this context the 'popular classes' have often used Islam as a way to 'express their alienation' from these groups, and as a source of comfort in the midst of rapid changes (Kandiyoti 1991a, p. 8; Moghadam 1994, p. 9; Azzam 1996, p. 220; Kandiyoti 1997, p. 6).

Further, there are interesting connections between education and women's participation in the Islamic movement. On the one hand, the Islamic movement has been widely supportive of women's education, while on the other, women are using their increased knowledge to find 'inspiration to excel' within Islam and to enter into religious discourse (Azzam 1996, p. 221; Hegland 1999, p. 183).

These views show how Islam can place a challenge to backwards traditions, and Islamist movements can enable women to take a more active role in society. They highlight the importance of Islam as a potentially empowering discourse for women, but simultaneously it is a discourse which, unlike feminism, is not seen as a threat to social cohesion or cultural norms. Many modern women in the Middle East are therefore able, through Islam, to seek an improved status, while adhering to seemingly authentic and non-westernised social structures. Azzam (1996, p. 227) writes: 'For some women, an Islamic framework of reference is the only really viable means for change, since it would allow them to remain within the bounds accepted by society

and which men cannot attack because it is based on Islam'. Kandiyoti (1997, p. 6) also suggests that it might be more effective for women, when faced with a patriarchal society, to secure protection by appealing to men's obligations 'from within an Islamic discourse'. Hegland suggests that most women in the Middle East:

> live in a social environment, which makes it difficult to overtly resist religious pronouncements on gender and the dependent status of women. Judging it difficult or even dangerous to turn their backs on their social communities, these women must work to find ways to address their spiritual and social needs without obviously straying outside of state, community, family, and self-imposed boundaries.
>
> *(Hegland 1999, p. 178)*

Understanding these views can help to elucidate the roles of symbols of piety such as the veil/hijab/headscarf. While colonisers thought that 'Islam innately oppressed women, and that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression' (Chatty and Rabo 1997, p. 15), in practice 'There is no single reason why women veil, and in some cases women may veil as a sign of their own agency' (Sharoni 1995, p. 27). Abu-Lughod suggests that 'modern Islamic modest dress that many educated women across the Muslim world have taken on since the mid-1970s now both publicly marks piety and can be read as a sign of educated urban sophistication, a sort of modernity' (Abu-Lughod 2002, p. 786). In fact, the issue of veiling now encompasses 'far broader issues than merely the position of women', such as the conflict 'between the colonized and the colonizers' (Chatty and Rabo 1997, p. 15). Azzam (1996, p. 225) also highlights this point. She explains that wearing a hijab for some, not only fulfils a religious duty, but it is also a rejection of westernisation and the 'sexual promiscuity and decadence' associated with western fashions. Further, wearing a hijab allows a woman to be judged for more than her physical appearance while also discouraging male sexual harassment in public (Azzam 1996, p. 225). Hegland (1999, p. 193) agrees that wearing a veil can allow women greater mobility and access to work and education, with less 'approbation and harassment'. As such, she suggests that women 'veil to further their own goals'. Kandiyoti (1997, p. 6) gives examples of how Islamic dress allows conservative women to access education providing 'mobility rather than seclusion'.

In Ahmed's (1992, p. 217) authoritative account of the role of the veil, she sees 'Islamic dress' as the 'visible emblem' of the Islamist movement in Egypt. By dressing in Islamic dress, women describe how they gain 'inner peace' and respect from others, while also discouraging harassment from men in public (Ahmed 1992, p. 223). She acknowledges that veiled women are more conservative than non-veiled women and less feminist in terms of their expectations of women's education and entrance into the workplace (Ahmed 1992, p. 226). Ahmed does, however, highlight the striking

levels of similarity in attitudes between veiled and unveiled women and the findings that 'the overwhelming majority of veiled women support women's rights to education and work, that a majority support equality in public life and equal political rights, and that a substantial proportion support equality in marriage', suggesting that the conventional opinion of veiled women as 'committed to the view that women's place is in the home' is incorrect (Ahmed 1992, p. 227). She describes how the 'sum of their responses on matters of women's roles and rights indicates that most were consistently *for* education, *for* the right to employment, *for* avenues of professional achievement being open to women, and *for* equal political rights' (Ahmed 1992, p. 227). Ahmed (1992, p. 227) suggests that veiled women's views are more progressive in terms of women's rights than the position set out for women as 'identified with traditional Islam' and the 'conventional interpretations of the shari'a'. Ahmed shows how wearing the veil is not so much an act of submission but rather one of the many ways in which modern women negotiate their relationship with Islam and society.

The hijab and Islamic dress came up repeatedly in my interviews, as described above. Dressing 'religiously' was seen as a particular active choice made by women, that extended beyond simply donning the hijab. To dress religiously required the *jilbab*, *niqab*, an absence of make-up and accessories (Rola; Tahani; Wafaa).

A relatively new, but contentious, development is the emergence of Islamic feminism. This movement promotes the reinterpretation of religious texts so as to 'remove the fetters imposed by centuries of patriarchal interpretation and practice' (Al-Labadi 2014, p. 169). Islamic feminists seek to support and enhance women's status without doing away with Islam as a whole (Akhami and Friedl 1997, p. xiii). This movement has had 'wide resonance' among Muslims and non-Muslims (Esfandiari and Badran 2010, p. 7). Akhami and Friedl (1997) and Masoud et al. (2016) suggest that Islamic feminism seems to be successful in improving attitudes towards gender equality. They stress the difficulties women face in trying to gain their rights, often having to confront the fundamental bases of their communities; 'the family, the village, the workplace, the city, male-female relations. They must dare to displease those who are near them emotionally and on whom they depend in times of need' (Akhami and Friedl 1997, p. xiii). In this context, they suggest that 'separating cultural conditions that impede women's rights from "Islam" often are crucial to success' because people are more willing to do away with customs than with their religion (Akhami and Friedl 1997, p. xiii). Masoud et al. (2016, p. 1) measured support for women's political leadership after hearing religious and non-religious justifications for it. They find that: 'Respondents exposed to a Qur'ānically justified argument in favor of female political leadership were more likely to express acceptance of women in power than were those exposed to an equivalent, non-religious argument, or to not argument at all' (Masoud et al. 2016, p. 3). This suggests

that Islamic feminism might be a good method for promoting greater gender equality.

However, the movement has faced substantial criticism. Masoud et al. (2016, p. 36) voice their concern for the 'pitfalls' inherent in Islamic feminism, suggesting it risks delegitimising secularists, promoting a restricted version of gender equality and excluding certain women. They conclude:

> We are unable to resolve this debate. We can only offer evidence on the efficacy of an Islamic feminist rhetorical strategy, and leave to activists and theorists the greater task of determining whether the gains to be had from deploying Islamic rhetoric and symbols in service of women's rights are outweighed by the potential costs of doing so.
>
> *(Masoud et al. 2016, p. 36)*

Esfandiari and Badran (2010, p. 3) express their concern that Islamic feminism is portraying itself as an 'indigenous' feminism at the expense of secular feminism. Barakat calls it a 'reconciliatory apologetic reformist trend' (Barakat 1985, p. 1994, p. 33). Meriwether and Tucker (1999, p. 8) write that some feminists in the region 'argue that to engage with the "Islamic" discourse on gender is a mistake' because it is a system which cannot be rehabilitated and so engaging with it is a waste of time. While the debate surrounding the efficacy of Islamic feminism is unresolved, its arguments have nonetheless been filtering into the mainstream of women within Islam, bolstering views of Islam as by no means antithetical to the empowerment of women.

Understanding these nuances and the locations where Islam can be, or is felt to be, empowering is important in countering simplistic - and even dangerous – portrayals of Muslim women as victims of patriarchy (Ahmed 1992, p. 167; Sharoni 1995, p. 28; Abu-Lughod 2002; Masoud et al. 2016, p. 4). This picture questions assumptions which associate religion with tradition as is proposed, for example, in the "Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap" (Inglehart and Norris 2000). It also shows how women have managed to find a space for female empowerment within a religious context, therefore accounting for the role of community and responsibility, while rejecting the colonial, sexualised connotations of western feminism.

In order to look at the question of whether religious women might be more or less supportive of gender equality, I returned to the gender equality scale in Poll 24 above. I compared the average for women who marked high on a religious scale (a score of '3') with the rest of the respondents to Poll 24. The mean gender equality scale for religious women is 11.6 compared to a sample mean of 11.5 (and a mean for men of 10.8 and women of 12.1). This shows that religious women are very slightly more (0.1 point) in favour of gender equality than the overall sample. To break down this view, it can be assumed that 'religious women' will include those who are traditionally religious as well as those who adopt these ideas of Islam as empowering for

women. It should also be remembered that the overall sample of women will include those (often supporters of leftist organisations) with strong feminist views. As such, this small difference shows that female religiosity should not be presented, necessarily, as socially conservative as it often is as the average views of this group – admittedly taken from only one poll – indicate that their views are more supportive of gender equality than men.

The synthesis of elements that might usually be considered as conservative with potentially subversive or empowering gender positions is not exclusive to the Middle East. In feminist literature in the West, there are several examples of similar phenomena. Kaplan (1982, p. 76), for example, emphasises the radical potential of conservative women in her case study of women in Barcelona, where 'to fulfil women's obligations, they rebelled against the state'. She posits that women with female consciousness defend their women's work of 'preserving life' and will fight all those who interfere with this work whether 'left or right, male or female' (Kaplan 1982, p. 76). In a study of Catholicism and the republic in France, Sudda and Itçaina (2011) found that conservative women's organisations which were dedicatedly anti-feminist and opposed to female suffrage, 'paradoxically provided frameworks for political socialization' in their efforts to support the Catholic political agenda. Rinehart (1992, pp. 15–16) also suggests that women of the New Right, although dedicated to conservative gender roles, often breach these norms in order to speak out in their defence. Riesebrodt and Chong (1999) describe how women in Christian fundamentalist groups in the United States use their moral status gained through membership to shame and sanction their husbands into behaving properly. These views highlight the problems in viewing conservative movements as inherently and homogenously enforcing the submission of women and puts Islamist women into a much broader context of conservatism creating opportunities for female empowerment.

If Islamist discourse provides an alternative route towards gaining greater rights, which does not put women on a collision course with societal norms, it might be that some women who seek greater rights for women adopt this path rather than the western feminist path. This reaffirms the expectation that women are more likely to consider themselves religious but positions this as an active decision that holds the possibility of empowerment. Women might be more religious because they are making use of the opportunities and increased rights and status afforded them through demonstrating religiosity.

4.2 Gendered Beliefs and Political Preferences

It has been shown above that women are more religious than men, and that religiosity is an important feature of the Palestinian social context, in part, at least, because of the way it has been linked to nationalist discourse. It is also suggested that women support gender equality more than men, but

that pressure for gender equality has been dampened by the nationalist context (which prioritises the national struggle and discourages support for any movement which is potentially socially divisive). This section moves on to assess how these gender differences might impact support for the two major political groups in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

Fatah is a broadly nationalist party which does not officially subscribe to any ideological current. Fatah has tended to toe a much more secular line than Hamas. This does not mean it is strictly secular. Lybarger describes Fatah as having a 'soft secularism that integrates religion as part of a multi confessional identity' and emphasises that this has ebbed and flowed over the years (Lybarger 2007, p. 1). Fatah has appropriated 'some religious symbolism' in its publicity and campaigns, and polls show that people who pray frequently are 'as likely to support the secular nationalists of Fatah as they are to support Hamas' (Shikaki 1998, p. 32).

The middle-ground position of Fatah has meant that those without a strong Islamist or socialist stance have found Fatah the most representative party for them. Fathi told me: "Fatah had based its work on recruiting as many Palestinian people … and built its philosophy on the approach of inclusiveness for those Palestinians who have no political affiliation". Fatah is a party where you can find atheist communists, devout Muslims and those with no strong ideological position (Ayman; Fouad; Ghassan). Fatah member, Yousef explained why he chose this party:

> I am not really religious and not really open and liberal. [Fatah] respect Islam, they respect our culture, so they respect the one who pray[s], and they respect the one even who does not pray. So, I found that they are really flexible people. So that if I don't pray no one will say that he should leave us. If I should pray, I would be still welcome.
>
> *(Yousef)*

Jihan described Fatah to me as: "Fatah is more secular … you might be religious in Fatah, but you don't tell the other guy 'don't drink wine". Fathi told me: "sometimes you feel that they try to emphasise their secular attitude against Islamists, but sometimes they do the opposite". This ambivalence appeared again and again in interviews. Bassel said: "They are separating religion and politics, most of them do whatever they want. But the government and our politics, they are not related to our religion. But at the same time, they, or most of them, are Muslim".

Nor does Fatah have a clear position regarding feminism and support for gender equality. In their attempt at representing the middle ground, Fatah seem to have avoided taking a position on the 'women's question', as such Fatah tend to represent the status quo and to reproduce existing patriarchal constructs (Gluck 1995, p. 8; Abdulhadi 1998, pp. 654–655).

In recent years, the PA, which is made up mostly of Fatah, has been seen as reinforcing patriarchal norms and putting in place laws which discriminate

against women (Karmi 1996, p. 75; Abdo 1999, pp. 43–44; Jamal 2001, p. 266). Accordingly, the mainstream of Fatah cannot be associated with a strong pro-gender equality stance.

A mixed picture of Fatah appeared in the interviews. Some characterised it as a party which was male dominated (Mona) with men having more power than women and being members in greater numbers (Iyad). Iyad suggested that this is because they do not reach out to women in the same way that Hamas does. Maha characterised women in Fatah as being like "the first lady" and only joining because it is dominant, or because their boyfriend is Fatah, but "they don't know anything about the political". Nasrin, who had been a prominent member of Fatah, suggested there were fewer women because there is a problem with the culture of Fatah. This view emerged more fully from Yousef, a Fatah member from Gaza; he told me that women do not really play a big role although he would like to see them play a bigger role. He suggested the problem was from social pressure. Although, some girls are "really good in politics", "if [they] become … active … in a political organisation, maybe [they] will struggle to find a husband". He suggested that people might think "she is always busy because of these activities. How can she look after your sons or daughters? She cannot be a good wife because she is always sitting with other men." Further to this, he also suggested that men tended to avoid "talking with girls in meetings" because of the risk to their reputations. "I always try not to sit with girls because I don't want even the other people to blackmail me" (Yousef). The stigma from society and the obstacles to getting ahead within Fatah might prove too much for many aspiring female Fatah politicians or members.

On the other hand, some interviews suggested Fatah took a more proactive approach with women. Hussein and Karim both suggested that Mahmoud Abbas had worked to improve gender equality. Karim described how "The president previously agreed to rights for women and children", while Hussein emphasised how he had encouraged equal pay and employment for women. Rola suggested that there was a good system of female mentoring within Fatah. She said "In political life women participate inside the movement of Fatah. For example, I was following a woman in a higher position than me, and she was following someone, a woman, in a higher position than her in the party. So, there was a chain of female supervision … ". Nadia worked for Fatah "raising political awareness among women encouraging women to be part of the political party. Volunteering and encouraging them to join in the volunteer work." She suggested that Fatah tried to recruit women through "conferences, meetings, awareness-raising meetings, workshops".

This mixed picture suggests that there are no particular draws for women to support Fatah in terms of their women's rights agenda. Fatah does not position itself as a pro-women party in their policies, although there are some attempts at female inclusion and recruitment. Nor does Fatah appeal

to a particularly religious constituency. Fatah has remained open to a wide range of opinions but has not taken a strong position in relation to women's rights or women in general. Its structure may put more conservative women off participating because the meetings tend to be mixed gender. It is therefore unlikely that belief, either in terms of feminist belief or religious belief, would strongly account for political support for Fatah; these factors are therefore unlikely to account for the gender gap in support for Fatah.

There is a more obvious connection between the gender differences in religious belief and behaviour described above and the religious character of Hamas. Hamas has espoused an avowedly Islamist ideological stance and has used Islamic rhetoric to try to gain support. It uses Islam to inform and justify its political programme and it seeks to Islamise Palestinian, and particularly Gazan, society (Gunning 2007, p. 200; Hroub 2010, p. 172; Caridi 2012, p. 313). Hamas conflates nationalist and religious rhetoric, Islamising the nationalist discourse in the Occupied Territories and reframing the liberation of Palestine as a religious duty (Esposito 1984/1998, p. 229; Hroub 2010, pp. 171–174). That being said, Hamas also 'sees itself as a moderate Islamic party' (Caridi 2012, p. 311). Hamas leader Khaled Meshaal has emphasised how Palestine is a civilised, plural and open society (Caridi 2012, p. 313). Its ideological position is based in 'the reformist interpretation of the Muslim Brotherhood, which broke with the traditional reading of the Muslim faith', meaning it is 'very far from the Salafi literalist interpretation of Islam' (Caridi 2012, pp. 311–312). More recently, they have also avoided imposing Islamic precepts on the people of Gaza (Hroub 2010, pp. 171–174).

Hamas's religious identity has appealed to many Palestinians because it claims to be working according to God's laws. Suleiman explained the attraction of Hamas.

> With Hamas it is different from the other factions because over there, there is ideology, a religious ideology. It is not a sort of pure political program, it is religious–political program that you belong to it, not only to liberate Palestine but to go to heaven. It is your path to salvation.
>
> *(Suleiman)*

A senior female member of Hamas said: "What is Hamas? Hamas is religion … everyone who you see that loves religion, you will see them supportive of Hamas" (Ruwaida). Many interviewees described Hamas to me as being defined by religion (Lana; Maha; Mona; Nadia; Naimeh; Ruwaida; Samira; Tahani; Wafaa; Yasmin; Zainab; Fouad; Hussein; Jalal; Karim; Nidal; Ramy; Yousef). Interviewees ranged from impressed to sceptical: Azza, a Hamas supporter, said that she "found the values and good Islam in this party", Naimeh told me "They connect everything with religion … they connect everything with God" while Karim suggested "Both parties try to

recruit people. Fatah uses authority, government, media and money. Hamas uses religion".

Hamas clearly fits the role of a political party aligned with religious policies, and I have also shown that women are more religious than men. As described in Chapter 1, women support Hamas more than men. This all contributes weight to ***Hypothesis 2***, that the gender gap in political support for Hamas can explained by the difference in male and female levels of religiosity.

Many scholars and feminists see Hamas as hostile to women's interests and not as a possible source of women's empowerment. Ababneh found that Palestinian academics and women's rights practitioners saw female Islamists as 'tools in the hands of the male elite of Hamas who reproduced their own subordination' (Ababneh 2014, p. 36). This explains Shikaki's (1998, p. 32) finding that Islamist movements in Palestine have 'less support among feminists'. Some of the opposition to Hamas is due to accounts of it, or organisations affiliated with the Islamist movement, having coerced women to cover up. Scholars frequently cite the fact that Gazan women were beaten or had stones thrown at them for not wearing headscarves during the First Intifada (Hammami 1990; Abdo 1994, p. 165; Jamal 2001, p. 271; Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 189; Caridi 2012, pp. 91–92). Milton-Edwards and Farrell describe how 'bareheaded women were being stoned and abused in the street; their moral and national commitment was openly questioned' by groups of 'young men or boys with Hamas affiliations' (Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 189). Hammami explains how the hijab became 'a sign of women's political commitment, as women, to the intifada' and of 'respect for the martyrs' while also being construed as 'a form of cultural struggle, an assertion of national heritage' (Hammami 1990, p. 26). Jad (2011a, p. 187) points out that this veiling campaign was linked to fears of Shin Bet tactics used to gain collaborators by seducing women seen as having loose morals. Sayigh (2011, p. 94) describes Hamas's policy towards women since taking power, some of their measures include: 'imposing a "proper" dress code on women, separating unmarried men and women on the beach, banning women from riding motorcycles, requiring female lawyers to wear the hijab in court, and preventing male hairdressers from working in women's hair salons'; although, some of these measures have since been withdrawn in the face of opposition.

Whether Hamas have enforced an 'Islamic' moral code in Gaza was rejected by some interviewees (Tahani; Wafaa; Yasmin) and confirmed by others (Zahra; Zainab). Some scholars also question the extent of the role which Hamas played in the hijab campaign of the First Intifada (Hroub 2000, p. 237; Gunning 2007, p. 188), and the way in which feminist scholars have used Hammami's article to discredit all Islamist women (Ababneh 2014). Holt suggests that for many Palestinians the question of the headscarf is not a priority. She writes: 'everyone longs for liberation and, therefore, what one wears is of secondary importance' (Holt 1996, p. 76).

There was no consensus in my interviews as to whether Hamas was good or bad for women. Some feminists I spoke to suggested Hamas had a negative effect. For example, Jamila told me:

> Women are more restricted by Hamas now, they are more oppressed by Hamas … And they are fed up with all these restrictions on their mobility. They have to be veiled … there is daily violence, that is not only physical, it is emotional and psychological, you see, because women are targeted by Hamas, through the ethics, through the code of ethics. Because there are these ethical guards … who are in the street just monitoring women … the market for women now has become restricted too. They feel they are monitored all the time and I think that's the feeling is very miserable.
>
> *(Jamila)*

Nasrin, an expert interviewee, suggested that "In Gaza under Hamas there is a huge regression in women's rights." And that "at the moment Hamas are battling against women's NGOs, they are making them register again, splitting schools and universities into boys and girl's schools and segregating society". While Zahra, a young Gazan woman, said that there was no oppression of women when Hamas came to power, she then moderated that when I probed by saying:

> There were limitations on hairdressers, but just for a short time. For a short time, women were prevented from smoking shisha. And if there was a couple, a man and a woman on the beach they would ask to see their marriage certificate - but this was only for a limited time. This was not a problem affecting women. I don't feel my freedom of going out, of having to wear the hijab or being able to work is restricted by Hamas.
>
> *(Zahra)*

Other scholars and interviewees paint a more complex picture. Hamas is neither feminist nor regressive but it allows certain spaces for women and encourages their participation in ways that conform more with societal ideas of propriety.

Certainly, the Hamas activists I spoke to saw women's participation in Hamas as integral to its power and connected to its Islamic character. Kamal suggested that within Hamas's Islamic bloc "men and women … both have the same power". Other Hamas members suggested the same thing. Nidal, a Hamas PLC member, told me that "woman is half of the people so, if we put them only in homes, we lose fifty percent of our power. So … women must work with us … going to work, going everywhere, making demonstrations". Ruwaida explained: "Islam respects women, Hamas is implementing Islam, this means Hamas respects women. For example, Islam allows women to work, allows them to do political work, it gives them their inheritance, and to express their opinion, it respects her voice".

Hamas's policies towards women seem to embrace the rhetoric of Islam as empowering for women, while also maintaining several 'regressive' gender policies. It is 'contradictory', and the 'doors to women's equality [are] only partly open' (Jad 2011a, p. 176). Gunning (2007, p. 168) describes how, on the one hand, Hamas's position on inheritance and polygamy 'buttress existing inequalities', while on the other hand, its election manifesto and its female candidates have called for a reduction in gender inequalities, with reference to Islam. Abdulhadi (1998, p. 663) describes how the Islamist women she met criticised the imposition of the hijab, strongly opposed women's seclusion in the home and suggested that women learn to interpret Islamic writings themselves so as to be able to judge what is appropriate. Indeed Jad (2011a; 2018) shows how women within Hamas have been key in engaging with feminist and nationalist thought from outside the movement and pushing and reinterpreting the boundaries in Islam around women's roles. In fact, Hamas has appealed to what Jad terms 'the new Islamic woman' who she describes as 'highly educated, outspoken, *moltazemah [committed]* … professional and politically active' and who would wear the veil rather than traditional dress (Jad 2011a, p. 180; Jad 2018). The matching Islamic dress worn by the young women in the student parade shown in Figure 4.6 indicates that these women are united, pious and modern.

Hamas has been keen to articulate that 'Hamas does not oppress women', and to emphasise the increased participation of women in education, the labour force and the public sector (Sayigh 2011, p. 100). Indeed, since around

Figure 4.6 Women in a Hamas parade for student elections at Birzeit University, West Bank, 20th April 2015.

Source: Photograph by author.

1995 Hamas in Gaza has had a 'Women's Action Department', and in 2003 they formed an Islamic women's movement (Jad 2011a, pp. 176–178). Ben Shitrit (2016, p. 788) discusses how Hamas abided by a gender quota for the 2006 parliamentary election, but did so insisting that it was not capitulating to feminist demands but instead their decision to include women 'stemmed from an authentic commitment to Islamic principles'. Drawing on the work that women had done in the social sector and showing steadfastness against the occupation, Hamas promoted the idea that 'women were indeed capable of serving as elected representatives and that this was in fact a part of their Islamic tradition rather than a break from it' (Ben Shitrit 2016, p. 788). Gunning (2007, p. 168) quotes Hamas candidate Jamila al-Shanti, who stated "there are traditions here that say that a woman should take a secondary role-that she should be at the back, but that is not Islam. Hamas will scrap these traditions. You will find women going out and participating". Gunning (2007, pp. 169–172) also notes the increased prominence of women in Hamas in the run up to the 2006 election and credits their encouragement of women's participation with increasing its levels of support. Although, clearly this was also related to the gender quota as mentioned above (Ben Shitrit 2016). However, the incorporation of women in politics within Hamas, still does mean not showing their faces on election posters and the segregation of political meetings (Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 201).

Within Hamas, while men dominate the very top levels and in the militant wing, there is a parallel women's structure in the organisation which allows them a prominent role (Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 182; Jad 2011b, pp. 179–180). The women's structure within Hamas is mostly separate from the male structure; "it is like a different political party" (Yousef; Nidal). This reaches to the local level, where for example in the administrative committees for each region in Gaza there was one head of the committee for men, and another for women (Jad 2011a, p. 181). Describing the Islamic bloc – the Hamas student organisation – at Birzeit University, Ababneh (2014, p. 46) explains how it has 'two equal bodies, one for women and one for men' and how these different groups elect their leaders leading to a parallel and gender balanced leadership. The 'rationale behind having these two structures was the belief that gender mixing was *haram* (religiously prohibited)'. This strategy means that they have tended to have a larger proportion of female representatives on the student council than Fatah (Ababneh 2014, p. 47). Ababneh (2014, pp. 47–48) suggests that this example questions 'the belief that gender segregation is necessarily disempowering for women' and shows how 'Islamist thinking in general, and the belief in segregation more specifically, does not necessarily lead to depriving women of certain freedoms'. When women have reached the highest levels of Hamas, they have found wearing the veil works to help them by providing the validation required to be working late hours and at times alongside men (Jad 2011a, p. 182).

Because of the parallel gender structure within Hamas, many of those I spoke to felt that women were given a bigger voice and role within the

organisation than in other political parties (Maha; Mona; Kamal). Maha said "girls in Hamas have a huge role, but it is not the same role as men. Men [in] Hamas are in the field, you know they are out there. Girls do all the other things, they organise things they do things, they help people, they make a family out of it". Mona told me "these girls have a higher level or position inside this group of people who belong to Hamas". Further Maha told me: "I think for a religious woman who still wants to maintain her religion as part of their political activism then yes they would choose that because they have a lot of power, and at the same time they would have a good platform and ideology". Being part of an Islamist nationalist organisation can provide rewards; several of those I interviewed explained that it was easier to be politically active within Hamas without challenging social norms. Karim told me: "Here in eastern communities, especially in lower status places, women who are active in religious movements are seen as good and holy". Mona said:

> [As] a woman I would think that being part of Hamas, which is more conservative, would be better for me … It would give me this look of [a] polite, quiet, religious person. And my family agrees with it because I would not have to go out a lot, I would be doing nothing wrong because they are religious.
>
> *(Mona)*

Hamas therefore might provide women with an organisation that values them and their work and provides them with roles that do not confront social expectations.

As emphasised above, Hamas is well known for its charitable sector. The appeal of an Islamist ideology or religious identity might be stronger when you see examples in your community of religious individuals helping people. Whether this might cause women to be more religious than men is questionable, but it does strengthen the connection between women and exposure to and admiration of Islamist ideas and discourse (Milton-Edwards and Farrell 2010, p. 205). These organisations provide welfare for women and are also run by women (Ben Shitrit 2016; Ruwaida; Nidal). Ruwaida, a female Hamas PLC member told me:

> There are several institutions … [for] improving the women's situations and creating job opportunities for women, especially for those that are poor. For example, they would concentrate on Palestinian heritage at the same time, this would be for the benefit of women, like, for example, embroidery, Palestinian embroidery. Poor women would do embroidery and get an income. Women who are running these organisations would organise exhibitions and sell the products, for example there were organisations interested in cultural things for women and encouraging women to read.
>
> *(Ruwaida)*

The way Hamas addresses women's needs could be considered more appropriate to the context in which they are living, compared to the seemingly irrelevant feminist campaigns of some NGOs. Ben Shitrit (2016, p. 787) emphasises that many of the women candidates put forward for the 2006 parliamentary election worked in Hamas' social services and charitable organizations and as such had 'vast experience and outreach'.

Women form a large part of Hamas's support base, as evidenced by the polls. This is acknowledged by Hamas themselves with Hamed Bitawi asserting "Hamas is now made up of more women than men" (in Caridi 2012, p. 90). But they also see women as important agents in their agendas for Islamising society and liberating Palestine. Whether designed for the recruitment of women or not, Hamas has a television channel and a radio channel, both called 'Al-Aqsa' launched in 2006 and 2003 respectively. Programmes on the channel 'draw on the Islamic past as having relevance to the present' and 'depict Hamas as the true guardians of religion' while also often giving tips on how to raise children as good Muslims (Alshaer 2012, p. 243).

Certainly, Islamist organisations such as Hamas have a mixed record regarding women. They can enhance women's positions and prominence as long as they conform to certain roles deemed appropriate for them 'as women', while excluding them from the top levels of the leadership and military wing (see Jamal 2001; Ababneh 2014; Ben Shitrit 2016). Nevertheless, Hamas has provided women with spaces to participate in politics and the public sphere in ways that do not entail confronting social norms, but rather enhances their social status. Hamas, or at least certain women within Hamas, has begun increasingly to use the rhetoric of Islam as being progressive and as giving women their rights, while rejecting 'traditional' restraints upon women. As such they may appeal to women more than men not just for their religious rhetoric, but for the way they combine religious and nationalist rhetoric with space for women's advancement – all without risking social stigmatisation. This helps us to understand how Hamas' appeal for women may extend beyond a simple equation between religion and support but also encompasses nationalist sentiments and women's desire for a better status as women.

4.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how gendered beliefs in the Palestinian Territories might explain the gender gap in political support. It has shown that women are more religious than men and suggests this might be the cause of the gender gap in political support for Hamas. The hypothesis that came out of this chapter is as follows:

> ***Hypothesis 2: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female levels of religiosity.***

Suggestions emerged as to why this might be the case. Some interviewees suggested that women are more likely to stay at home, that they are not accepted in the same way as men in certain public spaces and in certain jobs. Additionally, they suggested that there is greater pressure on women to behave morally, with young women for example facing greater social stigma than men if they are seen to be out with members of the opposite sex, drinking or smoking. These two pressures may have meant that religion becomes more accessible, through their greater time for reflection, and exposure to Islamic media at home, and more appealing as a way of increasing social standing.

Further, an exploration of the nationalist context in the Palestinian Territories pointed out that any social pressures on women to show piety and conform to modest and conventional modes of behaviour would be intensified within the nationalist context. Conservative elements in Palestinian society have been reinforced both by the mainstream nationalist organisations such as Fatah, but also by Islamist nationalist discourse, both of which tend to emphasise and reinforce differential gender roles in Palestine. According to the conservative-nationalist discourse, women are obliged to conform to certain modes of acceptable behaviour so as not to undermine either social unity or the national project. This means that, for the most part, women are expected to look after the domestic sphere, wear clothes and adopt behaviour deemed appropriately 'modest'. The nationalist context of Palestinian society has placed greater meaning on certain forms of, usually traditional and moral, behaviour and maligned those who disrupt or divide society. This nationalist context has allowed women to perceive their traditional and moral behaviours as contributing to the national struggle. Breaking with social conventions was seen to be not only invoking questions about a woman's personal reputation, but also about their commitment to the national cause. This exploration of nationalism provides a further, deeper insight into why women might be more religious than men in the Palestinian Territories.

This chapter also has shown that women tend to be more supportive of gender equality than men in the Palestinian Territories, yet they were less supportive than men of the political groups which most prominently advocate gender equality i.e. the leftists. Indeed, the women who did associate themselves with the leftists were seen as sexualised convention breakers and were highly stigmatised.

To understand this, there are explanations again within the nationalist discourse, where seeking women's or individual rights was deemed as a distraction and as potentially divisive at a time when Palestinian unity should be the priority. While the earlier Palestinian nationalist movements, with closer ties to international socialism and ideals of equality, had espoused and promoted ideas of gender equality, over time, as these movements fractured and lost prominence relative to the more mainstream Fatah and to Islamist movements like Hamas, feminist ideals have become decoupled

from and in most cases are seen to be openly in conflict with Palestinian nationalism. Overt feminism is often seen as socially disruptive and a distraction from the real goal of national liberation. Western-style feminism is seen as too greatly focused on sexual behaviour and individualism, both of which do not fit with the nationalist focus on collective action, community coherence and the maintenance of a moral community which preserves Palestinian culture. This layers with the increased pressure for conformity with social conventions, making the adoption of outright feminist views particularly difficult in this context.

This then left a puzzle as to how or whether the gender gap in beliefs about gender equality does find any outlet in terms of political support. Therefore, while many women I spoke to do favour greater women's rights, they would rarely see these are more important than the national struggle and would very rarely identify as feminists.

Many of the interviewees spoke about Islam in terms of providing women with 'all their rights'. An Islamic women's rights discourse is a way of bringing pressures for social conformity, nationalist unity, and the desire to strive for an improved situation for women together. Here again, some women in Palestinian society, like many women in the wider Middle East region, have been able to critique 'backwards' traditions and feel empowered to get involved in social work and politics by employing Islamic discourses and joining Islamist movements. Further, the idea has emerged that Islam holds the potential for enabling greater female empowerment while not presenting an overt threat to the social fabric.

Fatah, particularly since they set up the Palestinian Authority, has largely served to reinforce traditional patriarchal structures and aimed not to distort the status quo. They have neither adopted explicitly religious or feminist stances and have not made any particular effort to engage with women.

Hamas has taken a more active role and has 'combined Islamic social-instructional discourse with the discourse of nationalist resistance', meaning that for many people it seems that 'commitment to an Islamic code of conduct served the objectives of resistance and liberation' (Hroub 2000, p. 239). By bestowing nationalist meaning to religious behaviour, Hamas has given additional weight to differential gender roles and increased the burden of modesty and piety upon women. Yet at the same time, through the separate structures for women and the recruitment of women into Hamas it has enabled women to express themselves, take an active role in the nationalist project while also conforming to behavioural norms. The Islamic rights discourse, where Islam is portrayed as giving women 'their rights' unlike backwards Palestinian traditions, was expressed by women supporters of Hamas. This rhetoric is likely to attract women further towards religion and Hamas. The spaces Hamas has created for women have allowed these ideas to flourish and be partially adopted into the more mainstream Hamas rhetoric. Jad (2011a; 2018) points to the ways in which women within Hamas

have been able to shape debate and policy through engaging in this Islamic rights discourse.

The role of nationalist and Islamist discourse presents a different account of why women might be more religious than men and moves away from a flat portrayal of their political preference as being a passive expression of traditional values. The rhetoric surrounding Islam as giving women their rights and being a modern alternative to the 'backwards Palestinian traditions' shows the flaws in assuming that secularisation goes hand in hand with modernisation (Gunning 2007, p. 11).

This chapter proposes alternative ways of understanding how ideologies might impact women's political support. It shows that even in societies with stark gender inequality, feminism can fail to make a big political impact. This has implications for those seeking to promote and support gender equality. In a nationalist political context, people will tend to prioritise the unity of the group over other interests. The findings above add weight to Ababneh's assertion that feminists in the Palestinian Territories should not simply exclude Hamas women on principle, but need to engage with women within this movement, many of whom are pursuing female empowerment, but within an Islamic context.

While the political context of the Occupied Palestinian Territories is perhaps more imbued with nationalist discourse than other places, in the post-colonial world, nationalist movements often promote cultural or religious forms of nationalism that have similar effects. Understanding the complexities of the way nationalist discourse is framed can help comprehension of women's apparently conservative behaviour in post-colonial or other nationalist contexts.

Further, women's support of conservative, religious or right-wing movements is often misunderstood or deliberately maligned as 'false consciousness' (Campbell and Childs 2015, p. 628). This is particularly true of Islamist movements. While there have, since 2001, been significant attempts to increase engagement and understanding of Islamist organisations among the academic community, there is still a long way to go. Understanding why women support nationalist or Islamic movements support them is important if feminism does indeed seek to speak 'for women'.

As a final note, the above analysis might help to add nuance to blunt portrayals of religious - and particular Islamist – organisations as bad for women. Participating in these organisations certainly is an important way for women to engage in the public sphere, and the more women that enter these organisations and are able to alter the discourse from within may mean the more they accommodate and enhance women's political positions.

