

# Understanding Masculinities:

Results from the  
**INTERNATIONAL MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY SURVEY (IMAGES)**  
– MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

## Palestine



## About this Study

This study on Palestine is an integral part of the International Men and Gender Equality Survey – Middle East and North Africa (IMAGES MENA) study, which includes quantitative and qualitative research of men and women aged 18 to 59. <https://imagesmena.org/en/> Local research partner for Palestine is the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.

The multi-country study and its dissemination were coordinated by Promundo and UN Women, under the UN Women Regional Programme *Men and Women for Gender Equality* funded by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida).

## About IMAGES

The International Men and Gender Equality Survey (IMAGES) is a comprehensive, multi-country study on men's realities, practices, and attitudes with regard to gender norms, gender-equality policies, household dynamics, caregiving and fatherhood, intimate partner violence, sexual diversity, health, and economic stress, among other topics. Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW) created IMAGES in 2008. As of 2017, IMAGES has been carried out in more than 30 countries, including this four-country study. Additional partner studies inspired by IMAGES have been carried out in Asia by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and other partners. IMAGES includes both women and men and is generally carried out with respondents aged 18 to 59.

The survey is conducted together with qualitative research to map masculinities, contextualize the survey results, and provide detailed life histories that illuminate quantitative findings. The questionnaire is adapted to country and regional contexts, with approximately two-thirds of the questions being standard across settings. For more information, see: [www.promundoglobal.org/images](http://www.promundoglobal.org/images)

## About the Institute of Women's Studies

Founded in 1994, Birzeit University's Institute of Women's Studies is among the first academic centres for the study of gender in the region. Evolving from a long history of Palestinian women's activism, the Institute aims to provide an academic underpinning to the debates around women's rights, gender relations and social policy in the local and regional context.

Through its wide-ranging research projects, inter-disciplinary academic programs and long-term engagement in community and policy level outreach, the Institute has become recognized as an established centre for scholarship on gender that bridges between local needs, regional concerns and global debates.

The institute is a thriving academic centre pioneering in gender research. Investing in scholars and teachers has been the key to the Institute's Development and success. The multidisciplinary group of faculty members who launched and developed women's studies have remained at the forefront of woman's studies, in its vision, planning, and its activities. It has three main activities: teaching, research and gender intervention.

## About Promundo

Founded in Brazil in 1997, Promundo works to promote gender equality and create a world free from violence by engaging men and boys in partnership with women and girls. Promundo's strategic partners in the United States (Promundo-US), Brazil (Instituto Promundo), Portugal (Promundo-Portugal), and Democratic Republic of the Congo (Living Peace Institute) collaborate to achieve this mission by conducting applied research that builds the knowledge base on masculinities and gender equality; developing, evaluating, and scaling up gender-transformative interventions and programmes; and carrying out national and international advocacy to promote gender equality and social justice. For more information, see: [www.promundoglobal.org](http://www.promundoglobal.org).

## About UN Women

UN Women is the UN organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their needs worldwide. UN Women supports UN member states as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes, and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also coordinates and promotes the UN system's work in advancing gender equality. For more information, see: [www.unwomen.org](http://www.unwomen.org)

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of the United Nations, including UN Women or UN Member States.

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## Palestine

Institute of Women's Studies - Birzeit University  
UN Women  
Promundo-US

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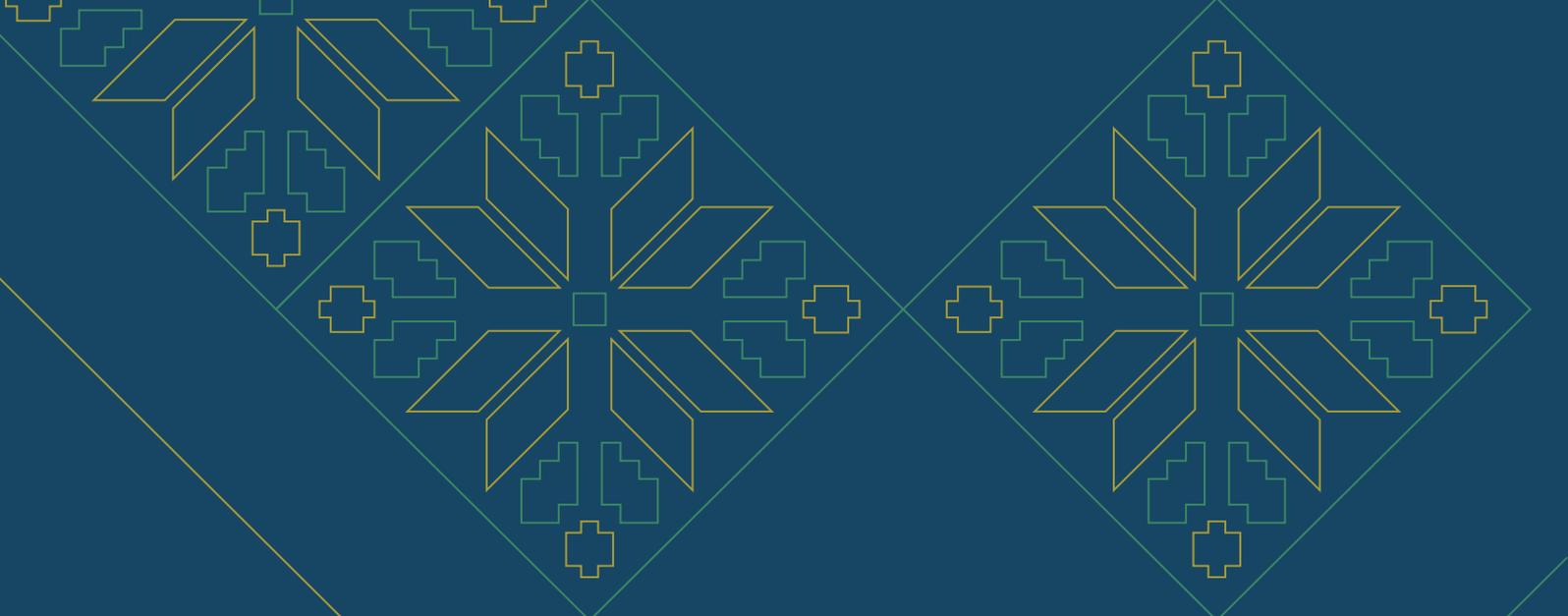
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# Acronyms

<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
<b>CES-D Scale</b>	Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale
<b>DHS</b>	Demographic and Health Survey
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>GBV</b>	Gender Based Violence
<b>GEM Scale</b>	Gender Equitable Men Scale
<b>GEQ</b>	Gender Equality and Quality of Life Survey
<b>HIV</b>	The Human Immunodeficiency Virus
<b>ICRW</b>	International Center for Research on Women
<b>IDI</b>	In-depth Interview
<b>IMAGES</b>	International Men and Gender Equality Survey
<b>IPV</b>	Intimate partner violence
<b>IRB</b>	Institutional Review Board
<b>MENA</b>	Middle East and North Africa
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>oPt</b>	Occupied Palestinian territory
<b>PA</b>	Palestinian Authority
<b>PCBS</b>	Palestinian Bureau of Statistics
<b>PSU</b>	Primary Sampling Unit
<b>Sida</b>	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
<b>SRH</b>	Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH)
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Program
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNRWA</b>	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
<b>WHO</b>	World Health Organization



Chapter 1

**Studying Men,  
Masculinities, and  
Gender Equality in  
the Middle East and  
North Africa (MENA)**



This report presents the results for Palestine from the International Men and Gender Equality Survey – Middle East and North Africa (IMAGES MENA), conducted in four countries: Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine

## 1.1 BACKGROUND TO MEN AND GENDER EQUALITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

There has been significant policy and civil society attention to the rights and conditions of women and girls in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in recent years. In contrast, there has been relatively limited research on men's attitudes and practices in terms of their partner relationships and their perspectives on gender equality.<sup>1</sup> As seen in this study and many others, men frequently dominate or control household decision-making, political and leadership spaces, and the daily lives of women and girls, yet relatively little of a systematic nature is known about how men perceive their attitudes and practices on such issues.

IMAGES MENA has been designed and conducted to help fill this knowledge gap. Specifically, the study seeks to provide insights into the following questions: Where are men in terms of gender equality in the MENA region? How are men of all ages, and younger men compared to older men, reacting to the gradual but significant efforts to improve the position of women and girls in the region? How are ideas about masculinity affected by political and economic stresses, and by the impact of the Arab Spring? In short, what does it mean to be a man in the Middle East and North Africa in 2017, and beyond?

Considerable advances have been made in the status of women in most parts of North Africa and the Middle East in the two decades since the landmark Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1995. Health indicators, including female life expectancy and maternal mortality (as well as under-five mortality), have improved notably in many countries. Female literacy has risen substantially, and in some parts of the region, women now exceed men in terms of attendance, as well as performance, in secondary and post-secondary education.<sup>2</sup> The vast majority of countries in the region have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and female political participation, at the ballot box and in government, has grown in several countries since the Arab uprisings.

Yet, these and other gains are matched by formidable hurdles and setbacks. At a regional average of 25 per cent, female labour force participation (referring mostly to formal sector employment) in MENA remains amongst the lowest in the Global South.<sup>3</sup> Women in paid work find their wages routinely lagging behind those of their male peers, along with their access to financial networks and resources. Rural, poor, migrant, and marginalized populations of women remain at a considerable disadvantage in terms of equal access to health, education, and other services and institutions. While gender equality is enshrined

1. For UN Women definitions of gender equality and various gender-related terms that are also in this report, see United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women). (2014). *Gender Mainstreaming in Development Programming*. New York: UN Women.

2. World Bank. (2008). *The Road Not Traveled: Education Reform in the Middle East and North Africa*. MENA Development Report. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group.

3. Jung, et al. (2016). *Against Wind and Tides: A Review of the Status of Women and Gender Equality in the Arab Region 20 Years after the Adoption of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action*. New York: The Center for Women (ECW) at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA).

in constitutions across the region, laws on the books – and in practice – in most countries offer greater rights and freedoms to men than to women, a position reflected in various countries’ reservations to CEDAW based on conservative interpretations of shari’a.<sup>4</sup> Opinion polls show that both sexes hold patriarchal views of the “rightful” roles and capacities of women.<sup>5</sup> Gender-based violence is still widespread, with growing research revealing substantial rates of sexual harassment in public spaces, workplaces, and schools, and, a high prevalence of domestic and intimate partner violence (IPV). The ongoing and lingering effects of armed conflict in parts of the region, and consequent migration, further jeopardize women’s welfare.

Against this backdrop, gender relations in the Middle East and North Africa remain a topic of heated debate, all the more so with the political, economic, and social upheaval and conflict of recent years. But gender, as conventionally defined in the region, has distinctly female features: the vast majority of academic research, government policies and programmes, and civil society interventions are focused on women. Little research has looked at how men view gender equality, how their perspectives on gender relations are affected by conflict and social upheaval in the region, and what pathways toward gender-equitable attitudes and practices might be possible for men in the current context of the region. Nor is much data available on the impact of political, economic, and social shifts on men’s view of their own place in their families and communities; nor on how these forces shape their own identities as men and their relations with others; nor on the ways in which these issues differ among the generations. These attitudes and practices have a direct impact on the lives and well-being of women and girls, as reflected in substantial rates of gender-based violence, amongst other challenges.

Understanding masculinities and men’s views of gender equality in the MENA region also requires attention to men’s gender-specific realities. Youth<sup>6</sup> unemployment rates in the MENA region are among the highest in the world – in excess of 20 per cent for young men in many countries and even higher for young women.<sup>7</sup> For young men in the region, social pressure to realize the “provider” model of manhood is a frequent source of tension. In a region where male employment is often a prerequisite for marriage, unemployment and poverty are often felt as emasculating. Although some women are providers for their households – mostly through work in the informal sector – many, and particularly younger women, lack access to jobs in the formal sector, which contributes to limitations on their physical, social, economic, and political mobility. Numerous studies, including nationally representative surveys, have found widespread frustration, marginalization, and alienation from social and political institutions, with profound implications for young men and young women alike.<sup>8</sup>

4. A number of Arab states maintain reservations to several CEDAW provisions, among them Article 2 (on discrimination against women); Article 9 (nationality rights); Article 15 (equality in law); Article 16 (equality in marriage and family relations).

5. World Values Survey. (2010–2014). Wave 6: Official Aggregate v.20150418. Madrid: World Values Survey Association.

6. Here “youth” refers to the definition used by the International Labour Organization as individuals aged 15–25.

7. United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN ESCWA). (2016). Social Policy Brief 8: Unemployment of Young Women in the Arab Region: Causes and Interventions. Beirut: UN ESCWA.

8. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Regional Bureau for Arab States (RBAS). (2016). Arab Human Development Report: Youth and the Prospects for Human Development in a Changing Reality. New York: UNPD and RBAS.

Ongoing conflicts and their consequences in the MENA region bring distinct challenges for specific groups of men and for gender relations. The MENA region is home to nearly half of the world's internally displaced people and 57.5 per cent of all refugees in the world.<sup>9</sup> This includes Palestinian refugees, whose displacement is the result of one of the most protracted occupations in recent history. In the region as a whole, between 2000 and 2015, the number of armed conflicts and violent crises increased from 4 to 11. To give an indication of the impact of these conflicts on daily life, the Syrian economy has shrunk by an estimated 40 per cent since fighting broke out in 2011 – affecting young men's ability to find legal employment. Three in every four people in Syria are now living in poverty.<sup>10</sup>

In sum, to advance women's empowerment in the region and to provide a more nuanced view of men in the Middle East and North Africa, IMAGES provides much needed data and insight on men, masculinities, and gender equality in the Arab region. This study looks at four countries, chosen in part to reflect the diversity of the region, and includes conflict-affected areas. In spite of the limits of its geographical scope, IMAGES MENA offers key snapshots of the diversity of men, women, and gender relations in the MENA region.

9. UNDP and RBAS, Arab Human Development Report, 2016.

10. The Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP). (2015). Updated overview: 2015 Syria Response Plan and 2015-2016 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

## 1.2 ABOUT IMAGES

IMAGES, created in 2008 by Promundo and the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), is a multi-year, multi-country effort to build the evidence base for the ways in which public institutions and policies might be changed to better foster gender equality and to raise awareness, among policymakers and programme planners, of the need to involve men in health, development, and gender equality issues. It includes a questionnaire for men and for women and has both a core set of questions and new questions that are adapted in each country or region to include key and emerging, context-specific issues in gender equality, gender relations, and women's empowerment.

As of 2017, IMAGES and IMAGES-inspired studies have been carried out in more than 30 countries. IMAGES served as the basis for household surveys carried out by Partners for Prevention (P4P, the UN joint programme on engaging men in ending violence against women) and other UN agencies on men, gender, and gender-based violence. IMAGES was inspired in part by the Gender Equality and Quality of Life survey (GEQ) carried out in Norway in 2006. The IMAGES questionnaire was designed to include questions addressing the major issues relevant to gender relations, with an emphasis on men and women in heterosexual-partnered relations, as well as the gendered vulnerabilities of men and women.<sup>11</sup>

### SPECIFIC TOPICS INCLUDE:

- Use of, and attitudes related to, gender-based violence;
- Health and health-related practices, including sexual and reproductive health;
- Household decision-making and division of labour;
- Men's participation in caregiving and as fathers;
- Men's and women's attitudes about gender and gender-related policies;
- Men's reports of transactional sex and paying for sex;
- Men's reports of criminal behaviour, delinquency, and childhood experiences of violence;
- Happiness and quality of life.

### THE OVERALL RESEARCH QUESTIONS THAT INSPIRED IMAGES INCLUDE:

- In light of the gains in and challenges to women's rights and empowerment in the region, what are men's attitudes and practices in relation to women? How do these compare to women's attitudes and practices? Are men internalizing the messages and policies calling for greater equality for girls and women in education, income and work, political participation, and health?
- How do women perceive men's response to gender equality and women's empowerment and rights? What are remaining barriers to women's empowerment?
- What are men's attitudes and practices related to their own health and interpersonal

11. While the IMAGES questionnaire is primarily designed to assess partner relations among men and women who are in heterosexual intimate partnerships, it also asks about same-sex relationships when local contexts permit, and asks about attitudes toward sexual minorities, understanding homophobia as a key component of how masculinities are socially constructed. In some settings, separate qualitative or "nested" studies have been included to focus on the realities of sexual minorities

relationships? How much are men participating in the care of children and other domestic activities? How do men's care practices compare to women's?

- How common is men's use of intimate partner violence and other forms of violence, including street and workplace sexual harassment? What factors are associated with this violence? What do men think about existing laws on gender-based violence and other policies designed to promote gender equality?
- Are men's own lives improving as they embrace gender equality and take on more equitable, flexible, and non-violent versions of masculinity?

The conceptual or theoretical framework for IMAGES emerges from the social constructionist approach to gender and gender relations. This approach posits that norms, attitudes, and practices related to gender are reinforced in families, social institutions, the media, and national laws and policies, and are internalized by girls and boys, women and men. IMAGES is also informed by a life-cycle approach, the idea that gender norms, in part, are internalized from childhood experiences and evolve over the course of a life through interactions with key social institutions and relationships. Accordingly, the IMAGES conceptual framework is constructed to assess the relationships between attitudes, childhood experiences and relationship factors, and current relationship practices and life outcomes. Multivariate and bivariate analyses look at these associations, which are further explored in the accompanying qualitative research.

The gender attitude questions that are employed include those from the Gender Equitable Men Scale (GEM Scale),<sup>12</sup> which assesses men's and women's beliefs toward a set of equitable or inequitable norms (see Chapter 2 for more details). The GEM Scale was developed by Promundo and the Population Council and is now widely adapted to suit specific cultural contexts and used globally as both a population assessment tool and an evaluation instrument.

The full IMAGES questionnaire is always adapted to local settings to include, to the extent possible, contextual issues. Among the additional topics included in IMAGES MENA Palestine are the specific effects of conflict.

12. Pulerwitz, Julie, and Gary Barker. (2008). "Measuring Attitudes toward Gender Norms among Young Men in Brazil: Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the GEM Scale." *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 10, no. 3., doi: 10.1177/1097184X06298778.

### 1.3 IMAGES QUESTIONNAIRE APPLICATION AND SURVEY DESIGN

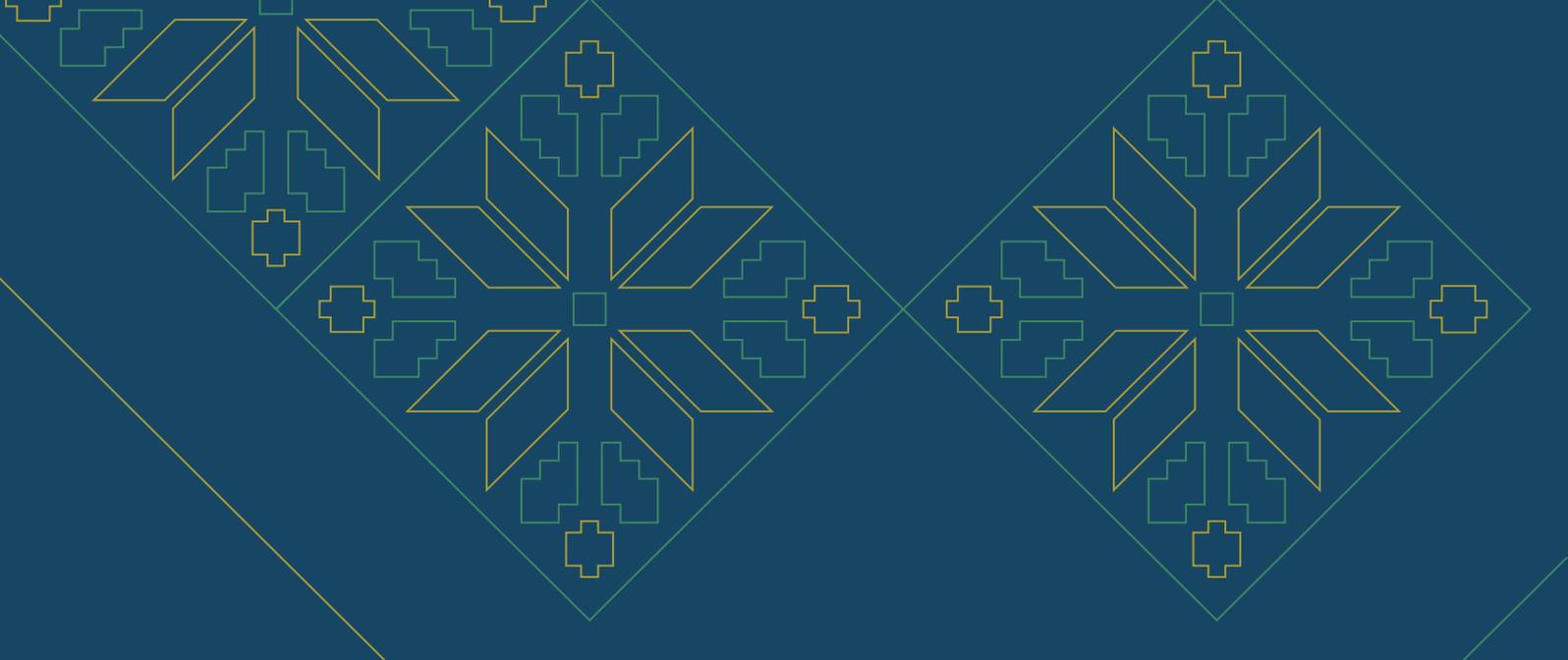
IMAGES questions are taken from a number of standardized instruments on gender-based violence, gender attitudes, childhood experiences, and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) and sexual and reproductive health (SRH) fields. The questionnaire is also based, in part, on the Norwegian Gender Equality and Quality of Life survey. In the more than 30 IMAGES surveys to date, when possible, hand-held devices have been used for data collection; when resources or local conditions have not permitted, the questionnaire has been paper-based and interviewer-applied, with extensive training of enumerators, given the sensitivity of the survey questions. The decision to use this method is based on availability of and experience with hand-held survey applications in the country; familiarity with the technology on the part of the implementing partner; and local conditions (in Palestine, electronic data collection is regarded with suspicion by respondents, thereby compromising results or putting enumerators at risk).

Following the design of the World Health Organization (WHO) multi-country studies on violence against women, IMAGES is generally carried out in a minimum of two major urban areas in each country. When funds and conditions allow, nationally representative samples that include rural areas are covered, as well. IMAGES follows standard procedures for carrying out stratified, random, representative household surveys in each participating city, region, or country. The questionnaire has approximately 250 items and takes approximately an hour, sometimes longer, to administer. In the case of IMAGES MENA, the survey instruments were pre-tested and adapted in all four countries to take into account local realities, as well as the needs of policymakers and practitioners. For the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey, the study protocols was approved by the Birzeit institutional review board.

For IMAGES MENA Palestine study, a year-long consultation, by Promundo starting in 2015, was conducted with research partners in the region, as well as with civil society, UN Women staff Palestine, and government counterparts. A review of existing research and surveys on context-specific issues related to masculinities and gender equality in the MENA region complemented this process. This consultative and review process led to the adaptation of existing survey questions and the creation of new, region-specific modules on:

- Gendered laws and policies;
- Women in public life;
- Gender-based violence in public spaces (also referred to as sexual harassment/assault in public spaces);
- Honour and honour killing;
- Men and marriage;
- Men and migration;
- Men and the effects of the occupation.

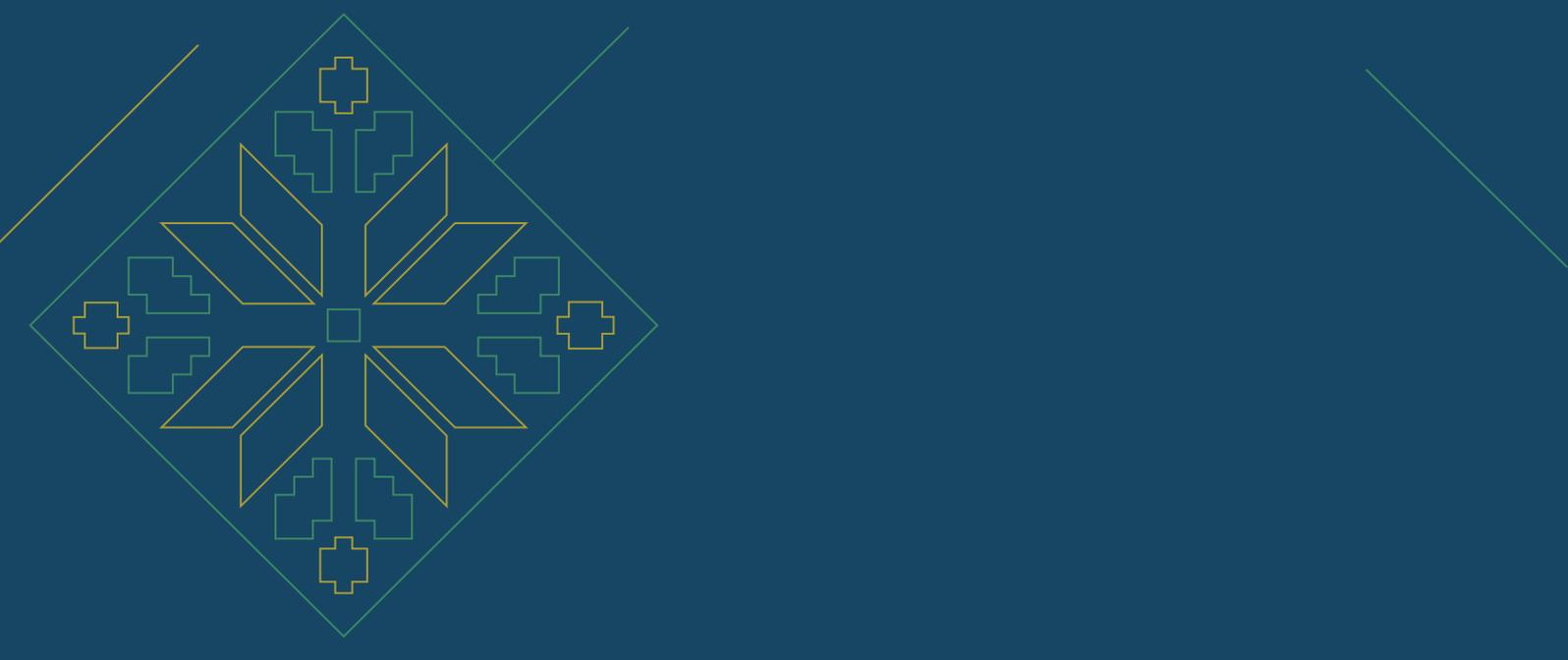




# Chapter 2

## **Methodology**

### **IMAGES Palestine**



## 2.1 OVERVIEW

The Palestine survey consisted of a sample of 2,399 respondents (1,200 men and 1,199 women), representing urban, rural and refugee camp residents. The age group interviewed was between 18-59 years old.

