

The Status of Political Participation of Palestinian Women

Under UNSCR 1325

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Table of Contents

Topics

Table of Figures	2
Table of Tables	4
Introduction	5
Theoretical Framework	6
Part 1: Literature Review	13
Legal Framework	13
the reality of Palestinian women's political participation	17
Obstacles & Challenges against women's political participation	19
Part 2: Results & Outputs	21
Chapter 1: Society trends towards women's political participation	21
Chapter 2: The impact of Israeli occupation policies on Palestinian women's political participation	31
Chapter 3: Obstacles of Palestinian women's political participation	40
Chapter 4: Presenting successful feminist experiences	51
Chapter 5: Documentation of programs and initiatives which support the right of the Palestinian women in political participation	63
Part 3: Conclusions	69
Recommendations	73
References	79
Annex 1	80
Annex 2	83

Table of Figures

Figure (1): Sample distribution based on gender	7
Figure (2): Sample distribution based on geographical area	8
Figure (3): Work nature for sample members	8
Figure (4): Israeli occupation policies hinder women's opportunities of political participation	31
Figure (5): Israeli violations against Palestinian women enhanced their political role	32
Figure (6): Israeli occupation procedures against women enhanced community trends which prevent women's lack of participation in	32
Figure (7): Israeli occupation follows physical targeting policy of women in the time of wars and military invasions	33
Figure (8): Separation procedures and checkpoints followed by the Israeli occupation weakened the Palestinian feminist movement	33
Figure (9): Common community culture of women's role in the society	40
Figure (10): Impact of religion on preventing women from political participation	41
Figure (11): Impact of security instability on preventing women from political participation	41
Figure (12): Impact of Israeli occupation on preventing women from political participation	42
Figure (13): Impact of lack of financial resources on preventing women from political	42
Figure (14): Impact of family responsibilities on preventing women from political	43
Figure (15): Impact of political factions on preventing women from political participation	43
Figure (16): Impact of lack of education on preventing women from	44
Figure (17): Impact of self-confidence on preventing women from political	44

Figure (18): Impact of lack of family support on preventing women from political participation	45
Figure (19): Impact of lack of electors support on preventing women from political participation	45
Figure (20): Impact of lack of women to women support on preventing women from political participation	46
Figure (21): Impact of lack of men support to women on preventing women from political participation	47
Figure (22): Impact of lack of women's experience in elections and political participation on preventing women from political	47

Table of Tables

Table (1) Sample distribution based on age	9
Table (2): Descriptive statistics of the degree of community activists empowerment for achieving just peace and equity between both genders	21

Introduction

(Speech of WATC Director about the importance of the research)

1. Theoretical Framework:

1.1 Research Objective & Scale

1.1.1 General Objective

The overall objective of the research is to examine the different factors which influence Palestinian women's political participation in compatibility with the principles of UNSCR 135, which focuses on considering the privacy of women and involving them in the processes of preservation of security and creating peace particularly in the areas affected by the conflict.

Special Objectives of the Research:

- 1- Identifying the main obstacles which hinder the active participation of Palestinian women in the political process.
- 2- Recognizing the society's role and trends regarding women's political participation.
- 3- Recognizing the feminist political experiences and their role in enhancing women's political participation.

2.1.1 Research Population:

The study population consists of 30 villages and cities included by the study; 20 out of which are located in the West Bank and Jerusalem; while 10 are located in Gaza Strip. The study population has included all citizens who are above the age of 17 in the specified areas; as they are the category which has been targeted for the project's activities.

3.1.1 Research Sample:

The total research sample includes 3255 of West Bank and Gaza Strip citizens; as the members of the study sample are of the age category (17-76).

4.1.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Targeted Category:

The study has aimed at reaching to all society categories within the targeted areas. The study sample includes 3255 distributed persons; 140 out of which were targeted through interviews; as 5 interviews were conducted in each targeted area (30 areas) in the project. Moreover, 56 focus groups were implemented and attended by 740 persons; and 6 interviews were conducted with leading women who won in the elections for the purpose of recognizing their experiences and success. Furthermore, 2369 persons were targeted through the questionnaires distributed to West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem; as their average ages was 23 years with a standard deviation of 11 years; as females constituted 55.6% and males constituted 44.4%.

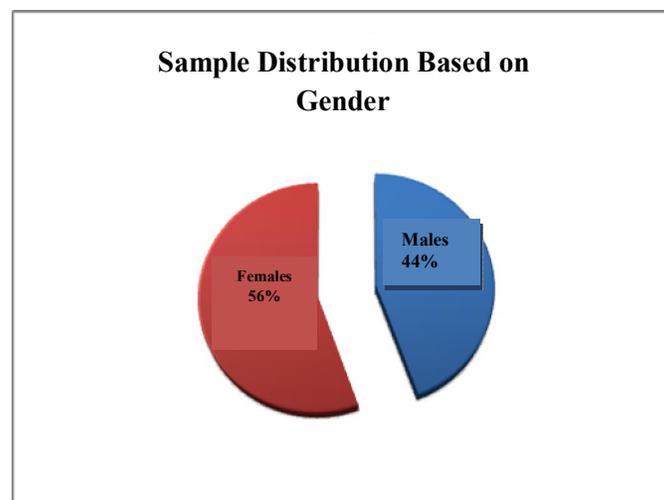


Figure (1): Females constituted 55.6% and males constituted 44.4% of the sample

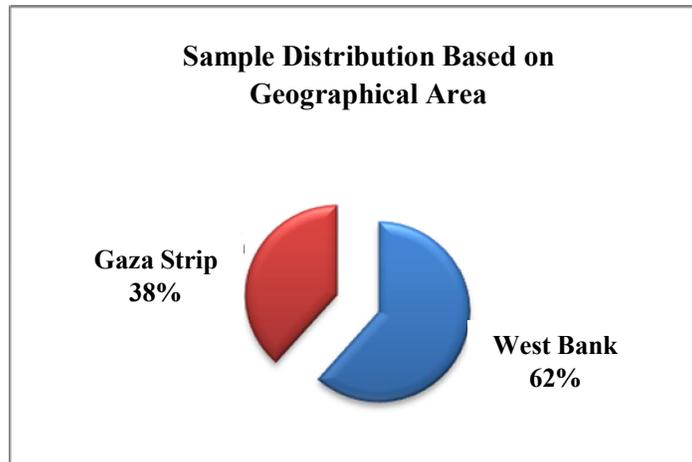


Figure (2): Sample was distributed as follows: 62% from West Bank & 38% from Gaza Strip

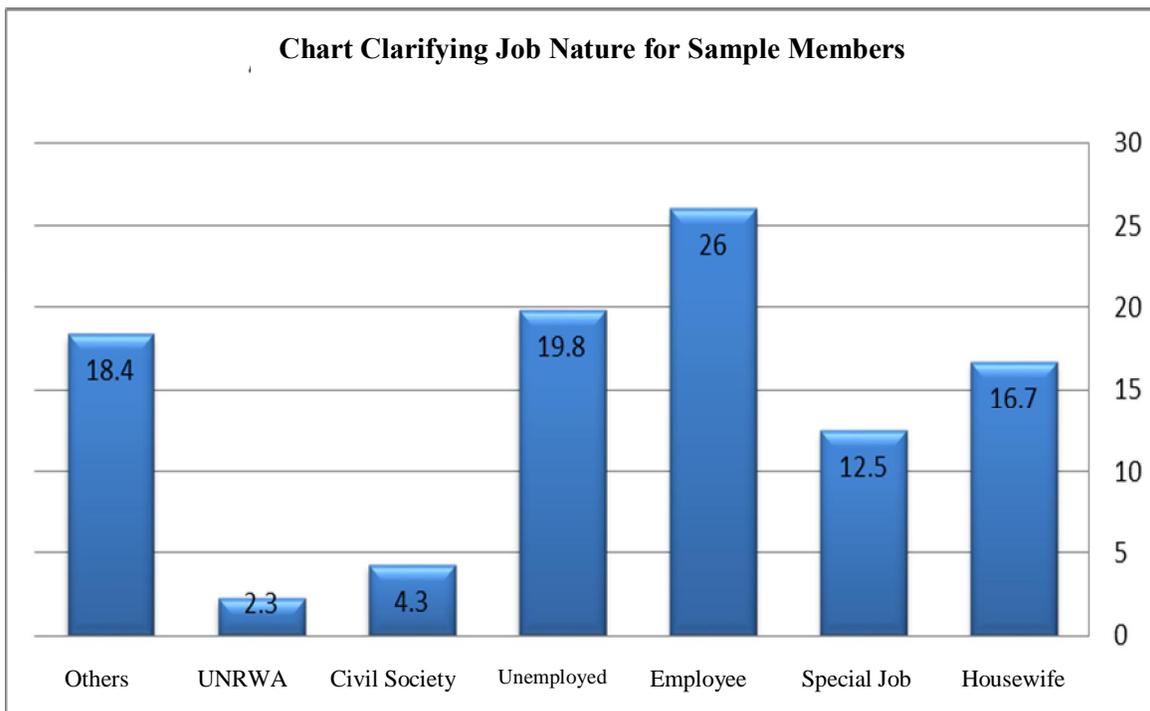


Figure (3)

Table (1): Sample Distribution Based on Age

Age	Number	%
14-18	43	1.8
19 ó 23	558	23.6
24 ó 28	598	25.2
29-35	403	17.0
36-46	434	18.3
TOTAL	2036	100

2.1 Challenges

The main challenges which encountered the research team include:

1. Lack of commitment of some local institutions to facilitate the research process.
2. Inability to complete some interviews in the required time due to the busyness of targeted groups.
3. The increasing number of researched individuals and targeted areas which has led to the difficulty of achievement by using the available resources.
4. Difficulty of transportation and movement between some villages and cities.
5. Busyness of some targeted personalities in the interviews which has led to the delay in conducting interviews with them.

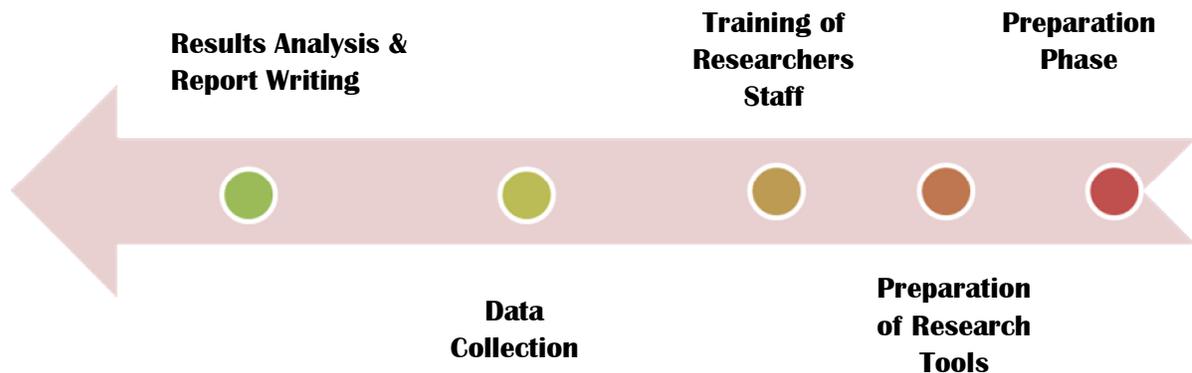
3.1 Research Methodology:

Action (Participatory) research approach was adopted as the research methodology to ensure effective participation of society members in all the research phases starting from planning, moving to implementation and reaching to analysis.

Action (Participatory) research is a way to know and take aware actions which reflect what is important for the society. This kind of research is practical and cooperative and addresses people's special questions; as it is designed by the people participating in it. Participants should find ways compatible with the research topic and context as well as their own questions; as results are achieved through the research process. This approach includes narration and dialogue; and it also includes a large set of other techniques for integrating several points of view and creating understanding between them. The research team identifies what the situation requires; whereas researchers pose questions, collect and analyze data, take procedures and ask questions about them, and discuss what they learn from others within their society.

1.3.1 Adopted Mechanisms for Providing Technical Support to the Research Team

To verify the project and study objectives, the study was performed in several phases as illustrated in the following figure; then we will discuss each phase separately.



2.3.1 Phases of Research Methodology

First Phase: Preparation

Through this phase, there was preparation for the study through examining the targeted group of the project, recognizing the general and special objectives of the project, and then reading the project's plan in details.

Second Phase: Preparing Study Tools

Through this stage, questionnaires and guiding questions were prepared in order to conduct interviews and focus groups on the empowerment of grassroots activists for achieving just peace and gender equality. At the end of the phase, all the research tools were prepared in cooperation with researchers to be ready for implementation.

Third Phase: Training Field Team

A training course was organized for field researchers. Through this training course, the project objectives and evaluative study were explained; as all the questions which include tools (such as questionnaire, interviews, and focus groups) were explored. Moreover, the field team was trained on the manner of applying the study tools; and the following points were taken into consideration during training the field team on the study tools:

- Emphasizing on the understanding of topics and questions
- Recognizing the general objective of the study
- Applying tools on a pilot sample to solve the communication problem
- Practical training on the manner of conducting interviews with the category and filling the questionnaire

Implementing 30 local trainings which targeted 300 of field researchers who were introduced with the principles of action (participatory) research, and working with them to identify the research mechanism and setting an action plan for data collection and role playing.

Fourth Phase: Auditing & Encoding Information (Data):

All questionnaires and data underwent several stages of review and auditing in compatibility with quality standards of data collection. Such stages are represented in the following:

- **Field Auditing:** field coordinators are responsible for field auditing; as supervisors audit and review a group of questionnaires which are randomly selected before being sent to the main office
- **Office Auditing:** all questionnaires in this stage have been audited by the research team; as the team reviewed all the questionnaires in terms of reliability and reasonability of answers.
- **Encoding Questionnaires:** after finishing auditing, questionnaires are encoded with reference to the pre-prepared encoding evidences; as the questionnaire is prepared in its final form for data entry
- **Auditing During Data Entry:** it is performed using the entry program; as the program is prepared with logical precautionary bases which do not allow the entry of any false data.
- **Cleaning data:** after finishing data entry, frequency tables are extracted to measure the study indicators, then they are reviewed by the statistical team to ensure the validity of entered data and the absence of any excessive cases which may affect the result, and if any errors exist, the questionnaire should be entered again.

Fifth Stage: Analyzing Results and Report Writing:

After finishing data entry process and ensuring its validity and readiness for analyzing and extracting the results, results were analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) program; then focused workshops were held with researchers for confirming the results and coming out with recommendations which reflect all points of view.

Part 1: Literature Review

1. Legal Framework

The clauses of the Palestinian laws, mentioned in the Declaration of Independence, as well as the modified basic law emphasized that women, like men, are entitled to enjoy all rights on the basis of equal opportunities and lack of discrimination; otherwise the gap is still large in terms of application and procedures which should be taken to ensure the further participation of women and to guarantee commitment to applying the laws which ensure that women enjoy all rights completely.

We present the most significant local laws and international resolutions whose clauses stipulate that it is necessary to have gender equality and to enhance women's political participation.

