# The Role of Family in Wellbeing and Quality of Life among Palestinian Adults

A Dissertation Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Carolyn Reagh Spellings
May 2014

Copyright © 2014 by Carolyn Reagh Spellings
All rights reserved.

## Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Cullin Spellings, without whose continual encouragement and support I would not have reached this goal; and to our daughter, Ainsley, who reminds me every day that I am truly blessed.

## Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank all of those who participated in this project. I sincerely appreciate their willingness to share their thoughts and experiences. I also wish to express my gratitude to my dissertation committee: Drs. Brian K. Barber, Priscilla Blanton, Clea McNeely, Spencer Olmstead, and Barbara Thayer-Bacon. Their support, encouragement, and guidance have shaped me into the researcher I am today. I would especially like to thank Dr. Brian Barber for allowing me to be an integral part of his research center and the PAL project. His generosity and mentorship have truly made my experiences in graduate school invaluable. I am forever indebted to him.

I also want to express my thanks to Olfat Hammad for her assistance and insights with this project. She has read many pages of this dissertation with an eye of keeping me honest to the Palestinian culture and people. This project would not be what it is without her input. I would also not be the person I am without her friendship. Thank you.

Additionally, I thank my past and fellow graduate students for their support and friendship: Rhett Billen, Karen Bluth, Ben Doty, Teri Henke, Swapna Purandare, Min-Jung Jung, Patricia Roberson, Juli Sams, and Jennifer Phagan Zorotovich. I could not have completed this journey without you all! I thank them for reminding me there is more to life than publications and presentations and uplifting my spirits with laughter. Thank you also to Sonja Spell and Sarah Senter. I sincerely appreciate their willingness to listen and give honest feedback.

Finally, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to my friends and family. Their continual encouragement has given me confidence and helped me to push through the trying times of graduate school. Their delight in seeing me succeed brings a smile to my face.

**Abstract**

The family domain has been inadequately included in general discussions of wellbeing and quality of life. The omission of family influences from these discussions is particularly unfortunate given that families are the primary institution in which individuals come to know themselves in relation to others and their environment. Adequate attention to family is all the more important when studying political conflict given the span of forces associated with political conflict that might tax families. This dissertation used data from a recent project designed to understand the nature of wellbeing/ quality of life among Palestinians, focusing particularly on the role of family. Interview data from 14 group interviews of 21-53 year old Palestinians conducted in 2010 were used (*n*=68; 5 individuals per group, minus two absentees; 33 males, 35 females). Analyses of the interview data were conducted using principles from a grounded theory approach. Findings revealed that although family was not described as the most important aspect of wellbeing, it featured prominently in conceptualizations of quality of life, both as affecting and being affected by wellbeing in other domains. From the women's interviews, five themes of family life emerged. These values included connection among family members, the importance of autonomy and educational attainment for women and children, desires for the physical safety of one's family, and the need for fathers to attain economic security. Similarly, the men also spoke of the importance of economic security to a man's sense of self and issues of women's autonomy. Some of the men also discussed the roles of respect and religious devotion. Though there were differences in the themes that emerged from the men's and women's interviews, both groups described how the political context creates barriers that prevent families from achieving wellbeing. The findings of this study point to the importance of including family relationships in discussions of wellbeing /quality or life, particularly for individuals who have experienced chronic political constraint such as Palestinians. One apparent value of such an endeavor is the discovery of how tightly family life is tied to other prevailing contexts in jointly determining quality of life.

**Table of Contents**

Chapter 1: Introduction ..... 1
Method ..... 7
Chapter 2: Literature Review ..... 9
Family as an Element of Quality of Life/Wellbeing: Contexts of Chronic Constraint ..... 10
Culture as a Context of Understanding Family Life ..... 13
Arab families: Family solidarity and cohesion. ..... 13
Arab families: The marital union ..... 18
Arab families: The parent-child relationship ..... 20
The Family's Relationship to Domains in the Socio-Ecological Context ..... 22
Economics and employment as a context ..... 24
Religion as a context ..... 29
The political environment as a context ..... 33
Summary ..... 39
Chapter 3: Methods ..... 41
Methods of PAL Phase 1 ..... 42
Protocol. ..... 46
The interview setting ..... 49
Sample ..... 51
Analysis of Interview Data ..... 52
Positioning ..... 53
Protection against cultural biases. ..... 55
Procedure of data analysis ..... 57
Chapter 4: Results ..... 60
Salience of Family Wellbeing ..... 61
Descriptive results: Overall project ..... 61
Descriptive results: Family in the hierarchy of functioning. ..... 62
Gender Differences in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing ..... 67
Commonalities in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing ..... 69
Economic security. ..... 69
Autonomy ..... 79

Female-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing ..... 88
Connection and closeness ..... 88
Educational attainment. ..... 95
Safety and security ..... 99
Male-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing ..... 101
Respect ..... 102
Religious devotion ..... 104
Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing ..... 106
Chapter 5: Conclusion ..... 109
Family as an Element of Quality of Life/Wellbeing ..... 110
Core Values of Family Life Related to Wellbeing ..... 111
Connection ..... 112
Autonomy ..... 114
Economics and family wellbeing ..... 116
Linking Family to the Broader Context ..... 119
The Influence of Gender on Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing ..... 124
Limitations ..... 126
Application and Future Studies ..... 128
List of References ..... 131
Appendix ..... 146
Appendix A:Table 1 ..... 147
Appendix B:List of Open and Axial Codes from Women's Interviews ..... 148
Appendix C:List of Open and Axial Codes from Men's Interviews ..... 154
Appendix D: Figures ..... 159
Vita ..... 164

## List of Figures

*Figure 1.* Porportions of Females Nominating Domains of Functioning……159

*Figure 2.* Proportions of Males Nominating Domains of Functioning……160

*Figure 3.* Data Driven Model of Multiple Domains of Palestinian Adult Functioning……..161

*Figure 4.* Propotion of Men and Women Citing Family Life, by Interview Task……162

*Figure 5.* Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing in Context……163

# Chapter 1: Introduction

History has been plagued by thousands of conflicts and wars in which individuals, families, and civilian communities continue to be driven and directly impacted by politically motivated stressors. The recent spate of uprisings in the Middle East is just another illustration of the pervasiveness of political conflict throughout the world. Extensive literatures study political conflict, a good portion of which are focused on understanding the impact of exposure or involvement in conflict on those who experience taxing political conditions. This body of research, typically conducted by psychologists and psychiatrists, has concentrated rather narrowly on documenting the link between violence exposure and an individual's mental health. For example, the majority of studies investigating political conflict among children and youth measured negative psychological functioning (e.g., trauma-related stress, conventionally labeled as PTSD) as the prime or sole outcome of interest (for reviews see Barber, 2013, in press; Barber & Schluterman, 2009). Further, they have been typically conducted among populations who experienced episodic or short-term conflicts. Little information has been gathered on conflicts that are characterized by chronic political constraint, continuing conflict, political insecurity, and associated economic strains.

