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**Palestinian Women Resistance And Empowerment  
In Fadwa Tuaqan's Enough for me and Mourid  
Barghouti's midnight**

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial  
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**Literature and Civilisation**

**Candidates:**

**Ms. Benkouider Aicha**

**Ms. Koudri Souad**

**Board of Examiners**

Dr. Benkhelifa Imane	University of M'sila	Chairperson
Dr..Frrah sabah	University of M'sila	Supervisor
Dr. Laouidji karima	University of M'sila	Examiner

## Dedication

All praise is due to Allah first and last, outwardly and inwardly. This achievement is only by His grace and mercy.

To myself for enduring, resisting, and never giving up. You have always been the most deserving of this moment.

To my beloved father the light that guided my steps, the promise I now fulfill. This is for your pure soul.

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To my dear friend Aicha my companion through every joy and sorrow. Without you, this success would lack its color.

To my friend Khadija a warm soul in my hardest days, whose laughter eased the weight of worry.

## **Dedication**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis uses the feminist theory conducts a comparative analysis of Fadwa Tuqan's *Enough for Me* and Mourid Barghouti's *Midnight*, examining how each poet portrays resistance as a deeply personal and empowering experience. While Palestinian resistance literature often emphasizes collective struggle, this research explores how individual resilience, identity, and emotional strength emerge through poetic expression. Using postcolonial theory and literary analysis, the study investigates the use of metaphor, imagery, and tone to convey defiance and transformation. Drawing on both historical context and personal memory, the poets construct narratives that go beyond suffering to assert agency. The findings show that poetry, in this context, functions not only as a form of protest but also as a means of personal and cultural affirmation. This study contributes to a deeper understanding of resistance literature by highlighting how the poetic voice becomes a tool of empowerment and self-expression.

**Key words:** feminist, Palestinian women, resistance, empowerment .

## Table of contents

<b>Dedication .....</b>	<b>I</b>
<b>Acknowledgement .....</b>	<b>III</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>IV</b>
<b>Table of contents .....</b>	<b>V</b>
<b>General Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Chapter one: the socio-historical context and theoretical framework .....</b>	<b>3</b>
I- Post Colonial Arab Feminism.....	4
II- Historical Context of Palestinian Women’s Resistance. ....	8
II-1Early resistance movement .....	8
II-2Contribution during the great revolt (1936-1939) against British colonialism. ....	8
II-3Women’s role in smuggling arms, organizing boycotts, and military involvement. ....	14
III-Post-1948 Nakba.....	18
III-1The Impact of Displacement on Palestinian Women's Activist and Social Roles .....	18
First Intifada (1987-1993) .....	26
III-2Grassroots Leadership by Palestinian Women in Strikes, Demonstrations, and Committee Work. ....	26
III-3Transition to militant tactics and feminist consciousness within nationalist movement. ....	30
IV-Forms of resistance .....	33
IV-1Everyday Resistance .....	33
IV-2Cultural resistance.....	38

IV-3Political resistance .....	48
Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjnctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight .....	58
I- Asserting Voice and Claiming Agency in Fadwa Tuqan's "Enough for Me" .....	
II- Emotion and Embodiment as Sites of Struggle in "Enough for MeTuaqan's Enough for Me.....	.61
III-Gendered Nationalism in Fadwa Tuaqan's Enough for Me." .....	66
IV-Space and exile in Fadwa Tuaqan's Enough for Me.....	69
V-Symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuaqan's Enough for Me .....	72
VI -Voice and agency in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight.....	79
VII-Nationalism and gender in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight.....	80
VIII-Space and exile in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight .....	82
IX-Symbolism and subjectivity in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight.....	83
General Conclusion.....	85
Works cited .....	87

# **General Introduction**

## General Introduction

Feminism is a literary ideology that focuses on women's issues and their experiences in social and political life worldwide. It aims to create fairness between men and women and promotes gender equality. Therefore, the goal of this theory is to ensure that both genders have equal access to social, political, and economic opportunities and rights. Women's opinions about their unfavorable circumstances are expressed through literature by feminist authors. Their writings have, in fact, had a significant impact on the long-standing improvements in women's lives.

As a result, a wide range of topics are covered in feminist literature, including rape, racism, sexism, identity, oppression, and gender roles. Feminists discuss the everyday problems and barriers that keep women from leading balanced lives similar to those enjoyed by males in these types of works. They also look at patriarchy and the unfair ways that men deny women their independence. In addition, they examine the ways in which women rebel against and overcome their harsh circumstances and oppression

Similarly, with arab feminism theory .Fadwa tuqan and Mourid barghouti are among the figure writers in Palestine. Hence this study is devoted to identify the resistance and empowerment in both Fadwa tuqan's enough for me and Mourid barghouti Midnight.

This dissertation aims to address this gap by exploring how Tuqan's and Barghouti's poetry encapsulate Palestinian women's resilience, agency, and empowerment amid occupation and patriarchy, thereby contesting reductive portrayals of Palestinian women as mere victims and highlighting their active participation in the national and feminist struggle.

Although these poets differ in gender and stylistic approach, both offer deeply resonant depictions of the Palestinian experience, where the personal becomes inseparable from the political. Fadwa Tuqan, known as a pioneering feminist voice in Arabic literature, writes with profound introspection, revealing the struggle of a woman navigating both occupation and patriarchy. Her poem becomes a declaration of self-worth and emotional resilience. Conversely, Mourid Barghouti, while primarily focused on themes of

exile and homeland, offers nuanced portrayals of human vulnerability, memory, and inner strength—often reflecting the quiet but enduring resistance of women in the face of loss and fragmentation. This study applies the feminist theory in both Fadwa tuquan's *Enough for me* and Mourid barghouti *Midnight*. Simultaneously, it is an analytical comparison study uses 7th edition of MLA style. It aims to describe the oppression

exercised over the female characters in both novels under this study. In addition, it examines the different forms that the female characters adopt to fight back and resist the oppression.

Fadwa Tuqan and Mourid Barghouti employ their poetry as powerful tools for resisting injustice, solidly rooted in Palestinian resistance to identity, homeland, and dignity. Tuqan's poem *Enough for Me* is a testament to this as she expresses a heartfelt yearning to be kept in contact with her land even after she dies, exemplifying resistance through spiritual and physical grounding within Palestine, this study exploring this research questions How do Fadwa Tuqan and Mourid Barghouti use their poetry to express resistance against oppression. In what ways do their works empower individuals and communities facing displacement and marginalization . How do their personal experiences and the broader Palestinian experience influence their poetry

furthermore, the application of the feminist theory in this study is an attempt to deal with inequality, women's oppression and patriarchy that are reflected through these works and seek to establish justice and equality between men and women. The reason behind our choice of this theme and these poems goes back to the fact that we are women who likes to analyse and feel the experience of female characters in the poems from different situations. Second the recent events is another reason and my desire to study and highlight the resistance and empowerment of Palestinian women, chose literature and tried to use my pen in order to convince the whole world that in the past women suffered a lot and are still suffering and their human rights are exploited. Women are still raped, exploited, humiliated, subjugated, and enslaved by Israeli occupation. Also, being an Algerian women, is a necessity to speak for all the Algerian women, to voice their needs, describe how my female ancestors suffered during the

colonial period. Finally, I chose this specific theme to show that women were capable to achieve success, be independent, and resist all forms of their oppression no matter how tough their life was. I chose this specific theme to show that women were capable to resist, to achieve their freedom.

Among the objectives of this research are to analyze the themes of resistance and empowerment in “Enough for Me” by Fadwa Tuqan and Midnight by Mourid Barghouti. To explore the cultural and historical context influencing the poets’ representation of Palestinian identity and struggle. To investigate the literary techniques employed by Tuqan and Barghouti to evoke emotional and intellectual responses from readers. To examine the role of personal experience and collective memory in shaping their poetic narratives.

This thesis is divided into two chapters, the first chapter that is devoted to give an overview of the postcolonial Arab feminism, this section provides some definitions of what postcolonial Arab feminism means to some scholars like Nawal El Saadawi and Fatima Mernissi who enriched this context with their influential writings and perspectives. Also, it analyzes what patriarchal system. The second chapter of the thesis will be an analysis of Fadwa Tuqan's *Enough for Me*, it seeks to show how Palestinian women are oppressed because of Israel occupation and patriarchal social framework, they are living in, the first chapter gives the themes of both poems *Enough for Me* and *Midnight* by analyzing the major themes like voice and agency, nationalism and gender, symbolism and subjectivity, space and exile from Fadwa Tuqan's *Enough for Me* and Mourid Barghouti *Midnight*. Finally, this thesis emphasizes the essential role of Palestinian women's resistance and empowerment in Palestine. Hence, this dissertation uses this theory to show the strength of Palestinian women through literary work. In addition, the dissertation sheds light on various forms of resistance under Israeli occupation. It employs these literary works as a tool to confront oppression and reveal the true image of the Israeli occupation.



**Chapter one:**

**the socio-historical context**

**and theoretical framework**

### Post Colonial Arab Feminism

Post-colonial Arab feminism is a transformative intellectual and activist movement that critiques the intersections of patriarchy, colonialism, and gender in Arab societies. It emerged following decolonization, seeking to liquefy the double legacies of European colonialism which planted foreign gender hierarchies and explored native cultures and entrenched patriarchal systems ongoing in post-independence countries. Unlike Western feminist thought, post-colonial Arab feminism prioritizes cultural specificity, religious reinterpretation, and agency on the part of Arab women over homogenizing narratives of Islamic uniformity and regional erasure. Post-colonial Arab feminism traces its roots to the 20th-century anti-colonial movements against European colonialism.

Women played central roles in anti-colonial movements—from Egypt's revolution of 1919 to Algeria's war of independence (1954–1962)—yet were often marginalized from the nation-building processes that followed. Post-colonial regimes too readily inherited patriarchal legal codes, layering colonial-era law with traditional interpretations of religion to bolster authority. This exclusion of women's agency led to feminist critiques that linked gender oppression to the legacies of colonialism. For instance, Egyptian feminist Huda Shaarawi, who publicly unveiled in 1923 as a gesture to serve as a symbol of liberation from British rule and internal tyranny, pointed out how colonialism and patriarchy co-operated. Her autobiography, *\*Harem Years\** (1986), illustrates how colonial "modernity" used to fetishize Arab women as symbols of primitiveness to justify foreign dominance.

Post-colonial Arab feminism is headed by intellectuals and writers who blend activism with rigorous scholarly research. Among the most notable is "Nawal El Saadawi" (1931–2021), an Egyptian novelist and physician whose works expose the structural violence done to women by patriarchal and neocolonial societies. In *"Woman at Point Zero"* (1975), El Saadawi relates the life of Firdaus, a Cairo prostitute who is condemned to death for murdering her violent pimp. The novel condemns Egypt's religious and legal establishments, which legitimize male violence and criminalize women's resistance. Similarly, her polemical treatise *"The Hidden Face of Eve"* (1977) anatomizes problems such as polygamy

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

and female genital mutilation, arguing that colonial powers exploited the fact of these practices' existence to delegitimize Arab cultures while still enforcing their own misogynistic policies. Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi (1940–2015) Post-colonial Arab feminism is defined by intellectuals and writers who blend activism with rigorous scholarly research.

Among the most influential is Nawal El Saadawi (1931–2021), Egyptian novelist and physician whose work exposes the structural violence wrought on women by patriarchal and neocolonial states. In "Woman at Point Zero" (1975), El Saadawi narrates the tale of Firdaus, a prostitute from Cairo who is condemned to death for murdering her brutal pimp. The book is a denunciation of Egypt's religious and legal systems, which criminalize women's resistance and legitimize violence by men. Similarly, her polemical book "The Hidden Face of Eve" (1977) dissects practices like female genital mutilation and polygamy, arguing that colonial powers exploited these practices to denigrate Arab cultures while they themselves continued to apply their own misogynistic policies. Moroccan sociologist Fatema Mernissi (1940–2015) reshaped Islamic feminism by excavating egalitarian ideals from the early history of Islam. In "The Veil and the Male Elite" (1987), she challenges patriarchal hadiths (sayings attributed to the Prophet Muhammad) used to justify women's seclusion, asserting that such interpretations emerged from political struggles, not divine mandate.

Mernissi's work underscores how colonialism distorted gender relations by framing the veil as a marker of oppression, thereby erasing Muslim women's historical agency. Her scholarship encompasses religious ethics and feminist praxis, offering a counter-narrative to Western orientalist stereotypes as much as to Islamist conservative discourses. Leila Ahmed (b. 1940), Egyptian-American scholar, historicizes the colonial manipulation of gender in "Women and Gender in Islam" (1992). Ahmed documents how British colonizers in Egypt used feminist discourse—such as campaigns against the veil—to disarm native resistance while ignoring working-class women's interests. Her book is a critique of the "colonial feminism" that persists in Western interventions, such as the 2001 U.S. invasion of Afghanistan justified as "liberating" Muslim women. Algerian author Assia Djebar (1936–2015) deals with the silencing of

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

women in nationalist discourse. In "Women of Algiers in Their Apartment" (1980), Djébar uses fragmented narratives to retrieve the voices of Algerian women silenced during the struggle for independence. Her work critiques both French colonial violence and the post-independence restriction of women's rights, showing how nationalism reinforces patriarchal ideals.

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Postcolonial feminist theory in Palestine examines the intersection of patriarchy, colonialism, and gender within the Zionist settler colonialism and patriarchal norms, which coincide to subjugate Palestinian women and also Western feminist narratives that suppress their agency and resistance. Postcolonial feminist scholarship takes Palestinian women's voices center stage, recontours notions of homeland and exile, and suggests their doubled opposition to occupation and violence against women.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Some thinkers of post colonial feminist in Palestine such are : Sahar Khalifeh: *Writing Dual Oppressions*. Sahar Khalifeh, better known as the "Virginia Woolf of Palestine," uses fiction to expose the ways in which patriarchy and occupation collude against the marginalization of women. Her novels challenge the socio-economic impact of colonialism while subverting traditional gender roles.

*Wild Thorns* (1976)

"The occupation isn't just soldiers and checkpoints. It's in our homes, in how we breathe."

Set in Nablus in the 1970s, this book follows Palestinians who are facing economic collapse under Israeli occupation. Women like Basima, whose husband works abroad, have to endure both the financial strain of managing homes alone and battling social disgrace. Khalifeh points to the manner in which colonialism entrenches patriarchy, locking women into a spiraling poverty and dependency.

Suad Amiry: *Satire and Subversion* Architect and writer Suad Amiry uses dark humor to critique the absurdities of life under occupation, revealing how Palestinian women redefine "home" amid constant invasion.

*Sharon and My Mother-in-Law: Ramallah Diaries* (2003)

"Occupation is when even your mother-in-law becomes a weapon of mass destruction." Amiry's memoir weaves the Israeli army's 2002 Ramallah siege together with the mayhem of sheltering her dominant mother-in-law. By mapping the home as a conflict zone—bombed by soldiers and ruled by matriarchs—she displaces notions of domesticity and security under colonialism.

Palestinian postcolonial feminist literary writing navigates the entangled narratives of settler colonialism, patriarchy, and displacement, yielding dense explorations of resistance and survival. Palestinian writers reconstruct stories of belonging, bodily agency, and self-determination through the tropes of space vs. exile, body vs. emotions, and voice & agency, Nationalism Vs gender and Symbolism and subjectivity.

## **II. Historical Context of Palestinian Women's Resistance.**

### **Early resistance movement**

The discourse on Palestinian resistance has largely been in the context of male leadership and armed opposition; however, there is a need to note that Palestinian women have always played a central and varied role in resisting both patriarchal and colonial powers. Women in the 1920s went beyond being bystanders to actively participate in the construction of the national movement. Their efforts went into a diverse range of areas including the political organizing, public protests, and symbolic acts of cultural resistance that laid the groundwork for mobilization in the following decades. This study explores the early stages of women's resistance while focusing on their early activism and decisive contributions before and within the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939.

### **Contribution during the great revolt (1936-1939) against British colonialism.**

During the Great Revolt 1936-1939, Palestinian women emerged as a vital yet under recognized agents of anti-colonial resistance, employing both traditional and innovative tactics to challenge British rules. They were essential to the Great revolt's organization and execution, as evidence by their militant demonstrations, enforcement of the general strike, and political advocacy-contributions that not only advanced the anti-colonial struggle but also redefined gender roles in Palestinian resistance movement.

Militant Demonstrations and Protests of Palestinian Women can be divided into 3 main key tactics, physical confrontation, symbolic acts, and moral pressure. Women had engaged in this since at least 1920, when 29 women from northern Palestine wrote a letter protesting about the Belfour Declaration. They also participated in 1921 Jaffa Riots, where they raised funds for delegations, formed committed and confronted British officials directly (Fleischmann 18).

Fleischmann documented British reports of women's violent involvement in demonstrations. In October 1933, the British high commissioner of Palestine, ARTHUR WAUCHOPE; noted "new and

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

disquieting” feature in violent demonstrations that took place in Jerusalem and Jaffa. Police were physically assaulted, government gates were kicked, and men were urged to defy orders by some women from elite families. This resulted in the shooting deaths by police of twenty-six Palestinians (16).