1.1 Modified Basic Law

The Palestinian Modified Basic Law of 2005 confirmed on the basic rights of individuals and groups; as the basic law emphasized that women should enjoy a group of rights; particularly their right to equity. It has also emphasized, in Article 9, that all Palestinians are equal before the law and jurisdiction without any discrimination between them based on race, gender, color, religion, political view or disability. Moreover, Article 26 asserted on the Palestinians' right of political participation, whether individuals or groups, and it also emphasized their right of forming political parties or being affiliated to them, and confirmed on their right to form unions, trade unions, associations and clubs according to the law. The law also asserted on the right

of voting and nomination in the elections to select representatives according to the law. It also emphasized that all Palestinian are entitled to fill the general occupations based on equal opportunities.

5.1 Palestinian Declaration of Independence:

The Palestinian Declaration of Independence 1988 emphasized that all Palestinians, in all their locations (Positions), fully and equally enjoy the rights while preserving their dignity, and they also enjoy religious freedom under a democratic regime which depends on freedom of opinion and political parties and respecting the freedom of minorities and decisions of both minorities and majorities. It also asserted on the concept of equal justice in equality and lack of discrimination in general rights based on gender, color and religion. It also emphasized on the significance of protecting such freedoms by the law and the independence of jurisdiction. The Palestinian Declaration of Independence asserted on women's right to nomination and election; contributing therefore to establishing the environment of equality and enhancing active political participation of women; however, the reality is still between theory and practice as discrimination still exists; so this requires the availability of a monitoring system to follow-up the degree of commitment to such laws.

5.1 Election Law

The Election Law No. 13 of the year 1995 has stipulated that there should be no discrimination between men and women. Article 12 of this Law emphasized that it is necessary to enjoy the legal rights, and asserted on the right of being nominated at the Legislative Council regardless of gender; male or female. The Palestinian Election Law has emerged based on the memorandums of understanding achieved by Oslo Accords including any reservations and understandings with the signed sponsoring parties which deprive Palestinians abroad, in Jerusalem and in the lands of 1948 from their right to participate in the election process; as the first elections were limited to the

West Bank and Gaza Strip in addition to residents of East Jerusalem, and Oslo Accords has identified the number of candidates and powers of the Legislative Council.

The presidential decision 1/2007 on general elections was issued without violating the preceding laws; although it has adopted one way for elections which is represented in the full relative system which depends on party lists, as the legislator intervened in organizing such lists in the preceding law. The legislator intervened again in this law by approving on the quota system which was previously adopted in the preceding law; while keeping the distribution of feminist positions in the election lists as previously organized in the preceding law. This new trend of the Palestinian legislator exceeds the criticism directed against the old law which allowed the political parties to select their nominees of departments without any restrictions. Through this new trend, it is supposed that the percentage of women's participation will increase in their party lists to the double in comparison with the previous percentage.

Controversy still exists on the legality and effectiveness of quota system as a system ensuring women's right to reach to a part of their role in political participation. A group of feminist movement leaders consider that the quota system is important within a society which does not believe in women's ability to make a change; as it is considered a tool for ensuring women's political participation. While another group thinks that it contradicts with some laws which were approved by the Basic Law and the Election Law. Whereas a third group believes that quota system has not granted women the minimum level of their rights; as it has not taken into consideration the size of competing seats as a limited number of seats was allocated for women without considering the percentage represented by such seats out of the grand total to have an influence in political mobility.

4.1 Labor Law:

The Palestinian labor law included a number of articles which ensure that women enjoy their right to work; and this is confirmed by a number of articles; as Article 2 emphasized that it is necessary that every citizen should enjoy the job he/she is capable of, and the Palestinian Authority works based on equal opportunities principle

without any discrimination. Article 100 asserted on preventing discrimination between men and women in the workplace.

1.5 UN Security Council Resolution 1325

The International Security Council has adopted the Resolution 1325 during Namibia's presidency of the International Security Council in October 2000. This Resolution is considered the legal, political and historical framework which recognizes the importance of women's participation and involvement of gender perspective in peace negotiations, as well as planning for humanitarian programs, processes of preservation of peace, and creating peace after the end of conflict. This resolution calls for:

- Women's participation in all decision-making levels
- Preventing violence against women through enhancing women's rights, accountability and enforcing the law.
- Generalizing and integrating gender perspective in peace preservation processes

This resolution is considered a platform which enables the Palestinian feminist movement to make its voice heard, to demand the Security Council and the General Secretary to provide protection for Palestinian women from the occupation and its violence. In addition, the Palestinian woman can, through such resolution, demand a fact-finding commission to identify the reasons which hinder the implementation of such resolution in the occupied Palestinian territories. This resolution can be used for holding Israel accountable for its crimes. According to Resolution 1325, the Palestinian feminist movement can suggest programs and demands for participating in the efforts of civil peace and reconciliation through participation in national dialogues or through a special initiative for women which emphasize on dialogue for preserving the Palestinian social structure.

In 2011, the first conference of the National Coalition was held for applying the UN Resolution 1325 in Palestine. This conference aimed to set a national action plan to apply the UN Resolution 1325 for ensuring protection and security for Palestinian

women struggling under occupation, and for the effective participation of women to end the occupation and establish the Palestinian independent sovereign state and its capital the Holy Jerusalem. The conference was considered the starting point for launching the Coalition with a unified vision from all participant parties.

2. The status of Palestinian Women political participation:

The international community strived for enhancing the concepts of justice and equality between men and women in civil and political rights as well as economic, cultural and social aspects, and aimed to enhance women's participation in development and decision-making processes; while encouraging both parts to participate for finding solutions to the political conflicts. While the international attention is focused on equality between men and women, the Palestinian women are still suffering from exclusion and marginalization at rights level; which reflects the gap between international standards and the actual reality in which the Palestinian women live.

The political participation is based on different concepts which exceed the involvement in elections to reach to the participation in decision-making for having a direct influence on the management of political affairs. By entering to the third millennium, Arab societies still live in a state of regression as women encounter violence and abuse; contributing therefore to the increase in illiteracy rates among women, depriving them from working outside home, lack of women's actual participation in economic production as well as their weak participation in general political work.

Despite the efforts made for improving the status of the Palestinian women in the society and the rich feminist experience at different social, economic and political levels, women's political participation is still modest in comparison with the size of exerted sacrifices. The Palestinian women's political participation has been influenced by several factors which grant it some sort of privacy compared to women's status in the Arab societies who live in similar situations. The most important factor is the existence of the Israeli occupation and the formation of Palestinian National Liberation Movement which was capable of attracting women to participate in

national struggle, in addition to other factors associated with the political and social system.

Although the Palestinian women have played a role in political participation under the Palestinian Liberation Organization and the Palestinian National Authority, their participation in the non-governmental institutions and organizations was much wider and more effective. The increasing numbers of non-governmental organizations, within the absence of actual authority, has granted an opportunity for the feminist movement to prove itself as an active factor in confronting the emergent challenges encountered by women within the society. It has been noticed during the last two decades, that there are about 3000 institutions; as the institutions working in the feminist field constituted 15% out of which. However, such institutions have not paid a serious attention to improve women's participation in the society in general and in the political life in particular. Available data and statistics at the level of the Palestinian society indicate the weakness of feminist participation in non-governmental organizations and associations and trade union work. Moreover, women are present in base non-leading levels; therefore they are far away from decision-making positions, in addition women's participation in the government, diplomatic work and municipal councils does not achieve the principle of equal opportunities, and it is incompatible with the desired presence of women within their national authority.

Women's participation in the governmental sector in 2008 constituted about 29.3%, which is the largest percentage of labor forces throughout the years; as women occupied the position of two ministers out of thirty ministerial positions, and there are 13 women out of 101 general directors and 971 women out of 5251 directors. Although the PA adopted laws which enhance equity between men and women, women's participation is still relatively weak.

Women's participation within political parties and organizations reflect the reality in which women live within the society; as women do not play a major role in decision-making processes, leading such organizations, or setting the factional policies and programs. Data revealed the existence of an inverse relationship between women's contribution and the authority level; as women's contribution decreases if decision-making level increases. For example, 5% only of the members of Fateh Movement

Central Committee members are women, while 4% are in the Higher Committee are women. This applies on the Palestinian political parties including left-wing parties.

The Palestinian laws; particularly the basic law, provide equality for all people in the society; However, indeed, women are clearly excluded from playing a role in participating in decision-making processes, crisis management and creating peace. For example, women have been deprived of contribution in national reconciliation processes for ending division; which is an indicator of the male mentality that is still dominant in the Palestinian society. The shortage in applying such laws is reflected on the level of daily practices; as several problems encountered by women are solved in a community manner before resorting to courts; leading therefore to the fact that women surrender and waive their rights. The Palestinian feminist movement was involved in the first and second Palestinian elections which is indicative of Hamas and the trend of the feminist movement to play its normal role within the Palestinian political movement, as well as its refusal of any deliberate or undeliberate exclusion. Despite all the challenges encountered by the feminist movement during this participation, it has won 5 seats in the Legislative Council out of 88 seats in 1996, and 17 out of 132 seats in 2006; which proves the interest of women and the feminist movement, in general, in involvement and participation in the general political life.

4. Obstacles and challenges against women's political participation in the society:

There are several factors which hinder and eliminate women's political participation in the society; here we mention these factors in detail:

1- Women -activity related factors

- Weak women's roles in building and establishing lobbying networks for involving them in decision-making.
- Lack of community awareness on the concept of political participation which directs feminist activities towards the path which enhances their participation.
- Absence of governmental support to women organizations.
- Women's lack of understanding of their rights and roles.
- Limited women's interest in political participation.

- Women's lack of confidence regarding political participation.
- Emphasizing on certain specializations and trends concerning women education.

2- Political Factions Related Factors:

- Palestinian factions are still adopting the male perspective without granting real opportunities for feminist participation.
- Women's participation at leadership level and decision-making is still limited, in addition to the weak influence of leading women in the political factions on factions programs.
- The Palestinian political and social reality has granted the priority to the national programs on the account of social programs

3. Community Related Factors:

- Lack of community awareness on women's issues and rights
- Customs and traditions which enhance male culture and negative perspective towards women's role in the society
- The expansion of poverty
- Lack of legal awareness on women's issues and rights
- Lack of democratic climate
- The increase in unemployment rates among women in the society

Part two: Results and outcomes

The research included five main chapters. Chapter I focused on assessing attitudes of the community towards women's political participation. Chapter II focused on the impact of the Israeli occupation on women's political participation. Chapter III addressed the obstacles to women's political participation in the Palestinian society. Chapter IV focused on the nature of the programmes and projects designed to promote women's political participation. Chapter V elaborated some of the successes of women in the realm of political participation, both at the national level or the local level.

Chapter One: Attitudes of the Community towards Women's Political Participation

This chapter consisted of six main areas (see figure below). The results and the responses were analysed in the light of three key variables, namely, gender, place of residence and work.

Table 2: descriptive statistics of community activists' empowerment to achieve fair peace and gender equality

Effect of Israeli occupation on women's political participation	Average	Standard deviation	Overall score	Relative weight	Ranking
Gender equality	13	1.8	30872	0.481	5
General function	28.8	4.6	68148	0.565	2
Quota	10.2	3.2	24082	0.567	1
Effect of occupation's policies	6.9	1.9	16411	0.460	6
Women's roles in the parliament	12.4	2.5	29305	0.517	3
Justice, legitimacy	8.7	2.5	20569	0.483	4

and empowerment					
Total score	79.9	11.8	189387	0.481	

1.1 First Theme: attitudes of the community towards gender equality in politics.

This theme included eight essential items, which were ranked in terms of their importance for the respondents. The results showed that there is a remarkable support for women's political participation: 66.4% of respondents approved women's role in the political process and active participation at all levels; 53.1% approved women's right to become a prime minister and/or a president; 65.5% rejected customs and traditions that limited women's participation as much as men.

The results of this theme were as follows:

- 1.1.1. 59.6% agreed that men could become better leaders than women and they had greater chances in elections; however, 38.3% disagreed. The rate of the respondents to this item was 55.1% of males and 44.9 of females.
- 1.1.2. 63.7% agreed that women had the same opportunity to public positions as men. 60.9% of females answered *Yes* compared with 39.1% of males. This showed that a high rate of researched women denied the existence of any gender discrimination in access to higher positions.
- 1.1.3. 65.5% (60.4% females, 39.6% males) disagreed that women were controlled by customs and traditions.
- 1.1.4. 75.6% (62% females, 38% males) agreed that men and women should receive equal employment opportunities.
- 1.1.5. 53.1% (62.8 females, 37.2% males) agreed that women and men have equal rights to become a prime minister and/or a president.
- 1.1.6. 74.7% agreed that women have equal rights to men in terms of making decision on family matters.
- 1.1.7. 55.9% agreed that women should have the same rights as men in everything.
- 1.1.8. 66.4% disagreed that women should stay away from the political milieu.

1.2. Second Theme: Attitudes of the community towards gender equality in public positions.

This theme included 15 items designed to measure the attitudes of the community on gender equality in employment rights in terms of the variable of gender. The results of this theme were as follows:

- 1.2.1 54.5% (63.5% females, 36.5% males) disagreed that men should have greater access to jobs; however, 43.4% agreed.
- 1.2.2 83.8% (57.9% females, 42.1% males) agreed that both men and women should be equal salaries in the same type of jobs.
- 1.2.3 60.2% (52.1% males, 47.9% females) agreed that men were more competent than women as political leaders.
- 1.2.4 77.6% (58.1% female and 41.9% male) agreed that the government should ensure the presence of women in the government positions.
- 1.2.5 76.4% (56% females, 43.7% males) agreed that women perceive problems in rather a different way. 63.2% of the respondents were employed, 36.8% were unemployed.
- 1.2.6 0.4% agreed that men make decisions in different ways from women.
- 1.2.7 49% agreed (45.6% disagreed) that men and women have the same capacity and competency regarding decision-making on public matters.
- 1.2.8 71.1% agreed that men were more competent than women in some political positions.
- 1.2.9 49.1% agreed that both men and women should equally participate in government; however, 50.9% disagreed.
- 1.2.10 58.8% disagreed that women have equal status to men in politics.
- 1.2.11 56.9% agreed that women should have equal roles in business and industry.
- 1.2.12 81.6% agreed that government should ensure that women have equal opportunities to achieve success.
- 1.2.13 66.5% agreed that official bodies should promote principle of gender equality.

1.2.14 73.2% agreed that all official bodies should promote gender equality in terms of gender perspective.

1.2.15 73% agreed on the need to establish committee to ensure the implementation of gender equality in Palestine.

1.3 Third Theme: the attitudes of the community towards quota system

This theme included six items, which measured the attitudes of the community towards gender quotas in the Palestinian electoral roll. The results showed that a quota system is a controversial issue in the Palestinian society, where nearly 20% of the respondents said they had no clue of how the quota system worked. 68.6% agreed that the quota system was a good procedure, but lacked adequate public awareness, whereas 45% argued that the quota system enhanced gender discrimination. Nearly 52.5% agreed that women should be elected in terms of the merit. The results of this theme were as follows:

1.3.1 60.9% (59.2% females, 40.8% males) agreed that gender quota system is necessary and vital for increasing women's parliament role.

1.3.2 51.6% (51.3% female, 48.7% males) agreed that the quota system should be used in certain times only; however, 48.4% disagreed.

1.3.3 68.6% of the respondents (55.8% females, 44.2% males) agreed that the quota was a good system, but not enough, as it required public awareness.

1.3.4 46.5% of the respondents (54.1% females, 45.9% males) agreed that the quota was useful as it made women's participation rather genuine.

1.3.5 52.5% of the respondents (53.6% female, 46.4% males) agreed that the quota was not necessary, and that women should be elected on the basis of merits.

