

## **“The Socio-Political Situation of Palestinian Women under Occupation”**

**By Researcher:**

**Dania Mohammed Sheikh Ahmed**

**Supervised by: Prof. Dr. Huang Mingxing**

**Institute of Middle East Studies**

**NorthWest University**

**People's Republic of China**

**2020**

**[Daniamusa19@gmail.com](mailto:Daniamusa19@gmail.com)**

## Chapter One: Political Participation of Palestinian Women

- abstract
- Introduction
- Research problem
- :Research hypothesis -
- :Research objectives -
- The importance of research -
- limits Research-
- arch conceptsseeR -
- :Research methodology-
- literature review

## Chapter Two: The role of Palestinian women's struggle under the British Mandate and Israeli Occupation

- The role of women during the British Mandate and Israeli Occupation
- The role of Palestinian women in the 1936 revolution
- The Cairo Conference of 1938
- The Nakba in 1948
- The Naksa- (Setback) in 1967
- The First Intifada in 1987
- The Second Intifada 2000-2005
- Israeli occupation and its impact on women: challenges and obstacles

## Chapter Three: The official political work of Palestinian Women

- Women in decision-making positions
- The Palestinian Women Movement (Women's Charitable Associations, General Federation of Palestinian Women)
- Palestinian women and the Palestinian Authority (the role of women politically after the Oslo agreement and its impact on women's movement, women and elections at the organizational level)
- Being part of the executive authority
- The quota system and the Legislative Council

- Role of the Committee for the Development of Women's Participation in Elections
- Election results and their impact on the Palestinian political system and women's movement

#### Chapter Four:

- Conclusion
- References

#### Chapter I

#### Abstract:

This paper concentrates on the political and social role of the Palestinian woman under the Zionist occupation. The study concluded that the situation of the Palestinian woman is different than other women's situation in Arabic countries, due to the different social and political circumstances. The Palestinian woman suffered and stills suffering from the reality of the Zionist occupation, as she is the fighter, the prisoner, the struggle and the martyr who gave so much for Palestine and The Palestinian cause. The Palestinian woman left her house in order to participate in social and national activities despite the constraints of Zionist coercive policies. In addition, she led national and militant manifestations, as she presented her social and political role through becoming an influential partner in the political life. The Palestinian woman was able to reach advanced leadership positions, and to achieve success at different levels towards prosperity and development. This was through enacting laws that guarantee equal rights for women as men, such as the Palestinian constitution, the Quota system and CEDAW convention. Women's participation in the political life is essential to achieve the political and social system's objectives which lead to independence.

**Keywords :** The Israeli occupation , The British Mandate, Gender resistance , The role of Palestinian women, The social struggle, political participation .

#### Introduction:

Political participation is the basis of democracy and women's role is important in the process of political participation as women naturally represent half of the society. The Palestinian woman was able to express her political opinion by being present along men, by leading demonstrations and rallies and participating in awareness campaigns on the importance of political change in the Palestinian state.

#### Political participation of women

Politics: Formulates and reshapes social power relations and identifies any social group that dominates and controls the rest of the other social groups, politics also shapes social groups resources and public resources available in society.

1. The concept of empowerment in the political sphere is one of the latest concepts introduced by the modern women movements to expand and add to the concept of politics. This concept is seen as a process by which oppressed groups have some control over their lives by creating or engaging in activities and structures that allow them to participate more in aspects that directly affect their lives. This concept means to use of force not for the purpose of exercising it on others but to help those oppressed groups to govern themselves efficiently and to accelerate the process of change at the social level. This process also gets benefits and services of others or from the state. Based on this, the concept is linked to many activities and structures carried out by oppressed groups to strengthen themselves and affect a change in the social sphere – a core of politics (Institute of Women's Studies, 2000)

Understanding the concept of empowerment may help widen the scope of the political role of Palestinian women to include various forms of activities carried out by women both within the home and in the society. The political role of women is not limited to institutions that politicize women, be it belonging to a party or unions, but rather to examine the impact of

this role in the vision of women for themselves as an effective and influential force that can bring about a change on the social level as well as examining the factors that affect the strengthening or weakening of this role.

There are factors that influence the increased political participation of Palestinian women. The Palestinian society seeks to achieve independence with a view of development. Political participation includes various social groups that make up the society, therefore it is vital to express women's interests and aspirations and for these to be taken at the highest levels of decision-making and to set goals for achieving these interests and aspirations.

### Research problem:

occupation in various forms of armed conflicts and wars on the territory of IsraeliThe problem lies in the practices of Palestine, which have implications for the lives of Palestinian women in particular, Palestinian women endured difficult conditions to face the war and had to provide food, clothing and protection to their families in the absence of men, and to secure ways to escape the massacres of occupation for Palestinian villages, The results of these wars have directly affected women in the counting of victims, wounded, disabled persons, displaced persons, orphans and widows, Which has economic consequences for these conflicts, such as increasing women's involvement in economic work or carrying out family burdens in the absence of a breadwinner to support their family, they have had to bear additional burdens within their families due to the negative repercussions of the war on the family itself, which increases its responsibilities and at the same time increases the pressure on it.

### Research hypothesis:

- 1- There is an important role of statistical significance at the level of significance  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for the variable the social role of Palestinian women on the land of Palestine under occupation.
- 2- There is an important role of statistical significance at the level of  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  for the variable the political role of Palestinian women on the land of Palestine under occupation.

### Research objectives:

This paper seeks to achieve the following:

- Analyze the roles and responsibilities of Palestinian women.
- Analyze the status of women in political and social life, both formal and informal.
- Focus on the participation of women in political and social life in light of the 1936 revolution and the Israeli occupation.

