

THE ROLE OF PALESTINIAN WOMEN IN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION DURING THE ISRAELI SIEGE IMPOSED ON THE GAZA STRIP, PALESTINE

Jehad Shehab,* Nurazmallail Marni (PhD)

Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities.
Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM).

Research Article

Corresponding Author*

Jehad Shehab

Article History

Received: 19.01.2020

Accepted: 22.01.2020

Published: 29.01.2020



Abstract: This study aims to identify the Palestinian women involvement in the politics during the Israeli siege on Gaza between 2006 and 2014. In regard to achieve the objective of the study, the researcher designed a questionnaire with a purpose of collecting the required data. The framework of the study has used quantitative methodology, using questionnaire tool for data collection. The study population consists of 1,500 Palestinian students studying at 13 universities in Malaysia according to the list of Malaysian universities recognised by Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education. The questionnaire was filled out by a stratified random sample of 352 students. The study demonstrates that there is a positive significant relationship between political involvement of Palestinian women in the Gaza Strip and the independent variables consist of women involvement in the political parties, women involvement in the parliament and ministries, women involvement in NGOs, qualifications, women rights, and difficulties facing the women. The study concludes that Palestinian women were involved in the politics;

it argues that, there is an obvious impact of the Palestinian women through the adoption of the resistance to the Israeli occupation. The study shows many difficulties facing the Palestinian women's involvement. This study however concludes several recommendations, most notably is the need to compel the Palestinian political parties to execute the principle of political pluralism, giving Palestinian women's the rights according to the Palestinian constitutions, and exceed social and cultural difficulties that prevent political involvement of Palestinian women.

Keywords: *Palestinian Women, Political Participation, Israeli Siege, Gaza strip.*

INTRODUCTION

The issue of women's participation in political action is one of the most important issues of great significance in recent decades; this issue has been raised on a number of levels. One of its aspects has to do with activating the political participation of citizens in general. On the other hand, women's political participation is part of the global international discourse on women. Therefore, it is impossible to talk about the political participation of women in isolation from the social and political

conditions that exist within society.¹ Political participation has also been linked to the growing cultural behaviour of societies that are turning towards democracy, which has become a profound phenomenon rooted in political life, based on cultural and political maturity, as a way of dealing with the daily culture of peace and tolerance through the existence of difference and party diversity, freedom of belief and thought, different social and political forces, and respect of opinion, opposition opinion².

The participation of women in political life is an urgent need to take part in the development process of any society. The progress of this society is therefore reduced, and members of society at the global level are increasingly aware of the importance of women's participation in politics. Thus, the employment of the Palestinian women's efforts in the process of political participation will increase the chances of the comprehensive development of the Palestinian society and the prosperity of its entity³. Over the past decades, the Palestinian issue has undergone many changes at various levels, and this great change has led to adjustment to new situations. Therefore, Palestinian women have played a paramount role alongside men in many of these changes. The most significant of these was their role on the political and developmental level of Palestinian society. The role of Palestinian women in various fields includes the battlefields of resistance, sacrifice, and redemption, emerged in 1987. Their role continued to sacrifice their sons and daughters as martyrs, prisoners and Mujahideen (people who practise Jihad) defending their just cause. There are also many unique Palestinian women models who sacrificed themselves to defend their homeland and its sanctities⁴.

This dynamic role continued until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 1994, and women witnessed a shift in their role to their political participation both in the general elections and in public institutions. The Palestinian women took part in some government positions. This stage continued in late 2005, followed by a different stage that began in 2006. The Palestinian legislative elections were held for the second time, resulting in the victory of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas by a majority of the seats in the Palestinian parliament. After that, there was the formation of Hamas, the tenth Palestinian government and the institutions that followed it; this period extended until 2014, where it witnessed a major change in the nature of the Palestinian political system, which characterized the exercise of political action as well as the resistance against the Israeli occupation at the same time, which is unusual in the history of countries with political systems and democratic elections, which led to the imposition of a siege on the Palestinian government since its formation in 2006 by the international community and its various institutions and bodies⁵.

There is no doubt that Palestinian women have played an important role through their presence in the Palestinian Legislative Council, their presence at the head of some ministries as part of the government, their membership in local bodies and municipalities, and their active participation in

1Brahimi, Nabih, and Hazab, Ahlam (2016). Political Participation of Women in the Arab World "A Case Study of Algeria 1989 to the Present Day". Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Moulay Taher, Saida, Algeria.

2Al-'Eila, Riyadh (2007). The Reality of Palestinian Women in Political and Public Participation "Gaza Strip as A model". Journal of An - Najah University for Research (Humanities). 21(1), Nablus, Palestine.

3Barakah, Ayah(2016). Political variables and their impact on the development of the political participation of Palestinian women 1994-2013. Search Unpublished Masters, Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine.

4Shehab, Jehad (2015). The Role of Palestinian Women in Political Participation during the Period of Israeli Siege on the Gaza Strip between 2006-2015, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Technology Malaysia (UTM), Malaysia.

