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Invisible disasters: the effects of Israeli occupation on Palestinian gender roles

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Women's participation in the First Intifada allowed for increased gender equality in Palestine. However, the weakness of the Palestinian Authority, established by the Oslo Accords, created space for non-state actors (dominated by the Islamist political organization Hamas) to emerge and gain popularity. Likewise, during the post-Oslo period conservative positions on gender resurged. This paper re-examines the structural factors that facilitated increased gender inequality and argues that the nature of the occupation itself serves as the greatest force for gender inequality in Palestine. To develop and test our theory, we draw on original, large-*n* survey data and in-depth interviews.

Keywords: Palestine; gender inequality; social structure; colonialism; Israeli occupation

Introduction

In the midst of abnormal socio-political conditions, like military occupations and wars, the affected society is impacted in a number of ways. This paper explores gender dynamics and how they are affected under the structural condition of Israeli military occupation that has become the norm in Palestine, rather than a short-term condition. We build on previous analyses that identify the First Intifada as a moment of increased inclusion of women in society and politics, but question the fate of the Women's Movement in a nearly stateless, post-Oslo Palestine. How do the policies of occupation impact gender equality and gender roles in Palestine? How has the ongoing colonial structure of the occupation served to maintain and change gender inequality?

During its 59th meeting that took place in March 2015, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW) adopted a resolution condemning Israel's occupation and its direct contribution to the 'grave situation of Palestinian women'.[1] While the impact of the occupation is measurable by the number of women killed, imprisoned and harassed by Israeli soldiers and settlers, we believe that gender roles are socially constructed as argued by Nira Yuval-Davis (1997a), and that these constructions of gender roles are susceptible to change due to Israeli military occupation. We concur with the conclusions of De Matos and Gerster (2009) that occupations transcend visible military effects, but are also about instituting power structures that have deeper, invisible and long-lasting 'human and cultural' effects. We argue that the Israeli occupation similarly impacts the internal dynamics of Palestinian society,

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serving to diminish the strength of women's presence and reinforce adherence to traditional gender roles.

Research on gender in Palestine offers two possible answers to the question of evolving gender roles in Palestine. The absence of a strong state that could effectively deliver social goods such as education and healthcare services to the population has created space for the emergence of non-governmental civic institutions that aim to provide these needed services. Any meaningful social policy assumed by the Palestinian Authority (PA) is not without severe limitations due to the occupation. This has allowed political competitors, such as the Islamist political organization Hamas, to step into this role, thus furthering the salience of Islam-inspired charity work in the predominantly Muslim Palestinian society. It is tempting to point to this seemingly conservative aspect of Palestinian society as the culprit in perpetuating adherence to traditional gender roles. Instead, we locate the source of this phenomenon in the nature of the Israeli military occupation itself, where restricted mobility and exposure to different forms of harassment by Israeli soldiers and settlers compels Palestinian families to impel their daughters to stay at home in order to protect them. We draw out and support this theory through a multi-method approach, including qualitative interviews and the analysis of a large-*n* survey.

Literature review

An understanding of the impact of political violence experienced by societies points to exacerbating gender inequality, on the one hand, but also to the potentially equalizing effect of conflict, insofar as times of war and resistance create opportunities for increased participation in society and politics for women, on the other (Enloe 2000; Gardam and Charlesworth 2000; Sharoni 1995). A key example comes from the fate of women's interests in El Salvador during and after the civil war (Blumberg 2001). Although women were largely governed by conservative religious and political ideologies and were relegated to the private sphere, they found entrance into politics during the war. Women contributed greatly to the support and success of the grassroots-organized, left-wing insurgent groups, and rose to positions of power, which they leveraged into legislative change, codifying gains made during the resistance (Blumberg 2001). Similarly, the Nicaraguan Sandinista revolution opened the political sphere to women, where Maxine Molyneaux notes that 'Women's participation in the Nicaraguan revolution was probably greater than in any other recent revolution with the exception of Vietnam' (Molyneaux 1985, 227). Although the Sandanista regime did not hold power for much longer than a decade, they established a legacy of drawing on women-centred volunteer-based organizations to provide social goods such as education and childcare. Thus, women achieved greater political presence during a time of conflict and maintained that presence to some degree in the post-conflict era.

The development of the Women's Movement in Palestine establishes this as a familiar pattern, where women mobilized under the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) during the First Intifada (Kuttab 1993; Massad 1995; Sharoni 1995; Hammami and Johnson 1999; Craviotto and Bamya 2014). The mobilization of women around resistance efforts did not begin with the First Intifada. Instead, women's political mobilization in Palestine has a long history extending to the beginning of the 20th century, as Britain affirmed support for Zionism, which sat in political opposition to the growing Palestinian Nationalist movement (Sharoni 1995). However, the Israeli occupation forced Palestinian activists to mobilize in new ways and around

new issues, given the difficulty of movement through occupied Palestine and the devastating effect of the occupation on Palestinian infrastructure in general (Peteet 1991; Sharoni 1995). Of the onset of the occupation in 1967, Simona Sharoni writes, 'The Israeli occupation confronted Palestinian women with at least three interlocking systems of oppression –as Palestinians, as women, and as workers' (Sharoni 1995, 63). Thus, as the Palestinian resistance efforts began to coalesce around the First Intifada, the Women's Movement grew and became increasingly inclusive, actively integrating poor and working-class women into a movement that had previously centred on the needs of the middle and upper classes.

