CHANGING FEMININITIES DURING CONFLICT – CASE STUDY: THE GAZA STRIP

REEMA ABURAMADAN

DECEMBER 2022

CHANGING FEMININITIES DURING CONFLICT – CASE STUDY: THE GAZA STRIP

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE

GRADUATE SCHOOL

OF GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

BAHÇEŞEHİR UNIVERSITY

REEMA ABURAMADAN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS

FOR

THE DEGREE OF

GLOBAL POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

DECEMBER 2022

T.C.

BAHCESEHIR UNIVERSITY

GRADUATE SCHOOL

MASTER THESIS APPROVAL FORM

Program Name:	Global Affairs
Student's Name and Surname:	Reema Aburamadan
Name of the Thesis:	Changing Femininities During Conflict – Case Study: The Gaza Strip
Thesis Defense Date:	January 9, 2023

This thesis has been approved by the Graduate School which has fulfilled the necessary conditions as Master thesis.

Prof. Dr. Ahmet ÖNCÜ

Institute Director

This thesis was read by us, quality and content as a master's thesis has been seen and accepted as sufficient.

	Title/Name	**Signature**
Thesis Advisor's	Assoc. Prof. Rahime Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm	
Thesis Advisor's	Assist. Prof. Ayşegül Akdemir Son	
Member's	Assoc. Prof. Hande Paker	
Member's	Assist. Prof. Damla Bayraktar Aksel	
Member's	Assist. Prof. Ayşe Deniz Ünan Göktan	
Member's	Assist. Prof. Aslı Telseren	

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Reema, Aburamadan

Signature:

ABSTRACT

CHANGING FEMININITIES DURING CONFLICT – CASE STUDY: THE GAZA STRIP

Reema, Aburamadan

Master's Program in Global Affairs.

Supervisor: Rahime Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm and Ayşegül Akdemir Son

December 2022, 80 pages

This thesis analyzes the effects of the blockade and division on female economic development and masculine identities that are being challenged as a result of the Israeli blockade on Gaza, which also resulted in female employment. To examine these effects, twenty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with different NGOs and with working females in Gaza to understand the effects the division and the blockade had on families living in Gaza. Our results show that the society in Gaza changed after the economic difficulties the society faced, and indeed women today are encouraged to work. However, that is not because of the development of the idea of equality among the two genders but is due to the economic situation that urged females to work and forced males and the society to accept working women. Therefore, due to the worsening economic conditions, dominant masculinity in a conservative society was challenged in Gaza as males were unemployed and unable to provide to their families, which caused women to seek different jobs.

Key Words: Female employment, Challenging masculinities, Gaza, Blockade, Political division

ÖZ

Çatışma Sırasında Değişen Kadınlık– Vaka Çalışması: Gazze Şeridi

Reema, Aburamadan

Küresel İlişkiler Yüksek Lisans Programı

Tez Danışmanı: Rahime Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm ve Ayşegül Akdemir Son

Aralik 2022, 80 sayfa

Bu tez, İsrail'in Gazze'ye uyguladığı ve aynı zamanda kadın istihdamına yol açan ablukanın bir sonucu olarak abluka ve bölünmenin kadınların ekonomik kalkınması ve eril kimlikler üzerindeki etkilerini analiz etmektedir Bu etkileri incelemek ve bölünme ve ablukanın Gazze'de yaşayan aileler üzerindeki etkilerini anlamak için farklı STK'larla ve Gazze'de çalışan kadınlarla yirmi bir yarı-yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşme yapıldı. Elde ettiğimiz sonuçlar, Gazze'deki toplumun karşılaştığı ekonomik zorluklardan sonra toplumdaki kadınlık algısının değiştiğini ve gerçekten de bugün kadınların çalışmaya teşvik edildiğini gösteriyor. Ancak bu, iki cinsiyet arasında eşitlik fikrinin gelişmesi nedeniyle değil, kadınları çalışmaya zorlayan ve erkekleri ve toplumu çalışan kadınları kabul etmeye zorlayan ekonomik durumdan kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenle, kötüleşen ekonomik koşullar nedeniyle Gazze gibi'de muhafazakar bir toplumda baskın erkeklik, erkeklerin işsiz kalması ve ailelerine bakamaması nedeniyle zorlanmış ve kadınların farklı işler aramasına neden olmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kadın istihdamı, Erkekliklere meydan okuma, Gazze, Abluka, siyasi bölünme, Kadınlıklar .

To my family

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGUERS

LIST OF ABBREVATIONS

FTO	Foreign Terrorist Organization
GCMHP	Gaza Community Mental Health Programme
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PWWSD	The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
USD	United States Dollar
WACG	Women's Affairs Center in Gaza
NIS	New Israeli Shekel

Chapter 1

Introduction

This thesis seeks to understand the evolution of femininities in cases of economic recession and blockade using the exploratory case study of Gaza following Israeli blockade.

There are several studies that explain the evolution of masculinities in conflict settings where the underlying notion that fulfilling the protector and/or provider role was necessary for creating a normative masculinity which is crucial for the construction of dominant masculinity. The protector and/or provider position has historically supported men's dominance at home and in business life. Conversely, wifehood and motherhood roles helped to develop acceptable femininity (Ashe and Harland, 2014, p. 751). The social relationships between men and women, husbands and wives, parents and children, and states and citizens change as a result of globalization and events like war and conflict (Donaldson et al., 2009).

Since the start of the twenty-first century, supporting arguments regarding male dominance have surface, especially migration studies which is the closest context in the literature to conflict and division that I explore in this thesis. This is significant because for a long time, masculinity had been overlooked as a significant factor driving migration. Yet, with the evolution of the literature on femininities reveals that femininities are also redefined in other ways as well, such as when women become breadwinners and have the power to renegotiate gender contracts[1]. When mobility is experienced by women, it is imagined differently. The idea that migration is gendered, and that the gendering processes have obvious effects on men, women, and societies preconditions how we respond to migration movement (Wojnicka and Pustulka, 2019, p. 91). Studies on family reunification among migrants in general, and men in particular, tend to center on two unwavering ideas. Migrant males have either been considered hyper-masculine, which is associated with gender violence, or considered

---

[1] According to Carole Pateman's claim, the liberal democratic idea of the social contract is a "patriarchal covenant that confirms men's sex right over women." She challenges the liberal ideology's claims to universality and equality and reveals what she terms the patriarchal nature of the allegedly neutral category of the person (Pateman, 1989).

to have deficiency in masculinity, which is related to issues of family abandonment (Davalos, 2020, p. 1717).

Women, on the other hand, often take on traditionally masculine-coded roles during times of conflict and/or displacement, while men frequently struggle to live up to expectations of being decision-makers, protectors, and breadwinners (Myrttinen et al., 2017, p. 108). However, migrant men's masculinity is put to the test not only in the workplace but also in the family, where males' dominant roles may be questioned as a result of migration. Researchers that look at how migration affects masculinity within the setting of the family present a nuanced picture. Men's power and status as breadwinners at home are frequently strengthened by their earnings from migrant labor. At the same time, after their wives migrate, stay-at-home husbands in immigrant families are sometimes compelled by social pressure to change their gender identities (Choi, 2019, p. 80). Men lost the control they got from managing the two principal resources—cattle and arable land—while new livelihoods provided women and young people with prospects for financial independence. This was discovered through a closer examination of the backdrop of displacement and life in camps[2]. The ideal male is supposed to defend his family and take care of the material needs of women and children, but considering the reality of life in refugee camps, this was impossible (Myrttinen et al., 2017, p. 108).

Since post-conflict nations usually share a similar yet unique economic, political, administrative, and security settings, these factors should be considered when addressing the issue of changing roles in the family, especially when it comes to women's economic empowerment in these nations as they pose particular difficulties as well as opportunities for the execution of a women's economic empowerment strategy (Abril, 2009, p.16). For temporary stability, reintegration, economic growth, and long-term peace following a crisis, employment is crucial (United Nations 2009). Initiatives to create jobs are one of the greatest ways to maintain peace in communities after violence, according to a report for the United States Agency for International Development (Stewart, 2015, p. 9).

Women may have been drawn to the wartime economy through many channels. Wives frequently had less to do at home while the family's employment income

---

[2] According to UNRWA (2021), there are eight camps in Gaza and 1.4 million out of the 2.1 million inhabitants of Gaza are refugees and living in refugee camps.

dropped dramatically while the husband was away. When women entered the labor market after war, they made number of investments, including those in job training and alternative housekeeping arrangements, which decreased the costs and increased the advantages of postwar work. Despite the perception that liberalization of the societal or marital standards that forbade a wife from working caused worry (Goldin, 1991, p.741).

These studies inform us about how femininities evolved during times of conflict and crisis as well as how masculinities can be challenged. However, neither female empowerment and employment during economic difficulties – that are caused by blockade and political division – are explored, nor how developments in femininity have the ability to challenge dominant masculinities in patriarchal and conservative communities.

Similar studies were made on women's employment post-conflict in the United States after the Second World War as well as in Afghanistan post the events of September 11. However, these studies focus on post-conflict, while the case of Gaza lies in an on-going conflict, which makes the case-study unique, due to its context, as it suffers from occupation, blockade, political division, and it is indeed a male dominant society – thus it remains in conflict. Therefore, we seek to answer this question through studying the Gaza Strip as a case study in this thesis. The case of Gaza represents a crucial exploratory case to develop theoretical arguments on the evolution femininities and the challenging of masculinities during economic recessions and blockade.

As the establishment of Israel was celebrated in 1948, Palestinians experienced displacement, known as *Nakba[3]*. Palestine was divided in several ways, where after the Nakba, Gaza fell under the Egyptian rule until 1967 and the West Bank became part of Jordan. However, after the Six Day War in 1967, Israel occupied Gaza the West Bank, Golan Heights of Syria, and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula (Filip, 2014). Meanwhile, Palestinian political parties started to rise, gain support, and influence. Two of the most

---

[3] Nakba: The 1948 Arab Israeli War, also referred to as the Palestinian Catastrophe, resulted in the destruction of Palestinian society and their national homeland, as well as the long-term internal displacement of most Palestinians in Palestinian cities like Gaza.

influential and popular parties were Hamas[4] and Fatah[5] (Dixit and Weibul, 2007, 7351).

In 2005, Israel unilaterally pulled out of Gaza (Filip, 2014). Yet, the Strip's borders, as well as the flow of products, services, and people, remain under Israeli control. Hamas won Palestinian legislative elections in 2006. However, the International Quartet[6] refused to acknowledge Hamas' victory in the 2006 legislative elections (Goerzig, 2010), due to the fact that Hamas is regarded as a terrorist organization not just by Israel, but also by the US State Department, which has branded them as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Considering that Hamas's agenda differs from the Palestinian Liberation Organization's (PLO), Palestinian Authority's (PA)[7], and Fatah's agenda, where they criticize the peace talks with Israel, commit to resisting the occupation and its forces, and refuse to recognize the state of Israel, the International Quartet whilst Israel imposed a tight and strict blockade on Gaza (Migdalovitz, 2010; Goerzig, 2010). Therefore, the inhabitants of the Gaza Strip have been living in deplorable social, economic, and political conditions.

Israel ratcheted up the pressure on the Gaza Strip by imposing more sanctions. Israel has control over Gaza's six land crossings, which were considered as the principal supply lines. For example, the primary commercial gate between Gaza and Israel, the Karni Crossing[8], was completely closed, and Israeli border authorities redirected supplies to the Strip through the Kerem Shalom Crossing[9], which is

---

[4] Hamas: through a violent Palestinian nationalist and Islamist group in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Hamas (Arabic: Harakat al-Muqwamah al-Islmiyyah, English: Islamic Resistance Movement) seeks to establish a sovereign Islamic state in the historical land of Palestine. Hamas has resisted the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) secular approach to resolving the Israeli-Palestinian issue since its founding in 1987 and has opposed any attempt to cede any territory within Palestine.

[5] Fatah: Formerly known as the Palestinian National Liberation Movement, the Palestinian Nationalist Social Democratic Party is the second-largest party in the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) and the major component of the confederated multiparty Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO).

[6] The International Quartet was established in 2002 by the United Nations, the European Union, the United States, and Russia. Its goals are to support Palestinian institutional and economic development as well as help mediate Middle East peace discussions.

[7] While the PLO makes more general decisions about Palestinians everywhere and the status of Palestine, it has no formal legal jurisdiction over internal local administration in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), where the PA has "municipal authority" over the issues of Palestinians. They are inextricably intertwined because the PLO signed the Oslo Accords, worked to form the Palestinian Authority (PA), which was established to carry out the Accords, and is currently in charge of both organizations.

[8] The Karni Crossing, located near the north-eastern edge of the Gaza Strip, was a cargo terminal on the Israel-Gaza Strip barrier that opened in 1994 to allow Palestinian merchants to export and import goods.

[9] At the meeting point of the boundaries between Egypt and Israel and the Gaza Strip, there is a border crossing called Kerem Shalom. It is run by the Israel Airports Authority, and trucks that deliver goods to Gaza from Egypt or Israel utilize it.

considerably smaller and underdeveloped. The closing of the Karni Crossing was made with the intention of interrupting the flow of humanitarian and commercial commodities. As a result, the key route between Gaza and Israeli and international markets has been shut down (Tannira, 2021, p.137).

The economic difficulties the community in Gaza faced led to the rise of unemployment from 29 percent in 2007 to 40 percent in 2009 according to the statistics provided by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). The unemployment rate keeps on fluctuating in Gaza; however, it does not get below 40 percent. Due to the division between Fatah and Hamas, many Fatah employees lost their jobs in Gaza which caused the economy to worsen (Butt and Butt, 2016; Buchan, 2012; Migdalovitz, 2010; Sourani, 2011; Alhelou, 2019). Considering that the situation had an effect on all humans in Gaza, females specifically suffered economically and psychologically. This is due to the fact that Gaza is a highly conservative community where women do not have an important role outside of the household; however, this changed after the blockade (Wendel, 2016; Abu Watfa, 2016; Rizq-Al-Qazaz, 2016). Yet, the impact of this change, women's participation in the labor market due to the blockade, on masculinities and femininities in the Gazan society remained unexplored.

The thesis argues that through the economic blockade and the rise of unemployment, many women started to seek job opportunities in order to be a helping hand in their households – whether as a wife, daughter, or a sister. Therefore, the blockade, although had negative consequences on the Gaza Stirp, but it helped women to join the labor force and engage in economic activities – arguably, in one way or another. Nonetheless, female employment has caused masculinities in Gaza to be challenged as the community is conservative and patriarchal due to the changing role of femininities and womanhood. This thesis begins by outlining the theoretical framework; where the focus will be on feminist theories which elaborate on the concepts of gender as a social construction, gender performativity, masculinities and femininities, as well as challenging masculinities. In addition to the literature review, which provides a thorough background on the research's case study, the Gaza Strip, where the blockade and division are discussed and how they affected the Gazan economy, as well as gender in Gaza and the effects of the blockade and division on women, are discussed.

The methodology of the research relies on a case study methodology of Gaza, using qualitative data collection techniques, specifically semi-structured in-depth interviews. Four interviews were done with different non-governmental organizations in Gaza focusing on women along with seventeen interviews with working women. Through the interviews, I aimed to examine males' perspective on working women before and after the blockade, in other words challenged masculinities due to changing living conditions, as well as the rise or decline of female employment in Gaza. The results showed that, women today see that they should work and contribute to their families financially because of the deteriorating economic situation. Further, although Gaza remains a conservative and patriarchal city, men today prefer working women so the man would not be the only one responsible for the financial needs of the household – due to the economic situation and unemployment. However, this plays a role in challenging their masculine identity due to the changing social constructions of femininity and womanhood.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The blockade resulted in the average worker's productivity in Gaza falling by 20 percent, as assessed by actual value added per worker (Etkes and Zimring, 2015, p.17). Therefore, these measures had a direct impact on Gaza's industrial sector, causing an additional crisis for both manufacturers and workers. More than 90 percent of the Strip's manufacturers were thought to have shuttered, while the remaining 10 percent continued to operate at a reduced capacity (Tannira, 2021, p.138; Al Hennawi and Al Sabe, 2016).

The key indication for assessing women's strength and presence in the labor market is their participation in the workforce, on which all other indicators are based in order to arrive at a specific analytical scenario. According to PCBS, it is improving in terms of education, but it is regressing significantly in terms of labor market participation, despite the fact that some of the countries with the highest percentages are regarded more conservative than Palestinian society (PCBS, 2020). The increasing participation rate of women with more than 12 years of schooling is largely responsible for the increase in women's labor force participation (ILO, 2012). During the same time, the participation percentage of women with less than 11 years of schooling remained low, at around 10 percent (ILO, 2012).

According to the PCBS, the average daily wage in New Israeli shekels (NIS), which is the currency used in Palestine, for employees of known wages 15 years in Gaza in 2020 is 89.4 NIS for females whereas it is 57.1 NIS for males. Regarding unemployment, it is 63.7 for females while 39.5 for males, this is because that most women work in the informal sector; thus, not registered legally. More than half of wage female employees in the private sector (60 percent) receive paid maternity leave for the year 2020, even though 23 percent of wage female employees in the private sector work without a work contract and 62 percent receive a contribution to financing retirement/end of service benefits (WAFA, 2020). Women make up 73.1 percent of the workforce in the services industry and other branches, followed by 11.1 percent in the trade, restaurants, and hotels sector, and 6.7 percent in agriculture (PCBS, 2020).

Thus, the research problem revolves around the economic deterioration, which is a result of the international blockade on the Gaza Strip, and its connection with challenging a male dominant and conservative society, as well as female employment.

1.2 Research Gap and Contribution

The available literature that focuses on female employment in Gaza has been studied in terms of cultural abstains and society's view (Sourani, 2011; Banat, 2018; Jabali, 2009; Wendel, 2016; Haj, 1992; Muhanna, 2016; Irving, 2016; Tannira, 2021; Abu Watfa, 2016; Rizq- Al-Qazaz, 2016). Based on our knowledge in the literature, there are no studies focusing on the impact of the blockade and division of 2007 on women's employments, dominant masculinities, as well as the society's view on working women dominant femininities in society. The events of 2007 caused dramatic economic deteriorations that caused unemployment and the economy of the strip was affected where according to the statistics provided by the PCBS, in the year 2000 the unemployment rate was 18.7 percent, and the employment rate in 2008 was 79.0 percent. In 2008, the unemployment rate increased to 40.6 percent and the employment rate declined to 53.0 percent. Most recently in 2021, the percentage of the unemployment increased to 46.9 percent, and the employment remained slightly the same, 53.1 percent (PCBS, 2000; PCBS, 2008; PCBS, 2021). With that being said, due to the responsibilities women carry during conflict, war, and/or economic crisis, the research focuses on developing femininities during blockade and economic crisis in

the Gaza Strip. The research gap focuses on the process of feminine change as a result of economic crisis which in turn challenges dominant masculinities.

Given the research gap this thesis will discuss how the high number of unemployed people, families in Gaza were affected financially due to the lack of job opportunities, lay-off from governmental jobs due to the political division, and the decrease of trading due to the blockade. In such an environment, women had to look for job opportunities in order to contribute to their families financially. Considering that Gaza is a small, conservative, and patriarchal society, women's employment was not accepted among the community; however, with the blockade, division, and economic devastations, the society, especially males, started to overlook the norms and traditions of women's roles. This caused femininities to change and masculinities to be challenged in Gaza, as it is the male's role was to secure the house financially without the assistance of the females in the house, but because of the economic difficulties, males were forced to accept female employment and, in some cases, encourage it. In other words, the research will contribute to the literature in understanding the effects of the blockade on women's employment and its effect on dominant masculinities.

1.3 Research Question

The main research question of the thesis is: How did femininities evolve and change during blockade and political instability?

Research sub-questions: RSQ1: How the blockade and division affected women's employment and dominant masculinities in Gaza? RSQ2: Did the blockade and division change the perception of males towards working women in Gaza?

The Israeli blockade acts as the independent research variable, whereas there are two dependent variables, changing femininities along with challenging masculinities. The mediating variable among the two is women's employment.

1.4 Hypothesis

This research hypothesis is, Israeli blockade in Gaza paved the way for increasing women's employment and altered female employment. Therefore, as women's employment increases, power dynamics between male and female family

members change and trigger the evolution of femininities whilst challenging masculinities

The dependent variable altering femininities by challenging masculinities. Operationalization of this variable is conducted through multiple observable indicators such as male's perspective on women's employment, women's perspective of their own employment, and society's reactions to men when women work. There are disparities in this kind of power since men traditionally have more authority than women. The four forms of masculinity identified by Connell are hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginalized. Hegemonic masculinity is an explanation for how and why men still maintain dominant social positions over women and other gender identities viewed as feminine in a particular community (Gomez, 2007, p.116). However, in times of war and instability, females take on masculine roles within the household and society which causes femininities to develop in different forms and kinds (Abril, 2009; Goldin and Olivetti, 20133; Goldin, 1989; Schweitzer, 1980; Afonso, 2018).

Furthermore, considering that the blockade imposed by Israel on Gaza, which is the independent variable, started in 2008 after the Hamas administration seized power in the Gaza Strip in 2007, Israel established an unprecedented siege from land, sea, and air. Israel's presence in the West Bank and Gaza is often considered as an aggressive occupation notwithstanding the 2005 disengagement. In contrast to a true state of war, belligerent occupation does not grant the legal right to establish a blockade. Despite this, Israel continues to blockade Gaza, trapping residents there in one of the world's densest populations, leading to a protracted humanitarian catastrophe with serious repercussions. The siege has had a disastrous effect on the quality of life for Gazans, destroying the local economy, limiting their freedom of movement, and severely restricting their access to basic supplies including food, medication, gasoline, and other necessities. Over time, the barricade has evolved into many shapes and sizes. It has been made more rigid, more supple, and more rigid again, although these adjustments have often been undertaken in response to external demand and have largely been cosmetic. The reasons behind the Israeli blockade of Gaza are the denial of basic rights to Gazans, the decline in their standard of living as a result of persistent economic decline, which worsens poverty and lowers incomes, as well as

the consistent deterioration of infrastructure and circumstances in the fields of healthcare, education, and sanitation (Butt, and Butt, 2016, p. 158).

The last variable, the mediating variable, focuses on how the blockade's effects on women's employment in Gaza. As of 2020, women make up 11.1 percent of the workforce in the trade, restaurants, and hotels sector, 6.7 percent in agriculture, and 73.1 percent of the workforce in the services sector and other sectors (PCBS, 2020). In Gaza, 16.8 percent of female workers in the unorganized sector are women (PCBS, 2021) and according to the interviews conducted, it is difficult to specifically know the number of the females who are working in Gaza due to the fact that there is no formal registration of employment records.

In the next chapter, the theoretical framework that guides the thesis and the research question of how the blockade altered dominant femininities in conflict settings is discussed, along with the literature review on the case study.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework and Literature review: Gender and Femininities

From an essentialist[10] perspective, gender implies that individuals of different genders should be treated differently, more, or less directly. Men and women should perform distinct tasks at work and at home, for instance, and people of one gender should be treated better than people of the other (Berg-Sorensen et al., 2011, p.40). Exposure to essentialism was associated with a lower likelihood of social change and a higher acceptance of social dominance – for instance, the belief that inequality is acceptable. Although both men and women were affected by these beliefs, women are more likely to suffer (Morton et al., 2009, p.661).