### importance of research The:

The importance of women's participation in politics

The Palestinian woman is part and parcel of the development process, the international community is striving to empower women across the developmental process. The participation of Palestinian women in national, judicial and civil institutions and at the level of political decision-making and in political and cultural life are important indicators for women as there are part of the guaranteed international rights set in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and CEDAW. International laws governing political action guarantee everyone the right to political participation irrespective of their demographic characteristics (gender, color, race). Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights stipulates that "every citizen has the right to take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives". Article 7 of CEDAW stipulates that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country". Article 8 of the same Convention further stipulates that "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations".  
(United Nations, 1981(CEDAW 1979.2) (United Nations, Convention No. 03 0360793) (

The Palestinian Constitution Article 9 stipulates that the Palestinians are equal before the law and the judiciary, regardless of race, sex, color, religion, political opinion or disability.

Hence, the issue of the Palestinian women participation and their empowerment are vital in establishing the state and building its institutions to achieve independence.

### **Palestinian women's political rights per the Palestinian Constitution**

- The amended Palestinian law no 12 provides for full equality between the sexes and that there is no difference in rights and duties because of gender.

- Article 9 of the Constitution stipulates that Palestinians are equal before the law and the judiciary regardless of race, sex, color, religion, political opinion or disability.

Article (26):

\* The right to form unions, syndicates, associations, organizations, clubs and grassroots organization per the law.

\* The right to form and join political parties in accordance with the law.

\* The right to vote and to run for election and the right to elect representatives by law.

\* Holding special meetings without the presence of police officers and holding public meetings, processions and gatherings within the limits of the law.

) Palestinian Constitution, 2003\* The right to hold public office and jobs on the basis of equal opportunities(

### **arch limitsseeR:**

Spatial boundaries: Palestine, temporal boundaries: the political and social participation of Palestinian women during the Period of the British Mandate on Palestine to the Period of Zionist Occupation

### **arch conceptsseeR:**

Definition of role: A set of professional actions and responsibilities performed by the individual during his work to (Abu Al-Nasr, 2009 ) adhere to the principles of professional work

Political participation: This term is closely linked to political development, political participation is an important (Omar, 2004)indicator of the progress of the people, democracy and progress, and the readiness to meet the challenges

Social empowerment: increasing the participation rate of women in community issues while emphasizing their important in forming positive values at the family and community level, creating diverse relationships between national and role Arab women's organizations in order to mediate among themselves, raising awareness to eliminate all forms of (Wafaa, discrimination against women, working to provide services that help women to balance their responsibility 2006)

### **Research methodology:**

.Descriptive historical approach -

### **Literary reviews:**

The researcher has seen previous studies to benefit from them, the most important of which were:

Study (Awad and kuttab 2007) entitled The Palestinian Women's Movement aims to help the women's movement in - A developing a joint program on common issues, and the study was concerned not to marginalize the countryside and

camps because the results of the study showed that there is a gap between the leadership and grassroots bodies in terms of knowledge and awareness( kuttab Abu Awad, 2007)

- A study (Alqam, 2005) entitled The history of the Palestinian national movement and the role of women in it, the results were the multiplicity of roles played by women in the first intifada and the documentation of the testimonies of those who lived in the event (Alqam, 2005 )

A study (Allan,2005) entitled Village to Camp, aimed at revealing the role of rural Palestinian refugee women in the - preservation of the family from 1948-1962, and summarized the results that women had an active role in that period but were marginalized by men although they were the basis in the preservation of the family and the continuation of the family (Allan, 2007)

There is a meeting point between the researcher's study and previous studies that women were actively participating in the national struggle in the first intifada period, but after this period they became involved in activities through official institutions such as committees and others, without having a prominent leadership role as they were before the Oslo agreement, such as struggle operations Influential, but the point of difference is with the study of Allan, women were not marginalized from men because they were a symbol of the revolution from 1936 against the mandate and the occupation.

## Chapter Two: The role of Palestinian women's struggle under the British Mandate and Israeli Occupation

It has become common in literature when dealing with the role of women in society, especially in politics not to isolate this role from the influence of colonialism as well as nationalism as major elements affecting women especially in third world countries. The effects of colonialism on women are summed up as follows: the delay of social struggle because of the dominance of the national cause against social struggles. Colonialism also strengthens inequality between various social, racial and religious gaps (divide and conquer strategy). Colonialism also controls the prevailing cultural values system with the aim of using what establishes the relationship of hegemony and subordination, it creates confusion, and degrades what stands in the face of this hegemony. These factors, in turn, impede women's awareness of themselves and impedes the consideration of the national struggle as a culmination of all types of oppression be it political or social, especially those that negatively affect women's situation. In the Palestinian society, women are not only impeded by the role of the Israeli occupation, but it is also preceded by the period of the British mandate and the other preceding occupations as the struggle does not only pertain to the history of European colonialism.

However, Palestinian women played a distinctive role in resisting colonialism, whether British or Israeli.

The political role of women in the British mandate was clear. There is a clear gap between what the women's political elite organizations in the cities focused on ways to resist the Zionist movement and the British mandate and the role of women in the rural areas- the main revolution center after 1933. For the elite's focus was a role of relief and protest writing petitions and hosting demonstrations in the cities in addition to following up on prisoners. The role of women in the countryside was different. It focused on strengthening the role of revolutionaries, prolonging the duration of the armed revolution, building barriers, supplying mountain fighters with food supplies, exploring where the enemy sites were based. Additionally, women were not reluctant to defend their villages and families by throwing stones at the soldiers from their rooftops, which lead to killing a number of women by these forces. Women in the countryside also participated in protests, demonstrations and military activities.