### **IMAGES MENA Palestine Data Collection Overview:<sup>1</sup>**

**Sample size, men:** 1200

**Response rate, men (%)** ~100

**Sample size, women:** 1199

**Response rate, women (%)**: ~100

**Total sample** :2399

**Age group:** 18-59

Site(s)/Geographic representation: Randomized, nationally representative sample following the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics sampling framework and representing the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem

In-country quantitative research partner: Institute of Women's Studies and the Center for Development Studies, Birzeit University

Questionnaire application process (hand-held/paper): Paper questionnaire

In-country qualitative research partner: Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University

Qualitative research design and focus: Individual interviews included: 10 "more equitable" men, 12 "more empowered" women, and 12 former political prisoners, including both men and women.

Focus group discussions were also conducted with university students (two groups) and male former political prisoners (one group). Qualitative data collection took place in Jerusalem and the West Bank.

1. Details of the sociodemographic characteristics and other sample features are included in chapters that follow.

## 2.2 SURVEY DETAILS

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The adapted survey tools were translated into local Arabic dialects and, prior to full data collection, pilot-tested with respondents from different socio-demographic groups. Data collection was completed between April 2016 and March 2017.<sup>2</sup> Questionnaires were administered face-to-face using paper questionnaires. Given the sensitive nature of the questions, and in accordance with IMAGES procedures, female interviewers interviewed women and male interviewers interviewed men. A Strategic Consultative Group, was formed in Palestine with representatives from academia, civil society, government, and UN agencies, and they reviewed the overall research design and findings.

### QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

A country research team developed their own qualitative research plans, combining a mixture of focus group discussions (FGDs) and in-depth individual interviews (IDIs). FGDs were used to triangulate the survey findings, and individual interviews were also used to identify and investigate “more empowered” women and “more equitable” men, in both cases referring to men and women whose life trajectories showed divergence from the gender norms of their settings. These life-history interviews were analysed to identify factors or circumstances that supported individual pathways to gender equality. In Palestine, a subset of in-depth interviews included former political prisoners whose specific life circumstances provided useful insights into gender relations and masculinities in the context of conflict. The qualitative component of IMAGES MENA was designed to account for greater local variability, thereby better capturing local specificities. In addition, Palestine used its own criteria for selection of qualitative participants, with a view to capturing, to the extent possible, diversity according to urban/rural location, age, sex, income, and religious and ethnic differences.

### SAMPLING FRAME AND DESIGN

IMAGES MENA Palestine study used a stratified, multi-stage cluster-sampling methodology, randomly selecting between 30 and 60 primary sampling units (PSUs), half of which served for sampling male respondents, and half for sampling female respondents. PSU selection was proportionate to the population of the larger administrative units (e.g., districts, governorates, prefectures). Within each PSU, households and respondents were randomly selected and interviews were conducted. Sample sizes were chosen based on expected levels of non-response or refusal.

### ETHICAL AND LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS

The household survey and qualitative studies in Palestine were approved by the Committee on Research Ethics at Birzeit University. The study followed standard ethical procedures for research on intimate partner violence (IPV). Researchers sampled men and women in different clusters to avoid interviewing men and women in the same household. All respondents were fully informed about the purpose and procedures of this study and were

2. Palestine data collection was conducted October-December 2016

told that their participation in the survey was voluntary and that they had the right to terminate the survey, at any point, or refuse to answer any questions. Confidentiality of the interviews was strictly guarded. Prior to data collection, interviewers received training on gender, violence,

ethical procedures in gender and masculinities research, and how to ask sensitive questions and respond to respondents in distress; in the case of questions about suicidal ideation, respondents were offered contact information for local service providers able to provide care and support.

In Palestine, questions related to sexual attitudes and practices were omitted due to research partners' understanding of local cultural sensitivities. Similarly, questions related to parenting, intimate partner violence, and reproductive health practices and decision-making were asked only of married respondents.

### LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

Large-scale survey research in general, and IMAGES MENA in particular, presents noteworthy limitations and challenges. In order to cover the breadth of necessary topics in this study in sufficient detail, the survey questionnaire was long (typically taking more than an hour to complete). The sensitivity of questions that related to certain topics – among them, violence and sexuality – also presented challenges for research teams. In anticipation of these challenges, data collectors' trainings included thorough discussions on topics of gender, violence, sexuality, and how to ensure a safe, comfortable environment for all survey respondents. While IMAGES draws on years of testing various ways to minimize social desirability bias and maximize the comfort of men and women answering sensitive questions, these are challenges in any survey research on such topics.

Palestine's political situation presented in some cases extreme, challenges to data collection. Field workers' movement was restricted, in certain cases, especially when Israeli security forces closed cities, such as Hebron and Jerusalem, during the data collection period. Also during data collection, a group of settlers attacked Palestinian civilians on main roads in Jerusalem, compelling the team to take additional security precautions. In addition, due to restrictions on travel, it was impossible for the researchers in the West Bank to travel to Gaza and vice versa, thereby doubling the length of the training period and necessitating the deployment of additional field supervisors. In Gaza, three field researchers were arrested and held for several hours by local authority security forces, which further complicated the data collection process.

### DATA ANALYSIS

**IMAGES MENA Palestine** presents findings from the quantitative research with summary observations and illustrative quotes from the qualitative research. For the quantitative research, the report provides primarily descriptive statistics and bivariate analyses. Data were analysed using either the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) or Stata, generating descriptive tables and figures, and using t-tests and chi-squared tests to test associations between variables of interest. Unless otherwise stated, results reported in tables throughout this report are calculated using the full country sample. Where differences or associations are reported on a specific outcome by factor (e.g., age, wealth, educational attainment, or other variable), these are always statistically significant at a p-value of <.05.

## 2.3 CONSTRUCTION OF KEY VARIABLES

Gender Equitable Men (GEM) Scale: To measure men's and women's gender-related attitudes in quantitative terms, IMAGES MENA asked respondents to agree or disagree with a range of statements on gender norms. Using validity tests, a sub-selection of these statements were then used to construct a MENA-specific version of the GEM Scale. Versions of the GEM Scale have been validated and widely used in studies in more than 30 countries, including all previous IMAGES reports (see Section 1.2).<sup>3</sup> The MENA-specific GEM Scale includes 10 items:

- A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family.
- A man should have the final word about decisions in the home.
- There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten.
- To be a man, you need to be tough.
- Changing diapers, bathing children, and feeding children should all be the mother's responsibility.
- A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together.
- A married woman should have the same rights to work outside the home as her husband.
- It is a man's duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives.
- Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men.
- Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters.

Respondents could choose one of four options to all of these items: strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree. These four options were given integer scores from zero to three, where zero reflects the most gender-inequitable response and three represents the most gender-equitable response. The GEM Scale score presented in this report is the respondent's average response, on a scale of zero to three, combining all 10 items.

Depression scale: To measure depression symptomatology, the IMAGES MENA survey used the CES-D Scale.<sup>4</sup> This scale includes 20 statements of symptoms associated with depression, all of which have been used in longer, previously validated scales. Examples include "I thought that my life had been a failure" and "my sleep was restless", among 18 other items. Respondents reported whether they had experienced these symptoms "rarely", "some of the time", "a moderate amount of the time", or "most or all of the time", in the week prior to the survey. Most items reflect depressive symptoms, while some items reflect the absence of depressive symptoms. Each of the 20 statements was given an integer score from zero to three, where zero reflects the lowest reporting of depressive symptomatology and three reflects the highest. According to the international standard calculation, any respondent with a total score of 16 points or higher was said to have met the screening standard for depression.

3. Pulerwitz, Julie, and Gary Barker. (2008). "Measuring Attitudes toward Gender Norms among Young Men in Brazil: Development and Psychometric Evaluation of the GEM Scale." *Men and Masculinities*, vol. 10, no. 3., doi:10.1177/1097184X06298778; Scott, et al. (2013). "An assessment of gender inequitable norms and gender-based violence in South Sudan: a community-based participatory research approach." *Conflict and Health*, vol. 7, no. 4., doi: 10.1186/1752-1505-7-4.

4. Radloff, Lenore S. (1977). "The CES-D Scale: A Self-Report Depression Scale for Research in the General Population." *Applied Psychological Measurement*, vol. 1, no. 3, pp. 385-401, doi: 10.1177/014662167700100306.

Wealth index: The IMAGES MENA questionnaire followed the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) methodology for constructing the wealth index in each site. This included asking respondents about a range of assets and objects their household might or might not possess, including arable land, livestock, appliances, automobiles, and many others. The index was constructed using factor analysis in the combined women's and men's data set (so that women's and men's households were held to the same wealth standard), accounting for differences in wealth dynamics in urban and rural settings, and then dividing respondents into equal tertiles and quintiles based on their factor scores. While the wealth index calculation did not include respondents' self-reported income earnings, some analysis related to reported income is also included in the country chapters. The full procedure for calculating the wealth index from the DHS questionnaire module is available online at [www.dhsprogram.com](http://www.dhsprogram.com).

Intimate partner violence: The IMAGES MENA survey sought to measure men's perpetration and women's experience of intimate partner violence using a standard battery of questions. These questions measured four types of intimate partner violence: emotional, economic, physical, and sexual. Each question asked how often a certain act of violence might have occurred in the respondent's lifetime. If the respondent reported that the violence had ever occurred, then they received a follow-up question to determine whether this act had occurred within the previous year. Prevalence rates were calculated by adding up respondents who reported any one or more of the acts of that particular form of violence. Questions in this section never used the word "violence" or its Arabic equivalent, because of the shifting, subjective nature of this term. The IMAGES MENA questions and approach for measuring intimate partner violence followed guidance established by the WHO and PATH.<sup>5</sup> The questionnaire also included a smaller battery of questions to ascertain women's perpetration of intimate partner violence. The report includes detailed information on survey results related to intimate partner violence. Given local cultural sensitivities, an intimate partner was defined as a spouse in IMAGES MENA Palestine.

Care work, domestic work, and caregiving: The questions included on this topic come from a variety of household surveys, including the aforementioned DHS and GEQ surveys. They were asked of men and women, each describing their own caregiving or domestic work and their male/female spouse's caregiving activities, with the caveat that these excluded any assistance the respondent or his/her spouse might have received through outside help by others.

5. Ellsberg, Mary, and Lori Heise. (2005). *Researching Violence Against Women: A Practical Guide for Researchers and Activists*. Washington, D.C.: World Health Organization (WHO) and PATH.

# Key Findings

- **The reality of Palestinian lives – including gender relations and gender dynamics – has been carved by the prolonged Israeli occupation.** The occupation has become the central structural framework of analysis for all elements of political, economic, and social life in Palestine. IMAGES findings in Palestine must be understood within this contextual framework.
- **Inequitable gender attitudes remain common in Palestine, although women hold more equitable views than men do.** For example, around 80 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women agree that a woman's most important role is to take care of the home. Men with greater wealth, with more education, and whose fathers participated in commonly feminine household work hold more equitable attitudes, however. Notably, there is no difference in gender-related attitudes between younger and older men.
- **At the same time, there are many signs of more equitable views.** For instance, some three-quarters of women and half of men agree that a married woman should have the same right as her husband to work outside the home. Most respondents of all genders reject the idea that it is more important to educate boys than girls when resources are scarce, as one among other signs of equitable views in Palestine. In practice, there are also many men contributing in commonly feminine household work, as well as sharing decision-making authority with women. Fewer than 20 per cent of men and women think that it is shameful when men engage in caring for children or other domestic work.
- **Several men (interviewed for the qualitative portion of the study) who had been imprisoned by the Israeli security forces for political reasons pointed to the extraordinary ability of women to carry a double or triple burden at home during the men's imprisonment.** The ability of women to simultaneously manage the household, care for children, and earn an income gave these men greater respect and appreciation for women. This newfound respect contributed to some men carrying out commonly female household tasks, such as feeding, bathing or changing babies' diapers. In the cases of these political prisoners' families, the change in women's roles during the husband's absence was met with more appreciation and a reconsideration of women's abilities to perform different roles. At the same time, this led to a reevaluation of men's domestic work, reflected in the willingness of many ex-prisoners to share household work with women.
- **There is strong agreement among men and women that gender equality has not been achieved in Palestine.** Three-quarters of men and nearly 87 per cent of women agree with the statement, "We as Palestinians need to do more work to promote the equality of women and men".
- **Fifty-nine per cent of women and 42 per cent of men believe that women should have greater representation in political authority.** By contrast, however, a majority of both men and women agree that "women are too emotional to be leaders".
- **Twenty-five per cent of male respondents and 22 per cent of female respondents reported witnessing their mother being beaten by their father or a male relative during their childhood.** More men than women had experienced physical violence from someone in the household during their childhood. Men faced more bullying and other forms of violence in school than did women, with 57 per cent of men saying they were physically punished by a teacher (compared with 30 per cent of women), and 24 per cent of men saying they were bullied at school (compared with 14 per cent of women).

- **Nearly all respondents hold fears related to personal or family safety.** Furthermore, some 70 per cent of women and 78 per cent of men worry about not being able to provide their families with the necessities of daily life. These fears and worries are experienced alongside the constant threat imposed by the occupation on many aspects of Palestinian life.
- **There are significant differences between men's and women's agency and autonomy with regard to arranging and planning a marriage.** Forty-four per cent of men said that they had the greatest say about their own marriage arrangements, compared with only 5 per cent of women. About 25 per cent of men and 39 per cent of women said that their marriage decision was shared between the husband and wife. Furthermore, the majority of men (88 per cent) and women (82 per cent) think that marriage should be ultimately the couple's decision, not the family's decision.
- **Women's participation in higher education has been increasing in Palestine, as has women's participation in the paid labour market, compared with previous decades. Still, the division of work within the household falls sharply along gendered lines.** This can be linked to the worsening political and economic situation under Israeli occupation. Women reported high levels of involvement in nearly all types of domestic work, but men mostly concentrated on activities outside the home. Men whose fathers participated in commonly feminine household work, as well as men who were taught to do this work as children, are far more likely to contribute to the household work within their own marriages.
- **While women carry out the majority of daily caregiving of children, men express a desire to be more involved.** One encouraging finding is that more than 60 per cent of fathers in the sample reported talking with their child about important personal matters in their lives; this points to an emotional intimacy not always associated with masculine behaviour.
- **Most respondents – 65 per cent of men and 55 per cent of women – reported having experienced one or more specific forms of occupation-related violence and adversity within the past five years.** Men were more likely than women to report having lost land; having been harassed by soldiers or settlers, detained, or injured; having had difficulty accessing health services; and having lost work or educational opportunities due to the occupation, but occupation-related violence and difficulties are very common among all respondents.
- **Nearly one in five men (17 per cent) said they had ever perpetrated an act of physical violence against a female partner.** Twenty-one per cent of women reported ever having experienced such violence. Men who witnessed violence against their mother as children and men who experienced physical violence in their childhood homes are statistically significantly more likely to report perpetrating intimate partner violence in their adult relationships.

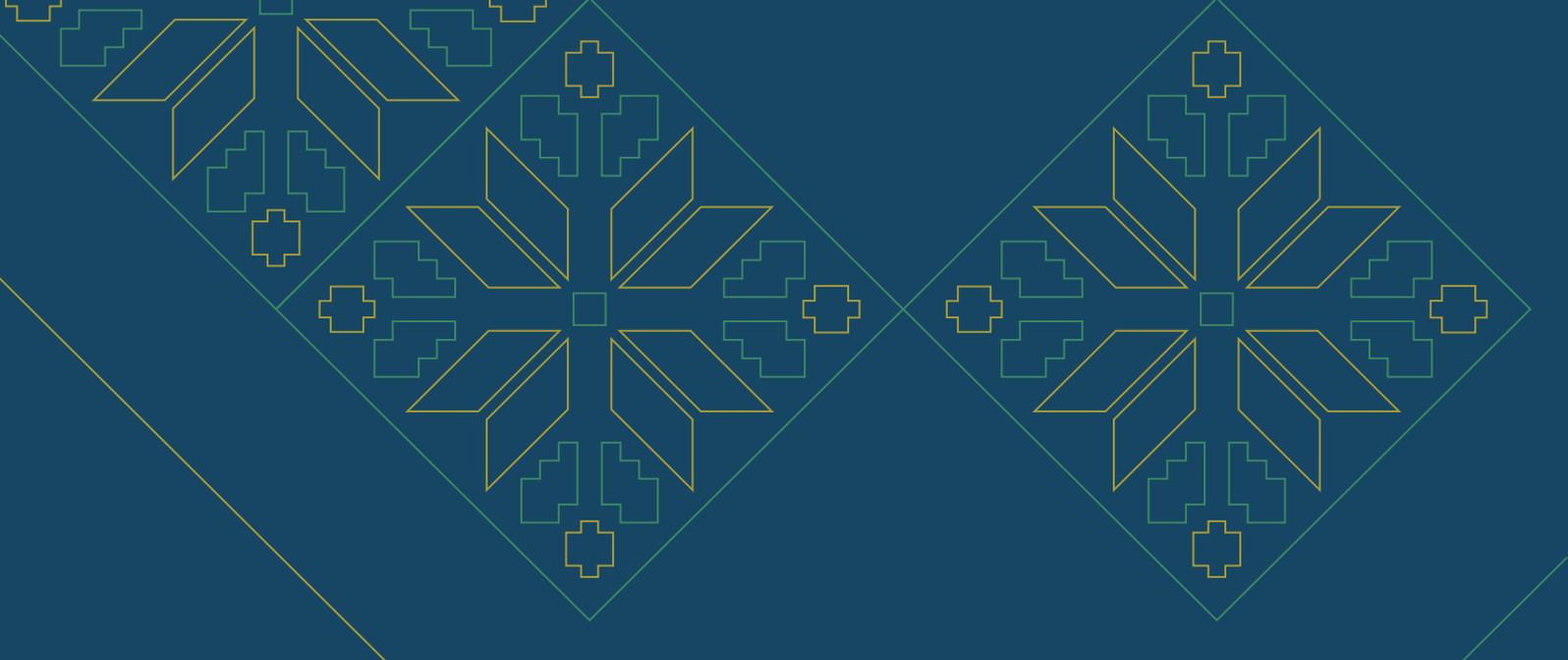
# Who Was Surveyed?\*

- 1,200 men and 1,199 women, aged 18 to 59, representing Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem, were surveyed.
- The age distribution reflects the young population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip; 32 per cent of men and 31 per cent of women in the survey were aged 18 to 25.
- 68 per cent of the sample draws from urban settings, 19 per cent from rural settings, and 13 per cent from refugee camps.
- 60 per cent of men and 70 per cent of women have ever been married; the mean age of marriage in the sample is 25 for men and 20 for women.
- 35 per cent of men and 36 per cent of women have received some higher education.
- 69 per cent of men in the sample are currently employed, compared with only 11 per cent of women.
- 54 per cent of men and 30 per cent of women spend most of their time out of work, or looking for work; 28 per cent of men and 14 per cent of women have given up on looking for work.
- Average household monthly income in the sample was approximately US \$710 (reported by men) and US \$730 (reported by women), which approaches the poverty line of about US \$620. Around half of the respondents qualify as poor according to the national statistics and standards. To enable the study to test associations with family wealth, respondents were classified into three “wealth index” groups of equal size, based on many reported factors of their household wealth.

**TABLE 2.1a**

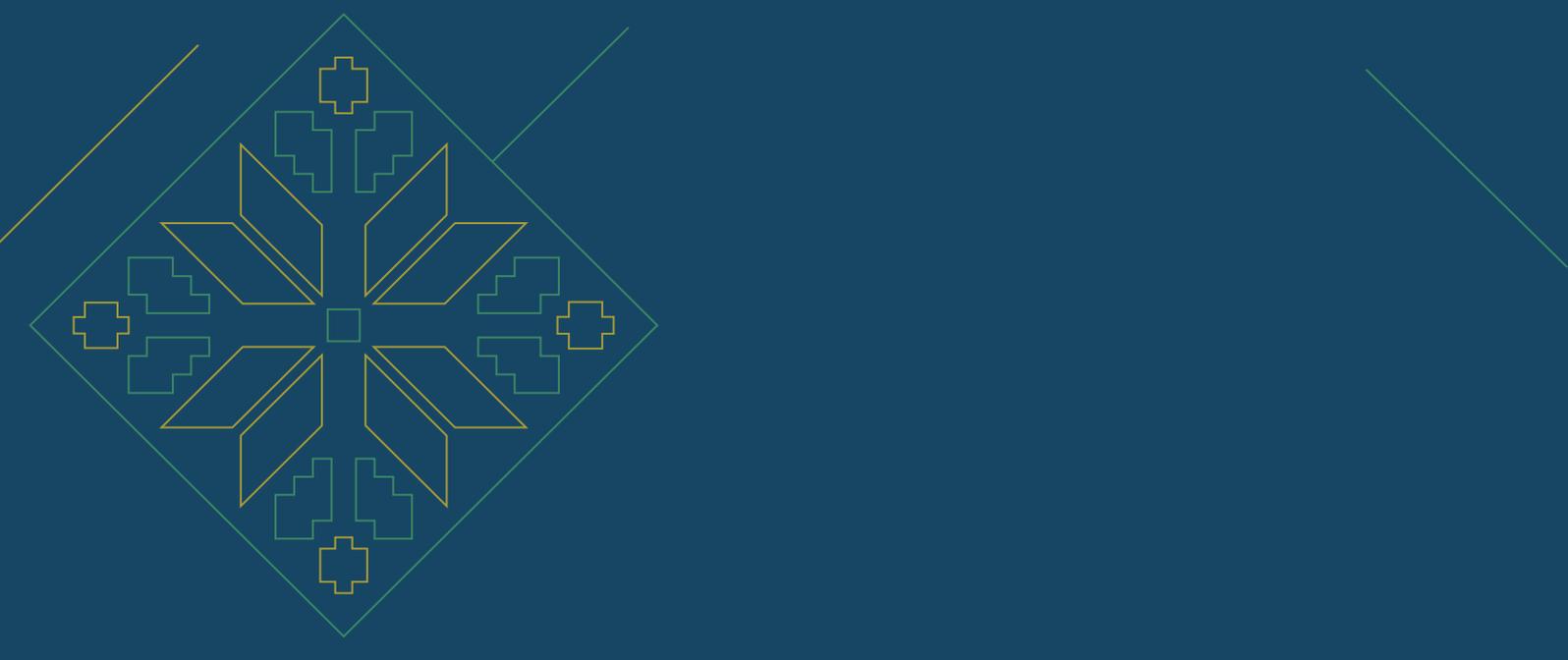
Quantitative sample characteristics, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN		WOMEN	
	N	%	N	%
<b>Type of settlement</b>				
Urban	820	68.3	819	68.3
Rural	230	19.2	230	19.2
Camp	150	12.5	150	12.5
<b>Age group</b>				
18-24	385	32.0	374	31.2
25-34	381	31.8	380	31.7
35-49	297	24.8	341	28.4
50-59	137	11.4	104	8.7
<b>Level of education</b>				
No schooling	40	3.3	28	2.3
Primary school	84	7.0	79	6.6
Secondary school	668	55.7	663	55.3
Higher	408	34.5	429	35.8
<b>Employment status</b>				
Employed	827	69.0	131	11.0
Unemployed	373	31.0	1,068	89.0
<b>Employment situation is mostly stable (agree or strongly agree)</b>	<b>536</b>	<b>59.9</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>70.6</b>
<b>Marital status</b>				
Single	475	39.6	369	30.7
Married	717	59.8	767	64.0
Divorced, separated, or widowed	8	0.6	63	5.3
<b>Age at first marriage (mean, standard deviation)</b>	<b>25 (4.3)</b>		<b>20 (4.0)</b>	
<b>TOTAL (N)</b>	<b>1,200</b>		<b>1,199</b>	



# Chapter 3

# **Introduction**



## INTRODUCTION

Any analysis of gender justice and masculinity in Palestine must be framed within the central dynamics that shape Palestinian life under Israeli occupation: displacement, dispossession, economic deprivation, and militarism. In Palestine, as in other countries where a sovereign state does not exist or is too weak, other communal structures often become the main sources of social, political, and economic stability and support. And no source of support is as central to Palestinian life as the family. Therefore, as a foundation for the data presented in this chapter, it is essential to understand Palestinian family life and gender relations under Israeli occupation.