5 Political Violence and Gender

Occupation, Resistance, and Oppression

Understanding the violent context of the Palestinian Territories, through the Israeli occupation, political oppression and resistance towards this occupation, is important for understanding political support. As the use of violence, and conflict more generally, tend to be highly gendered, with men much more strongly associated with active participation than women, these are particularly important issues to address when considering explanations for a gender gap in political support.

In the Palestinian context, the question of whether armed resistance or negotiations is a better tactic in the conflict with Israel is of high political salience, but also the context of the occupation and internal authoritarianism means there may be severe repercussions for those who political support certain organisations, such as Hamas. Therefore, if there are gender differences in support for either tactic, or in the way men or women are targeted by occupying forces, then this may account for gender differences in support for the different political parties. Research in the West shows that women are less likely than men to support policies associated with the use of force (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Conover 1988; Howell and Day 2000; Kaufmann 2002; Norris 2003; Norrander and Wilcox 2008; Norrander 2008). Further, scholars also suggests that men tend to be targeted more than women by authoritarian governments and occupying forces (Segal 2008; Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009; Khalili 2010; Sjoberg 2014). This chapter looks first at the questions surrounding the issues of resistance and the peace process in the Palestinian Territories, then it looks at the role of political oppression, trying to determine whether or how political violence may have a gendered impact on political support.

5.1 Resistance, Negotiations, and Political Support

Conflict and occupation have plagued the Palestinian Territories for over a century, and Palestinians have been using violent methods to resist the occupation for decades. Nationalist discourse dominates the political sphere, and how to end the occupation, liberate Palestine and/or establish a Palestinian state is the most important political question. In the context of

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-5

Figure 5.1 A poster for Hamas's Islamic Bloc displayed for the student elections at Birzeit University, 20th April 2015.

Source: Photograph by author.

the national struggle, the use of both violent and non-violent methods for achieving these aims are seen as legitimate. There is a long history of armed resistance, ranging from guerrilla warfare to suicide bombing, and 'resistance to occupation and sacrificing for that struggle are highly praised and everywhere commemorated in Palestine' (Allen 2002a, p. 34). Participants and victims of the national struggle are glorified to the extent that 'people who have died because of Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza' are called martyrs and have streets, hospitals and babies named after them (Allen 2002a, p. 34).

Most Palestinians, consistent with international law, see 'Israeli soldiers as entirely legitimate targets' (Allen 2002a, p. 36). As Baconi (2018, p. x) puts it, many see 'support of the rifle … [as] not only comprehensible and dignified, but necessary … the only way to secure Palestinian rights against a murderous and unrelenting occupation'. Fervent Palestinian support of the resistance does not, however, preclude there being support for non-violent methods and peace negotiations in the Palestinian Territories. Richter-Devroe (2008, p. 45) points out that far from being only 'violent radicalism', Palestinian resistance includes a wide range of activities. She writes:

> Every single day Palestinians engage in everyday forms of resistance, such as resisting closures, roadblocks, curfews, invasions, land-grabs, etc., in order to carry on with their daily life. They also take part in more formally organized nonviolent direct action, resisting the occupation through demonstrations, sit-ins, or protests. Furthermore academic boycott, awareness-raising campaigns, speaking tours and festivals, or projects to celebrate Palestinian history and culture, these are all acts of resistance - of resisting the occupation and resisting the establishment of facts on the ground as normal and irreversible.
>
> *(Richter-Devroe 2008, pp. 45–46).*

The peace process, when seen to be progressing, was also very popular in Palestine. In the 1990s, there was majority support for the peace process, due to exhaustion with the conflict and the hope that the peace process would lead to political and economic gains (Pearlman 2011, pp. 126–127). Just as political parties have changed their positions and methods, public opinion has also shifted over time. Other factors such as class (see El Kurd 2019) and gender are likely to impact support for protests and mobilisation.

Support for negotiations or resistance is seen by many as the main difference between Fatah and Hamas. For the last few decades, Fatah and Hamas have (on the whole) espoused divergent methods for trying to end the Israeli occupation. Fatah has adopted a non-violent approach which favours negotiations, while Hamas has continued to affiliate itself with violent resistance (Shikaki 1998, p. 29). However, this characterisation of these organisations positions is overly simplistic. It overlooks important historical changes in position and the disparity between the rhetoric and the reality of the methods being pursued.

At its founding, Fatah insisted upon 'the primacy of armed struggle as the sole means of liberating Palestine' (Sayigh 1997, p. 89). Some commentators suggest that Yasser Arafat was a particular advocate of attacks on Israeli civilians as a way to undermine immigration to Israel, divert their security forces and to destroy the Israeli economy (Rubin and Rubin 2003, p. 41).

The first sign of a change came in November 1988 when the Palestine National Council (dominated by Fatah) renounced all forms of terrorism (although, they continued to assert the legitimacy of armed struggle) (Sayigh 1997, p. 547). Then, in the early 1990s with the signing of the Oslo Accords, the foundation of the Palestinian Authority and the peace process, Fatah's tactics switched to seeking a Palestinian state through negotiations with Israel. Oslo signalled a key turning point, when the Palestinian nationalist movement in its broadest conception became divided between those who supported and those who opposed the Oslo Accords and the peace process. On the 'pro-peace' side were Fatah, the People's party (PPP) and FIDA, while on the opposition side, disagreeing fundamentally with the terms of the Oslo Accords, were the PFLP, DFLP, Hamas, and Islamic Jihad (Stork and Doumani 1994, p. 3).

However, during the Second Intifada, Fatah once again carried out violent attacks on Israel, including suicide bombings against Israeli civilians. Brown and Hamzawy describe how, at this time, the divisions between parties lifted and 'Suddenly "resistance" was the common denominator for all Palestinian groups' (Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 167). During the Second Intifada, Fatah played a double game with the leadership calling for negotiations, while Fatah militias carried out attacks sometimes with and sometimes without the blessing of the leadership (Baylouny 2009). After the Second Intifada, Fatah returned to its position as the advocates of the peace processes. Yet, they never fully gave up on the rhetoric and symbolism of armed resistance, which still plays an important role in the imagery and speeches of many branches of Fatah.

A more recent, but less popular, approach adopted by Fatah since the formation of the PA, is their attempt to portray 'good governance' as a form of resistance (Khan 2004; Blecher 2009, p. 69; Tartir 2015), by both encouraging Palestinians to carry on living in the West Bank, but also as a way of proving to the international community that they are competent and able to maintain control and stability therefore 'earning sovereignty through good behavior' (Blecher 2009, p. 70). Attempts at boosting the Palestinian economy can be seen as examples of this (Khan 2004; Tartir 2015).

Hamas, unlike Fatah, have never disavowed the use of force or violent resistance to achieve their goals, as part of their opposition to the occupation and the peace process (Gunning 2007, p. 195; Bröning 2013, p. 12). It is worth pointing out that Hamas has not been in a continual state of attack against Israel but has kept several ceasefires (Gunning 2007, p. 52, 221; Sayigh 2011, p. 13; Caridi 2012, pp. 196–197; Bröning 2013, p. 19, 64; Baconi 2018). Indeed, Hamas's position with regard to the long-term solution to the conflict, has been 'ambiguous' (Gunning 2007, p. 195). Since 2005, they have been seen to be gradually turning away from violent resistance, as signalled by their participation in the 2006 elections (Gunning 2007, pp. 195–196; Baconi 2018, pp. 238–239; Dana 2019, p. 49). They have also shown willingness for compromise and have tried to demonstrate its 'readiness to accept a two-state solution' to the conflict to western powers (Gunning 2007, pp. 195–196; Sayigh 2011, p. 13; Jamal 2012, p. 195). Hroub (2010, p. 174) reveals the extent to which Hamas's attitude changed: 'Two years after assuming power, Hamas went so far as to accuse those groups and factions that kept launching rockets against Israeli towns after the June 2008 ceasefire of damaging the national Palestinian interest and serving the Israeli occupation'.

The choice of methods is a subject of much academic discussion and has variously been attributed to the ideological positions of different groups, the level of internal cohesion (Pearlman 2011), or by the opportunities and restrictions presented by the political context (Allen 2002b, p. 42). Hamas's critique of the peace process has been rooted in its ideological stance but has also been justified as the most effective method of gaining concessions

from Israel, and can be used as a form of leverage against them (Gunning 2007, p. 199, 203; Pearlman 2011, p. 136).

Furthermore, Hamas's stance might be a political manoeuvre. Gunning suggests that the ability to inflict violence on Israel is 'an important source of authority' for Hamas and has helped it to improve its position vis-a-vis Fatah. Undermining the peace process was seen as 'a sure way to weaken Fatah' who had 'staked its political future on the Oslo agreement' (Gunning 2007, p. 46; Pearlman 2011, p. 136). The resistance plays a significant role in its discourse and symbolism (Gunning 2007, p. 139, 175). However Baconi (2018, p. 97) suggests that support of armed struggle 'did not feature prominently in its electoral platform or constitute the majority of its votes'.

A further point of confusion when trying to pin down Hamas's position is the relationship between Hamas's military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, and the rest of the organisation. Some scholars suggest that it has a certain degree of independence, and that it is controlled and funded by the external leadership (Gunning 2007, p. 40; Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 165). Others argue that there is no 'separation between its military and its political wing' and that the same authority 'makes the principal decisions on terror operations as well as on political, social, and other policies' (Herzog 2006, p. 85). The use of violence has reputedly been one of the areas of 'tension' between the internal and external leadership of Hamas, with external leaders being more militant (Gunning 2007, p. 40; Pearlman 2011, p. 138).

The changes over time and the divergence in attitudes between Fatah and Hamas have impacted how they are viewed by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Popular opinion tends to back the use of methods that are deemed to be effective.

Arafat's peace process gained the people's support as long as he could 'plausibly hold out the prospect of an end to the Israeli occupation' (Stork and Doumani 1994, p. 4; Shikaki 1998). While the peace process was seen as the best chance at ending the conflict and gaining an independent Palestinian state, attacks were unpopular and were seen as undermining the broader process (Shikaki 1998, p. 36). Shikaki, who runs one of the foremost polling organisations in the Occupied Territories, writes:

> As the peace process progressed, Palestinian support for violence against Israeli targets declined. Opposition to terrorism depends on diplomatic movement, national reconstruction, and Arafat's leadership. Support for attacks against Israelis has dropped from 57 percent in November 1994, to 46 percent in February 1995, to 33 percent a month later, and to 31 percent in March 1996 - all dates of major suicide bombings by members of Hamas or Islamic Jihad.
>
> *(Shikaki 1998, p. 35)*

However, support for the peace process then started to wane. First came frustration as Israel closed off the West Bank and Gaza in response to

Palestinian attacks, leading to increased support for the use of violence (Shikaki 1998, p. 35). Gradually, the whole Oslo process became 'thoroughly discredited', as no progress was made towards a 'credible two-state solution', while Israeli settlement building and land confiscations proceeded apace, and the promised prosperity foundered (Gunning 2007, p. 48). In the midst of this came the Second Intifada, when support for the use of force significantly increased (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 32).

During the Second Intifada, those who opposed suicide bombings were often seen as being self-interested or trying to appeal to western donors and many peace NGOs were seen as trying to promote 'Western, defeatist attitudes harmful to the Palestinian cause' (Allen 2002b, p. 40). Political factions were aware of the strength of the appeal of the resistance at this time and often vied over claiming the dead as members of their organisations (Allen 2002a, p. 34).

Even after the Second Intifada, disillusionment with the peace process increased with the Israeli assaults on Gaza showing Palestinians how powerless the Abbas government is to protect them (Blecher 2009, p. 70).

Many Palestinians feel that peace negotiations have not improved their position; whereas they see Hamas's violence against Israel as having been more effective in eliciting concessions from the Israelis. Events such as the Israeli 'retreat' from Gaza in 2005, and the prisoner exchange when Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was freed in return for several hundred Palestinian prisoners being released from Israeli jails, have played 'to the benefit of Hamas', because they can be seen as evidence that resistance is more effective than negotiations (Gunning 2007, p. 52; Hollis 2010, p. 12). Esposito (1984/1998 p. 230) suggests that Fatah and Hamas are so strongly identified with their divergent positions on resistance and negotiations that Hamas's popularity is 'contingent on the progress of the peace process' with their popularity soaring when 'relations between Israel and the Palestinians have deteriorated'. This has also affected how Fatah are seen. Jamal writes:

> For many Palestinians, the peace process revolved around Israel's security concerns, and US ambitions in the region, paying little attention to the persistence of Israel's military occupation. The Fateh leadership's willingness to accommodate Israeli security demands, with little in return, simply delegitimised the organisation in the eyes of the Palestinian people.
> *(Jamal 2013, pp. 283–284)*

Some of those I spoke to continue to support Fatah's peace process (Basima; Hussein; Karim; Majed; Tarek). Hussein firmly supported the president and his dedication to peace. He called Abbas a "peace man" who only wants Palestinians to live in safety. Suleiman echoed the same sentiment. Fatah has maintained support with people who see their approach as pragmatic and realistic. Karim said: "Fatah don't see the world in black and white and [they] understand that you have to sacrifice something to gain something

else. They are pragmatic in politics". Likewise, Majed said "Fatah is the logical party. If you look at it logically Fatah do what they have to do". Basima told me that "[Fatah] want to have a Palestinian state. They believe in a two-state solution. They are talking in reality, not like Hamas who are imagining things". These views were not widespread. Often those who held them were either long term employees of the PA security services or lived in rural areas dominated by Fatah.

I found other Palestinians to be despondent when talking about Fatah's peace process (Amjad; Dawood; Hassan; Nidal; Yousef). Amjad told me: "Fatah has the peace agenda which has no results". Dawood said: "The settlements are increasing, and the occupation is still here. Negotiations are going nowhere, so Fatah cadres are not satisfied, and Fatah is losing members". Hassan reflected the same sentiment: "The failure of the peace process is the reason for the decrease in support for Fatah". Nidal, a Hamas PLC Member in Ramallah, and Yousef, a Fatah member from Gaza, tried to explain to me why peace did not seem to make sense anymore:

> the Fatah peace programme has failed. They have been negotiating for more than 25 years with no results. We have the wall which has separated East Jerusalem from the West Bank and they have cut it [off from] all the cities … we have now more than a hundred thousand settlers who are living in the West Bank, so what results do we have from the Oslo Accords? They are negative. They are eating our land. So now if you look on a map and you look at the West Bank, you will see that it is impossible to have a two-state solution because they are spreading everywhere in the West Bank, everywhere.
>
> *(Nidal)*

> Abu Mazen, he believes just in peace. And you know the resistance is something the people wanted … They need somebody to defend them. They need somebody to protect them. We are talking about settlers burning children alive, attacking the civilians and houses while our president is standing all the time and saying: 'I just believe in peace. We have just to work to reach a peaceful agreement.' While the other side … the [Israeli] defence minister. He is saying: 'We should destroy … these cities and kill Palestinians'.
>
> *(Yousef)*

Fathi, a Fatah politician, described the peace process and the growing disillusionment that the people have with it. In doing so, he blames Israel rather than Fatah for the failure of the peace process. He said:

> [The people] have seen nothing over 20 years, that Arafat's dream was nothing, that Israel has consolidated its grip on geography with the construction of more and more settlements and then creating the environment that was conducive to the erection of the wall. The stagnation led to the

> election of Hamas … Israel has turned the peace process into a process that yields no results whatsoever. Palestine has been turned into a Swiss cheese-like country where we win the holes and Israel wins the cheese.
>
> *(Fathi).*

Hamas has gained support as the 'faction of choice for those opposed to the peace-process', being much more effective than the waning 'leftists' after the collapse of the Soviet Union. They have become popular even with those who 'did not wholly subscribe to the Brotherhood's ideological programme' (Gunning 2007, pp. 39–40). As Hamas became more and more prominent in the violence of the Second Intifada, and the leadership became targeted by Israel for assassination, they gained popular appeal leading to 'an increase in volunteers and political support' (Gunning 2007, p. 50). This view could be reflected in the view expressed by Lina, a young atheist woman:

> Hamas is not the attraction. The attraction is Al-Qassam, the military faction of Hamas. This is the attraction. Everyone wants resistance. They are resisting, they are doing something. So, of course, I would be attracted to them. Everyone [else] is compromising, they're not.
>
> *(Lina)*

A number of those I spoke to said that they like Hamas because of their role in the resistance (even if they might not support them overall for other reasons) (Azza; Lana; Lina; Maha; Samira). Most interviewees couched their support for the resistance to me in terms of fairness, international law, self-defence or pragmatism. Hamas activists I spoke to said: "The land will not come back to its people unless we fight or unless we use power and resistance. We believe in peace, but with a state like Israel we can't see this as something that could be successful" (Kamal). And: "All the international rules gave legitimacy to the resistance … People feel there is no escape from the Israeli occupation except with Hamas. It is the one that raises the flag of the resistance" (Ruwaida). Habib said: "When they withdrew from Gaza, 2005, without consulting the Palestinian Authority, it was seen as a victory for Hamas because they seemed to cause the withdrawal. So, the military approach to the conflict was better than the peace approach". Abdel told me:

> Let Fatah do the negotiation and let Hamas do the resistance … we say the negotiation side you need a power, you can let Hamas be that power and you can do negotiation and now the world starts to respect you, because … your base is strong. You are expressing something strong. You are saying 'No! This our right! I'm not going to the negotiation process without a result. You have to give me a deadline. You have to give me this. We want these lands. We want this.'
>
> *(Abdel)*

Ibrahim explained to me why he supported the resistance. He said:

> The usual argument is that Hamas should stop violence, so they can sit down and talk. Well, the West Bank is doing [that] and what they are getting is more settlements and it hasn't benefitted us at all. Actually, it just made it worse. So, this is where the rhetoric of why diplomacy isn't working out, why we should be ditching it, is coming from. I mean it's coming out from a reason, it's not just us liking to be getting violent … It's just a cumulative process, where we got to a point where we see that by being peaceful we are being more marginalised.
>
> *(Ibrahim)*

A few interviewees opposed Hamas because of their resistance methods. Basima told me, "what Hamas is doing it is not good for the Palestinian people". Ayman was upset because Hamas "are not thinking of the people who are dying". Fathi said: "Hamas was not able to liberate an inch of Palestine despite all the rhetoric and the three wars we witnessed".

During time of war, such as the 2014 conflict that was taking place during my first field trip, support for Hamas and the resistance reached a high point (Blecher 2009, pp. 64–65). An activist with the Islamic bloc at Birzeit University explained that Hamas's role in the war had been an important factor in getting them to win the student council (Kamal). Dawood said: "with the current situation, with the recent news from Gaza, of course people tend to support the resistance". Shadia told me: "during the war on Gaza I supported Hamas strongly, because it was self-defence". Farida, who I spoke to during the war, explained her thinking:

> I support resistance. Because right now I am with the resistance 100 percent, because I believe that what Israel is doing in Gaza is a war crime because they are killing innocent people. But what is the resistance doing? They are killing soldiers who are killing innocent people. They don't mean no harm for innocent people … I hate when people kill each other. It is not right. It cannot be this way; we cannot live this life. But I am with the resistance because they need to do something to survive to live through this life.
>
> *(Farida)*

Many of those I spoke to said that Hamas's behaviour during the 2014 war made a favourable impression on them (Shadia; Faisal; Ibrahim; Louay). "They were very good in the last war, they strengthened the Palestinian people, particularly how they freed the Palestinian prisoners in exchange for kidnapped Israeli soldiers" (Louay).

Even those who are loyal to Fatah in general felt some sympathy – or even support – for Hamas at this time. The reasons for those who oppose the use

of violence in general supporting Hamas during the war were explained very well by Ibrahim, who told me:

> even me … I am kind of supporting of Hamas in terms of resistance I'm personally against killing innocent civilians. But … in the … 2014 war, I mean Hamas killed three civilians and 62 soldiers and, according to the UN, 70 to 80 percent of those the other side killed were civilians and the rest were militants. Even in that sense it seems that Hamas is doing more of a fair war … so I am kind of with Hamas in the resistance part, but I am totally against them in the political arena … this is why Palestinian society shifted towards Hamas because they found the one that is defending them; that is standing for them: something that they haven't seen for a long, long, long time.
>
> *(Ibrahim)*

Some interviewees – particularly those in Gaza – having supported Hamas through the war, lost their support for Hamas after the war, when life continued, more difficult than ever, in its aftermath (Zainab; Habib; Hassan; Wahid). Pollster, Habib, told me: "During the wars the popularity of Hamas actually increased, but then a couple of months after the war, the popularity decreases again because people will see how the war affected them and made the situation much worse". Wahid, who works in polling in Gaza, told me:

> After the last assault on Gaza, support for Hamas was actually raised because they were able to overcome the last assault. We did a poll on the last day of the wars, or the last two days of the war, and the results were very high for Hamas … it was an immediate reaction to the assault on Gaza, and it was more of an emotional thing. After a small period of time people realised the destruction that happened in Gaza and how hard the situation was and so that is why that support began diminishing.
>
> *(Wahid)*

Zainab, who was also in Gaza during the war, told me how she went from elation and support for Hamas during the war, to disappointment with them in its immediate aftermath. She said:

> Right after the war people were extremely disappointed with Hamas because they accepted the terms that they could have accepted on the eighth day of the war and saved so many lives and so much destruction and so on.
>
> *(Zainab)*

These views signal a disenchantment with the resistance that might be specific to those in Gaza who have experienced so much suffering that even

a compromise peace seems better than continuing the struggle. Wahid told me:

> People start to question the issue of the resistance. What does resistance mean and why we need to suffer this and why we need to be having wars and why? Why? Why? People to start to [question] because they don't see the [benefits].
>
> *(Wahid)*

Within the Palestinian population, people support both resistance and negotiations. They can provide justifications rooted in pragmatism for both methods. The question of resistance or negotiations remains unresolved with both methods seemingly failing to produce a solution. As the Israeli occupation persists, the question of how to gain a favourable resolution remains vital.

Hamas and Fatah are largely seen to support rival methods, as such, support for one method or another is likely to be a large determinant of political support. The literature above and the interviews show that public opinion and attitudes towards support for the peace process and the resistance, and so peaceful or violent methods, tend to be heavily influenced by the immediate political context.

It is clear that, despite the broad changes over time, Palestinians tend to see negotiations or resistance as the main difference between Fatah and Hamas. Dena told me: "Fatah – Hamas, actually there is a difference. As you can see, Hamas believe in resistance for getting back Palestine. But [for] Fatah negotiations are the way to get back Palestine. And I think it is a big difference between them". Fatah are still characterised as, for the most part, the party supporting negotiations and the peace process. This was clear in my interviews (Lana; Amjad; Hussein; Karim; Majed; Nidal; Tarek; Yousef). Interviewees described the "Fatah peace programme" (Nidal) and how "Fatah has the peace agenda" (Amjad) and how "Abu Mazen … believes just in peace" (Yousef). Hamas position themselves, particularly to the Palestinian populace, as the resistance party (as can be seen in Figure 5.1). Gunning (2007, pp. 175–6) describes how, in the lead up to the 2006 election as well as in student election campaigns, they often refer to violence including highlighting their role in the resistance, posters of 'martyrs' including suicide bombers and in one university election even blowing up a model of a bus. They are also broadly seen by interviewees as a resistance organisation (Hanan; Iman; Lina; Naimeh; Rawda; Samira; Suhad; Zahra; Zainab; Faisal; Fouad; Ibrahim; Kamal; Louay; Mousa; Nidal; Tarek). I was told "when I look at Hamas as a political movement I see the resistance" (Jamila); "they are fighters" (Iman). Although, there was some nuance to these views, with most interviewees seeing this as positive, there were some who told me that Hamas just "want to kill" (Tahani; Tarek).

There is then a clear divide between Hamas and Fatah in terms of how they are perceived in relation to the use of force. Fatah are seen as largely unwilling to use force to liberate Palestine, while Hamas are seen as very clearly dedicated to the use of force for this end.

5.1.1 Gender, Resistance and Negotiations

Many feminists highlight and critique the way war tends to be 'gendered', such as the way that 'men have been constructed as naturally linked to warfare, [and] women have been constructed as naturally linked to peace' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 94; Turpin 1998; Sjoberg 2014). Prominent among these scholars are Sjoberg, Segal, and Tickner, who highlight the importance of gender for understanding war and international relations. These scholars point to the problematic way that "[w]ar-making and war-fighting have been traditionally associated not only with men, but also with the traits that men are expected to have, or masculinities" (Sjoberg 2014, p. 3). Manliness has 'been associated with violence and the use of force' (Tickner 1992, p. 6). War requires 'manliness' and war is itself used as a way of shaping and evolving masculinity. Indeed, war is seen as 'an event when boys become men' and military training is a way of disciplining masculinity (Tickner 1992, p. 40; Segal 2008, p. 21). Male violence in the context of war has tended to be 'valorized and applauded in the name of defending one's country'

Figure 5.2 Mural of Leila Khaled on the Wall, 27th March 2016.

Source: Photograph by author.

(Tickner 1992, p. 6). These scholars suggest that perceptions of masculinity, as associated with warfare, are problematic both because of how they obscure the involvement of others in war, but also because of their implications for masculinity itself (Sjoberg 2014).

The same scholars also point to how women have often been excluded from accounts of war, save for being portrayed as the innocents needing protection back at home (Sjoberg 2014). These portrayals of women serve to justify and glorify warfare and the use of violence. Therefore, scholars have been keen to challenge these simplistic gendered portrayals of war and conflict. While armies in most countries and in most centuries, have been mostly made up of men, these scholars highlight the role of women in war, the roles other than soldiering played by men and the problem with narrow visions of warfare offered where men are seen just as soldiers and women (together with children) are the innocents to be protected at home (Sjoberg 2014).

In reality, women have, throughout history, been complicit in war and violence. Most women have supported their country's wars, and many have supported dictators or shamed conscientious objectors (Ruddick 1989; Afshar 2003; Segal 2008, p. 22). Segal emphasises that there are no 'necessary links between women and opposition to militarism' (Segal 2008, p. 22).

Participation in the Palestinian national struggle has been broadly gendered, with men often seen as the more active participants, but that certainly is not consistent for all times and at all levels.

The leadership of all Palestinian political movements is overwhelmingly male (Holt 1996, p. 39; Abdo 1999, p. 42; Tessler and Nachtwey 1999, p. 27). This has transferred into the structures of the PA (Gluck 1995, p. 11), and the peace negotiations (Sharoni 1995, p. 20). The actors in the resistance have also been overwhelmingly men, whether guerrillas, stone-throwing demonstrators or suicide bombers (Sharoni 1995; Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 36; Hasso 2005).

The gender differences in participation in the national movement is tied to the gendered national discourse. As has been touched upon above, '[t]he Palestinian national discourse is a masculine discourse', which expects male participation (Aweidah and Omar 2013, p. 14). Yasser Arafat was described as the "symbolic father" of the nation, and the iconic black and white *kufiya*, emblematic of the resistance, is a male head scarf (Massad 1995, pp. 477–479). Directives and slogans tend to prioritise the masculine, overwhelmingly conceiving of 'Palestinian nationalist agents as masculine' (Massad 1995, p. 473).

Palestinian masculinity has itself come to be defined by participation in the national struggle. Baxter (2007, p. 747) suggests that a man being 'supportive of the nationalist cause' can bestow honour on the whole family. Peteet (2000, p. 113) explains how beatings and surviving detention by Israeli soldiers became reinvented as a mark of manliness, at a time when men's ability to provide for and protect their families was hindered by the occupation.

Women are expected to find roles within the national struggle that act as extensions of traditional female roles, in caring, protecting, sustaining and nurturing (Peteet 1991, p. 93). Only a few women have participated in the violent side of the resistance, whether in the Palestinian guerrilla movements in the 1960s, 70s and 80s, such as the PFLP member Leila Khaled, or as female suicide bombers of the Second Intifada (Hasso 2005; Chehab 2007, p. 87; Ness 2008; Irving 2012).

Instead, women's involvement in the national struggle has, for the most part, been more closely tied to non-violent activity. Abdo (1994, p. 153) describes women's involvement in petitions, strikes, delegations and a '120-car parade of veiled women' during the British Mandate in Palestine. Women's involvement in the national struggle reached its zenith during the First Intifada. At this point, women confronted the occupation directly, through demonstrations and stone-throwing, but also worked in multiple ways to ensure Palestinian self-sufficiency during strikes, closures and boycotts (Abdo 1994, p. 157). They organised to provide day-care centres, health education and to encourage and support economic independence through cooperatives for women (usually involving food preparation or small-scale manufacturing) (Abdo 1994, p. 159; Abdulhadi 1998, p. 656; Abdo 1999, p. 42). The Second Intifada, however, was much more violent than the First Intifada, and women did not play such a large role.

While women do continue to be involved in resistance activities, these tend to have a different emphasis from the male dominated protests. Richter-Devroe (2012, p. 193) gives examples of women's protests involving wearing traditional clothes, attending vigils and silent marches, the symbolic use of song and prayer and the harvesting of produce from annexed land. While these do stretch ideas of women's roles and include them in the public sphere they cannot be seen as a full break with concepts associating 'femininity with non-violence and motherhood'. For the most part, women have been prominent in resistance in forms such as the idea of '*sumud*' being steadfastness (Peteet 1991, p. 153; Abdo 1994, p. 153; Sharoni 1995, p. 35; Pappé 2006, p. 238; Richter-Devroe 2011) or in roles which are seen as extensions of 'women's responsibilities' such as mothering and care (Peteet 2000, p. 119; Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 37).

Further, women have been particularly prominent in peace movements, from candlelit vigils, sewing patchwork quilts, and through dialogues between Palestinian and Israeli women (Afshar 2003, p. 187; Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 38; Powers 2003, p. 25; Golan 2011). The idea that women might be more inclined towards, or more prominent in, care and peace work is also supported elsewhere. Kaplan (1982, p. 56), for example, describes women's or, rather female consciousness, as based on 'the need to preserve life' and suggests that female consciousness involves placing 'human life above property, profit and even individual rights'. She suggests that it is a learned behaviour, inscribed as part of gender socialisation, she writes: 'As part of being female, women learn to nurture' (Kaplan 1982, p. 56). Some

feminist accounts also highlight women as a resource for peace because they see 'the commonality of women's experience as superseding man-made national boundaries' and so identify with unity and shared values which transcend the 'borders and boundaries which enflame the intertwining, swirling circles of violence' (Afshar 2003, p. 186). Segal suggests that women have been 'most prominent in working for peace' and points to how many women's peace movements have mobilised support through referring to their positions as women and mothers (Segal 2008, pp. 21–23). What has often been found in the Palestinian case, however, is that initiative for dialogue between Israeli and Palestinian women have often fallen flat due to power inequalities between the two sides and Palestinian women prioritising their solidarity with the Palestinian cause over their solidarity as women (Richter-Devroe 2008, p. 35; Golan 2011; Mariam; Nasrin).

Women who do actively participate in the national struggle do not benefit, as Peteet and Baxter suggest men do, from an improved reputation - rather they may face serious social stigma. Peteet (2000, p. 118) describes how women who are detained by Israel are tainted with 'the shame of having bodily contact with strange men', and how, once they return to the community 'Foremost on everyone's mind is the question of sexual violation'. Aweidah and Espanioli (2007, p. 36) spoke to a female ex-prisoner who described how on being released from prison she was not allowed back into school because they thought she would 'subvert' the other girls, her friends deserted her, and people told her that no one would marry her. In comparison, male prisoners are considered heroes. As a result, families are often hesitant to allow their daughters to become activists (Sayigh 1981, p. 6).

It is impossible to assess the extent to which men and women participated in violent or non-violent activism from the interviews. While I asked about the extent that interviewees participated in political activism, I did not ask specifically about the use of violence nor did I want to, because of the risks and suspicions these kinds of questions would create. Instead, I asked about participation in demonstrations. Many interviewees said that women were less likely to attend demonstrations, because their "family do not allow [them] to go because it's dangerous" (Azza), or "she has to be at home with the kids" (Wafaa), or "because of the society's culture" (Ramy) or even because "there are a lot of bad guys and at the demonstrations they are trying to touch or start sexual stuff" (Saleh). These reasons reflect those used to prevent women from joining in many nationalist activities.

While the gender difference in active participation in the nationalist project is apparent, there is less information about perspectives towards the different methods in the Palestinian context. In my interviews, I did not find any stark differences between men and women in their attitudes towards the use of resistance or negotiations. However, there is a substantial body of literature in the West which suggests that women might be more in favour of peace and opposed to the use of violence in terms of their political priorities (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986; Conover 1988; Howell and Day 2000;

Kaufmann 2002; Norris 2003; Norrander and Wilcox 2008; Norrander 2008). It should be noted that these findings relate to issues as diverse as gun control in the US to opposition to capital punishment, the use of force by the police for quelling riots and opposition to troop deployments abroad (Shapiro and Mahajan 1986, pp. 48–49; Howell and Day 2000, pp. 870–871; Norrander 2008, pp. 17–19). These preferences tend to hold for specific wars, such as the Iraq war where 'in the USA only 52 per cent of women under 25 supported the (second) US war in Iraq in 2003, compared with 82 per cent of men' (Segal 2008, p. 22), and they also apply more generally – for example Eichenberg (2003, p. 112) finds that '[o]n average, women are less supportive of the use of military force for any purpose'. The explanations for these differences are fairly diverse, but scholars suggest these values extend well beyond a simple opposition to violence and encompass a wider 'ethic of caring' (Gilligan 1982; Conover 1988, p. 988; Ruddick 1989; Cook and Wilcox 1991, p. 1111; Norrander 2008, p. 14).

Studies of violent women, suicide bombers and fighters suggest that women are more likely to become involved in 'ethno-separatist' terrorist organisations and 'anti-state- 'liberatory'' nationalist movements than more conventional wars (Ness 2008, p. 7; Alison 2009, p. 2). Alison (2009, p. 113) suggests that women's attitudes change according to the type of war and they are more likely to be involved in wars over liberation, justice or the defence of the home than wars over political power or economic resources. Women in colonised societies might argue that they 'could not afford the luxury of being anti-militaristic, because the national liberation of oppressed people can only be carried out with the help of an armed struggle' (Yuval-Davis 1997/2010, p. 113). Women have tended to be most involved in warfare where wars have either developed to involve civilians or when they are centred on questions of identity, liberation and self-determination (Richter-Devroe 2008, p. 31).

Studies by Eichenberg, Togeby and Clark and Clark give further weight to the suggestion that different 'types' of violence provoke different gendered responses. Eichenberg finds that women's support for the use of military force in the US depends upon the purpose and the likely consequences of using force in a particular instance. He suggests that women are more sensitive to humanitarian concerns and the loss of human life and will support or oppose more depending on their perceptions of these factors (Eichenberg 2003, p. 112). Togeby observes that while women in Denmark seem more inclined towards peace in terms of cutting the defence budget and antipathy towards Denmark's membership in NATO, they also 'support resistance movements in the Third World' a number of which are 'fairly violent' (Togeby 1994, p. 379). She suggests that women do not simply oppose violence but they 'take a more liberal position or have more critical views of foreign policy than men' (Togeby 1994, p. 379). Clark and Clark have showed that the gender gap in the US disappeared briefly in 2002, because women, in the wake of the September 11 attacks, jumped to being even more

right-wing than men on issues such as increasing the defence budget (Clark and Clark 2008).

Studies in the Middle East and Israel suggest that there are no gender differences between men and women in their support for more violent acts, or in terms of favouring non-violent resolution of the Israel-Palestine conflict (Tessler and Warriner 1997; Tessler et al. 1999; Ben Shitrit et al. 2017). Tessler et al. (1999) suggest that this may be due to a number of factors including the belief that the Arab-Israeli conflict is seen as 'anti-imperialist' and therefore justifiable, or else because of the salience of the conflict. These studies also point to certain nuances, such as in Israel during times of conflict, women are more in favour of socially excluding 'out-groups' than men (Ben Shitrit et al. 2017), and in the wider Middle East people more in favour of gender equality are more likely to support a non-violent resolution for the Arab-Israeli conflict (Tessler and Warriner 1997).

This literature indicates that the major exceptions to female antipathy towards the use of force are in circumstances where ethno-nationalism (Sarkar and Butalia 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997/2010; Ness 2008; Alison 2009), the defence of the home (land) (Clark and Clark 2008), or some perceived injustice is involved (Togeby 1994; Eichenberg 2003). These accounts suggest that it is likely that women will be less inclined to support violence than men on the whole, but that certain circumstances might limit the extent of these gender differences. In Palestine, all three of the circumstances mentioned above frame the conflict; a perceived injustice, defence of the home(land) and ethno-nationalism are all very much present in the nationalist rhetoric surrounding the use of force.