The role of women has continued especially in the cities since the 1948 defeat, where dozens of charities have been established in various cities. This time it was not to recruit women in the political struggle based on the national cause at the time but to help save the community from a total political and social collapse. During this period several associations emerged to care for orphans and displaced persons as well as the refugees and displaced persons from their former villages. The programs focused on providing health and education services for women and the family, with a greater emphasis on raising the level of education among females (Institute of Women's Studies, 2000 )

The Palestinian woman played a vital role- as reported in the media during the Intifada- women participated in the violent demonstrations that characterized the uprising in its early stages, when Israeli soldiers shot many of them dead.

Women also played an important role responding to the demand of the political leadership to organize campaigns to weave woolen clothes for the detainees, to sew flags as a symbol of the request for independence, to provide domestic alternatives to Israeli goods and to boycott them, to disseminate a national political culture for children and conduct regular visits to detainees from relatives and children. These visits would start from the middle of the night, including humiliation: either through long hours of waiting at the gates of prisons or through beatings or through humiliating personal inspection, all in return for the vision of children and loved ones for a brief period of not more than half an hour. Women followed up the cases of detainees, whether in the offices of lawyers or in Israeli courts. It was women who followed up the collection of the allocations of martyrs, wounded and detainees accredited by the PLO institutions, which sometimes necessitated travel to Jordan, Lebanon or Tunisia later. Additionally, the role of women was to strengthen ties at the family level, the village level and keep ties for those who are in the homeland with those who are outside.

The various functions and activities of Palestinian women are often seen as an individual act to protect their families and relatives and thus are the daily necessities of women and their daily life to protect their home and family. Most of these activities are managed within the home or around the family. These activities have led to having women leaders at the local level who gather and mobilize women for protest activities. These women leaders interact with these tasks and activities to help women develop and thus play a significant role in the process of change at the social and political levels. These leaderships have also functioned to marginalize women from truly affecting change at the political leadership level, but these activities are affected directly by society, as women's political role affects change in society as well as women's status in the community (Institute of Women's Studies, 2000 )

## The role of Palestinian women in the 1936 revolution

### First: providing supplies

Women in the villages sent food and drink to the rebels in the mountains and sometimes transported military equipment. One of these methods was to put the gunpowder in the piles of wood, carried by the women on their heads to the rebels ( Abdul Hadi, 2005 ).

The role of women in the rural area was within the economic framework, as the revolution was of an economic and agricultural infrastructure. With the participation of many men in the revolution Palestinian women became the main productive force, especially under the punitive English measures aimed at destroying of food stocks and raising grain prices. Women are the main agricultural force and a major source of supply for the revolutionaries. The role played by Palestinian women in the 1936 revolution is a production line and a seamless supply of arms for the revolutionaries.

As for the medical role it was part of the supplies role so some Palestinian women received courses in the first aid and helped to treat patients until the arrival of the doctor.

### Second: supporting role

Palestinian women encouraged the revolutionaries and sharpened their skills through popular artistic devices such as singing and folk music, and even some women greeted their martyrs with songs. These songs were to ask for support when needed and to incite revolution against the enemies.

Women also used to sing as a form of hidden resistance. This pattern was linked to the support of the direct war effort, the song was a device to pass messages between the detainees in the Atlit prison and the rebels in the mountains. Song was used in order to respond to some of the British abuse mechanisms especially the use of Palestinians as human shields. The women used to sing to warn the rebels against some military convoys that have taken Palestinian civilians as shields (Khartabil, 1995)

The women practiced revolutionary work in the public space by endorsing revolutionary discourse in schools, seminars and places of worship. The work of women did not stop at moral support for the revolutionaries, but was followed by demonstrations where women led the marches such as the demonstration led by Rabab al-Husseini in Gaza in 1936 despite the conservative social atmosphere of Gaza ( Al-A'raj, 2015)

### Third: the role of intelligence communication

The women in cities were carrying news about the army forces stationed in the cities and passing the information to women in the countryside. Country women would then take this information and deliver it to the rebels in the mountains. The women's role was an endless loop, where women's role was not only about sharing intelligence but also creating a network of communication and information.

#### Military role

There was a wide participation of women in this area of engagement. Women were fighting against British soldiers to save the revolutionaries, which was the mission of the young women. Women would also sabotage British military operation by lining nails on the roads and under the British military vehicles in addition to stoning these vehicles (Abdul Hadi, 2015)

The women in the countryside had a great attachment to the arms. Women would hide and maintain the weapons as if they were one of their children. The nature of the Palestinian countryside, which is rich in areas of natural shelters, has played a major role in facilitating the work of women supporting the resistance. Often women hid weapons of resistance in the houses' gardens between wheat or in the wells. Some women sometimes hid weapons in their loose clothes, this role was not limited to rural women, but women in the cities had some role in hiding weapons from the eyes of the British soldiers.