First and foremost, as prior studies have shown, Palestinian women's resistance to the many effects of the occupation, and their ability to cope with continuous crises, have been strategies to preserve the coherence and harmony of Palestinian families. The strength of the family – this ongoing sense of coherence and harmony – is closely tied to the ability of Palestinians to preserve the solidarity needed to endure discriminatory occupation measures, including those that cause and compound economic hardship. This family steadfastness has been particularly essential, for instance, when occupation measures have sought to minimize or diminish Palestinians' presence on their lands through "forcible transfer". Such measures make all aspects of everyday life extremely difficult. In the face of these and other more direct and violent policies, the presence of strong communal and familial relations is essential for solidarity and resistance.

But the family, even as a source of social coherence and solidarity, also presents paradoxical relations – a combination of conflicting and cooperating elements, or "cooperative conflict" – which underlie inequitable gender attitudes, roles, and perceptions.<sup>1</sup> The cooperation and solidarity of the family represent necessary tools for survival amidst the ongoing political

1. Sen, Amartya. (1990). "Gender and Cooperative Conflicts." *Persistent Inequalities: Women and World Development*, edited by Tinker, Irene. New York: Oxford University Press, pp.123-149.

crisis. But conflict and inequality can exist alongside solidarity and cooperation, even within the same family. The scope and nature of any such conflict within the family is also linked to other factors, including the family's economic situation, level of education, and general openness to more equitable relations. As a result of these paradoxical and overlapping dynamics, it is clear that family solidarity for survival does not necessarily coincide with more equitable gender relations; instead, inequitable gender relations may persist within the same family that is also a vital source of coherence and support.<sup>2</sup>

Within such a paradoxical situation, while many elements of patriarchy persist, certain gender stereotypes and roles are being transformed along with aspects of Palestinian society.<sup>3</sup> Still, even as Palestinian families show an ability to transform and adapt, more radical transformation toward equality is not yet possible. This is due, in part, to the continuous occupation policies, which make all elements of family life very difficult. In this context, maintaining communal institutions such as the family – even with its “cooperative conflict” and gendered, unequal roles for men and women – becomes a vital survival strategy and means of resistance.

Acts of resistance, by their very nature, demand social transformation, however. Acts in the pursuit of freedom and justice demand that men and women question all forms of social, economic, and political discrimination and oppression, including those related to gender. This means that the success and depth of any social transformations, including those related to gender roles and relations, are part and parcel with the collective resistance movement in Palestine. It is only in cases of outright defeat, in which people are utterly unable to act or resist, that all social and cultural transformations cease. This is not yet the case in Palestine, where personal and social transformations are occurring alongside acts of resistance, at many levels.

One such arena of personal and social transformation in Palestine is women's growing political and economic empowerment. This empowerment has occurred within the family – often emerging from the strategies of steadfastness and resistance described above – as well as in various social and political spheres. Palestinian women have undeniably stepped into unprecedented roles within Palestinian families in recent years. For instance, when restrictions on mobility, house demolitions, violence, and arrests affect male family members disproportionately and curtail their ability to protect and provide for their families, many Palestinian women find themselves thrust into new family roles, alongside the struggle for liberation. Outside of individual families, this trend has also given birth to a grassroots movement of women's groups and organizations seeking at once to liberate their society, to increase women's abilities to safeguard their families' economic and physical well-being, and to move the society toward true gender justice. All of these new roles, as this chapter explains, are contributing to women's gradual political and economic empowerment in Palestine.

In the time since the Oslo Accords of 1993, the economic situation across Palestine has continued to deteriorate. The Israeli occupation has intensified its land confiscation, illegal settlement building, and restrictions on mobility. Simultaneously, the adoption of neoliberal policies by the Palestinian Authority (PA) has created a new reality in which unemployment,

2. Kuttab, Eileen. (2010). “Coping with Conflict: Palestinian Families and Households, Against All Odds in Feminisms, democratization, and radical democracy.” *Case Studies in South and Central America, the Middle East and North Africa*, edited by Di Marco, Graciela and Constanza Tabbush: Universidad Nacional de San Martin.

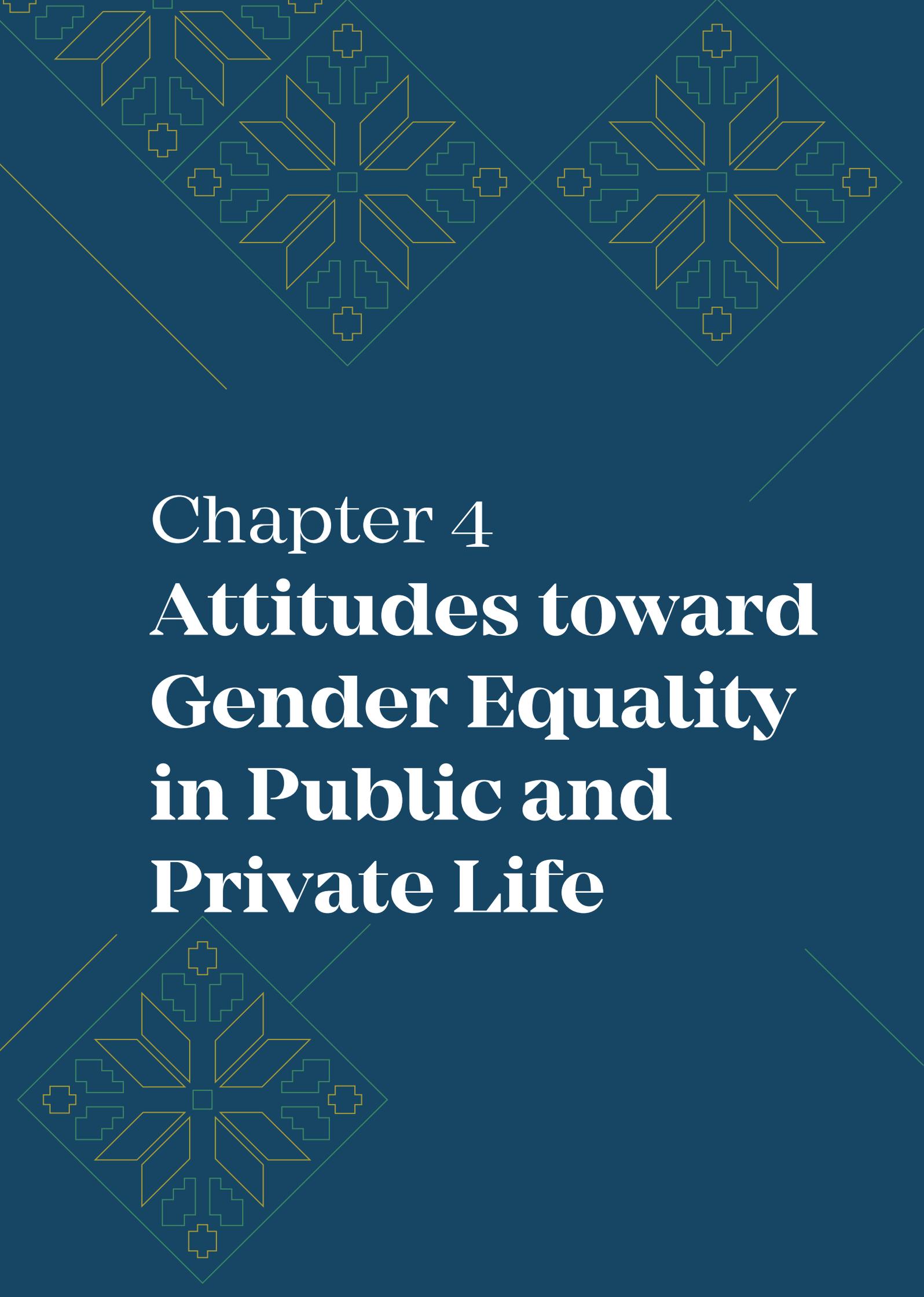
3. Kuttab, Eileen, *Coping with Conflict*, 2010.

poverty, and wide class stratification and polarization have become features of Palestinian society, as well. Under these circumstances, Palestinian women have found themselves confronting additional challenges, having to compensate for the absence of social services not provided by the PA, and make up for their husbands' job loss. When their husbands only earn irregular or low incomes (in an ever-more-globalized economy in which temporary or informal work is becoming the norm), many women find it necessary to supplement the family income. This has left a significant proportion of Palestinian women engaging in various kinds of informal work. However, because these activities are seen as secondary and temporary for women, they are as invisible as women's disproportionate domestic work, and at the same time bear new forms of exploitation. As this chapter will show, these shifts in women's political and economic roles have not yet effected permanent change in the division of labour within the Palestinian family, nor have they completely transformed social attitudes around gender and gender relations in Palestine.

This leaves the pursuit of gender justice objectives in Palestine in a unique place: by many indicators, quality of life seems to be deteriorating for the majority of Palestinians, patriarchal structures and gendered expectations persist, and the occupation goes on seemingly indefinitely. At the same time, partly in spite of and partly because of these factors, many Palestinian women and men find themselves in truly transformed gendered spaces. This study has sought to better document these overlapping dynamics and this moment in the rich story of gender in Palestinian life.

The data certainly show some positive changes in gender relations and gender attitudes in Palestine. Many men in the study report that they want to be more involved in caregiving for their children, that they'd like to see more women in positions of public leadership, and that they think Palestinians ought to do more work to achieve gender equality. Qualitative interviews with men and women conducted for this study also show new and shifting ideas related to women's employment, education, domestic work, and parenthood in Palestine.

In sum, even as IMAGES MENA Palestine demonstrates that patriarchy is still present and dominant in Palestinian society, it also supports the conclusion that patriarchal structures are changing along with Palestinian society. Such changes are more visible in the details of everyday life than in general or normative statements about certain gender attitudes or relations. These insights are further enriched by the paradoxes that appear between the quantitative and qualitative findings, in which theoretically patriarchal stances are sometimes contradicted by more gender equitable practices – or vice versa, where reported practices do not match up with equitable attitudes.



Chapter 4  
**Attitudes toward  
Gender Equality  
in Public and  
Private Life**

## 4.1 – MEN AND WOMEN, ROLES AND RIGHTS

**Inequitable gender attitudes remain common in Palestine.** Around 80 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women agreed that a woman’s most important role is to take care of the home (Table 4.1a). Similarly, 77 per cent of men and 68 per cent of women agreed that “changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be the mother’s responsibility”. Meanwhile, a very low percentage of men (19 per cent) and women (14 per cent) agreed with the statement, “I think it is shameful when men engage in caring for children or other domestic work”.

Findings also indicate a widespread assumption that “men need sex more than women do”, with 59 per cent of men and 71 per cent of women agreeing with this statement. Yet, the qualitative research shows more nuanced and diverse attitudes and perceptions of masculinity and femininity.

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“There is no such thing as ‘man’ or ‘woman’, there is a human being. There are no qualities limited to men and qualities limited to women. Masculinity and femininity are bodily qualities that should not be reflected in roles and behaviours.”

**Man, 23 years old, student, Nablus**

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**TABLE 4.1a****Attitudes toward Gender Equality: GEM Scale Questions**

Percentage of respondents who agreed with selected statements about gender roles and decision-making, violence, and perceptions of masculinity and femininity, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>Attitudes toward gender roles and decision-making</b>		
A woman's most important role is to take care of the home and cook for the family	80	59
A man should have the final word about decisions in the home	80	48
Changing diapers, giving baths to children, and feeding children should all be a mother's responsibility	77	68
<b>Attitudes toward violence</b>		
There are times when a woman deserves to be beaten	34	26
A woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together	63	50
If another man in my community insults me, I will defend my reputation, with force if I have to	89	*
<b>Perceptions of masculinity and femininity</b>		
To be a man, you need to be tough	40	20
I think it is shameful when men engage in caring for children or other domestic work	19	14
It is a man's duty to exercise guardianship over his female relatives	82	64
Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters	76	26
Unmarried women should have the same right to live on their own as unmarried men	29	39
Women should have the same freedom to access sites on the Internet as men	54	71
<b>Attitudes toward relationships, sexuality, and reproduction</b>		
It is a woman's responsibility to avoid getting pregnant	25	31
Men need sex more than women do	59	71
A husband should not have friends of the opposite sex	67	62
A wife should not have friends of the opposite sex	81	67

\*This statement was not included in the women's questionnaire

Fewer than half of women felt that a man should have the final word about decisions in his home, compared with 80 per cent of men who claimed this prerogative. Respondents showed even starker divergence on the statement, “Boys are responsible for the behaviour of their sisters, even if they are younger than their sisters”, where men were nearly three times as likely as women to agree.

**When taken as a whole using the GEM Scale, Palestinian women tend to hold more equitable attitudes than men do.** IMAGES MENA Palestine has selected 10 of the attitude statements that appear in Table 4.1a to be included in a regionally adapted GEM Scale, which presents scores on a scale from 0 to 3 (where 0 reflects the most *gender-inequitable* response to all of the attitude statements and 3 reflects the most *gender-equitable* attitudes). As Table 4.1b shows, the average GEM Scale score for men in the Palestine country sample was 1.17, while women’s average score was 1.52.

**TABLE 4.1b**  
**GEM Scale**

GEM Scale scores for men and women by selected background characteristics, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016\*

		MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Overall average score		1.17	1.52
Wealth index	Rich	1.35	1.67
	Middle	1.24	1.48
	Poor	0.93	1.40
Education	Higher	1.30	1.65
	Preparatory/Secondary	1.13	1.46
	Primary	1.04	1.38
	No education	0.84	1.21
Locality type	Rural	1.21	1.58
	Urban	1.17	1.49
	Camps	1.10	1.56
Age	50-59	1.18	1.36
	35-49	1.19	1.46
	25-34	1.15	1.53
	18-24	1.18	1.61
Father's participation in housework	Did not participate	1.11	1.49
	Participated	1.24	1.55

\* GEM Scale scores range from 0 to 3.0, with 0 being most inequitable and 3.0 most equitable

Among men, those with higher wealth and greater educational attainment, as well as those whose fathers participated in commonly feminine household work, show higher GEM Scale scores, at a statistically significant level.

Notably, there is no statistically significant difference among age groups, suggesting that changes in men's opinions about gender relations are not undergoing generational changes. Attitudes among the younger generation of men may be affected by the high rates of unemployment these men face, and their lesser likelihood – compared with older generations – of pursuing higher education, among other factors. However, among the women respondents, this generational change is taking place, in which younger respondents hold significantly more equitable GEM Scale scores than do older respondents. Women with greater wealth and education also hold more equitable attitudes. And by comparison with respondents from rural and camp settings, women in urban settings hold slightly less equitable attitudes.

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**“Society views the man as tough, whose main role is as provider. Yet from my point of view, men's qualities are loyalty, honesty, and respectfulness. These ethical qualities can also characterize women.”**

**Woman, 20 years old, student, Jerusalem**

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Respondents' household wealth is modest, which plays a role in hindering the process of social transformation and promoting gender-equitable attitudes. The survey data showed low income levels among respondents' households, with household income averages ranging between US \$700-730 for a family of five people, approaching the poverty line of about US \$620. Around half of the respondents qualify as poor, according to the national statistics and standards, which can link with their conservative attitude to gender, as insecurity of life conditions can bring a more conservative attitude toward different social issues.

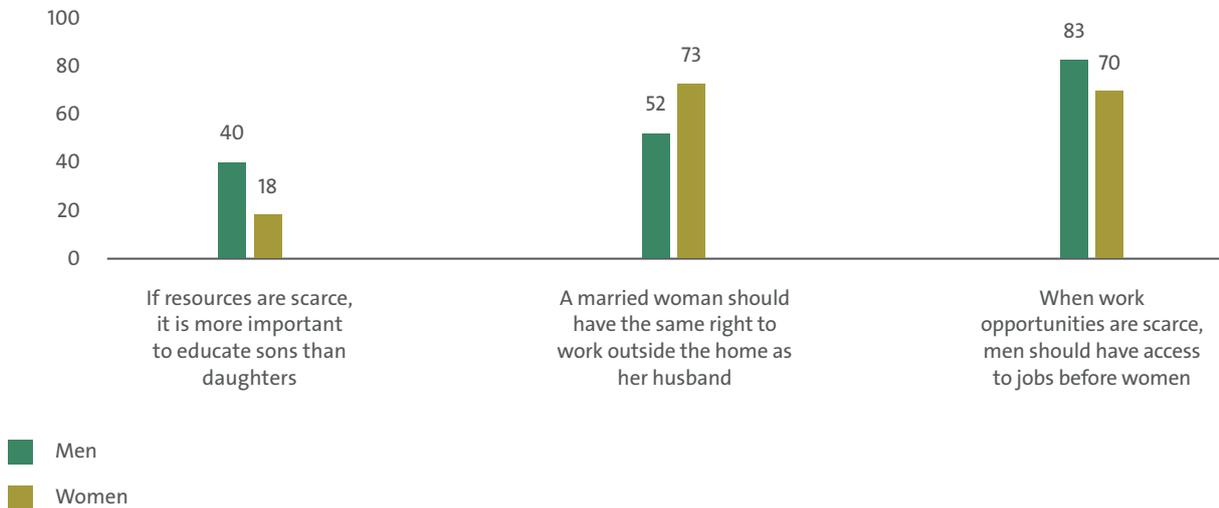
## **4.2 – MEN, WOMEN, AND WORK**

**Men expect preferential access to educational and economic opportunities in times of scarcity, and many women agree.** Around 83 per cent of men and 70 per cent of women agreed that men's access to work should take priority over women's when such opportunities are scarce (Figure 4.2a), which is the case in Palestine.

**FIGURE 4.2.a**

**Attitudes toward Women’s Empowerment**

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about women’s education and employment, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



Since the statements in Figure 4.2a pertain to conditions of scarcity, it is important to understand this finding in its proper context, acknowledging the implications of material factors in shaping gender attitudes. As a result of the prolonged occupation practices, including confiscation of land and restrictions on Palestinians’ movement, among many others, income-earning opportunities for Palestinians are severely restricted. When this distorted political economy meets the inequitable view that a man should provide financially for his family, attitudes like those in Figure 4.2a are likely to emerge. Such attitudes, however, co-exist with the finding that around three-quarters of female and half of male respondents agreed that a married woman should have the same right to work outside the home as her husband, and men’s generally equitable views regarding women’s education.

“There are more positive views towards women’s participation in the labour market. This, however, does not necessarily reflect a transformation in the view towards women and in recognising her rights. Rather it reflects transformations in the nature of life and the hard economic conditions which oblige the society to agree to women’s work outside the home.”

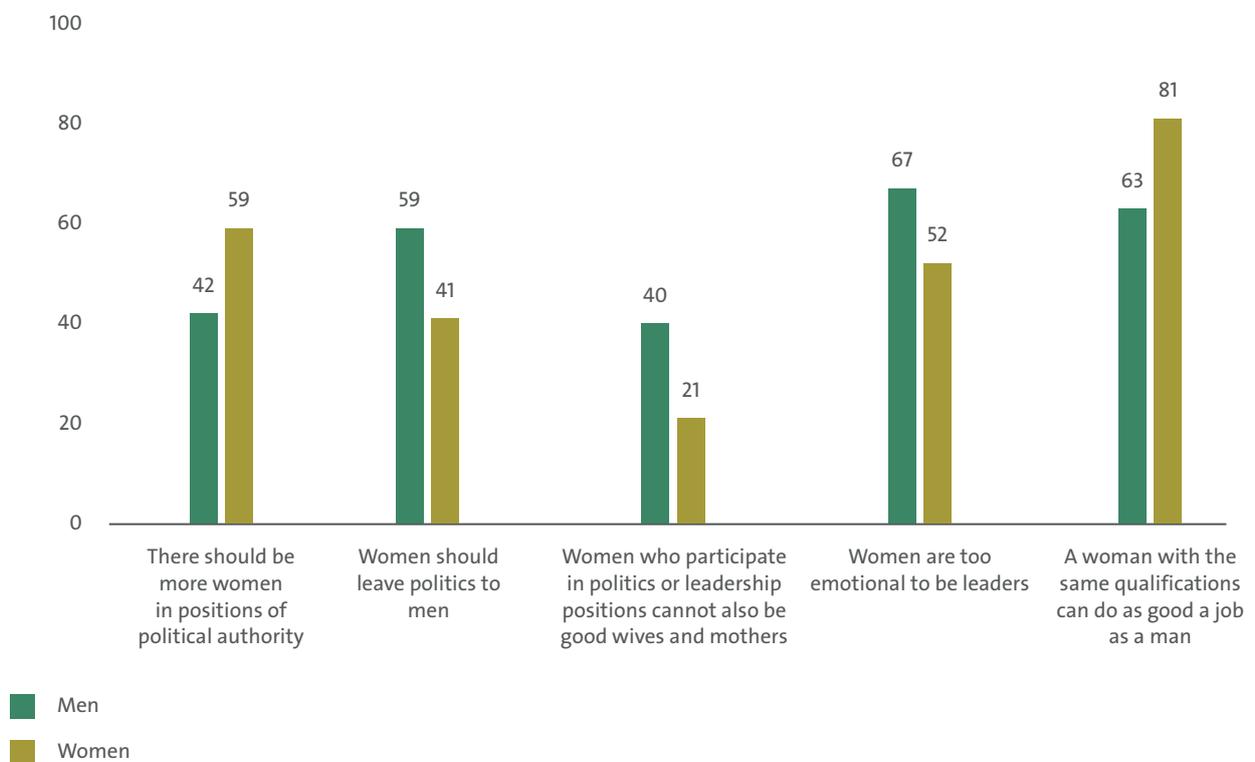
**Man, 45 years old, contractor, Ramallah**

### 4.3 – WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

**Men and women in Palestine disagree as to whether women should occupy more public roles.** IMAGES MENA Palestine found that more women (59 per cent of the sample) than men (42 per cent) believed that women should have greater representation in political leadership (Figure 4.3a). However, more than half of women and two-thirds of men agreed that “women are too emotional to be leaders”, suggesting mixed views on women’s accession to public power.

**FIGURE 4.3a**  
**Attitudes toward Women in Leadership**

Percentage of men and women who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about women’s participation in politics and leadership positions, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



Similarly, women were more likely than men to approve of women in specific leadership positions (Table 4.3a). Men, and to a greater extent, women were particularly likely to support women as voters, leaders of NGOs, heads of professional syndicates, and members of parliament. The participation of women in the Palestinian liberation struggle has effected many changes in the attitudes (and practices) with regard to women’s political participation, especially among men in the national movement.

Women were also much more likely than men to endorse female quotas (Table 4.3b). The last two parliamentary and local elections held in Palestine adopted quota systems for women candidates (with 20 per cent of seats reserved for women). While almost 60 per cent of men supported such quotas, nearly 80 per cent of women were in favour.

**TABLE 4.3a****Women and Public Leadership**

Percentage of men and women who approved of women's participation in particular public positions, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Women as heads of political parties	46	59
Women as members of parliaments/assemblies	66	78
Women as government ministers	59	69
Women as heads of state	36	47
Women as voters	79	87
Women as demonstrators in political protests	53	70
Women as police officers	58	69
Women as leaders of NGOs	73	90
Women as leaders of professional syndicates	66	85
Women as leaders of trade unions	57	76
Women as judges	52	66
Women as soldiers or combatants in the military or armed forces	40	54
Women as religious leaders*	57	71

\* Not imams or priests

**TABLE 4.3b****Attitudes toward Quotas and Colleagues**

Percentage of respondents who agreed with selected statements about quota policies and women at work, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>Respondents who support...</b>		
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women in parliament or cabinet	57	79
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women to study in universities	70	89
A fixed proportion of places or quotas for women in executive positions	52	76
Equal salaries for men and women in the same position	75	90
<b>Respondents who accept...</b>		
Working with women as lower-level colleagues	77	90
Working with women as colleagues at the same level	79	94
Having a female boss	63	83

Where the wider world of work is concerned, women’s support for gender-affirmative policies ranges from a low of 76 per cent, for quotas for women in executive positions, to a high of 90 per cent, for equal pay for equal work. Men’s support varies from a low of 52 per cent, for women quotas in executive positions, to a high of 75 per cent supporting equal pay for equal work. This weaker endorsement of quotas for women in executive positions most likely stems from the perception of the private sector as a male preserve.

Men and women alike are largely comfortable interacting with women in the workplace; more than three-quarters of men and four-fifths of women reported they would accept working with women at a lower or comparable job level. At just over 60 per cent, fewer men than women were prepared to work with a female boss.

Qualitative research affirms that men and women appear to hold more positive views of women’s rights and equal roles in the public sphere than in private life (see Chapter 6). This raises the question of how women can achieve equality in the public sphere if there is not greater equality in terms of unpaid care work.