Johnson and Kuttab (2001, p. 32) found in their analysis of a poll in January 2001, that 'Palestinian men and women do not have significantly different attitudes towards the violent nature of this war on the face of it', finding gaps of only four percent, with most of the population supportive of military operations and about half the population supportive of suicide attacks. They found that women do have greater support for the 'peace process' but that 'overall attitudes between women and men towards Palestinian use of violence are more similar than different' (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, pp. 32–33). As a result of their findings, they suggest that the major differences between men and women with regard to war and peace is 'perhaps truer in gender roles than in attitudes and beliefs' (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 33).

To see whether there are gender differences in attitudes towards resistance and negotiations in the Palestinian Territories – whether due to gendered participation in related activities or due to a more general female 'ethic of caring', I looked at the data in the polls.

There are three variables in the dataset which can be used to test this. Figure 5.3 shows responses to a question, present in 30 polls, which asks whether respondents support or oppose attacks on Israeli civilians. What exactly is meant by this changes throughout the period, with suicide

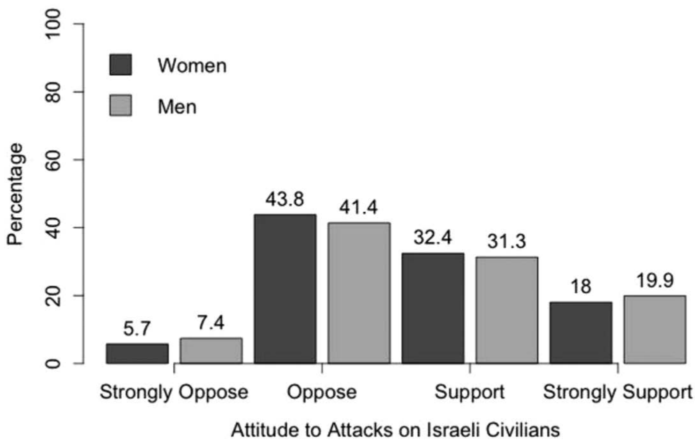

Figure 5.3 To show support and opposition to attacks on Israeli civilians by gender.
Data = PSR Polls 2-7, 9 -21, 27, 28, 30, 31, 34-38, 42 and 56, χ^2 (3) = 74.41, $p < 0.001$, n = 37760

bombings being the main form of attack on civilians during the Second Intifada, and rockets being the main form of attack after 2007. The main gender difference is that women are more 'moderate' in their responses, tending towards the less strongly worded sentences in the middle ground. This phenomenon, where women support more moderate positions or 'don't know' options is well known in the literature (see e.g. Togeby 1994). However, a Pearson's Chi-Square test on grouped responses (so counting 'strongly oppose' and 'oppose' together and 'support' and 'strongly support' together) shows that there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and support or opposition to attacks on civilians [χ^2 (1) = 2.08, p = 0.15].

Another question in the polls offers a different perspective on support for the use of violence. It is phrased: 'Do you believe that armed confrontations have so far achieved Palestinian rights in a way that the negotiations could not?' and the responses are 'definitely yes/certainly yes', 'yes', 'no' and 'definitely no/certainly no'. The responses are presented below in Figure 5.4. Women are less likely to think that armed confrontations have been an effective tactic compared to men, but the difference is not large. In both of these charts it is notable how high the overall percentage is of people who tend to support attacks on civilians and armed confrontations is, with over 50 percent of respondents supporting attacks on civilians and over 60 percent of respondents thinking they have been more effective than negotiations. This echoes many of the views in my interviews.

Figure 5.5 shows the percentage of men and women's responses to the question 'Generally do you see yourself as:', with the choice of three

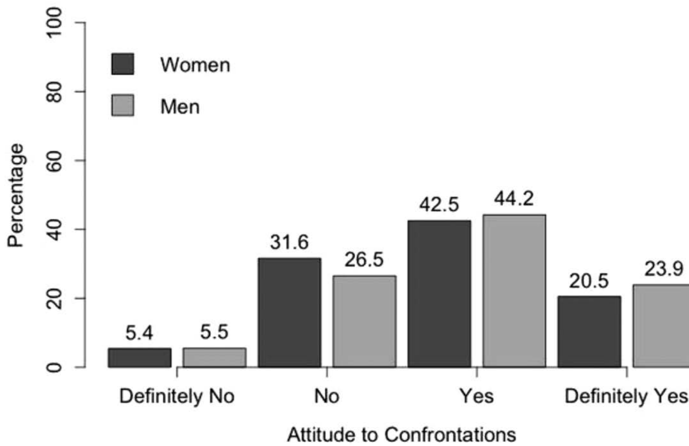

Figure 5.4 To show attitudes about the effectiveness of armed confrontations versus negotiations by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 2-23 (Merged Dataset), χ^2 (3) = 105.21, p < 0.001, n = 27917

answers: 'Supportive of the Peace Process', 'Opposed to the Peace Process', 'Between Supportive and Opposed'. Overall, more women are supportive of the peace process than men. This reflects the widely held view that women are more 'peace-loving' than men, although again the gender differences are not stark. Further it also shows a majority support for the peace process, as was suggested above.

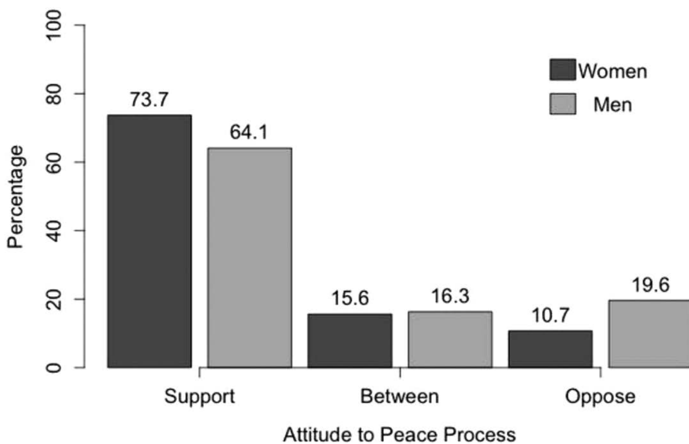

Figure 5.5 To show support and opposition to the peace process by gender.

Data = PSR Polls 19-38, 42, and 56 (Merged Dataset), χ^2 (2) = 461.44, p < 0.001, n = 27424

The responses to the above three questions do not point comprehensively to a clear gender gap on all matters relating to peace and violence; the gaps where they exist are small.

While the charts above suggest that women are overall slightly less supportive of the use of violence and more in favour of peace than men, there are theories which suggest that women's and men's attitudes might change at times of particular stress (see e.g. Clark and Clark 2008). Research has shown that in Israel political attitudes and in-group feelings increase at times of violence and unrest (Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter 2006; Ben Shitrit et al. 2017). It is likely therefore that political attitudes are impacted by the political context of the Palestinian Territories at the time.

Tables 5.1 and 5.2 compare attitudes to the use of violence during the Second Intifada and during a more peaceful period after. I have used the questions relating to attacks on civilians and the question relating to the effectiveness of armed confrontations (used above) as they are present in both the Second Intifada and after.

The evidence shows that views are substantially different during the Second Intifada compared to afterwards. During the Intifada, women hold equally strong views to men, while after the Second Intifada women are likely to adopt more moderate positions. The gender gap narrows/disappears during times of threat (the Second Intifada) and the percentage of women saying 'definitely yes' when asked about the effectiveness of confrontations rises during the Second Intifada. While the results aren't completely consistent, they do show something of a convergence of views between men and women during times of increased conflict.

What then to make of how gendered attitudes to the peace process and resistance might impact support for political parties? As shown in Chapter 1, women support Hamas more than men and Fatah less than men, meaning that women do not support the organisation more committed to non-violence more than men and do not support the organisation most committed

Table 5.1 To compare men and women's levels of support for attacks on Israeli civilians during the Second Intifada and afterwards during a relatively more peaceful period.

	Second Intifada		*Other times*	
Attack civilians?	*Men %*	*Women %*	*Men %*	*Women %*
Strongly Support	26	25.9	15.6	12.7
Support	29	28.3	32.9	35.2
Oppose	39.6	40.4	42.7	46.2
Strongly oppose	5.4	5.4	8.8	5.9
n	7729	7736	10962	11333
χ^2 *(3)*	***1.30, p = 0.729***		***117.47, p = 0.000***	

Data = PSR Polls 2-7,9-21,27, 28, 30,31, 34-38, 42, 56 (PSR Polls 2-14, are taken as Second Intifada, Merged Dataset), n = 37,760

Table 5.2 To compare men and women's attitudes towards the effectiveness of armed confrontations versus negotiations for achieving Palestinian aims during the Second Intifada and afterwards during a relatively more peaceful period.

	Second Intifada		*Other times*	
Confrontations more effective?	*Men %*	*Women %*	*Men %*	*Women %*
Definitely yes	25	23.4	22.2	16.3
Yes	45.2	41.6	42.7	43.7
No	24.9	29.2	28.9	35.1
Definitely no	4.9	5.7	6.2	5
n	8412	8159	5688	5658
χ^2 *(3)*	***50.23, p = 0.000***		***96.38, p = 0.000***	

Data = PSR Polls 2-23 (PSR Polls 2-14, are taken as Second Intifada, Merged Dataset), n = 27,917

to violent resistance less than men. Instead, the reverse is true: Women support Hamas more and Fatah less than men. Yet the gender differences where they do exist are not particularly large.

Further, it may be the case that context really matters here. At times of stress or violence, gender differences in support for armed confrontations and attacks on civilians decrease. It is at these times that these questions are most politically salient, and so this might explain why gender differences in support for resistance or peace are unlikely to impact political support.

Further, it may be that the support for a particular party comes first, determined by the other broad factors such as family preferences and socialisation, economic incentives or a religious affinity with them. Then the methods are accepted as part of that ideology, so to speak. This would fit more with Green et al.'s (2002) concepts of 'party identity', where they suggest that 'When people feel a sense of belonging to a given social group, they absorb the doctrinal positions that the group advocates' (Green et al. 2002, p. 4).

As such it is not suggested that gendered attitudes towards resistance or negotiations are an important explanation for the gender gap in political support.

5.2 Oppression

This section aims to highlight the role of political oppression in the Occupied Palestinian Territories but also to explore whether an oppressive political context might impact on or explain the gender gap in political support in Palestine. Most gender gap research is conducted in the West in relatively open and democratic societies, whereas Palestinian politics takes place under Israeli military occupation in the West Bank where there is limited 'self-government' by the PA and in the Gaza Strip under the Hamas

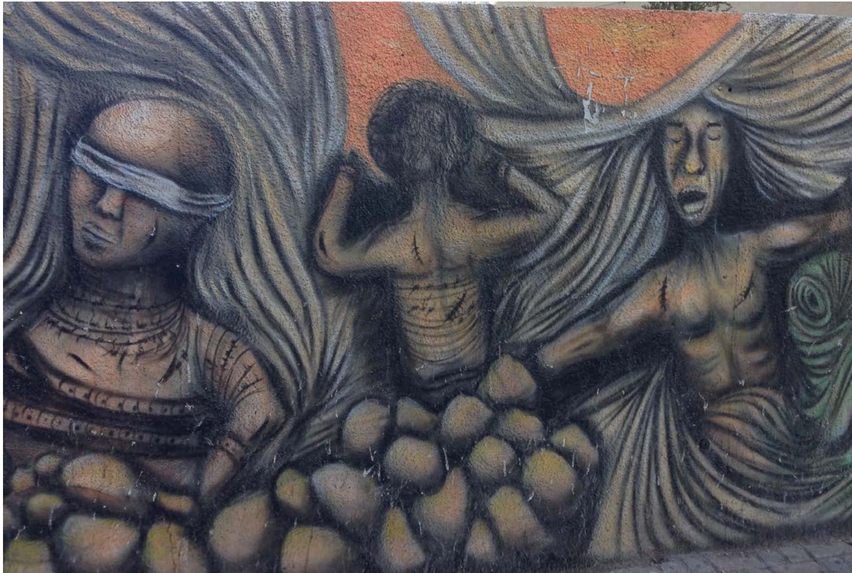

Figure 5.6 Mural in Ramallah appearing to show men as victims of torture, 27th February 2016.

Source: Photograph by author.

government which have both shown signs of being increasingly autocratic and intolerant of political opposition.

Under authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, as well as in contexts of occupation, governments and regimes can usually ensure displays of support from the population partly through coercion and control. Compliance can be achieved through 'carrots', which for a regime or organisation can mean economic benefits, employment, and access to power (explored in Chapter 3 above), and 'sticks' which could be restrictions on access to the above benefits and, of course, the use or threat of imprisonment and physical violence. These tools may alter an individual's public and political behaviour. Scott (1990) and Wedeen (1998) have both explored the phenomena of individuals behaving publicly for the benefit of those in power. Scott suggests that, most of the time, 'the public performance of the subordinate will, out of prudence, fear, and the desire to curry favor, be shaped to appeal to the expectations of the powerful' (Scott 1990, p. 2). Wedeen examines the Syrian state under Assad, finding that people behave loyally due to 'coercive compliance' where 'people obey because they fear being punished' (Wedeen 1998, p. 519). In the context of an oppressive political environment, it becomes more difficult to see people's public behaviour as a reflection of their true feelings or beliefs.

However, that is not to say that the political behaviour of people living in these contexts should be discredited outright. Studies show that there

is scope for the population to express their opposition to the government within the context of electoral politics in authoritarian regimes. Elections in authoritarian regimes mostly serve as a tool for co-opting elites and party members and distributing 'the spoils of office', working as 'competitive clientelism' where different candidates seek the position of 'intermediaries in patron-client relations' (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, pp. 405–407). Regimes usually use force or intimidation, together with offering benefits, to make the population turn out and vote in its favour (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, p. 405). However, expressions of opposition do occur. For example, de Miguel et al.'s (2015) work suggests that in non-democracies while there is no proper opportunity for voting out politicians with whom they are not happy, the public can express their disapproval of the regime through abstaining from voting. They write: 'Expressing opposition in this way can be very effective because elites in competitive authoritarian regimes value high voter turnout as a means of legitimating their rule to both domestic and international audiences.' (Miguel et al. 2015, p. 9) Further Gandhi and Lust-Okar find that voters who strongly oppose the regime tend to vote for opposition parties, even if they do not agree with their policies. They suggest that because of the cost and risk of doing so, these people tend to be 'more highly ideological' (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009, p. 409). These studies suggest that despite government coercion, citizens in authoritarian regimes do use the opportunity of elections to voice their support or opposition to political groups. In this section, I will explore the extent to which the public feel free to express their political views in the Palestinian Territories and how this might affect their declared political support.

Further this section also questions the extent to which political coercion and oppression are gendered. Research suggests that men tend to be targeted more than women by authoritarian governments and occupying forces (Segal 2008; Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009; Khalili 2010; Sjoberg 2014). Therefore, in this section, I will consider whether the context of oppression might be gendered and whether it might impact the gender gap, looking at the following hypothesis:

> ***Hypothesis 3: The gender gap in reported political support can be (partially) explained by the differential way tools of oppression are applied to men and women.***

5.2.1 Oppression in Palestine

There are multiple sources of oppression in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. The occupying forces of the Israeli military provide the overall context, while within the nominally autonomous sections within the territories the Palestinian Authority and Hamas have shown increasingly authoritarian behaviour. Fear of being subject to violence, or facing imprisonment, threats, or a loss of livelihood or freedom, is likely to impact how

Palestinians express their political support. There have been many 'free and fair' elections in the territories, and some political freedoms remain, including, to some extent, a culture of political pluralism. Personal circumstances, political preferences and the current political climate are likely to determine whether individuals in this context feel able to express their political views.

The Occupied Palestinian Territories are, as the name suggests, occupied territories, and not a state. Ultimate power has remained, since 1967 and even after the Oslo Agreement, in the hands of the Israelis: they control the borders, airspace, and even the subterranean waters of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Weisman 2007, p. 19; Hilal 2010, p. 33). The occupation means that at the most fundamental level, the Palestinian political system is not democratic: Israel is in ultimate control and Palestinians cannot vote to change their rule.

The Israeli occupation is based, for the most part, on the coercion and subjugation of the Palestinian population. The extent of arrests and violence by the occupying forces is astonishing. Sayigh (1997, p. 608) writes that by '1985 an estimated 250,000 Palestinians had experienced interrogation or detention – 40 per cent of all adult males had been held for at least one night – since 1967'. In the years 1986 and 1987 he describes how '103 Palestinians died, 668 were wounded, and 12,842 were arrested in confrontations with Israeli forces' (Sayigh 1997, p. 608). As of August 2016, there were over 6,000 Palestinian political prisoners and security detainees from the Gaza Strip and West Bank in Israeli prisons and military facilities (Freedom House 2017, p. 619 and p. 648).

Further, Israel uses other forms of coercion and punishment against the Palestinians, including assassinations, firing at demonstrators and farmers, the demolition of Palestinian homes and businesses, and, most prominently, restricting movement. Restriction of movement often amounts to collective punishment such as the Gaza blockade, where movement of goods and people to and from the Gaza Strip are heavily regulated, 'impeding civilian life and reconstruction efforts' (Freedom House 2017, p. 616). Or for example, as Freedom House recounts:

> In July, one village had its access points sealed after a teenage resident stabbed and killed an Israeli girl in a nearby settlement. The village was cut off for 34 days, and 2,771 permits to work in Israel were canceled.
> *(Freedom House 2017, p. 649)*

Israel deems many of the Palestinian political movements, including Hamas, as terrorist organisations. They have assassinated, detained and tortured many prominent members of these organisations. 'Indeed Israel has made no bones about backing Fatah and attacking only Hamas targets' (Koshy 2007, p. 2871). Because Israel controls not only the Palestinian borders but also has numerous checkpoints within the West Bank, they can also make life difficult for people suspected of being associated with, say, Hamas by

preventing them from travelling outside of and even within the Occupied Territories. The threat or possibility of facing repercussions from Israel is likely to impact individual political support for these organisations, and how, or whether, they voice it.

Further to the 'official' violence of the Israeli occupation, there is what Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2017) calls the 'occupation of the senses'. In her study of East Jerusalem, she points to the use of graffiti, nationalist festivals and demonstrations, the treatment of pregnant women, through to the settler violence against Palestinian children. These factors create atmospheres of violence, tension, and fear for residents of East Jerusalem, but her study would apply to all those living close to Israeli settlements.

The testimonies of those I interviewed point to the Israeli Occupation forces as violent and oppressive. Several interviewees had suffered very directly from Israeli violence. Yahya at the age of 11 was shot in his stomach by an Israeli soldier. Ruwaida's husband, a prominent member of Hamas, was assassinated in 2001. Several other interviewees' relatives had been killed (Farida; Nidal) or arrested by Israeli forces (Amjad; Hussein; Louay). Interviewees suggested that fear of repercussions from Israel meant they should watch what they say (Lana; Maha; Munira; Naimeh; Amjad; Wahid). Lana told me that she had not involved herself in student politics because she feared the repercussions. She said:

> Once I was really considering becoming a member of … the student council, especially because people in my town really wanted me to, but I haven't … because everyone who participates in them becomes on the blacklist of Israel, so I'm like, maybe later there are other ways I can participate, just not that way.
>
> *(Lana)*

Amjad told me about his father: "[my] father is a professor at the university and he has been in an Israeli jail in an administrative detention for no reason, because [he] expressed himself in lectures".

Since 1967, the major source of coercion for the Palestinian people has been the occupying army, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), but more recently other 'security forces' have started to play similar roles. The Palestinian Authority's own police force and security apparatus also use violence to exert control. Since the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007, Hamas has formed its own police force to keep control of the population in that territory. Beyond these, there are several armed militias and militarised organisations which have acted on the command of different political groups in recent decades (Gunning 2007, p. 26). The occupants of the territories are subject to the violence of different powers. Gunning writes:

> Occupation, the violent practices of the Israeli army and Jewish settlers, the plethora of resistance factions, clan militias and criminal gangs,

> and their violent practices, combined with the widespread availability of arms, the relative weakness of central authority structures and the existence of violent clan traditions, have all served to create a political environment in which violence is commonplace.
>
> *(Gunning 2007, p. 175)*

Within the territories under Palestinian Authority or Hamas control, democratic freedoms ebb and flow with external pressure and internal reform. The status for the Palestinian Territories for the 10 years covered by Freedom House fluctuates between partially free and not free. Scholars argue that authoritarianism is enabled, rather than restricted, by the funding given to the PA by the West (Tartir 2016; Tartir 2018; Tartir and Ejdus 2018; El Kurd 2020, pp. 3–4). There have been, particularly since 2007, major problems with expressions of support for the respective opposing parties in the Fatah-dominated West Bank, and Hamas-dominated Gaza Strip (El Kurd 2018, p. 387). This has taken the form of harassment and arrest by the security forces of Fatah and Israel in the West Bank, and Hamas's armed wing in the Gaza Strip (see Usher 2006, p. 27; Blecher 2009; Hilal 2010, p. 24; Caridi 2012, p. 262; Bröning 2013, p. 67). In addition to the arrests, sympathisers of the opposing parties have been dismissed from their jobs in both the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and Hamas's charitable organisations have, for the most part, been disbanded or co-opted by the PA in the West Bank (Bröning 2013, p. 23).

Since the Oslo Accords and increasingly since 2007, the Israeli military have, mostly, worked together with the PA (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 23). As such, Israel can arrest and detain Palestinians they deem as 'security risks', often with the explicit help of the PA security services. Gunning (2007, p. 44) writes: 'The security forces were the instrument by which [the PA] could maintain control. By the late 1990s, an estimated 60,000 personnel were employed by over ten security services, providing a 'police'-to population ratio of a staggering 1:150'. While the exact figure varies in different reports, the ratio is undoubtedly high (see e.g. Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 23; Pearlman 2011, p. 132; El Kurd 2018). Both Israel and the PA have a shared interest in ousting and/or suppressing organisations like Hamas. Since the 1990s and up to the present, PA and Israeli forces have tried to suppress Hamas, by targeting members in mass arrests, firing sympathisers from government jobs and by shutting down affiliated organisations (Brown and Hamzawy 2010, p. 167; Pearlman 2011, pp. 139–140; Freedom House 2017, p. 645). Tartir and Ejdus (2018, pp. 158–160; also Tartir 2018) describe the police under the PA as 'highly politicized and democratically unaccountable' and suggest many Palestinians see the recent security reform as a way of 'subcontracting repression' to the Palestinian Authority who use the police forces to 'silence and criminialise resistance against the Israeli occupation'.

The major crackdown on Hamas in the West Bank came in the aftermath of the 2006 election, when Fatah boycotted the Hamas-led Palestinian

Legislative Council (PLC), and 46 Hamas legislators were imprisoned in Israel or given movement restrictions leading to their near imprisonment in certain towns or cities (Sayigh 2011, p. 107). Hamas members of the PLC that I interviewed, Nidal and Ruwaida, had both been imprisoned after the Hamas victory in 2006. They are both now allowed to carry out only limited work, and one was not allowed to leave Ramallah.

In the aftermath of these elections, Fatah tried to expel Hamas from the West Bank. Many employees of the PA who were Hamas supporters in the West Bank were fired, or else, they were arrested in the wake of the Hamas victory (Azza; Farida; Reem; Ashraf). Azza told me: "A lot of people who were Hamas, and who were working with the government, like teachers and stuff, Fatah – the Palestinian government – fired them because they belonged to Hamas and they got them imprisoned".

Hamas's charitable and welfare organisations in the West Bank were dismantled, closed or put under Fatah leadership in the aftermath of the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip (Bilal). Ruwaida, a Hamas member of the PLC, said:

> The PA, along with the occupation, they agreed to prevent all these things. For example, it is forbidden to give the poor money because the money is linked to terrorism. It is forbidden to give a seminar, because this was considered terrorism. Centres for memorising the Qur'an, which belonged to Hamas, they closed them. Charities which belonged to Hamas including the Juthoor centre, the Tadamun centre they changed the administrative boards. They are now all Fatah … You will find there is a war on them from every angle, everything it does they either forbid it or they imitate it.
>
> *(Ruwaida)*

However, as has been mentioned in Chapter 3, some charitable services and *zakat* committees continue to operate, not as Hamas, but with the popular knowledge of their association with the Hamas movement.

Political control over the mosques is particularly important for Fatah. Lana told me how a Hamas sheikh from her village was imprisoned and banned from giving lessons in the mosque. Saleh also told how a Hamas sheikh was arrested after giving a talk in the mosque in his village. He said:

> Most of the sheikhs in the mosque they just support Abu Mazen. Maybe before two years or three years there was a sheikh from Hamas he was talking about the homeland and about Islam and after we went out from the mosque, they put him in the jail directly.
>
> *(Saleh)*

Another moment of heightened political repression was during Operation Cast Lead, the Israeli assault on Gaza, when the PA tried to ensure sympathy with Gaza and support for Hamas would not destabilise the West Bank.

The PA initially forbade demonstrations, then they surrounded mosques with 'plainclothes security personnel' (Blecher 2009, pp. 65–66). Blecher (2009, p. 68) suggests that during 'Operation Cast Lead' the PA security chiefs worked in close cooperation with the Israelis, sharing intelligence and arresting wanted people.

Interviewees were aware of the dangers of openly declaring support for Hamas, which might mean "harassment from the PA, harassment from Israel" (Maha). Kamal, a Hamas activist at university had been arrested himself. He told me:

> The Authority would arrest the student activists from the Islamic bloc. They would suffer during the imprisonment period … They treat us as if we are an opposition against the authority's beliefs and as if we are not allowed to work at the university. The basic charge is you are working for Hamas and Hamas should not be working in the West Bank.
>
> *(Kamal)*

Farida's brother had been arrested and tortured. She told me:

> My brother used to support Hamas, my older one. They used to take him to jail and torture him. He spent more than a year in and out of their jails. And they took him to a jail in Ramallah. It is known as the slaughterhouse … because they torture them a lot. He spent months there without seeing even the sun. And when he got out of the jail, he used to tell us the ways they tortured him.
>
> *(Farida)*

Fatah's increasingly authoritarian methods are not just applied to Hamas sympathisers but reach anyone critical of the PA. Interviewees thought it was dangerous to speak out in public. Those who express opposition to the PA in public, or join in political events, risk threats and arrest (Samira; Shadia; Abdel; Amjad). Those I spoke to were wary of spies – 'birds' – or the secret police, who might be watching you online, at a demonstration or listening in to your conversations (Maha; Reem; Samah; Ashraf; Faisal; Raafat; Saleh; Samer). Farida told me: "We can't say anything about the government, like even on phones, because we might get to jail. They don't care. They just take us to jail and torture us. And I know this as a fact". Ashraf said: "Here people are afraid of talking about politics and especially parties, because if you say you are from Hamas, you know maybe you will be arrested. So, I don't hear from any neighbours who is supporting Fatah or Hamas". Yousef who had worked previously in Abu Mazen's office told me: "if we speak something against Abu Mazen you might get arrested after a few hours". Hanan told me:

> People are sometimes afraid of the sulta [Palestinian Authority]. People take into consideration the PA's position or something like that, for

> example if there is a PA worker in front of you, you might be cautious about what you might say or what you might do in front of that person.
>
> *(Hanan)*

Bassam told me: "The essential thing is fear. Because this is the Palestinian Authority. This is the power. And you cannot confront this. You have to go along with it".

Fatah's oppression has broadened to include many others who are seen to oppose the PA, including certain members of 'leftist' organisations and union members. Lana told me how PFLP members moved out of her village after pressure was placed on them. When I was conducting my research, there was a teachers' strike taking place over severely low wages. Many teachers were harassed, prevented from attending demonstrations, threatened or even imprisoned. Reem was a striking teacher, she told me that she and other teachers, as well as their husbands, were threatened with losing their jobs or worse by Fatah members.

Several of those I interviewed told me that you could not criticise the PA online. Others had themselves been put under pressure and told to stop posting on Facebook (Iman; Reem; Iyad). Abdel had been arrested for what he had put on Facebook. He told me:

> One time I post on Facebook about how there is injustice in our country, and the government just arrests me the next day [asking] 'Why [did] you post this on Facebook?'
>
> *(Abdel)*

Fathi, who had been in charge of Fatah's digital media, despite saying "welcome to the land of openness", acknowledged that the culture within the PA tended towards closing down dissent. He described the internal debate in Fatah about shutting down critical websites:

> Somebody had recommended that we should close some websites because they were insinuating against Fatah, but I was totally against this for a simple reason. Those websites are insignificant, closing them down is not only going to tarnish the reputation of Fatah as a liberal, dynamic, secular party [but it] is going to serve in favour of those running those websites. They want acknowledgement and you give them the platform by closing them. I showed [the Fatah Council] the figures. I showed them the stats for the specific website. [It was] only visited by a thousand people. When we closed it, it became a hundred thousand. So, you are turning the insignificant into the significant. I was grilled at the Council … I was the advisor to the president on technology and sent a memo saying we should reopen the websites immediately. And I was criticised [by the Fatah Council who] said 'You are the advisor and that is bad advice. Those people are insinuating [insulting?] Fatah. They hate us.'
>
> *(Fathi)*

I also heard several allegations of the opinion polls being politically biased. Wahid told me that in the polls preceding the 2005 and 2006 elections the field researchers were being refused by "bearded men or religious women wearing the hijab or niqab" when he asked members of Hamas what was happening "they said 'we have orders not to answer you guys and if we do to give a dishonest opinion'. So, the results said that Fatah would win… Fatah had won in the opinion polls and Hamas had won in the elections." (Wahid) Gunning also explained that, while he used survey data in his research, this data is not wholly unproblematic. Of the surveys he writes:

> Though the methodology used follows international polling guidelines, there are persistent complaints among Hamas activists that Hamas sympathizers are systematically under-represented in the polls … Exit polls at the 2006 election … under-represented the percentage Hamas eventually received, although the discrepancy was far less than had been the case previously. There are various explanations for this [including] the possibility that Hamas supporters are less likely to declare their allegiance to a pollster for fear of harassment by the security services. Whatever the reason, when using polls, it is important to bear in mind.
>
> *(Gunning 2007, p. 21)*

I cannot say that I saw any evidence of bias in the process of producing the polls. However, as the section above shows, the focus of my research concerns areas where expressing an honest opinion could be incredibly risky for Hamas supporters.

Hamas have also used violence and oppressive tactics against their opponents (Gunning 2007, p. 183; Sayigh 2011, p. 40). The most violent episode of the use of force against Palestinians in Hamas's history came in 2006–2007 in the aftermath of the 2006 election when they took over the Gaza Strip. In January 2007 alone, 45 people were killed in Fatah-Hamas clashes (Gunning 2007, p. 183). Hamas tends to be blamed for this violence. Many interviewees mentioned that Hamas seemed violent or had been violent in how they carried out the coup in Gaza (Azza; Hiba; Iman; Zahra; Bassel; Habib; Mostafa; Raafat). Majed told me: "The monstrous killing and cruel acts that they did against Fatah in Gaza is basically the reason I'm against it. They killed 700 persons from Fatah".

When they took control of the Gaza Strip 'politically motivated arrests, beatings and torture of detainees, and often egregious violations of the constitutional rights of speech and peaceful assembly' were used to target Fatah activists (Sayigh 2011, p. 40). Both Gunning (2007, p. 139) and Sayigh (2011) argue that Hamas gains 'legitimacy' or 'authority' from its ability to use violence to maintain security in the Gaza Strip. Sayigh (2011, pp. 1–2, 5) describes how this 'need to maintain security' in the criminal 'anarchy' of the Gaza Strip, has fused with their struggle for political survival (and their pursuit of religious legitimacy) to create an authoritarian environment

in the strip. Although, by 2011, Sayigh (2011, pp. 39–40) claims this had become less severe, yet the situation continued to echo Fatah's practices against Hamas in the West Bank. Freedom House (2017, p. 617) describes how, in 2016, 'Fatah is largely suppressed' and there is 'little display of opposition party activity' and there have been 'multiple incidents in which Hamas used excessive force or arbitrary detention against its political opponents and critics'.

The press has also been restricted in Gaza under Hamas. After 2007, there were only 'a handful of newspapers' circulating without restrictions: '*Felesteen* and *al-Resalah,* published by Hamas, and *al-Istiqlal,* published by Palestinian Islamic Jihad' (Sayigh 2011, p. 106). However, some of these restrictions have been eased with several Fatah-associated West Bank newspapers, and the PA's Palestine TV now allowed (Freedom House 2017, pp. 618–9). Several interviewees told me that Hamas restricted the press and journalists who criticise Hamas risk arrest (Tahani; Zahra; Zainab).

Hamas prevents freedom of expression in the Gaza Strip using "imprisonments, detaining people" (Wafaa). Zahra said that you were not allowed to demonstrate against Hamas or be seen to criticise them in the street or support Fatah. Yousef, who was a Fatah activist in the Gaza Strip, had left Gaza partially because he feared arrest by Hamas. He said:

> They started like to attack us, and they started to use guns in order to scare us. And they started to, for example, kidnap some people … from Fatah Youth … they used to call me … 'If you are going to come here, we are going to arrest you, we are going to kill you.' It was like gambling with your life.
>
> *(Yousef)*

However, other Gazans suggested the situation was not as repressive as in the West Bank. Wahid said:

> Fatah in Gaza is allowed by Hamas to operate … Not like Hamas in the West Bank, [that] is like a secret organisation. In Gaza, Fatah is there. There was some problem in the early days of the divide, but, after the agreement on the reconciliation in 2011 in Cairo, more freedom was given to Fatah … the leadership of Fatah they meet from time to time, they even meet with Hamas … there is more room for Fatah in Gaza to operate much more than the room that is given to Hamas [in the West Bank].
>
> *(Wahid)*

Despite these descriptions of the oppressive practices of the Palestinian Authority, Hamas, and most of all the Israeli military, there is evidence to suggest that the culture of political pluralism has not been extinguished yet.

The international pressure on the PA, and its dependence upon international aid donations, does mean that it is forced to agree to some semblance of

democratic standards. There have been elections in the Occupied Territories since the 1970s which have contributed to the politicisation of the population (Ghanem 1996, p. 513). Student and union elections have been contested by Fatah, Hamas and 'leftist' representatives for decades (Gunning 2007, pp. 45–46). The 1996 and 2005 presidential elections and the 2006 legislative election have all been considered for the most part as free, fair and democratic elections (Tessler and Nachtwey 1999, p. 22; Carter 2006, p. 142, 182; Caridi 2012, p. 168, 193). Miguel et al. (2015, p. 5) reported a turnout of 72 percent in Palestinian elections in their polls, the highest out of their selection of countries in the region. The 2012 municipal elections in the West Bank were criticised for the way they were conducted and for the exclusion of certain parties and candidates. Yet, despite this, many of those running against the dominant party, Fatah, won seats (Abu Aker and Rudoren 2012; Guignard 2016). Currently, the greatest problem with elections in Palestine has been their absence. Mahmoud Abbas's term in office was meant to have ended in January 2009, yet he has continued to rule. Indeed, since the 2007 split, 'the postponement of elections and the sidelining of parliamentary procedures through the issuance of executive decrees have become almost a daily routine' (Bröning 2013, p. 4). The absence of elections has begun to cost the leadership a great deal of political legitimacy.

The Palestinian population seems to largely support political pluralism and democracy. All of those I interviewed understood the significance and relevance of the different political parties. Suleiman told me that Palestine had "a culture of political pluralism, but not necessarily democracy". He said: "There is tolerance to differences in political views … But whether that is democracy or not is another story".

This view has been expressed at various points in the academic literature. Tessler and Nachtwey describe a moment of optimism following the Oslo Accords when they wrote in 1999:

> Palestinians themselves frequently complain about corruption and human rights violations on the part of their leaders. Nevertheless, political life in Palestine is characterized by institutional and ideological pluralism, by intense political competition, and by vigorous debate about government policy on a wide range of issues.
>
> *(Tessler and Nachtwey 1999, p. 22)*

Shikaki, who runs one of the most respected polling organisations in Palestine, the PSR, has contended that the population of Palestine are hospitable to all the aspects of a democratic system. He writes:

> To the extent that public attitudes reveal a deeper culture and value system, survey research on Palestinians appear to show a political culture hospitable to democratic values and practices. Palestinians overwhelmingly support a democratic political system and show readiness to participate

> in the political process. They support freedom of the press, the rights of the opposition, and the right of women to political participation.
>
> *(Shikaki 1996, p. 12)*

Wahid emphasised that Palestinians a firm believers in democracy, even if the current situation meant this was increasingly difficult. He told me:

> We don't have official democracy; elections process, a formal democracy. But people themselves are democratic by their mind, by their culture. You know Palestinians, we don't have a government. We are civil society … we have this culture of democracy, open opinion, but [the] PA made it difficult. If you compare between now and some 25 years ago, we were in a better situation [then]. So, people can speak and can put on the Facebook. If you go on the Facebook you will find criticism to all: to Hamas, to Abbas … people have this rooted into their culture. Of course, it is decreasing, it is shrinking … people still have civil belief in democracy, in informal democracy you can call it or community-based democracy.
>
> *(Wahid)*

Most interviewees did not view the Palestinian system as democratic – indeed many of them just laughed when I asked (Fatih; Fatima; Hanan; Naimeh; Rasha; Rawda; Rola; Sahar; Samira; Shadia; Tahani; Wafaa; Yasmin; Faisal; Faraj; Iyad; Jalal; Jawad; Mousa; Nasim; Raafat; Saleh; Samer; Tawfiq). Nor did most interviewees think there was freedom of expression in the Palestinian Territories (Hanan; Maha; Mona; Munira; Reem; Samira; Shadia; Suhad; Zainab; Faraj; Karim; Raafat; Samer; Tawfiq).