Those who follow the events of the revolution note that a good number of assassinations of traitors were done by women. For example Shamsa, a well-known milk seller in Haifa was famous for her good looks. When she sold milk in Haifa she had a gun. She hid the pistol in her chest-pocket, she moved selling the milk and when it was needed, she would hand the pistol to the person concerned and

he would shoot the person who is wanted. Shamsa would then hide the pistol in her chest, the people would flee and she would continue to shout and offer milk for those around (Khartabil, 1995)

### Eastern Women Conference For the Defense of Palestine / The Cairo Conference in 1938

This conference resulted of constant Arab feminist meetings on the Palestinian cause. It was mainly driven by a meeting held at the house of the Lebanese activist Ibtihaj Qadoura in the summer of 1938, which dealt with many national issues. The idea of holding a women's conference was born and Ibtihaj suggested to hold the conference in Cairo to receive media attention. A letter was sent on behalf of Iraqi, Lebanese and Palestinian women to the Egyptian activist Huda Shaarawi asking her to plead the issue of Palestine in front of the international community institutions and to coordinate for the conference. The conference was held and the Palestinian women delegation was the largest among the participating delegations (24 women), 13 women came from Egypt, 4 were Iraqi women and one Iranian woman were present. Some of those who participated in the Palestinian delegation were: Nabiha Nasser, Sobhiya Raed Tamimi, Aqila Ameen Tamimi, Zolikha Shehabi, Zahaia Nashashibi amongst others.

#### Among the resolutions issued by the conference:

- Demilitarization of the Jews just as Arabs.
- Call on the Egyptian Ministry of Education and the Egyptian institutes to teach the orphans and the sons/daughter of the martyrs orphans from Palestine free of charge.
- Call the Red Crescent to establish a special unit for wounded Palestinians.
- Sending telegrams to the heads of the great powers and the Pope to reveal the policy of British repression.
- Communicate with the women of India to urge them to be in solidarity with women and the Palestinian cause (Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, 2017)

## The Nakba of 1948

The Nakba is a term for the tragedy of Palestine in 1948, where thousands of Palestinians were killed and displaced of their homes and lands and were driven to neighboring countries by the Zionist forces that destroyed most of the features of the Palestinian society be it political, economic or the features of its civilization.

The Palestinian society witnessed at this stage the Nakba and its devastating effects on all its political, economic and social components. This tragic situation had a great impact on women. Women were affected by the changes in the Palestinian social structure through the Israeli control of the land, which lead to total collapse of production methods and means on the ground. This collapse lead to demonstrations, which were often the larger form of struggle that led to women's participation in national activities.

In response to this situation, the United Nations issued several international resolutions to remedy this tragedy and to restore the rights of the Palestinian population and return them to their homes. On December 11, 1948, the UN issued a resolution (1948) on the right of refugees to return. This resolution emphasizes the right of return and the necessity of the return of the Palestinian indigenous people to their lands and homes, but all these decisions were faced with the racist terrorism of extremist Zionist groups that refused to return any refugees to their land and homeland. The Israelis continue to obstruct the peace process by refusing to return refugees to their homes.

This situation at this stage reflected on the socio-economic nature on many of the activities carried out by women, the most prominent of which was the formation of women's associations, which had a role in providing orphanages and relief for the affected families namely providing food, water, housing and clothing. A popular women's organization was established in 1965 under the name of the General Union of Palestinian Women. The Union's aim was to organize the social and political situation among the women in the occupied homeland. With the formation of this system, the role of women extended to include national and social work. This comes after the formation of the PLO and its awareness of the importance of women's participation in the workforce be it political or social.

Despite all the international resolutions and the world's preoccupation with the return of the refugees to their homes, Israel was controlling more land by confiscating and seizing land by force through wars, surprising the world by the 1967 war "Naksa" or setback.

## The Naksa "setback"- 1967

The Naksa was the Six-Day War that broke out between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. It ended with the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Sinai and the Golan. The United Nations passed several international resolutions urging Israelis to withdraw from the territories. The most notable of which is resolution no (242) issued on November 22, 1967, which stipulated that Israel should withdraw from all the territories it occupied in 1967 in order to achieve peace.

At this stage, the role of women was significantly clear, as she faced resiliently on the ground, just like all men, which gave women a sense of the importance of their presence within the political frameworks and organizations. The formation of women's frameworks began with the decision of the Palestinian factions in 1978 in agreement with the leaders of the women's movement. This decision was made to assure that women from the different parties in all their places of residence, whether the countryside or the city or camp are part of the movement. This was to assure that the segments of society are engaged without having a certain focus on one segment of the society at the expense of another. Women then were active in various areas of life, politically, socially, culturally, health sector and the national ( Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2012)

## The 1987 Intifada:

The first intifada began in December 1987, when the Israeli truck driver ran over a group of Palestinian workers and the intifada ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords between the Israeli entity and the PLO in 1993.

Palestinian women played a prominent role during the Palestinian uprising. They were not afraid of confronting the Israeli army. This was tangible in the fact that women represented a third of the intifada victims.

The Intifada allowed space for women to participate on both the social and political levels. In the past, only active women participated in politics. With the deterioration of living conditions, the high rate of Israeli violations and the increasing Israeli sanctions, women's participation increased either by throwing stones or organizing demonstrations. Women played a role of self-sufficiency by establishing cooperatives in order to provide the materials that were scarce due to the sanctions.

The importance of the Intifada was prominent; women's role was effective and integrated- it cast down the traditional sensitivity to the role and controls placed on women. The formal differences between women and men in public action dissipated, it gave women a prominent and advanced role that men can not fulfil, for example, when the soldiers would try to arrest children and youth in villages, camps and cities and women freed them from the hands of soldiers. The heroic role played by Palestinian women in the Intifada has been the same since the occupation of the Palestinian people women alongside of the men in every location and time. In 1983. There were four women's fractions representing four political organizations and these became a platform for women in political frameworks. In 1987, the number of fractions was six. There were large numbers of women in these fractions, which spread in the cities, villages and camps, providing services to the Palestinian public and thus they gained the trust of the community in which they were present.

