National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file / Votre référence

Our file / Notre référence

NOTICE

The quality of this microform is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us an inferior photocopy.

Reproduction in full or in part of this microform is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30, and subsequent amendments.

AVIS

La qualité de cette microforme dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de qualité inférieure.

La reproduction, même partielle, de cette microforme est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30, et ses amendements subséquents.

**NEGOTIATING SPACES OF STRUGGLE:
PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S RESEARCH CENTRES
IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA**

by

MONA C. MARSHY, B.A. HONS.

A thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
in partial fulfilment of
the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

Department of Geography

Carleton University

Ottawa, Ontario

September, 1994

copyright

© 1994, Mona C. Marshy

National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Author's Acknowledgement

Notice de remerciement

THE AUTHOR HAS GRANTED AN
IRREVOCABLE NON-EXCLUSIVE
LICENCE ALLOWING THE NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF CANADA TO
REPRODUCE, LOAN, DISTRIBUTE OR
SELL COPIES OF HIS/HER THESIS BY
ANY MEANS AND IN ANY FORM OR
FORMAT, MAKING THIS THESIS
AVAILABLE TO INTERESTED
PERSONS.

L'AUTEUR A ACCORDE UNE LICENCE
IRREVOCABLE ET NON EXCLUSIVE
PERMETTANT A LA BIBLIOTHEQUE
NATIONALE DU CANADA DE
REPRODUIRE, PRETER, DISTRIBUER
OU VENDRE DES COPIES DE SA
THESE DE QUELQUE MANIERE ET
SOUS QUELQUE FORME QUE CE SOIT
POUR METTRE DES EXEMPLAIRES DE
CETTE THESE A LA DISPOSITION DES
PERSONNE INTERESSEES

THE AUTHOR RETAINS OWNERSHIP
OF THE COPYRIGHT IN HIS/HER
THESIS. NEITHER THE THESIS NOR
SUBSTANTIAL EXTRACTS FROM IT
MAY BE PRINTED OR OTHERWISE
REPRODUCED WITHOUT HIS/HER
PERMISSION.

L'AUTEUR CONSERVE LA PROPRIETE
DU DROIT D'AUTEUR QUI PROTEGE
SA THESE. NI LA THESE NI DES
EXTRAITS SUBSTANTIELS DE CELLE-
CI NE DOIVENT ETRE IMPRIMES OU
AUTREMENT REPRODUITS SANS SON
AUTORISATION

ISBN 0-612-02972-7

Canada

Name Mona C. Marshy

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

Geography

SUBJECT TERM

0 3 6 6

SUBJECT CODE

U·M·I

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
Art History 0377
Cinema 0900
Dance 0378
Fine Arts 0357
Information Science 0723
Journalism 0391
Library Science 0399
Mass Communications 0708
Music 0413
Speech Communication 0459
Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
Administration 0514
Adult and Continuing 0516
Agricultural 0517
Art 0273
Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
Business 0688
Community College 0275
Curriculum and Instruction 0727
Early Childhood 0518
Elementary 0524
Finance 0277
Guidance and Counseling 0519
Health 0680
Higher 0745
History of 0520
Home Economics 0278
Industrial 0521
Language and Literature 0279
Mathematics 0280
Music 0522
Philosophy of 0998
Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
Reading 0535
Religious 0527
Sciences 0714
Secondary 0533
Social Sciences 0534
Sociology of 0340
Special 0529
Teacher Training 0530
Technology 0710
Tests and Measurements 0288
Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language 0679
General 0289
Ancient 0290
Linguistics 0291
Modern
Literature 0401
General 0294
Classical 0295
Comparative 0297
Medieval 0298
Modern 0316
African 0591
American 0305
Asian 0352
Canadian (English) 0355
Canadian (French) 0593
English 0311
Germanic 0312
Latin American 0315
Middle Eastern 0313
Romance 0314
Slavic and East European

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
Religion
General 0318
Biblical Studies 0321
Clergy 0319
History of 0320
Philosophy of 0322
Theology 0469

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
Anthropology
Archaeology 0324
Cultural 0326
Physical 0327
Business Administration
General 0310
Accounting 0272
Banking 0770
Management 0454
Marketing 0338
Canadian Studies 0385
Economics
General 0501
Agricultural 0503
Commerce Business 0505
Finance 0508
History 0509
Labor 0510
Theory 0511
Folklore 0358
Geography 0366
Gerontology 0351
History 0578
General

Ancient 0579
Medieval 0581
Modern 0582
Black 0328
African 0331
Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
Canadian 0334
European 0335
Latin American 0336
Middle Eastern 0333
United States 0337
History of Science 0585
Law 0398
Political Science
General 0615
International Law and Relations 0616
Public Administration 0617
Recreation 0814
Social Work 0452
Sociology
General 0626
Criminology and Penology 0627
Demography 0938
Ethnic and Racial Studies 0631
Individual and Family Studies 0628
Industrial and Labor Relations 0629
Public and Social Welfare 0630
Social Structure and Development 0700
Theory and Methods 0344
Transportation 0709
Urban and Regional Planning 0999
Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture
General 0473
Agronomy 0285
Animal Culture and Nutrition 0475
Animal Pathology 0476
Food Science and Technology 0359
Forestry and Wildlife 0478
Plant Culture 0479
Plant Pathology 0480
Plant Physiology 0817
Range Management 0777
Wood Technology 0746
Biology
General 0306
Anatomy 0287
Biostatistics 0308
Botany 0309
Cell 0379
Ecology 0329
Entomology 0353
Genetics 0369
Limnology 0793
Microbiology 0410
Molecular 0307
Neuroscience 0317
Oceanography 0416
Physiology 0433
Radiation 0821
Veterinary Science 0778
Zoology 0472
Biophysics
General 0786
Medical 0760

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
Geochemistry 0996

Geodesy 0370
Geology 0372
Geophysics 0373
Hydrology 0388
Mineralogy 0411
Paleobotany 0345
Paleoecology 0426
Paleontology 0418
Paleozoology 0985
Palynology 0427
Physical Geography 0368
Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
Health Sciences
General 0566
Audiology 0300
Chemotherapy 0992
Dentistry 0567
Education 0350
Hospital Management 0769
Human Development 0758
Immunology 0982
Medicine and Surgery 0564
Mental Health 0347
Nursing 0569
Nutrition 0570
Obstetrics and Gynecology 0380
Occupational Health and Therapy 0354
Ophthalmology 0381
Pathology 0571
Pharmacology 0419
Pharmacy 0572
Physical Therapy 0382
Public Health 0573
Radiology 0574
Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460
Toxicology 0383
Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences
Chemistry
General 0485
Agricultural 0749
Analytical 0486
Biochemistry 0487
Inorganic 0488
Nuclear 0738
Organic 0490
Pharmaceutical 0491
Physical 0494
Polymer 0495
Radiation 0754
Mathematics 0405
Physics
General 0605
Acoustics 0986
Astronomy and Astrophysics 0606
Atmospheric Science 0608
Atomic 0748
Electronics and Electricity 0607
Elementary Particles and High Energy 0798
Fluid and Plasma 0759
Molecular 0609
Nuclear 0610
Optics 0752
Radiation 0756
Solid State 0611
Statistics 0463

Applied Sciences

Applied Mechanics 0346
Computer Science 0984

Engineering
General 0537
Aerospace 0538
Agricultural 0539
Automotive 0540
Biomedical 0541
Chemical 0542
Civil 0543
Electronics and Electrical 0544
Heat and Thermodynamics 0348
Hydraulic 0545
Industrial 0546
Marine 0547
Materials Science 0794
Mechanical 0548
Metallurgy 0743
Mining 0551
Nuclear 0552
Packaging 0549
Petroleum 0765
Sanitary and Municipal System Science 0790
Geotechnology 0428
Operations Research 0796
Plastics Technology 0795
Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
Behavioral 0384
Clinical 0622
Developmental 0620
Experimental 0623
Industrial 0624
Personality 0625
Physiological 0989
Psychobiology 0349
Psychometrics 0632
Social 0451

The undersigned recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
and Research acceptance of the thesis

NEGOTIATING SPACES OF STRUGGLE:
PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S RESEARCH CENTRES IN THE
WEST BANK AND GAZA

submitted by Mona C. Marshy, B.A. Hons.
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Arts

Thesis Supervisor

Chair, Department of Geography

Carleton University
19 September 1994

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines five recently established women's research centres in the West Bank and Gaza. The emergence of the centres attests to the increasing ability of the Palestinian women's movement to give form to women's agency and consciousness **as women**. As sites of resistance, the centres are constituted through Palestinian women's negotiation of tensions inherent in waging a gender-based struggle within a national liberation movement.

Deriving from a long history of Palestinian women's organizational activism, the centres reflect Palestinian women's responses to the perceived need for an organized effort to analyze the contradictions facing women in the rapidly changing conditions of the *intifada* (Palestinian national uprising) and post-Gulf War period. The centres also represent attempts on the part of Palestinians to create civic, democratic institutions and processes as the basis of a Palestinian state.

The various strategies and approaches employed by the centres constitute places or sites of resistance which challenge gender, class, racial, and spatial boundaries that span several levels of socio-spatial relations. In particular, the centres negotiate the exigencies of Orientalism, Zionism, prolonged military occupation, current development efforts, national political movements, and socio-cultural norms within Palestinian society.

A multi-spatial framework is employed to explore both the specificity of Palestinian women's organizational activism, as well as the context within which Palestinian women's movements encounter both constraints and possibilities in forming, and theoretically formulating, spaces of struggle.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deep gratitude and admiration to the women and men interviewed during the course of fieldwork. This study is dedicated to them and to their struggle.

During four months of fieldwork, Women's Studies Centre in East Jerusalem provided administrative support, methodological guidance, and encouragement. I am deeply appreciative of the time and trust extended to me by all those at the Centre and wish to express particular thanks to its director, Dr. Suha Hindiye. To Hania Aswad, who translated interviews, contributed to the fieldwork process in widely ranging ways, and extended a warm friendship, I am entirely thankful. I remain very grateful to Mahnoor Yar Khan for opening her temporary home in Palestine to me, and for feeding and nurturing the author as well as the research with infallible acumen and humour. And I am sincerely appreciative of the generosity, insight, friendship, and sustaining laughs shared by the women at WSC--thank you Maicoon, Fedwa, Laura, Sharry, Nasreen, Bouthaina, Hanna.

I am grateful to Professor Lisa Taraki, of Birzeit University, for acting as my local academic advisor in Palestine. I am also thankful for encouragement and assistance

from Sonia Marshy in setting up interviews with women in Nazareth. Medical Aid for Palestine (MAP), Jerusalem, kindly extended its office space and facilities during initial weeks of fieldwork, which was much appreciated.

I would like to acknowledge with particular gratitude my supervisor, Dr. David B. Knight, for his consistent encouragement and interest through the duration of research and writing. Professor Iain Wallace provided much appreciated guidance; and the experience and insight of Professor Nahla Abdo helped set the research endeavour on its course.

Financial support from several groups made four months of fieldwork possible. I wish to acknowledge with appreciation the generosity of the Arab Community Centre, Vancouver, OPIRG Carleton, the Carleton-Birzeit Exchange Program, CUPE 2323, and Carleton University's Women's Centre.

I am very grateful to Amelia Marshy, my mother, for love, encouragement, and various kinds of support through the extended length of this project. For care and support as I obsessed, or for stopping me from obsessing, warm thanks are extended to Robin Phillips, Fauzia Gardezi, Pamela Scholey, Adrian, Storie, Robert, Justin, and Lena and Joy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	v
List of Figures	viii
 CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: WOMEN'S RESEARCH CENTRES IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA	 1
Conceptualizing "Spaces of Struggle"	6
Organization of Thesis	8
 CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE SPATIAL CONFIGURATION OF STRUGGLE	 10
Charting the Framework	15
Hierarchic Dualism	16
Dualism in Geograpny	17
Recasting Conceptual Polarities	18
Dualism, National Identity	20
The Geography of Orientalism	22
British Imperialism and Zionist Settler Colonialism	30
The Geography of Zionism	31
Israeli Military Occupation: Control of Space-- Control of Movement	36
Social Conditions of Occupation: Articulating with and Augmenting Patriarchal Control of Women	39
Development--"Paradoxical Spaces"	41
National Movement: Engendered Boundaries	43
Social Norms: Spatial Constraints	47
Conclusion	48
 CHAPTER 3: HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND FEMINIST RESEARCH: A METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION	 49
Issues of Theory and Epistemology	51
The Process: Developing the Perimeters of the Research	65
The Interview Schedule	72
Mediating Methods: 'Involving the Researched' in the Research Process	76
Conditions of Research	78

TABLE OF CONTENTS--II

CHAPTER 4: PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM: HISTORICAL AND SPATIAL CONTEXT	83
Palestinian Women's Movement--British Mandate Period, 1918-1947	84
Establishment of a Jewish State--Dispossession and Dispersion for Palestinians	90
The West Bank and Gaza: Under Jordanian and Egyptian Rule	91
Occupied Palestine: The Social Geography of Israeli Military Occupation	93
Women's Legal Status under Occupation	96
Women and the PLO	99
Women's Organizational Response	100
Grassroots Women's Committees	102
Palestinian Women and the <i>Intifada</i>	106
Emerging Contradictions	112
Women, the <i>Hijab</i> , and the Struggle Over Meaning	114
The Women's Movement	118
Efforts: Unifying the Women's Movement	119
Women's Research Centres: Filling a 'Gap'	120
 CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS I: WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES--GIVING FORM TO WOMEN'S AGENCY AND CONSCIOUSNESS	 123
CASE STUDY I: WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE	124
CASE STUDY II: WOMEN'S STUDIES COMMITTEE Bisan Center for Research & Development	134
CASE STUDY III: WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE	142
CASE STUDY IV: WOMEN'S AFFAIRS Nablus, West Bank	148
CASE STUDY V: WOMEN'S AFFAIRS, Gaza City	151
Women's Centres: Spaces of Class and Gender	152
"Independence": Working With and Through Women's Committees	155
Balancing Legitimacy with Effectiveness	159
Conclusion	161

TABLE OF CONTENTS--III

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS II: REVISITING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: NEGOTIATING SPACE THROUGH PLACES OF ACTIVISM	163
Introduction	163
Confronting Patriarchal Norms within Palestinian Society	164
Negotiating Space within the National Struggle	167
Confronting Military Occupation	173
Negotiating Contradictions of Development	180
Resisting Zionism and Orientalism	189
Challenging Dualistic Concepts	191
Conclusion	193
 CHAPTER 7: SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION	 196
Re-assessing the Hypothesis	196
Research Findings Summarized	197
Methodology Revisited	200
Theoretical Implications of the Study: Expanding Geographical Analysis	202
Direction of Future Research	206
Conclusion	213
 APPENDIX 1: Research Program Outline as Originally Proposed	 214
 APPENDIX 2: Interview Schedule--27 May to 22 August, 1992	 216
 APPENDIX 4: Summary of Women's Studies Centre's Activities	 221
 APPENDIX 5: Publications of the Centres	 227
 APPENDIX 6: Excerpts of Press Release Issued July, 1992, by the "Task Force for the Protection of Democratic Freedoms"	 229
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 230

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	DESCRIPTION	PAGE
Figure 1:	Territoriality of Women's Centres as 'Spaces of Struggle'	14

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION:
WOMEN'S RESEARCH CENTRES
IN THE WEST BANK AND GAZA

Since the 1920s, Palestinian women's organizations have been deeply involved in the national struggle, reflecting the belief that women's fate and rights are organically linked to the attainment of a Palestinian state. While still shaped by the exigencies of the Palestinian national struggle, women's organizing has recently begun to focus on women's concerns as separate from (though inherently linked to) national issues.

During the *intifada*,¹ or Palestinian national uprising, begun in December, 1987, women's grassroots committees began to take stock of emerging contradictions of the uprising. It was noted, for example, that while women moved into the streets for demonstrations and established alternative structures, including health and education, their work was being compromised as increasing aspects of their lives become defined by and for the national struggle. Re-emerging polarization within the Palestinian national movement resulted in a heightening of symbolism surrounding women's roles, and a politicization of women's domestic labour.

¹ The *intifada* translates literally as a "shaking off"--of Israeli occupation.

National leaders within the Palestinian national movement were slow to respond to women's concerns, for example, around an Islamicist campaign to pressure women to wear the *hijab* (a white veil covering the hair). Additionally, women's increased mobilization and central role in the *intifada* were not leading to an increase in women's participation in political decision-making. The women's committees began to assess their approaches and achievements. There was a decided need to address emerging contradictions of the national struggle in a systematic manner.

Several women's research centres emerged in the midst of this discussion within the women's movement, and in response to the perceived need for an organized effort to analyze the situation of Palestinian women in the rapidly changing conditions of the *intifada* and post-Gulf War period. It is argued that the women's centres signify new developments within the women's movement--reflected, in particular, in its attempts to directly challenge the boundaries of women's roles and activism within Palestinian society and within the national struggle.

The central debate in the Palestinian women's movement, in the words of Hindiye, Director of Women's Studies Centre, is "how can we, while constructing our nation-state, integrate a feminist agenda?" (Hindiye 1993:22). A consensus is growing

in the women's movement, on the need to unite women, to devise a united agenda, to build structures to integrate women into social and political processes, to train women in skills in order to take leadership roles, to develop a legal framework which can guarantee women's rights, while increasing the social legitimacy of women's demands.

The five women's research centres² examined in the study have formulated their objectives around these needs. The distinctiveness of each centre's programs and structure is examined, as is the role of the centres within the women's movement and within the context, in turn, of Palestinian women's historical activism within a national struggle against British and Zionist colonization and Israeli military occupation. The Palestinian women's movement today comprises women's committees (originally four, now over seven³), each

² The women's research centres examined in the study are variously referred to by Palestinian women (working in the centres as well as elsewhere) as "women's studies centres," "women's research and development centres," "independent women's centres." I refer to them as women's *research* centres (as opposed to women's studies centres) both to more clearly distinguish them from the office facilities of grassroots women's committees, which sometimes house "women's centres," as well as to underline their efforts to act as "think tanks" within the women's movement and consciously apply "feminist research methodologies."

³ Three of the four main political factions (and the women's committees associated with each) have split into two, bringing the total number of women's political committees to seven. But, for brevity (and out of some admitted confusion), interviewees often referred to the seven committees as "the four political committees," or "the six or whatever committees." In any case, there remain four main committees, and references to these usually include the various splinter committees which have formed in the

Figure 1

Territoriality of Women's Centres as 'Spaces of Struggle'

articulate their concerns and address their needs, a socio-spatial framework is presented.

The centres' strategies and approaches are formulated through the articulation of the Palestinian women's movement with various socio-spatial relations. These are conceptualized within a matrix (see Figure 1) as comprising the Palestinian national struggle, Israeli military occupation, Zionism, Orientalism and dualism. These configurations of power relations are interlinked and impact directly on women's struggles. It is suggested that the forms of the centres, that is, their objectives, structures, programs, and methodologies, are constituted through women's negotiation with and resistance to these relations as they articulate in particular places.

As "spaces of struggle," the centres give form to Palestinian women's subjectivity, consciousness, and agency. In turn, women's class, regional and religious 'locations' within Palestinian society shape the constitution of the centres. Finally, the historical and geographic dislocation of Palestinian society and the cultural, economic and political dynamic between the women's movement and the national struggle forms the context of the centres' work (outlined in Chapter four).

Conceptualizing "Spaces of Struggle"

Underlying this study is a conception of the inter-relationship between the production of 'women's place' and attempts to negotiate 'ground' or 'space' within which gender struggles for self-determination are waged. Women's centres navigate political, economic, discursive and religio-cultural exigencies which tend to 'place' women within various actual and symbolic roles. Women's ongoing attempts to negotiate new 'ground' or space--both through and away from this propensity are reflected implicitly and explicitly through the centres' programs and methodologies.

Women's centres, thus, present a focus to examine the links between gender, national, racial (colonial) ideologies, each constituting and working through the others as well as through discriminatory practices. The methodology endeavours to problematize the notion of localities and geographical difference as foci of research and to explore their relation to other scales of geographical difference (Smith 1992:70). Thus, the conceptualization of women's centres as "spaces of struggle" attempts to avoid both a fetishization of space, as well as to counter the (wrongly assumed) privatized location of gender relations. Gender relations, rather, are not the exclusive domain of the family but, rather, are worked into

states, bureaucracies, international relations and economic, social, colonial and state policies.

By situating the study of Palestinian women's centres within a spatial framework of dynamics on several levels, focus is placed on the strategies applied by the women's movements, rather than on finding the 'true' 'reality' of Palestinian women's experience (compare Sayigh 1991:23-25). In this way, the study moves away from, in McDowell's words, a "conservative idea of place/locality as the locus of 'being' or identity, as an area where somehow social relations are more 'authentic'" (McDowell 1993b:312). Palestinian women's agency is understood as deriving not from an essential nature, but from ongoing negotiation at several simultaneous socio-spatial levels and shaped by particular class, gender, racial and geographic locations.

Chapter three brings into the discussion the "scale of abstraction" through which we conceive of social relationships (Smith 1992:74). The research hopes to illuminate their struggles at several intertwined levels of social relations and discourses (this portrayal included therein), and the ways in which their consciousness and activism is creating new options--new spaces. The intent is to assess the work and approaches of the centres with reference to Palestinian

women's stated priorities and understandings of their struggles.

Organization of Thesis

Chapter two outlines a conceptual framework, arguing that multi-spatial relations form the context and shape the constitution of the places of women's activism. Chapter three discusses the methodological approach taken in this study and the methods employed, as well as the significance of the 'place' of academic enquiry within the matrix outlined in Chapter two.

Chapter four examines the historical forms and context of Palestinian women's activism, including the class basis of their organizing, and the particular political, social, and economic developments which shaped the focus and meaning of their work. Apparent in the discussion is women's wide-ranging historical responses to dispossession and fragmentation caused by British and Zionist colonialism and Israeli military occupation.

Chapter five presents a discussion of the programs and activities of the centres, as well as the centres' attempts to integrate into its programs, as well as balance the interests

of, various segments of the women's movement. Chapter six revisits the conceptual framework to examine the ways in which women's research centres negotiate contradictions occurring at various levels.

Finally, Chapter seven provides a brief summary and evaluation of the original hypothesis formulated in the study. Suggestions are made regarding the women's centres' programs and objectives, and indications suggested as to the direction that further research can take in examining Palestinian women's struggles. Finally, theoretical implications are explored along with the study's tentative contribution to feminist geographic analysis.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:

THE SPATIAL CONFIGURATION OF STRUGGLE

Feminist geography criticism underlines the multi-dimensionality of space. In Rose's words,

The subject of feminism insists that spaces are extraordinarily complex.... Its multidimensionality refers to complicated and never self-evident matrix of historical, social, sexual, racial and class positions which women occupy, and its geometry is one strung out between paradoxical sites. These feminist maps are multiple and intersecting, provisional and shifting, and they require ever more intricate skills in cartography (Rose 1993:155).

Two-dimensional social maps are rightly being discarded by feminist geographers for notions of "spaces structured over many dimensions" or of "geometrics of difference and contradiction" (Rose 1993:151). This enables, also, differences other than gender and class to be better addressed (Rose 1993:131), as well as the ways in which difference is ideologically constructed. The framework presented in the study (as outlined in Figure 1) attempts to both locate women's centres "at the intersection of multiple, fluid structures of domination which intersect to locate women differently at particular historical conjunctures" (Mohanty 1991a:13), as well as to explore the constitution of places and women's agency within and through these.

The five women's research centres have emerged out of Palestinian women's historical activism in the context of the Palestinian national struggle against colonialism and occupation. The issues addressed and methodologies employed by the centres reveal a process of negotiating contradictions resulting from women's dual struggle--within Palestinian society and within a national struggle for a State. This negotiation, it is suggested, occurs within a 'net' of social relations comprising Palestinian national movement and ideology, social norms and symbolism around women's roles within Palestinian society, development endeavours, Zionist ideology, settler colonialism, Israeli neo-colonialism, imperialism, Western dominance, Orientalism, and, finally, underlying binary categories (see Figure 1).

In summary, Palestinian women's centres are conceived as situated within a framework of social, political, economic, and discursive (this study included) relations, articulated at several scales of the organization and control of space.⁵ The five centres are each constituted by the articulation of Palestinian women's consciousness and agency with these relations in particular socio-historical places. The conception of 'places' or 'spaces' within the study, borrows from Westwood's notion of "sites." In her conception, invoked,

⁵ The term "socio-spatial relations" is understood as comprising social, cultural, political, and economic structures and processes at particular historical junctures.

[are] both the geography of space and the Foucauldian understanding of discursive space, or the social and power relations of specific contexts that have both formal recognition and informal negotiations as part of the ways in which they are constructed (Westwood and Radcliffe 1993:20).

Place is conceived, thus, as neither a categorical nor territorial notion, but as, in McDowell's words, "constructed from alliances and oppositional struggles to lines of power" (McDowell 1993b:313), and as serving to unify individuals who might otherwise be dispersed by their divergent (class, geographic, cultural) locations and interests (Westwood and Radcliffe 1993:20-21).

The study's focus on Palestinian women's consciousness and agency, **as expressed within and through women's research centres**, does not negate the fact that Palestinian women engage in power struggles within a multiplicity of sites. It is suggested, rather, that by focusing on particular places of activism within the Palestinian women's movement, one can gain a more clear understanding of the potential as well as challenges facing the Palestinian women's movement's attempts to build on and unify the various forms of women's resistance in occupied Palestine.⁶

⁶ "Occupied Palestine" refers to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Arab or East Jerusalem in its pre-1967 borders. While Gaza and Jericho are not, technically, presently under "occupation," the daily conditions of life for Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho remain over-ridingly determined by their history of prolonged Israeli military occupation. The political agreement, in the Declaration of Principles signed between the PLO and Israel, and relations which establishes the perimeters of Palestinian autonomy

The fragmentation and dislocation, in both time and space, of day-to-day life under prolonged Israeli military occupation, and the diverse effects of this fragmentation, make it especially important to build theory and strategy which accounts for both the particularity of the places of women's lives and struggles, as well as the socio-historical context of these struggles. The need is for, as Smith argues, empirical research in and on localities, while conceptually constructing these localities as related to other scales of geographical difference (Smith 1992:70).

Finally, while the Israeli-Palestinian conflict centres on the control of land and is, hence, fundamentally 'geographic,' this study argues that geographies of territorial struggle need to be mapped across several socio-spatial relations in order to understand the complexity of territorial conflicts and how, in particular, geographies of gender, race, and class configure within and across national struggles.

are beyond the scope of the study. Perhaps, in an admittedly cryptic way, continued reference to "occupied Palestine" might serve to bring into question the discrepancy between the media-encouraged international excitement and relief shared over the political developments between Palestinians and Israel, on one hand, and the still deepening despair and economic destitution of Palestinians in Gaza (Roy 1993), on the other. In any case, the use of the term is not meant to dismiss the need for careful examination of the particularities of the agreement and relations which characterize the current situation. Rather, the intent is to take a small liberty to enable the "social map" of life in Gaza to override, in this small discursive space, the political one--if this, indeed, can be successfully condensed into a brief term.

Figure 1

Territoriality of Women's Centres as 'Spaces of Struggle'

■ -- areas, or 'intersections' where the women's centres
navigate contradictions that present constraints as
well as potential options

Charting the Framework

The various levels of socio-spatial relations (as outlined in Figure 1) represent scales at which difference is constructed and through which spatial and ideological boundaries are generated--and, in effect, through which space and 'others' are 'placed' and thus controlled. There is a tension, then, between the delineation of gender, class, and ethnic difference, on one hand, and attempts to wage struggles for self-determination, on the other hand. It is suggested that this tension, for women, derives from political, economic, social, discursive and religio-cultural propensities to delineate women's actual and symbolic 'place' within socio-spatial configurations. The following segment of the Chapter attempts to explore socio-spatial relations through which contradictions faced by the Palestinian women's movement transpire. The discussion attempts to trace various manifestations of gendered, class, and ethnic boundaries within and through ideological and material relations.

The apparently hierarchical ordering of socio-spatial processes (as presented in Figure 1) is not intended to lend primacy to the role of Orientalist and Zionist discourses. Implied is an interaction of the ideological with the socio-economic, occurring within and across several scales of analysis. Similarly, the notion of a clear separation between

'macro' and 'micro,' as well as between 'structure' and 'agency' is dislodged.

Hierarchic Dualism

Western philosophical discourse is organized around hierarchically ordered binary oppositions, mind/body, Culture/Nature, male/female. One side of each pair is always valued over the other. The dualism underlying Western discourse is manifested in geographic thought and in the conceptual tools with which the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and women's struggles have been examined. There is a need to re-conceptualize women's struggles, to 'recast' dualistic concepts to account for the multiplicity of the sites from which both colonialism and anti-imperialist struggles radiate and from which women practice politics (Rogers 1992:518; Westwood and Radcliffe 1993:20).

Thus, women's struggles need to be reconceived outside of binary conceptualizations. Toward this, dualistic categories are examined in terms of how they underpin academic discourse, Orientalism, Zionism, and national boundaries--and how, thereby, binary polarizations serve to maintain ideological and material gender divisions of labour.

Dualism in Geography

Uncritical use of conceptual polarities, particularly the public-private divide, is being challenged from several directions: by the political practice of Black women in Britain and the U.S.A., informed by their lives in racist societies; by an expanding body of feminist scholarship in anthropology, development studies and geographies of the 'Third World'; and within feminist and deconstruction discourses.

Critiques, for example, point out that the distinction between (feminine) Nature and (masculine) Culture is one of the most important of the binary principles in Western thought, and is central to what it means to be human in the West. Within the discipline of geography, the Nature/Culture opposition underlies the human/physical geography split (Rose 1993:68). But human geography as a whole also rests on the "deeply embedded" distinction between Nature and Culture (Rose 1993:68, 73). Other binary concepts looked at by geographers align themselves as follows:

Culture	Nature
city	countryside
space	Nature
Culture	primitive
theory	empirics
mind	body
male	female
public	private
social	body
knowledge	maternity

rational	emotional
space	place
presence	absence

To these can be added:

Western civilization	Islamic culture/traditions
'First World'	'Third World'

The distinctions are implicitly racial as well as gendered. One side of the binary pairs is given primacy to the exclusion of the other. To recognize the relationship within each duality, for example, that identity depends on difference, and that presence relies on absence, is to disturb, according to Grosz, "the very structure of knowledges" (Grosz 1987:27).

The need to "destabilize dichotomies" is addressed by geographers. Bondi notes that ideologies of gender articulated around notions of public and private domains are central to concepts such as nationhood, citizenship, and community (Bondi 1992:100). Sayer emphasizes the "inability of dualistic thinking to cope with complexity and ambiguity" (Sayer 1989:304).

Recasting Conceptual Polarities

These are more than textual concerns. For example, the productive (public/male) and reproductive (domestic/female) distinction regarding labour serves to reinforce international

and sexual divisions of labour (Mies 1986). Boundaries that delineate gendered realms also maintain power configurations of the state and international relations (Dalby 1992:7). For example, "public" space is often policed through control of the "private" space of family relations. For Palestinians in occupied Palestine, for example, Israeli reading of Arab psychology, in Sayigh's words, "leads to sexual aggression or threat being used against [women] as a means of intimidating the population as a whole.... All possible combinations of family-bound male/female feelings--love, fear, shame, protectiveness--are employed to shock and break down resistance" (Sayigh 1989b:470).

Similarly, Rose notes that the private/public distinction is maintained by violently policing public space to exclude its Others (Rose 1993:62). Attempts to shift the boundaries of social space in both "public" and "private" spaces incur high costs for Palestinians.⁷ More directly, for Palestinians the "private" space of the home has increasingly been the site for collective punishment exacted by the Israeli military. Similarly, the "proper" place of women (especially during the height of the *intifada*) was not in the home, but in street

⁷ The tragic "logic," as suggested by Layoun, of the struggle over narrative patterns and spaces is witnessed by, as she describes, "the grim sight of a young 12 or 13 year-old boy in Gaza cornered by Israeli soldiers for throwing stones who, realizing that escape is impossible stops running, turns and bares his chest, daring the soldiers to shoot him--and the soldiers obligingly respond with five bullets to his chest" (Layoun 1992:412).

demonstrations and confrontations with the Israeli soldiers to protect children from being arrested and beaten (Layoun 1992:411).

Recasting polarities, particularly the public/private divide, is thus necessary to discard the assumption, in the academic literature on Middle Eastern women, that women's freedom of movement is restricted by unchanging, "traditional" cultural norms (Hammami 1993:301). Moreover, it is necessary to examine how boundaries are constructed at several levels of socio-spatial relations, and how these boundaries articulate with each other in order to understand--as the Palestinian women's movement is now attempting--how the public/private divide is being reformulated to suit the political interests of Islamicist groups in occupied Palestine (Hammami 1990).

Dualism, National Identity, and Women's Resistance

Dualist conceptualizations also underpin the organization of space within national frameworks. National ideology and structures are configured (as discussed below) not only around the separation of 'us' and 'them' but also on particular castings of women's role as signifiers of the community (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989).

Thus, there occurs a mutually reinforcing relation between patriarchal power and binary oppositions in notions such as public/private. This polarization assumes that patriarchy occurs in the private, domestic realm of family, kinship structures, and rural communities. The public realm is deemed the locus of capitalist production. Women are assumed to be non-productive members of society and economies. This conceptual separation is particularly entrenched in notions of women in Muslim countries where, it is assumed, patriarchal forms are deemed to be frozen within a timeless, Islamic paradigm (L. Ahmed 1992).