This chapter looks upon different theories that explains gender and gender development, as well as an explanation to the case study which would allow us to understand the evolution of femininities and challenging masculinities in the chosen case study, the Gaza Strip.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

This chapter offers the theoretical framework leading my proposition that changing work patterns after blockade have developed and changed femininities in the Gazan context as well as challenging the existent dominant masculinity.

The chapter begins by presenting theories on gender, starting with feminism where a special focus will be given to second wave feminism as well as post-colonial feminism, then the discussion will move on to discuss gender as a social construction and gender performativity. The theory discussion will move further to discuss the development of both masculinities and femininities, and finally how masculinity is challenged by contexts of conflict, especially with the role and responsibilities women hold during times of crisis, conflict, and/or war.

---

[10] Essentialism is the view that objects have a set of attributes that are necessary to their identity

2.1.1 Feminism. Although some philosophers can locate the origins of feminism in antiquity, it was not until the late nineteenth century that women's equal rights activities became a clearly defined and self-conscious movement, or rather a sequence of movements (Rampton, 2015, p.1). It is important to note that while feminism is about women, feminist philosophy also examines the world from critical intersectional perspectives (Ferguson, 2017, p.2). At its root, feminism is about equality between the male and the female, not about the sameness. In other words, because male's body is different that the females and because both bodies do not share the same physical strength and capability, equality is not possible (Caprino, 2017).

Feminism, according to the Dictionary of Philosophy, is a movement that claims men create a hierarchy of dominance and exploitation over women based on gender differences, as well as a movement that seeks to eradicate sexism at the most basic level and demands equality of opportunity (Flew, 1979). Today's feminist theory is a vast, fruitful, and varied intellectual and political ensemble. It develops through creative interdisciplinary work and engaged critical politics. Feminist theory engages the world via critical intersectional viewpoints and is not just about women, yet it is about them (Ferguson, 2017).

The recognition that preexisting theories were insufficient to account for women's place in the past as well as their capacity for change in the present and the future led to the development of feminism (Grosz, 2010, p.49). Feminism has interacted with and prospered from a variety of ideologies, concepts, and movements in terms of theoretical and practical aspects from the 19th century, when women began to urge for a public voice, to our time (Camgoz, 2020, p.8). The feminist movement has progressed through several waves, three to be precise. Each wave has its own history and distinguishing characteristics (Johnson, 2017, p.2).

First wave feminists focused on suffrage and public rights and evolved in the late 19th and early 20th centuries amid urban industrialism and liberal, socialist politics, was to increase opportunities for women (Rampton, 2015, p.1). Second wave feminism began in the late 1960s and continued until the 1990s, the credo was the personal is political (Rampton, 2015, p.3; Baxandall and Gordon, 2002, p.414). Third wave feminism, on the other hand, aimed to create their own brand of feminism that considers their own social circumstances and challenges. Young women today, for instance, believe they are more sophisticated and media-savvy than feminists of their

mothers' generation because they live in a society where mass media and information technology are prevalent. The role of cultural production and criticism is emphasized in a lot of third-wave literature, with a particular focus on female pop stars, hip-hop music, and beauty culture (Snyder, 2008, p.178).

However, focusing on second wave feminism as it is connected to how women reintroduced the human experience of being a woman into the political and economic rhetoric (Mack-Canty, 2004). Which is also connected with the subject of the research as it focuses on how femininities evolved in times of economic blockade and political division. Second-wave feminism was influenced and sparked by the civil rights movement, started embracing race and class problems that were significant to black women in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Baxandall and Gordon, 2002, p. 410).

Second wave feminism's motto, "personal is political", is utilized to draw attention to the difficulties that many women face as a result of patriarchy, such as domestic violence, workplace inequity, unfair distribution of home labor, and so on (Mack-Canty, 2004, p.154). The second branch of the women's movement, known as women's liberation, was born out of a rebellion of these civil rights and new left women. It developed a style, constituency, and politics that were different from those of today: these women were younger, mostly in their twenties, and less professional; they insisted on woman-only autonomous groups; and they were radical in the sense that they worked for structural change and were doubtful of the ability of conventional politics to do so (Baxandall and Gordon, 2002, p.416/7).

The more successful assault on patriarchal society was done by second-wave feminists (Franceschet, 2004, p. 500). Activists of the second wave protested against the heterosexual and patriarchal foundations of the family and the church. In order to escape the educational and family requirements that molded individuals and upon which, they thought, organizations were built, they sought to undermine the fundamental philosophical, scientific, theoretical, and theological structures at the center of society (Molony and Nelson, 2017). For instance, the types of feminist activity that emerged in the 1970s were influenced by this particular idea of secularism. Instead of discussing how religion affected society, feminists attacked and even condemned all faiths, claiming that they were responsible for women's oppression because they relied on a hierarchical understanding of sexual difference that viewed women as inferior. Therefore, the activity of second wave feminists was oriented on

the fight for greater equality and universality, emphasizing legislative successes and the realization of rights for both men and women (Molony and Nelson, 2017, p. 66).

It is equally important to discuss post-colonial feminism, as it focuses on the challenges that postcolonial challenges have for the political mission of global feminism as well as the gender elements of those issues (Kerner, 2016, p.10). Particularly postcolonial feminisms have contributed much to understanding power, knowledge, and the importance of language, which results in very real interventions with very real impacts. Postcolonial feminists also address concrete concerns of poverty, injustice, and power, though, and avoid focusing solely on word, images, and representation (McEwan, 2001, p. 105).

Post colonialists evaluate how colonialism's legacy, as well as variations of neocolonialism and imperialism, inform and affect our postcolonial reality. According to Kerner (2016), postcolonial studies are primarily concerned with three things. First of all, they admit that historical forces led to the global, postcolonial world as we know it now. This calls for evaluating and seriously considering how European colonialism has affected contemporary political, social, and economic structures as well as thought patterns. It also calls for considering and carefully examining how colonialism and imperialism have been re-actualized in the modern era. Postcolonial studies work against any efforts to de-historicize and naturalize ways of living or any other situation, such as through ethnicization. This is especially true in the Global South, the parts of the world that have a long history of being stabilized and de-historicized in Euro-Atlantic discourse. Focusing on historical and contemporary global entanglements and links is postcolonial studies' second main emphasis. This challenges beliefs and explanations of independent progress, not just in Europe but also elsewhere. Postcolonial studies challenge modernization theories, which place Europe as the sole driver of world history, and theories of various modernities, which recognize high civilization forms outside of Europe but emphasize primarily autonomous processes in the establishment of each modernity. Third, imbalances in power between the North and the South are examined and critiqued in postcolonial studies. In doing so, they explicitly focus on discursive elements, differing from some of the earlier materialist accounts of world affairs, insights of which are progressively being reinstated into postcolonial studies. As a result, one can say that, particularly since the field's materialist turn, postcolonial studies attempt to look at discursive, material, and – in

particular – economic aspects of global power relations in conjunction (Kerner, 2016, p. 9).

Many theorists investigated how the postcolonial discourse could be applied to the fields of migration, gender, and health. They also looked at how the fusion of postcolonial and black feminist discourses produced a postcolonial feminism perspective that challenges binary classifications and provides the theoretical framework for the analysis of complex social relations, including gender relations (Khan et al., 2007, p. 231).

The portrayal of women in formerly colonized nations and in Western locales is a key focus of postcolonial feminist theory. It focuses on how gender difference is constructed in colonial and anti-colonial discourses, as well as how women are represented in these discourses with specific attention to the work of female writers. The critiques of postcolonial feminism bring up a number of conceptual, methodological, and political issues with the study of gender representation (Tyagi, 2014, p. 45).

By opposing Western conceit and ethnocentrism and embracing the voices of oppressed groups, postcolonial feminisms aim to undermine the authority to label, represent, and theorize. The power to identify, including the usage of terminology like primitive, native, traditional, and Third World women, has been a source of special worry for women in the South. Since colonial times, Western feminism has maintained its ability to speak for women elsewhere (McEwan, 2001, p. 100). According to Mohanty (1988), white, middle-class norms do not apply to black and Southern women, who are thus defined as different. Monolithic and exclusive words like Third World women obscure the diversity of women- in terms of class, race, culture, religion, sexuality, and so forth (McEwan, 2001, p. 100). Many of the same methodological concepts found in critical feminist research, such as processes of reflexivity, reciprocity, and transformational research, are also present in post-colonial feminists' study. To portray a conceptual approach that urges us to consider all the elements of oppression, not just those created by colonialism, past and present, but also those constructed by race, each of these processes/concepts is re-conceptualized, with a focus on how processes like racial identity organize daily experience. Post-colonial feminists promote a thorough and in-depth examination that reveals the intersections of all elements (Khan et al., 2007).

With its repeated emphasis on the need to take gender concerns into account, postcolonial feminist theory puts pressure on mainstream postcolonial theory. As some feminist critics point out, postcolonial theory is a male-centered field that has not only disregarded women's issues but also exploited them. As a result, there is now tension between postcolonialism and feminism. Postcolonial feminist theorists have charged postcolonial theorists with misrepresenting women in nationalist discourses in addition to erasing the role of women in the battle for independence (Tyagi, 2014, p. 46).

In addition to second wave feminism and postcolonial feminists, it's important to discuss the term intersectionality which refers to the interaction of social identification frameworks like race, class, and gender in shaping life experiences, particularly those of privilege and oppression (Gopaldas, 2013, p. 90). One of the earliest examples of intersectionality has been credited to the Combahee River Collective, a group of Black feminists, where they mentioned that they find it difficult to distinguish between racial, class, and sex oppression because in our lives, they are most frequently experienced simultaneously, they claimed (Cole, 2009).

Within this broad umbrella, intersectionality can also be usefully conceptualized as a constellation of comprehension developments that change in relation to one another along with variations in the interpretivist communities that elevate them. Intersectionality can be thought of as an encompassing knowledge project whose changing curves grow from and respond to social groupings of complex social disparities. A collection of concepts from the larger knowledge project offers brief definitional consensuses. The reason why overarching intersectional frameworks have been so successful is that they provide the impression that the constellation of more compact knowledge initiatives can be unquestioningly grouped within intersectionality's broad definition (Collins, 2015, p.5).

2.1.2 Gender as a Social Construction. The term gender distinguishes between our biologically given characteristics, also referred to as sex, and the expectations, actions, and attitudes that are taught about what it means to be a man or woman (Rolleri, 2013). So, from the level of individual gendered selves through cultural norms and expectations that influence interaction to the design of many institutional domains. Gender is multifaceted and dynamically ingrained in all of these layers at the same time (Budgeon, 2013, p.319). It is seen as a product that is constructed and performed in interaction rather than a fixed or static identity. They emerge as various forms of masculinities and femininities that are built and reconstructed in place of prior norms that are passively acquired during childhood socialization (Brekowitz, Manohar, and Tinker, 2010, p.133). Instead of identifying gender based on anatomy, social constructivists believe that gender should be referred to through history and culture's eyes (Moynihan, 1998, p.1073; Martin, 2004, p.1249).

Gender is achieved through people and their surroundings, according to social constructivists. Therefore, gender is not something we are, but something constructed, or created, by our social environment that leads to our actions and beliefs (Moynihan, 1998, p.1073). According to Van Den Berg (2011, p.386), who is following in the footsteps of Foucault and Butler, both gender difference—maternity vs. femininity— and sexual difference—male vs. female sexualities—are cultural constructs used to maintain patriarchy, which is a power imbalance in which men have more sway than women (Budgeon, 2013, p.318).

Constructivists challenge the concept that the existing system is neutral by exposing the manufactured nature of our understanding of men's and women's qualities, roles, interests, and so on. This is true in terms of culture, society, and the law. There is also a structural factor to consider. If it is agreed that gender is socially constructed; it means admitting that there is environmental sociocultural conditioning at work, and that our perceptions of ourselves and others are not as free as we might believe (Havelková, 2020, p.435). Individuals are treated differently depending on their gender. For instance, if a parent dressed a baby boy in attire meant for infant girls, the child would be treated with more gentleness (Keaton and Bodie, 2011, p.195). Humans learn masculine and feminine traits via their experiences with their surroundings, making humans active participants in the creation of female-male standards (Rolleri, 2013).

17

According to gender and the situation in which we find ourselves, we label others and ourselves (Smith, Noll, and Bryant, 1999, p.499). According to Deaux and Mjor (1987) many factors influence gender-related responses, which are very flexible and context-dependent. People's gender conceptions contain gender belief systems, which include descriptive and prescriptive aspects for both genders. Toril Moi, on the other hand, suggested to replace the concept of gender with the concept of the lived body, which would provide feminists with a notion that can fulfill the role of sex-gender categorization while avoiding its drawbacks. The lived body is a coherent concept of a physical body functioning and experiencing in a particular socio-cultural context; therefore, it is a body-in-situation (Young, 2002, p. 415).

Gender is embedded in all aspects of social life, therefore has close links with political institutions including the state. For instance, the family institution, the military, and religion, among other institutions, have been unsettled by second-wave feminism's challenge to the legitimacy of girls' and women's subjugation (Smith, Noll, and Bryant, 1999, p.500; Martin, 2004, p.1258). Kate Young argues for a gender perspective in development planning in order to encourage and enhance women's participation and empowerment. Gender as an institution helps highlight its many characteristics - ideology, practices, restrictions, conflicts, and power - as well as its intricacies and multifacetedness (Wieringa, 1998, p.356; Martin, 2004). Institutionalization of gender, in turn, triggers different performances of it towards external and internal audiences which is covered in depth in the following section.

2.1.3 Gender Performativity. Gender is thought to be a defining characteristic of all human identities and a method of identifying and distinguishing humans from other sexified organisms; therefore, the concept of gender is at the focus of many feminist analyses. Humans are interpellated as gendered creatures from the moment of birth and continue to be gendered in a variety of ways throughout our lives. Humans should also recognize that they are considered as gendered beings, gender affects and encodes humans in a variety of ways (Lloyd, 1999, p.195). Gender performativity is introduced in *Gender Trouble*, where Butler states that gender establishes performance— that is, constituting the identity it is alleged to be. Gender is always a doing in this sense, even though it is not a doing by a person who could be considered to have existed before the deed (Butler 2002, p.33, Salih 2007, p.56). Gender identity does not exist behind gender expressions; rather, the very expressions that are claimed to be its outcomes performatively generate gender identity (Butler 2002, p.33).

Gender and gender roles are complex social performances that people put on in daily life, according to the theory of gender performativity. Public perceptions of man, masculine, and feminine were built on hegemonic versions of these acts. If being a woman or a man is indeed acted and reinforced in daily life, then others' impressions of our gender performances, not just our own, impact how we identify with each gender (Butler, 2002). The need for acceptance of the gendered self as a real, intelligent subject drives gender performativity and its materialization in the shape of bodies that matter. In other words, the urge to project a cohesive and compelling identity, one that is acknowledged and valued by others, underpins our performance of gender (Tyler and Cohen, 2010, p. 179).

Performativity theory essentially rejects the essentialist concept of selfhood and the idea that a person has a consistent gender identity. Instead, Butler explains how social agents create reality—including identities—in everyday life using language, gesture, and a variety of symbolic social signs using theatrical, anthropological, phenomenological, and philosophical theory (Nentwich and Morison, 2017, p. 5).

According to the social constructivist understanding of gender, gender is not in any way a permanent locus of agency from which different acts flow, but rather an identity that is shakily formed through time and is built by the repetition of behaviors. The stylization of the body also affects gender; thus, it is important to comprehend how many bodily gestures, actions, and enactments give the appearance of an eternally

gendered person (Butler, 1988, p.519). In other words, the fact that gender exists is typically taken as evidence for its intrinsic legitimacy. Gender is influenced by essential conventions to be one gender or the other, frequently within a strictly binary frame, hence gender reproduction is constantly a power struggle. One essential aspect of gender is the reproduction of social norms that have the potential to be destroyed or reversed in unexpected ways (Butler, 2009, p.1). Butler confused the lines separating sex from gender to show that sex is not gender. No natural body that existed prior to its cultural inscription exists because all bodies are gendered at birth. This seems to imply that gender is a series of behaviors, is a doing rather than a being, and not something that one is, but one does (Salih, 2007, p. 55).

Judith Butler's theory of performativity has contributed some helpful ideas for thinking about and researching the gendered self within this scholarly phenomenon. The idea of a fundamental, stable self as it is currently understood in psychology was further challenged by her concept of performativity, which in turn further challenged the notion of a uniquely female perspective or experience in feminist theory and the women's movement. Butler argued that sex is also a creation like gender, challenging de Beauvoir's idea that being and becoming a woman still entailed sex and gender on opposing extremes of the continuum. Butler believes that we do not naturally possess sex, but rather we construct it through preexisting standards (Nentwich and Morison, 2017).

2.1.4 Masculinities and Femininities in the Making. The premise that gender is a social construct means that biological factors are not the only ones that influence the affective, cognitive, and behavioral traits that are typically associated with either masculinity or femininity. Instead, people are socialized to perform gender in accordance with a particular society's gender-typed norms and expectations, based on their biological sex (Conradie, 2011). Building on the theory of performativity, it is important to understand what is being performed which is debated in the literature on masculinities and femininities. Male and masculinity studies, look at men's identities, performances, power, privileges, relationships, styles, and structures, rather than merely defining or categorizing them as *a state of being* (Pascoe and Bridges 2016).

The concept of masculinity dates back to the nineteenth century, one of the first people to pay close attention to the concept was by Sigmund Freud. His interest in the

socialization of men and women, was a steppingstone to understanding the intricate structure of masculinity. Despite the fact that his work was overlooked in later studies, it was a pivotal milestone in the development of modern masculinity theory (Connell, 1995). Masculinity studies were also driven by feminist and gay liberation movements in the 1970s, which had already begun to criticize patriarchal male authority (Connell, 1995).

Men do not come into the world with an understanding of masculinity and masculine practices. This concept is imposed on them by the society; thus, socially created, which means that society does not only shapes the basic outlines of this subjectivity, but also polices the borders of the identities it sets through punishments and incentives (Lewis, 2007, p.6). Men's gender, or the way they are, is frequently confused with their biological sex, and masculinity, or the way males are, is therefore thought to be the result of genetic/hormonal evolution. However, masculinity is a socially constructed gender practice, not a biologically determined set of traits (Connell, 1995). Connell (1995) notes that because of its dynamic and unseen structure, the social aspect does not seem to be as genuine as the biological features when compared to biological changes. Many people are therefore ignorant of the living character of gender and masculinity as a gender practice, which creates the conundrum of using sex versus gender as general categories (Connell, 1995).

The element of power, not the superficial manifestations of behavior, distinguishes masculinity from femininity. Masculinity is a practice that promotes access to power, privilege, and valuable resources, as well as a hegemonic worldview. It is important to emphasize that while not all males wield authority, all men benefit from patriarchal privilege. Whether it's because of color, class, or sexual orientation, recipients of privilege are usually blissfully oblivious of its benefits. As a result, it is up to individuals who do not have access to specified privileges to point out how unequal their influence is (Lewis, 2007, p.7). The fact that masculinities are varied, adaptable, and fluid and do not exclusively exist in hegemonic positions (detailed below) in a society is sometimes neglected. They can also be seen as contextual positions, where the beliefs, behaviors, and ideals held in one environment may not be shared by those held in another (Jewkes et al., 2015, p.113). Masculinities are not uniform, constant, or necessary; rather, they are plural, contextual, and located in various power hierarchies in terms of structural determinants (Connell, 2005). Men's

21

masculinity is being re-defined, reconstructed, dismantled, and changed, among other things. Men battle with the definition of masculinity rather than pondering whether or not they should adjust their behavior. It should be understood that dominance is a feature of masculinity, not something men do on their own (McMahon, 1993, p.691).

Three distinct ideas about what it means to be a man are masculinism, male liberationism, and pro-feminism. The first point of view is in favor of patriarchy and male control over gay people and women. The exaltation of masculinism prevents its proponents from ever genuinely appreciating what it is to be a male because women and LGBTQ+ people oppose it. In other words, males who glorify masculinism are unable to accept males with less masculine features, in addition to males in the LGBTQ+ community. On the other hand, male liberationism is opposed to patriarchy's oppression of women as well as the responsibilities that men are expected to carry out. For example, they fight for standards that say a guy should work, fight, be sexually powerful, strong, and emotionless, not cry, or be suitably angry and aggressive according on the circumstance (Beril, 2013, p.20). Women have long been identified as the emotional gender, and the concept of emotions has various ideological functions. Women's ideological inferiority is perpetuated by cultural belief, which promotes the divide between facts and values as cognition, which theoretically achieves knowledge of facts, is dichotomized in relation to emotion, which is solely an index of value and personal interest (Lutz, 1986, p.288). The third concept, the pro-feminist approach, condemns patriarchy as a whole, rather than distinguishing between women, men, and queers. To pro-feminists, patriarchal males and the system are the fundamental cause of women's and queer people's subordination, hence this method aims to reveal the mechanism behind patriarchy and raise men's understanding of it (Beril, 2013, p.20).

Types of Masculinities. Considering that men, usually, have more power than females, there are variations among this kind of power. Connell's gender theory recognizes four types of masculinity: hegemonic, subordination, complicit, and marginalization (Gomez, 2007, p.116; Connell, 1995). Connell argued that when thinking about masculinities, it's important to think about the relations between the different varieties of masculinity: relations of alliance, domination, and submission. These sorts of masculinity relationships are dynamic, not static, and any move or change in gender

includes a commensurate shift or change in definitions of hegemonic masculinity (Reeser 2020, 21).

Hegemonic Masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is often regarded as the most prominent theoretical topic in the history of men's and masculinity studies. According to Connell, it is a methodological approach for recognizing the attitudes and actions of men that support gender inequality, such as their domination over women, their authority over other men, and the patriarchal structures that guarantee their dominance over women (Connell, 1987; Reeser 2020, p.20; Connell, 1995). When discussing hegemonic masculinities, Connell refers to a historically based hierarchy of masculinities that includes hegemonic masculinities, such as white, heterosexual, middle-class men, conservative masculinities who support it, and subjugated masculinities (Connell, 1897; Newton, 1994, p.195). With the underlying premise that hegemonic masculinity is both a personal and a collective endeavor, as it incorporates a number of characteristics, including a hierarchy of masculinities, unequal access for men to power over women and other men, and the interaction between patriarchy, power, and men's identity (Jewkes et al., 2015, p.113). Besides women and homosexuality, hegemonic masculinity is also related to race. Connell referred to black masculinity in the United States as marginal because, while it may embody certain aspects of hegemonic masculinity, it is not recognized and cannot remain so, implying that the whiteness of hegemonic masculinity cannot be disregarded (Reeser 2020, 24).

Even if hegemonic masculinity is not as prevalent in a specific society or a setting and may only relate to the actual personalities of a small number of men, vast number of males are complicit in supporting the hegemonic paradigm (Reeser 2020, 21). Imperialism's and neoliberal global power's shifting structures are crucial to our understanding of masculinities. Both illustrate the current structural circumstances of hegemonic programs and the historical effects of gender projects. It can be said that masculine hegemony is continually being built, renovated, and challenged (Connell, 2016, p.314).