Moreover, because of this long history of activism, which grew under Israeli occupation, the Women's Movement developed parallel to and was integrated into the PLO. The PLO was founded in the 1960s as a secular organization that was the umbrella organization of all Palestinian organizations resisting Israel. The PLO (and all other organizations within it) thus developed as a gender-inclusive organization since women were as significant in resisting Israeli occupation as men (Kuttab 1993; Sharoni 1995).

> [W]omen were able to negotiate many claims and rights within the PLO by their 'active citizenship,' inclusion into the military being perhaps one of the most symbolically important ways that women laid claim to a whole array of rights (both political and social). (Hammami and Johnson 1999, 321)

Further, equality between the sexes as an overall goal of the PLO was written into the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence, though like other leftist organizations internationally women found entrance into the political effort via their traditional roles as mothers and caregivers (Haj 1992; Massad 1995; Hammami and Johnson 1999). Indeed, social goods such as daycare, health clinics, health education and basic language skills such as reading and writing, union organizing and vocational training were key supports women's committees offered to the resistance effort (Haj 1992). Thus, like other radical organizations, the PLO found its strength in numbers regardless of traditional gender roles, and in doing so expanded the existing space and opportunity for the presence of women in politics (Sayigh 1981; Sharoni 1995).

However, the promise of greater gender equality carried by the resistance effort under the PLO met with complicated ends under the PA established by the Oslo Accords. The accords, signed in 1993, established the PA as a quasi-government, and was primarily populated by ex-PLO members, alongside other political activists (Hammami and Johnson 1999; Jad 2011; Sousa 2013). The Women's Movement was integrated into state-building efforts under the PA (Johnson and Kuttab 2001). Within the context of the PA, women found substantial, if not full, representation within the organization. Moreover, within the PA women's interests received formal attention, first under the Inter-Ministerial Committee for the Advancement of Women's Status (IMCAW), and later under the Ministry of Women's Affairs (Jad 2011). Even so, within the PA agendas around gender equality were conflicted and confused, and a coherent strategy around gender equality remained non-existent. Firstly, women's gender equity was not taken as an overall goal across other policy areas, such as economics and politics. Secondly, the efforts of the IMCAW were dependent on outside funding, and therefore so were their priorities. Additionally, the establishment of the PA coincided with the demobilization of the types of grassroots movements under the PLO that pushed for and signalled increased gender equality in the first place

(Massad 1995; Johnson and Kuttab 2001; Jad 2011). Thus, outside the PA civic organizations with gender equality at their centre are nearly non-existent, and the PA itself is weak on the promotion of gender equality.

The weakness of the PA as a state apparatus, combined with the continuation of the Israeli occupation, is perhaps more important to the fate of gender equality in Palestine than the weakness of the PA on issues related to gender (Rockwell 1985). These two facts together shape gendered experiences within Palestine. A few years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, the Second Intifada erupted primarily due to the exacerbation of settlement-building and the continued presence of Israeli military occupation. A key feature of the resistance in the Second Intifada is the emergence of Hamas as a socio-religious political organization. While Hamas had developed as a significant political party in the resistance during the First Intifada, the Second Intifada increased the visibility of Hamas. In response to acts of violence committed by Israeli citizens against Palestinians, Hamas embraced militarized violence as a resistance tactic (Haddad 2009; Roy 2012). However, that is not the only role taken on by this Islam-inspired political party. In the years after the signing of the Oslo Accords, Palestinians increasingly functioned as a stateless people due to the limitations forced upon the PA. These limitations hobbled its ability to govern. Of the PA, Jad (2011, 362) writes:

> The PA from its inception was able to function at best as a kind of 'quasi-state', divided and constrained by rigid and ever-evolving conditions and sanctions that deprived it of the power to govern in any meaningful way, its very existence in question. The experience left deep scars on the Palestinian community at large and on gender relations in particular.

In the absence of a cohesive, functioning state concerned with welfare and development, religious charities emerged to fill the civic void left by a weak, occupied state (Rockwell 1985; Roy 2011).

It is tempting to locate the conservative turn taken by Palestinian society in Hamas itself, as an Islamist organization supportive of traditional gender roles, the centrality of the family, the dependence of women on their male counterparts and female honour measured in terms of sexual purity (Haj 1992). However, because Hamas functions as a socio-political institution and bears a large portion of the social welfare burden in Palestine many community members may organize around and affiliate with Hamas without holding conservative gender perspectives (Roy 2011, 2012). Instead, the rise of Hamas, rather than signalling a new era of conservatism in Palestine, simply signals the increasing importance of non-state institutions in Palestinian society.

A review of survey data examining public opinion held by Palestinians supports this perspective. The survey, collected in 2013, includes measures of whether or not women should always wear the hijab or whether it should be a matter of personal choice, alongside measures of religious identity and religious devotion (Dana 2014). Fully 65% of respondents indicated that wearing the hijab is either not important or should be a women's personal choice, signalling that Palestinians are fairly progressive in their views towards women's rights. Moreover, in a rigorous model controlling for relevant covariates including religion and religious devotion, saying that one is Muslim is statistically related to support for progressive perspectives on the hijab. Among the more devout, individuals are instead supportive of the idea that women should always wear the hijab, but these results demonstrate that identifying as Muslim can coincide not only with liberal perspectives on gender but also often is statistically predictive of progressive attitudes. Thus, the increasing importance of

Hamas in Palestinian society does not directly correlate to increasingly conservative perspectives on gender.