Though the conventional approaches (i.e., the correlation of violence exposure with mental health outcomes) are informative and useful, they fail to consider how politically motivated conflict is experienced more broadly, including its effect on institutions within an individual's socio-ecology, such as families and schools. Such a narrow frame fails to promote an appreciation of the overall wellbeing or quality of life of those who endure political conflict. Although psychological functioning is certainly a key realm of human functioning, it is but one level or domain of the complexity of functioning that describes human experience (e.g., employment, family, education, etc.; Barber, McNeely, & Spellings, 2012; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010).

Specific to the purposes of this dissertation, the family domain has been inadequately included in studies on the effects of political conflict. Indeed, political conflict aside, family has been neglected even in general discussions of wellbeing and quality of life. When family life is included in health assessments, for example, typically only one aspect of family relationships is examined, namely, perceptions of support among members (WHOQOL, 1998). Limited inclusions of family from these discussions is ironic given that families are the primary institution in which individuals come to know themselves in relation to others and to their environment (United Nations, 2013). Additionally, scholars have noted that generally across cultures the family unit takes responsibility to care for the young, weak, and elderly as well as to provide a social safety net for those members in need (Farsoun, 2004). Adequate attention to family is important when studying political conflict given the span of forces associated with severe political conditions that likely tax families (e.g., economics, politically related losses and constraints).

Palestinian families (all of whom are Arab) living in the occupied Palestinian territories (to use the U.N. vernacular: [oPt]) are an appropriate population to examine when studying political conflict due to the importance this cultural group places on family (Barakat, 1985; Johnson, 2006). In addition, Palestinians live in a context of continued political conflict and constant economic and political constraint (Roy, 2007; Tessler, 1994). Regarding the former, the broader literature on Arab families has noted that despite cultural changes towards increasing levels of personal independence, family continues to be the basic unit of social organization, and family members remain connected by a sense of mutual obligation and interdependence (Alsharekh, 2007; Taraki, 2006). Arab culture, specifically as it relates to family, is also highly gendered. Thus, for example, family honor is in large part dependent on the behavior of female members, whereas wives' personal contentment is based on their husband's standing in the community (Barakat, 1985). These cultural values provide further evidence of the salience of family in perceptions of personal wellbeing for Arab individuals.

Regarding their political situation, political conditions likely stress as well as strengthen Palestinian families. Closures, checkpoints, and curfews restrict individuals from traveling to see family members and from employment opportunities, which has implications for the economic health of families (Batniji et al., 2009; Hunter, 1993). Also, a family's experience with conflict and violence can include the death or severe handicapping of a family member, many of whom are typically the family's primary breadwinner (Barakat, 1985). Yet, in the face of these difficulties, scholars have noted that Palestinians continue to prioritize connection within the family unit such that solidarity is seen as a source of resistance against the Israeli Occupation (Taraki, 2006).

One of the primary means through which Arab families strengthen and perpetuate familial bonds is through the institution of marriage. Marriage is perhaps the most common realm of family experience discussed by scholars examining Arab families. Indeed, by 30 years-of-age approximately 80% of Palestinian adults are married (Stokke, 2001). Compared to Western cultures, Arab and Palestinian cultures downplay the importance of personal satisfaction within the marital union and prioritize a more functional purpose of marriage, namely, the maintenance of kinship relationships (al-Khateeb, 2007; Farsoun, 2004). For the majority of Palestinians living in the oPt, marriage is the primary means through which one fulfills Islamic religious obligations (Hasso, 2011). As with Arab culture generally, marriage is also gendered in that authority and responsibility is stratified by sex and age such that fathers hold the highest and most esteemed position followed by the eldest adult son (Barakat, 1985). Wives' responsibilities are relegated to the maintenance of life within the home, and they have been traditionally kept out of public arenas (El Saadawi, 2007; Hasso, 2011; Treacher, 2003).

In addition to the role the marital union plays in supporting kinship ties and family cohesion, Arab children are socialized into dependency so that as adults they remain connected to their families. In return for protection and provision of needs, children are expected to show respect and obedience to their parents and, as adults, to care for their parents, particularly their mothers (Hasso, 2011). This type

of parenting strategy reflects a society wide value of family connectedness and is an indicator of what many cross-cultural psychologists have identified as collectivists-orientated or interdependent societies (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1996). Arab children are socialized into seeing themselves as interdependent with the familial group rather than independent from it (Hasso, 2011). This is perhaps the primary means through which family solidarity and cohesion are maintained.

In sum, the maintenance of family relationships appears to be prioritized in characterizations of Arab societies. Thus, one would expect that elements of family life would likely be salient among Arabs. However, to date empirical documentation of this has not been possible because serious attention to family issues has not been part of classic measurement strategies in studies investigating wellbeing and quality of life generally. Further, the role of family life has been inadequately studied in regions of conflict where families strive to maintain family relationships in the face of political and associated economic stressors (e.g., conflict, mobility constraint, and economic insecurity).

In addition to a lack of specification of the elements of family life that are central to *wellbeing*, little attention has been given within the *quality of life literatures* to understanding the family's relationship to other life domains. This remains despite assertions that family relationships are affected by factors in domains that are external to the family unit. For example, according to a socio-ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Clarke, 1973), the microcosm of family is directly affected by forces in the surrounding environment and family members' behaviors are, in part, influenced by these external forces. Further, family systems (Broderick, 1993; White & Klein, 2002) and family strengths frameworks (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985) are grounded in the assumption that functioning within a family unit is determined by a family's ability to successfully respond or make adaptive changes to stressors in the external environment.

External stressors that most visibly affect the Palestinian family environment occur in the economic/employment, religious, and political domains of life. In regards to the economic/employment

domain, the current economic crisis in the oPt has created difficulties for husbands to fulfill the provider role and, as a consequence of their un- or under-employment, many have experienced a loss of status and authority within the home (e.g., Hasso, 2011; see Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2011, for similar discussions about Afghan families). In response, Palestinian wives have entered the formal work force in increasing numbers, expanding their conceptualizations, duties, and responsibilities of motherhood to include those of a full-time homemaker as well as the family's primary breadwinner (Ayesh, 2002; El Saadawi, 2007; Farsoun, 2004). One consequence of wives' entry into the public sector is a pileup of responsibilities and a shift of the hierarchical authority within the home.

In addition to the deteriorating economic context, the religious context of Arab communities impacts family relationship with particular influence on interaction between husbands and wives. Although Arabs affiliate with different religions, including branches of Christianity, 97% of Palestinians currently residing in the oPt are Muslims. Islam promotes a strict and traditional division of household labor wherein wives find their purpose in the caring and raising of children and husbands find meaning in the provision and protection of their families (al-Khatteb, 2007; Hasso, 2011). When husbands are unable to fulfill their religious obligation of provision for their families, many report a greater need to assert and perpetuate their authority in the home (Barakat, 1985; Farsoun, 2004; Hasso, 2011). In turn, some scholars have suggested that this patriarchy in Muslim culture puts women at risk for abuse (Sharify-Funk, 2008). Other scholars (Abu-Lughold, 2002; Zayzafoon, 2005) have stressed that politicians' interpretations of Islamic text to advance their own agendas and structural factors (e.g., poverty) are to blame for women's disenfranchised position in Arab society and families, not Islam. Regardless of who or what is responsible for women's position in society, a religiously endorsed gender hierarchy and division of household labor have likely consequences for men's and women's behaviors and roles within the family.