Therefore, the dominance of hegemonic masculinity over other subordinate and marginalized masculinities, according to Connell, is just as vital for gender hegemony (Schippers, 2007, p.87). Periods of hegemony were never set because of the underlying class disparity; they were always reliant on preexisting historical circumstances, some

of which were more favorable than others, and opposed because of the presence of subordinated classes (Jefferson, 2002, p. 68).

Subordinate Masculinity. If hegemonic masculinity is the currently acceptable legitimization of male dominance, it is always historically contingent and disputed by women and men whose gender practices contradict the hegemonic configuration. Hence, why Connell refers to such men's masculinities as *subordinate* (Jefferson, 2002, p.68/9).

The subordination of homosexual men by heterosexual men is perhaps most crucial to Connell. Subordinate masculinities are embodied by gay men, where they serve as the inferior or as the other, while during comparison, hegemonic masculinity is seen as the ideal (Schippers, 2007, p.87). Subordinate masculinities are frequently confused with femininity. There is, however, no conceptual equipment for distinguishing femininity from lower masculinities. Thus, this argument remains vague (Schippers, 2007, p.88). Given heterosexuality's pervasive cultural domination, Connell's key example of homosexual masculinities being subservient is expected (Jefferson, 2002, p.69).

Complicit Masculinity. The term complicit masculinities refer to the significant number of males who do not practice or criticize the hegemonic interpretation of masculinity, but actually benefit from it (Jefferson, 2002, p.69). Complicit masculinities are those who were created in a way to benefit from patriarchy without experiencing its conflicts or dangers (Schippers, 2007, p.87). In other words, the extension and institutionalization of a male power group is referred to as complicit masculinity. As a result, a group determines how subordination will be implemented. Hegemony is ineffectual if a thoughtful and strategic plan is not successfully developed to ensure power control. Complicity is a cautious conspiracy and one of the core elements of masculinity's power because it alludes to the mental preparedness to rule over other groups (Gomez, 2007, p.118).

Marginal Masculinity. Besides women and homosexuality, hegemonic masculinity is also related to race. Connell referred to black masculinity in the United States as marginal because, while it may embody certain aspects of hegemonic

masculinity, it is not recognized and cannot remain so, implying that the whiteness of hegemonic masculinity cannot be disregarded (Reeser 2020, p.24). Masculinities are devalued as a result of the interaction of gender with other systems, such as racism and class. The masculinities of subordinate groups will always be under the control of the powerful group's hegemonic masculinity because of the dominance/subordination connections across ethnic groups, for example, which has the authority to exclude or permit entrance to the hegemonic project (Jefferson, 2002, p.69). Men who are marginalized are homosexual or transgendered. Because of religious, cultural, and other moral and ethical issues, marginalized male's masculinity falls beyond the recognized norm of masculine behavior (Lewis, 2007, p.7).

Using a multi-layered model of social practices, feminist social constructionist theories investigate how gender operates as a defining characteristic and guiding principle of collectivizes, social institutions, historical processes, and social practices (Budgeon, 2013, p.319). Being a woman was thought to give one the appearance of being weaker than males, yet men had natural influence over women and children, which was why they were seen as having untouchable social power (Connell, 1987). Tough, ambitious, strong, analytical, forceful, independent, and aggressive were used to describe masculinity, while on the other hand, compassion, gentile, soft, affection, loving, caring, and happy were used to describe femininity (Bem, 1974).

Conflict-affected and post-conflict nations have distinctive socioeconomic, political, administrative, and security contexts. When tackling the issue of women's economic empowerment in these countries, it is important to consider these variables since they present both distinct challenges and potential for the implementation of a women's economic empowerment approach (Abril, 2009, p.16).

Considering that the research focuses on how women's employment was impacted during the years of blockade and economic recession, it is crucial to look at examples that complement the topic, which also helps me to put the case of Gaza into a broader context. Post-conflict strategies often have three objectives: rebuilding the economy, reintegrating combatants, and internally displaced people, and addressing the underlying causes of the conflict. Employment affects all three, as has long been understood. Employment after a crisis is essential for immediate stability, reintegration, economic growth, and long-term peace (United Nations 2009). According to a report for the United States Agency for International Development, job

development initiatives are one of the best ways to stabilize communities and maintain peace in the early aftermath of violence (Stewart, 2015, p. 9).

Different methods may have attracted women to the wartime economy. During the husband absence, the wife frequently had less to do at home and the family's work income dropped significantly; for some, patriotic duty was sufficient justification to participate in the war effort. Several investments made by women during the war, such as those in job training and alternate housekeeping arrangements, reduced the costs and raised the benefits of postwar work once they were in the labor market (Goldin, 1991, p.741).

In post-conflict cultures, female economic empowerment has the ability to support the economic growth as well as better governance and social cohesion. The disenfranchised typically participate more in local and national decision-making processes as part of an empowerment process. Therefore, increased female participation could improve governance and aid in easing the transition from war to development (Abril, 2009, p. 18). During World War two, the male labor force in the United States declined by almost 9 million during the war years whereas the female labor force increased by more than 7 million, an enormous change given that the female labor force stood at 14 million in 1940 (Goldin and Olivetti, 2013). Married women's labor force involvement reached a tipping point in the 1940s, which led many to attribute economic and social upheaval to World War Two (Goldin, 1989). The country was likely going through its most severe downturn in history when 1940 rolled around. Four years later, 37 percent of all women over the age of fourteen had a paying job, and there were now 20 million women in the labor force, an increase of almost 50 percent. In some professions, the growth was even more noticeable. By 1945, there were 4.7 million more women working in administrative roles than there were in 1940, a rise of 89 percent, and 4.5 million more working in factories, an increase of 112 percent. Women now make up more than four times as many production workers in the manufacturing of durable goods (Schweitzer, 1980, p. 91). Notwithstanding, as female employment rose the years after the Second World War, conservative gender standards posed a significant barrier to female employment. The male breadwinner paradigm was contested by women's employment, which was especially supported by Christian democratic parties, which were major players in the development of social insurance programs in Western Europe (Afonso, 2018, p. 253).

26

Similarly, the creation of jobs for women, for others, and for the general economic recovery is made possible by women's economic empowerment. For instance, in Liberia the economic collapse and loss of livelihoods brought on by a protracted battle are partially mitigated by the prominence of women in some sectors of the economy. The bulk of the nation's small traders and agricultural laborers are women. Their market women networks connect female producers from rural areas with female dealers in Monrovia[11], allowing the basic operation of the economy in a situation when the market is completely broken (Abril, 2009, p. 18).

Also, it is crucial to look at female employment in Afghanistan to inform the conflict and blockade-led change in femininities and challenging of masculinities in Gaza. Considering that Afghanistan is a country that suffers from conflict that has been doing on for decades, in addition to the Taliban regime that caused women to face difficulties when it comes to employment and other aspects of social life. Throughout Afghanistan's turbulent history, there have been a variety of initiatives to better the lives of women, promote their involvement in public life, and also steps to further limit their freedom and rights. The advancement of women's rights and equality has typically been imposed from the top by ruling elites who support raising the status of women, but without a supporting strategy to mobilize and involve support from the female grassroots (Emadi, 2015).

In order to support and champion the cause of women's rights, they fostered and enabled the participation of women from wealthy families in public life. However, these women were typically more motivated than structured, they lacked unified methods and shared nothing with most women who did not share their viewpoints and did not frequently interact with or have access to them. Conservative groups opposed official initiatives supporting women's rights, viewing them as attempts to undermine Islamic beliefs and way of life. These measures to provide women's rights from the top also enraged them (Emadi, 2015). Similar to several Arab countries, the position of women in Afghanistan's civil, cultural, economic, political, and social lives is constrained by traditional cultural and religious norms and practices. Afghan women's business is particularly challenging due to the intersection of the cultural, political, and economic realms. The difficulties faced by female entrepreneurs in Afghanistan are

---

[11] Monrovia is the capital of Liberia

similar to those faced by women in other conservative Muslim nations, albeit to a greater degree (Holmen, Min, and Saarelainen, 2011; Gilani, 2008).

It is worth mentioning that the predicament of Afghan women, particularly those from middle- and upper-class families, highly profited from the post 2001 regime and order in Afghanistan (Allen and Felbab-Brown, 2020). Formal regulated employment outside the home is scarce, and although none of the Afghan women stated employment as their top human rights concern, work most certainly was a concern for at least 14 percent of Afghan men. Despite that, women's organizations that have established themselves in the state have worked hard to give women more opportunity to engage in the workforce, but they have not done nearly as much to give males the same opportunities, which resulted in high resentment among Afghan men as a result of this (Gilani, 2008, p.60).

More women were joining the workforce, while more men were holding on to roles that are traditionally for women, which led to the standard gender roles to fall apart due to the females' capacity to manage both sets of roles, those of the private world (the household) and those of the public sphere (employment). The ability of women to manage both roles—those of caretaker and income earner—has destroyed the responsibilities of the man as breadwinner and father (Gilani, 2008, p.62). Therefore, post 9-11, women are more easily becoming the head of homes as they rise to the position of principal breadwinners thanks to the additional support of women's aid organizations that have moved into the nation. In part because women are given special consideration and treatment, international initiatives make it more difficult for men to exert a role they have historically grown accustomed to. Masculinity is endangered by women who are now taking on traditionally male tasks as economic opportunities become scarce, and men increasingly find themselves in the role of primary caregiver rather than primary breadwinner. Thus, rather than being a place where masculinity can be promoted, employment in Afghanistan looked to be a place where males are progressively reduced in size. As a result, masculinity in Afghanistan was challenged and was in danger as conventional gender roles are flipped and males are viewed as less significant contributors to the family's economic success (Gilani 2008, p.60).

The discussion on how conflict leads to women's economic outlook is quite important, as it adds to the main argument of this thesis – which is the blockade and

economic situation of Gaza led women to explore employment opportunities. Major economic consequences follow from conflict. The International Monetary Fund estimates that annual economic growth in conflict-affected nations is roughly 3 percentage points lower than in other nations, and that income per capita normally drops by about 12 percent during the first five years of a conflict. Conflict can increase women's economic prospects, shift views and expectations about gender roles, and prompt swift societal change despite the carnage and devastation it causes (Klugman and Mukhtarova, 2020).

2.1.5 Challenging Masculinities. For some, defining masculinity is challenging, owing to a common-sense conception of masculinity as manifested in men's daily activities. Men do not really define masculinity in any methodical sense; it is something they simply do. Beyond this point of view, that is somehow taken for granted, the unexpressed character of masculinity for most men is about something bigger. Masculinity, as a dominant ideology, eliminates the necessity for reason, as Pierre Bourdieu previously observed. This androcentric worldview establishes itself as impartial and does not require explanation in discourses intended to legitimize it. The social order operates as a massive symbolic machine that seeks to confirm the masculine dominance that it is based on (Lewis, 2007, p.4). Therefore, rather than being discovered and defined, masculinity must be understood. It is not simply enigmatic, but there are others who have a vested stake in keeping it monolithic and opaque (Braudy, 2010, p.4).

Men's masculine consciousness evolves as a result of a combination of social practices or behaviors. It is also linked to an ideology that orients males to a gendered conception of themselves as gendered subjects with defined roles and expectations set by society (Lewis, 2007, p.6). What is seen today is that men's roles in society are indeed being challenged and their social dominance is in jeopardy; females no longer accept inferior compensation for having the same position and career as a male. Females today demand representation in the highest levels of government and business (Landsberg, 2020).

Since masculinity is not a static concept, it is constantly adapting and altering in response to new situations (Lewis, 2007, p.8). The definition of masculinity is entangled in a logic of opposition and contradiction at the same time. The logic of

difference gives masculinity flexibility and malleability, making it possible to explain changes in dominant modes of masculinity in terms of distinguishable contrasts between higher and lower, typical, and abnormal, hegemonic, and counterhegemonic forms. These changes are handled by a web of permutations that can take masculinity in several directions while preserving a sense of continuity (Hutchings, 2008, p.401).

Changes in ideas of intimacy and gendered relationships are intricately tied to shifting economic and social situations, such as urbanization, higher levels of formal education, and greater consumption expectations. All of these are changing men's attitudes toward marriage and fatherhood, which are reflected in their values and behaviors. While marriage and parenthood continue to be essential components of manhood, the importance of money in helping men achieve these goals is shifting (Smith, 2020). Fortunately, some men see equality and equity as entirely natural and long overdue; hence, actively support these goals. However, for some, this shift has resulted in a transformation. Traditional gender norms have been mostly pulled back since Victorian times, but social expectations of the stronger sex have not, a man can still be counted on to offer a shoulder to lean on and to provide for his family (Landsberg, 2020). Nevertheless, a lot of men and women want to see more fundamental changes, like an end to all of men's privileges and power over women, and, most importantly, an end to men's increased coercion and violence, which such authority has up until now accepted, if not promoted. As women's desires to change get stronger and more confident, both on a personal level and through collective battles, more men will be forced to reassess the thoughtless presumptions and unchallenged prerogatives of masculinity (Segal, 1993, p.634).

For many, the fast and unsettling shifts in gender relations that have been occurring globally signaled a crisis in masculinity. In a period of uncertain labor and property relations, the idea of the male provider that supported claims to legitimate male privilege in many societies was destroyed. Terms like frustrated masculinities and aggrieved entitlement have become common in public discourse versions of masculinity to describe men's existential condition of fury and terror at having their rightful status challenged (Kandiyoti, 2019, p. 32). When masculinities are challenged, they become very visible, which provides the researcher with a chance for their investigation. Most men and women work in professions that are predominately filled by people of the same sex due to the long-standing sex segregation of the labor

markets. In Britain, two thirds of women and a slightly higher proportion of men work in professions where they outnumber the other sex by a ratio of at least two to one, and many professions are significantly more segregated than that (Lupton, 2000, p. 34/5).

Therefore, as the male's masculinity grows out of the social practices and norms surrounding him, female economic empowerment, and employment results in masculinity to be challenged, this is especially true in patriarchal societies (Landsberg, 2020; Lewis, 2007). However, considering that masculinity is created through the society, it is not fixed where it can be challenged and thus changes regarding gender relations can occur as a result of certain events (Smith, 2020).

2.1.6 Conclusion. In conclusion, the aim of the theoretical framework is to present a comprehensive theoretical background on gender and its evolution to help in understanding the case-study presented thoroughly. Firstly, the chapter started with an overview on feminism and its evolution through different waves, specifically during the second wave feminism, as well as the impact of post-colonial feminism on women through different parts of the world. Moving on to social constructivism of gender and whether humans consciously grow with their gender roles or is it imposed on them by their surroundings: culture and society. Also, the concept of gender itself, how words such as gender and sex are misused, and the interpretation of a gender being part of a social institution. In addition to gender performativity where according to Butler (2002) gender is a doing, in which it exists outside the very manifestations that are performed as its results to create gender identity.

After that the focus shifted to theories of masculinity and femininity, where the development of both is explained. Starting with masculinity where Connell's types of masculinities, hegemony, subordination, complicit, and marginalization, were also examined, and the fact that with the wide range of masculinities, males are constantly fighting with hegemonic masculinity, the dilemma of how actual males, with their distinct biographies and mental formations, interact to these varied masculinities seems inevitable (Jefferson, 2002, p.73). Also, a focus was given to the development of female employment post-conflict, where women were encouraged to work and join the economic field after war or crisis, taking the example of women participating in the economic field in the United States after World War Two, as well as in Liberia and Afghanistan. Finally, this section ends by giving an overview on challenging

31

masculinities, as the idea of the male provider that supported claims to legitimate male privilege in many societies is currently changing and being challenged. Terms like frustrated masculinities and aggrieved entitlement have become common in public discourse versions of masculinity.

As the upcoming chapter will shed the focus on the main case-study of this research, The Gaza Strip, where it covers the 2007 blockade, the political division of the Palestinian parties, and how both aspects had an effect on the development of femininities as well as challenging dominant masculinities in the Strip. It is important to discuss how the presented theories help us understand the development of femininities and challenged masculinities in the context of the case study. Theories on feminism will add to the case study in understanding the evolution of femininities in the society – politically and economically. While gender as a social construction and gender performativity, will help us in understanding how gender roles and activities came to be in our current societies. The discussion on masculinities and femininities in the making contributes to the case study in which it shows the different types of masculinities, how masculinities are performed, and developed. Similarly, it focuses on female development in the society, especially in times of conflict and post-conflict. Finally, the discussion on challenging masculinities provides us with a theoretical understanding of how masculinities can be challenged, especially by working women and female development, which is crucial for the case study.

2.2 Case Study: The Gaza Strip

In order to understand the development of femininities and challenging masculinities as a result of economic recession, I explore the case of Gaza, which offers a crucial exploratory case due to the Israeli blockade which paved the way for economic recession and hardship which required women to adopt a non-traditional breadwinner role by participating in the labor market.

As stated before, the Israeli blockade that led to the economic recession is the independent variable in this study. Therefore, the aim of this section is to offer an operationalization to the economic recession in the case that I will analyze. This sub-chapter is divided into three sections, the first section will describe and explain the blockade and political division on the Gazan economy, then I will move on to discuss gender roles in the Gaza Strip, and finally how the blockade affected women, especially women's employment in Gaza.

2.2.1 Effects of the Blockade and Division on the Gazan Economy. After the 2006 legislative elections tension between the two main Palestinian parties, Hamas, and Fatah, rose. Among the two movements, there has been many disagreements. The ideological divergence between the two movements, which promotes Islamic doctrine and military conflict against Israel while simultaneously accepting a long ceasefire with the latter, is what accounts for the difference. The second adheres to secularism and contends that diplomatic relations with Israel are the sole means of ending Israeli occupation (Anadolu Agency, 2017).

Hamas accused Fatah of reversing the results of the democratic experiment it had won, while Fatah accused Hamas of delegitimizing Palestinians. As a result, Hamas gained full control of the Gaza Strip in June 2007 (Migdalovitz, 2010).

Following 2007, Hamas' rule was terminated by the PA President, Mahmud Abbas, and replaced with a West Bank-only administration headed by Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. On the other hand, Hamas remains in control of the Gaza Strip. Israel claimed it was acting in self-defense to prevent Hamas from obtaining weapons when it imposed a severe land, sea, and air embargo on the Gaza Strip. The resumption of diplomatic ties between the United States and Israel and the new PA administration coincided with this action. Israel reasoned that by comparing Hamas' authority with

the better living conditions Palestinians in the West Bank, the closure would turn Gazans against Hamas. Instead, the siege isolated the region and increased Hamas's power (Migdalovitz, 2010, p.1).

Due to Hamas' control of Gaza, Israel imposed an unprecedented blockade from land, sea, and air. It also has control over Gaza's demographic register, communications networks, and a slew of other sectors of life and infrastructure. A belligerent occupation is not the same as a true state of war, and it may not confer the technical right to form a blockade (Erakat, n.d). Notwithstanding, Israel's blockade of Gaza remains in place, trapping Gazans in one of the world's most densely populated areas, resulting in a prolonged humanitarian disaster with severe consequences (Butt, and Butt, 2016; Erakat, n.d.). Israel has been subjecting Palestinians to a strangling siege instead of performing its responsibility to safeguard the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, which is a flagrant breach of international humanitarian law and an unprecedented form of collective punishment. (Erakat, n.d.).

Although assessments on the effects varied between Israel's supporters and its critics, the blockade's implementation resulted in a humanitarian crisis in Gaza (Butt & Butt, 2016; Buchan, 2012; Migdalovitz, 2010). The blockade destroyed livelihoods and economic activity, and has worsened Palestinians' living conditions, increased their level of poverty and food insecurity, prevented reconstruction, as well as increased their reliance on aid, according to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). It is stated that the obstruction constitutes collective retribution (Migdalovitz, 2010), around 2 million people are trapped in Gaza, which has become a massive *human cage* on the Eastern Mediterranean as a result of the embargo, and they seem to have no possibility of escaping their desperate circumstances (Buchan, 2012).

The blockade has had a disastrous impact on the wellbeing of Gazans, burdening the Gazan economy, limiting travel, and drastically reducing the delivery of necessities including food, medication, gasoline, and other supplies. Over time, the barricade has evolved into many shapes and sizes. It has been tightened, loosened, and tightened again, but the alterations have often been shallow and brought on by external pressure (Butt, and Butt, 2016). Studies show that the limited humanitarian space in Gaza is shrinking by the day, and it will be difficult to find anything in the near future that signals a possible improvement in the situation (Alsoos, 2020).

34

After mapping the historical background and political division in Gaza, it is important to note that this siege or blockade differs from well-known sieges in modern and contemporary history in terms of the way it is carried out and the goals it looks to achieve (Sourani, 2011, p.3). Following the Oslo Accords, the regional economies of the West Bank and Gaza both experienced yearly growth rates of 10.7 percent and 6.1 percent, respectively. After the second intifada broke out in 2000, Israel forbade Gaza-based Palestinian laborers from entering or working there. Much of the Palestinian infrastructure, including institutions of the Palestinian National Authority, was destroyed between 2000 and 2006, and there were restrictions on the movement of people and goods. This had a cascading effect that adversely impacted poverty as well as overall development, employment, and economic progress. The Gazan economy only increased by 2 percent a year throughout this time (UNCTAD, 2020).

Finally, there have been five military operations since June 2007 while Gaza has been completely closed off from land, sea, and air travel. The blockade along with the division affected all economic sectors in Gaza, starting from trading, cut-out of industry, agriculture, supply of electricity and fuel, movement of goods and people, tourism – Gaza lies on the Mediterranean Sea, in addition to investment and construction due to the constant attacks Gaza faces from the occupation forces (Sourani, 2011). In the years between 2007 and 2018, Gaza's economy expanded by an average of 0.8 percent annually, whereas the West Bank's economy, which is not harmed by the closure and restrictions despite being occupied and subject to comparable restrictions, increased by 6.6 percent annually. As a result, from 37 percent in 1995 to 18 percent in 2018, Gaza's economic contribution to the Palestinian economy. Prior to 2007, Gaza's percentage never dropped below 31 percent and consistently hovered around 35 percent as evident by figure 1. Additionally, investment in Gaza almost vanished, dropping from 31 percent of all investment and 11 percent of the Occupied Palestinian Territory's GDP in 1994 to 10 percent and only 2.7 percent, respectively, in 2018. Only 2 percent of all non-building investment worldwide and 0.2 percent of GDP were spent on non-building projects in Gaza in 2018 (UNCTAD, 2020).