Uncritical use of the public/private divide has resulted in ethnocentric notions of the household, the family, kin, inheritance and property (McDowell 1991:124). Moreover, without rethinking the public/private dichotomy, many of the political activities of Palestinian women would remain overlooked. Najjar points out that public and private spheres become particularly blurred when communities are forced to draw on all their resources for survival (Najjar 1992b:146). Moreover, the home as a site of presumed domesticity and (local) patriarchal oppression of Palestinian women is (also, it might be noted),

the setting for confrontation and for collective punishment exacted by the Israeli military; as the male figures--fathers, sons, husbands, or brothers--who arguably served to mediate the confrontation between home....and occupier....are imprisoned, exiled, killed,

or beaten, the problematic vulnerability of the "inside"/home has become apparent (Layoun 1992:411).

The gendered construction of dualities, including the notion of "public" and "private" spaces has limits, obscuring, for example, the context of national struggle which serves to transform the meaning of Palestinian women's actions and roles as "public" and national. Since the *intifada*, "work" in the streets became defined by the activism of "women workers" and as, moreover, *national* work. On the other hand, this work was also cast within national ideology as a "logical" extension of women's position as nurturers and sustainers of life (Layoun 1992:412).

Palestinian women, then, organize and act to challenge the boundaries of both patriarchal society and colonial oppression--from complex positions which defy a location based on uncritical assumptions of "public" and "private" spaces.

The Geography of Orientalism

Binary polarizations underlie Orientalism, a discourse, or "style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction between the 'Orient' and (most of the time) the 'Occident'" (Said 1979b:2). The Orient and the Oriental are constructed as the 'Other.' In the words of Lord Cromer, England's representative in Egypt at the turn of the

century, "somehow or other the Oriental generally acts, speaks, and thinks in a manner exactly opposite to the European" (Said 1979b:39).

Within Orientalist frameworks, Arabs and Jews are perceived as two peoples between whom a natural antagonism exists. The assumed "eternal hatred" between Arab and Jew obfuscates a complex history. As Young explains,

Binary oppositions, positing a "one" and an "other," leading to and/or assuming a good and a bad--two sides, two views--reduce and render invisible those issues that are most central to understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: gender, race, and class politics...distinctions of geography, social status within a range of class frameworks, social constructions of gender, violence against women, victimization of colonized men, violence against nature--all are obliterated (E. Young 1992:3-4).

Knowledge of Arab women received in the West transpires through Orientalism. The 'geography of Orientalism' has

- i) legitimized and facilitated historical relations of power between the West and the Middle East; ii) converges with sexism, or the "crisis of masculinity" (Driver 1992:28); and,
- iii) converges with and reinforces various socio-spatial relations, including Zionism and military occupation. These links need to be examined, as emphasized by Abu-Lughod, in order to extend theorizing about Arab women beyond the righting of Orientalist misrepresentations (Abu-Lughod 1990:104).

That is, theory needs to extend beyond the aim of righting 'bad' representations of Palestinian women. Anthropologist Abu-Lughod's point is worth quoting at length. She states,

nearly every anthropological study of Arab women is intended, with varying degrees of self-consciousness, to undermine stereotypes of the Middle Eastern woman. This oppositional stance is, I think, a source both of the strengths of the field and the weakness of its theoretical development... [The] rhetorical ploy of conjuring up an imagined or intended audience of those who hold such views which are then going to be corrected risks degenerating into the sole *raison d'être* for the study. The danger is that the scholar will take the less theoretically rigorous path of arguing against a vague but unchanging stereotype... (Abu-Lughod 1990:104).

The aim here is to avoid the danger, to repeat Abu-Lughod's words, of "taking the less theoretically rigorous path of arguing against a vague but unchanging stereotype," by examining, for one, the ways in which Orientalism transpires through socio-spatial relations and discourses and, in turn, the location of Palestinian women within these.

Orientalism is, in Said's words:

not a mere political subject matter or field that is reflected passively by culture, scholarship, or institutions.... It is rather a distribution of geopolitical awareness into aesthetic, scholarly, economic, sociological, historical, and philological texts; it is an elaboration not only of a basic geographical distinction (Orient and Occident) but also of a whole series of "interests" which, by such means as scholarly discovery, philological reconstruction, psychological analysis, landscape and sociological description, it not only creates but also maintains; it is, rather than expresses, a certain will or intention to understand, in some cases to control, manipulate, even to incorporate, what is a manifestly different (or alternative and novel) world... (Said 1979b:12).

Orientalism played a role in Europe's ability to "manage and even produce the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said 1979b:3). Historically, the West has been "locked in geographic proximity with Islam straddling and controlling the central regions of the known world, blocking Europe's horizons and access to the East" (Ahmed 1982:523). The confrontation between Christian Europe and the Islamic Orient, whether traced back to the Crusades (Kabbani 1986:5), or to the Middle Ages (Hentsch 1992:49), was constituted through the 'critical axis' of geographical knowledge (McGee 1991:335).

The geographical space of Asia was given a particular cartographic identity, distinguishing it by its non-Europeanness (McGee 1991:335). Geographers, cartographers, and others shared in the process of manipulating time and space. Acting as part of the colonial system, some called themselves explorers and charted the dimensions of the Asian empires:

...there was an assumption of power, of superiority--a right to exert intellectual power (hegemony) and to draw boundaries" (McGee 1991:335).

Geographical interest lent a moral neutrality to the project of Orientalism; that is, geographic pursuits served to "dignify simple conquest" by turning the appetite for geographical space into a theory about the relationship

between geography and civilized versus uncivilized peoples (Said 1979b:216). In Said's words, "all the latent and unchanging characteristics of the Orient stood upon, [or] were rooted in, its geography" (Said 1979b:216). Environmental or geographic determinism became the ideological buttress, in turn, for imperialism and racism (Hudson 1977:12, 17). In this way, Orientalism represents, in Driver's terminology, a 'geographical essentialism,' and a genealogy of 'imaginative geographies' (Driver 1992:31, 32).

Orientalism, then, "is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political...power intellectual...power cultural...and power moral..." (Said 1979b:12).

Rather, points of convergence are apparent between Orientalist discourse, Zionism, Israeli occupation measures, and national ideologies concerning Palestinian women in the West Bank and Gaza. Orientalism also articulates with assumptions underlying development policies in the occupied Palestinian territories.

It is also useful to note the historical convergence of Orientalist and masculinist discourses. As Driver notes, the

"crises of masculinity" converged with questions of geography (Driver 1992:28). The veiled woman in colonialist discourse became a metaphor for the mystery of the Orient itself--requiring a process of Western unveiling for comprehension (Shohat 1990:40). Images of the harem provided the colonial imagination with a geographically and culturally removed context within which to play out its own fantasies of sexual domination (Shohat 1990:41; Kabbani 1986:36).

At the same time, women were the key "to converting backward Muslim societies into civilized Christian societies.... [Through women] a trail of 'gunpowder' would be laid 'into the heart of Islam'" (Ahmed 1992:154). The underlying assumption was of an inherent link between women and culture and, more specifically, of the inherently oppressive nature of Islamic culture for women.⁸ Images of the silent, veiled Arab woman provided 'proof' of the inherent superiority of European culture (Graham-Brown 1988:6). As Shohat argues, these assumptions render sexual difference (Arab women as oppressed, Western women as liberated) central to the construction of the East as Other (Shohat 1990:40).

⁸ Combinations and various forms of "Islamic" practices, such as polygamy, veiling, cliterodectomy and seclusion, have existed in non-Muslim China and India, Christian communities in the southern Mediterranean, and in Victorian England and Puritan America--being a byproduct of the presumption of male supremacy and female subordination (Hammam 1981:28).

Meanwhile, the assumption that the issues of women and culture are 'inextricably fused' was injected into Arabic narratives of resistance, as it adopted the terms of reference of the colonizers. The veil, in particular, began to symbolize in the resistance narrative "the dignity and validity of all native customs" but, in particular, those customs relating to women and coming under strongest colonial attack. The affirmation of these customs became a means of resisting Western domination (Ahmed 1992:164, 162-66). In this way, changes in the conditions of women's lives were seen as concessions to the colonizer (Mernissi 1987:7-8).

On the other hand, the language of Western women's movements was employed in the project of imperial domination in an attempt to create a moral legitimacy. According to Ahmed, "feminism came together in harmonious and actually entirely logical accord in the service of the imperial idea" (Ahmed 1992:152, 153). Muslim women were conceived by feminists and imperialists alike as doomed to "an unchanging oppression, dictated by cultural values," and could only be saved, presumably, through Western influence (Tucker 1983:324). Ahmed's scholarship reveals how the language of feminism was shaped to fit the particular target of domination. (Interestingly, while the language and goals of

feminism was put in the service of the colonial project, it was resisted and suppressed at home.⁹)

Lazreg argues that academic feminist writing and practice reflects today an unbroken continuation of early women's writings, and takes place within a "religion/tradition paradigm." Tradition is exemplified by the veil, seclusion, clitoridectomy, and so on. While religion, in Lazreg's words, "is seen in Western societies as one institution among many, it is perceived as the bedrock of the societies in which Islam is practiced." Likewise, religion is perceived as the source of underdevelopment in modernization theory (Lazreg 1988:85-86).

Writings on Middle Eastern women have tended to lack theoretical grounding, and incline toward universalisms. As Mohanty points out, it is often assumed that, for example, the greater the number of women who wear the veil, the greater the extent of patriarchal control over them (Mohanty 1991b:66). The implication is that for Arab women to be feminist, they must disassociate themselves from Arab men and Arab and Islamic culture (Lazreg 1988:88).

⁹ This dual purpose was embodied, in fact, in the person of Lord Cromer. While he championed the unveiling of women in Egypt, he founded the Men's League for Opposing Women's Suffrage in England (Ahmed 1992:152).

It must be understood, rather, that while religious ideologies and cultural specificities shape gender systems, they are not the primary determinants and are themselves subject to change (Moghadam 1993:14). In the West Bank and Gaza, traditions have been "re-invented" to suit political interests of movements (Hammami 1990). Religious symbols are also manipulated by men and women in both everyday life, as well as in institutional settings (Lazreg 1988:95).

British Imperialism and Zionist Settler Colonialism

Regionally, Arab women have had to contend with such "re-inventions" of traditions as ideological shifts have been measured against colonialism. Egyptian feminist Mai Ghousoub states:

Colonialism was lived by the Arabs not simply as a domination or oppression, but as an usurpation of power. The principal victims of this complex were to be Arab women. For the cult of a grandiose past, and the 'superiority of our values to those of the West', inevitably led to a suffocating rigidity of family structures and civil codes... (cited in Accad 1990:14).

Hijab argues that the more dominated the Arab world feels, the more conservative is the nationalist trend. Likewise, the more independent it feels, the stronger the liberal nationalists. Arab feminists have tended to belong to one or the other of these two camps. Those seeking equal rights for women have had

to argue their case as nationalists who do not seek to betray cultural values shaped by Islamic traditions (Hijab 1988:46).

The Geography of Zionism

Like Islam, Zionism is not a unitary, ahistorical movement. Zionism emerged in the last decades of the 19th century in Eastern Europe, combining nationalist and imperialist thought and aspirations of the time. In the decades preceding the creation of the State of Israel, Labour Zionism was most prevalent (Abdo 1987:17), and foremost on its agenda was the aim of 'Judaizing' the land of Palestine to create a Jewish homeland. The result for Palestinians was, within a few short years, massive dispossession of their land and dislocation from their homes and means of livelihood as well as social and political discontinuity.

What is important to underline here is ideological convergence between Orientalist and Zionist notions of the Arab as Other--a convergence which facilitated the dispossession of Palestinians and the strengthening of patriarchal norms within Palestinian society.

Said notes that because the Zionist movement was committed to transforming Palestine into a 'mono-religious'

Jewish state, its success has depended on it being equally intent on destroying Arab society as on constructing a Jewish life in Palestine (Said, et al. 1989:238). To accomplish this dual aim, the land of Palestine was deemed empty, 'a land without a people, for a people without land' (Said, et al. 1989:240). Zionist leaders set out to create a view of the landscape in which Palestinian society and culture, and Palestinian identity do not exist.¹⁰

The "engrossing tendency" to deny the existence of and to dehumanize Palestinians is explained by the European heritage of the leaders of the movement. Maxime Rodinson notes, in Israel and the Arabs (1968), that late nineteenth century Europe held to the belief that "every territory situated outside that world (Europe) was considered empty--not of inhabitants, of course, but constituting a kind of cultural vacuum, and therefore suitable for colonization" (cited in Said, et al. 1989:241). This notion provided a context which

¹⁰ The myth that Zionist settlers 'made the desert bloom' was contradicted by their own admissions to the contrary. Arthur Ruppin, director of the Zionist settlement department, noted in a letter to a colleague, that "there is hardly any land which is worth cultivating that is not already being cultivated" (Said, et al. 1989:240). Further, on a visit to Palestine in 1887, Lawrence Oliphant attested, in his book Haifa, or Life in Modern Palestine, that the valley of Esdraelon was "a huge green lake of waving wheat, with its village crowned mounds rising from it like islands; and it presents one of the most striking pictures of luxuriant fertility which it is possible to conceive" (The quote is from John Ruedy, "Dynamics of Land Alienation," in I. Abu-Lughod (ed.), Transformation of Palestine, p. 126, n.20; cited in Said, et al. 1989:240).

facilitated the downgrading of Arab achievement in Palestine, and the exaggeration of those of Zionists¹¹ (Said, et al. 1989:240).

The "community of language and of ideology" between Zionism and the West (Said 1979a:25) continued to serve the purposes of creating an Israeli state. On 14 May 1948, Israel was declared a Jewish state for and by "the Jewish people" throughout the world. Zionist ideology and intent were incorporated into Israeli state legislation. As a result, resources, land, employment and education opportunities could be allocated on the basis of one's identity as a Jew or 'non-Jew.' Palestinians, who became a minority in Israel, were not viewed by Zionists as just any national minority, but as a potential "fifth column" on whose domination and control the survival of the state depended (Swirski and Safir 1991:9).

One of the ways in which Israel has maintained control over the Palestinian population is by strengthening the traditional leadership within Palestinian society.¹² The

¹¹ Said cites a diary entry by Theodore Herzl, dated 31 October 1898, following a visit to a Jewish hospital in Jerusalem, in which he writes: "Misery and squalor. Nevertheless I was obliged, for appearance's sake, to testify in the visitors' book to its clearliness. This is how lies originate" (Said, et al. 1989:240).

¹² Manar Hassan describes an incident which demonstrates this cooperation between Palestinian notables, traditional leadership and the government at the expense of women: A 'respectable' married man raped a woman in her twenties from a family considered less respectable. Fearing revenge, the man approached an official of the

active cooperation between traditional Palestinian leaders and the Israeli government has, in turn, reinforced patriarchal control over Palestinian women (Swirski and Safir 1991:9). At the same time, Palestinian society developed the "defense mechanism" of returning to patriarchal tradition and preservation of values based on that tradition (Hassan 1991:70).

Zionist ideologies also serve to regenerate gendered and racial boundaries within Israeli society itself. Shohat, an Israeli feminist scholar, argues that the Israeli identity rests on gender and racial polarizations. She exposes the myth of equality promulgated in Zionist discourse, through looking at images in Israeli cinema:

the mythological Sabra (native-born Jew associated with European origin), the prototype of the newly emerging Jew in Eretz (Greater) Israel/Palestine, constituted the masculine antithesis of the Zionist image of the "feminine" Diaspora [Oriental or Arab] Jew... The Sabra hero was portrayed as healthy, tanned, often with blond hair and blue eyes, presumably cleansed of all "Jewish" inferiority complexes, a kind of child of nature, confident, proud and brave (Shohat 1991:31).

This conception (ironically influenced by the "youth Culture" fashionable in turn of the century Germany) perpetuates a gendered discourse which cherishes masculine toughness (Shohat

Israeli administration and confessed, promising that he would serve as a collaborator for Israeli authorities if no charges were laid against him. The man was given a gun which he proudly and openly carried, and the entire village was aware that he was under the protection of the government (Hassan 1991:71).

1991:31-32). "National security" as the over-riding rallying call enables gender, race, and class inequalities to be institutionalized (Sharoni 1993:21) and recast, for example, within the family where the collective "us," serves to generate the need for (male) protection against "them" (Bloom 1991:135).

Thus, when the framework is shifted away from the notion of "ancient hatreds." it is possible to glimpse the multifarious reverberations of Israel's settler colonial enterprise both (in different ways) for Palestinian as well as Israeli women.

The discipline of geography has been employed in reproducing Zionist myth by, for example, rendering invisible the human geography of both the Palestinian population of Palestine/Israel, and of institutionalized race, class, and gender hierarchies within Israel (Falah 1989:537-38). The reverberation of Zionist ideologies within scholarship "strikingly illustrates" how, according to geographer, Falah:

the power of an ideological matrix--namely the dominance of Zionist myth--can function to promote an unusual degree of scholarly subjectivity (Falah 1989:537).

This "subjectivity" has been "harnessed" in order that writing and research on geographical topics can serve urgent domestic needs of the Israeli state and the need for

legitimation and international recognition of achievements of the country (Falah 1989:538). In the process, Zionist myth has served to legitimize "a massive, still ongoing colonial settler enterprise aimed at displacing the indigenous Arab population" (Falah 1989:537-8). It is this enterprise, as it is taking place in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which is witnessed in the conditions and measures of occupation.

Israeli Military Occupation: Control of Space--Control of Movement

The Occupied Palestinian Territories are subject to Israeli military regulations based on the Defense Emergency Regulations, instituted by the British in 1945 against Jews and Arabs.¹³ The conditions and measures of Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza deepen the fragmentary effects of British and Jordanian rule.

A succession of over 1,200 military orders were put in place by Israel which control all aspects of daily life for

¹³ These regulations sanction detention without charge and trial by military tribunal. Detainees can be held for a year without review, and their detention renewed. Detention centres are tent camps with open sewers and a lack of food, medical care, adequate clothing, or access to legal assistance. These regulations have been declared illegal by the Geneva Convention Relative to the Treatment of Civilian Persons in Time of War and by the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, but the Israeli government continues to sanction their use (E. Young 1992:28).

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. These orders have effectively created two systems of legal bodies (one applying to Israeli Jews, and the other to native Palestinians)¹⁴ (Tamari 1993:27). The effect of these laws means that there are often shortages of drinking water in villages, where there will be swimming pools and springs in adjacent settlements. The intricate system of controlling the movement of Palestinians extends also to the colour of car license plates which distinguish drivers from the West Bank (Green), Gaza (Blue), and East Jerusalem (Yellow; Arab and Jewish residents of East Jerusalem are distinguishable through different numerical coding.¹⁵

Israeli measures to subjugate Palestinian society and absorb it into the Israeli economy impact on women directly, as well as indirectly, through its effects on Palestinian families (Jad 1990:128). Without a state, and facing daily

¹⁴ Outlined in Shehadeh's Occupier's Law (2nd ed. 1988), from 1967-71, control was established over water and other natural resources; the Israeli military authority was given the power to expropriate land and regulate municipal and village councils; identity cards, travel permits, driving licenses, and licences for professional practices were instituted. Jordanian land laws were subsequently amended to facilitate the "transfer" of Arab lands to the control of Jewish settlement councils (constituting 60 percent of the total land area of the West Bank and Gaza). In 1979, Israeli law was extended to apply to Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza, and from 1981 to the present Military Orders regulate fiscal policies of the West Bank and Gaza, including the collection of taxes and revenue, and the flow of funds to the territories (Tamari 1993:27).

¹⁵ As described by an official of UNRWA, Interview 38.

hostility from military occupation, the family's role, according to Giacaman and Johnson, as protector, arbiter and social authority became vital, and made it more resistant to other social forces that could have undermined its authority. The functions of the family have "stretched" accordingly (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:163).

As occupation undermined the agricultural base of Palestinian society and led to a dependency on labour in Israeli factories, Palestinian women lost their position as active producers in a rural and peasant society (Saida 1989:8). Moreover, dependence on labour, including the labour of children, invoked the "demographic factor": the notion that the higher the birth rate, the larger the number of Palestinians, and the better future ability to conquer the aggressor. In Giacaman's words,

It is as if the loss of Palestine as a geo-political entity has caused Palestinians to cling to their national, cultural, and political identities, and reinforce them in all ways possible, including demographically (Giacaman 1988:96).

Thus, Palestinian women entered the labour market in unskilled jobs, earning lower wages than Palestinian men (who, in turn, earned less than Israeli workers for the same work); meanwhile, they retained full responsibility for domestic work--carrying a threefold oppression, as Palestinians, as workers, and as women (Jad 1990:129).

Social Conditions of Occupation: Articulating with and Augmenting Patriarchal Control of Women

Within the West Bank and Gaza, Israeli authorities, while themselves physically absent from Palestinian owned or run factories, utilize the indigenous exploitation of women to extracts gains from women's labour. Women are vulnerable to exploitation, not only because of their relative poverty but because of the value Palestinian society attaches to female sexual purity (Haj 1992:769). Siniora notes how patriarchal relations at home and in the workplace are mutually reinforcing. An informal social relationship between the employer and the workers' families serves to strengthen the employers' hold over the workforce. In Siniora's words, "at the slightest disobedience or misbehavior, employers will directly inform the worker's male supporters.... Women are forced by their families to behave, since their misbehavior will bring disrespect to their families" (Siniora 1989:54).

Control of both men and women in Palestinian society has been exploited by Israeli authorities. For example, Israeli interrogators will often play upon families' concerns about women's honour, threatening and carrying out sexual assault of women under interrogation. Meanwhile, Peteet's research indicates that young wives and sisters increasingly complain

that their husbands and brothers return from interrogation and detention with a new authoritarianism (Peteet 1994:45).

Peteet's research provides an interesting illustration of how the violence of Israeli occupation reverberates within Palestinian society in ways which serve to locate political agency among men. For example, as imprisonment, torture, and public beatings are transformed into male rites of passage, they serve also to determine access to leadership positions.

What is worth underlining is the Israeli response. Peteet notes that, "with constant attention directed to detecting ripples of change in Palestinian cultural categories and social relations" Israeli military authorities have realized how imprisonment and bodily violence have served to empower a generation committed to resistance. Instead, sexual forms of interrogation are increasingly used against men. It is more difficult to transform rape and sexual fondling by interrogators (with photographs taken of the incidents) into rites of passage into manhood (Peteet 1994:45).

What is at stake in Palestinian women's attempts to create a discourse whereby women's issues and concerns are seen as national issues is their access to national discourse and structures of power. Women face the burden of, on one hand, mutually reinforcing constraints of occupation and

intensified patriarchal customs within Palestinian society, as well as the continually evolving mechanism of control and occupation of space on the part of the Israeli state. The following section looks at the mechanisms by which, in particular, economic development is controlled in occupied Palestine.

Development--"Paradoxical Spaces"

The comprehensive measures in place which comprise the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza facilitate Israeli 'development' plans which spatially organize and cinch Palestinian dispossession. Meron Benvenisti, ex-deputy mayor of Jerusalem, explains the 'explicitly sectarian' nature of development plans:

The criteria established to determine priorities of settlement regions are 'interconnection [havirah] between existing Jewish areas for the creation of [Jewish] settlement continuity' and 'separation [hayitz] to restrict uncontrolled Arab settlement and the prevention of Arab settlement blocs'; 'scarcity [hesech] refers to areas devoid of Jewish settlement' (Benvenisti 1984).

And to ensure that "uncontrolled Arab settlement" does not germinate into controlled Palestinian development, Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli defense minister at the time, declared, in 1985, that:

There will be no development [in the occupied territories] initiated by the Israeli government, and no permits will be given for expanding

agriculture or industry, which may compete with the State of Israel (cited in Awartani 1989).

The development which has been permitted has served Israeli economic interests and undermined Palestinian social and economic livelihood. International development agencies, in this context, serve both to allay the harshness of the conditions of military occupation, as well as facilitate Israeli neglect of its (very minimal) legal obligation to Palestinians under its military occupation. For example, as Israel collects more taxes from West Bank and Gaza residents than it spends on Palestinians, it nonetheless encourages farmers and other groups to seek financial assistance from international development agencies and institutions ("Farmers" 1992:n.p.)

Caught in this bind, Roy states that "perhaps ironically, foreign assistance, which is nominally intended to strengthen Palestinian society, is, in its own way, contributing to the divisions slowly undermining it" (Roy 1993:26). That is, the increasing availability of foreign funding has served to intensify political and regional rivalries amongst Palestinians (Roy 1993:25). These rivalries are 'played out' geographically, as foreign assistance enters the Gaza Strip through Jerusalem, where economic and financial decisions affecting the Strip are usually made. As a result, "Gazans

uniformly see themselves as oppressed by their West Bank counterparts" (Roy 1993:27).

The following section examines how these contradictions, in turn, articulate with national ideologies to constrain women's attempts to create social, cultural and political spaces in which to address women's issues.

National Movement: Engendered Boundaries

The Palestinian women's movement has emerged from women's activism within the Palestinian national liberation struggle. Nonetheless, as Abdo asserts, theorizing of Palestinian women's struggles calls for a simultaneous theorizing of the state itself:

A clearer vision of the true nature of the relationship between feminism and nationalism would have to go beyond the confines of the national liberation framework and consider the more "stable" structure of the nation-state.... [as well as] a serious investigation of the internal and external dynamics within which the history of the region has unfolded (Abdo 1993:32, 34).

In particular, attempts by Palestinian women to create organizational autonomy from national political structures, calls for an understanding of how women are (both symbolically and actually) 'cast' within the exigencies of national (liberation as well as state) processes and ideologies. For

example, as Yuval-Davis and Anthias suggest, within national frameworks, women come to signify ethnic/national differences. Women are also a focus and symbol in ideological discourses used in the construction, reproduction and transformation of ethnic/national categories (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989:6-10). Moghadam explains,

At times of regime consolidation and state building, questions of gender, family, and male-female relations come to the fore. The state becomes the manager of gender. Cultural representations of women, and of course legislation on family law and women's rights reflect the importance of gender in politics and ideology and signal the political agenda of revolutionaries and regimes. Whether political discourses support women's emancipation and equality or whether they glorify tradition, morality, the family, and difference, the point remains that political ideologies and practices are gendered and that social transformation and state-building entail changes in gender relations as well as new class configurations and property rights (Moghadam 1993:95).

During transitional periods of state formation, women are invariably linked to modernity or tradition (Moghadam 1993:95). Women are conscripted, also, in attempts to guarantee the integrity of the boundaries of Islam and the nation:

The compelling association between women's appropriate place and conduct, however defined, and notions of cultural authenticity is a persistent theme...[connected to the process of] demarcating the boundaries of the 'true' community and excluding the 'Other within'... (Kandiyoti 1991a:8).

Moghadam also points out how political-cultural projects and the position of women are inextricably linked, stating

that "transforming society and transforming women are consequently two sides of the same coin"¹⁶ (Moghadam 1993:96). Religion, in particular, is often utilized in nationalist projects as a means of fortifying an 'indigenous' ideology with which to confront imperialism and racism (this use is not confined to the Third World, for example, as the role of Catholicism in Ireland and Poland attests) (Yuval-Davis et al. 1992:36).

In Palestine, the severity of Israeli hegemony and military occupation has increased the tendency for politico-religious groups to cast women as cultural signifiers of the Palestinian nation. In Sayigh's words, Israeli hegemony, "seen as 'modern' and 'Western,' has strengthened ideological countercurrents that place false emphasis on 'our' women remaining 'traditional'" (R. Sayigh 1989a:490).

Islamicist movements in occupied Palestine need to be addressed, thus, as political movements within the framework of the national liberation struggle--rather than, that is, as an intractable, unchanging "Islam." As noted above, while the

¹⁶ The idealized woman has played a major role as a national or cultural symbol outside of the context of the Middle East, of course. Moghadam traces this connection to as early as the French Revolution, where 'Marianne' symbolized the model woman (Moghadam 1993:94).

religions and cultural specificities shape gender systems,¹⁷ they are not the primary determinants (Moghadam 1993:14). Rather, these articulate with local, national, and regional political and economic contexts.

For Palestinian women, there is no doubt that, as expressed by an activist from a grassroots women's committee, "the success of the women's movement depends on the success of the national movement."¹⁸ The question remains whether national structures will be strong enough and autonomous enough to indeed be able to secure women's rights and not, for example, delegate the regulation of women's rights and freedoms to local communities or interests. The "social" issues addressed by the women's movement are thus necessarily linked to efforts on the part of Palestinian men and women to formulate and build civic structures and a national legal framework. In the words of a member of Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza,

There is a strong feeling that there is a need to create strong institutions for civil society and personal institutions like juridical institutions and the notion of individual rights backed by law--as the basis for

¹⁷ Moghadam cites Theresa de Lauretis' definition of sex/gender system as "the cultural conceptions of male and female as two complementary yet mutually exclusive categories into which all human beings are placed... within each culture... [and] is always intimately interconnected with political and economic factors in each society." Theresa de Lauretis, Technologies of Gender (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p. 5, cited in Moghadam, 1993.

¹⁸ Interview 13. Ramallah, West Bank, 8 June, 1992.

creating a safe structure of impersonal laws and practices.¹⁹

Whether Palestinians will be able to achieve this will depend, partly, on how the national movement integrates social issues into its agenda.

Social Norms: Spatial Constraints

The combined effect of increasing repression and heightened nationalism is described by an artist as she explains the barriers to creating social and psychological space:

The isolation we live here is horrible. This is the most difficult barrier we have here as artists--borders of authorities, borders of the political situation, and borders of mentalities. There is an ambiguity about what art is, what an artist is. There are lots of discussions about this... The Palestinian situation is not easy and has put in people's minds [the idea] that everything should look Palestinian. If it doesn't then we are not Palestinian.... People are driven after the symbols, the colours--without them we can't live..."²⁰

¹⁹ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

²⁰ Interview 18. Ramallah, West Bank, 28 June, 1992.

Conclusion

The framework has attempted to illustrate how social relations, organized over space, history and discursively, interact and mutually reinforce each other. Moreover, it is suggested that, "local" places of Palestinian women's struggles, in fact, take place within complex webs of regional, national and international relations. These webs of relations comprise struggles through which gender, class, and racial boundaries are contested.

The following chapter attempts to 'place' this study within the web of relations noted above. The research process is outlined and contradictions explored in an attempt to reflexively trace the position of this study within the matrix of relations in which Palestinian women are engaged.

CHAPTER 3

HUMAN GEOGRAPHY AND FEMINIST RESEARCH:

A METHODOLOGICAL DISCUSSION

If, however, we are going to construct meaning, I am committed to the idea of constructing meanings that do not require enormous energy (and denial) to sustain (Spender 1983:28).

The complexity of women's lives demands a detailed, contextual and fine-grained epistemological approach (Rose 1993:115).

This chapter briefly explores some "fine-grained epistemological" issues which arise in my attempt to construct meanings, of Palestinian women's activism, that are necessarily situated within intellectual and institutional processes of knowledge creation which serve to obfuscate--and deny--("our") understandings of "Others" (as well as "their" understandings of themselves and "us").

In other words, the discussion situates the research within Western social science discourse and institutions to address contradictions of attempting to contribute to emancipatory research from within academia. Outlined is my own positioning within the research process, as a Canadian-born, (half) Palestinian, Western-educated researcher studying 'Other' women.

Woven implicitly through this discussion is an exploration of the suggestion that a geographical imagination is vital to finding a way through the contradictions inherent in speaking about 'Others' through the concepts and machinations of 'Othering' processes (Rogers 1992:512). The intent is to bring to the fore the negotiation "between difference and different subject positions" (Smith 1992:72), and thereby avoid turning various differences into a single, frozen Difference (Abu-Lughod 1990:92).

The research process has followed the "guiding principle" of feminist methodology in taking as a starting point the experiences of women as both subjects and creators of knowledge (Dyck 1993:53). By beginning with women's experiences, feminist criticism calls into question are the theories underlying academic research, the processes through which problems are derived, the scale at which these are studied, and the methods employed (Rose 1993:57; Moss 1993:49). This chapter addresses each of these and possible means of negotiating contradictions which emerge in social science research of 'different' women.

Issues of Theory and Epistemology

The issue of how to translate "the experiences of women" into academic knowledge, becomes problematic when the study is of 'different,' that is, non-white, non-Western women, and by a Western, middle class, social science researcher. Difference, in general, whether cultural, ethnic, gender, or racial, has been a stumbling block for Western social science from its inception (Lazreg 1988:87).

Feminist critique suggests that the 'stumbling block' derives from language and categories of social science enquiries, which obtain from the experiences and problematics of white, Western, bourgeois, men (Harding 1991:106). Moreover, men's questions about women have often derived from aspirations to pacify, control, exploit, or manipulate women (Harding 1987:8). In somewhat parallel fashion, radical critiques point out that Western knowledge is the product of European expansion and domination (Sharabi 1990:3).

Thus, the very constitution of social science knowledge is linked to historical processes of socio-spatial control and marginalization of Others. Sharabi explains that,

The social-science disciplines developed in pursuit of knowledge of non-Western cultures and peoples are based on forms and categories of analysis designed **specifically** for grasping the Other...for understanding non-Western (primitive) cultures (Sharabi 1990:3).

Hence, in Ahmed's words, the "flawless certainty" of the perceptions that, for example, Muslim women are "overwhelmingly oppressed without being able to define the specific content of that oppression" (Ahmed 1982:523) is produced not simply from 'bad' representations of 'different' women, but from the very purposes for which (masculinist and racist) social science categories were derived--that is, to create a conception of difference through which to create and control Others.

The question becomes, not how to create more **accurate** representations, but how to find a place from within academic research from which to subvert its link to colonial, neo-colonial and masculinist structures and processes. For the Western researcher, speaking of/for Others from within the yoke of Western domination, the difficulty derives from "our complicity with the very power that we are trying to subvert" (McDowell 1992:68). This power resides, in particular ways, within the discipline of Geography, through its historical role as the "science of colonialism" (Sidaway 1992:403; also Driver 1992; Hudson 1977). Rose adds to this problematic in arguing that "to think geography--to think within the parameters of the discipline in order to create geographical knowledge acceptable to the discipline--is to occupy a masculine subject position" (Rose 1993:4).