Third, the political conditions under which one lives also impact families. Recently, scholars have advocated for the inclusion of a political domain in quality of life frameworks, suggesting that in order to comprehensively understand individuals and families, particularly those living under conditions of chronic political constraint, one must examine how political conditions, such as freedom of movement, stability, and security affect individuals, families, and communities (Barber et al., 2012; Giacaman et al., 2007; McNeely et al., in press). Little empirical testing of the link between political conditions and Palestinian wellbeing, particularly related to family relations, has occurred (Giacaman et al., 2007, 2011; Mataria et al., 2009). One piece of evidence is the results from two very different studies that found that exposure to/involvement in political violence during the first Palestinian intifada was associated with an increase in negative or punitive parenting practices (Barber, 2001; Punamäki, Qouta, & El Sarraj, 1997). Also, al-Krenawi and Graham (2011) found a decrease in general levels of family functioning as reported by Palestinian adolescents in the West Bank who reported direct exposure to political violence. Though these studies are unique in that they do include attention to family level outcomes, they are limited in their assessment of political conflict. Exposure to political violence is but one element of disruptions and constraints that characterize political conflict.

Palestinian society in the oPt is a unique context in which to examine the impact of broad political conditions on families due to the longstanding political tensions and unequal power relations between Palestinians and their economically and militarily stronger Israeli occupier. Since the creation of the Israeli nation state in 1948, Palestinians have been denied access to their homelands, displaced, and experienced politically induced mobility constraints. Despite achieving a UN (General Assembly only) designation of “non-voting observer state” in 2012, Palestinians remain stateless in all significant senses of the word (control of borders and imports and exports, freedom of movement, etc.). According to economist Sarah Roy (1995, 2007), Israeli political policies concerning the oPt has been intentionally one of the “de-development” of the Palestinian economy. This has been most readily seen in the Gaza

Strip, particularly since 2007, when its local economy and basic infrastructure began to be further constrained as a consequence of the Israeli imposed embargo. In addition to these punishing political policies and practices, since the 1980s Palestinians have lived through two long episodes of substantial political conflict with Israeli forces (i.e., the first and second intifadas [Arabic for uprising or shaking off]; 1987-1993, and 2000-2005, respectively), one civil war in Gaza between the political parties Fateh and Hamas (2007), and, again for Gazans, the brief but massively destructive and costly 2008-9 war.

Clearly, Palestinians face a plethora of constraining political conditions which, as alluded to above, have impacts on the employment status of fathers, economic health of families, and maintenance of kinship ties. If an individual is unable to travel to work or to visit family members due to closures or significant, yet unpredictable, delays through checkpoints, these political stressors likely have consequences for significant elements of family wellbeing.

**Method**

The purpose of this dissertation was to focus explicit attention on family relationships among contemporary Palestinian families in the oPt. Specifically, this dissertation was concerned with understanding local perspectives on family and quality of life/wellbeing through the use of interview data. It did so by utilizing data from the first phase of the *Impact of Political Conflict on Youth: Assessing Long-Term Well-Being via an Event History-Resource Model Project* (hereafter referred to as the PAL Project; Brian K. Barber, PI; Funded by the Jacobs Foundation, Zurich, Switzerland). The purpose of Phase 1 was to begin the process of creating the culturally-specific measure of wellbeing to be used in later phases of the PAL project. Specifically, in this phase a series of fourteen group interviews ($n$=68; 5 persons per group, minus two absentees; 33 males, 35 females) were conducted to elicit perceptions of what it means to be functioning well and not well in contemporary Palestinian adult society. The interviews were conducted in Arabic in February 2010. To maximize representation of key variations in experiences, groups were composed with respect to (1) gender, (2) region, (3) residential location, and,

in Gaza, (4) political affiliation. This dissertation's author was present along with the PI at all of the interviews, seated apart from the proceedings with a simultaneous interpreter.

Participants were asked to do three main tasks during the interviews. First, participants were asked to "think of two people of your age that you know well – one who you think is doing relatively well in life and who you feel is not doing well in life. Please describe both of these people." Second, participants were asked to free list components or characteristics of wellbeing. Third, once a list was compiled, participants were then asked to prioritize the list by indicating their top three components of wellbeing or a good life. This phase of the PAL project was critical because existing measures are largely not useful because they have not considered what wellbeing means in the confluence of multiple constraining contexts that define the life of Palestinians.

The interview data from Phase 1 of the PAL project were used to answer the following research questions:

1. To what degree are family relationships salient to discussions of quality of life for Palestinian adults living under conditions of consistent political constraint?
2. What are the specific elements of family life that Palestinians describe in their narratives?
3. Do Palestinian adults link their descriptions of family to other domains of their lives? And if so, how?
4. To what degree are the salience of family relationships, elements of family life, and linkages between domains of wellbeing described similarly and differently by men and women?

To answer research question 1, responses to the interview question asking participants to prioritize domains of wellbeing were examined. Additionally, the transcripts were inspected for discussions of a hierarchical relationship among domains. To answer research questions 2 -4, the interview data were analyzed using coding techniques recommended in grounded theory approaches, such as open, axial, and selective coding, as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (2008).

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

Many families around the world live in difficult and challenging economic and political circumstances. For example, recent estimates are that about 55 countries throughout the world have recently experienced significant political upheaval (Boothby & Knudsen, 2000; McKay, 2005). The wave of political conflict in 2011 that swept through the Middle East and beyond is an illustration of the fragile and explosive nature of political conditions throughout the world. Recent studies have begun to examine the influence of political turmoil on a variety of elements of life such as educational attainment and opportunity, economic climate, social cohesion, and family life (Dupree, 2004; Giacaman et al., 2010; Jabbra, 2004). However, the conventional approach to this work continues to be understanding the impact of conflict and political conditions on *individual* outcomes, even for studies which include measures of functioning across multiple domains such as employment, economics, and family (e.g., Betancourt and colleagues, 2010; Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010).

The narrow focus of this impact of conflict is unfortunate because scholars have acknowledged that the political climate directly disrupts the broader ecology (e.g., communities, employment, families) and thereby impacts individual mental health (Barber, 2009; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). Indeed, it is the interplay among these contexts that are thought to impact overall health, quality of life, and wellbeing (Barber et al., 2012). It is especially apt to include attention to a family domain due to its centrality as the basic unit of society, with primary functions of the socialization of children and the caregiving of the elderly (United Nations, 2013). In many cultures the family domain is the principal institution that provides a social safety net for vulnerable members (Farsoun, 2004). Thus, there appears to be good reason to extend the growing work on the impact of political conflict by more systematically studying whether and how conflict and its associated constraints inform family relationships—directly and in conjunction with additional stressors external to the family unit, such as economic strain.