1.3.6 45% of the respondents (57.7% female, 42.3% males) disagreed that the quota system reinforced gender discrimination against women.

1.4 1.4. Fourth Theme: attitudes of the community towards women's roles in Parliament

This theme addressed the attitudes of the community about the women's parliamentary role and its impact on the public. It included 8 fundamental items. The results showed that 58.3% of the respondents disagreed that the women had adequate representation in the official senior posts. On the other hand, 59.2% agreed that increasing the number of the female MPs would certainly lead to an increase in their number the official positions.

72.1% agreed that female MPs bore the responsibility of promoting women's interests in the community. Beside, 46.8% agreed that more female MPs would lead to a greater women's political power. The results of this theme were as follows:

- 1.4.1 72.1% (58.6% females, 41.4% males) agreed that women MPs bore the responsibility of promoting women's interests in the community.
- 1.4.2 63.1% (56.1% males, 43.9% females) agreed that male MPs have the responsibility of promoting men's interests in the community.
- 1.4.3 46.8% (62.7% females, 37.3% males) agreed that more female MPs would probably lead to a greater women's political power.
- 1.4.4 52.7% (62.8% females, 37.2% males) disagreed that men could represent and promote women's interests adequately, however, 47.3 % agreed.
- 1.4.5 57.7% (53.1% females, 46.9% males) disagreed that could represent and promote women's interests adequately, however, while 42.3 agreed.
- 1.4.6 73.1% (55.9% females, 44.1% males) agreed that women's views and concerns were different from men's.
- 1.4.7 58.3% (56.4% females, 43.6% males) disagreed that women had sufficient executive positions in their district.
- 1.4.8 59.2% (59.7% females, 40.3% males) agreed more female MPs would lead to larger number of women in the official bodies.

1.5 1.5 Fifth Theme: the attitudes of the community towards justice, legitimacy and empowerment

This theme included six key concepts related to gender justice and equality. The results showed that 56.1% agreed that the female parliamentary representation fostered the political legitimacy of the parliaments. However, the community was divided on the equal gender representation in the decision-making positions. 51% agreed that women constituted half of the community, and thus they had to be equally represented in the decision-making positions.

65.7% agreed that women bring different perspectives, new perceptions and creative talents to the political arena. In addition, 75% agreed that the empowerment of women would lead to the development of the society as a whole.

The representation of women in the political parties has positive implications on their representation in the parliament. 71.3% agreed that increasing women's participation in the electoral process would probably enhance the political popularity of the parties and groups. The results of this theme were as follows:

1.5.1 51% (63.9% females and 36.1% males) agreed that women constituted half of the society, and they should be equally represented in the decision-making positions.

1.5.2 56.1% (61% female, 39% male) agreed that women's parliamentary representation strengthened the political legitimacy of the parliaments.

1.5.3 68.7% (58.6% female, 41.4% male) agreed that women should have greater power in the decision-making bodies as is enshrined in the national and worldwide laws and conventions.

1.5.4 65.7% (58.7% female, 41.3% males) agreed that women bring different perspectives, new perceptions and creative talents to the political arena.

1.5.5 75% (61.1% 38.9% females, males) agreed that women's empowerment would lead to the development of the society as a whole.

1.5.6 71.3% (59% female, 41% male) agreed that increasing women's participation in the electoral process would probably enhance the political popularity of the parties and groups.

In addition to these results, the participants in the interviews and focus groups agreed that there are real and sincere changes in the attitudes of the Palestinian community towards promoting women's political participation. Thus, woman's role in the decision-making bodies, private sector and civil society became a rather natural and desired phenomenon. Nonetheless, this role was still largely defined and bestowed by male members. In this regard, some participants agreed that the gender quota system fostered women's representation in the parliament and local councils. Others considered that women, women's organizations and associations did not adequately promote the successful female models; leading to weak community awareness of the importance of women's political participation (although many Palestinian parties largely depended on women to gain popularity). Some believed that women should demonstrate their excellence and efficiency in the political arena as they did in other areas such as education. Finally, some considered that the Palestinian political division deprived women from an ideal opportunity to attest their capacities of finding problem solving and reconciliation.

The following are some of the participants' quotes in the focus groups that reflected the community's attitudes towards women's political participation:

The Palestinian society is interested in women's political participation. We attend meetings and conferences at the competent institutions that are concerned with women's rights and violence. It seems that people are interested more and more in gender fairness and equality. I reckon that there is a genuine propensity towards women's political participation. (Rafah)

Some people ban their daughters from going out and participating in elections, or even taking part in the political activities. The community needs to raise public awareness of women's political participation. (Nablus area)

Most of the political factions welcome women's political participation, including Fatah and Hamas. Even the popular parties such as the Islamic Jihad allow women to actively participate with them. (Gaza Strip)

The society is working towards promoting women's political participation, but this participation is somehow hampered by the difficult conditions due to the {Israeli} occupation. (West Bank)

I think the apparent dissemination of the successful female experiences may alter conservative attitudes in favour of supporting attitudes. (Gaza Strip)

The following quotes revealed that the Palestinian women's roles were only simple or formal, and that the community was still divided on the significance of women's roles:

We note women are assuming merely formal roles in the political participation, both in government or administrative positions. Besides, the women's roles have shifted from political struggle to lead NGOs, pertinent to awareness of women's rights. (West Bank)

The community attitudes towards women's are still negative. People lack conviction in the success of women in their roles. (Gaza Strip)

"The society does not endorse women's political participation as indicated by women's ratios in the elections. (West Bank)

With regard to the community attitudes towards the level of in women's political participation Palestinian parties, the interviews indicated that most of the participants were dissatisfied with the level of women's representation in the political parties; that the representation of women's political participation in political parties resulted from the gender quota system enforced by the law on the parliament and local councils; that without it, women would not have any political participation in the political parties; that most women were only elected due to the prescribed gender quota system; that male-dominated Palestinian parties oppose any actual form of women's political participation; that most of the parties consider women's political participation as compulsory and "cosmetic". Obviously, women leaders did not play satisfactory roles in factional representation and publicity, active participation in the political reconciliation, and social issues and problems. Some participants argued that the absence of active women leaders in the political parties (due to lack of competence, advocacy, and bad economic conditions as well) led to poor women's political participation.

The following are some of the participants' quotes in the focus groups that reflected community's attitudes towards women's participation in the political parties:

I am definitely dissatisfied with the situation. We hardly see women as senior directors, party leaders or spokeswomen. We only see men as party leaders or spokesmen. However, we do have such capable women who could make competent party spokespersons or leaders. Unfortunately, these roles are an exclusive privilege for men. (West Bank)

Unfortunately, the situation of women in the Legislative Council is not different from that of women in the political parties. We need a firm stand to support women's political representation of the political parties. I think we should achieve a fair women's representation that reaches up to 30% at least. (Gaza Strip)

We could gain greater benefits the more we endeavor to modify the community's culture and enhance its widespread conceptions. First, we need to increase the number of the active women frontrunners in the decision-making positions. Second, we ought to do justice to those competent women frontrunners by increasing their representation in the parliament, national institutions, local councils and others. (Northern West Bank)

The civil society organizations play a greater role in changing community attitudes and highlighting the role of women's political participation. Political parties cannot do that. I think that civil society with its women's organizations is surely capable of doing this. (West Bank)

Women's main role entails carrying out sufficient efforts, activities and programs to promote and raise awareness among women and other ordinary people. There is a widespread conviction of the importance of women's political participation, which may help achieve the desired changes. (Gaza Strip)

I assume that the political leaders are required to be fully aware that the civil society organizations have plenty of women leaders who are quite competent to be ideal decision-makers. Women are indeed capable of making positive changes and put forward new efficient policies. Despite the {Israeli} occupation and the {Palestinian} political division, the civil society organizations properly serve women interests in particular and the society in general. (West Bank)

Women are part of the local community. Therefore, they should be actively involved in the political milieu and the policy-making process in the Palestinian

Authority. To achieve this goal, they need to interact and be present in all civil society organizations, NGOs and cultural forums. This would make them an essential part of the Palestinian people. Communication and interaction would surely lead them to attain their rights in their society. (Gaza)

On the contrary, I believe that civil society organizations play the biggest role because the other organizations, including universities and schools, have their own concerns. Even if such organizations run women's programmes, they are treated as minor and marginal programmes. Hence the civil society organizations are more suitable as they can allocate complete programs and act more freely. (Gaza Strip)

Chapter Two: The impact of the Israeli occupation measures on women's political participation

This theme included 5 items, which tackled the impact of the Israeli occupation policies on the Palestinian women's political participation. The results showed that 59.7% agreed that the occupation measures against the Palestinian women reinforced societal attitudes against women's participation in the political activities. 67.1% agreed that the occupation targeted the Palestinian women physically during wars and incursions. 72.9% agreed that the occupation policies of separation and barriers weakened the Palestinian women's participation. 70.1% agreed that the Israeli occupation policies hindered women's political participation. 72.7% agreed that the Israeli violations against the Palestinian women strengthened their political roles.

The results of this theme were as follows:

1. 70.1% (58.6% female, 41.4% males) agreed that the Israeli occupation policies hampered women's political participation. (58.3%: West Bank, 41.7%: Gaza Strip, 63.3%: employed, 36.7%: unemployed).

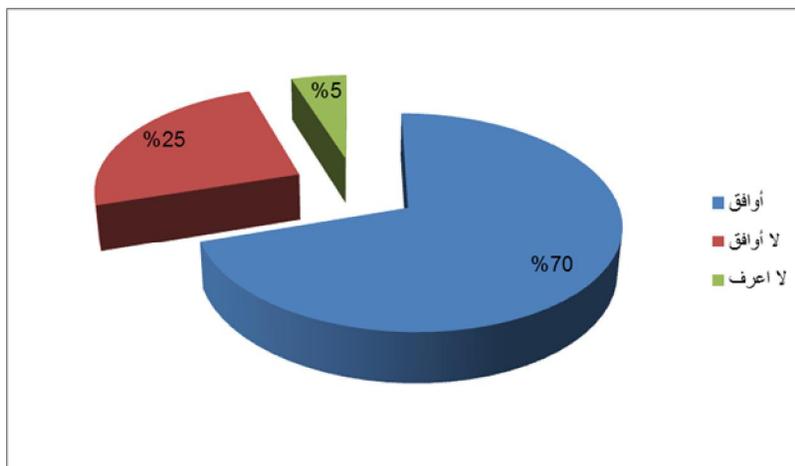


Figure (4) Israeli occupation policies hindered women's political participation

2. 72.7% agreed that the Israeli violations against the Palestinian women strengthened their political roles. (56%: females, 44% male, 60.8%: West Bank, 39.2%: Gaza Strip, 63.7%: employed, 36.3%: employed).

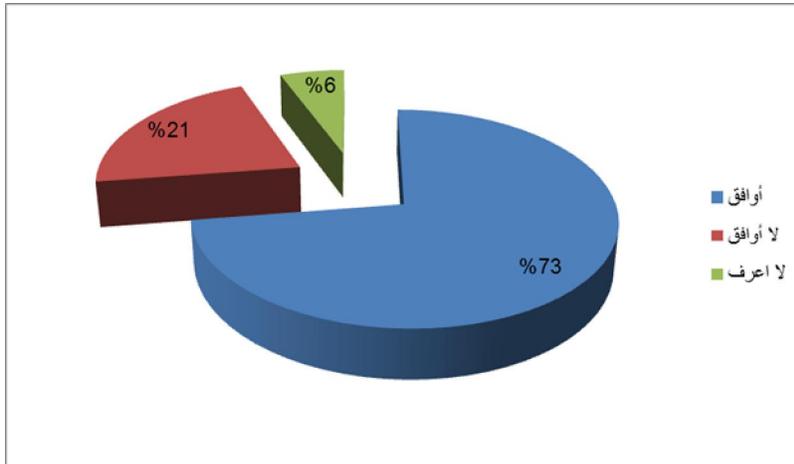


Figure (5) the Israeli violations against women strengthened their political roles

3. 59.7% agreed that the occupation measures against the Palestinian women reinforced societal attitudes against women's participation in the political activities. (56.8%: females, 43.2%: males, 60.7%: West bank, 39.3%: Gaza Strip).

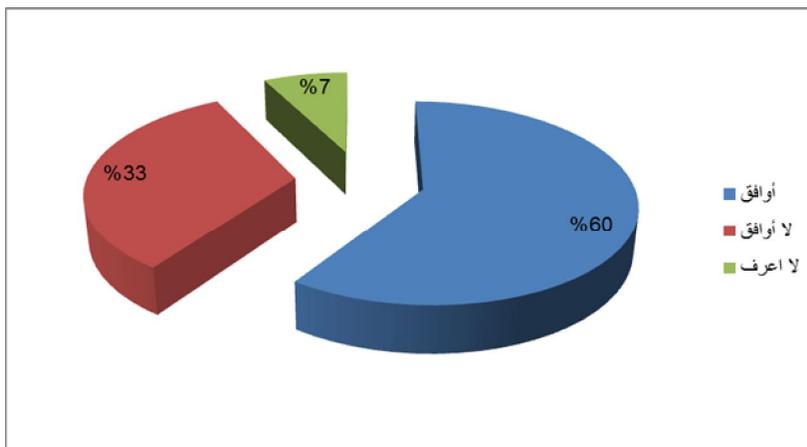


Figure (6) occupation measures against the Palestinian women reinforced societal attitudes against their participation in political activities

4. 67.1% agreed that the occupation targeted the Palestinian women physically during wars and incursions. (54.5%: females, 45.5%: males, 61.2%: West Bank, 38.8%: Gaza Strip).

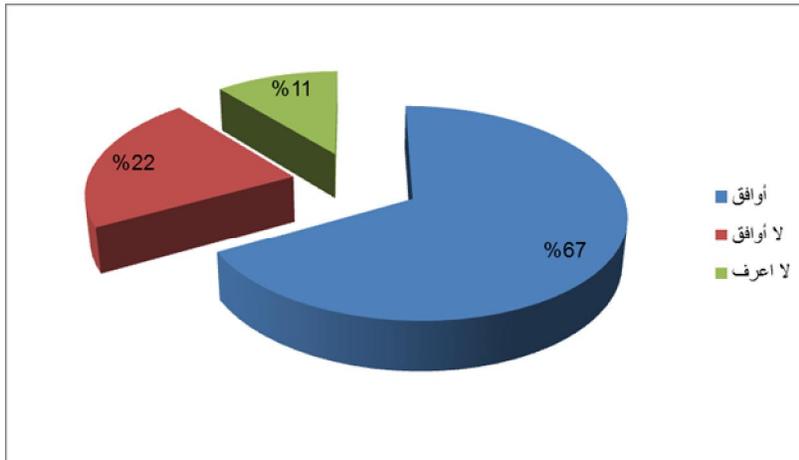


Figure (7) the occupation targeted the Palestinian women physically during wars and incursions

5. 72.9% agreed that the occupation policies of separation and barriers weakened the Palestinian women's participation. (54.7%: females, 45.3%: males, 59.4%: West Bank, 40.6%: Gaza Strip).