Palestinian women played a major role in the Intifada through their active role in forming popular committees at the level of neighborhoods that provided the public with various services in the field of health, education and social welfare, as well as were various forms of direct and indirect struggle against the occupation. The women were able to push against economic siege on the villages and camps when women were carrying large amounts of milk and sneaking under the siege to help the besieged people of the village or the camp. This had a significant impact in raising the morale of the people under siege go on. Palestinian women worked to provide large amounts of bread, where women spent over twenty hours baking and when the occupation to cut off electricity and prevent gas, Palestinian women resorted to the use of Tabun (fire wood traditional/ natural oven) conquering the occupation and providing bread and milk to the Palestinian people staying completely self-sufficient.

Palestinian women worked to liberate many young men and women from the hands of the Israeli occupation forces when they were arrested, as well as to save large numbers of detainees and smuggle them in houses or the fields. Women carried food and clothes daily for those who were wanted and hiding in the mountains which helped them stay strong in the face of the occupation.

In the Intifada Palestinian women went out to the street to participate in sit-ins and demonstrations and clashed with the occupation forces inhaling poison gas, subject to death or beatings by Israeli soldiers in defiance as they were on the path of independence and victory.

The result of the first Intifada was the recognition of the right of the Palestinian people to live on their land. Israel realized that there was no military solution to the conflict with the Palestinians, which meant that a political solution was needed. Despite the refusal of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to discuss any political settlement with the Palestinians, in 1993, the Oslo Accords were signed. In 1994, the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was established on the homeland and the first Palestinian presidential and legislative elections were held.

### **The Second Intifada 2000-2005**

The continued obstacles and restrictions imposed by Israel and having Israeli Prime Minister Sharon storm Al-Aqsa Mosque in addition to killings, the arrests, the imprisonment and all the oppressive practices that can expect from an occupation army led to a second intifada in the occupied Palestinian territories.

Expanding popular education in the camps and cities, setting up civilian clinics to treat the wounded as a result of the enemy's attacks, going to universities and schools from alternative roads, plowing the land and securing the family's livelihood and carrying out commando operations in Jerusalem and the West Bank was a summation of the role of women during Al Aqsa Intifada.

## Chapter Three: The official political work of Palestinian Women

### - Women in decision-making positions

Women's political participation and decision-making were the main pillars of the national strategy for the advancement of Palestinian women, with the aim of promoting democratic life in civil society institutions and ensuring equal opportunities for women to participate in building the Palestinian society alongside men across all fields and levels.

The National Gender Strategy has identified three aspects of women's participation political life. These are the general national role of Palestinian women in achieving the rights of the Palestinian people to independence, freedom and the establishment of their independent state.

### - The Palestinian Women Movement (Women's Charitable Associations, General Federation of Palestinian Women)

This movement provides a variety of services to women, the various organizational forms reflects a different diversity in terms of goals, programs and vision, in addition to awareness and knowledge of the needs of women in their various locations.

#### Women's Charitable Associations

Most of these associations are based in the West Bank rather than in the Gaza Strip. Some of these associations were founded in the early 1920s and others were founded in the mid-1990s. A number of these associations still serve and a big number is being founded to date. The objectives of these associations vary between providing services to different groups, be it widows, the disabled, the ill, the poor, sons of martyrs and detainees. Providing maternal and child health services, caring for chronic diseases, dental care, physiotherapy, etc.

These associations provide job, education and training opportunities for poor women. The associations also provide support services for working women such as kindergartens, children's libraries as well as ready-made foods, in addition to producing a number of different commodities such as woolen garments or toys.

During the Palestinian uprising Intifada that began in December 1987, these associations branched and included work with the victims of the Intifada: those who were disabled, the wounded and families of martyrs. These associations also work to provide productive services such as embroidery, straw-products (hats, baskets..etc), as well as providing vocational training and illiteracy services. These associations work on raising awareness of health, food sector and legal concerns for women ( Women's Studies Committee, 1993)

#### General Federation of Palestinian Women

It was founded in 1964 as a grassroots of the Palestine Liberation Organization. It was founded on the initiative of the women themselves, especially those working at the time in various charitable societies. The Federation seeks mainly to organize and mobilize the Palestinian energies to achieve national democratic liberation. The objectives of the Union are in article 4, with 13 items as follows :

\* The Union works to achieve the objectives of the Palestinian democratic revolution on the entire land of Palestine, committed to the Palestinian national charter, believing that this is only an armed struggle, supported by other forms of struggle, and mobilizing and organizing the energies of Palestinian women wherever they may be to serve in the struggle to liberate the occupied homeland and highlight the personality of Palestinian women by involving them in all areas of organizational and struggle work at various levels both on the Arab and international levels. Additionally, the women continue to struggle for equality in all rights and duties, without forgetting to raise awareness for women to exercise their rights acquired by and grabbed through the long struggle, and then defend the interests of the Palestinian women's be it physical or moral to raise the social, political and economic level of women. Thus, focus on the full interdependence between social empowerment of Palestinian women and the national liberation cause.

These earlier goals are proposed to be shortened in the draft new bylaws at the beginning of 1998, which aims to strengthen the unity of the women's movement in Palestine, in a step to organize women's efforts and mobilize their energies to achieve the following:

- \* Arrive at the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to return, self-determination and the embodiment of the State of Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital.
- \* Enhancing the role of women in society and increasing their contribution to the comprehensive development process and building the institutions of the State of Palestine through coordinating and unifying the women's efforts in the different fields of work.
- \* Struggle to achieve equality between women and men in rights and duties in line with the provisions of the Declaration of Independence declared by the Palestinian National Council at its nineteenth session in 1988. By enhancing the role of women in political, social, economic and development decision-making positions.
- \* To highlight the personality of Palestinian women by engaging them in all fields of political, social and developmental work at various levels be it in the Arab or the international levels and finally to sensitize women to exercise their rights gained by their long struggle and defend their interests.