Accordingly, the focus of this dissertation was to explore the role of family relationships in broad, unstructured discussions of wellbeing and quality of life among a population that places high priority on family relationships and experiences chronic political constraint. The main purposes of the dissertation were to: a.) examine if and to what extent Palestinian adults include references to family life as part of a discussion of quality of life under conditions of consistent political constraint, b.) identify which elements of family relationships are referred to in these discussions, c.) examine the extent to which and how Palestinian adults invoke forces external to the family in these discussions, and d.) examine the degree to which references to the family domain, elements of family life, and inter-linkages with other domains differs for men and women.

To begin to understanding these issues, it is useful to review theories and literature from a variety of disciplines. Accordingly, the remainder of this chapter will first discuss the extent to which the extant literatures on wellbeing and quality of life integrate family relationships as an element of overall health. Next, a variety of contexts (e.g., cultural and economic contexts) that inform conceptualizations of family life and linkages between the family and other domains of wellbeing are examined.

**Family as an Element of Quality of Life/Wellbeing: Contexts of Chronic Constraint**

To begin, the well-established literatures on human wellbeing essentially have neglected any discussion of family life. Rather, wellbeing has been understood traditionally as a unidimensionsal construct centered on economic conditions as the gateway to subjective, personal happiness (e.g., McGillivray, 2007; Tay & Diener, 2011). Specifically, the focus has been on an individualistic assessment of overall life satisfaction without attention to which domains of life are most satisfying or fulfilling (Stevenson & Wolfers, 2008). Though some have noted that happiness and wellbeing are related to freedoms in specific domains of life – personal (Suh & Oshi, 2002) and political (Triandis, 2000) – the family domain continues to be omitted from these discussions. For example, when describing personal freedoms, Suh and Oshi (2002) referred only to demands on an individual's time and behavior that vary

between individualistic and collectivistic cultures and not, for example, the extent to which an individual feels freedom to make personal decisions within the family unit.

Literatures on quality of life provide a more differentiated picture. Specifically, quality of life has been conceptualized to include functioning in four domains: *physical* (e.g., pain and ability to perform duties); *psychological* (e.g., ability to concentrate, negative feelings about self); *social* (e.g., satisfaction with personal relationships; support from family and friends); and *environmental* (e.g., quality of physical environment, access to health services; WHOQOL, 1998). Though this approach acknowledges multiple domains of quality of life, functioning within the family is referenced only as a minor component of a broader dimension of social quality. In fact, only one aspect of family life—satisfaction of support from one's family—has been included in standard quality of life instruments (e.g., WHOQOL, 1998).

This lack of attention to family is unfortunate for those interested in intervention work with populations affected by armed conflict who note that individual wellbeing is intimately related to the functioning of the larger group and that there are a variety of politically related losses and constraints associated with conflict that directly stress the family (Williamson & Robinson, 2006). Particularly, when discussing the social aspects of wellbeing, Williamson and Robinson (2006) identified family as the fundamental social unit of society which is integral to the identity and functioning of individuals. Accordingly, these authors argued that the preservation of families and positive family relationships should be of the utmost importance in situations of conflict and political insecurity.

Additionally, scholars of political conflict have noted that it is the disruption of institutions in the broader ecology, of which family is one, that impacts individual functioning (Barber, 2009, in press; Miller & Rasmussen, 2010). For example, Eggerman and Panter-Brick (2010) found that family harmony and low levels of family conflict impacted Afghan children's perceptions of hope and overall mental state. Similarly, Betancourt and colleagues' (2010) study of Sierra Leonean youth illustrated the

centrality of the family environment, specifically perceptions of being accepted by one's family, on youth's self-confidence, prosocial attitudes, and internalizing symptoms. Further, Panter-Brick and colleagues' (2011) study of risk factors related to the mental health of Afghan children found that family violence was more predictive of children's mental health than political violence. Though restricted to a focus on individual mental health of those affected by conflict, the findings nevertheless illustrate the importance of the family environment wellbeing or quality of life.

In sum, the quality of the family environment has not been prioritized in either the wellbeing or quality of life literatures despite the family unit's central role in the organization of society and its influence on an individual's identity, development, and overall health (United Nations, 2013; Williamson & Robinson, 2006). This is true even for studies among populations who are impacted by political conflict and constraint. Therefore, to address this lacuna the remaining sections explore specific contexts that are thought to be important for understanding family life and its placement in conceptualizations of quality of life.

Importantly, because of the population being studied in this dissertation, the following review prioritizes literatures most directly relevant to Arab and, when available, Palestinian experience. (Since this dissertation's author does not speak Arabic, this review is necessarily limited to English language documents and is therefore inherently, but unavoidably, limited and potentially biased.) When applicable, Western literatures and frameworks are also reviewed. This is done not to validate the findings or themes from Arab works, but to illustrate whatever compatibilities there might be across the literatures that could assist in understanding Palestinian family life and wellbeing. According to the English language literature on Arab and/or Palestinian families that have been reviewed, four major contexts appear to be particularly important in Palestinian societies in informing family experience. First, the *cultural* context provides a frame for defining the family unit, understanding the roles and responsibilities of specific family members, as well as illuminating particular aspects of the family

environment which are central to family life. Next, the *economic/employment*, *religious*, and *political* contexts are thought to influence family members' ability to fulfill their assigned roles and responsibilities, and thus inform the overall climate of the family unit.

**Culture as a Context of Understanding Family Life**

In order to begin to understand how family relationships are related to overall wellbeing, it is essential to recognize that families exist in cultural contexts which define both family membership and the roles and responsibilities of those members. As discussed throughout this section, Arab culture endorses the primacy of the family relationship, connection among family members, the purpose of the marital union, and the roles of husbands, wives, and children. Accordingly, each of these issues is outlined below.

**Arab families: Family solidarity and cohesion.** In Arab culture generally, the basic unit of social organization and socioeconomic activities is the family. Though contemporary family life is changing to reflect greater levels of personal independence, members of the extended family continue to remain connected by a sense of mutual obligation and support such that kinship ties take precedence over political or business loyalties (Alsharekh, 2007; Taraki, 2006). Ties to "extended" family members remain strong because marital, economic, and employment opportunities are mediated through the family (Ata, 1986). Additionally, it has been noted that kinship ties are important for one's social and political identity, suggesting that family cohesion and solidarity not only fulfill a social-organizational purpose but also provide an individual with a sense of belonging and identity (Taraki, 2006). Individual family members are so intertwined that the success or failure of one member affects the fate of the entire family. For example, female members of the family have been said to be content if their male relatives are respected within the community whereas the family honor is, in part, dependent on the behavior of the female members (Barakat, 1985).

Historically, in Palestinian culture, individual family units were placed in a larger context of kin groups, or the combination of many family units. Individuals living in the family home, particularly in rural areas, were multigenerational and often included parents and the families of their adult male children (Giacaman & Johnson, 2002). Upon marriage, it was not uncommon for wives to live with their husband's family. Indeed, Palestinian culture was termed a "kinship culture" in which an individual was dependent upon his/her kinship group and solidarity and cohesion among members of a kinship group were highly valued (Ata, 1986).