Speaking from this subject position while attempting to subvert it, creates contradictions for the researcher and for the subjects of research. Some of these contradictions arose during the course of fieldwork, and served to reveal the "paradoxical space" of academic research and, in Rose's words, its "troubled relation to hegemonic discourses" (Rose 1993:159).

Feminist critiques argue that the contradictory condition of researchers can provide insight into the research process and should, in fact, be the starting point of inquiries. It is pointed out that the "schizophrenia" of women scholars (which results from having to repress and negate their own experience of sexist oppression for the purposes of abiding by the standards of 'rational,' value-free, and neutral theory and methodology) can in fact enhance the rigour and objectivity of the research (Harding 1987:9; Mies 1983:121).

Geographers, similarly, address the need to construct a map of the world "from inside the world." Rogers argues that, in trying to establish an adequate position, social and cultural geographers should give more thought to their own nation(s) and homeland(s) as mediating between the politics of position and the questions of global culture" (Rogers 1992:512).

I attempt here to situate myself within the research process to glean some insight into the methodological and

political implications of some contradictions encountered in research. My own "schizophrenia," in Harding's terminology, is two-fold, stemming from my location as a woman within malestream academia, and my role as Western researcher of (half) Palestinian origin, speaking of/re-presenting (without, necessarily, representing) Palestinian women.

Canadian-born and educated, during the course of this research I have felt less a certain degree Palestinian and more an embodiment of the contradictions of being of half-Palestinian, half 'Canadian'²¹ (i.e. British) origin. Questions emanating from my 'split' identity played some part in wanting to map the socio-spatial links between 'here' and 'there,' and the barriers, as well as possibilities in forging strategies and solidarity across boundaries of nation and identity.

During the course of fieldwork, the boundaries of my identity were being drawn. Prior to fieldwork (which was my first trip to Palestine, although not to the Middle East), my sense of being Palestinian had been one of (fluctuating) degree. Upon arrival, I became Palestinian "from inside the

²¹ The inverted quotation marks denote the problematic designation of 'Canadian' to mean white, British (or French) origin.

green line,"²² from Nazareth (meaning Christian), and half-Canadian (half Western).²³ When it was apparent that my 'half-Palestinian' side is my father's line, it was sometimes declared that, "Well! You're Palestinian then."

The extent to which my Palestinian origin influenced the interview process is difficult to gauge. During the first weeks of interviews, H. accompanied me to most interviews, facilitating introductions and enabling interviewees to 'place' me and my research interest. During these introductions, often exchanged in Arabic, I would be introduced as a student from Canada, conducting research toward a Masters thesis in Geography. H. would also often mention that I am of Palestinian origin. As I began to travel and conduct interviews on my own, I did not always mention my Palestinian origin. One interviewee, after realizing my background at the end of the interview, exclaimed that had she known she "would have told me a different story!" This was an atypical incident, though I sensed, in general, that my Palestinian origin helped people 'place' me and enabled them to extend a qualified trust in my general intentions.

²² The "Green Line" denotes the 1967 border between Israel and the West Bank, with "inside the Green Line" indicating Israel.

²³ Shortly after my arrival, a Palestinian woman using the facilities of one of the women's research centres asked me, hesitantly, if my ('Canadian') mother thought she was better than my father.

Having relatives in Nazareth widened the scope of my research and provided, during three visits to family, I was able to get a sense of the situation for Palestinians living in Israel. Contacts made through a cousin enabled me to do some comparative research on Palestinian women's activism in Israel. I spoke with a woman involved in setting up a woman's refuge in Nazareth, and was able to pass on their experience and plans to the Women's Centre for Legal and Social Counselling in East Jerusalem. These personal connections also enabled me to better understand the impact of Israeli policies at the level of the individual and family.

As a Western researcher, my inquiries about Islamicist movements in occupied Palestine, such as *Hamas*, was informed by my concern that I not replicate, or appear to be replicating, an unmitigated apprehension of 'fundamentalism' (as portrayed in Western media). The subject was pursued, nonetheless, as I did not want to "buy into" the hands-off approach that is derived from a notion of "cultural sensitivity" that views religious movements and culture as essential, timeless elements, rather than a means through which social and political battles are waged.

My Palestinian origin again came into play as I attempted to have my travel visa extended. At the offices in West Jerusalem, I was asked repeatedly why I was in Jerusalem and

not in Nazareth, since my relatives live in Nazareth, and whether I had relatives in the Old City (of Jerusalem), the West Bank, or Gaza. I was told to register my name with the military office so it could be determined whether I have any family in these areas. (I did not register my name with the military and, in spite of my Canadian passport, my visa was not renewed.)

Such (relatively minimal) encounters with the realities of the Israeli occupation inform my sense of the context of struggle for Palestinians. They also served to 'locate' myself within the spectrum of "Palestinian" and to situate, in part, my Palestinian identity within the research process and within my life. While my Palestinianness has been part of my experience more in terms of my identity than culture, Anthropologist Abu-Lughod's observation, following her anthropological research in Egypt, rings true for my experience. For Abu-Lughod, fragments of the Arab part of her life, which had not seemed to make sense as she had not experienced them as part of an ongoing social and cultural system, began to fall into place (Abu-Lughod 1988:160).

Abu-Lughod tells of negotiating the two 'sides' of her (American/Arab) identity within and through her research endeavour. Although necessarily idiosyncratic, her difficulty in 'being both' reverberates in my own work. Abu-Lughod found

that in describing "as faithfully as possible" bedouin's own understanding of their life, she was "taking the systematic and defensive attitude of someone who had just begun to understand who her Arab father was and needed to explain it to her American mother." She eventually began to write as more of an outsider, asking herself whether she was becoming her mother's daughter: "In the five years since fieldwork, I had been discovering how complicated it was to be both" (Abu-Lughod 1988:160).

Besides serving to situate the process of knowledge creation, tracing oneself in relation to the research serves to underline the socio-spatiality (as opposed to essential nature) of difference. Abu-Lughod suggests that,

To recognize that the Self may not be so unitary and that the Other might actually consist of many others who may not be so "other" after all is to raise the theoretically interesting problem of how to build in ways of accepting or describing differences without denying similarities or turning these various differences into a single, frozen Difference. (Abu-Lughod 1988:92).

Women's contradictory location within various structures needs to be written into the analysis, also, to devise effective political action (Mohanty 1991b:66; emphasis added).

Dalby summarizes Pratt's (1993) argument that:

understanding the local determinants of political identity among women in different places suggests both the diversity of their lived experiences and their local political possibilities, as well as the opportunities to build political coalitions sensitive to the geographical variation of practical struggles, and to the different

constraints facing women in different locales (cited in Dalby 1993:13).

In this way, also, women's activism can challenge (from different locations) the "boundary functions of state discourses" (Dalby 1992:10). Also, in the reflexivity attempted in the research, understanding the local determinants of knowledge creation enables both the attempt to situate knowledges, as well as the need to account for the context in which these knowledges are situated. As Rogers notes,

Otherness, difference, and cultural relativism, without an understanding of the conditions of their creation, are empty gestures which can do little more than serve up cultures as curios--part of the spectacle business. Situated knowledges are always situated *in* something, and this something increasingly involves global processes of power and production, the circulation of money, images, and people themselves (Rogers 1992:519).

Lazreg argues for an "intersubjectivity" which means "seeing their lives as meaningful, coherent, and understandable instead of being infused 'by us' with doom and sorrow. It means that their lives like 'ours' are structured by economic, political, and cultural factors. It means that these women, like 'us,' are engaged in the process of adjusting, often shaping, at times resisting and even transforming their environment..." (Lazreg 1988:98). In short, it means their 'other' women are not the antithesis of us and that 'we' are not justified in studying 'them' in ways we do not study 'ourselves' (Lazreg 1988:99).

The attempt at reflexivity is multi-purposed. It is important to identify the 'place' of social science research (including its methods, concepts and language) within wider discursive and social relations as this context has methodological implications for the role of research within struggles for social change.

Fieldwork served to dislocate, quite literally, my identity as a Canadian-born Palestinian. In re-placing parts of myself through the eyes and reactions of Palestinians in occupied Palestine, I found that I was also working through methodological questions of authorship. For example, is it more legitimate for me to speak for Palestinian women in occupied Palestine because of my origin? Would my depiction of Palestinian women be perceived as more 'authentic' and hence more embedded in Orientalist frames--to become, simply, a decorative addition to dominant discourse on "silent, oppressed Arab women" (Minh-ha 1989:101)? What role can my identification with the Palestinian struggle play in the research process and its scientific rigour? I also wondered if or when I may be placing "them" within my own project of "de-othering" myself.

Placing myself "in the same critical plane" as the subject of study is intended to reveal ways in which my class, race, culture and gender, assumptions, beliefs and behaviours

may shape the findings; by including "subjective" elements, to increase the objectivity of the research and decrease its "objectivism" (Harding 1987:9). The intent is, also, to emphasize the interpretive and contingent, rather than categorical, nature of social knowledge (Westcott 1990:61).

On the other hand, as noted above, there lurks, so to speak, a danger that 'situating' myself can serve a preoccupation "with the constitution of our own identity as well as the need to market that preoccupation" (Friedman 1987:170). Young cautions that:

In any attempt to turn the other into a self, the anti-imperialist perspective has to come to terms with the fact that the very project of imperialism was to do the very same thing... (Young 1990:165).

Intended, rather, is a "reflexive self-reflexivity," as Spivak advises:

I see no way to avoid insisting that there has to be a simultaneous other focus: not merely who am I? but who is the other woman? How am I naming her? How does she name me? Is this part of the problematic I discuss? (Spivak 1987:150).

For Palestinian women, tired of reading about themselves "through the eyes and words of outsiders,"²⁴ the problem is not simply that their lives and struggles are depicted from a more removed (perhaps even uniquely useful) vantage point, but

²⁴ As expressed by a leader of the women's movement, who was also, she confided, "weary of having [her] bones picked by foreign researchers" (Conversation, East Jerusalem, August 1992).

that "they tend to be represented as Others by those doing the representing" (Crang 1992:529). This situation is exacerbated by the difficulties in devising collective and individual notions of, even, womanhood in the context of colonialism and military occupation. In the words of one of the interviewees:

We never studied our own culture.... Am I the same woman as those in villages? Does the woman in Ramallah and the woman in Gaza have the same make-up? To what extent? What is it? I don't know. I'm talking in terms of my own confusion about myself as a woman and the conception of others toward me. What is their conception?.... I mean, we are a society that has been under colonization for a long time and has never been given the space, the time to think of ourselves. We have always thought of the Other, how to kick out the Other.... We never thought of ourselves. We never studied ourselves. I think we need to do that. And this is, of course, what all the women's research centres are trying to do, which is important.²⁵

As a rolling tape recorded her words and my attempt to acquire knowledge of them (acquiring knowledge of themselves), I wondered at the relationship of our exchange to Western institutional knowledge which serves to legitimize the Israeli military occupation (Said 1979b). As McDowell rightly notes, "we cannot ignore our own positions as part of the conventional structures of power within the academy, nor, although it is often painful, can we afford to ignore the structures of power between women" (McDowell 1992:59). The question is, what methodological approaches and techniques can ensure that research processes and representations can be used by Palestinian women, for their own agenda? Which concepts

²⁵ Interview 43. Ramallah, West Bank, 11 August, 1992.

should be used? How should the particularity of their consciousness and struggles be contextualized?

The question is, also, whether there are any analytical categories for the marginalized and silenced that do not mirror the distorting and mystifying categories and projects of the dominant discourses (Harding 1989:18). Mies argues that we have to accept that the concepts we use in our analysis are already "occupied," like territories or colonies, by dominant sexist ideology. The solution is to examine them 'from below,' from the perspective and experiences of the oppressed and exploited and their struggles for emancipation (Mies 1986:3).

The issue of language and concepts is not lost on Palestinian women's centres in their production and publication of research on women and writings by women. Writing, as Mohanty notes, often becomes the context through which new political identities are forged; it becomes a space for struggle and contestation about reality itself (Mohanty 1991a:34). This study attempts to incorporate into its findings the ways in which Palestinian women are explicitly negotiating the 'occupation' of predominant concepts. This negotiation provides insight into how they are defining their struggles in relation to national and local discourses on women's 'place' within Palestinian society.

It is vital that these "contestations about reality" are spatially and historically contextualized. Geographers have a particularly important contribution to make in their sensitivity "to context and the recursive manner in which people and places are shaped" (Dyck 1993:57). Hanson notes the need to recognize

that difference occurs in so many dimensions...that any boundary scheme defining categories must be seen as fluid, mutable, and specific to certain circumstances or context (Hanson 1992:575).

Difference, then, should be seen as actively created; it is important, as feminist geographers point out, to "pay attention to similarities as well as to differences... to context and to questions about the tensions between the general and the specific" (Hanson 1992:576).

But the representation of "similarities as well as differences" needs to be linked to the agenda of those being represented. McDowell advises that "however well we represent 'the other' in our textual analyses, unless this representation has a political context and grounding, we are in danger of reinventing geography's fascination with the 'native' and the 'exotic'" (McDowell 1992:70).

Feminist methodology addresses the need to both engage the research in social struggle, as well as employ methods which can maximize the engagement between those researched and the researcher herself. Mies advises that the researcher

should actively participate in women's movements to avoid 'spectator knowledge'; the research process itself should be one of conscientization; the research should facilitate women's own appropriation of their history; and it should contribute to the collectivizing of women's experiences and the appropriation of history by women themselves (Mies 1983:122-28). The motivation of research should be to change the status quo and to serve the interests of dominated, exploited and oppressed groups. This would entail participation, on the part of the researcher, in social actions and struggles, and the integration of research into these processes (Mies 1983:125).

Within such an approach, particular methods and the position of the researcher as outsider, can contribute to the rigour of the research. My attempts to apply such methods and methodological approach are addressed in the following outline of the development of the perimeters of the study.

The Process: Developing the Perimeters of the Research

Preliminary research on Palestinian women's struggles revealed that women's increased mobilization during the first stages of the *intifada*, the Palestinian national uprising, had decreased following the Gulf War. Women's frustration was

growing due to the national leadership's delayed response to women's concerns. Palestinian activists expressed concern about the need to secure women's gains which accrued from their vital role during the *intifada*.

The following questions were derived, for the most part, prior to fieldwork. They reflect a desire to both expand the notion of territoriality, as well as address the socio-spatial particularity of Palestinian women's struggles within the Palestinian national liberation movement:

- How are Palestinian women organizing? Around what issues and strategies? Within what spaces/places?
- How are women conceptualizing the relationship between women's needs and concerns and those of the national struggle? How do their strategies reflect and respond to this conceptualization?
- How does women's activism articulate with socio-spatial relations at various scales? In particular, how is the constitution of the places of women's organizing shaped by various socio-spatial relations (as elaborated in Chapter two)? Can women's struggles shed light on the particular spatial configuration of these processes? and on the gendered (in addition to the better theorized class and racial) nature of relations?
- How has the historical dislocation of Palestinian society affected the spatial organization of the women's activism? How has women's activism responded to social disruption and geographic dislocation? Have these responses served to widen and deepen women's roles within Palestinian society?
- What do Palestinian women's struggles tell us about the production of difference within spaces, and the implications for women's attempts to 'ground' their issues, in occupied Palestine and elsewhere? How can a conceptualization of their struggles expand the notion of

territoriality regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

- What are the implications of Orientalist "knowledge" of "other" women for Palestinian women's attempts to communicate the meaning of their struggles--to each other, for Western consumption, and within academic feminist discourse?

Upon arrival in the Occupied Territories, I heard much concern expressed about the need to develop greater theoretical understanding of the situation of women in order that a longer term strategy could be devised to secure women's rights within a national framework. My initial contact with the women's movement in occupied Palestine was through the director and staff of the Women's Studies Centre, and Professor Liza Taraki, who acted as my local advisor during the course of fieldwork.²⁶ My desire to examine the relationship between women's issues and national issues was, I was told, "of vital interest" to the Centre.

My original intent to look at women's cooperatives, in terms of how they might reflect new 'ground' which could link national and women's needs, was redirected following discussion at WSC. They suggested, instead, that recently established women's centres would be a more appropriate unit of analysis and more feasible methodologically than women's

²⁶ Initial contact with the WSC was made through correspondence several months before arriving, in which I relayed my research interest and desire to work in conjunction with a local women's group.

cooperatives. The cooperatives are more directly linked to political factions and hence more entrenched in factional politics; the centres, on the other hand, are locationally specific, occupying physical office space, with permanent staff and regular office hours.

These factors were particularly important given the relatively short time frame of my fieldwork (four months) and the difficulties of travelling in the West Bank and Gaza (created by frequent curfews and military closures of areas). Also, much of the original hope placed in the women's cooperatives had diminished as the majority of them had failed since the Gulf War. The women's research and development centres represented new hope, and new developments in the women's movements.

It was decided that I look at five women's centres. One of these, Bisan's Women's Studies Committee, is part of a larger, general development centre located in Ramallah. The other centres are Women's Studies Centre, and the Women's Legal Centre, both located in East Jerusalem. Women's Affairs is situated in the northern region of the West Bank, in Nablus, and its branch is located in Gaza. The following questions took shape following discussion with members of the Women's Studies Centre:

1. Concerning the socio-spatial nature of women's centres:

What is the significance of the centres' (urban-based) locations, in terms of their accessibility and priorities? Do the centres represent an expansion of the sites of women's struggles?

2. The relationship between women's needs and roles and the centres' strategies:

What are the issues addressed by the centres? How are these issues reflected in the centres' programs and structures? How are the centres' priorities derived? What are the direct and indirect effects of the centres' programs on women's lives? Do they represent an expansion of the socio-political roles women occupy? Are they enabling women to make inroads in social, economic, cultural and political processes and structures?

3. The centre's ability to reconfigure the boundaries of women's roles:

Do the centres widen or challenge the boundaries of:

- women's roles within the home;
- social norms regarding women's roles and place within Palestinian society;
- national ideology;
- geographic isolation created by occupation;
- the psychological isolation of individual women;
- development priorities of local and international organizations;
- Orientalist images and assumptions;
- dualistic polarizations of women's/national issues and of civic/political spaces?

4. The significance of the centres' within the historical continuum of women's activism:

Why are the centres emerging now? How do they reflect the continuum of Palestinian women's historical activism? Do they represent new directions taken by the women's movements? Are they a result of women's increased and mass mobilization during initial stages of the *intifada*? Did they emerge in response to women's decreased political influence (in relation to their increased activism)? Do they represent a shift in the strategies of the women's movements? Are they 'healing' divisions within the women's movement or are they shifting divisions from the political realm to the geographic and economic (class) realms?

5. The efficacy of the centres in expanding the sites of women's struggles vis-a-vis the national movement:

Are the centres 're-mapping' the places of women's issues within the configuration of national social and political concerns? Are they helping to increase the influence of women's committees (connected to the political factions) within their factions? As physical, urban-based centres, do they reflect the declining influence of grassroots networks and mobilization? How might they reflect the changing sites of political and social struggle, in the context of the diminishing influence of the *intifada*, the national uprising?

6. Negotiating the contradictions of foreign funding:

What funding do the centres receive? How does this funding shape the formulation of their agendas? What are the wider implications of funding links to (and dependency on) foreign international development organizations?

7. In retrospect of fieldwork:

What are the implications of organizing within a liberation struggle and within the context of the Declaration of Principles signed between the PLO and Israel, giving Palestinian limited autonomy in Gaza Strip and Jericho? What relationship is desirable between the centres and the Palestinian leadership?

A meaningful study, I was advised, would require conducting some interviews in Arabic. Given my very basic knowledge of Arabic, a staff person at the centre was asked to be my translator for 10 hours per week. In return, I would expose her to feminist and participatory methods and provide her with research experience and tools (henceforth, she is referred to as "H."). It was also agreed that I would give a workshop/presentation of my progress and findings toward the end of my stay. Through working for the centre about 10 hours a week (when, among other things, I edited some articles,

produced audio tapes of English language lessons for a blind patron of the centre, helped edit and lay out a program pamphlet, and took documentary photographs of the territories' first Arab women's film and book festival) I was able to observe the centre's day to day operations as well as its relations with other groups and centres. Participant observation, then, and direct interviewing were the primary sources of information. I also had access to materials from local resource and research centres and institutes.

In the months following fieldwork, I transcribed the interviews from tapes and notes. An elaborate system began of categorizing 'bits' of interviews into various sets of subject files.²⁷ Several hundred pages of interview transcripts were cut up and inserted into a couple dozen areas which, I thought, would form the skeleton of the study. This stage of 'reading' the interview findings was both exciting as well as disconcerting. How could I, for example, ensure that Palestinian women's voices are heard, while their words are dismembered, shuffled, and reworked by a researcher thousands of miles away from the ever-evolving context and hence shape of their stories and struggles? While the semi-structured and open-ended interviews allowed them some leeway in shaping the interview and contextualizing their words according to their

²⁷ Patricia Maguire's work, Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach (Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts, 1987) was useful at this stage.

own frames of reference, the process of writing up their words in the study seemed to be undermining the spirit of the exchange. Wise explains it thus,

... they put themselves very much in our hands by exposing themselves in a one-sided relationship. When you come to depart you take their words away, to be objectified as an interview transcript. In the end you are very powerful in this style of interviewing, and the absence of the questionnaire may obscure this all the more (Wise 1987:76).

I tried to retain in my mind the context of each interview, and the interpretive nature of communication and knowledge. As there are "no facts that are not products of an interpretive process," Stivers advises "treating facts and interpretations in a nondichotomous way" (Stivers 1993:421). Throughout this thesis, an attempt is made to separate and then weave together the interviewees' words and interpretations, the context of their words, and my own interpretation. In this way, there is no attempt to find a 'truth' within Palestinian women's consciousness or agency, but a realization of the inherently "temporary and inadequate" nature of knowledge (Spender 1983:28).

The Interview Schedule

From May to August, I conducted interviews (either with H. or alone) with 49 women and 5 men (see Appendix 2). All but

three (of which were conducted with two or three people) were individual interviews. I was able to follow up discussions with five of the interviewees. Most of the women and three of the men were directly or indirectly involved in the five centres' work. Those interviewed include researchers of the women's centres, the centres' directors and board members, professionals, university professors, artists, village women, students, leaders of three of the four women's main committees, and "rank and file" members from each of the women's committees.²⁸ All the interviews, except three, were conducted in the West Bank, Gaza, or East Jerusalem. Two were conducted in Nazareth, with Palestinian Israeli women activists, and one in West Jerusalem with a Jewish Israeli woman activist.

The Interviews

The information sought varied with each interview, depending on the involvement of the interviewee in the women's centres, in the Palestinian or Israeli women's movement, and their personal and professional background. A 'key' (see Appendix 3) was used as a guide. The questions were meant to obtain various kinds of information. Information on the

²⁸ These are not meant as unitary categories; the "researchers in the centres," for example, included women from most of these groupings.

centres' programs and objectives was sought, as was insight into the relationship of the centres with various segments and objectives of the women's movement. Women's individual conceptions of the relationship between Palestinian women's concerns, the women's movement, and the national movement was explored. I also attempted to attain a brief profile of each woman interviewed to get a sense of the meaning of her activism in her life, and to be able to understand how Palestinian women are balancing conflicting roles and demands.

The wording of questions changed to adapt to various levels of fluency in English. Not all the questions were asked of each interviewee. Prior to interviews I (or H. and I) selected relevant questions from the 'key.' These were given or translated to the interviewee, and were used as a general guide. The interviews were held in places of work and in homes, and lasted, in general, from one to two hours (ranging from 20 minutes to over three hours). Some of the interviews were taped. The presence of a tape recorder was accepted readily in most cases and when not, I took notes.

Some explanation in the use of a tape recorder is required, given the ever-present danger that women face as activists.²⁹ When the interviews took place in people's

²⁹ Activists are often arrested, detained, and put under house arrest.

homes, I generally did not use a tape recorder and conducted more informal and wide-ranging discussions. When visiting women in villages and refugee camps, I did not tape interviews and discussions were generally worked into the activities of the day. The cassette tapes were carefully coded; no names were written on their labels and no introductions recorded on them.³⁰

Tape recording may have increased the likelihood that those interviewed would 'portraitize' their situation to a greater extent. The drawbacks of this was minimized by cross referencing information, and holding follow-up interviews and on-going discussion with many interviewees outside of the formal interview setting. On the other hand, somewhat formalizing the interview process also provided some insight into the multiple levels at which Palestinian women's stories and struggles take form, and gave me a sense of the contextual relevance of the information relayed.

In retrospect, tape recording also served to 'ground' me somewhat in my 'researcher' role and, thus, partially contain

³⁰ I also camouflaged the cassettes with music labels, as I did not have (nor did I attempt to obtain) an Israeli permit to conduct research in the West Bank and Gaza. I was somewhat concerned that my research material could be confiscated at the close of my trip in crossing the Israeli-Egyptian border (with an expired visitor's visa which was refused renewal on the basis of my having relatives in Nazareth). In the end, my bags were not opened and the anonymity of interviewees maintained.

my indentity conundrum (as a nousse wa nousse, or half-and-half Palestinian, re-placing myself)--a conundrum, I was realizing, that also characterizes Palestinians in occupied Palestine, precisely because their location is determined by the fragmenting purposes of colonialism and military occupation.

Mediating Methods: 'Involving the Researched' in the Research Process

I attempted to create bridges between my own agenda and that of the women's centres (in particular, the Women's Studies Centre) by, for example, 'involving the researched' in the research process. In interviews, particularly with members of Women's Studies Centre, I solicited their suggestions as to the direction of my research. I attempted to integrate these into the research process by asking interviewees, for example, what role they believed the women's centres could play in their lives or organizations.

Also, as part of this effort, I found myself wanting to equalize the working relationship between H. and I--for her to develop her own agenda, so that her input into my thesis program could also be used for her own purposes. For various reasons, she did not have the time or energy to embark on a

research project herself.³¹ I found myself slowly realizing that my attempts to encourage H. to work out her own agenda stemmed from a desire that she help carry my project, and help me develop my conceptualizing of interview findings. Patai notes that,

The researcher's desire to act out feminist commitments, relinquish control, and involve the researched in all stages of the project runs the risk of subtly translating into the researcher's own demand for affirmation and validation (Patai 1991:147).

I gained insight into my own research methods, and into the demands I was making of H. when, during one weekend, the tables were turned and I acted as her assistant. Accompanying her on one of her trips for her other job with a cultural centre, we set off to a village near Ramallah to make a sound recording of traditional women's songs. I learnt a great deal from her about how to manage the delicate expectations involved in research relationships. Through this small reversal of roles, I also came to value her input into my own research efforts, as I became aware of the difficulties in acting as a general support to someone else's project.

³¹ I had suggested that we jointly write an article. For several reasons, this collective work did not happen. While I was able to transcribe some of the interviews shortly after conducting them, I found it very difficult to gain much distance from the research findings or observations to be able to conceive of and write an article. In effect, the process of gathering and interpreting the findings was closely determined by my agenda of conducting research for a thesis. For H.'s part, demands of two jobs, family responsibility and personal issues took much of her time and energy. There was also the matter of different skill levels.

As we became closer friends, my relationship with H. became a source of insight into the day-to-day concerns of young Palestinian women, that is, of the social dilemmas and contradictions they face and the responsibilities which fall on their shoulders. I was mindful of not raising expectations or inducing dependency, and of the danger of misusing sentiment as a research tool. As Patai notes, creating friendships to "give them something" in effect merely creates "a bracketed moment," taken out of the broader context of unequal relations (Patai 1991:12). Despite contradictions, a collaborative relationship and friendship was begun which, it is hoped, may lead to future work together.

Conditions of Research

The research process in the West Bank and Gaza was directly affected by the conditions of Israeli military occupation. Travelling from East Jerusalem, where I was living, to areas in the West Bank and Gaza entailed moving through roadblocks (in collective taxis, called 'service') where Israeli military would check identification and passes of the passengers.

My interview program was at times disrupted, while walking from one interview to another, as a curfew would be

called, or an area blocked off. Experiencing, albeit fleetingly, the imposition of curfew gave me insight into the deeply internalized frustration of Palestinians. The feeling of powerlessness, of having absolutely no control over the course of your next moment, hour, or weeks, no matter what you have planned, or how much energy has gone into the planning, is devastating. I came to understand the often expressed phrase that, "one can't plan more than one or two days at a time." This insight also informed the study's conception of space, that is, of how time is lived within it and the meaning held by the past and future in particular places.

Even with my constant ability to get into a "service" and leave to the relative calm of, for example, East Jerusalem (for which Palestinians elsewhere in the West Bank need a permit), I could feel, over the months, the stress of living under occupation physically accumulate in me--making it difficult to relax or feel safe or, even, to easily imagine myself out of the situation.

Around one or another street corner, could be seen the military's routine accosting of men on their way to work, school, or wherever; lining them up against the wall of a building, checking identification; having the power to humiliate and using it; having the power to send any one of them into detention and their family on a 'wild goose chase'

for months trying to locate them. These moments, on my way to one or another interview appointment, gave me a small sense of the fear, frustration, and deepening depression of Palestinians; and informed my understanding of how the dynamics of oppression reverberate within families, within communities, and in attempts to create social change and economic development.

Finally, the incongruence between what I saw on a daily basis--blatant violations of human rights and of the dignity of Palestinians--and how this was (if it was) reported in the Israeli and international media, provided some insight into how the boundaries between 'us' and 'them' are furnished. Following fieldwork, I gave nine slide show presentations of both the general conditions of life in the West Bank and Gaza, as well as the particular struggles of Palestinian women. My attempt was to contribute in a more direct way to mobilizing to end the occupation; I was also fulfilling agreements with groups who had contributed financial support for fieldwork research, by 'reporting back' to their constituency.

This chapter has attempted to 'map' the process through which the study has 'taken place,' and to note some of the contradictions which emerged in attempting to extend the 'reach' of Palestinian women's voices. My arrival in occupied Palestine, I was told, was "timely" and the study was shaped

by the needs and agenda of the Palestinian women's movement, through my close association with the women's centres, in particular, the Women's Study Centre. I have attempted to "step back" and make use of my outsider role to critique the women's centres from the vantage of someone not directly involved in their work.

It was believed, by members of WSC, that my outsider position would contribute to gaining a more full picture of all the centres. The aim, thus, is to make the study part of a forum, as an extension of the efforts of the centres. The question of how to deal with "sensitive" issues, such as political rivalries within and between the centres, arose during fieldwork and afterwards. Essentially, the issue is one of the depth to which the study should explore relations between the groups (in particular, competition and political in-fighting), and involves the tension between the attempt to have research facilitate processes by airing otherwise festering issues or, on the other hand, to over-expose a part of the women's movement which is best dealt with in the context of relationships and communication therein. I attempted to approach this tension by bringing up issues during, for example, the workshop with the Centre part-way through fieldwork, taking the opportunity to make these part of the Centre's own forums. In the text, I have tended to

footnote some of these relations as a way of indicating that they form part of the "subtext" of the centres' relations.

In the proceeding chapters, I attempt to present the problematic of Palestinian women's organizational activism from the starting point of variously located Palestinian women's concerns. Before outlining the findings of the research (examined in Chapters 5 and 6), the following chapter attempts to situate the work of the research centres within the historical continuum of Palestinian women's activism within the context of colonialism and the Palestinian national liberation struggle.

CHAPTER 4

PALESTINIAN WOMEN'S ACTIVISM:

HISTORICAL AND SPATIAL CONTEXT

The strategies of the recently established women's studies centres emerge from the historical continuum of Palestinian women's organizing. This chapter traces this continuum within the context of historical developments in Palestine and their influence on the forms and places of women's activism.

Three periods of women's organizational and more spontaneous activism are examined: 1920s-1948, 1948-1967, 1967-present, including the *intifada* and "post-intifada" developments toward limited Palestinian autonomy. Discussion of the latter two periods is limited to women's activism in occupied Palestine, namely, the West Bank, including Arab Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip.

Explored are the ways in which women's organizations have reflected, as well as challenged, boundaries of gender, class, culture, geography, and politics. The degree of autonomy achieved (or desired) by women's organizations, and the extent to which their activism has enabled women to widen their roles and increase their status within Palestinian society, is noted.

Palestinian Women's Movement--British Mandate Period, 1918-1947

The goal of the British Mandate was to secure a national homeland for Jews. The Palestinian national movement which arose to resist this in turn sparked Palestinian women's activism. The aims as well as the limitations of women's activism were set by its *raison d'être* to end foreign rule (rather than, for example, to struggle against Palestinian social norms or structures), and from the class nature of its leadership which limited its activities to charitable services (Jad 1989:127).

The class and geographic base of women's organizing was shaped by British colonial exacerbation of class, religious, and spatial/geographic rifts among Palestinians (Jad 1990:126). Social divisions within Palestinian society were exacerbated by, for example, the British Mandate government's involvement in schooling, which served to reinforce inequality between: i. Arab and Jewish sectors; ii. Arabs in urban and rural areas; and iii. male and female sectors³² (Sayigh 1992:15). These rifts, along with religious differences which

³² Sayigh notes that the Mandate government's claim that the population would not allow education for girls is belied by the expansion of private girls' schools during the Mandate period. The development of education at this time was supported primarily by private and community funding. Rural Palestinians opposed not the education of girls but, rather, **mixed** schooling for boys and girls (Sayigh 1992:15).

had been previously reinforced by the effects of Missionary schooling partly determined which sectors of the population would become leaders in the women's movement in the first decades of the century. The first women's associations were formed by a nucleus of Christian middle- and upper-class women, and carried out charitable services, holding meetings in homes, schools and churches (Jad 1990:126).