There were a few, usually Fatah supporters, who said that there was freedom of expression (Basima; Ghadah; Hiba; Habib; Louay; Yahya). For example, Ayman told me: "In the West Bank here, you can shout, anybody here, 'Fucking Abu Mazen' and everyone will laugh. Fuck Abu Mazen. Here, you will find what you will not find in any Arab country. You can do, speak, and nobody will do anything for you. Do not do security things and do not break the law but speak as much as you want".

Although most interviewees did not think there was freedom of expression, most interviewees I spoke to said they were happy to talk to their friends and family (Maha; Munira; Rawda; Samira; Shadia; Faraj; Ibrahim; Majed; Mousa; Nasim; Raafat; Saleh; Tawfiq). Samira explained that although there might be potential repercussions, in general, people "love to talk about politics". Ibrahim said:

> I am not scared of what would happen to me if I said this and this and this, so to some extent there is freedom of speech, and there are a few instances where we heard that you could be … targeted for saying so and so, but I don't think it scared us as a society from saying what you want to say … I think there are more people scared when it comes to jobs,

> because people do work in the PA, under like the PA, so I think they would be more scared to criticise it, but I think that's kind of normal, because if you work in a company anywhere in the world you would be afraid of criticising it to not be fired so …
>
> *(Ibrahim)*

The fact that so many people agreed to be interviewed and then told *me* about corruption and lack of free speech is a testimony to the fact that although the environment was hostile, freedom of expression had not been completely closed down. It seems that while the political context is far from democratic, there is a strong culture of political pluralism.

It is important to note, and the gender aspects of this will be explored below, that there were certain factors that made people more confident about speaking out. Having a particularly high status, being a recognised voice of criticism or having a family member high up in the PA seemed to embolden people. A journalist, a prominent professor and the head of a rights NGO all claimed to criticise and speak out against the PA (Jihan; Fouad; Ghassan). Lina told me that she probably would not be harassed or arrested if she spoke out against the PA because "they know me, and they know my parents and I have family in the PA in really high positions". Saleh also said that he could say his opinion in front of anyone in Fatah because his uncle is "in the *sulta* [Palestinian Authority] and he is Fatah too" so "he can protect the closest people".

The widespread violence and repressive measures used by Israel, the Palestinian Authority and the Hamas government are likely to impact political behaviour and expression in the Palestinian Territories. Individuals may, from fear of the repercussions, avoid associating with certain political groups, most obviously with organisations such as Hamas which are deemed as a terrorist organisation by Israel and are the unwelcome opposition party in the West Bank. Further, people may, despite supporting, say, Hamas, not feel comfortable in declaring their position to a researcher in an interview or an opinion poll. Rola explained: "We tend to not support Hamas out of fear, because our authority in the West Bank is Fatah and we are afraid of supporting Hamas because of the *sulta* [Palestinian Authority]". Authoritarian tendencies and the fear of oppression are likely to impact political support.

On the other hand, the autocratic styles of Fatah and Hamas might have a negative impact on their approval ratings. Fatah have lost much popular goodwill because of their oppressive tactics (Gunning 2007, pp. 48–49). Farida told me that Fatah's repression of Hamas made her "hate to vote for Fatah".

The context of authoritarianism with restrictions on freedom of expression, even though this has changed throughout the period being examined here, makes research difficult, as these threats and tensions are likely to impact how respondents reply to both polling and interview questions. However, it certainly does not mean that all data gathered in this context

should be discounted out of hand, as the forthright critiques of the PA voiced in my interviews show that many Palestinians are willing to take risks in expressing their views. However, it is important not to underestimate the role of fear, coercion, and oppression in shaping people's responses to questions surrounding political support, when the livelihoods, personal safety and lives of respondents might be at risk.

5.2.2 Gendered Political Oppression

Political coercion, and oppression, are gendered. Men are more likely to be targeted for forceful coercion than women. The literature on the use of violence in war and occupation suggests that men are 'overwhelmingly' the victims of violence and the targets of control (Segal 2008, p. 32). Sjoberg (2014, pp. 41–42) suggests that frequently 'those checking at security checkpoints employ the gender essentialist assumption that women are less dangerous than men' and, as such, women are 'less likely to be scrutinized by security checkpoints than men'. Khalili describes how occupying forces monitor and harass male members of the subject population more than females in her study of gendered practices of counterinsurgency. Describing the US-led military occupation of Iraq after the 2003 invasion she writes:

> Men are differentially targeted in these wars. In the cordoned cities where retinal scans, thumb prints, identity cards and registers of residence are used to monitor the populations, men between the ages of 15 or 16 and 50 are considered the primary target of this intensive, aggressive, and invasive surveillance.
>
> *(Khalili 2010, p. 10)*

The way these occupying forces target men is also gendered in that often tactics are used to effeminise the subject population, through for example 'the undressing of men at checkpoints and in prisons and the use of language which is intended to dishonour men' (Khalili 2010, p. 10). In Egypt, where the political regime is 'best described as electoral authoritarian', Blaydes and El Tarouty (2009, p. 368) have looked at government repression during elections. They suggest that while male members of the (opposition) Muslim Brotherhood often face harassment from the security services, women were targeted much less frequently, to the extent that 'the presence of women at or near polling stations can help to deter types of election violence' (Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009, p. 375). They cite an analyst who suggests that 'both the Brotherhood and the state have maintained an implicit agreement to put women outside of the repressive policy of detention and police harassment' (Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009, p. 376). It seems, therefore, that male supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood are more likely to be targeted by the Egyptian security services than female members of the organisation.

The literature on Palestine suggests that here too men are the targets of political oppression more than women. Johnson and Kuttab (2001, p. 24) suggest that 'gender is clearly an organizing principle of Israeli repression'. The targets of the occupation are largely male as it is the men and boys who tend to be arrested and taken away by Israeli soldiers (Hasso 1998, p. 453; Afshar 2003, p. 181). Richter-Devroe (2012, p. 189) found that while all protest was seen as dangerous, some women thought they were 'less likely than men to get arrested'.

Peteet's study of the First Intifada highlights the gendered nature of the violence inflicted upon men. She writes that 'one would have been hard pressed to find a young male Palestinian under occupation who had not been beaten or who did not personally know someone who had been' (2000, p. 107). She also notes that there have been few women beaten due to the 'tendency of the Israeli Defense Forces to go for males first' (Peteet 2000, p. 118).

Men are also systematically targeted for control by the Israeli authorities. Johnson and Kuttab describe an order from the Israeli Chief of Staff - issued during the Second Intifada - which banned men from travelling in private cars in the West Bank. Male only cars were returned, and travel for men was only permitted if a woman was present (Johnson and Kuttab 2001, p. 22). Weisman (2007, p. 147) recounts in his book how at Huwwara checkpoint, in the West Bank, soldiers randomly 'decided to detain every ninth adult male wishing to cross the checkpoint' one day, and another 'every man whose name was Mohammad was detained'. These gendered policies, where men are presumed suspicious, are commonplace.

My interviewees confirmed the view that the most violent acts are targeted at men. This was explained to me by some of those I spoke to:

> Men, if you are in a party, or if you are not just in a party … if you have a political view you will be arrested, shot, something.
>
> *(Naimeh)*

> I think that men get picked up [by the Israeli army] more than women do, but that doesn't mean that women don't get picked up at all. They do. But in terms of percentages, men get picked up more … men do get searched more.
>
> *(Ibrahim)*

> Men are seen as a threat and women are not, and so a lot of times [at checkpoints or when a bus is stopped by Israeli forces] I don't even have to give my ID … they take the guys down and they search them, they don't take the women down.
>
> *(Maha)*

Women in Gaza told me how "men are not allowed to leave the country" (Wafaa). Tahani clarified that "men need certain permits" to cross at the

Eretz or Rafah crossing points into Egypt or Israel, because they are seen as more of a threat.

Peteet (2000, p. 121) suggests that the Israeli occupation, similar to the occupation of Iraq described by Khalili above, uses sexualised practices based on their 'pseudo-knowledge of the subject population' to further undermine Palestinians in detention. In my interviews, I heard about the Israeli soldiers taunting Palestinian demonstrators with sexual taunts (Yousef) and Palestinian men being raped by Israeli soldiers while in prison (Lana), suggesting that these practices certainly occur.

Women also face harassment and oppression from the Israeli Occupation. Female activists, in their hundreds, have also been put in Israeli prison, with Ahed Tamimi being perhaps the most prominent recent example (Pappé 2006, p. 238; Underwood 2018). Women detainees face the additional stigma and suspicion surrounding their confinement with strange men (Peteet 2000, p. 118). The politicisation of women's bodies and the conception of 'Palestinian womanhood as a signifier of national honor' has been reflected in the targeting of women for rape and sexual abuse by the occupation forces (Abdulhadi 1998, p. 655). Sayigh describes this phenomenon in her 1981 article: 'Where girls and women are concerned they are vulnerable as females, not just as Palestinians, because the Israeli reading of Arab psychology leads to sexual aggression or threat being used against them as a means of intimidating the population as a whole' (Sayigh 1981, p. 7; Sharoni 1995, p. 39). Women find it difficult to return to their communities, or even marry, after spending time in prison because of the assumptions of rape and sexual violation (Afshar 2003, p. 182). Nadia, a middle-aged female Fatah activist, was the only interviewee to mention this dynamic in the specific context of female prisoners:

> Society accepts somehow the imprisonment of men more than the imprisonment of women … Because they are afraid of what could happen to a female if she is arrested. Like physically the honour thing, they think that she will be affected.
>
> *(Nadia)*

In my interviews, Israeli soldiers were seen as threatening women and their sense of self-respect and dignity in encounters at checkpoints. Two of the young women I interviewed told me of the stress, embarrassment, risks and inconvenience they faced when Israeli soldiers asked them, when travelling by bus, for their phone numbers (Maha; Naimeh). Maha said:

> Maybe two or three times when a soldier insisted he wanted to take my number … I just didn't want to give them my number … I mean he's a soldier and he's very powerful and he can stop me from doing anything. He can even arrest me for doing nothing you know, so I kept saying no I don't feel comfortable giving you my number. I was very

> nice you know … if he didn't have that power I would have slapped him, but it was very humiliating.
>
> *(Maha)*

Some men seemed upset at the way women were treated at checkpoints as well. Jalal and Jawad told me that "at checkpoints it is more humiliating for women to go through" in case "someone touches her" or "they move her scarf".

Women also suffer from the occupation in their roles within the family. Aweidah and Espanioli suggest that women have to hold families together and provide for their children when men are killed, maimed or in prison and cope with issues such as the destruction of their home and the trauma faced by children. Women are 'the mother who heals the wounds of traumatized children, wanted sons and unemployed husbands' (Aweidah and Espanioli 2007, pp. 9–10). Women have also had to face an increase in domestic violence as frustrated men turn 'their anger towards the women in their families' (Baxter 2007, p. 750). Some figures suggest that domestic violence affects upwards of 50 or 60 percent of Palestinian women (Toman 2006, p. 64; Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling 2012, p. 51). Studies also show that women bear devastating psychological effects as a result of the 'continuous and sequential trauma' of living under occupation (Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling 2012, p. 57).

Women face a specific kind of harassment, in that they are targeted because of the significance attributed to their bodies. I did not hear about women being targeted for their political beliefs in the same way as men were, instead women faced greater physical and reputational risks when coming into contact with the occupying forces or engaging in political activities. Jamila described how women are victimised in a more structural way which leads to them increasingly restricting their own lives to their home. These findings reflect and reinforce some of the findings surrounding women's economic roles and their religiosity as described in the previous chapters.

The starkest difference between how men and women are targeted seems to be amongst those who are affiliated with Hamas. Male Hamas members are more likely to face harassment and oppression, while women in Hamas were much less likely to be targeted by the PA or Israel. The scholarship on Hamas repeatedly hints at this gender difference. Gunning (2007, p. 172) suggests that the increased role of women in Hamas's political campaigns is 'in part a response to the incarceration and assassination of male activists'. Ababneh (2014, p. 46). suggests that female Hamas activists at Birzeit University advertise when they are standing for elections, but the young men do not do so 'for security reasons', Blecher (2009, p. 66) notes that while the PA suppressed all support for Hamas in the West Bank during Operation Cast Lead, 'women and children sporting the occasional green [Hamas] headband or scarf generally were not harassed'.

This gendered targeting came through very strongly in my interviews. I was told in one interview that because men were more likely to be arrested "and tortured", the "guys who associate themselves to Hamas" are "more afraid to say it" (Lina). Maha made the same point. She told me: "Being a Hamas guy is very hard … It's like choosing voluntarily every day to go through a lot of trouble … Harassment from the PA, harassment from Israel, harassment from people around them. It's not easy … to be a guy in Hamas". Male Hamas supporters, as described in Chapter 3, also might face losing their jobs, or facing serious obstacles to employment and ability to travel (Majed; Samer). Women were often considered to be less 'active' in Hamas, and therefore less in danger of arrest for their support of Hamas (Majed). Maha told me that "girls" in Hamas would get in "less trouble" because they do not have "the same role as men" within Hamas. She explained that: "Men [in] Hamas are in the field, you know, they are out there. Girls do all the other things. They organise things. They do things. They help people … They make a family out of it … Their role is not really out there, so they don't have to face all these things".

Women were also targeted less because of cultural attitudes towards women. Ruwaida told me that men were arrested more than women because security services were reluctant to follow and arrest women as "in our society getting close to women is a bigger crime". Hussein agreed that Hamas women were less likely to be arrested. He said:

> [Hamas] know the women if she goes to the street, no one stops her, in the demonstration … Now if you go to any demonstration, from here to any other area, you will see women more than men in the demonstration with the flag and they say bad things about the [Palestinian] Authority, and no one will come.
>
> *(Hussein)*

Karim who worked for the PA security sector made the same point. He told me:

> The Islamic movements use the point of privacy of women to their advantage … The nationalist security apparatuses can take anyone they want from their beds, but it is shameful for them to follow around and surveil a woman, as such women are better at doing the secret work for the Islamic movements without being caught. Here in this country the Islamic movements use this method.
>
> *(Karim)*

I would contend, as have many of my interviewees, that the view of women as being less violent and less politically active than men is widespread in the Palestinian Territories. This contributes to an understanding of women as less 'dangerous' than men, in the eyes of the PA and Israel, even if they

support Hamas. It seems to be the case that while women can be harassed, imprisoned, tortured or killed because of their political beliefs, men face these threats to a much greater extent. An individual's gender therefore is likely to impact whether they might expect repercussions for expressing their political opinions or criticising the government.

Rawda gave me her explanation of the gender gap in political support. She said: "Probably, the men if they wanted to support Hamas they would be in prison or they would be hurt, not necessarily imprisoned. Fear factor. As girls, we would know that probably nothing would happen to us. Because the traditions would save us from these things". Samer gave me his explanation of the gender gap in support: "Maybe the reason is that women are more free. Women can say their opinions without being scared and … the men … maybe they are afraid". Ruwaida suggested the same explanation. She said:

> It could be that men support Hamas, but the security issue prevents them from talking about it, and the biggest evidence of this is the elections of 2005 and 2006, opinion polls said that Hamas were going to get 20 percent but when the elections took place Hamas got around 60 percent. It is the fear and the security issue which prevents men from this.
> *(Ruwaida)*

The interview evidence and literature suggest that men are more likely to be targets of political violence and oppression. This is also evident in the statistics. A report published by Addameer (2014, p. 7) suggests that 'more than 800,000 Palestinians' have been detained under Israeli military orders in the occupied Palestinian territory since 1967 of which 10,000 are women. This means approximately 80 men are imprisoned for every woman.

Statistics on prisoners within the Occupied Territories are more difficult to find, but the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics shows that 70–80 women were convicted offenders in 2014 compared to 5,500–6,500 male convicted offenders (different pages differ which accounts for the range of figures) (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics). While data on prisoners does not present a complete overview of the gendered nature of political oppression, it is sufficient to suggest that men are more likely to be targeted for violence and harassment (whether by the Israeli military or Palestinian security services) than women.

> ***Hypothesis 3: The gender gap in reported political support can be (partially) explained by the differential way tools of oppression are applied to men and women.***

To further explore this hypothesis, I looked at the question in the polls which asks, 'In your opinion, can people in the West Bank or Gaza Strip criticize the Palestinian Authority without fear?' (there are a number of

Table 5.3 To look at freedom to criticise the PA by gender for the West Bank and Gaza Strip before and after the 2007 split.

Are You Free To Criticise PA?	*Location*	*% Women Say Yes*	*% Men Say Yes*	*Total n*
Pre 2007	**West Bank**	50.2	57.0	10243
	Gaza	53.2	59.7	6222
Post 2007	**West Bank**	35.2	37.4	5702
	Gaza	33.4	35.1	3173
Total n		12652	12688	25340

Data = PSR Polls 1-7,11-14, 16, 21, 25, 28, 29, 31, 37, 38, 42, 56

different versions of this for different periods and places but I brought them together as criticising the PA).

The most obvious difference in the results in Table 5.3 above is the clear difference between before and after the 2007 Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip. Around half the people in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip felt that they were free to criticise the PA without fear before the split, but this figure drops by around 20 percent after the split when only just over a third of people feel that they can criticise the PA without fear. The second interesting difference is that women on average are less likely to think you can criticise the PA without fear than men. This result may be explained in a number of ways, from women's greater concern for themselves and their families, to women's greater aversion to risk. Finally, it is interesting to note that the difference in men's and women's views is much bigger in the pre-2007 data than in the post-2007 data. However, it does not give any clarity as to whether fear of criticism might impact reported political support.

A second variable which might be useful in measuring oppression is a question asking "How do you evaluate the performance of Palestinian security services?", with the answer options as "Very Good", "Good", "Neither good nor bad", "Bad", "Very Bad". This is shown in Table 5.4. Here men were more likely than women to describe the performance of the security services as bad although there are quite wide variations in this gap across

Table 5.4 To look at negative views of the security services by gender for the West Bank and Gaza Strip before and after the 2007 split.

View of Security Services	*Location*	*% Women Say Bad/Very Bad*	*% Men Say Bad/ Very Bad*	*Total n*
Pre 2007	**West Bank**	38.4	49.8	3114
	Gaza	27.7	50.3	1918
Post 2007	**West Bank**	30.7	31	768
	Gaza	37.3	42.1	421
Total n		3066	3155	6221

Data = PSR Polls 4, 13, 16, 21, 28

the polls, making the analysis less clear. Analysis is perhaps made more difficult because this variable is not included in many polls. It should also be noted that these measures are unable to shed much light upon fear of the Israeli or Hamas security forces.

Tables 5.3 and 5.4 seem to tell slightly different stories. With women more than men suggesting that there are repercussions for criticising the PA, but men more than women seeing the security services of the PA in a negative light. As such, these two polls show two oppositional gendered responses to oppression, with men viewing the security services more negatively, but women thinking more often that criticising the PA might lead to negative consequences. This cannot be easily explained. As such, it is unclear how it might be possible to incorporate a gender gap in oppression into our analysis of the polling data.

Oppression and its impact on political support is very difficult to measure. There are too many arguments which make identifying any clear causality, particularly with polling data, extremely difficult. One argument might be that those who support the ruling party are less likely to feel threatened about their opinions so are more likely to speak the truth and say who they support, while those who support the opposition and do feel threatened might be more likely to lie to protect themselves and say that they support the ruling party. Further anyone expressing the lack of freedom of expression, is showing, in doing so, that there is a certain degree of freedom of expression, and as such it is unclear whether they would, or would not want to truthfully assert which party they may support. As such, it is not possible to sufficiently address ***Hypothesis 3***, and it must remain as an untested possible explanation for the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.

5.3 Conclusion

This chapter has explored political violence in the Palestinian context and tried to assess whether it might account for the gender gap in political support stated in Chapter 1.

First, it looked at whether questions around the use of armed resistance and the peace process could impact political support. In looking at the Palestinian context, it is clear that the question of the use of violence is highly politically salient, with the strategies of negotiations or armed resistance being a major point of differentiation between Fatah and Hamas. Therefore, it is likely that supporters of these organisations reflect similar preferences for one strategy over another. If there were a gender gap in support for peace or the use of force, then this might lead to a gender gap in political support.

This chapter showed that participation in the Palestinian resistance or in nationalist actions is highly gendered with men much more likely to have leadership positions and 'active' roles. This chapter then looked at whether

popular support might be equally gendered – although, the literature did not suggest that it would be. The polling data showed that women did tend, on the whole to be slightly more in favour of peace and opposed to the use or armed resistance than men. However, and interestingly, it also showed that at a time of crisis (i.e. during the Second Intifada) these gender differences tended to decrease.

A puzzle proposed by this finding is how to reconcile this finding with women's greater support for Hamas – the party of the 'resistance' – and men's greater support with Fatah – the party of 'peace negotiations'. The explanation is most likely to be that other factors outweigh these considerations in choosing which organisation to support. Or else perhaps because these issues are most salient at times of crisis and the gender gap in attitudes towards resistance and peace more or less disappears at these points, the gender gap in attitudes towards resistance and negotiations is not relevant in determining political support for Fatah and Hamas. Whatever the explanation, it is clear that the gendered approach to questions of peace and resistance cannot be an explanation for the gender gap in political support.

This chapter then explored the issue of oppression in Palestine. The Occupied Palestinian Territories falls somewhere between having a free and open, and a closed and repressive political framework. There are several repressive security services operating in the Palestinian Territories – Israeli and those connected to both Fatah and Hamas – but there is also a long history and deep culture of political pluralism. Large proportions of Palestinians, in both my interviews and in the polls, have shown that they feel at least partially free to express their views by indicating that they support Hamas, which for the majority of the time examined, and for the whole period in the West Bank, has been the party of opposition and considered a terrorist organisation by Israel. This shows that there is some justification for doing this kind of research, using interviews and polling data, in the Palestinian Territories. On the other hand, this chapter also points to the importance of taking into account the role of oppression in shaping publicly stated political beliefs.

I have explored the ways in which repression seems to be gendered in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Men are the major victims of violence from both Israel and the political factions in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. They face arrest, beatings and senior Hamas (and other organisation) members have often been assassinated. Equally, men are more pro-active in their involvement with the Palestinian struggle and so are more exposed to these risks. Women risk having their modesty and dignity, and even sexual 'integrity' placed in question with each interaction with Israeli soldiers. This has reinforced pressures upon women not to venture out unaccompanied. However, women do not tend to be targeted in the same violent way as men have been if they are Hamas supporters. The hypothesis which came out of this chapter is:

> ***Hypothesis 3: The gender gap in reported political support can be (partially) explained by the differential way tools of oppression are applied to men and women.***

Explorations of the polling data produced contradictory and confusing results, from which no conclusions can be drawn. As such the question of the role of oppression in causing the apparent gender gap in political support remains unanswered.

The violence which suffuses the Palestinian context no doubt shifts and shapes political support in the Palestinian Territories. The levels of violence and fear described in this chapter must impact how individuals see the political scene. However, it is difficult to understand how it might interact with gender to determine political support, at least from the context of the polling data. Nevertheless, this chapter acts as important reminder of the difficulties of conducting research in an authoritarian setting, and points to a strong possibility that oppression may be at least a partial explanation of the gender gap in political support.

6 Explaining the Gender Gap in Political Support

In this chapter, I test with statistics the explanations for the gender gap in political support proposed in the preceding three chapters. In doing so, I hope to be able to suggest an explanation for the gender gap that finds support from both the interviews and the opinion polls. Statistical tests are in many ways limited, yet they form the best way of seeing whether the opinions and views expressed by the individuals in the interviews and the theories presented in the literature do in fact reflect what is happening within Palestinian society at a broader level.

I test several different models to explore the relationship between each group of variables and the gender gap, using logistic regressions and then gender gap in predicted probability of supporting Fatah or Hamas. Variables which, when added to a model cause the gender gap to reduce, are considered as partially explaining the gender gap. This might be seen as a variation upon the 'regression decomposition technique' (Studlar et al. 1998, pp. 786–787).

6.1 Modelling the Gender Gap

In this section, I aim to test and explore some of the possible explanations for the gender gap in political support, using different logistic regression models, but first I will set out and explain the different variables being used.

6.1.1 Dependent Variables

Political support
'FATAH SUPPORT'
'HAMAS SUPPORT'

The main 'variable' or question of interest here is political support. I use two variables called *'Fatah support'* and *'Hamas support'*. These are dichotomous variables coded from the question 'Which of the following movements and parties do you support?' in the polls. Respondents choose one party from a given list or indicate that they do not support any of them. The choice of answers in the polls varied for different years as small new parties

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-6

were added to the selection in the polls. The full and final list used included: 1) PPP, 2) PFLP, 3) Fatah, 4) Hamas, 5) DFLP, 6) Islamic Jihad, 7) FIDA, 8) Al-Mubadara al-Wataniyya/National Initiative [added in PSR Poll 15 onwards], 9) Independent Islamists, 10) Independent Nationalists, 11) Third way headed by Salam Feyyad [added in PSR Poll 36 onwards], 12) None of the above, 13) Others. Respondents could only choose one response. The variables used have been recoded so that in '*Fatah support*', Fatah supporters are coded '1' and in '*Hamas support',* Hamas supporters are coded '1' and everyone else is coded '0'. This question was present in all PSR polls.

Many studies and models trying to assess how gender might impact political outcomes would look at questions asking for an individual's intended vote rather than their political support. However, analyses here are based on support for political groups rather than intended vote because I felt that intended vote might include political machinations on the part of the individual which obscured their actual support. Box-Steffensmeier et al. prefer to study partisanship for this reason, suggesting that candidates and campaign contexts influence voting (Box-Steffensmeier et al. 1997, pp. 5–6). In the Palestinian context, elections are not regular, and the last meaningful election for the president of the legislative council in Palestine, at the time of writing was over 15 years ago. Elections have been scheduled and delayed several times since. Questions on intended vote are less meaningful when elections are unlikely to occur. Further studies in other authoritarian-but-election-holding locations have shown that abstaining from voting or voting for the opposition even if they are not your party of choice may be used as a form of protest by voters, which again might warp our understanding of political support (Gandhi and Lust-Okar 2009; Miguel et al. 2015).

Looking at how supporters of various parties say they would intend to vote in our polling data, there are various discrepencies. Of all the Fatah supporters, only 83.3 percent say they would vote for Fatah. Of Hamas supporters only 76 percent say they would vote for Hamas (with 13.6 percent saying they would not participate). But also a number of supporters of other parties or of no party say they might vote for Fatah or Hamas, with many saying they would not vote. As voting intention is dependent upon many more factors, including perceived legitimacy of the whole institution and perceptions of the likelihood of any elections being held, or being fair, I thought it would be simpler to measure underlying support for political factions. However, it is worth noting that the gender gap also clearly exists in the data on intended vote, with over all the polls over the entire period, the gender gap in support is -8, while the gender gap in intended vote is -12.4.

Table 6.1 compares intended vote with declared support for Fatah and Hamas. An important factor to consider here too is also that the question on intended vote is not present in Polls 1–18, as such it means using a much smaller dataset, and covering a much smaller time period (another reason to use the question on support). As can be seen, there are no huge discrepancies between the two figures (especially considering the reduced number of polls included for intended vote), and certainly there is a gender gap of

Table 6.1 To compare intended vote with support for Fatah and Hamas for women and men.

	Fatah		*Hamas*	
	Intended vote (%)	*Support (%)*	*Intended vote (%)*	*Support (%)*
Men	41.9	38.6	18.1	16.7
Women	33.3	38.0	21.9	24.2

For intended vote, n = 23908 and gender gap = –12.4. For support, n = 51527 and gender gap = –8.

note, of considerable size and in the same direction, for both intended vote and party support.

6.1.2 Independent Variables

Here I will describe and explain what 'variables' will be used in the logistic regressions below to test some of the hypotheses generated above as to what might explain the gender gap in political support.

Gender

'FEMALE'

This is a dichotomous variable with female coded as '1', and male coded as '0'. This is present in all PSR polls. The size of the gender effect in the models below indicates the relevance of gender, despite controlling for the other variables. Where values are positive it means women are more likely than men to support Fatah/Hamas, and where values are negative it means women are less likely than men to support Fatah/Hamas. Larger values in either direction indicate a larger gender gap. As such when the figure is closer to zero, it means more of the gender gap has been explained.

Time and Place

'DATE'

I try to account for the variations of time by analysing the 40 polls available to me separately, so situating them in their time, or else including a variable to account for changes across the time covered by the polls, called *'date'* which is the date of the first day each poll was conducted (converting the dates to their numerical equivalent). The date of the polls analysed range from 2000–2015.

PRE-2007/POST-2007

I also have divided some analyses into before and after the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip in 2007 (for the West Bank and Gaza Strip) to see whether

this has an effect. I include PSR Polls 1–24 in the Pre-2007 dataset, and Polls 25–38, 42, and 56 in the Post-2007 dataset.

'AGE'

I include a variable *'age'* so the effect of being brought up in different periods might have on attitudes and political support is accounted for. This variable gives the age in years of the respondent divided by 10. As such, an increase of one means an increase of 10 years. It is in all the polls.

GAZA AND WEST BANK

One of the major variations is between Gaza and the West Bank. As such, I will use a variable *'Gaza'* to account for these variations in the logistic regressions below. It is a dichotomous variable where '1' indicates the respondent lives in Gaza and '0' indicates they do not. In other analyses I try to split the analysis between Gaza and the West Bank (pre- and post-2007) in order to see whether being in these different territories makes a difference.

CITY, VILLAGES AND TOWNS, AND REFUGEE CAMPS

The literature above (described in Chapter 2) indicates that support for different parties may differ between urban and rural locations, with Fatah being more popular in rural communities, and Hamas more popular in cities. In order to account for these variations, I include two variables *'city'* and *'refugee camp'* in my analysis. The variable *'city'* is created from a question in the polls called Residence/place with three possible responses 'City', 'Village/Town' and 'Refugee camp'. I have recoded this to form a dichotomous variable where '1' indicates a City and '0' indicates all other options. *'Refugee camp'* is another dichotomous variable where '1' indicates a Refugee Camp and '0' indicates all other options.

Socioeconomic Status

'MARRIED'

This is a dichotomous variable recoded from a question on marital status which gives three options: 'unmarried', 'married', 'other', recoded so that 'married' is '1', and both other responses are '0'. This is present in all polls.

'FAMILY SIZE'

Family size is almost a scale variable. I capped it at 13, because there were some responses of over 90 which were distorting the general trend. Thus, the number represents the respondent's family size unless they give a family size over 13, in which case it has been coded as '13'. This is present in all polls.

'INCOME'

The income variable has been recoded from three different questions about household monthly income, using Jordanian Dinars and Israeli Shekels as currency. I recoded them into a three-point scale for the sake of ease, although the original scales were much larger. One of these three questions were present in all the polls.

There are major problems inherent in questions about income. The problems usually involve 'mean reversion' which means that poorer people report higher incomes and richer people report lower incomes. Micklewright and Schnepf (2010) suggest that there are serious inaccuracies in incomes reported using a single question, as was used in the PSR polls. An additional problem with the income variable below comes from my having to combine three different income measures used in different polls, which themselves used different currencies (Israeli Shekels and Jordanian Dinar) whose values would have changed over the length of the polling period. All the confusion and inaccuracy would be more problematic if the goal was to accurately report incomes in the Palestinian Territories, but instead the interest is in the relationship between gender and reported income, which should not be greatly obscured by these problems.

'EMPLOYED'

This is a dichotomous variable created from a question about employment sector, with the options 'public', 'private' and 'other' or in some polls 'no work' (Polls 22–38, 42, and 56). Being employed in either the public or private sector was coded as '1', and other or no work was coded as '0'. This question was present in all the polls.

'EDUCATION'

This is a scale variable for level of education reached. There are seven options coded so that the highest level represents the highest level of education, 'illiterate' - '1', 'elementary' - '2', 'preparatory' – '3', 'secondary' – '4', 'college diploma' – '5', 'BA' – '6', and 'master's and above' – '7'. This question was in all the polls.

Belief

'RELIGIOSITY'

This is a scale variable of 1–3, with '3' indicating highest levels of religiosity. It is created from a composite of three questions, relating to frequency of prayer, religious self-identification and how frequently someone reads the Qur'an.

The main difficulty faced with coming up with a measure for religious belief or practice was that the PSR polls used several questions to measure

religiosity. Different questions were placed on different polls meaning there is no one measure used across all the polls. The questions used to measure religiosity in the polls necessarily limits what I can use, and unfortunately a full religiosity scale is not available. Instead, I use three variables which seem to approximate religiosity well. It is worth noting that it is not too important for this research to delineate between religious belief and religious practice, so although one might question whether these three indicators suggest actual belief, or the presentation of religious practice is of less importance

I look at a question which asks respondents to self-identify as 'religious', 'somewhat religious' or 'not religious'. This question on religious self-identification is present in Polls 19–38, 42, and 56. I also look at a question on frequency of prayer. This has been recoded from the options from being '5 times a day', '1–2 times a day', 'Only on Friday', 'Occasionally', 'Rarely', 'Never' to being 'Never', 'Sometimes', and '5 times a day', because, overwhelmingly, respondents answered '5 times a day' and so there was not much meaningful variation across the other options. The question on prayer is present in Polls 9–38, 42, 56. As neither of these variables looked at the first few polls, I have also included a variable looking at the frequency that an individual reads the Qur'an. This question is only present in polls 2–8. Reading the Qur'an was mentioned frequently in my interviews but is not as fundamental a part of Islamic religious practice as prayer. Here again I have recoded the original poll question which gave four options, 'Everyday', 'Occasionally', 'Every week', 'Never', to just three options, 'Never', 'Sometimes' and 'Everyday', because of ambiguity between the two middle options. I have also rearranged the coding so that the most religious is highest, so that 'Everyday' is coded '3', 'Sometimes' is coded '2', and 'Never' is coded '1'. These three variables were then combined in a single variable to measure religiosity more broadly.

6.1.3 Models

I will conduct logistic regressions on the variables *'Fatah support'* and *'Hamas support'*. Each logistic regression will include a greater number of variables to see whether and how they contribute to a model explaining support for Fatah and Hamas, but also whether these variables reduce the size of the *'female'* coefficient. If *'female'* becomes smaller with the addition of another variable, then that variable partially explains the gender gap.

Model 1a: Political support ~ female

Model 1a shows the impact of being female on party support. Table 6.2 shows that being *'female'* has a positive beta value for Hamas (0.47) and a negative beta value for Fatah (-0.34), meaning that a woman is more likely to support Hamas than a man and less likely to support Fatah than a man.

Table 6.2 To compare the ability of Models 1a and 1b to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas.

	Model 1a		*Model 1b*	
Variable	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*
(Intercept)	−0.46 (0.01)***	−1.61 (0.02)***	−23.37 (1.26)***	1.20 (1.49)
Female	**−0.34 (0.02)*** **	**0.47 (0.02)*** **	**−0.35 (0.02)*** **	**0.47 (0.02)*** **
Date			0.17 (0.01)***	−0.02 (0.01)
Age			−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.05 (0.01)***
Gaza			0.05 (0.02)*	0.47 (0.02)***
City			−0.24 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.03)
Refugee Camp			−0.15 (0.03)***	0.02 (0.03)
Deviance (Null)	66262 (66589)	51789 (52239)	65607 (66445)	51174 (52125)
AIC	66266	51793	65621	51188

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables '*Fatah support*' and '*Hamas support*' using Models 1a and 1b, p < 0.0001= ***, p < 0.001 = **, p < 0.01 = *, p < 0.05 =., Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset)

The values for *'female'* are significant at the $p < 0.0001$ level, meaning that the findings are very unlikely to be coincidences.

$$\text{Model 1b: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp}$$

Model 1b has the *'female'* variable again, but it also contains variables accounting for time, age and location. These variables are included in this model so that variations across time and place can be held constant. Importantly, including these variables makes very little difference on the size and significance of *'female'*. When holding these variables constant, Table 6.2 shows that the B value for *'female'* for support for Fatah changes to -0.35, increasing slightly the size of the gender gap.

It might be of interest to see that residents of the cities and refugee camps are less likely to support Fatah, which confirms that Fatah is most popular in rural locations. Gazans are more likely to support both Fatah and Hamas, suggesting that political support is higher in the Gaza Strip, although the size of the effect is larger for Hamas.

It is also interesting that *'date'* is positive for Fatah, implying that support for Fatah has increased throughout the period. This is likely because just after the polls the Second Intifada started, when Fatah lost support, then in the period after the Second Intifada support for Fatah increased.