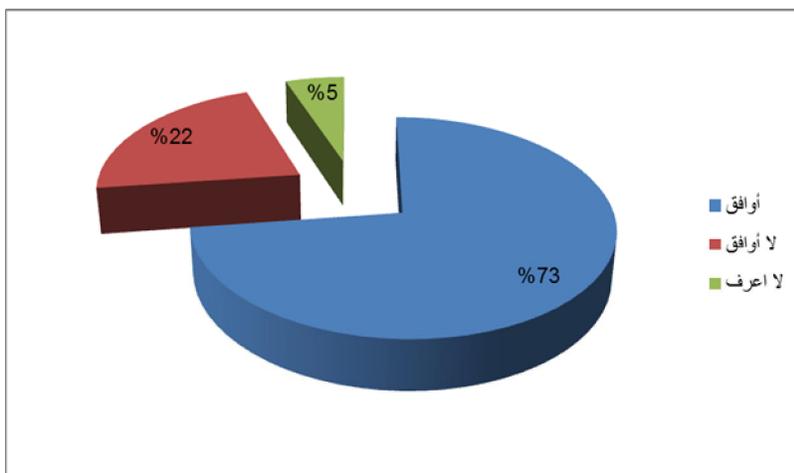


Figure (8) policies of separation and barriers weakened the Palestinian women's participation

During interviews and focus groups, the impact of the occupation on the Palestinian women's political participation was discussed from three main perspectives:

1. What is the impact of the mobility restrictions and closures in the Palestinian territories on women's political participation?
2. What is the impact of the siege on the societal values and attitudes towards women's political participation?
3. What are the forms of violations of the Israeli occupation against the Palestinian women, and how do they affect their political participation?

As for impact of the mobility restrictions and closures in the Palestinian territories on women's political participation, the participants agreed that the Israeli occupation had a direct and significant impact on reducing women's political participation. Indeed, mobility restrictions and closures had adverse impacts on the ability of the Palestinian women to participate in many national and international meetings and conferences. Besides, barriers inside the areas of the West Bank and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip hampered the freedom of movement, which negatively impacted the feminist movement in general, and the women activists in particular. Most importantly, they adversely affected the movement of women MPs, women's participation, and the development of a Palestinian women's movement, which is able to meet the needs of the community in satisfactory manner. Moreover, they hindered women's associations and trade unions from developing a strategy for promoting women in the decision-making positions.

"Certainly the Israeli siege around the Gaza Strip constituted a major obstacle that prevented women from participating in transnational conferences, which give them greater political character, wider openness, and better awareness of what is happening worldwide. The siege made such thing quite difficult". (Gaza Strip)

"These impacts exceeded the women movement leaders. The Israeli occupation, siege and barriers prevented many women MPs and activists from participation and movement between the two parts of the country. Such personalities included VIPs, members in the Fatah Central Committee, members in the PLO bodies,

members of the General Union of Palestinian women (GUPW), and other civil society leaders. This situation in the Gaza Strip hindered the broad participation of women, and weakened communication and joint collaboration between members of the Palestinian women movement as well". (Gaza Strip)

The occupation barriers prevented women from travelling. In addition to barriers, some women suffered from arrests, security-related travel ban, and other actions. The Israeli occupation controls the Palestinian areas through roadblocks and checkpoints, especially in the West Bank. Women are empowered and they have capabilities t, but they cannot move freely. (West Bank)

Continuous Israeli blockade led to adverse impacts on women's participation, as well as communication between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Unfortunately, the occupation often hindered this communication process. Closing key crossings, such as Beit Hanoun and Rafah, obstructed women's regional and international action, conferences and meetings, which promoted political participation. This situation affected the development and participation of women leaders from becoming capable leaders at the national, regional and international levels. (Gaza)

We live in a community with conservative customs and traditions. Palestinian people disapprove the harassment of women at the Israeli checkpoints and barriers. (West Bank)

The closure of the crossings affects the Palestinian women. They are often treated badly, I away that exposes them to disrespect and indignity. (Gaza Strip)

As for the impact of the occupation and blockade on the community attitudes towards women's political participation, the majority of the respondents concurred on its real impacts on the community attitudes towards women's political participation. Customs and traditions attempt to protect Palestinian women from harassment. The vicious siege and occupation made people concerned about the indignity, humiliation, arrest and harassment of women. These policies had greater impacts on younger women than older women. Yet, the majority underscored women's determination and defiance of the occupation's policies of repression and arrests. In addition, the respondents referred to the difficulties resulted from the economic situation, Palestinian division and the absence of democratic life in the

Palestinian society, which adversely reflected women's representation, influence, and policies in the Palestinian parties.

The blockade strengthened the sense of the determination of the Palestinian people in general and the women in particular. These women managed to cope with the challenging conditions, distress, wars and disasters incurred by the Palestinian people. They are an essential part of the resistance and struggle; they aspire to reach decision-making positions, either. (West Bank)

The Israeli occupation played a big role in fostering the Palestinian political division, which impeded holding fair periodic elections. Such elections would positively include a higher percentage of votes of both genders, a step that would allow participation of newer personalities in the political stage. It is worth mentioning that we tend to focus on the siege itself rather the occupation, which constitutes root cause of blockades and checkpoints. As a result, we should focus on ending the occupation itself. (Gaza Strip)

The Israeli blockade led to greater intellectual, economic, political and social traumatic consequences. The Israelis would not let us die, yet they would not let us have peace of mind. The economic blockade is modest compared with the blockade of expression, opinion and thought. The ongoing internal division led to another form of blockade. We are now lost between the blockade of the Gaza Strip by Israeli and the internal blockade by Hamas. (Gaza Strip)

The Palestinian society has almost entered a new era. Women are no longer housebound; the society has changed – it has prospects, and women's political participation is part of. The woman is a partner with the man in the political community and decision-making process. A woman activist was the opponent of the late President Yasser Arafat in the 1996 Presidential Elections. This shows that the Palestinian people has a big advantage, education and awareness, which distinguishes us from other Arab nations. (Gaza Strip)

With regard to the Israeli occupation violations against the Palestinian women, and their implications on their political participation, the replies expressed a mixture of bitterness and anger. Truthfully, this subject invoked painful memories. Their accounts recalled that women are the biggest losers as a result of the Israeli occupation. They are indeed affected by the Israeli violations against the

Palestinian people more than any group; besides, they frequently encounter degrading harassment at checkpoints, barriers, in prisons and in detention centers.

The Israeli occupation targets the Palestinian women by attempting to murder their husbands, brothers, fathers, and children, in front of their eyes. Some women were their arrested and confined inside the Israeli prisons, whereas others were deported. Others suffered from permanent disabilities. They also suffer from recurrent aggression, human rights violations, house raids, beatings, humiliation, insults and others. (Gaza Strip)

So far there are female prisoners and detainees in the Israeli prisons. The barriers exist in the West Bank, but not in the Gaza Strip; they obstruct women's movement and access to work. The separation wall is yet another problem in the West Bank; many people from the Gaza Strip have not seen the suffering of the people due to this wall that divides the nation. It made transport and mobility more difficult. This is only part of the challenges incurred by women due to the occupation policies. (West Bank)

In the West Bank, things are completely different. I cannot travel from the Gaza Strip to the West Bank. Passing through the military roadblocks is very risky; I fear that one of my relatives is wanted by the occupation. I also worry that the Israeli intelligence agents might as well try to interrogate me, and then get arrested. (Gaza Strip)

Some women got arrested and now in prisons; bombing houses and war affected a lot of women; some women are killed; other lost their legs. This whole thing effected women's political participation. (West Bank)

In Gaza we live and suffer more than people do in the West bank. Passing through the Israeli crossings may lead to degrading inspection of the Palestinian women at the hands of the Israeli soldiers. During visits to the Palestinian detainees in the Israeli prisons, women are often subjected to non-human inspection that is inconsistent with the international laws. Despite this, Palestinian women remain determined and stubborn. Mothers of the prisoners won't always allow inspection to take place; sometimes they even refuse to be inspected. As for your question, nothing will stop the Palestinian women from giving in every area. (Gaza Strip)

The Israeli occupation targets the Palestinian women in every way possible, either through intimidation, terror, detention, beating, murder or barriers. These conditions hinder women's political participation and obstruct their right to participate in every other field. (Gaza Strip)

The Israeli economic blockade had adverse impacts on women's political participation. It led to increased poverty and deprivation in the Palestinian society, especially the marginalized and the poor groups in the society including women. It also led to increased unemployment rates among young men and women, and other segments of the society. This in turn led to increased dependency on these groups on political parties in the Palestinian community to get aid and support.

On the other hand, participants stressed that the Israeli blockade led to the emergence of parasitic economics such as tunnel trade, black markets, monopolies and high prices. It also led to lack failure of small businesses due to lack to raw materials and higher prices. Besides, corruption, and absence of transparency and accountability led to increased poverty and marginalization. The absence of fundamental freedoms and democracy within Palestinian society impacted the parties and organizations, which lead to encroachment of masculinity within political parties and exclusion of women's effective participation in decision making process at both party and institutional levels, which led to general reluctance to participate in decision-making process, and strengthened the traditional and stereotypical forms and deprived the young people from political decision-making action.

These conditions headed for dependency of the citizens in general, and women in particular, who suffer from weakness, poverty and marginalization. These groups sided with certain political parties, and their political participation was limited only to the festivals which required supporting crowds. Naturally, these people sided with the parties to gain some assistance and sustenance due to the collapse of the official social security system. This form of subordination weakened the faith of the people in general and women in particular in the political participation, and prospects for social and political changes. Therefore, a group of politicians monopolized marginalized other groups in the society. Moreover, the participants assumed that the women's economic empowerment would enhance their self-reliance and strengthen their social presence in decision-making sectors. It would

also promote the emergence of women's and young leaders capable of making changes, and affirm their political presence.

The political situation affects both the women's roles as well as men's roles. The difficult economic situation in Gaza resulted from internal causes. Many people have lost their jobs because of political reasons and divisions. Thus they tried to work in agriculture in their fields in the eastern area. However, the Jews won't allow them to do that. Hence many families remained without source of income. (Gaza Strip)

They control women through their salaries, which makes them dependent on their families. They have to share their salaries with their husbands and parents. The rate of unemployment among them is rising; they get higher qualifications, but they cannot get job. Local traditions and customs forbid women from leaving their houses and participate in sit-downs and marches. These things have adverse impacts on their political participation. (Gaza Strip)

If women have adequate financial empowerment, they are more likely to assume and excel in higher positions, economic and political fields, or any other sphere. (West Bank)

The economic siege leads to two different outcomes. From one hand, it weakens women's participation due to general miserable situation, frustration, and despair. On the other hand, it reinforces their participation since the worsening situations motivates them to actively participate in many aspects including the political sphere. (West Bank)

Women bear greater burden, responsibility and demands at home. Increased unemployment, poverty and malnutrition made many women seek support and assistance from charities. These hard conditions made them vulnerable to parties, which exploit them to gain more votes. (West Bank)

Economic empowerment makes women overcome many substantial obstacles. If they can provide enough sustenance, they would probably have more time for political participation. (Gaza Strip)

Chapter Three: The obstacles to women's political participation

In this chapter, the respondents answered the following question: What is the influence of (prevailing community culture, religion, security concerns, Israeli occupation, lack of financial resources, family responsibilities, lack of support from political parties, lack of self-confidence, lack of family support, lack of support from voters, women and men, lack of experience) on women's political participation?

The results were as follows:

1. 83.3% agreed that the prevailing community culture concerning women's roles in the society prevented women from political participation. (56.1%: females, 43.9% males. 62.7%: West Bank, 37.3%: Gaza Strip, 64%: employed, 36%: unemployed).

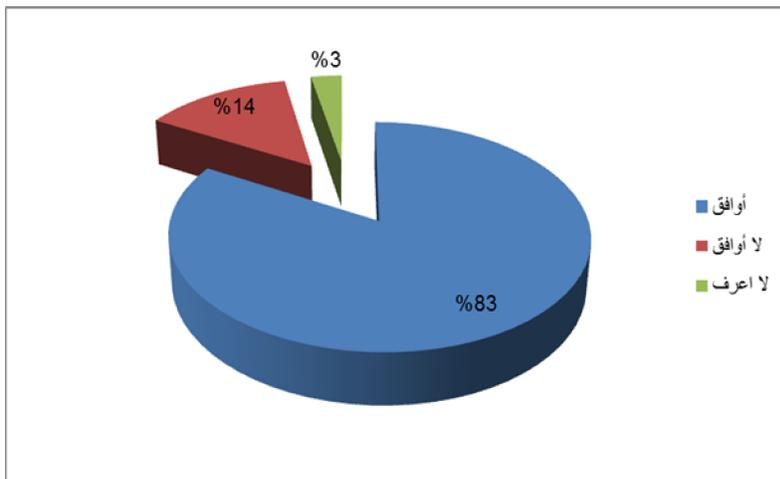


Figure (9) prevailing community culture concerning women's roles in the society

2. 54.2% agreed that religion had passively affected women's political participation. (52.1%: females, 47.9%: males, 62.4%: West Bank, 37.6%: Gaza Strip, 63.9%: employed, 36.1%: unemployed).

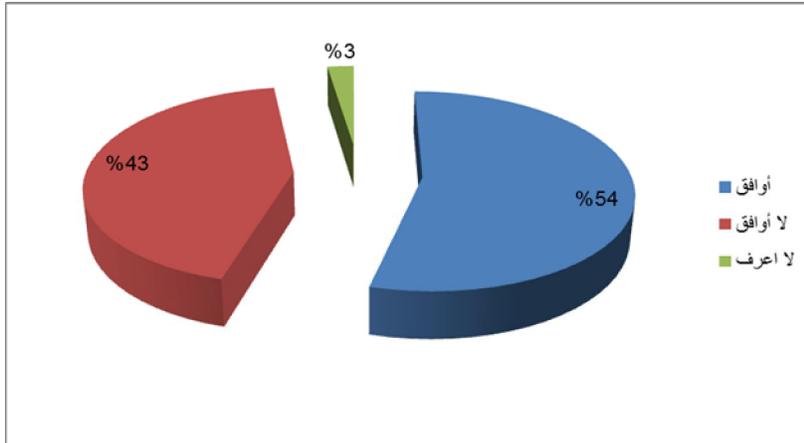


Figure (10) effects of religion on women's political participation

3. 80.4% agreed that security concerns hindered women's political participation (56.3%: females, 43.7%: males, 62.1%: West Bank, 37.9%: Gaza Strip).

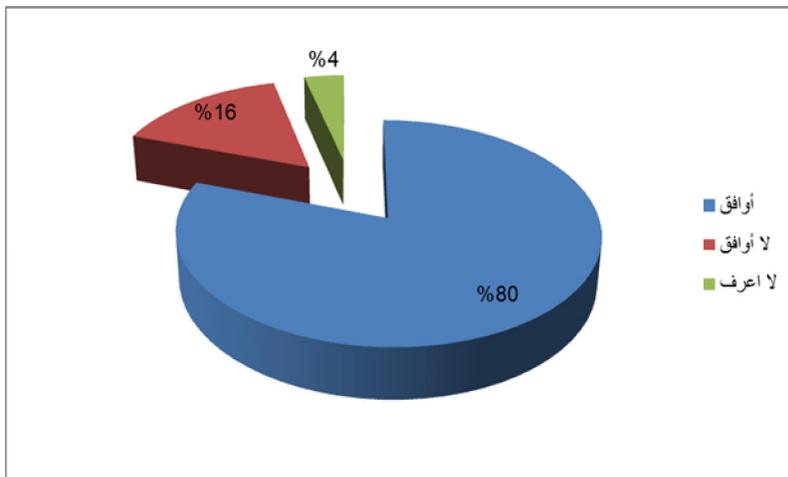


Figure (11) effect of security concerns on women's political participation

4. 77.7% agreed that the Israeli occupation hindered women's political participation. (57%: females, 43%: males. 61.3%: West Bank, 38.7%: Gaza Strip, 64.1%: employed, 35.9%: unemployed).