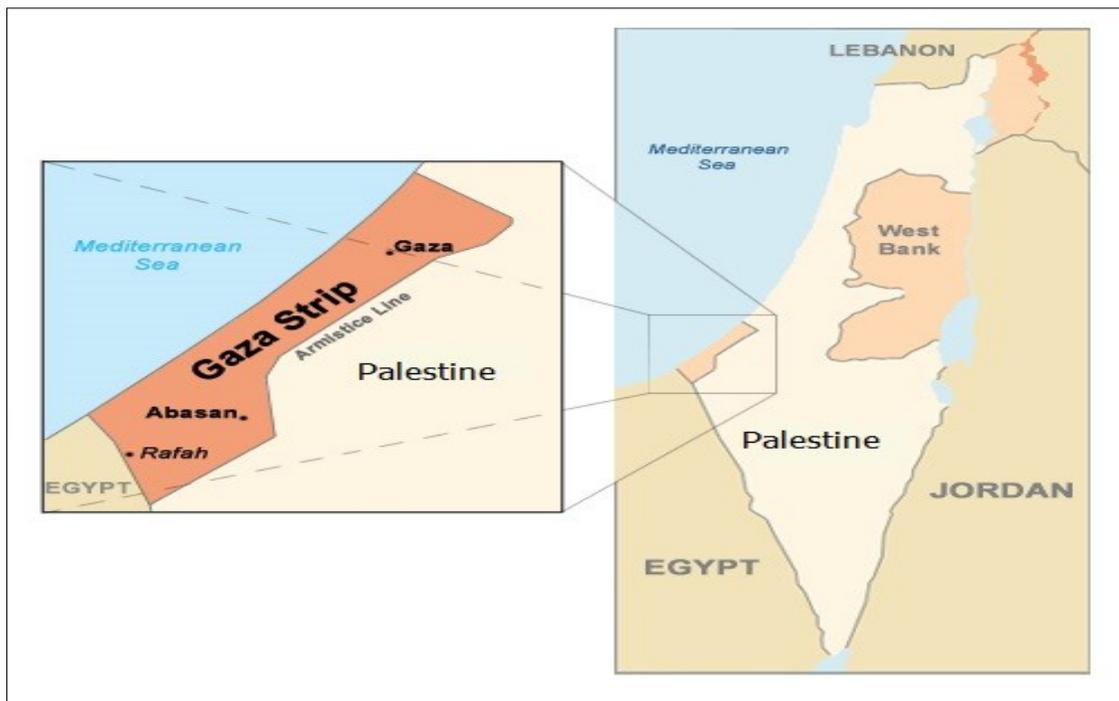
5 4.

political parties, women's unions and trade unions, which is considered the most complex period since the beginning of the occupation of the Palestinian territories. Therefore, the study highlighted the role of Palestinian women in political participation in the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip between 2006 and 2014 and the most important obstacles to their effective participation.

GAZA STRIP BACKGROUND

The Gaza Strip is a narrow region of the state of Palestine; it is located along the southwestern part of the Palestinian coastal plain's region. The total area of Gaza is about 360 km² (Figure 1). A length from south to north of Gaza of about 45 km on the Mediterranean coast and the display ranges between 7 to 12 km. Located in the Sinai desert in the south, the Negev desert in the east and the Mediterranean Sea in the west. The population density in the Gaza Strip is considered as the most densely populated places in the world, with a population around 1,899,291 people the growth of 3.2% annually.

The Gaza Strip is



considered one of the most densely populated places in the world, with more than 1.65 million residents⁶.

Geographically, the Gaza Strip is separated from the rest of the Palestinian territories by the policies of the Israeli occupation of Palestine; it is one of the conflict areas in over the world which has significantly witnessed deterioration of political and socioeconomic conditions due to the repeated aggression and blockade by Israeli power.

Figure 1: Location map of the Gaza Strip, Palestine.

⁶PCBS Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). Press Release on the Occasion of World Population Day, 11 July. PCBS Issues A statistical Overview on the Palestinian Population, Palestine.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall objective of the study is to explain the political role of Palestinian women during the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip between 2006 and 2014. The sub-objectives of the study are as follows:

1. Clarifying the political role of Palestinian women under the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip;
2. Highlighting the challenges facing women which prevent them from playing their role effectively and from reaching senior positions;
3. Realizing the impact of women's participation in political life on the Palestinian issue and the extent to which the steadfastness of the Palestinian citizens under the siege is strengthened, and;
4. Revaluating the role of Palestinian women in political participation and its implications during the siege period from 2006 to 2014.

Palestinian Women and Political Participation

Political participation can be defined as a slow process in modern democracies due to several factors, most notably poverty and illiteracy, and that participation is also limited in stable democratic states⁷. It is also the voluntary activities of interested individuals with a view to identifying and leading them and contributing to policy and decision making directly or indirectly. Therefore, political participation is not merely a vote in a particular election period, but rather a general orientation and clear interest by citizens in the cause and outcome of the political decision⁸. Political participation may also reflect the political awareness of an individual in his or her country by knowing his or her rights and duties as a citizen, by observing their own government and how their country's current policy affects its citizens' welfare policy⁹. The participation of women in political life is necessary to achieve the objectives of the political system. This gives representative and executive institutions a representative power stemming from the democratic option. Therefore, the first steps necessary for the political participation of women is the recognition of equal rights in accordance with the law without discrimination. Women's political participation at different levels of decision-making is also an opportunity to participate in the formulation of policies, plans and programs and to involve them in implementation processes and effective supervision to achieve the interests of society as a whole¹⁰.

The presence of Palestinian women in the decision-making positions is not born for a moment or a certain period. Palestinian women have been present in many places to make political decisions. They always participate in decision-making or contribute to the development of their social, political and economic life. The development of Palestinian society is now taking place outside the family and the traditional form it has become accustomed to. Palestinian women have a significant role in the

7Miyari, Mahmoud (2003). *Political Culture in Palestine - Field Study - Series of Strategic Studies* 5. Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies, Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine.