Same incident happened in 29 July 1936, when police attacked a women’s demonstration in Acre, resulting by that wounded young girls who were carrying flags. This shows women’s visible, confrontation role in revolt-era protest (Fleischmann 16).

In order to assist rebel bands, Palestinian women served an essential logistic role in their participation in the faz'a alarm calls, a traditional alarm call system for mutual assistance between villages. British records revealed that in October 1936, as rebel leader Fawzi al-Quawqji was attempting to flee British forces, village women were included in such urgent calls by "running behind their husbands, ululating as they are wont to do, thereby exciting their men to action." This sort of mass mobilization was key to coordinating resistance across villages, demonstrating the role of women in amplifying communications and facilitating rapid response in the aftermath of British counterinsurgency actions. (Hughes 502).

The Palestinian women's logistical support for the 1936-1939 revolt involved essential material and financial aid that sustained the revolt in the face of British repression. Women stepped in to pay crippling collective fines imposed by the British authorities on villages suspected of supporting rebels from their own means. From the archive files, one woman spent four Palestinian pounds (which was £P4) of her dowry in paying the fine she was levied on her village—the sum which represented an enormous total of 250 days' wages for a male laborer who was paid the customary rate of 80 mils a day (Hughes 490).

Such sacrifice is notable considering that £P3-4 was a "considerable sum" for rural Palestinian monthly wages, and an average dowry of £P20 was approximately an annual salary (Hughes 490). In addition to individual sacrifices, women also contributed greatly collectively in terms of finances, with

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

some contributions as much as £P100 (Hughes 500), thereby showing their critical contribution to ensuring the financial sustainability of the rebellion.

These financial inputs were only one facet of a broader material support system that women organized. In addition to funds, they provided insurgents with essential goods like foodstuffs, clothing and medicines. This supply chain was especially important when British soldiers besieged villages, when women risked their safety to transport provisions to rebel forces hiding underground. Their ability to organize resources amidst severe economic strains and personal privation highlights the important, if often overlooked, contribution women made to sustaining the infrastructure of the rebellion (Hughes 500).

The financial burden women shouldered was a testament to their dedication to the nationalist movement and also to the unequal impact of British punitive policies on Palestinian families. As men were often jailed or executed, women were responsible for maintaining household economies while simultaneously financing collective acts of resistance (Hughes 490).

The story of the woman who finished her £P4 dowry is an exemplar of the reversal of gender roles, wherein women's individual assets became an indispensable resource to both communal survival and political resistance. The economic sacrifices recorded in both British military reports and Palestinian oral

histories demonstrate the previously unseen burdens shouldered by women during the revolt, along with their creative reactions to colonial rule (Hughes 490).

Palestinian women played a crucial role in maintaining clandestine communication channels active, using their daily lives as a cover for their rebellion operations. The British army did not want to thoroughly search women due to cultural values and allowed them to move between villages freely making them ideal messengers. They hid rebel messages in folded clothes, hollowed-out bread loaves, and even baby wraps while fetching water or visiting relatives (Hughes 497). In Jerusalem and other cities, wealthy women turned their homes into clandestine meeting halls, where officers reported under the guise of tea parties (Hughes 502).

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

The system grew more sophisticated. marketplace sellers used coded conversations about the price of fruits to communicate intelligence on troop movements, and young girls memorized verbal reports to avoid carrying incriminating papers. One British patrol report begrudgingly detailed how a woman, seemingly attending to a sick child, had actually been delivering ammunition blueprints concealed in the infant's blanket (Hughes 497). As authorities tightened checkpoints, women adapted by embroidering tiny scrolls into skirt hems or concealing notes within pottery cooking vessels.

The efficacy of this network was contingent upon the utilization of colonial oversights. Military personnel frequently regarded women as lacking political significance; however, their preserved correspondences disclose a sense of exasperation: "They see everything, say nothing, and pass warnings faster than our wireless sets" (Hughes 502).

As the uprising progressed into its later phases, these unofficial communication methods became sufficiently crucial that certain rebel factions designated women specifically as intelligence couriers demonstrating that resistance was not solely waged through firearms, but also through subtlety and resourcefulness (Hughes 502).

During the Arab Revolt, Palestinian women were unexpected guardians of cultural resistance by deliberately making political fashion choices in their attire that were of significant political importance. Rebel commanders systematically reinterpreted peasant dress as a national symbol, compelling urban women to give up Western-style headwear and sleeveless tops for the traditional headscarf *kufiyya* and full-face veil (Hughes 503). This was less about modesty than a strategic effort at visually erasing class distinctions between urban elites and peasant soldiers, building a unified national image that could withstand colonial divide-and-rule tactics.

The protest assumed coercive forms, and there are instances of boys publicly shaming recalcitrant women using slogans such as "Umm al-bunya, al-raqqasa/Biddha bumba wa rasasa" ("The hat-wearing dancer deserves a bomb and bullet"). But the records show interesting complexities - Christian women in

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Jaffa and Haifa fashioned mixed styles, layering veils over European attire, proving that cultural icons could be assimilated instead of adopted in its entirety (Hughes 504).

British officials had initially dismissed such wardrobe adjustments as non-political until General Montgomery's effort to prohibit the kufiyya in Haifa showed how deeply garments had become invested in resistance. The High Commissioner's cancellation of Montgomery's edict acknowledged what rebels had understood for a long time: within occupied society, even how one tied a headscarf could become an act of resistance (Hughes 503). The cultural aspect of the revolt demonstrated how women navigated between imposed norms and personal agency, with their daily choices in clothing becoming subtle but potent articulations of resistance to colonial occupation.

Palestinian women strategically employed symbolic leadership to maximize their political impact. By collaborating with the media to frame their activism in terms of historic "firsts," they legitimized and dramatized the urgency of the movement. The detention of prominent activists like Sadiyah Nassar in Haifa was touted as a milestone, converting repression on the part of the state into effective propaganda (Fleischmann 23).

Headlines like "For the First Time in History" were seen in newspapers during the 1929 Women's Congress, and also gave the same level of attention to rural protests in Tulkarm as unprecedented (Fleischmann 25). These strategically told tales served two significant functions: they put pressure on British authorities who were vulnerable to negative publicity and simultaneously galvanized previously reluctant women by illustrating tangible effects of collective action.

The innovations of the movement in tactics included mobilizing children to join protests, especially under Sadiyah Nassar's initiative in the Haifa Arab Women's Union. In the 1933 Balfour Day demonstrations, women deliberately marched with children to foreign consulates, exploiting colonial stereotypes of women as non-threatening maternal figures (Fleischmann 23).

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

This tactic presented a quandary for British authorities, as forceful suppression threatened to look barbaric against women and children, and restraint de facto encouraged the protesters. The intergenerational symbolism also highlighted the long-term stakes of the nationalist struggle, making the women's involvement seem both morally legitimate and strategically vital to the uprising's success (Fleischmann 23).

Visual and sartorial communication were a vital part of women's symbolic resistance. Key activists like Matiel Mogannam deliberately presented urban women in Western-style clothing—"European clothes, silk stockings, manicured hands"—when engaging with international media in order to counter Orientalist representations (Fleischmann 21).

At the same time, the movement promoted traditional peasant dress, like the kufiyya, in rural areas as markers of nationalism, though urban leaders often maintained a syncretism of sartorial styles. This two-pronged approach created a powerful contradiction: even while rhetorically demanding traditional gender roles and "Arab women's right to seclusion," activists repeatedly violated these norms in confrontational actions like physically assaulting government property in demonstrations (Fleischmann 27).

The women's movement solidified its symbolic function through the utilization of class-based and religion-based imagery. Remarkably, it was also evident in 1933 during the time of the protests when Christian activist Matiel Mogannam addressed the Mosque of 'Umar while Muslim leader Tarab 'Abd al-Hadi addressed the Holy Sepulcher (Fleischmann 24).

Prominent women cast their activism as a moral obligation, with Mogannam particularly highlighting the adverse comparison between Ottoman and British rule: "We lived under the Turks. No such atrocities were committed" (Fleischmann 27). This rhetoric had several effects: it condemned British authorities, legitimized elite women's far-reaching departure from customary gender roles, and created

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

solidarity among the varied religious and social classes in Palestine, thereby rendering their symbolic leadership inclusive and politically effective.

### **Women's role in smuggling arms, organizing boycotts, and military involvement.**

The history of the Palestinian resistance is inextricably linked with the active role played by women, whose role in its many forms was central to the collective effort against colonialism and occupation. In the early resistance movements, especially during the British Mandate and the 1936–1939 Arab Revolt, women played key roles in such activities as arms smuggling, boycott organization, distribution of nationalist literature, and, to a lesser degree, direct military action. These actions not only confronted colonial authority but also disrupted conventional gender roles, thereby affirming women's space within the nationalist movement.

One important, largely unnoticed, role Palestinian women took upon themselves during the early period of resistance movements was their involvement in the clandestine smuggling of arms. Amid circumstances of heightened colonial vigilance, women resourcefully utilized existing stereotypes that rendered them politically disengaged and innocent. Those notions gave people a degree of freedom of mobility, which they exploited to smuggle weapons through British checkpoints and across occupied territories, thus facilitating critical assistance to resistance movements (Saleh 58).

Strategically embracing veiling in addition to their culturally bestowed domestic and family responsibilities gave them extensive cover for their clandestine activities. Women facilitated logistic networks using these methods, which were essential in maintaining armed resistance, especially at moments when the mobility of men was significantly limited. These functions, Saleh claims, played a central role in guaranteeing the continuity of resistance mechanisms under colonial pressure (58).

In the 1936–1939 Great Revolt, this logistical engagement took on broader political meaning. Smuggling arms was no longer merely a practical necessity but a conscious act of political defiance.

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

Women commandeered ordinary tasks—such as visiting markets or family members—as pretexts for resistance, turning their presumed social behavior into strategic assets (Saleh 58).

This reversal of colonial expectations reveals how women turned invisibility into a strategic advantage. Besides merely assisting the resistance, their actions were a redefinition of political agency whereby they became independent actors in the national liberation movement. Their actions underscored the fact that the role of Palestinian women was not ancillary or symbolic but constitutive of the operational effectiveness of the movement (Saleh 58).

As reported in *The New Arab*, the Great Revolt involved a diverse section of Palestinian society that included women whose participation in arms smuggling undermined traditional boundaries between civilians and combatants. Women in both urban and rural settings converted their homes and personal connections to sites of resistance. Their participation in these activities commonly presented significant risks to their own safety that involved arrest and violent backlash (Moussa).

These threats instead fueled a collective will to oppose colonial domination and expulsion. The representation of women as secret agents in the armed resistance serves to counter simplistic portrayals of Palestinian women as victims. In addition to that, their role in the smuggling activities highlights their vital contribution to both the practical and symbolic sides of national resistance movements (Moussa).

Outside the realm of logistics, women were central to organizing and maintaining economic boycotts of British and Zionist goods. Boycotts were a means of grassroots resistance that were extremely effective on both economic and political levels. Women's committees enabled communities to use local alternatives offered by Palestinian families and discouraged compliance with the economic decrees of colonial powers (Saleh 59).

The success of these movements is due not just to the direct economic disruptions they created, but to their ability to create a shared national identity and induce a sense of solidarity in the population. Saleh

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

argues that women's participation in these movements created a type of resistance that was both ongoing and embedded in the very fabric of everyday life (59).

The significance of women's participation was also extended to a broader political mobilization. During the 1936 Arab Revolt, women actively participated in demonstrations against British colonial rule and the mounting threat posed by the expansion of Zionist settlers. Women expressed a national narrative that linked gender-based empowerment with anti-colonial resistance through protests and media articles (Moussa).

Women's activism involved fundraising to support families affected by the conflict, the signing of petitions, and public speeches in support of more comprehensive acts of civil disobedience. According to a report by *The New Arab*, the women's mobilization was so intense that it didn't go unnoticed by British officials, who saw their outward visibility as a challenge to social order and to colonial domination (Moussa).

While relatively rare, women's involvement in military activities added another layer to their acts of resistance. Though men made up the bulk of armed resisters, there are documented cases of women playing active roles in military activities—acting as messengers, informants, and, in a few instances, combatants. Though not the norm, such activities carried great symbolic weight, as they represented a larger commitment to liberation that extended beyond conventional gender expectations. Women who took part in such activities did so in full knowledge of the risks involved, thus asserting political agency in a way that subverted both colonial and patriarchal norms (Saleh 60).

Additionally, the British response to women's activism often highlighted the dangers that such activities posed to colonial rule. Women protesters were arrested, interrogated, and subjected to intense surveillance. In some cases, women's rights organizations were outlawed, and women activists were subjected to intimidation and repression. However, rather than deterring involvement, these actions often created heightened organization among Palestinian women. In the view of Moussa, women's participation

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

in the Great Revolt sparked the rise of a new generation of women's nationalist consciousness that would continue into the following decades, seen most notably during the First Intifada and beyond (Moussa).

Alongside their public and strategic role, women played a vital ideological role. Their resistance narratives in various forms, starting from speeches to poetry and journalism, made a significant contribution to the intellectual foundation of Palestinian nationalism. Women authors questioned British policy critically in terms of the humanitarian effects of the process of colonization (Saleh 61).

They called for solidarity that went across both gender and classes, emphasizing that liberation was a task that required the participation of all the people. These ideological contributions to the movement made the resistance fit within the broader moral and cultural space that appealed to the larger Palestinian population (Saleh 61).

The value of these functions' rests in the double acts of resistance performed by Palestinian women—ranging against colonial rule and resisting societal limits intended to keep their activities confined to the home. By taking public and oftentimes risky stances, these women challenged traditional models of gender and the nature of political participation (Saleh 58–60; Moussa).

Their acts of resistance both symbolic and conscious reminded women of their potential not as followers but as agents within the national cause. The activities that these women performed established the precedent for the institutional recognition of women's labor within the Palestinian Liberation Organization and many other nationalist movements (Saleh 58–60; Moussa).

These early developments laid the groundwork for a sustained pattern of female activism that achieved precise momentum in the second half of the twentieth century. For instance, throughout the First Intifada, the influence of women activists of the 1930s was clearly visible in the crucial role played by the women in leadership positions, in the organization of the communities, and in the representation of the uprising in the media. Their activism in the British Mandate provided a precedent for inclusive resistance

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

that shifted the struggle for liberation to a collective engagement in which the women played a similarly equal role (Saleh 62).

In brief, the involvement of Palestinian women in early resistance movements in the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt was widespread and varied. Their activities included arms smuggling and organizing boycotts as well as shaping public opinion and even taking part in armed conflict; these activities played a central role in the anti-colonial movement's material and ideological underpinnings. Their activism undermined conventional gender orders and the narratives of the colonizers, thus putting the agency of women in the center of Palestinian nationalism. This precedent continues to shape contemporary movements and should have a central role in any future consideration of Palestinian resistance.

### **. Post-1948 Nakba**

The Nakba of 1948, also termed the catastrophe, marks a turning point for Palestinian history. The establishment of the Israeli state led to the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians from their homes and subsequently undermined Palestinian institutions and society structures. While the massive displacement reached the general Palestinian population, it had a major impact on women, triggering a shift in their function within both family and society spheres. This research focuses on how the Nakba challenged traditional gender expectations and opened up new spaces for activism and citizenship for Palestinian women.

### **The Impact of Displacement on Palestinian Women's Activist and Social Roles**

Forced Palestinian displacement in 1948 drastically changed pre-existing gender dynamics and created new social and family roles for women. Earlier, especially within rural communities, women's roles were largely domestic within patriarchal family structures. During the fragmentation of communities and dissolution of family structures, women became critical agents for maintaining the welfare and cohesion of displaced families. The destruction of rural life networks obliged many women to move from their traditional household duties to take on public life within refugee camps.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Rifah Abu AlResh's research at the Institute for Women's Studies at Birzeit University illustrates that women refugees had to take on the responsibilities required to fulfill caregiving and protective roles because of the lack of male family members, brought about by the deaths, imprisonments, or disappearance of many individuals. They successfully operated household economies under adverse conditions, provided for informal schemes of schooling, and distributed resources. These new roles, unknown to them earlier, arose out of necessity and challenged prevailing norms, thus creating the building blocks for women's agency within the lens of exile (56).

Women within the camps pursued activities that went beyond mere survival needs. These activities included participation in talks with officials from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), active involvement in aid meetings, and carrying out bureaucratic tasks—functions normally entrusted to men (Ben-Ze'ev 146).

Efrat Ben-Ze'ev, in her "Rural Palestinian Women" chapter of the collection *Remembering Palestine during 1948*, indicates that while the transition from agrarian village life to the tight regime of the camps severely upended family and communal structures, it also led women to engage in bartering, petty commerce, and embroidery production as a way not only to meet the basic needs of their families but also to ensure cultural continuity (146).