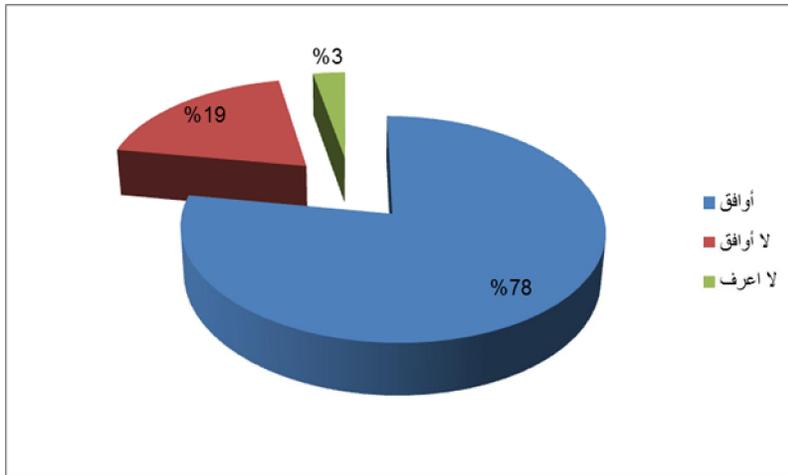


Figure (12) effect of the Israeli occupation on women's political participation.

5. 72.8% agreed that lack of financial resources prevented women from political participation. (57.9%: females, 42.1%: males, 61.5%: West Bank, 38.5%: Gaza Strip, 62.7%: employed, 37.3%: unemployed).

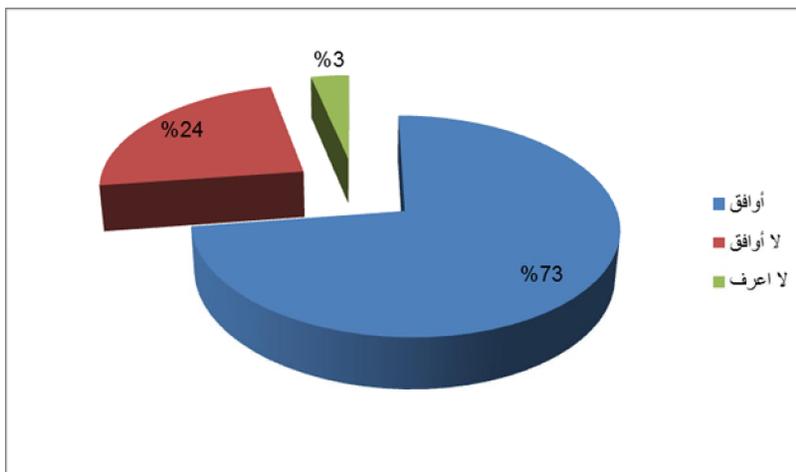


Figure (13) effect of lack of financial resources on women's political participation

6. 80.7% agreed that family responsibilities hindered women's political participation. (55.2%: females, 44.8%: males, 63.4%: West Bank, 36.6%: Gaza Strip, 64.1: employed, 35.9: unemployed).

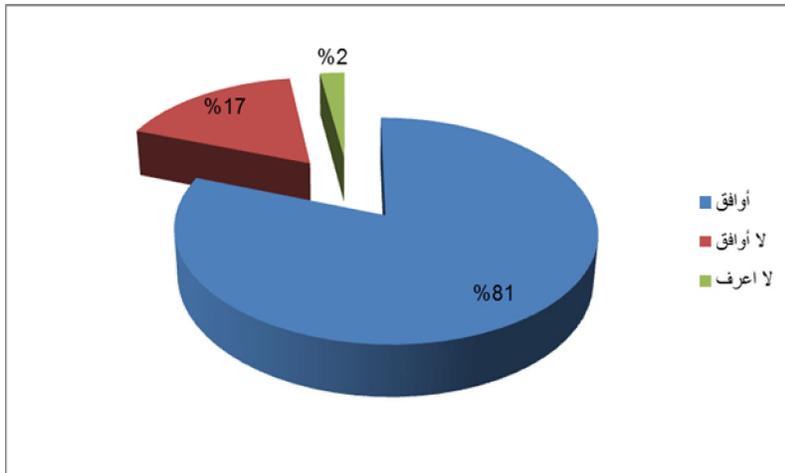
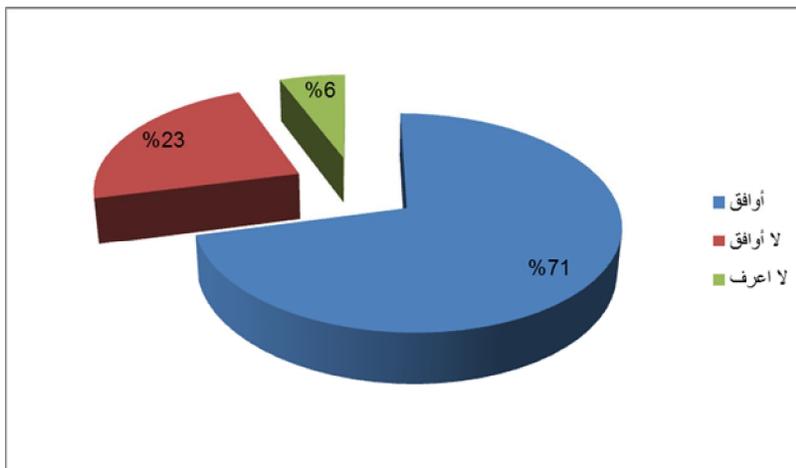


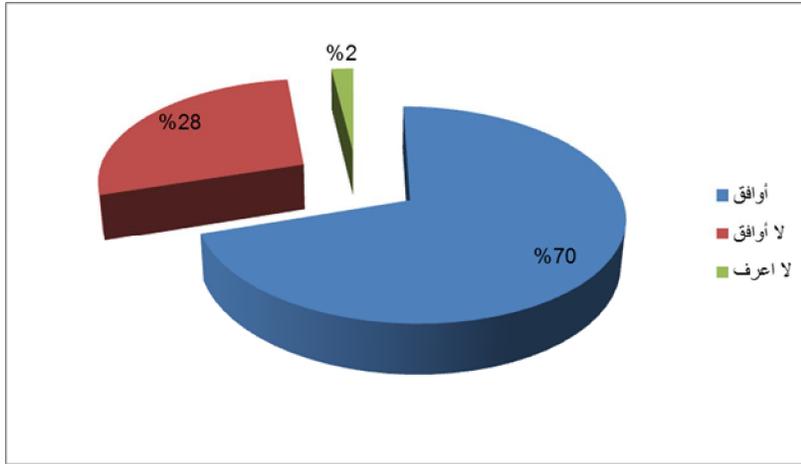
Figure (14) effect of family responsibilities on women's political participation

7. 71.1% agreed that lack of support from political parties adversely affected women's political participation. (57%: females, 43%: males, 60.7%: West Bank, 39.3%: Gaza Strip).



Form (15) effect of the political parties on women's political participation

8. 70.1% agreed that lack of education hindered women's political participation, (56.9%: females, 0.1%: males, 61.2%: West Bank, 38.8%: Gaza Strip, 63%: employed, 0.37%: employed).



Form (16) effect of lack of education on women's political participation

9. 68.8% agreed that lack of self-confidence had negative effects on women's political participation. (54.9%: females, 45.1%: males, 61%: West Bank, 39%: Gaza Strip. 64.3: employed, 35.7: unemployed).

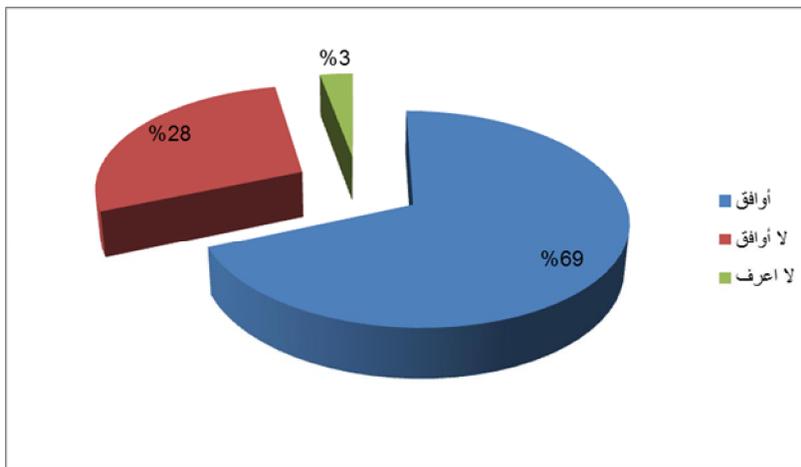
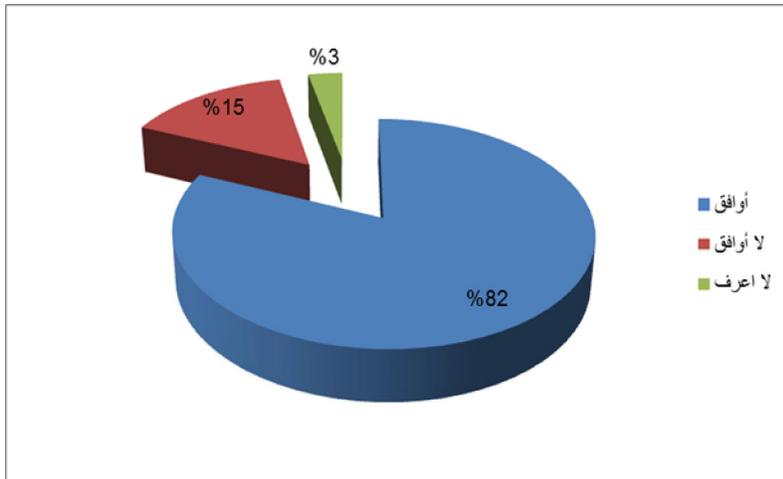


Figure (17) effect of self-confidence on women's political participation

10. 81.6% agreed that lack of family support hindered women's political participation. (56.5%: females, 43.5%: males, 62.1%: West Bank, 7.9%: Gaza Strip).



Form (18) effect of lack of family support on women's political participation

11. 78.9% agreed that lack of votersø support hindered women from political participation. (56.8%: females, 43.2%: males, 61.5%: West Bank, 38.5%: Gaza Strip).

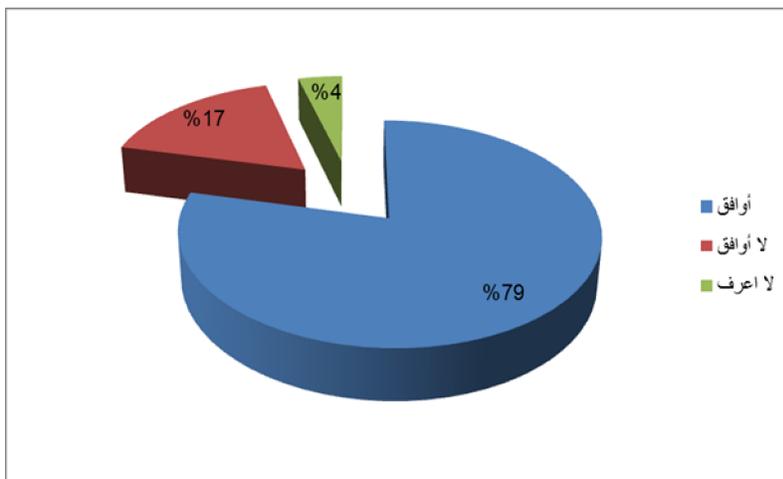


Figure (19) effect of voters' support on women's political participation

12. 75.5% agreed that lack of support from women hindered women's political participation. (57%: females, 43%: males, 61.8%: West Bank, 38.2%: Gaza Strip).

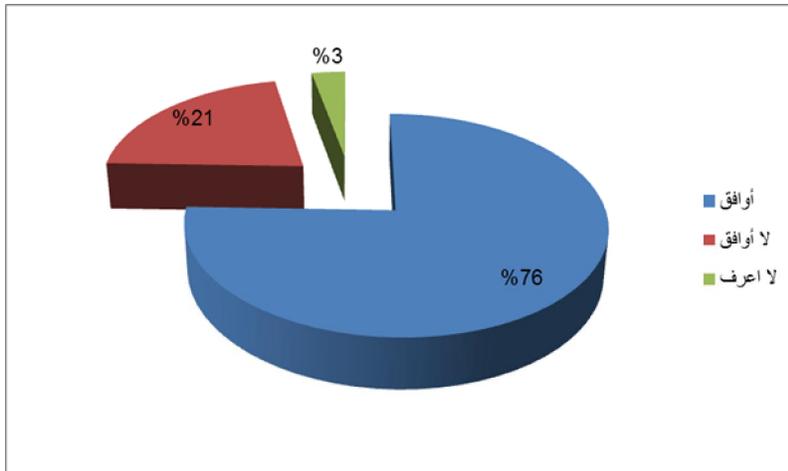


Figure (20) effect of support of other women on women's political participation

13. 75.5% agreed that lack of men's support hindered women's political participation. (57.1%: females, 42.9%: males, 62.7%: West Bank, 37.3%: Gaza Strip, 63.9 employed, 36.1%: unemployed).

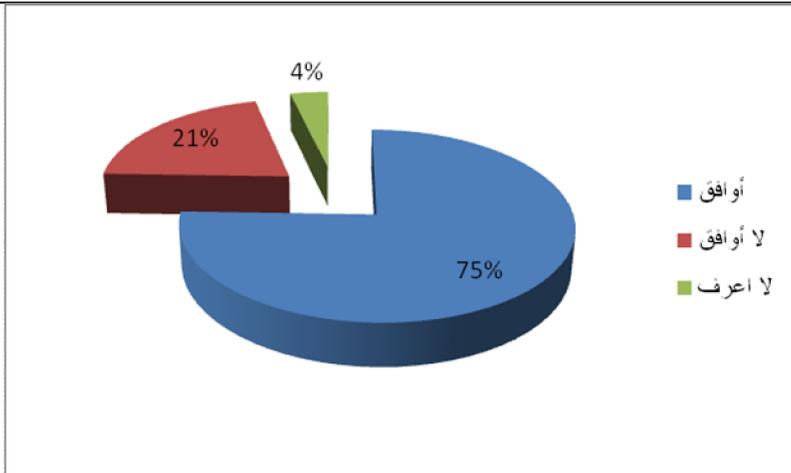


Figure number (21) clarifies effect of support shortage from men in preventing woman from political participation

20-72.6% of respondents agree that the lack of experience for women in issues of elections, political participation and talking in front of the public and other skills influence in preventing women from political participation. 54.2% of the respondents were females, and 45.8% of the respondents were males. 61.6% of respondents from the West Bank, and 38.4% of the respondents from the Gaza Strip.