Instead, we argue that the nature of the occupation itself is at the centre of increasing conservatism towards women in Palestinian society (Barber 1999; Rockwell 1985). The nature of the occupation exacerbates existing cleavages between men and women, and increases the vulnerability experienced by poor women. The elaborate system of checkpoints and exposure to Israeli soldiers and settlers that may lead to harassment encourages families who can afford it to keep their daughters within the private sphere instead of engaging in public pursuits such as education, participation in social and political institutions, and participation in the labour market (Barber 1999; Rockwell 1985). Key attributes of the occupation that impair gender equality in Palestine include reduced mobility between Palestinian territory, reduced access to important social goods like jobs, education and healthcare, and frequent harassment of Palestinians by Israeli soldiers (Imam 2010; Hilal 2012; Craviotto and Bamya 2014). Alternatively, the destructive impact of the occupation on the Palestinian economy is such that poor women who *must* enter the labour force are subjected to lower wages, worsening working conditions and further social marginalization (Haj 1992; Sharoni 1995; Rockwell 1985). While the nature of the occupation impacts all members of Palestinian society, it has the potential to have special implications for women.

> Palestinian women's participation in the social and economic spheres has been limited by contextual effects. The loss of land for many women informal agriculture workers resulted in further confinement to home spaces and in losing productive status in the household. […] In Zone C and Gaza, this inability to construct the necessary infrastructure also limits access to education. (Hilal 2012, 689–690)

The UNESCO Palestinian Women's Research and Documentation Center researched and prepared a series of reports focused on gender and family in Palestine. These series of reports all unequivocally locate issues facing women and families in Palestine in the fragmentation of the Palestinian people across the three zones. The inability to move freely between borders and the suddenness with which borders closed divides families, makes it difficult to access housing, jobs, education and healthcare, and adds bureaucratic layer upon bureaucratic layer that Palestinians must negotiate in order to move between the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT), Israel and other countries (Center for Development Studies at Birzeit University 2010; Imam 2010; Juzoor Foundation for Health and Social Development 2010). All these aspects of occupation affect all Palestinians, but they exacerbate issues faced by women in society.

The negative effect of the occupation on the status of women in Palestine is born out in gender differentials across key indicators. While the rate of employment in Palestine is shockingly low at less than 70%, women's participation in the formal economy is one of the lowest internationally at only 15% (Hilal 2012). Among those aged 18–24 years, 42% of men are employed compared with only 8% of women (Hilal 2012). While the population of Palestine is highly educated, gender differentials emerge here as well: the illiteracy rate among women is 6.4% compared with only 1.8% of men (Craviotto and Bamya 2014).

In sum, the continued occupation of Palestine, the absence of a strong state in the wake of the Oslo Accords and the dissolution of grassroots organizations that supported the PLO have all led to increased conservative treatment of women in Palestinian

society. The occupation creates practical difficulty to accessing government and society for women, where travel is made exquisitely difficult across zones, families are separated, and women are tied to their male counterparts through old and uncertain law. The absence of a strong state has left the provision of social welfare services to religious civic institutions. Finally, the creation of the PA has channelled radical agendas and energy into a feckless, unwieldy bureaucracy and snuffed out the spark and space that facilitated women's entry into the public sphere during the First Intifada (Johnson and Kuttab 2001).[2]

Theory and expectations

We argue that the key to understanding perspectives on gender equality in Palestine is experiences with the occupation. Rather than the emergence of Hamas as an organization that promotes relatively more conservative perspectives on gender, we locate the decreased presence of women in the workforce and education in the nature of the occupation itself. The practical constraints placed on movement by the continuation of the occupation, and the convoluted policy structure that results from the web of Israeli control and the PA degrade access to goods such as education, jobs and healthcare. Moreover, negative experiences with Israeli soldiers as Palestinians move across borders further contribute to gendered outcomes, where women are encouraged to stay home and focus on their role as caregiver. This increases existing gender inequalities in representation in both the workforce and politics. Alternatively, poor women who must enter the workforce face a degraded economy, increasingly low wages and poor working conditions, which exacerbate their vulnerability to forces of the Israeli military.

We have constructed this theory through a review of women's changing role in society under the PLO and the PA. We have critically examined the growth of Hamas as a religious institution around which Palestinian society organizes itself in the absence of a strong state as a way of interrogating the hypothesis that religion is at the centre of gender inequality in Palestine. Finally, we have derived this argument from reports that locate the difficulty of addressing gender and family issues in the face of the practical constraints of the occupation. What remains largely missing from the existing literature, however, is both a qualitative and a quantitative analysis of the experiences of Palestinians with the occupation. That is, analyses reviewed for this paper have focused on the fate of women within the PLO, the structure of the PA, and policy landscape that results from the nature of the occupation that leads to gender differentials on a number of outcomes. We think that such analyses provide a good foundation from which to ask the questions:

- How do Palestinians experience the occupation in their daily lives?
- Does the occupation impact women differently than men?
- How does experience with the occupation serve to support or undermine ascription to traditional gender roles?