Hypothesis 1: Gender differences in socioeconomic status explain (reduce) the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories

As has been shown women tend to score lower than men in terms of socioeconomic status, and because of the different ways Fatah and Hamas interact with the economy, the discussion above suggests that gender differences in socioeconomic status may explain the gender gap in political support.

Hypothesis 1a(i): The gender gap in political support is smaller among married people (due to shared economic interests).

Hypothesis 1a(ii): The gender gap in political support is greater among married people (due to more divergent gender roles).

Analysis of the grouped polling data shows that the gender gap in political support is greater among married people (it is 16.1 points) than among those who label themselves either 'single' or 'other' (11.5 points). This means that married men differ in their political support more from married women, than single or 'other' men and women differ in their political support. This does not seem to support the idea that women and men who are married are more likely to have similar views because of being tied to the same economic interests. Therefore, ***Hypothesis 1a(i)*** cannot be accepted, and instead ***Hypothesis 1a(ii)*** is strongly suggested, the evidence below seems to confirm that this is the explanation.

$$\text{Model 2a: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married}$$

I include the dichotomous variable *'married'* in Model 2a. Table 6.3 shows that including the variable *'married'*, has almost no impact on support for Fatah. Indeed, there is almost no change in the deviance or AIC for Models 1b and 2a for Fatah support. However, the '*married*' variable does explain some of the support for Hamas. People who are married are slightly more likely than those who are not to support Hamas. This may be because there is a slightly higher incidence of marriage among religious constituencies, or that in the poorer areas people tend to get married younger meaning there are fewer non-married people in areas which support Hamas. Including *'married'*, seems also to account for some of the gender difference in support for Hamas, by very slightly reducing the B value for '*female*'. Again, this may be because of overlaps in values as described above.

Hypothesis 1b: The gender gap in support for Fatah can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female employment levels.

$$\text{Model 2b: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married} + \text{employed}$$

Table 6.3 To compare the ability of Model 1b with Models 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d, and 2e which include variables to control for socioeconomic status, to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas.

	Model 1b		*Model 2a*		*Model 2b*		*Mode 2c*		*Model 2d*		*Model 2e*	
Variable	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*
(Intercept)	−23.37 (1.26)***	1.20 (1.49)	−23.37 (1.26)***	1.09 (1.49)	−23.30 (1.26)***	0.99 (1.49)	−23.63 (1.27)***	0.41 (1.50)	−24.13 (1.28)***	−0.78 (1.51)	−24.93 (1.28)***	−0.93 (1.52)
Female	**−0.35 (0.02)*** **	**0.47 (0.02)*** **	**−0.35 (0.02)*** **	**0.46 (0.02)*** **	**−0.27 (0.02)*** **	**0.36 (0.03)*** **	**−0.27 (0.02)*** **	**0.37 (0.03)*** **	**−0.32 (0.05)*** **	**0.29 (0.06)*** **	**−0.31 (0.05)*** **	**0.29 (0.06)*** **
Date	0.17 (0.01)***	−0.02 (0.01).	0.17 (0.01)***	−0.02 (0.01).	0.17 (0.01)***	−0.02 (0.01).	0.18 (0.01)***	−0.01 (0.01).	0.18 (0.01)***	−0.01 (0.01)	0.19 (0.01)***	−0.00 (0.01)
Age	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.05 (0.01)***	−0.08 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.09 (0.01)***	−0.08 (0.01)***
Gaza	0.05 (0.02)*	0.47 (0.02)***	0.05 (0.02)*	0.46 (0.02)***	0.07 (0.02)**	0.44 (0.03)***	0.06 (0.02)**	0.42 (0.03)***	0.04 (0.02).	0.38 (0.03)***	0.06 (0.02)**	0.39 (0.03)***
City	−0.24 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.24 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.24 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.24 (0.02)***	0.03 (0.03)	−0.23 (0.02)***	0.04 (0.03).	−0.23 (0.02)***	0.05 (0.03).
Refugee Camp	−0.15(0.03)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.15(0.03)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.15(0.03)***	0.03 (0.03)	−0.15(0.03)***	0.03 (0.03)	−0.15(0.03)***	0.04 (0.03)	−0.14(0.03)***	0.04 (0.03)
Married			0.01(0.02)	0.16 (0.03)***	−0.02(0.02)	0.19 (0.03)***	−0.02(0.02)	0.19 (0.03)***	−0.02(0.02)	0.20 (0.03)***	−0.02(0.02)	0.20 (0.03)***
Employed					0.15(0.02)***	−0.17 (0.03)***	0.16(0.02)***	−0.15 (0.03)***	0.16(0.02)***	−0.13 (0.03)***	0.21(0.02)***	−0.13 (0.03)***
Income							−0.04(0.01)**	−0.09 (0.02)***	−0.04(0.01)**	−0.09 (0.02)***	−0.00(0.02)	−0.08 (0.02)***
Family size									0.01(0.00)*	0.02 (0.01)***	0.01(0.00)	0.02 (0.01)***
Family size female*									0.01(0.01)	0.01 (0.01).	0.01(0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
Education											−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.01(0.01)
Deviance (Null)	65607 (66445)	51174 (52125)	65607 (66445)	51140 (52125)	65567 (66445)	51104 (52125)	65559 (66445)	51080 (52125)	65543 (66445)	51018 (52125)	65450 (66445)	51016 (52125)
AIC	65621	51188	65623	51156	65585	51122	65579	51100	65567	51042	65476	51042

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables '*Fatah support*' and '*Hamas support*', $p < 0.0001$ = ***, $p < 0.001$ = **, $p < 0.01$ = *, $p < 0.05$ =., Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset)

In Model 2b *'employed'* has been added to the model. *'Employed'* is a dichotomous variable where '1' is being employed and '0' is not being employed. As can be seen in Table 6.3, the inclusion of *'employed'* impacts both the model for Hamas and Fatah support, with both models showing fairly substantial reductions in the deviance and the AIC. Being employed is a strong predictor of support for Fatah and being unemployed is a strong predictor of support for Hamas (as can be seen by the positive B value for 'employed' for Fatah and the negative B value for 'employed' for Hamas). This suggests the importance of economic interest in determining political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories and, from the interview data, it can be supposed that clientelism and possibly welfare provision play important mediating roles. The B value for 'female' gets substantially closer to zero for both *'Fatah support'* and *'Hamas support'* decreasing by 0.08 and 0.10 respectively. Therefore, differences in employment status partially account for the gender gap confirming ***Hypothesis 1b***. Interestingly, although ***Hypothesis 1b*** only suggests employment status is important for Fatah, Table 6.3 shows that it is also important for determining support for Hamas. This adds weight to the division of labour explanation as set out in ***Hypothesis 1a(ii).***

> ***Hypothesis 1c: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female income levels.***

$$\text{Model 2c: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married} + \text{employed} + \text{income}$$

In Model 2c *'income'* is included. It is created from the household income variable described above. As shown in Table 6.3 the inclusion of the *'income'* variable in Model 2c does account for some of the variation in *'Fatah support'* and *'Hamas support'* with people with higher incomes less likely to support either Hamas or Fatah. This may be because they are less needy of either the employment opportunities Fatah offers or the welfare services that Hamas provides. Interestingly, the inclusion of *'income'* does not reduce the B coefficient for *'female'* for either Hamas or Fatah and so it does not help explain the gender gap in political support. This may be because this is a household income variable, so that it obscures the gendered division of labour that may account for the gender gap in political support. Whatever the case, ***Hypothesis 1c*** cannot be accepted with the data available from the polls.

> ***Hypothesis 1d: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by women's greater role in care provision.***

It is difficult to suggest one clear variable included in the opinion polls which can measure whether women have a greater responsibility for care than men. One statistical work around could be to use a variable for *'family size'* and

see if there is an interaction between *'family size'* and *'female'* in accounting for political support. As such it is possible to analyse whether women with larger families are more likely to support Hamas or Fatah compared to both men and women with smaller families. The idea being that women in larger families are more likely to have a greater caring responsibility.

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Model 2d: Political support} \sim {} & \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} \\ & + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married} + \text{employed} + \text{income} \\ & + \text{family size} + \text{family size} * \text{female}\end{aligned}$$

'Family size' is a variable ranging from 1-13. To look the impact of family size (and therefore perhaps caring responsibility) on women, a variable called *'familysize*female'* is included which means family size multiplied by the female variable i.e., all men will have a value of '0' (as anything multiplied by zero is zero) and so only the impact of increasingly large families on women is addressed by this variable. Members of larger families are likely to support both Fatah and Hamas more than members of smaller families, and this relationship is statistically significant. This is probably connected to the relationship between family size and poverty. To speculate, it may be that more middle-class families with greater resources tend to have a smaller number of children, while poorer families have larger numbers of children. Those in larger families are perhaps therefore more likely to be dependent on political parties both for support and employment more than others. This is similar to the way the income variable seems to explain support for both Fatah and Hamas. Another way of seeing it could be that the role of family as a source of connections explains the greater support for Fatah among some people in big families, and the greater dependence on welfare explains the greater support for Hamas of others in big families. However, these explanations at this stage are just speculation.

The variable *'familysize*female'* is not statistically significant in the Fatah or Hamas model. This suggests either that women's greater responsibility for care is not an important explanation for political support in the Palestinian Territories, or that greater female responsibility for care is not properly addressed by this variable. It also may be that women's greater role in care, is already partially be incorporated into the *'employment'* variable above.

Looking at the impact on the gender gap, including *'family size'* and *'family size*female'* reduces the B value for *'female'* by 0.08 for *'Hamas support'*. This partially supports ***Hypothesis 1d*** but considering the lack of statistical significance for the *'family size*female'* discussed above, I would not be willing to state this with confidence. Family size variables may in fact be addressing another issue even if the effect of *'familysize*female'* is not statistically significant in itself.

Interestingly, the B value for *'female'* increases (by -0.05) for *'Fatah support'*. This may be that while members of bigger families in general are more

likely to support Fatah, women within those families are still no more likely to support them.

> ***Hypothesis 1e: The gender difference in education levels (partially) accounts for (reduces) the gender gap in political support.***

$$\text{Model 2e: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married} + \text{employed} + \text{income} + \text{family size} + \text{family size} * \text{female} + \text{education}$$

This model includes the variable *'education'*. As can be seen in Table 6.3, including *'education'* makes only a small reduction in the size of B values for *'female'* for the Fatah model and has no impact on the B value for *'female'* in the Hamas model. As such the null hypothesis cannot be rejected ***(Hypothesis 1e)*** and gender differences in education levels do not explain the gender gap in political support. However, I would suggest keeping *'education'* in the model as it is an important indicator of socioeconomic status, and an important variable in explaining support for Fatah, with more educated people significantly less likely to support Fatah, and the inclusion of *'education'* greatly reducing the residual deviance and the AIC compared to previous models.

Table 6.3 shows that when socioeconomic variables are included, the gender gap in political support is greatly reduced. From Model 1b to 2e, the B value for *'female'* reduces from -0.35 to -0.31 in terms of support for Fatah and from 0.47 to 0.29 in terms of support for Hamas. As such the null hypothesis can be rejected and ***Hypothesis 1*** can be accepted, that gender differences in socioeconomic status do partially explain (reduce) the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, although most of the explanation here is due to the gender gap in employment.

As has been shown socioeconomic status impacts on the gender gap in political support. Yet *why* men and women's different socioeconomic status means they support different parties is different from models in most other studies. Fatah, by dominating the PA, has been able for several years to provide its supporters with employment opportunities. Hamas has closer links to the charitable sector and provides welfare and support to the most vulnerable in society. As such differential gender roles which mean men are under greater pressure than women to earn an income and women are more responsible for caring and supporting the vulnerable in society could explain why women support Hamas more and men support Fatah more.

> ***Hypothesis 2: The gender gap in support for Hamas can be (partially) explained by the difference in male and female levels of religiosity.***

Differences in political belief, as discussed in Chapter 4, might account for the gender gap in political support. Most interviewees attributed the gender gap in political support to women being more religious than men.

$$\text{Model 3: Political support} \sim \text{female} + \text{date} + \text{age} + \text{Gaza} + \text{city} + \text{refugee camp} + \text{married} + \text{employed} + \text{income} + \text{family size} + \text{family size} * \text{female} + \text{education} + \text{religiosity}$$

In Model 3 I use a *'religiosity'* variable which combines three indicators (self-identification, prayer and reading the Quran) to form a scale from 1–3 as described above, with being more religious being coded higher on the scale. Unfortunately, none of these indicators are available for Poll 1.

In order to work out whether the gender difference in religiosity is the explanation for the gender gap in political support, I will compare Model 1b, Model 2e and Model 3 for support for Fatah and Hamas. The results can be seen in Table 6.4.

In the comparison of models across all polls (as shown in Table 6.4), the addition of *'religiosity'* reduces the residual deviance for Fatah by 179 and for Hamas by 342. Comparing the deviance between the Models shows that the addition of '*religiosity'* makes a greater reduction of the deviance for Hamas rather than Fatah, indicating that religion is a more important predictor of *'Hamas support'* than *'Fatah support'*.

Introducing *'religiosity'* reduces the gender gap as the strength of the '*female'* variable is slightly reduced here, with the beta value for '*Fatah support'* reducing from -0.31 to -0.28, and the beta value for Hamas reducing from 0.29 to 0.24 as shown in Table 6.4. Therefore, ***Hypothesis 2*** can be accepted because gender differences in religiosity do to some extent explain gender differences in political support. Nonetheless, *'female'* is still a strong predictor of political support, even when accounting for *'religiosity'*. This indicates that other factors play an important part too.

Hypothesis 3: The gender gap in reported political support can be (partially) explained by the differential way tools of oppression are applied to men and women.

Although, interview data and literature on Palestine strongly suggested that men might be more afraid of repercussions for supporting the opposition party, there was no way of reliably statistically testing this using the polling data (as was explored in Chapter 5). As such, it is not possible to produce a model of the gender gap in political support which accounts for the role of oppression. Nevertheless, I am unwilling to dismiss it as a very likely explanation of at least part of the gender gap in reported political support.

In summary, it seems that the best model of political support to take account of the gender gap – with the data available – is Model 3, which

Table 6.4 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e with Model 3, which includes a variable to control for level of religious belief, to explain the gender gap in political support for Fatah and Hamas.

	Model 1b		*Model 2e*		*Model 3*	
Variable	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*
(Intercept)	−23.37 (1.26)***	1.20 (1.49)	−24.93 (1.28)***	−0.93 (1.52)	−34.70 (1.49)***	14.28 (1.73)***
Female	**−0.35 (0.02)*****	**0.47 (0.02)*****	**−0.31 (0.05)*****	**0.29 (0.06)*****	**−0.28 (0.05)*****	**0.24 (0.06)*****
Date	0.17 (0.01)***	−0.02 (0.01).	0.19 (0.01)***	−0.00 (0.01)	0.26 (0.01)***	−0.12 (0.01)***
Age	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.05 (0.01)***	−0.09 (0.01)***	−0.08 (0.01)***	−0.08 (0.01)***	−0.09 (0.01)***
Gaza	0.05 (0.02)*	0.47 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)**	0.39 (0.03)***	0.10 (0.02)***	0.34 (0.03)***
City	−0.24 (0.02)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.23 (0.02)***	0.05 (0.03).	−0.25 (0.02)***	0.08 (0.03)**.
Refugee Camp	−0.15(0.03)***	0.02 (0.03)	−0.14(0.03)***	0.04 (0.03)	−0.16(0.03)***	0.07 (0.03).
Married			-0.02(0.02)	0.20 (0.03)***	-0.01(0.02)	0.18 (0.03)***
Employment			0.21(0.02)***	−0.13 (0.03)***	0.20(0.02)***	−0.11 (0.03)***
Income			−0.00(0.02)	−0.08 (0.02)***	-0.02(0.02)	−0.06 (0.02)***
Family Size			0.01(0.00)	0.02 (0.01)***	0.01(0.00).	0.02 (0.01)**
*Family Size*female*			0.01(0.01)	0.01 (0.01)	0.01(0.01)	0.01 (0.01).
Education			−0.07 (0.01)***	-0.01(0.01)	−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.01(0.01)
Religiosity					−0.19(0.01)***	0.32(0.02)***
Deviance (Null)	66262 (66589)	51789 (52239)	65450 (66445)	51016 (52125)	65271 (66445)	50674 (52125)
AIC	66266	51793	65476	51042	65299	50702

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables '*Fatah support*' and '*Hamas support*', p < 0.0001 = ***, p < 0.001 = **, p < 0.01 = *, p < 0.05 =., Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset)

includes socioeconomic indicators as well as a variable for religiosity. Compared to Model 1a, this model shows the beta value for *'female'* for *'Fatah support'* has reduced from -0.34 to -0.28 a reduction of 0.06 and the beta value for *'female'* for *'Hamas support'* is now 0.24, reduced from 0.47, a reduction of 0.23. Further, the total variance has been reduced by 991 (from 66262 to 65291) for *'Fatah support'* and by 1115 (from 51789 to 50674) for *'Hamas support'*. However, *'female'* remains a significant predictor of political support when the models are applied to the combined data. This is likely because of a number of reasons. First, it has not been possible to accommodate one of the major possible explanations for the gender gap as described in ***Hypothesis 3***. Further larger data sets make it easier for variables to be seen as statistically significant, when as is shown below, on a poll by poll level, with Model 3, gender is no longer statistically significant in most cases.

Comparing Gaza and the West Bank after 2007

A final test of the models for explaining the gender gap in political support in the Palestinian Territories is to compare how well they explain political support in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, after the change in political control with the Hamas takeover of Gaza in 2007. The differences between these territories during this time period have been important throughout the analysis above. As such, I will explore the data in two additional tables (Tables 6.5 and 6.6) to look at Models 1b, 2e and 3 in the Gaza Strip and West Bank after the 2007 split.

Model 3 accounts for most of the gender gap in political support in Gaza after 2007, rendering *'female'* no longer a statistically significant predictor of support for Fatah. But it accounts for little of the gender gap in support in the West Bank after 2007. The gender gap in support for Fatah in the Gaza Strip after 2007 is not as big as it is in the West Bank, indeed once socioeconomic factors (i.e., employment) has been taken into account this gender gap hardly exists. This might be because while there are a few Fatah employees still in the Gaza Strip, there is no need for men more than women to show allegiance to Fatah in order to gain employment, as Fatah are not present to provide jobs. Support for Hamas among women in the Gaza Strip is quite easily accounted for with some socioeconomic variables and by accounting for religious belief. There does not seem to be the additional 'hidden' factor that some men may support Hamas but are reluctant to say so because of the security context, so the gender gap in support for Hamas in the Gaza Strip post-2007 is quite easily accounted for using the variables within the polling data. Whereas in the West Bank after 2007, repression of Hamas is at its highest, and the other side of this coin is that pressure to support Fatah is much higher for anyone wanting a job in particular. This may explain why even after controlling for socioeconomic variables and religiosity, men still say that they support Fatah more than women, and

Table 6.5 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e, and 3 in the West Bank in the period 2007–2015 to explain the gender gap in political support.

	Model 1b		*Model 2e*		*Model 3*	
Variable	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*
(Intercept)	−24.44 (2.56)***	−10.42 (3.43)**	−24.44 (2.69)***	−11.94 (3.59)***	−37.67 (3.01)***	6.31 (3.91)
Female	**−0.44 (0.04)*****	**0.90 (0.05)*****	**−0.57 (0.09)*****	**0.72 (0.12)*****	**−0.49 (0.09)*****	**0.62 (0.12)*****
Date	0.18(0.02)***	0.06(0.03)**	0.18(0.02)***	0.08(0.03)**	0.29(0.02)***	−0.06(0.03)*
Age	−0.05(0.01)***	−0.11(0.02)***	−0.09(0.01)***	−0.12(0.02)***	−0.08(0.01)***	−0.15(0.02)***
City	−0.22(0.03)***	−0.01(0.04)	−0.19(0.04)***	0.03(0.04)	−0.22(0.04)***	0.06(0.04)
Refugee Camp	0.04(0.06)	−0.08(0.08)	0.02(0.06)	−0.08(0.08)	0.01(0.06)	−0.07(0.08)
Married			0.10(0.05)*	0.10(0.06)	0.10(0.05)*	0.08(0.06)
Employment			0.11(0.04)**	−0.18(0.05)***	0.11(0.04)*	−0.17(0.05)**
Income			−0.08(0.02)***	−0.03(0.03)	−0.09(0.02)***	−0.01(0.03)
Family Size			−0.00(0.01)	0.03(0.01)*	−0.00(0.01)	0.02(0.01).
*Family Size*female*			0.02(0.01)	0.01(0.01)	0.01(0.01)	0.01(0.02)
Education			−0.07(0.01)***	−0.01(0.02)	−0.07(0.01)***	−0.01(0.02)
Religiosity					−0.25(0.02)***	0.41(0.03)***
Deviance (Null)	22200 (22697)	15928 (16386)	22141 (22697)	15890 (16386)	22033 (22697)	15698 (16386)
AIC	22212	15940	22165	15914	22059	15724

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables '*Fatah support*' and '*Hamas support*' for the West Bank 2007-2015, $p < 0.0001$ = ***, $p < 0.001$ = **, $p < 0.01$ = *, $p < 0.05$ =., Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset)

Table 6.6 To compare the ability of Models 1b, 2e, and 3 in the Gaza Strip in the period 2007–2015 to explain the gender gap in political support.

	Model 1b		*Model 2e*		*Model 3*	
Variable	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*	*Fatah*	*Hamas*
(Intercept)	23.94 (6.16)***	−1.47 (6.76)	25.80 (6.26)***	−5.36 (6.87)	32.27 (6.36)***	−19.78 (7.06)**
Female	**−0.15(0.05)****	**0.44 (0.06)*****	**−0.00(0.14)**	**0.31 (0.16).**	**0.06(0.14)**	**0.23 (0.16)**
Date	−0.18(0.05)***	−0.00(0.05)	−0.19(0.05)***	−0.03(0.05)	−0.23(0.05)***	0.10(0.05).
Age	−0.10(0.02)***	0.04(0.02).	−0.11(0.02)***	0.01(0.02).	−0.08(0.02)***	−0.05(0.03)*
City	−0.36(0.08)***	0.28(0.09)**	−0.36(0.08)***	0.29(0.10)**	−0.38(0.08)***	0.33(0.10)***
Refugee Camp	−0.33(0.09)***	0.31(0.10)**	−0.33(0.09)***	0.33(0.10)**	−0.34(0.09)***	0.35(0.11)**
Married			−0.10(0.06)	0.20(0.08)*	−0.08(0.07)	0.18(0.08)*
Employment			0.28(0.07)***	−0.10(0.08)	0.28(0.07)***	−0.09(0.08)
Income			0.20(0.05)***	−0.06(0.05)	0.19(0.05)***	−0.04(0.05)
Family Size			0.00(0.01)	0.03(0.01).	0.01(0.01)	0.03(0.02).
*Family Size*female*			0.00(0.02)	0.01(0.02)	0.00(0.02)	0.00(0.02)
Education			−0.05(0.02)*	−0.00(0.02)	−0.06(0.02)**	0.02(0.02)
Religiosity					−0.65(0.07)***	1.73(0.11)***
Deviance (Null)	9151.4 (9232.6)	7658.5 (7735.1)	9104.9 (9232.6)	7638.9 (7735.1)	9023.8 (9232.6)	7336.3 (7735.1)
AIC	9163.4	7670.5	9128.9	7662.9	9049.8	7362.3

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables '*Fatah support*' and '*Hamas support*' for the Gaza Strip 2007-2015, p < 0.0001 = ***, p < 0.001 = **, p < 0.01 = *, p < 0.05 =., Data = PSR Polls 1-38, 42 and 56 (Merged Dataset)

women still say they support Hamas more than men (or rather perhaps fewer men say they support Hamas because men are more likely to fear the consequences of making a statement like this than women). As such, this might be a backdoor way of assessing the gendered role of oppression on reporting of political support.

Gender Gaps Across Time

Below I also compare Model 3, with the simplest model, Model 1a, for each different polling date. Figures 6.2 and 6.3 show the gender gap in predicted probability of a man or a woman supporting Fatah or Hamas using the following equation:

$$\begin{aligned} Gender\ Gap = ((&Predicted\ \ probability\ of\ \ a\ woman\ supporting\ Fatah \\ &- Predicted\ \ probability\ of\ \ a\ woman\ supporting\ Hamas) \\ &-(Predicted\ \ probability\ of\ \ a\ man\ supporting\ Fatah \\ &- Predicted\ \ probability\ of\ \ a\ man\ supporting\ Hamas)) \end{aligned}$$

Logistic regressions for the above models have been conducted on each poll individually, to generate predicted probabilities. This reduces the impact of analysing such a large dataset and helps to show how the data varies across time. Figure 6.1 shows the gender gap in predicted probability of supporting Fatah and Hamas. The further a point falls from the zero line, the greater the gender gap in political support. The gender gap is clearly greatly reduced in Model 3 compared to Model 1a. Figure 6.2 shows how these differ for the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show the *'female'* coefficients, and the levels of significance for support for Fatah and Hamas for Models 1a and 3. The lines attached to each point are of tapering thickness. The thinnest line shows a multiplication of the Standard Error for the gender coefficient of 3.29; the medium width line shows a multiplication of the Standard Error of 2.58, and the thickest line shows a multiplication of the Standard Error of 1.96. These three thicknesses denote the level of statistical significance of the coefficient. Where none of these lines cross the zero-line, gender is statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level. Where the various lines cross the zero lines it shows that 'female' is no longer statistically significant at that level.

Figure 6.3 shows that in Model 1a, gender is a statistically significant predictor of political support for Hamas and for Fatah in a majority of the polls. In nine out of the 40 polls *'female'* is statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level for both Fatah and Hamas. In only one poll – March 2010 – is *'female'* not significant for either Fatah or Hamas.

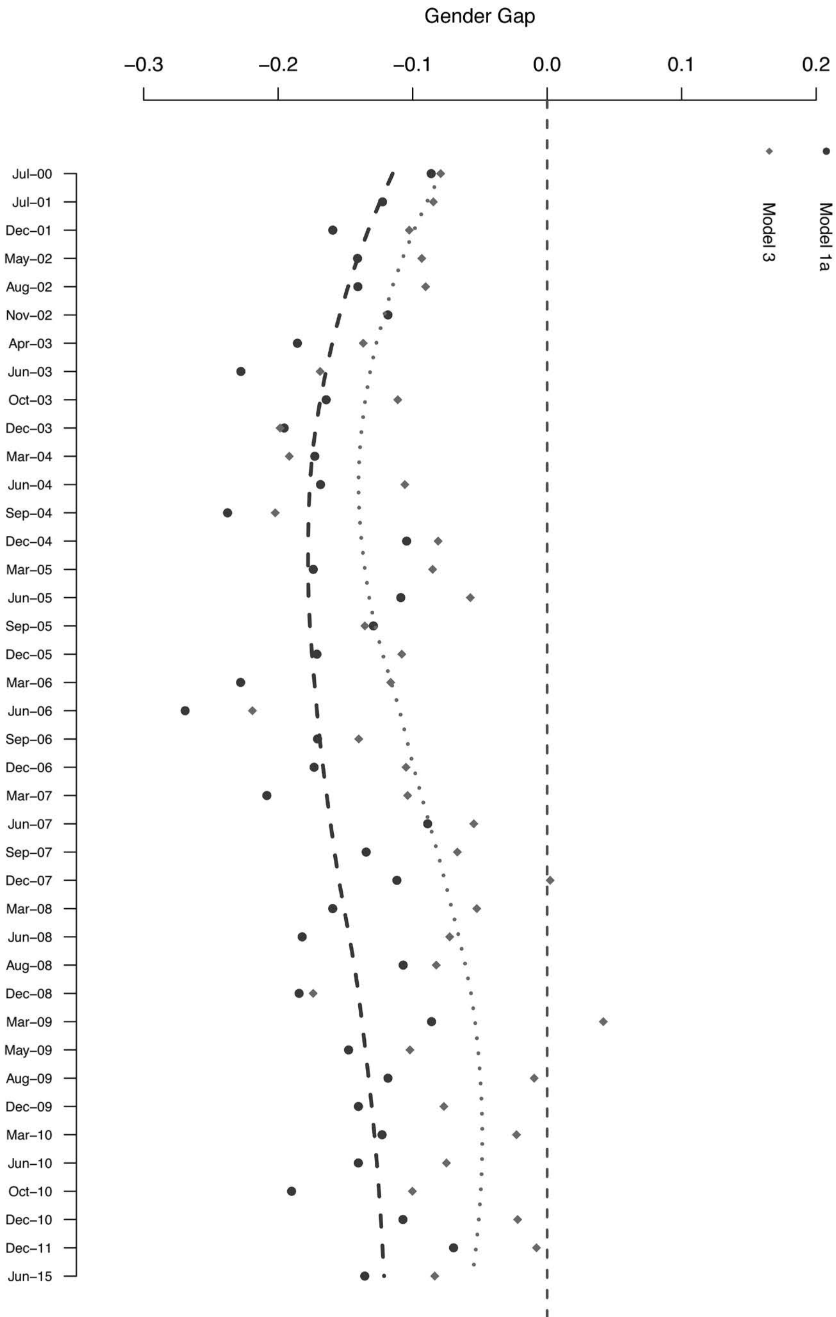

Figure 6.1 To compare gender gaps in predicted probability of support for Hamas and Fatah in Models 1a and 3.

Data = PSR Polls 1–38, 42, and 56 (Merged Dataset)

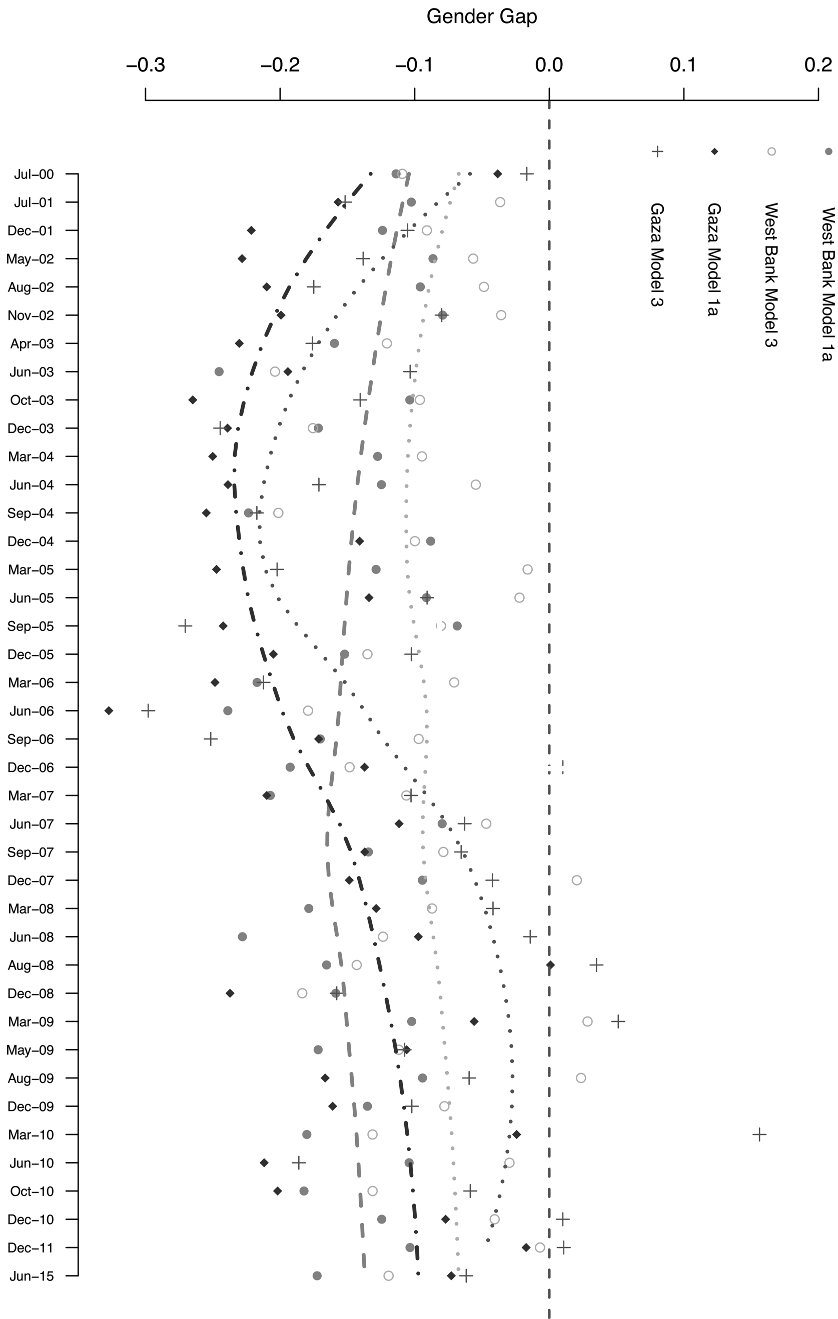

Figure 6.2 To compare gender gaps in predicted probability of support for Hamas and Fatah in Models 1a and 3 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Data = PSR Polls 1–38, 42, and 56 (Merged Dataset)

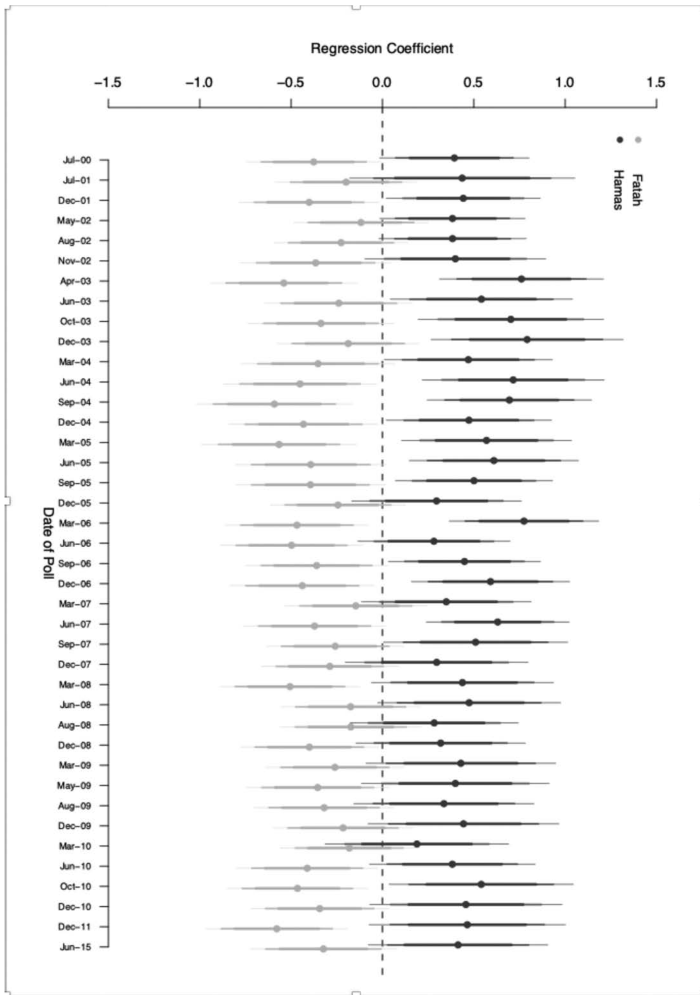

Figure 6.3 To show 'female' coefficients for support for Hamas and Fatah in Model 1a. Levels of significance are denoted through thick ($p < 0.05$), medium ($p < 0.01$), and thin ($p < 0.001$) lines.

Data = PSR Polls 1–38, 42, and 56 (Merged Dataset)

Figure 6.4 shows that once socioeconomic status and *'religiosity'* are taken into account, this is no longer the case. *'female'* is only a statistically significant predictor of support for both Fatah and Hamas in two polls but is not at all significant in 23 of the 40 polls.