Recently there have been trends within Palestinian culture away from large, multi-generational family units to urban-nucleated households consisting of husbands, wives, and their dependent children (Giacaman & Johnson, 2002; see also El Saadawi 2007 for similar trends in Egyptian families). When residing in rural communities, Palestinian families tend to live among close relatives such that women in the family aid each other in childcare and household maintenance. Due to the costs involved with a residential move, often only nuclear families are migrating to the cities. Thus, the support that women and mothers had when living among extended family is no longer available in urban areas. This loss of social and instrumental support systems is particularly striking for those families in which both mothers' and fathers' incomes are required to meet the financial demands of the family (Hammani, 2002; see also the section *Economics and Employment as a Context* below).

The priority of maintaining family relationships in Arab societies points to what many cross-cultural psychologists have defined as values or goals in collectivists-orientated or interdependent societies. In interdependent cultures, norms, duties, and obligations of the collective unit regulate most social behavior. "Self" is typically defined as interdependent with other members of one's group and not as independent from the group (Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Triandis, 1996). In contrast, in individualistic or independent societies the self is defined as an autonomous unit. Personal goals are given priority

over the goals of the collective, and social behavior is primarily shaped by attitudes of a single individual rather than relationships between individuals (Hui & Triandis, 1986; Triandis, 1996).

This is not to suggest that the self is undervalued in interdependent societies (or that the needs of a family unit are disregarded in independent cultures), for indeed elements of individualism and collectivism are found in all cultural contexts (Cohen, 2009; Kagitcibasi, 2005, 2013; Vandello & Cohen, 1999; for example, as evidenced by the trends towards urban-nucleated households in Palestinian society.) Rather, it is the relative prioritization of the self as connected to or independent from the family and community that classify a particular society. Accordingly, the value on family cohesion and connectedness in Arab and Palestinian societies is symbolic of the interdependence in family units that weave these societies together. One goal of relationships within the family (e.g., husbands-wives, parents-children, siblings) appears to be to maintain the sense of connection and cohesion (see also *Arab Families: The Parent-Child Relationship*).

The substantial work on family life done among predominantly Western populations is consistent with this parameter of family in that many of the models used to assess the quality of functioning within families include elements of cohesion and solidarity. For example, the circumplex model classifies families and explains characteristics of “strong” versus “weak” families by positioning families on two dimensions, one of which is cohesion or the degrees of emotional closeness among family members (Olson & Gordall, 2003). Similarly, the McMaster model of healthy family functioning describes the structural and organizational properties which distinguish well-functioning families by determining a family’s ability to accomplish tasks through their placement on six dimensions, two of which are emotional closeness and value of family members (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983). Furthermore, the family strengths framework identifies six qualities of strong or resilient families, four of which speak directly to family solidarity and cohesion: commitment to the family unit, appreciation of

and affection for individual family members, relational maintenance, and spending quality time together (Stinnett, Stinnett, DeFrain, & DeFrain, 1997).

There is disagreement within Western scholarship as to whether too much cohesion or closeness is detrimental to family functioning. For example, scholars (e.g., Barber & Buehler, 1996; Green & Werner, 1996) criticized the circumplex model – which defines cohesion as the extent of "emotional bonding that family members have toward one another" (Olson, 1993; p. 105) – for positioning enmeshment (i.e., too much cohesion, lack of tolerance for individuality) and disengagement (i.e., too little cohesion, emotional absence) as two extremes on a bi-polar continuum. According to the circumplex model both enmeshment and disengagement are thought to be related to dysfunctional family functioning and lower levels of family satisfaction (see Olson, 2011). The source of the debate lies in the overlapping of psychological intrusiveness and lack of respect for individuality with high levels of cohesion. It is argued that high levels of cohesion or closeness among family members are not synonymous with lack of tolerance for individuality (Green & Werner, 1996) such that families can be highly close while also respecting each member's sense of self (Scabini, 1985). Indeed, other scholars have understood and defined cohesion as being conceptually different from enmeshment (e.g., Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990; Barber & Buehler, 1996; Moos, 1974). For example, Barber and Buehler (1996) found that high levels of cohesion were related to lower levels of American youth's internalizing and externalizing behaviors, whereas enmeshment (i.e., psychological intrusiveness) was related to increases in youth's internalizing symptoms.

In addition to conceptual criticisms, scholars contended that the definition of what constitutes intrusiveness can vary by sociocultural, developmental, and situational contexts (e.g., Green & Werner, 1996; Kagitcibasi, 2013; Manzi et al., 2006). Manzi and colleagues (2006) examined the relationship between cohesion, enmeshment, and wellbeing among adolescents in the United Kingdom and Italy. Their findings have shown that cohesion, as defined by the strength of the family bond, was related to

higher life satisfaction and lower levels of depressive-like symptoms among adolescents from both cultures. Differently, enmeshment, defined as weak within family boundaries which may signify a lack of respect for individuality among family members, was associated with higher levels of anxiety and depressive-like symptoms among adolescents from the United Kingdom but *not* among Italian youth. In attempts to interpret their findings Manzi and colleagues (2006) suggested that the process of individuation and differentiation from the family may differ depending on one's cultural context, particularly emphasizing that in cultures where connection to the family is highly valued (i.e., Italian, Palestinian) behaviors of parents to promote connection and identification with the family unit are not understood to be detrimental to one' sense of self. In more independent cultures, these same behaviors may be interpreted as being disrespectful towards one's individuality.

In related work, Kagitcibasi (2005) suggested that autonomy and connection are not opposite ends of a bi-polar continuum. Rather they are part of a two dimensional construct, with the one dimension being interpersonal distance (relatedness-separateness) and the other being agency (autonomy-heteronomy). Cultures and people groups differ in their placement on both dimensions not in the presence or absence of one construct. In fact, Kagitcibasi's (2013) family change theory integrates these two dimensions into three separate models of family life which differ only in the degree to which they integrate connection and autonomy in family life. For example, her family model of psychological interdependence is a synthesis of high values on relatedness and close-knit family ties alongside values of individuality particularly in relationship to the ability to make life decisions. According to family change theory a cultural shift from rural to urban lifestyles is associated with changes in the relative balance of connection and autonomy, specifically with an increase on the value of individuality. Though this theory has not been tested within Palestinian society, the increase of urban-nucleated households perhaps suggests a cultural shift in the relative importance of the role of autonomy within Palestinian family life (see Giacaman & Johnson, 2002).

In sum, the priority given to family cohesion in Arab societies appears to be common with major Western family theory frameworks. Though there is some disagreement in Western scholarship as to the benefits of high levels of connectedness within families, in more interdependent societies, identification with and connection to the family unit appears to be related to positive health outcomes, specifically for youth. The debate on intensity of cohesion aside, both Arab and Western literatures suggest family solidarity is a value that transcends cultures.