8Ghuloom, Ali Yusuf, et al. (1997). *Political Participation in Kuwait*. Journal of Social Sciences, 25 (4), Kuwait.

9Ameri, Salha (2013). *The Role of Emirati Women in Political Participation*. Unpublished MA, Middle East University, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

10Muhanna, Majd (2013). *The political Participation of Palestinian Women in the Public and Private Sphere*. Center for Women's Affairs. Gaza, Palestine.

process of development in the various Palestinian institutions, in which they manage the development of Palestinian institutions alongside men. As required. The presence of five ministerial portfolios headed by women is a development in political, social and economic life¹¹.

The Israeli Siege on the Gaza Strip

The Israeli siege on the Gaza Strip is the Israeli measures backed by the international quartet on the Gaza Strip following the victory of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in the 2006 legislative elections and then tightened its siege after the movement took over the Gaza Strip in June 2007; the siege included the closure of all crossings between the Gaza Strip and the occupied territories since 1948. The siege was tightened after the Egyptian authorities closed the Rafah crossing^{12,13}. Since 2006, the siege has been aimed at dismantling the political, economic, social and cultural structure of the Palestinian people and bringing it to a state of frustration and despair through the accumulation of factors of impoverishment, suffering and deprivation that in turn lead to confusion of priorities in the Palestinian popular mentality towards the conflict with the enemy and steadfastness in confronting and resisting it, to become a secondary priority. Unemployment, extreme poverty, deprivation and deprivation have increased dramatically in the Gaza Strip, and have increased significantly following the Barbaric aggression in late December 2008 and January 1, 2009, confirming that the Israeli objective since the imposition of the siege and aggression and the return to the blockade is the continued dismantling of the Palestinian political system and division. The second and most important goal is to achieve the fragmentation and division of national identity between a national identity that lacks its struggle and the identity of political Islam led by Hamas¹⁴.

LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

A number of previous studies have reviewed the political role of Palestinian women, their political participation, and the challenges they face, including¹⁵: this study indicates the transformation within the Palestinian political system of the role of women in it, as it is a society that gives preference to males to females as well as being a developing society that takes the steps of democratic transformation in thought and practice. The study concluded that Palestinian women played specific roles in their political participation and Palestinian political decision-making. Despite the prominent role of Palestinian women in the struggle of the Palestinian people, their political decision-making positions in public institutions are negligible and women's legal awareness of their issues and rights remains limited. While¹⁶ examined the efforts made by the Palestinian National Authority to enhance the role of women and support their participation between 1996 and 2006, at the

11Almasri, Majda (2014). Islamic Feminism and its Role in Political Development in Palestine. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.

12 Saad, Wael (2006). The Siege: A study on the Siege of the Palestinian People and Attempts to Overthrow the Hamas Government. Al-ZaytounaCenter for Studies and Consultations, Beirut, Lebanon.

13 Saleh, Mohsen (2011). Convoys to Break the Siege on the Gaza Strip. Information Report (20). Al ZaytounaCenter for Consultancy and Studies Beirut, Lebanon.

14Sourani, Ghazi (2009). Siege and Division and their Economic and Social Effects on the Gaza Strip. Civilized Dialogue. Number (2750), Quoted on 21/03/2016 from the link: <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=182510>

15Aldalu, Nadia (2011). The Role of Palestinian Women in Political Decision-Making in the Palestinian National Authority, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine.

16Jadallah, Hanin (2007). Official Planning for the Development and Activation of Political Participation of Women in Palestine, 1996-2006. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.

official development planning levels of the legislative and legal structure. It also reviewed the plans developed by the Authority for Development.

The researcher concluded the most important results: the effort exerted by the Palestinian Authority Is not enough and needs to be applied in a realistic way to support women's access to decision-making positions. The process of activating women's participation is a cumbersome struggle that requires reform of the political system and raising awareness about gender issues. ¹⁷focused on the political participation of Palestinian women in the Palestinian Legislative Council and their role in government, local bodies, municipal councils, women's associations and charitable societies, and their participation in the Palestinian diplomatic corps as well as the stages of struggle for political and social independence. Including the customs and traditions of society and the lack of awareness of society about the role that women can play in the political sphere ¹⁸ also highlighted the role of women in decision-making in Palestinian governmental institutions between 1995 and 2000. The study examined the most important obstacles that affect the lives of working Palestinian women. The most important conclusion of this study is that Palestinian women have a significant role in sustainable development: the internal and external political factors, the social, the self, and the cultural factors played a role in highlighting the role of many Palestinian women. The presidential and legislative elections also represented a real picture of the participation of Palestinian women, but their representation in leadership positions is still weak.

In the same context,¹⁹reviewed the history and development of the Palestinian feminist movement and the obstacles faced by the movement in the light of the changes that took place with the rise of the Islamic feminist movement and the relationship between them. It adopted the basic law of international conventions as sources of legislation, as well as the role of secularists and Palestinian Islamists in the political scene. It also reviewed the experience of the Islamic National Salvation Party in Gaza as the first public political organization of Hamas, and the shift in the movement's thinking regarding women²⁰presented the theme of feminism and its role in the political development in Palestine, and dealt with the concept of feminism, its origin and the conditions of its appearance in Palestine. It also presented the concept of feminism in the West and its impact on feminism in Palestine. The study concluded that the political reality of the Palestinian division between Fatah and Hamas prevented the continuation of the work of Islamism under official titles. In the same context, Rahal (2010) discussed the participation of Palestinian women in the presidential, legislative and local council elections in 2010 by reviewing the history of Palestinian women and their political and military participation as well as their social role, and then presenting the participation of women in the first elections in 1996 and the 2006 elections. A presentation of the most important obstacles that hinder and weaken the participation of Palestinian women, the most important of which is the dominance of male culture in Palestinian society and the control of men's thinking about women's choices.