These findings show that accounting for gender differences in socioeconomic status – most specifically employment status – and religiosity for the most part explain the gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Accounting for socioeconomic status and religious

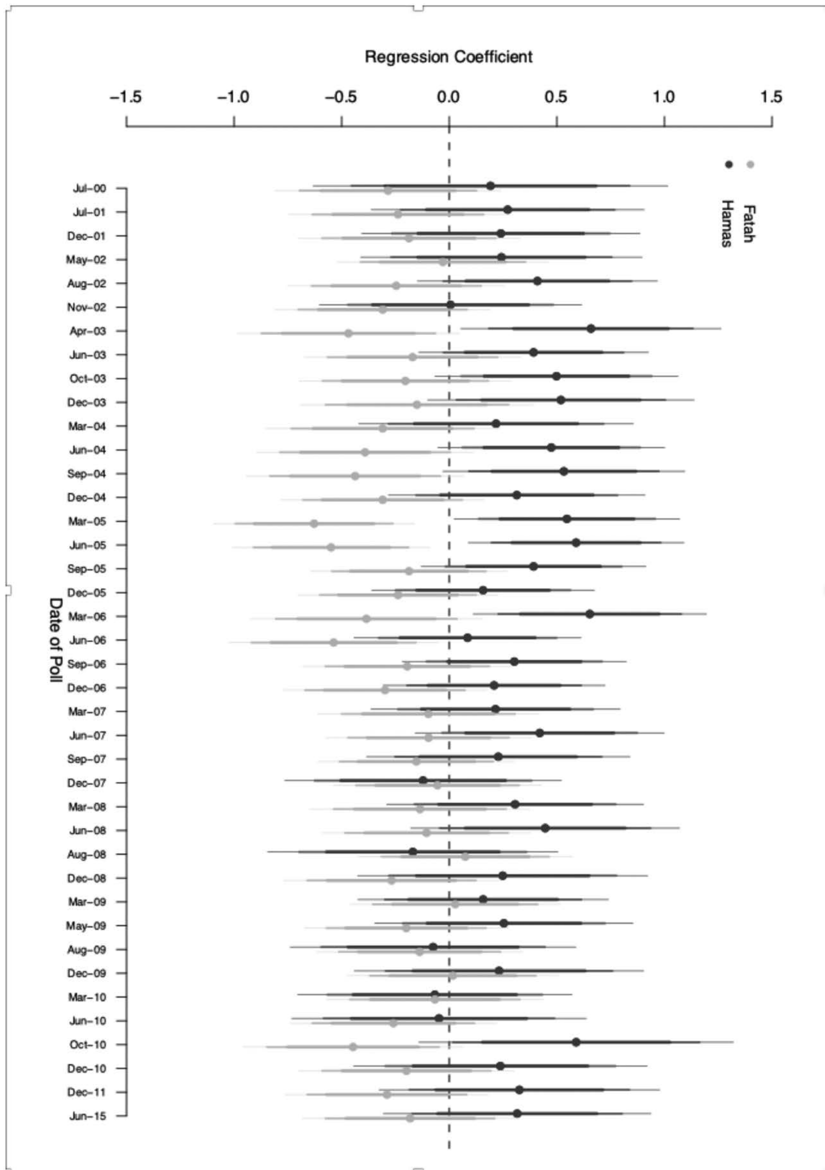

Figure 6.4 To show 'female' coefficients for support for Fatah and Hamas in Model 3. Levels of significance are denoted through thick ($p < 0.05$), medium ($p < 0.01$), and thin ($p < 0.001$) lines.

Data = PSR Polls 1–38, 42, and 56 (Merged Dataset)

belief and practice mostly explain why women are more likely to support Hamas than men and why men are more likely to support Fatah than women.

6.2 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have shown that the statistical evidence supports the explanations for the gender gap in terms of gender differences in employment status and religiosity. These findings echo what I was told by an interviewee who said that the two main motivators for people are “money and faith” (Mona).

The key variables in Model 3 which explain the gender gap in political support are variables which are very prominent in literature and interviews in the chapters above. Socioeconomic status and religious belief and practice are both highlighted frequently as areas where men and women differ, and which often impacts their political support.

One of the main explanations for the gender gap in political support in the Palestinian Territories is the gender difference in socioeconomic status. Women and men both tend to hold traditional gender roles in Palestine, with men doing most of the earning and women having a more domestic role. The main explanation for the gender differences in support is the gender gap in levels of employment, with men’s employment being an important factor in explaining the gender gap in support for Fatah in particular. Further, women are lower than men in most social indicators. The gendered division of labour might point to why women support Hamas which does more for the poor and vulnerable than men – although the evidence was not definitive on this – and why men support Fatah which is a better bet for employment opportunities and a stable economy more than women. The role played by international aid, corruption, nepotism, and the charitable role of the Islamic establishment mean that the usual description of political economic positions as left or right wing do not fit. Further, the gender gap in political support suggests that patriarchal family structures should not be seen as quite as all-powerful as has often been suggested, as clearly Palestinian women do not always feel obliged to support the same political organisations as their male relatives.

In Palestine, religion also plays an important role in shaping women’s engagement with political groups. Indeed, women being more religious than men has led them to choose the more socially ‘conservative’ party more than men which seems to closely resembles the ‘traditional’ gender gap. Nonetheless, as shown in Chapter 4, religiosity in Palestine should not be pigeonholed as ‘traditional’. Some Islamists in Palestine have rejected certain backwards traditions, advocating the improvement of women’s social situation and endorsing female participation in the workforce and further education. Further, Islamism in the Palestinian ‘colonial’ context interacts with revolutionary and nationalist ideas surrounding identity, authenticity,

and justice. As such, women's greater religiosity cannot be seen solely as a conservative phenomenon, but one that interacts in a complex way with patriarchal social expectations, nationalism, and ideas around gender equality.

By modelling the gender gap in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, this chapter has shown that most of the variation in the gender gap in political support can be attributed to the way the different parties appeal to men and women – because of the way the economic context of Palestine is so gendered, and due to women's greater religious belief. However, what cannot be modelled is the role of oppression. By dividing analysis between the West Bank and Gaza Strip after the 2007 division the data seems to show – perhaps – the 'shadow' of the influence of PA repression of Hamas. It may be, as suggested in Chapter 5, that the gender gap in political support is – at least partially – a gender gap in reporting political support, due to men being more frequent targets of Israel and the PA's 'security apparatus'.

7 Beyond Palestine

This book has shown there to be a gender gap in political support in the Palestinian Territories which demands the attention of both scholars and practitioners of politics. Women have been supporting Hamas significantly more than men for at least two decades, while men have been more supportive of Fatah. This gender gap has serious implications for Palestinian politics, but in this chapter, I explore beyond the Palestinian Territories.

Political scholars and spectators often make assumptions based on male or Western experiences and understandings, and so using this gendered Palestinian study as a starting point could throw a different light on non-western politics. Might it be the case that women throughout the Middle East region are also greater supporters of Islamist parties than men? Might similar patterns of greater female religiosity exist? Does greater male dependence upon the employment prospects offered by parties of government impact political support in other states? Could the oppressive tactics of the authoritarian governments mean that male support for opposition Islamist parties is continually underestimated? Could these patterns contribute to our understanding of why and how Islamist parties often triumph when democratic moments have happened in the region?

This chapter explores the extent to which there may be a broader pattern of gender gaps in political support across the wider Arab Middle East. Understanding how gender interacts with political support is important for increasing understanding of politics in authoritarian settings on a much broader scale, and crucial for understanding and aiding transitions to more open and less oppressive democratic systems.

This book has pointed to the importance of understanding the political context in order to interpret and make a sensible use of opinion poll data. However, in this chapter, I will be using opinion poll data in broad-brush manner without the in-depth political context that gives the real understanding. This is as a scoping exercise to see whether the wider landscape may in anyway resemble what has been explored in depth. I hope to provoke further detailed and nuanced research which broadens and deepens our understanding of how gender might impact political support in the

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-7

non-western world. Here I limit my speculation in this chapter to Arabic-speaking majority states, which are surveyed in the Arab Barometer.

7.1 Regional Similarities and Differences

The major difference between the Palestinian Territories and the other Arab Middle East states is the context of the Israeli Occupation. The way the occupation impacts the lives of Palestinians and the manner of control is not replicated in any other state. Palestine also stands out as being one of the more pluralistic and politically engaged societies in the region, and as one which has been – due to the broader conflict – studied to a much greater degree. As such, it is an easier starting point for research of this kind than some of the more oppressive neighbouring states due to the greater availability of data and willingness of people to be interviewed.

Despite these stark differences, and before jumping to the statistical evidence, it is worth briefly surveying where there may be similarities in the patterns of gendered interaction with the economy and politics between Palestine and the Arab Middle East region.

7.1.1 Economy and Political Support

While the context of occupation is unique to the Palestinian Territories, economic phenomena related to it, such as high levels of unemployment and financial insecurity, and rentier type states are relatively common in the wider Arab region. The Economic Research Forum (2018) estimates that almost two-thirds of the population in the region are either poor or vulnerable to multidimensional poverty. Many states in the Arab region may also be seen as rentier states, with governments depending on forms of income other than taxation for their budgets. These may be revenue from the sale of natural resources such as oil and gas but also – perhaps to a lesser extent – in terms of military or political aid, due to the strategic location of a state as a transit point or even in terms of workers remittances (Beblawi 1987). Rentier income often goes hand-in-hand with authoritarian styles of government because the government is able to obtain their income without the consent of the population.

Numerous regimes in the region distribute ‘rent’ as a way to shore up political support (Khan 2004, p. 4; Blaydes 2011; Clark 2012). Connected to this, patterns of clientelism and patronage are common to those political parties most closely linked to the government, in a pattern similar to the Palestinian Territories. Largely due to the persistent authoritarianism in the region, they do not focus on policies in the same way as political parties in democracies are expected to do. Jamal and Khatib describe non-Islamist parties in ways which sound familiar to descriptions of Fatah:

> In the Arab world political parties, with the exception of Islamist parties, remain weak. They are often unable to formulate wide and

> encompassing issue-oriented policies or outlooks. Many Arab political parties remain personalistic, tribal, kin-based, and narrow, lending themselves to a model of clientelistic distribution rather than constituency interest aggregation.
>
> *(Jamal and Khatib 2014, p255)*

We might expect there to be similar gender differences in support for these distributive political parties if there are similarities in the gendered division of labour within family structures. The Arab Barometer data shows that 60 percent of men work compared to 22 percent of women, confirming that there are broad gender differences in employment in the region (Arab Barometer Waves 1–5 merged). This finding confirms to a certain extent views in the academic literature, which have designated the standard family structure in the Arab Middle East as a 'classic patriarchy', although of course this structure is neither stable across time or place and should rightly in further study be analysed within its own context (Barakat 1985, p. 1994; Kandiyoti 1988; Kamrava 1998; Doumani 2003; Baxter 2007). As the gendered division of labour in families tends to emphasise the need for men get employment more than women, then the coupling of high unemployment with clientelism from political parties, may encourage greater male support for those parties in a position to offer employment and patronage.

There is additional research in the region which could contribute to gender differences in support for clientelistic politicians. Studies in Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria have shown that women are less likely than men to benefit in terms of access to jobs or services from parliamentary clientelism or from knowing local councillors (Benstead 2016; 2019). This, Benstead (2016, p. 189) argues, is due to women being perceived as less important by politicians, because they have fewer resources and are less politically active, and because 'patriarchal norms' limit the interactions between male politicians and female citizens, so they are less able to request services and favours. This might reinforce our expected findings of women being less concerned with showing support to the parties in power in return for economic benefits.

Islamist organisations also distribute benefits to gain political support, but across the region the emphasis of the Islamist parties tends more towards service provision. Islamists stand out across the Middle East for their Islamic social institutions and private voluntary organisations, encompassing charities, schools, medical clinics, and day care centres. Due to the support systems they provide they have often been described as creating 'states within states' (Clark 2004, pp. 941–942). While Clark (2004) questions whether they are used for political recruitment of the poor, emphasising instead the middle-class basis of the Islamic social institutions in terms of both who runs them and who primarily benefits from them, other studies show that the welfare provided by the Islamists seems to benefit women. Blaydes (2014) in a study of two different areas in Cairo, found that health outcomes for women were better in an area controlled by an Islamist organisation. While she does not definitively point to a 'causal mechanism' she

suggests it is likely related to their ‘health and service provision’ (Blaydes 2014, p. 502). This sounds familiar to the welfare service provision associated with Hamas. Here again we may expect women to be the primary users and beneficiaries of these networks through their role as care givers. As such, the different emphasis of the benefits provided by Islamist organisations means they may be more likely to attract women as political supporters.

7.1.2 Belief

The religious-secular divide in political positions, as shown by Hamas and Fatah, reflects the divisions between the major political parties in many states in the Arab world (Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia, and Morocco show similar divides). The Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamist organisations throughout the region have been pursuing the Islamisation of society for decades, through mosques, education, and the provision of welfare (Mandaville 2014), while in many states broadly secular nationalist parties have tended to hold power.

In looking at support for Islamist parties, as well as their economic role, their religious identity is certainly an important factor determining support. A study in Tunisia suggests that people might be more likely to vote for Islamist parties, when they feel more frustrated with their present – and in particular their financial conditions (Grewal et al. 2019). The authors of this study suggest this may be because when people feel strain, they might tend to favour a party which might offer ‘divine compensation in the hereafter’ (Grewal et al. 2019, p. 859). Those with stronger beliefs are presumably more likely to support these organisations.

There is also a widespread disillusionment with explicit feminism in the Middle East. Feminism has strong associations with colonialism, in particular with the British and French colonial projects in the region. Ahmed (1992, p. 129) tells how issues surrounding women’s appearance and behaviour are deeply connected to the colonial history of the region which portrayed the ‘native culture’ as innately misogynistic. Feminism has been used ‘as an instrument of colonial domination’ and so has been tainted ‘in Arab eyes’ ever since (Ahmed 1992, p. 167). Since the colonial period, issues surrounding women, and signifiers such as the headscarf, have become fused with issues of nationalism and culture.

More recently, as nationalist movements tended to converge into state structures, feminism has come to be seen by many as serving an authoritarian leadership or an educated elite at the expense of the people (Moghadam 1994; Sika and Khodary 2012, p. 99; Muhanna-Matar 2014, p. 11). Bush and Jamal (2014, p. 4) found that ‘improving women’s rights may serve as a strategy of authoritarian survival in the Arab world’ by gaining a regime international legitimacy. They found that some members of the public opposed progressive gender policies because they were seen to strengthen a regime which they opposed (Bush and Jamal 2014).

Across the Arab World, in a manner similar to what has been described in the section on belief in the Palestinian Territories, Islamist parties have, sometimes, been seen to promote an Islamic form of women's empowerment. Islamists have tended to welcome women's education. Indeed, according to Ahmed (1992, p. 194), the Muslim Brothers in Egypt 'stressed that education was as essential to women as to men, chiefly that they might fulfil their roles as wives and mothers, though this need not be their sole objective'. Abu-Lughod (1998, p. 243) suggests that although Islamists 'stigmatise sexual independence and public freedoms as Western' they are open to the idea of women working and women's education. Belonging to, participating in, and supporting an Islamist organisation can be a form of empowerment in itself. Blaydes and El Tarouty (2009, p. 379) suggest that women who vote for the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt 'often carve out a unique form of *political* empowerment in a society where politics is often viewed as a male domain'. Biagini (2012, p. 49) suggests that women activists in the Freedom and Justice and Al-Nour parties in Egypt and for the Ennahda party in Tunisia are motivated by the idea of constructing a new society based through the 're-affirmation of Muslim Identity' rather than any subscription to western-style feminism. Yet despite this she claims that Islamist women's activism 'aims precisely at enhancing their social and political status' and that they often intend to 'redress the gender imbalances present in their societies' but they do so by promoting community values over individual empowerment (Biagini 2012, p. 49).

Hegland (1999, p. 177) also suggests that women are helping to shape Islamic discourse as 'active participants'. They may 'develop personal Islamic interpretations … gain public office and pressure for change, and appropriate rituals and myths for their own needs. They may subvert religious meanings to better fit their own existential situations.' (Hegland 1999, p. 192)

Further, several scholars suggest that Islamist organisations target women in particular for recruitment. Women act as markers between the 'righteous Islamic nation' and the corrupt West. Further, they are also the backbone of the family which is the major source of stability for an Islamic society (Hegland 1999, p. 183; Ben Shitrit 2013, pp. 85–86). Hegland (1999, p. 183) suggests that women are used as 'Islamic icons; as religious, political, and anti-imperialist symbols; and as recruiters and socialisers'. As such, Islamist movements 'give women attention, recruit them into movements, court their votes, use them for leadership and propaganda, inflame them to attack the opposition, bring them into public positions and offices, get them on the streets in mass demonstrations, pressure them into Muslim dress and behaviour, urge them to correct their less-advanced sisters, and honour them for donating their sons for service and martyrdom' (Hegland 1999, p. 183).

Blaydes and El Tarouty propose that women in Egypt are targeted by Islamist activists because they are 'highly effective political recruiters for

Muslim Brotherhood candidates' (Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009, p. 365). The advantages of women recruiters for the Muslim Brotherhood is their ability to make house calls to other women, and to use pre-existing social networks and mosque groups to emphasise the benefits of supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and helping in their work to aid the poor (Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009, p. 374). 'Muslim Brotherhood women — generally literate and members of the middle class — are highly effective recruiters of other women, and the symbolic importance of their participation may garner even more support for their candidates' (Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009, p. 379).

Clearly, there are draws and benefits for women in joining and supporting Islamist parties, but it is also important to see that women may be differentially attracted to these parties because many of the social restrictions on the behaviour of women are common to both the Palestinian Territories and the wider Arab region (Kandiyoti 1988; Kamrava 1998; Deeb and Harb 2013, p. 9). While the potential of membership in or support for an Islamist party of being empowering or beneficial for women's rights remains contentious, yet it seems that these options are there for women across the region who want to become politically and spiritually active without putting their reputations at risk.

It is clear that support for Islamist parties across the region may well be gendered through differences in how men and women are drawn to, involved in or interact with Islamic organisations. Men and women may be targeted differentially by Islamic organisations propagating certain belief systems. Further, while explicit western-style feminism has not had as wide an impact on political support as it might have in other regions, it is not necessarily purely out of conservatism that women might get involved in Islamist organisations but through a desire for activism and the improvement of society. As a whole, it would seem that differences in men and women's beliefs are likely to impact their political support. However, it is worth remembering that Islamist organisations will vary across the region, with multiple organisations sometimes representing different sects, some Islamist organisations remaining outside of party politics, and others collaborating with the governing authority. As such, even when support for these organisations is gendered it may not translate to a clear gender gap in political support.

7.1.3 Oppression

Governments in the Arab world often display what Brynen et al. call 'persistent authoritarianism' (Brynen et al. 2012). Certainly, the fears over authoritarianism and oppression impacting survey responses that were a worry in the Palestinian Territories, exist in most other states in the Middle East. A study by El Kurd in Saudi Arabia, found respondents 'treated' with a story about the religious police, were more likely to drop out of the survey than those who were not (El Kurd 2017). Some studies have found the impact

of changes which might imply or facilitate surveillance by the government had surprisingly small effects (Bush et al. 2016; Benstead 2018). Certainly, in many states, survey respondents may fear government reprisals if they do not demonstrate loyalty to the regime in power.

The impact of this oppression is likely to be gendered. Often efforts to suppress and repress dissent are aimed at men (Segal 2008; Blaydes and El Tarouty 2009; Khalili 2010; Sjoberg 2014). As such we may expect to see a similar phenomenon in the wider Arab region of lower male reporting of support for opposition parties, without knowing whether fear of reprisals is a factor.

7.2 Gender and Political Support in the Arab World

In order to explore the extent to which the phenomena found in the Palestinian context might exist in the wider Arab region, I use data from the Arab Barometer. The Arab Barometer is a series of opinion polls carried out across multiple countries, and which have been conducted over the last two decades.

The Arab Barometer data comes from sets of surveys carried out over five different time periods (or 'waves'), with the sixth 'wave' ongoing at the time of writing. The first wave surveyed seven countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Yemen) from 2006-2009. The second wave surveyed 10 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen) between 2010 and 2011. The third wave surveyed 12 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen) between 2012 and 2014. The fourth wave surveyed seven countries (Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) between 2016 and 2017 and the fifth wave surveyed 12 countries (Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Sudan, Tunisia, and Yemen) from 2018 to 2019. The Arab Barometer surveys tend to be carried out by local polling organisations in partnership with the Arab Barometer organisers. The surveys aim to understand respondents' feelings about their government and political institutions, their economic outlook and broader views on religion, global politics, and recent events.

The Arab Barometer data provides a valuable insight into public opinion in the Middle East over the last two decades and allows comparisons across the region. To use this data I merged the first five Arab Barometer survey results to create one large dataset which would provide an overview of results to my particular questions.

It is worth remembering the limitations which accompany this kind of broad statistical analysis. Firstly, the size of the dataset makes it more likely that any relationships will be found to be statistically significant. Secondly, there are some serious questions around how people will respond to questions about political parties in a broadly authoritarian region (as has been

mentioned above). Finally, the differences in political context from country to country are vast. These limitations are likely to impact how individuals respond to questions regarding political support. To try to mitigate some of these issues I look at two questions from the Arab Barometer which approach the question of political support differently.

First, there is a question which asks respondents 'Which of the existing parties is closest to representing your political, social and economic aspirations?'. This exists in waves two, three, four, and five. Across all the countries, several hundred political parties are listed (it was not asked in Saudi Arabia). Using this question to explore gender differences in political support is problematic for a number of reasons. Many countries across the region are governed by authoritarian regimes. In these countries, elections and political parties, if they exist, may have very little chance of bringing about any change. Additionally, respondents in these countries may be reluctant to indicate that they support or favour a non-regime party for fear of reprisals. Both of these factors mean that response rates in authoritarian regimes to this question may be low and the responses themselves may be biased. The number of valid responses reflects this context with low percentages of the respondents replying to these questions, ranging from 1 percent (in Jordan for Wave 4) through to a high of 65 percent (in Palestine for Wave 3).

Further, throughout the period covered some countries were/are undergoing seismic changes, being as it is in the midst of the 'Arab Spring' period and the subsequent upheavals and wars. Finally, it is worth remembering the variety of contexts that exist throughout the region; Sudan, Iraq, and Yemen are all riven by serious secessionist and/or regional rights movements, there are major sectarian divides in Lebanon, Yemen, and Iraq, and the political regimes range from entrenched monarchies to fragile fledgling democracies and vary from some of the world's poorest states to the affluent emirates of the Gulf. As such few political parties are clearly or easily comparable with each other. In order to try to make some comparisons possible I have categorised political parties by their ideological positions into 'centrists/nationalists', 'Islamists', 'leftists', and 'others'. This is tricky in itself as not all parties fall clearly into even these broad categories, and there are many small parties which hardly have a clear ideology at all. Fortunately, most of the bigger, more popular political parties tend to fit fairly neatly into these groups. Where it wasn't clear I marked a party as 'other'.

The cross tabulation in Table 7.1 shows a very small (but statistically significant) gender difference in the types of parties that men and women support in the Arab world. With those not choosing a party and those choosing a party that does not fit these categories excluded, it is worth noting that nearly 2,000 fewer women than men indicated a political party that fits into these groups. Out of those who did respond, a slightly higher percentage of men feel close to centrist/nationalist (and leftist) parties, and a slightly higher percent of women prefer Islamist parties. This fits in with the findings from

Table 7.1 To compare the percentage of male and female support for centrist/nationalist, Islamist and leftist political parties using data from the Arab Barometer surveys.

Party Type/Gender	*Male (percent)*	*Female (Percent)*
Centrist/Nationalist	53.4	51.8
Islamist	39.3	41.9
Leftist	7.3	6.3

n = 18493 (10070 male, 8423 female), $\chi^2 = 16.318$ p = 0.000

Palestine. When these results were broken down to a country level, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco and Palestine show this relationship to be statistically significant. Although, some of the other countries show similar relationships, they are not statistically significant. Four states do not seem to be similar. In Kuwait the number of respondents is too low to be useful or to be able to qualify for the Chi square statistical test. Yemen, Tunisia and Egypt all seem to show slight reversals of the trend. Interestingly these are three states where the Arab Spring managed to unravel the old regime structures (even if only temporarily). It might therefore be expected that the distributive power of the centrist/nationalist parties of presidents Mubarak, Ben Ali and Saleh were somewhat undone. This may have undermined the economic basis of male support for their parties. In the cases of Tunisia and Egypt these powers were then transferred to the Islamist parties which took over in the post-revolutionary period (not for very long in Egypt) and therefore men may have realigned their support to them. Were this the case it would reinforce my findings which point to the importance of economic power and patronage in garnering support in these non-democratic regimes. Further the oppressive powers of the state would have been given to the Islamist parties for a period in these states, which again might have a greater impact upon how men choose to respond to the survey. Unfortunately, I do not have space to explore the extent to which these speculations may be true here.

A second question from the Arab Barometer surveys might also help us to understand gender and political support. It asks, ‘Which of the following sentences is the closest to your point of view?’ Then offers the following two sentences: ‘I prefer a religious political party over a non-religious political party’ and ‘I prefer a non-religious political party over a religious political party’. Respondents can then choose to strongly agree or agree with either the first or second sentence. This question might give us a better view of respondents’ preferences than the previous question as by being phrased in a more general way it is unlikely to provoke similar worries about regime responses or apathy towards the political system. On the other hand, with this question not asking specifically about a political party, some of the more direct connections between party and supporter might be missed.

Table 7.2 shows that across the region women tend to prefer religious political parties and men tend to prefer non-religious political parties.

Table 7.2 To compare the percentage of male and female preferences for religious or non-religious parties using data from the Arab Barometer surveys.

Party Preference/Gender	*Male (percent)*	*Female (Percent)*
Strongly Prefer Religious	28.5	33.4
Prefer Religious	27.1	30.3
Prefer Non-Religious	29.2	24.6
Strongly Prefer Non-Religious	15.2	11.7

n = 38520 (19404 male, 19116 female), $\chi^2 = 271.425$ p = 0.000

While very much abstracted from the actual political realities on the ground this is an interesting finding.

When looking at responses to this question at a country level, of the 12 countries where it was asked, only in Kuwait and Yemen does this pattern not seem to exist. In the other 10 countries, women respondents tend to prefer religious parties more than men, and non-religious parties less than men. In six of these countries (Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia) these findings are statistically significant at the $p < 0.001$ level, and in one (Sudan) at the $p < 0.01$ level. In Algeria, Egypt and Lebanon, the gender difference is not statistically significant.

While neither strong nor consistent, on balance it seems that there may be some similarities in gendered trends for political support across the Arab world. I conducted logistic regressions on this data to identify whether similar explanations might hold in the wider region as they do in Palestine.

As the dependent variables, I used four dichotomous variables created from the two questions above. The first ('*Islamist*') is for those who chose a specific party that I have then categorised as Islamist as a party which is closest to representing their political, social and economic aspirations. Those who chose an Islamist party are coded '1' and all others are coded '0'. The '*Nationalist*' variable is the same but for those who chose a nationalist or centrist political party. The results of the logistic regressions on these variables are shown in Table 7.3. The two other independent variables are for those that prefer religious or non-religious parties, using the second question described above. I grouped together those that strongly agree and agree with each sentence to form two dichotomous variables, one '*Prefer religious*' with those that prefer a religious party coded '1' and all others coded '0', and '*Prefer non relig*' doing the same for those who prefer a non-religious party.

The independent variables have been chosen to approximate those used above in the Palestinian context. '*Female*' is the respondents gender, with women coded '1', and men coded '0', so showing whether being female increases or decreases likelihood of supporting either of these groups. *Age* is the respondent's age in years. '*Married*' is a dichotomous variable showing the effect of being married. *Education* is a five-level ordinal variable showing level of education from elementary through to a Masters level and above. '*Employed*' is a dichotomous variable with those who are in employment

Table 7.3 To compare the ability of statistical models including socioeconomic status and religious belief variables to explain the gender gap in political support for Islamist and nationalist/centrists parties.

	Islamist	*Islamist*	*Islamist*	*Nationalist*	*Nationalist*	*Nationalist*
(Intercept)	−1.98 (0.04)***	−1.88 (0.06)***	−2.82 (0.08)***	−1.52 (0.03)***	−1.64 (0.05)***	−1.29 (0.06)***
Female	**−0.10 (0.02)*****	**−0.15 (0.03)*****	**−0.21 (0.03)*****	**−0.22 (0.02)*****	**−0.16 (0.02)*****	**−0.12 (0.03)*****
Age		−0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00).		−0.00 (0.00)*	0.00 (0.00)
Married		0.14 (0.03)***	0.04 (0.03)		0.05 (0.02)*	0.09 (0.02)***
Education		−0.02 (0.01)*	−0.00 (0.01)		−0.00 (0.01)	−0.00 (0.01)
Employed		−0.08 (0.03)**	−0.08 (0.03)**		0.13 (0.02)***	0.15 (0.03)***
Religiosity			0.23 (0.01)***			−0.09 (0.01)***
Deviance (Null) (Null)	47751 (47751)	47374 (47444)	43498 (44072)	56560 (56657)	56104 (56239)	51516 (51788)
AIC	47755	47386	43512	56564	56116	51530

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables for individuals who preferred Islamists and Nationalists/Centrists, $p < 0.0001$ = ***, $p < 0.001$ = **, $p < 0.01$ =*, $p < 0.05$ =., Data = Arab Barometer Waves 1-5

coded '1' and all others coded '0'. Finally, '*Religiosity*' is a variable created from three different questions relating to an individual's religious devotion, regarding their self-identification as religious, somewhat religious, or not religious, their frequency of prayer and frequency of reading the Quran (or the bible). Each is on a three point scale from 0–2 and the three questions have been added together, so those who consider themselves religious, pray and read the Quran very frequently (daily or several times a week) will have a score of 6, and those who rarely or never pray or read the Quran and do not consider themselves religious will have a score of 0.

Table 7.3 shows the results of six logistic regressions across the whole dataset to the grouped responses to the question: 'Which of the existing parties is closest to representing your political, social and economic aspirations?' The first three look at those who chose Islamist parties and which factors made it more or less likely that they chose those parties. The second three look at nationalist and centrist parties. Across all six regressions, the B values are negative for *Female*. This means that women were less likely to choose either nationalist or Islamist parties than men. These results actually reflect the fact that women were less likely to choose *any* party for this question. It is worth remembering that this question garnered low response rates in most countries, and women often have lower response rates than men. Interestingly, and this seems to echo our findings above, the unemployed (including all the many reasons for not working) are more likely to choose an Islamist party and those who are employed are more likely to choose a nationalist or centrist party. This may reflect the fact that across the region those who are in power are mostly nationalists and centrists, and that they are more able to provide employment opportunities to their supporters, or it could show something else such as that centrists and nationalists have an approach to the economy which would benefit those already in employment. Finally, as might be expected, those who are religious are more likely to choose an Islamist and less likely to choose a nationalist or centrist party.

Table 7.4 looks at the second question regarding the respondents' preference towards a religious or non-religious political party. Responses were much higher to this question. Women are more likely to prefer a religious party to a man and less likely to prefer a non-religious party. The size of this relationship is reduced when other variables are introduced, and it becomes less statistically significant once religiosity is accounted for in terms of preferring a religious political party. This suggests that it is women's greater religiosity that at least partially explains their preference for religious political parties. Somewhat unsurprisingly, being religious is associated with preferring a religious political party, and not preferring a non-religious one. The relationship between employment and political support is less clear in this table. While the unemployed are more likely to prefer a religious political party, there is not a statistically significant relationship of the reverse (i.e. that employed people prefer a non-religious political party). It might be supposed that while there is an appeal – perhaps through ideological

Table 7.4 To compare the ability of statistical models including socioeconomic status and religious belief variables to explain the gender gap in preferences for religious and non-religious parties.

	Prefer religious	*Prefer religious*	*Prefer religious*	*Prefer not relig*	*Prefer not relig*	*Prefer not relig*
(Intercept)	−1.05 (0.21)***	−0.46 (0.04)***	−0.98 (0.05)***	−0.90 (0.03)***	−1.22 (0.04)***	−0.13 (0.05)*
Female	**0.21 (0.02)*****	**0.08 (0.02)*****	**0.04 (0.02).**	**−0.25 (0.02)*****	**−0.21 (0.02)*****	**−0.13 (0.02)*****
Age		−0.00 (0.00)	0.00 (0.00)**		−0.00 (0.00)**	−0.00 (0.00)
Married		0.01 (0.02)	−0.09 (0.02)***		−0.08 (0.02)***	0.06 (0.02)**
Education		−0.07 (0.01)***	−0.06 (0.01)***		0.09 (0.01)***	0.08 (0.01)***
Employed		−0.30 (0.02)***	−0.30 (0.02)***		0.03 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)
Religiosity			0.16 (0.01)***			−0.28 (0.01)***
Deviance (Null)	88966 (89143)	87352 (88056)	79717 (80958)	74266 (74450)	73320 (73735)	63718 (65835)
AIC	88970	87364	79731	74270	73332	63732

Showing the B values, Standard Errors (in brackets) and level of significance for logistic regressions on the variables for individuals who preferred a religious or non-religious party, $p < 0.0001$ = ***, $p < 0.001$ = **, $p < 0.01$ = *, $p < 0.05$ =., Data = Arab Barometer Waves 1–5

position or through welfare provision – of Islamism for those not in employment, the reverse pattern of preferring a centrist/nationalist party, as was found in the Palestinian Territories, only occurs when that party holds power and so is able to distribute and maintain employment for its followers and supporters. This specific relationship may not be captured by this more general question of preference.

7.3 Conclusion

This chapter shows that some of the trends found in the Palestinian case may exist elsewhere in the region. Gender seems to be an important factor in determining political support. Women, in general, tend to prefer religious political parties and men tend to prefer non-religious political parties. While these findings are the result of a broad-brush scoping exercise they certainly warrant further research. Understanding the gendered dynamics surrounding elections, should provide important insights for future events, making surprise electoral victories less likely. That there are differences between men and women's preferences show that even in more patriarchal societies there are important differences between men and women's political preferences. The initial findings in this chapter highlight the need for disaggregating political insights along gender lines, and shows how gender is a crucial element for analysis.

The regressions above point to women's greater religiosity as the only factor that clearly contributes to this finding. This hints back at some of the early research on gender differences in voting preferences in the West, where it was women's greater conservatism that meant they tended to vote for right wing parties more often than men. However, the academic literature points to there being greater levels of nuance to what 'being religious' might mean, and particularly the potential for involvement in religious organisations to potentially be empowering for women in conservative societies.

While there was no clear indication that employment status explains this gender divide, this theory should not be ruled out. There is some evidence that employment status does impact political support but the nature of the dependent variables used meant that the connections between party of preference and employment were not as clear as in the Palestinian case. That there were reversals in the patterns of support in Egypt, Yemen and Tunisia – all locations where the regimes were destabilised and replaced by the Arab Spring – is an interesting finding and hints at the importance of a party's connection to power in garnering male support. Perceptions and benefits derived from corruption and clientelism are also likely to be gendered and are certainly more complex than can be easily ascertained in a survey. In areas where political parties make a difference more through empowering groups through clientelist networks rather than policy changes, then this is certainly an area worthy of further explanation.

The importance of the authoritarian context is clear from the analyses above, but whether it is gendered is more difficult to say. There were very few responses to the questions on political party of preference. This is likely to be caused by fear of reprisals together with the irrelevance of political parties in systems which do not allow for democratic change. The role of oppression would certainly need to be explored in more depth.

There may of course be other dynamics at play that have not been included in the analysis above, feminism may impact party preference, or class, or else living in an urban or rural setting may interact with an individual's values in a gendered way. There are very likely to be many more crucial factors that relate to the particular issues faced in different countries.

This chapter has made a tentative first foray into whether these patterns of political support might be more broadly generalisable. I am reluctant to make any overstated claims at this stage, but the exploration of the Arab Barometer data seems to indicate that further research would certainly be worthwhile. This Palestinian study points to important possible explanations for gender differences in political support, but I would hope that further research would try also to go beyond the opinion polls and to find the nuances of different political systems. The gender gap in political support in the Arab region is a very important political consequence of the most fundamental gender division: the division of labour in the home. The standard male responsibility for breadwinning and the female responsibility for the home, care, and morality seems to have clear political consequences in terms of political support.

8 Conclusion

This book has found there to be a gender gap in political support in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. It finds that women tend to be more supportive of Hamas than men and men tend to be more supportive of Fatah than women and that this gap seems to have more or less persisted for almost two decades.

Finding and understanding the gender gap in political support has important implications for politics in Palestine. The findings in this book suggest that the gender gap in political support in Palestine may have changed the direction of Middle East politics when Hamas won the 2006 legislative election. Accounts of the election show it as a surprise Hamas victory; however, understanding the widespread female support for Hamas and, additionally, factoring in the possible role of repression on the polls, might have meant that Hamas's victory could have been better anticipated, and the subsequent violence and division might have been avoided. Now that this gender gap in political support has come to light and some of the possible causes have been examined, it would be hoped that if or when there are future democratic moments, analysts and experts will be better able to understand and speak to the importance of gender as a factor. Better understanding is crucial for the wider community to be able to support and push for the end of the Israeli occupation and for greater democracy in the region.

In looking at gender and political support in the Palestinian Territories, this research engages with feminist ideas of research while also stretching and wrangling with it. Highlighting the importance of gender, gendered behaviours, and the private sphere for understanding politics at the national and even international level fits neatly within the goals of feminist research. Further, bringing ordinary women's voices, women's behaviours, and women's beliefs into accounts of conflict, elections, and oppression is important in redressing the historical absence of these voices from these spheres.

However, it might be troubling from a feminist perspective that women show greater levels of support for an organisation like Hamas. In the western media, Hamas is strongly associated with violence. For me, having lived in Tel Aviv during the Second Intifada, Hamas was most deeply

DOI: 10.4324/9781003177395-8

associated with the suicide bombings of buses and cafés in Jerusalem, a hotel during Passover, and nightclubs in Tel Aviv. Hamas is not just a violent organisation, but one which has targeted civilians. Feminism and women's movements worldwide, and within the Israel-Palestine context – have been important voices for peace.