Through their work in these associations, women were able to expand their roles by 'playing off' the socio-cultural distinctions between the cities and towns, on one hand, and villages, on the other. For example, although women's organizations were urban-based, by organizing their activities in villages they avoided threatening the norms against women's involvement in public life, in the social milieu of their own towns. Additionally, the fact that the site of their charitable work was in villages served to legitimize their work outside their homes as their activities could be seen to strengthen Palestinian historical traditions- associated with villages, where customs were more closely adhered to (Divine 1985:76). As Divine explains,

...women were able to create careers for themselves while implying that those careers formed an inseparable bond with their ancient traditions (Divine 1985:76).

2

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

In the midst of the "crisis of religion and values" which convulsed traditional Palestinian society (resulting from contact with the West, but also from pressures from within Palestinian society), and in the midst of the deeply disrupting changes over which Palestinians had no control, women's work became a means of containing these changes. The locus of women's work--in villages--also helped mediate generational and parental conflict, and enabled women to both expand, as well as hold inviolable, Palestinian traditions (Divine 1985:76-79).

The women's organizations formed in this period aimed to help educate or improve the lives of the Palestinian peasantry. They set up health clinics, elementary schools, vocational institutions, and homes for orphans. The inspiration for their work was autonomous of that of men's organizations--being primarily social rather political or, in Divine's words, "less absorbed by political considerations narrowly conceived" (Divine 1985:77). The organizations were not always long-lived, but contrast with the general weakness of male-dominated political institutions in mandated Palestine (Divine 1985:78).

Despite their philanthropic focus, these societies insisted that membership amount to real work--that office holders receive a salary or, at least, the perquisites of

office, including a place to work, a car, and a telephone (Divine 1985:76). Nonetheless, the early women's movement posed no overt challenge to prevailing norms of domesticity. Women did not demand changes in their position or status (Peteet 1989:12). Women, usually upper-middle class kinswomen of prominent political personalities, in Peteet's words,

discerned no clear separation of their issues from those of a country under foreign rule and in danger of being expropriated by the increasingly militant Zionist movement.... Their goals and activities were oriented to achieving national independence and social development. Demands for improvements or reforms in women's positions were negligible, largely overshadowed by the pressing immediacy of national struggle.... Palestinian women were aware of the organic links binding their movement to the national movement and made little attempt to extract their own problems and prospects from those of the large social body (Peteet 1989:12; Peteet 1986:20).

Whereas in other Arab countries, including Egypt and Tunisia, women's organizations were fighting for the abolition of polygamy and of summary divorce, and the right to vote, in Palestine, women demanded that the Balfour Declaration be revoked, that Jewish immigration to Palestine be restricted, and that Palestinian political prisoners receive better treatment (Hilterman 1988:408).

These issues were stated in the resolutions of the women's conference, organized in Jerusalem, in 1929, and attended by more than 200 (mostly) wives and relatives of political leaders or notables. Conferences and demonstrations increased after 1933, in particular during the 1936-39 revolt,

but remained limited to upper-class women or students³³ (Jad 1989:127).

The movement of elite, urban women remained largely isolated from the more spontaneous and militant actions of rural women which included, in the 1936 revolt against the British, for example, transporting weapons and messages, hiding fighters from the authorities, providing food and nursing care to the wounded and, for a few women, fighting alongside men (Peteet 1989:12).

Gender segregation in Palestinian society meant that women were not at this point directly involved in existing political parties (Divine 1985:71). Nonetheless, by the thirties, women and students represented the vanguard within the national movement, pressing the leadership to take more militant action, including the call for the General Strike in April 1936 (Sayigh, R. 1989b:155).

Although national crisis acted *directly* on women rather than through the mediation of men's organizations (R. Sayigh 1989b:154), the ebb and flow of women's activism was closely linked to the exigencies of the national movement. In Hilterman's words:

³³ Of the 120 Arabs killed by the British, as they put down nationalist protests in August, 1929, nine were women (Jad 1989:127).

Women were visibly active, and were tolerated, if not encouraged, to be so, during times of crisis, when male fighters needed an infrastructure of support providing them with food, clothing and arms, and able to take care of the wounded. Such a time was the period of Palestinian revolt against the British mandatory power which was seen as promoting Jewish immigration and protecting the Jewish communities at the expense of Palestinian development in the 1930s. Women also played a crucial support role in the 1947-48 war. But for organized women's activities....there was little room at such times of turbulence, when the struggle for mere survival took precedence (Hilterman 1988:410).

Indeed, during times of crisis, organizational growth came to a halt. On the other hand, women's activities, taking place within the framework of religious organizations and, predominantly charitable in character, "performed the crucial function of substituting for state services" (Giacaman 1987:4). Giacaman notes:

They set up training centres for women nurses, establishing the profession as socially acceptable and respectable for women; they successfully operated first aid stations where even minor surgery was performed; they campaigned increasingly for donations ranging from canned foods to clothes to money; they organized soup kitchens and succeeded even in getting very bourgeois society women to participate in cooking; and they washed and mended the clothes they had collected and distributed them to those who needed them (Giacaman 1987:4).

Antonius notes that women's activism expressed also their desire to place religious affiliation secondary to national identity (Antonius 1986:63-64). (This continued during the *intifada*, when both Christian and Muslim women marched together in Sunday and Friday marches (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:162)).

The following sections reveal how women's activism continued to play a crucial role between 1948 and the late 1970s, transforming the focus and forms of their organizing to respond to the social upheaval and devastation wrought by the wars of 1948, the creation of a Jewish State on part of Palestine, foreign rule in the West Bank and Gaza and, following the 1967 Arab defeat, Israeli military occupation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and annexation of Arab Jerusalem.

Establishment of a Jewish State--Dispossession and Dispersion for Palestinians

With the establishment of the state of Israel in the largest and most highly developed part of Palestine, sixty percent of Palestinians became homeless, expelled from 20 cities and 400 villages (Jad 1989:127). About 800,000 Palestinians were dislocated, fleeing to the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Transjordan, Lebanon and Syria (Abu-Lughod 1971:161). The Palestinian Arab economy was left dismembered and severely handicapped. Most of those displaced had owned their own homes and land in Palestine or were share croppers in or near their native villages (P.A. Smith 1989:159). Moving to makeshift refugee camps set up by UNRWA, United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the body set up to look after the needs of Palestinian refugees, a new proletariat was formed. Men tended to leave

the camps to seek work elsewhere, and women began to go out to work, locally, selling vegetables and cleaning houses.

The West Bank and Gaza: Under Jordanian and Egyptian Rule

Jordan annexed the West Bank in 1950, and Gaza Strip fell under Egyptian military rule. As Jordan prevented political organizing through harsh repression, women's charitable associations attempted to meet the needs of the population. The education of girls became a priority for their organizations, in order to help women secure employment other than the serving and sewing positions available in the camps (Jad 1990:127).

In both Gaza and the West Bank, women were the "backbone" of refugee camp life. Women also became members in underground political groups forming the national movement, including the Jordanian Communist party, the Ba'th party, and the Arab Nationalist Movement. These parties devoted little attention to issues of women's emancipation, fearing prevailing traditional values. Gender segregation in society was extended into the party structure, with women forming separate party cells; their activities were restricted to secretarial work, typing services, signing petitions and delivering communiques,

and they were requested to refrain from raising women's issues (Jad 1990:128).

A watershed in women's organizational activism occurred in 1964, when the conference which established the Palestine Liberation Organization, was followed by the establishment of the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW). GUPW was formed as a separate women's branch (comprised of middle class women, rather than the wives of the political elite) in the national movement. While it continued the strategy of the charitable associations--providing services to women while leaving aside social questions--GUPW also provided institutional support for and the backing of a national or governmental authority for women's organizations in occupied Palestine and the diaspora (Antonius 1983:64). At the same time, the context was created in which organizations adhering to ideologies that were at variance with the official PLO line could find their own niche (Hilterman 1988:418). (Although, when GUPW was established, the PLO itself did not have a clear program for resistance, nor a popular base (Jad 1990:128).)

As GUPW remained banned in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinian Women's Association (PWA), was set up in 1964, and held its first conference in 1965; but it too was subsequently banned by the Jordanian authorities as its activities began to branch out over the area (Hilterman

1988:413). The PWA worked under the cover of women's charitable organizations. The charitable organizations formed during the Jordanian period were highly centralized, concentrated in urban areas, and played a back-up role to the male-dominated struggle for national liberation (Hilterman 1988:414).

Occupied Palestine: The Social Geography of Israeli Military Occupation

The 1967 War and Arab defeat led to a new exodus of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza. Some refugees from the 1948 War who had been living in camps, were uprooted and forced to leave for the second time. Others left as the military occupation and expansion of Jewish settlements dispossessed them of their homes and livelihoods. By 1972, Palestinians registered for relief numbered 1.5 million, about half of the total Palestinian population. Of these, almost half were housed in refugee camps (P.A. Smith 1989:163).

The conditions of military occupation and of occupied Palestine's colonial heritage, thus, have differential effects on Palestinians depending on their geographic and social location. There is considerable variation between the West Bank and Gaza in terms of both topographic and social

structure. The Gaza Strip is approximately 5 miles wide and 28 miles long; 400,000 of the population of more than 525,500 are refugees from the 1948 and 1967 Israeli-Arab wars, making the Gaza Strip one of the most crowded areas in the world³⁴ (E.G. Young 1992:65).

By contrast, the West Bank has a much lower population density living in a greater geographical expanse. Approximately one million Palestinians live in over 12 medium-sized urban centres and 430 villages. Variations by region, between the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem, can also be noted in income and employment levels. Whereas, one of five Palestinians is fully employed in Jerusalem, one in twenty in Gaza, and one out of thirty in southern Gaza is fully employed (Tamari 1993:25).

Under Israeli military occupation, the West Bank became isolated from its metropolitan centres. Its population became land-locked, cut off from its cultivable land and coastal

³⁴ This is graphically illustrated by the fact that, for example, the average floor space per person of United Nations-built refugee housing in Gaza is 27 to 35 square feet; the American Correctional Association's recommended floor space per prisoner in the United States is 60 square feet (Layoun 1992:415). Refugee camps in both the West Bank and Gaza typically have their entrances blocked with cement-filled barrels, restricting movement. It is not uncommon, also, for high fences to be erected around schools (in refugee camps as well as in towns) giving them a prison-like appearance and feel; the official reason is to prevent stone throwing at passing cars (Interview with an UNRWA official, Qalandia Refugee Camp, West Bank, 7 August, 1992).

markets (Tamari 1993:22). With the Israeli policy of confiscating land and water resources for new Jewish settlements and for the cultivation of cash crops for export, the economic survival of village communities, as well as residents of refugee camps, became dependent on employment in Israel (mainly in construction and service industries); this had the effect of "de-skilling" the Palestinian labour force as a whole (Tamari 1993:26).

Meanwhile, two opposing trends were taking hold. One was a determination to acquire as much formal education as possible, the other, in Antonius' words, was

a nostalgic longing to preserve the old society's structures and habits, which led to the metaphysical resurrection of the destroyed villages and urban neighbourhoods within the chaos of the refugee camps and to a strict enforcement of the old mores (Antonius 1983:65).

Tamari notes that those who might otherwise have been a force for change in rural villages, left to find work elsewhere (Tamari 1993:26). This cycle is perhaps re-emerging currently. A research analyst at Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza indicated that Palestinians presently returning with skills, resources, and education tend to settle in Gaza City, refraining, thus, from introducing new ideas or practices to their home villages or camps.³⁵

³⁵ Interview 35. Gaza City, 22 July, 1992.

Women's Legal Status under Occupation

It is worth reviewing the legal framework of women's status in occupied Palestine, to contextualize current efforts and strategies in the Palestinian women's movement regarding formulating legal protection for women (discussed in Chapters 5 and 6). In 1917, the Ottomans issued a 'code' of personal status which gave a woman the right to seek dissolution of her marriage on a number of grounds, and adopted a provision aimed at limiting polygamy. The British government modified and replaced various Ottoman laws, but paid little attention to the laws of personal status, leaving unchanged, and within the jurisdiction of religious (*shari'a*--Islamic--or church) courts, the legal principles affecting the position of women (Rishmawi 1988:81). Jordan's annexation of the West Bank brought the area under the jurisdiction of the Jordanian legal system. Jordanian legislation regarding women differs from that of other Arab countries, in its incorporation of Bedouin values and, hence, is more restrictive regarding women's rights than, for example, legislation in Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon³⁶ (Rishmawi 1988:84). In addition, between 1948 and

³⁶ Since 1953, Lebanese law gives women the right to vote and run for public office; Egyptian and Syrian legislation provides for mandatory female representation in Parliament. Jordanian legislation differs also from Egyptian law. The latter considers a man's intercourse with a female without her consent to be rape, regardless of their marital status, whereas Jordanian law enables a rapist or assaulter to avoid penalty if he marries his victim (Rishmawi 1988:84-5).

1967, Jordan was subject to the provisions of Emergency Regulations, which enabled the government to curtail basic freedoms (Rishmawi 1988:86).

In 1967, the Israeli Military Proclamation No. 2 served to transfer all legislative, executive and administrative powers held by the Jordanian government to the General Military Commander for the West Bank, and froze all laws in their pre-occupation state--thus, depriving West Bank Palestinians from benefiting from modifications to Jordanian legislation, including the 1976 Jordanian Civil Code. Modifications and additions to Jordanian legislation by the Israeli military authorities (instituted according to Israeli interest in Judaizing the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip, despite international legal restrictions on the occupying authority's right to change existing local laws) are contained in 1,180 Military Orders (Rishmawi 1988:87). Legislation left unmodified includes, for example, Jordanian laws pertaining to charitable and cooperative societies, as they provide for Israel's strict supervision and control of these organizations (Rishmawi 1988:86-7).

The religious courts have remained outside the powers of the Israeli military government, and have applied (in areas under their jurisdiction) modifications introduced into

Jordanian law after 1967.³⁷ The Jerusalem *shari'a* court, though, is not recognized by Israeli authorities, leaving Palestinians, as noted by West Bank lawyer Rishmawi, to live under conflicting jurisdiction, duplicate court fees, and conflicting legislation (Rishmawi 1988:87-8).

The Jerusalem *shari'a* court applies the 1976 Jordanian Law of Personal Status (JLPS) with regard to personal and family legislation. But, as Palestinians do not recognize Jordanian authority over them, and with no way of directly addressing the Jordanian legislature that issued the JLPS (which was formulated to be applied only in Jordan) in 1976, Palestinians have not been able to challenge the family laws applied to them. As one Birzeit professor stated,

It's very good to study the law. It's very good to know the law, but the law is not in our hands to change. We need to have a government in order to change the law. Besides the law, we need to work on longer-term processes.³⁸

Since Palestine National Council was declared the Palestinian legislative authority, and in recognition of the

³⁷ Included in these is a law that gives a woman the right to demand compensation for "arbitrary" divorce. Rishmawi notes that this is extremely significant since it goes against classical Islamic law which holds divorce to be the unilateral right of the husband, who does not have to show reason or justification. On other issues, modifications in Jordanian law have not gone as far as legislation in Egypt, Syria, or Iraq. For example, the banning (in Tunisia) or restriction (by Iraqi and Syrian law) of polygamy (Rishmawi 1988:88).

³⁸ Interview 43. Ramallah, West Bank, 11 August, 1992.

Palestine Liberation Organization's legitimate representation of Palestinians, Jordan cut all legal and administrative links with the West Bank. Jordanian public and governmental institutions withdrew, with the exception of the two legal departments. In August, 1988, the Executive Committee of the Palestine National Council decided that all laws and orders in force at the time of the Jordanian decision to cut ties would remain in force until repealed or amended by the Palestine National Council, declared as the Palestinian legislative authority (Welchman n.d.:114-15). This leaves the *shari'a* courts able to apply a law promulgated by the newly created legislative authority of the State of Palestine. In Welchman's words, when this does take place, "both the content of the law and the method of its implementation will be of great significance" (Welchman n.d.:115).

The political context in which this legislation is created is paramount. And women's ability to direct and shape the formulation of a comprehensive legal framework rests both on the democratic nature of this process and on accumulating a body of knowledge, experience, and strategies in addressing women's present legal concerns.

Women and the PLO

With the 1967 defeat, the Palestine Liberation Organization became a mass organization, calling on "the people in arms" rather than "Arab armies" for the task of liberation. Slogans emerged, such as: "Women will be liberated when society is," and "Men and women--side by side in the battle" (Jad 1990:129). Despite the lack of an agenda for women within the overall agenda of the revolution, the Palestinian Resistance Movement provided the impetus for initiating and sustaining a transformation in the roles of women-- a transformation which had been underway in the preceding decades of exile (Peteet 1989:141).

Women's Organizational Response

In the main, women's confrontation of the occupation was channelled through over a hundred women's charitable associations (Giacaman and Johnson 1986:158).³⁹ The first major act of Palestinian solidarity to deal with the shock of

³⁹ Women's participation in armed struggle, and their torture and imprisonment, served to alter the image of women as weak. Their involvement also undermined the notion of "women's honour"--the notion that women's sexual purity reflects on the honour of her family which renders her sexuality in need of guarding and which, in turn, has served to legitimize restrictions on women's behaviour and movement (Jad 1990:129).

the 1967 defeat was undertaken by a women's organization, *In'ash el-Usra* Society. The society collected food donations for villages razed by Israeli troops.⁴⁰ Najjar notes that the collective cooking and the logistics of getting the food to the refugees served to pull the community together and make it feel less helpless (Najjar 1992b:147).

Membership in the charitable organizations continued to be *de facto* restricted to middle-class women from major urban areas. These charities and societies focused on helping camp and rural women face harsh conditions in the event of death, deportation, or imprisonment of the men in the family (Jad 1990:130). They also fostered a revival of Palestinian embroidery, which provided women with incomes but also served to affirm Palestinian identity.⁴¹

During the 1970s, several developments fostered the growth of "new" women's organizations. These developments, as noted by Jad, include the following:

⁴⁰ Demolition, by the Israeli military, of over six thousand houses in border villages left about ten thousand villagers homeless (Halabi 1981:51-53).

⁴¹ New embroidery stitches found their way into traditional patterns, which provided a running commentary of women's views on political developments. For example, the 'dead-end-road' stitch denoted women's rejection of the Camp David Accords; and the 'two-snakes' stitch represented women's feelings about Begin and Sadat (Najjar 1992:147).

- Women were granted the right to vote in the 1976 municipal elections⁴² which helped to bring in younger and more progressive leaders into two dozen town and city councils. This leadership organized work camps, in particular in the central region of the West Bank, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Ramallah, which became breeding grounds for women activists.

- During this time, nine colleges and community colleges opened; women comprised from 35 to 55 percent of the student bodies.

- In 1977, the Likud government of Begin-Shamir-Sharon came to power and immediately escalated repressive measures against Palestinians in the occupied territories. This was met with greater determination and resistance, not least among Palestinian women. Many activist women were placed under house arrest. These house and prison detentions had differing effects on organizations. For example, the functioning of charitable societies, for which decision making was restricted to a few members, was greatly hindered when key figures were arrested. On the other hand, student organizations and the newly emerging women's organizations, which elected leadership democratically and in a decentralized manner, were able to escape some of the effects of the repression. Hence, the relative importance of charitable organizations began to decline.

- women's issues were increasingly raised and dealt with in cultural activities of the mid-1970s, including theatre performances, magazine articles, and entire books (Jad 1990:130-1).

⁴² Rishmawi discounts Israel's claim that its motive in extending the Jordanian Law of Municipalities to include Palestinian women's right to vote in West Bank municipalities was to improve women's legal status. Namely, Israel's claim is untenable because of the fact that no other provision whatsoever relating to women's legal status has been changed (Rishmawi 1988:88). Rather, incentive was political: Israeli Defense Minister at the time, Shimon Peres, made the mistaken calculation that Arab women would vote conservatively--that is, against Palestinian nationalist candidates. They voted, rather, heavily in favour of nationalist and progressive candidates (Jad 1990:130).

Grassroots Women's Committees: The Emergence of a 'Vanguard'

These developments led, in 1978, to the establishment of a women's committee along the lines of the volunteer work committees begun in 1971-72. Politicized in the student movement at Palestinian universities, the founders aimed to deepen the involvement of women in villages, camps as well as poor urban women, women workers, intellectuals and urban middle-class women in a united women's movement.⁴³ This focus is explained by Giacaman:

The rediscovery of the village and refugee camp led to the emergence of a new type of struggle, one that attempted to change the predicament of these neglected women, to help them solve their daily problems so that they could then develop their own roles and positions in the popular resistance against the occupation. It is precisely at this stage that a reconstruction of the women's liberation formula began to take place; it was now evident that the formula had to take into consideration other contradictions dominating women's lives. Once this reformulation took place, the progressive women's committees movement adopted a platform demanding simultaneous improvement in women's status politically, economically, socially and culturally, and their liberation from all forms of exploitation (Giacaman 1987:10).

From the first committee, the Union of Women's Work Committee (UWWC), splinter committees formed, each associated with a different political faction of the PLO. The Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, later changed to Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC), and

⁴³ Interview 10. East Jerusalem, 2 June, 1992.

associated with the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), emerged in 1980. A year later, women in Jerusalem and Ramallah set up the Union of Palestinian Working Women's Committees (PWWC), affiliated with the Palestinian People's Party (formerly the Palestinian Communist Party). The Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (PWC) is aligned with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). And the Women's Committee for Social Work, set up in June, 1982, is formed from members associated with *Fatah* (Hilterman 198:432-44).

The WAC has focused on organizing housewives and village women first, then employees, teachers, workers and artisans. Toward this, it set up vocational training centres for women, cooperatively-based production projects and cooperative shops, as well as literacy centres and day-care facilities (Hilterman 1988:479). The PWC focuses more on recruiting working women. The PWC is notable in its relatively greater emphasis on women's social struggles. Finally, the WCSW closely models the aims and activities of charitable societies in taking "a leading role in offering help for the needy" (Hilterman 1988:487; cited is WCSW, Association Bulletin No. 2 1983-84. Ramallah, 1984).

Despite these differences in approach, and in the political positions each committee takes on national issues,

their programs are very similar--and, in fact, do not differ substantively from those of the charitable organizations. The committees have all set up nurseries, training programs, literacy centres, and production cooperatives. In contrast, clearly, to the charitable societies, the committees' projects aim to raise women's consciousness and decrease the barriers preventing women from taking a more active role in the national movement--ultimately, to increase the membership of the political factions to which the committees are variously associated.

Membership in the women's committees is flexible, in contrast to the restrictive membership conditions of the charitable organizations (Jad 1990:132). While the women's charitable organizations are registered societies and closely monitored by the Social Affairs Department of the Civilian Administration (in other words, by the Israeli military authorities), the women's committees have chosen not to apply for permits (Hilterman 1988:430). This has not protected members from harassment or imprisonment for their activism. In 1986, the committees were banned by the Israeli military authorities.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Interview 1. East Jerusalem, 27 May, 1992.

The committees are financed mainly by contributions from their members, by donations, and by revenue from periodic sales at bazaars. Increasingly, foreign donor organizations, including War On Want and Oxfam in England, and NOVIB in the Netherlands, are providing funding to individual projects (Hilterman 1988:469). According to a PWC activist, "...the [Israeli military] authorities put restrictions on who gives what to whom. People, for example shopkeepers, who gave us money have at times been summoned to military headquarters [for questioning]..." (cited in Hilterman 1988:534).

Palestinian Women and the Intifada

The structures of the four (later seven) women's committees, well established by the mid-1980s, enabled Palestinian women to play a major role in the Palestinian *intifada*. The uprising precipitated "no less than a social revolution within Palestinian society" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in involving all sectors of society, and all geographic areas, including affluent and normally apolitical Christian towns and neighbourhoods, such as Beit Sahur, Beit Jala, Bethlehem, and East Jerusalem (Y. Sayigh 1989:28-29).

Women's committees provided leadership at a local level, mobilizing women to participate in demonstrations and sit-ins,

providing food, clothes and medical aid to the injured and those trapped in villages and refugee camps under extended curfew (Hilterman 1988:443). By providing concrete solutions to people's daily problems, both the women's and workers' movements were able to "out-administer" Israel and Jordan, undermining the institutional control exercised by Israel's Civilian Administration and local collaborators, as well as Jordan's support of village elites (Hilterman 1988:400).

Popular committees emerged to organize agriculture, education, food storage, medical, and guarding committees. These were meant as alternative institutions to those connected to the Israeli administration, and as the nascent infrastructure of an independent Palestinian state. Women were active in these from the start. The education committees had the highest proportion of women. Women responded to the military-ordered closures of schools by setting up classrooms (Jad 1990:134). It was the community-service functions of these popular/neighbourhood committees and their all-inclusive and democratic form which facilitated women's mass participation (Giacaman and Johnson 1989: 164).

Home economies were another avenue for women's active participation in the *intifada*. The home economies movement was entrusted to women by the UNLU, and were a means of facilitating the boycott of Israeli goods, and of attaining

self-sufficiency in the face of the economic blockade imposed by the occupation forces (Jad 1990:136). Women organized the production of foodstuffs either from their homes or in income-generating projects outside the home. Debate arose in the women's movement as to the potential of home economies for changing women's social status; much of the discussion centred on the preferential location of the projects outside of the home. Jad notes "one should not, as is sometimes done, take a mechanistic attitude regarding the virtues of women's work outside the house" (Jad 1990:136). Where home economies have led to changes in the traditional division of labour, in Jad's words, "such changes....have not been accompanied by a public critique of existing rural values" (Jad 1990:136).

What happened was that, in the words of a member of a women's research centre, production got:

very wound up with the home economy, cutting off from the Israelis....creating an indigenous economy... What happened, in a subtle way, [was that] the priority moved away from women's production.⁴⁵

Women's cooperatives set up by women's committees prior to the *intifada*--for example, Our Production Is Our Pride, set up by the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees--focused on getting women involved in work outside the home as a way toward empowering them through providing an independent income. The context of the *intifada* served to diffuse this

⁴⁵ Interview 39. East Jerusalem. 9 August, 1992.

goal--just as it served to render women's production vital to the national struggle.

While the committees in villages were made up of all men, they coordinated with women's organizations; mixed popular committees were formed, on the other hand, in cities (Jad 1990:135). Women in refugee camps tended to participate on a more spontaneous and massive basis, in activities such as marches, demonstrations, and martyrs' funeral processions. Their direct involvement in committees was rare partly because meetings were held in coffee shops or in mosques, where women rarely go (Jad 1990:135). Notably, though, the guarding committees in cities and towns comprised of male youth whereas older women in camps and villages were active in guarding committees in their areas (Jad 1990:134).

Through their organized activism, women were building barricades, fighting soldiers, throwing rocks and defying curfew to smuggle food and fuel into the camp. Women's language also began to change, as women talked about the uprising, politics, detentions, and such, and, in effect, sharing politics in a way they had not before (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:160).

Decision making within the women's movement remains in the hands of urban middle-class women. Nonetheless, Giacaman

and Johnson argue that the relative greater participation of women in camps and villages (as compared to women in towns) constitutes an historic reversal in the orientation of the women's movement in Palestine (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:160).

Women and the National Leadership

The mobilization of women, along with workers, was an integral part of the PLO's strategy to politicize the masses and involve them in the struggle (Hilterman 1988: 339). The Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) (a diffuse and widely representative group formed at the start of the uprising) called upon women to participate along with other sectors of society. The language of the appeals of the UNLU noticeably evolved from that of the appeals issued during the 1936-39 Palestinian revolt. In the latter, leaflets called on "youngsters of Palestine, men, elderly people." From December, 1987, the UNLU appealed "people of martyrs... revolutionary giants... men and students... workers, peasants and women..." (Jad 1990:133).

Nonetheless, of the first thirty *bayans*, or appeals, only one mentions women. Communique no. 29 congratulated the "mother of the martyr" for giving her son to the struggle. The "mother of the martyr" is a heroic role enshrined in

Palestinian history and the Palestinian present--stoically courageous but not necessarily actively resisting (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:165).

On November 15, 1988, the independence of the state of Palestine was declared by PLO Chairman, Yasser Arafat. This document sets a precedent among Arab countries, by affirming equality between men and women. Nonetheless, the Declaration of Independence portrays women, still, in a static role:

We render special tribute to that brave Palestinian woman, guardian of sustenance and life, keeper of our people's perennial flame. (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:166).

These two images of women--the mother of the martyr and the guardian and sustainer of life--are clearly wanting in terms of their ability to improve women's status in the future (Giacaman and Johnson 1989:166). But of more immediate concern to women during, in particular, the second and third years of the *intifada*, were the contradictions which were increasing women's burden, but serving to decrease national and social support for women's activism.

Emerging Contradictions

Israeli military repression had been stepped up to an unprecedented scale during the Gulf War. Funds from Gulf States and from remittances sent by Palestinians working in the Gulf were no longer forthcoming. The increased focus on the "peace talks" between Palestinians and the Israeli government was accompanied by an unprecedented increase in Israeli repression against Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. Political factionalism was again rising, and women's committees were feeling the pinch of these developments. Their projects were failing, and the mass mobilization attained in the first and second years of the *intifada* had dropped off.

Whereas there was a rise in membership of grassroots organizations (including women's committees) at the beginning of the *intifada*--when the *intifada* declined, membership declined. Grassroots organizations began to investigate this decline. As a member of a women's committee noted:

They realized how wrapped up they were in the national struggle and did not see the social problems facing women--be they domestic violence, school dropouts, early marriages, too many kids, problems or training. These problems existed all along, but because there was another priority, the national struggle, we could not see through it.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Interview 49. Ramallah, West Bank, 17 August, 1992.

In spite of the *intifada*'s push to get rid of oppressive customs, these were on the rise. For example, early marriages were increasing because of the continued closure of schools and universities and increasing insecurity of employment options for women. As expressed by one activist, "with schools closed during the *intifada*, marriage became a chance to improve a girl's situation."⁴⁷ Hammami notes, also, that fear for the lives of young men played a role in parents' decisions to marry their sons during the height of the *intifada*. That is, death is considered more tragic for a young man if no male heir is left behind (Hammami 1993:289). Women were also obliged to deal with the economic and psychological suffering resulting from the oppression that their sons or husbands are subjected to when arrested, beaten and sometimes killed (Nasrou 1990:16)

The contradictions of the *intifada* were felt within various organizations. While the uprising provided the conditions to raise and push for women's issues, the imperatives of the national struggle also resulted in a decline in organizations' ability to address women's issues. For example, al-Haq, or Law in the Service of Man, a Geneva-based human rights organization in Ramallah, created programs to address women's and labour rights in the mid-1980s. With the *intifada*, al-Haq became overwhelmed by the need to deal

⁴⁷ Interview 23. Beit Sahur, West Bank, 10 July, 1992.

with general human rights abuses. As explained by a staff member, human rights violations during, in particular, the first two years of the uprising, were so tremendous "that it was impossible at that time to raise women's issues. The whole society had to deal with all the injuries, killings, abuse. We fell into the trap of only focusing on human rights violations at the hands of the Israeli occupation."⁴⁸

al-Haq's women's and labour programs have been replaced by projects which are approved individually. This represents a retreat from integrating women's issues and rights into its over-all approach. As explained by a staff member,

It is a more efficient way of working but behind it there is a different understanding of women's rights. The difference is to look at women's rights separately or to deal with women's issues in every human rights issue that is being raised--with the understanding that women's rights are integral to human rights.⁴⁹

Women, the Hijab, and the Struggle Over Meaning

The *intifada* has also been the context for a campaign in Gaza, and to a lesser--though increasing--extent in the West Bank, to impose the *hijab* on all women. Hammami (1990) reports that in Gaza, one year into the *intifada*, only a few committed

⁴⁸ Interview 26. Ramallah, West Bank, 11 July, 1992.

⁴⁹ Interview 53. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 August, 1992.

women continued not to wear the *hijab*. She suggests that social acquiescence, the inaction, or late-coming action of the political leadership, family pressure and an ideological transformation during the *intifada* made it difficult for women to counter the newly charged Islamicist movements. The struggle "was not against the *hijab* itself, but about what the *intifada* would lead to" (Hammami 1990:24).

Much of what *Hamas* calls for was called for previously, but now it is being done at "an incredibly blatant and political level."⁵⁰ The issues that people used to think they could ignore because they were there but subtle, the fundamentalists have raised in a very open and threatening kind of way which forces people to call for a need to start dealing with them.⁵¹

Before the *intifada*, in Gaza as elsewhere in the Middle East, there were many different forms of *hijab* used or not used by women of various social classes and groupings. The forms and meanings associated with it have been fluid, variously signifying class, regional background, religion or age. The dress and headcovering of older camp women in Gaza asserts both their peasant origins and their contemporary

⁵⁰ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

status as camp women. Its primary function has been to signify class/group identity rather than a gendered one (Hammami 1990). Since 1948, there has been in the West Bank and Gaza, ongoing appropriation, transformation and reinvention of customary clothing and headcoverings.

Many women stopped wearing the *hijab* altogether in the late 1950s. By the end of the 1970s, the Islamic Resistance Movement, or its acronym, *Hamas*, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, began to endow the *hijab* with renewed religious significance and political affiliation. Women active with the movement began wearing the *shari'a* dress, a long, plain, tailored overcoat. With no real precedent in indigenous Palestinian dress, Hammami sees this "invention of tradition" as "fundamentally an instrument of oppression, a direct disciplining of women's bodies for political ends. The form itself is directly connected to a reactionary ideology about women's role in society and a movement that seeks to implement this ideology" (Hammami 1990:25).