Tatreez, or traditional embroidery, is an example of the intersection of economic and cultural roles in the situation of exile. According to Ahmad Ezzeddin Assaad, tatreez became a way for women to earn a living while also being a means of passive resistance. The act of embroidery in exile became a symbol of rootedness and preservation and hence a means to reassert a fragmented identity through the language of craft.

In addition, traditional caregiving duties have expanded considerably within the context of refugees. The women of the generation that came after the Nakba not only cared for their own families but also took on communal duties. From reports by UN Women, women with their networks provided social support

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

structures by creating informal networks for child welfare, healthcare, and provision of food. These networks provided emotional anchors and functional responses to displacement, thus promoting cohesion within trauma-affected populations (UN Women).

As community leaders and organizers, women often negotiated gender-based constraints while also working to redefine them. Yara Hawari points out that the situation after displacement demanded a form of grassroots mobilization led by women, which, in many cases, took place ahead of the formalization of political institutions. While women's leadership was often disregarded by dominant political forces, their contribution was essential to the community's survival and capacity to adjust.

Despite the adoption of this new role, the new duties had a large influence on women at psychological and emotional levels. The shift from an orderly urban or rural life to the unpredictability of exile forced women to be both keepers of memory and carriers of continuity. Many of the urban women who previously had exposure to schooling and professional life ended up being made indistinguishable within camps where survival meant playing various, often conflicting, roles (Assaad).

Cultural preservation among Palestinian women exiles worked not just as a coping mechanism but eventually transcended into a highly political act of resistance and assertion of identity. After the Nakba, Palestinian women played a significant role in passing on cultural memory through oral histories, rituals, language, and crafts. These acts were beyond individual recollection; they were an intentional effort to resist erasure and claim historical continuity.

Ahmad Ezzeddin Assaad explains that women of exile mostly became the main narrators of family and communal histories. Through tales, lullabies, and descriptions of life before 1948 Palestine, women rebuilt a sense of belonging for the youth who did not see their homeland. Such narratives, shared within households and community gatherings became archives of life that opposed displacement's will to cut people from their beginnings.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

The political aspect of memory was also shown in women's use of knowledge of place, family trees, and shared traditions to challenge the settler-colonial story that erased Palestinian history. As Efrat Ben-Ze'ev says, many women kept clear memories of their villages and towns with exact location details, harvest ways, and festivals. These memories often overlooked by official records—became the source for demands to go back and repay (149).

Tatreez had already been discussed as an economic activity, it thus re-embraced political symbolism in the post-Nakba period. Yara Hawari explains how the regional identities and historical references became embedded in the patterns of embroidery, turning them into visual texts through which collective memory was articulated. For example, certain motifs and colors would indicate a woman's place of origin; this fact allowed displaced communities to map, cultural geographies they were part of while living in exile.

Rifah Abu AlResh adds these practices of cultural transmission, which were often shouldered by women, because the labor exile was divided along gender lines. While men were engaged either in political activism or working outside the camps, women maintained these intimate spaces where memory could be cultivated and shared. Homes became sites of memory work; food preparation, storytelling, and religious rituals would keep something alive related to tradition even in the face of loss.

UN Women's report for 2024 builds further evidence that these gendered practices had long-term implications. Cultural resilience among women was not just symbolic but strategic—it helped build community cohesion and identity in the absence of territorial sovereignty. The continuity of memory served as a bridge across generations and preserved a national consciousness despite fragmentation.

Despite frequently being overlooked in official political discourse, this cultural endeavor has significant ramifications for Palestinian nationalism. From farming methods to prayer chants, women's experiential knowledge stood in stark contrast to the abstract conceptions of statehood that male-dominated leaderships sought to achieve. According to Interpal's article on women's resiliency, this

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

grassroots cultural preservation produced a different repository of national identity based on everyday customs and emotional continuity.

Reactions from the Nakba inspired Palestinian women to seek strategies for survival while simultaneously laying the groundwork for a new type of grassroots activism fueled largely by their engagement. Palestinian women thus became key figures in community organization, philanthropic efforts, and unofficial educational programs within refugee camps and exile communities (Abu AlResh).

Refugee camp life underscored informal leadership positions of particular importance for women who provided basic services in the absence of an organized governmental system. Through informal governing mechanisms in nonprofit agencies and community-run programs, women helped fill social gaps created under displacement by creating short-term committees, neighborhood watch programs, and relief aid distribution networks. Besides enabling biological survival for those around them, these women also built a governance structure based on trust and need (Abu AlResh).

A number of women-led initiatives arose in reaction to the immediate need for safeguarding Palestinian identity. The women organized cultural events, taught future generations about their Palestinian heritage, and lobbied for refugees in various international forums (Assaad).

Most of these women's movements operated outside of formal political parties; however, they had a far greater influence within community life. These women's networks operated as tools of resistance as well as sources of resilience against male-dominated governments and institutional disregard (Hawari).

Stories from refugee camps in Jordan and Lebanon show how younger women have learned leadership tactics from maternal figures, thus continuing cycles of community progress and informal resistance. Even though they have yet to gain citizenship after years of displacement, these ties have maintained a persistent feeling of belongingness (UN Women).

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

Local women's organizations were from time to time allied with formal nationalist forces. Though women generally held peripheral positions within national liberation movements, their persistent presence at the grassroots level provided a foundation for wider political identifications (Ben-Ze'ev 152).

In the refugee context, daily acts of child education in temporary camps, finding sustenance, and defending local musical identity became imbued with political meanings. These mundane acts of activity were acts of resistance against displacement and displays of committed collective effort in finding solutions (Interpal).

Street activism and community leadership were not merely reactive strategies but became creative strategies in response to circumstances of deprivation. Women created new contexts of care, governance, and memory in an attempt to impose order in the context of exile. Their response embodied a style of relational leadership from daily experiences rather than one that was solely concerned with survival but also with preserving Palestinian identity, values, and aspirations (Abu AlResh).

Despite having played an important role in social cohesion, preservation of culture, and civic participation, Palestinian women have faced deeply embedded structural barriers in formal political participation since the post-Nakba period. These structural barriers are inextricably linked both to historical displacements and patriarchal domination in both Palestinian society and its political institutions.

Yara Hawari argues that even though women have been actively part of nationalist resistance movements historically, they remain shut out from political leadership positions. Women are not just underrepresented in formal political circles but are entrenched in extensive systematized gender hierarchies. Even in nationalist groups such as the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), women are often relegated to symbolic or subordinate positions that rarely lead to real policymaking powers.

A major hindrance has been the lack of frameworks that encourage gender equality in Palestinian political institutions. The Oslo Accords seemed on the verge of allowing for increased representation through establishment of the Palestinian Authority. Yet, as described by Hawari, women's hopes for

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

participation were for the most part not met through male-dominated political appointments and limited implementation of women's inclusion programs. The women's grassroots leadership that had won out in exile and refugee camps often did not translate into formal political power, but instead faced continued resistance from nationalist movements and government institutions.

Displacement aggravates the marginalization of Palestinian society. Ahmad Assaad clarifies that the fragmentation of Palestinian society throughout different camps, cities, and national borders hinders the formation of unified political participation, especially for women. The absence of Palestinian statehood and geographical dispersion within these lands creates practical and legal obstacles that disproportionately afflict women political mobilization in these areas.

In addition, sociopolitical expectations of gender roles have continued to impede women's access to leadership roles. Predominant traditionalist discourses are especially pronounced among many Palestinian communities, and particularly conservative refugee settings. Women who attempt to participate in public political spaces are often stigmatized, put under family pressure, or accused of violating entrenched social norms. These societal restrictions perpetuate a path in which women are denied political space despite their considerable informal influence (Abu AlResh).

Conditions in refugee camps, although provoking grassroots activism, simultaneously limit opportunities for vertical mobility. Rifah Abu AlResh argues that women who are active in community leadership in refugee camps are rarely identified as political agents in mainstream institutions. Their labor is underappreciated and overlooked within nationalist narratives even though it plays a crucial part in displaced peoples' survival and organization.

One relevant consideration relates to the focus on militaristic modes of resistance in Palestinian nationalist discourse. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev notes that the concept of political legitimacy has often been linked to participation in armed struggle, a sphere largely closed to women due to both practical circumstances and reigning ideologies. The gendered construction of political activism reduces the value of women's

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

contributions to other modes of resistance, including cultural preservation, education, and communal organization, thus situating women in an inferior relation to the national project (147).

International institutions and aid agencies while sometimes supporting women-led projects have also been responsible for their marginalization. Donor-initiated projects often co-opt women's activism for apolitical purposes that are based on a framework of "development," thereby displacing women from participation in crucial political discussion (Hawari).

Though formally integrated into political processes, women's participation is often superficial. In a report released by UN Women Arab States, Palestinian women have consistently expressed discontent with being included for the sake of representation only, without having real power or decision-making influence in policy processes. This tokenistic inclusion is not sufficient to overcome the structural barriers they face (UN Women).

Women in Palestine have been playing a key role in safeguarding national identity and community cohesion since 1948 while simultaneously pursuing survival and resistance activities. Though they have been facing gender-specific obstacles and have yet to attain real empowerment, women's voices are still poorly represented in mainstream political platforms. Their grassroots leadership has been crucial in developing Palestinian resilience and identity despite that.

**First Intifada (1987-1993)**

**Grassroots Leadership by Palestinian Women in Strikes, Demonstrations, and Committee Work.**

The First Intifada, or the Palestinian Uprising of 1987-1993, was a revolutionary period in the Palestinian struggle for independence. It was a period of mass protests, general strikes, and mass civil resistance against Israeli military rule. While the media selectively focuses on the male-dominated Palestinian Liberation Organization's leadership, Palestinian women were central and pioneering figures in organizing and sustaining the resistance on a grassroots level.

In general strikes and protests and in the work of committees, Palestinian women did more than become active participants but were also leaders who shaped the course of the Intifada and paved the way to the next generation of activists.

The active participation of the Palestinian women in the First Intifada was not a recent phenomenon but a culmination of different decades of politics and struggle. The Palestinian women had been part of the political processes as early as the early part of the 20th century but did so from the margin or on the local basis. In the First Intifada, however, the difference was that the women began to play a more central role in leadership when mobilizing demonstrations and strikes and local action (Jad-Islah 45).

The Intifada itself was ignited by a truck accident in 1987 between an Israeli truck and a truck carrying Palestinian laborers in which four were killed. The accident led to widespread disturbance and demonstrations across the West Bank and Gaza. Women were also a part of the resistance from the very beginning (Al Jazeera).

They stood at the vanguard of street demonstrations, leading processions and delivering speeches calling on others to sustain the struggle. Palestinian women had been active in nationalist circles for many

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

years but were never accorded as much space for politically active leadership as during the Intifada (Al Jazeera).

Women had a varied role in the first phase of the intifada. They organized and participated in walkouts in the educational sector, healthcare sector, and the job sector. These were some of the women's mass organizations which organized such activities and walkouts. Some of the organizations were the Palestinian Women's Union, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW), and the Women's Work Committees (WWC). Women were on the front line in mobilizing the local population in boycotts of Israeli goods and services, paralyzing the Israeli economy and exerting pressure on the Israeli military to contend with the economic resistance (Jad-Islah 46).

One of the most significant expressions of resistance in the First Intifada was the prevalence of street demonstrations. These gatherings commonly included incidents of stone-throwing, clashes with Israeli army forces, and large-scale open-air meetings. Despite the fact that most violent clashes involved mainly male participants, Palestinian women played a significant role in the planning, coordination, and strategic direction of these demonstrations. Women attended in large numbers, both in the role of participants and in leadership positions, according to Hiltermann (1991). Women contributed to organizing rallies, the dissemination of information pamphlets, and the coordination of mass marches, all of which played a significant role in the continued uprising (Hiltermann 62).

The participation of women in protest movements went beyond passive participation; many women took leading roles within these movements. Women who lived in refugee camps in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank played a pivotal role in organizing sit-ins, strikes, and public demonstrations against the Israeli occupation. The role played by women was pivotal in determining the course of the Intifada, despite the severe repression exercised by the Israeli government, which entailed curfews, arrests, and acts of violence against women demonstrators (Hiltermann 64).

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

In addition, the Palestinian women's involvement in the demonstrations reflected the inclusive strategy to challenge Israeli hegemony over the daily lives of people. As highlighted by Aljazeera (2018), the women actively participated in organizing peaceful demonstrations against both the Israeli occupation army and the settler communities (Aljazeera).

They played a prominent role in the development of a nonviolent resistance strategy that defied the use of violent forms of rebellion. The involvement of women in these peaceful protests highlighted the moral high ground of the Palestinian resistance while at the same time increasing the resistance's worldwide recognition (Aljazeera).

While street demonstrations and protest marches were paramount in the First Intifada, much of the resistance organization was carried out through local committees that supported the activities of the uprising. Of these, the Women's Work Committees (WWC) stand out in particular in their resistance to the hegemony of the various Palestinian factional groups. The WWC grew to become a significant forum that provided Palestinian women with the opportunities to show leadership in overseeing day-to-day activities and providing vital services to the occupied territories (Hiltermann 66).

Women played a crucial role in organizing these committees and also contributed substantially toward their operational success throughout the occupation. These committees operated as resistance centers, coordinating strikes, overseeing underground education for Palestinian children, providing medical care, and coordinating logistical support to families victimized through the actions of the Israeli military (Jad-Islah 53).

Though long neglected, the women involved in these committees played an indispensable role, particularly with the Israeli government concentrating efforts to eliminate the men who led the fight against the Intifada. With the lack of male leadership due to incarceration or exile, women took up these critical roles, many of them becoming the most influential players in running and coordinating resistance activities (Jad-Islah 53).

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

The Women's Work Committees played a major social role in supporting Palestinian families and raising morale in the face of adverse situations. Hiltermann explains that the committees undertook not just political activities but also the provision of basic needs like food and educational facilities for children who had been deprived of these services due to the limitations of the Israeli military occupation. Such support was critical for the survival of the Palestinian people under occupation and also brought to light the critical role played by women to the overall resistance movement (68).

Jad-Islah highlights the strong positions held by secular Palestinian women in the resistance struggle, specifically the women who held membership in the Marxist-oriented groups like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). These women participated actively in organizing the strikes and demonstrations, continually arguing for the applicability of secular nationalism to the Palestinian struggle for liberty. These women saw the Intifada to have two aspects: a struggle against the Israeli occupation, and a struggle for social justice, women's emancipation, and equality (Jad-Islah 47).

On the other hand, Hiltermann examines the rise of Islamist women movements in the context of the Intifada. This rebellion was, in turn, fueled by the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and Hamas, both groups that had linked women who emphasized their resistance activities along with their religious roles (Hiltermann 70).

Despite the organizational approaches these women took at the moment, their commitment to the Palestinian cause was equally fierce. Women in Islamic movements also tended to emphasize the role of Islam in the struggle for resistance, using religious language to frame their cause within points of unity and solidarity among Palestinians (Hiltermann 70).

Despite past ideological differences, both secular and Islamist women actively contributed toward the perpetuation of the resistance struggle. According to Aljazeera (2018), the joint actions of religious and secular women throughout the Intifada represent an excellent example of Palestinian national unity.

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

By bridging the gap between the two groups, Palestinian women managed to form a more united front that went beyond the sum of the participating groups (Aljazeera).

### **Transition to militant tactics and feminist consciousness within nationalist movement.**

The First Intifada was a major shift as it signaled a greater political role for women, moving from being peripheral sympathizers to taking an active part in militant activities. This change came after decades of nationalist movement and brought new tactics after the 1982 Lebanon War, when women initially proved themselves within combat roles while defending refugee camps (IEMed).

The grassroots activists, the Women's Work Committee being an example, recognized that deeply rooted gender norms greatly restricted mobilization efforts, which further spurred the use of innovative strategies to overcome society obstacles and meet requirements for resistance (Sayigh, 45). The activist model that ensued effectively merged feminist consciousness and nationalist aims; still, younger, never-married women faced particularly strict familial restraints that often forced them to be clandestinely involved.

The women were involved in numerous activities throughout the Intifada, and these evolved as the uprising continued. Initially, they participated by organizing neighborhood committees and engaging in economic strikes. They later employed more daring tactics (Hiltermann, 52).

By 1989, women were involved in building barricades, organizing warning systems to protect against military incursion, and, in certain factions, directing attacks using Molotov cocktails. This escalation occurred despite Israeli military orders that specifically targeted female activists by destroying their homes and using sexualized interrogation techniques designed to take advantage of cultural sensitivities. The methods used to repress women's activism inadvertently led to their further political radicalization and created new solidarity networks among those imprisoned (Sayigh, 78-82).

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

The onset of feminist consciousness during this era had a dialectical tension between activism and critique regarding gender. Norman's work makes clear how day-to-day interactions with soldiers allowed changes in consciousness: "Women's testimonies revealed the tensions between collective nationalist identity and personal gendered experience, particularly when confronted by male soldiers' sexualized violence" (134).