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“I worked for two years and the work contributed to developing my personality. However, I decided to quit my job in the interest of my two daughters. I realized then that working for long hours with a modest material return had affected my relationship with my little daughters. Moreover, I became unsatisfied with the type of education my daughters are receiving from my mother and mother-in-law.”

**Woman, 28 years old, unemployed, Ramallah**

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## 4.4 – GENDER EQUALITY AND THE LAW

**Three areas of gendered law represent highly emotive issues in the Palestinian context: divorce, inheritance, and “honour-killing”.** Divorce, inheritance, and “honour-killing” are clear reflections of masculine power and control over women, and are the subject of numerous attempts by the Palestinian women’s movement and human rights groups to change existing legislation.<sup>4</sup> IMAGES MENA Palestine found that men are less likely to support equal inheritance rights (37 per cent of men), compared with 55 per cent of women (see Table 4.4a). Qualitative findings suggest that while religion is often used to defend the practice of inequitable inheritance laws, economic interests are often at the core.

4. Family law matters for Muslim residents of the West Bank and Gaza are governed by the Jordanian Law of Personal Status (1976) and the Egyptian Law of Family Rights (1954), and Israeli law.

“Inheritance is a right that the Islamic religion had guaranteed to women, and women should be encouraged to receive their inheritance. Yet the male family members discourage women from receiving their inheritance out of their material interests.”

**Man, 50 years old, shopkeeper, Nablus**

**TABLE 4.4a**  
**Legal Changes**

Percentage of respondents who think that there should be a law on selected aspects of gender equality, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>Respondents who agreed that there should be a law...</b>		
Criminalizing domestic violence, including marital rape	64	81
Allowing fathers to write a will that gives equal inheritance to sons and daughters	37	55
Treating honour killings like any other murders	62	76
Allowing women and men the same right to initiate divorce	50	81

Findings show that a majority of Palestinian men and women support making marital rape a crime. Palestine’s first national coalition to eliminate violence against women was established in 2003, and since then has mobilized major public awareness campaigns around the issue in Palestinian communities. The fruit of this and comparable efforts is the fact that 64 per cent of men in the survey supported a law to criminalize domestic abuse, including marital rape. Interestingly, although 81 per cent of women supported such a law, the fact that nearly one in five women rejected such legislation suggests that there are women who prefer that such private matters be kept out of the public domain.

Men and women tended to agree that current divorce laws favour women in various ways, with the exception of the right to initiate divorce, which is seen by men and women alike as favouring men. In terms of alimony (which in Islamic law is limited to monthly ‘maintenance payments’, rather than a share of household assets, or of wealth accrued over the course of the marriage), almost 80 per cent of men and 69 per cent of women stated that the current laws favour women over men. This assumption may be due to the fact that only women have legal rights to receive maintenance on the dissolution of marriage.

Along the same lines, both men and women claimed that visitation and custody rights either favour women (at 41 per cent for both male and female respondents) or equally favour both women and men (at 48 per cent for both male and female respondents). A possible explanation for these findings is a low level of knowledge about family laws among

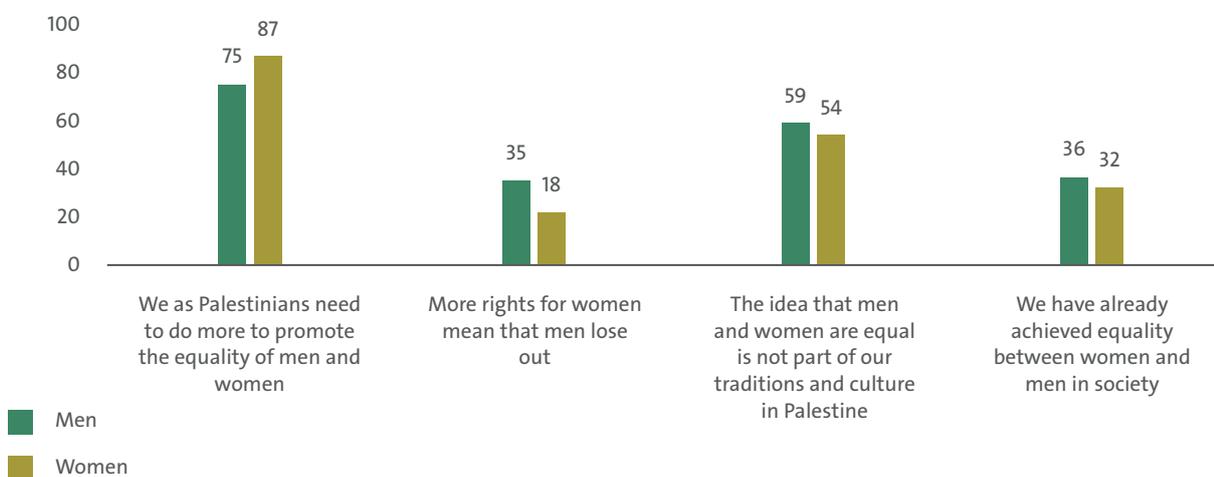
respondents, or alternately that respondents felt unable to criticize the law. Survey data reveal that a relatively small percentage of men (25.5 per cent) and women (34.2 per cent) reported knowledge of at least one law that protects women and promotes their rights.

Qualitative research confirmed these findings. Many male and female interviewees pointed to the fact that they do not know much about the current laws. Interviewees who are more knowledgeable about family laws pointed to the practical limitations of more equitable legislation. A male interviewee explained that “women’s resort to the courts requires time, effort, and cost, which obliges many poor women to give up”. Other interviewees questioned the ability of the law to solve issues related to social and domestic matters.

There is strong agreement among men and women that gender equality has yet to be achieved in Palestine. Three-quarters of men and nearly 87 per cent of women acknowledged that, “We as Palestinians need to do more work to promote the equality of women and men”. Men are fearful of gender equality; they are twice as likely as women to agree that “more rights for women mean that men lose out”.

**FIGURE 4.4a**  
**Attitudes toward Gender Equality**

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about gender equality, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



Palestinian men and women alike tended to respond more positively toward gender equality in the abstract, but were more conservative when asked about the details. Furthermore, the qualitative findings affirm that women’s direct participation in the resistance has positively changed attitudes and practices with regard to women’s rights, suggesting links between political activism and practice, and transformations in social value systems and social attitudes. As one woman shared:

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“Historically, the struggle of Palestinian women has been linked to the Palestinian struggle for liberation, and the participation of women in all forms of struggle endowed them with more opportunities. This participation has empowered Palestinian women and legitimized their demands for social and gender equality.”

**Woman, 47 years old, Ministry of Health employee, Ramallah**

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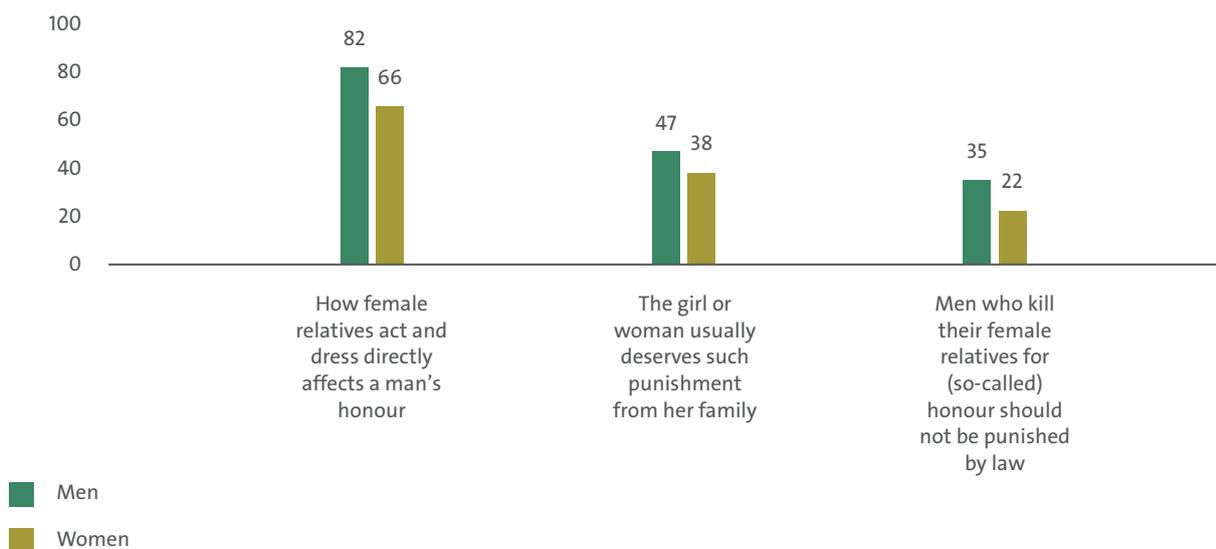
**Family honour is tied to women’s identities in the Palestinian context, although most respondents reject honour killing.** Approximately half (53 per cent of men and 54 per cent of women) had heard of an “honour killing” in their community over the previous year. Such high numbers may suggest that respondents were recalling media reports. A majority of both men and women support the general principle that the ways in which women dress and behave directly affect a man’s honour (Figure 4.4b). Support for the notion of women as bearers of male honour was much higher among men (at 82 per cent compared with 66 per cent of women). However, fewer men (46 per cent) and even fewer women (38 per cent) believed that “the girl or woman usually deserves such punishment (being killed) from her family”. Even fewer men (35 per cent) and women (22 per cent) felt that honour killings should *not* be punished by law.

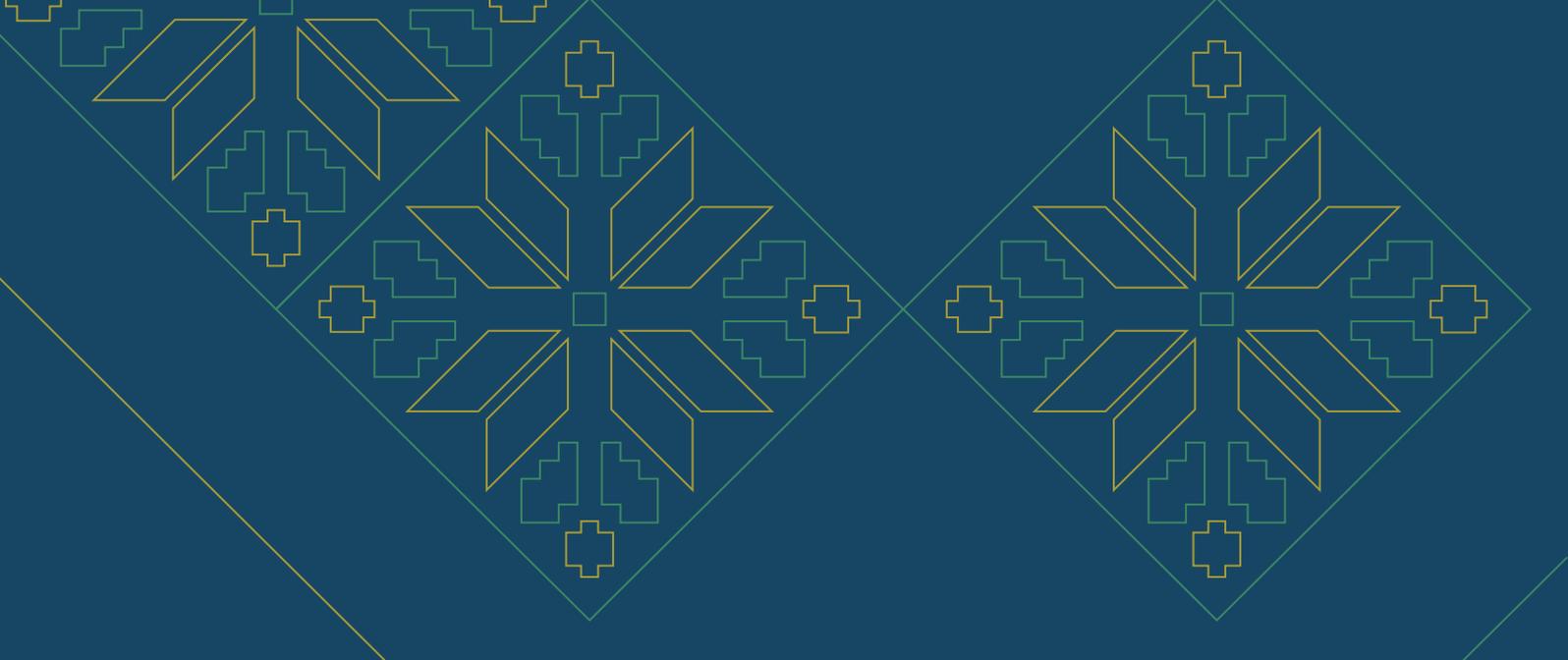
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**FIGURE 4.4b**

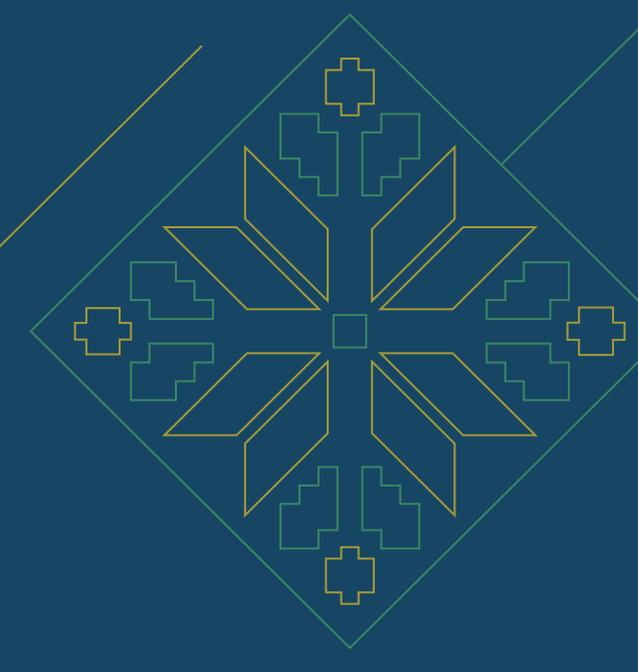
**Attitudes toward Honour Killings**

Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about honour killings, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016





Chapter 5  
**Childhood and  
Adolescence**



## 5.1 – GENDER ROLES AND RIGHTS IN CHILDHOOD

**Boys enjoy greater freedom of movement and more free time than do girls.** In recalling their childhood, 92 per cent of the men in IMAGES MENA Palestine said that it was easier for them and their brothers (compared with their sisters or girls in the neighbourhood) to go outside the home when they were children, and 75 per cent said they had more free time than their sisters because they did not have to do household chores. In contrast, 63 per cent of women said they had less ability to go outside the home in childhood (than their brothers did), and only 43 per cent said they had less free time due to having to do chores. Notably, more than half of men respondents – 55 per cent – reported that they had less free time because they had to earn income as children. Approximately 39 per cent of women affirmed the same observation about their brothers. On the whole, men remembered having more privileges than their sisters, while women recalled enjoying more freedom than men acknowledge.

## 5.2 – HOUSEWORK AND HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING IN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE

**Most respondents' childhood homes exhibited inequitable, gendered divisions of labour and authority.** For the vast majority of male and female respondents, their father was the most important male figure when they were growing up. This is a product of the transition to nuclear families in Palestine, which occurred in the 1970s and 1980s, reducing the central role previously played by other (usually older) male relatives. Just over 5 per cent of male respondents reported no significant male figure in their childhood, possibly the result of growing up in a female-headed household. Among women, brothers were mentioned in second place as the most important men of the house when they were growing up. In the kinship system of Palestinian society, brothers are considered to be critical sources of support to sisters throughout their lives; this is reflected in the fact that it was the norm until only recently for women to waive their inheritance rights in favour of their male siblings.

Most respondents reported that their fathers *never* prepared food, cleaned the house, washed clothes, or cleaned the bathroom/toilet (Figure 5.2a). Consistent with the findings of other studies in Palestine, the most common task fathers were reported to have undertaken was shopping for household items, followed by taking care of the respondent or her/his siblings.<sup>5</sup> In spite of this ongoing rigidity in household roles, qualitative interviews found exceptions, particularly among younger men in their own married lives (see Section 6.3).

5. These percentages are consistent with findings from the *PCBS Time Use Survey 2012/2013*, which reported that around 90.8 per cent of females aged 10 years and above performed household chores (preparing and serving food, cleaning, vacuuming, shopping and home care for house purposes) compared to 44.6 per cent of males. See Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2014). *Main Findings of Time Use Survey, 2012/2013*. Ramallah: PCBS.

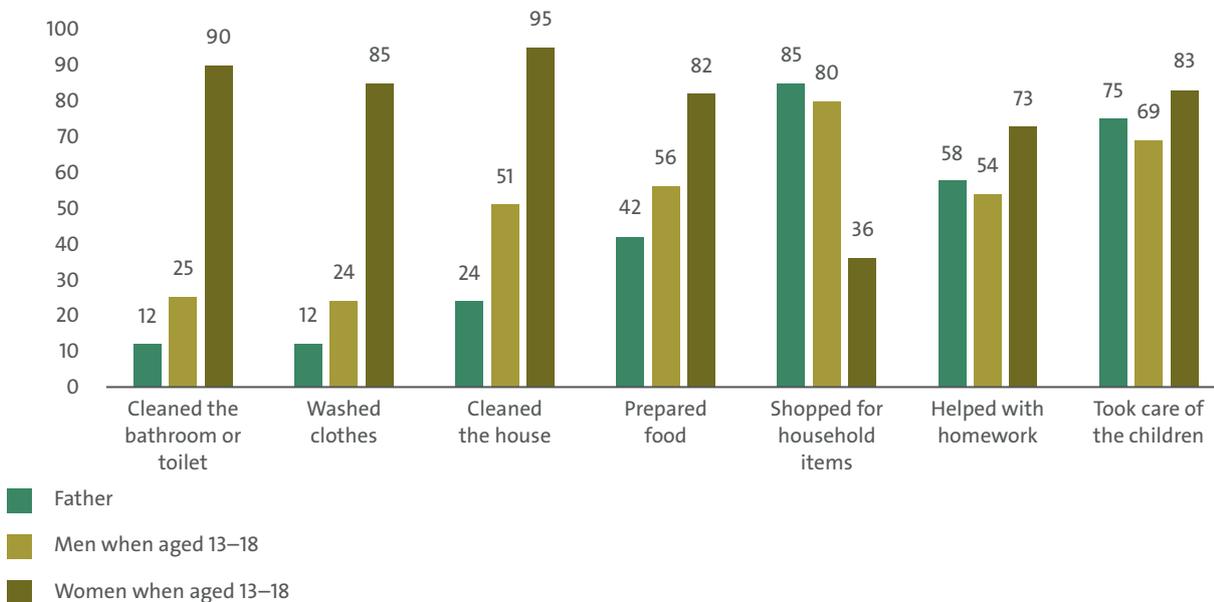
“I was raised in a traditional rural household with a strict gendered division of labour. Gender equality was not part of my upbringing. Yet, this has been changed in my current family, as myself and my wife have agreed from the beginning to form a more just and equitable family.”

**Man, 30 years old, schoolteacher, Ramallah**

**FIGURE 5.2a**

**Household Chores in Childhood and Adolescence**

Percentage of male respondents aged 18 to 59 reporting that their father or any other man (excluding male domestic workers) ever performed selected domestic tasks, and percentage of male and female respondents aged 18 to 59 reporting participation in selected domestic tasks when they were 13 to 18 years old, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



In reflecting on their childhood homes, men tended to assume that their fathers had greater final say in decisions than women recall. Only in terms of the final say about daughter’s marriages did male and female respondents agree that their fathers had the final decision, at 38 per cent for both men and women. For all other items, men tended to believe their fathers had more final say than women reported their fathers having. Recent surveys in Palestine show that, when it comes to the purchase of large household assets, husbands continue to have a much greater decision-making role than wives do in contemporary Palestinian society.<sup>6</sup> However, qualitative interviews suggested nuances in such decision-making, revealing, in practice, processes of negotiation, and a slightly greater balance of power among the men and women of the family.

6. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2012). *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society, 2011: Main Findings*. Ramallah: PCBS; and Abu Awwad, Nida. (2012). *Informal Economy and Power Relationships Within a Settler Colonial Context: The case of the Palestinian West Bank following the second Intifada*. Dissertation, Exeter University.

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“In my own household, as in most traditional households, the father had the final say in most family matters. Yet, my mother’s influence on the decisions of my father was critical. I, as well as my other sisters, used to approach our mother with our issues so she would talk to our father and influence his decisions.”

**Woman, 25 years old, bank employee, Jerusalem**

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**Nearly all women, and few men, report having had to do domestic chores when they were adolescents.** With the exception of shopping for household items, women reported overwhelmingly higher levels of participation in various domestic tasks when they were adolescents than did men (Figure 5.2a). Men’s rates of participation in conventionally feminine household tasks as adolescents (such as washing clothes and cleaning the bathroom or toilet) were far lower than women’s.

In the qualitative research, some respondents said that mothers tend to assign girls more household tasks than they do boys, who are usually given more individually oriented jobs, such as making their own beds or washing only the dishes they themselves used. In cases where there were no daughters in the family, however, some interviewees suggested that boys were given tasks that may otherwise have been assigned to girls. On the other hand, the presence of a family member from an older generation – usually a grandmother or grandfather – appears linked to the continuation of a more gender-inequitable distribution of household work.

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“In my family, we are seven, and my grandmother lives with us. My grandmother and mother do everything. Why? Because this is the way they are, because this is how they taught us – not that my brothers work in the house, too, they only tidy their rooms, but for the whole house, like washing the dishes, they do not do anything.”

**Woman, university student, Ramallah**

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### 5.3 – ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

**Childhood violence is common in Palestine, especially for boys.** A quarter of male respondents and 22 per cent of female respondents witnessed their mother being beaten by their father or a male relative during their childhood; other forms of violence against mothers were not assessed. More men than women had experienced physical violence themselves from someone in the household during their childhood (Table 5.3a). Furthermore, men experienced harsher forms, with 37 per cent beaten with a belt or a stick (compared with 19 per cent of women), and 18 per cent of men beaten so hard that it left a mark or a bruise (compared with 11 per cent of women).

Consistent with recent studies,<sup>7</sup> men reported facing more violence in school than women had, with 57 per cent of men saying they were physically punished by a teacher (compared with 30 per cent of women). Men also said they faced greater public humiliation as children, with 37 per cent reporting that they were insulted or humiliated by family members in front of others (compared with 25 per cent of women). Moreover, 24 per cent of female respondents and 28 per cent of male respondents claimed they experienced hunger in childhood.

“During my adolescence, at the age of 14, I witnessed the violence of my father towards my mother. It was a stressful period and it affected my siblings and me. I felt fear and oppression mainly because I was helpless. I felt very weak and could not intervene. This experience affected me immensely and I still have flashbacks from that period. My view of my father has been negatively affected till now.”

**Woman, 28 years old, unemployed, Ramallah**

**TABLE 5.3a**

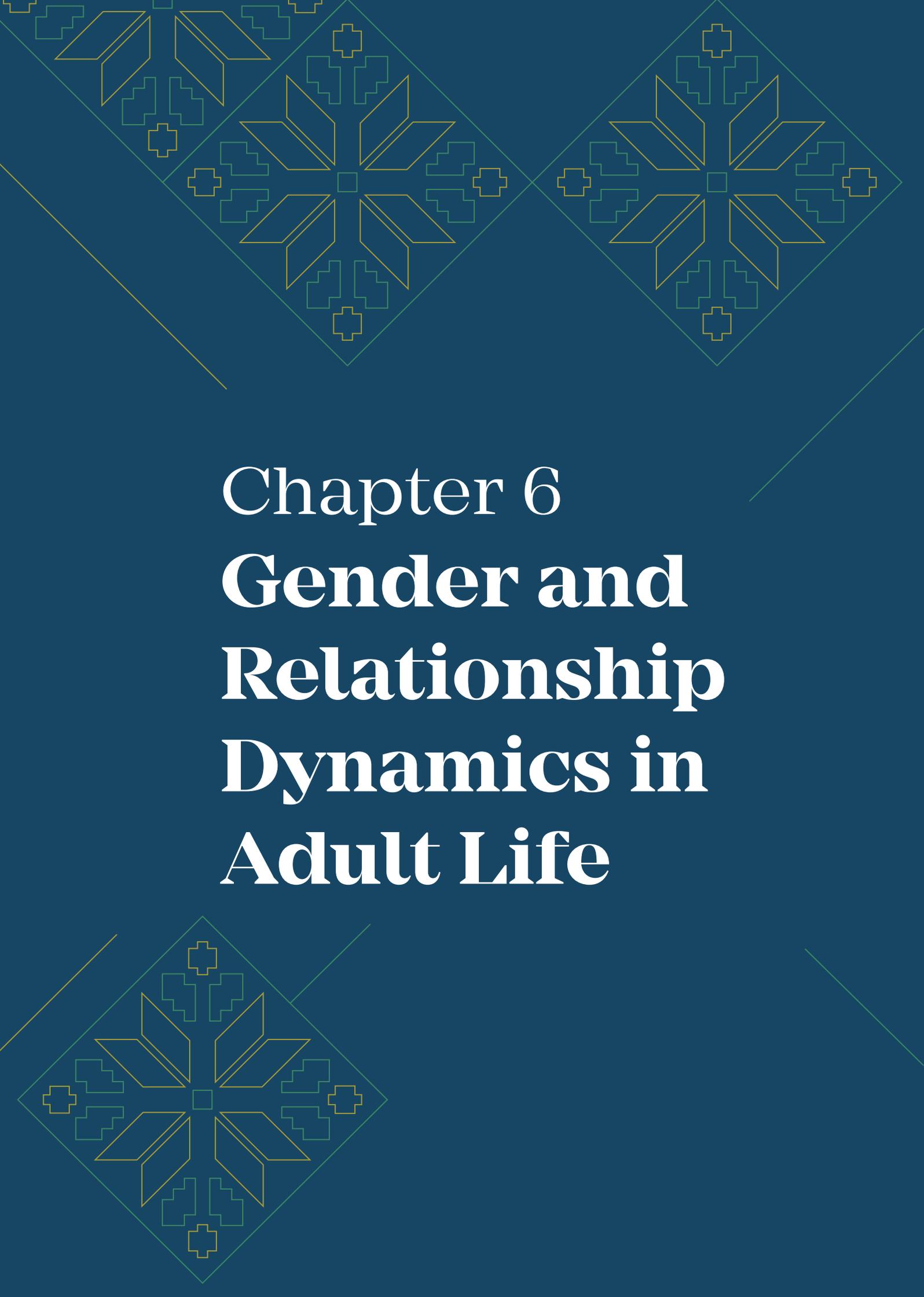
**Adverse Childhood Experiences**

Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who experienced selected adverse events at home and at school before the age of 18, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>At home</b>		
There were times when I did not have enough to eat	28	24
I saw or heard my mother being beaten by my father or another male relative	25	22
I was insulted or humiliated by someone in my family in front of other people	37	25
I was spanked or slapped by my parents in the home	60	45
I was beaten at home with a belt, stick, whip or other hard object	37	19
I was beaten so hard at home that it left a mark or bruise	18	11
<b>At school</b>		
I was beaten or physically punished at school by a teacher	57	30

<sup>7</sup> PCBS, *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society, 2011, 2012.*



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# Chapter 6

# **Gender and Relationship Dynamics in Adult Life**

## 6.1 – HEALTH AND WEALTH

**Many respondents are fearful, stressed, and show signs of depression.** Nearly all Palestinian study participants reported fears related to their own and their families' safety (see Table 6.1a). Fully 70 per cent of women and 78 per cent of men also reported worry about not being able to provide their families with daily necessities.