Before the *intifada*, pressure to wear *shari'a* dress remained site-specific--affecting women at the workplace or the Islamic University campus. The social space continued to exist for women not to wear any form of *hijab* until during the *intifada* when an active campaign began (Hammami 1990:26). Eventually, religious meanings associated with the *hijab* were

replaced with new *intifada* significance: it became a sign of women's commitment, as women, to the *intifada*. It was also a sign of respect for the martyrs, and a form of cultural struggle--an assertion of national heritage. Meanwhile, those women who persisted in not wearing the *hijab* did so as an expression of their political activism and, hence, were more easily identified by the military as activists (Hammami 1990:26).

The *intifada* Leadership's response to the *hijab* campaign revealed for Palestinian women the tension between the national movement and the goal of women's liberation. Besides reacting to women's concerns too late, the leadership's response reinforced the traditional valuation of women, rather than supporting women's rights and political independence. That is, the leadership condemned attacks on women by religious youths on the basis of a woman's 'honour,' rather than her right to freely choose whether or not to wear a *hijab*. The leadership's opposition to the *hijab* has been expressed in terms of the need for unity (Hammami 1990:27-28). Hammami suggests that the *intifada* leadership's delay in responding to the *hijab* campaign attests to its efforts at forming a political alliance with the religious groups (Hammami 1990:28).

The Women's Movement: Strategies Re-evaluated

When the pressures of *Hamas'* campaign around the *hijab* became apparent, the women's movement as a whole began to take stock, realizing that it did not have a proactive program of action to ensure that women's concerns could be promoted. The ability of women to build on their increased participation in the national struggle became a pressing question within women's committees.⁵²

To different degrees, all the committees began a process of re-evaluating their programs, including the need to transcend political divisions between the committees. As stated by an activist in a committee,

The thing we were talking about was--should we continue with the same strategies, or do we need to change them? The debate again arose: to what extent are women's issues priority for the whole Palestinian movement.⁵³

And, in the word of another activist,

As problems were discovered, the question became: now that we don't have the *intifada*, what do we have as women, what have we achieved as women?⁵⁴

A re-assessment was underway. One activist noted that, whereas the belief in the early 1980s was that the once women

⁵² Interview 10. East Jerusalem, 2 June, 1992.

⁵³ Interview 49. Ramallah, West Bank, 17 August, 1992.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

became involved politically, became active in promoting the national movement, that "automatically that would strengthen your stance as women....and the national movement would acknowledge your presence and work on your issues.... Times have shown us that this was indeed a delusion."⁵⁵

Efforts: Unifying the Women's Movement

Creating a unified women's movement has become a primary goal of the women's committees. In this effort, at the beginning of 1989, the four major women's committees came together to form the Unified Women's Council (UWC)⁵⁶ which became a coordinating body between the committees (Jad 1990:135). Thus far, the UWC has been most active in coordinating kindergarten projects of the committees, and in arranging tours for visitors.⁵⁷ Political rivalries, while not debilitating, have served to limit the UWC's work in other areas and has limited its potential, according to one activist, to take on a leadership role within the women's movement.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Interview 28. East Jerusalem, 14 July, 1992.

⁵⁶ Initially called the **Higher** Women's Council, the name was changed in an effort to avoid an apparent hierarchal structuring of bodies within the women's movement (Scholey 1994, forthcoming).

⁵⁷ Interview 48. East Jerusalem, 17 August, 1992.

⁵⁸ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

Additionally, the UWC comprises only women from women's committees (the leaders of three committees and members of the fourth are represented). When its mandate was being formulated and discussed among leaders within the women's movement, including women not affiliated with any one women's committee, the independent women were "kicked out."⁵⁹

Meanwhile, another organization, the Women's Association of Professional and Academic Women, emerged, comprising only independent women. The fear is that factional rivalries will paralyse the association, hence it bars "political women" from its membership, regardless of their professional qualifications.⁶⁰

Women's Research Centres: Filling a 'Gap'

At the time of the emergence of the five women's research centres examined in the study (1989-91), women's issues were being discussed internally within women's committees, but not between them. There were discussions among the committees on the future of the women's movement in light of other revolutionary movements, and about why women's emancipation and other 'social' problems were not being discussed. But the

⁵⁹ Interview 43. Ramallah, West Bank. 11 August, 1992.

⁶⁰ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

programs of the committees, and discussion among them, served the aims of women's committees as formulated when they were established--and thus focused on the need to integrate women into the national movement.⁶¹

As the contradictions of the *intifada* increased, with pressures arising regarding women's dress and behaviour, women began to realize that the 'groundwork' of the committee structures will not automatically lead to an effective program of action. Women saw that they "did not have a deep idea about the aims of their committee, about themselves as women, about what they wanted to do, and how."⁶²

Women's research centres represent an attempt to 'step back' from the situation of women in the context of the *intifada* and post-Gulf War period. By examining women's concerns outside of the structures of the political women's committees, women's studies centres are bringing together "political" women and "independent" women. As the following chapters illustrate, the process of formulating strategy around women's concerns is providing direction and guidance to the women's committees and to the women's movement as a whole.

⁶¹ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

⁶² Interview 30. Ramallah, West Bank, 15 July, 1992.

The emergence of the centres corresponds, also, with the growing belief that addressing women's concerns necessitates united action. A "certain kind of collective consciousness" has emerged in that everyone, except charitable societies, realizes that gender relations need to be addressed now and not after liberation.⁶³ The Director of one of the women's centres noted that:

Women's grassroots committees have started thinking more seriously about women's issues. They are re-evaluating their work.... There was a nadwa (discussion) that took place in Nablus. I could feel it between the lines; ["A"] saying we have to get away from the factions. We have to stop taking directions and get more professionals and academics involved. ["B"] on the other side saying, whether independent or dependent, we need free thinkers. Analysis does not necessarily have to be influenced by the male dominated factions because whether we like it or not factions are male dominated like the rest of society, like the rest of the world. But how much can women in political factions be empowered enough to bring about change from within? I don't know. So we need independent thinkers.⁶⁴

The following two chapters examine the centres' attempts to promote and address women's concerns from a place of institutional and political independence. The significance of the centres' emergence at this time, is explored in Chapter six, while the programs and objectives are discussed in Chapter five.

⁶³ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

⁶⁴ Interview 5. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS I:

WOMEN'S RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT CENTRES--

GIVING FORM TO WOMEN'S AGENCY AND CONSCIOUSNESS

The emergence of women's research and development centres in the West Bank and Gaza signals, I argue, the increasing ability of the Palestinian women's movement to give form to women's agency and consciousness **as women**. The centres organize women's activism around women's issues rather than around national issues. This focus is 'new ground' for the women's movement. A member of Women's Affairs in Gaza commented:

When women come here, they don't expect to find the ideas that we have. They expect to find activities directly related to the occupation. It is often the first time they hear these things.⁶⁵

This chapter examines

- i) the programs and objectives of each centre in five case studies; and
- ii) the role the five centres play within the women's movement including, in particular, the centres' attempts to devise mechanisms through which to foster links between otherwise disparate segments of the Palestinian women's movement.

⁶⁵ Interview 20. Gaza City, 2 July, 1992.

CASE STUDY I
WOMEN'S STUDIES CENTRE
East Jerusalem

Women's Studies Centre is located in Beit Hanina, on the outskirts of East Jerusalem, on the main road between East Jerusalem and Ramallah. The Centre, established in 1990, houses a resource lending library, video equipment, over 30 films on and by women, and office and computer equipment.

The WSC aims to raise feminist consciousness and contribute to building a feminist agenda. In the words of the Director:

A major goal for the Centre is women's empowerment....I don't want it to become a fashionable concept, but empowering women to be able to design their destinies, to know that they have potential like other human beings...⁶⁶

⁶⁶ Interview 5. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

Structure

The WSC has developed a collective process whereby all staff members take part in weekly meetings.⁶⁷ Collective meetings and a process of self (individual and collective)-evaluation helps to encourage each member to actively participate and take responsibility within the Centre. This practice is an attempt, also, to create 'democratic' organizational processes.

Establishing 'Independence'

The Centre was established by the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees (PFWAC). However, feeling that "there was an urgent need for the Centre....[and that] the work of such a centre should pour into the women's movement as a whole,"⁶⁸ the WSC worked to establish its independence from the PFWAC. As with each of the research centres examined in the study, WSC's attempt to remain independent from any one women's committee derives from the need to gain legitimacy as a centre which serves

⁶⁷ At the time of fieldwork, WSC comprised a Board of Directors, a Director, and ten full-time employees, including three "volunteers," their salaries paid directly by international development organizations (OCSD/Oxfam-Quebec and UNAIS).

⁶⁸ Interview 5. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

the interest of women in general, rather than those of women from a particular women's committee. While the membership of the board is comprised of women from one women's committee, as well as independent women (those not directly involved in a political committee), the Centre has managed to include the participation of women from all committees in its activities and training programs.

The WSC has become structurally autonomous from the PFWAC by securing funding from international development organizations. For the Centre, and for some staff members, the move away from working within the PFWAC toward working as a separate centre has been a gradual one. A member noted the effect of shifting her focus from the women's committee to the WSC:

When I was editing the magazine while still involved in the PFWAC, I would always pick articles written by someone in the Committee, announce something for the Committee, etc. Those who were buying the magazine saw it as not independent and therefore not for all women. Now, as I am not with the Committee, I feel I can give more to women, and address all women's concerns.⁶⁹

The Director noted that "it has not been easy to work on its independence within the women's movement as a whole. Only very recently have [women] come to respect that it is independent."⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Interview 10. East Jerusalem, 2 June, 1992.

⁷⁰ Interview 5. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

The Centre's Board of Directors includes women from the PFWAC as well as 'independent' women. At the time of fieldwork, the issue of "opening up membership of the Board" to women from other women's committees was a sensitive subject, but was being addressed among members of the Centre.⁷¹

As with the other four centres, the WSC has developed mechanisms to ensure its courses and programs are open to women from each of the women political committees, as well as independent women. For example, each event is advertised in the local media and invitations are sent to each of the women's committee. For training courses, the centre reserves an equal number of 'spots' for each committee to fill with its members. Additional places are left open for women not active or affiliated with a committee. These mechanisms enables the Centre to maintain legitimacy within the women's movement, as not primarily serving the (political) interests

⁷¹ Four of the nine Board Members are "independent" women. The remainder are affiliated with the PFWAC. When one of the "independent" women joined the Centre's Board (at the time, the Centre was financially and physically housed by the PFWAC), she made it clear that she was joining because she believed the PFWAC was establishing an important project and, moreover, did not want her membership on the Board to be used (politically) by the PFWAC to claim the Centre's independence from the committee. Notably, the (political versus "independent") location of individuals within the Centre and the Centre's origins remain determinate in terms of public perception--in spite of financial independence from the PFWAC and its inclusion into its programs (if not structure) of women from all committees, segments of the women's movement, and sectors of society.

of the PFWAC. At the same time, the significance of their role in the women's movement is linked to maintaining relations with grassroots women's committees, as they are considered 'the real women's movement.'

Activities

The Centre undertakes and publishes research studies (see Appendix 5), holds courses and workshops for women (on topics such as problems facing women's cooperatives, feminist research methodology, car maintenance, English language instruction, video production, journalism and writing, counselling on women and mental health), and hosts open discussions and seminars (on, for example, women and family status law, and women and mental health). With Women's Affairs and Bisan's Women's Studies Committee, the WSC organizes an annual women's film and book festival. The Centre has also hosted conferences on domestic violence against women, the initial one of which (held in June, 1991) was the first conference on this issue in occupied Palestine. (A summary of the Centre's activities is contained in Appendix 4.)

The Centre's monthly publication, *al-Mar'a* (The Woman), an Arabic-language publication, addresses issues such as

women's equality, social and cultural change, women's right to education, legal rights, women in work, women's health and various other issues. It also provides information and advice on issues of health, wife battering, divorce, and child care. *Sparks/Wamid* summarizes the main articles in *al-Mar'a* and reaches English-speaking readers and funding organizations.

Annual Film Festival and Book Fair

One of the WSC's main undertakings has been its Annual Women's Film and Book Festival. These festivals make visible the experiences of women and have served as forums for discussion on the portrayal of Arab women in Western media and art, women's legal rights, issues of cultural and/or religious practices such as female circumcision, arranged marriages, and veiling. The Festivals have brought in Arab women film-makers who have shared their experiences and views with Palestinian women.

The book fairs have featured Arabic-language publications on women from local book stores and resource centres. Also featured during the festivals were monodramas performed by Palestinian actresses from inside the Green Line, and art exhibitions in Nablus, Jerusalem and Gaza,

featuring paintings, photography, ceramics, textile work and flower arrangements. Gathering together and making these resources available to women is important given the effects of the political situation which makes movement difficult and therefore venues less accessible. Also, with the West Bank and Gaza culturally and economically isolated from the rest of the Arab world due to the occupation, Arabic-language texts from Arab countries are difficult to obtain.

The conditions of occupation make the festivals' organization particularly difficult. During the planning stages of the Second Annual Women's Festival, the West Bank and Gaza were closed, creating major difficulties and repercussions which lasted through the festival (WSC February, 1993:5). As noted by one organizer of the events:

Given the political climate at the time, just holding the festival was, in many ways, a bold undertaking, and the markedly positive response from the public was no small success (WSC February, 1993:5).

Films were screened in five areas of the West Bank and Gaza (East Jerusalem, Ramallah, Birzeit, Nablus, and Gaza City), reaching more women than had been possible during the previous year's screenings. Additionally, following the main screenings, the WSC took films from its video club to women in towns and villages for smaller screenings. In this way, the second festival reached more women, as well as women

from different geographic, socio-economic, political and religious backgrounds (WSC February, 1993:6).

Coordinating with Local Organizations

The WSC provides services, including training, which local organizations take advantage of. Its course on women and mental health was designed for women from local institutions who provide counselling services to women in their daily work. This course aimed to provide participants with basic counselling tools, to sensitize them to problems specific to women, including depression and low self-esteem, and to address issues of ethics and professional responsibilities to clients. Issues included sexuality, incest, domestic violence (physical and emotional), and depression. As with its other programs, this course was structured around "participatory learning" in an attempt to encourage participants' active involvement (WSC February 1993:4).

The Centre's video training workshops, conducted by an Indian film-maker on a one-year contract with WSC, are hosted by local organizations, including Palestine Agricultural Relief Committees in Jerusalem, the Centre for Popular Arts in Ramallah, and Women's Affairs Centres in

Gaza and Nablus. These courses are two-weeks in duration and provide women with hands-on experience in shot taking, camera movement, lighting, research, story and script writing, filming, and editing, as well as training in working out a budget and fund raising proposals for film productions. Participants in the Centre's various courses are generally from a range of geographic, professional and political backgrounds, including women from the Gaza Strip and the Jordan Valley.

Facilitating Links

The Centre also functions as a base which can foster links and networks among women. Participants in the course on Women and Mental Health took the initiative to create follow-up mechanisms, including monthly lectures, to support women counsellors. During the Second Annual Film Festival, women writers were invited through newspaper advertisements to participate in regional working committees responsible for preparing literary activities for the festival in their area. Women, some of whom had been writing in isolation for years, organized readings during which they shared their poems, stories and reflections, and contributed to the production of two literary booklets.

Expanding its Approach

In the year following fieldwork for the study, the Centre has worked on strengthening the links between its research agenda and its education program, so that its research can have a more direct impact and bring about social change. For example, its study on why women and girls are dropping out of school is being conducted in the old city in Ramallah and coordinated with UNICEF; the Centre hopes, with this study, to provide strategies and programs and to be involved in a consultative and resource capacity in order that the research can directly lead to the implementation of strategies with other organizations.⁷²

⁷² Personal correspondence, July, 1993.

CASE STUDY II**WOMEN'S STUDIES COMMITTEE****Bisan Center for Research & Development****Ramallah, West Bank****Structure and Objectives**

Established in 1990, in Ramallah, not far from Birzeit University, Bisan draws on the skills of professionals and academics in the area. As a social research and development organization, Bisan is comprised of three committees:⁷³ the Economic Development Studies Committee, the Women's Studies Committee, and the Social History Studies Committee.

Bisan's Women's Studies Committee is unique in addressing women's issues within the context of a broader research and development centre. The Director explained that its "integrated approach is in order to connect women's issues to economic development and to social development. This is the rationale behind establishing the three committees".⁷⁴ This

⁷³ These committees are contained within the organizational structure of Bisan, to be distinguished, that is, from committees associated with the various political factions--that is, women's committees or grassroots committees.

⁷⁴ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

case study briefly reviews the programs of each of the Centre's Committees.

A member explained the rationale for the Women's Studies Committee, in working within a general development centre, as follows:

I feel that having a women's studies committee in a general centre enables us to impose our own agenda, issues and activities on the situation. We cannot say that progressive males will promote our own issues--that will not happen. I want to put myself in the general framework and see how I can use this general framework to impose my own issues. The other women's centres are healthy developments but sometimes I'm afraid that we are so geared to women's issues that we do not see the relationship between these and general issues.... I do not want to work in isolation.⁷⁵

A Director, a secretary, and three full-time staff from international development organizations⁷⁶ work with Palestinian volunteers. Bisan's reliance on Palestinian volunteer workers also distinguishes its Women's Studies Committee from the other four centres examined in the study. It relies on its volunteer base to promote "indigenous development."⁷⁷ In the words of the Director, Bisan attempts "to bring peasants and workers into the decision-making of development.... We are trying to bridge the gap between intellectuals, professionals and these sectors of society--

⁷⁵ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

⁷⁶ Two from OCSD/Oxfam Quebec and one from UNAIS.

⁷⁷ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

women, workers and peasants."⁷⁸ In its reliance on volunteer time and labour, Bisan's structure reflects its desire to build on already-existing structures (those of the political committees).

As with the other centres, Bisan works with the grassroots committees, including women's committees. According to its Director, Bisan's "integrated approach [serves to] connect women's issues to economic and social development."⁷⁹ Working with women's committees also provides a practical means of reaching women:

We consider the grassroots important to communicate and connect people in the community. Although we have problems with the grassroots, which is itself elite. But at least they have the potential to be grassroots and we need to work with them and through them because we cannot go to rural areas and camps without direct connections...⁸⁰

At the same time, Bisan has been able to create links directly with communities (that is, outside of the networks of political affiliations), working with independent community members to set up "children's corners," or playgrounds.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.* The interviewee noted that the UNLU was not allowing people to go into villages or camps to, for example, set up programs or project unless these were established through contacts in political committees.

A resource library in economic development, women's studies and social history is being built. It aims to contribute to a culture of professional, nonpartisan approaches and processes, and thereby develop "professional" structures, guided by the "principles of democracy" (Bisan n.d.:1). Bisan includes in these principles the need to ensure accessibility to its services regardless of political views or affiliations. In terms of its links to political committees, its Director explains thus:

There is no such thing as independent institutions. If it's professional, I consider it OK.... Every organization has an ideological point of view and therefore cannot be independent.... The tools for evaluation of institutions should include questions of whether the group has a board, a structure, a program, real projects and needs assessment being implemented.⁸¹

Thus, the notion of the "independence" of the centres examined in the study must be examined in the context of each centre individually. While Bisan does not play down its political affiliation (with PFLP), it has a clear idea of what constitutes meaningful organizational autonomy.

Research Studies and Training Programs

One of Bisan's studies looks at local cooperatives in the West Bank and Gaza. In response to the needs uncovered in the

⁸¹ Ibid. Bisan is associated with the PFLP.

study, Bisan set up training and skills workshops for women involved in production projects. Weekend training workshops on marketing strategy, financial management, production and administration are ongoing. The intent is to upgrade women's skills as well as improve the status of women in the workplace, by enabling them to take on managerial positions. Women from all political groups come for this training.⁸²

The Social History Committee is addressing the lack of "real scholastic and critical studies" and the need to build a democratic Palestinian culture which has been, rather, "persistently overshadowed by ideas and practices whose aim was to deprive the people from their identity and transfer their culture to mere folklore" (Bisan n.d.:1). As a result, as explained by the Director, "we don't consider that Palestinian history is written yet. It is written only from the point of view of families, leaders.... We are going to rewrite our social and economic history."⁸³

In particular, the history of women has been overshadowed. In the words of the Director of Bisan, "in our history books, there is no mention of women, only as supporters of men. We want the history of Palestine to be written from the majority point of view, not the elite point

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

of view."⁸⁴ The Social History Committee is conducting an oral history of "Popular Heroes" of Palestinian society during the early part of the century, in particular during the 1936-39 revolt. One of Bisan's researchers interviewed several dozen men and women who had lived through and played a role in the 1936-39 revolt. Of particular interest to the researcher was women's recollections and their involvement in the revolt. The research will be written up in the form of children's books on Palestinian history and geography.⁸⁵

Another study conducted examines the effects of the *intifada* on the socio-economic conditions at Jalazon refugee camp in the West Bank. This study is expected to lead to the provision of various services for women, including a general counselling centre.

Bisan is coordinating with various communities to build children's outdoor playgrounds and meeting centres. This project is the first for Bisan to involve direct links with the community, rather than working through one or more women's committees, or through the political factions.⁸⁶ One "children's corner" was established in Ramallah, and a second is to follow in Nablus.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ Interview 14. Ramallah, West Bank, 8 June, 1992.

⁸⁶ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

Women's Studies Committee

The Women's Studies Committee's first activity was a conference on the negative social impact of the *intifada* on women. Papers addressed the increase in early marriage, school drop-out rates for girls, and the increased pressure being voiced for women to wear the *hijab*. Women and men from all parts of the West Bank and Gaza attended.

The objectives of the Women's Studies Committee include integrating women into all processes and stages of development. As stated by a member of the Committee,

We are an applied developmental resource committee, if you like, or a study committee where we are trying to look at specific problems, to study them in depth in order to provide a service or a solution to such a problem.⁸⁷

The Committee aims to provide services and training to women to enable them to take managerial positions in their workplace. Three working groups were formed within the Committee: one for children's publications, a working group to look at setting up a counselling centre, and one for coordinating research.

The research working group is examining the increased drop-out rates of girls. Plans are in place to do a comprehensive assessment of services available to women from

⁸⁷ Interview 49. Ramallah, West Bank, 17 August, 1992.

local and international organizations, along with a needs assessment toward running a comparative study of services and needs.

CASE STUDY III
WOMEN'S LEGAL CENTRE
East Jerusalem

Structure and Objectives

Located at the border between East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the Women's Legal Centre is housed in the same building as the Women's Studies Centre. It comprises a Director, lawyer, and Board of Directors. As with the Women's Studies Centre, the Legal Centre was set up under the auspices of the Women's Training and Research Society, by the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees. While the WSC has become financially independent of the PFWAC, the Legal Centre remains dependent for staff salaries--pending its application for funding from international agencies.

The objectives of the Legal Centre are formulated around a two-fold focus: i) providing legal services to women, and ii) working toward formulating a legal framework that would protect the rights of women and children. At the time of fieldwork, the cases being examined were derived from referrals from the PFWAC and include cases all over the West Bank, from Nablus to Hebron. The cases deal with, primarily, divorce, inheritance, and custody issues.

With the lack of a comprehensive legal framework, or a national authority to institute it, there is no social consensus around legal issues. Further impeding the Centre's work, women are often unaware of the legal protection which does exist and is available to them. The work of the Centre, hence, rests on "tricky ground." The complexity of providing legal advice was expressed by one member of the Centre:

It's a new experience. Nobody has experience in this. Our lawyers don't have experience in this. You have to work with the fathers, you have to work with the mothers.... I'm talking about, for instance, marriage rape. How do you approach it? You want the family of the woman to help you. How do you approach the subject with the father who has to be in on the subject along with the mother, to give the girl full support? These are taboo subjects. You can't talk out in the open about it. There's no legal framework, nothing to protect a woman who is abused by her husband. Actually, for the sake of tradition, she's encouraged to endure the abuse by her own family. So there is nothing. You're talking about a society that's operating in a total political vacuum.⁸⁸

The Centres' lawyer mediates with clients' families and becomes involved in the social events in their clients' communities. This personal involvement is part of Centre's attempt to increase women's legitimacy and social status within her family and community.

The Centre is also broadening the practice and concept of legal counsel to include psychological counselling which would enable a woman to make decisions about her situation and

⁸⁸ Interview 50. East Jerusalem, 21 August, 1992.

follow through with them. The aim is to integrate personal counselling with legal counselling:

You can tell women so much about their rights, but in most cases they need to be talked to, they need to be counselled [to make difficult personal decisions] and you have to be there if they need you for any kind of information. And it has to be good information, facts rather than heresy.⁸⁹

This expansion of legal counsel, in turn, extends legal jurisdiction and services into "traditional" authority structures within the family, village and refugee camp. Mediation with the family will often take place. The attempt is to solve cases with and through the family. The family is taught "how they can be the problem and the solution. Or we bring the case to court,⁹⁰ if the family refuses to cooperate with us."⁹¹

In one case, a woman whose husband died was being prevented by her family from remarrying, and her deceased husband's family would not give her daughters their share of their father's money. In this case, the lawyer tried, herself and then through individuals in the community, to convince the woman's family to let her get married, with no success. She states:

⁸⁹ Interview 50. East Jerusalem, 21 August, 1992.

⁹⁰ *Shari'a*, or Islamic courts.

⁹¹ Interview 12. East Jerusalem, 8 June, 1992.

We have a lot of cases. Some of them are easy and solved in court. Others are not solved by the court. We try to solve them through the family. The most painful ones are the ones in which the woman is emotionally destroyed by her family. Some of these cases were solved just by letting the woman talk to us. For others we had to talk to the family and teach them how they can be the problem and the solution. Or we'd go and bring the case to court, if the family refuses to cooperate with us.⁹²

The Centre plans to develop brochures on *mahr* (the money paid by the groom to the bride), on conditions in the marriage contract, and other issues. These would be written in simple and accessible language, as opposed to highly technical and legalistic language "so the average woman would be able to read it and understand it."⁹³ This public education around legal issues also serves to challenge traditional authority. Legal information is usually put into highly technical language, because lawyers do not want to be accused of simplifying tradition or the Kur'an.⁹⁴

The Centre seeks legitimacy from "traditional faces" in the community, as noted by a member of the Legal Centre: "Traditional faces are needed in certain regions because they help us resolve problems that confront us."⁹⁵ The sensitivity

⁹² Interview 12. East Jerusalem, 8 June, 1992.

⁹³ Interview 50. East Jerusalem, 21 August, 1992.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

of legal issues, in particular, calls for different approaches in different areas:

We find each region has different needs. In Khalil [Hebron], for instance, it's not as important to have a highly professional person as it is to have a respectable community person--a *wajaha*, or traditional community, respected figure.⁹⁶

Toward formulating a legal framework, the situation in Egypt and Tunisia is of interest to the Centre. A coordinated set of civil laws, based on a separation between religion and state is the goal.⁹⁷ A board member with whom I spoke was wary of the situation in Algeria whereby laws have been implemented but are quietly made redundant or banned without notice. She states thus, the need for a progressive government to ensure that women's political voice remains effective:

...So you really need a government that's progressive and if it's not progressive you want to make sure that you get there and you stay there and not get there because you're needed at a certain stage in the political struggle to be sent out when you are not needed.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

Negotiating Political and Social Space

The constraints that the Centre faces include the fragmentation and inadequacy of the existing legal framework, women's lack of awareness of the legal protection which is available to them, and social conditions which perpetuate the discrimination of women within their families, communities, and workplace. When legal protection does exist, there is often little or no social support for women who choose to claim their due. To address this, the Centre is attempting to integrate legal counsel with psychological counselling in order to bring women "to a situation where they can make a decision for themselves and bear the consequences of that decision."⁹⁹ They are also attempting to create a wider framework, as mentioned, both legally and socially, whereby women's rights are recognized.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

CASE STUDY IV
WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
Nablus, West Bank

Structure and Objectives

Women's Affairs Centre is located in Nablus. Women's training is identified as priority. The training programs are geared to women from the various women's committees "because these women are the leaders of the future."¹⁰⁰ An assessment of women's position within the political process convinced the founders that a significant barrier to women taking on leadership roles within the political process was their lack of skills. A member explains:

We had done an analysis on the political process and noted that even during the first year of the *intifada*, when women had a very important role, women continued to be the executors of the decisions of men. There are many reasons, the institutions themselves are not democratic. But on the top of the reasons is that women in politics don't have the skills....it is a problem of their socialization. Problem solving, thinking systematically, knowing what strategy is and differentiating it from tactics....public speaking, [the] ability to write....all these skills were absent.¹⁰¹

The Centre is conducting a two-year training course in research methodology, sociology, practical research skills,

¹⁰⁰ Interview 32. Birzeit Village, 21 July, 1992.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

computer skills, and writing. At the end of the two years, the participants will become staff members at the Centre. Trainees on the course are from women's committees and conduct research studies in Nablus and surrounding towns like Jenin and Tulkarem. The researcher chooses the topic and area of fieldwork. Issues addressed include the increase in early marriage for women, women and domestic production, women and health, women sanitation workers, and the effect of polygamy on the second wife.

Usual studies on polygamy, for example, have looked at it as a family problem or as a general social study. A researcher explains her focus:

For us, we focused more on women and particularly on the first wife. How did she feel and what happens to her?.... A lot of times we find out things that are completely different than what is commonly known. For example, in this particular study, we assumed, as is generally assumed, that upon taking a second wife, the husband forgets his responsibilities to the first and her children. What we found out is that the father remains responsible to the children and house. We think that this is because Nablus is a small community and a close one. So the father cannot stay away from the house as the community will always remind him of his responsibilities. Or, he might meet one of his kids in the market every day or almost every day. Or, if he doesn't see his kids, he'll see his neighbours.¹⁰²

Life histories are also being written, and works on women translated into Arabic. These studies are published periodically in book-form, along with profiles of Palestinian

¹⁰² Interview 40. Nablus, West Bank, 10 August, 1992.

women, translated articles (into Arabic), and reviews. An office has been established in Amman, which serves as a link to the Arab world and from which it distributes its publications. The Centre is twinned with an Italian women's centre, Centro di Documentazione delle Donne, in Bologna, Italy.

Besides holding courses for members of women's committees, the Centre has been asked by the Women's Committee for Social Work (WCSW) for special training to equip them with the skills to open and run their own women's studies centre. The WCSW wanted to set up a centre in Nablus, but Women's Affairs suggested instead that they open one elsewhere to avoid duplication. Eight women from the committee go to Women's Affairs each week for a day of training.

CASE STUDY V
WOMEN'S AFFAIRS
Gaza City, Gaza Strip

Structure and Objectives

Women's Affairs in Nablus opened a branch in Gaza in December, 1991. The two centres share a Steering Committee and are organized around the same objectives and guidelines. As the situation in Gaza differs significantly from that in the West Bank, the Director of the centre in Gaza asserted that,

we have to have the chance to put in place positions which relate to our particular situation here....We all agreed on our right to put in place what we believe is needed here...¹⁰³

This was successfully negotiated between the two centres (and is discussed more fully below). The staff of the Centre consisted (at the time of fieldwork) of a Director, a Manager, and five women trainees.

The first research undertaking of the trainees was a joint study on the *mahr* (money paid to the bride and her family by the groom). Each of the researchers has also conducted profiles of prominent women in their communities. The Centre is conducting weekly development workshops for

¹⁰³ Interview 35. Gaza City, 22 July, 1992.

women involved in production. They are planning to cooperate with local development centres in Gaza Strip which will provide money for loans for the women's projects. These clinics were expected to draw women from all over Gaza Strip. The Centre has also held poetry and short story writing courses.

Women's Centres: Spaces of Class and Gender

The fact that decisions "come from the centres themselves" distinguishes them from factionalized organizations. The gender make-up of the centres is significant in this regard, as the centres represent the establishment of an institutional framework whereby all decision-makers are women. (A staff member of one of the centres is male.) The Board of Directors or Steering Committee of the centres are all women. The exception is the Advisory Board of Women's Affairs which is made up of men and women. This Advisory Board functions as a symbolic endorsement from the community and has no direct decision-making capacities.

Notions of 'class,' 'patriarchy,' 'capitalism,' etc., operate within specific historical and spatial contexts. As noted by Brittain and Maynard in Sexism, Racism and Oppression (1984), the experience of class, for example, is "profoundly

shaped by the site of oppression, and by the way in which oppressors and oppressed continually have to renegotiate, reconstruct and re-establish their relative positions" (cited in Smith 1990:266). Nonetheless, it is important to contextualize gender struggles within a framework of class divides while viewing these divisions as contingent (Smith 1987).

The class background of the women at the centres varies. In Women's Affairs, Gaza, all the women are from refugee camps and villages and,

from poor families and they have a political consciousness and social consciousness and not one of them is from a bourgeois family....The women from refugee camps more than women from Gaza will be more in touch.¹⁰⁴

In general, the centres were founded by prominent leaders in the women's movement, both from within committee structures and outside of them. As one woman acknowledged,

By and large, these issues are of relevance mostly to intellectuals. It's unfortunate, but like everywhere in the Arab world, there is a gap. It's important to get more people to realize that these are issues of their own and that they also have a stake in the outcome of whatever struggle is taking place. But I think this has been the case in the Arab world and elsewhere. Intellectuals are really the natural group to fight for women's rights.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ Interview 29. Ramallah, West Bank, 14 July, 1992.

It was suggested by another woman, involved in a centre, that,

practical projects have not helped us because you have to have two things: theory and application. Without practice, you cannot correct your thinking and without thinking you cannot correct your practice. So we lacked the think tank.¹⁰⁶

This evokes the question of whether the women's centres represent a separate, elite, segment of the women's movement. During the course of interviewing, my own concerns were echoed by some women interviewed--that two separate structures might be emerging, one, in the form of women's centres, formulating a framework for action and the other, the women's committees which would continue to provide day care and skills training services. The problem was expressed by one leader of a women's committee as that "of creating two different structures that are not in contact. But if they are in contact and can challenge each other, then this is good."¹⁰⁷

As discussed below, the effectiveness of the centres, as spaces which can widen and deepen women's activism as women, is linked to their ability to foster the integration of all women into their structures, and into wider social and political processes.