Sayigh's "triple burden" framework became deeply pertinent within refugee camps, where women contended against the violence of occupation, patriarchal bias within the home, and pressures within society for sustaining community under conditions of scarcity (67). The intersecting nature of different types of oppression has given rise to what is called "resistance feminism" in the IEMed report, where the liberation of gender is central, not ancillary, to national liberation (15). The organizational framework has played an important role in sustaining the dual focus. The UPWC created a hidden system of literacy programs that also served as spaces for political training, for over 12,000 women through 1991 (Hiltermann, 59).

These projects explicitly linked skill development to resistance training, as in the case of teaching first aid alongside protest tactics. However, movement internal documents reveal continued disputes over resource allocation, as just 8% of the budgets of factions were spent on women's programs, despite their integral role in operations (Sayigh, 93). This presented a contradiction whereby women were both celebrated as symbols of nationalism and constrained as political actors within the very movements that they helped to sustain.

Following the 1990s, there was a shift in focus from combat during the Intifada to nationalism and gender issues. Norman's research indicates women's work was explicitly categorized by group notices based on conventional notions, such as a Fatah notice calling for "mothers to raise the next generation of mujahideen" (Norman, 138).

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

This shift was followed by substantial material marginalization, as women became systemically excluded from the strategic thinking done by the Tunis-based leadership. Grassroots activists, however, exercised counter-practices; for instance, the Gaza Women's Health Committee secretly documented cases of sexual violence against women by Israelis and Palestinians, thus creating an unprecedented archive recording gendered oppression (Sayigh, 88). These actions typified the persistence of feminist consciousness, in spite of the decline of institutional frameworks.

The post-Intifada years highlighted the provisional nature of gender advancement under wartime conditions. While 35% of grassroots activists within the Unified National Leadership came from women, they made up only 3% of executive positions within the PLO during the negotiations at Madrid (IEMed, 18).

Norman attributes the disparity to institutionalization, stating that "The formalization of structures of resistance privileged traditional power brokers who reconstituted patriarchal norms as 'stabilization' measures" (110). Feminist frameworks and underground networks set up during the Intifada, however, resurfaced within the context of the Second Intifada, what proves the lasting ideological and organizational impact of the movement.

The activism of militant women during the First Intifada radically altered gender roles within nationalist movement frameworks. Their struggle against patriarchy and against occupation allowed for the opening of spaces for feminist dissent, despite institutional impediments. The memory of the Intifada underscores the continuing revolution for the liberation of women. This context is crucial for understanding intersecting struggles existing within contemporary conflict.

## **Forms of resistance**

### **Everyday Resistance**

#### **Resistance as Resilience**

While resilience has been contested in International Relations (IR) scholarship today, a lot of discussion about it begins with the assumption that resilience is a neoliberal tool of governance, whether it's in the context of development aid, peacebuilding, or the enhancement of national security. The idea of resilience is firmly situated in the field of neoliberal (or post-liberal) initiatives, even within the context of arguments over the wisdom of adopting a "resilience-building" approach to peace, security, and/or development (Chandler 2012, 2013a; Richmond 2012). This prevailing rationale has exceptions, such as Bourbeau's (2013:11) contention that resilience needs to be "context-informed" and thus is neither good nor bad in and of itself. Corry (2014:271) is arguing the same point, blaming the literature for portraying resilience as a distinctly neoliberal practice and claiming that the link between neoliberalism and resilience "seems to owe more to theoretical priming than empirical investigation." Similarly, it is the hope of this paper to challenge the notion that neoliberalism and resilience are related.

Many of the contemporary discussions regarding the nature of resilience distance it from the customs of communities by emphasizing it as an imposed strategy of governance. Additionally, they fail to consider how resilience. One example of an infrapolitics of resistance is ence. It is apparent that resilience is a much more beneficial concept than literature suggests and can be a practice of resistance rather than a practice of coping if we are to consider it a tactic or strategy used intuitively by populations rather than something arbitrarily applied to them from above. This method of understanding resilience opens up discussion in two quite different ways outside of the parameter of efforts geared to improve resilience

First, considering resilience as a weapon largely utilized by Western interveners ignores the obvious: overcoming adversity and adapting to shock are not Western inventions that should be used when

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

stepping in somewhere else. Second, discussions in the literature on resilience do not take into consideration the possibility that resilience is a collective and purposeful resistance mechanism. These two ideas can be demonstrated using the Palestinian concept of "sumud," which also challenges the rationale behind defining resilience in terms of neoliberalism. They primarily displace contemporary debates concerning the nature of resilience from community norms by bringing it to the center as a practice of governance inflicted upon individuals. Furthermore, they fail to consider how resilience might be a resistance infrastructure. We can observe that resilience is far stronger than the literature currently would lead us to suppose and that it can be a practice of resistance rather than just coping if we approach it as a tactic or strategy used unconsciously by populations rather than something being done to them from above. This kind of resiliency emphasis changes the conversations outside the bounds of efforts aimed at increasing resilience in two ways. The hypothesis that resilience is largely a tool utilized by Western intervenors ignores the glaring fact that enduring adversity and learning to manage shock are not Western ideas to be utilized when occurring elsewhere. Second, resilience discussions within the literature neglect the possibility that resilience might be a collective and intentional process of resistance. These two principles can be evidenced through the use of the "sumud" in Palestine and challenging the reasonableness behind defining resilience within neoliberalism. Palestinians have struggled against occupation, exile, and dispossession for decades employing a broad variety of strategies. Overt resistance is the central concern of most of the global attention given to Palestinian causes, particularly violent methods of resistance such as rocket fire, suicide bombings, and martyrdom operations. What Palestinians call Sumud has not been the subject of much attention. Sumud is rendered as "steadfastness" or "resilience" in Arabic, but it encompasses a wide range of strategies and activities aimed at sustaining the Palestinian presence on historic Palestine land, including presently occupied West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem, and practices of adapting to routine life under occupation. Sumud, for Singh (2012), is a type of resistance that begets other, more active, types of resistance like staging protests or using militancy. Sumud is commonly spoken of by Palestinians, and particularly Palestinian women, as a distinctly Palestinian strategy that enables them to preserve honor, dignity, and physical presence on the land in the

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

face of adversity and hardship. It is also a way of resisting the occupation which aids them in their daily survival.

Sumud is only one of many Palestinian tactics and strategies used to resist the occupation of Israel that has been repurposed according to changing reality of occupation. In my essay, I contend that sumud is an intricate and active strategy of resisting decades of occupation. Because sumud depends on everyday coping, it is a form of resistance that has to be enduring since the occupation is ubiquitous; that is, sumud is an enduring resistance (Halper 2006; Khalili 2007). Sumud is a resistance resilience since it is about living in spite of uncertainty rather than living with it. The distinction is important in that it draws out sumud as a mechanism of resistance. Accordingly, the strategy of sumud, building, or exercising can reveal that resilience is a strategy of resistance, and it offers an additional perspective concerning what resilience is, where to get it, and how it can be utilized.

This study enriches the body of literature within resilience and sumud by envisioning sumud as a "resilient resistance." The case study on sumud advances resilience scholarship because it shows how resilience and resistance are not incompatible, particularly where resilience is built from the inside out, rather than the outside in. In doing so, it increases the need for more empirically oriented work at the grassroots level in the literature on resilience that eschews the a priori assumption that resilience is always being imposed from the outside and that it can always be distinguished from resistance.

### **Resistance between Normality and Normalization**

Sophie Richter –Devroe in his article titled :Palestinian womens everyday resistance between normality and normalisation explores Palestinian women's ideational understandings, practices, and framing of daily resistance. Women employ various ideational coping mechanisms in tandem with materially based survival strategies in their day-to-day resistance activities. In order to better shed light on the dynamic, interdependent, and reciprocal interaction between women's agency and various social and political power structures, this study looks at how women migrate to set up (a sense of) a normal, happy

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

existence for themselves, family, friends, and society. Palestinian women, it is asserted, are exploiting the possibility to subtly resist and transgress under patriarchal relations of domination despite their situating their actions to transcend physical confinements carried out by Israel as actions to resist the occupation.

..... about gaza and the Israel aggression, believe me it was the worst day in my life very difficult , ugly and horrible especially on the kids . Eight windows were broken in my flat , my wife and kids were in the room and glass broke on them, but thank God nothing happened to them. Plus the sound of the explosions with the sound of the F16 made my kids, and even us, suffer until this moment. My kids now are scared of everything, even if the door [just] shuts strongly from the wind. [...] About [the question of] how we can still make jokes about Israelis and the occupation? - Because we have to, we have to live and yes, you can call it “*ṣumūd*”( Marwan ).

As Scott (1997) has it, *Ṣumūd*, steadfastness, is a form of infra-politics, or ordinary (nonviolent) resistance.. It is, as Marwan illustrates, the unshakeable and unbending commitment to keep on living life and even to avail oneself of every opportunity to do so. *Sumūd* is a quieter, often solitary, and uncoordinated style of everyday resistance than the public, heroic, and visible nonviolent resistance more commonly linked to stone-throwing youth in Palestine. Unlike the public, heroic, and open nonviolent resistance one would normally identify with youth who throw stones in Palestine, *ṣumūd* is a more tacit, often individual, and unorganized form of everyday struggle. The term can be used to refer to a wide range of actions, from more material survival strategies (such as continuing to cultivate occupied land or laboring on small-scale ventures to make money) to cultural resistance (such as preserving customs, folk music or dress, and other mores) to social and ideational resistance (such as preserving hope and the perception of normalcy). Women's everyday struggles have been linked to *ṣumūd* as a tactic used to preserve family and communal life (Johnson, 2007:602-3; Peteet, 1991:153; Richter-Devroe, 2008:47-51).

"Lama, a mother of five from the Askari refugee camp in Nablus who now works as a secretary for one of Ramallah's non-governmental organizations, defined my *ṣumūd* for me as follows: My closest girlfriends and I used to discuss in school what we wanted the future to be like for our children. How

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

much you have to keep your cool in order to stay strong despite all the misery that surrounds you how much you must hold on."

Lama, too, practices *sumud* on the ideational level by remaining hopeful, cheerful, and looking forward. This type of *sumud* is exactly what Palestinian women from a diverse array of backgrounds kept insisting on to me throughout: their mundane efforts to uphold a normal and, to the greatest extent possible, festive existence for themselves, their children, and their families in the midst of death, disillusionment, and devastation everywhere. Despite economic hardship, women plan their sons' and daughters' weddings and other festivities, take their families on trips to visit friends and relatives in other parts of the West Bank, and organize trips and excursions to the countryside for women through mainly informal networks, despite Israeli movement restrictions.

Sophie mentioned the idea of *from the suspension to affirmation to life* he argue their quest to find means to live life is a common thread throughout all these stories. They feel they are deserving of enjoying life and letting loose. So, even with the death, devastation, and frustration all around them, they try to have or restore a sense of normalcy and hopefulness. Practices and conceptions of resistance during the First Intifada are entirely different from this need to be in control and take care of one's family in a good, comfortable life. Most importantly, this struggle is conceived as an act of *ṣumūd*.

Palestinian resistance during the First Intifada was predominantly collective and took the form of committee activity, strikes, or demonstrations. There was also a less visible form of daily resistance in the guise of "suspension of life" as Jean-Klein (2001) calls it that occurred simultaneously with the public demonstrations of nonviolent resistance to Israeli occupation. In a process Jean-Klein terms "self-nationalization," people called on each other to set aside routine activities and celebratory rituals. Birthday parties, weddings, and religious ceremonies had to be put on hold in order to justify the peculiarity of the job. There would not be time for normalcy and enjoyment until independence was achieved. "We'll have one grand wedding procession when we get our state," as one of Jean-Klein's respondents stated bluntly.

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

Several years into the Second Intifada, Palestinians have resorted to searching for everyday enjoyment and normalcy after the peace and state-building opportunities were lost (see Junka, 2006; Kelly, 2008). The narrative of resistance has changed, and the majority of Palestinians now regard the search for hope and living life despite the disastrous circumstances as being part of resistance and *ṣumūd*.

### **Cultural resistance**

Women have been subjected to a variety of types of violence throughout history in times of war and conflict. In addition to being subjected to rape and violence in these periods, displaced women and refugees tend to experience more hardship than men. This has been the case with Palestinian women.

maltreatment at both a physical and psychological level for more than 70 years. Nevertheless, resistance to oppression of this nature is as integral to the history of Palestine as the persecution by colonial powers and the Zionist regime during the last century. Palestinian women have been leading the struggle, fighting against Zionism, colonization, and male hegemony all at once (Holt 2013).

But very little has been studied about the Palestinian women's contribution to the fight against Israel. There is a significant disparity between women's real contributions to this conflict and what is recorded in history (Fleischmann 2003). Renowned American Middle Eastern historian Nikki Keddie blames this exclusion on methodological problems in historiography. Historiography predominantly uses male-centred written accounts, in contrast to other social sciences that base data on observation and interviews (Keddie 2008: 1).

"Women are neither viewed as prime makers of history, nor as adept reporters and tellers of history," says Alison Baker (1982).

Palestinian women were similarly excluded from histories because, until the 1987 Intifada, the Western Orientalist view depicted them as men-dependent and incapable of independent action. As a result, almost all histories of Palestine explicitly exclude the subject of Palestinian women (Fleischmann 2003). In spite of this, women have been vital to the Palestinian struggle.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

because from the early times. The Palestinian women's role in the resistance fight against Israel will be addressed here.

Every period has its own strategy, and we won't succeed if we stick to the same strategy.

We need to be innovative, so that Israel Won't predict what we're going to do.

— Andaleeb

During the history of the Palestinian national movement, Palestinian women have participated in resistance. While they have taken part in violent along with peaceful types of action, their involvement in the latter has by far outstripped their involvement in the former. One Nonviolent action theorists argue that this is because nonviolence exposes participants to less risk of injury, retaliation, or social norm breaking.

2. Nonviolent resistance theoretically presents fewer barriers to women's involvement than violent resistance because it involves less risk. This seems to be especially so for Palestinian women, who face many, often intersecting forms of oppression based on gender norms in Palestinian society and the Israeli occupation.

However, this is only a part of the reality of Palestinian women's involvement in nonviolent resistance. Although many Palestinian women were involved in mass nonviolence against the Israeli occupation during the First Intifada, they have more or less stopped doing so following Oslo.

. Women's disengagement has been especially notable, despite the fact that this trend is component of the overall decline in Palestinian participation in collective popular resistance action since Oslo. Mapping the processes contributing to Palestinian women's mobilization and demobilization is therefore key to an understanding of the composite factors underlying their participation in popular resistance. The convergence of feminist, social movement, and nonviolent action theories is essential to this project.

**Palestinian women's alternative resistance strategies**

To be active it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to join a group or go to a certain place and stage a protest. It's nice to firstly start with ourselves, individually, and to improve our own awareness of our history, our situation, and our future.

Meriam

The means by which Palestinian women have articulated a resolute commitment to resistance are the subject of this chapter. This commitment has been articulated primarily through the use of everyday forms of resistance, or *ṣumūd*. The backdrop for this discussion is the evolution of *ṣumūd* from its First Intifada incarnation as a "suspension of life" tactic to its post-Oslo articulation in "affirmation of life" tactics. It shows how women have resiliently adapted to changing power dynamics and structures along with appropriation of internal dynamics by borrowing *ṣumūd* techniques.

The routine of normal life was interrupted collectively during the First Intifada as a manifestation of community commitment and a rejection of Israeli occupation normalization. But in the post-Oslo environment, daily life has become a prime site of resistance to the decline of an integrated national resistance culture, the mounting structural and physical violence of the occupation, and the overall disillusionment with collective Palestinian politics. As a form of collective sacrifice and rejection of normalization of Israeli occupation, everyday life's daily routine was temporarily put on hold throughout the Intifada.

The search for enjoyment in the "immanent present," "seeking the ordinary" in what seem like mundane activities, "counter-movements against immobility by overcoming the checkpoint regime," women's vacation travel, and other mundane practices are some of the "affirmation of life" strategies that Palestinians frame in terms of *ṣumūd*.<sup>5</sup> The tactics used by the women with whom I conducted interviews were congruent with the above resistance strategies' life-affirming, individually adapted and enacted nature. They did, however, also manifest quite a number of major differences. None of the

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

women I spoke to saw it as being resistance, although they did declare commitment to maintaining everyday life and to ordinary, happy activities. In fact, the vast majority of interviewees looked for resistance tactics that eschewed what they perceived as a normalizing obsession with the "immanent present." From this perspective, the techniques that interviewees instead described as their desired ways of resisting were all concerned with how they would eventually change Palestinian society and politics. This emphasis was due to their belief that it was needed to the success of the resistance movement to address Palestinian society's and politics' systemic problems. Interviewees perceived their strategies as functioning incrementally, bottom-up, since they believed that Palestinian women's ability to bring about radical social and political change on an individual level was limited.

In accordance with the slogan "to exist is to resist," *ṣumūd* acts can be characterized as unofficial, mini-demonstrations of tenacity performed in the context of generalized violence and devastation. "Practicing *sumoud* means holding firm on one's land and, more generally, holding firm in serving one's country and in service to the struggle for freedom," Jean Zaru writes. 7. *ṣumūd* may also be conceived of as a type of everyday resistance or "infrapolitics," a concept invented by prominent political scientist and anthropologist James C. Scott to describe the everyday, underground forms of resistance used by subordinated peoples. 8. Such practices are mostly concealed.