**TABLE 6.1a**

### Individual and Family Security

Percentage of respondents with selected concerns about personal and family security, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
I fear for my safety	94	95
My family fears for my safety	98	97
I feel capable of protecting my family	96	86
I worry about not being able to provide my family with daily life necessities	78	70
I worry about my family's safety	97	98
I worry about my future and my family's future	96	96

On a related note, when asked about various other life stresses and feelings of depression, Palestinian respondents continued to share a difficult picture. Evoking the inequitable expectation that men be financial breadwinners, the study found that more than half of Palestinian men – 54 per cent – agreed or strongly agreed that “I am frequently stressed or depressed because of not having enough work or income”.

In qualitative interviews, working women talked about their double burden of professional and domestic responsibilities and their feelings of guilt at not being able to perform well in their main, socially-prioritized role as mothers. Similarly, the higher rate of reported depressive symptoms among unemployed men is linked with their inability to realize their socially assigned role as providers and breadwinners, in a context characterized by continuing high rates of unemployment, low income, and economic deprivation. These realities are a result of the prolonged occupation’s structural domination of Palestinian lives and the Palestinian economy, as well as the Palestinian Authority’s neo-liberal policies that impoverish the majority of Palestinians. The depressive symptoms, in this case, can be understood as an expression of the failure of society to provide the conditions under which men can fulfil their socially-assigned role as breadwinners.

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**“The social responsibility to provide for the family is a source of pressure and affects the masculine image of a man.”**

**Man, 22 years old, engineering student, Nablus**

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**Respondents are generally satisfied with their health, but many respondents share wishes for changes to their bodies.** A vast majority of respondents rated the state of their own health highly, as compared with that of their peers (Table 6.1b).

**TABLE 6.1b**  
**Perceptions of Personal Health**

Percentage distribution of respondents, according to self-declared health status, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>In comparison to peers, respondent’s health is...</b>		
Good or very good	89	85
Moderate	7	10
Bad or very bad	4	5
<b>The respondent is happy with (his/her) body</b>	85	75
<b>The respondent would like to lose weight</b>	32	52
<b>The respondent would like to have a more muscular body</b>	56	*

\* Not asked in the women’s questionnaire

Most respondents said that they are happy with their bodies, though more than half of women – 52 per cent – said that they would like to lose weight, while a similar proportion of men – 56 per cent – said that they would like to have a more muscular body. Men’s desire for muscle bulk and women’s desire for a thinner figure reflect stereotypical notions of idealized male and female physiques, as well as the penetration of a capitalist consumerist value system that attempts to redirect and reformulate people’s desires and needs in the same stereotypical direction.

More than half of men in the sample – 55 per cent – reported that they are smokers, compared with fewer than 8 per cent of women. Of male smokers only, 64 per cent felt they smoke too much, and 22 per cent reported having ever had a health problem related to their smoking.

## 6.2 – MARRIAGE AND DIVORCE

**Palestine has high overall marriage rates, even as the average age of marriage is increasing.**

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the marriage rate in Palestine is among the highest in the Arab states. Some 70 per cent of women and 60 per cent of men in the IMAGES MENA Palestine sample have ever been married. The median age at first marriage of men and women in Palestinian society is increasing; it reached around 25 years old for men and 20 for women in 2015, a two-year rise over the previous two decades. Early marriage (first marriage before age 15) among women aged 15 to 49 is relatively high, at 1.8 per cent in the West Bank and 2.6 per cent in the Gaza Strip; early marriage rates are higher in lower-income areas of Palestine.<sup>8</sup> Reducing the rates of early marriage necessitates addressing issues of poverty, not only concentrating on changing attitudes.

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“The main obstacle I faced in my life was my early marriage at the age of 14. I was raised in a family with lots of girls and our economic situation was very bad. Moreover, my mother’s disease, God have mercy on her and forgive her, worsened the situation. When she knew she was sick, she started to marry us, one after the other, so no one tyrannizes us after her death.”

**Woman, 43 years old, official at Ministry of Social Affairs, Nablus**

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Women tended to hold more flexible views on various marriage-related issues. More than half of respondents, men and women, agreed that “it is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career”, with men far more likely to agree with this statement than women were (Table 6.2a). Few respondents were in favour of informal marriages, and respondents generally disagreed with restrictive statements such as “a man should not marry a woman who has been previously engaged”, and “a man should not marry a woman who is more educated than he is”.

8. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2015). *Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, 2014*. Ramallah: PCBS, United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

**TABLE 6.2a****Attitudes toward Marriage**

Percentage of respondents who agreed with selected statements about marriage, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
If a wife works, she should contribute to household expenses	81	92
A man should not marry a woman who has been previously engaged	28	17
If a man does not marry, he is not a man	17	11
It is more important for a woman to marry than for her to have a career	75	51
Informal marriages ( <i>'urfi, misyar, mut'a</i> ) are a solution to the high cost of official marriage	7	4
A man should not marry a woman who is more educated than he is	23	19
Ultimately it should be the couple's decision, not the family's decision, to marry each other	88	82

Qualitative research affirmed respondents' relatively flexible views of marriage-related issues, particularly the readiness of men to marry women who are more educated than they are.

**"I finished high school but was not able to continue higher education as a result of the economic situation. I still feel regret for that. My wife, though, has attained higher education and fulfilled my dream. When we got married she had her bachelor's degree, and a year and half later she was employed as a teacher. My wife enjoys studying and I was so glad when she stated her intention to get a master's degree. I supported her, as I respect her achievements. I hope she continues for a PhD degree."**

**Man, 42 years old, shop employee, Nablus**

There were significant differences between men and women with regard to who makes decisions around the arranging and planning of their own marriages. Some 44 per cent of men said that they had the most say when it came to their own marriage arrangements, compared with only 5 per cent of women (Table 6.4.2b). These and other results show how much greater is the agency held by men (and men's families) in making marriage arrangements compared with that of women (and women's families).

**TABLE 6.2b****Male and Female Decision-Making around Arranging and Planning a Marriage**

Percentage of respondents reporting selected answers to the question “Who had the greatest say with regard to arranging and planning your most recent marriage?”, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

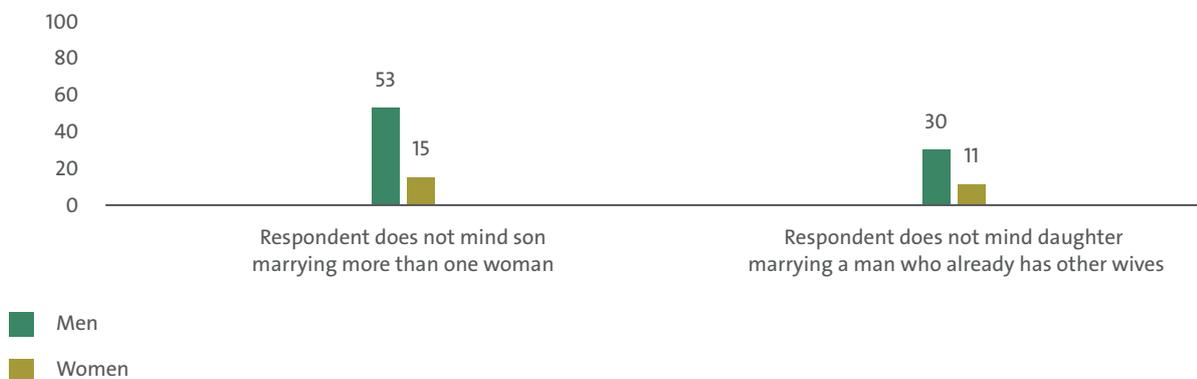
	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Mostly the husband	44	5
Mostly the wife	1	16
Husband and wife together	25	39
One or more people in wife's family	1	21
One or more people in husband's family	28	19
Someone else	1	1
<b>Total number of ever-married respondents</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>830</b>

Three-fifths of ever-married men reported that the cost of their own marriage was a burden on their families. At the same time, fewer than a quarter of these men would have liked to see those costs shared with the bride’s family.

Approximately 1 per cent of men and women reported currently being in polygamous unions, consistent with national surveys. According to PCBS, polygamy used to be more common in Palestine, but is declining.<sup>9</sup> In the IMAGES MENA Palestine sample, 1 per cent of men said they have more than one wife, while fewer than 1 per cent of women said that their husbands have more than one wife. Among survey respondents, men were far more open to polygamous practices than women were, even as the practice is declining (Figure 6.2a).

**FIGURE 6.2a****Attitudes toward Polygamy**

Percentage of Muslim respondents who agreed with selected statements about polygamous unions for their son or daughter, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



9. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2003). *Marriage and Divorce in the Palestinian Territory (1996-2001), Comparative Study*. Ramallah: PCBS.

**Men and women widely agree on questions related to divorce – except when it comes to the basic right to initiate proceedings.**

In Palestinian society, divorce is not common. According to 2013 research by PCBS, only 0.3 per cent of men and 1.6 per cent of women had ever been divorced.<sup>10</sup> In the IMAGES MENA Palestine sample, 3 per cent of men and 1 per cent of women reported ever having divorced. Low rates of divorce in Palestinian society may be linked to the nature of the struggle for survival experienced by Palestinians in the context of occupation. Facing these immense structural forces, family solidarity becomes especially important. The high cost of marriage arrangements may also be a deterrent.

Women considering divorce must weigh not only economic security considerations but also stigma and the loss of status they might experience. Indeed, the majority of Palestinian men did not agree that a woman should have the right to divorce, as shown in Figure 6.2b. By contrast, 77 per cent of women in the survey agreed that women should have the right to divorce. Notably, a large majority of both men and women agreed that “divorce will lead to the breakdown of society”. At the same time, respondents overwhelmingly said that divorced women or men should be treated with respect.

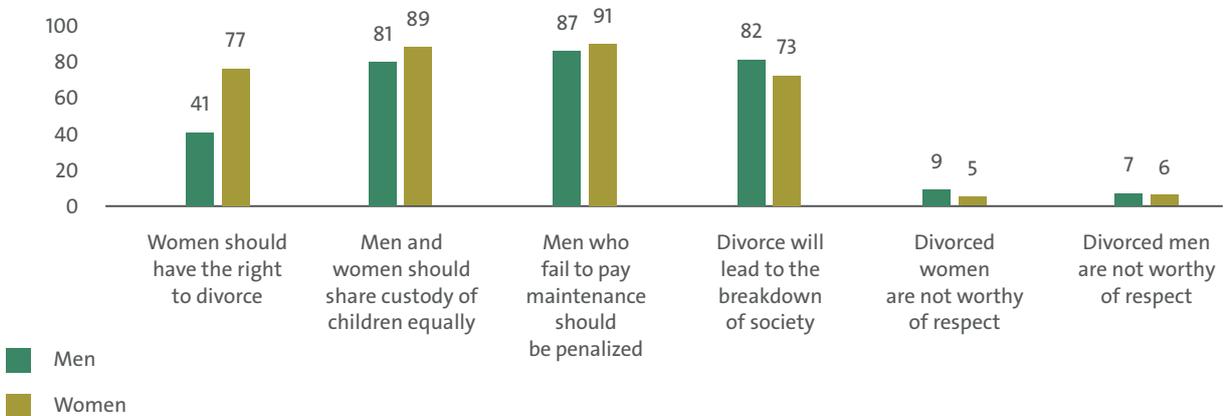
“We now have the law of *khul’*. I am very happy that we have such a law because when a woman wants to be divorced from her husband, now she can divorce him even if she has to give up her dowry, because she does not want to live with him, she is not comfortable with the man she is living with. That the woman can divorce her husband... at least I have a say that I do not want this person.”

**Woman, 28 years old, unemployed, Ramallah**

**FIGURE 6.2b**

**Attitudes toward Divorce**

Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about divorce, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



10. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). (2014). *Women and Men in Palestine. Issues and Statistics*. Ramallah: PCBS.

## Women’s Position in Marriage and Divorce: An Illustrative Story

*Qualitative research found that among older generations, there are still women who had been married off by their families, and who accepted this because they wanted to please their parents, mainly their fathers. In one such case, a woman (who is now divorced with three daughters) said that since she and her ex-husband (picked by her father) wanted different things – he wanted to live abroad while she wanted to live in the West Bank – she took the decision to leave the relationship. However, the price of her autonomy was an informal separation. What is*

*interesting here, as in many other cases of separation, is that the woman preferred not to tell anyone about it, including her own family, especially her father. Her main fear was that she would be obliged to live in her parents’ or brother’s house and lose the independence she had acquired after separating from her husband. This decision, however, meant that she had to manage financially on her own, and with a lower living standard than what she had been used to. She opted for the latter because she did not wish to lose her own and her daughters’ freedom.*

In a focus group discussion, university students described the economic pressures that men, in particular, experience related to marriage. As one young man, perhaps facing these pressures himself, said:

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“The man has to bring a house and a dowry and a car, and has to have a job, he needs to have established himself to be able to marry. This would mean he would be 70 when he has achieved all this. How do you, as a woman’s father, expect a young man, who has just graduated, to be established at this stage? How do you expect that he could provide all this, unless someone helps him, that his father has money, or that he had already worked, or he studied something that allows him a job with a good salary, or he stole. Maybe there are other ways, but how do you expect a man to do all this at a certain age ... this is the pressure on the man.”

**Man, 20 years old, university student, Ramallah**

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### 6.3 – HOUSEWORK AND HOUSEHOLD DECISION-MAKING

**In recent years, women’s participation in higher education has been increasing in Palestine, as has women’s participation in the paid labour market. However, this transformation has not been accompanied by fundamental changes in household dynamics and the division of domestic and care work.** As IMAGES MENA Palestine data in this and later sections will show, the division of labour within today’s Palestinian household still falls sharply along gendered lines: men make the money, and women clean up the mess. Women reported high levels of involvement in nearly all types of domestic work, particularly those related to cleaning the

clothes/home and preparing food (Table 6.4.3a). By contrast, more than half the men reported having carried out only four elements of household work in the preceding month: repairing the house, buying food, controlling the weekly budget, and paying bills.

Among the small number of men (approximately 6 per cent of ever-married men) whose spouses are employed full time, a greater proportion (58 per cent) reported participation in domestic work. At the same time, however, 100 per cent of Palestinian women who work full time reported undertaking domestic work, as well.

**TABLE 6.3a**  
**Division of Household Labour**

Percentage of ever-married respondents according to participation in household labour in the previous month, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>Household labour</b>		
Washing clothes	17	96
Repairing the house	70	57
Buying food	82	67
Preparing food	27	96
Cleaning the kitchen or sitting rooms	17	95
Cleaning the bathroom or toilet	39	96
Controlling the weekly budget	89	78
Paying bills	89	36
<b>Per cent participation in commonly female domestic tasks*</b>	47	97
<b>Total number ever-married respondents</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>830</b>

\* "Commonly female domestic tasks" include washing clothes, preparing food, cleaning the kitchen or sitting rooms, and cleaning the bathroom or toilet

These findings are consistent with prior research in Palestine, and reflect the particular economic realities in this setting. However, IMAGES MENA Palestine data reveal a positive trend in the Palestinian context; in particular, couples reported relatively high rates of sharing some household tasks, compared with the results of a survey conducted by the Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University in 2009, which showed much lower rates of shared household work.<sup>11</sup> IMAGES MENA Palestine data may indicate that some changes are happening: 47 per cent of men reported carrying out commonly female domestic work in the previous month. Still, low rates of women's participation in the labour market and a high fertility rate in Palestine suggest that these advances have been slow in coming.

11. Hammami, Rema. (2002). "Division of Labor Inside the Household." *Inside Palestinian Households: Initial Analysis of a Community-based Household Survey*, edited by Giacaman, Rita, and Penny Johnson, Birzeit: Birzeit University, vol. 1.

Across the board, men with higher education levels were more likely to report recent involvement in conventionally female domestic tasks, which implies a link between men's educational achievement and more equitable practices at home. Men in the oldest age category were least likely to report participation in this domestic work, which similarly suggests that generational changes may be underway.

## Men's Political Imprisonment Driving More Gender-Equitable Caregiving

*Several former political prisoners (who had been imprisoned by occupation forces) pointed to the extraordinary ability of women to carry a double or triple responsibility when they and other men were imprisoned. Imprisonment, according to one political prisoner, threw the entire burden of household life, including income generation, onto his wife. The husband in this case may have come to reject the inequitable division of household labour and to believe in cooperation. Some former political prisoners were less worried or had less to say about who carried out which tasks, and were more concerned that all of the work had fallen to their wives while they were in prison. The ability of women to carry this larger burden gave many men greater respect and appreciation for women, and may have been the driver for some men to begin undertaking conventionally female household tasks after they were released, such as feeding and bathing children and changing diapers.*

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“Each time, I could see that the woman is a cornerstone in your life as a Palestinian, she maintains your presence by maintaining your identity, your secrets, your self, also maintaining your family tradition .... Her role was more important than that of the father, the mother. ... She achieved much more than I expected and more than is usually expected from the man, I am talking physiologically during pregnancy, and morally during labour, I also talk about other responsibilities that have to do with managing the house, working and taking care of the imprisoned husband. The woman is an embodiment of an enormous power to achieve all these tasks that fell on her shoulders.”

**Man, former prisoner, village near Ramallah**

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*One woman whose husband had been a political prisoner, and who is also a working mother and an activist, affirmed that bearing the extra burden when her husband was in prison served to affirm her own strength. She said she was in no way calling for women to carry the full burden of a family, but that she found positive affirmation of her own abilities in this experience. Nevertheless, this positive example does not negate the multitude of challenges that the wives of imprisoned men face, particularly from their own and their husbands' families, who usually want to take responsibility for the prisoners' wives and children.*

*And what happens when a former political prisoner returns home? Some women said that men are quite appreciative of their wives when they return from imprisonment. Others reported tensions when the men want to “assume control” again, and the resistance on the part of the woman against giving up certain responsibilities she had assumed during his absence. One interviewee said that such tensions could be resolved by men showing greater appreciation for their wives' ability to take on such responsibility and validating the confidence their wives have acquired, and stressed the necessity of sharing tasks.*

**Men and women agree that women do the majority of household work.** Nearly 89 per cent of ever-married men and 96 per cent of ever-married women said that, within their homes, the wife does most of the household work. Not surprisingly, men are much more likely to be “very satisfied” with this arrangement than are women. Some 81 per cent of ever-married men shared this response, compared with only 64 per cent of ever-married women.

The qualitative research begs to differ, however; here it emerged that young men and women – mainly young women – were not satisfied with the household division of labour. Despite this dissatisfaction, young women often said they continue to abide by the current division of labour because of pressure from their mothers and grandparents; still, they said that they aspire to a more equal division of labour in their relationships. Male and female university students stressed that cooperation and mutual help are necessary in performing household tasks. Male and female students alike seemed to agree that mothers are to blame for the existing division of labour, not only because they usually give household tasks to daughters and not to sons, but also because they are sometimes willing to perform all household tasks without distributing responsibilities to either sons or daughters.

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“Why? Because my grandmother and mother would not be convinced, I cannot change the way they think, ‘no, let him wash the dishes’, because they are used to this, I should wash the dishes but [men] should not .... But me, in my house, when I get married, it would be good to get my husband used to the fact that there is not a division of labour between us, with me working in the house and he outside – I will be working, of course, there will not be a division between us, we will cooperate – but in my family house I cannot do this.”

**Woman, university student, Ramallah**

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Even when women participate in wage labour, and even when they are allowed to have a car and leave the house, this does not necessarily reflect a change in attitudes toward women. Some interviewees said that such outliers had more to do with circumstances – with economic need – than with equality. One woman said that she did not want to work outside the home because she wanted full control over how her daughters were raised. Moreover, while the percentage of working women in Palestine has grown, there seems to be a social conviction that their main role is as mothers, and that motherhood, as their responsibility, should not be sacrificed or compromised for paid work. By the same token, many men still saw the financial support of the family as their main responsibility, even if their wives work for income.

What is changing, though, is that men may *help* with certain tasks in the household, mainly with the education of their children or with cooking, or allow their wives to work if they want to, or not interfere in how their wives run the household, which women who want independence in their households saw as positive.

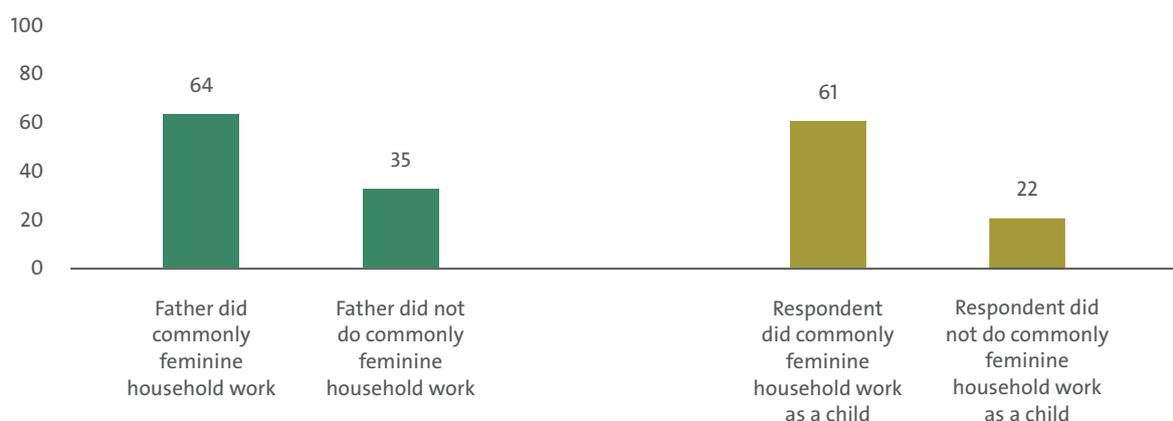
**Moreover, the findings of IMAGES MENA Palestine confirm, “like father, like son”: Men whose fathers participated in commonly feminine household work, as well as men who were taught to do this work as children, are far more likely to contribute in these ways within their own marriages.**

Figure 6.3a demonstrates the power of these precedents; the data for each are statistically significant. Upwards of three-fifths of men who either saw their father participate in this work or were taught to do this work as children reported doing this work in their adult households.

**Men and women hold different views about decision-making power within their households, though both point to major restrictions on women’s agency and mobility.** These findings, presented in Figures 6.3b and 6.3c, suggest that household decision-making power remains contested among Palestinian couples, even with significant evidence of patriarchal power structures in place. On every decision, apart from contraception, the majority of men felt that they themselves hold sole decision-making power. Hardly any men reported that their wives have sole decision-making power over anything included in the survey, with only 3 per cent of men reporting that their wives have independent decision-making power over whether she can leave the house.