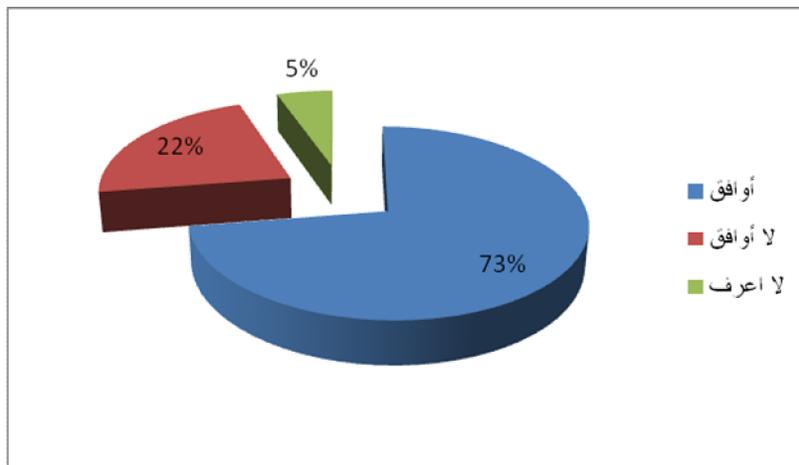


Figure (22) clarifies the effect of experiences shortage in issues of elections and political participation in preventing woman from political participation

Through reviewing answers of participants in the interviews and focus groups about the axis of the barriers that limit women's political participation, the interviewees agreed that community prevailing culture, customs, traditions and cultural heritage which underestimate women compared to men, are the most important obstacles facing women. In addition to the masculine culture of Palestinian society, which has been rooted within the socialization of men that have enhanced men opportunities at the expense of women and young males on young.

The second thing is related to Israeli occupation as a fundamental obstacle to Palestinian political life resulted in division which led to absence of elections, all aspects of democratic life in the community. This is reflected in the structure of the Palestinian political parties, which still maintain a formality for women within the framework of parties. Participants also talked about the obstacles associated with women themselves such as lack of awareness of the importance of promoting feminism participation in decision-making centers, lack of experience among women in the political sphere, in addition to the bad economic situation experienced by women in Palestinian society.

"Customs and traditions are negative or positive: our habits of course, Arabs and especially Palestine have restriction habits on woman, they do not give her complete freedom , she is prevented from travelling or work . She should be accompanied with her husband , she does not have full freedom that might be 20 years ago. However; now thankfully people began to understand the situation , they started giving women freedom in their work "(one of the participants from West Bank).

"Patriarchal masculine society and the surrounding environment might be prohibitive for women to participate and have a role in institutions or political parties. As I said, occupation is one of the reasons, family and parents might allow women political participation but Israeli occupation prevent this through checkpoints, delays and arresting. So, we do not want to be involved in these problems and these troubles, we want to live safely (one of the participants from West Bank).

First barriers that affect women's political participation: customs and traditions which consider the role of women in the education of their children only and that men are more capable than women politically, women lack faith in her role in political participation, women lack knowledge in her political rights, also occupation and the resulted problems hindering women political participation. (one of the participants from Gaza Strip).

As regards to the reasons for women's lack of confidence, there were many answers from participants about that, but there was almost a consensus that elected women or leaders did not seriously work to solve the problems faced by women. In other words, they are not feminists, they did not try to promote joint work with women in the community. They represent the interests of the parties they nominated for; they are women who defend the rights of women. Moreover; they did not have a clear imprint in adoption of policies and laws that support women's rights in equality, or to raise the proportion of women's quota. While some believe that part of these women were not elected by Palestinian Women basis, many of them not for people and the masses of women. Many of those who won the elections or available in the party do not feel that they are existed due to feminists support for them also for decisions taken by men as decision makers whether in the party or family or municipality .Some have pointed out that feminists civil society have a role and contributed to adoption of policies and laws in favor of women more than the role played by elected women.

While another part of the participants said that the presence of women in decision-making positions is a benefit and must work to develop, invest and work to increase the representation of women in all decision-making positions, and that women are better able to defend the rights of women. Blame has been directed on culture and socialization that led to the weakness of the political participation of women and her poor self-confidence.

"What have these ladies who have existed and represent us in Legislative Council made to us, they have not focused on women's issues. As without the feminist movement and without the institutions of civil society who pressing for women issues such as quota and achieved success and not women who are in the Legislative Council "(One of the participants from West Bank).

"There is no conviction by women that women have the ability , potential and acceptance to be men's partners in decision-making issues, or in a political solution or such issues" (one of the participants from Gaza Strip).

"Our Patriarchal masculine society, do not resort to women for solving problems but resort to man, so that women even woman resorts to man for solving our problems, but this is wrong" (one of the participants from Gaza Strip).

If there is a culture that believes in woman's right to exist, believes in the right of women to take their role in all spheres of society, society would not have looked at women in this way and secondly the lack of a culture that women bear the responsibility within the framework of the community. (One of the participants from Gaza Strip).

"The political elites monopoly their roles and leaderships, do not like to work for the interests of women seriously , they do not like to be competitive on their leaderships , this position is considered oppression for the role of woman as it is clear in our society " (One of the participants from West Bank).

First, the lack of women's experience in this field, and in our community did not see great experiences of women leaders encouraged us to say that women may be successful in this area, shortage of women leaders do not encourage on confidence and make women not confident of her success, and society's perception still make woman scare to elect a woman and prefer to elect a man who succeed and not elect a woman who will live a new experience that may succeed or fail. (one of the participants from Gaza Strip).

"what these ladies have made to us who represent us in Legislative Council. They did not focus on women's issues. Without feminism movement and without the institutions of civil society who practiced pressures such as quota subject which they have succeeded in " (One of the participants from West Bank).

Chapter four: presentation of women's successful experiences:

"All the leaders of the Palestinian feminisms factions feminist suffer from the same persecution, oppression and marginalization. Going back to the level of active participation, and challenge within the party ranks, is larger than public challenge in the elections."

Naima Sheikh Ali, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council on the list of Fatah movement, at the age of 50 years old, married and a mother of three children, grew up in a political family where her father died before while she was six months old, her brother Ziad martyred in the battle of Al-Karama in 1969. She was not ten years, her mother raised her and her brothers on nationally, holds a Bachelor of Arabic language from the Islamic University in Gaza and then Higher Diploma in Psychology.

She began her political career since she was in high school where she participated in demonstrations against Camp David and self autonomy proposals, then engaged in national student movement, then in the student youth movement after the split in 1983. She witnessed the seventies, which were all demonstrations against the repressive policies of Israeli occupation and following resistance men in camps.

I worked at the Union of Women's Committees for Social Work in 1987 as coordinator and member of the executive office in homeland. Her youth period and her university study started at beginnings of national awakening and return for national action. In spite of her victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council, but she did not abandon her role in the feminist movement. She still works as a member of the Secretariat General of the Federation for Women and working as a volunteer as chairman for the Association of Culture and Free Thought and works to compensate inactivated role of the Palestinian Legislative Council as a result of the political division through her work in civil society and in the feminist movement.

She still believes that the motivation that launched her while she was small for political and national action is still present. It is the liberation of Palestine, preservation of national identity and Palestinian national heritage. She has an ambition in increasing women's participation in national construction as she participated and engaged in the struggle, working to increase women's participation in decision-making positions by a percentage that commensurate the size of the national sacrifice. She sees that this is a right of women and not a favor from one.

She adds that all the leaders of the Palestinian feminist with all factions suffer from the same oppression, marginalization and go back to the level of active participation. She considers that challenge within the ranks of the party is greater than the mass challenge in the elections. She recognizes that the National Movement in general and Women Movement in particular has regressed in terms of role after Oslo Accords, and this is reflected in the reality of Palestinian women. Despite the fact that Palestinian women's movement is still young, its leaders are still young, the peak of national action polarization was in the eighties. However; after the formation of the Palestinian National Authority, the feminist movement has suffered from the migration of women cadres towards PNA institutions which weakened the voluntary work in the community, the disruption of real democratic life within political parties and lack of potential financial sources.

She says: My dream is not far from the society in which I live, I dream in a democratic state dominated by social justice in accordance with the Palestinian Basic Law and the Bill of national independence, I do not want a detailed community for women, I want a just society to everyone on the base of equality for all, woman is a part of the community, I want equality and freedom of expression for all, I want to justice to the family law for women and men, I want a just law which equals society and maintains a civil and democratic state with mechanisms to ensure the works of the law, I do not want my children to suffer as I did.

"We had a dream, but we cannot achieve due to division "

Hanan Abu Amr, a member of the municipal council for the Maghazi area in central Gaza Strip, married and mother of six children, holds a diploma in Arabic,

won the municipal elections on the list of the Fatah movement in 2005, but until now, she is a community activist and feminist known in the Maghazi refugee camp, a director of the kindergarten inside camp, and linked by a special relationship with all the inhabitants of the camp. She was selected and commissioned by Fatah movement to be representative of the movement in the municipal elections, holds a number of advanced training courses in the field of local governance, mechanisms of local councils and the mechanics of the integration of civil society in the local labor,

Mrs. Hanan says: I have a dream that I see women in all decision-making positions, see her a mayor and not a member of the municipal council, president of the Legislative Council and President of the Government. I dream that society looks at us and we look at ourselves as women that we are strong, I wish we could get rid of the socio-cultural heritage which divides community on the basis of a man and a woman,

I did not expect the support that I got from the community, family and my husband. I was happy in the experience, and visits of camp's residents, neighbors and friends who supported me, especially moral support to me, I could see the pride and enthusiasm in the eyes of women in the camp, I always feel the weight of responsibility upon me to fill out my place as a woman, to proved to society that women is on the confidence level given to her by community, that we can do what men can do and sometimes better. I want to woman experience in the municipal elections to be a successful and to be the first step which women build upon to go towards greater and wider participation in the decision-making centers on the principles of justice and fairness.

Despite the division and difficult working conditions in the present circumstances of political division, lack of resources, siege, collapse of infrastructure in the community, we were able to achieve success, and I wish we could in better conditions of these conditions which may cause in varied performance and differed assessment .

"I advise young women to participate in political and social work, empower themselves, develop their performance, their abilities, their culture, to be educated ,

involve deeply in society issues, we should keep up with evolution - develop our roles through participation in the civil institutions, develop women's work, develop our roles of leadership within the parties and within the community. We, as parties have to care about voluntary, educational work, empowerment of women and young people to be able to complete the journey towards the nation, liberation and statehood, citizenship, equality and rights, and to build a society in which we are assured on our children and our daughters. "

"Fighting a bitter struggle within the party in order to get our role and get rid of the traditional leaders and be influential."

Mrs. Rahma Ali Suleiman Abu Laila, a member of the municipal council for the Rafah Shuka area, 46 years old, holds a bachelor degree in social development, married with seven sons, a member of the Palestinian Democratic Union Fida, participated in several courses, holds a number of experiences in leadership and prepare the political cadre, feminist activist within the party and in many community-based women's organizations in Gaza Strip.

Grew up in a political family where her brother was arrested for ten years when she was small. The political debates, visit to her brother in prison watch the Israeli soldiers, participated in the activities and events of the first intifada in 1987. All of this has strengthened and created motivation to her, the desire for political participation and play a political role.

She began her party activities after marriage where she joined the Palestinian Democratic Union- Fida, worked within the women's committees within the party, took on the task of educating women, girls and to prepare a real women cadre that is able to play an influential role in politics within the party, while the masculine outlook within the Palestinian parties was a tyrant and a lot of them do not want women except for decoration only, dependent and not a real partner in decision-making within the party institutions.

Mrs. Rahmeh says: it is not easy for women to challenge societal prevailing culture, customs and traditions, which see strangeness in presence of women in decision-making centers or crowding out of the men inside the party positions. However; the steadfastness of women in the face of these challenges and not

surrendering has changed community trends and enforced acceptance to the presence of women in political, social and local decision-making circles.

"I decided to nominate for municipal elections and decided to take advantage of the women's quota system, which was approved. I received the support from the party, family, my husband. I have faced opposition from some within the party, sought to unify the voice of feminist within the party, I challenged the negative trends of the community who want women to be in her home only, and proved that a woman has a real effective role

I am Proud and satisfied with my performance, and will nominate for the Legislative Council elections in the next time. I will support other women to get to the decision-making centers, my main goal is to help women reach decision making centers at the local, national and social level. This history will not be forgotten in my life, my existence in the Municipal Council.

Women can benefit from the media boom, community awareness, which began to accept women's political participation, we want young leaders to be able to enter the political sphere and defend social issues, education opportunities for girls are available now more than the youth , we have to take advantage of these opportunities. Young people, especially girls, to promote their participation in politics and educate themselves to be able to convince stakeholders of the importance of their presence in decision-making positions, we have tremendous tasks to work on, fighting a bitter struggle within the party in order to get our roles , be influential and get rid of the traditional leaders, we have a homeland and future. "

"Matching between the party's interest and citizens' interest is difficult, but I do not choose between the interests of citizens and anything else."

Renad Nadi Arar, a member of the village council - Qarawat Bani Zeid, age 35 years, married and mother of four children, holds a Bachelor degree in Social Work from Al Quds Open University, won the Qarawat Bani Zeid village council elections, on list of the left.

Raised and grew up in a political family and a political father who spent a period of his life in Israeli jails. She used to attend meetings of working committees in Ramallah since she was ten years old, got married at the age of 15 years old, completed high school after marriage, completed her undergraduate studies while she is married, early marriage did not stand in front of her ambition or formed an Early impediment to complete her education and participation in the elections and win membership of the village council in an area dominated by tribal traditions and the upper word for the family and the man. Since her childhood, she is inhabited emotionally, nationally and politically work. Her experience was well formulated through her weekly visits Israeli jails to see her detained father whose absence no one could fill. She used to participate in the political, national and field events in the first intifada. She did not need to be organized because she grew up in a family who considered policy as a family member, love community work, which she has practiced since childhood when she was accompanied by her uncle, Dr. Yousef Arar, professor of Psychology who served for 18 years in the charities Union and was moving from city to city to exercise his duties. When she graduated from high school, she insisted to specialize in the field of social service because she believes in community work, then worked in education field as an educational counseling in the village.

I worked as a volunteer in municipal elections in 2005, I was concerned with how women achieve victory in the elections and be present. I remained with the dream to nominate for election until 2012. So, I decided to nominate for the municipal elections, I received support from the family and the party which is the Popular Front, I nominated on the list of unified list of the forces of the left.

I wish I could change society's perception towards women and to change the look of women for women. We still need a sense of equality as women. My dream not be monitored and restricted from the community. We have fought like men, women are more losers from occupation, I wish I could change the perception, even the elected women are supplement and not a basis and a partner. In many cases be the challenge is difficult to reconcile between the party's interest and the interest of the citizens. It is true that I choose not hesitate in choosing the interests of citizens, because this an honesty and I will account myself on it.

Every woman has a dream. So, we, women and young women have to defend our dream and our goal to another life for a moment, because the goals need to struggle to achieve it, we have to have the knowledge and skill to change our society does not give in to social culture that deprive us of our rights and constitute an obstacle between us and our dreams, we can achieve success and stick to the dream.

I can not imagine that women do not participate in decision-making, I do not think that we can build a home without them ó woman is homeland.

Yusry Mohamed Diriehe: age 45 years, married, won membership village of Beit Fajar Council in Bethlehem on the list of the Fatah movement in 2012, holds a Bachelor in Social Work from the University of Jerusalem, Ebrahemia and a High diploma in education. She works as a teacher in education, union activist and works as deputy secretary of the Union of teachers in Bethlehem, worked as a member a volunteer in the administrative body of the General Federation of Palestinian Women from 1997 till 2012.