Scott contends that such tactics take mainly covert forms since there is a pragmatic consciousness of power imbalance which would make any open display of opposition extremely perilous.

### **Resistance through education and consciousness raising**

The vast majority used the term "education" in the broad sense to describe a method of healing the lethargy and fragmentation which dominated Palestinian politics and society yet opposed occupation. Two such examples are very instructive. Initially, the following quotation from Raneem:

Maybe fighting the soldiers or something like that is really important. But for me, I don't believe in that. Why? Because I think that the occupiers or the Israeli soldiers need to be fought by our minds and

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

our, you know, education. Not – ok, I know that when you go and throw a stone or something like that you're fighting for your country, and I do respect and appreciate that. But if you were killed I think that well that's the end of the story. But if you go to university, if you tried to get your BA, you travelled abroad and you came back and tried to build your country and raise the awareness of your people here, then that would be much better. This is my point of view. And [although] I do respect all the fighters – this is my point of view as a girl here in Palestine... [It's about] raising your awareness and [getting] stronger. And then you are culturally better, economically better, and even politically better: when people are educated they will be more open in politics and not just fighting each other for nothing.

And, second, the following exchange with university students

FARAH: The point is also that academic education, by itself, is not enough.

It's about being open minded, and this needs to be achieved in the culture and the mentality of the people. So you don't just study to have

a certificate, you study in order to improve your character and the way you think.

MARIAM: And the occupation is working against that.

FARAH: Exactly.

For the most part, notions of how education and consciousness-raising would be part of a resistance strategy were ill-defined. However, the fact that so many of the women I interviewed recognized the significance of education demonstrates how pertinent it is to their daily lives. Its importance is also shown by that they were permitted to enter this domain of the public sphere. More specifically, education was a field where Palestinian women could realistically expect to engage in meaningful social interaction without violating societal or cultural expectations. In fact, Ghazal, a student at college and one of the discussants, maintained that the only way Palestinian women could take revenge was through education.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

The difficulty of attending an education under occupation, which includes transcending the often gendered challenges and humiliations involved in navigating through checkpoints and negotiating other forms of spatial control, has also invested it with an even more profound value and significance, as indicated by Mariam above.

Education has been a culturally embedded survival strategy for Palestinian women (and men) and a means of national aspirations and identity. In a 1999 survey, 72% of parents wanted their daughters to attend college, and 87% of parents wanted their sons to do so. 84 These ambitions, along with rising female education completion rates, have had little effect, however, on present and future job opportunities.

In accordance with a 2013 report published by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), the gender disparity in Palestine's unemployment rates has been widening over the years. 85 Although the majority of the women I interviewed agreed that there were very few job opportunities for women in Palestine, they nevertheless strongly believed that education was central to the development of themselves and their communities. This is consistent with the common traditional view among Palestinians in Palestine and the diaspora that education is a central component of a strategy for national and individual survival. Some of the women I interviewed made explicit connections between their education and employment and the national struggle without prompting. When asked if they planned to return to Palestine after completing their planned master's degrees abroad, Reem, Mariam, and Farah all answered in unison with a resounding "Of course!" at the above focus group. Reem also added, "We are studying to build Palestine."

Do you think women have a role in resistance in Palestine?

Of course. If you think positively, women must be a good influence because they raise the next generation. She instills in her children the fact that you are supposed to serve your country. You should do something, but it does not necessarily have to be throwing stones; you can use education to work towards helping the country develop. Education, progress, etc. can help you fight the enemy. Women are

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

part of this fight too. Unbeknownst to her, even an ordinary mother who is not political or educated still has a good contribution. I can do more; I do play my part, though, as I've said, sometimes you're too preoccupied. For example, I'm part of the growth and development of the institution. I would like to push it even beyond that, like building up women's thought processes through the center, the symposia we used to organize, and the programs. More of all that is necessary, however.

The organisations were playing their role in repressing cultural consciousness. These types of groups ignore such things by reacting with things like, "Don't think about them; let's perform dabka, dance, go on trips, and inform you about the map of Palestine." They practically don't know anything. These organizations are not performing tasks properly; it looks like they are merely paying lip service. "Come, go to your country." How long do they stay with the group after they have told [children] about the country, how and when they left, refugees, and so on?

Let's say they are given four classes. How long do they maintain it? I am not going to discuss teaching the same children once more, but how much am I going to provide [this little girl] and her mother so that she will also carry on? ... How do I reach the remaining 4,000 children? What is the value of working with twenty children? They're 4,000 or 5,000 children surrounding you and yet I've 20 children who understand their country and understand right of return. My child [was involved in local community-based projects] since I was little myself; how many times did they work with me as a mom? Once.

Amira Hass, an Israeli journalist, stated in article 103 that all Palestinian schools need to teach resistance. Yes, they should. We have an issue with the media, conveying messages, and maintaining momentum in every school, organization, home, and street. We have an issue with the "big egos" in charge; we have an issue with the objectives we select. The women who are at the helm of the national women's movement, for instance, have existed for centuries in Ramallah. Let in other newcomers! Why is everybody just waiting? Give space for fresh blood to come in! There has been a new consciousness born, as well as new global trends and practices that you do not know of.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

According to BARBARA HARLOW in his famous book *resistance literature* he made clear The term "resistance" (muqawamah) was first introduced in a characterization of Palestinian literature in 1966 by the Palestinian novelist and critic Ghassan Kanafani in his study *Literature of Resistance in Occupied Palestine: 1948-1966*. Notably, Kanafani's critical work was completed in 1966, prior to the June War of 1967, when Israel opened the border between the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip, now known as the "Occupied Territories," and Israel having defeated the Egyptian and Jordanian armies. Consequently, it proposes a fundamental difference between literature written "under occupation" [taht al-ihtilal] and literature written "in exile" (manfa). Consequently, it proposes a fundamental difference between literature written "under occupation" [taht al-ihtilal] and "exile" (manfa) literature. Such a distinction is founded on the shared belonging of a people to a place, cause, or identity that then serves as the grounds for marking the difference between two ways of historical and political existence—that is, "occupation" and "exile."

The phrase "resistance literature," which Ghassan Kanafani uses to describe Palestinian literature, is a particular historical situation, one perhaps most readily associated with the current national liberation movements and resistance movements fighting against Western imperialist domination of Africa, Central and South America, and the Middle and Far East. Yet the specificity and urgency of the historical context highlight the larger significance that resistance literature—and more broadly, what has come to be called "Third World literature" — possesses.

As with Cabral, for whom "culture plunges its roots into the physical reality of the environmental humus in which it develops," "armed resistance is not the husk, but the very fruit of cultivation forcing its roots deep into the land," Ghassan Kanafani's second study of the literature of occupied Palestine, two years after his first study and one that took advantage of the recently opened borders between Israel and the occupied West Bank.

Poetry is not limited to a vehicle for expressing nationalistic or even personal identity. Poetry, being part of the cultural institutions and historical existence of a people, is a battleground in and of itself.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

The recent history of colonialism and the west's, Europe's, and the United States' imperialist enterprise have to a large extent defined that struggle, which is now occurring in a number of Third World nations, from Indonesia's East Timor to Central America's El Salvador, on a cultural, political, and military level.

Poetry has therefore been at the very center of the actual struggle for liberation, serving both as a storehouse of popular memory and awareness and as an incitement to the shaping of a popular resistance to domination and occupation. Lebanese novelist and critic Elias Khouri, in his book "The world of meanings in Palestinian poetry," maintains that language is the very foundation of steadfastness (*sumud*). National memory is preserved in language. It is the fundamental national asset which has to be protected. Poetry is important in political mobilization not only because it is more effective than other kinds of writing but also because it holds national continuity in popular memory.

Poetic language is viewed as an essential component of the ideological underpinnings of the new public and private social order, and is used for decrees and love letters alike. It is not envisioned here as an ethereal or otherworldly form of expression, detached from the political reality of conflict. It is still necessary to create the new language, the language constituted of poetry and resistance. The resources required do not derive from cultural resistance or armed struggle alone. Moreover, poetry has to deal with the weight of its own history and with the stranger, the invader or the attacker, and the retrograde effects of colonialism.

Mahmud Darwish, a Palestinian poet currently in exile, therefore explores the twofold battle of the resistance and its writers in his poem "The dictionary and the roses

Be that as it may,

I must. . .

The poet must have a new toast

And new anthems.

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Traversing a tunnel of incense

And pepper and ancient summer,

I carry the key to legends and ruined monuments of slaves.

I see history an old man

Tossing dice and gathering the stars.

Be that as it may,

I must refuse death

Even though my legends die.

In the rubble I rummage for light and new poetry,

Did you realize before today, my love,

That a letter in the dictionary is dull?

How do they live, all these words?

How do they grow? How do they spread?

We still water them with the tears of memories

And metaphors and sugar.

Be that as it may,

I must reject the roses that spring

From a dictionary or a diwan.

Roses grow on the arms of a peasant, on the fists of a laborer,

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Roses grow over the wounds of a warrior

And on the face of a rock.

Darwish's poetic summons to the popular struggle enacts what Elias Khouri characterized in Palestinian poetry as the "approach to the popular song," and so to the "rhythmical clarity [in poetry] which is capable of playing a specific role in political practice." His poem, suspended in the tension between the inevitability and inexorability of the historical process ("Be that as it may") and his own struggle with it ("I must"), forbids the dictionary definitions and conventions proffered by classical Arabic literature ("the roses that spring/from a dictionary or a diwan").

The Palestinian resistance poets and their Arab counterparts are fighting against deeply rooted social, political, and literary traditions in addition to Israel's occupation of Palestine.

### **Political resistance**

In Palestinian society, political participation by women serves the purpose of accomplishing the aims and objectives of the political structure. It provides the executive and representative arms with a democratic decision-making form of legitimate authority. Hence, an affirmation of all women's rights such as citizenship and equality before the law in its entirety without any discrimination would be the first step towards securing their effective political participation. This can be done by empowering women to participate in political and decision-making, to decide future plans, development projects, and policies, and to oversee their implementation to the benefit of Palestinian society and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Five women won in the first legislative election in 1996, an indicator that there is a bright future for Palestinian women to occupy political leadership roles. Women participated in the uncovering of corruption and its manifestations, were actively involved in foreign policy decision making, and played a role in the formulation and voting of laws like the Labor Law, the Maintenance Fund, and the Civil Service Act. Also among the most notable successes of the Palestinian women was the 2002 Palestinian National Reform. This statement was full of a number of other accomplishments that say a lot

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

about the potential of women to meet the demands of leadership roles and underscored the inevitability of political, economic, administrative, and judicial reform as a domestic imperative .In spite of numerous, the remaining instances of women's potential and capability, these are all intermittent instances. Tools are then needed to facilitate and aid women along with deconstructing the barriers for women to political engagement to facilitate an establishment on how best to remove them.

The word "political participation" is not that old; it became widely accepted after the Industrial Revolution of the 18th and 19th centuries, when had a significant influence on the growth of the vote once it was no longer the preserve of the privileged and the trend towards political participation. For example, in order to shield themselves from their employers, working men across various industries and occupations in Britain established trade unions. The establishment of the General Federation of British Trade Unions at the end of the nineteenth century laid the basis for the economic and political strength of trade unions in society .The term political participation also originates from the manner with which a person engages with society by fully involving oneself in activities that are in the public space, referred to as "public policy" practice. Yet, Felipe Brow (1998) asserts that it is "the culmination of the collective actions taken by the governed which allow them to influence the way the political system functions".

Palestinian women have been active participants in social and political activity since the early 20th century. Women's nonprofit organizations, including elder centers and orphanages centers, which were the focal point of their effective involvement and contributed towards involving Palestinian women in the social concerns of the community. However, the political environment in Palestine—from the British mandate to the Israeli occupation—has been responsible for the political trajectory of the involvement of Palestinian women, as indicated by protest petitions, marches, sit-ins, and demonstrations.

The initial political action of Palestinian women was a protest demonstration against the establishment of the first colony in Afula in 1893. Prior to the commencement of the Mandate in 1920, 29 women signed a letter to the chief administrator of the territory protesting against the Balfour Declaration, stating that "we Moslem and Christian ladies who represent other ladies of Palestine protest vigorously."

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

In addition, women took part in other political endeavors, such as the 1929 Wailing Wall occurrences. The British army killed nine women in these episodes, which led to women increasing their political activism in an attempt to improve the appalling conditions in which they were living. Consequently, Palestinian women consciously started a movement in 1929, and the Palestine Arab Women's Congress in Jerusalem was the first. The Congress, which had more than 200 women in attendance from across Palestine, passed resolutions regarding the country's issues and made a commitment to "support all resolutions, decisions, and demands of the Arab Executive."

Following the debate, the women organized a final session, at which an Arab Women's Executive Committee (AWE) was elected to implement and manage the resolutions of the Congress. In spite the movement clearly put gender at the center of its political awareness, with the AWE's later activities' resolutions focusing primarily on the national question.

The Palestinian society went through the Nakba (Catastrophe) and its catastrophic impact on social, political, and economic life between the years 1948 and 1967. Women's organizations contributed significantly to the development of social life through the provision of social care services to orphans and supplying the victimized families with food, water, shelter, and clothing, among other humanitarian and relief aid materials. The women were also awarded a "quota" in the National Assembly, which varied between 2% in 1964 and 7.5% in the Gaza Council session in 1996, following the formation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) in 1964.

The Palestinian women's official representative to the Palestine Liberation Organization was established in 1965 as "the General Union of Palestinian Women" in Nablus and Jerusalem. The Women's Union wrote a set of objectives it envisioned to attain in a bid to provide all Palestinian women with a democratic platform: promoting the awareness of women about their legal rights acquired through the First and Second Palestinian National Conferences; integrating women into all aspects of political, social, and judicial life; and providing them with equality in all rights and obligations. This is to say that Palestinian national and community-based organizations became more politically aware of the women's

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

movement. In addition, women were also trained to use arms and participated in military operations during the period, expanding their role from social work to militant and national action. Nearly 68 women's societies were engaged in women's aid relief and charity until the latter part of 1967. When Palestinian political parties chose to define women's political involvement and include women from rural villages, urban centers, and refugee camps within their parties in 1978, women underwent a significant transformation. Women have been involved in the majority of areas of life, including politics, society, culture, health, and the country.

By demonstrating, being arrested, and taking part in some violent activities, Palestinian women voiced their opinions during the struggle in 1987: Women leaders participated in various left-wing parties and had various functions. In 1991, a collective alliance of four women's committees, four research and advocacy institutes, two legal aid concerns, and hundreds of grassroots groups and voluntary associations was formed by the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) Women's Task Force.

The Task Force also facilitated three workshops where hundreds of Palestinian women drafted and discussed the Women's Agenda, a strategic vision paper for Palestinian women's empowerment. But the activities of those groups were limited to social services only. Interestingly, those women's committees were established in an effort to provide social work, attracted the political parties that utilized them to mobilize women to engage in political action.

The Palestinian National Authority was established in 1993 as the rightful representative of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank following the Oslo Accord. In effect, while the Palestinian Authority built institutions, passed legislation, conducted elections, and set up civil society organizations that concern women's rights, the Palestinian situation was transformed both internally and internationally. However, despite the sacrifices of Palestinian women and the important role of women's role via groups and unions, the indicators of the success of women's political as illustrated below, political representation

agine, how we used to speak with such strength .

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

—Nisreen

The history of Palestinian women's national liberation struggle is also that of their struggle for liberation of women because their historical struggles against foreign occupation's domination and within their own society for gender equality are so intertwined. The women's movement was facilitated and obstructed by this close interconnection. One Because the women's movement was so closely linked to the national movement, its advance was virtually entirely dependent on that of the latter, even though nationalist activism (especially during times of greater struggle) allowed for room to maneuver in the organization of women and the expansion of opportunities for public political involvement. The ability of the women's movement to effectively overthrow patriarchal systems and rework social relations in Palestinian society was thus drastically hampered by the prioritization of women's interests by the national movement. Although Palestinian women's activism has tended to exist on the margins due to gendered struggles of resistance, their resistance against foreign occupation has all too frequently taken the shape of unofficial everyday activity or expansion of traditional roles. These everyday acts of activism reveal forceful evidence of women's agency, which tends to be forgotten and seldom discussed in resistive histories.

This conversation not only traces the path of continuity and expansion of women's popular resistance, but also serves as a benchmark for interviewees of subsequent chapters. They strongly illustrate how the narrative of resistance within popular and personal memory continues to influence and cut across contemporary frames of resistance by the use of the national and women's movements' historical facts that they choose to emphasize in their interviews and what they leave out in their histories.

Palestinian women were politically active from at least the late Ottoman era, even if official records are not generally available to make this obvious. They were active around Palestinian nationalism and opposition to the Zionist project. Women's unions, literary societies, sports clubs, and religious and

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

philanthropic societies all grew through this activism. These were the first to offer a forum for women to organize starting in 1903, when the Orthodox Aid Society for the Poor in Acre, the earliest known Palestinian women's association, was founded.