To answer these questions we draw on rich, qualitative accounts of experiences with the occupation and the impact it has had on the daily lives of women. We then use survey data to test quantitatively whether or not women experience the occupation differently than men, and whether or not it is perceived that the occupation leads to conservative attitudes towards women. The following section describes our data collection

and method of analysis in detail. We then move on to a review of the qualitative interviews, and conclude with the quantitative analysis of survey data.

Data and methods

The data and analysis draws on two sources: qualitative interviews and surveys with youth living in Palestine. The qualitative component of the analysis draws on 25 interviews carried out in January 2014. Each interview lasted between 20 and 45 minutes. Potential respondents were identified by first making contact with a local community leader who facilitated selection and introductions. Interviewees were made aware that their participation was voluntary; all signed a consent form. Efforts were made to include interview participants from across regions and resident types, including respondents from cities, villages and refugee camps. Interview participants were asked questions concerning whether or not they had been harassed, how they thought the effects of the occupation were different by gender, and how it impacted access to things such as jobs, education and healthcare. Interviews were semi-structured, using a guided, open-ended format.

The survey, also carried out in January 2014, included a total of 334 respondents between the ages of 16 and 35 years. Data were collected by sending members of the research team to various locations in the city centre across several cities; researchers would then approach individuals on foot and ask them to participate in the survey. Researchers employed a skip pattern as a way of introducing randomization into respondent selection, where researchers approached only every fourth person passing their station. Individuals who agreed to participate were given a clipboard with a 20-question survey, which took approximately two minutes to complete, and upon completion they would place the survey in an unmarked envelop. None of the field researchers looked at the completed surveys as an added assurance of the anonymity of the respondents. Research teams worked in male and female pairs to allow female researchers to approach potential female respondents. In an attempt to maximize the randomness of the sample, the enumerators alternated their positions to meet both incoming and outgoing foot traffic. Data were collected in Hebron, Bethlehem, East Jerusalem, Nablus and Jenin. Just over half (51.8%) of respondents were female; all socio-economic status categories, income, political views and education levels were represented in the sample.

Results

Evidence from in-depth interviews with Palestinian youth

Qualitative interviews with youth of both genders in Palestine centred on explicit experiences with the occupation, perspectives on the PA and perceptions of the impact of the occupation on men versus women. The following emerges from these interviews:

- The occupation affects both men and women, particularly for those who live apart from their families and who travel for work or school.
- The occupation has exacerbated gender differentials in both employment and compensation.

- Being both Palestinian and a woman creates an intersectional experience, such that women face double discrimination beyond that of their male Palestinian counterparts.

For both men and women who work apart from their families or travel to attend school, moving through checkpoints presents an opportunity for harassment by Israeli soldiers. Moreover, the difficulty presented by having to move through checkpoints is an added burden that students must overcome for the sake of their education. For example, Respondent #10, a woman who lives in Bethlehem and studies in Jordan, noted that she often makes the decision to spend her holidays in Jordan, which entails crossing the border into another country once, instead of enduring daily crossings of checkpoints within the OPT. Similarly, Respondent #13, a young man from Jenin who studies in Nablus, noted that he leaves for school three hours before his class to avoid being late, despite a relatively short distance, due to the time it takes to go through multiple checkpoints. When increased travel time relates to school for young people, it may appear merely to be an inconvenience. However, Respondent #16, who studies an hour away from where his family lives, noted that he always stops to think before travelling home due to the fact that the roads are surrounded by Israeli settlements where he runs the risk of having his car shot at while travelling.

The gravity of the nature of the occupation and the extent to which it limits mobility is made even more salient by Respondent #21. This respondent, a student from Hebron, voiced that his health had been affected by the occupation due to the fact that ambulances cannot reach Palestinians efficiently. He recounted a story from his childhood when he fell on the stairs, but because the ambulance could not reach him to take him to hospital his father had to carry him outside the city to the ambulance. The bleeding child went without needed emergency care for nearly half an hour as his father sought to get him on foot to the ambulance. Thus, this story begins to identify the seriousness of impeded movement and lack of access to important services created by the occupation.

The occupation, by limiting the freedom of movement of Palestinians, creates a type of open-air prison experienced by Palestinian society. Accordingly, Palestinians face discrimination from Israeli settlers and soldiers that emerges from the ongoing conflict between the two groups. Speaking about the impact of the occupation on her education, Respondent #23 recounted an event at her school, which is bordered by the separation wall. One day, in response to protesters picketing the presence of the wall who took refuge at the university, Israeli soldiers sprayed the streets all around the university with sewage. The respondent remarked, 'You feel that you are a lesser breed when you know that others have the power, and they have fun by spraying sewage water all over an entire [Abu Deis] city, where people live and raise families.' The level of discrimination and harassment faced by Palestinians at the hands of Israeli soldiers is so routine that for some it has become a marker of their identity. Referencing an experience with harassment while going through checkpoints, Respondent #13 remarked, 'It makes me a true Palestinian!'

Another theme that emerged from the interviews with Palestinian youth is that the occupation exacerbates gender differentials in Palestinian society. Both men and women were asked about the impact of the occupation on getting jobs and how that differed by gender. Respondents gave different evaluative answers, but nearly all mentioned that the types of jobs available tend to be service jobs suitable for women, as opposed to manual labour positions, but that women are offered much less for their

services. For some, the interpretation of this situation is that it is better for women because there are more jobs available to them, and because of the pressure placed on men to support their families, where the inability to get a masculine job that paid well was seen as an added pressure for them. For others, the interpretation of this situation is that it is worse for women since they are offered much less for their services than are men.