Furthermore, after the Hamas takeover of the Gaza Strip, there were numerous stories in the news about the imposition of Islamic law and the ways in which women have been repressed. These stories give accounts of women being shot for going out with men they are not married to, harassment of women not wearing the hijab, and male hairdressers being shut down because they were not allowed to touch women's hair. For many western and non-western feminists (including many Palestinians I spoke to), the idea of women supporting this organisation more than men unsettles beliefs about women as wanting equal rights.

Why would women *more than men* support this violent organisation that oppresses women?

This book shows that Palestinian women do tend to support both gender equality and peace more than men, the context of the Palestinian Territories and the nationalist climate means that there are other reasons for supporting Hamas more than men which explain their choice – and importantly the reason men support an increasingly corrupt and authoritarian organisation such as Fatah which has failed to deliver on the long-promised peace.

The problem with the western feminist perspective is that it is bound up in the more comfortable priorities of women in the West. For Palestinian women, violence is a part of life, and it is something that is visited upon them and their families much more frequently. As such, they are less likely to be as horrified by the prospect of suicide bombing as western feminists. Equally, for Palestinian women, national liberation is the priority, accordingly objecting to wearing a headscarf seems petty in comparison, indeed, as I cited above, 'everyone longs for liberation and, therefore, what one wears is of secondary importance' (Holt 1996, p. 76). Wearing the hijab and the shutting of hairdressers are of course not an issue at all for most women, who themselves feel it a religious (and national) duty to show modesty and piety.

8.1 Economy

The first explanation for the gender gap is a simple one: support can be bought. This is true of politics in most countries: the connection between employment, economy, welfare provision, and political support is well known and acknowledged. In the Palestinian Territories, the connection between being in employment and supporting Fatah is clear, and there is also the strong possibility that those who benefit from welfare provision by Islamic organisations are more likely to support Hamas.

Fatah appeals more to those in employment. This may be because workers favour stability, and Fatah represents relative stability in terms of the

economy and relations with the wider world. But interviews and some of the academic literature suggest that clientelism is the primary explanation for this support. Fatah is as near as can be the party of government and it has the ability – and inclination - to distribute employment opportunities to their supporters. High levels of unemployment and a system rigged to give employment preferentially to those with connections and known to support the 'right team' (aka Fatah), means that those with jobs, seeking employment, or those wanting to stay on the ladder and get promoted, know that it is best to support Fatah. Fatah 'is' the Palestinian Authority, which receives all the international aid and tax revenue – and hands out the highly sought-after jobs in the public sector and security services. Because of how the dynamics at the personal and family level work, the pressure falls on men's shoulders to get an income, pay for a house, a wedding and to financially care for the family. As such, this seems to explain why it is men and those in employment, more than women, who support Fatah most.

This is a result of the relations between the Palestinian Authority and the wider world. The economic context of the PA is intricately linked with the Israeli occupation which hinders the growth of independent enterprises, making the population more dependent on the employment provided by the PA. At the same time, the situation within the Occupied Palestinian Territories means that the PA receives a great deal of aid money. This warps the economy to the benefit of Fatah and Fatah's patronage networks. Thus, there are important political implications to the giving of aid. Currently, aid funnelled through Fatah and the PA primarily benefits men and increases support for Fatah and the PA. This finding contributes to a growing body of research which links international aid money as indirectly funding PA clientelism, corruption, and repression (Khan 2014; Tartir and Ejdus 2018; El Kurd 2020). Schemes promoting 'economic peace' are likely only to reach men already associated with the PA rather than women who form the backbone of Hamas support. Were gendered socioeconomic inequalities to be addressed, this might change.

Greater female support for Hamas may also have economic drivers. Women may – and this did not come through as clearly either in the interviews or in the statistical analysis – be more attracted to Hamas because of their association with the Islamic charitable and social institutions which (now primarily in Gaza) have provided everything from kindergartens to health centres to women's organisations. They look after orphans and feed the needy. These services may appeal more to women, because they do the lions' share of the care work for children, the sick, and the elderly and as such are more likely to come into contact with, or appreciate the importance of, such institutions. There was however little solid evidence to support this connection in my research.

While these insights based on the division of labour are interesting as explanations of the gender gap, they also serve to unsettle some of the assumptions around the 'patriarchal' family structure in the Palestinian

Territories. Many interviewees, and some scholars (both of gender gaps in the West and of the Middle East) suggest that within a family structure, and most especially within more patriarchal forms of the family, the whole family's interests are bound together as an economic unit, and so are likely to be very similar. However, the research showed that this is not the case, but instead it seemed that the gendered division of labour within the family seemed to account for much of the differences.

Finally, it is worth reflecting on the findings in Chapter 7, which show that being in employment or not may also be a predictor of political support for different political parties across the wider region. This is not a surprising phenomenon, but it may be that many of the dynamics of clientelism where supporters are provided with employment and helped to progress and supporters of the opposition are excluded from employment is a feature common to countries in the region.

8.2 Religion

The second explanation, again one that came up in my interviews, was that women are more religious than men. This seemed to be true and was found to account for a great deal of the gender gap in political support. Female conservatism is certainly a familiar concept, and it is a strong theme in analyses of early gender voting gaps in the West, where women tended to support right wing parties more than men. That this phenomena is widespread was confirmed by the research in Chapter 7 which showed that across the wider Arab world women tend to be more religious than men.

However, what was interesting from my interviews was that women were not seeing religion as passive or traditional but as a way of gaining greater rights for women than they could get through adhering to Palestinian traditions, while also being a way that they could directly or indirectly contribute to the Palestinian national cause. As such our understandings of greater female religious belief and behaviour – and the way they are behaving within an organisation such as Hamas – shows that this is not necessarily an example of outright conservatism, but has the scope and potential for empowerment within an Islamic framework. This finding fits with many analyses of women's role in modern Islam and serves to provide nuance to standard perceptions of women and political preferences.

8.3 Feminism

There was a clear finding also that parties with feminist policy did not tend to have greater female support. This is an important finding and has implications for feminist research. It shows the importance of not making assumptions about what women want and which policies would matter to them, because often there are different dynamics on the ground. The strong association between leftist parties and profligate women that came through

in my interviews shows how advocating for women's rights can in fact backfire and damage the women associated with these policies and lose women's support for these organisations.

8.4 Oppression

A final explanation that again was suggested to me through interviewees was that the gender gap in political support was actually at least partially a gender gap in reported political support. The suggestion was that it was riskier for men to acknowledge support for Hamas than for women. This was difficult to assess or uncover, however by comparing the logistic regressions for political support in the West Bank and Gaza after 2007, it was possible to see a large and unexplained gender gap in support remained in the West Bank, which hints at the role of political oppression in discouraging men from revealing their support for Hamas in opinion polls when living under Fatah control.

This book has more generally thrown light upon the difficulties of doing research of this kind in areas where there is significant political oppression. Opinion poll and even interview data is less reliable. Political parties and even the whole system were seen to be irrelevant by many interviewees as they were unable to change the status quo. However, I think it has also pointed quite squarely to the importance of acknowledging that oppression may itself be a gendered phenomenon. This finding has important implications for assessments and analyses of data collected in areas where respondents may fear reprisals. While research in these areas is difficult, it is nonetheless essential in order to be able to understand and support the population when democratic moments do occur.

This book shows the importance of moving beyond the usual silos of research. This includes the use of types of methods, the areas of research and geographical reach.

Having access to both the opinion poll data and the voices and insights from the interviews has been important for developing and testing explanations. Each of the three hypotheses tested came up in my interviews when I asked what might explain the gender gap in support, showing the importance of asking the subjects of research for their own theories. Further, the interviews highlighted the complexities and nuance of the gender gap, from how women in Hamas were seen in a positive light and the scope for attaining rights through Islam, to understanding the way political hiring worked in the Palestinian Authority. Using a mix of research methods has brought depth and breadth to the research and greatly improved the scope and implications of the findings.

This book brings together two substantial areas of research in the Palestinian Territories: research into politics and political organisations and feminist and gendered analyses. The former tends to include women, often either prominent women politicians or activists, or describe the visual

effect of female Hamas activists; however, they often excluded a gendered understanding of Palestinian political parties. The latter tend to focus more generally on specific groups of women, such as peacemakers, feminist activists, female suicide bombers or women refugees. This is the first analysis which considers how gender interacts with political support, and it shows that a gendered analysis can provide important insights into the power dynamics, and inequalities in Palestinian society, but also how they have led to clear gender differences in political support.

Further, this is one of the first studies to examine gender and patterns of political support outside of the western context. The three explanations for the gender gap in the Palestinian Territories – while broadly similar to findings in the gender gap literature – are novel in the way they show connections between gender, political support and clientelism, women's rights, nationalism, Islam, and political support and contributes to the known unknown of the role of oppression on polling data. This research while deeply connected to the context of the Palestinian Territories may – as Chapter 7 shows – contribute to our understandings of political support in similar contexts.

By marrying these different forms and areas of research, this book offers a different starting point for further research and analysis. It could be used to provide possible avenues for research into gender and political support across regions of the world where the Western gender gap literature may have few points of comparison, such as for much of the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia. In helping us understand patterns of political support better, it also shows how factors as diverse as international aid donations, the Israeli Occupation and family dynamics shape political support. It raises many questions around gender and oppression, the prospects for feminist research in the region, the potential of women's empowerment within Islamist organisations and the role of clientelism in political support. Improved information on these subjects could help to better understand and support organisations and individuals calling for an end of oppression and the introduction or resuscitation of democracy in the wider region.

Interviews

'Amara': Nablus: 14 July 2014 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, student, with 'Azza'.

'Azza': Nablus: 14 July 2014 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, with 'Amara'.

'Basima': Nablus governorate (rural): 17 July 2014 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, part-time working mother.

'Dena': Nablus: 22 July 2014 (in English) female, housewife, with 'Bassam'.

'Farida': London/Salfit governorate (skype): 2014 (in English) female, student.

'Fatih': Salfit governorate (rural): 18 May 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, housewife.

'Fatima': Salfit governorate (rural): 18 May 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, housewife.

'Ghadah': Salfit governorate (rural): 18 May 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, housewife.

'Hanan': Ramallah governorate (rural): 5 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, student.

'Hiba': Ramallah governorate (rural): 5 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter) female, housewife.

'Iman': Ramallah: 9 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, NGO worker, DFLP activist.

'Jamila': Expert. Birzeit: 24 June 2015 (in English) female, feminist academic.

'Jihan': Expert. Ramallah: 24 June 2015 (in English), female, NGO director.

'Laila': Expert. Jerusalem: 18 November 2015 (in English) female, feminist academic.

'Lana': London: 14 January 2016 (in English) female, student.

'Lina': London: 22 January 2016 (in English) female, student.

'Maha': London: 24 January 2016 (in English) female, intern.

'Mariam': Expert. Tel Aviv: 22 February 2016 (in English), female, feminist academic.

'Mona': Ramallah: 25 February 2016 (in English), female, student.

'Munira': Kufr Aqb: 25 February 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Nadia': Expert. Jenin: 28 February 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, Fatah activist.

'Naimeh': Shu'afat: 29 February 2016 (in English), female, archaeologist.

'Nasrin': Expert. Ramallah: 2 March 2016 (in English), female, retired public servant.

'Nour': Jericho: 3 March 2016 (in English), female, pharmacist.

'Rana': Expert: Ramallah: 7 March 2016 (in English), female, NGO director.

'Rasha': Ramallah: 8 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, not-working.

'Rawda': Ramallah: 8 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, shop worker.

'Reem': Qalqilya: 10 March 2016 (in English), female, teacher.

'Rola': Tulkarm: 12 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Ruwaida': Expert. Nablus: 14 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, Hamas PLC memer.

'Sahar': Birzeit: 16 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Samah': Hebron: 22 March 2016 (in English and Arabic without interpreter), female shop worker.

'Samira': Dheisheh Refugee Camp: 23 March 2016 (in English), female, NGO worker.

'Shadia': Nablus: 26 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Suhad': Jerusalem: 30 March 2016 (in Arabic without interpreter), female, domestic worker.

'Tahani': London/Gaza (skype): 4 May 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Wafaa': London/Gaza (skype): 4 May 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Yasmin': London/Gaza (skype): 4 May 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), female, housewife.

'Zahra': UK: 16 May 2016 (in English), female, postgraduate student.

'Zainab': London: 19 May 2016 (in English), female, postgraduate student.

'Abdel': Nablus: 15 July 2014 (in English) male, postgraduate student.

'Amjad': Nablus: 15 July 2014 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, engineer.

'Ashraf': Nablus: 15 July 2014 (in English) male, engineer.

'Ayman': Nablus governorate (rural): 17 July 2014 (in English) male, farmer.

'Bassam': Nablus: 22 July 2014 (in English) male, professor, with 'Dena'.

'Bassel': Balata Refugee Camp: 23 July 2014 (in English), male, NGO worker.

'Bilal': Balata Refugee Camp: 24 July 2014 (in English), male, NGO worker.

'Dawood': Balata Refugee Camp: 24 July 2014 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, NGO director.

'Faisal': Salfit governorate (rural): 18 May 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, retired.

'Faraj': Salfit governorate (rural): 18 May 2015 (in English), male, student.

'Fathi': Expert: Ramallah: 28 May 2015 (in English), male, Fatah politician.

'Fouad': Expert. Birzeit: 28 May 2015 (in English), male, academic.

'Ghassan': Expert. Kufr Aqb: 31 May 2015 (in English), male, journalist.

'Habib': Expert. Ramallah: 7 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, pollster.

'Hammad': Expert. Ramallah: 7 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, pollster.

'Hani': Expert. Ramallah: 9 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, DFLP politician and NGO director.

'Hassan': Expert. Ramallah: 14 June 2015 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, pollster.

'Hussein': Bethlehem: 23 November 2015 (in English), male, taxi driver and police trainer.

'Ibrahim': London: 27 January 2016 (in English), male, postgraduate student.

'Iyad': Ramallah: 27 February 2016 (in English), male, office worker.

'Jalal': Jenin: 28 February 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, office worker, with 'Jawad'.

'Jawad': Jenin: 28 February 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, office worker, with 'Jalal'.

'Kamal': Birzeit: 1 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, Hamas student activist.

'Karim': Ramallah: 2 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, in security services.

'Louay': Jericho: 3 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, waiter.

'Majed': Tubas: 6 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, postgraduate student.

'Mostafa': Tubas: 6 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, clothes seller.

'Mousa': Tubas: 6 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter), male, student.

'Nasim': Nablus: 6 March 2016 (in English) male, programmer.

'Nidal': Expert: Ramallah: 8 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, Hamas PLC member.

'Raafat': Qalqilya: 10 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, pharmacist.

'Ramy': Tulkarm: 12 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, public sector worker.

'Saleh': Hebron: 13 March 2016 (in English) male, between jobs.
'Samer': Hebron: 13 March 2016 (in English) male, doctor.
'Suleiman': Expert. Birzeit: 16 March 2016 (in English) male, academic, ex-minister.
'Tarik': Nablus governorate (rural): 26 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, farmer.
'Tawfiq': Nablus governorate (rural): 26 March 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, farmer - with Shadia.
'Wahid': Expert. London/Gaza (skype): 27 April 2016 (in Arabic with interpreter) male, pollster.
'Waleed': Expert. London/Gaza (skype): 27 April 2016 (in English) male, development.
'Yahya': London: 11 May 2016 (in English) male, student.
'Yousef': London: 29 July 2016 (in English) male, postgraduate student.

Bibliography

Ababneh, Sara (2014) The Palestinian Women's Movement versus Hamas: Attempting to Understand Women's Empowerment outside a Feminist Framework, Journal of International Women's Studies, 15(1), pp. 35–53.

Abdo, Nahla (1994) Nationalism and Feminism: Palestinian Women and the Intifada – No Going Back?, In: Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.) Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies, London: Zed Books.

Abdo, Nahla (1999) Gender and Politics under the Palestinian Authority, Journal of Palestine Studies, 28(1), pp. 38–51, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2537933.

Abdulhadi, Rabab (1998) Palestinian Women's Autonomous Movement, Gender and Society, 12(6), pp. 649–673.

Abendschön, Simone and Stephanie Steinmetz (2014) The Gender Gap in Voting Revisited: Women's Party Preferences in a European Context, Social Politics, 21(2), pp. 315–344.

Abrams, Elliott (2012) Chronic Kleptocracy: Corruption Within the Palestinian Political Establishment, Council on Foreign Relations, Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Middle East and South Asia United States House of Representatives 2nd Session, 112th Congress.

Abu Aker, Khaled and Jodi Rudoren (2012) Mixed Results for Fatah Amid Low Turnout in Municipal Elections in West Bank, New York Times, 20 October 2012, 18 January 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/21/world/middleeast/west-bank-elections-show-mixed-results-for-fatah.html.

Abu-Lughod, Lila (1998) The Marriage of Feminism and Islamism in Egypt: Selective Repudiation as a Dynamic of Postcolonial Cultural Politics, In: Lila Abu-Lughod (ed.) Remaking Women: Feminism and Modernity in the Middle East, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Abu-Lughod, Lila (2002) Do Muslim Women Really Need Saving? Anthropological Reflections on Cultural Relativism and Its Others, American Anthropologist, 104(3), pp. 783–790.

Addameer (2014) Annual Violations Report: Violations Against Palestinian Prisoners in Israeli Detention, Ramallah

Afshar, Haleh (2003) Women and Wars: Some Trajectories towards a Feminist Peace, Development in Practice, 13(2), pp. 178–188.

Aggestam, Karin (1999) Reframing and Resolving Conflict: Israeli-Palestinian Negotiations 1988–1998, Lund: Lund University Press.

Ahmed, Leila (1992) Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Akhami, Mahnaz and Erika Friedl (1997) Introduction, In: Mahnaz Akhami and Erika Friedl (eds) Muslim Women and the Politics of Participation: Implementing the Beijing Platform, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Al-Adili, Nadim, Mohammad Shaheen, Staffan Bergström and Annika Johansson (2008) Deaths Among Young, Single Women in 2000-2001 in the West Bank, Palestinian Occupied Territories, Reproductive Health Matters, 16, pp. 112–121, http://www.jstor.org/stable/25475371 Accessed: 26/11/2014 12:43.

Al-Ali, Nadje (2000) Secularism, Gender and State in the Middle East: The Egyptian Women's Movement, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Al-Ali, Nadje and Latif Tas (2018) Reconsidering Nationalism and Feminism: the Kurdish Political Movement in Turkey, Nations and Nationalism, 24(2), pp. 453–473.

Alexander, Amy C. and Christian Welzel (2011) Empowering Women: The Role of Emancipative Beliefs, European Sociological Review, 27(3), pp. 364–384.

Ali, Nijmeh (2019) Active and Transformative Sumud Among Palestinian Activists in Israel, pp. 72–104, In: Alaa Tartir and Timothy Seidel (eds) Palestine and Rule of Power: Local Dissent vs International Governance, Palgrave Macmillan

Alison, Miranda H. (2009) Women and Political Violence: Female combatants in ethno-national conflict, Oxon: Routledge.

Al-Labadi, Fadwa (2014) Guardianship in Marriage: Gender and Islamic Law in Palestine, In: Niamh Reilley and Stacey Scriver (eds) Religion, Gender and the Public Sphere, London: Routledge.

Allam, Nermin (2018) Activism Amid Disappointment: Women's Groups and the Politics of Hope in Egypt, Middle East Law and Governance, 10, pp. 291–316

Allen, Lori (2002a) There Are Many Reasons Why: Suicide Bombers and Martyrs in Palestine, Middle East Report, 223, pp. 34–37, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1559462.

Allen, Lori (2002b) Palestinians Debate "Polite" Resistance to Occupation, Middle East Report, 225, pp. 38–43.

Al-Malki, Majdi (2011) Researching in an Unsuitable Environment: The Palestinian Case, In: Roger Heacock and Edouard Conte (eds) (trans. Nadim Mseis and Ibrahim Abu-Lughod) Critical Research in the Social Sciences: A Transdisciplinary East-West Handbook, Institute of International Studies; Birzeit University and the Institute of Social Anthropology; Austrian Academy of Sciences

Alshaer, Atef (2012) Hamas Broadcasing: Al-Aqsa Channel in Gaza, In: Khaled Hroub (ed) Religious Broadcasting in the Middle East, London: Hurst.

Alvarez, R. Michael and Edward J. McCaffery (2003) Are There Sex Differences in Fiscal Political Preferences? Political Research Quarterly, 56(1), pp. 5–17.

Andersen, Kristi (1999) The Gender Gap and Experiences with the Welfare State, PS: Political Science and Politics, 32(1), pp. 17–19.

Antonius, Soraya (1979) Fighting on Two Fronts: Conversations with Palestinian Women, Journal of Palestine Studies, 8(3), pp. 26–45.

Arab Barometer, http://www.arabbarometer.org/

Arafeh, Nur (6 July 2017) The myth of a 'Palestinian economy', Chicago: TCA Regional News.

Aweidah, Sama and Hala Espanioli (2007) Women, Armed Conflict and Loss: Phase 2, "The Experience of Bereaved Women in Mutual Psychological Support", Jerusalem: Women Studies Center.

Aweidah, Sama and Sahar Omar (2013) Societal View of the Palestinian Women Movement and the Role of Women Organizations, Jerusalem: Women's Studies Center.

Alayan, Samira and Lana Shehadeh (2021) Religious Symbolism and Politics: Hijab and Resistance in Palestine, Ethnic and Racial Studies, 44(6), pp. 1051–1067.

Azzam, Maha (1996) Gender and the Politics of Religion in the Middle East, In: Mai Yamani (ed.) Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives, Reading: Ithaca Press.

Baconi, Tareq (2018) Hamas Contained: The Rise and Pacification of Palestinian Resistance, Stanford California: Stanford University Press

Barakat, Halim (1985, 1994) The Arab Family and the Challenge of Social Transformation, In: Elizabeth Warnock Fernea (ed.) Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voices of change, Austin: University of Texas.

Barisione, Mauro (2014) Debunking the Myth of a "Traditional" Gender Gap in the Electoral Support for Silvio Berlusconi in Italy (1994-2013), Electoral Studies, 36, pp. 117–128.

Baxter, Diane (2007) Honor Thy Sister: Selfhood, Gender, and Agency in Palestinian Culture, Anthropological Quarterly, 80(3), pp. 737–775.

Baylouny, Anne Marie (2009) Fragmented Space and Violence in Palestine, International Journal on World Peace, 26(3), pp. 39–68, http://www.jstor.org/stable/20752894.

BBC (2014) Gaza crisis: Toll of operations in Gaza, BBC News, 1 September 2014, 18 January 2017, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-28439404.

Beblawi, Hazem (1987) The Rentier State in the Arab World, in: Hazem Beblawi and Giacomo Luciani (eds) The Rentier State, London, Routledge

Ben Shitrit, Lihi (2013) Women, Freedom, and Agency in Religious Political Movements: Reflections from Women Activists in Shas and the Islamic Movement in Israel, Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, 9(3), pp. 81–107.

Ben Shitrit, Lihi (2016) Authenticating Representation: Women's Quotas and Islamist Parties, Politics and Gender, 12, pp. 781–806.

Ben Shitrit, Lihi, Julia Elad-Strenger and Sivan Hirsch-Hoefler (2017) Gender Differences in Support for Direct and Indirect Aggression in the Context of Protracted Conflict, Journal of Peace Research, 54(6), pp. 733–747.

Benstead, Lindsay J. (2014a) Effect of Interviewer-Respondent Gender Interaction on Attitudes toward Women and Politics: Findings from Morocco, International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 26(3), pp. 369–383.

Benstead, Lindsay J. (2014b) Does Interviewer Religious Dress Affect Survey Responses? Evidence from Morocco, Politics and Religion, 7, pp. 734–760.

Benstead, Lindsay J. and Ellen Lust (2015) The Gender Gap in Political Participation in North Africa, Middle East Institute, 24 September 2015, http://www.mei.edu/content/map/gender-gap-political-participation-north-africa.

Benstead, Lindsay J., Amaney A. Jamal and Ellen Lust (2015) Is it Gender, Religiosity or Both? A Role Congruity Theory of Candidate Electability in Transitional Tunisia, Perspectives on Politics, 13(1), pp. 74–94.

Benstead, Lindsay J. (2016) Why Quotas Are Needed to Improve Women's Access to Services in Clientelistic Regimes, Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration and Institutions, 29(2), pp. 185–205.

Benstead, Lindsay J. (2018) Survey Research in the Arab World: Challenges and Opportunities, PS, pp. 535–541.

Benstead, Lindsay J. (2019) Do Female Local Councillors Improve Women's Representation? The Journal of the Middle East and Africa, 10(2), pp. 95–119.

Bergh, Johannes (2007) Explaining the Gender Gap: A Cross-National Analysis of Gender Differences in Voting, Journal of Elections, 17(3), pp. 235–261, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17457280701617078.

Biagini, Erika (2012) Why Women Support Islamist Parties: Beyond Feminist Narratives: Dissertation, Dublin City University.

Blaydes, Lisa and Safinaz El Tarouty (2009) Women's Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilization, Middle East Journal, 63(3), pp. 364–380.

Blaydes, Lisa (2011) Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Blaydes, Lisa and Rachel M. Gillan (2013) Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response, Politics and Religion, 6, pp. 459–482.

Blaydes, Lisa (2014) How Does Islamist Local Governance Affect the Lives of Women?, Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions, 27(3), pp. 489–509.

Blecher, Robert (2009) Operation Cast Lead in the West Bank, Journal of Palestine Studies, 38(3), pp. 64–71.

Blinder, Scott and Meredith Rolfe (2018) Rethinking Compassion: Toward a Political Account of the Partisan Gender Gap in the United States, Political Psychology, 39(4), pp. 889–906.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Suzanna DeBoef and Tse-Min Lin(1997) Macroideology, Macropartisanship, and the Gender Gap, Washington D.C.: Paper prepared for presentation at the 1997 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

Box-Steffensmeier, Janet M., Suzanna De Boef and Tse-Min Lin (2004) The Dynamics of the Partisan Gender Gap, The American Political Science Review, 98(3), pp. 515–528.

Bröning, Michael (2013) Political Parties in Palestine: Leadership and Thought, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Bregman, Ahron (2014) Cursed Victory: A History of Israel and the Occupied Territories, London: Allen Lane.

Brown, Nathan J. and Amr Hamzawy (2010) Between Religion and Politics, Washington D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

Bryman, Alan (2012) Social Research Methods, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 4th Edition.

Brynen, Rex, Pete W. Moore, Bassel F. Saloukkh and Marie-Joëlle Zahar (2012) Beyond the Arab Spring: Authoritarianism and Democratisation in the Arab World, Boulder: Lynne Rienner.

Bush, Sarah Sunn and Amaney Jamal (2014) Anti-Americanism, Authoritarian Politics, and Attitudes about Women's Representation: Evidence from a Survey Experiment in Jordan, International Studies Quarterly, pp. 1–12.

Bush, Sarah Sunn, Aaron Erlich, Lauren Prather and Yael Zeira (2016) The Effects of Authoritarian Iconography: An Experimental Test, Comparative Political Studies, 49(13), pp. 1704–1738.

Cammett, Melani (2014) Compassionate Communalism: Welfare and Sectarianism in Lebanon, New York: Cornell University Press.

Campbell, Angus, Philip E. Converse, Warren E. Miller and Donald E. Stokes (1960) The American Voter, New York: John Wiley and Sons.
Campbell, Rosie and Sarah Childs (2008) Women's Political Participation and Voting, In: Sarah Childs (ed.) Women and British Party Politics: Description, substantive and symbolic representation, London and New York: Routledge.
Campbell, Rosie and Sarah Childs (2015) To the Left, to the Right': Representing Conservative Women's Interests, Party Politics, 21(4), pp. 626–637.
Campbell Rosie (2017) Gender and Voting, In: Kai Arzheimer, Jocelyn Evans and Michael S Lewis-Beck (eds) Handbook of Electoral Behaviour, Sage Publications.
Campbell, Rosie, Sarah Childs and Joni Lovenduski (2009) Do Women Need Women Representatives?, British Journal of Political Science, 40, pp. 171–194.
Caridi, Paola (2012) Hamas: From Resistance to Government (trans. Andrea Teti), New York: Seven Stories Press.
Carroll, Susan J. (1999) The Disempowerment of the Gender Gap: Soccer Moms and the 1996 Elections, PS: Political Science and Politics, 32(1), pp. 7–11, http://www.jstor.org/stable/420743.
Carroll, Susan J. and Linda M. G. Zerilli (1993) Feminist Challenges to Political Science, In: Ada W Finifter (ed.) Political Science: The State of the Discipline II, Washington D.C.: The American Political Science Association.
Carter, Jimmy (2006) Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid, New York: Simon and Schuster.
Chaney, Carole Kennedy, Jonathan Nagler and R. Michael Alvarez (1998) Explaining the Gender Gap in U.S. Presidential Elections, 1980–1992, Political Research Quarterly, 51(2), pp. 311–339.
Chatty, Dawn and Annika Rabo (1997) Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East, In: Dawn Chatty and Annika Rabo (eds) Organizing Women: Formal and Informal Women's Groups in the Middle East, Oxford: Berg
Chehab, Zaki (2007) Inside Hamas: The Untold Story of Militants, Martyrs and Spies, London: I.B.Tauris.
Cherifati-Merabtine, Doria (1994) Algeria at a Crossroads: National Liberation, Islamization and Women, In: Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.) Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies, London: Zed Books.
Childs, Sarah (2008) Women and British Party Politics: Description, substantive and symbolic representation, London and New York: Routledge.
Clark, Cal and Janet M. Clark (2008) The Reemergence of the Gender Gap in 2004, In: Lois Duke Whitaker (ed.) Voting the Gender Gap, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.
Clark, Janine (2004) Social Movement Theory and Patron-Clientelism: Islamic Social Institutions and the Middle Class in Egypt, Jordan and Yemen, Comparative Political Studies, 37(8), pp. 941–968.
Clark, Janine A (2012) Municipalities Go to Market: Economic Reform and Political Contestation in Jordan, Mediterranean Politics, 17(3), pp. 358–375.
Conover, Pamela Johnston (1988) Feminists and the Gender Gap, The Journal of Politics, 50(4), pp. 985–1010.
Cook, Elizabeth Adell and Clyde Wilcox (1991) Feminism and the Gender Gap-A Second Look, The Journal of Politics, 53(4), pp. 1111–1122.
Dana, Tariq (2015) The Structural Transformation of Palestinian Civil Society: Key Paradigm Shifts, Middle East Critique, 24(2), pp. 191–210.

Dana, Tariq (2017) A Century of Settler Colonialism in Palestine: Zionism's Entangled Project, The Brown Journal of World Affairs, 24(1), pp. 197–219.
Dana, Tariq (2019) The prolonged decay of the Palestinian National Movement, National Identities, 21(1), pp. 39–55.
Dana, Tariq (2020) Crony Capitalism in the Palestinian Authority: A Deal among Friends, Third World Quarterly, 41(2), pp. 247–263.
De Beauvoir, Simone ([1949] 2010) The Second Sex, (trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevalier), New York: Vintage Books.
de Bruijn, Simon and Mark Veenbrink (2012) The Gender Gap in Radical Right Voting: Explaining differences in the Netherlands, Social Cosmos, pp. 215–231.
Deeb, Lara (2006) An Enchanted Modern: Gender and Public Piety in Shi'i Lebanon, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
Deeb, Lara and Mona Harb (2013) Leisurely Islam: Negotiating Geography and Morality in Shi'ite South Beirut, Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
Desposato, Scott and Barbara Norrander (2008) The Gender Gap in Latin America: Contextual and Individual Influences on Gender and Political Participation, British Journal of Political Science, 39, pp. 141–162.
Doumani, Beshara (2003) Introduction, in Beshara Doumani (ed.) Family history in the Middle East: household, property, and gender, New York: State University of New York Press
Downs, Anthony (1957) An Economic Theory of Democracy, New York: Harper and Row.
Economic Research Forum (2018) Extreme Poverty in Arab States: A Growing Cause for Concern, https://theforum.erf.org.eg/2018/10/16/extreme-poverty-arab-states-growing-cause-concern/
Edlund, Lena and Rohini Pande (2002) Why Have Women Become Left-Wing? The Political Gender Gap and the Decline in Marriage, The Quarterly Journal of Economics, 117(3), pp. 917–961.
Eichenberg, Richard C (2003) Gender Differences in Public Attitudes toward the Use of Force by the United States, 1990–2003, International Security, 28(1), pp. 110–141.
El Kurd, Dana (2017) Policing Expression: A Survey Experiment on the Efficacity of Repression in Saudi Arabia, Journal of Arabian Studies, 7(2), pp. 265–282.
El Kurd, Dana S (2018) The Legacy of Authoritarian Strategies: Repression and Polarization in the Palestinian Territories, Middle East Law and Governance, 10, pp. 375–401.
El Kurd, Dana (2019) Who Protests in Palestine? Mobilization Across Class Under the Palestinian Authority, pp. 105–129, In: Alaa Tartir and Timothy Seidel (eds) Palestine and Rule of Power: Local Dissent vs International Governance, Palgrave Macmillan.
El Kurd, Dana (2020) Polarized and Demobilized: Legacies of Authoritarianism in Palestine, London: Hurst & Co.
Esfandiari, Haleh and Margot Badran (2010) Islamic Feminism and Beyond: The New Frontier; Middle East Program; Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.
Esposito, John L (1984/1998) Islam and Politics, New York: Syracuse University Press, 4th Edition.

Evans, Geoffrey, Anthony Heath and Mansur Lalljee (1996) Measuring Left-Right and Libertarian-Authoritarian Values in the British Electorate, The British Journal of Sociology, 47(1), pp. 93–112.

Evans, Jocelyn A J (2004) Voters and Voting: An Introduction, London: Sage Publications.

Farsakh, Leila (2005) Independence, Cantons, or Bantustans: Whither the Palestinian State? Middle East Journal, 59(2), pp. 230–245.

Freedom House (2017) Freedom In The World 2017: The Annual Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield.

Gandhi, Jennifer and Ellen Lust-Okar (2009) Elections Under Authoritarianism, Annual Review of Political Science, 12, pp. 403–22.

Gelman, Andrew and Jennifer Hill (2007) Data Analysis Using Regression and Multilevel/Hierarchical Models, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerring, John (2004) What is a Case Study and What is it Good for? The American Political Science Review, 98(2), pp. 341–354.

Ghanem, As'ad (1996) Founding Elections in a Transitional Period: The First Palestinian General Elections, Middle East Journal, 50(4), pp. 513–528.

Giacaman Rita, Islah Jad and Penny Johnson (1996) For the Common Good? Gender and Social Citizenship in Palestine, Middle East Report, 198, pp. 11–16.

Giger, Nathalie (2009) Towards a Modern Gender Gap in Europe? A Comparative Analysis of Voting Behavior in 12 Countries, The Social Science Journal, 46, pp. 474–492.

Gilligan, Carole (1982) In a Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development, Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.

Gluck, Sherna Berger (1995) Palestinian Women: Gender Politics and Nationalism, Journal of Palestine Studies, 24(3), pp. 5–15.

Golan, Galia (2011) Asymmetry in Cross-Conflict Collaboration: Is There a Gender Factor? Peace and Conflict Studies, 18(2), pp. 164–191.

González, Alessandra L. (2011) Measuring Religiosity in a Majority Muslim Context: Gender, Religious Salience, and Religious Experience Among Kuwaiti College Students-A Research Note, Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion, 50(2), pp. 339–350.

Gothreau, Claire (26 February, 2021) Everything You Need to Know About the Gender Gap, Center for American Women and Politics, https://cawp.rutgers.edu/election-analysis/everything-you-need-know-about-gender-gap

Green, Donald, Bradley Palmquist and Eric Schickler (2002) Partisan Hearts and Minds: Political Parties and the Social Identities of Voters, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Gren, Nina (2015) Occupied Lives: Maintaining Integrity in a Palestinian Refugee Camp in the West Bank, Cairo: The American University in Cairo Press.

Grewal, Sharan, Amaney A. Jamal, Tarek Masoud and Elizabeth R. Nugent (2019) Poverty and Divine Rewards: The Electoral Advantage of Islamist Political Parties, American Journal of Political Science, 63(4), pp. 859–874.

Guignard, Xavier (2016) The 2012 Local Elections in the West Bank: a Display of Discreet Authoritarianism?, NORIA, 12 January 2016, 18 January 2017, http://www.noria-research.com/local-elections-in-the-west-bank-adisplay-of-discreet-authoritarism/.

Gunning, Jeroen (2007) Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence, London: Hurst.