17Jabali, O. (2009). Palestinian Women's Political Participation. *Acta AsiaticaVarsoviensia*. 22, 29-41.

18Al-Qotob, Rola (2012). *The Role of Women in Decision-making in Palestinian Governmental Institutions (1995-2010)*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.

19Jad, Eslah (2008). *Women at Crossroads: Palestinian Feminist Movements Between Nationalism, Secularism and Islamic Identity*. Palestinian Foundation for the Study of Democracy - Citizen, Ramallah, Palestine. 2011.

The study²¹ dealt with the role played by Palestinian women in the political field, especially in the Palestinian parliament, and their contribution to the decision-making and drafting of the legislations issued by this council. The study concluded that the participation of parliamentary women in official institutions did not rise to the role The importance that Palestinian women must play at the national and political levels, limiting their potential for influencing policy-making and making changes in existing legislation, as well as the weak performance of women parliamentarians as a result of the lack of visibility in women's projects and their relationship with the issues of Palestinian society.

Most of the previous studies dealt with Palestinian women and their political participation in general, some dealt with their role in the elections and local bodies, others dealt with the role of women's institutions in activating the political participation of Palestinian women, and also dealt with some obstacles to women's access to decision-making positions. However, none of these studies dealt with women and their role in political participation during the period of the siege on the Gaza Strip. Therefore, the period of time covered by this study has not been dealt with before, as well as the exceptional objective circumstances and the siege environment in which Palestinian women participated in politics. The study adds quality and freshness.