Although the philosophies and actions of the groups varied, they all shared the same exclusive goal of "helping the nation" by working for the underprivileged and women.

Openly political activities of women's organizations were infrequent and irregular during this decade. Yet, Rosemary Sayigh argues that the political activity of women from the 1920s onward showed a degree of dynamism and creativity that complicates the notion of "organic unity" between the women's movement and the wider nationalist movement. Women's movement-specific projects such as the establishment of committees to raise funds for the nationalist leadership and protests drawing attention to interfaith solidarity, for example, implied a more complex relationship than one involving women's movement passivity in the wake of male leadership.

### **The First Arab Women's Congress**

The First Congress of Arab Women It has been demonstrated that Palestinian women's organizations put their goals and language more and more in a nationalist framework as the national crisis grew. Following dramatic events, such as the 1917 Balfour Declaration and armed confrontations between the Jewish and Palestinian communities in Palestine (the 1921 Jaffa disturbances are particularly noteworthy), their political activity soon became more overt. For an example, women demonstrated with a group that was granted a meeting with the British High Commissioner after the demonstration in Jerusalem in 1920 regarding the Balfour Declaration and torture of Palestinian prisoners. 16 Besides these incidents, purchasing lands to Zionist institutions in large numbers created a persistent dilemma.

An irate landless peasant community was the result of the heightened Palestinian eviction from the land they worked on, and they had no means of other sources of income.

**Intersectionality in Resistance**

“I feel like I have two occupations; the Israeli occupation and the cultural occupation which connects the family and the religion and everything. So yeah, imagine your life with two occupations. How awful is that.”

-Respondent, Hebron, 2016

“...I would say in Palestine actually, women are exposed to two kinds of occupations; the structural patriarchal occupation and the

...occupation that is the Israeli occupation so...that's why women struggle twice.”

-Respondent, East Jerusalem, 2016

According to intersectional feminist theory, the oppressions and discriminations women have experienced are shaped by their intersecting, or combining, identities. The notion that a woman's experience can be reduced to her gender alone is rejected by intersectionality, which charges us with being mindful of all the various things that are at play in her life, including her race, class, ethnicity, disability, citizenship status, sexual orientation, and other markers, and how those systems of oppression intersect. Black women came up and developed this concept because their specific form of oppression tends to be overlooked owing to the lack of intersectional examination. Palestine becomes a feminist issue when we view the world through intersectional feminist eyes. According to David Lloyd, it is only by understanding the disproportionate impact of Israel's structural violence and the oppression and violence experienced by Palestinian women at the hands of Zionism that we can view Palestine as a feminist issue.

"Women in all realms are targeted by Israel's war on the reproduction of Palestinian life. As mothers and caregivers, it evidently targets women as real or potential agents of the reproduction of life. But it also targets women as producers of social and cultural life, as if targeting women—as it was so

## **Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework**

common in colonial orders—was the royal road to the devastation of the social and political life of the native. All Palestinians have endured greatly from living under Israeli occupation or under its racist state, but Palestinian women have endured the most."

Israel's apartheid system systematically and deliberately oppresses Palestinian women. They are deprived of their freedom, reproductive health, economic opportunities, education, and movement. When detained in Israeli prisons as political prisoners, they face gender-based abuse by Israeli soldiers. Poverty and displacement caused by Israel's continued occupation disproportionately affect them.

Political violence constitutes a mainstream element of political violence Palestinian women are exposed to. Political violence, feminist scholar Bell Hooks clarifies, occurs when government or powerful actors use gendered violence in order to follow their political aspirations and deter women from politics. Israel routinely uses political violence against Palestinian women through indiscriminate arrest (as the case of Mariam Barghouti), sexual violence inflicted on Palestinian women prisoners, threats against them, blackmail, and danger from Israeli officials to Palestinian victims and survivors of sexual and domestic violence.

### **Some Stories**

To date, Lena Jerboni is the Palestinian woman prisoner with the longest sentence. She has spent 11 years of her 17-year sentence. Lena is regarded as the inmate dean of the prison. She attended to all of our affairs in the first instance. She treated us all like an older sister, though she was very young. Though she is older than some of them, some of the inmates refer to her as Khalto [auntie]. I demanded a cigarette because I wanted a cigarette. "No," responds Lena brusquely as she swings around to face me. Slaves aren't here. Lena is the strongest and the weakest woman whom I have ever known. Prison is now the familiar thing to her. In one of the discussions I had with the other girls when I was in prison, we were trying to explain thin pants and how they look. We chuckled. We chuckled in gross. Yet we cried from

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

our hearts. We cried because we didn't want prison to be all that we have and because we had to accept the fact that we lived but didn't really live.

Lena is wisdom

### **No, You Can't Be A Feminist And A Zionist**

The relevance of intersectional feminism is corroborated by the fact that the coexistence of Zionism and feminism is itself a topic of controversy. As Jaime Omar Yassin contends, "feminism cannot be Zionist or neo-Nazi if gender is common to all racial groups—feminism that does not understand how it intersects with racial and ethnic oppression is merely a diversification of white supremacy." Is it possible to be a feminist and openly advocate for the murder of women in a neighboring state and uphold a political-economic order that clearly adds to their oppression by Israel and Palestinian society?

Palestinian-American activist Linda Sarsour put it best when she said: "You cannot be a feminist in the United States and be for the rights of American women and then say that you are not interested in being for the rights of Palestinian women in Palestine. You are either for the rights of Palestinian women and all women, or you are not. You just can't escape it.". It is racist, and not freeing, for what is hailed as feminism to dictate the look of a free woman in such a manner that it excludes most women of color in the world, who have suffered the brutality of colonialism and war. Bell Hooks once made the remark, "Feminist sisterhood cannot be fully realized as long as women are using class, race, or power to dominate other women."

Agnes Liljegren in his crucial article titled: A Double Occupation: The Struggle within the struggle a field study about Palestinian women's struggle for gender equality during life under occupation .

This study explores two forms of oppressions facing Palestinian women in the Occupied

Palestinian Territories: the Israeli Occupation and the Patriarchal Structure in their society , and also explores the Galtung's three forms of Violence

## Chapter one : the socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Johan Galtung's theory is the theoretical foundation for this research. Galtung has been a prominent scholar in peace and conflict studies. He has conceptualized peace as "the absence of violence" in his seminal work *Violence, Peace, and Peace Research* (1969: 168). He contends that when people are manipulated to a point where their actual physical and mental perceptions fall behind their potential perception, violence is evident (1969:167). Violence, however, is the antonym of peace (Galtung & Fischer, 2013:35).

He argues that his distinction between different forms of violence has changed our vision and understanding of violence fundamentally; the notion of both peace and violence has to be understood in a higher understanding . He introduced the term "structural violence" since he assumes that conflict has to be understood as complicated (Aggestam & Höglund, 2017:26f)There are three interrelated forms of violence, as can be seen below (Galtung & Fischer, 2013:35).Violence can begin at any vertex of the triangle and at various times (1990:294,302).The most evident type of violence is immediate violence, which can be touched. "Physical hurting other human beings with intent" is how Galtung (Johansen, 2014:27) defines it. It is exercised by agents such as states, rape, global war, and "kills fast." Mostly, casualties and bodily harm can be quantified to measure it.

In contrast, structural violence is covert and "kills slowly." Galtung defined it as "harm to humans as a result of injustices in our societies" that are enforced either directly or indirectly by violent political, economic, or social systems (1969:179f). They happen because of social injustice, such as prejudice against women and minorities that denies them access to necessities like healthcare (ibid.).

When culture makes violence legitimate, it is known as "cultural violence," and this term was coined by Galtung in the 1990 paper "Cultural Violence" (Galtung & Fischer, 2013:35). How a society perceives the Self and the Other is always an internalized process.Where the Self is superior to another culture and the Other is dehumanized as a second-class citizen due to gender, race, religion, or language, and where there is victim-blaming, stereotyping, and willfully withholding resources, beliefs of the Other become the main justification of direct and institutional violence. Any aggression can inflict psychological

damage (Galtung, 1990:292ff). Galtung's theory is also discussed in the following figure, which will also be useful to us when we examine the complexity of the violent phenomenon.

### **Galtung's Peace**

Peace is not the lack of conflict, but the lack of all violence. So, in Galtung's opinion, what must be done to have peace? First, he distinguishes two types of peace that are necessary: positive and negative peace. Negative peace is the lack of tangible violence, but since there are other forms of violence, it is an unfair system of peace. Improving elements, preventing future violence through, for instance, negotiation, coalition building, and enhancing society in general are all part of positive peace (Sandole, 2010; Galtung & Fischer, 2013:39ff). Galtung extended his understanding of peace in 1990, claiming it can only be realized when the opposites of his three forms of violence—direct peace, structural peace, and cultural peace—are established

**Chapter two: voice and  
agency , Body and emotions , space and exile,  
nationalism and gender and symbolism and  
subjunctivity in fadwa Taaqan's enough for  
me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

**I- Asserting Voice and Claiming Agency in Fadwa Tuqan's "Enough for Me".**

In the realm of postcolonial Arab feminist discourse, voice embodies the power of underrepresented women to express their journeys, stories, and defiance in manners that confront prevailing narratives (frequently dictated by colonial forces, nationalist sentiments, or patriarchal systems). According to Mariam Cooke the concept of voice serves as a mechanism for "cultural translation," facilitating Arab women in the negotiation of their identities both within and in opposition to oppressive frameworks. Cooke underscores the significance of collaborative narrative construction and the critical undermining of patriarchal and colonial silencing. So this concept we find it in several literary works such as Sahar Khalifeh's novels *Wild Thorns* (1976).

Khalifeh utilizes diverse narrative voices to challenge homogeneous representations of Palestinian society amidst occupation. In *Wild Thorns* (1976), she contrasts the viewpoints of men and women, youth and elders, militants and non-combatants, to underscore the complexities of intersecting oppressions. For instance, the character Basima, a woman from the working class, expresses the compounded burdens of Israeli occupation and domestic patriarchy. Her introspective monologues critique the idealization of resistance movements that neglect the contributions of women's labor:

"They talk of revolution, but who cooks their meals? Who raises their children?" (Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*, p. 89). By affording Basima a platform for her narrative, Khalifeh contests the marginalization of women's roles in anti-colonial movements, depicting their quotidian endurance as a manifestation of resistance.

Enough for me

The poem "Enough for Me" by Fadwa Tuqan is effective in expressing the notions of voice and agency, particularly given Palestinian identity and struggle. The speaker of the poem gains meaning and agency in the process of belonging and eventually becoming part of her hometown through death and rebirth, illustrating a strong connection to the land. In spite of displacement and dispossession, the voice in

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

the lyrics "Enough for me to die on her earth / be buried in her / to melt and disappear in her soil / then sprout forth as a flower played with by a child from my country" lays claim to presence and continuity.

The voice in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me.

Tuqan's voice is both universal and intensely personal, resonating with both the broader Palestinian experience and her own. Her language is a poetic one of determination and rootedness, reaffirming a physical and spiritual belonging to the land despite erasure. This voice is a yearning to return and a refusal to be quieted by exile or occupation, and it is both a lament and a form of resistance. By expressing freely both her personal and national suffering, Tuqan's voice as a woman Palestinian poet also defies traditional patriarchal conventions and gives voice to those who tend to be silenced in both the literary and political arenas.

Agency in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me

Agency in Tuqan's poetry is enacted through both the creative act and the assertion of identity. In telling her own narrative and that of her people, Tuqan asserts agency in spite of gender, exile, and war constraints. Her poetry is rendered a site of resistance wherein political and personal agency converge. A cycle of life and rebirth that resists the corrosive forces of displacement is figured in the poem's imagery of uniting with the earth and being reborn.

Furthermore, Tuqan's fight for freedom within a traditional and patriarchal society is reflected in her wider literary and autobiographical work. By writing openly about her life, love, and rebellion, she broke down barriers and turned personal suffering into artistic strength. To voice and to declare oneself a poet is an act of taking control, especially for Palestinian women who endure various forms of discrimination.

"I Shall Not Weep"

This poem's rejection of the stereotypically feminine role of passive lamentation is a perfect example of Tuqan's assertion of agency. She appropriates a voice of resistance and strength instead,

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

promising to continue the fight rather than surrender. She asserted her presence and agency in the male-dominated nationalist discourse, her entry into it, saying:

"I Shall Not Weep"

How shameful had I come to meet you

with eyes wet, blinking

and with a despairing, defeated heart!

Upon my word, I shall not weep hereafter."

By declining the standard role of the silent, weeping woman, Tuqaan turns the construct of femininity "on its head." Rather than weeping, she says she will "take the torch forward" from the women who have preceded her, placing herself as active agent and inheritor of the cause. This is an explicit declaration of agency—she is a "force of retaliation" who will fight using her poems and words, not simply observe.

**II- Emotion and Embodiment as Sites of Struggle in "Enough for MeTuqaan's Enough for Me.**

Postcolonial Arab feminism construes "body" and "feelings" to be inextricably linked with patriarchy, nationalism, and colonialism. Often a "battlefield" in postcolonial nations, the body—more specifically the female body—is conceived as a location where political, religious, and cultural wars intersect. Postcolonial Arab feminist theory construes that feelings are inextricably linked with the body and its experiences. Because of colonization and repeated efforts at independence, they are the shared memory of trauma, resistance, and identity. Feelings are expressions of both loss and agency, and they are more than personal; they are informed by histories and societies. Women's feelings of pride, indignation, or transgression can be acts of resistance against colonial and patriarchal values, postcolonial Arab feminists contend. Emotions are therefore a key component of feminist resistance and identity formation

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

in the postcolonial Arab world, since the emotional geography of Arab women is a site of struggle where individual emotions overlap with larger political and cultural discourse.

The poetry of Fadwa Tuqaan was an effective tool of articulation for the issues that her country was facing, condensing the entire spirit of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in its entirety of historical and political nature. She reached the heights of her artistic work at this period, beginning with her book of poetry "The Night and the Knights." Her poems, which depicted both national and individual concerns, were marked by the interaction between internal and external conflicts. One of the most celebrated poets in modern Arabic literature is Fadwa Tuqaan. Her own life is reflected in her poetry, and it is rich in joy, love, sadness, and suffering.

Tuqaan's writings clearly depict the trials and tribulations of her life.

Her poems are forceful sentences that very eloquently convey her feelings, emotions, and positions.

The period of time that Fadwa Tuqaan lived was a time of social and political upheaval. She had to struggle against the Nakba (the Palestinian dispersion) and the British occupation of Palestine, but also internal struggles with freedom, education, and citizenship. She once professed:

voice calling from beyond the veils,

Do you see my life's spring running dry?

I still wander in barren existence,

Desolate as a wasteland, linked to sorrow,

Since his starfaded among the vanishing.

Where is Ibrahim tome, where, oh where?

The heart's cherished pearl, the light of my eyes

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Idwell between life and death, in limbo.

Perhaps the time draws near

When longing will soothe the wound and its pain. "

(Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, pp. 100 -101)

Personal experience, therefore, was important in Fadwa Touqan's poetry since, through her straightforward way of speaking and powerful poetic images, she could convey to her readers the depth of her national and human experience while being truthful and deeply sensitive to her feelings and personal experiences. Her poetry is evidence of the ability of poetry to withstand challenges and convey intimate feelings. Fadwa Tuqan expresses her strong love and attachment to her country Palestine in her poem "oh, my beloved homeland,

Your love fills my heart,

I long for your soil,

For your sun and moon,

I will continue to love you until my last breath. "

(Abdul Majid, Youssef, n.d., p. 33).

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in Fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

In her poetry, renowned Palestinian poet Fadwa Tuqan struggled with themes of loss and grief on a regular basis. Fadwa's poetry was greatly affected by the suffering and loneliness she experienced following the death of her mother and brother Ibrahim. She writes "Brother Ibrahim, I still remember our days

And the sorrow chokes me, Separation hurts me, Where are you now?

You left me alone in this world,

And our dreams remain suspended in the air. "

(Al-Sheikh, Gharid, p. 7.)

Fadwa Tuqan's poetry explored a wide range of human and emotional concerns with love and yearning being recurring themes. In these subjects, she articulated her most intimate feelings and life experiences openly and passionately. Tuqan's love poetry is known for its depth of description of passion and love, expressing her emotions through descriptive words and vivid poetic imagery. She also conveyed her love and passion for her family, especially her mother and her brother, the poet Ibrahim Tuqan, with whom she was close. Ibrahim also contributed a great deal to her life and poetry, and she constantly gave tribute to his memory and to their connection through her poems. So Tuqan writes:

What do I feel here , deep inside me,

My desires and yearnings tremble.

"A thousand feelings burn within me,

A surging current, torrential and flowing.

A thousand emotions, a thousand passions,

Burning feverish in my blood, in my veins.