**Arab families: The marital union.** In addition to broader issues of family cohesion, many Arab and Palestinian scholars have discussed the importance of marital unions as a means to strengthen family bonds and maintain connections to kinship and familial groups. Marriage in Arab cultures differs perhaps most widely from Western cultures in the purpose of the marital union. For example, the general trend in Arab culture is for marriage to perpetuate the connections between extended family members and kinship groups rather than to grant a sense of personal satisfaction to husbands or wives, an aspect of marriage that is characteristic of Western unions (al-Khateeb, 2007; Knapp & Lott, 2010). As al-Khateeb (2007) noted “feelings and emotions [in Arab marriages] are regarded as something marginal” (p. 96). This is not to suggest, however, that personal feelings and happiness are irrelevant when evaluating the quality of the marital union. Indeed, it has been noted that in recent years there has been a shift in the evaluation of marital unions to include elements of mutual respect and understanding as characteristic of a well-functioning relationship (al-Khateeb, 2007; Farsoun, 2004). Nevertheless, personal happiness or satisfaction with one’s marital partner continues to remain secondary to the functional purposes of marriage. Perhaps this is most readily illustrated in the belief that marriage in Arab, specifically Muslim, culture meets religious requirements outlined by the Prophet Mohammad (Hasso, 2011).

Arab and Palestinian culture have specific scripts for the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives. Traditionally, women have been restricted to the home or private sphere or their public work

is framed as an extension of their roles as caretakers of the home, whereas men populate the public arenas and thus the division of household labor follows in this vein (El Saadawi, 2007; Treacher, 2003). Husbands have the responsibility for the economic health of the family unit and are considered guardians over women and children. Indeed, the family unit is stratified by sex and age such that fathers hold the ultimate authority and responsibility of the family, followed by the eldest adult son (Barakat, 1985). Wives, in turn, are in charge of raising young children and the maintenance of family life inside the home (al-Khateeb, 2007; Hasso, 2011). Although dependent on childbearing abilities, it has been noted that Palestinian wives' authority in the home increases with the presence of children, especially boys. Indeed it is thought that a wife finds her meaning in life when she has children to raise (al-Khateeb, 2007).

Perhaps the clearest example of gender role segregation in Palestinian society was women's activism during the first intifada (1987-1993). Though at lower rates than men, Palestinian women participated in all forms of political activism, including direct or front line forms which occurred in public spaces, in the Palestinian uprising against the Israeli forces (Barber & Olsen, 2009). (Incidentally, this was also the case for young Palestinian women, who as youth, participated in various forms of political activism [Spellings, Barber, & Olsen, 2012]). However, some have argued that women's participation was framed in terms of traditional gender ideologies as an extension of their caregiving duties and belief that the goal of their activism was to keep Palestinian families alive and intact (Peteet, 1991). Indeed, Women's Committees, groups or organizations that were founded between 1978 –1987 before the intifada by each Palestinian political party, were responsible for grassroots level campaigning, organizing relief and emergency services, and helping to establish schools and food distribution centers. When schools were closed during the intifada, the Women's Committees were responsible for providing alternative education to Palestinian children (Hiltermann, 1998; Sharoni, 1995). When the conflict ended, most Palestinian wives left the public arenas and returned to their homes (Treacher, 2003). As

scholars have suggested, a temporary expansion of Palestinian wives participation in the public area does not equate to a permanent shift in gender relations in the home because their appearance in public spaces, to begin with, was always framed as a means through which they would be able to care for all of Palestine's children (e.g., Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Treacher, 2003). Thus, coupled with the functional purpose of marriage (e.g., maintenance of kinship ties), the roles of husband and wife carry strict duties and responsibilities that are characteristic of culturally bound gender roles within the larger society.

**Arab families: The parent-child relationship.** In addition to the marital union being a means through which to promote cultural values of family cohesion, the parent-child relationship is another dyad within the family unit that is concerned with the perpetuation of family solidarity. Specifically, Arab children are socialized into dependency so that as adults they contribute to the family unit and remain tied to the kinship group (Barakat, 1985). As young people transition into adulthood, it is expected that they will continue to be connected, both emotionally and often geographically, to the family unit. For example, it is not uncommon for adult sons to continue to live among their parents and other adult siblings, even with his own wife and children (Giacaman & Johnson, 2002). Though when daughters marry they often live with their husbands' families, the expectation is that daughters will continue to be tied to their families of origin, most often to provide help to ailing parents (Nahleh & Giacaman, 2002). A goal of parenting in Arab societies is to impart to children a desire to remain connected to the family and to see themselves as one member of a broader familial structure which relies on all of its members to thrive.

This close connection between parents and children is especially salient for a mother since she relies upon her children for provision and protection in old age and her standing in the community is in part a function of the success of her children, specifically her sons (Ata, 1986; al-Khateeb, 2007). Indeed, Palestinian mothers have reported that in their elder years they expect their sons to provide

them financial support and their daughters to provide physical care (Nahleh & Giacaman, 2002). Arab children are taught that in return for the protection, financial support, and nurturance that they receive from their parents, they are expected to show respect, obedience, and deference to both their mothers and fathers (Hasso, 2011). Only in instances of widespread public approval is it acceptable for youth, specifically males, to take over roles and responsibilities that have been traditionally delegated to fathers. A case in point would be the prominent role that youth assumed in publically resisting the occupation during the first intifada (Barber & Olsen, 2009; Hunter, 1993; Mabuchi, 2003; Qouta, Punamäki, & Sarraj, 2008; Spellings et al., 2012).

The parent-child relationship has been extensively studied in Western scientific literatures. Many of the principles examined appear to be compatible with an understanding of the parent-child relationship in Arab families, such as Baumrind's (1966, 2012) authoritative parenting, or Barber, Stolz, and Olsen's (2005) connection, regulation, and respect for individuality. However, those literatures appear to be concerned with understanding the internal dynamics of the parent-child relationship as they might be promotive of child and youth development. In contrast, the literature on Arab parents and children appears to be concerned primarily with documenting and understanding the ways through which family solidarity and cohesion are passed down from one generation to the next. An approach to studying the parent-child relationship which is focused on positive child outcomes is of somewhat less importance culturally for its individualistic focus. Rather, becoming interdependent and connected to one's family unit is of more value, culturally, because aging parents, in particular mothers, depend on the physical, emotional, and financial support of their children.

In sum, Arab communities are knitted together by a strong sense of family solidarity and connection among members of a kinship group that reach far beyond the bounds of a traditional nuclear family. Arab and Palestinian culture maintain closeness in familial relationships primarily through the marital union and the socialization of children. Palestinian culture promotes a traditional division of

household labor with wives being primarily responsible for the maintenance of the home and the caregiving of children and the elderly. Conversely, husbands assume authority over their families and are in charge of their economic health. The behavior of individual family members to adequately fulfill their role within the family has implications for the family's standing in the wider community. Particularly for women, identity in society also is entangled with the success of their husbands and sons.