Figure 1: Gaza: Share in the Palestinian economy (UNCTAD, 2020)

Gaza's economy has undergone significant structural transformation since 1995 as a result of increased political risk, travel and access limitations, restricted access to imported inputs, devastation, and exclusion from international markets. Agriculture and industry, which make up the productive sectors of the economy, saw a decline in their proportion from 26 percent in 1995 to 12 percent in 2018 and their contribution to employment from 34 percent in 1995 to roughly 23 percent in 2018, as evident by figures 2 and 3. In its analysis of the de-industrialization and de-agriculturalization of the economy, UNCTAD has expanded on this. Because the agricultural and manufacturing sectors have a greater ability for innovation, productivity growth, the realization of economies of scale, and the increase of employment, it raises severe concerns about the future development of the economy of Gaza (UNCTAD, 2020, p. 9).
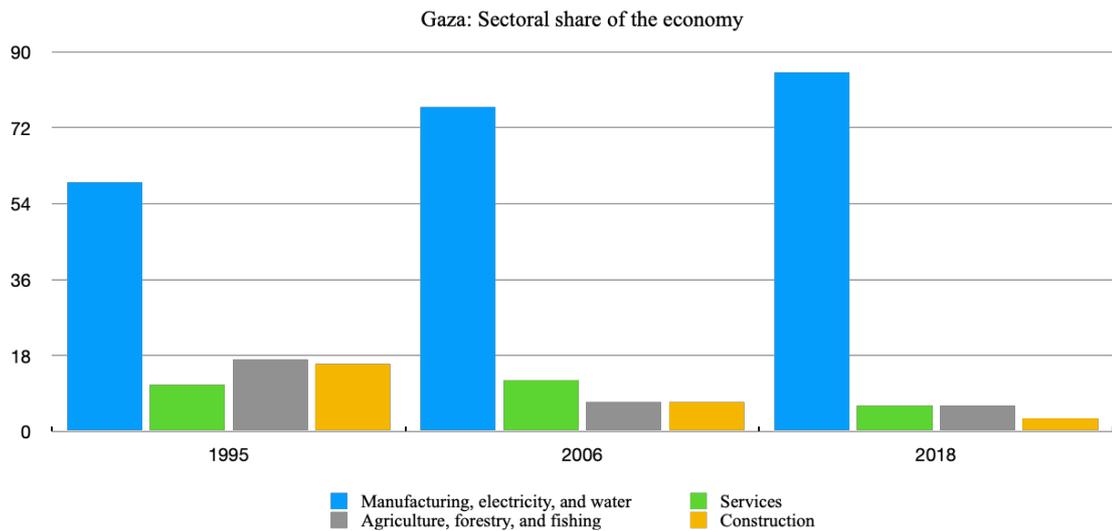
Figure 2: Gaza: Sectoral share of the economy (UNCTAD, 2020)
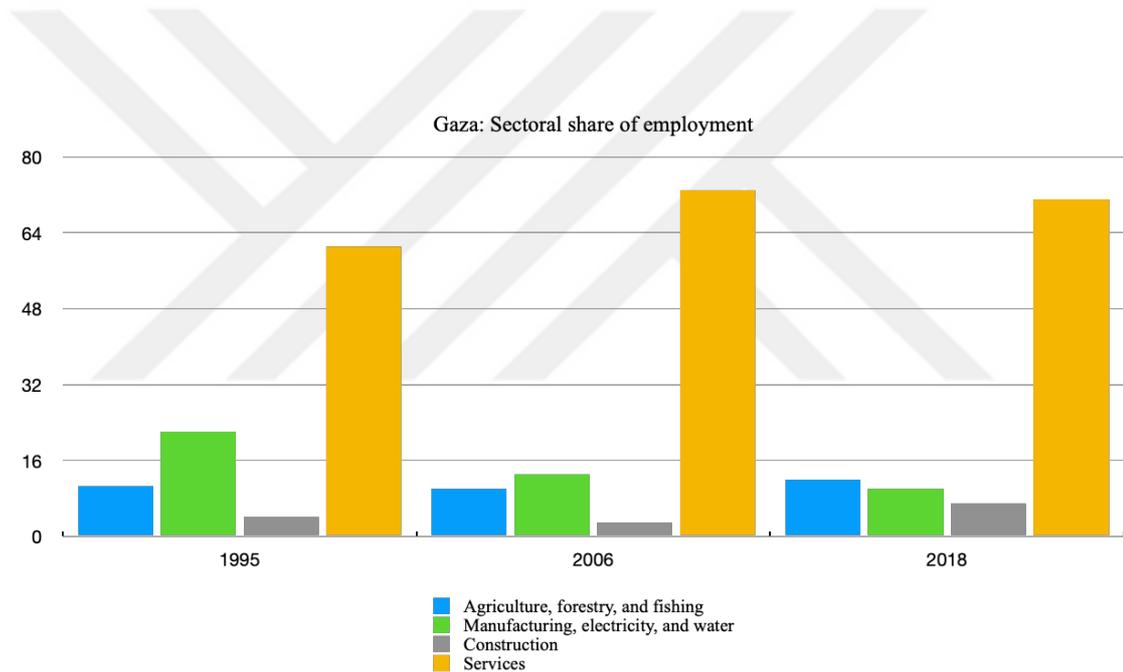
Figure 3: Gaza: Sectoral share of employment (UNCTAD, 2020)

According to Shaqoura (Palestinian News & Info Agency, 2015) an Arab League researcher specializing in Palestine, the siege policy has hampered economic development in Gaza, as shown by a sharp drop in economic performance indicators and restrictions on the entry of goods, merchandise, and cash liquidity, especially since the sector accounts for about 44 percent of Palestinian Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Consequently, the private sector has suffered, as it employs roughly 100,000 people – 53 percent of the total workforce. According to United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) more than 70 percent of Gaza Strip families have been living below the poverty line since mid-2007 (Palestinian News & Info Agency, 2015; UNRWA, 2021). The Gaza Strip, which is a home to more than two million Palestinians, suffers from severely poor economic and living conditions because of the embargo. In 2011, 60 percent of Gazan households were food insecure or at risk of becoming food insecure, a figure that has likely risen due to the continuation of the occupation, blockade, and division (Wendel, 2016). Poverty and unemployment rates had risen to 52 percent and 50 percent, respectively, by the start of 2020, owing to the Palestinian Authority's irregular payment of salaries and the Gaza government's increased tax rates on imported goods. According to the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor - found in Geneva, half of the Gaza Strip's population is poor, with four out of every five persons receiving financial aid (Alhelou, 2019; Anadolu Agency, 2020).

Before the blockade was imposed in 2005, the unemployment rate was 23.6 percent, and most recently by the end of 2021, it reached 50.2 percent, while the number of unemployed reached around 300,000, which is a tragic and unusual level, and most importantly, the highest in the world (Alhelou, 2019; Euro-mid Human Rights Monitor, 2022).

Ali Al-Hayek, the head of the Palestinian Businessmen Association in Gaza, told Al-Araby Al-Jadeed that a substantial crash is hitting the Palestinian economy's foundations, foreseeing a real catastrophe in the productive industrial side, which employs a considerable proportion of the workforce, as well as consumer trade that supplies the market (Alhelou, 2019).

Male employment has always been higher than females for several reasons including society's perception of women's work, which is influenced by a variety of factors such as household work, childbirth and the associated maternity leave, breastfeeding, and nursery. Also, because of the man's physical structure, he is desired by employers in many labor-intensive vocations, such as construction and real estate, or military duty. Women generally do not prefer to work at night for a variety of reasons, including the lack of agreement from their husbands or their families in general, or childcare responsibilities. Men's work is preferred due to fierce competition for the already underdeveloped Palestinian labor market, which is under siege from all sides by the Israeli occupation. Finally, scientific studies have shown

that in general, a lack of gender equality leads to a drop-in women's labor market involvement. As indicated by the table below (table 1), the unemployment rate for women in much higher that males (World Bank Group, 2022) despite the fact that currently many women work from hand to mouth, as presented in the results chapter.

Table 1

Labor Market Statistics in the Palestinian Territories – 2022

Indicator (percent)	West Bank	Gaza	Palestinian Territories
Unemployment rate	13.8	44.1	24.2
Labor force participation rate	47.2	39.6	44.3
Youth unemployment (15-29)	21.3	59.1	34.8
Male	17.6	52.1	29.4
Female	37.3	82.2	55.4

Source: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

2.2.2 Women and Gender Roles in Gaza. Some of the world's lowest standards of women's rights are found in the region's primarily Arab countries (Fisher, 2012). There is little doubt that the wars and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region have had an effect on women and gender relations. There is a connection between civil war and gender inequality, a catch-all phrase that covers a wide range of social relations outside women's issues. Gender disparity has been connected to both authoritarianism and economic underdevelopment (UNDP 2002; Dalacoura, 2019). Culture-based sexism is not exclusive to Arab countries, it was employed by colonial powers to spread sexist beliefs in the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, and South Asia (Fisher, 2012). Considering that the Arab region has its history with colonialism, as mentioned prior, postcolonial feminism contributed to the awareness of power, knowledge, and the significance of language, which leads to very real interventions with very real repercussions in postcolonial regions (McEwan, 2001, p. 105). The main focus of postcolonial feminists is on the construction of gender difference in colonial and anti-colonial narratives as well as how women are portrayed in these discourses (Tyagi, 2014, p. 45).

Men's perspectives on gender equality are wildly at odds with the goals of young women, according to a MENA-wide survey. In research of viewpoints in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Palestine, men's attitudes on how women should behave at work and at home, as well as in public, were found to be stereotypically sexist (Lyons, 2017). Workplace gender disparities have a serious negative impact on economic growth. The impact of gender inequality in the workplace is significant and has grown over the past few decades, especially as other regions have increased female employment at much faster rates than MENA. As a result, MENA's economic potential is significantly reduced, especially when compared to other nations. Thus, the persistent gender imbalance in the region appears to be a key impediment to higher economic growth (Klasen and Lamanna, 2003).

The challenges women in the MENA experienced after the Arab upheavals resulted in a pushback against their rights and limited political engagement; in the setting of the violent clashes that followed the revolutions, sectarian and nationalist identity politics gained traction. Because the memory and psychological imprint of the revolutions would not be simply erased, it is more likely that the long-term impact of the upheavals will be one of empowerment and mobilization. Domestic politics in the

MENA region will take some time to develop from their current hybrid state to a level of political liberalization and democracy. However, there has been progress in this area, with women's advocacy playing a vital part (Dalacoura, 2019).

While the health and educational conditions of women have significantly improved, there has been less advancement in the area of labor, and there are still legal disparities and limitations on women's participation in civil society and politics. Figure 2 demonstrates that women today make up only 7 percent of CEO positions in publicly traded companies in Norway, a country that is frequently hailed as a model of gender equality. However, the MENA region is undoubtedly at the bottom of the global scale when compared to other regions (Dalacoura, 2019). Sourani (2011, p. 429) underlined, in several third world countries, females were subjected to tyranny, humiliation, servitude, and abuse by men, whether that may be fathers, husbands, or even brothers (Sourani, 2011, p.429).
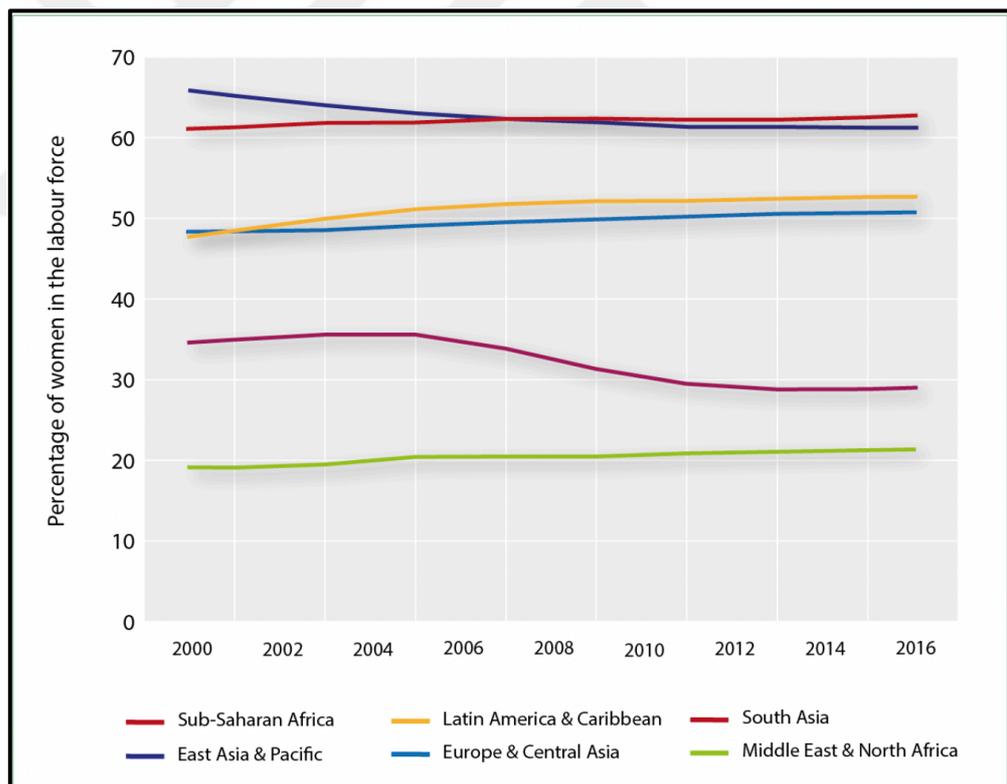

Figure 4 Percentage of Women Age 15+ in the Labor Force by Region (Dalacoura, 2019).

As the Arab national idea has crumbled over the last three decades, we have seen an increasing accumulation of backwardness and oppression in the Arab and in the Palestinian societal conditions (Sourani, 2011, p.427). Traditionally, Palestinian women's role in the society is being mothers or housewives, in addition, their identities are at once associated with either her father or her husband (Banat, 2018).

However, in times of crisis, Palestinian women participate in the national struggle, they were activists and martyrs against Israeli occupation, they took part in politics, ministries, diplomacy, local governance, trade unions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and public sector jobs where they represented political parties and defended their issues, such as Hanan Ashrawi, Rawya Shawwa, and Samiha Khalil Alqubbaj (Jabali, 2009, p.3/9; Banat, 2018, p.8/9; Sourani, 2011, p.432). After the establishment of the PA in 1994, several laws and regulations were made to help in women's empowerment, such as laws concerned with maternity leave in 2000[12], basic employment laws of 2003[13] and women rights in 2006[14]. However, violence against women persisted due to the authority's continued support for conventional social and family economic arrangements, particularly in the Gaza Strip considering the blockade and the division. If there are any career opportunities for women in Gaza, they are limited traditional women-dominated careers, such as secretarial work, kindergartens, schools, and nursing, as well as agricultural labor among rural women (Sourani, 2011, p.439; Wendel, 2016).

Women in the Gazan, across generations, dedicated their lives to the wider household's reproduction as a means of gaining personal power. Although women were involved in agriculture production, the first generation of married women in the post 1948 era were dominated by men (fathers and husbands), who were physically present in the home and in charge of producing family resources and making public decisions. Older women used familial and kin relationships as well as kin marriage arrangements to exercise their authority as the transmitters of the family's riches and

---

[12] The length of maternity leave was set at 14 weeks by Convention No. 183 of 2000 Concerning Maternity Protection Convention "revision," and her entitlement to additional leave because of illness or pregnancy was safeguarded.
[13] In the legal system and in the courts, discrimination between women and men is prohibited by the Palestinian Basic Law of 2003.
[14] Document on Palestinian Women's Rights from 2006 consolidating the idea of gender equality, putting equal rights at work front and center, and shielding women from all types of assault motivated by gender

honor. Before Israel's takeover of Gaza, gender dynamics in patriarchal traditional peasant families took on this archetypal pattern (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p. 42).

The second generation of married women were the wives of wage workers in Israel, those were increasingly ruled by older women rather than their husbands, due to their absence. During the 1970s and late 1980s, the elderly women (mother-in-law) received social power from their husbands to stand for them while they were away in Israel. Although the patriarchal structure of the Gazan household was undermined by this type of domestic gender interactions, the patriarchal discourse persisted as the dominant narrative in the community (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p. 42).

The mothers of the current generation, most of whom got married in the early to mid 1990's, make up the third generation of women. They experienced the relative political and economic stability of Gaza after the creation of the PA throughout the early stages of their marriage, in contrast to women in earlier periods. The third generation of women maintained their domestication while simultaneously enjoying increasing degrees of autonomy. This autonomy was mostly attained through the nucleation of families, wherein women tried to exert authority over their offspring and family unity, which largely occurred under the PA between 1993 and 2000. Nevertheless, the only source of support for this group of women was the income of their husbands (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p. 43).

The inhumane condition that the Palestinian community faces and lives under, led to damaging impacts and negative repercussions that are not restricted to only men or women, indeed they were related to the political, democratic, or legal meaning, or merely to freedom of thought and expression (Sourani, 2011, p.428). The patriarchal situation women live under lead to, lack of educational options, high percentage of illiteracy, lack of employment outside homes, lack of practical engagement in economic output, and extreme weakness in terms of political engagement. Because of the deteriorating internal political, economic, and social realities in the Gaza Strip as a result of the occupation, partition, and imposed siege, Palestinian women face terrible circumstances. Women's living conditions under occupation are made worse by the patriarchal culture that prevails and by Palestinian laws that subject women to violence and discrimination (Syam, 2020). Thus, it is noteworthy that Palestinian females do not only face oppression from the patriarchal

societies they live and grew up in, but also, from the occupation (Haj, 1992; Wendel, 2016).

The blockade and the division were and still are harsh on the people of Gaza, as a consequence more than 80 percent of the population relies on humanitarian aid. In the Gaza Strip, women make up less than 20 percent of the work force (Syam, 2020).

2.2.3 Effects of the Blockade-led recession on Women's employment in Gaza. The blockade, along with the division, affected every single person living in Gaza, whether its male, female, children, elders, patients, handicaps, etc. Globally, women always put double the effort to be recognized in a male dominated field, let alone a male dominated society. Yet, Gaza's case is exceptional and unusual, with ongoing military assaults – 5 in 15 years, occupation, limits on movement and travel, shortage of water and electricity, and violence; women struggle in having a secure life (Wendel, 2016). Taghreed Jumaa, the director of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees in Gaza, said Palestinian women in Gaza are still paying the price of conflicts, the siege, the accompanying high unemployment rates, and deteriorating social, economic, and living situations (Al-Jazeera, 2017).

Further, according to data from 2008, Gaza's economy shrank from USD 1.7 billion in 2005 to USD 1.1 billion in 2008, representing for 22 percent of Palestinian GDP as opposed to 35 percent in 2005. With almost 65 percent of the labor force unemployed, the economy continued to deteriorate through 2009 (Tannira, 2021, p.138). The embargo, according to UNISPAL[15], had a 90 percent impact on the private sector. For instance, between 2007 and 2010, the construction industry was completely shut down, leading to historically high unemployment rates in Gaza and a 200 percent increase in the price of basic necessities (Tannira, 2021, p.141). Because of their political ties to Hamas, the non-traditional dealers and businesses who benefited from the tumultuous trade in the Gaza–Egypt tunnels. As a result, they were able to accumulate large sums of money quickly and rewrite the private sector's map by acquiring important economic sectors and real estate (Tannira, 2021, p.141).

The Gaza Strip had an open economy with a fixed exchange rate from the start of the decade until 2005 because it did not issue its own money instead using the New

---

[15] UNISPAL The Israeli-Palestinian conflict and other Middle East issues are covered in the (United Nations Information System on the Question of Palestine) collection of previous and present United Nations resolutions and publications.

Israeli Shekel (NIS). Between 2000 and 2005, imports accounted for 35.6 percent of total spending on average, whereas exports during that time period averaged 10 percent of imports. Three sources were used to pay for the Gaza Strip's significant trade imbalances. First, unilateral transfers from the West Bank; second, returns from Palestinians working abroad; and third, foreign direct investment. The precise dimensions of each of these elements remains unknown. Gaza had a GDP of USD 1.43 billion and a population of 1.35 million people when the blockade was put in place. There were some ambiguities regarding the specifics of the border crossing limits for goods: There are contradicting reports from different interested parties about others, and some are kept private. Palestinian National Accounts show that in 2009, Gaza's exports of products totaled USD 0.6 million, down from an annual average of USD 52.8 million in 2005–2006. In addition, non–energy imports fell by 75 percent, from an annual average of USD 482 million in 2005–2006 to USD 129 million in 2009. Figure 5 summarizes imports (excluding energy) and exports for Gaza for the years 2005–2011 (Etkes and Zimring, 2015).

Exports and Non-Energy Imports, Gaza, 2002 – 2010
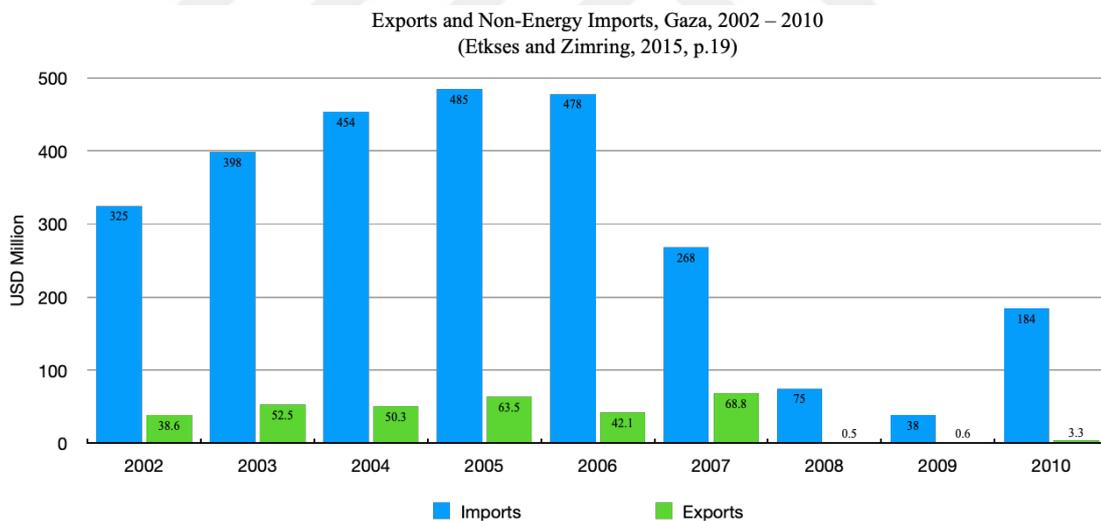(Etkses and Zimring, 2015, p.19)

Figure 5: Exports and Non-Energy Imports, Gaza, 2002 – 2010 (Etkses and Zimring, 2015, p.19).

Note: Data are in current USD million, taken from national accounts published by the PCBS (Etkes and Zimring, 2015, p.19).

Due to the lack of economic and security stability, as well as succeeding battles on the Strip and their exposure to Israeli oppression, Gaza's reality harms Gazan women, placing them in a least favorable position worldwide (Abu Watfa, 2016). In addition, women are one of the most vulnerable groups in the Strip. Women in Gaza, especially after the blockade and division among Hamas and Fatah, wanted to work to provide a heling hand for her father, husband, and/or brother. However, considering that Gaza is conservative, small, and highly populated, there were not enough opportunities that welcome women. Therefore, it is safe to say that this conflict affected women's motivations towards work, employment, and other aspects of life (Rizq- Al-Qazaz, 2016, p.5/6). According to Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), in 2020 the unemployment rate among women in Gaza Strip is the highest not only in Palestine but in the whole MENA region. As of 2019, Gaza city 36.2 percent, North Gaza 37.6 percent, Rafah 42.1 percent, Khan Younis 43.3 percent, and Deir AlBalah 44 percent. In a society, where the economy gets worse day by day, 53 percent are under the poverty line, and where traditions and customs are used to disempower females, rather than to embrace and empower them (PCBS, 2014).