Hamas (1988) Hamas Charter, The Avalon Project, Yale Law School, 18 August 1988, 23 January 2017, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.
Hamdan, Ashraf and Mohammad Bargothi (2014) Women and Men in Palestine: Issues and Statistics, Ramallah: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
Hammami, Rema (1990) Women, the Hijab and the Intifada, Middle East Report, 164/165, pp. 24–28, 71, 78.
Harker, Christopher (2014) Debt and obligation in contemporary Ramallah - Chris Harker, Video of talk, Jerusalem: 17 July 2014, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pn8epxEX0II.
Harker, Christopher (2017) Debt Space: Topologies, Ecologies and Ramallah, Palestine, Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, pp. 1–20.
Harsgor, Liran (2018) The Partisan Gender Gap in the United States: A Generational Replacement? Public Opinion Quarterly, 82(2), pp. 231–251.
Hasso, Frances (1998) The “Women’s Front”: Nationalism, Feminism and Modernity in Palestine, Gender and Society, 12(4), pp. 441–465.
Hasso, Frances S (2005) Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs, Feminist Review, 81, pp. 23–51.
Hatem, Mervat (2011) Gender and Revolution in Egypt, Middle East Report, 261, pp. 36–41.
Hegland, Mary Elaine (1999) Gender and Religion in the Middle East and South Asia: Women’s Voices Rising, In: Margaret L Meriwether and Judith E Tucker (eds) Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East, Boulder: Westview Press.
Herzog, Michael (2006) Can Hamas be Tamed? Foreign Affairs, 85(2), pp. 83–94.
Hilal, Jamil (2010) The Polarization of the Palestinian Political Field, Journal of Palestine Studies, 39(3), pp. 24–39.
Hill, Lisa (2003) The Political Gender Gap: Australia, Britain and the United States, Policy and Society, 22(1), pp. 69–96.
Hill, Peter C. and Ralph W. Hood Jr. (1999) Measures of Religiosity, Birmingham: Religious Education Press.
Hollis, Rosemary (2010) Israelis and Palestinians: Contest for Control, The World Today, 66(1), London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs.
Holt, Maria (1996) Women in Contemporary Palestine: Between Old Conflicts and New Realities, Jerusalem: PASSIA.
Howell, Susan E. and Christine L. Day (2000) Complexities of the Gender Gap, The Journal of Politics, 62(3), pp. 858–874, http://www.jstor.org/stable/2647963.
Hroub, Khaled (2000) Hamas: Political Thought and Practice, Washington DC: Institute of Palestine Studies.
Hroub, Khaled (2010) Hamas: Conflating National Liberation and Socio-Political Change, In: Khaled Hroub (ed.) Political Islam: Context versus Ideology, London: SAQI.
Huber, John and Ronald Inglehart (1995) Expert Interpretations of Party Space and Party Locations in 42 Societies, Party Politics, 1(1), pp. 73–111.
Immerzeel, Tim, Hilde Coffe and Tanja van der Lippe (2015) Explaining the Gender Gap in Radical Right Voting: A Cross-National Investigation in 12 Western European Countries, Comparative European Politics, 13(2), pp. 263–286.
Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris (2000) The Developmental Theory of the Gender Gap: Women’s and Men’s Voting Behavior in Global Perspective,

International Political Science Review/Revue internationale de science politique, 21(4), pp. 441–463.

Inglehart, Ronald and Pippa Norris (2003) Rising Tide: Gender Equality and Cultural Change Around the World, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Irving, Sarah (2012) Leila Khaled: Icon of Palestinian Liberation, London: Pluto Press.

Iversen, Torben and Frances Rosenbluth (2006) The Political Economy of Gender: Explaining Cross-National Variation in the Gender Division of Labor and the Gender Voting Gap, American Journal of Political Science, 50(1), pp. 1–19.

Jad, Islah (2011a) Islamist women of Hamas: Between Feminism and Nationalism, Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, 12(2), pp. 176–201.

Jad, Islah (2011b) The post-Oslo Palestine and Gendering Palestinian Citizenship, Ethnicities, 11(3), pp. 360–372.

Jad, Islah (2018) Palestinian Women's Activism: Nationalism, Secularism, Islamism, Syracuse New York: Syracuse University Press.

Jamal, Amal (2001) Engendering State-Building: The Women's Movement and Gender-Regime in Palestine, Middle East Journal, 55(2), pp. 256–276, http://www.jstor.org/stable/4329617 Accessed: 26/11/2014.

Jamal, Amaney (2007) Barriers to Democracy: The Other Side of Social Capital in Palestine and the Arab World, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jamal, Amaney (2010) Analyzing Reform Successes and Failures: The Personal Status Regime in the Arab World, Islamic Feminism and Beyond, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Middle East Program.

Jamal, Amaney (2012) Of Empires and Citizens: Pro-American Democracy or No Democracy at All?, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Jamal, Amaney and Lina Khatib (2014) Actors, Public Opinion, and Participation pp. 246-286 in Lust, Ellen (ed.) The Middle East (13th Edition) CQ Press: California

Jamal, Manal A. (2013) Beyond Fateh Corruption and Mass Discontent: Hamas, the Palestinian Left and the 2006 Legislative Elections, British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 2013, 40(3), pp. 273–294.

Jayawardena, Kumari (1986) Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World, London: Zed Books.

Johnson, Penny and Eileen Kuttab (2001) Where Have All the Women (and Men) Gone? Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada, Feminist Review, 69, pp. 21–43.

Jones, Jeffrey M. (2012) Gender Gap in 2012 Vote Is Largest in Gallup's History, Gallup, 9 November 2012, 2 February 2017, http://www.gallup.com/poll/158588/gender-gap-2012-vote-largest-gallup-history.aspx?g_source=gender%20gap&g_medium=search&g_campaign=tiles.

Kamrava, Mehran (1998) Democracy in the Balance. Culture and Society in the Middle East, New York: Chatham House.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1988) Bargaining with Patriarchy, Gender and Society, September 1988, 3: Vol. 2, pp. 274–290.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1991a) Women, Islam and the State, Basingstoke: Macmillan.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1991b) Identity and Its Discontents: Women and the Nation, Millenium - Journal of International Studies, 20, pp. 429–441.

Kandiyoti, Deniz (1997) Beyond Beijing: Obstacles and Prospects for the Middle East, In: Mahnaz Afkhami and Erika Friedl (eds) Muslim Women and the

Politics of Participation: Implementing the Beijing Platform, New York: Syracuse University Press.

Kaplan, Temma (1982) Female Consciousness and Collective Action: The Case of Barcelona 1910–1918, In: Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi (eds) Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Karmi, Ghada (1996) Women, Islam and Patriarchalism, In: Mai Yamami, Feminism and Islam: Legal and Literary Perspectives, Reading: Ithaca Press.

Kaufmann, Karen (2002) Culture Wars, Secular Realignment, and the Gender Gap in Party Identification, Political Behavior, Vol. 24(3), pp. 283–307, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1558398 Accessed: 15/12/2014 09:43.

Kaufmann, Karen (2006) The Gender Gap, PS: Political Science and Politics, 39(3), pp. 447–453.

Keohane, Nannerl O. and Barbara C. Gelpi (1982) Foreword, In: Nannerl O. Keohane, Michelle Z. Rosaldo and Barbara C. Gelpi (eds) Feminist Theory: A Critique of Ideology, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Khalidi, Rashid (2010) Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness, New York: Columbia University Press.

Khalidi, Rashid (2020) The Hundred Years' War on Palestine: A History of Settler Colonial Conquest and Resistance, London: Profile Books.

Khalili, Laleh (2010) Gendered Practices of Counterinsurgency, Review of International Studies, pp. 1–21.

Khalili, Laleh (2011) The Ethics of Social Science Research, In: Roger Heacock and Edouard Conte (eds) Critical Research in the Social Sciences: A Transdisciplinary East-West Handbook, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies; Birzeit University and the Institute of Social Anthropology; Austrian Academy of Sciences.

Khan, Mushtaq Husain (2004) Introduction: State Formation in Palestine, pp. 1–12 in Inge Amundsen, George Giacaman and Mushtaq Husein Khan (eds) State Formation in Palestine: Viability and Governance During a Social Transformation, London: Routledge

Khan, Mushtaq (2014) Aid and Governance in Vulnerable States: Bangladesh and Pakistan Since 1971, Annals of the American Academy, 656, pp. 59–78.

Klein, Menachem (2003) By Conviction, Not by Infliction: The Internal Debate over Reforming the Palestinian Authority, Middle East Journal, 57(2), pp. 194–212.

Koshy, Ninan (2007) Palestine's New Partition, Economic and Political Weekly, Jul 2007, 27/28: Vol. 42, p. 2871–2873.

Levitt, Matthew (2006) Hamas: Politics, Charity, and Terrorism in the Service of Jihad, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Lybarger, Loren D. (2007) Identity and Religion in Palestine: The struggle between Islamism and secularism in the Occupied Territories, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Ma'an (2011) Islamic Jihad to take part in local elections, Ma'an News Agency, 13 May 2011, 19 January 2017, http://www.maannews.com/Content.aspx?id=387236.

Mahmood, Saba (2005) Politics of Piety, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Mandaville, Peter (2014) Islam and Politics, London: Routledge.

Manza, Jeff and Clem Brooks (1998) The Gender Gap in U.S. Presidential Elections: When? Why? Implications? American Journal of Sociology, 103(5), pp. 1235–66.

Masoud, Tarek (2014) Counting Islam: Religion, Class and Elections in Egypt, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Masoud, Tarek, Amaney Jamal and Elizabeth Nugent (2016) Using the Qur'ān to Empower Arab Women? Theory and Experimental Evidence From Egypt, Comparative Political Studies, pp. 1–44.

Massad, Joseph (1995) Conceiving the Masculine: Gender and Palestinian Nationalism, Middle East Journal, 49(3), pp. 467–483.

Mattei, Laura R Winsky and Franco Mattei (1998) If Men Stayed Home … The Gender Gap in Recent Congressional Elections, Political Research Quarterly, 1998, 51(2), pp. 411–436.

McEvoy, Joanne (2006) Elite interviewing in a Divided Society: Lessons from Northern Ireland, Politics, 36(3), pp. 184–191.

Meriwether, Margaret L and Judith E Tucker (1999) Social History of Women and Gender in the Modern Middle East, Boulder: Westview Press.

Micklewright, John and Sylke V Schnepf (2010) How Reliable are Income Data Collected with a Single Question? Journal of the Royal Statistical Society, 173(2), pp. 409–429.

Miftah, The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy (2013) Gender-based analysis of the services provided by the Ministry of Social Affairs: A beneficiary-based Study.

Miguel, Carolina de (2013) Women and voting in the Arab World: Explaining the Gender Gap, http://www.carolinademiguel.com/uploads/2/3/2/5/23255342/womenvotingarabworld.pdf

Miguel, Carolina de, Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler (2015) Elections in the Arab World: Why Do Citizens Turn Out?, Comparative Political Studies, pp. 1–34.

Milton-Edwards, Beverley and Stephen Farrell (2010) Hamas, Cambridge: Polity.

Mishal, Shaul and Avraham Sela (2006) The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence and Coexistence, New York: Columbia University Press

Moghadam, Valentine M. (1994) Introduction and Overview: Gender Dynamics of Nationalism, Revolution and Islamization, In: Valentine M. Moghadam (ed.) Gender and National Identity: Women and Politics in Muslim Societies, London: Zed Books.

Moghadam, Valentine M. (2004) Patriarchy in Transition: Women and the Changing Family in the Middle East, Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 35(2), pp. 137–162.

Muhanna-Matar, Aitemad (2014) New Trends of Women's Activism After the Arab Uprisings: Redefining Women's Leadership, LSE: Middle East Centre.

Ness, Cindy D. (2008) Female Terrorism and Militancy: Agency, Utility, and Organisation, London: Routledge.

Norrander, Barbara (1999) The Evolution of the Gender Gap, The Public Opinion Quarterly, 63(4), pp. 566–576.

Norrander, Barbara (2008) The History of the Gender Gaps, In: Lois Duke Whitaker (ed.) Voting the Gender Gap, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Norrander, Barbara and Clyde Wilcox (2008) The Gender Gap in Ideology, Political Behavior, 30(4), pp. 503–523, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40213331.

Norris, Pippa (2003) The Gender Gap: Old Challenges, New Approaches, In: Susan Carroll, ed., Women and American Politics: Agenda Setting for the 21st Century, Oxford: Oxford University Press, http://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/RUTGERS.PDF.

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?tabID=512&lang=en&ItemID=790&mid=3172&wversion=Staging.

Palestinian Trade Center, Country Profile, Palestinian Trade Center, 3/10/2017, https://www.paltrade.org/en_US/page/country-profile.

Pappé, Ilan (2006) A History of Modern Palestine, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Second Edition.

Parsons, Nigel (2005) The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: From Oslo to al-Aqsa, New York: Routledge.

Pearlman, Wendy (2011) Violence, Nonviolence and the Palestinian National Movement, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Peteet, Julie (1991) Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement, New York: Columbia University Press.

Peteet, Julie (2000) Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A Cultural Politics of Violence, In: Mai Ghoussoub and Emma Sinclair-Webb (eds) Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East, London: Saqi Books.

Powers, Janet M. (2003) Women and Peace Dialogue in the Middle East, Peace Review, 15(1), pp. 25–31.

Pulzer, Peter G. J. (1967) Political Representation and Elections in Britain, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd.

Riesebrodt, Martin and Kelly H. Chong (1999) Fundamentalisms and Patriarchal Gender Politics, Journal of Women's History, 10(4), pp. 55–77.

Richter-Devroe, Sophie (2008) Gender, Culture, and Conflict Resolution in Palestine, Journal of Middle East Women's Studies, 4(2), pp. 30–59.

Richter-Devroe, Sophie (2011) Palestinian Women's Everyday Resistance: Between Normality and Normalisation, Journal of International Women's Studies, 12(2), pp. 32–46.

Richter-Devroe, Sophie (2012) Defending Their Land, Protecting Their Men: Palestinian Women's Popular Resistance after the Second Intifada, International Feminist Journal of Politics, 14(2), pp. 181–201.

Richter-Devroe, Sophie (2018) Women's Political Activism in Palestine: Peacebuilding, Resistance, and Survival, Urbana: University of Illinois Press

Rinehart, Sue Tolleson (1992) Gender Consciousness and Politics, London: Routledge.

Roy, Sara (1999) De-development Revisited: Palestinian Economy and Society Since Oslo, Journal of Palestine Studies, 28(3), pp. 64–82.

Roy, Sara (2004) The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict and Palestinian Socioeconomic Decline: A Place Denied, International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society, 17(3), pp. 365–403.

Roy, Sara ([2011] 2014) Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector, Princeton: Princeton University Press, [2011] 2014, Second Edition.

Rubin, Barry and Judith Colp Rubin (2003) Arafat: A Political Biography, London: Continuum.

Ruddick, Sara (1989) Maternal Thinking: Toward a Politics of Peace, Boston Massachusetts: Beacon Press.

Said, Edward W. (1995) Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient, London: Penguin Books.

Salime, Zakia (2011) Between Feminism and Islam: Human Rights and Sharia Law in Morocco, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Sampathkumar, Mythili (2018) Trump administration cuts aid to Palestinians by more than half, Independent, 16 January 2018, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-palestine-aid-payments-money-cut-half-un-fund-latest-a8162876.html.
Sarkar, Tanika and Urvashi Butalia (1995) Women and Right Wing Movements: Indian Experiences, London: Zed Books.
Sayigh, Rosemary (1981) Encounters With Palestinian Women Under Occupation, Journal of Palestine Studies, 4: Vol. 10, pp. 3–26.
Sayigh, Rosemary (1983) Women in Struggle: Palestine, Third World Quarterly, October 1983, 4: Vol. 5, pp. 880–886.
Sayigh, Yezid (1997) Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949-1993, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Sayigh, Yezid (2011) "We Serve the People" Hamas Policing in Gaza, Crown Center for Middle East Studies; Brandeis University, Crown Paper.
Schanzer, Jonathan (2008) Hamas Vs. Fatah: The Struggle for Palestine, New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
Scott, James C. (1990) Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts, New Haven: Yale University Press.
Segal, Lynne (2008) Gender, War and Militarism: Making and Questioning the Links, Feminist Review, 88, pp. 21–35.
Seidel, Timothy (2006) Christianity in Palestine: Misrepresentation and Dispossession, Electronic Intifada, 2 August 2006, https://electronicintifada.net/content/christianity-palestine-misrepresentation-and-dispossession/6280.
Shalaby, Marwa and Abdullah Aydogan (2020) Elite-Citizen Linkages and Issue Congruency Under Competitive Authoritarianism, Parliamentary Affairs, 73, pp. 66–88.
Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera (2002) Reexamining Femicide: Breaking the Silence and Crossing "Scientific" Borders, Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 28(2), pp. 581–608.
Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera (2017) The Occupation of the Senses: The Prosthetic and Aesthetic of State Terror, British Journal of Criminology, 57, pp. 1279–3000.
Shamir, Michal and Tammy Sagiv-Schifter (2006) Conflict, Identity and Tolerance: Israel in the Al-Aqsa Intifada, Political Psychology, 27(4), pp. 569–595.
Shapiro, Robert Y. and Harpreet Mahajan (1986) Gender Differences in Policy Preferences: A Summary of Trends from the 1960s to the 1980s, Public Opinion Quarterly, 50, pp. 42–61.
Sharoni, Simona (1995) Gender and the Israeli–Palestinian Conflict: The Politics of Women's Resistance, New York: Syracuse University Press.
Shikaki, Khalil (1996) The Peace Process, National Reconstruction, and the Transition to Democracy, Journal of Palestine Studies, 25(2), pp. 5–20.
Shikaki, Khalil (1998) Peace Now or Hamas Later, Foreign Affairs, 77(4), pp. 29–43.
Sigel, Roberta (1999) Gender and Voting Behavior in the 1996 Presidential Election: An Introduction, PS: Political Science and Politics, 32(1), pp. 4–6.
Sika, Nadine and Yasmin Khodary (2012) One Step Forward, Two Steps Back? Egyptian Women within the Confines of Authoritarianism, Journal of International Women's Studies, 13(5), pp. 91–100.
Sjoberg, Laura (2014) Gender, War and Conflict, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Sjoberg, Laura and Jonathon Whooley (2015) The Arab Spring for Women? Representations of Women in Middle East Politics in 2011, Journal of Women, Politics and Policy, 36(3), pp. 261–284.

Spierings, Niels and Andrej Zaslove (2017) Gender, Populist Attitudes, and Voting: Explaining the Gender Gap in Voting for Populist Radical Right and Populist Radical Left Parties, West European Politics, 40(4), pp. 821–847.

Stanley, Liz and Sue Wise (1990) Method, Methodology and Epistemology in Feminist Research Processes, In: Liz Stanley (ed.) Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology, London: Routledge.

Stanley, Liz (1990) Feminist Praxis and the Academic Mode of Production: An Editorial Introduction, In: Liz Stanley (ed.) Feminist Praxis: Research, Theory and Epistemology in Feminist Sociology, London: Routledge

Stork, Joe and Beshara Doumani (1994) After Oslo: The Shape of Palestine to Come, Middle East Report, 186, pp. 2–4, 26.

Studlar, Donley T., Ian McAllister and Bernadette C. Hayes (1998) Explaining the Gender Gap in Voting: A Cross-National Analysis, Social Science Quarterly, 79(4), pp. 779–798.

Sudda, Magali Della and Xabier Itçaina (2011) Catholicism, the Republic and Civic Culture. The Paradoxical Role of Catholic Lay Associations under the French Third Republic, ECPR General Conference, Reykjavik: 2011.

Taraki, Lisa (1995) Islam is the Solution: Jordanian Islamists and the Dilemma of the 'Modern Woman', British Journal of Sociology, 46(4), pp. 643–661.

Taraki, Lisa (1996) Jordanian Islamists and the Agenda for Women: Between Discourse and Practice, Middle Eastern Studies, 32(1), pp. 140–158.

Taraki, Lisa (2000) Higher Education, Resistance and State Building in Palestine, International Higher Education, pp. 18–19.

Taraki, Lisa (2008) Enclave Micropolis: The Paradoxical Case of Ramallah/Al-Bireh, Journal of Palestine Studies, 37(4), pp. 6–20.

Tartir, Alaa (2015) The Evolution and Reform of Palestinian Security Forces 1993-2013, Stability: International Journal of Security and Development, 4(1), p.Art. 46.

Tartir, Alaa (2016) How US Security Aid to PA Sustains Israel's Occupation, TCA Regional News, Chicago

Tartir, Alaa (2018) The Limits of Securitized Peace: The EU's Sponsorship of Palestinian Authoritarianism, Middle East Critique, 27(4), pp. 365–381.

Tartir, Alaa and Filip Ejdus (2018) Effective? Locally owned? Beyond the technocratic perspective on the European Union Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories, Contemporary Security Policy, 39(1), pp. 142–165.

Mark Tessler and Ina Warriner (1997) Gender, Feminism, and Attitudes Toward International Conflict: Exploring Relationships With Survey Data from the Middle East, World Politics, 49, pp. 250–81

Tessler, Mark and Jodi Nachtwey (1999) Palestinian Political Attitudes: An Analysis of Survey Data from the West Bank and Gaza, Israel Studies, 4(1), pp. 22–43.

Tessler, Mark, Jodi Nachtwey and Audra Grant (1999) Further Tests of the Women and Peace Hypothesis: Evidence from Cross-National Survey Research in the Middle East, International Studies Quarterly, 43, pp. 519–531

Tickner, J. Ann (1992) Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security, New York: Columbia University Press.

Tilly, Jean (1995) Party Utility and Voting Behaviour, Amsterdam: Het Sphinhuis.

Togeby, Lise (1994) The Gender Gap in Foreign Policy Attitudes, Journal of Peace Research, 31(4), pp. 375–392.

Toman, Cheryl (2006) The Link between Women's Studies Programs and Grassroots Organisations in Lebanon, the Balkans, and the Palestinian Territories: A Comparative Study, Arab Studies Quarterly, 28(2), pp. 55–67.

Turpin Jennifer (1998) Many Faces: Women Confronting War, In: Lois Ann Lorentzen and Jennifer Turpin (eds) The Women and War Reader, New York: New York University Press.

UNCTAD (2017) Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory/United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, http://unctad.org/systems/files/official-document/tdb64d4_embargoed_en.pdf.

Underwood, Alexia (3 August 2018) How Ahed Tamimi, a 17-year-old Palestinian activist, became an international icon, Vox https://www.vox.com/2018/8/3/17639254/ahed-tamimi-palestinian-activist-israel

Usher, Graham (2006) The Democratic Resistance: Hamas, Fatah, and the Palestinian Elections, Journal of Palestine Studies, 35(3), pp. 20–36.

Usher, Pat (1997) Challenging the Power of Rationality, In: George McKenzie, Jackie Powell and Robin Usher (eds) Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice, London: Falmer Press.

Webb, Paul and White Stephen (2007) Conceptualizing the Institutionalization and Performance of Political Parties in New Democracies, In: Paul Webb and Stephan White (eds) Party Politics in New Democracies, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Wedeen, Lisa (1998) Acting "As If": Symbolic Politics and Social Control in Syria, Comparative Studies in Society and History, 40(3), pp. 503–523.

Weisman, Eyal (2007) Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation, London, New York: Verso.

Whitaker, Lois Duke (2008) Voting the Gender Gap, Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press.

Wirls, Daniel (1986) Reinterpreting the Gender Gap, The Public Opinion Quarterly, 50(3), pp. 316–330.

Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (2012) Women's Voices: Glimpses of Life Under Occupation, Ramallah: Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling

Yuval-Davis, Nira (1997/2010) Gender and Nation, London: Sage.

Zeira, Yael (2018) From the Schools to the Streets: Education and Anti-Regime Resistance in the West Bank, Comparative Political Studies, 52(8), pp. 1131–1168.

Index

Italicized and **bold** pages refer to figures and tables respectively, and page numbers followed by “n” refer to notes.

Ababneh, Sara 116, 119, 124, 162
Abbas, Mahmoud 27, 39, 49, 51, 53, 114, 130, 156
Abdo, Nahla 83, 94, 95, 138
Abdulhadi, Rabab 118
Abu-Lughod, Lila 104, 105, 109, 197, 198
Ahmed, Leila 109, 110, 196, 197
Akhami, Mahnaz 104, 110
Al-Ali, Nadje 91
Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade 26, 38
Al-Malki, Majdi 28
Al-Quds Bank *44*
Alayan, Samira 97
Andersen, Kristi 71, 74
Arab Barometer surveys 16, 23, 194, 195, 199–201, **202**, 207
Arafat, Yasser 47, 50–51, 60, 129, 131, 137; on attacks on Israeli civilians 127; on childbearing 95; death of 5, 27, 28; leadership 39; peace negotiations with Israel 36
authoritarianism 2, 5; and freedom of expression 158; in Palestinian Authority 28, 125, 150; persistent 194, 198
Aweidah, Sama 65, 139, 162
Azzam, Maha 48, 97, 107–109, 115, 151

Baconi, Tareq 41, 126, 129
Badran, Margot 111
Balance of Terror approach 41
bantustanization process 31
Barakat, Halim 63, 64, 83, 111
Barisione, Mauro 82
Baxter, Diane 83, 84, 137, 139

Ben Shitrit, Lihi 106, 119, 121
Benstead, Lindsay J. 195
Bergh, Johannes 9, 12, 69
Bethlehem 18, 32
Biagini, Erika 197
Blaydes, Lisa 195
Blecher, Robert 152, 162
Blinder, Scott 146
Boston Tea Party 46
Bröning, Michael 35, 36, 38, 41
Brooks, Clem 62
Brynen, Rex, 198

Campbell, Rosie 12, 83
Chehab, Zaki 96
Cherifati-Merabtine, Doria 108
Childs, Sarah 14, 83
Chong, Kelly H. 112
Clark, Cal 140
Clark, Janet M. 140
clientelism 8, 78, 178, 206, 210–211, 213; competitive 147; and employment 49; defined 50; and patriarchal family structure 53; from political parties 194–195; and political support 51
Cook, Elizabeth Adell 12, 101
corruption 2, 78, 158, 191, 206, 210; and aid from international donors 46; allegations against Abbas’s sons 39; allegations and Fatah 10, 27, 38, 41, 51; Arafat’s reliance on planned; 51,
cultural nationalism 89, 91

Dana, Tariq 47
Day, Christine L. 8, 9, 11, 71, 74
De Beauvoir, Simone 62

Deeb, Lara 86, 90, 105–107
Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) 24, 101, *102*, 127, 170

East Jerusalem 16, 96, 97, 149
economy 209–211; and gender 43–78; gendered 9–10; Israeli 45, 127; Palestinian 44–61; and political support 194–196; and socioeconomic gender differences 61–76; tunnel 30
Edlund, Lena 11, 62, 82
Eichenberg, Richard C. 140
Ejdus, Filip 150
El Tarouty, Safinaz 197
An Enchanted Modern (Deeb) 105
Esfandiari, Haleh 111
Espanioli, Hala 65, 139
Esposito, John L 130
ethnic nationalism 89, 141

Farrell, Stephen 116
Fatah 25, 28, 32, 47, 53, 55, 60, 67, 72, 76–78, 135, 153, 155, 158, 191, 193–194; authoritarian rule 38; corruption allegations against 10, 27, 38, 41, 51; difference between Hamas 127–131; and economy 209–210; gendered beliefs; 80–124; gender gap in political support 169–191, **171**, **175**, **177**, **182**; Nationalist Bloc flag *37*; violence and oppression *22*
feminism 7, 22, 79, 211–212; and gender gap 12–13; and Islam 99–112; in Middle East 196; in Palestinian society 12; Islamist movement 104; Western-style 123, 197–198
First Intifada 25, 26, 36, 67, 94, 95, 97, 116, 138, 160
Friedl, Erika 104, 110

Gandhi, Jennifer 147
Gaza Strip 24, 25, 26, 41, 42; de-development of 30; Fatah activist in 155; gender gaps **188**; PA **165**; political opposition in 28; rebuilding Palestinian homes in 51; refugees 30; security services **165**; unemployment of 49; violence in 154; *vs.* West Bank 183–191
gender equality: in Middle East region 21; Islamic feminism 111; PSR 100
Gender Equality Scale 100, 111
gender gap 1, 145, 169; Fatah support 68–71, **175**, **177**; female coefficient 174, *190*; Hamas support 71–76, 121–124, **175**, **177**; in socioeconomic status 43–44; nationalism 89; Occupied Palestinian Territories 2–14; opinion polls 15–18; oppression 164–168; in political support 169–191, **171**, **175**, **177**, **182**; religion 80; voting 1; West Bank political support 32, *33*
gender inequalities 2, 84, 118, 124
gender socialisation 7, 74, 138
gendered beliefs: and political preferences 112–121; feminism, Islam, and women's empowerment 99–112; nationalism and women 89–99; religion 80–88
gendered political oppression 159–166
Giacaman, Rita 56, 72, 94, 95
Giger, Nathalie 9
Gilligan, Carole 73, 74
Green, Donald 145
Gren, Nina 85
Gunning, Jeroen 32, 40, 52, 57, 118, 119, 129, 135, 149, 150, 154, 162

Hamas 2, 11–13, 18, 22, 28, 49, 116, 128, 132–134, 136, 144, 147–152; difference between Fatah 127–131; economic reputation 54; electoral process 41; gender gap, support to 71–76; imprisonment of 27; Islamic Bloc *40*, *126*; Islamic woman 118; Occupied Palestinian Territories 39–42; religious identity 115; student election 60; support 169–171; violence and peace 141; welfare services 57; women parade *118*
Hamas Charter 39, 40
Hammami, Rema 116
Harb, Mona 86
Hegland, Mary Elaine 109, 197
Hilal, Jamil 31
household income **70**, 178
Howell, Susan E. 8, 9, 11, 71, 74
Hroub, Khaled 128

Inglehart, Ronald 5, 8, 9, 12, 62, 74
interviews: expert 18; non-expert 19
Islamic feminism *see* feminism
Islamism 2, 32, 42, 104, 191, 206
Israeli Occupation 8, 15, 24, 30, 31, 127–129, 132, 135:
'official' violence 149; harassment and oppression 161; Palestinian economy 44, 45; problems of 44; religious reasons 97; women's movement 87
Itcaina, Xabier 112

Jad, Islah 90, 94, 116, 118, 123
Jamal, Amaney 28, 50, 59, 91, 94, 95, 130, 194, 196
Jayawardena, Kumari 92
Jerusalem 18, 28; Al-Aqsa osque in 26; under Israeli direct governance 31; Maqasid charitable hospital in 56; refugees in 30; suicide bombings in 209
Johnson, Penny 65, 94, 141, 160

Kamrava, Mehran 62–63, 85
Kandiyoti, Deniz 63, 69, 84, 91, 103, 107, 109
Kaplan, Temma 112, 138
Khalidi, Rashid 31
Kuttab, Eileen 65, 141, 160

leftist organisations 5, 26, 35, 58, 59, 72, 92, 98, 101, 112, 153; male and female percentage *102*, *201*
Leisurely Islam (Deeb and Harb) 86
Lust-Okar, Ellen 147

Mahajan, Harpreet 83
Mahmood, Saba 104, 105
Manza, Jeff 62
Masoud, Tarek 110, 111
Meriwether, Margaret L. 111
Middle East 2, 15, 21, 22, 62, 79, 82, 85, 105, 108, 109, 112, 123, 193, 195, 196, 199, 208, 213; academic literature on 7; as a 'classic patriarchy' 195; family in 11, 62–63; explicit feminism in 196; feminist movements in 12–13; gender differences 141; gender equality in 21; Islam 104; religious 'revival' in 82; scholarship on women and Islam in 104; social structure 62, 63; stereotypes about 15; women's religiosity in 108–109
Miguel, Carolina de 147, 156
Milton-Edwards, Beverley 116
Moghadam, Valentine M. 63, 90
Muhanna-Matar, Aitemad 107
Mural of Leila Khaled *136*

Nachtwey, Jodi 156
nationalism 12, 22, 88–99, 103, 124, 213; civic 91; cultural 89, 91; emancipatory radical 101; ethnic 89, 141; forms of 12, 89; and gender 2, 89; Islamic version of 99; Palestinian 36, 39, 60, 92, 96, 98–99, 123; and political support 2; revolutionary 93; secular 82; women's rights 91, 99
Norrander, Barbara 11, 12
Norris, Pippa 5, 8, 9, 12, 62, 74

Occupied Palestinian Territories 19, 23–25, 82, 92, 124, 167, 178, 189, 208, 210; Fatah 36–39; feminism, Islam, and women's empowerment 99–112; gender gap in 2–14, 192; geography 30–35; Hamas 39–42; history 24–30; nationalism, religion, and women 89–99; negotiations 136–145; opinion polls 28; oppression 147–159; political support 61–76, 125–136; religion 80–88; resistance 136–145; socioeconomic gender differences 61–76; socioeconomic status 43
Operation Cast Lead 28, 151, 152, 162
Operation Pillar of Defence 28
Operation Protective Edge 28
opinion polls: allegations of 154; interview-based research 14; PSR 15, 16; statistical analyses of 7
oppression 22, 93, 117, 145–147; gendered politics 159–166; in Palestine 147–159
Oslo Accords 24–26, 31, 36–38, 44, 56, 127, 131, 150

Palestinian Authority (PA): corruption in 51; criticising **165**; establishment of 55; international pressure 155; powers of governance 26; security services 14
Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) 2, 15, 16, 156, 170, 173; city, villages and towns, and refugee camps 172; Gaza 172; gender 171; time and place 171–172; West Bank 172
Palestinian economy 44–47, 66, 76, 77, 128
Palestinian gender gap 5, 7, 11
Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) 25, 26, 36, 38–39, 55, 95
Palestinian National Liberation Movement 36; *see also* Fatah
Palestinian People's Party (PPP) 101, 102, 127, 170
Palestinian political organisations 47–61
Palestinian population 25, 46, 51, 55, 135, 148, 156
Palestinian Territories *see* Occupied Palestinian Territories

Pande, Rohini 11, 62, 82
peace process 26–28, 38, 41, 42, 77, 127–129; failure of 131; issues of 125; support and opposition *143*
Peteet, Julie 20, 93, 96, 137, 139, 160, 161
political gender gaps 1, 89
political oppression 13, 14, 22, 125, 159–166, 212
Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) 24, 25, 35
poverty 8, 10, 44, 84, 179; concentrated 32; and family size 179; female 64; and Gazans 30, 42; multidimensional 194; and Palestinians 44

religion 11–13, 22, 82, 89–99, 115, 120–123, 199, 211; belief 196–198; in Gaza Strip 82; in West Bank 82; male and female levels of 80
religiosity 173–174
Richter-Devroe, Sophie 95, 96, 126, 138, 160
Riesebrodt, Martin 112
Rinehart, Sue Tolleson 112
Roy, Sara 31, 45, 65
Ruddick, Sara 73, 74

Sayigh, Rosemary 32, 45, 48, 51, 55, 58, 67, 116, 148, 154, 155, 161
Second Intifada 37, 38, 41, 96, 128, 130, 160, 175; and Arafat's death 27; and Fatah 128, 175; and Hamas 41, 208; and Oslo Accords 26–27, 37–38; violence 132, 138, 142, 144, **144**
Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera 97, 98, 149
Shapiro, Robert Y. 83
Sharon, Ariel 26
Shehadeh, Lana 97
Shikaki, Khalil 39, 116, 129, 156
social welfare program 71, 73
socioeconomic status 7; control variables **177**; employment 173; family size 172–173; gender differences in 10, 43; income variable 173; marital status 172; statistical models **203**, **205**
Sudda, Magali Della 112
suicide bombing 26, 41, 126, 128, 130, 209

Taraki, Lisa 31, 90, 107
Tartir, Alaa 150
Tessler, Mark 141, 156
Togeby, Lise 12, 140
Tucker, Judith E. 111

unemployment 194, 195; in Gaza 45; and poverty rates 30; rate of 30

violence 141–143; domestic 65, 162; for Israeli occupation 149; Hamas's attitude 41; in Gaza Strip 28; in Occupied Palestinian Territories 13; Israel for assassination 132; schools 65; and Second Intifada 132, 138, 142, 144, **144**

Wedeen, Lisa 146
West Bank 16, 24, *25*, 38, 42, 48, 61, 66, 77, 82, 150, 151; gender gap in 32, *33*, *188*; geographical differences 30; Hamas parade for student elections *118*; illegal Israeli settlements 31; political oppression 212; re-occupation of 26–27; security services *165*; *vs.* Gaza 183–186
Western-style feminism 123, 197–198
Wilcox, Clyde 11, 12, 101
women 89–99; civilian attack, support for **144**; confrontations *vs.* negotiations **145**; economy position 61; empowerment 99–112; Fatah support 5; Hamas parade 118; Hamas support 5; incomes *70*; intended vote **171**; politics 21, 96, 104; traditional dress *93*; religiosity 85, 192, 204, 206
women's rights 12, 91, 93, 94, 99–101, 213; discourses within Islam 22, 107, 123; and Fatah 114–115; and Islamist movement 12, 105; and nationalism 91, 99; NGOs 95

Yuval-Davis, Nira 89, 90

Zeira, Yael 59