¹⁰⁶ Interview 30. Ramallah, West Bank, 15 July, 1992.

¹⁰⁷ Interview 28. East Jerusalem, 14 July, 1992.

"Independence": Working With and Through Women's Committees

The Women's Studies Centre and the Women's Legal Centre both emerged directly out of the Palestinian Federation of Women's Action Committees. The WSC subsequently began to gain an independence from the PFWAC in order to become a centre for the entire women's movement. Women's Affairs was established in Nablus, outside of any link with a committee. Its legitimacy is derived, in large measure, from the prominence of its founder, a known and respected writer. Women's Affairs' branch in Gaza was afforded a legitimacy by its association with the Nablus centre. Bisan Centre is associated with the Palestinian Union of Women's Work Committees but, like the other centres, functions as an independent centre in that it works with women from all women's committees, as well as with "independents."

Links between centres and women's committees are fostered by the centres as a way to facilitate discussion of women's issues within women's committees, as well as to promote women's concerns within the political factions themselves. Working with women's committees also provides legitimacy, as explained by a member of a centre, also active in a committee:

We do not try to do any project or promote an idea away from the grassroots organization. We have a certain role to play. We cannot mobilize people and we understand that very well. We understand that without the grassroots we

cannot survive. We will be seen as a few people talking behind closed doors.¹⁰⁸

The committees also act as a support system. In Gaza, women's committees subsidize transportation for their members to attend Women's Affairs' courses. The Centre in Gaza had approached the committees with a request that they contribute to a general transportation fund, for certain activities, which would be used by independent women, as well as women involved in their particular committee.¹⁰⁹ There was some resistance to this idea from the Committees, but the Centre continued to promote it.

The centres' close relationships to the women's committees makes it easier to reach women, as those involved in women's committees are already active in their communities and more amenable to the idea of organizing around women's issues. Research courses are often designed in conjunction with committees, upon discussing with them what their needs are.¹¹⁰ Although, as noted by one interviewee, the authoritarian structure of committees is not conducive to their members being able to make use of their skills or pass them on. She states, "in terms of trained women from women's

¹⁰⁸ Interview 32. Birzeit Village, West Bank, 21 July, 1992.

¹⁰⁹ A return trip from Women's Affairs in Gaza City, to Rafah Camp in the south of Gaza Strip, is 12 NIS (about US\$ 4).

¹¹⁰ Interview 9. East Jerusalem, 1 June, 1992.

committees actually being able to pass on these skills, there's a blockage which has to do with the structure of the committees themselves."¹¹¹

The centres reported varied success in this matter. Women's Affairs in Nablus, which works mainly with women from committees, invites and trains an equal number of women from each committee. These women have reportedly risen "to the top of their group" within their committees. As noted by a member of Women's Affairs,

This is one of the best indicators that training for leadership is working. She's going right up in her group. Another manifestation is that these trainees are continually going into debate over feminist issues within their committees."¹¹²

The question of whether committees were 'losing' their women to the centres arose. In Nablus, I was told that "so far, none of the members have completely left their committee to work only in the centre, but many have become very critical of their committee. But this is positive. To be very critical is a very good thing."¹¹³

The centres walk a fine line. On one hand, to maintain legitimacy with the general population they work with each of

¹¹¹ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

¹¹² Interview 32. Birzeit Village, West Bank, 21 July, 1992.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

the committees and try to avoid being associated with any one. At the same time, they must address issues that are deemed of importance to each committee. As one member of a women's committee and active in a centre, addresses: "How can we--the research centres and grassroots--work together in a women's agenda that is acceptable to each grassroots committee?"¹¹⁴ This task is facilitated by an urgency felt regarding the need to build a consensus around women's issues before the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Discussion within women's committees is spurred also by public forums and conferences organized by the centres. Bisan's conference on the effect of the *intifada* on social issues, held in November, 1990, was a watershed event. As described by an organizer of the event:

All the issues were there but somehow a structure had never been created in which it was actually OK to start identifying these things on some kind of nationalist level. It created the context for women in committees to start talking about social issues. I don't know if it actually started them to [think they have to work on their own agenda] but what it did say was that it was OK to...¹¹⁵

In June, 1991, a short time after Bisan's conference on the social effects of the *intifada*, the Women's Studies Committee held a conference on domestic violence. Many in the

¹¹⁴ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

¹¹⁵ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

women's committees felt it was 'too soon' to address the issue and that the national issue was more important. Nonetheless, the event was proceeded by discussions on the issue within women's committees.¹¹⁶

Bisan's Women's Studies Committee is unique among the centres in that its attempts at being "independent" focus on professionalizing its structures, rather than projecting an apolitical stance. Moreover, mobilizing the national movement is a priority with Bisan and is worked into the structure of Bisan's work. They:

always mobilize the national movement through the political parties because if you don't do this you are a weak element. Individual connections to personalities in the national movement are pressured to move on issues. We are not only working with the grassroots but also within the political framework.... Bisan is different from other centres.... We have to revolutionize.... We can promote new things in the old system--that's more powerful."¹¹⁷

Balancing Legitimacy with Effectiveness

Maintaining relations with all women's (political) committees necessitates, for the centres, choosing trainees or participants in courses on the basis of committee affiliation. At the same time, as expressed by a member of Women's Affairs

¹¹⁶ Interview 10. East Jerusalem, 2 June, 1992.

¹¹⁷ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

in Gaza, they are trying not to be "completely shackled by the notion of balance."¹¹⁸ Problems arise with maintaining balance when, for example, Women's Affairs in Gaza put out a call for women from committees to train for staff positions. The Director explained that at least two committees had sent women to WAG who could not benefit from the training, but who were perhaps owed a reward for completing a difficult job elsewhere, or as compensation for not having received their salary.¹¹⁹

Another problem has arisen in terms of the status of women from committees who become permanent trainees of WAG. The Director noted that a particular committee had wanted its member to be involved in WAG as a representative of her committee, rather than primarily a trainee or employee of the Centre. This meant that, as she explains,

every time we had a problem with [one trainee] we were not just dealing with her but were dealing with the whole committee. Finally, we set up a bunch of rules. We now take committee people but they come as trainees, as individuals, not just representatives of their committees.¹²⁰

¹¹⁸ Interview 39. East Jerusalem. 9 August, 1992.

¹¹⁹ Interview 35. Gaza City, 22 July, 1992.

¹²⁰ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

Conclusion

The five case studies reveal how women's research centres are inquiring into women's needs, providing services to women, and helping to create a social discourse on women's issues. The centres are contributing to the formulation of a unified women's agenda within the women's movement.

The differences in structure and focus between the centres signal a maturation of the women's movement, in which differences denote a diversity of approaches, rather than competition and duplication. The centres are able to bring together disparate segments of women, in particular, women within grassroots committees and 'independent' women. And each centre negotiates with the need to balance working with grassroots structures while not becoming locked into reproducing the divisions within the women's movement.

The question of whether the centres can transcend class, geographic, and social divides, requires further inquiry into how the centres are negotiating the contradictions (which serve to exacerbate these divisions) of various socio-spatial relations (as outlined in Chapter two). For example, can the centres serve as a vehicle for confronting social norms around women's roles in Palestinian society? Can the centres create space for women's activism to transcend factional divisions

and shape national priorities? How do the centres mitigate the contradictory nature of development under occupation? of Zionist policies and Orientalist frameworks? These questions are addressed in the following chapter, in an attempt to examine the programs and approaches of the centres in the context of increasing constraints and several levels of contradictions.

CHAPTER 6
FINDINGS II
REVISITING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK:
NEGOTIATING SPACE THROUGH PLACES OF ACTIVISM

Introduction

This chapter explores the women's research centres' negotiations of various contradictions encountered in a "web" of relations (as outlined in Chapter two). The discussion attempts to generalize the role and significance of the centres taken together. It might be useful, hence, to note in greater detail the differential access I had to each centre during fieldwork.

As noted in Chapter three, for example, I was able to observe the activities of the Women's Studies Centre at closer range and for longer periods of time than those of the other centres. Also, greater depth and scope of information was obtained from WSC members. Moreover, my research agenda and methods were formulated in conjunction with discussion with WSC members and director. At each centre, I interviewed staff members, the director and/or managers, and members of the boards of directors (or Steering Committee, in the case of Women's Affairs centres). In Women's Affairs, Nablus, I was

not able to spend as much time talking with researcher-trainees. In the case of the Women's Legal Centre, comprising a director, a lawyer, and a 4-member board of directors I interviewed the director, lawyer and one member of the Board. The following formulations of the challenges faced by the centres, and their ability to create potential avenues for theorizing and action, can be read with this disparity in mind.

Confronting Patriarchal Norms within Palestinian Society

The effects of traditional social norms on women in the West Bank and Gaza vary according to class, family and educational background, and place of residence of the woman. Traditional customs are reinforced by the effect of military occupation. Military control of movement, planning, and geographic space, separates women geographically and diminishes their freedom of movement. Additionally, patriarchal norms in Palestinian society are revived or invented in different forms to counter political and social oppression (Hammami 1990:24).

Meanwhile, social customs hamper women's personal and social development. One member of a centre describes women's situation thus:

Women here are the least heard. Nobody listens to women. She can suffer alone. She can think alone. She can dream alone. Nobody bothers to listen to women. Even women themselves don't listen to each other. They talk at each other. If you notice, you will see that women are talking at each other and not to each other. Because of the traditional upbringing and teaching of this society, people are taught, particularly women, to keep their feelings, their ambitions, their thinking to themselves. And it's always a shame to talk about a problem you're having or a thought. It's a shame to say what's happening in your house. So nobody dares to ask you and you don't dare to tell anybody. So you live in your own world, in your own space. You talk at people but you don't talk to them. [Women don't have] the facility to discuss their problems, to talk together freely, to help each other and support each other, and so on.¹²¹

The centres' address women's isolation, and the revival of traditional norms through their various programs and approaches. The compounded effect of women's social and geographic isolation, and their "weak situation" in terms of their social status, is addressed, for example, by a member of the Women's Legal Centre:

We would like to reach all women in towns and camps because they're very uneducated and lost within their small and closed communities. They're also very invisible as women, going through a lot of problems and because of their weak situation, they can't ask for their rights. Maybe at the beginning we can get to these women through holding open discussions all over.¹²²

Both the Legal Centre and Bisan's Women's Studies Committee are integrating psychological counselling into legal and general (including financial) advising into their

¹²¹ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

¹²² Interview 12. East Jerusalem, 8 June, 1992.

programs. By making legal advice directly accessible to women, the Women's Legal Centre challenges traditional social authority, as well as contributes to creating secular authority structures and processes.

Just as the effects of traditional norms, and of the combined effect of military occupation and patriarchal customs varies depending on women's various social and physical locations within Palestinian society, findings indicated that the effect of women's involvement in the centres also varied according to each woman's particular situation.

For example, a member of one centre remarked: "When I came to the centre, I came to a new life."¹²³ Another talked about her increased determination to follow through with her beliefs and greater self-confidence. Women also relayed a sense of increased hope, and of being able to share in and feel part of something. Some women expressed satisfaction in gaining greater independence as well as an outlet for their writing and creative expression.

Findings of the research indicate that the centres play a role in enabling women to challenge the constraints of social norms within Palestinian society. The centres provide a place around which women can organize their involvement in

¹²³ Interview 20. Gaza City, 2 July, 1992.

the women's movement and, hence, organize their roles within their families and communities. The centres also challenge the emergence of "invented" traditions, and their use within national ideologies, by attempting to both create a social consensus around women's issues, as well as increase women's legitimacy within their various community and family contexts. The centres' various programs account for the complexity of the constraints facing women--specifically, the combined effects of traditional norms and military occupation in various locales.

Negotiating Space within the National Struggle

While the centres focus on women's concerns, their programs and approaches also promote women's issues as national issues. In the process, the centres widen and deepen the national struggle by:

- providing skills to women active in women's committees;
- holding conferences and public forums on women's issues which bring women and men from all sectors, political affiliations, and geographic areas together;
- facilitating strategizing in the women's movement; and,
- developing democratic and civic structures and processes at an organizational level.

In carrying out these activities, the women's research centres are negotiating contradictions inherent in organizing around women's issues within a struggle for national liberation. These contradictions, and the centres' various responses, can be summarized as follows:

i) The Palestinian national movement battles political, social, regional, religious, and economic fragmentation, exacerbated by occupation. In creating forums where women's issues are defined through a process of linking together of women from diverse political and personal backgrounds, the centres foster processes and structures which counter social and political fragmentation.

ii) The women's research centres attempt to alter the place of Palestinian women within national ideology and cultural symbolism. They create spaces from which to challenge the politicization of traditions and culture in the national struggle and, thereby, the marginalization of women within national politics and ideological configurations.

iii) National liberation struggles, by definition, prioritize national issues over social (gender, class, race) issues. In asserting women's concerns as issues of national importance, the centres challenge the content of the national agenda, as well as the process through which national issues are defined.

1) Forging Links Between Disparate Segments of Society

By creating places of activism outside of national political structures, the centres can bridge the rift between independent women activists and grassroots women's committees. Without such places and structures, "educators will not go to

the women's movement and the women's movement will not go to the educators because they are independent."¹²⁴

Through these links, the centres are able to act as a 'mirror' to the women's movements, providing criticism, for example, of grassroots women's committees. In a publication of the Women's Studies Centre, a member puts the women's movement "on trial," stating,

What the women's committees have failed to attain is a participatory role for women in political decision-making.... They have not been able to educate women about the necessity of developing their own roles and participating more fully with our male compatriots in leadership, planning and decision making (rather than becoming mere tools in the national struggle) (Labadi 1993:5).

In striking testimony to this, a modification in the internal organization of one political faction was proposed which would have increased the percentage of women in its leadership to 25 percent. Ironically, that is, women members opposed the modification, indicating, in the words of Labadi, "that patriarchal perceptions still predominate even in women's views. Confronting such attitudes is the responsibility of the women's movement" (Labadi 1993:5).

¹²⁴ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

ii) Challenging the Place of Palestinian Women within National Ideology and Cultural Symbolism

There is a lack of consensus within the centres as to the threat posed by *Hamas* to the women's centres as organizations. In Gaza, where *Hamas* is stronger, a member of Women's Affairs expressed that, "if *Hamas* knew there was a centre for women and women want to publish ideas about women and to influence women and ask for their freedom, I'm certain they would refuse to have it because I know how they think." Her view was not shared by her colleagues, who believe that *Hamas'* main objection is that mixing of women and men, and that a centre which helps women improve their situation would not be seen as contrary to Islam.¹²⁵

Nonetheless, women's research centres walk a fine line. For example, their public forums and conferences aim to attract all sectors and political sentiments, in order to open discussion on women's issues across the spectrum of Palestinian society and politics. But, in order to not alienate anyone from this process, a 'middle ground' is sometimes taken regarding sensitive issues. For example, Bisan's first conference, in November, 1990, began as a means to address the pressures on women to wear the *hijab*. It ended with panellists (with the exception of one) "talking around

¹²⁵ Interview 20. Gaza City, 2 July, 1992.

the *hijab*." Precisely because the *hijab* is a symbolic practice and "a means of imposing all sorts of things on women like early marriage," organizers of the conference decided that to address it directly would be too much of a frontal attack (on *Hamas*).¹²⁶

On the other hand, the Women's Studies Centre proved instrumental in forefronting the notion that the to women's freedom of expression is a threat to Palestinian society as a whole (as witnessed in a press conference held following threats to an organization hosting a 'leg' of the First Arab Women's Film Festival, described below).

iii) Integrating Women's Concerns into a National Agenda

The centres' attempts to create a space whereby women's issues are regarded as national issues serves to challenge and potentially widen the social, political, and cultural spaces available not just to women but to society as a whole. The extent to which they represent attempts to create structures and processes outside of national, political structures, the centres build civic structures and processes which can, in turn, influence political, national agendas, as well as pressure these agendas to be more accountable.

¹²⁶ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

Public conferences are one means of creating space for women's issues within the public, political and national realms. For example, discussion of women's issues in forums that include women and men from all corners of the Occupied Territories provides a legitimacy to the issues, rendering them issues of national concern. The centres enable discussion of women's concerns to occur outside of either women's committees or political factions.

For example, Bisan's conference on the social effects of the *intifada* was a watershed in this regard. A participant recounted that, "finally social issues were being dealt with in a public and nationalist type of way".¹²⁷ Previous to the centres' forums on women's issues, conferences had always emphasized women's national role. Referring to the same conference, an organizer explained,

When we started [Bisan's] conference on the veil it was a new idea that women should not be the target of pressure, and it made the national movement express its condemnation of this. I feel we were successful because Faisal Hussein [a prominent political leader] had to say 'we will not permit this to happen because women are historically tools of liberation.'¹²⁸

The centres' public conferences serve to put pressure on factions to deal with social issues in a public way, rather than internally, within political factions. As such, the centres' programs challenge the ideological as well as

¹²⁷ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

¹²⁸ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

practical boundaries of the 'political' to include both social issues as well as political accountability.

One woman at Women's Studies Centre explained that,

Women working in women's centres are finding that working for national issues doesn't require active work in political parties. Creating the centres themselves is part of the national struggle.¹²⁹

Challenging the boundaries between 'social' and 'political' issues is enabling women to tackle issues "that all [political factions] have in the back of their minds but are afraid to touch."¹³⁰ One such issue is the need for legal counsel for women in areas such as divorce and domestic violence.¹³¹

The lack of consensus among and within political factions concerning women's issues means the centres' work is contingent on making progress on several fronts. A member of the Women's Studies Centre remarked thus:

One has to realize that the national movement, the different political groups have different perceptions of the problem, the way to solve it, the kind of society we want. There is no consensus which has emerged around what is to be tolerated and what is not to be tolerated. You have groups that span the spectrum from left to right. I

¹²⁹ Interview 10. East Jerusalem, 2 June, 1992.

¹³⁰ Interview 50. East Jerusalem, 21 August, 1992.

¹³¹ A local human rights centre had previously approached a women's committee to work through its branches in villages in order to offer legal advice to women. A committee leader recounted that, "we were afraid that if a woman needs legal advice for a divorce and comes to our branch, then the whole village would kick us out. I remember that no committee felt it could go along with this..." (Interview 49. Ramallah, West Bank, 17 August, 1992.)

expect that as anywhere else, there will be controversy until the national movement is agreed that these issues are important to raise.¹³²

In this context, what is paramount to ensuring that women's concerns are integrated into the national agenda is the existence of democratic processes through which issues can be voiced and heard. This imperative, to build democratic, civic processes and structures, underlies the centres' work. Moreover, because the centres are able to create spaces whereby women can strategize and formulate theory outside of the context of politically-aligned women's committees, the women's movement is able to extend its role and cross the boundary between women's ("social") issues and national imperatives--to become, in fact, vital to gauging and resisting threats to building a democratic national state.

This point is best illustrated by an incident that occurred during the centres' hosting of the First Arab Women's Film Festival and Book Fair, in June, 1992. Toward the end of the event a threat was issued by *Hamas* activists to one of the organizations hosting film screenings in Ramallah. (Festival screenings and events were held without incident in East Jerusalem and Gaza City.) The communication from the *Hamas* activists (it was not certain whether the threat was from leaders within *Hamas* or individuals) referred to an Egyptian

¹³² Interview 29. Ramallah, West Bank, 14 July, 1992.

film and indicated that, should Palestinian women need to understand Islamic practices and teachings, they should consult *Hamas*.¹³³

The Women's Studies Centre decided to cancel that portion of the festival and organized meetings, which brought together women from various organizations, women's committees, and independent women, to formulate a response. A press conference was organized to address the threats. When women addressed the issue in the conference and through their press release, they spoke of it as a threat to freedom of expression generally, and as signalling increasing and unprecedented pressures on individuals and groups to curb their movement. The statement issued by the ad hoc Task Force for the Protection of Democratic Freedoms (comprised of "representatives from all Palestinian grassroots women's committee unions and women's studies centres, as well as independent women activists") reads, in part, that,

the practice of democratic freedom is the right of every individual and group, including people from all different intellectual and political persuasions within Palestinian society.... Recent forms of threat and pressure from individuals and groups against cultural activities are an outrageous violation of individual and group

¹³³ Notably, festival organizers remarked that the film in question was not critical of, or even critiquing Islamic teachings, and was "not very progressive." But, clearly, what was at stake was more than the freedom to screen a particular film, but the existence of a space for discourse around the meaning of Islamic teachings and individual religiosity.

freedoms...(WSC 1992:4). (The statement is more fully excerpted in Appendix 6.)

Rather than stressing the threat to women *per se*, women held the press conference to express the significance of the incident as a threat to, as one activist expressed:

the future of democracy, the future of our relationships as people together, the future of allowing differences, of freedom of choice, freedom of expression and practice.¹³⁴

Faisal Hussein spoke along with three women. But, unlike the message of the women, Hussein framed the issue as a threat to "women's rights."¹³⁵ In spite of the fact that, at the time, *Hamas* and *Fatah* (the mainstream and largest of the political factions) were in direct conflict on the streets of Gaza. Giacaman notes the irony, stating that in spite of this,

when [Hussein] spoke, he spoke about freedom of expression, of assembly, etc., entirely in terms of women's individual rights.... There was a clear gap, and this gap illustrates the differences that are currently being debated in the Palestinian women's movement, and why the making of an agreed women's agenda has been so hard to fashion (cited in Usher 1992:34).

The Women's Studies Centre was instrumental in facilitating an immediate, collective response from the women's movement. The centres, in general, were key in having fostered contexts in which previously disparate segments of

¹³⁴ Interview 28. East Jerusalem, 14 July, 1992.

¹³⁵ Interview 29. Ramallah, West Bank, 14 July, 1992.

the women's movement could come together, formulate and carry out action. This action not only brought the incident into public space and made the national leadership (in the person of Hussein) accountable, but also enabled women's activism to serve as 'advance warning' of the social threats represented by constraints placed on public expression. In addressing the threat to "women's issues" as a national, public issue, women are challenging the boundary between social and national realms. Additionally, the centres were able to facilitate a process whereby the women's movement can act as a "vanguard" within the national movement.

This incident also reveals the centres as key places where women from all grassroots women's committees and independent women activists can push the women's movement as a whole to struggle for fundamental issues which neither factions nor affiliated grassroots women's committees can manage. Activism around women's issues thus brings women to assume "a leadership position and raise issues that are not strictly women's issues. These are issues of political and civil rights."¹³⁶

In the words of a Birzeit University professor, referring to the press conference, "women will be the vanguard in a sense because they feel the threat more acutely than men. Men

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

will come around when incidents touch them which do not have a female context."¹³⁷ Women feel the contradictions of the national struggle acutely as they are a focal point of tactics used by political parties to create national support.

If the centres can continue to facilitate collective and politically independent action on the part of the women's movement, and if the conditions of struggle enable the building of democratic processes, women's precarious position within the national struggle might continue to serve as an auspicious guide in ensuring the national movement remains connected to and, thereby, strengthened by social struggles.

Confronting Military Occupation

In day to day operations, the centres must negotiate conditions and measures of occupation. For example, during the planning stages of the Second Annual Women's Film Festival, the territories were closed, creating major difficulties and repercussions which lasted through the festival. Collective decision-making was hampered and special arrangements were made to deliver festival materials to Gaza. Those involved in ticket sales and publicity could not reach Jerusalem (WSC February, 1993:5).

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

Programs are cancelled due to curfews. The closure of Jerusalem has meant that events held in the city are inaccessible to women in the West Bank and Gaza. Women in Gaza, also, are unable to attend West Bank venues, and only a handful of West Bank women managed to reach Gaza for the Film Festival events (WSC February, 1993:5).

In terms of the centres' ability to establish themselves, it is more difficult to get a licence to conduct research than to open a shop or company. Moreover, research centres are often not given licences directly. For example, the legal status of Women's Affairs in Nablus (at the time of fieldwork) is that of a centre "being established." As a member stated, "they don't say no and they don't say yes." The centres are given a number and a temporary status, and await to be granted a licence at an indeterminate time in the future. In this way, the authorities can choose to close the centre down with no recourse, a situation which maintains continual self-censorship in terms of research topics.¹³⁸

In terms of setting up services for women, a member of the Women's Legal Centre explained the impossibility of setting up, for example, a women's refuge centre under occupation. It would be impossible, that is, to ensure sufficient protection for the women. Many of the worst cases

¹³⁸ Interview 42. Nablus, West Bank, 10 August, 1992.

of abuse involve the wives and children of collaborators who themselves are armed and protected by the occupiers. She explained:

It's a very natural result of the situation. A person who has lost his self-esteem, who has been abused himself, becomes an abuser. The first victims of his abuse are his own family. We have cases of collaborators' wives who were beaten violently.... The situation was intolerable. What do you do when you take those women and wives and daughters into your centre? How can you protect them from his arms? He's protected by the Israelis. So you call the police and they take him away for a month or two. How do you protect the people working in the centre from retaliation and vengeance. You do not go into something like this before you answer all these questions...¹³⁹

The Legal Centre plans, if needed, to send women to a refuge in Haifa or Nazareth.

Negotiating Contradictions of Development

Aside from the Women's Legal Centre (which was in the process of applying for funds) each of the centres receives "core" funding, that is, funding for ongoing administrative costs, as well as project-by-project funds from international development organizations. These include Dutch-based NOVIB, Ford Foundation, War on Want, Unicef, Christain Aid, and The Italian Fund. Additionally, the Women's Studies Centre and Bisan's Women's Studies Committee each had on their staff foreign "development workers" (two in the Women's Studies

¹³⁹ Interview 50. East Jerusalem, 21 August, 1992.

Centre and one in Bisan's Women's Studies Committee, whose salaries were paid by OCSD and UNAIS).

With the Palestinian economy in a desperate financial state, and with previous financing (once available through political factions) very much reduced and, finally, as women have been the first victims in terms of increasing unemployment, funding from international donors is increasing in importance. Grassroots women's committees are no longer in a position to finance additional production projects.

This context serves to exacerbate contradictions which arise from dependency on international funding bodies. These contradictions are discussed below. It can be noted, initially, that funding from international bodies is being used strategically by the women's research centres. For example, the process of satisfying report writing requirements, for example, can serve as a guide in organizational development. Able to clarify the Women's Legal Centre's organization objectives through the process of applying for funding, a member of the Centre noted: "If we can satisfy them that means we are clear in our objectives."¹⁴⁰

More critical, funding from international development organizations enables the women's centres to remain

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

structurally independent of national political factions, thus giving them scope to focus their programs primarily on women's issues. This funding also facilitates efforts to break down fractious political divisions in the women's movements, and to unify programs and services. A member of Women's Affairs expressed what was repeated often by members from each of the centres: "[Foreign funding] makes it easier for us to obtain the trust and respect of all the committees and that's very important."¹⁴¹

The centres are making conscious efforts to reverse the usual regional inequities which have resulted from development funds. In the past decades, being spent disproportionately in the West Bank. The desire to avoid a dependency relationship--Gaza on Nablus--influenced the division of labour between the two Women's Affairs centres. The centre in Gaza, for instance, does its own fundraising, and formulates its own programs and mechanisms for implementing them. The tendency of development organizations has been, in particular, to focus their work in the central region of the West Bank. Fundraising is the major mechanism of control between organizations in the West Bank and their branches in Gaza, and problems over the issue of autonomy became an issue for at least two organizations in Gaza. To counter this, the Gaza centre is completely autonomous, creating its own curriculum, hiring its own

¹⁴¹ Interview 11. Nablus, West Bank, 3 June, 1992.

3 of/de 3

PM-1 3½"x4" PHOTOGRAPHIC MICROCOPY TARGET
NBS 1010a ANSI/ISO #2 EQUIVALENT

PRECISIONSM RESOLUTION TARGETS

people, choosing its trainees, and its training programs, and doing most of its own fundraising.

What is notable is that ideas and experience have flowed from Gaza to Nablus, reversing the usual directional flow of information and resources from the West Bank to Gaza. Nablus is interested in following through on links made by Gaza's office, regarding its language training and administrative courses, as well as its development program.¹⁴²

In terms of the contradictions created by foreign funding, the centres must negotiate with the assumptions, language, and priorities of the development organization. Women's Affairs in Nablus, for instance, had wanted to set up an income-generating project which was to enable the centre to be self-supporting. The project did not qualify for funding from the international development organization as it did not, itself, have a "gender component"--despite the fact that its sole purpose was to finance the women's centre.

For Bisan's women's Studies Committee, the decision to establish itself as part of a general development centre was partly due to the perception that funding would be more forthcoming for a general centre. As noted by the Director of the Committee, "there was the perception that it would have

¹⁴² Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

access to wider sources of funding than a women's centre, and this was a minor dimension, but a factor nonetheless, in deciding on its organizational structure and priorities."¹⁴³

International funders have a hand in bringing about competition among Palestinian NGOs. As one centre's member commented:

International bodies come to you and say, 'there is money for this project. We need a proposal. FAX [sic] it to us in one or two days.' If I don't send them a FAX, then another NGO will. I have not gone into the field; I have not done a feasibility study. Large numbers of production projects with large amounts of money invested in them have collapsed because of this process.¹⁴⁴

Additionally, findings indicated problematic aspects of the notion and practice of 'transferring skills,' including a reinforcement of assumptions that Western expertise and models have greater validity. Also, this 'transfer' usually entails foreign NGOs placing 'their people' on the ground, at a time when the unemployment of skilled or potentially skilled Palestinians has dramatically increased (the closure of the territories has resulted in tens of thousands of lost jobs for Palestinian day labourers in Israel; also, following the Gulf War, thousands of Palestinians returned from working in Gulf States).

¹⁴³ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

¹⁴⁴ Interview 5. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

Funders tend to not pay for salaries of local staff, preferring to focus on space, equipment, and programs. This has led to a small 'brain drain' from local (that is, Palestinian) NGOs to foreign organizations which have offices in the West Bank and Gaza.¹⁴⁵ In addition, funders' priorities do not always coincide with those of the centres. For example, transportation costs are a major impediment to Palestinian women's access to the centres: the increasing destitution of women in camps and villages makes it very burdensome for them to get to the centres' facilities and training programs. Despite the centres' efforts to make their programs accessible, funders do not provide support for transportation costs.

The entrenchment of development practices and rationale in the historical structures of colonization and in the aim of readying the territories to be integrated into the international economy raises more questions. Kandiyoti cautions that, while donor governments and funding agencies attempt to affix women to their vision of a more effective, though not necessarily more equitable, international economic order, the manner in which the aid recipients are integrated into this order encourages the rise of unstable and repressive regimes (Kandiyoti 1991b:13).

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

One member of a centre, herself a volunteer (employee) of an international development organization on a contract with the centre, stated thus:

One has to be careful about this whole thing with 'exchange'....Colonialism has seeped in, to some extent, and you always believe subconsciously that there is a certain amount of superiority. This worries me. It's very much there. I don't know how much the area needs outsiders.... The fact that [an international development organization] will not support a program on its own but will support [foreign] individuals therein is problematic.... We have a Canadian teaching administrative skills. Is there not a Palestinian who can teach administrative skills?.... We are then saying the West has better working patterns, or more effective working patterns. What is effectiveness? Is it work output or individual development within the group? The whole point is why should development be decided by foreign NGOs?¹⁴⁶

At the same time, funding agreements are requiring more exacting progress reports and feedback and, to cope with these, still more "skills transfers" to train administrators in maintaining the flow of funds.¹⁴⁷

There is also a certain amount of appeasement that local organizations must do in the course of maintaining funding ties. As expressed by a volunteer of an international organization, working at a women's centre:

There's a power relationship because [funders] have contacts, they network with other funders; they are able to go to conferences around the world. so you don't want to upset them. You are dependent upon them because you

¹⁴⁶ Interview 7. East Jerusalem, 30 May, 1992.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

want your project funding to be renewed, so it's a difficult relationship.¹⁴⁸

These contradictions are difficult to deal with within individual organizations. A Canadian volunteer noted her own position, caught in the middle of the contradictions:

Part of the set-up though, [Westerners] coming here to reinforce institutions, in itself implies that you have more knowledge. In a way the very fact that I'm here, through the channels, is recreating unequal relationships. Why should not, for example, a Zimbabwean women be here in my place?¹⁴⁹

Means of mitigating the contradictions, nonetheless, are found. A member of Women's Studies Committee noted that the collective office meetings "are good so that the white, Westerners aren't assumed to have all the knowledge."¹⁵⁰ Another example of a centre's ability to mitigate the contradictions of development is witnessed in Women's Affairs' (in Nablus) focus on regional needs to offset the uneven development of the West Bank. For example, in attempting to counter the predominance of the Jerusalem-Ramallah area, Women's Affairs, Nablus, is focusing on publishing in Arabic and on making links to the Arab world.¹⁵¹

¹⁴⁸ Interview 4. East Jerusalem, 28 May, 1992.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

Nonetheless, the efficacy of such links, and of the centres' ability to mitigate localized contradictions produced by their dependence on foreign funding, must be assessed in the context of recent political and economic developments. Roy reports that economic devastation in Gaza¹⁵² is accompanied by the disintegration of civic structures and the exacerbation of political rivalries. Whereas in the past, foreign assistance agencies carefully avoided working with politically active groups in order to avoid exacerbating political rivalries, Roy reports that financial donors are increasingly working through political factions or politicized institutions as these are the only bodies "with the kind of power needed to get project work done."

In particular, Hamas is regarded as uniquely able to "deliver on its promises" by both Palestinians and foreign assistance providers (Roy 1993:29). Israeli military authorities support this change in funders' approach as it both weakens Palestinian social cohesion, as well as lessens the potentially volatile desperation due to the economic situation (Roy 1993:26).