Gender ties and roles have shifted dramatically in recent years, owing primarily to the economic effects of Israeli closures and the decrease in average family income (Irving, 2016, p.258). Men's inability to confront the material aspects of their masculinity issue is demonstrated by two incompatible patterns of behavior: either they are empathetic husbands who work with their wives to maintain the home, or they are violent, thoughtless, and inactive (Muhanna, 2010, p.43). In order to avoid coming seen as lessening their masculinity, men convey their cooperation with their wives extremely carefully (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p.46). As a consequence of Hamas' control over Gaza in 2006, the economy was destroyed and many Gazans lost their jobs, and Gazan males no longer had the means to support their families or even maintain a manly demeanor in front of their wives and kids (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p.40). Therefore, in addition to the deteriorating economic and political situation along with the obvious rise in unemployment which weakened both genders, men were viewed to have lost their social status as a result of losing their bread winner roles, considering they were not able to supply security or income to their families. Similarly, women were humiliated as they were obliged to leave their children at home to find aid from humanitarian organizations or beg in the streets for help (Muhanna,

2010, p.41); hence the fact that these women rely on their husbands' income (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p.43).

Husbands with a history of long-term, stable employment as skilled laborers in Israel were most likely to respond violently due to the consequences of the blockade. The capacity of those men to make a solid living from their work in Israel played a significant role in determining their influence. The wives of these husbands believe that their husbands would not accept low-paying jobs provided through foreign organizations' job creation projects. Due to their menial status and low pay, these jobs are despised by wives. Prior to the Second Intifada, women who had improved living conditions generally reported that their violent, unemployed husbands had become more aggressive. Shared traits of violent men as stated by their wives include passivity, selfishness, carelessness, and laziness. Many men have left the burden of providing for the family on women's shoulders without favorably or negatively intervening due to the lack of male sources of income and the social legitimacy of married young wives' mobility to seek out means for their children's survival. This reflects men realizing that the only means of survival open to them at this time are the 'inferior' tasks performed by women (Johnson and Wadi, 2010, p.48).

Although there have been studies that focused on women's changing role post-conflict, similar to those in the United States after World War Two and post 9-11 in Afghanistan. However, the case of Gaza remains quite unique as Gaza is experiencing female employment while it is still in conflict. Therefore, these studies did not adopt a conceptual and theoretical approach to show how femininities were developed and evolved in times of economic recession and blockade. In addition to the large gap in the literature that does not discuss male-female family relation dynamic prior to the division. Therefore, this thesis seeks to fill this gap, by relying on the literature on feminisms, gender as a social construction, gender performativity, development of both genders, as well as challenging masculinities which provides a theoretical framework to how the evolution and development of femininities challenges dominant masculinities.

2.2.4 Conclusion. In this chapter, the focus was on the effects of the blockade and political division on the Gaza Strip, and how it affected the females of Gaza, which is the core of the thesis's topic. It is evident that women rights in the MENA region in general are not the greatest; however, the circumstances that the region goes through ranging from wars, civil wars, political, social, and economic instability may be the sour road that would bring a change to women's lives in the region, not immediately, but through time.

In Gaza, women live under severe societal pressure. Nonetheless, with the blockade on Gaza, not only males and businessowners suffered the consequences of it, but also women. Due to the blockade and division, many males have lost their jobs and source of income, which therefore affected women in several aspects – ranging from financial problems to social problems. Therefore, a small increase has been witnessed in females' employment; however, the number presented by the PCBS and other statistical resources are not per cicely accurate as there are plenty of women who work and provide a living for their families but are not registered in the workforce.

The next chapter will focus on the methodology of the thesis, which is qualitative research and relies on 21 interviews with various NGOs and working women in Gaza, will be the main topic of the following chapter. Additional explanations are provided regarding the research design, data gathering techniques, data analysis, and research limitations. The results chapter, which follows the methodology chapter, the case study of the research is further explored in detail in regard to how the blockade's impacts on femininities and challenged masculinities.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This thesis is a theory advancing exploratory case study, as the research aims to learn from a unique case study. The uniqueness of Gaza lies in the fact that it is crucial to understand the relationship between the blockade, women's development regarding employment and how it challenged dominant masculinities. In other words, the intent is to understand and explore, through the interviews, how the changes in the political situation which distrusted the economic basis of the community affected women's employment and male's masculinities due to the fact that males stopped working and females began to work to help maintain the household financially. Also, the research aims to develop a theoretical argument regarding changing femininities due to challenging masculinities in the Gaza Strip after the effects of the blockade and division on the economy and unemployment where female job-seeking and employment serves as a mediating variable. In addition, this thesis relies on case study research design and uses a theory advancing exploratory case study of Gaza, which is unique to examine the changing masculinities at times of economic crisis due to the Israeli blockade.

The case study approach, which entails a thorough investigation of a specific historical episode in order to develop or test historical explanations that may be generalizable to other events, has been in and out of favor over the past five decades as researchers have looked into the potential of statistical techniques and formal models. In the past three decades, academics have organized case study methodologies and linked them to justifications from the philosophy of science (George and Bennett, 2005, p.38).

Yin (1989) and Eisenhardt (1989) offer useful insights into the case study as a research technique while leaving most design decisions up to the user. This is both the advantage and disadvantage of this technique. It has the benefit of making it possible to customize the design and data collection procedures to the study questions. The technique has drawn criticism, particularly from the quantitative research community, due to the large number of poor-quality case studies it has generated. The case study's

rather ad hoc construction suggests that there are a variety of decisions that need to be made while upholding certain moral standards (Meyer, 2001, p. 330).

A piece of writing that concentrates on a single instance of a larger phenomenon is likely to be called a case study. Case studies, according to Gerring (2004, 352), are best described as an in-depth investigation of a single unit with the intention of generalizing to a wider group of units. In other ways, the case study's difficulty is not only definitional but rather stems from the methodology itself. Case studies holds a contentious place in the field of political science. Methodologists in general approach the case study approach with great caution (Gerring, 2004, p. 341). A work may be referred to as a case study if it a) uses a qualitative research methodology (Yin 1994), b) uses participant-observation, ethnography, clinical research, or another type of field methodology, c) that the research employs process tracing, (d), that it examines the characteristics of a single case, or e), that it examines a single phenomenon, occurrence, or example (George and Bennett 2005; Gerring, 2004, p. 342). This conventional definition of case study is often criticized by prominent case study methodologists as case studies are methodologies which can involve qualitative or quantitative data collection. Data collection methods involved in case studies can involve participant observations, clinical research and they do not necessarily have to be qualitative (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm, 2021).

The development of strong causal hypotheses complements rather than competes with strong description, which is one of the sometimes-neglected advantages of the in-depth case-study technique. Even if the study ultimately fails to make even a single valid causal inference, framing it in terms of an explanatory problem could lead to a more focused and relevant description (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994, p. 45). One of the sometimes-overlooked advantages of the in-depth case-study technique is that strong causal hypotheses complement strong description rather than competing with it. Even if the study ultimately fails to draw even a single legitimate causal inference, framing it around an explanatory issue may result in a more focused and pertinent description (King, Keohane, and Verba, 1994, p. 45).

Case studies are usually defined with their suitability to test theories. Yet, it is wrong to argue that all case studies are designed for theory testing. Rather, there are explanatory case studies which offer narrative analysis on a specific event, or case. These case studies are generally designed as single case studies and the researcher is

50

mainly interested about giving in-depth explanation on how a particular event in each context takes place. Albeit similar, there are also exploratory case studies which are designed for building a theory or advancing an existing theory. Exploratory case studies aim to offer broader explanations beyond the case in question and possibilities for generalization when similar conditions are met. Still, researchers rely on single case in exploratory case studies but their offer if in-depth analysis is designed in a way to build a theory that fits the case study. Therefore, the chosen case should represent a 'typical' and 'crucial' case (Süleymanoğlu-Kürüm, 2021, p. 152-153).

Also, case studies can be multiple, comparative, or single (Cunningham, 1997). This thesis relies on a single case study, studying one case in an explanatory manner. The Gaza Strip in the Palestinian Territories was specifically chosen because there is no other identical case similar to Gaza, considering that it is under occupation, blockade, divided, politically and territorially, from the rest of its territories (the West Bank specifically). Thus, it represents an ideal case to advance a theoretical proposition on the impact of economic recession on dominant masculinities in a given society. In addition, Gaza is a very conservative community that is ruled by a party that is affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood, Hamas. Since 2007, Gaza witnessed a political division and blockade which has brought many economic difficulties and the rate of unemployment rose (PCBS, 2021). As a results, families in Gaza started to look for different ways to survive and fulfil their financial needs. Although the society in Gaza is conservative, but after the blockade and the rise of unemployment, women started to help in contributing to the family financially (Banat, 2018; Muhanna, 2010; Irving, 2016; Wendel, 2016). Hence, we have an ideal condition to explore how masculinities evolve when in a conservative society, where women's role is traditionally been restricted to the private sphere, women start to work to and assume breadwinner status.

3.2 Data Collection

Data was collected through interviews, which were specifically chosen in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the situation and context of the study. To understand the effects the blockade and division had on females after the blockade and how female employment challenged dominant masculinities.

The interviews were semi-structured with open-ended questions in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Because they blend elements of structured and unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews were deliberately chosen because they provide the advantages of both: comparable, accurate data and the opportunity to ask follow-up questions. Additionally, having the ability to develop a thematic framework beforehand aid in maintaining concentration, reducing distractions, and encouraging two-way conversation between the interviewer and participant. Despite using the same procedures as structured interviews, questionnaires, and surveys, semi-structured interviews provide additional depth and richness since they are more open-ended (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 110).

In Gaza, around ten non-governmental organizations (NGOs) work with women along with the UN programs for designated specifically for women. Considering that the research focuses on women, their femininities, and perceptions of masculinities, three of the most influential and important NGOs were interviewed, Women's Affairs Center in Gaza (WACG), AISHA Association for Women and Child Protection (AISHA), and The Palestinian Working Woman Society for Development (PWWSD). Further, the interview shed the light on an important topic, which is how the new responsibilities women are holding is affecting them. Therefore, an interview was conducted with the General Director of Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP), Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei to understand how the blockade and division had an effect on the mental health of women.

The reason behind choosing these four NGOs specifically is because they are the most well-known and active in the community; they work with women in Gaza in need of employment, aid, and assistance; and thus, they would add to the research positively. WACG is one of the earliest women's and civil organizations to be founded in Palestine in 1991. It is an independent, non-profit organization that advocates for women's rights and gender equality through advocacy, research, and activities that empower women. WACG is dedicated to upholding the principles of human rights in order to fulfill its vision and mission. These principles include accountability and dedication to the rule of law, transparency, tolerance, justice, equality, non-discrimination, participation, and empowerment of marginalized groups (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022).

AISHA was founded in 2009 and has been empowering marginalized communities in the Gaza Strip through economic empowerment and psychosocial support, with a particular emphasis on Gaza City and the northern region. AISHA supports, empowers, and raises knowledge of significant psychological, social, legal, and economic issues in order to protect women and children from violence. Additionally, it designed and implemented a Gender Mainstreaming in all areas of execution while carrying out its strategic plan (AISHA, personal communication, 26 June 2022).

Providing psychological, social, and legal support to women, empowering them, and encouraging their participation in the political, economic, and social spheres, as well as in the development process are all goals of PWWSD, a civil feminist human rights organization that works to achieve gender equality and combat all forms of discrimination and gender-based violence (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022). It is important to note that these NGOs work with all types of women in Gaza (young, old, poor, disabled, class, education level, religion, and so on), allowing the research to obtain more comprehensive information and data.

GCMHP is a non-profit civil organization called the Gaza Community Mental Health Programme (GCMHP) was founded in 1990. By providing clinical, social, research, and training services, as well as by accumulating support and fighting for the rights of women, children, and those who have been the victims of violence and human rights violations, our organization's work in the fields of mental health and human rights aims to improve the mental health of the Palestinian community. The Programme and its late creator, Dr. Eyad El Sarraj, received numerous important international awards in the domains of mental health and human rights in honor of their continued effort for nearly three decades. The GCMHP operates within strategic plans that are regularly created in accordance with community requirements. Integrity, transparency, social responsibility, good governance, and respect for human rights are values we uphold. There is an executive administration for the Programme that carries out action plans and is answerable to the Board of Directors. The latter is a member of the program's General Assembly, which has 35 members from various social and professional backgrounds (Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei, personal communication, 13 December 2022).

Given the reputation these NGOs have, they will suggest women to interview, and the women suggested by the NGOs will also lead us to different women to interview. In other words, a combination of the snowball[16] sampling method and quota sampling was used to reach more working women to interview (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.98). Where before starting the interviews, I had an idea on the profile of the people who would seem fit for the research, then snowballing was made when reaching the participants. Considering the difficulties and safety issues of going to Gaza, I conducted the interviews online, through Google meet and WhatsApp. To ensure diversity among the women interviewed, Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi Center for Culture and Development (HCCD)[17] helped me to reach women in different places, such as hospitals, markets, shops, and streets. Also, I chose to interview working women through the help of HCCD to give these working women interviewed comfort because the interviews were conducted online. The interviewees from the NGOs were very open and collaborative with the information they provided as each interview lasted for 40 minutes to an hour. However, the interviews with the working women lasted for 10 to 15 minutes, due to the nature and sensitivity of the topic, and the fact that the interviews were conducted online, not all women felt safe to share details about their struggles. I increased the number of interviews than planned in order to mitigate this challenge arising from shorter interviews.

Four of the women interviewed are not educated and/or did not continue their education, thirteen are educated; however, only two are employed/work in fields related to their studies. The women interviewed ages range from 22 to 50. Four of the women interviewed, their husbands and brothers and/or fathers do not support the fact that they work, two changed their views on working women due to the economic situation, and eleven encourage their wives and/or daughters to work only because

---

[16] Snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method that enlists current research participants to help find new study participants.

[17] A group of civil activists launched a Palestinian non-governmental organization in 2014 at their own initiative. Goals: To strengthen Palestinian society's participation in the struggle for its citizens' unalienable, legitimate, and national rights, which aims to end the occupation and secure its citizens' rights to self-determination and repatriation. making a website to document Dr. Haider Abdel Shafi's march to further the principles of democracy, freedom of expression, tolerant society, and tolerance of others. to revive the idea of volunteerism and personal development. Establishing a debate platform with well-known local and international figures in order to promote intercultural understanding and gain support for our rights. to enhance the spirit of non-discrimination and equality among residents regardless of their gender, ethnicity, or religion

they bring money to the household. In addition, all women unanimously agree that they work today because of the economic situation and the need of money.

The interviews determine how the blockade and division affected women's employment. Additionally, given that the community is conservative and patriarchal, the interviews looked at whether or not the economy and a lack of work possibilities have challenged males sense of masculinity. The research question, which revolves around understanding changing masculinities due to the economic difficulties that are caused by the Israeli blockade, as well as its effects on female employment in the Gaza Strip will be answered through the interviews questions that are designed into themes.

Nevertheless, the hypothesis of the research is that women employment increased in a dominant masculine environment due to the blockade and economic situation. According to this research, when the number of women in the workforce rises, the power relationships between male and female family members alter, and as a result, masculinities, and femininities change. In this study, the Israeli blockade serves as the independent variable, whereas the dependent is changing femininities and challenged masculinities, and the dependent variable is operationalized differently for men and women.

3.3 Ethical Concerns

Due to the nature of the topic and the sensitivity it holds, the utmost care was taken as I was granted the approval of the Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Committee at Bahçeşehir University to conduct the research and protect the identity of those interviewed. When contacting the NGOs and the working women to request an interview, I shared with them a consent form which provides the aims of the research and the type of questions asked, the consent form also included that the identity of those interviewed will be anonymized. The interviewee had the option to avoid answering specific questions or withdrawal from the research, also upon their approval, the interviews were recorded. The interview questions are in table 1 and 2, and the full list of the interviews is provided in table 3 in the appendix. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, as it is the native language of Palestine, the interviews were also recorded, transcribed, and translated into English language.

3.4 Data Analysis

It would be helpful to tabulate data and create a frequency of how frequently something happened. The researcher might initially create a list of categories before attempting to determine how decision-makers utilized particular sorts of information while formulating policy. The used information is then categorized. The objective of the analysis is to create the right number of categories to describe the most pertinent data. The categories offer the framework for the detailed, written presentation of the case, which frequently employs quotes and anecdotes as examples (Cunningham, 1997, 404).

The researcher may create a narrative to support a particular viewpoint and provide information on the motivations or ideas behind the outbursts. Aside from using explanations to support their arguments or address queries, professionals like lawyers, police officials, medics, and journalists also employ them. Each explanation is backed up by textual evidence and interpretations of that evidence. Such a scenario can offer an explanation or be viewed as an experiment (Cunningham, 1997, 404).

This research examines the effects of the political division along with the blockade on women's employment and development in the Gaza Strip, and how did this affect femininities and challenge the dominant masculinities in the society as well as the perception of males towards working women in Gaza. Therefore, the methodology of this thesis is qualitative, relying on case study technique and data collection through interviews. Twenty-one semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted, four of which were with NGOs focusing on women in Gaza whereas the other seventeen interviews were with working women who were suggested by the NGOs. Some of those women were suggested by the NGOs as they are beneficiaries there and some were reached through the snowballing sample. Interviews specifically were chosen because according to Patton (1990), the goal of an interview is to understand what is on someone's mind, people are interviewed to learn from them those things we cannot immediately witness (Patton, 1990; Merriam and Tisdell, 2016). This is why interviews were chosen to be the methodology of this thesis, as the interviews with the NGOs and the working women helped in understanding how the economic conditions that a result of the blockade and political division cause women are to work, altering their femininities and thus challenging masculinity in a male dominant society as the unemployment rate rose.

The research is qualitative and may be used to a variety of research subjects and epistemologies because it is based on a thematic analysis. It is a technique for finding deciphering, compiling, and reporting themes in a set of data. According to Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 78), a theme is a subject or heading that encapsulates a data notion relevant to the research question. Its relevance is correlated with how strongly the theme relates to the research question. Themes were developed in this study by looking for patterns in the data, headers, and guided responses, leading to logical and straightforward factual conclusions (Sodhi & Tang, 2018). Our interviews with the NGOs were organized around four themes: i) on the NGO itself and the nature of work they do, ii) female employment in Gaza (including challenges and income), iii) masculinity – which discusses how males feel about working females and if it bothers them, and iv) on the blockade and how it affected female employment and challenged masculinities in a male dominant society. The interviews with working women revolved around three themes: i) demographics – as in level of education, social status, and nature of employment and/or work, the questions asked were designed to protect the identity of the women, ii) on masculinity, which discussed women's opinions and observations on how males view working women, and iii) on female employment, focusing on the salary, type of work, if work empowers the female, and if work creates problems with the males in their lives.

The conclusions about the effects the blockade had on women specifically, and how the female employment challenged masculinities are derived from my own analysis and interpretation of the interviews, literature, and understanding of the context. I relied on the comparative analysis of the interviews conducted with different people to reach my findings. In order to identify the effects that the blockade had on working women and how it challenged masculinity in Gaza, I have interpreted the interviews in collaboration with the literature on changing masculinities and the context of Gaza, blockade, and women.

3.5 Limitations

To be able to witness people's behavior, emotions, or how they understand their environment, interviews are necessary. Interviews are also crucial when we are interested in historical occurrences that cannot be repeated (Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 108). This is the case for this research's case study, it was important to conduct

several interviews to understand the effects the blockade and division had on women in Gaza and on dominant masculinities. However, the research limitation lies in the fact that the researcher was not able to go to Gaza to conduct the interviews face-to-face with both the NGOs and with the women due to security concerns.

Further, one of the limitations of the research is the fact that Gaza is a conservative community means that the findings and results of this thesis cannot be generalized in non-Muslim and non-conservative and/or liberal communities.

In addition, the interviews conducted are not inclusive of all NGOs who work with women and only focuses on the female perspective of masculinity. It was quite difficult to interview males in Gaza due to the context and sensitivity of the topic, as mentioned before, Gaza is a patriarchal and conservative society; thus, it is difficult to discuss such a topic with males considering its delicacy. However, the research presents an adequate sample of the female perspective regarding the effects of the blockade on female employment as well as the changes the female witnessed from the opposite sex due to the challenges of the economy and unemployment. The sample chosen is diverse from age, economic status, educational background, religious affiliation, and social status.

Chapter 4

Results and Findings

The literature review provided a comprehensive theoretical framework regarding the theories related to gender, feminism, gender construction, gender performativity, masculinities, and changing masculinities.

As feminism went through several stages, each stage characterized by its own features and context, it started to spread to the other parts of the world as it was born in the Western world (Rampton, 2015; Johnson, 2017; Valverde, 2016; Golley, 2007). Feminism in the Arab world emerged in the first part of the twentieth century aiming to provide women political representation and the right to vote (Saadallah, 2004). However, considering that the Arab world, specifically the MENA region, has been instable for the past two decades, it is quite difficult to see the progress of feminism in the region (Tazi and Oumlil, 2020). It is important to note that second-wave feminism had a more effective campaign on patriarchal society. The church and the family's heterosexual and patriarchal roots were denounced by second wave feminism activists. They attempted to weaken the fundamental philosophical, scientific, theoretical, and theological foundations at the core of society in order to avoid the educational and familial requirements that shaped individuals and upon which, they believed, organizations were constructed (Molony and Nelson, 2017; Franceschet, 2004). Additionally, postcolonial feminisms have made significant contributions to our understanding of knowledge, power, and the value of language, all of which have led to very real interventions with very real effects. However, post-colonial feminists go beyond simply focusing on language, imagery, and representation by addressing actual issues of poverty, injustice, and power (McEwan, 2001).

In addition, the constructivist views show that gender is constructed through culture and through society, as well as the difference between sex and gender (Rolleri, 2013; Budgeon, 2013; Brekowitz, Manohar, and Tinker, 2010; Moynihan, 1998; Martin, 2004). Humans are interpellated as gendered creatures from the moment of birth and continue to be gendered throughout our lives. Gender identity does not exist behind gender expressions; rather, the very expressions that are claimed to be its

outcomes performatively generate gender identity (Lloyd, 1999; Butler 2002; Salih 2007).

Since gender is a social construct, other variables outside biology can alter the affective, cognitive, and behavioral characteristics that are often linked to either masculinity or femininity. Instead, based on their biological sex, people are trained to perform gender in line with a specific society's gender-typed norms and expectations (Conradie, 2011). Being a woman was deemed to make one appear weaker than men, yet being a man conferred natural control over women and children, Connell (1987) writes. Tough, ambitious, strong, analytical, forceful, independent, and aggressive were used to describe masculinity, while compassion, gentile, soft, affection, loving, caring, and happy were used for femininity (Budgeon, 2013; Bem, 1974). There are four types of masculinity, hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginal, according to Connell (1995) and Lewis (2007), and each has a distinctive subjectivity. Lewis (2007) argues that society shapes the basic outlines of this subjectivity and polices the borders of the identities it sets through punishments and incentives.