**The Family's Relationship to Domains in the Socio-Ecological Context**

Now that a general overview of Palestinian families has been given, I turn to the task of identifying elements in the socio-ecological setting that are thought to be related to family life. According to an ecological framework, forces outside of the family influence how family members function and adapt to their surroundings (Clarke, 1973). Though Bronfenbrenner's framework (1979), a derivative of an ecological framework, is more concerned with the forces that are related to individual development rather than the family, his perspective is useful in understanding the influence of multiple contexts on family life. According to Bronfenbrenner, individuals are nested in a set of microsystems of which the family is one. Microsystems intertwine with each other (i.e., the mesosystem) and are connected to external settings, such as religious and governmental institutions, and employment and education opportunities, (i.e., the exosystem) which are embedded in the overarching values, ideologies, and belief systems of a society (i.e., macrosystem) and one's current place in time (i.e., chronosystem; Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The emphasis of structural factors in the macrosystem and their inter-linkages with the family provides a framework for understanding how broader societal forces inform the microcosm of the family. Indeed, many of the prominent family theories examine the family's relationship to the external environment and response to stressors that exist outside the family. For example, family systems researchers and practitioners define and understand family functioning by the degree to which the family maintains social relationships between family members as well as spatial relationships between

the family as a whole and the environment (White & Klein, 2002). According to this theory, family members must maintain a balance between connection to one another and distance from one another so as to become neither disengaged nor enmeshed and must do so in response to environmental influences (Broderick, 1993; Olsen & Gordall, 2003). Related, the McMaster model of healthy family functioning suggests that healthy families are able successfully to accomplish tasks, such as the acquisition of shelter, transition from couple dyad to families with young children, and cope with crises *in the face of demands of the external context* (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983). Further, the family strengths framework asserts that healthy families do not experience an absence of problems or stressors (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985). Rather, it is how these families react to internal and external stressors that classify them as having well- or ill-being.

Though each of these perspectives illustrates the nexus of family with other contexts, Walsh (2012) has been critical of these theories because, in application, individual families are grouped into typologies based on the presence or absence of specific qualities highlighted in each theory. This method of defining strong families is viewed as being static and acontextual because these frameworks often do not consider what are appropriate adaptive responses to specific stressors. Adaptive responses to external stressors are thought to be dependent on cultural values, the nature of the stressor, and existing internal family resources**.** For example, during times of heightened political conflict it may benefit Palestinian families to focus on increasing levels of cohesion among members particularly when political constraints, such as checkpoints and road closures, are barriers to family member's and ability to visit one another (see Batniji et al., 2009 for a discussion of the impact of restrictions on movements on Palestinian families).

In attempts to move beyond specific typologies of families who are doing well and take into account context, Walsh (2006) has discussed key processes that allow families to be resilient in the face of adversity. She has advocated for a systemic view on the processes (and not specific characteristics)

that mediate the positive adaption of both individual family members and the family as a whole to crises and persistent adversity. These processes are organized into *belief processes* (i.e., meaning making, positive outlook, and transcendence and spirituality), *organizational processes* (i.e., flexibility, connectedness, and social and economic resources), and *communication and problem solving processes* (i.e., clear consistent messages, open emotional expression, and collaborative problem solving; Walsh 2012). Although Walsh has claimed that the family resilience framework could be applied in multiple contexts since it does not advocate for specific typologies, her framework suggests that well-functioning families approach adversity in specific ways. Otherwise stated, well-functioning families utilize one or more of the resilience framework processes in response to stressors that are external to the family unit. Though it is unclear if in all contexts and cultures the processes promoted in the family resilience framework would be equally relevant, this theory not only positions families in a broader socio-ecological framework but it also highlights the importance of understanding how families can adaptively respond to factors that strain the familial unit.

When examining the Palestinian context, external stressors that are perhaps most visibly related to Palestinian families occur in the employment and economic, religious, and political domains of life. Each of these domains is discussed in detail below.

**Economics and employment as a context.** Perhaps the most visible influence of the economic domain on Palestinian families is a shift in who is primarily responsible for the financial provision of the family. Traditionally, there has been a strict division of household labor such that Arab husbands and fathers have been responsible for the economic provision in the family whereas wives' primary duties were the raising of children and the maintenance of the home (Farsoun, 2004). During times of severe economic crisis, such as is occurring in the oPt (Roy, 2007), Arab scholars have noted increasing levels of difficulty for husbands, particularly Palestinian husbands, to fulfill the provider role and the loss of status and authority in the home that is a consequence of their un- or under-employment (e.g., Hasso, 2011).

In response, Palestinian wives have been compelled to enter the labor market to supplement family income and, in turn, husbands have been stripped of their role as the sole financial provider (Ayesh, 2002; Farsoun, 2004).

This loss of status and pride due to economic conditions is not unique to Palestinian husbands. Eggerman and Panter-Brick (2010) noted the impact of a depressed economy on Afghan husbands' standing in the community and family such that the inability to provide has led to loss of authority and decreased feelings of self-worth. Mollica (2006) noted a similar relationship among Cambodian refugee fathers and the humiliation they experienced as a result of an inability to fulfill the provider role. Further, from ethnographic case studies of immigrant Latino men to the United States, Lopez and colleagues (2012) linked drug use and violence perpetration to the structural-economic conditions which inhibited Latinos from finding employment and thus fulfilling the provider role. A Palestinian husband's loss of role status not only strips his identity as to what it means to be a husband but it also threatens his ability to fulfill the religious obligations of a good Muslim man (see *Religion as a Context*). In turn, it is believed that Palestinian husbands have a greater need to assert and perpetuate their authority within the home (Farsoun, 2004; Hasso, 2011).

Relatedly, the entry of Palestinian wives into the work force cannot simply be viewed as a positive change, because the conditions surrounding their entry into the work sector impact the overall quality of life of the family generally and of wives specifically (Ata, 1986). In a study of lower and upper middle class families in Egypt, for example, Mohsen (1985) found that upper middle class wives who entered the work force did so out of personal desire whereas lower middle class wives entered the work force out of necessity to supplement the family income. Interviews with these different groups of women revealed the hopeful anticipation of entering the working world of the upper middle class women in contrast to the lower middle class women who discussed not only their increased responsibility to the family but also the loss of status of their husbands as the sole and primary

breadwinner. It is not the case, according to Mohsen (1985), that wives' entry into the employment sector decreases their responsibilities to their children and the home; rather, wives either delegate household responsibilities to domestic help (if they are able to afford to do so) or, as is most common, they add economic provider to their list of roles and responsibilities. The ability then to fulfill the role of motherhood as defined as taking full responsibility for the day-to-day care and raising of children becomes easily attainable to those women who have the financial ability to pass along "motherhood duties" to paid employees (Mohsen, 1985). Indeed, Arab scholar El Saadawi (2007) stated:

> In this new situation, men have continued to wash their hands of any responsibility at home and to evade many of the responsibilities in society and public life, responsibilities related to the need for a new organization of social life capable of solving the problems faced by women both at work and in the home. Women continue to bear the double or even triple burden constituted by their new roles in society and at the work place, combined with their old roles at home, towards the husband, the children and sometimes relatives such as fathers, mothers, brother, sisters, and even cousins (p. xxxi).

Though El Saadawi (2007) was writing about Arab family life in general, the increase in Palestinian wives entry into the formal work force coupled with the traditional division of household labor in Palestinian culture suggests that El Saadawi's concept of a "triple burden" is relevant to understanding the lives of some Palestinian women.