**Figure 6.3a**  
**Domestic Work across Generations**

Percentage of ever-married male respondents who reported participating in commonly feminine household work in the previous month, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



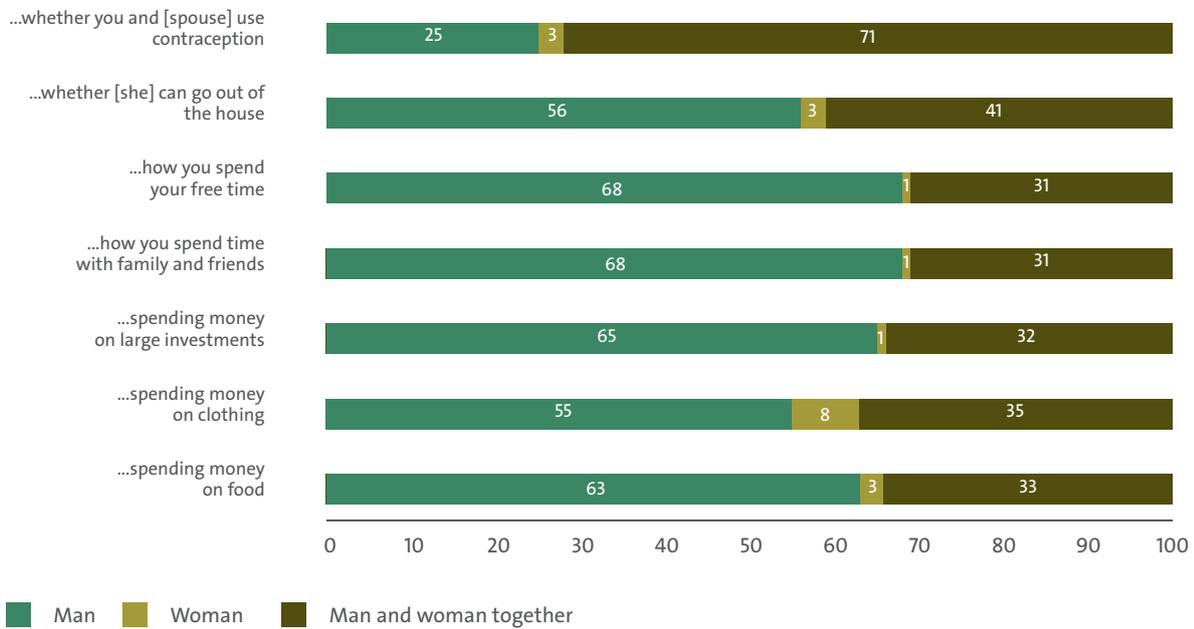
At the same time, women were more likely to report that they share final decision-making authority with their husbands. Still, it is nevertheless a small proportion of women – 29 per cent and 25 per cent, respectively – who felt that they have sole decision-making authority over such basic issues as their mobility and whether they can spend time with friends or family. These restrictions on women’s agency, particularly with regard to their mobility, reflect a fundamental power imbalance in the home. Furthermore, 1 in 10 women reported that she has sole decision-making authority over whether she can work or get a job outside the home.

Men said that many decisions are solely theirs, and that women’s role in decision making is almost nonexistent, even as women gave a seemingly opposite picture, reporting that they have more of a role in making shared decisions. The apparent contradiction may be explained by the difference between the real process of making a decision, which usually entails some form of negotiation, and notions of a sole figure of authority.

**FIGURE 6.3b**

**Men's Responses: Who has the final say on...\***

Percentage of male respondents by whom they report has the final word on selected household decisions and spousal behaviours, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

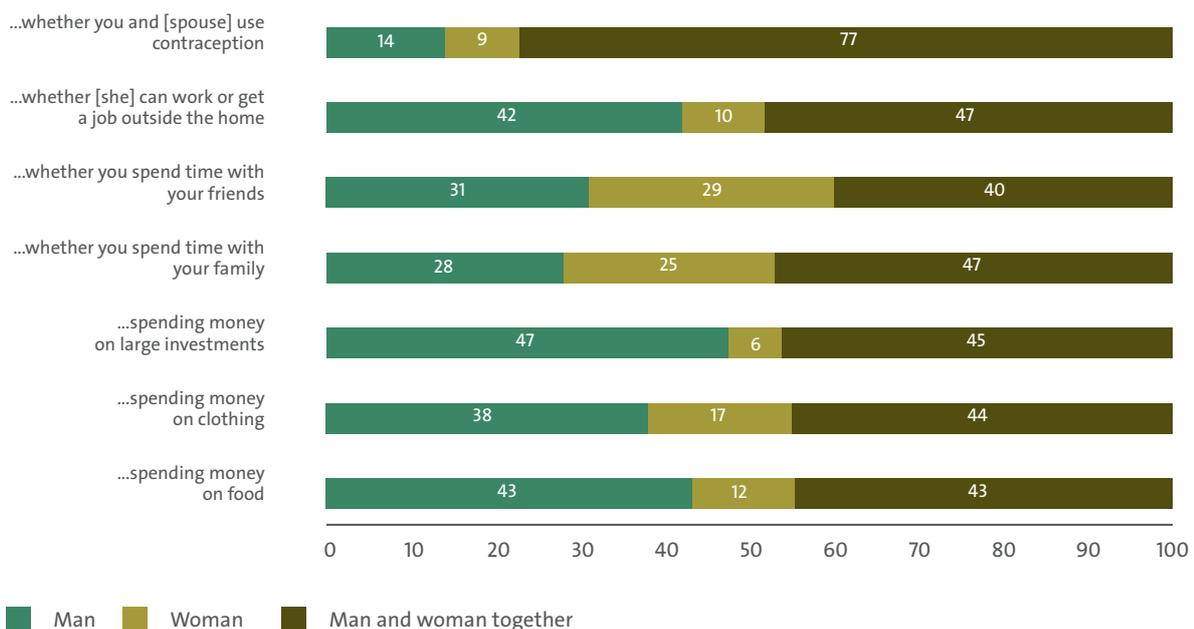


\* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

**FIGURE 6.3c**

**Women's Responses: Who has the final say on...\***

Percentage of female respondents by whom they report has the final word on selected household decisions and spousal behaviours, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



\* Percentages may not total 100 due to rounding

Some data in Figures 6.3b and 6.3c indicate a positive change toward more shared decision-making between men and women. Some 30 to 40 per cent of men said that husband and wife together have the final say in family decisions. For the question of contraception, the percentage becomes 70 per cent. From the women's perspective, 40 to 47 per cent said that decisions were shared, and 77 per cent said that the decision about contraception was shared.

## Focus on Household Decision-Making

*Household decision-making continues to be one of the most challenging aspects of men's control and power over women and girls in Palestine, and was cited as the source of considerable couple conflict. Women's lives are severely constrained, including the decision as to whom they marry – something that women said their fathers mostly controlled, with input from mothers. Women perceived themselves as mostly having decision-making authority when it came to running the household. Women's emphasis on their autonomy around housework can be understood as their way of re-appropriating housework as their work, rather than work they perform as unpaid employees in their households or families. In general, when it comes to decision-making, women said they had a role through dialogue and negotiation with their husbands, discussing their different views. However, the women said that even this depends on the degree of "understanding" on the part of the husband.*

*The perception of women as partners in decision-making, one interviewee said, represents a real change in gender relations and attitudes toward women. When women are seen as partners in making important decisions related to the family, then they are not seen as mere obedient wives who are there to fulfil men's desires.*

*For women from younger generations, decisions related to how they raise their children are an area of frequent conflict with husbands. Other decisions women cited as sources of conflict between the spouses include those that relate to household work and those that relate to their own personal dress. Women's work and education were not mentioned as areas of conflict.*

*Marriage of offspring seemed to remain (as mentioned above) something that is decided by fathers, with varying degrees of influence – both direct and indirect – by the mothers. In fact, one way in which manhood was defined was by connecting it to the power of decision-making; one female interviewee referred to this paternal role as "the monarch who should know and control all". Whatever role mothers have in decision-making, according to interviewees, remains marginal and informal compared with that of fathers.*

*Among the younger generations, and in relation to their husbands, women said that they have important roles in decision-making, referring mainly to decisions having to do with the household. As noted earlier, the one time when women were seen as having greater decision-making power beyond the household is when a husband is imprisoned. In many of these cases, women proved that they could make all of the necessary decisions concerning the family, and came to be seen as more reliable in making these decisions than other partners. In these cases, it was changes in material situations and practices – like those experienced by prisoners' families – that allowed for changes in the position of women in household decision-making.*

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*"I feel equality in my family, and sometimes I feel I am more advantaged. I am the one who makes the decisions or influences the decisions in the household."*

**Woman, 25 years old, bank employee, Ramallah**

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**In addition to restrictions on women’s mobility, all respondents acknowledge an array of controlling behaviours by men over their wives.**

Almost 90 per cent of men and women agreed or strongly agreed, in reference to their own marriage, that the husband needs to know where his wife is at all times (Table 6.3b). Beyond this indicator of controlling behaviour, men and women show much less symmetry in attitudes, suggesting that, while men may want to know where their wives are all the time, that does not necessarily mean that they do know, or that their wives always tell them.

With the exception of the emotionally controlling item, “husband lets his wife know that she is not the only partner he could have”, ever-married men were unabashed in reporting their controlling behaviours, with at least 85 per cent of men agreeing with all remaining statements. Women’s reports of experiencing these controlling practices were somewhat lower, which may indicate a gap between some respondents’ expressed attitudes and their real life practices.

Despite these trends and discrepancies, a vast majority of ever-married respondents reported satisfaction with their marriage. Over 90 per cent of both men and women characterized their relationship with their spouses as “good” or “very good”, and nearly three-quarters also reported talking to their spouses about personal problems within the preceding week.

**TABLE 6.3b**  
**Spousal Control**

Percentage of ever-married respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about the relationship with his/her spouse, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Husband wants to know where his wife is at all times	88	85
Husband does not allow his wife to wear certain clothes	91	77
Husband controls when his wife can leave the house	85	63
Husband lets his wife know that she is not the only partner he could have	45	29
Husband expects his wife to agree to have sex when he wants to	87	80
<b>Total number of ever-married respondents</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>830</b>

## 6.4 – FATHERHOOD

**Men participate to a certain extent in childcare, and would like to do more.** Rapid social, political, and economic changes in Palestine have exerted tremendous pressures on the family that may weaken the fathers’ and other family members’ abilities to care for their children. Occupation places further pressure on fathers; they may be imprisoned or worried about their inability to provide for and protect their children. Palestinian women’s growing participation

in the paid labour market has not yet been accompanied by changes in gendered notions of men as co-caregivers. Among younger parents, however, research suggests that more fathers embrace the idea of active parenting and are willing to engage in the care of their children.<sup>12</sup> In spite of these changes, there has been almost no discussion among policymakers about the need to support men's equitable caregiving in Palestine.

Fatherly behaviour starts early in Palestine; three-quarters of men who have a biological child reported that they accompanied their wives to antenatal health care visits (Table 6.4a). However, only about 30 per cent of the fathers reported accompanying their wives to each such visit. When fathers did attend antenatal care visits, most were significantly involved. Slightly more than half of men and women reported that the husband (father) joined his wife for the actual visit with the healthcare provider, while smaller proportions of fathers (according to men's and women's reports) only dropped off the wife or sat in the waiting room. Several factors influenced husband involvement in antenatal visits, including men's and women's socio-demographic background. Survey data confirm that age, education, wealth, and employment status affect whether the husband accompanied his wife to an antenatal care visit. Younger men, those with more education, those with greater wealth, and those who were employed were more likely to have accompanied their wives to an antenatal visit.

**TABLE 6.4a**  
**Antenatal Care and Childbirth**

Percentage of respondents who reported men's attendance at antenatal visits and childbirth during the last pregnancy, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
<b>Frequency of husband's attendance at antenatal healthcare visit</b>		
Every visit	30	29
Some visits	66	67
One visit	5	4
<b>Where was the husband during the visit?</b>		
Dropped wife off at entrance or waited outside	11	8
In waiting room	33	35
Joined her for some or all of visit with the healthcare provider	56	58
<b>Where was the husband for the birth of the most recent child?</b>		
In room of birth	4	6
Same building but different room	77	77
Not at building/place where birth took place	16	15
<b>Total number of respondents with one or more biological children</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>724</b>

12. Abu Awwad, Nida, *Informal Economy and Power Relationships Within a Settler Colonial Context*, 2012.

As Table 6.4a shows, around three-quarters of husbands were present for the birth of their most recent or youngest child – at the hospital, but only rarely in the delivery room. Palestinian delivery rooms are usually occupied by more than one woman, and as such it is not culturally acceptable – nor, often, is it possible in terms of physical space – for men to be present during childbirth. In qualitative interviews, however, both men and women emphasized the importance of men’s presence in the delivery room, which gives them a glimpse of the pain and hard work that women go through when giving birth, and promotes a greater spirit of solidarity and sharing between spouses.

**A substantial proportion of working fathers, according to both women’s and men’s reports, took leave within the first six months after the birth of their youngest or most recent child.**

Some 52 per cent of fathers and 38 per cent of mothers reported that the father took some amount of time off work to help care for the new child. These men reported taking an average of five days off. More than 60 per cent of all fathers and mothers said that they would like to have the option of paid time off for new fathers. Only 14 per cent of both mothers and fathers stated that they would prefer a fathers’ leave to be greater than two weeks, however. The vast majority of respondents said that they’d like a paternity leave option of up to one week, or one to two weeks.

Respondents are trying to balance the pressures of being breadwinners and caregivers. Over three-fifths of respondents felt that the father’s role in childcare is primarily as a “helper” rather than as a primary co-caregiver, women less so than men. However, half of men reported that they wish they could spend more time with their children but they are overburdened with other work (Table 6.4b).

**TABLE 6.4b**  
**Perceptions of Fatherhood**

Percentage of respondents who agreed with selected statements about work and childcare, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
[Father] spends too little time with the children on account of his job or the time [father] spends looking for work	69	68
[Father’s] role in caring for the children in home is mostly as their financial provider	77	65
[Mother] wishes to spend more time with children but is overburdened with other work	*	51
<b>Total number of respondents with one or more biological children</b>	<b>644</b>	<b>724</b>

\* Not asked in men’s survey

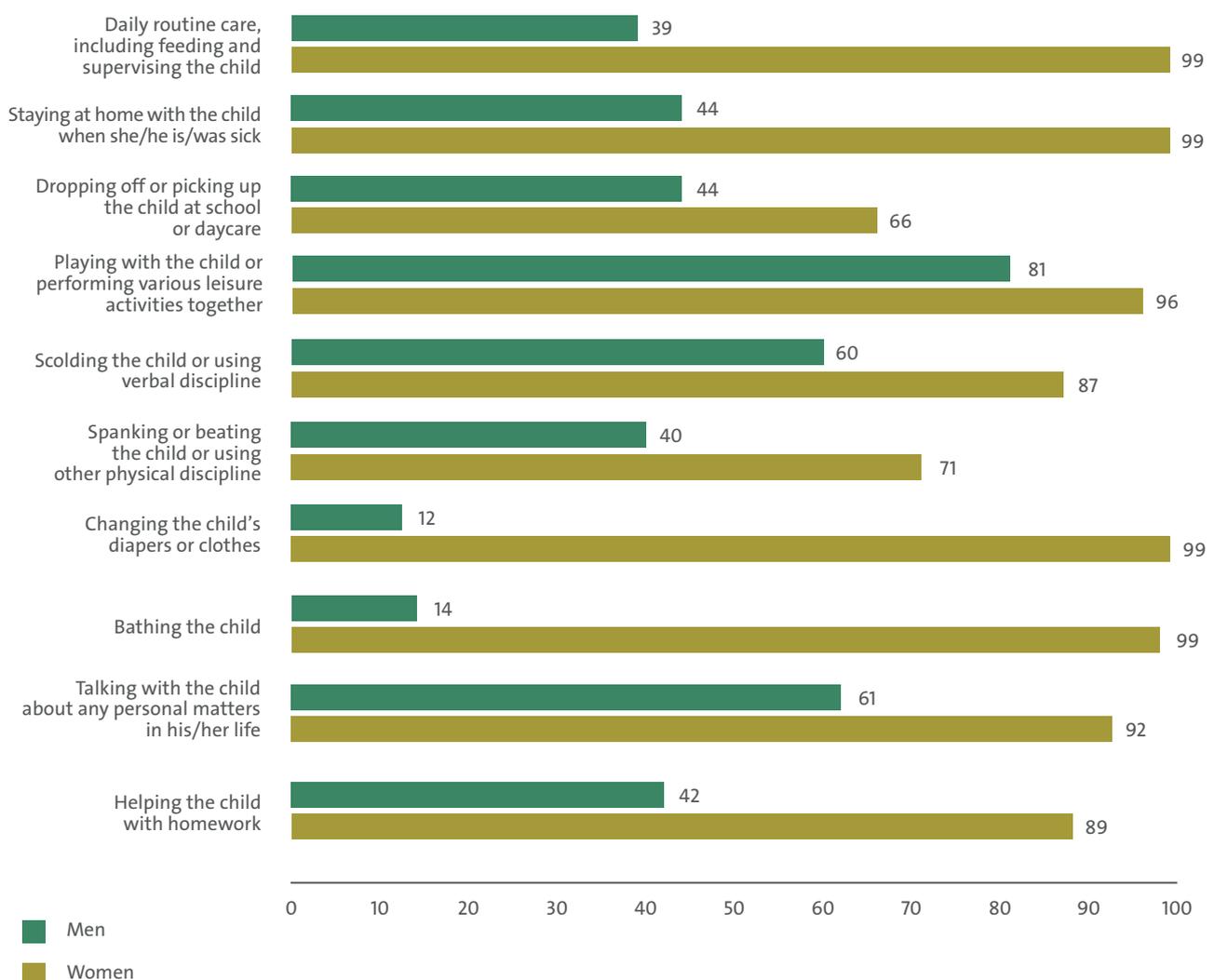
**Task-by-task responses show that mothers are doing the heavy lifting on care work.** In the Palestinian cultural setting, fathers are expected to be an important resource for children, for both financial and emotional needs. Their involvement in the day-to-day elements of childcare work is not well understood in the research literature, however. As shown in Figure 6.4a, mothers outpace fathers in all childcare tasks, sometimes by vast margins.

Mothers' involvement in all elements of childcare is deep, perhaps as expected. In fathers' reports of ever participating in various tasks, certain trends emerged. Fathers were least likely to report giving the child a bath, and changing the child's diapers or clothes, with only 14 per cent and 12 per cent of fathers reporting carrying out these tasks, respectively. For five additional elements of childcare, approximately 39 to 44 per cent of fathers reported some level of involvement: helping the child with homework, spanking or beating the child, dropping off or picking up the child at school, staying at home with the child when the child was sick, and daily routine care of the child.

**FIGURE 6.4a**

**Fathers and Childcare**

Percentage of respondents who performed childcare tasks related to their youngest child (under age 18) while that child was living at home, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



One encouraging finding is that over 60 per cent of men reported talking with the child about important personal matters in their lives, pointing to an emotional intimacy not always associated with masculine expectations. Otherwise, it is only in the area of scolding or verbally disciplining the child that fathers rise to a level above mere “helper” with regard to caring for their own children.

**Mothers and fathers report using high levels of physical discipline with their children** Around half of men and 70 per cent of women reported using some form of physical discipline with their children (Table 6.4c). Women’s greater use of physical discipline is a function of the share of time they spend on childcare compared with men. In both men’s and women’s data sets, parents with lower wealth status were significantly more likely to report using physical discipline than other parents.

**TABLE 6.4c**  
**Child Discipline**

Percentage of respondents with children aged 3 to 14 who used selected child disciplinary methods in the previous month, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
Explained why the child's behaviour was wrong	89	97
Took away privileges or forbade something the child did, or did not allow the child to leave the house	61	75
Shouted, yelled, or screamed at the child	80	91
Spanked or slapped the child on any part of her/his body	47	70
Hit the child on the body with something like a belt, stick, or other hard object	25	37
<b>Used any physical discipline (spanked or hit child)</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>72</b>

Qualitative research found that, from the perspective of sons and daughters, fathers remain authority figures, but not necessarily always coercive ones. Many respondents also pointed out the constraints placed on men’s ability to be involved as caregivers, by having to work long hours away from home, by social rules and norms, or by political imprisonment. Some women described their fathers as dominating their mothers and said they did not want to repeat this relationship dynamic in their own marriages. In these cases, the father figure was a model of how things should not be. The following interviewee, however, had a gender-equitable father:

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“My father had the biggest influence on my life. He put my foot on the road. If it weren’t for him, I would not have finished my studies or be where I am now. He pushed me to study although he never finished his education, but he had a great mentality, he respected reading and culture and women. This had an important role in shaping my personality.”

**Woman, 58 years old, university professor, village near Ramallah**

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Qualitative interviews also showed that fatherhood, or becoming a father, had changed some men’s attitudes toward household roles in two ways: first, they felt they needed to be more involved or present in their children’s lives in a way that would compete with that of their mother. Second, fathers with daughters started to assess their relationship with their wives in light of what they wanted their daughters to achieve or be in the future; these fathers realized that if they wanted their daughters to achieve all they could, they themselves had to change in terms of household roles.

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“When I was first married, and even after we had our second daughter, I never lifted my plate from the table. My wife never complained, or made me feel that she needed help. But honestly, when I see my girls growing, my love and fear for them grows, and I start to think that they will marry and their destiny will be to serve others; this will be a normal thing for them if they grow up seeing that all their mother does is clean and cook...

I started to think how I should care more and teach them that their role in life is much more than this, but it is not about words, they should see how the man should respect his wife in practice by helping her. I started to realize how much I was unfair to my wife, I started to realize the huge load of work she does. I was shocked; a woman is great, never complaining. I, on the other hand, complain of one extra hour of work. I even started to think of my mother who had to manage alone with five children.”

**Man, 34 years old, bank employee, Ramallah**

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As noted earlier, because it renders them unable to be physically present to make household decisions, political imprisonment of fathers becomes another form of separation between fathers and their children. Mothers in these cases play an important role in maintaining the presence of the father in the family even when he is physically absent because of imprisonment. They usually do this by stressing to the children the father's role in making decisions concerning important changes or events in the lives of their children. It is precisely around this issue of fatherhood that IMAGES MENA Palestine finds a promising path for men toward embracing gender equality in their everyday lives.

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“I prayed that she give birth when I am out of prison, and thank God my wish was realized, and I was released four days before she gave birth. A woman in this circumstance [giving birth] is weak ... she is going into a new phase of which she does not know enough, pregnancy and labour involve changes for which she needs support, especially from the husband. If he is not there for his wife in this phase, she may feel more vulnerable, but thank God, we were able to communicate during this period.”

**Man, 41 years old, bakery employee, village near Ramallah**

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## 6.5 – POLITICAL VIOLENCE, GENDER ATTITUDES AND HOUSEHOLD RELATIONS

### **Experiences of occupation-related violence and other extreme hardships are very common.**

According to PCBS, more than 750,000 Palestinians (including 10,000 women) have been arrested by Israeli occupation forces since 1967.<sup>13</sup> According to the same study, about half of Palestinian households had been exposed to some form of violence directly by occupation forces or by settlers<sup>14</sup> prior to July 2010, with slightly higher exposure in the Gaza Strip. The past few years have seen an escalation of occupation-related violence against Palestinians, in particular during the 2012 and 2014 Israeli wars against the Gaza Strip – resulting in the loss of thousands of lives, tens of thousands of injuries, and billions of dollars in total damage and losses – and more recently in the West Bank, where hundreds of people have been killed.<sup>15</sup>

13. PCBS, *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society, 2011, 2012*.

14. “Settlers” is a term used to refer to Israelis living in settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory. Settlements are illegal under international law as they violate Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits the transfer of the occupying power’s civilian population into occupied territory. This has been confirmed by the International Court of Justice, the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, and the United Nations Security Council. Seizure of land for settlement building and future expansion has resulted in the shrinking of space available for Palestinians to develop adequate housing, basic infrastructure and services and to sustain their livelihoods. These and related measures have contributed to the forced displacement of families and communities. Israeli civil law is de facto applied to all settlers and settlements across the occupied West Bank, while Israeli military law is applied to Palestinians, except in East Jerusalem, which was illegally annexed to Israel. As a result, two separate legal systems and sets of rights are applied by the same authority in the same area, depending on the national origin of the persons, thereby discriminating against Palestinians. For more information, see: <https://www.ochaopt.org/theme/humanitarian-impact-of-settlements>

15. World Bank. (2015). *Economic Monitoring Report to the ad hoc Liaison Committee*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank Group; and PCBS, *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society, 2011, 2012*.

IMAGES MENA Palestine included various questions on occupation-related violence, influenced by the aforementioned PCBS survey. Among respondents, 65 per cent of men and 55 per cent of women reported experiencing one or more of twelve forms of occupation-related violence within the previous five years, all of which are presented in Table 6.5a. Men were more likely than women to report having lost land; having been harassed by soldiers or settlers, detained, or injured; having had difficulty accessing health services; and having lost opportunities due to the occupation. These findings underscore the widespread effects of ongoing Israeli occupation on Palestinian families, and also show that the occupation imposes greater limitations on Palestinian men than women.