The definition of masculinity is entangled in a logic of opposition and contradiction at the same time. The logic of difference gives masculinity flexibility and malleability, making it possible to explain changes in dominant modes of masculinity. These changes are handled by a web of permutations that can take masculinity in several directions (Lewis, 2007; Hutchings, 2008). Masculinities are challenged during times of conflict and migration (Davalos, 2020) in which women take on roles that were previously masculine codded. Therefore, this results in men losing control over some aspects of their masculinity, as their power as breadwinners is lost (Myrttinen et al., 2017; Choi, 2019). As for femininities and their development, women's economic empowerment in post-conflict and conflict-affected countries presents a unique set of socio-economic, political, administrative, and security variables. These variables are important because they present both distinct challenges and potential for the implementation of a women's economic development approach (Abril, 2009). Theory review provided a theoretical framework for the thesis, as well as literature review to provide a background for the case study of the thesis. In 2006, Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections, but the international community and Fatah refused to accept their victory because they considered Hamas to be a terrorist organization (Migdalovitz, 2010; Anadolu Agency, 2017; Butt & Butt, 2016; Erakat, n.d.). The

blockade and division were and still are harsh on the people of Gaza, as a consequence more than 80 percent of the population relies on humanitarian aid (Sourani, 2011; Haj, 1992; Wendel, 2016; Syam 2020). Over 940 thousand females in the Gaza Strip, compared to 971 thousand males, and 11 percent of Palestinian families are headed by women, specifically 9 percent in Gaza (Said, 2019). 53 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, and the economy is getting worse by the day. Unemployment rate among women in Gaza Strip is the highest not only in Palestine but in the whole MENA region (Abu Watfa, 2016; Al-Jazeera, 2017; Rizq- Al-Qazaz, 2016; PCBS, 2014).

There is no doubt that the consequences of the blockade and division affected all kinds of people in the Gaza Strip, from toddlers to the elderly. As explained in the literature review on the Gaza Strip presented in chapter two, Gaza's economy highly suffered from the blockade and division, where more than 70 percent of the inhabitants of Gaza are living under the poverty line due to the economic conditions, lack of job opportunities, and irregular salary payments. Building on the theoretical framework, the in-depth understanding and analysis of the case study, along with the interviews, the results are divided into three themes. Firstly, we try to understand, from the interviews, how the blockade and the rise of unemployment among males affected females in terms of employment. Also, we look at how the society in Gaza, which is patriarchal and conservative, perceive working women after the blockade and the deteriorated economic situation. Finally, it is important to analyze how did the unemployment among males, and employment among females, challenged male's sense of masculinity in the family in a male-dominated and patriarchal society.

4.1 Blockade and Division effects on Women in Gaza

As a consequence of the blockade and division, both genders in Gaza were weakened due to the rising unemployment rate, lack of job opportunities, and the fact that many people lost their jobs Sourani, 2011; UNRWA, 2021; Alhelou, 2019; Wendel, 2016; Muhanna, 2010; Tannira; 2021; Rizq- Al-Qazaz, 2016). Therefore, women who were stay at home mothers, or unemployed sisters and/or wives, held another responsibility on their shoulders – which is looking for job opportunities (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022; AISHA, personal communication, 26 June 2022; PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022).

61

The blockade did not only affect the economy of Gaza, but also the political and social life (AISHA, personal communication, 26 June 2022). After the division, the PLO and Fatah stopped its employment system/process in the Gaza Strip, which does not only affect males but females as well, and their chances for work are very slim (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). As a result of the blockade and division, work opportunities for all genders became very slim (IANS, 2021; PCBS, 2020; Euro-mid Human Rights Monitor, 2022) and according to the interviewee from AISHA, unemployment for women is higher than 60 percent, in fact according to the PCBS, as of 2020 the unemployment rate for women is 63.7 percent (Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022; PCBS, 2021; PCBS 2020).

Due to the high unemployment rate, many people started to receive humanitarian aid from different NGOs – local and international. To received humanitarian aid, people had to wait in line for long hours (considering the large number of people in need of aid); however, for females the queue is shorter which results in males sending female members of the family to receive this aid, and in some cases, females beg for aid and assistance. This clearly affects females' dignity and sense of value and causes psychological traumas and problems (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022). The queue for women usually runs more quickly because males try to avoid issues of harassment in public arenas; thus, the fact that the women's queue runs faster may seem respectable for women, but it also helps males secure their masculinity in public through two ways, appearing to be respectful of women, and to avoid being caught looking and/or talking to females. In this way, men try find ways to avoid challenging their masculinities while in reality, keeping women responsible for collecting humanitarian aid and packages is a blue print manifestation of their non-hegemonic but complicity or marginal forms of masculinity.

There is also a widespread agreement among the interviews conducted with NGOs, that there is no minimum wage for women, it varies from one workplace to another, public or private, legal, or illegal, and there is no way to control it. However, according to the Council of Ministers decisions[18] 121 on August 23, 2021, the

---

[18] According to the Council of Ministers: In all areas of the State of Palestine and in all industries, the minimum monthly pay is 1,880 shekels. And seasonal workers, as well as everyday workers, particularly those who work on an irregular daily basis (85 shekels). The hourly minimum pays for employees covered by Paragraph 2 (10.5 shekels).

minimum wage should be 1,880 NIS[19] per month (Palestine Council of Ministers, 2021). When analysing this new decision, it is clear that this decision does not specify if this rule is applicable for both genders or is only directed to one gender. This shows that although Palestine is one of the countries who signed the CEDAW convention (UN Treaty Body Database, n.d.), women are still marginalized in the law. Yet, women's turnout for employment in a society that is not traditionally associated with the labor market roles, implies their changing femininities as well.

Breil (2013) mentioned three distinct ideas about what it means to be a man, masculinism, male liberation, and pro-feminism. Masculinism is aggrandized, supports male dominance over women and gay people, and its proponents never truly enjoy being men because of the fights that women and queer people wage against them. Male liberationism opposes the patriarchal system not only for the way it oppresses women but also for the roles that men are required to play in society. The pro-feminist approach seeks to critique the patriarchy as a whole without making distinctions between women, men, and LGBT people. This strategy attempts to understand the mechanism underlying patriarchy and raise men's consciousness of it in order to combat it because, in their opinion, patriarchal males and the system are the main cause of the subordination of women and queers (Breil, 2013, p.20). However, it can be said that in Gaza there is a fourth kind, which is a mixture between masculinism and pro-feminist, where women rights are acknowledged in the law, and international agreements are signed upon it, but in terms of appliance and reality it is nowhere to be found. The Palestinian government tries to make efforts in order to achieve equality between the genders, but it is not applied into law and system.

In addition, considering that there is a political division, the de facto government in Gaza, Hamas, does not take on the decisions created by the Council of Ministers, as the government in the West Bank and Gaza are divided. It is also important to be reminded that the government in Gaza is conservative and is associated with the Muslim Brotherhood; therefore, the existence of a de facto government in Gaza makes it nearly impossible to regulate the wages for both genders – equally, and to have a regular, uninterrupted, and transparent supervision of wages (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June

---

[19] 1 USD equals 3.40NIS, which makes 1,880 NIS equivalent to 550 USD.

2022; WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). According to the interview conducted with PWWSD, women who work in kindergartens in the Gaza governante might take 400 NIS[20] per month, "but this is because she works in Gaza City, if she works in the north of the Strip or south, she might take less" (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022).

Because of the economic conditions as well and the inability of families to pay university fees, females prefer to take vocational education where they learn hair styling, make up, or embroidery, instead of going to university (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022). Twelve of the interviewed working women are university educated; however, ten of them work in areas outside the field of their studies. Due to the fact that Gazan society does not attribute breadwinner role to women, and women's employment is not socially and culturally approved, women accept lower wages which is an indication of their acceptance of subordinate position to masculinity. For instance, participant 8[21] did her bachelor's degree in nursing but was not able to secure a permanent job with a stable income, so she started to work in embroidery and sell the pieces she makes online through her Facebook page (Participant 8, personal communication, 27 July 2022). Also, participant 4[22] has a bachelor's degree in mathematics but she could not find a job in her field of studies, so she is working in a library near the university in Gaza (Participant 4, personal communication, 26 July 2022).

According to participant 1[23], "the economic situation is the reason behind my father's approval for me to work" (Participant 1, personal communication, 21 July 2022). Also, participant 3[24] said that:

> I joined my husband in fishing and selling fish, because of the economic situation in Gaza worsened, especially after the blockade, she mentioned further that "my husband does not disagree on the fact that I am currently

---

[20] 1 USD equals 3.40NIS, which makes 400 NIS equivalent to 117 USD
[21] Participant 8 is single and has a BA in nursing. Her family works in embroidery, her sister and mother do embroidery, and her father finishes the work by adding wood to whatever kind of design they make, so she also joined them in the embroidery work.
[22] Participant 4 is single and has BA in Math, but she works in a library.
[23] Participant 1 is single. She only finished high-school and did not go to university because of the economic situation. She works in embroidery.
[24] Participant 3 is not educated, only until grade 5. She is married and has 10 children. She works in the fishing industry with her husband. However, the fishing industry is very bad so most of the time they do not have money.

working, because of the economic situation. I do not make much but even if I contribute five NIS it is good" (Participant 3, personal communication, 21 July 2022).

This shows that males overlook their beliefs because of the economic situation and the need for money. Participant 5[25] stressed on the fact that she "needs" the money and that is why she is working because her situation at home is very bad, especially that her brothers do not like her working (Participant 5, personal communication, 26 July 2022). Participant 7[26] mentioned that her brothers do not like the idea that she is working, but they need the money, so they accept it. An English language teacher I interviewed stated that:

> Five or seven years ago, I used to ask for 200 NIS[27] per class, but today, with the economic crisis deteriorating, I reduced it to 50 NIS[28], it is not much, but at least I can contribute to my family. Also, I need the money (Participant 7, personal communication, 26 July 2022).

Participant 12[29] is a nurse, she mentioned that prior to the division, her father did not allow her to work, but now with the division, he encourages her due to the need of money (Participant 12, personal communication, 8 August 2022). Due to the need of money and the worsening economic situation, females stay silent when they face different kinds of abuse in the working space, for instance, some women face sexual and verbal abuse, and others face hierarchal abuse – in which, according to the PWWSD interviewee, if a woman works in a hair salon, the manager of the salon can also ask her to come clean her house or cook for her, with no extra payments, quoting:

> Women go to their place of work and face abuse; the kind of abuses vary, it may be sexual, if the manager is male, and it can be verbal and/or hierarchal if the manager is either male or female. For instance, I know cases, where a woman in need works in a hair salon, her manager always asks her to clean her house (for couple of extra NIS) instead of hiring a cleaning lady that would take more (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022).

---

[25] Participant 5 has a BA in social education and is not married. She teaches English in centers. She takes care of her siblings financially because her father is dead.

[26] Participant 7 has BA in English and giver private English classes; she is single and has been working for 16 years. She lives with her mother and three brothers, her father left them when they were kids.

[27] 1 USD equals 3.40NIS, which makes 200 NIS equivalent to 58 USD

[28] 1 USD equals 3.40NIS, which makes 50 NIS equivalent to 14 USD

[29] Participant 12 has a diploma in nursing, she is married with 4 children.

This was also suggested by the interview done with WACG, where females are exploited at work and are unable to address this exploitation to higher authorities for two reasons, mainly because they will lose their jobs and the manager does not mind firing her because there are fifty other girls waiting to get this job, and the other one is that the community is conservative and issues that can bring shame, scandal, and disgrace to one's family are to be avoided (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). In any case, women are facing new contexts which forces them to perform different kinds of femininities than they would perform in the absence of blockade and economic recession.

Further, today, most of the working women who work are not included in the statistics as they work in informal sectors – such as cleaning, cooking, selling embroidery or food online, etc. This was also verified through the interviews made by working women, as none of them said that they are formally registered as employees or have a stable salary that she guarantees she will receive towards the end of the month (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022; WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). The interviewee in PWWSB added that despite there is only 11 percent of women acting as head of the family[30], most of those women do not have stable jobs (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022). According to Dr. Yasser, "there are programs that teaches women about women empowerment; however, that does not mean that she is exempted from the responsibilities she holds as a housewife or mother. Therefore, there are women who are not employed, but does daily work, in other words hand to mouth, to help raise a family on her own" (Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei, personal communication, 13 December 2022).

Therefore, considering Gaza's situation it is difficult to say that feminism is taking or took the same evolution it took in other parts of the world, considering what was suggested by all the interviews conducted, that there is no minimum wage for females, and when employers see that a female is applying for a job, they reduce the income, because if she did not accept, others will (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022; PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022).

---

[30] What is meant by "head of the family" here is that the male is not present, either death, abandonment, or handicap.

4.2 Image of working women in a Gaza

Since Gaza is conservative community women are usually seen as stay-at-home wives, and their identities are associated with their fathers, after marriage, their identity immediately shifts to be associated with their husbands (Banat, 2018), as in the wife of so-and-so. This in fact connects with the theory of gender as a social construction, where women are looked at through the mainstream lens of gender roles and norms (Brekowitz, Manohar, and Tinker, 2010; Moynihan, 1998; Keaton and Bodie, 2011; Rolleri, 2013).

Considering the division and its ramifications – where women started to work and look for opportunities to improve the economic situation and the flow of income at home – women in Gaza are no longer seen as only stay-at-home wives and/or mothers. Through the interview questions, specifically the second theme set in the interviews with women, where the focus of the questions was on observations on how males view working women after the division. Therefore, the results will tell us how femininities changed as a result of rising female employment and male unemployment, as well as how the society sees working women.

In other words, this theme relies purely on the results found from the interviews and will examine how this conservative patriarchal society look at working women. The aim here was to see if there is any change regarding how the society views working women before the economic recession, and after the economic recession.

Indeed, the blockade destroyed the living conditions in Gaza; however, it gave a chance for females to work. That is not to say that females have gained full control of their right to work as exploitation, abuse, and lack of freedom in regards with the income still exists (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; AISHA, personal communication, 26 June 2022; WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). All the working women interviewed acknowledge that people hold different views regarding several aspects of life. Hence, they all agree that the male acceptance and encouragement of work depends on the structure of the family and their socio-economic status, which was also supported by the interview conducted with AISHA (AISHA, personal communication, 26 June 2022). For instance, participant 6 mentioned:

Males in Gaza look at working women with a different eye, of course there are some males who accept and encourage women to work, and there are some who consider it as a big no, it all depends on the environment they live in and their background (Participant 6, personal communication, 26 July 2022).

Also, participant 8, who works in embroidery with her family, mentioned "I believe the society is divided into two when it comes to how males, and even females, look at working women," which was repeated by participant 14, who works in one of the local NGOs as an English translators (Participant 8, personal communication, 27 July 2022; Participant 14, personal communication, 8 August 2022). Participant 11[31], on the other hand, mentioned that her husband prefers if she can stay at home, but because of the economic situation, he does not say much (Participant 11, personal communication, 6 August 2022). Nonetheless, this also relates to gender performativity, in cultures that are patriarchal and conservative, women are seen as housewives. Therefore, the day-to-day activities that are put on women through the social context and paradigm is that women's gender activity is being a housewife and at home (Butler 2002, Salih 2007; Tyler and Cohen, 2010).

Almost all of the working women said that their parents and/or family (which includes male siblings) do not approve of them working; however, now that they are in need, they accept the fact that they should allow them to work to secure their economic needs. Four out of the seventeen women interviewed said that at the beginning the males in their lives totally refused to allow them to work, but when they saw that they can contribute financially and take some of the financial responsibility of their shoulders, they fully support them now. Participant 15[32] mentioned that "if our financial situation was better, and we had a better live, my husband would not allow me to work and would ask me to stay at home, because he believes women should stay at home and not work" (Participant 15, personal communication, 9 August 2022). Therefore, intersectionality indeed adds to the case study, as we can see through the blockade, gender, and roles have been challenged due to the economic experiences situation that resulted from the blockade (Collins, 2015).

---

[31] Participant 11 has a BA in management and works as a secretary, she is married with no kids.
[32] Participant 15 has a BA in psychology, and she works in an NGO, she is married with 5 kids.

However, working women who are married and work hard to contribute to the family financially do not have a say or an opinion in the house. There is a consensus among the interviewed women that husband is the one who decides everything in the house and does not take his wife's opinion at all. For example, participant 13[33] said, "my husband allows me to take decisions at home, but before going through with my decision I need to consult him, otherwise he will be angry" (Participant 13, personal communication, 8 August 2022). This finding implies that men are threatened about losing their decision-making roles and take action to preserve his authority and avoid his masculinity being challenged. According to Myrttinen et al.(2017, p.108) in times of conflict, women take on male-dominated roles, and because the literature does not explain how femininities are developed in times of economic recession and blockade, it is evident from the interviews that females have gained some kind of power in the family relation dynamic and the male on the other hand is the one being challenged as his role is being slowly undermined. Therefore, men try to fulfil their sense of masculinity using different means, such as control over the decisions, and income in some cases as mentioned previously. On the other hand, those who still live with their parents, do not face any problems from their father, but from their male siblings, where specific stress was made on male siblings, sometimes feel discomforted that their sister goes to work, and people know her, which was mentioned by participant 5:

> I have two siblings, one of them completely disagrees with the fact that I am working, the other one says he is okay with it, but it is only because he doesn't want me to be taking money from him (because he does not have any). I have been working for a very long time and now that they see that I have not done anything disrespectful, they accept the idea of me working.

Indeed, working women affirmed that work had a huge positive impact on their personality and personal growth, as they are now aware of their surroundings and how to act with and among a society. Work allowed them to have a role in the society, even if it is a small role. Participant 9 mentioned "ever since I started working, my self-esteem has developed, I started to feel more confident, and I feel work gave me a purpose in life. Also, now that I work and bring money, my opinion is taken seriously at home and my parent consult me with big decisions whereas before I started working,

---

[33] Participant 13 has a diploma in electronic engineering, she is married with no kids, her husband works but their income is not enough for them.

they did not give me much attention" (Participant 9, personal communication, 4 August 2022). These assertions are clear manifestations that working women observe their femininities being altered and even masculinized to some extent by stepping up to the role of decision-maker and assuming power. This also builds on the discourse regarding second wave feminism as through the positive impact work has on females, we can expect a rise in working females that would eventually start to work for their personal development instead of the economic conditions. This also would eventually lead to the rise of the second wave feminist discourse among women in Gaza in order to achieve not only equality, but equity as well – considering that second wave feminism focuses on the pursuit of greater equality and universality, placing special emphasis on the passage of legislation and the achievement of rights for both men and women (Molony and Nelson, 2017, p. 66).

Therefore, it is conspicuous that work adds to the female's personality and makes it stronger, which leads to the approval of family members regarding the females and work, and actually some encourage it when they see that it made a difference. Nonetheless, the society in Gaza is still shaken when it comes to women's employment and development. As indicated by the interviews, it is difficult to say if the community is with or against. Therefore, it is safe to say that the society is divided into two when it comes to women's employment, a) those who genuinely believe that women should work and have a role in the society, and b) those who believe that women's role should be at home and in the kitchen but are unable to express their thoughts due to the economic conditions that forces the community to rely on more than one income at home. This can be explained through the male dominant social order that operates to confirm dominant masculinities existence and control over females, as suggested by Lewis (2007).

As masculinities are challenged, and with the increase among females in regards to the desire to change, be stronger, and more confident - both on a personal level and through collective battles, more men will be forced to re-examine the thoughtless generalizations and assumed privilege of masculinity (Segal, 1993).

4.3 Challenging Masculinities

Both genders were disadvantaged by the blatant increase in unemployment. After the blockade and the division, society started to perceive males as worthless

70

because they could not provide their families with stability or an income. On the other hand, mothers were degraded because they had to leave their kids at home to seek aid from humanitarian organizations or scrounge for money on the streets (Muhanna, 2010); this situation led to males feeling that their masculinity is being challenged.

As a result of the lack of job opportunities, job terminations that resulted from the sanctions on Gaza's economy due to Hamas' rule, and weak economy, many males lost their jobs and source of income. Thus, to be able to live and pay bills, women began to look for job opportunities. This, indeed, challenged males in the sense that there is a belief that if a female works, she will be able to know what her rights and demand for them are, causing "headache" to the male. According to WACG:

> Of course, there are males who are threatened by working women because there are males who do not accept working women; whether sister or wife, or when he goes to marry one, if she is working, he demands her to leave her job (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022).

However, according to the interview with PWWSD:

> I do not think men are threatened by working women, because so many women work and their income is low, and even if it is enough, men control the wife's income, and she takes from him her allowance. I know cases where if a woman does not give her husband her income, he beats her up until she gives it to him (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022).

This indicates that although a major part of the man's role is gone, working and being the breadwinner of the family, today also females occupy such a role while males are not working and took on the role of stay-at-home father. Therefore, men do different things to satisfy their masculine identity and protect it from changing, such as what PWWSD mentioned above, confiscating the females' income, beating her to take her income, and/or controlling her income. Also, AISHA confirmed that majority of the cases they know about, women do not control their income (Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022).

The literature also tells us how masculinities are challenged and sometimes change in times of conflict, just like in Afghanistan post 9-11 (Ashe and Harland, 2014; Donaldson, Hibbins, Howson, and Pease, 2009; Wojnicka and Pustulka, 2019; Davalos, 2020; Myrttinen et al., 2017; Gilani, 2008); therefore, the data presented from the interviews tells us that although males in Gaza feel that they are losing a sense of

their masculinity because of the deteriorating economy, unemployment, and female employment, they satisfy their masculinity with a different kind of control. In this case, it is control over the wife's income and violence. Participant 3's husband, does not like the fact that she works, but because she contributes to the household, he is not able to say anything, she said "I know he doesn't like me working but now that he is not working and is staying at home, he does not express his feelings because my income is all we rely on" (Participant 3, personal communication, 21 July 2022). As Connell (1987) said, men had natural influence over women and children, which is why despite the context the case study lies in, men are seen as having untouchable social power. Participant 6 who did not continue her college education because of the economic situation and works in a store added, "I give half my income to either my father or to my male siblings, if a month comes and I do not give them my income, they come and ask me what happened with the money" (Participant 6, personal communication, 26 July 2022).

Dr. Yasser adds that the political division itself and its consequences challenged males' dominance and masculinity. According to him:

> Two things happened: on the bad side, people who worked with the government agencies were asked to stay at home, they are not allowed to work or look for another job, and they will receive their income. On the good side, this created more than 20,000 jobs, and these jobs were filled by incompetent people related to the new government in Gaza" (Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei, personal communication, 13 December 2022).

The consequence of men staying at home and not working is that they lost a sense of their masculinity, they are no longer the breadwinner of the family, similar to what males went through in Afghanistan. Although, yes, they may receive their income, but they do not do anything and sit at home all day, "it is like they are retired and receiving social security" this also adds stress on the women in the household as the male is always present in the house. Therefore, they would need to fulfil his duties constantly, on the other hand, if his demands were not fulfilled due to the women's busy schedule, his masculinity would be affected. For instance, the house should be always clean for the man to be able to sit and enjoy watching the television, while the females in the household should be able to cook, clean, and take care of the children

in the house without disturbing the male (Dr. Yasser Abu Jamei, personal communication, 13 December 2022).

In line with masculinity studies, men develop their sense of masculinity as a result of a variety of social customs or actions, and because the idea of masculinity is not static, it constantly modifies and adapts in response to fresh circumstances. In the current form of societies, men's roles are changing and their dominance in society is under threat (Landsberg, 2020; Lewis, 2007). Considering that Gaza is a conservative and patriarchal society, the interviewee from the WACG said that based on her experience and what she sees, most males do not see life as a partnership when it comes to the mainstream roles of the male and female. The interviewee does not generalize the former on all males in Gaza; however, this is mostly the case according to the cases they see at the center. In other words, males in Gaza still see women as housewives, even if she is a working female, males still do not have a role inside the house – in terms of household activities (cooking, cleaning, taking care of kids, etc.) – thus making it more difficult, if not impossible, for females who work and would like to work. Also, according to Muhanna (2010, p.43) husbands who are educated are not secure to have a cooperative role in the household, as they rely on their wives or daughters to do so.