Yet, even this is complicated by the social response to women who try to become educated or to hold a job, and in doing so risk being harassed by Israeli soldiers and settlers. For example, Respondent #3 recounted a story of being verbally harassed by an Israeli soldier while she was out visiting family. Although the respondent indicated that she knew she was not at fault, and that the Israeli soldier did not touch her, she also said that many people witnessed the incident, including a work colleague of her father's. As a result, her family does not want her to leave the home to attend university because they do not want her to be subject to such experiences. Similarly, Respondent #25 started attending university, but her parents required her to stay home after an incident where she was spat on by an Israeli soldier while out in the city. She remarked about her father's decision, 'He did what he knew to do … he always wanted me to get an education, but he was worried for [me], and now that I have a daughter, I understand his decision better.' The women interviewed clearly identified that they experienced an added layer of marginalization due to their gender. Respondent #25, while recounting how and why she had to leave her studies, said, 'This society is not fair! Not only that I feel like a second-class citizen as a Palestinian in my own city of Jerusalem, but I am also a woman.' Similarly, Respondent #23, reflecting on gender relations in Palestine, concluded, 'Our problem has to do with primitive social norms and occupation, and it seems to be that we … Palestinians … women have to suffer both. Both seem to feed into each other.'

In sum, the qualitative interviews conducted for this project indicate that the occupation creates conflict between Palestinians and Israeli settlers, where Palestinians are treated as second-class citizens. Yet, the experience of marginalization faced by the Palestinian people is compounded for Palestinian women, for complex reasons. On the one hand, it makes it increasingly difficult for individuals of both genders to get jobs and attend university. Moreover, it exposes individuals to harassment while moving through checkpoints and roads surrounded by Israeli settlements. This, some respondents argue, is especially bad for young men because they are more mobile, as they search for work or attend university. However, part of the reason men are more likely to move through checkpoints and be exposed to harassment is that Palestinian families respond to the threat of harassment by keeping their daughters home in order to protect them. Thus, the intersection of gender and being a Palestinian residing in the occupied territories presents a point of dual pressure experienced by Palestinian women. The next section builds on the themes that emerged from the qualitative interviews to test their generalizability among a larger group of Palestinian youth, and finds that the nature of the occupation itself does indeed create additional lines of gendered experiences, not solely attributable to the growing importance of religion in Palestinian society.

Quantitative evidence from a survey of Palestinian youth

The results of qualitative interviews with Palestinian youth suggest that the Israeli occupation creates lines of gendered exclusion, where there might not otherwise be such delineations. That is, while many members of Palestinian society hold progressive

views towards women's rights, the experience women have with harassment by settlers and Israeli officials leads families to encourage women to stay home rather than pursue education, work or other participation in activities outside the home. This perspective, present in the qualitative interviews, is reflected in an empirically rigorous analysis of the quantitative data, and is thus more widely generalizable.

Fully 70% of survey respondents indicated that Palestinian society should support women's rights sometimes or always. Similarly, nearly 60% say that wearing the hijab is either not that important or should be a matter of personal choice for women. This indicates that Palestinian youth are fairly progressive regarding women's rights. Yet, these progressive attitudes are counteracted by concern and worry around the experiences of women when they move through society under the occupation. For example, women who are exposed to the occupation are objectively more likely than their male counterparts to experience frequent harassment by Israeli forces or settlers. Exposure to the occupation is measured by the frequency with which one travels through checkpoints – daily, a few times a week, a few times a month or never. Frequency of harassment was measured by asking respondents if they had been harassed by Israeli soldiers or settlers in the last year – one to five times, five to 10 times, more than 10 times or not at all. While men and women pass through checkpoints with about the same frequency (about 60% of both men and women pass through checkpoints at least a couple of times a week), women are less likely to say they have never been harassed in the last year than are men (only about 40% say so compared with about 50% of men who say so).

Table 1. Factors impacting frequency of harassment by Israeli soldiers among Palestinian youth in the West Bank, by gender.

	Full sample	Men	Women
Demographics			
Female	0.170(0.217)		
Checkpoints	0.102(0.106)	−0.122(0.163)	0.326**(0.150)
Age	0.110(0.112)	0.0776(0.174)	0.135(0.154)
Education	0.0664(0.0951)	0.0219(0.149)	0.0716(0.131)
Income	−0.0797(0.122)	−0.124(0.182)	0.00489(0.178)
Party, compared with Fatah			
Islamist	0.0153(0.286)	0.0311(0.402)	−0.0839(0.428)
Leftist	0.594*(0.323)	0.834*(0.453)	0.345(0.477)
Different party	0.124(0.356)	0.0335(0.488)	0.218(0.548)
No party	−0.459(0.387)	−0.419(0.647)	−0.316(0.529)
Governorate, compared with Ramallah			
Hebron	0.136(0.387)	0.0752(0.600)	0.638(0.609)
Jerusalem	0.0341(0.347)	−0.177(0.447)	0.580(0.590)
Nablus	0.00882(0.354)	−0.244(0.469)	0.618(0.590)
Bethlehem	−0.226(0.380)	−0.231(0.497)	0.0645(0.627)
Jenin	−0.0938(0.494)	0.0989(0.700)	−0.0276(0.746)
N	334	161	173

Notes: Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

*$p < 0.10$; **$p < 0.05$.