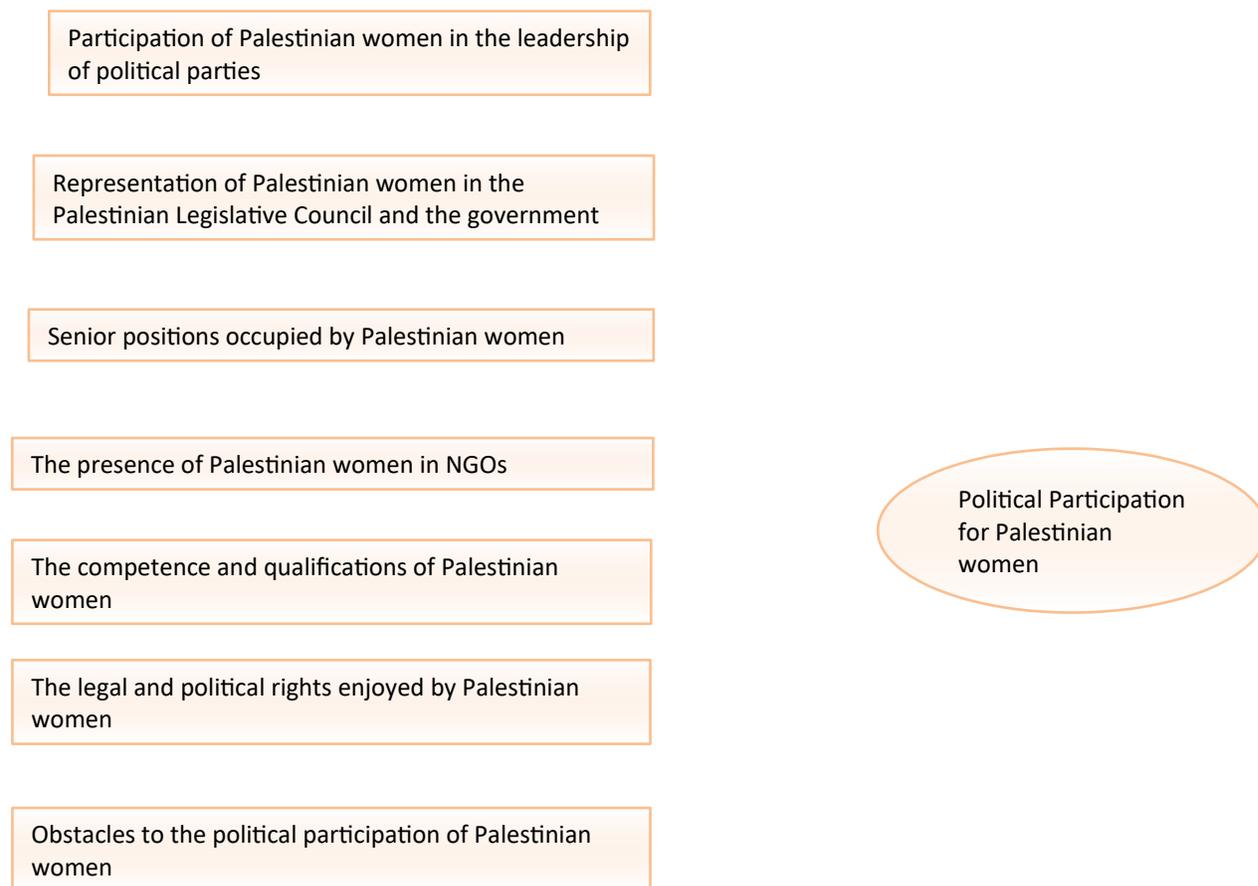
Methodology of the Study

The researcher used a mixed descriptive and qualitative approach. The questionnaire was used as a quantitative tool to obtain information from the respondents to test the hypotheses later which are shown in Figure 2. A questionnaire was prepared on "the role of Palestinian women in political participation during the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip". The technical questionnaire is the most widely used in many social sciences researches²². The number of students from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank has been distributed at the various stages of their studies: "Bachelor, Master, PhD", and currently studying in 13 Malaysian universities accredited to the Palestinian Ministry of Higher Education, according to the estimates of the Federation of Palestinian Students in Malaysia (2015/2016). The study population was chosen in Malaysia due to the difficulty of reaching the Gaza Strip because of the Israeli siege imposed on it for about ten years. The survey was conducted, and the questionnaire was distributed to Palestinian students currently studying in Malaysian universities. The sample size of the study (306) people -a minimum- according to²³. A total of 352 questionnaires were distributed to all members of the sample to ensure that the minimum number of respondents (306) or more was obtained.

21Eshtia, Omar (2012). The Experience of Palestinian Women in Parliamentary Work and its Impact on Enhancing Political Participation (1996-2009). Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.

22Creswell, J. W. (2009). Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches. SAGE Publications, Incorporated.

23Krejcie, R. V., and Morgan, D. W. (1970). Determining Sample Size for Research Activities. *EducPsychol Meas.*



Data Collection and Data Analysis

Data were obtained through the field survey of the sample of Palestinian students studying in Malaysian universities. The questionnaire model was designed to achieve the purpose of the study. The seven hypotheses were tested through statistical data processing. The results of the analysis showed that all the hypotheses of the study were valid and found that they positively affected the participation of Palestinian women in politics. In light of the outcomes, the results were presented, discussed and compared with the results of the previous studies related to the subject. It was also found that the results of the study corresponded to the majority of the results of the previous studies, except for some results related to a few items that do not affect the essence of the current study due to changing conditions and time period in which the study was conducted.

Testing and Analyzing the Hypothesis of the Study

The data were collected by answering the questionnaire questions. The data were also analyzed, the hypotheses were examined, and the most prominent results were checked by analyzing

their items according to the study variables. Statistical processing of data collected using the Statistical Package for Social Studies (SPSS) version 22 was conducted

Discussing the Results of the Hypothesis Analysis of the Study

The present study is in line with the study of²⁴, which holds that women's parliamentary participation in official institutions has not risen to the important role that Palestinian women must play at the national and political levels²⁵ indicates that the presidential and local legislative elections constituted a negative picture of the participation of Palestinian women. While ²⁶found that there was a weak representation of women in local bodies, which in turn reduced the role of women in local bodies. In the same context, the study also agreed with²⁷ that the presence of women both at the legislative level and at the ministerial level contributed to the stifling conditions that the Palestinian society is experiencing, but that is not qualitative and may be low and substandard. This study is in disagreement with a number of studies including:²⁸ which considered that the share of Palestinian women from decision-making positions in public institutions is weak and is not noticed for many reasons²⁹ concluded that women are still out of political decision-making at the general political level and at the level of Palestinian ministries and indicated that women in Palestinian ministries increase their percentage as the career ladder decreases and that the majority of women occupy executive positions rather than policy-making positions. On the other hand, ³⁰sees the arrival of the Palestinian National Authority and the distribution of leadership positions as a disincentive to Palestinian women, where women felt that what they enjoyed was totally incompatible with the sacrifices they had made all the time

³¹ concluded that Palestinian women did not have the opportunity to be in decision-making positions in international relations until they changed³² also found several problems in the employment mechanisms that hampered the work of Palestinian women and prevented them from reaching the higher administrative levels, and there is no balance in women's eligibility for promotions compared with men³³ believes that women's weak political participation deprives them of high office and that decision-makers are convinced that women are unable to participate politically³⁴ also noted that Palestinian women did not reach the level of creativity in finding solutions to many problems when they assume some administrative positions due to the objective circumstances experienced by the Palestinian society. The current study is consistent with the study of³⁵, where the formation of women's

2421.

2518.

26Izzat, Nadir (1996). *Palestinian Women and Local Government Councils*. Women's Affairs Team, Ramallah, Palestine.

27Alhalabi, Rajaa (2016). Personal Interview on 03/04/2016.

2815.

29Hindiya, Suha (2000). *The Reality of Women's Participation in the Institutions of the Palestinian National Authority*, Presented to the Conference of Arab Women and Political Participation, Jordan.

3018.

31Al-Naqshbandi, Bari'ah (2005). *The political Role of Palestinian Women in War and Peace*. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, 32(1). The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.

32Fares, Samer, et al. (2005). *The Role of Women in Senior Management Levels in the Institutions of the National Authority*. Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, Ramallah, Palestine.

33Bani Odeh, Samar (2002). *Obstacles to Women's Access to Senior Positions in Palestinian Institutions*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.

3427.

35Othman, Ziad (2003). *A critical Reading of the Participation of Palestinian Women*. Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah. Palestine.

frameworks was considered an important station on the road to their political participation. Women's frameworks contributed to legal awareness and formed a vision for political action in Palestine.³⁶ stressed that there is a strong relationship between the role of women's associations in empowering women to work in accordance with their skills and developing their work skills, in addition to a strong relationship between the role of women's associations and women's understanding of their rights and enabling them to exercise them by increasing their awareness and awareness of their rights and duties. The present study agreed with the study³⁷, where it considered that the legal awareness of Palestinian women and their rights is still weak, thus reducing their political participation³⁸ showed that the economic and social emancipation of women and the increase of their education is a prerequisite for activating the political participation of women³⁹ stressed that policymakers are convinced that women are unable to participate politically, thereby weakening their participation in public life. The current study is in line with⁴⁰, where occupation and cultural heritage are considered factors limiting the political participation of women, and that development cannot be achieved without the political participation of all citizens, men and women⁴¹ revealed the existence of social and cultural obstacles, and some of the obstacles that impede Palestinian women's participation in politics, making Palestinian women veiled towards leadership in a state of confusion.