The political goals came to match the reality on the ground after the General Secretariat of the Union returned to the homeland, as well as the focus on the developmental goals required to build the Palestinian Authority. These goals were reflected strongly in the Union's contribution in formulating the national strategy for Palestinian women, endorsed on the 14<sup>th</sup> of June 1997 in Ramallah (General Union of Palestinian Women, 1985)

11 General Union of Palestinian Women, Secretariat-General 1985, Bylaws and Rules endorsed at the Fourth General Conference of the General Federation of Palestinian Women in Tunisia.

### **- Palestinian women and the Palestinian Authority (the role of women politically after the Oslo agreement and its impact on women's movement, women and elections at the organizational level)**

#### **The political role of women after Oslo**

Oslo: From 1991 until now

The Intifada was an important point of change for Palestinians on the national consciousness and on the level of structural changes that formed the women's movement. The Oslo Accords, preceded by the Madrid Conference in 1992, did not only change the reality of women, but also changed the reality of the Palestinian people as a whole. The Oslo Accords enshrined the peaceful solution as a strategic choice for the Palestinian cause. It also allowed the chance for the first Palestinian authority on the homeland. This carried on to establish a new political system that is supposed to carry out a comprehensive state-building process in which plans and programs will be put in place to change the conditions in which the Palestinian people lived for years. At the same time, Oslo has made the supposed "state-building" process take place while the dominant framework of the Israeli occupation continues to exist, which adds enormous burdens on the people and the Palestinian authority with regard to the end of the occupation or the start of the state-building process.

The Oslo Accords also led to issues in the Palestinian political structure that had been previously defined. The political factions that rejected these Accords suspended their membership in the Palestine Liberation Organization and boycotted the decision-making bodies associated with them (the PFLP and the Democratic Front withdrew from the Executive Committee) The entry of the historical leadership of the organization into the homeland led that the homeland became a center for decision-making and action, which also led to the further marginalization of the role of the Palestine Liberation Organization as representative of the Palestinian people in all its places of residence. This meant that after the first Palestinian legislative elections the process of representing the Palestinian people became internal to cover representation of the Palestinian people living in the occupied Palestinian territories, which was dangerous to those living in the Diaspora. This split caused by the Oslo Accords in Palestinian political construction left its traces not only on the PLO but also on the Palestinian parties affiliated with it, and left its traces on the general vision that the organization was taking with regard to the fateful decisions, which was called (the national consensus) this situation left effects on everyone, including women and the feminist/women movement.

## Oslo and its impact on the women's movement

21- One of the most important effects of these agreements on women in general and women's movement in particular was provoking a strong debate about the relation of the national tasks in comparison to the social tasks. The state-building process requires participation and work to involve women in the development process to benefit from the results, as well as in reviewing the legal framework governing this process. A number of institutions and women centers were heavily involved in the process of reviewing the past laws and also the foundations of policies that will be applied. Yet, the occupation exists, which requires the continuation of the efforts of women organizations to continue to resist the occupation and develop a list of demands and objectives. This means the development of new resistance mechanisms for settlement expansion and collective punishment policies, in particular the demolition of houses, the razing of villages and the disruption of the geographic distribution of the Palestinians, in addition to confronting the policies in Jerusalem namely confiscation of identity from the Arab population and high taxes imposed on Arab nationals (Institute of Women's Studies, 2000)

The controversy of this debate intensified after the return of a number of women leaders of the General Federation of Palestinian Women from the diaspora. This debate settled down as soon as these women received a number of positions in the Palestinian Authority, forcing everyone to direct efforts to various areas of development work away from working to organize the masses and engage women in the national struggle. There is no doubt that the organized and directed efforts to organize the tasks of the national struggle against the occupation, whether from the women movement or from the other social movements have witnessed a significant decline after the signing of the Oslo Accords and the arrival of the Palestinian Authority to the homeland. It would be wrong to assume that the women's movement witnessed this change because of calling for social liberation at the expense of national liberation. When comparing the women movement, which has come a long way in unifying feminist vision with another movement such as the labor movement, we find that there is a difference between development in each of them. The labor movement, for example, is still looking for common rules to unite itself for instance with - the existence of a union for each political faction as it was for women's organizations before Madrid agreements. The labor movement in Palestine has not yet come to a clear idea of the demands that would steer it from facing the occupation. This is the same sort of criticism directed at the women movement, despite the severe situation in which thousands of Palestinian workers live because of the structural dependence of the Israeli economy, the movement is not effective at the level of the national struggle either.

The decline in national action in general has to do with a number of reasons, not the most important of which is the concentration of various social movements on social / economic demands, but on the failure of the Palestinian uprising to achieve its goals of independence, the removal of dependence on the State of Israel and the belief of many that the Oslo accords are a historic reconciliation with The Israeli entity, but this was followed by disappointment and frustration in addition to the existence of the Palestinian Authority and the dependence of many on it to complete the stage of national struggle through peace as a strategic option as well as the role of the PA in separation between the masses and the places of the occupation forces.

Oslo led to a decline in the popularity of the political parties that had formed the body of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the most important of which are the radical changes in the vision of these parties on how to liberate Palestine.

The decline in the popularity and the collapse of the intellectual and organizational matters at the political parties also affected the popularity and norms of women's recruitment for these parties as the parties were engaging women on political grounds. This organizational decline was followed by development in the work programs and strategies of the various women's organizations as mentioned earlier. These programs were focused on women with varying visions and programs as well as national demands and slogans but these do not necessarily seek to recruit women as they did in the past.