**TABLE 6.5a**  
**Occupation-Related Violence and Experiences**

Percentage of men and women respondents reporting various occupation-related violence and experiences within the previous five years, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
I have been harassed by Israeli security forces including settlers	36	19
Our family is vulnerable to violence from Israeli settlers	24	18
Our house has been demolished because we were denied a building permit by Israeli security forces	8	9
We have been forced to leave our home temporarily by Israeli security forces	22	22
We lost access to all or some of our land (due to confiscation/ fear of violence/ buffer zone) due to Israeli practices	25	14
Someone in my household has been detained for at least one day by Israeli security forces	33	23
Someone in my household was injured due to violence by Israeli security forces or settlers	29	21
I was injured due to violence from Israeli security forces or settlers	20	7
Someone in my household was killed due to violence from Israeli security forces (soldiers and settlers; in Gaza due to war)	15	11
Because of the occupation we have had difficulty accessing health services	28	16
We visit our family and friends less than we want to due to the occupation restrictions including the wall and checkpoints	27	20
We lost the right to choose a suitable educational institution due to occupation restrictions	20	9
<b>Experienced one or more of the above</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>55</b>

Restrictions on mobility – in the form of sieges, checkpoints, the separation wall, and closures – affect all dimensions of life in Palestine. They hinder access to health services, educational institutions, and workplaces. They also restrict family visitations, participation in weddings, and burials. All such activities are subject to cancellation, postponement, or delay based on unpredictable mobility restrictions. Nearly a third of men and a fifth of women reported that they had difficulty accessing health services due to the occupation. Similar percentages of men and women said that occupation forces had limited their ability to visit friends and family, leading to social isolation, especially for women.

Detention of men and women, especially young men, is often used to suppress and discourage the younger generations from resisting. Of survey respondents, 33 per cent of men and 23 per cent of women had been detained for at least one day by Israeli security forces. The most extreme effect of the occupation is death, which not only results in the permanent loss of a family member, but changes family gender dynamics. If the person killed is the breadwinner, as is often the case, families face particular economic hardship. IMAGES MENA Palestine shows that this occurs to no small number of households: 15 per cent of men and 11 per cent of women said that someone in their household was killed due to violence from Israeli security forces and settlers.

These multiple forms of violence, coercion, and intimidation by the Israeli occupation affect daily life for Palestinians in multiple and gender-related ways. Both women and men said they feel threatened and live in a heightened state of fear. When expelled from their homes, they are made to leave their known social environment and search for alternative schooling and work. Children are uprooted to a new environment, and families suffer economically when they are compelled to spend additional money to dwell in less than adequate housing. Men, in particular, are subjected to daily checks and harassment from Israeli security forces and settlers because they have greater mobility and are presumed to be part of the armed resistance. Qualitative research shows that these practices generate resilience and resistance in Palestinians, as well.

## The Gendered Effects of Political Detention Under Occupation

*As part of the IMAGES MENA Palestine research, Birzeit University researchers conducted qualitative research into Palestinian families' experiences with political imprisonment. Findings show that the struggles of men within prison walls were mirrored on the outside by women's struggles to bear the burden of household responsibilities without a male partner.*

*As discussed earlier, these interviews testify to the perseverance of women, and show a strong appreciation for their sacrifice on the part of their previously imprisoned husbands. The former prisoners who were interviewed remarked on their wives' impressive steadfastness, patience, and resilience. Most formerly imprisoned men said they knew they could trust their wives' ability to manage the household without them.*

*This is not the case with all prisoners' wives. Some women may become more vulnerable with the imprisonment of their husbands. They may be seen as weak, and they may not be able to be relied upon to take care of themselves or their children; this leaves them vulnerable to the control of their families or their husbands' families, or threatened with abuse and exploitation by various other parties.*

*The study also included a focus group with university students. While some of these said that women*

*prisoners might be more vulnerable than men – due to being physically weaker and vulnerable to sexual violence – others said these threats are no different from the threats of torture that men faced. In some cases, the students affirmed what was found in previous studies, that coming through the prison experience made the women prisoners stronger and more confident and, in effect, liberated their bodies from being sites of weakness and control.<sup>16</sup>*

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“[Women whose husbands are imprisoned are subject] to blackmail, weakness, and social, economic, and emotional needs that should be filled by the life partner, the husband. ... One should invest in a relationship based on trust. When there is trust, I was able to feel all the huge responsibilities that fall on the woman's shoulders, instead of fearing for her or confining her. ... Our reality has shown that the women are able to play an enormous role on the level of the household and family, socially and economically. One would ask, if it were the man who stayed with the family and the woman [were] the one imprisoned, in certain cases you would have more challenges, and the man may have been helpless in relation to balancing responsibilities inside and outside the house.”

**Man, 40 years old, ex-prisoner, village near Ramallah**

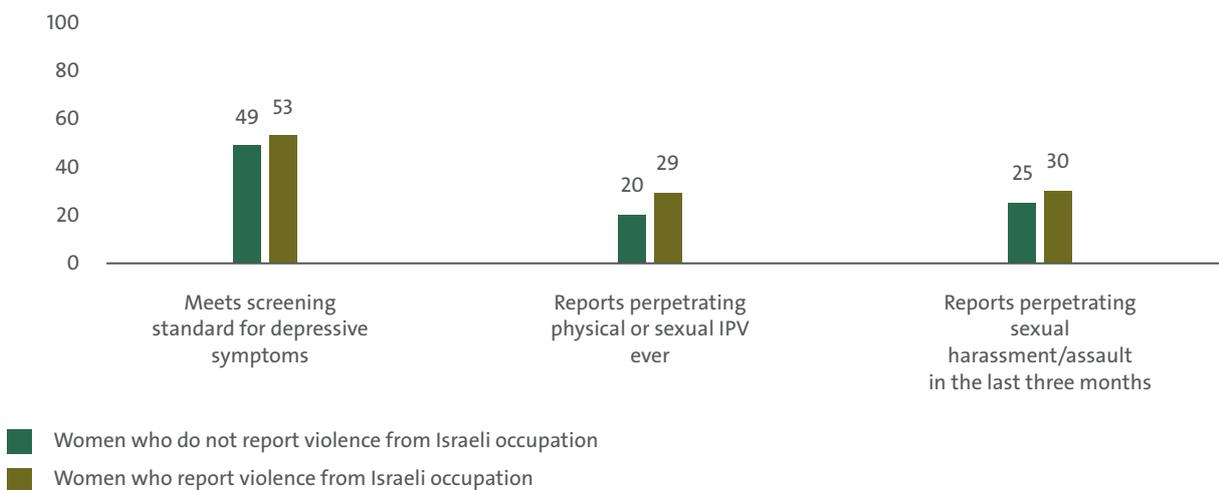
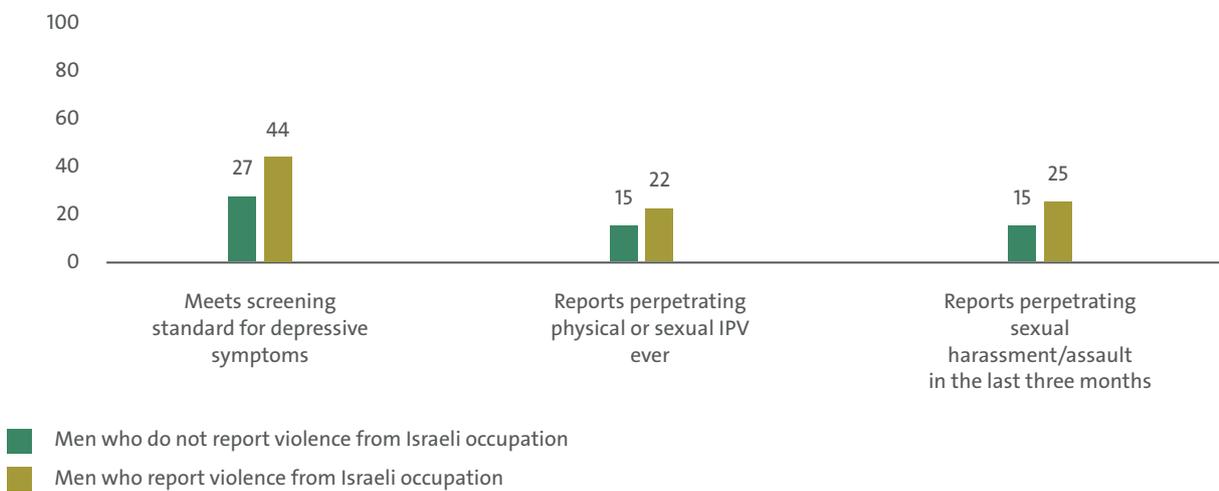
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16. On the steadfastness of Palestinian women political prisoners and the consequent transformations on gender attitudes and perceptions of the body, see Meari, Lena. (2015). “Re-signifying “Sexual” Colonial Power Techniques: The Experiences of Palestinian Women Political Prisoners.” *Rethinking Gender in Revolutions and Resistance: Lessons from the Arab World*, edited by El-Said, Maha, et al, Zed Books.

**Study findings show important links between occupation-related experiences and other harmful experiences and behaviours.** How, specifically, do these multiple forms of occupation-related violence affect men, women, and gender relations? Analysis shows that being exposed to occupation-related violence and adversity is tied to increased depressive symptoms, experiences or perpetration of intimate partner violence, and experience or perpetration of sexual harassment, among other possible connections (see Figure 6.5a).

**FIGURE 6.5a**  
**Links in the Chain**

Percentage of respondents who reported depressive symptoms, intimate partner violence, and sexual harassment/assault, according to those who have experienced occupation-related violence and those who have not, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



Men who reported having experienced occupation-related violence were more likely – at a statistically significant level – to also report depressive symptoms, perpetration of physical or sexual intimate partner violence (ever), and perpetration of sexual harassment (in the previous three months). Women showed these same statistically significant links with IPV and sexual harassment experiences. Of course, the links between various forms of violent experiences are much more complex than these figures represent; it is impossible to confirm a causal relationship in either direction.

The effects of violence on people depend on the situation in which the violence takes place, as well as the role of each party in the violence. Israeli occupation violence, when experienced collectively and resisted, can, in fact, become a source of empowerment, and can foster a sense of liberation. This perspective complicates any link between men experiencing violence by the Israeli occupation and perpetrating intimate partner violence.

**Many Palestinian study participants report harmful encounters with Palestinian security forces.** As Table 6.4.5b shows, one-fifth of men and 6 per cent of women reported having been harassed or threatened by Palestinian security forces within the preceding five years. Across the board, men were more likely to report any such experiences than were women. Some 8 per cent of men and 6 per cent of women reported that someone in their household had been injured as a result of violence committed by Palestinian security forces within the preceding five years. The violence perpetrated by Palestinian security forces should be contextualized within the Oslo agreements that call for close coordination between Palestinian security forces and Israeli security forces, leading to mistrust by Palestinians of their own state security structures.

**TABLE 6.5b**  
**Interaction with Palestinian Forces**

Percentage of respondents who reported experiences of violence by Palestinian security forces within the previous five years, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN (%)	WOMEN (%)
I have been harassed or threatened by members of the Palestinian security forces	20	6
I have been detained for at least one day by Palestinian security members	15	1
I was injured due to violence practiced by Palestinian security members	7	1
Someone in my household was injured due to violence practiced by Palestinian security members	8	6

## 6.6 – GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

**Men’s use of violence against women is widespread, though more widely reported by women than by men.** Interviewing men about their perpetration of spousal or intimate partner violence is unprecedented in Palestine; PCBS’s two previous national surveys on the subject assessed women’s attitudes and experiences. Almost 40 per cent of men said they had ever committed an act of emotional violence against their wives, while 46 per cent of women said they had experienced the same. Some 26 per cent of men and 33 per cent of women reported this form of violence occurring within the previous year. Nearly one in five men (17 per cent) said they had ever perpetrated any act of physical intimate partner violence against a female partner. Similar rates – 21 per cent – of women report ever having experienced such violence. With regard to economic violence, 12 per cent of men said they had ever perpetrated any such act, while nearly 18 per cent of women reported experiencing such abuse. Prohibiting one’s spouse from working and throwing one’s spouse out of the house were the two most commonly cited forms of economic violence. And while only 4 per cent of men said they had ever perpetrated sexual violence against their spouse, 11 per cent of women said they had experienced this form of violence in their lifetime (see Table 6.6a).<sup>17</sup>

**TABLE 6.6a**  
**Violence against Women: Male and Female Respondents**

Percentage of ever-married respondents by acts of violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women, lifetime and 12-month prevalence, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

	MEN		WOMEN	
	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)
<b>Emotional violence</b>	<b>39.8</b>	<b>25.8</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>32.9</b>
Insulted (his wife/her) or deliberately made her feel bad about herself	31.5	19.7	40.0	25.8
Belittled or humiliated (his wife/her) in front of other people	9.4	5.4	19.8	12.4
Scared or intimidated (his wife/her) on purpose for example by the way he looked at her, by yelling and smashing things	15.4	10.8	24.0	15.8
Threatened to hurt (his wife/her)	7.3	4.2	14.1	8.3
Hurt people (his wife/she) cares about as a way of hurting her, or damaged things of importance to her	3.0	2.1	11.0	7.2

17. IMAGES findings on experiences of violence are broadly consistent with the 2011 national survey assessing women’s experiences of violence. It is important to note, however, that IMAGES MENA Palestine differs from the national survey in its sample size, geographic scope, age range, as well as differences in the items included in the definition of spousal violence. IMAGES MENA also asked women if they had ever used three forms of violence against their husbands. Eight per cent of women reported ever slapping their spouses or throwing something at them, 2 per cent of women reported ever pushing or shoving their spouses, and 2 per cent of women reported ever hitting their spouse with a fist or something else that could hurt them. See PCBS, *Violence Survey in the Palestinian Society, 2011, 2012*.

**TABLE 6.6a CONTINUED**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)	Lifetime (%)	12-months (%)
<b>Economic violence</b>	<b>12.3</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>9.6</b>
Prevented (his wife/her) from working for wages or profit	5.7	2.1	8.1	4.5
Took (his wife's/her) earnings against her will	1.0	0.6	5.9	3.1
Threw (his wife/her) out of the house	5.1	1.7	11.9	5.7
Kept money from earnings for personal use when the respondent knew (his wife/she) was finding it hard to pay for her personal expenses or household needs	2.6	1.5	5.1	2.5
<b>Physical violence</b>	<b>16.8</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>21.2</b>	<b>12.8</b>
Slapped (his wife/her) or threw something at her that could hurt her	12.7	5.0	14.9	9.4
Pushed or shoved (his wife/her)	7.2	4.2	14.0	8.1
Hit (his wife/her) with his fist or with something else that could hurt her	5.8	2.9	12.7	7.3
Kicked, dragged, beat, choked or burned (his wife/her)	1.4	0.7	8.4	4.9
Threatened to use or actually used a gun, knife or other weapon against (his wife/her)	0.3	0.1	2.7	1.1
<b>Sexual violence</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.6</b>	<b>11.3</b>	<b>7.0</b>
Forced (his wife/her) to have sex with him when she did not want to	4.3	2.6	11.3	7.0
<b>Total number of ever-married respondents</b>	<b>725</b>		<b>830</b>	

As data earlier in the chapter show, many respondents felt that these forms of violence were normal or justified. One-third of men and one-quarter of women in IMAGES MENA Palestine agreed that “there are times when a woman deserves to be beaten” and more than half of men and women alike agreed that “a woman should tolerate violence to keep the family together” (see Table 4.1a). As discussed in the introduction to the chapter, this urge to “keep the family together”, according to some research, rises to the level of a survival strategy in the Palestinian context.<sup>18</sup> When women tolerate violence, according to this research, they understand it to be a result of the restriction of men’s opportunities and identities by the long-reaching effects of the occupation. In addition, as argued in the introduction, conflict within the household does not rule out cooperation but actually co-exists with it, and women see, in the family, a realization of certain interests, even as certain others are threatened.

18. Kuttab, Eileen, *Coping with Conflict*, 2010.

IMAGES MENA Palestine data demonstrate intergenerational links between acts and experiences of violence, consistent with much of the literature on intimate partner violence. Men who witnessed violence against their mothers as children and men who experienced some form of physical violence as children were statistically significantly more likely to report perpetrating emotional, economic, and physical forms of intimate partner violence in their adult relationships. Men with less wealth were significantly more likely to report perpetrating emotional and physical forms of intimate partner violence.

The qualitative research shows negative attitudes toward violence among both male and female participants. According to some interviewees, the use of violence against women is a symptom of weakness. From their perspective, violence against women is not an indication of a man's power but of his loss of control.

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**“It is unacceptable to resort to violence for solving problems. Violence is a sign of weakness, not strength. Controlling a woman’s life, regardless of the relationship with her, is inadmissible and constitutes injustice ... I do not talk about beating only, but also insult, not only physical violence ... He would be very weak if he lays a hand on her or insults her, for it means that he cannot reach her, he cannot communicate...”**

**Man, 45 years old, engineer, Ramallah**

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Some respondents whose mothers experienced violence from their fathers did not see their mothers as passive victims. Some said that their mothers even justified their fathers' use of violence against her as a way to preserve the integrity of the family. Some respondents also saw the ways in which their mothers reacted to this violence as a way to protect them when they were children. Some respondents who had witnessed such violence said it left them with a feeling of resentment toward their mother's helplessness as well as toward the father whose actions showed them, as children, their own helplessness. A few women who experienced intimate partner violence described standing up to a violent husband, even as they most often stayed with him:

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**“My husband was used to me, that I would cry a little [after he used violence against me], lock myself in my room, and then calm down, and go back to performing my household duties. But when there was an instance of violence in a phase where I was really strong, I made things spiral to reach divorce. Even my husband was shocked by my position. He said, ‘You became strong, and now you want to be strong over me’. Men**

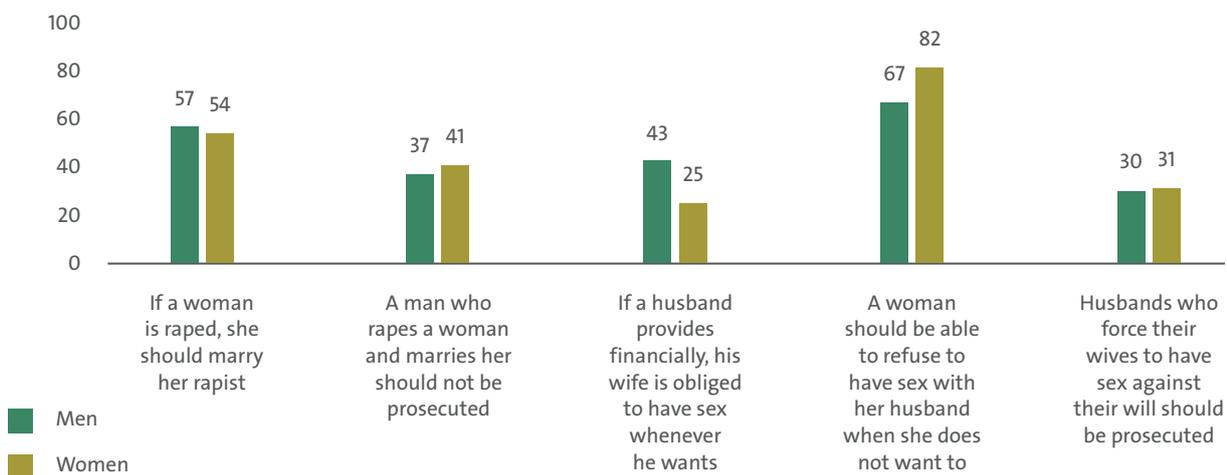
do not like it when women are stronger than they are ... now it [violence] has vanished, because in that episode of violence I stood up and spoke and had a position. I was able to say, ‘No, this is a red line, and should never happen; because [violence] happened, many things are broken between us’.”

**Woman, 28 years old, unemployed, Ramallah**

**Many men and some women fail to condemn rape.** The majority of men and women agreed that “if a woman is raped, she should marry her rapist” (Figure 6.6a). Men were more likely to normalize and justify rape, including marital rape, in all cases. The greatest differences between men and women emerged with regard to the assertion that “if a husband provides financially, his wife is obliged to have sex whenever he wants”, with which 43 per cent of men but only 25 per cent of women agreed.<sup>19</sup> Although the majority of male and female respondents considered marriage to the rapist to be the solution for victims of rape, this contrasted with the majority position among both genders that rapists should be prosecuted.

**FIGURE 6.6a**  
**Attitudes toward Forced Sex**

Percentage of respondents aged 18 to 59 who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about sexual violence, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



19. Sexual violence has a complex legal context in Palestine. So-called “rape marriage laws” continue to exist in the penal code in Gaza (based on the previous Egyptian penal code) and in the West Bank (based on the continuing Jordanian penal code) in which a rapist can be exempted from punishment if he marries his victim. Rarely invoked or implemented in Palestine, these laws represent long-held beliefs about the nature of rape.

**Street-based sexual harassment is common, and many respondents hold victim-blaming opinions about why such harassment occurs.** Some two-fifths of women in Palestine reported ever experiencing one or more forms of street-based sexual harassment, and a similar proportion of men reported perpetrating this harassment (see Table 6.6b). Ogling is by far the most common such harassing behaviour, but one-fifth of women also reported ever having received catcalls/sexual comments and/or being stalked or followed in a public place.

Younger men were more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment. Data also show links between sexual harassment perpetration and perpetration of other forms of violence: men who reported any of the four aforementioned forms of intimate partner violence were more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment, at a statistically significant level. In addition, men who experienced physical violence as children were significantly more likely to report perpetrating sexual harassment.

**TABLE 6.6b**  
**Street-Based Violence against Women: Male and Female Respondents**

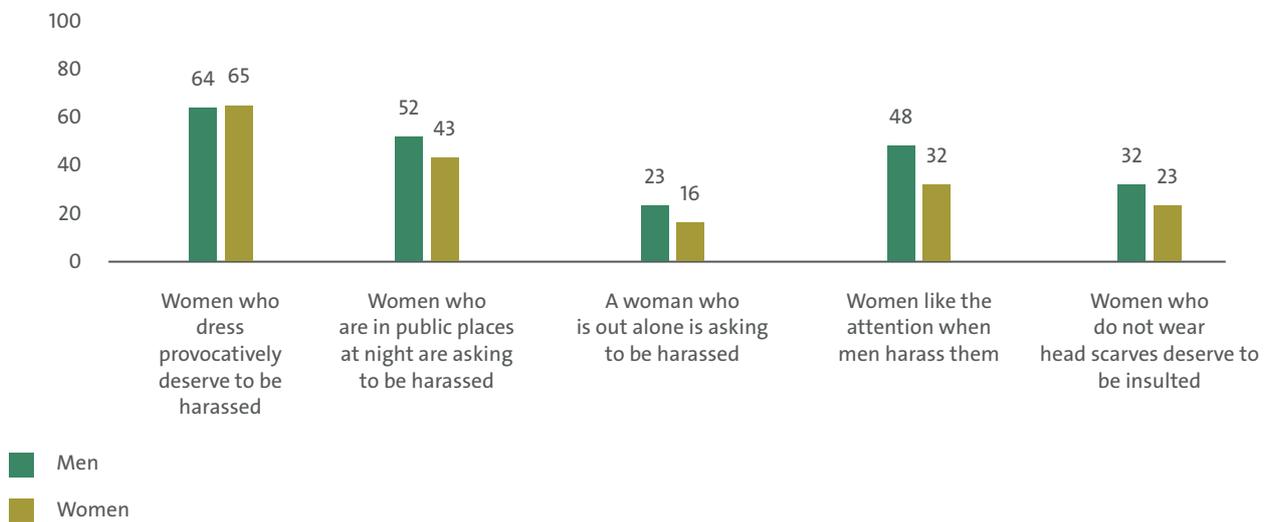
Percentage of men who have committed specific acts of sexual harassment/assault against women, and women who have experienced such acts in public spaces, lifetime and 3-month rates, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016

Type of sexual harassment/assault	MEN (PERPETRATED)		WOMEN (EXPERIENCED)	
	Lifetime (%)	Previous 3 months (%)	Lifetime (%)	Previous 3 months (%)
Ogling	34	20	31	20
Catcalls or sexual comments	10	4	19	13
Stalking or following	10	5	19	12
Obscene phone calls or text messages	4	2	9	6
Online harassment	5	3	8	6
<b>Any of the above acts of sexual harassment/assault</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>28</b>