While both ⁴²⁴³ studies attributed the weakness of women's political participation to the circumstances of the Palestinian political division between Hamas and Fatah that began in 2007 until now, in addition to not empowering Palestinian women on the political side to be able to participate in public life⁴⁴ considered the dominance of the dominant male society in society and the spread of male culture as one of the most important obstacles facing women in political participation, in addition to Palestinian legislation and laws that do not give women the full right to political participation. While ⁴⁵ attributed the reasons for weak political participation to the weakness of the economy, in addition to other obstacles related to the family and the surrounding environment, in addition to legal discrimination against Palestinian women⁴⁶ considered that the weak political participation of Palestinian women prevents them from holding senior positions in public institutions. The decision-makers' conviction is that women are incapable of political participation, in addition to administrative and social obstacles. In addition, ⁴⁷ found several factors that impede women from

36 Suliman, Huda (2004). *The Role of Humanitarian Associations in Empowering Women to Participate in Public Life*. Study in the General Practice of Social Work, *Journal of Studies in Social Work and Humanities*. 16(3).

37 15

38 Awad, Wafa (2008). *The Role of Women's Organizations in Activating Women's Political Participation in the Period 2000-2006*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.

39 33.

40 19.

41 Nazzal, Riad (2007). *Political and Social Factors Affecting the Leadership Role of Women in Palestinian Civil and Governmental Institutions in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine.

42 19.

43 11.

44 Rahal, Omar (2004). *Political Participation of Palestinian Women*, Ramallah Center for Studies and Human Rights, Tasamah Magazine, Ramallah, Palestine.

45 Shimon, Hidaya (2006). *Women and Political Participation among the Obstacles and Possibilities Available: A case Study on the Gaza Strip*. Center for Women's Affairs, Gaza, Palestine.

46 33.

47 2.

accessing advanced political positions, most notably the common view of society and culture regarding Palestinian women, the high rates of early marriage among Palestinians, the economic factors represented by high unemployment women in particular, political factors are the decline in the status of political parties advocating for women, and the current electoral law and the role of tribal elections.

9. THE FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The researcher reached a number of results after analyzing the hypotheses by analyzing the results of the questionnaire. Therefore, the study achieved its objectives and answered all its questions. The results are reviewed according to the objectives of the study as follows:

First: The political role of Palestinian women and their participation in public life under the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip.

The results of the study proved that the Palestinian women have accumulated experience in political work, distinguished efficiency and various abilities that enabled them to engage in political work and obtain some advanced positions in different institutions, either by appointment or election. The presence of women in their various positions proved great progress in developing the work of the institutions that led them. And, also contributed to the development and development of the Palestinian society in general. Palestinian women, through their positions of responsibility, provided creative solutions to alleviate the effects of the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. The study showed that Palestinian women participated in different roles during the siege period on the Gaza Strip between 2006 and 2014. These roles are based on the resistance project against the Israeli occupation, their political participation in the Palestinian Legislative Council and their membership in the Palestinian government and the leadership of the student work in the universities. Through these positions, the Palestinian women were able to provide great services to the Palestinian society, which contributed to its development and strengthened the steadfastness of the citizens under the suffocating siege imposed on the Gaza Strip in this period.

Second: Highlighting the challenges and obstacles faced by Palestinian women who prevent them from playing their role effectively and from reaching senior positions.

The results of the study showed that the Palestinian constitution lacks any material that detracts from the right of women to their political participation, but expressly provides for their full political and electoral rights. There are also no restrictions in the Palestinian laws and legislations that impede Palestinian women from political participation or access to decision-making positions, but the main problem lies in the practical aspect of these laws because of the predominant male political system dominating the Palestinian political life, and there is also a clear problem in the internal rules and regulations of the Palestinian political parties that hinder the exercise of women for its full political and democratic rights.

The outcomes also showed that despite the confidence of the Palestinian society in the efficiency of Palestinian women and their ability to participate in politics and assume senior managerial positions, the society prefers to occupy men with advanced leadership and administrative positions instead of women, since men are the ones who are the first to assume these positions. One of the most difficult obstacles to the access of Palestinian women to decision-making centres in public

institutions, and these obstacles are due to cultural reasons and social heritage which the Palestinian society did not get rid of as a whole.

The findings of the study also revealed the existence of other obstacles to the participation of Palestinian women and hindered their access to higher positions. The most important of these are the traditional ideas and social restrictions that limit the freedom of women and their involvement in political work, men's control of decisions within ministries and the absence of awareness of Palestinian women in their political role and disruption of the education system in terms of the inability to encourage women to work in political, in addition to the weak economic level and increasing rates of unemployment in the Palestinian society because of the siege imposed on the Gaza Strip. All of these obstacles have led to a decline in the political participation of Palestinian women.

At the external level, the international community's policy of stopping the financing of the Palestinian government budget and the activities and programs of women in the Gaza Strip in particular, and its complicity in consolidating the siege of the Gaza Strip and its unfair view of the Islamic women who took control of politics and women's work after the legislative elections in 2006 represented a great difficulty and complexity of the political role of women in the Gaza Strip.