## level Women and elections at the organizational

The Palestinian legislative elections came in 1995 as the culmination of the process of clarifying new social goals and programs for the Palestinian women's movement at a time when the movement was not yet able to build its organizational frameworks on these new foundations. However, a lot of people reached the conviction that the old organizational foundations are no longer valid either due to lack of democracy internally or because of differences in

vision about the importance of women's issues or about ways to raise these issues, or because of the dominance of the political party on the structure, finances and projects to women's movement work frameworks.

As a result, the legislative elections tried to reflect the voice and noise of the women's movement and organizational weakness at the same time. It showed weakness of the women's movement which went into the elections disorganized as a result of the factors that have already been explained. The opposition women's movement boycotted the elections and voted in the final moments to support the democratic party's candidates. The General Federation of Women did not take a clear position in the beginning, and this was changed when the head of the branch Ms. Samiha Khalil decided to run for the presidency. Considering strong opposition was present within the Federation for this nomination, the position for or against elections was not clear, especially among the women of the charities. The

s last minute 'branch of headed by Khalil is classified politically as close to the rejectionist front. Thus, Khalil announcement of candidacy for presidency weakened the possibility of organizing women and even the base of the .Federation to support her candidacy more effectively

The political body, which worked to prepare itself fairly well, was the Women's Affairs team as it is a coordinating body between three frameworks in addition to some women's rights center. The team relied mainly on the rest of the women base and some women laborers to implement the programs and projects of the three women's frameworks (social work, -working women and women in the labor force) as well as the base of the three political parties (Fateh, Fida, Hizeb Al s Affairs team relied on the public [both men and women] while also proving efficient with 'ab). The Women'Sha communication, influence and pressure on the leaders of the various parties to pressure parties to nominate many women team also worked to 's Affairs's issues and needs in their programs. The Women'candidates and to introduce women motivate women through a number of different publications and booklets to register and vote independently of the the number of women participating in elections in general family and clan ties. This has contributed to an increase in 2000) ,Institute of Women's Studies)

### Being part of the executive power

Women constitute more than 40% of the labor force in the executive branch, which is higher than women's participation in the labor market in general. In the West Bank this rate is at about 45% while in the Gaza Strip it is about 30%. These percentages reflect the importance of the government's commitment to employ women and give them equal opportunities. The executive branch reflects the general pattern of women on the jobs that being at the lowest level of employment. There are no women in the post of deputy minister in the Gaza Strip. There are only 6 in the West Bank. There are 5 women as deputy assistant in Palestine, 3 in the West Bank and 2 in the Gaza Strip. There are 10 women in the position of Director-General in the various ministries, 8 of them are in the West Bank and two in the Gaza Strip. The Executive Authority, while opening more opportunities for women, strive to remain an effective channel for women to be in decision-making positions and have influence.

### Distribution of Public Sector Employees by Title, Region and Sex, 2018

Job title	Palestine		
	Male	Female	Total
Deputy Minister	41	3	44
Deputy Assistant	77	5	82
General manager of the Ministry	117	9	136
General manager at the ministry step A4	557	77	634
A,B,C Manager on steps	4.550	1.473	6.023
01-Employees steps 1	44.209	36.596	80.805
Other	442	100	542
Total	49.993	38.273	88.266

(2018), Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

### - Election results and their impact on the Palestinian political system and women's movement

#### 1- The Quota system and the Legislative Council 2002

24-It is a system that is used to eliminate the gap in gender equality in political life, especially in representative councils. In addition, it aims to encourage women to practice politics and address the problem of exercising their legal right to representation equally with men. The Quota system aims to strengthen society's culture of belief in women's capacities to play their role in political representation on the one hand and avoid wasting their energies and potential while on the other hand the system allocates and grants a quota or seats for women in elected bodies and this share can be up to 20% or 30% or 40% (Hadi, 2017)

25-Women's movements, civil society organizations and the Ministry of Women's Affairs considered that the call for quotas in the elections guaranteed fair participation and preserve the right of women's participation by allocating a minimum quota of 20% of the quota allocated to the Legislative Council, thus urging political forces and parties to include women candidates' on their election lists with a percent of no less than 30% (Supreme Committee for Local Elections, 2005)

#### 2006-Women in the PLC 1996

Year	Male	Female	total
1996	83	5	88
2006	115	17	132

26-The results of the 2006 elections showed the importance of a proportional representation law that includes the presence of women in decision-making positions, forcing parties and political currents to choose women for these posts. Regional

differences were not significant in the number of women elected between the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, that being a 12.1% and a 14.9% respectfully. Gaza Strip is known to be more conservative towards women's participation. However, the law required parties, including Hamas, to choose women, which meant that the nature of a conservative society cannot keep up when legal provisions binds it with a quota percentage law (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013)

### **Role of the Committee for the Development of Women's Participation in Elections**

The Committee for the Development of Women's Participation in the Elections was formed in 2003, as a follow-up to matters relating to the quota and elections with the participation of a committee that consisted of many women's centers such as the General Federation of Women the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Local Government. The Commission has worked on several matters:

First: worked on influencing political life and decision-making.

Second: Expand the participation of women in all legislative institutions and local bodies by supporting women candidates in the elections.

Third: To support the issues of women candidates.

Fourth: Networking with private institutions on gender issues.

Fifth: Networking with decision-making institutions at the Palestinian Legislative Council (Ministry of Women's Affairs, 2005)

### **Election results and their impact on the Palestinian political system and women's movement**

- The elections came in order to consolidate the concept of public responsibility and democratic competition.
- The women's movements came to a conclusion that political organization such as the political party is more capable of supporting women and embracing their demands for change in terms of legislation or policies.
- The elections showed that having women in organizations is not enough to fight the political power in society. A large percentage of female candidates did not run for elections only because they are leaders in women's organizations, but because they are members of political parties and women's organizations. Candidates were favored on party basis and not on a feminist basis.