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

What do I feel? I feel an eagerness,  
Wandering, flooding all my horizons.  
My lips have dried, and their shadows quiver,  
Thirsting in my longing eyes.  
My soul is scattered, tormented, By its yearning, by the  
enigma of its eagerness.  
A longing for the unknown propels it, Charring the walls of its isolation.  
A longing for what I cannot comprehend,  
Calling it in the silence of its solitude.  
Is it nature whose voice awakens her?  
Is it life summoning its daughter?  
What do I feel? A feeling of being lost to herself,  
Suffering in her bewilderment." (Tuqan, Fadwa, 1990, p. 31).

Fadwa Tuqan's seminal poem "Enough for Me" is a poem of body and emotions. Written in the wake of the 1967 Arab defeat (Naksa), the poem begins with the solemnity of death and culminates in the joy of a child, mingling individual suffering with Palestinian collective pain. Using the body as a site of resistance and emotions as propellers of revolutionary change, grief becomes hope.

The Body: Rebirth through Dissolution. Death is not an ending but return to the land of mothers, or "her earth," according to Tuqan, who transforms the destruction of the body into an act of embedment and

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

rebirth: "to die on her earth / be buried in her." Declining exile or uprooting, the body descends into Palestinian earth.

- Emotions: Sacrificial Love Defiant Hope.

Emotions shift from hopelessness to transcendent resolve

In initial glance, as desperation, "enough for me to die" is a promise: dying "on her earth" is an act of love.

Destructive Tenderness:

Hope is given by images like "a flower / played with by a child from my country". The physical body maintains the land inherited by the child (posterity).

The statement "to remain in my country's embrace / as a handful of dust" portrays physical erasure as everlasting closeness in Sacred Surrender

**III-Nationalism and Gender in Fadwa Tuqan's enough for me."**

A critically thoughtful critique of gender and nationality, postcolonial Arab feminist discourse illustrates the ways that the patriarchal order and colonial traditions overlap to regulate women's roles in Arab societies. This view challenges the restrictions these forces place on women's agency while highlighting politicizations of genders as instruments of nation-building and culture of resistance. In a patriarchal framework, Tuqan's nationalistic literary style is liberation against Israel and combat for Arab women's voice.

The poet addressed literature and liberation to educated women in the West Bank (Tuqan, 1990, p. 122-123.)

Tuqan became active in politics only when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza in 1967. The Palestinian poet had dedicated her work to the resistance struggle due to the occupation of 1967. To the

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

issues of women's participation in national struggle, women as national and human symbols, and gendered and ecological symbolism based on this understanding of nationalism and gender, she had demanded answers. To her people and to her loved country, Palestine, her poems were a cry. This Land, My Sister, is a Woman, poem by Tuqan

.My sister, our land has a throbbing heart,

it doesn't cease to beat, and it endures

the unendurable. It keeps the secrets

of hills and wombs. This land sprouting

with spikes and palms is also the land

that gives birth to a freedom-fighter.

This land, my sister, is a woman.”

Her poetry frequently employs this strong image, one in which the motherland becomes a female whose suffering and perseverance are tied to the people's: "This land, my sister, is a woman."

In both fragility and strength, this image makes the Palestinian land become a living, breathing female being.

"Labour Pains"

Tuqan bridges the sensation of the female body with the strength of the nation by equating the ordeal of the occupied land with the agony of giving birth:

“Earth shivers with love,

with the pain of giving birth,

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

but the conqueror wants us to believe

tale of submission and surrender, this leads us to understand that the fight for the country is akin to the labor of a woman—painful yet productive and vital."

"The Deluge and the Tree" (Excerpt)

Tuqan uses natural and feminine imagery in a hope-inspiring, defiant message:

“When the Tree rises up, the branches

shall flourish green and fresh in the sun

the laughter of the Tree shall leaf

beneath the sun

and birds shall return

Undoubtedly, the birds shall return

The tree, in this case, symbolizes the survival and rebirth of the nation and carries connotations of implied feminine association with growth and life.

“Enough for Me” describes her love and connection to her homeland:

Enough for me to die on her earth

be buried in her

to melt and vanish into her soil

then sprout forth as a flower

played with by a child of my country.

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Enough for me to remain  
  
in my country's embrace  
  
to be in her close as a handful of dust  
  
a sprig of grass a flower

The passionate and emotive poems of the poet express her love for Palestine and bravery in enduring the chaos and unrest of the occupation.

In the poem, the poet exhibits a deep and personal bond with her own Palestine.

The need to "die on her earth" and "be buried in her" is an ultimate sacrifice and devotion to the country. The symbol of healing and rebuilding the country in spite of suffering and loss is that of melting into the ground and bursting as a flower. The use of the flower being "played with by a child of my country" as a symbol reinforces the wheel of life and resilience of the country by illustrating the subsequent generations that will inherit and hold the land.

This shows a nationalist mindset that believes that one's own future and identity are tied up together with the country's and its people. To express this nationalist loyalty, the poem also uses maternal and feminine imagery. As a caring female figure—"her earth," "her soil," "her embrace"—the earth is anthropomorphized, adhering to traditional expectations of women as caregivers and birth-givers. The speaker's intent to "sprout forth as a flower" after "melting and vanishing" in the earth is a figure of speech for women's ability to bear, develop, and renew. Such figurative speech assists in charging women with the nation's resiliency and fertility as it aligns women's experience and body with earth itself. Thus, women's motherly roles are progressed to that of a symbol of hope and national perseverance.

**IV-Space and exile in Fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me**

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

In literature, space accounts for how a writer creates and structures the world in a text—how places, scenes, and environments are depicted, imagined, and given meaning. Literary space need not only be physical; it may be social, symbolic, or Despite the fact that In literature, exile has a tendency to describe a situation in which one is estranged from one's home country, whether by choice or circumstance. Themes of alienation, nostalgia, displacement, and identity search are commonly used. Exile can be psychological (the feeling of not belonging or being at home somewhere) or physical (actual displacement).

Following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948, Palestine underwent radical political, social, and demographic changes. In order to show their displeasure at the illegal occupation of Palestine and the destiny of their people, Palestinian writers embraced a new model of creativity. Palestinian literature after 1948 reflected the repression and exile of the Palestinian people. In the post-1948 Palestinian exodus, poetry was the initial literary type to emerge from the new literary movement. Called "Poetry of the Resistance" or "Resistance Poetry," this special literary movement resisted persecution and would not yield to the Zionist state. Palestinian resistance poetry departed from the classical Arabic literary tradition and forged a new expression in addition to assuming contemporary techniques (Hijjawi, 1968, p. 6).

The other themes fell out of favor in Palestinian poetry by the late 1960s, and resistance poetry emerged as the most dominant expressive literary form among Palestinian poets (Jayyusi, 1992).

A well-known poet of the Palestinian resistance in the 20th century was Fadwa Tuqan. She expressed her disapproval of the occupation of Palestine through her poetry.

The Deluge and the Tree

I found it... my soul found itself

Suddenly, after being lost,

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

After long wandering

In deserts of nothingness!

It found itself a tree

Stripped bare of leaves,

Standing in desolation

Before Death's door,

Standing beneath the gale's onslaught

And the devouring Deluge,

The wind raging against it

And the raging waters swallowing its roots!

And it refuses to fall! (1957)

Fadwa Tuqan wrote "IFound It" in the late 1950s when she was abroad studying in England, a tumultuous time in her life. In addition, the poem's theme is a reflection of her internalized journey to self-discovery and reclaiming her identity as a Palestinian woman, in addition to her physical exile from Palestine. The poem examines the conflict between homecoming and exile, belonging and displacement, and the search for national and personal identity. The poem is commonly seen as a reflection of discovering one's identity and voice in the midst of estrangement. The 1967 film *Before the Closed Door* The "closed door" metaphor strongly recalls the dispossession of Palestinian land following the 1967 war—a land stifled by occupation, shut off, and out of reach.

Both the physical exile and psychological imprisonment of a people are represented by this closing off of space. The space is closed and occupied. My Sad City: Personification of Nablus as a Place of Exile

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

is another poem. The streets and homes of Tuqan are depicted as locations of estrangement, symbolic of the disintegration of Palestinian identity under occupation. The city is depicted as somber and repressed, a microcosm of national exile. To me, Fadwa Tuqan is enough. The poem effectively conjures the land of Palestine itself, which is represented as a sheltering, maternal embrace that the author wishes to be in even after death. The physical landscape of the homeland is not simply geographical but also intensely symbolic; the earth represents continuity, identity, and belonging. The poet's body and the land are inseparably united in the notion of melting into the earth and re-emerging as a flower, an ecofeminist coupling in which land and female self are indivisible. By contrasting the poet's stated wish to die and be buried in her native land with the reality of Palestinians' forced dislocation, including Tuqan's own, the poem indirectly broaches exile. The desire to "dissolve and melt into her earth" is a spiritual opposition to the dislocation and disconnection of exile in becoming part of the land.

"Enough for me," the poem's subdued tone of resignation, can be interpreted as a defiant insistence on belonging in symbolic identification with the land, and a resignation to the improbability of return.

### **V-Symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me**

The use of symbols—things, people, colors, or patterns—that have meanings or conceptions beyond their literal meaning is known as symbolism in literature. Symbols enable authors to express deeper meanings indirectly but forcefully, frequently emotional or political, on difficult subjects like identity, resistance, or exile. The term "subjectivity" describes the manner in which a person's viewpoint, emotions, and experiences are expressed in literature. It focuses on the inner life of the narrator or author, like self, thoughts, and feelings. It tends to draw attention to how one's own experience crosses over with these larger social or political realities.

Fadwa Tuqan's poetry, rich in symbolism with high subjectivity and blending personal experience with shared Palestinian identity and resistance, is some of feminist literature in the form of symbolic imagery to convey themes of femininity, resistance, and exile, yet maintains high subjectivity in her

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

subjective voice that highlights the female experience under occupation and patriarchy. Her writings first include *The Deluge and the Tree*. Despite violence and displacement, the tree represents Palestinian identity, rootedness, and resilience. Ethnocide and devastation are the deluge (hurricane or flood). Return and peace are represented by birds. The poem combines national and individual loss and represents both collective pain and hope through the poet's emotional response. "My Sad City" Nablus is a sad and alienated city that represents the occupied Palestinian homeland.

The collective suffering of occupation is personalized by Tuqaan's personal grief and rage, and the city's suffering becomes urgent and close-up—now finally, *Enough for Me*. In exile and displacement, the rich lamenting imagery of the poem achieves a strong identification with Palestinian homeland. As the familiar holy space to which the poet desires to be attached, even posthumously, earth/soil is the motherland itself—Palestine. Beyond the suffering of forced exile, the picture of melting and dissolving into the earth is total spiritual and physical identification with the earth. The flower and grass twig are symbols of renewal, hope, and continuation—life that arises from selflessness and belonging to one's own homeland. In spite of the continued woes, the child's play with the flower is a symbol of innocence, future generations, and the indestructible people-land relationship.

Further, Tuqaan's subjective experience as a displaced Palestinian woman is voiced in the poem as her own individual yearning and affective identification with homeland. Her hopes are modest but highly meaningful, being spiritual belonging and not material return, and the constant repetition of "Enough for me" implies a modest but authentic acceptance. The poet's internal world, where hope, memory, and identity are entwined with the land, is revealed in the intimate tone, politicizing the self. Tuqaan turns collective displacement into a very personal investigation of resilience, loss, and home through the subjective tone. Tuqaan utilizes cityscape (cities), natural symbols (trees, birds, earth), and body metaphors to symbolize the Palestinian people's association with their native land and continuous struggle.

In "*The Deluge and the Tree*," for instance, the olive tree is an emblem of Palestinian nationalism and perseverance and birds are an emblem of harmony and promise of return. Her work is popular because

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

these symbols carry complex political, cultural, as well as emotional meanings. In a patriarchal and colonial society, Tuqan's poetry can convey women's subjectivity. Her poetry is a place where personal gets politicized since her feelings of sorrow, hope, rage, and courage are interwoven with that of collective Palestinian suffering. By insisting on women's experience and vision of exile and resistance, this subjective voice transgresses the masculine nationalist tradition of narrative.

### **Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Mourid Barghouti's poetic work results from the complexity surrounding displacement, memory, and political division and thereby presents a collection both representative of the situation of the Palestinian diaspora and reflective of the emotional and symbolic constructs that underpin such a condition. The linguistic and stylistic attributes of the poetry are marked by their minimalism, melancholy tone, and internalized contradictions intrinsic to the motifs of absence and belonging. The intersection of numerous different subjects is an essential element of his poetry: the dislocation of the national collective, the symbolic projection onto women, the silences intruding upon identity, and the labor of emotions necessary to maintain cultural persistence (Sayigh 67, 24).

The thematic concerns uncovered are not discrete entities; instead, they are an interrelated and dynamic system in which aspects of voice and agency, body and emotions, nationalism and gender, space and exile, and symbolism and subjectivity are constantly engaging with each other. Barghouti avoids describing these notions as distinct lenses; instead, he depicts them as intersecting modes that invite Palestinian identity, pain, and memory. Such a synthesis of political and poetic discourse accords with arguments offered by feminist theorists such as Julie M. Norman, who contend that women's emotional visibility within discourse on resistance is often a cover for further structural marginalization (134).

Within Barghouti's corpus, a woman can be represented by a single line; however, her presence is also often an intense conflation of political and symbolic weight. Her silence, for instance, goes beyond a lack of words, becoming instead a sign of political exclusion and affective tension. Her inability to move

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

is similarly not an absence of action, but an imposed stasis socially conditioned and representative of wider attendant gendered poles of space and nationalism. Such an inscribed presence is a metaphor for the way in which Barghouti represents events of national loss and personal displacement—what Judith Butler calls "the cultural coding of mourning," by which particular voices are made audible and others pushed to the margins (24).

The rich symbolic structure is central to the novel's analysis of exile. Barghouti's celebrated autobiographical novel, *I Saw Ramallah*, sheds critical light onto this intellectual framework. When the protagonist returns to Ramallah after an extended period, he notices the silence of his mother: "She looked at my face and turned back into the kitchen" (Barghouti 29). This brief domestic gesture is rich with emotional weight. She is the home he cannot fully reclaim, the embodiment of perseverance, and a metaphor for the stability of a disintegrating nation. Though her physical presence is palpable, her verbal interaction is minimal; however, her emotional weight is salient despite a restrictive narrative character.

In doing so, Barghouti both reinforces and problematizes the symbolic representation of women in resistance literature. Rosemary Sayigh has long argued that narratives of Palestinian nationalism tend to assign a symbolic role for women as figures of suffering and remembrance, yet deny their own agency as active political players (67). To augment this point, Julie M. Norman further observes that these narratives "place women at the emotional heart of resistance but deny them discursive voice" (134). Barghouti adheres to this structure. Instead, his work distills it with a lyrical subtlety, depicting women as figures of endurance and remembrance, yet seldom giving them the narrative voice largely monopolized by the male poet-exile.

In the book, *I Was Born There, I Was Born Here*, Barghouti addresses these ideas through the framework of generational trauma and return. The narrator is faced with a changed Palestine marked by fragmentation and militarization. Women in this context return to the domestic sphere—serving coffee, repeating received stories, and guarding cultural rituals. They are instrumental in creating a sense of historical and emotional continuity; however, their narrative agency is circumscribed. Their lives are not

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

located in the public sphere of resistance or politics; rather, they are in a feminized sphere of cultural recurrence. Efrat Ben-Ze'ev suggests that this dichotomy captures the nature of exile literature, in which women are limited to "inhabiting emotional space rather than political geography," a space in which their presence is allowed only if their voices are silenced (146).

The brevity of Barghouti's poetry serves to emphasize strong themes. In the poem "I Have No Problem," for instance, a woman is "a line in the dust, drawn by memory." Such imagery invites one to ponder ephemerality and symbolism—she is a trace, a permanent presence, defined not by her voice but by the speaker's remembrance of her. Her physical presence is metaphorical, and her movements are anticipated within the framework of mourning. Butler's assertion that symbolic representation oftentimes erases political marginalization is especially pertinent here: "To be represented is not necessarily to be allowed to speak" (26). In the world of Barghouti's poetry, women are pervasive; their lives are however defined by others.

The author's literary choices are not only aesthetically oriented; they are also politically charged. Barghouti is a poet who struggles with loss, return, and the futility of reconciliation that can perhaps never arrive. His poems encapsulate the ambivalences surrounding resistance and the politics of remembrance, how the desire to maintain remembrance oftentimes reiterates the same silences one wishes to contest. The women represented—those folding blankets, perching by windows, and waiting at doorsteps—exist not only as a locus of sorrow but also as the system of women's marginalization within nationalism. While honored for their endurance, their silence is not questioned. And their acts are open to an aesthetic reading, their subjectivity nonetheless kept at bay (Ben-Ze'ev 147).

The author's literary choices are more than aesthetic; they have intense political ramifications. Barghouti comes across as a poet who walks a tightrope of loss, return, and impossible reconciliation. His work embodies the intricacies involved in resistance and recollection, where the desire to preserve memory often reinforces the very silences it tries to redress. The woman folding the blanket, the one sitting by the window, the figure waiting at the door—these images go beyond the articulation of

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

mourning; they also instantiate the structural entrapment of women in the nationalist discourse. Though their steadfastness is praised, their silence is not questioned. Their actions are aestheticized, but their personal subjectivity remains in the background (Sayigh 84).