Third: The impact of women's participation in political life on the Palestinian issue and the extent to which the steadfastness of the Palestinian citizens under the siege is strengthened.

The study concluded that Palestinian women contributed significantly during the years of siege on the Gaza Strip in the social, charitable, institutional and union work, which had an impact on the development of the Palestinian society, and their various contributions reinforced the confidence of citizens in the importance of the role of Palestinian women in politics which has allowed political parties to join and participate in the leadership of these parties and give them the opportunity to participate in the trade union, institutional, local and legislative elections, and thus granting their membership in these institutions and practicing political and public actions.

The outcomes of the study showed a clear effect for the Palestinian Islamic women through their adoption of the project of resistance to the Israeli occupation, their participation in charitable and advocacy activities through the associations, their educational activities in schools and kindergartens, memorization of the Quran and preaching lessons in the mosques and their participation in the elections of institutions, Which was clear in adopting the issues of citizens under the siege and the effects of aggression and repeated wars, where their participation contributed to the development of society and alleviate the suffering of orphans, the poor and students. On the other hand, the results of the study show the Palestinian citizen's satisfaction with the performance of Islamic women compared to the performance of secular and leftist women in the Palestinian society.

Fourth: Evaluation of the role of Palestinian women in political participation and its implications during the siege period from 2006 to 2014.

The results of the study indicate that the gap in the negative attitude of the Palestinian society towards women compared with previous studies in terms of their rights and freedoms and granting them their right to education and giving them opportunities to work is equal to men. The outcomes of the study also indicate significant progress in the Palestinian society's view towards Palestinian women in terms of their legal entitlement to work, political participation, participation in the elections

and the enjoyment of most of their rights stipulated in the Palestinian constitution and law. The findings of the study considered that the Islamic women in Palestine were able to achieve great gains for women in general and left a great impact in the Palestinian society under the Israeli siege imposed on the Gaza Strip through its participation in the Palestinian Legislative Council and through its work in political parties and leadership of Islamic women's charitable organizations, Civil society, trade unions and local bodies that were led by Muslim women. The study stressed that the work of women in the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas in all areas of life, especially in political work, expresses a free will without any association with any international agendas. It is based on the urgent and necessary needs of the Palestinian society and serves its social, educational and health issues without wasting money allocated to those projects and programs as well as its performance on the development of the Palestinian society and its different sectors, unlike some other institutions that receive large conditional funding and linked to the visions and policies of those foreign donor countries, which has had an impact on the attitudes of the Palestinian voter and the confidence of the Palestinian society in Islamic institutions and women leadership which topped the electoral scene later in most of the elections in the Palestinian territories.

The outcomes of the study also indicated the importance of the Palestinian educational system in shaping the personality of Palestinian women and qualifying them to participate in political life. The findings showed that women often reach top and advanced positions and run on party lists if they are educated and aware of their legal and political rights. Public life, as well as its expertise, efficiency, and self-confidence rather than the support of political parties. The results also indicated that the rehabilitation and training programs have had a great impact on building the personality of Palestinian women, as well as awareness of their rights, especially their right to political participation, as well as motivating them to play a more active role in public life.

10. THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study recommends the following:

- 1- Benefiting from the efficiency of Palestinian women and their experience in institutional and trade union work as a prelude to their export to the political scene, as well as rehabilitating them through a series of training programs that contribute to building their personality, developing their skills and exploiting their abilities and awareness of them as women towards their society in order to increase their participation in public life;
- 2- The need for Palestinian political parties to be committed in practice to adopt the principle of political pluralism and grant them the full legal rights of Palestinian women in accordance with the constitution and the Palestinian law and the foundations of democratic life, so that these parties provide adequate guarantees for representation of women in all departments and committees equal to men without any impediments or restrictions;
- 3- The need for the media, cultural elites and academics to educate the society about the dangers of negative social restrictions and the practice of the wrong cultural traditions related to women and their impact on society and work to remove all social and cultural obstacles that prevent the normal participation of Palestinian women and limit their access to advanced positions in public institutions and decision-making centres, which will positively affect society and contribute to its development;

4- Ending the Palestinian political divide will work to improve the general economic situation, and the equality of women with men in employment opportunities and education will mitigate the effects of the Israeli siege on the Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip and create a healthy environment in which women can play their roles, In their practice of political action and their participation in public life and other areas;

5- Activating the media aspect of women's NGOs and public institutions to shed light on the role of women leading these institutions in order to promote the cause of women and to clarify the level of their participation and their community contributions to the public opinion in order to enhance their confidence in women's ability and role in public life;

6- The need for the Palestinian government to improve the stereotypical image of women in the educational system and curricula in order to advocate their various issues and to present their role in the various stages of the Palestinian struggle and their contribution to the development of the society in a way that paints a positive picture of its achievements and different roles and its political participation in the future, and contributes to the development of public awareness of the community's acceptance of its involvement in public life, and;

7- The need for respecting the rule of law and gender equality in the exercise of political rights and guaranteeing the right of political participation of Palestinian women in all legislative institutions, local bodies, and trade unions. And finally, the researchers recommend specialized studies on the problems and obstacles faced by Palestinian women, especially the social and cultural ones, in order to overcome them and to reach a vision and policies to effectively integrate women into the political process, break social barriers and prevent fear of participation of Palestinian women in political and other fields.