However, when it comes to paying bills and financial responsibilities, if the woman works, their view on life changes and becomes a partnership where the woman has to contribute financially to the household (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). All of the interviewed women agree that their husbands, fathers, brothers, do not help in the household activities, as these roles are for females only, which shows the hegemonic and patriarchal privilege.

Connell (1987) argues that men have social powers because they instinctively affect women and children. This is also because of the development of gender and gender norms (Budgeon, 2013; Van Den Berg, 2011; Brekowitz, Manohar, and Tinker, 2010). Which explains why the patriarchal-hegemonic male identity is still visible. Nonetheless, it is also because the nature of the community the context lies in, which is conservative; therefore, the sense of masculinity and masculine identity in the community is being challenged and males secure it by adhering to the hegemonic image of the male.

On the other hand, the NGOs interviewees share similar answers when it comes to working women challenging masculinity. In which, that working women do not challenge the male's masculinity in the sense that even if the male does not work and contribute financially to the house, males still control everything in the house, from what food will be cooked for lunch to the income the female receives from her job (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022), this is a result of traditional gender norms and males power privilege in a male dominated society, as the male should be the one in control of the money flow withing the household. However, now that he is not working and not contributing financially, an aspect of this traditional gender norm is missing which he tries to achieve it in controlling the wife's income.

As stated in the interviews conducted with working women, those who were not married and are living with their parents received more support and approval to work in contrast with those who were married. Eight out of the eleven women who are not married, their parents supported and encouraged them to work, while four out of the six married women, their husbands did not approve or supported them working but is forced to accept it due to the economic situation. When combining all the interviews together, the idea of unmarried women receiving support from their parents and those who are married their husbands do not support them can be understood in the context of (a) those who are unmarried live with their parents and do not have a purpose in life[34]. Therefore, they do not have the responsibility the married woman has and would like to explore the small world around them. On the other hand, (b) those who are married, their husbands do not approve or like the idea of them working, due to traditions and the thought that males should be the one providing the house necessities financially. However, these males are forced to accept the work of their wives because of the economic situation that resulted from the blockade and division.

To secure their masculinity and prevent it from being challenged, some males either take the females income or he goes to the bank to receive it, and he gives her allowance. Also, some do not prefer working women because they know when she works, she will know her rights, so they consider her as a rebellious woman (PWWSD, personal communication, 23 June 2022; Aisha Association, personal communication,

---

[34] Participant 15 used the terminology "purpose in life" when she described her reasons behind finding job opportunity, besides the fact that she also wanted to help her family financially.

26 June 2022; WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022). That is not to say that all males in Gaza act the same, according to the interview with AISHA, it depends on the family – their social status, level of education, and wealth, which is also what almost all the working women interviewees agree with (Aisha Association, personal communication, 26 June 2022). Therefore, similar to any conservative region, the image of working women in Gaza remains shaken which makes it harder for women to take on the role of the breadwinner especially when it challenges the man's masculinity.

Based on the information provided by the interviews, it is safe to say that the type of masculinity that exists in Gaza is a combination between hegemonic and complicit masculinities. The former because men have more dominance over women and the relationship with females is usually patriarchal (Connell, 1995; Connell, 1987; Reeser 2020). Whilst the latter because not all males in Gaza's context are hegemonic; although they do have dominance over females, but they are not having a very strong position at home or in the society, and are actually benefiting from the existence of hegemonic masculinities (Jefferson, 2002; Schippers, 2007; Gomez, 2007).

Concluding, in spite of Gaza's economic, social, and political circumstances, it is clear from the interviews conducted for this study that women in Gaza still have a long way to go before achieving equality and equity. That is not to say that women should take on this road on their own, it should be the society's responsibility to question the inequality among the two gender and work collectively to achieve gender equality and development. Considering the disastrous effects of the division and blockade on the Gaza Strip, the division helped society to accept working women in some measure and to stop treating them disrespectfully. In other words, today female employment in Gaza, a conservative and patriarchal society, is accepted, not because Gaza is developing its beliefs regarding equality among the two genders but because of the economic situation that forced this community to accept, and in some cases encourage females to work. However, it is extremely important to note that although we have been witnessing very small improvements regarding female employment, it should not be forgotten that the community in Gaza is still conservative and patriarchal, and it is still not very much accepted (WACG, personal communication, 28 June 2022).

Chapter 5

Discussions and Conclusion

If gender, in its broadest contexts, is constructed and its performances are created by others' perception and gender (Butler, 2002; Moynihan, 1998; Budgeon, 2013), then gender theories such as feminism and masculinity are also constructed based on how the society expects man and woman to act and re-act.

Feminism calls for equality among the two genders, equality of opportunity, payment, treatment, etc.; however, this equality is often misunderstood as sameness (Caprino, 2017). Women have different social responsibilities that she needs to accomplish, especially in the MENA region, for instance, it is expected for a woman to be married before a certain age, have children, and be able to take care of her husband and kids. Female's social responsibilities do not include female's employment and work responsibilities. Second wave feminism in particular, sought to undermine the fundamental philosophical, scientific, theoretical, and theological structures at the center of society. Also, they were oriented on the fight for greater equality and universality where they focused on legislative successes and the realization rights for both men and women (Molony and Nelson, 2017). Further, second wave feminism focuses with inequality at the household level - personal is political, seeks to transform interpersonal relationships, and criticizes the institution of the family (Mack-Canty, 2004; Franceschet, 2004; Molony and Nelson, 2017).

On the other hand, males do not hold such responsibilities, as discussed by masculine studies, it is the male's privilege to not have any social responsibility in the household, but males do have other responsibilities, such as being responsible for having a stable income for the household along with fulfilling the financial needs of the household (Lewis, 2007; Jewkes et al., 2015). However, since women's economic empowerment can promote social cohesiveness, in times of war and crises, women held on masculine coded responsibilities due to the males' absence, and they continue to do so during the post-conflict period. Hence, improved governance and an easier transition from war to development may be benefits of greater female participation (Abril, 2009; Goldin and Olivetti, 20133; Goldin, 1989; Schweitzer, 1980; Afonso, 2018).

In Palestine, specifically in Gaza, where the community is conservative and is yet to be free from the patriarchal rule; hence why women suffer from the lack of equality. Nonetheless, Palestinian women do not only suffer from a patriarchal society but also from an occupation (Haj, 1992), and Gaza they suffer from a political and economic crisis, in other words the division and blockade which destroyed all aspects of life. Therefore, when discussing theories of feminism and feminist development, as well as masculinities, the Gaza Strip is an exceptional case-study.

This research covered the effects of the blockade and division on female employment, its development, as well as its effect on dominant masculinities. The research goes on to understand how gender and its aspects are constructed, and moves further to understand gender theories, especially how masculinities can be challenged in times of conflict when females take on more masculine coded rules compared to stable tines. The literature does not discuss how femininities are developed and improved in times of economic recession, blockade, and political instability. Also, there is a large gap in the literature regarding Palestinian women employment prior the blockade and division and after. This research attempted to cover how the blockade and division had an effect on females in Gaza financially, which led them to look for work opportunities, this also led us to the discover how masculinities in Gaza were challenged due to the rise of unemployment rate and deteriorating economic situation.

Considering Gaza's context, the worsening economic situation led males to lose their jobs, and source of income, and females started to seek different job opportunities or started to help their families, in-case of the existence of family business. The population in Gaza still adheres to traditional gender norms for both men and women; thus, the fact that women started to work violated men's feeling of masculinity and male identity. This was seen through the results obtained from the methodology, which relied on semi-structured interviews with three of the main NGOs working with women in Gaza and interviews conducted with random working women in Gaza through snowballing and quota sampling technique.

It was also evident from the interviews that women in Gaza seek job opportunities, not because of the developed way of life and thinking in the society, but because of the economic situation that oblige women to work to contribute to the households they live in. This, indeed, results in the weakening of masculinity and the patriarchal image of the male in the society due to their inability to maintain a stable

household, which therefore causes masculinity to be challenged and femininities to develop (see also Muhanna, 2016). This does not mean that masculinity in Gaza is disappearing but is currently challenged and under attack where males fight back to secure their masculine identity through different means – such as domestic violence and control over female income.

Through the literature presented on gender theories and the results of the interviews, it is noticeable that the masculine identity of males in Gaza is being violated and is challenged through different means, starting with the lack of job opportunities, unemployment, economic recession, and most importantly, female members who are working and are contributing financially to the household while the male might have not been able to work for years. This all led to the violation of the manhood identity the male holds and is grown to believe in as a result of the social construction of gender norms and traditional gender roles.

For feminism, we can see that there is a mix of first and second waves of feminism in Gaza, where there is violence and unemployment, and women are eagerly seeking employment prospects with secure wages (Valverde, 2016; Mack-Canty, 2004; Baxandall and Gordon, 2002). In addition to the visible development of female knowledge regarding the importance of work and its effects on the self, although most women work only because of the economic situation, this is slowly shifting the mind set among females, especially among the upcoming generation where the mother does not adhere to the traditional gender norms. Also, it should be noted that although the numbers provided by the interviewees corresponds with the statistics provided by the PCBS, it is difficult to rely on these numbers as almost all the interviewed working women are not registered as employees; thus, making it difficult to identify the number of working women in Gaza.

To answer the main research question, which is "How femininities evolved and changed during blockade and political instability?" femininities in Gaza evolved due to the Israeli blockade that forced females to look for job opportunities in order to survive the blockade, as males became unemployed. Thus, women fought the conservative society and the mainstream belief that women are housewives only, to offer a financial helping hand to the household, whether to her husband, father, or brother.

Regarding the sub questions of the research, which are "How the blockade and division affected women's employment and dominant masculinities in Gaza? Did the blockade and division change the perception of males towards working women in Gaza?" Females' employment affected dominant masculinities in which it caused them to be challenged, due to the fact that women no longer hold the gender norm image of a housewife, but also is responsible for masculine coded roles. However, males try to secure their sense of masculinity in different ways, such as confiscating females' income, controlling females' social life, and using violence and harassment on females. Also, it is safe to say that the blockade and division encouraged women to explore for jobs outside of their typical traditional responsibilities. That did not, however, imply that the employment they were looking for were in line with their interests or, if they were educated, with their expertise.

In other words, women had to look for jobs because of the economic situation not because of progressive views towards equality of work among the two genders. Also, as long as hegemonic, and complicit masculinities exist, working females' development and independence is more complicated as males confiscate not only the females' income, but also their freedom as well. On the other hand, according to the interviews, it is evident that males today prefer a working woman rather than an unemployed one. This is also not because of the belief of equality among the two genders, but it is indeed due to the economic crisis in which males today are not able to get married and have a family if there is only one income in the house. This shows how masculinities are challenged during economic recessions and difficulties, and how the traditional gender norms are being overlooked as the economic situation worsens. In addition, it suggests that the social constrains put on women are slowly fading, as a result of the blockade and economic conditions, where she can be a housewife as well as an employee; therefore, suggesting that the social construction image for women is changing.

It is suggested that eliminating salary inequality and the subpar working conditions they experience will be crucial to encourage more women to enter the workforce. Most significantly, the Palestinian economy's potential for production must be increased. To do this, policies and strategies must be put in place to fight the erosion of productive industries like manufacturing, agriculture, and technology brought on by Israeli colonial practices. These industries can be enhanced by making a variety of

investments, such as those in research and development, quality control, and the implementation of trade protection measures (Al-Batmeh, n.d.). Programs that are based on humanitarian aid and temporary development should be also avoided. In order to ensure sustainable integration for females in the work force in Palestine, specifically in Gaza, is programs that would teach women how to be an active member in the economy, this would also lead to women's empowerment and it would be a step forward towards gender equality. To conclude, this confirms our research hypothesis that the blockade and the economic recession opened a path for women to discover a world besides the constructed traditional gender norms they grew up believing. Whereas the blockade affected males negatively as their masculinity is under challenge and violation due to female employment and lack of job opportunities.

REFERENCES

14 years of Hamas control of Gaza. (2020, June 14). *Anadolu Agency* Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/1876122/ إطار-غزة-على-حماس-سيطرة-من-عاما-14/التقارير

Abril, M. E. R. (2009). *Women's Economic Empowerment in Conflict and Post-conflict Countries*. Retrieved from https://cdn.sida.se/publications/files/sida51910en-womens-economic-empowerment-key-issues-and-policy-options.pdf

Abu Watfa, Y. (2016, May 8). Gaza women face siege, poverty, and unemployment. *The New Arab* Retrieved from https://www.alaraby.co.uk/ يواجهن-غزة-نساء البطالة-و الفقر-و الحصار

Adli, H. (2020 November 30). Gaza women break down work barriers amid Israeli sieges. *Al-Jazeera* Retrieved from https://www.aljazeera.net/news/reportsandinterviews/2017/3/8/ يدفعن-غزة-نساء والعدوان-الحصار-ثمن

Afonso, A. (2018). Migrant Workers or Working Women? Comparing Labour Supply Policies in Post-War Europe. *Journal of Comparative Policy Analysis: Research and Practice*, *21*(3), 251–269. https://doi.org/10.1080/13876988.2018.1527584

Al Hennawi, A. and Al Sabe, A. (2016). Economic Recovery in the Gaza Strip: From emergency aid to more sustainable development. *OXFAM*. Occupied Palestinian Territories: OXFAM.

Al-Batmeh, S. (n.d.). Palestinian women in the labor market A growing labor force that is being held back by Israeli colonialism. Retrieved from Interactive Encyclopedia of the Palestine Question website: https://www.palquest.org/ar/highlights.

Alcoff, L.M. (2010). *New epistemologies: post-positivist accounts of identity*. USA: SAGE publications.

Alderfer, C.P. (1969). An empirical test of a new theory of human needs. *Organizational behavior and human performance*, *4*(2), 142-175.

Alexander, A.C. & Welzel, C. (2007). Empowering women: four theories tested on four different aspects of gender equality. In *Annual meeting of Midwest Political Science Association.* Chicago: Palmer House Hotel.

Alexander, A.C., Bolzendahl, C., & Jalalzai, F. (2016). Defining women's global political empowerment: theories and evidence. *Sociology Compass*, *10*(6), 432-441.

Alhelou, A. (2019, March 14). Gaza economy at last. *The New Arab* Retrieved from https://www.alaraby.co.uk/ اقتصاد-غزة-في-الرمق-الأخير/

Allen, J., & Felbab-Brown, V. (2020, September 16). The fate of women's rights in Afghanistan. Retrieved from Brookings website: https://www.brookings.edu/essay/the-fate-of-womens-rights-in-afghanistan/

Alsoos, I. (2020, November 24). Democracy in Office, Authoritarianism in Power: The Failure of Palestinian Electoral Democracy, 2006-2007. Retrieved from Arab Center for Research and Policy Studies website: https://siyasatarabiya.dohainstitute.org/ar/issue045/Pages/Siyassat45-2020-Alsoos.pdf

Alsoos, I. (2020). Democracy in office, authoritarianism in power: the failure of Palestinian electoral democracy, 2006-2007. *Siyasat Arabiya: A Bimonthly Peer Reviewd Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *45*(1), 7-23.

Anderson, J. M. (2002). Toward a post-colonial feminist methodology in nursing research: Exploring the convergence of post-colonial and black feminist scholarship. *Nurse Researcher (through 2013)*, *9*(3), 7.

Ashe, F., & Harland, K. (2014). Troubling masculinities: Changing patterns of violent masculinities in a society emerging from political conflict. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, *37*(9), 747-762.

Banat, B. (2018). Palestinian women and resistance. *International Journal of ANGLISTICUM, 7*(3), 44-55.

Baxandall, R., & Gordon, L. (2002). Second-wave feminism. *A companion to American women's history* (414-432). Oxford: Malden, Mass- Blackwell Publications.

Baxandall, R., & Gordon, L. (2002). Second-wave feminism. *A companion to American women's history*, 414-432.

Bbasin, H. (2021 June). ERG theory of motivation with its implications. *Markerting* Retrieved from https://www.marketing91.com/erg-theory-of-motivation/

Bem, S. L. (1974). The measurement of psychological androgyny. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 42(2), 155-162.

Berg-Sørensen, A., Holtug, N. & Lippert-Rasmussen, K. (2010). Essentialism vs. constructivism: introduction. *Distinktion: Scandinavian Journal of Social Theory*, *11*(1), 39-45.

Beril T. (2013). *Violence as a way of reconstructing manhood: the role of the threatened manhood and masculine ideology on violence against women.* (Master Thesis). Presented: Middle East Technical University , Social Science.

Biever, J.L., Fuentes, C.D.L., Cashion, L. & Franklin, C. (1998). The social construction of gender: A comparison of feminist and postmodern approaches. *Counselling Psychology Quarterly*, *11*(2), 163-179.

Braudy, L. (2010). *From chivalry to terrorism: War and the changing nature of masculinity*. New York: Vintage.

Braun, Virginia, & Victoria Clarke. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Routledge, 3*(2), 77-101.

Braunstein, E., Bouhia, R. & Seguino, S. (2019). Social reproduction, gender equality and economic growth. *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, *44*(1), 129-156.

Brodmann, S., Cuadra, E.P., Allouche, M.I. & Hillis, S.A. (2012). From education-to-work: opportunities and challenges in the West Bank and Gaza. *World Bank*

Buchan, R. (2012). The palmer report and the legality of Israel's naval blockade of Gaza. *The International Comparative Law Quarterly*, *61*(1), 264-273.

Budgeon, S. (2013). The dynamics of gender hegemony: femininities, masculinities and social change. *Sociology*, *48*(2), 317-334.

Butler, J. (1988). Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory. *Theatre Journal*, *40*(4), 519-531.

Butler, J. (2002). *Gender trouble*. Routledge.

Butler, J. (2009). Performativity, Precarity and Sexual Politics. *AIBR. Revista de Antropología Iberoamericana*, *4*(3), 1-13.

Butt, K.,& Butt, A. (2016). Blockade on Gaza strip: a living hell on earth. *Journal of Political Studies*, *23*(1), 157-182.

CAMGÖZ, Z. (2020). *Commodification of feminism within neoliberalism: the notion of femvertising.* (Master Thesis). Presented: Yeditepe University, Media and Communication Management.

Caprino, K. (2017). What is Feminism, And Why Do So Many Women And Men Hate It? *Forbes,* Retrieved from

https://www.forbes.com/sites/kathycaprino/2017/03/08/what-is-feminism-and-why-do-so-many-women-and-men-hate-it/?sh=710bdfab7e8e

Caprino. K. (2017). What is feminism, and why do so many women and men hate it? *Forbes*.

Carlson A. (2010). Gender and sex: what are they? Sally Haslanger's debunking social constructivism. *Distinktion: Journal of Social Theory*, *11*(1), 61-72.

Carpenter, R. (2002). Gender theory in world politics: contributions of a non-feminist standpoint? *International Studies Review, 4*(3), 153-165.

Choi, S. Y. (2019). Migration, masculinity, and family. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *45*(1), 78-94.

Cole, E. R. (2009). Intersectionality and Research in Psychology. Retrieved from American Psychologist,

Collins, P. H. (2015). Intersectionality's Definitional Dilemmas. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *41*(1), 1–20.

Connell, R. (1987). *Gender and Power: Society, the Person and Sexual Politics.* Palo Alta: University of California Press.

Connell, R. (1995)*. Masculinities*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Connell, R. (2005)*. Masculinities*. Second ed. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Connell, R. (2016). Masculinities in global perspective: Hegemony, contestation, and changing structures of power. *Theory and Society*, *45*(4), 303-318.

Conradie, M. (2011). Constructing femininity: A critical discourse analysis ofCosmo. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, *29*(4), 401–417. https://doi.org/10.2989/16073614.2011.651940

Costley, K. C. (2006) . Why do we have theories? *Arkansas Tech University*. Retrieved from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED491769

Cunningham, J. B. (1997). Case study principles for different types of cases. *Quality and quantity*, *31*(4), 401-423.

Dalacoura, K. (2019). Women and gender in the Middle East and North Africa: mapping the field and addressing policy dilemmas at the post-2011 juncture. *MENARA Final Reports.*

Dávalos, C. (2020). Localizing masculinities in the global care chains: experiences of migrant men in Spain and Ecuador. *Gender, Place & Culture*, *27*(12), 1703-1722.

De Cenzo, D.A., and Robbins, S.P. (1988). *Personnel/human resource management*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall International.

Deaux, K., and Major, B. (1987). Putting gender into context: An interactive model of gender- related behavior. *Psychological Review, 94*(3), 369-389.

Denzin, N.K. (1986). Postmodern social theory. *Sociological theory*, *4*(2), 194-204.

Deutsch, K. (1961). "Social Mobilization and Political Development." *American Political Science Review, 55*(3), 493-514.

Donaldson, L. (1997). A positivist alternative to the structure-action approach. *Organization Studies*, *18*(1), 77-92.

Donaldson, M., Hibbins, R., Howson, R., & Pease, B. (Eds.). (2009). *Migrant men: Critical studies of masculinities and the migration experience* (Vol. 20). Routledge.

Duflo, E. (2012). Women empowerment and economic development. *Journal of Economic Literature*, *50*(4), 1051-79.

Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review* 14 (4): 532–50.

Elsous, A., El-Kass, S.D.A., Salama, A., Radwan, M., Abo-Eid, S. & Baloushah, S. (2021). Depression among infertile women in Gaza Strip: symptom severity and predictors. *Depression research and treatment*, *2021,* 2-7

Emadi, H. (2015). Women in the Post-Taliban Afghanistan: Dialectics of Oppression and Token Recognition. *Race, Gender & Class*, *22*(3–4), 244–259. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26505359

Erakat, N. (no date). Almost unlivable after 15 years of blockade" *Euro-med Human Rights Monitor* Retrieved from *https://euromedmonitor.org/en/gaza*

Etkes, H. & Zimring, A. (2015). When trade stops: Lessons from the Gaza blockade 2007–2010. *Journal of International Economics*, *95(*1), 16-27.

Etzioni, A. (1968). Basic human needs, alienation and inauthenticity. *American Sociological Review*, *33*(6),870-885.

Euro-mid Human Rights Monitor. (2022, January 25). Bitter 16: New report documents consequences of Israel's blockade on Gaza. Retrieved from Euro-

Med   Human   Rights   Monitor   website:
https://euromedmonitor.org/en/article/4866/Bitter-16:-New-report-documents-
consequences-of-Israel%27s-blockade-on-Gaza.

Ferguson, K.E. (2017). Feminist theory today. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *20,* 269-286.

Filiu, J. (2014). The twelve wars on Gaza. *Journal of Palestine Studies, 44(*1), 52-60.

Fisher, M. (2012, April 25). The real roots of sexism in the Middle East (it's not Islam, race   or   'hate').   *The   Atlantic*   Retrieved   from https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2012/04/the-real-roots-of-sexism-in-the-middle-east-its-not-islam-race-or-hate/256362/

Flew, A. (Ed.) 1979. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. London: Macmillan.

Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative inquiry*, *12*(2), 219-245.