¹⁵² In Gaza, hunger is a growing problem, and malnourishment increasingly visible. Meat is out of reach of most except the very rich. Roy reports that more cases of malnourishment and related diseases among young children are being treated by doctors than at any time since the beginning of the occupation (Roy 1993:22).

The Women's Legal Centre realizes the importance of situating the work to create a legal framework within the context of the *actual and ongoing* conditions of women's lives. These include women's economic dependence on men (Hammami 1993:309), and social norms which serve to dissuade women from employing what legal protection that does exist. But the rise in *Hamas'* influence is also contingent on regional and international economic conditions in which the Palestinian economic and political developments are taking place.

In other words, the creation of a legal framework is not, in itself, sufficient to guarantee women's rights when--the *hijab*, in Mernissi's words, is "manna from heaven" for political leaders facing crisis. For example, entreating women to wear the veil forms part of the attempt to create a gender division of labour: "It sends women back to the kitchen. Any Muslim state can reduce its level of unemployment by half just by appealing to the *shari'a*." Hence, the need to situate the rise in "fundamentalism" within the context of regional and international economic developments (Mernissi 1992:165).

Resisting Zionism and Orientalism

The fragmenting effects of Palestinian colonial history, followed by prolonged military occupation, has left both men

and women with--besides a severely undermined and dependent economy and devastated social and political structures--an identity crisis of sorts. This is a crisis that reverberates at the level of individuals as well as communities and the nation. The centres' efforts to create a unified agenda on women's issues entails, on one level, the need to create a consensus on "what it means to be a woman" in Palestinian society. As one woman remarked when asked about the centres' relevance for her, as an independent activist not directly involved in the centres,

We are a society that has been under colonization for a long time and has never been given the space, the time to think of ourselves. We have always thought of the Other, how to kick out the Other. It was our main thought all the time. We never thought of ourselves. We never studied ourselves. I think we need to do that. And this is what all the women's research centres are trying to do.... I'm thinking of the cultural and psychological make-up of the woman.... I mean, who am I? I was brought up into this culture....but we never studied our own culture.... Am I the same woman in Hebron? Am I the same woman as those in villages? I'm talking in terms of my own confusion about myself as a woman and the conception of others toward me...¹⁵³

Similarly, Bisan's efforts to "re-write our history" reflect the attempt to re-integrate Palestinian identity and history through present spaces and social processes--in order, that is, to contribute to longer-term processes of development.

¹⁵³ Interview 43. Ramallah, West Bank, 11 August, 1992.

Challenging Dualistic Concepts

The extent and type of autonomy that the Palestinian national authority will be able to negotiate will have local socio-spatial effects for women. For example, Peteet notes that while a sharp line of demarcation between the public and private worlds of men and women in the Middle East has been overdrawn, with increasing integration into regional, national, and international capitalist economic structures and market relations, public/private separation intensifies. Women's roles in production declines, and ideologies of their subordination are more easily realized (Peteet 1989:137).

The women's centres, in addressing women's issues in public forums, and in asserting women's concerns as national concerns (as noted above), are paving the way to creating a public critique that can break down the duality which associates women with (and serves to confine them to) the home and domestic reproduction. That is, women's and men's participation in public debate around women's issues not only breaks down the association of women's concerns with private, familial realm, but also serves to redefine "political issues" to include "women's issues."

On another level of their work, the centres are attempting to provide theoretical guidance to the women's

movement as a whole. Significantly, toward this aim, they are 'grounding' their work in the everyday experiences and concerns of Palestinian women. Their research methodologies place an emphasis on fieldwork and feminist, participatory methods. The Women's Legal Centre's approach to formulating a legal framework which could address and secure women's rights within a Palestinian context is tied to the concerns of individual women's cases. The Centre is thus creating a process whereby the frame-of-reference for the creation of public processes and institutional goals are linked and answerable to the 'private,' individual concerns of women.

The duality of urban/rural remains to be addressed more concretely in the centres' programs. Emphasis on outreach programs to reach women in villages and camps depend, for their success, on the accessibility and democratic nature of wider economic and political development processes, as well as on concerted efforts to make programs, if not facilities, directly accessible to women in rural areas and camps. The isolation experienced by women is compounded by the fragmenting effects of occupation and colonial history.

Conclusion

Through the centres' programs, women's concerns reverberate through the spectrum of socio-spatial relations. For example, in providing practical skills to individual women, the centres create a basis from which to widen and deepen women's roles within political structures--through, that is, grassroots women's committees. Further, as the centres formulate language and strategies for raising women's issues within Palestinian society, they challenge the terms of their links to international development funders. And, as the centres undertake research on women's needs and concerns, they dislodge the 'situation' of Arab women within Orientalist discourse.

But, demanding a public space where women's concerns can be addressed remains contingent not only on the amenability of national leaders and political factions, but on the regional and international context in which Palestinian national autonomy is emerging--and in which Israeli military occupation of most of the West Bank, and annexation of Arab East Jerusalem, continues. Increasing economic constraints are creating increasing political polarization which, in turn, is intensifying the discourse around women's roles.

Kandiyoti cautions that, at times, as governments struggle to shore up their legitimacy, they choose tactically to relinquish control of women to their immediate communities and families, thus depriving women of full legal protection (Kandiyoti 1991b:12). It is, thus, important that the Palestinian women's movement create both a broad-based movement which expresses the real, immediate concerns of women in villages and refugee camps, as well as create a general social and political consensus around women's issues, and foster democratic institutional processes. As politically (structurally if not ideologically) independent organizations, the women's centres are well 'placed' to continue to foster the development of a unified women's agenda which can support women's committees' efforts to both promote women's issues within their political factions, as well as link 'grassroots' women to a structure which can effectively link women's concerns to national issues, without subscribing to a "two-step" (national, then women's) liberation process.

In terms of creating oppositional critiques vis-a-vis the Islamicist groups' discourses on women's dress and behaviour, the centres have directly confronted leaders in the national movement to take action, and to address women's issues "publicly" rather than within the confines of each faction. In Kandiyoti's words,

One of the deepest ironies behind this emphasis on the control of women is the fact that the ties of economic

and political dependence in which most states are enmeshed restricts their autonomy quite severely in almost every other sphere (Kandiyoti 1991b:12).

Thus, the potential as well as constraints of women's organizational activism in occupied Palestine, in the form of women's research centres, remains contingent on several levels of relations. The following Chapter attempts to infer in greater depth, the challenges facing the women's research centres, and the Palestinian women's movement as a whole, in the context both of the limited autonomy gained by Palestinians, as well as increasing constraints and contradictions.

CHAPTER 7

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter provides a brief summary and evaluation of the original hypothesis formulated in the study. Theoretical implications are explored in terms of the study's ability to build from as well as contribute to geographic analyses. Finally, some suggestions are made regarding both the women's centres programs and objectives, as well as the direction that further research might take in the area of women's struggles in Palestine.

Re-assessing the Hypothesis

The original hypothesis asserts that the women's centres, as places of women's activism, are creating spaces for women's agency and consciousness to effect changes in political, social, and cultural processes within Palestinian society. In so doing, the centres enable Palestinian women to confront and challenge boundaries of gender within national ideology, Israeli military occupation measures, development policies, Zionist ideology, and Orientalist discourse. This hypothesis is premised on the notion that the places of women's activism are constituted by their dialectical relationship with each of these "scales" of socio-spatial relations.

Research Findings Summarized

The findings indicate that the centres represent places of individual women's activism, as well as spaces which serve to provide direction to the women's movement as a whole. As such, the centres formulate means of inquiring into and addressing women's needs; of linking women to services; providing services to women; mitigating women's isolation; and creating a social discourse around women's issues. As places which both shape women's agency and give form to the priorities of the women's movement, the centres come into direct contestation with the strategies and ideologies of the national struggle. As such, the centres are also engaged in a dialectical relation with several "scales" of relations (as outlined in Chapter two) in which the Palestinian national movement is situated. The constitution of the centres, their programs and objectives, are both shaped by historical socio-spatial relations as well as impact on these.

Through their structures and approaches, the centres create a space which allows for the expression and constructive development of differences among women in the women's movement. In the words of a women's committee leader,

the discussion has gone very far from when raising women's issues was somehow completely taboo to now when

we can raise any issue for discussion and also allow for a difference of views and a dialogue around it...¹⁵⁴

Several sectors of the women's movement are involved in this dialogue.

The centres also attempt to transcend class, and geographic divisions among women by mitigating the contradictory nature of development under occupation. In the process, the contradictory nature of national struggle is brought to the surface of Palestinian social and national discourse through the centres' strategies. Thus, the findings reveal how places can shape responses to contradictions and in turn shape the potential and constraints that these contradictions represent.

The centres' autonomy from political factions, and their concerted efforts to attain (or maintain) structural independence from any one women's committee, has enabled them to create spaces whereby women's committees as well as 'independent' women have been able to work together. These spaces provide mechanisms for united action. The findings of the research suggest the importance of efforts to create a unified agenda to lessen the precariousness of women's demands vis-a-vis alliances being formed between political factions with very divergent positions on women's issues. A unified

¹⁵⁴ Interview 28. East Jerusalem, 14 July, 1992.

program also aids the women's movement's efforts to lessen its isolation in relation to other local development organizations.

The ability of the centres to remain autonomous of a national political body is vital. Lessons can be heeded, as Palestinian women know, from the experience of Algerian women. The dismal position of Algerian women following liberation is noted with reference to the appendage-like nature of their organizations, as well as to the absence of a clear, ideological stance by the national movement on the role of women within a post-liberation state (Peteet 1989:138). The cases of the Sudan, South Yemen, Iran, and Egypt further indicate that the participation of women in national struggles can be extensive without involving substantial changes in the sexual division of labour, or in women's access to power in post-liberation states (Peteet 1989:138-141).

The centres' ability to mitigate the contradictions are dependent, ultimately, on the ability of Palestinians to attain autonomous jurisdiction over development decisions and processes--before, that is, the economic disintegration and political repression serve to completely undermine the processes of civic institution building which began before and during the *intifada*. At the time of fieldwork, there were attempts to create a consortium of Palestinian NGOs which

would act as a coordinating body. Such a body would be able to mitigate some of the contradictory effects of foreign funding. But, in light of the Declaration of Principles signed between the PLO and Israel, questions need to be posed regarding how development priorities will be set. For example, how much jurisdiction will Palestinians have over trade relations? And, in terms of creating civic structures, will organizations have the same motivation to remain politically independent of a governing authority, as public funding becomes available for services now provided by independent organizations?

The original thesis is valid, I suggest, but as constraints of context are increasing, a re-evaluation is required to further explore the constraints facing the centres and whether, moreover, the centres are coming to **reflect** more than **negotiate with and transform** polarizations of political affiliation, class, and regional divides within Palestinian society.

Methodology Revisited

Feminist geographers rightly argue for a theorizing away from dualities and toward "a different kind of geographic engagement" to reconceptualize the ground so the absented Other can "both speak and be heard" (Bondi and Domosh

1992:211). As there is no "true" Palestinian women's voice, that is, that exists outside of the context from which it emanates, and as there is no unitary "Palestinian woman," the research has attempted to focus on the role of places of activism in formulating strategies and constructing women's consciousness and agency.

The difficulty of formulating strategy is underlined by an activist. She states,

You need to work on so many levels, you cannot even really say 'I want to achieve this and this and this' because it is difficult to, first of all, measure anything more than awareness. You cannot see anything building on the ground because you don't have a system that can show you how your changes have affected people. On the other hand, awareness is so difficult to effect and is so difficult to measure. So you work and see small bits and pieces of your efforts but you cannot put them together until you have some way of systematizing them.¹⁵⁵

The study has attempted to contribute in a modest way to efforts in the Palestinian women's movement to "step back" and formulate a theoretical framework from which to devise strategies. This effort has attempted to contribute, thus, to "systematizing" an understanding of Palestinian women's efforts to "ground" women's activism.

¹⁵⁵ Interview 28. East Jerusalem, 14 July, 1992.

Theoretical Implications of the Study: Expanding Geographical Analysis

The study has drawn on examinations of, for example, the ways in which nationalism articulates with patriarchy (Yuval-Davis et al. 1989); and of feminism with imperialism or ethnocentrism (Abu-Lughod 1990; Amos and Parmar 1984; Mies 1985; McDowell 1993b). In attempts to reconceptualize hitherto taken-for-granted social categories the study draws on geographic formulations of the specific gendered conception of 'nationhood,' 'citizenship' and community' (Radcliffe 1990; Schmidt 1990), and on conceptions of the interconnections between patriarchy, nationalism and racism (Sanders 1990; Mitchell and Smith 1990).

Underlined in the framework is the interdependence of racism, patriarchy, and nationalism, and the need to pay more explicit attention to, as Smith notes, "the ways in which different ideological forms, and the discriminatory or usurpationary practices which underpin them, each constitute or work through the others" (Smith 1990:264) within particular locations and scales.

The conception of places or sites of Palestinian women's activism, in the form of research centres, draws from feminist geographic theorizing (Massey 1993; McDowell 1993b; Westwood

and Radcliffe 1993). Particularly useful is Massey's conception of places of women's activism as "differentially located nodes in a network of relations, unbounded and unstable," and her assertion that macro processes are more than linked to local places but, rather, form part of the constitution of local places (Massey 1993:144). The study embraces feminist attempts to diverge from the spatially-defined and fixed conception of locales that has dominated the discipline of geography (McDowell 1993b:312).

These notions have informed a framework of fluid, interacting relations whereby "imperialism," "colonialism," and "patriarchy" are examined not as abstracted concepts but in their articulation with women's activism in particular places and historical junctures. The framework, thus, 'places' Palestinian women's activism not simply in the physical places of their research centres, but within a historical space--as agents in their day-to-day strategizing and in, simultaneously, historical and world relations.

Such a 'situation' of Palestinian women's activism, moreover, helps to underline the links between their struggles and "our" struggles. The links between the Israeli military occupation and institutional, economic, discursive relations which situate women variously "occupied" are also, it is hoped, made more apparent.

The conceptual framework attempts to contribute, in a modest way, to an exploration of the tension between the gendered nature of boundaries of difference--configured at various socio-spatial levels or scales--and Palestinian women's attempts to 'ground' struggles for self-determination both as women and as members within a national liberation struggle. By exploring how these (interlinked) boundaries are organized at various scales of socio-spatial relations, the study formulates a conceptualization of territorial struggle, as well as reveals the usefulness of a spatial or territorial framework to a clearer understanding of the contradictions faced by women's struggles within national liberation movements.

Finally, the study attempts to extend feminist geography critiques which have focused "almost exclusively on gendered relations in the 'real' material world," rather than on the ideological construction of 'woman' (McDowell 1993a:162). By examining the places, or sites, of women's activism within a "web" of relations, including the ways in which these relations are produced discursively, the study has attempted to contribute to critiques of the taken-for-granted social categories (S.J. Smith 1989; Smith 1990:261, 264-5; Pettman 1988; Westwood and Radcliffe 1993).

The intent has been, also, to gauge the usefulness of a socio-spatial analysis to an exploration of the territoriality of the Palestinian women's movement's and, in particular, its organizational activism. In terms of assessing this aim, some tentative observations are possible.

A socio-spatial framework has helped to set the context of Palestinian women's activism in both its particularity, as well as within general regional, global and historical processes. This context is particularly useful in attempting to theorize women's struggles within a national liberation struggle. That is, the absence of a 'fixed' national context in which the Palestinian women's movement wages its battles, makes it important to conceptually frame the dynamism of power relations which articulate with women's localized activism.

Regarding the study's contribution to feminist analyses of socio-spatial relations, by focusing on Palestinian women's *negotiation* with these various scales of relations, the notion of territoriality is extended to include social, discursive, and cultural configurations (besides the more often theorized political and geographic).

The study also indicates the centrality of women's struggles in gauging the 'ground' on which the national struggle rests. That is, the more precarious the national

struggle, the more severe the constraints on women. The women's research centres' activism is vital to the Palestinian national struggle--both in being a gauge with which to assess the context in which the national struggle is waged, as well as in challenging the national struggle to remain linked and accountable to the social struggle.

In an ironic way, women's issues are definitive "social" issues--in that the struggles of women within the national framework are, by definition, opposed to the 'logic' of the project of the nation-state which rests on gender divisions of labour in which women are the subjugated "other." That is, the framework has, I believe, enabled a clearer understanding of the contradictions of women's struggles as emanating from the various manifestations of the gendered nature of socio-spatial configurations at national and international levels.

Direction of Future Research

In terms of understanding the obstacles in the way of women's attempts to "ground" their gains as women, further study is needed to examine how increasingly sophisticated means of controlling and 'occupying' space reverberate within Palestinian social and political structures.

The framework and findings indicate that the rise of Islamicist groups in the West Bank and Gaza is linked to the increasingly desperate economic situation and continuing political repression, and that women's battles with, for example, *Hamas*, entail struggles not simply against "traditions" but against the politicization of customs by political movements vying to increase their constituencies. Additionally, Palestinians I spoke with often responded to my inquiries about the nature of the threat posed by *Hamas*' growth as a movement, with assertions that Palestinians as a people "have never been fundamentalist," implying that their secular history is a built-in guard against Islamicist groups gaining political power within a Palestinian state. Or, it was suggested, Palestinians "cannot lose this accumulated history mechanically," and that, also, the rise in *Hamas* is part of the discontent with the political leadership.¹⁵⁶ The election of fundamentalists in various Chambers of Commerce, student councils, etc., was perceived by many as, mainly, a protest vote, reflecting disaffection with the PLO.

These statements are supported by the findings of a recent survey of living conditions in the West Bank and Gaza. The study attests to the importance of distinguishing the individual religiosity of the veil from the political movements which focus on women's dress and behaviour. Its

¹⁵⁶ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

findings indicate that, in fact, Palestinian women in both Gaza and the West Bank who are "religiously observant or active" share similar profiles with secular women with regard to their views on women's issues, such as working outside the home, and the need for daycare facilities for women (Heiberg 1993:263, 267, 274).

These findings enable cautious speculation that a framework exists in which the Palestinian women's movement can create broad support among women for women's issues, regardless of the increasing support for Islamicist political groups.¹⁵⁷ Despite this potential to rally women's support for women's issues, the women's research centres' work to create a social consensus around women's issues is vital in order to effectively challenge the social and political agendas of Hamas, for example.

The increased numbers of women wearing the hijab (headscarf), in particular in Gaza, may not be sufficient to say that fundamentalists have "taken over," and may indeed "reflect more the social dimension than political Islam."¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ The survey also indicates that, for men loyalties are shifting from the family to Islam, whereas women's adherence to the national movement is increasing. Heiberg suggests a "feminization of the national movement." Women view Islam more in terms of religious orthodoxy than of political activism. (Heiberg 1993:274, 267).

¹⁵⁸ Interview 15. Ramallah, West Bank, 13 June, 1992.

But the line between "social" and "political" is a tenuous one when the political map has not yet jelled, so to speak.¹⁵⁹ What needs more attention is the context in which *Hamas* is gaining influence. As noted above, *Hamas'* effectiveness in "delivering" badly needed services and resources to the most destitute has rendered it a vital social movement. Moreover, political symbols around which it previously focused its campaigns, including, pressuring women to wear the *hijab*, "no longer seem important," as Roy reports (Roy 1993:23).

In other words, while *Hamas* seems to have quieted its campaign around women's dress, it is gaining legitimacy by playing a more vital role in supporting the community's economic survival. Moreover, this legitimacy is accompanied by deepening political rifts and corruption among nationalist factions (Roy 1993: 23). The question arises as to whether *Hamas* will attempt to re-engage Palestinians in a perhaps more ardent discourse around women's dress and behaviour. And, should this occur, what sort of discursive space will be available for oppositional stances. *Hamas* has managed, since the *Intifada*, to place nationalist factions on the defensive regarding its moral plea around women's role. Additionally, research:

¹⁵⁹ The study also indicates that, in all three regions surveyed (the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem), a full third of women who wear the *hijab* fear the consequences of not doing so (Heiberg 1993:264).

seems to vindicate observations that there has been a general social retrenchment during the *intifada*, with women in their teens being most affected by new conservative ideologies (Hammami 1993:307).

In the case of Pakistan, for example, Gardezi points out that the ability to come out openly in favour of secularism in mainstream political discourse has been lost. While, she acknowledges, a secular state is no guarantee of women's rights, "the inability to talk of the separation of Islam from the state, laws, educational systems, the media, and other institutions is muting current struggle" in Pakistan (Gardezi 1990:22).

The need for the centres to remain politically autonomous of a governing body remains paramount. The women's centres must also continue to find effective ways of integrating all women's concerns and voices into their structures. At the same time, they need to ensure that issues formulated in unified women's agenda are relevant to women in camps and villages, as well as to urban women. By ensuring that women in villages and camps are represented in the issues and concerns--and processes--of the centres, the centres can hold the grassroots women's committees accountable to their constituencies, and can open up avenues through which to coordinate strategies with other service-oriented development organizations.

At the same time, as women's concerns vary greatly according to their social and geographic location in Palestinian society, the centres need to guard against public attempts to discount their work with accusations that the issues are relevant only to middle-class, urban women. Thus, while the centres need to continue to foster ongoing self-criticism within the women's movement, they need also to continue building a social discourse in which all women's concerns are deemed of vital, national importance. As Gardezi cautions, in reference again to Pakistan, "a gender-based struggle must not be waged alone, but it also must not be compromised" (Gardezi 1990:21).

Along with the imperative felt by many Palestinians that the future state be secular, the intense discussion underlying their efforts to create organizational structures and civic institutions is fed by notions of democracy. These efforts are seen as a means of transcending factional rifts, as well as a way, in the words of the Director of Bisan, "to move from factional thinking to state thinking."¹⁶⁰

This discussion of democracy is occurring also in the context of events in Eastern Europe and of the increasing support for Islamicist movements in the Middle East. The

¹⁶⁰ Interview 17. Ramallah, West Bank, 22 June, 1992.

notion of individual rights and the rule of law is prominent. This is a recent development in the West Bank and Gaza and is informing critiques of grassroots committees. As described by a member of Women's Affairs in Gaza, there has been a movement from "very unclear, collectivist notions of politics to a feeling that, in the unclear structures of organizations, there is a lot of hierarchy and authoritarianism across the board."¹⁶¹

This discussion needs to be better theorized in terms of how notions of democracy have become ideologically laden. Feminist research into the "silent revolutions" of Eastern Europe indicate, for example, that:

the transformation of the relationship between public and private spheres lies at the heart of the process of change in Eastern Europe, and that the exclusion of women and the de-grading of feminine identity currently in train are not contingent to, but rather a fundamentally constitutive feature of, the democratisation of Eastern Europe (Watson 1993:471).

The masculinism at the heart of Western democracies needs to be better assessed and theorized in terms of their value to gender struggles of self-determination if they are fundamentally gendered, exclusive, and racist.

Finally, more comparative research of women's negotiations in the context of Middle Eastern states and

¹⁶¹ Interview 39. East Jerusalem, 9 August, 1992.

social movements can better inform Palestinian women's attempts to draw from their experiences and strategies.

Conclusion. 3. a settlement or arrangement after discussion:
the conclusion of a treaty¹⁶²

The women's centres looked at in the study reflect attempts in the Palestinian women's movement to address women's needs and concerns as women, and to integrate these into the national agenda. The study asserts the need to problematize socio-spatial dimensions of territoriality as the complexity of Israeli-Palestinian conflict continues to increase. The conceptual framework of socio-spatial relations does not preclude the centrality of land to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Rather, it seeks to trace what is at stake for Palestinian women, in the struggle to define and establish a Palestinian state in occupied Palestine. In effect, women's centres represent new sites through which the women's movement is able to give form to women's negotiations for a certain "Palestine."

¹⁶² The Winston Dictionary of Canadian English. Intermediate Edition (Montreal: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1970), p. 127.

APPENDIX 1

Research Program Outline as Originally Proposed

PROPOSED RESEARCH PROGRAM

Research will examine activities and objectives of five women's research and development centres; the role of these centres in the women's movements; and, how they are putting forth a feminist agenda.

Research Questions:

- What issues/long term visions are being articulated through the centres?
- How are Palestinian women putting forth a feminist agenda?
- How are women's centres articulating this agenda?
- Why now?
- What directions is this feminist activism taking the women's movement?
- Is there a correlation between the centres' work and attempts to move away from factional/national political processes?
- How are the women's centres instrumental--or not--in creating an autonomous voice and new political 'spaces' for women's activism?
- What links exist between the women's centres and international funding organizations? What are the ramifications of these links?
- How are women's centres addressing the need to work in a truly grassroots manner? That is, how are they working to include 'independent' women who are not already active in the women's movement, in the nations' struggle?

Case Studies:

- a) Women's Studies Centre, East Jerusalem
- b) Women's Legal Centre, East Jerusalem
- c) Women's Studies Committee, Bisan Research & Development Centre, Ramallah
- d) Women's Affairs, Nablus
- e) Women's Affairs, Gaza branch

Methodology:

Participatory/feminist--will work with a translator/research partner in conjunction with whom I will (as much as possible jointly) conceive and carry out research. Will provide feedback, seek input from Women's Studies Centre, E. Jerusalem.

--Methodological Tools:

i. Interviewing

Staff members, Directors, Board Members of women's centres; those who access centres' facilities and programs; members of women's committees; community leaders; students. Interviews will take place in Nablus, Ramallah, East Jerusalem, and various locations in the Gaza Strip.

ii. Examination of Documents

- centres' newsletters, flyers, workshop reports, etc.;
- resource centres' materials;
- newspaper coverage ;
- research and reports produced by local research centres.

iii. Participant-observation

- sitting in on meetings (where possible);
- participate in planning, organizing, and facilitating events (possibly film festival, being organized by Women's Studies Centre);
- working with translator/research partner in conceptualizing research, planning questions and interviews, conducting interviews, reviewing methodology literature--toward creating an inter-active dialogue and research process.
- conducting a workshop with Women's Studies Centre staff to generate feedback regarding the aims and direction of their work and directions this research project might take in response.

APPENDIX 2**Interview Schedule--27 May to 22 August, 1992**

1. 27 May, East Jerusalem
2. 27 May, East Jerusalem
3. 27 May, East Jerusalem
4. 28 May, East Jerusalem
5. 30 May, East Jerusalem
6. 30 May, East Jerusalem
7. 30 May, East Jerusalem
8. 1 June, East Jerusalem
9. 1 June, East Jerusalem
10. 2 June, East Jerusalem (follow-up interview)
11. 3 June, Nablus, West Bank (group interview)
12. 8 June, East Jerusalem
13. 8 June, Ramallah, West Bank
14. 8 June, Ramallah, West Bank
15. 13 June, Ramallah, West Bank
16. 20 June, East Jerusalem
17. 22 June, Ramallah, West Bank
18. 28 June, Ramallah, West Bank
19. 1 July, Gaza City (group interview)
20. 2 July, Gaza City
21. 8 July, West Jerusalem
22. 9 July, Old City, Jerusalem
23. 10 July, Beit Sahur, West Bank
24. 10 July, Beit Sahur, West Bank
25. 10 July, Beit Sahur, West Bank
26. 11 July, Ramallah, West Bank
27. 13 July, East Jerusalem
28. 14 July, East Jerusalem
29. 14 July, Ramallah, West Bank
30. 15 July, Ramallah, West Bank
31. 16 July, East Jerusalem
32. 21 July, Birzeit Village, West Bank
33. 21 July, Ramallah, West Bank
34. 21 July, Ramallah, West Bank
35. 22 July, Gaza City
36. 22 July, Gaza City
37. 30 July, Ramallah, West Bank
38. 7 August, Kalandia Refugee Camp, West Bank
39. 9 August, East Jerusalem
40. 10 August, Nablus, West Bank
41. 10 August, Nablus, West Bank
42. 10 August, Nablus, West Bank
43. 11 August, Ramallah, West Bank
44. 11 August, Ramallah, West Bank (follow-up interview)
45. 13 August, East Jerusalem (follow-up interview)
46. 13 August, East Jerusalem (follow-up interview)
47. 15 August, East Jerusalem (follow-up interview)
48. 17 August, East Jerusalem

- 49. 17 August, Ramallah, West Bank (group interview)
- 50. 19 August, Nazareth, Israel
- 51. 19 August, Nazareth, Israel
- 52. 21 August, East Jerusalem
- 53. 22 August, Ramallah, West Bank
- 54. 22 August, Ramallah, West Bank

APPENDIX 3**Interview Guide****A/ PERSONAL**

1. How long have you been involved with the centre, either formally in a paid position or informally, volunteering, for example?
2. What kind of work do you do here?
3. Why did you get involved with this centre?
4. How does your work with the centre reflect your perception of what Palestinian women/the women's movement needs?
5. How does the centre represent new developments in the women's movement?
6. Why is the centre, in particular able to raise issues not previously raised within the women's movement?
7. Does the centre play a self-reflecting role within the women's movement?
8. Has political independence been difficult to achieve for the centre?

B/ CENTRE

1. What is the history of the centre?
2. What are its aims/goals?
3. What are the main issues dealt with?
4. Work-related issues? Legal issues? Domestic violence? Incest? Rape?
5. [FOR LEGAL CENTRE: What do the cases you deal with concern? How are they followed up on?]
6. What issues do you expect the centre to be dealing with in the future?
7. Why have these particular issues been chosen as priority issues?
8. What materials [newsletters, journals, training/teaching guides, workshop reports, etc.] are produced by the centre?
9. Why is the centre located where it is?
10. How does this location affect who is reached by the centre and who is able to use the facilities, etc.?
11. What, would you say, is the "constituency" of this centre?
Which women are reached--what is the geographical 'reach' of your programs and services, and the background of the women who get involved?
12. How do you reach them?
13. Do you attempt to reach women who are not 'active' in any way?
14. How?
15. Is 'outreach' a priority of the centre--that is, do you have staff persons/committees, etc., who are able to work

specifically on extending the centres' activities and programs to reach women not formally involved?

16. How are new positions advertised?
17. Who makes hiring decisions? What is the hiring process?
18. What kind of working relationship exists among staff members at the centre? For example, is it formally hierarchical or is there a collective decision-making process?
19. Is this working relationship an "issue" at the centre, for example, is it discussed at meetings?
20. Does the centre provide child care subsidies, etc?
21. What are the sources of funding for the centre?
22. Do you receive funding from international organizations?
23. How does this funding affecting the work of the centre?

D/ VIS-A-VIS WOMEN'S MOVEMENT/NATIONAL STRUGGLE

1. How do you see the role of this centre within the women's movements in Palestine?
2. Is the centre putting forth a feminist agenda?
3. How do you deal with the relationship of domination--the West over the East--which has also been reflected in Western feminism?
4. What is the relationship between the feminist visions and struggles of Palestinian women, and Western feminism?
5. Why is the centre and the Palestinian women's movements articulating a feminist agenda now?
6. How is this articulation related to the juncture at which the national struggle is at?
7. What do you perceive to be the relationship between the women's movements and the national struggle?
8. What directions is feminist activism taking the women's movement/the national movement?
9. Is there a correlation between the centres' work and attempts to move away from factional/national political processes?
10. How are the women's centres instrumental--or not--in creating an autonomous voice and new political 'spaces' for women's activism?
11. What questions are being asked/what issues raised by Palestinian women, regarding the nature of the future Palestinian state?
12. What future role will this women's centre play within such a state?

E/ FOR BISAN CENTRE

1. What is the relationship between this centre and women's production projects/cooperatives?
2. Are these projects/cooperatives providing a measure of economic autonomy for women?

F/ THE INTIFADA

1. What has been the effect of the *intifada* on women's participation in Palestinian social/political/economic life?
2. Has women's increased involvement been sustained? Has this centre been able to sustain women's increased involvement?....

G/ ISLAMICIST MOVEMENTS

1. What has been the effect of Islamicist movements on women?
2. How has the Centre addressed the increased pressures on women to wear the hijab?

APPENDIX 4

Summary of Women's Studies Centre's Activities¹⁶³

June 1990 - July 1993

- June '90 - presentation of a working paper on WSC research entitled "Socio-Economic Conditions of Female Wage Labour in Palestinian Factories" at the Fourth International Interdisciplinary Congress on Women at Hunter College in New York City.
- Sept '90 - one-day workshop on "Mechanisms for Women's Grass-Roots Committees on Working with Women Masses."
- presentation of paper on "Women and Production" at a conference sponsored by the Community Development Project in East Jerusalem.
- Oct '90 - presentation of a paper entitled "Illiteracy among Palestinian Women" in Namibia at a conference sponsored by the International Council on Adult Education.
- Dec '90 - presentation on images of women in the press at "The Intifada and Women's Social Issues" conference sponsored by the Women's Studies Committee of Bisan Centre.
- all WSC activities brought to halt due to blanket curfew imposed over occupied territories at the outbreak of war in the Persian Gulf.
- March '91 - first issue of WSC's Arabic monthly *al-Mar'a*.
- June '91 - conference on domestic violence against women; the first conference of its kind in the occupied territories, it was attended by over 100 women.
- July '91 - publication of "Women Street Peddlers: The Phenomenon of Bastat in the Palestinian Informal Economy."
- Oct '91 - opening of new WSC centre with space for its growing library, as well as a separate room for training courses and workshops.

¹⁶³ Sources include Women's Studies Centre Newsletters, February 1992, August 1992, February 1993, and August 1993.