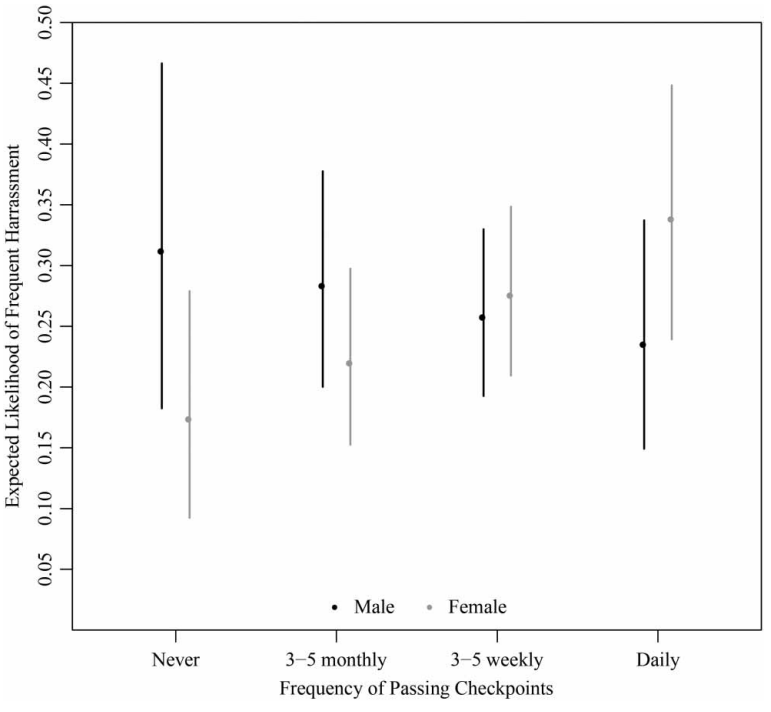

Figure 1. Likelihood of experiencing harassment by gender.

This trend, and the increased likelihood of harassment experienced by women from passing through checkpoints, is reflected in Table 1. The analysis shown compares the impact of frequency of going through checkpoints on reports of harassment for men compared with women. While gender itself is not statistically related to experiencing harassment, among the subsample of women going through checkpoints leads to higher levels of harassment. The impact of exposure to the occupation on likelihood of frequent harassment by gender is displayed in Figure 1. Women who go through checkpoints daily have a 30% likelihood of saying they have experienced harassment more than five times in the last year compared with women who never go through checkpoints who have only a 17% likelihood of saying the same, and with men who go through checkpoints daily who have only a 20% likelihood of saying so. Thus, women who frequently go through checkpoints are objectively more likely to experience harassment as a result of the occupation than men who have the same social exposure.

Survey respondents were then asked whether or not they thought that women were worse off under the occupation than men. Nearly 75% of both women and men agreed that women were worse off under the occupation than men. Moreover, reflecting the lived reality that women who frequently go through checkpoints are more likely to be harassed than their male counterparts, going through checkpoints regularly increases the belief that women are worse off than men under the occupation regardless of gender (Table 2). This is further explored in Figure 2. Among the full sample, individuals who never go through checkpoints have a 15% likelihood of strongly agreeing with the statement that women are more negatively affected by the occupation than men. Going through checkpoints daily increases the likelihood of strong agreement by 30%.

Table 2. Perceived impact of checkpoints on women among Palestinian youth in the West Bank, by gender.[a]

	Full sample	Men	Women
Demographics			
Female	0.139(0.218)		
Checkpoints	0.632***(0.115)	0.436***(0.167)	0.911***(0.171)
Age	0.00954(0.114)	0.130(0.168)	−0.134(0.166)
Education	−0.0501(0.0921)	0.0490(0.138)	−0.170(0.132)
Income	0.000854(0.124)	−0.264(0.180)	0.190(0.182)
Party, compared with Fatah			
Islamist	0.581**(0.290)	1.060***(0.410)	0.183(0.439)
Leftist	0.496(0.325)	0.514(0.464)	0.446(0.487)
Different party	0.268(0.344)	0.125(0.440)	0.363(0.573)
No party	0.891**(0.405)	0.725(0.703)	1.137**(0.544)
Governorate, compared with Ramallah			
Hebron	−0.505(0.391)	−0.943(0.597)	−0.480(0.617)
Jerusalem	−0.216(0.341)	−0.237(0.453)	−0.202(0.577)
Nablus	−0.556(0.347)	−0.573(0.455)	−0.649(0.594)
Bethlehem	−0.386(0.376)	0.0575(0.506)	−0.868(0.615)
Jenin	−0.837(0.526)	0.303(0.695)	−2.288***(0.837)
N	334	161	173

Notes: Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

[a]The survey question used to measure perceptions of the impact of checkpoints on women is as follows: 'They say that Palestinian women are affected by the Israeli occupation more than men, due to the checkpoint and ID checks, which would make women not want to go out of their houses for work or education, and would leave the house only for necessities. How strongly do you agree?'