She has been activist since her youth in the national movement and the student movement at the university, arrested in 1985 on the back of its activities in the marches and demonstrations had been repeatedly harassed by the occupation and prevented from traveling to complete university education outside the homeland.

I grew up in a family where the elder brother was detained for a period of 12 years in occupation jails, I am married to a brother of a martyr, did not face any problems from family or spouse or parents for working in politics and nominated for elections.

She says: We cannot stay in our homes and leave the interests of the people in the hands of others without accounting and accountability. We must interest ,participate to shape our society and our future. I can not imagine that women do not participate in decision-making, I do not think that we can build a nation without women ó woman is homeland.

I am proud of my performance, accomplishment and my presence in the municipal council. Next time, I will nominate for the post of President of the Municipal Council, I am happy in people's trust, I always try to involve citizens in every activities through the formation of a multi-community committees, trying to succeed in spite of all the circumstances and challenges, trying to prove that women are able to influence and contribute to the construction and development, may enter the parliament and compete for decision-making positions, trying to create a feminist elite who are able to lead homeland that fit the sacrifices. My interest is women's access to positions of decision-making and not what is offered by their feminist quota. I thought for a moment to form a feminist list to address each attempts that seek to marginalize the role of women and contempt their role. I can not take responsibility for the silence in this country, the sin of silence, and let others play the fate of our people seriously, silence is not a solution, but a sad thing. We have to face of injustice, account officials and teach our people how to account us.

I am trying to make a real change in society, in the reality of Palestinian women. I am convinced in my experience. I should have been president of village council and not a member.

My message to the Palestinian women not to abandon their role and not give in to attempts to marginalize their role and isolate her in her home, we have to take a real role and develop our capabilities in order to deserve this role, we have to prepare well for active participation in decision-making positions.

"If the Palestinian women did not change the opinion of the community towards her issues and highlight her role, she should not wait others to give her right."

Amal Tawfiq Hamad, holds a doctorate in social psychology, age of 51 years, lives in the town of Beit Hanoun in the northern Gaza Strip, residents of Beit Hanoun, a political activist since she was a student at Birzeit University in West Bank, about thirty years ago, took many positions in the movement, all through the

elections. She has been working in the women sector and assumed leadership positions in women's federations, worked at School for the preparatory phase, and worked as director of the Department of Women in the Palestinian Legislative Council, was elected to the North region in the Fatah movement, won in the last Conference of the Fatah Movement as a member in Revolutionary Council, was elected as deputy secretary. I also worked as deputy commissioner of international relations in the Fatah movement, then chosen to be a member of the Central Committee, became the head of Social Commission. She considers that the subject of women is an important subject, she must have a role in decision-making, and we must work to unify the efforts of women's federations.

She says that women have to take the initiative and calls for change, working toward mobilizing people who believe in her case, fight against who reject their role in society. She and adds: We must work to create a young and national leaders who are able to complete the journey after us, we must as women work to make cooperation and partnership with men in women's and community issues.

Through her work as a teacher in her place of residence in Beit Hanoun, she knew closely the concerns of Palestinian women in terms of their suffering, marginalization of their social and political role, faced many difficulties and challenges to complete her education at Birzeit University, fought for the promotion of social and political participation of women, worked as a member of the Board of Directors in Musharkiet Foundation, which defended the personal status and women's rights. She sees it is necessary for the presence of women in decision-making positions, away from decorative complementary role. She sees it is necessary to work with men in achieving justice and equality between the sexes, and the issue of women is not a feminist issue only, it is like Men and all community, prides itself on being the only woman in the Central Committee of the Fatah movement and struggles to be a colleague in the next Congress and achieve feminist quota within the Fatah movement which is 20% of women within movement frameworks. Women say that they are basic and fundamental partner in the Palestinian revolution.

She says that women can influence the decision-making process, and may have a role in the achievement of national unity and national liberation, and we women

have to fight within the party in order to achieve full partnership with men, and to reject all attempts to marginalization and exclusion of women from the departments and centers of decision-making, if not Palestinian women change the opinion of the community towards the issues and highlighting its role is not waiting for the one that gives them the right, we, as women politicians and assets in Mrako decision-making to keep However, young leaders of both sexes were to create a capable generation to complete the journey towards equality, justice and liberation,

"Women are not a numbers, they are partners, they must prove their existence and their worth, and no one can marginalize or except her".

Mrs. Wafaa Afif Zakarneh, from Jenin, married, has four children, two young men and two girls, aged 47 years, holds a high school, has received numerous training courses, staff training courses within her work in the Fatah movement and in the General Union of Palestinian Women, president of General Union of Palestinian Women; of Branch Jenin, and an elected member of the region of Fatah movement in Jenin, She has been detained at the age of 19 years at the hands of the Israeli occupation on the background of organizing and leading demonstrations against the occupation and in support of the prisoners in their hunger strike, where her two brothers were detained in Israeli prisons at that time.

She began in the organizational work at the age of fifteen within the events of the volunteer work in schools and then to Students Youth in 1982. She says that the first electoral test when she participated in the election campaign of her father, Afif Zakarneh in 1976, where he nominated for the municipal elections in Jenin within the lists of PLO. She was educated on this experience, which remained in her memory which motivated her to nominate for the legislative elections on the list of the Fatah movement in 2006 from Jenin, and then to nominate for membership of the Revolutionary Council of Fatah movement in 2009. Grew up within a struggler's family, all of its members working in politics, where her father, the late Afif Zakarneh, was a leader of the Baath Party and Arab nationalists, sentenced to death in absentia by the Jordanian regime as a result of his political activities, was arrested several times in Jordanian prisons and won the municipal elections in Jenin list in 1976.

Wafa says that the family and the home are the most important in the march of struggle for women, where woman is brought up on the national culture, the culture of participation and voluntary work, talks about her experience and how she insists on going to visit her brothers in Israeli jails, and how she helps in organizing demonstrations in support of prisoners, anti-Israeli occupation and how she was arrested on the back of organizational activity at the age of 18 years.

Wafa says that women should be present in all places and locations, and to impose herself merit and efficiency so that they can take their rights, implement her role to fight against the occupation, defense of freedom and equality, and to impose herself on those who refuse women political participation and presence in decision-making positions. Many of the men want only decorative role and not an active role for women.

She blames a lot of women who opposed the women's quota in the Revolutionary Council and the Central Committee of Fatah. Without the quota a lot of women would not succeed in municipal and legislative elections. Wafaa talks bitterly about some of the models in the Palestinian community who are trying to push some of the female candidates within the party and legislative lists with ladies who do not have struggle experience but because they are sons of families. She talks about her dream in existence of the largest possible number of women in decision-making positions, and to be women on the basis of efficiency and struggle and not just a decoration. She says that women are not a number only, a woman is a partner she has to prove her existence and worth. No one can marginalize or exempt her, and in order to be a partner in the change, she must seek to strengthen her presence in the decision-making positions, even working to change laws and policies.

Women face a lot of challenges in the Palestinian society, masculine society makes her to work hard so that she imposes herself. She has to be a feminist advocates for women's rights in equality, to prove their worth and not waiting to be dominated by one because she is the girl or wife. My dream is still not achieved, the end of the Israeli occupation to Palestine, a dream that I have begun as early from childhood, grew up at the time of my arrest at the age of 19 years, still not achieved.

I dream of involvement the largest possible number of women to decision-making positions, women real feminists, strugglers who are able to impose a positive change in the community, capable to change laws and policies because laws can achieve justice and equality, have the capacity to defend the woman's point of view and not a decoration for men.

Chapter Five: documentation of programs and initiatives in support of the right of Palestinian women in political participation

One of the main axes of the research is to know the extent of the community's awareness about the existence of supportive programs and projects about the right of Palestinian women in political participation. The results of the analysis highlighted that there is a low percentage of awareness about the existence of such programs. 80% of the interviewees that they do not aware of any programs; the importance of women access to the advanced level of practical and scientific knowledge has been highlighted. Therefore; the concerned institutions should access to all the women in all areas to empower them culturally, socially and politically. The remaining percentage have confirmed that the programs and current projects are not sufficient, as so far, the women did not reach the required empowerment and that institutions are interested in a particular category. So, the institutions should access to the most marginalized places and work to adopt a clear methodology for the involvement of women in various programs and not limited to programs of psychological support. As has been noted by some that most of the implemented projects are concentrated in major cities and these projects end after the funding ends.

"For example we have conducted a project study to identify the needs of women members in municipalities and women institutions. We have known from them that women receive training during election period only. Now there are training projects for women who are members at municipalities. There is no confidence in courses and studies that we get, and our interpretation of these funds that it is loss of funds and far away from the real change. "(One of the activists from one of the villages of West Bank).

"I am as an employee at the Ministry of Education, I meet with a lot of feminist and community institutions, I hope that this is not an attack but just a point of view. What I mean is that we have reached the stage which is enough to work with a group of women only, the project should be transferred into a program, because the project ends with ending its money. However, if we have approved to convert it into a program, we will ensure its continuity. The majority of our projects do not

need a very large funding. For example, we, at Rahmeh (mercy) Association we have completed approximately six projects and workshops to promote the role of women with very little funding. This Association was established since six months. (One of the participants in focus groups in the northern of West Bank).

"We train, but when outputs, we do not find one, in every project we find with us the same known faces, we are unable to reach a new generation who is ready to complete these steps, We do not have currently in the younger generation the spirit of volunteerism. We used to see that previously without any benefits. However, nowadays this has, I mean the spirit of volunteerism. This is seriousness. We have lived a long period of time and we are working on a short projects for a short period and then ends. "(one of the participants in focus groups in the Hebron area).

Some of the initiatives and projects that have been highlighted and identified during the research process:

É Women's Project and political participation implemented in Gaza Strip by the Union of Women Committees, where the Union works with all the feminist frames to build a democratic country believe in freedom, works to uphold the status of women and promote the role of women in the Palestinian political life by raising the level of her awareness and to strengthen political role in political parties.

É An implemented project by the Federation of Women's Committees for Social Work. It continued for two years (2013-2014) and is designed to enhance the level of active political participation of women in Palestine through capacity building of elected women to positions of responsibility and related civil society organizations to women to become community leaders and agents of change in their communities who work to address of women's issues, improve perceptions about the political participation of women and the establishment of mechanisms for public dialogue (through dedicated forums for women), the provision of technical and financial support for initiatives that address the specific needs of their essential for the development of public perception and cognition and support women's participation in public and political environments. The program adopts a multi-curriculum focus to create a driving force to increase women's participation in

political and public life where they focus on strengthening the leadership role of women with particular attention to elected young women and women with support to local women to get the best representation by increasing social awareness of the importance of women's political participation and motivate women towards participation in national existing forums such as the National Forum to promote women's participation in elections, as well as highlight the importance of the role of elected women to meet the community needs of women by providing successful models in the media to the public. In addition to that, the program will facilitate the formation of the Committee for the Advancement of Women in politics (CPWP) and support a coalition of women's organizations and non-governmental, non-partisan network to promote women's political participation.

ÉElection Support Program implemented by (Muftah) key institution during years 2012 _ 2013. This program holds a series of public meetings for raising awareness in various governorates of the country with the aim of raising awareness among the public voters in active citizenship, importance of community participation, political and practical electoral. The institution organized numerous awareness events and meetings with local decision-makers and mutual visits for women members in the local bodies for the aim of strengthening and enhancing women capabilities with the community. The institution will hold training courses targeting women candidates for elections in the West Bank to prepare them to manage successful election campaigns, women leaders in Gaza Strip, to familiarize them with the experiment and prepare them for the future.

ÉProject of "Vote for Change" implemented by the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy - Muftah "key"; in response to a strategic goal of "community empowerment components of leadership to participate in the promotion of democracy, good governance and to raise community awareness about the rights of good citizenship and duties" implemented by Muftah "key". This project supports a group of young activists and empowerment in leadership roles and motivates them to adopt the initiative and progress in their community activism with readiness and success, through the development of their knowledge and practical skills.

Documenting coalitions of UN resolution number 1325 initiatives:

In this section, emphasis will be placed on project "Gender, Peace and Security" implemented by the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy. The aim of the project is to form institutional coalitions base to activate the UN resolution number 1325 in the occupied Palestinian territory since 2007. The geographical distribution and specialization, in Nablus and Hebron, and later in Jericho and the Jordan Valley. This has come in parallel with the work on the localization of the decision by Palestinians, through holding many of the sessions and meetings with male and female experts and activists in the feminist and human rights area, to agree on the appropriate mechanisms to use UN resolution in an optimal use.

Below are some examples performed by the initiative, which reflects Muftah institution experience in contributing to the development of the UN resolution 1325 on the agenda of the work of the member institutions that have worked to strengthen its presence in the community, through its interaction with the community and priorities needs, and its success in attracting different segments of society to interact with the Palestinian women's issues. It found in the UN resolution 1325 a tool contributes to disclose violations of the Israeli occupation against Palestinian women , in addition to the integration of women in political decision-making process.

Initiative of Moon (Alqamar) Charity:

The initiative entitled «My power is in my knowledge » UN resolution 1325 breaks the typical method in spreading awareness about it. Moon (Alqamar) Charity nearly targeted 160 of the local community of families and institutions. Responses have been received before Ramadan evening, which was organized to answer the questions revolved around the definition of the United Nations resolutions 1325 and 1889, 242 and 181 and to recognize its importance. The meeting, where kind

gifts and material, distributed on the winners), 90 (young men and women).Some of the audiences who were there by chance in place of the evening by saying: «We have been here by chance, we were invited to Ramadan breakfast, we have benefited from information, and this is the first time that we hear about the Security Council resolution1325. »

Isra Initiative Charity:

Isra Charity targeted several categories of the visitors of the Society. It exploited the annual summer camp organized for children in the society to raise awareness about the resolution of UN 1325, which benefited about 30 boys and girls between the ages of(8-14) years through discussion sessions on the rights and freedoms of children and the importance of applying laws. The society also targeted a group of homogeneous women in age and culturally in a training course which lasted three days under the title "Women Tomorrow", where 25 women benefited with information about the localization of the UN resolution 1325 in Palestine and the importance of women's political participation, access to decision-making positions and at all levels.

In coordination with Al-Quds Open University, the Society has implemented an awareness session for Resolution number 1325 and the importance of documenting human rights violations against Palestinian women and girls in the occupied Palestinian territory with the participation of dozens of students.

Initiative of Aldyouk agricultural cooperative Society:

This initiative has coincided with the local councils elections that took place in October 2012, and expanded its activities to work to encourage women to participate in the nomination and voting processes. 30 women aged 18-34 have benefited, they have contributed in voting process for women who nominated within the lists. Two of women won to get seats in the municipal council at Aldyouk area. The participants expressed their motivation and incentive formed to them after the training course to participate in supporting women in their access to decision-making positions.

Social Rescue Society initiatives for the development of Palestinian women in Bani Naim, Althahriya and Althahria Ladies Charity:

Given the importance of empowering women and young women in particular of resolution number 1325 and make them aware of their rights under this resolution, social Rescue Association for the Development of Palestinian women at Althahria and Bani Naim and the Association of Althahria women participated in the organization of this initiative on two towns, which marked the organization of the International Day for the prevention of AIDS.

Within this initiative, which continued two months, several training courses and workshops aimed the working women, housewives and female university students . The situation of women in the region and to identify their problems, and empower them in resolution 1325, develop the concept of communication and social networking among them and come up with recommendations that raise women status, through the development of herself and lifting her potential and enable them to solve the difficulties, provide all what is needed to promote their issues.