- Nov '91 - meetings with different women's grass-roots committees to discuss how the centre can best serve their educational needs.
- Dec '91 - one-day workshop on problems facing women's cooperatives.
 - presentation of WSC research on women street peddlers at the Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza city.
 - reception of Middle East Children's Alliance delegation.
- Jan '92 - meetings with delegations from the Canadian Council for International Cooperation, "Tucson Women against the Occupation" affiliated with Middle East Witness, and a women's group from Torino, Italy.
 - publication of occasional paper on proceedings from workshop on problems facing women's cooperatives.
 - confirmation of joint research project with Women's Affairs Centre (both Nablus and Gaza branches) on socio-economic and political changes experiences by girls sponsored under an Italian "adoption" program.
 - publication of debut issue of *Sparks/Wamid*.
- Feb '92 - intensive two-month course in research and writing incorporating feminist approaches to research.
 - all-day workshop on car maintenance and basic auto repair.
 - open discussion on "Equality Between the Sexes."
 - open discussion on "Women and Social Change."
- March '92 - screening of Palestinian film director Mai Masri's "Children of Fire" and open discussion in celebration of International Women's Day.
 - open discussion on "Women and Physiology."
 - arrival of film-maker from India; Mahnoor Yar Khan, an OCSD project worker, will be with the WSC for a year to conduct video courses for women.
- April '92 - all-women's field trip to Jericho to mark conclusion of research and writing course.
 - visit to Women's Affairs Centre in Nablus regarding cooperation strategies.
- May '92 - WSC Director travels to Greece for Palestinian-Israeli Confidence Building and conflict Resolution workshop sponsored by Women For Mutual Security.

- two participants from the research and writing course join the WSC staff as researchers.
 - WSC project worker attends "Women Working for Change: An International Seminar on Strategies for Advancing the Status and Contribution of Women" organized by the British Council in Birmingham, England.
- June '92
- First Annual Women's Festival in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
 - publication of "Women in the Marginalized Workforce" including a study on women goldworkers in the West Bank town of Ya'abad and a reprint of the WSC study on women street peddlers.
 - publication of "Women's Experiences of Divorce" including two new studies on the experiences of divorced women in the West Bank town of al-Bireh and the nearby refugee camp of Qalandia.
 - release of bibliography including more than 500 titles of women's books in Arabic available through local libraries and institutions.
- July '92
- press conference in protest of increased restrictions on women's freedom of expression, and creation of task force in defence of democratic freedoms in coordination with other women's groups.
 - WSC staff member takes a group of young Palestinian women to month-long summer camp hosted by Italian women's group Casa Delle Donne.
 - six-week journalism course designed to promote skills development amongst Palestinian women journalists and writers.
 - ten-week intensive English language course for WSC staff and women's committees activists.
 - seminar on women in personal status law including presentations by women experts on Islamic law and an open discussion about strategies for the development of an appropriate Palestinian family code.
 - presentation of joint research project on Palestinian women centres in the West Bank and Gaza Strip by MA researcher from Canada and a WSC researcher.
 - four days of internal workshops on organizational structures, work evaluations, program planning, budgeting and group dynamics involving all WSC staff.
- Aug '92
- Indian film maker, attached to WSC as a project worker for a one-year period, begins first in a series of two-week intensive courses in video camera usage, film shooting and editing. The first

course was held at the Palestinian Popular Arts Centre in Ramallah. Course participants included a WSC researcher.

- Sept '92 - *al-Mar'a*, no. 14 released.
 - WSC Director travels to Italy for a seminar on gender issues. The seminar, sponsored by the Bologna Women's Documentation Centre, was attended by Palestinian, Italian and Israeli women.
 - editor-in-chief of *al-Mar'a* magazine travels to Kent University in Britain to participate in a one-year MA course in Women's Studies.
- Oct '92 - intensive ten-day counselling course focusing on feminist approaches to counselling for women counsellors working with women.
 - two days of internal workshops on organizational structures, evaluation processes, program planning and budgeting involving all WSC staff members.
 - work on second annual women's festival, slated for May 1993, begins.
 - celebration party for WSC staff and women's committee members who completed a three-month English course held at the WSC and conducted by AmidEast.
 - *Sparks/Wamid*, no. 5 released.
 - purchase of video equipment and launching of plans to develop audio-visual section for Centre's library.
- Nov '92 - research unit launches three-month pilot study on school dropouts in cooperation with UNICEF.
 - graduation party for graduates of the WSC counselling.
 - fundraising party for the plight of *al-Mar'a* magazine.
 - research unit coordinator takes an intensive one-week course in statistics for social sciences sponsored by the Centre for International Social Science Research (FAFO).
- Dec '92 - WSC hosts first in a series of monthly seminars on women and mental health organized by the counselling course participants. The opening seminar, led by Dr. Vivica Hasboun, was entitled "Women and Depression."
 - WSC project worker conducts video training course at Women's Affairs Centre in Gaza.
- Jan '93 - seminar on "The Role of Dreams in Counselling" led by Dr. Hasboun.

- WSC Director and several staff members participate in series of UNDP-facilitated workshops on women and production, women and education and creating a Palestinian women's agenda. The workshops were organized by a Palestinian women's task force including members from women's committee, women's charitable societies and women's centres.
- Feb '93
- Indian film-maker, Mahnoor Yar Khan, attached to WSC as a WSC project worker for a one-year period, holds a two-week intensive course in video camera usage, film shooting and editing at the Women's Affairs Centre in Nablus.
 - WSC staff members participate in the Centre's biannual staff retreat; the four days of internal workshops include sessions on organizational structures, staff relations, program planning, budgeting, and program and staff evaluation.
 - WSC Video Club is established; a video camera, a television, video cassette recorder and a selection of nearly three dozen films on and by women are made available through the Club.
 - Follow-up workshops from last year's counselling course, held in coordination with the Palestinian Counselling Centre, are initiated. The first one is on Women's Mental Support.
- March '93
- More than fifty community members attend a fundraising party for al-Mar'a magazine; activities include an auction, bingo, music, traditional sweets and lots of laughter.
 - Second follow-up counselling workshop, Violence Against Women in the Family, is held.
- April '93
- *Sparks/Wamid*, nos. 6 & 7 are released.
 - WSC staff members participate in a full day of internal workshops to follow up February's biannual staff retreat.
 - Third follow-up counselling workshop, Depression Among Women, is held.
- May '93
- Nablus, Ramallah, Birzeit, Jerusalem and Gaza City host the Second Annual Women's Festival in the Occupied Palestinian Territories.
 - Fourth follow-up counselling workshop, on Dream Interpretation, held.
- June '93
- A preliminary study on the phenomenon of dropouts in the Ramallah area, carried out in cooperation with UNICEF, is completed.

- A two-month study on women seamstresses in the Ramallah area is launched in cooperation with the Dutch development agency NOVIB.
- Several WSC staff members participate in a series of workshops, sponsored by Bisan Centre of Research and Development and exploring women and the economy, women and education, and women and law.
- WSC researcher attends International Human Rights Conference in Vienna as a member of the Palestinian women's delegation to the Conference.
- At the invitation of the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees, WSC Video Club screens two films for a group of 15 young women in Beit Reema, a small West Bank village near Ramallah.
- Fifth follow-up counselling workshop held on specific counselling cases.

- July '93
- The fourth biannual Arabic press bulletin, documenting and critiquing articles on women's issues carried in the local press, is released.
 - A new administrative assistant is welcomed to the WSC staff.
 - WSC Director participates in a seminar at the IDVA Centre in Tel Aviv.
 - One-month training course in management for women administrators begins.
 - Sixth follow-up counselling workshop held on women's physiology.

APPENDIX 5

Publications of the Centres

Abdul-Hadi, Izzat (ed.). 1990. "The Impact of the Gulf Crises on the Economic Situation in the Palestinian Occupied Territories." (Arabic). Ramallah, West Bank: Bisan Bisan Centre for Research and Development.

_____. 1992. The Intifada and Popular Development: A Socio-Economic Analysis of the Cooperative and Some Popular Economic Initiatives. (Arabic with English summary). Ramallah, West Bank: Bisan.

Abu Daqqa, Amal, et al. 1992. "Women's Income-Generating Projects in the Gaza Strip." Gaza: Save the Children and Shu'un il Mar'a (Women's Affairs), Gaza.

Directory of Palestinian Women's Organizations. 1993. Ramallah: Women's Studies Committee, Bisan Center for Research and Development.

Hindiyyeh Mani, Suha and Ghazawneh, Afaf. "Socio-Economic Conditions of Female Wage Labour in Palestinian Factories," Women's Studies Centre, 1990.

Lang, Erica and Mohanna, Itimad. n.d. A Study of Women and Work in 'Shatti' Refugee Camp of the Gaza Strip. Arab Thought Forum (Jerusalem), Women's Affairs (Gaza).

"The Intifada and Some Women's Social Issues." A Conference held in Al-Quds Al-Sharif/Jerusalem on December 14, 1990. Prepared by Women's Studies Committee/Bisan Center.

al-Mar'a monthly Arabic magazine, Women's Studies Centre.

Sparks/Wamid, bimonthly selection of articles from *al-Mar'a* translated into English

Biannual Arabic Press Bulletin. (Arabic). (Documentation and critique of articles on women's issues carried in local press). Women's Studies Centre.

Occasional papers by Women's Studies Centre:

"Women Street Peddlers: The Phenomenon of Bastat in the Palestinian Informal Economy," (in Arabic). Birzeit, West Bank: Afaq Filistiniyya, Birzeit University, July 1991.

"Marketing Experiences in Women's Production Cooperatives,"
(in Arabic). Proceedings of WSC Study Day, Women's
Studies Centre, October 1991.

Forthcoming occasional papers by Women's Studies Centre:

"Socioeconomic conditions of Female Wage labourers in
Palestinian Factories," (in Arabic).

"Women Street Peddlers: The Phenomenon of Bastat in the
Palestinian Informal Economy," (English translation).

"Women's Experiences of Divorce in all-Bireh Town," (in
Arabic).

APPENDIX 6

**Excerpts of Press Release Issued July, 1992, by the
"Task Force for the Protection of Democratic Freedoms"¹⁶⁴**

Palestinian women's early awareness of national oppression encouraged them to participate in large numbers in building Palestinian society at all levels--political, economic, social and educational--on equal footing with men.... With the increase in women's involvement in political organizations and various national activities, women have been able to change society's traditional view of women as weak and incapable of undertaking political activities. Women have proved their capabilities at all levels of the struggle.

Palestinian women, represented by the women's movement, are vital participants in the Palestinian national movement. Palestinian women are struggling to end the occupation and to establish a Palestinian state. In addition, women are struggling to reinforce democratic freedom among Palestinians, viewing this as a fundamental aspect of the fight against occupation. Pluralism and freedom of expression are important elements in the coming phase of the national movement.

At the present, Palestinian society is witnessing a serious and extensive discussion regarding the reinforcement of the democratic process; some tendencies characteristic of intellectual oppression and the repression of democratic freedoms have emerged. These have been accompanied by hostile practices against cultural activities--such as threats and financial and moral pressure--on grounds that such activities are in conflict with traditions. Such practices have negative repercussions on our national organizations and on different national activities [designed] to recruit the masses in the confrontation against the occupation's repressive measures aimed at suppressing democratic freedoms and annihilating Palestinian cultural heritage. Moreover, the reinforcement of traditional social views limits the participation of the masses in the struggle against the occupation.

The practice of democratic freedom is the right of every individual and group, including people from all different intellectual and political persuasions within Palestinian society. All these segments are working towards one objective: an end to the occupation and the establishment of a Palestinian state. Recent forms of threat and pressure from individuals and group against cultural activities are an outrageous violation of individual and group freedoms....

¹⁶⁴ From Women's Studies Center, Newsletter, August 1992.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abdo, Nahla. 1987. Family, Women and Social Change in the Middle East: The Palestinian Case. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.
- . 1991. "Women of the Intifada: Gender, Class and National Liberation," Race & Class, 32(4), 19-35.
- . 1993. "Middle East Politics Through Feminist Lenses: Negotiating the Terms of Solidarity," Alternatives, 18(1), 29-38.
- Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1988. "Fieldwork of a Dutiful Daughter." In Soraya Altorki and Camillia Fawzi El-Solh (eds.), Arab Women in the Field: Studying Your Own Society, pp. New York: Syracuse University Press.
- . 1990. "Anthropology's Orient: The Boundaries of Theory on the Arab World." In Hisham Sharabi (ed.), Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses, pp. 81-131. New York: Routledge.
- Ahmed, Leila. 1982. "Western Ethnocentrism and Perceptions of the Harem," Feminist Studies, 8(3), 520-34.
- . 1992. Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of a Modern Debate. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Amos, V. and Parmar, P. 1984. "Challenging Imperial Feminism," Feminist Review, 17, 3-19.
- Antonius, Soraya. 1983. "Fighting on Two Fronts: Conversations with Palestinian Women." In M. Davies (ed.), Third World-Second Sex: Women's Struggles and National Liberation, pp. 63-77. London: Zed Books.
- Bartlett, W.H. 1855. Jerusalem Revisited. London: Arthur Hall, Virtue.
- Benvenisti, Meron. 1984. The West Bank Data Project: A Survey of Israel's Policies. Washington, D.C.: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research.
- Bloom, Ann R. 1991. "Women in the Defense Forces." In B. Swirski and M.P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel, pp. 128-138. Toronto: Pergamon Press.
- Bondi, L. 1992. "Gender and Dichotomy," Progress in Human Geography, 16 (1), 98-104.

- Bondi, L. and Domosh, M. 1992. "Other Figures in Other Places: On Feminism, Postmodernism and Geography," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10, 199-213.
- Crang, P. 1992. "The Politics of Polyphony: Reconfigurations in Geographical Authority," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10, 527-549.
- Dalby, Simon. 1992. "Reading Gender, Reading Geography, Reading the Gulf." Paper presented at the International Geographical Congress, Washington, August.
- . 1993. "Gender and Geopolitics: Discourse, Silence and Violence in the New World Disorder." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Canadian Association of Geographers, Ottawa, May 31-June 3.
- Dhiab, Reema and Zamel, Amal. 1993. "Women's Role in the Media Process During the *Intifada*," Sparks/Wamid 4 (August):4-6.
- Divine, Donna Robinson. 1980. "The Dialectics of Palestinian Politics." In J.S. Migdal (ed.), Palestinian Society and Politics, pp. 212-29. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.
- . 1985 "Palestinian Arab Women and Their Reveries of Emancipation," S.C. Bourque and D.R. Divine (eds.), Women Living Change, pp. 57-83. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- Driver, F. 1992. "Geography's Empire: Histories of Geographical Knowledge," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10, 23-40.
- Domosh, Mona. 1991. "Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography," Transactions: Institute of British Geographers, New Series, 16, 95-104.
- Falah, Ghazi. 1989. "Israelization of Palestire Human Geography," Progress in Human Geography, 13, 535-550.
- "Farmers' Losses: Who Should Pay?" Almultaga Arab Thought Forum Newsletter 2 (2), n.p.
- Friedman, J. and Weaver, C. 1979. Territory and Function: The Evolution of Regional Planning. London: Edward Arnold.
- Friedman, J. 1987. "Beyond Otherness: Or the Spectacularisation of Anthropology," Telos, 71, 161-170.

- Gardezi, Fauzia. 1990. "Islam, Feminism, and the Women's Movement in Pakistan: 1981-1991," South Asia Bulletin, 10 (2), pp. 19-24.
- Giacaman, Rita. 1987. "Reflections on the Palestinian Women's Movement in the Israeli-Occupied Territories." Occasional paper, Birzeit University Community Health Unit.
- _____. 1988. Life and Health in Three Palestinian Villages. London: Ithaca Press.
- _____. (n.d.) "Palestinian Women and Development in the Occupied West Bank." Unpublished paper.
- Giacaman, Rita and Johnson, Penny. 1989. "Palestinian Women: Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers." In Lockman, Z. and Benin, J. (eds.), Intifada, pp. 155-169. Boston: South End Press.
- Goldring, Beth. (n.d.). "Israeli Human Rights Violations and Palestinian Women." Jerusalem: Sanabel Press Services, P.O. Box 51043.
- Gotlieb, Yosef. 1992. "Retrieving Life-place from Colonized Space: Transcending the Encumbrances of the Post-colonial State," Political Geography, 11(5), 461-474.
- Graham-Brown, Sarah. 1988. Images of Women: The Portrayal of Women in Photography of the Middle East 1860-1950. London: Quartet Books.
- Grosz, E. 1987. "Feminist Theory and the Challenge to Knowledges," Women's Studies International Forum, 10, 475-480.
- Haj, Samira. 1992. "Palestinian Women and Patriarchal Relations," Signs, 17 (4), pp. 761-778.
- Halliday, Fred and Hamza Alavi. 1988. "Introduction." In F. Halliday and H. Alavi (eds.), State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan, London: MacMillan.
- Hamad, Saida. 1989. "Intifada Transforms Palestinian Society, Especially the Role of Women," Al-Fajr, March 13, p. 8.
- Hammam, Mona. 1981. "Review: Women and Islam," Merip Reports, March/April, pp. 28-31.
- Hammami, Rema. 1990. "Women, the Hijab and the Intifada," Middle East Report, nos. 164-165, 24-28, 78.

- _____. 1993. "Women in Palestinian Society." In M. Heiberg and G. Ovensen, et al. Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions, pp. 283-311. Oslo: FAFO.
- Hammami, Reza and Martina Rieker. 1988. "Feminist Orientalism and Orientalist Marxism," New Left Review, no. 170, 93-106.
- Hanson, Susan. 1992. "Geography and Feminism: Worlds in Collision?" Annals of the Association of American Geographers, 82 (4), 569-586.
- Harding, Sandra. 1987. "Introduction: Is There a Feminist Method?." In Sandra Harding (ed.), Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues, pp. 1-14. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1989. "The Instability of the Analytical Categories of Feminist Theory." In M.R. Malson, et al. (eds.), Feminist Theory in Practice and Process. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- _____. 1991. Whose Science? Whose Knowledge?: Thinking from Women's Lives. New York: Cornell University Press.
- Hartsock, Nancy C.M. 1987. "The Feminist Standpoint: Developing the Ground for a Specifically Feminist Historical Materialism." In Sandra Harding (ed.), Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues, pp. 157-180. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Hassan, Manar. 1991. "Growing up Female and Palestinian in Israel." In B. Swirski and M.P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel, pp. 366-74. Toronto: Pergamon Press.
- Heiberg, Marianne. 1993. "Opinions and Attitudes." In M. Heiberg and G. Ovensen, et al. Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions, pp. 249-281. Oslo: FAFO.
- Hentsch, Thierry. 1992. Imagining the Middle East, translated by Fred A. Reed. Montreal: Black Rose Books.
- Hijab, Nadia. 1988. Womanpower: The Arab Debate on Women at Work. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Hilterman, Joost. 1988. "Before the Uprising: The Organization and Mobilization of Palestinian Workers and Women in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip." PhD diss., University of California, Santa Cruz.
- . 1990. "Sustaining Movement, Creating Space: Trade Unions and Women's Committees," Middle East Report, 20 (3 & 4), 32-36.
- Hindiye, Suha. 1993. "Notes on a Feminist Conference," Sparks/Wamid, 8 & 9 (June):2-4, 20-23.
- Hindiye Mani, Suha and Ghazawneh, Afaf. 1990. "Socio-Economic Conditions of Female Wage Labour in Palestinian Factories." Women's Studies Centre, Jerusalem.
- Hudson, Brian. 1977. "The New Geography and the New Imperialism: 1870-1918," Antipode, 9, 12-19.
- Jad, Islah. 1990. "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989." In J.R. Nassar and R. Heacock (eds.), Intifada, pp. 125-142. New York: Praeger.
- Jackson, Peter. 1989. Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography. Boston: Unwin Hyman.
- Kabbani, Rana. 1986. Europe's Myths of Orient. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Kandiyoti, Deniz. 1991a. "Introduction." In D. Kandiyoti (ed.), Women, Islam and the State, pp. 1-21. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- . 1991b. "Women, Islam and the State," Middle East Report, 21(6), 9-13.
- Keddie, Nikki R. 1979. "Problems in the Study of Middle Eastern Women," International Journal of Middle East Studies, 10, 225-240.
- Labadi, Fadwa. 1993. "On Women's Day: The Palestinian Women's Movement on Trial," Sparks/Wamid 2 (April):2-6.
- Layoun, Mary. 1992. "Telling Spaces: Palestinian Women and the Engendering of National Narratives." In A. Parker, et al. (eds.) Nationalisms and Sexualities, pp. 407-423. New York: Routledge.
- Lazreg, Marnia. 1988. "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria," Feminist Studies, 14(1), 81-107.

- McDowell, Linda. 1991. "The Baby and the Bath Water: Diversity, Deconstruction and Feminist Theory in Geography," Geoforum, 22(2), 123-133.
- _____. 1992. "Multiple Voices: Speaking from Inside and Outside 'The Project,'" Antipode, 24 (1), 56-72.
- _____. 1993a. "Space, Place and Gender Relations: Part I. Feminist Empiricism and the Geography of Social Relations," Progress in Human Geography, 17 (2), 157-179.
- _____. 1993b. "Space, Place and Gender Relations: Part II. Identity, Difference, Feminist Geometries and Geographies," Progress in Human Geography, 17 (3), 305-318.
- McGee, Terry G. 1991. "Presidential Address: Eurocentrism in Geography--The Case of Asian Urbanization," The Canadian Geographer, 35 (4), 332-344.
- MacKinnon, Catharine A. 1987. "Feminism, Marxism, Method, and the State: Toward Feminist Jurisprudence." In Sandra Harding (ed.), Feminism and Methodology: Social Science Issues, pp. 135-156. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Maguire, Patricia. 1987. Doing Participatory Research: A Feminist Approach. Amherst, MA: University of Massachusetts.
- Marcus, G.E. 1992. "'More (Critically) Reflexive Than Thou': The Current Identity Politics of Representation," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10, 489-493.
- Marshy, Mona. 1993. "Portraits and Postscripts: Places of Voice, Voices of Place. Review of Portraits of Palestinian Women by Orayb Aref Najjar," RFR,DRF (Fall/Winter):71-75.
- Massey, Doreen. 1993. "Questions of Locality," Geography, 78 Part 2 (339), 142-149.
- Mernissi, Fatima. 1987. Beyond the Veil: Male-Female Dynamics in Modern Muslim Society. Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- _____. 1992. Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World. New York: Addison-Wesley Publication Co.

- Mies, Maria. 1983. "Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research." In G. Bowles and R.D. Klein (eds.), Theory of Women's Studies, pp. 117-139. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- . 1986. Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labour. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Minh-ha, Trinh T. 1989. Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana university Press.
- Mitchell, O. and Smith, N. 1990. "Bringing in Race," Professional Geography, 42, 233-34.
- Moghadam, Valentine. 1993. Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East. Boulder, Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. 1991a. "Introduction: Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism." In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, Lourdes Torres (eds.), Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism, pp. 1-47. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- . 1991b. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." In Chandra Talpade Mohanty, Ann Russo, Lourdes Torres (eds.), Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism, pp. 51-80. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Moss, Pamela. 1993. "Focus: Feminism as Method," The Canadian Geographer, 37 (1), 48-61.
- Najjar, Orayb Aref. 1992a. Portraits of Palestinian Women. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- . 1992b. "Between Nationalism and Feminism: The Palestinian Answer." In Bystydzienski, J.M. (ed.), Women Transforming Politics: Worldwide Strategies for Empowerment, pp. 143-161. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Nevo, Naomi. 1991. "Ideology and Practice in the Cooperative Farm Village." In B. Swirski and M.P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel, pp. 276-281. Toronto: Pergamon Press.
- News from Within. May 1992; Mar-Apr 1992; Feb 1991; January 1991-Dec 1991.

- O Tuathail, Gearoid. 1993. "The Effacement of Place?: US Foreign Policy and the Spaciality of the Gulf Crisis," Antipode, 25 (1), 4-31.
- Palestine Human Rights Information Center. 1992. Targeting to Kill: Israel's Undercover Units. Jerusalem: PHRIC.
- Patai, Daphne. 1991. "US Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?" In S.B. Gluck and D. Patai (eds.), Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History. New York: Routledge.
- Peteet, Julie. 1986. "Women and the Palestinian Movement: No Going Back?" MERIP Middle East Report, 138, 16(1) (January-February):20-44.
- _____. 1991. Gender in Crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement. New York: Columbia University Press.
- _____. 1994. "Male Gender and Rituals of Resistance in the Palestinian Intifada: A cultural Politics of Violence," American Ethnologist, 21 (1), 31-49.
- Pettman, J. 1988. "Learning about Power and Powerlessness: Aborigines and White Australia's Bicentenary," Race and Class, 29, 69-86.
- Pratt, G. 1993. "Reflections on Poststructuralism and Feminist Empirics, Theory and Practice," Antipode, 25, 51-63.
- Radcliffe, S.A. 1990. "Ethnicity, Patriarchy, and Incorporation into the Nation: Female Migrants as Domestic Servants in Peru," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 8, 379-93.
- Ribbens, Jane. 1989. "Interviewing: An 'Unnatural Situation'?" Women's Studies Interational Forum, 12(6), 579-592.
- Rishmawi, Mona. 1988. "The Legal Status of Palestinian Women in the Occupied Territories." In N. Toubia (ed.), Women of the Arab World: The Coming Challenge [papers of the Arab Women's Solidarity Association Conference], pp. 79-92. New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.
- Rogers, A. 1992. "The Boundaries of Reason: The World, the Homeland, and Edward Said," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 10, 511-526.
- Rose, Gillian. 1990. "The Struggle for Political Democracy: Emancipation, Gender, and Geography," Environment and Planning D: Society and Space, 8, 395-408.

- _____. 1993. Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Roy, Sara. 1993. "Gaza: New Dynamics of Civic Disintegration," Journal of Palestine Studies, 22 (4) (Summer):20-31.
- _____. 1994. "Separation or Integration: Closure and the Economic Future of the Gaza Strip Revisited," Middle East Journal, 48 (1), 11-30.
- Said, E. 1979a. The Question of Palestine. New York: Times Books.
- Said, E. 1979b. Orientalism. New York: Vintage Books.
- Said, E. 1989a. "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community." In H. Foster (ed.), Postmodern Culture, pp. 135-159. London: Pluto Press.
- Said, E. 1989b. "Representing the Colonized: Anthropology's Interlocutors," Critical Inquiry, 15, 205-225.
- Said, E.W., I. Abu-Lughod, J.L. Abu-Lughod, M. Hallaj, E. Zureik. 1989. "A Profile of the Palestinian People." In E.W. Said and C. Hitchens (eds.), Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question, pp. 235-96. New York: Verso.
- Sanders, R. 1990. "Integrating Race and Ethnicity into Geographic Gender Studies," Professional Geographer, 42, 228-31.
- Sayer, Andrew 1989. "Dualistic Thinking and Rhetoric in Geography," Area, 21, 301-305.
- Sayigh, Rosemary. 1979. Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries. London: Zed Press.
- _____. 1989a. "Encounters with Palestinian Women under Occupation." In Naseer Aruri (ed.), Occupation: Israel over Palestine, pp. 465-90. Belmont, Mass: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc.
- _____. 1989b. "Palestinian Women: Triple Burden, Single Struggle." In Khamsin Publication Forum (ed.), Palestine: Profile of an Occupation, pp. 153-177. London: Zed Books, Ltd.
- _____. 1991. "Resources, Researchers and Power: Recording 'Real Life' in Wadi Zeineh," Middle East Report, 21(6), 23-25.

- _____. 1992. "Introduction. Palestinian Women: A Case of Neglect." In O.A. Najjar. Portraits of Palestinian Women, pp. 1-26. Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press.
- Sayigh, Yezid. 1989. "The Intifadah Continues: Legacy, Dynamics and Challenges," Third World Quarterly, 11(3), 20-49.
- Sayigh, Yusif A. 1988. "Dispossession and Pauperisation: The Palestinian Economy Under Occupation." In G.T. Abed (ed.), Palestinian Economy: Studies in Development under Perpetual Occupation, pp. 259-85. London: Routledge.
- Scholey, Pam. 1994 (forthcoming). Development as a Mode of Resistance: Women and Struggle in Palestine. M.A. Thesis. Carleton University, Ottawa.
- Schmidt, E. 1990. "Negotiated Spaces and Contested Terrains: Men, Women and the Law in Colonial Zimbabwe 1890-1839," Journal of Southern African Studies, 16, 622-48.
- Shanin, Teodor. 1988. "The Zionisms of Israel." In F. Halliday and H. Alavi (eds.), State and Ideology in the Middle East and Pakistan, pp. 222-55. London: MacMillan.
- Sharabi, Hisham (ed.). 1990. Theory, Politics and the Arab World: Critical Responses. New York: Routledge.
- Sharoni, Simona. 1993. "Is Feminism a Threat to National Security?" Ms., Jan/Feb, 18-22.
- Shohat, Ella. 1990. "Gender in Hollywood's Orient," Middle East Report, No. 162 (January-February), 40-42.
- _____. 1991. "Making the Silences Speak in the Israeli Cinema." In B. Swirski and M.P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel, pp. 31-40. Toronto: Pergamon Press.
- Sidaway, James Derrick. 1992. "In Other Worlds: On the Politics of Research by 'First World' Geographers in the 'Third World,'" Area, 24(4), 403-408.
- Siniora, Randa George. 1989. "Palestinian Labour in a Dependent Economy: Women Workers in the West Bank Clothing Industry," Cairo Papers in Social Science, 12, Monograph 3.
- Smith, Dorothy E. 1987. The Everyday World as Problematic: A Feminist Sociology. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

- _____. 1989. "Feminist Reflections on Political Economy," Studies in Political Economy 30, 37-59.
- Smith, Neil. 1992. "Geography, Difference and the Politics of Scale." In J. Doherty, E. Graham and M. Malek (eds.), Postmodernism and the Social Sciences, pp. 57-79. N.Y.: St. Martin's Press.
- Smith, Pamela Ann. 1989. "Palestine and the Palestinians." In B. Berberoglu (ed.), Power and Stability in the Middle East, pp. 157-72. London: Zed Books.
- Smith, Susan J. 1989. The Politics of 'Race' and Residence. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- _____. 1990. "Social Geography: Patriarchy, Racism, Nationalism," Human Geography, 14, 261-71.
- Spender, Dale. 1983. "Theorising about Theorising." In G. Bowles and B.D. Klein (eds.), Theories of Women's Studies, pp. 27-31. New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. 1987. In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics. New York: Methuen.
- Stivers, Camilla. 1993. "Reflections on the Role of Personal Narrative in Social Science," Signs, 18(2), 408-425.
- Swirski, Barbara and Marilyn P. Safir. 1991. "Living in a Jewish State: National, Ethnic and Religious Implications." In B. Swirski and M.P. Safir (eds.), Calling the Equality Bluff: Women in Israel, pp. 7-17. Toronto: Pergamon Press.
- Tamari, Salim. 1990. "Limited Rebellion and Civil Society: The Uprising's Dilemma," Middle East Report, (May-August).
- _____. 1993. "The Transformation of Palestinian Society: Fragmentation and Occupation." In M. Heiberg and G. Ovansen, et al., Palestinian Society in Gaza, West Bank and Arab Jerusalem: A Survey of Living Conditions, pp. 21-33. Oslo: FAFO.
- Taraki, Lisa. 1990. "The Development of Political Consciousness Among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 1967-1987." In Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (eds.), Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads, pp. 53-71. New York: Praeger.

- Taraki, Lisa. 1989. "Mass Organizations in The West Bank." In Naseer Aruri (ed.), Occupation: Israel over Palestine, pp. 431-63. Belmont, Mass: Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Inc.
- The DataBase Project on Palestinian Human Rights. n.d. "Women's Packet: A Collection of DataBase Project Documentation on Women and the Palestinian Uprising." Palestine Human Rights Information Centre (PHRIC), Arab Studies Society, P.O. Box 20479, East Jerusalem.
- "The Role of the Women's Movement and Its Importance in the Present Stage," Sparks/Wamid, 4 (August), 7-10.
- Tucker, Judith E. 1983. "Problems in the Historiography of Women in the Middle East: The Case of Nineteenth-Century Egypt," International Journal of Middle East Studies, 15, 321-336.
- Usher, Graham. 1992. "Palestinian Women, the Intifada and the State of Independence: An Interview with Rita Giacaman," Race & Class, 34(3), 31-43.
- Watson, P. 1993. "Eastern Europe's Silent Revolution," Journal of the British Sociological Association, 27(3), pp. 471-487.
- Watts, Michael J. 1991. "Mapping Meaning, Denoting Difference, Imagining Identity: Dialectical Images and Postmodern Geographies," Geografiska Annaler, 73 B(1), 7-16.
- Welchman, Lynn. n.d. "Family Law Under Occupation: Islamic Law and the Shari'a courts in the West Bank." Unpublished paper.
- Westkott, Marcia. 1992. "Feminist Criticism of the Social Sciences." In J. McCarl Nielson (ed.), Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary Readings in the Social Sciences, pp. 58-68. San Francisco: Westview Press.
- Westwood, Sallie and Radcliffe, Sahah A. 1993. "Gender, Racism and the Politics of Identities in Latin America." In S.A. Radcliffe and S. Westwood (eds.), 'Viva': Women and Popular Protest in Latin America, pp. 1-29. New York: Routledge.
- Wise, Sue. 1987. "A Framework for Discussing Ethical Issues in Feminist Research: A Review of the Literature," Studies in Sexual Politics, 19, 47-88.

- Women's Studies Committee. 1991. The Intifada and Some Women's Social Issues: A Conference held in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, Jerusalem, December 14, 1990. Ramallah: Bisan Center.
- Young, Elise. 1992. Keepers of the History: Women and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. New York: Athene.
- Young, Robert. 1990. White Mythologies: Writing History and the West. New York: Routledge.
- Yuval-Davis, N., Anthias, Floya and Cain, Harriet. 1992. Racialized Boundaries: Race, Nation, Gender, Colour and Class and the Anti-racist Struggle. N.Y.: Routledge.
- Yuval-Davis, Nira and Anthias, Floya. 1989. Women-Nation-State. London: Macmillan.

END

1 4 - 1 1 - 9 5

FIN