Franceschet, S. (2004). Explaining social movement outcomes: Collective action frames and strategic choices in first-and second-wave feminism in Chile. *Comparative Political Studies*, *37*(5), 499-530.

Gaza women pay the price of siege and aggression. (2017, March 8). *Al-Jazeera*

George, A. L., & Bennett, A. (2005). *Case studies and theory development in the social sciences*. MIT Press

Gerodetti, N., & McNaught-Davis, M. (2017). Feminisation of success or successful femininities? Disentangling "new femininities" under neoliberal conditions. *European   Journal   of   Women's   Studies*,   *24*(4),   351–365. https://doi.org/10.1177

Gerodetti, N., & McNaught-Davis, M. (2017). Feminization of success or successful femininities? Disentangling 'new femininities under neoliberal conditions. *European Journal of Women's Studies, 24*(4), 351-365.

Gerring, J. (2004). What is a case study and what is it good for? *Boston university, American political science review.*

Gilani,   S.   (2008).   Reconstituting   Manhood: Examining   Post-Conflict Remasculinisation and its Effects on Women and Women's Rights In Afghanistan. *Spire Journal of Law, Politics, and Societies*, *3*(1), 56-72.

Gill, R., & Scharff, C. (2011). *New femininities Postfeminism, neoliberalism and subjectivity*. Basingstoke, Palgrave Macmillan.

Goerzig, C. (2010). Transforming the quartet principles: Hamas and the peace process. *European Union Institute for Security Studies, The Occasional Papers*, *85*, 1-37.

Goldin, C. (1989). The role of World War II in the rise of women's work.

Goldin, C. D. (1991). The role of World War II in the rise of women's employment. *The American Economic Review*, 741-756.

Goldin, C., & Olivetti, C. (2013). Shocking Labor Supply: A Reassessment of the Role of World War II on Women's Labor Supply. *American Economic Review*, *103*(3), 257–262. https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.103.3.257

Golley, N. A. (2007). Is feminism relevant to Arab women? *Third World Quarterly, 25*(3), 521-536.

Gomez, L. F. (2007). Relations among Masculinities: controversy in Uncle Tom's cabin. *Folios*, 25, 115-124.

Gopaldas, A. (2013). Intersectionality 101. *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, *32*(Special Issue), 90–94. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/43305317.pdf

Gorely, T., Holroyd, R., & Kirk, D. (2003). Muscularity, the habitus, and the social construction of gender: towards a gender-relevant physical education. *British journal of sociology of education*, *24*(4), 429-448.

Grimes, D. A., & Schulz, K. F. (2002). Descriptive studies: what they can and cannot do. *The Lancet*, *359*(9301), 145-149.

Grosz, E. (2010). The untimeliness of feminist theory. *NORA—Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research*, *18*(1), 48-51.

Haj, S. (1992). Palestinian women and patriarchal relations. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *17*(4), 761-778

Hammad, J., & Tribe R. (2020). Adaptive coping during protracted political conflict, war, and military blockade in Gaza. *International Review of Psychiatry*, 33(1), 56- 63.

Hare-Mustin, R. T., & Marecek, J. (1988). The meaning of difference: gender theory, postmodernism, and psychology. *American Psychologist*, *43*(6), 455–464.

Havelková, B. (2020). The struggle for social constructivism in post-socialist Central and Eastern Europe. *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, *18*(2), 434-440.

Hill, M. (2003). Development as empowerment. *Feminist economics*, *9*(2-3), 117-135.

Hoff, J. (1994). Gender as a postmodern category of paralysis. *Women's History Review*, *3*(2), 149-168.

Holmen, M., Min, T. T., & Saarelainen, E. (2011). Female entrepreneurship in Afghanistan. *Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship*, *16*(03), 307-331.

Holmes, M. (2000). Second-wave feminism and the politics of relationships. *Women's Studies International Forum*, *23*(2), 235–246. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0277-5395(00)00072-8

Houghton, T. (2011). Does positivism really 'work' in the social sciences? *E-International Relations* https://sso.apa.org/apasso/oauth/authorize?grant_type=authorization_code&scope=journal%20electronicdb%20psycnet&response_type=code&redirect_uri=https://psycnet.apa.org/user/authenticate&client_id=pnclient1&state=sandwich

Hutchings, K. (2008). Making sense of masculinity and war. *Men and Masculinities*, *10*(4), 389-404.

IANS (2021, December). Unemployment rate in Hamas-ruled Gaza exceeds 50%: Palestinian official. *Business Standards,* Retrieved from https://www.business-standard.com/article/international/unemployment-rate-in-hamas-ruled-gaza-exceeds-50-palestinian-official-121122900082_1.html

ILO (2012). Women's participation in the Palestinian labour force: 2010-2011. *International Labor Organization.*

Jabali, O. (2009). Palestinian women's political participation. *Acta Asiatica Varsoviens, 2*(22), 29-41.

Jefferson, T. (2002). Subordinating hegemonic masculinity. *Theoretical criminology, 6*(1), 63-88.

Jewkes, R., Morrell, R., Hearn, J., Lundqvist, E., Blackbeard, D., Lindegger, G., Quayle, M., Sikweyiya, Y., & Gottzen, L.(2015). Hegemonic masculinity: combining theory and practice in gender interventions. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *17*(2), 112-127.

Johnson, P., & Wadi, S. (2010). *REVIEW OF WOMEN'S STUDIES*. Retrieved from https://fada.birzeit.edu/bitstream/20.500.11889/2226/1/Review%20of%20Women%20Studies%20issue%206.pdf#page=41

Johnson, T.B., 2017. Waves of feminism and the media. *UKnowledge, 32*, 1-15.

Johnstone, P., Adamowicz, R., de Haan, F., Ferguson, B., Ewert, J., Brown, R. & Wong, T. (2013). Linking urban water management to urban liveability. *Water-Journal of the Australian Water Association*, *40*, 112-116.

Kabeer, N. and Natali, L. (2013). Gender equality and economic growth: Is there a win-win? *IDS Working Papers*, *2013*(417), 1-58.

Kandiyoti, D. (2019). Mainstreaming Men and Masculinities: Technical Fix or Political Struggle?. *Masculinities: A Journal of Identity and Culture*, (12), 30-41.

Keaton, S. A., & Bodie G. D. (2011). Explaining social constructivism. *Communication Teacher*, *25*(4), 92-196.

Kenworthy, L. & Malami, M. (1999). Gender inequality in political representation: A worldwide comparative analysis. *Social Forces*, *78*(1), 235-268.

Kerner, I. (2017). Relations of difference: Power and inequality in intersectional and postcolonial feminist theories. *Current Sociology*, *65*(6), 846-866.

Khan, K. B., McDonald, H., Baumbusch, J. L., Kirkham, S. R., Tan, E., & Anderson, J. M. (2007, May). Taking up postcolonial feminism in the field: Working through a method. In *Women's Studies International Forum* (Vol. 30, No. 3, pp. 228-242). Pergamon.

Kilmartin, C. (1994). *The masculine self*. New York: Macmillan.

King, G., Keohane, R. O., & Verba, S. (1994). *Designing social inquiry: Scientific inference in qualitative research*. Princeton university press

Klasen, S. & Lamanna, F. (2003). The impact of gender inequality in education and employment on economic growth in the Middle East and North Africa. *World Bank*, 1-20

Klasen, S. & Santos, S. M. (2018). Gender inequality as a barrier to economic growth: a review of the theoretical literature. *Review of the Economics of the Household*, *19*(1), 581–614.

Klugman, J., & Mukhtarova, T. (2020). *How Did Conflict Affect Women's Economic Opportunities in Sub-Saharan Africa? Expert Advisors*. Retrieved from https://giwps.georgetown.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/How-Conflict-Affects-Womens-Economic-Opportunities.pdf

Kotef, H. (2009). On abstractness: first wave liberal feminism and the construction of the abstract woman. *Feminist Studies*, *35*(3), 495-522

Krapp, A. (2005). Basic needs and the development of interest and intrinsic motivational orientations. *Learning and Instruction*, *15*(5), 381-395.

Landsberg, T. (2020, November 13). Masculinity and gender roles undergoing change. *Deutsche Welle* Retrieved from https://www.dw.com/en/masculinity-and-gender-roles-undergoing-change/a-55585195

Lester, D. (2013). Measuring Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Psychological reports*, *113*(1),15-17.

Lewis, L. (2013). Man talks, masculinity and a changing social environment. *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, *1,* 1-20

Lloyd, M. (1999). Performativity, parody, politics. *Theory, culture & society*, *16* (2), 195-213.

Luintel, Y.R. (2014). Modernity and gender: A critique of modernization theory. *Himalayan Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*, *6*, 221-235.

Lupton, B. (2000). Maintaining masculinity: men who do 'women's work'. *British journal of management*, *11*, 33-48.

Lutz, C. (1986). Emotion, thought, and estrangement: emotion as a cultural category. *Cultural anthropology*, *1*(3), 287-309.

Lyons, K. (2017, May 2). Majority of men in Middle East survey believe a woman's place is in the home." *The Guardian* Retrieved from https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/may/02/majority-of-men-in-middle-east-north-africa-survey-believe-a-womans-place-is-in-the-home

Mack-Canty, C. (2004). Third-wave feminism and the need to reweave the nature/culture duality. *NWSA journal*, *16*(3), 154-179.

Maharaj, Z. (1995). A social theory of gender: Connell's "gender and power". *Feminist Review, 1*(49), 50-65.

Mandal, K.C. (2013). Concept and types of women empowerments. *International Forum of Teaching & Studies, 9*(2), pp.17-30.

Martin, P.Y. (2004). Gender as social institution. *Social forces*, *82*(4), 1249-1273.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. New York: Harpers & Brothers.

Maslow, A. H. (1954). The instinctoid nature of basic needs. *Journal of Personality, 22*, 326–347.

McEwan, C. (2001). Postcolonialism, feminism and development: intersections and dilemmas. *Progress in development studies*, *1*(2), 93-111.

McLeod, S. (2007). Maslow's hierarchy of needs. *Simply psychology*, *1*, 1-8.

McMahon, A. (1993). Male readings of feminist theory: the psychologization of sexual politics in the masculinity literature. *Theory and society*, *22*(5), 675-695.

Mehra, R. (1997). Women, empowerment, and economic development. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *554*(1), 136–149.

Merriam, Sharan B. and Elizabeth J. Tisdell. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass: A Wiley Brand

Meyer, C. B. (2001). A case in case study methodology. *Field methods*, *13*(4), 329-352.

Migdalovitz, C. (2010). Israel's blockade of Gaza, the *Mavi Marmara* incident, and its aftermath. *Library of congress Washington dc congressional research service, 20*, 1-20.

Mitra, A., Bang, J.T. & Biswas, A. (2014). Gender equality and economic growth: Is it equality of opportunity or equality of outcomes? *Feminist Economics*, *21*(1), 110-135.

Mohanty, C. T. (2003). Feminism without borders. In *Feminism without Borders*. Duke University Press.

Mohanty, C. T. (2015). Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses. In *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory* (pp. 196-220). Routledge.

Molony, B., & Nelson, J. (2017). *Women's activism and "second wave" feminism transnational histories*. London Bloomsbury Academic.

Morton, T.A., Postmes, T., Haslam, S.A. & Hornsey, M.J. (2009). Theorizing gender in the face of social change: is there anything essential about essentialism? *Journal of personality and social psychology*, *96*(3), 653-664

Moynihan, C. (1998). Theories in health care and research: theories of masculinity. *BMJ, 317*(1072), 1072–1075.

Muhanna, A. (2010). Changing family and gender dynamics during the siege against Gaza: spousal relations and domestic violence. *Review of Women's Studies*, *6*, 40-52.

Muhanna, A. (2016). *Agency and gender in Gaza: masculinity, femininity, and family during the second intifada*. New York: Routledge.

Myrttinen, H., Khattab, L., & Naujoks, J. (2017). Re-thinking hegemonic masculinities in conflict-affected contexts. *Critical Military Studies*, *3*(2), 103-119.

Narayan, U., Harding, S. G., & Harding, S. (Eds.). (2000). *Decentering the center: Philosophy for a multicultural, postcolonial, and feminist world*. Indiana University Press.

Newton, C. (1994) Gender theory and prison sociology: using theories of masculinities to interpret the sociology of prisons for men. *The Howard Journal*, *33*(3), 193-202.

Owda, M.O., Owda, R.O., Abed, M.N., Abdalmenem, S.A., Abu-Naser, S.S. & Al Shobaki, M.J., (2019). Personal Variables and Their Impact on Promoting Job Creation in Gaza Strip through Business Incubators, *3*(8), 65-77.

Palestine Council of Ministers. (2021, August 23). دولة فلسطين - مجلس الوزراء. Retrieved December 12, 2022, from www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps website: http://www.palestinecabinet.gov.ps/portal/Decree/Details/523fbeab-8642-418e-aa16-b959e042e51a

Pascoe, C.J. and Bridges, T. (2016). *Exploring masculinities: Identity, inequality, continuity, and change*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Pateman, C. (1989). The Sexual Contract. *Feminist Review*, (33), 105. https://doi.org/10.2307/1395222.

PCBS. (2020). Unemployment rate 15 years and over from Palestine by region and gender 2020. Retrieved November 11, 2022, from Pcbs.gov.ps website: https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_Rainbow/Documents/unemployment-2020-02a.html

PCBS. (2020). Women and men in Palestine issues and statistics 2020. *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic* Retrieved from https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Downloads/book2528.pdf

PCBS. (2021). Press Release on the Results of the Labour Force Survey, 2021. *Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistic* Retrieved from https://pcbs.gov.ps/site/512/default.aspx?lang=en&ItemID=4177

Pearse R. & Connel, R. (2016). Gender norms and the economy: insights from social research. *Feminist Economics*, *22*(1), 30-53.

Phillips, D.A. (2006). Masculinity, male development, gender, and identity: Modern and postmodern meanings. *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, *27*(4), 403-423.

Rajeswari, S. R. (1993). Real and Imagined Women. Gender, Culture and Postcolonialism. *London and New York: Routledge*

Rampton, M. (2015). Four waves of feminism. *Pacific University Oregon*, *25*, 2-10.

Reeser, T.W. (2020). Concepts of masculinity and masculinity studies. In *Configuring masculinity in theory and literary practice* (pp. 11-38). Leiden: Brill.

Reiter, D. (2015). The positivist study of gender and international relations. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *59*(7),1301-1326.

Rizq- Al-Qazaz, H. (2016). Women in the Gaza Strip. *Women's Affairs Centre – Gaza,* 14-69.

Robertson, S. (2009). Theories of masculinities and men's health-seeking practices. *Nowhere Man's Press*, *9*(2012), 149-172.

Rolleri, L.A. (2013). Understanding gender and gender equality. *Research fACTs and Findings*.

Rostow, W.W. (1959). The stages of economic growth. *The economic history review*, *12*(1), 1-16.

Saadallah, S. (2004). Muslim feminism in the third wave: A reflective inquiry. In *Third wave feminism* (pp. 216-226). London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Said, N. (2019). GENDER ALERT: NEEDS OF WOMEN, GIRLS, BOYS AND MEN IN HUMANITARIAN ACTION IN PALESTINE. In *UN Women* (pp. 1–25). Retrieved from https://palestine.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/Field%20Office%20Palestine/Attachments/Publications/2019/9/UNWPALCOGenderAlert2019.pdf

Saleem, F. (2020). *Afghan women empowerment through labour force participation: an economic analysis*. (Master Thesis). Presented: Anadolu University, Graduate School of Social Sciences.

Salih, S. (2007). On Judith butler and performativity. *Sexualities and communication in everyday life: A reader*, 55-68.

Schippers, M. (2007). Recovering the feminine other: masculinity, femininity, and gender hegemony. *Theory and society*, *36*(1), 85-102.

Schutte, O. (1998). Cultural alterity: Cross-cultural communication and feminist theory in North-South contexts. *Hypatia*, *13*(2), 53-72

Schweitzer, M. (1980). World War II and Female Labor Force Participation Rates. *The Journal of Economic History, 40*(1), 89-95. doi:10.1017/S0022050700104577

Segal, L. (1993). Changing men: masculinities in context. *Theory and Society*, *22*(5), 625-641

Sehlikoglu, S. (2018). Revisited: Muslim women's agency and feminist anthropology of the Middle East. *Contemporary Islam*, *12*(1), 73-92.

Smith, C.J., Noll, J.A., & Bryant, J.B (1999). The effect of social context on gender self-concept. *Sex Roles*, *40*(5/6), 499-512.

Smith, D.J. (2020). Masculinity, money, and the postponement of parenthood in Nigeria. *Population and Development Review*, *46*(1), 101-120.

Snyder, R.C. (2008). What is third-wave feminism? A new directions essay. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, *34*(1), 175-196.

Sodhi, M. S., & Tang, C. S. (2018). Corporate social sustainability in supply chains: a thematic analysis of the literature. *International Journal of Production Research*, *56*(1-2), 882-901.

Sourani, G. (2011). The blockade and division and their economic and social effects on the Gaza Strip. Palestine: Gaza, 1-26.

Sourani, G. (2011). *The current Palestinian scene.* Cairo: Gaziret AlWard Library.

Steigerwald, F. & Forrest, A. (2004). An examination of gender and ethics in family counseling—Part 2: a case study approach using a social constructivism model of ethical decision making. *The Family Journal*, *12*(3), 278-281.

Stewart, F. (2015). Employment in conflict and post-conflict situations. *Background Think Piece for Human Development Report*.

Study highlights the economic effects of the blockade imposed on Gaza. (2015, September 14). *Palestine News & Info Agency* Retrieved from http://www.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=rktMQBa590893946544arktMQB

SÜLEYMANOĞLU-KÜRÜM, R. (2021). ULUSLARARASI İLİŞKİLERDE NİTEL YÖNTEMLERLE MAKALE YAZIMI: VAKA ANALİZİ VE İNCELİKLERİ. *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, *42*(1), Ö149–Ö168. https://doi.org/DOİ:10.30794/pausbed.801518

Syam, A. (2020). Palestinian women in the Gaza strip between siege and covid-19. *CIDSE* Retrieved from https://www.cidse.org/2020/12/18/palestinian-women-in-the-gaza-strip-between-siege-and-covid-19/

Tannira, A. (2021). The Political Economy of the Gaza Strip Under Hamas. In *Political Economy of Palestine* (pp. 135-154). Palgrave Macmillan, Cham.

Tazi, M., & Omulil, K. (2020). The Rise of Fourth-Wave Feminism in the Arab region? Cyberfeminism and Women's Activism at the Crossroads of the Arab Spring. *CyberOrient*, *14*(1), 44-71.

Thabet, A.A., Tawahina, A.A., Victoria, T. & Vostanis, P. (2015). PTSD, depression, and anxiety among Palestinian women victims of domestic violence in the Gaza Stip. *Journal of Education, Society and Behavioral Science, 11*(2), 1-13.

Thabet, A.M. (2017). Work and family stressors, depression, and anxiety among working women in Gaza Strip. *Global Journal of Intellectual & Developmental Disabilities*, *3*(3), 67-72.

The economic losses of the Gaza Strip resulting from a decade of occupation and the Israeli siege exceeded 16.5 billion dollars. (2020, November 25) *United Nations Report* Retrieved from https://news.un.org/ar/story/2020/11/1066492

The Palestinian division... the roots of a quarter-century-old "ideological" and agreements on paper (2017, October 10). *Anadolu Agency* Retrieved from https://www.aa.com.tr/ar/التقارير/الانقسام-الفلسطيني-جذور-أيديولوجية-عمرها-ربع-قرن-واتفاقيات-على-الورق/931451

Trinh, T. M. H., & Trinh, T. M. H. T. (1989). *Woman, native, other: Writing postcoloniality and feminism* (Vol. 503). Indiana University Press.

Tyagi, R. (2014). Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, *1*(2), 2374–8869. Retrieved from https://ijllnet.com/journals/Vol_1_No_2_December_2014/7.pdf

Tyler, M., & Cohen, L. (2010). Spaces that matter: Gender performativity and organizational space. *Organization studies*, *31*(2), 175-198.

UN Treaty Body Database. (n.d.). Treaty bodies Treaties. Retrieved from tbinternet.ohchr.org website: https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/15/TreatyBodyExternal/Treaty.aspx?Treaty=CEDAW&Lang=en

UNCTAD. (2020). *The Economic Costs of the Israeli Occupation for the Palestinian People: The Impoverishment of Gaza under Blockade* (p. UNCTAD). Retrieved from https://unctad.org/system/files/official-document/gdsapp2020d1_en.pdf

UNDP–United Nations Development Programme (2002), Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunity for Future Generations, New York, United Nations Retrieved from http://www.arab-hdr.org/ Reports/2002/2002.aspx

United Nations Development Fund for Women (n.d.) Towards gender equality in humanitarian response: addressing the needs of women & men in Gaza.

United Nations Women (2020, July 1). Intersectional feminism: what it means and why it matters right now." Retrieved from https://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2020/6/explainer-intersectional-feminism-what-it-means-and-why-it-matters

UNITED NATIONS. (2009). UNITED NATIONS JURIDICAL YEARBOOK 2009. Retrieved from United Nations website: https://legal.un.org/unjuridicalyearbook/pdfs/english/volumes/2009.pdf

UNRWA. (2019). Gaza Strip | UNRWA. Retrieved from UNRWA website: https://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/gaza-strip.

UNRWA. (2021). UNRWA | United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees. Retrieved from UNRWA website: https://www.unrwa.org

Valverde, M. (2016). When the mother of the race is free': race, reproduction, and sexuality in first-wave feminism. In *Iacovetta, F. and Valverde, M. ed. Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (pp. 1-26). Toronto: University of Toronto Press

Van Den Berg, M.E.S. (2011). Bodies as open projects: reflections on gender and sexuality. *South African Journal of Philosophy*, *30*(3), 385-402.

Varghese, T. (2011). Women empowerment in Oman: a study based on women empowerment index. *Far East Journal of Psychology and Business*, *2*(2), 37-53.

WAFA. (2020). Women's employment in Palestine" *Palestinian News & Info Agency* Retrieved from https://info.wafa.ps/ar_page.aspx?id=3407

Wendel, S. (2016, December 14). Fighting narratives: agency, gender, and jihad in the Gaza Strip. *Anamesa*.

Wieringa, S. E. (1998). Rethinking gender planning: a critical discussion of the use of the concept of gender. *Gender, Technology and Development*, *2*(3), 349-371.

Witt, C. (2011). What is gender essentialism? In *Feminist metaphysics* (pp. 11-25). Dordrecht: Springer.

Wojnicka, K., & Pustułka, P. (2019). Research on men, masculinities and migration: Past, present and future. *NORMA*, *14*(2), 91-95.

World Bank Group. (2022, September 22). Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee. Retrieved from World Bank Group website: https://www.un.org/unispal/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/IDU0d06191180b10b040a709bde04af014ab10fd.pdf

Yin, R. K. (1989). *Case study research: Design and methods*. Applied Social Research Series, Vol. 5. London: Sage.

Yin, Robert K. (1994). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Young, I.M. (2002). Lived body vs gender: reflections on social structure and subjectivity. *Ratio*, *15*(4), 410-428.

Zimmerman, M.A. (2000). Empowerment theory. In *Handbook of community psychology* (pp. 43-63). Boston, MA: Springer