**$p < 0.05$; ***$p < 0.01$.

Finally, qualitative interviews suggested that the nature of the occupation, and exposure to harassment experienced by women, leads to adherence to conservative norms where daughters are concerned. The following question was asked in the large-*n* survey:

> There are some who suggest that the occupation makes Palestinian society more conservative, and an example of this would be that some families keep their daughters at home, and ban them from going to school after a certain age. How strongly do you agree?

Reflecting the findings in the qualitative interviews, around 70% of respondents agreed with this statement. Moreover, in a fully specified model controlling for relevant covariates, exposure to the occupation in the form of going through checkpoints regularly increases agreement with this statement among women, though not among men. That is, women who go through checkpoints are more likely to agree with the statement that the occupation makes society more conservative than either men who go through checkpoints or women who do not go through checkpoints (Table 3). This is further explored in Figure 3, which shows that, among men, experience with the occupation via checkpoints does not impact the belief that the occupation makes society more conservative towards women. Among women, however, going through checkpoints daily increases the likelihood of strong agreement by about 25% compared with women who

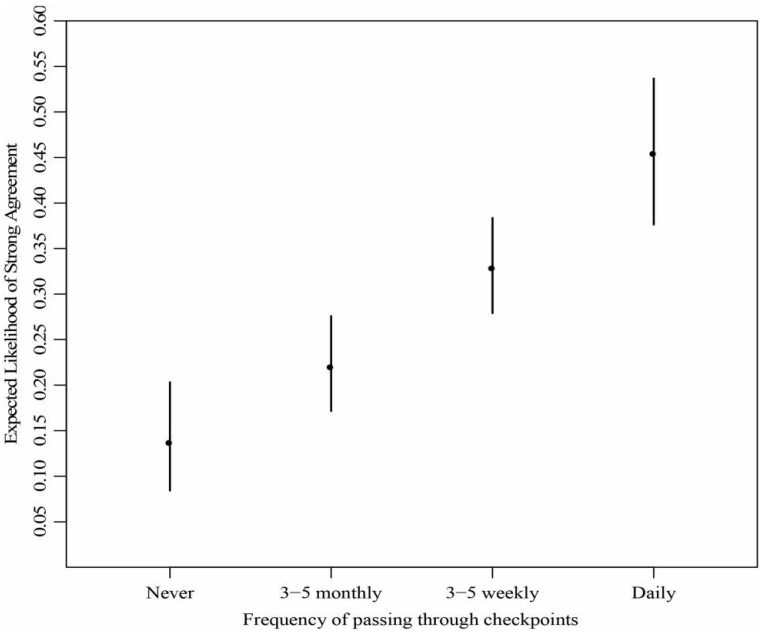

Figure 2. Expected likelihood of a strong agreement that exposure to occupation yields a belief that women are affected more than men by the occupation.

never go through checkpoints. In sum, women are objectively treated worse under the occupation and encouraged to stay at home due to the occupation, but this is a fact not readily recognized by all members of society.

Discussion and conclusions

We began this project with the following questions: How does the Israeli occupation impact gender equality and gender roles in Palestine? How has the ongoing conflict served to alleviate or reinforce gender inequality? A review of the state of gender relations in Palestine, the treatment of gender issues by the PA and the organizing structures of Palestinian society highlighted the role of religion in shaping gender relationships. Particularly, the absence of a strong state concerned with the delivery of social goods in Palestine has made room for the emergence of Hamas as an organizing feature of Palestinian society. That is, in the absence of a strong state, Hamas as a religious institution has stepped forward to fill the civic void. This points to the idea that the increasing importance of such a conservative religious institution itself is responsible for increasingly conservative attitudes towards women in Palestine. We made the argument that this assertion is misplaced. Instead, we theorized that the nature of the occupation itself serves to exacerbate gender inequalities and reinforces traditional gender norms.

In order to evidence our theory, we drew on qualitative interviews with men and women between the ages of 18 and 34 living in Palestine to understand how the occupation affects men and women differently in lived reality. We found confirmation for our theory. Interview respondents mentioned that women are offered less than men for their services, the occupation makes movement and access to services such as

Table 3 . Perceived impact of the occupation on conservative attitudes towards women among Palestinian youth in the West Bank, by gender.[a]

	Full sample	Men	Women
Demographics			
Female	−0.234(0.215)		
Checkpoints	0.326***(0.111)	0.120(0.167)	0.515***(0.157)
Age	−0.128(0.112)	−0.253(0.169)	−0.0729(0.158)
Education	0.0489(0.0909)	0.0850(0.136)	−0.00229(0.129)
Income	−0.176(0.122)	−0.214(0.173)	−0.199(0.176)
Party, compared with Fatah			
Islamist	0.306(0.287)	0.385(0.402)	0.239(0.428)
Leftist	0.293(0.321)	0.342(0.474)	0.203(0.465)
Different party	−0.403(0.343)	−0.458(0.446)	−0.541(0.569)
No party	−0.710*(0.391)	−0.137(0.643)	−1.060**(0.531)
Governorate, compared with Ramallah			
Hebron	−0.368(0.397)	−0.940(0.612)	0.103(0.595)
Jerusalem	−0.446(0.339)	−0.512(0.453)	−0.203(0.544)
Nablus	−0.512(0.347)	−0.0889(0.464)	−0.769(0.558)
Bethlehem	−0.0732(0.377)	−0.384(0.515)	0.339(0.591)
Jenin	0.0300(0.512)	−0.123(0.693)	0.350(0.824)
N	334	161	173

Note: Standard errors are shown in parentheses.

aThe survey question used to measure perceptions of the impact of the occupation on conservative attitudes towards women is as follows: 'There are some who suggest that the occupation makes Palestinian society more conservative, and an example of this would be that some families keep their daughters at home and ban them from going to school after a certain ago. How strongly do you agree?'