### **Conclusion:**

The paper focused on the role of Palestinian women in resisting British colonialism and the Israeli occupation. The focus was also on the most important challenges facing women under occupation, the concept of women participation in society, women's political situation and the law under the Palestinian National Authority. The Palestinian National Authority has endorsed international agreements such as the CEDAW and the quota system to ensure the protection of women's rights. The involvement of women in the national movement has helped women leaders with experience at work, it lead to more women participation in the national struggle, which increased the opportunity to participate in the political process and elections. The history and struggle of Palestinian women in participation in both the political and national struggle is still in the face of challenges to the practices of the occupation. Women have made quite a few achievements on the levels of political, national and legislative decision-making, which showed flexibility and responsiveness to some of the requirements of the women's movement. There is a responsibility on political parties for without proper attention to women's issues of national and community struggle there would be a great gap and limits political participation and participation in public life and loss of public confidence.

### Recommendations:

- Enhancing the role of women in national parties and institutions with the support of the Palestinian government in planning and strategic vision in the revolutionary democratic struggle to ensure the effective participation of women, especially after the Oslo agreement that led to the imposition of unjust laws that restricted the rights of women and prisoners..etc.Also activate its participation in international diplomatic representation, which strengthens its position in international bodies and represents its performance towards the Palestinian cause and women .
- Work to introduce laws that regulate the work of Palestinian social institutions to make them more effective to ensure the application of Palestinian laws supporting Palestinian women

## References:

Institute for Women's Studies, 2000, Women and Politics - Birzeit University, p. 10, p. 12, p. 46-47, p. 51 Birzeit, Palestine

United Nations, 1981, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women No. 60793-03

[www.unicef.org](http://www.unicef.org)

The Amended Palestinian Constitution (12), 2003, issued by the Ministry of Justice, Diwan al-Fatwa and Legislation, Ramallah, Palestine.

[www.lab.pna.ps](http://www.lab.pna.ps)

Abu Al-Nasr, M., 2009, Art of Social Service Practice, Dar Al Fajr, First Edition, 412 pages, p. 50, Cairo, Egypt, Al-Fajr Publishing and Distribution House .

Rahal, A., 2004, Political Participation of Palestinian Women, ALtsamoh Magazine, Issue 2, p2

Fahajjan w, 2006, the participation of Palestinian women in the formal labour market between marginalization and empowerment, The Institute for Arab Research and Studies, Cairo, Egypt.

Kuttab, A. & Abu Awad, N., 2007, Palestinian Women's Movement: Methodological Issues, Conceptual and Theory, Editor Jamil Hilal and others, Volume 4, p. 11, p. 12, Birzeit, Birzeit University, Palestine, Institute for Women's Studies

8-Alqam, N., 2005, History of the Palestinian National Movement and the Role of Women in It, Editing the Center for Palestinian Heritage and Society Studies Family Recovery Association, First Edition, 457 pages, p. 3, Palestine Family Revival Association Al-Bireh – Palestine

Allan, R., 2007, from the village to the camp/ The role of Palestinian rural refugee women in the preservation of the family (1948-1962), editing the Inash ElUsrah Society, first edition, 457 pages, p. 2, al-Bireh, Palestine, Inash ElUsrah Society

Abdul Hadi, F., 2015, Roles of Palestinian Women in the 1930s: The Political Contribution of Palestinian Women, Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation center , First Edition, 776 pages, p. 33-34, p. 32, p. 37-38, p. 46, p. 49-52, Al-Bireh, Palestine, Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation center .

Al-Araj, B., 2015, The Cultural Movement in Palestine: The Arab Revolution As a Model, Editing the Palestinian Museum, First Edition, 212 pages, p. 40-42, p. 107, Birzeit, Palestine, The Palestinian Museum .

Khartabil, W., (1995) Search for Hope and Homeland: Sixty Years of Struggle of a Woman for the Question of Palestine, Editing by Besan Publishing and Distribution, First Edition, 351 pages, p. 8, p. 82 First Edition, Beirut, Lebanon, Besan Publishing and Distribution.

Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, 2017, a study on the reality of women in Palestinian leftist political parties and their impact on the rise of political Islam, Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, Ramallah Palestine.

Ministry of Women, 2005, Palestinian Women and Participation in (Official Policy), General Department of Planning and Policy - Ministry of Women, Ramallah Palestine

Feminist Studies Committee, 1993, Directory of Palestinian Women's Institutions, Besan Center for Research and Development, Ramallah, Palestine .

General Federation of Palestinian Women, General Secretariat, 1985, Basic Bylaws and Regulations endorsed at the Fourth General Conference of the General Union of Palestinian Women in Tunis.

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018, Women and Men in Palestine Issues and Statistics, Ramallah ,State of Palestine.

Higher Committee for Local Elections 2004, Local Council Elections, Phase I, Ramallah .Palestine.

[www.elections.ps](http://www.elections.ps)

Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013, Women and Men in Palestine Issues and Statistics, Ramallah ,State of Palestine

Shib, H, 2017, Women Parliamentarians under the Quota System Of Women Parliamentary, Arab Democratic Center for Strategic, Economic and Political Studies, First Edition p. 29- 30.

Ministry of Women's Affairs ,2012, Empowering Palestinian Women and the Charter of the Palestinian State (Role and Reality), Ramallah , Palestine.