An analysis of Barghouti's corpus under this theoretical synthesis requires an attention to the internalized paradox of resistance poetry itself. A poem that is critical of the circumstances of occupation can also support patriarchal values. At the same time, a poem that invokes community trauma can incidentally exclude a large part of its readership. The complex interaction of the body, space, voice, and affect in Barghouti's prose and poetry reveals a poetics of gendered exile that is both reflective and complicit. His poetic genius sublimates grief, but also sanctifies and freezes the feminine subject. Through this process, such dynamics reinforce the very mechanisms of symbolic exclusion against which feminist theorists have worked so hard (Butler 26).

In trying to counter the marginalization of Palestinian identity, Barghouti creates a poetic archive. However, like all archives, this one is selectively inclusive. It remembers women chiefly as symbols of continuity and loss, and rarely as active agents of resistance. His poetry allows for feminist readings not because it neglects gender, but because it inscribes gender in a way that requires critical analysis. In Barghouti's poetry, the female subject is valued, well-represented, and emotionally central; she is, however, rarely given a voice. Her resistance is emotional rather than political, and her representation is indicative rather than based on subjective experience (Sayigh 84; Butler 26).

### **Body and emotions in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight**

Mourid Barghouti's poems capture the complex relationship between the physical body and emotional response in the context of the Palestinian postcolonial experience. The female body in the poem "Midnight" is depicted not as an activist emblem of political resistance but as a site of emotional labor, cultural heritage, and collective grieving. The image of the woman with "hands were dry, trembling with

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

the tea tray / but her tears did not fall" identifies this dynamic (Sayigh 82). Her physical presence registers a repressed sorrow and controlled grief and is consistent with Judith Butler's identification that "to be grieved is not the same as being known" (25). In this context, the female body is a site upon which national trauma is written, placed as an object upon and through which memory and resilience are symbolically transmitted and yet not as a subject that might speak her emotive state and narrative.

The affective space of "Midnight" is characterized by restraint and not explosive expression. The vision of the woman as "sat like stone / while the room changed around her" denotes her strength reflected in her immobility (Norman 136). She is imaged as a stationary monument representing the emotional labor women undertake in periods of national crisis. Her silence is not that of passivity but rather an emotional strategy under patriarchal and nationalist regimes. Sayigh terms this occurrence the "figures of contained suffering" in Palestinian nationalist discourse, where the emotional strength of the woman is acknowledged but not politicized (84). Here, the female body is imaged as a signifier of continuity against a history of change and division, but lacking agency. Though her suffering is made visible and expressed through the arts, it is nonetheless depoliticized.

Barghouti deepens the emotional symbolism of the poem through the use of deferred action. The statement "She folded the blanket / before the rain touched the roof" goes beyond the mere act of resistance to the storm; instead, it is a reflection of a state of quiet preparedness and dignified restraint (Sayigh 84). The image depicts the woman as being the strength to withstand and prepare for trauma, and as a result, she is a figure of collective national grief but expresses no obvious display of rebellion.

The following line reinforces this quiet preparedness: "She lit no lamp / yet I saw her shadow." The lack of physical light and the presence of her shadow create the idea that her emotional strength is even performed in silence. The poet recognizes her emotional labor; the labor is, however, not expressed overtly. Butler argues that this kind of symbolic performance often "aestheticizes absence rather than restoring political agency" (26).

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Barghouti's articulation of emotional resilience reimagines mourning as a manifestation of nationalism. The silence of the woman is framed as an "anthem," thus turning individual tragedy into a communal narrative (Butler 26). The anthem is the basis of the poet's account: "Her silence is the anthem / and I walk in its tune." Silence has become a tune that the speaker follows, but only through the experience of stifled emotional pain. Her mourning is a figuration rather than a testimony; she is not just neglected or open to others' interpretation

The repetition of bodily movements—waiting, prearranging, and shuddering—explains the deep emotional weight of exile, but this is clearly the poet's vision. "Waits by the open doorway" summarizes the overriding quality of emotional dislocation. She not only waits for return but grieves for something impossible: recognition as a person. Her emotional load provides significantly to the atmosphere of the poem, but her subjectivity is elusive.

In "Midnight," Barghouti depicts the female form as a symbol of emotional strength. The intersection of silence, corporeal immobility, and stifled grief creates a gendered space of resistance in which emotions become politically charged only through symbolic and not individual expression. According to Butler, "recognition without speech is a gesture of powerlessness masquerading as reverence" (27). In the poem, Barghouti's female subject is both venerated and mourned; yet this is through her silencing and the understanding of her emotions only through patriarchal and nationalist frameworks.

### **Voice and agency in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight**

In "Midnight," Barghouti builds a complex and gendered narrative that considers voice and agency. Although the woman is voiceless, her emotional presence is felt throughout the text. Even when she is not articulately expressive through voice, her silence is a structural point of the poem's construction: "Her silence is the anthem." The declaration of the woman's silence as a national motif encourages a query from

**Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Butler—can knowledge exist where there is not a voice accompanying? (26). The woman is positioned in the center of the narrative; her agency is fractured in the aesthetics of memory.

The male narrator asserts, reflects, and remembers: “I crossed the checkpoint of thought / and found her memory waiting me.” This insistence serves to entrench the gendered divide between the signifier and the speaker. The male subject travels, while the female subject stays put, trapped in affective stagnation. Norman labels this phenomenon as “anchored femininity” (134)—a state of affairs in which the female is pinned in place, protecting remembrance, while men move, talk back, and resist.

Even as she goes through different things—folding the blanket, showing patience, staying motionless—her actions are described by this person, refigured and charged with beauty. “Sat like stone / while the room changed around her.” Being stillness is not her expression of refusal; it is a construction created by the narrator. Butler's point that “representation often functions by aestheticizing absence” (26) is especially useful here. Her silence is heavily weighted; she has purposefully arranged it.

Sayigh warns against such approaches, as a preoccupation with symbolic meaning too often distracts from genuine political involvement (84). In "Midnight," the female subject is hailed for her strength; nonetheless, any expression of her dissent or articulation of her specific pain is left unspoken. Her silence serves to affirm the supremacy of the masculine narrator: " She spoke not a word / and I named the sorrow." The narrator has a dual role as interpreter and builder of her sorrow.

Therefore, voice and agency are here unevenly distributed. The woman provides narrative but is not permitted to hold it. She is remembered but not allowed to speak; she is integral to the pathos of the poem but is structurally voiceless. According to Butler, "recognition without speech" translates suffering into sacred silence, rather than into power (27).

**Nationalism and gender in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight**

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjenctivity in fadwa Tuaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

In the "Midnight" poem, the intersection of nationalism and gender establishes a symbolic framework in which women are emotional anchors to a fractured nation. Barghouti skillfully refigures home imagery as nationalism, with the following line being a prime example: " She folded the blanket / before the rain touched the roof." The action is intimate and prophetic, signaling the burden of foreseen suffering borne by the female. Rather than directly being a participator in the chaos of rebellion, she prepares, a reflection of the nation's determination to persevere through adversity.

This theoretical model is supported by Sayigh's claim that nationalist writing habitually reappropriates the woman as "landscapes of mourning," effectively making her a vital symbol of the nation while denying her political agency (89). In Barghouti's poem, the woman's ritualistic behavior—serving tea, waiting, and watching—is what creates a myth surrounding feminine endurance. Even though her role is vital, she is kept within the home: " She moved through the silence / as if silence were a task." The line redescribes her status—silence—as a task, essentially rendering it a burden that is tied to national persistence.

Norman defines these as being parts of a feminized space that is "emotional", while Barghouti deepens the ambiance through the positioning of herself in a space of immobility and silence. Far from negotiating or responding to loss, she embodies it. Her immobility, silence, and repetitive actions are symbolic of the persistence of nationalism. Ascription of nationalist responsibilities to gender denies the availability of active roles for women and channels them into symbolic space while the male poet takes up the narrative voice (135).

In her idealized actions, the woman still retains ritualistic connotations. The poet reinforces this when he observes: "She turned her face / to the fire's breath / and folded silence over her knees," sanctifying her restraint. Her emotions are repressed and represented through symbols and not as lived experiences. Sayigh notes that this act of sanctification removes women from the arena of active resistance and turns their memories into ritual and not revolution. She is the mother of the besieged homeland, but as a fighter she takes no part within (84).

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Taaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

The characterization of the woman as the moral pillar of the state is provocative but controversial. She is described as "the house that never closes," a metaphorical term reflecting the idea of maternal protection and communal heritage. Her strength lies in her ability to endure adversity rather than any change in circumstances. That idealized description is questioned by Butler, who deems that "symbolic valorization transfigures the unspoken into aestheticized absence rather than restoring political agency" (26).

Through the gendered poetic construction in the poem "Midnight," nationalism is expressed as women's emotional lives, their memories, movements, and silences are woven into the narrative of the homeland and embodied through the feminine body and their rituals and grieving processes, but their subjectivity is kept at the margins. The nation is conceived through the corporeal form of the feminine body and their mourning processes and rituals; their power to attach meaning to them is not given.

### **Space and exile in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight**

The spatial movements in "Midnight" demonstrate the gendered nature of exile. The male subject crosses physical and mental frontiers, imagining that he is declaring: "I crossed the checkpoint of thought." The female subject, in contrast, stays put and is located "by the empty doorway," a boundary between the remembered and the real. She is trapped in what Ben-Ze'ev calls "anchored femininity," where the feminine is constituted within emotional and home space, as symbolic bases of collective narrative (146).

This threshold—the door—is not only a place of waiting but an abiding barrier. The woman crosses it not at all; she is excluded not through movement but through being compelled to remain. Her physical immobility is underscored through "She sat like stone / while the room changed around her." Her persistence is set off against the backdrop of change, with the implication being that exile is perceived differently through the lens of gender.

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

Norman argues that the "domestic reconstruction of identity" (135), as represented in Barghouti's depiction of women in symbolic geography terms, is exemplified in her positioning of the hearth, doorway, and silence. They serve to define her role as keeper of collective memory and at the same time circumscribe her ability to speak it. Butler's warning that "narrative elaborates the pain of the unvoiced" (26) is apposite here: she embodies the suffering of exile but is not allowed to speak of it.

Through her economical gestures, the poet underscores her isolation in the sphere of domestic life: "She drew the curtains / before dusk could stain the floor." This gesture expresses protection and expectation, while also demonstrating deep solitude. The house, like her body, is a vessel for managing the trauma of exile. She is still part of the nation's narrative; in fact, she is its emotional core. Yet, the house circumscribes her agency. She does not participate in resistance or escape—her exile is more than a journey; it is a state of being.

Barghouti defines a sense of homeland in accordance with the woman's experience; yet, this homeland is remembered through her inaction. Compared to the poet's experience, her exile is not defined through mobility, but instead through a fixed and symbolic imprisonment. She stays behind to safeguard what has been abandoned by the poet. This specific articulation of gendered spatial exile allows the male speaker to move, to speak, and to ponder, while the woman carries the burden of silently maintaining what remains. As a result, her exile becomes the ultimate reclaiming of a home that constantly disappears.

### **Symbolism and subjectivity in Mourid Barghouti's Midnight**

"Midnight" employs powerful symbolic imagery to represent the female subject as something rather than as a subject with voice and agency. She is described through symbols "the shadow with no lamp," "a name in the ashes," "the house before the fires" that remove her from her subjectivity. Her experience is conveyed indirectly and through interpretation. Sayigh cautions that women represented in this way in literary texts become "stationary icons of homeland and purity," thereby circumscribing their experience within allegorical frameworks (84).

## **Chapter two: voice and agency , Body and emotions , space and exile, nationalism and gender and symbolism and subjectivity in fadwa Tuqaan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight**

This aestheticization is evidently demonstrated when the poet writes: “Her name remained in the ash / after the fire.” The woman is presented as a memory instead of an intellect. Her life is defined through her disappearance, whereas her identity is marked by remnants. She is remembered in lack of voice—a problem that Butler acknowledges as the predicament of symbolic commemoration, which “transforms the unspoken into aestheticized absence” (26).

Throughout “Midnight,” the woman exists in metaphor: “She folded the dawn / into the seams of the curtain.” Every gesture becomes mythic. These symbols affirm her importance but negate her subjectivity. She is love, land, endurance, grief—but never self. Even as the poet proclaims, “I still saw her name,” we realize we never hear her speak it.

The female body and her memories are incorporated into the symbolic order of public grieving. She is not placed as an articulator but instead is used as a signifier. Her silence becomes a literary device—visually striking and emotionally powerful, but lacking agency. Butler argues that “grief must be allowed to speak if it is to become more than an aestheticized loss” (27). Grief takes on an important role in “Midnight,” but the utterance comes through the poet's voice. Her suffering is deeply felt but not articulated.

The symbolism in "Midnight" creates a lyrical model suitable for veneration that unknowingly becomes a model of exclusion. The female figure is the nation, but she is not its narrator. She embodies collective memory, but she does not shape its form. Her own voice gets lost in the metaphors that give her an eternal identity. Though she is not forgotten, her voice is not heard.

# **General Conclusion**

## General Conclusion

This research deals with the most difficult issues that Palestinian women face under isreal occupation in fadwa Taaqan's enough for me and Mourid Barghouti's midnight .

Our study has examined various issues that Palestinian women suffer around the world under the domination of patriarchal societies and discuss how those women are resist against Israel occupation , feminists use Thier pens to give the voice to the silenced women : to protest against injustice Palestinian women suffer from , the resist against all the different forms of their oppression .

Mourid Barghouti midnight depicts a Palestinian woman sewing at midnight, transforming a domestic chore into an act of national preservation. Her needle stitches both cloth and collective dignity, mending the "shirt" of the homeland torn by occupation. Barghouti frames her quiet endurance as the essence of resistance: not through overt confrontation, but through **unyielding cultural continuity** and the daily reassertion of existence. Her empowerment emerges from **turning vulnerability (darkness/confinement) into a tool of resilience**, making the private sphere a site of profound political defiance. Barghouti transforms the ordinary image of a woman sewing at night into a potent symbol of Palestinian **sumud** (steadfastness) and quiet defiance against oppression.

Fadwa Taaqan's "Enough for Me" (1967) is a defiant anthem of Palestinian identity and resistance. The speaker declares unwavering connection to her homeland, rejecting displacement and oppression. She transforms personal grief into collective strength, asserting that her very existence—embodied in her blood, voice, and creative expression—is an act of resistance against erasure. The poem culminates in a vow to weaponize her words as "stones" in the struggle for liberation.

In deed both Fadwa Tuqan and Mourid Barghouti use their writing to present a strong female voice that calls for independence and freedom from the Zionist entity , the both tries to free women from the prison of ordeal occupation .

## **General Conclusion**

Fadwa Tuqan represented a strong Palestinian female voice against all several types oppression and gender the hunts women while Mourid Barghouti wan nationalist writer who fought also to protect his homeland .

Our study of fadwa Tuqan and Mourid Barghouti poems led us to conclude : the Palestinian women has voice through which she fights all forms of oppression .

The Palestinian women has resisted all forms of war ; out of love for her homeland , she cannot abandon it and does not recognize the existence of the Zionist entity , so they use pens as means to give theme the voice to express themselves .

Fadwa Tuqan and Mourid Barghouti share common concepts such as voice ans agence , Nationalism and gender , exile , space , symbolism ans subjectivity.

To conclude , in our present research we did not deal with all Palestinian women 's issues we focused with the most important issues .

The two poems can be studied from several aspects and need further investigation.

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## General Conclusion

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## General Conclusion

تعتمد هذه المذكرة على النظرية النسوية وتُجري دراسة مقارنة بين قصيدة "يكفيني" لعدوى طوقان وكتاب "منتصف الليل" لمريد البرغوثي، لتحليل كيفية تصوير كل من الشعارين للمقاومة كتجربة شخصية تنطوي على تمكين الذات. وبينما يركز أدب المقاومة الفلسطيني غالباً على النضال الجماعي، تستكشف هذه الدراسة كيف تتجلى مفاهيم الصمود الفردي، والهوية، والقوة العاطفية من خلال التعبير الشعري.

وباستخدام نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار والتحليل الأدبي، تتناول الدراسة دور الاستعارة والصورة والنبذة في تجسيد معاني التحدي والتحول. كما تعتمد على السياق التاريخي والذاكرة الشخصية لفهم الطريقة التي شكّل بها الشعاران نصوصاً تتجاوز الألم والمعاناة نحو تأكيد الفاعلية الذاتية. وتُظهر النتائج أن الشعر، في هذا السياق، لا يقتصر على كونه وسيلة للاحتجاج، بل يشكل أيضاً أداة للتعبير عن الذات وتعزيز الهوية الثقافية. وبهذا، تسهم هذه الدراسة في تعميق الفهم لأدب المقاومة من خلال إبراز دور الصوت الشعري في التمكين والتحرر الشخصي.