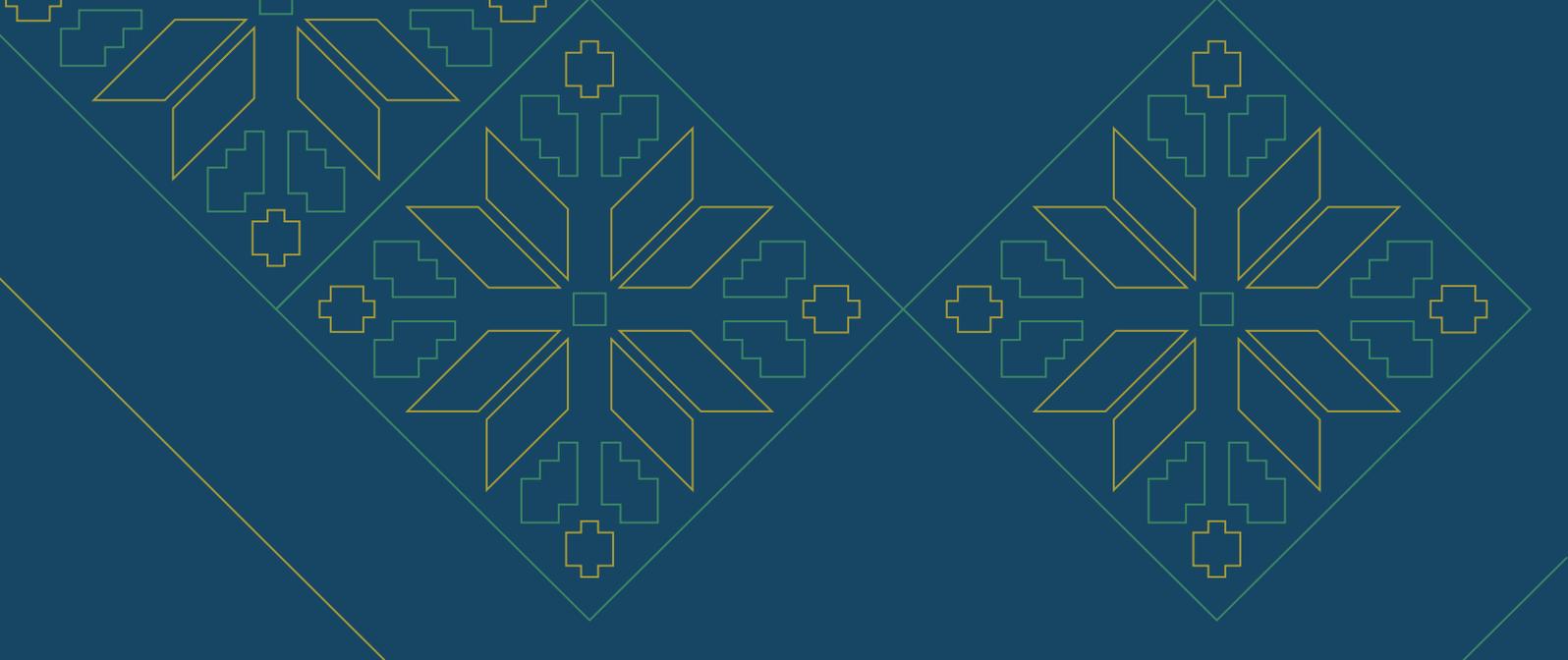
**FIGURE 6.6b**

**Attitudes toward Sexual Harassment/Assault**

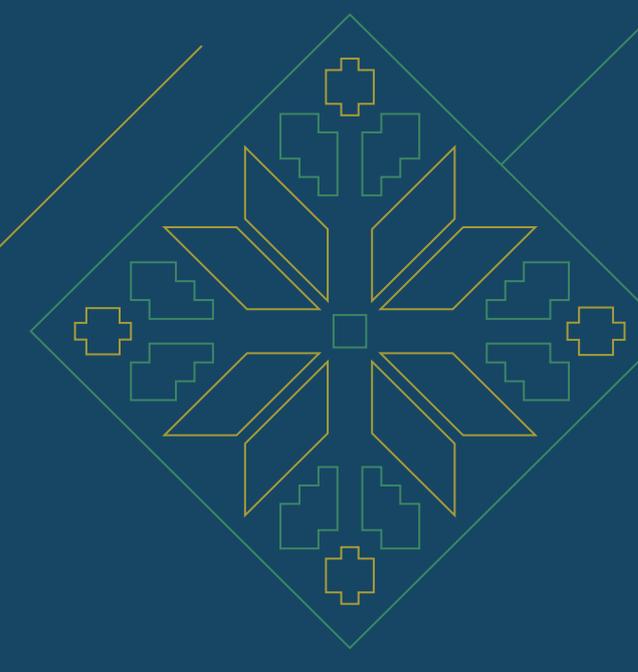
Percentage of respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with selected statements about sexual harassment/assault against women, IMAGES MENA Palestine 2016



As Figure 6.6b shows, victim-blaming in relation to sexual harassment is common, though men are more likely than women to lay the blame for sexual harassment on women. Almost two-thirds of both men and women agree that “women who dress provocatively deserve to be harassed”, for instance, and rates of agreement with other similar items are also very high. For the remaining four harmful attitudes in Figure 6.6b, however, women’s rates of agreement are much lower than men’s.



Chapter 7  
**Conclusions**



Inequitable gender attitudes remain common across Palestine. As the report demonstrates, however, certain transformations in gender relations and attitudes – some prompted by structural forces themselves, some emerging from individual and collective resistance to occupation, and others hard won by local women’s rights movements – are taking place. For deep, radical, positive change to happen, structural changes at the political, economic, and social levels are necessary. Such changes can only happen if Palestine is independent from occupation. The occupation remains a source and a justification for maintaining and empowering patriarchy as an institution of control. The occupation allows certain voices in Palestinian society to justify patriarchal social structures as means of protecting and defending women and the family. At the same time, structural violence initiated and perpetuated by militarism enhances violence in all its images and forms.

IMAGES MENA Palestine findings indicate that the division of labour in the household still reflects inequitable, gendered power relationships. This inequitable division of housework puts a greater burden on women, hindering their involvement in societal or political issues and maintaining their marginal position within the family and society. Therefore, change in household gender roles can be a starting point toward expanding women’s opportunities to access work, education, and resources. Such a change will require shifts in the labour market as well, to accommodate and allow for a re-ordering of the division of household labour. Although many women have internalized the expectation that they engage primarily in housework, there seems to be an increase in women’s and men’s awareness that the existing division of labour is not only unfair, but a barrier to women’s social, political, and economic advancement.

Many Palestinian women activists have gained a true sense of agency by shaping social transformations related to gender issues. But it is time for progressive Palestinian men, who hold positive gender attitudes, to join the struggle for true gender justice in Palestine. Results show that it is not enough for Palestinian men to hold positive attitudes, they must also translate them into practice, in both public and private spaces, and in so doing set an example for future generations.

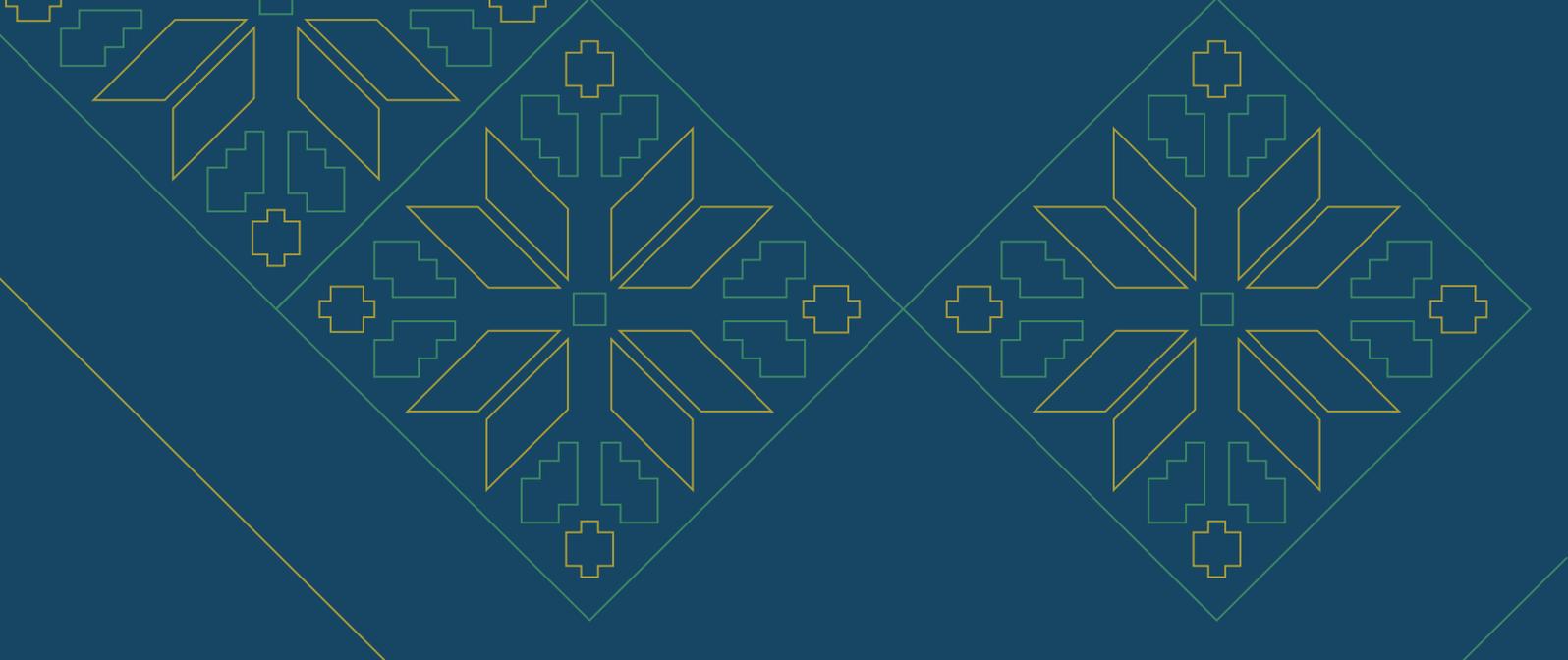
At the same time, findings show that most Palestinian men do not support laws that could help realize gender justice in Palestine, including a law that would equalize inheritance rights. Meanwhile, it is also clear that true gender equality cannot happen through new legislation alone. As findings demonstrate, the Palestinian legal and judicial system is patriarchal, and hence manipulative with regard to the implementation of the shari’a laws that give women rights in marriage, divorce, or inheritance. In other cases existing gender-equal laws may simply not be enforced. Women’s low legal literacy, poverty, and few material resources also limit access to, as well as the effectiveness of, this avenue.

Nevertheless, data show real changes in gender-related attitudes and practices among certain men who have come to appreciate women’s abilities and equal status. Men, including men who have experienced political incarceration, reported recognising women’s ability to manage all of the responsibilities – including economic responsibilities – of the household. Men in the qualitative study were very willing to acknowledge that they had previously held biases against women. These insights emphasize that change comes in the day-to-day struggles and experiences of regular people, and not only from top-down interventions in the form of law or state policies (which in Palestine are ambiguous and lacking in legitimacy, as it is).

It is clear that any real change in the legal framework must be accompanied by structural changes at the social, political, and economic levels to enforce laws, expand legal literacy, and boost confidence in the legal system. Education is one of these key structural changes. The study shows that men with higher education levels were more likely to report having recently carried out conventionally female domestic tasks. Qualitative data also show that younger couples with higher levels of education may be able to become catalysts for changes in the attitudes and perceptions of future generations.

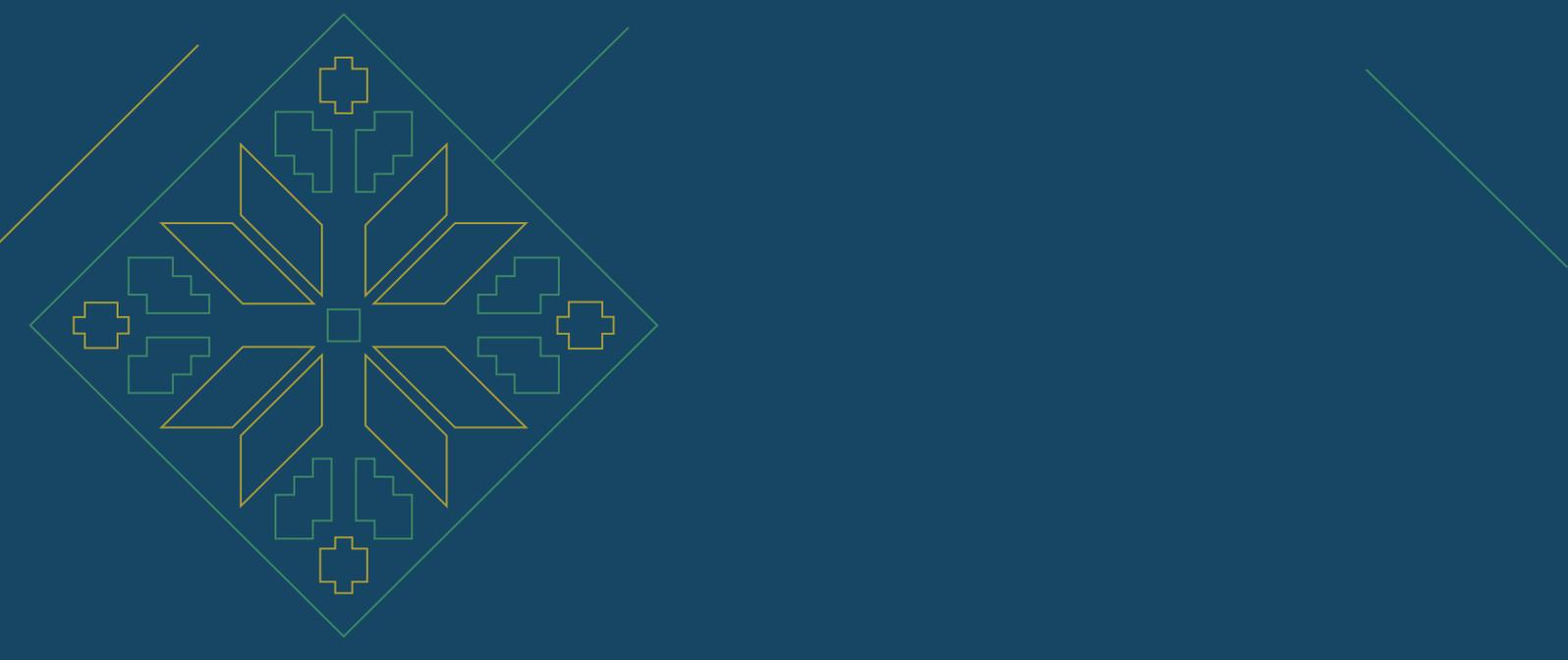
IMAGES MENA Palestine data show that change begets more change, and it needs to start at home. Men whose fathers participated in conventionally feminine household work, as well as men who were taught to do this work as children, were far more likely to contribute in these ways within their own marriages. Parents would do well to realize these insights and make the relevant adjustments in their attitudes toward division of labour, decision-making, freedom of expression, and equal treatment of genders in the home. This can become a starting point for meaningful progress toward more equitable gender relations. When positive, equitable attitudes and behaviours are practiced within the household, change can become a reality.





# Chapter 8

# Recommendations



Any change in attitudes and perceptions of individuals and groups, or in gender power relations, or in men's attitudes and behaviours towards women, should comprise a comprehensive transformation at different levels based on an integrated political, economic and social approach. In a context such as Palestine, a change that begins with independence and freedom from military occupation to achieve full sovereignty and control over resources; an economic system that has a human face that provide opportunities for all, and expand choices for all; and a social contract that is based on a social safety that provide social protection, social justice to vulnerable groups, and finally positive socialization that promotes equality, cooperation and partnership between both genders are all first requirements. These together will enhance a positive change in attitudes and perceptions of the society, and mainly those of men towards women, and achieve gender justice and equity. The recommendations below are targeted to all stakeholders, governments, NGOs, UN agencies, academics and researchers, and social movements, including the youth and women's movements.

## **1. PROMOTING CHANGES IN THE PRIVATE SPHERE**

The findings of the IMAGES MENA Palestine survey indicate that the division of labour in the household still reflects inequitable, gendered power relations. This inequitable division of housework lays a greater burden on women, hampering their involvement in social, economic or political spheres and maintains their marginal position within the family and society. Therefore, change in household gender roles and equitable division of labour can be a starting point toward expanding women's opportunities to access work, education, and resources. Such transformations will require the implementation of family friendly working policies and other shifts in the formal labour market as well, to accommodate and allow for a re-ordering of the division of household labour, and at the same time in the educational system where gender sensitive national curriculum can challenge existing social norms and gender stereotypes aiming to draw a new image for women and girls- men and boys that can positively influence a social change.

## **2. ENGAGING MEN IN THE GENDER JUSTICE**

Data shows some changes in gender-related attitudes and practices among certain men who have come to appreciate women's abilities and equal status. Men, including men who have experienced political incarceration, reported recognising women's ability to manage all types of responsibilities – including economic responsibilities – of the household. Hence, it is time to encourage progressive Palestinian men, who hold positive gender attitudes, to join the gender justice struggle in Palestine, including faith based and community leaders. Women's organizations need to build links and alliances with men who support an equitable gender order in Palestine; men can often be more influential communicators of gender issues to their male peers and activism and programming on gender equality has as yet to involve them as an effective resource rather than a perceived obstacle. At the same time, the survey results show that it is not enough for Palestinian men to hold positive attitudes; they must also translate them into practice, in both public and private spaces, and in doing so set an example to future generations.

### **3. ADOPTING COMPREHENSIVE, WHOLE OF SOCIETY APPROACH FOR GENDER EQUALITY**

Gender equality cannot be achieved through new legislation alone – especially when legal changes are perceived as against men’s interests. Therefore, any legal strategies for change should try and overcome the zero sum gain mentality that persists among many men and attempt to convince them that that gender equality benefits, men, women, girls and boys and is essential for sustainable development. As findings show, the Palestinian legal and judicial system is governed by patriarchal norms that are translated into legal frameworks, social practices and norms. As such, even when rights for women are acknowledged they can be manipulated by the larger context of masculinist social norms that block hamper their actual fulfilment.

As in many cases as well, women’s limited legal literacy, poverty and material resources limit their access to the benefits of the legal and judicial services that are available to them.

These insights emphasize that change should also come in the day-to-day challenges and experiences of regular people, and not only from “top-down” interventions in the form of law or state policies

Any real change in the legal framework must be accompanied by structural changes at the social, political, and economic levels to enforce laws, and expand legal literacy especially for marginalized women, and women in rural areas and refugee camps who are exploited and denied from their rights particularly inheritance rights, and to boost their confidence in the legal system. Education is one of these key structural entry points. The study shows that men with higher education levels were more likely to report having recently carried out conventionally perceived “women’s household work”. Qualitative data shows that younger couples with higher levels of education may be able to become catalysts for change in the attitudes and perceptions of future generations. However, any change in behaviours and legal practices can be facilitated through collective agency and in this context, women’s movement and specialized civil society organizations should be empowered to address these issues and mobilize women- in collaboration with men- to enforce legal practice or improve legal frameworks especially that single women are unable to face the social and economic pressures alone.

### **4. ENTERING SOCIAL CHANGE FROM THE GATEWAY OF PARENTING**

Data from the IMAGES MENA Palestine Survey show that change begets more change, and it needs to start from home. Men whose fathers participated in conventionally perceived “women’s household work”, as well as men who were taught to perform domestic chores as children, were far more likely to perform the same tasks while married. Parents would do well to realize these insights and make the relevant adjustments in their attitudes toward division of labour, decision-making, freedom of expression, and equal treatment of genders at home. This can become a starting point for a meaningful progress toward more equitable gender relations. When positive, equitable attitudes and behaviours are practiced within the household, change will become a reality.

It is important to encourage fathers to engage in child-rearing and caregiving roles as effective ways of changing behaviours of sons and daughters. In this context, changing

stereotypes through presenting pictures and images of re-arranged gender roles in school texts books, showing men taking domestic roles that were conventionally perceived as women's roles, in combination with providing parental education, and fatherhood program becomes a vital tool for gaining national legitimacy and acceptance and leading to lasting and positive changes in traditional gender roles

At the same time, changing texts and making them more gender sensitive needs the intervention of the Palestinian Government, UN organizations and the work of national women's organizations, General Union of Palestinian Teachers and Educators, among other key actors.

## **5. EMPOWERING WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION AND LEADERSHIP**

Enhancing women's participation and representation in the Palestinian political life represents an important task for achieving sustainable development. Women's absences from decision-making arenas and structures marginalizes their voices and influence, and keeps their concerns unattended to. Significant mechanisms already exist in the electoral system to address such issues. For instance, investing in the existing quota system and encouraging women's organizations to play an effective role in candidates' readiness for elections, and for their engagement with political parties male leaders while encouraging women to compete for high offices. All of these are crucial when taking into consideration that the survey findings indicate that 40 per cent of surveyed men, believe that women who participate in politics or leadership positions cannot also be good wives and mothers

## **6. IMPROVING AND ENFORCING LAWS RELATED TO ELIMINATING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN**

Improve and implement legislative reforms on women's rights – particularly those related to gender-based violence using public discussion and awareness campaigns to help men understand why such change is necessary to their own lives and wellbeing To do so, it is crucial to ensure that equitable laws and adequate law enforcement mechanisms are available and in order to hold perpetrators accountable and to provide them with the needed rehabilitation, and at the same time, to provide victimized women and girls and as well as survivors of violence with the needed care and protection through high quality and comprehensive victim-tailored services. It is also key to train teachers on gender sensitive and nonviolent teaching methods and how to recognise and respond to child abuse. Gender awareness training for (male) law enforcement personal is essential, as well as it is necessary to solicit their support in bringing in more women into these traditionally male professions.

## **7. PROMOTING POSITIVE MODELS OF MASCULINITIES**

There is a need to work with different media and art partners to build an alternative discourse and portray draw a positive and progressive male images to become a reference for all generation, mainly the younger generation. New literature based on data collection can offer science-based positive models and a passage of gender equality.

## **8. EMPOWERING YOUTH AS AGENTS OF CHANGE**

Working with the youth through popular education to campaign and lobby for women and girls' rights to become agents for change. Through formal and informal education, to maximize young men and young women's potential to become critical thinkers and working with them to transform negative attitudes and perceptions towards gender justice. Introduce courses on masculinities in universities and introduce the masculinities discourse at different levels of gender training within civil society organization's interventions. Ensure youth programmes and youth strategies have a strong gender equality angle (perspective?) and comprises the engagement of young men for gender equality.

## **9. DEVELOPING A RESEARCH AGENDA ON MEN AND MASCULINITIES**

Develop research agendas that can produce critical knowledge on men and masculinities focusing on action or policy research that can advance policies to enhance gender justice.

## **10. FOCUSING ON MEN'S HEALTH AS A REQUIREMENT**

The survey uncovered some concerning alarming findings regarding Palestinian men's health seeking behaviour. Data show that not only do men use health services less frequently than women, but they also tend to use them primarily in cases of urgent medical need rather than for prevention and self-care. Hence, it is important to promote men's health seeking behaviour. Moreover, the survey found men's psychosocial distress (particularly in Gaza) to be very high. Current programming in psychosocial and mental health tends to overlook men as a target group, while men are often reluctant to seek mental health and other types of psychological and emotional support. Existing psychosocial programming (especially in Gaza) needs to find ways to address these needs among men.

## **11. TRANSFORMING STRUCTURES**

Real changes necessitate structural changes. For a deep, radical, and positive change to happen, structural changes at the political, economic, and social levels are necessary. Such changes can only happen if Palestine is free from occupation. The Occupation remains a structural obstacle – a source and a justification for maintaining power structures and relations including patriarchy as an institution of control. The occupation allows certain voices within the Palestinian society to justify patriarchal social structures as means of protecting and defending women and families. At the same time, structural violence initiated and perpetuated by militarism enhances violence in all its forms.

## NGO SPOTLIGHT

### Together for Change

In a small office in Ramallah, the lines are ringing non-stop. Seven days a week, 1.5 million calls a year, a team of Palestinian men and women is at the ready to answer queries from across Gaza and the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. “Every two minutes, if the line is silent, we check to see if there is a technical problem,” they joke. But their work is no laughing matter, for this call centre belongs to Sawa, one of Palestine’s leading NGOs tackling gender-based violence.

Sawa means “together” and, true to its name, the organization is one of a handful of groups in the MENA region that directly engage with men and boys on women’s rights. Case-in-point is its crisis helpline, whose phone, email, and Facebook platforms handle more than 2,000 cases a month, almost 40 per cent of which involve men and boys. The vast majority of the male callers are under 21 and victims of domestic violence (including sexual abuse within the family) or bullying at school and in the community. Many of them, though, are calling for some basic facts of life; in the absence of formal sexuality education in Palestinian schools, many callers are at a loss to understand their own personal development. Sawa’s team of counsellors are specially trained to handle the needs of both male and female callers, and in the case of violence, to refer beneficiaries to a network of more than 500 medical, legal, and psycho-social support providers.

From the helpline and the insight it has provided into issues facing their communities, Sawa has developed a range of other programmes. For example, its “family health” classes are extracurricular sessions conducted in a dozen or so schools in East Jerusalem and Ramallah, to give students a chance to understand their changing bodies and emotions. Mobile clinics, in underserved regions, offer physical check-ups and sexual and reproductive health services to men, and take advantage of the opportunity to talk with beneficiaries about violence and gender issues.

Working with men is often a challenge, according to Sawa, especially engaging with youth who have grown up in the shadow of religious fundamentalism and who tend to take a more conservative approach to gender roles and rights. To shift their views, Sawa has been training community leaders – elected officials, religious figures, judges, police officers, and lawyers – who work along the fault lines of gender issues, to help them grasp the urgency of tackling violence against women and better support those on the receiving end of abuse. These influential figures then spread the word to their communities – like the Governor of Hebron, who has spoken publicly against violence toward women, or the religious leaders who are preaching sermons on the subject. At first, many men – and women, too – are resistant, claiming that such messages of empowerment are “Western” and a danger to the family. But with time, and training, attitudes slowly shift – though there is a long and winding road ahead for Sawa, and the communities it serves, before men and women are together in embracing equal rights for all.

**To learn more, visit: [www.sawa.ps](http://www.sawa.ps)**