Section three:

Conclusions:

1. There is a real and serious change in the attitudes of Palestinian society towards enhancing women's political participation and that the presence of women in a lot of decision-making positions, private sector and civil society has become a natural phenomenon needed in the community. However; this role is still determined by the men and the community and it is closer to be granted role of women in society and not a merit for her.
2. Community prevalent culture, customs and traditions and cultural heritage which underestimates women compared to men, are the most important obstacles facing women, in addition to the masculine culture of Palestinian society, which has been rooted within the socialization that reinforced man's chances at the expense of women and the young man on the expense of a girl.
3. Inefficiency, lack of advocacy and awareness campaigns are the causes of the absence of effective and influential women leaders of political parties.
4. The lack of awareness of the importance of promoting women participation in decision making positions, in addition to the lack of experience of women in the political sphere strengthened and enhanced the weakness of the political participation of women.
5. Women's civil society has a role and contributed in approving policies and laws for the favor of women more than the role played by elected women .
6. Producing women or women leaders did not work in earnest to solve the problems facing women, they were not feminists, they did not try to promote joint work with women in community. The represented the interests of the parties that have nominated for more than they are women who defend women's rights.

7. Absence of clear footprint of women parliamentarians in the adoption of policies and laws that support women's rights to equality or raise women's quota ratio, where some believe that a part of these women were not elected by Palestinian women base, many of them were not known for people and masses of women. Many of those who won the elections or existed in the parties do not feel that they are existed through feminist support to them, but as a result of decisions taken by the men decision makers whether through the party or family or municipality.

8. The Palestinian political division did not give women the opportunity to prove their worth.

9. Absence of women leaders from playing a real role in the parties, media, and active participation in achieving reconciliation, addressing issues and social problems.

10. The low level of women's representation in political parties as it is a reflection of the quotas that have been imposed by law in the parliament and municipalities. This is due to the patriarchal attitudes in the Palestinian parties which is more rejection for real representation of women in parties. Most of parties take the issue with something closer to a "decoration" imposed by law.

11. The institutions of civil society have the most important role in promoting women's rights in political participation and approve the feminist quota and international conventions. They had a distinguished role in highlighting the role of women, efforts have been exerted to educate women and build their capacities and contribute to the preparation of qualified women and youth through the implemented programs, projects and activities.

12. The omission of women, women's organizations and associations in promotion of successful women's models which are many contributed to the low level of community awareness of the importance of women's political participation.

13. Civil society has women leaders who are able to achieve the desired change. The institutions of civil society have to develop its performance to monitor and

follow up the work of government institutions and ministries to ensure gender equality, development of laws and regulations to enhance women's political participation and raise their representation in decision-making positions. They are required to adopt clear strategies to ensure the achievement of women's rights and fairness.

14. The poor economic conditions is an important factor in the weakness of women's political participation, play an active role and increases their dependence to parties.

15. Difficulties of the economic situation, difficulties caused by the Palestinian division, absence of democracy for the Palestinian community life has negatively reflected on the party status of women and the percentage of their representation and influence in the policies of Palestinian parties and factions.

16. Increase the economic empowerment of women will enhance the self-reliance, promotes family and social presence in decision-making circles. The absence of economic empowerment will enhance women economic and political dependency of women on men. While economic empowerment will enhance women's self-confidence, capabilities and possible to enhance the appearance of feminist leaders and youth who are able to bring about change and the imposition of feminist political presence.

17. Israeli occupation has direct and fundamental impact in reducing the political participation of Palestinian women, as mobility difficulties and closures by the occupation negatively effect on political participation. The difficulty of travel and movement limited Palestinian women empowerment to participate in many international forums and international conferences held in the countries of the world. Moreover, the barriers between the cities of the West Bank and between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip was prevented from freedom of movement for women in governorates, which reflected negatively on the feminist movement in general and the feminists activists in particular.

18. The Israeli occupation is the main obstacle to political participation of women and the development of a Palestinian feminist movement which is able to meet the

needs of the community, fit the sacrifices made by the Palestinian women. The policies of limiting the freedom of movement and mobility policies affected and reduced the role of women's organizations and unions in a manner prevented the crystallization a strategy that is able to strengthen the presence of Palestinian women in decision-making positions as men.

19. Ferocity of the siege and occupation has made a lot of people afraid of women exposure to insulations, humiliation, detention and harassment by the occupation. While the biggest effect of these policies influence greatly on young women than on older women.

20. Israeli economic seige has led to increased poverty and deprivation in the Palestinian community, which is reflected in all segments of society, its increased impact has been clear on the poor and marginalized groups in society, especially women. It also led to increased unemployment rates among young people of both sexes and the rest of society, which led to increased dependence of these categories on Political parties in the Palestinian community to request assistance and subsidies.

21. Israeli blockade led to the emergence of parasitic economies represented in tunnels, black trade market, monopolies, high prices and the absence of the chances of success for small businesses due to the lack of raw materials and rise of its price, lack of transparency, accountability and the spread of corruption, which has led to increased poverty and marginalization rates. All this coincided with the absence of freedoms and the disruption of democratic life within Palestinian society, which is reflected on parties and Palestinian institutions, and led to the predominance of the male within the political parties and the exclusion of women from active participation in decision-making both at the party or institutional level. However, this role led to the reluctance of mass for active participation in decision-making, strengthened the typical, traditional and absence of young leaders from the party decision-making and community circles.

22. The Israeli occupation is a fundamental obstacle to Palestinian political life and the resulting effect of division represented in absence of elections, and all aspects of democratic life in society. This is reflected in the structure of the Palestinian

political parties, which still maintain formality for women within the party frameworks.

Recommendations:

First: Recommendations for decision makers:

1. The government should take measures and policies that promote the presence of women in decision-making positions, given the opportunity to exercise real leadership role, political and supreme positions in the state structures.
2. The government should take accountable procedures in the field of empowering women and give them equal opportunities with men.
3. The formation of a monitoring body within the governmental institutions, assigned to monitoring mechanics of equality and equal opportunities between men and women.
4. Forming development committee in the Legislative Council assigned to monitoring governmental measures to ensure gender equality.
5. Raise the proportion of women quota in legislative and institutional elections by not less than 30%, and to take measures to ensure the application of this percentage within the parliament, political parties, and civil society institutions.
6. The government should adopt a long-term Strategy toward raising the percentage of women in all government institutions and positions of decision-making, top positions in the state.
7. Raise the percentage of women's participation in political parties by not less than 30% of all positions of party to have a role and a clear imprint in political action.
8. Reconsider the issues of Palestinian women as it is a national and social concern and not only a feminist concern.

9. Take actions and policies that guarantee providing more space for women, women's issues and concerns in the media.

10. Enhance the opportunities of economic empowerment for women, which would intensify the societal presence of women and reduce limiting the presence of Palestinian women in certain social roles.

11. The government should take clear procedures and policies with regard to gender equality in public positions and cancel all decisions and policies that will distinguish men from women.

12. The government should take procedures and policies that ensure the criminalization of violence against women and consider it a public affair and not a private matter.

Second: recommendations for institutions feminism:

1. Raise the efficiency of women and human rights organizations to enable them to monitor and document the occupation violations against women.

2. Strengthen the partnership and networking between women's organizations and the international human rights organizations to ensure submitting reports of Israeli violations to international levels to reduce the Israeli arrogance.

3. The need to find alternative ways to ensure real communication between the feminist movements in all Palestinian areas.

4. Reconsider the feminist movement in the Palestinian areas in all the Palestinian homeland and Diaspora, and to develop mechanisms for interdependence and make decisions aside from the political parties.

5. Formation of a human rights body dedicated for monitoring Israeli violations against Palestinian women in particular, and generally all violations against Palestinian citizens.

6. Prepare a feminist annual scale to measure the level of freedoms and equality in the Palestinian society, measure violations and extent of fairness of government policies and actions in the Palestinian community in addition to measuring the levels of women's participation in political parties and all state structures which have a monitoring and overseeing body which is published annually and discussed on the institutional, government and people levels.

7. women unions and organizations should enhance enlightenment role in Palestinian society, especially since the Palestinian political parties voluntarily renounced this role. Therefore; these parties have no longer been social change tools and do not enhance social mobility. Therefore, the feminism unions and institutions should exploit this gap and play this role .

8. Increase the awareness of the community about women quota, the mechanism of selecting women, its social and political benefits, as more than 20% of the study participants said they do not know about the mechanisms of the quota and the mechanism of its selection.

9. Organization, regional and international, especially in Europe, local campaigns in solidarity with the Palestinian women and to highlight the Israeli occupation violations against her rights.

10. Promote women's presence in the international youth networks, coalitions and alliances to convey the image of what is going on against the rights of Palestinian women at all levels.

11. Highlight the successful female role models at all levels, whether cultural, educational, academic, political or academic, because this would lead to a change in community attitudes toward women's issues which enhances the women's self-confidence.

12. Lobby for the adoption of a long-term media policy that will shed light on the successful women experiences and give women a media space that enhances her social role and affect the positive trends in society towards women.

13. The Palestinian women movement should develop its capabilities towards benefiting from media breakthrough and means of social communication to overcome the Israeli obstacles towards preventing freedom of movement.

14. Promote communication among women in the levels of decision and university girls in order to increase their awareness of the roles of women in politics, which would enhance women's self-confidence and increase their political participation.

15. Women organizations should claim to monitor the school and university curricula so as to ensure the existence of what promotes gender equality values.

16. Women organizations should encourage women to involve into politics and supports ladies who decide to work in politics and social roles.

17. Encourage individual and collective initiatives not institutionalized and non-organized, which aim to increase the monitoring and control of the social and political abuses against women.

18. Encourage women to complete their education, especially higher education, which would strengthen their presence in senior positions in the state structures.

19. Strengthen the capacities of women in leadership, advocacy, media and building campaigns so that they become able to create campaigns advocating their issues in addition to the skills of gaining the voters.

Fourth: Recommendations for Political Parties:

1. Develop a strategy and monetary policy for the Palestinian political parties as it is the basic tool for change in communities, towards the adoption of a building strategy, and community change based on all energies in the community for men and women, young and adults.

2. Work on infrastructure development so that they become more open to integrate the energies of different social groups, strengthen the democratic process within

the political parties based on actual representation of all segments of Palestinian society and get rid of the regulatory state based on same re-organizing structures and produce the same stereotypical characters.

3. Palestinian society should start perceiving women as partners and that their cause is the cause of the nation.

4. Work to amend the bylaws of the parties to ensure the integration of women in party action and their active participation within the Palestinian political parties, which would be reflected positively on the popularity of these parties and the legitimacy of their representation for all society segments.

Third: Recommendations for Donors:

1. The need to increase financial resources for women's organizations and institutions, to promote their social role in the defense and address of each affects the promotion of women's political participation and decision-making centers.

2. Increase the promotion of individual funding initiatives in the field of women's economic empowerment.

3. Increase funds to develop media skills, public speaking skills and leadership development skills for women.

4. Adopt a long-term funding strategies aimed at empowering women to implement programs that are able to achieve social justice.

5. Develop efficient women institutions in the field of monitoring the performance of government structures to ensure the application of the procedures and policies that promote gender equality in the civil jobs and liberties.

6. Raise the efficiency of women organizations in the field of international participation, networking and highlighting the Palestinian women's models.

7.Lobby on the Israeli occupation in order to ensure the realization of the right of freedom of travel and movement for all Palestinians especially women.

8. Highlight Israeli violations targeting the Palestinian society in general and women in particular, in the field of protection of civilians during war.

9. Allocating budgets to raise the efficiency of women organizations in the field of access to finance in order to ensure the continuity of their work.

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Annex 1:

Table number (1) the distribution clarifies according to the targeted areas:

Number of participants in all groups	Number of focus groups	Number of interviews	%	number	city	%	number	governorate	
22	2	5	3.7	88	Ezbet Beit Hanoun	7.7	183	North Gaza	Gaza Strip
24	2	5	4.0	94	Alboorah				
23	2	5	4.1	96	Almaghazi	11.5	273	Alwosta area	
26	2	5	3.5	84	Alserat-new camp				
24	2	5	3.9	93	Alserat - Alhasaini				
20	2	5	3.9	92	downtown	7.3	174	Khan Younis	
24	2	5	3.5	82	Khozaa				
24	2	5	3.8	91	town	11.8	280	Rafah	
17	2	5	3.5	82	Tal Al-Sultan				
23	2	5	4.5	107	Alshukah				

21	2	5	3.3	78	Arabeh	6.8	162	Jenin	West Bank
17	2	5	3.5	84	Qabatia				
23	2	5	1.3	30	Alnabi Saleh	2.7	65	Qalqilia	
38	2	5	1.5	35	Azoon				
0	2	5	6.2	146	Saeer	14.2	336	Hebron	
24			8.0	190	Beit Kahel				
33	2	5	4.4	105	Askar Albalad	9.2	217	Nablus	
21	2	5	4.7	112	Salem				
20	2	5	3.9	92	Aljalazoon	7.7	182	Ramallah	
26	2	5	3.8	90	Qarawa Bani Zaid				
0	0	0	5.2	124	Albalad	9.3	220	Jerusalem	
0	0	0	4.1	96	Mukhm as				
25	2	5	0.8	20	Farkha	1.9	45	Salfet	
59	2	5	1.1	25	Albalad				
24	2	5	2.2	53	Ateel	4.5	106	Tulkari m	
30	2	5	2.2	53	Shwekeh				
0	0	5	0.	15	Aqbat	1.3	30	Jericho	

			6		Jaber				
36	2	5	0. 6	15	Albalad				
17	2	5	2. 2	51	Beit Fajar	4.1	97	Bethlehe m	
22	2	5	1. 9	46	Alkhad er				

Annex 2:

About the Project:

The project *Grassroots Activists for Just Peace and Gender Equality* aims at empowering women affected by the conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories in accordance with UN Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820, as well as activating their role through social and local mobility, and raising awareness of policy makers and public opinion on the importance of women's political participation.

The project **is implemented** in 30 locations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (20 in West Bank and 10 in Gaza Strip) for the period of 24 months. 300 male and female activists are targeted to enhance gender equality, peace and security. In addition, 50 male and female students from Palestinian universities are also targeted. It is expected that about 6000 women and men will benefit from this project through its activities in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Targeted locations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip: 10 governorates in the West Bank (Jenin, Tulkarem, Qalqilia, Nablus, Salfiet, Ramallah, Jericho and Al-Aghwar, Bethlehem, Hebron, and East Jerusalem), and 5 areas in Gaza Strip (Beit Hanon, Rafah, Al-Maghazi, Al-Nsierat, and Khan Younis)

Targeted Groups: 30 female activists from 30 communities, 50 male/female students from 5 universities, The coalition of Women's Affairs Technical Committee, media persons, the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and the Ministry of Planning.

Project's Expected Results:

- Sustainable capacity of Women's Affairs Technical Committee and member organizations of empowering women from the communities affected by conflict, as well as raising their voice in peace and security issues.

- Increasing self-confidence and skills as well as playing active roles in local community mobility for women of 30 communities affected by conflict, as well as increasing women's contribution to achieve more peace and security.
- Youth active participation in enhancing women's central role in achieving more peace and security.
- Engagement of peace activists with effective national, regional and international entities.