*$p < 0.10$;

**$p < 0.05$;

***$p < 0.01$.

emergency medicine difficult and unwieldy, and families respond to threats of harassment by keeping their daughters home from work and school in order to protect them. Moreover, interview respondents identified the intersectional marginalization that results from being both Palestinian and a woman. Finally, themes that emerged from the qualitative interviews were tested and supported in a large-*n* sample of survey respondents.

Thus, we conclude that the nature of the occupation itself serves to reinforce and reiterate existing gender differentials, aside from the growing importance of Islam in Palestinian society. Our analysis is limited, and thus should be taken with caveats. The sample includes only Palestinian youth between the ages of 16 and 34 years. Thus, conclusions are limited to the perspectives of this subset of Palestinian society. Further, we were unable to control for level of religious devotion in estimating impacts on ideas about the occupation in our quantitative analysis. Here, we rely on narratives derived from the qualitative interviews that clearly point to the nature of the occupation itself as a source of gender inequality. Even so, we feel our analysis offers insight into some of the unique impacts of the occupation on Palestinian youth, and the unique intersectional experience of Palestinian women, who face

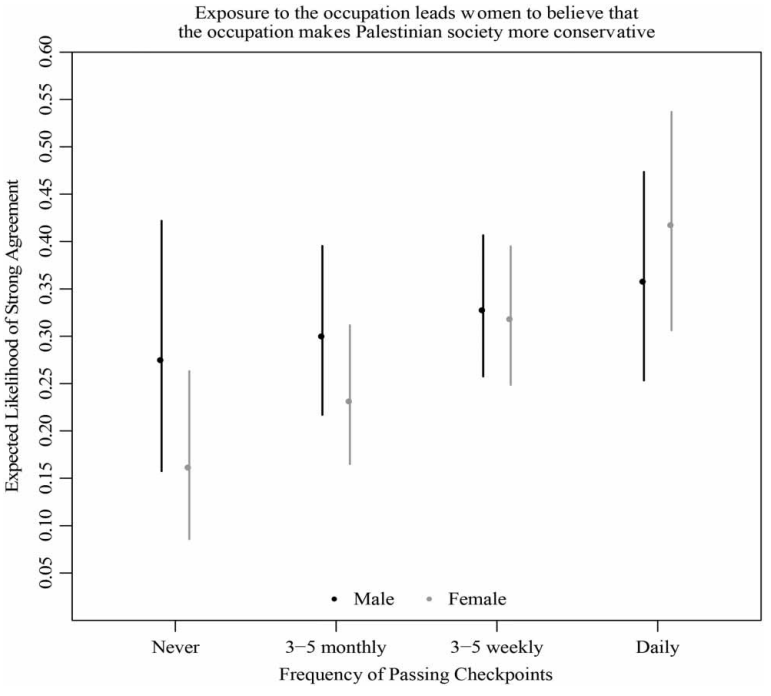

Figure 3. Expected likelihood of a strong agreement that exposure to occupation leads women to believe that occupation makes Palestinians more conservative.

double discrimination as women and Palestinian residents living in occupied territories.

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Notes

1. This is available from http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/D215E51BAD21D5F985257E0E004B2199/.
2. There are alternative interpretations of the development of the Women's Movement in Palestine that see the emphasis of the movement on the national agenda of liberation as subordinating gender equality (Massad 1995; Barber 1999). Scholarship of this variety views the de-prioritization of women's issues in favour of ending the occupation as ultimately hindering gender equality in Palestine, and moreover, that the entrance of the Women's Movement into mainstream resistance efforts via traditional female tasks associated with care-giving as evidence that gender equality was never taken seriously by either the PLO or the PA, and the feminist narrative as largely absent from resistance efforts. This vein of scholarship would further claim that, contrary to the claims made here, the presence of women in the First Intifada did not signal greater power for women, and thus should not

have been expected to advance gender equality in Palestine. We disagree with this perspective. Instead, like other feminist scholars who have written prolifically on the topic, we see a feminist consciousness emerging through women's activism during the First Intifada (Haj 1992; Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997b). A key example of the importance of the First Intifada for empowering women to claim their independence comes from the Women's Movement during the First Intifada, where women activists turned the tie between their sexual purity and their honour on its head, adopting the slogan 'al-ard qbla al-'ard' or *land before honour*, as a way of gutting Israeli tactics to turn them by threatening them with the exposure of their own sexual assault (Haj 1992). Women claimed their honour through their service to the resistance effort, displaying their own rights consciousness, absent prior to their activism. Finally, we take our cue from Haj (1992, 78), who writes about such critiques that:some debates that have so occupied Western Feminism – for instance, over separatist strategy – are unimaginable in the context of the national liberation struggle. Some theoretical positions – for example, the family as the principle site of women's oppression – have no resonance among women whose families and communities are under assault by an occupying power.With this admonishment, we see the vibrancy of the Palestinian feminist movement then and now, despite the persistence of patriarchal structures in Palestinian society, and trace the faltering contemporary movement to institutional failures rather than activist ones.

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