Reference

1. Aldalu, Nadia (2011). *The Role of Palestinian Women in Political Decision-Making in the Palestinian National Authority*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine.
2. Al-'Eila, Riyad (2007). *The Reality of Palestinian Women in Political and Public Participation "Gaza Strip as A model"*. *Journal of An - Najah University*, Palestine.
3. Alhalabi, Rajaa (2016). *Personal Interview on 03/04/2016*.
4. Almasri, Majda (2014). *Islamic Feminism and its Role in Political Development in Palestine*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.
5. Al-Naqshbandi, Bari'ah (2005). *The political Role of Palestinian Women in War and Peace*. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences Studies*, 32(1). The University of Jordan, Amman, Jordan.
6. Al-Qotob, Rola (2012). *The Role of Women in Decision-making in Palestinian Governmental Institutions (1995-2010)*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.
7. Ameri, Salha (2013). *The Role of Emirati Women in Political Participation*. Unpublished MA, Middle East University, United Arab Emirates (UAE).
8. Awad, Wafa (2008). *The Role of Women's Organizations in Activating Women's Political Participation in the Period 2000-2006*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
9. Bani Odeh, Samar (2002). *Obstacles to Women's Access to Senior Positions in Palestinian Institutions*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.
10. Barakah, Ayah (2016). *Political variables and their impact on the development of the political participation of Palestinian women 1994-2013*. Search Unpublished Masters, Al-Azhar University, Gaza, Palestine.

11. Brahim, Nabih, and Hazab, Ahlam (2016). *Political Participation of Women in the Arab World "A Case Study of Algeria 1989 to the Present Day"*. Unpublished Master Thesis, University of Moulay Taher, Saida, Algeria.
12. Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. SAGE Publications, Incorporated.
13. Eshtia, Omar (2012). *The Experience of Palestinian Women in Parliamentary Work and its Impact on Enhancing Political Participation (1996-2009)*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah University, Nablus, Palestine.
14. Fares, Samer, et al. (2005). *The Role of Women in Senior Management Levels in the Institutions of the National Authority*. Palestinian Economic Policy Research Institute, Ramallah, Palestine.
15. Ghuloom, Ali Yusuf, et al. (1997). *Political Participation in Kuwait*. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 25 (4), Kuwait.
16. Hindiya, Suha (2000). *The Reality of Women's Participation in the Institutions of the Palestinian National Authority, Presented to the Conference of Arab Women and Political Participation, Jordan*.
17. Izzat, Nadir (1996). *Palestinian Women and Local Government Councils*. Women's Affairs Team, Ramallah, Palestine.
18. Jabali, O. (2009). *Palestinian Women's Political Participation*. *Acta AsiaticaVarsoviensia*. 22, 29-41.
19. Jad, Eslah (2008). *Women at Crossroads: Palestinian Feminist Movements Between Nationalism, Secularism and Islamic Identity*. Palestinian Foundation for the Study of Democracy - Citizen, Ramallah, Palestine.
20. Jadallah, Hanin (2007). *Official Planning for the Development and Activation of Political Participation of Women in Palestine, 1996-2006*. Unpublished Master Thesis, An-Najah National University, Nablus, Palestine.
21. Krejcie, R. V., and Morgan, D. W. (1970). *Determining Sample Size for Research Activities*. *EducPsychol Meas*.
22. Miyari, Mahmoud (2003). *Political Culture in Palestine - Field Study - Series of Strategic Studies 5*. Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute for International Studies, Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine.
23. Muhanna, Majd (2013). *The political Participation of Palestinian Women in the Public and Private Sphere*. Center for Women's Affairs. Gaza, Palestine.
24. Nazzal, Riad (2007). *Political and Social Factors Affecting the Leadership Role of Women in Palestinian Civil and Governmental Institutions in Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate*. Unpublished Master Thesis, Birzeit University, Ramallah, Palestine.
25. Othman, Ziad (2003). *A critical Reading of the Participation of Palestinian Women*. Ramallah Center for Human Rights Studies, Ramallah, Palestine.
26. PCBS Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2010). *Press Release on the Occasion of World Population Day, 11 July*. PCBS Issues A statistical Overview on the Palestinian Population, Palestine.
27. Rahal, Omar (2004). *Political Participation of Palestinian Women*, Ramallah Center for Studies and Human Rights, Tasamah Magazine, Ramallah, Palestine.
28. Saad, Wael (2006). *The Siege: A study on the Siege of the Palestinian People and Attempts to Overthrow the Hamas Government*. Al-ZaytounaCenter for Studies and Consultations, Beirut, Lebanon.
29. Saleh, Mohsen (2011). *Convoys to Break the Siege on the Gaza Strip*. Information Report (20). Al ZaytounaCenter for Consultancy and Studies Beirut, Lebanon.
30. Shehab, Jehad (2015). *The Role of Palestinian Women in Political Participation during the Period of Israeli Siege on the Gaza Strip between 2006-2015*, Unpublished Master's Thesis, University of Technology Malaysia (UTM), Malaysia.
31. Shimon, Hidaya (2006). *Women and Political Participation among the Obstacles and Possibilities Available: A case Study on the Gaza Strip*. Center for Women's Affairs, Gaza, Palestine.

32. Sourani, Ghazi (2009). *Siege and Division and their Economic and Social Effects on the Gaza Strip. Civilized Dialogue. Number (2750), Quoted on 21/03/2016 from the link: <http://www.ahewar.org/debat/show.art.asp?aid=182510>.*
33. Suliman, Huda (2004). *The Role of Humanitarian Associations in Empowering Women to Participate in Public Life. Study in the General Practice of Social Work, Journal of Studies in Social Work and Humanities. 16(3).*