In addition to a pile-up of responsibilities facing many Arab women, decisions about what to do with the money wives earn can be a source of contention specifically within Muslim households. Islamic law indicates that if a wife earns an income, whether from employment in the formal work sector or selling goods out of her home, she is entitled to spend that money how she sees fit and is not required to use those funds to contribute to the financial provision of the home. The focus of this law is to continue to perpetuate the image of the husband as the sole financial provider for the family (Engineer, 1992; Moors, 1995). However, in practice, there are demands from Muslim husbands and families of origin as to how money is spent. Some Palestinian wives have reported feeling obligated to contribute to the family budget given the harsh economic conditions. Yet, they also have reported feeling pressure to

send money to their parents and siblings who are also suffering financially. Many women have been torn between their desires to help their families – both family of procreation and family of origin – and their right to keep portions of their income for themselves. For some families, this tension has strained relationships between parents and daughters, husbands and wives, and adult siblings (Moors, 1995).

Similar to the literature on Arab families, Western literatures also has discussed the pileup of responsibilities that accompanied women's increase in the formal labor force. For example, in their book, *The Second Shift: Working Parents and the Revolution at Home,* Hochschild and Machung (1989) wrote of the inequities in workloads between American husbands and wives, particularly in regards to household duties. Many of the wives interviewed described the emotional strain of contributing significantly to the household income as well as being responsible for the maintenance of the home. Even 20 years later, a study showed that mothers with preschool children who work fulltime put in an extra 5-7 hours of work at home compared to working fathers (Milkie, Raley, & Bianchi, 2009). Though Hochschild and Machung noted in their 2012 edition of *The Second Shift* that the amount of time working mothers spend on household tasks is about half of what it was in 1989, women today continue to feel role strain particularly as the economic climate makes it difficult for families to live comfortably on one income.

Similar reports of role strain have been documented among African American women. In her book detailing the lives of African American women from slavery to present day, Jones (1985) wrote not only of the burden of the demands of work both inside and outside of the home, but also of the frustration and remorse of many African American mothers for leaving their children to clean others' homes and raise White women's children. Clearly, for these women, economic insecurity and its associated effects hindered them from caring for their own children, a role that appears salient to their identity as mothers.

Clearly, gains in female labor participation, both in Western and Arab cultures, has not resulted in relaxed burdens at home. However, the “triple burden,” as El Saadawi (2007) termed it, is perhaps unique to Arab women – or at least does not universally apply to Western women. Although Western women have reported responsibilities associated with extended familial ties, most often this has occurred in the context of caring for elderly parents or grandparents and not a responsibility to care for all of those in one’s extended family (Carter & McGoldrick, 1999). The connection between extended family members and a woman’s sense of responsibility in Western culture appears to be somewhat distal in importance when considering responsibilities to her home, children, partner, career, and even herself. In comparison, Arab women are perpetually united to their extended family members so much so that their behavior and ability to meet cultural expectations largely determines their family’s (immediate and extended) honor (Barakat, 1985).

Western literatures also have noted that economic hardships and strains result in pressures on the quality and stability of the marital relationship (Conger et al., 1990; Cutrona et al., 2003; Elder, 1981). For example, in their study of marital quality among 202 married African-American couples in Iowa and Georgia, Cutrona and colleagues (2003) found that perceived financial strain significantly predicted lower levels of marital quality. Additionally, as expected, neighborhood economic level negatively predicted marital warmth, in that couples living in disadvantaged or poor neighborhoods were more likely to display lower levels of warmth in their interactions with each other than couples living in middle to upper-class neighborhoods. Relatedly, employment issues have been found to be prominent in predicting marital quality such that stable employment has been found to be more closely related to marital happiness than the amount of time spouses have to spend with one another (Voydanoff, 2004).

Similar conclusions have been found when examining the effects of economic and employment issues on the parent-child relationship. For example, Jackson and colleagues (2000) described how

financial strain among low-income single mothers living in New York City was related to increased levels of maternal depression which, in turn, was associated with increases in negative parenting quality. Though Jackson and colleagues were primarily interested in the relationship between financial strain and child outcomes (through its impact on parenting), their study highlights the importance of economic and employment stressors on the parent-child relationship. Indeed, the family stress model of economic hardships suggests that experiences of adversity predict an individual's psychosocial wellbeing which, in turn, predicts interactions between family members and their perception of relationship and family quality (e.g., Conger et al., 1990). Financial strain or deprivation and its effects on employment is certainly one such adversity.

In sum, the literatures on both Arab and Western families have illustrated the connection between the economic/employment and family domains. Particularly, as has been suggested by Arab scholars, a society's economic and employment health influences husbands' standing in the community (e.g., loss of status) and wives' decisions to enter the formal work sector. Similar to Western literature, Arab scholars have noted that the division of household labor is not adjusted with wives' employment, rather wives continue to take responsibility for the day-to-day maintenance of the home and caregiving of children. Perhaps unique to Arab society is the triple-burden Arab wives face with the caregiving demands of extended family members.

**Religion as a context.** In addition to the economic/employment context influencing family wellbeing, the religious context of many Arab communities, in particular Islam, is thought to be related to the functioning of the family unit. This influence is particularly visible in interactions between husbands and wives in that in general Islam supports a traditional division of household labor. Specifically, scholars have noted that Islamic doctrine holds that the father is an extension of Allah (god); and, thus, a religious obligation for husbands is to be responsible for the welfare, and particularly the economic welfare, of his family (Barakat, 1985). For Palestinian-Muslim husbands, the loss of role status

that is associated with increasing levels of under-employment coupled with wives' entry into the formal workforce not only challenges a man's identity as to what it means to be a husband but also threatens his ability to fulfill religious obligations of a good Muslim (Farsoun, 2004).

This prescribed division of household labor and authority within Muslim households is thought to lend itself to unequal distribution of power and privilege. Specifically, it has been noted that in response to their loss of social status Palestinian husbands have a greater need to assert and perpetuate their authority within the home (Farsoun, 2004; Hasso, 2011). In turn, Sharify-Funk (2008) has suggested, the patriarchy of Muslim culture puts women at risk for abuses in the family unit. Indeed, instances of marital abuse have been documented (Sayigh, 1985). Kinship marriages are particularly important for women because they facilitate continued ties with one's family of origin which helps to ensure their protection and support in the event of an abusive relationship (Taraki, 2006).

However, some scholars have suggested that Muslim women have their own sources of power in that their knowledge of and responsibility for family and household matters gives them power and authority over children and perhaps even husbands in matters which concern the daily functioning of the home (Farsoun, 2004; Mohsen, 1985). Although dependent on childbearing abilities, it has been noted that Muslim wives' authority in the home increases with the presence of children, especially boys. Indeed, it is thought that a wife finds her meaning in life when she has children to raise (al-Khateeb, 2007).

Accordingly, not all experts agree that Islam is repressive for Arab women. Rather, some have written that politicians' self-serving interpretations of Islamic text combined with structural factors (e.g., poverty) are to blame for women's disenfranchised position in Arab society and families (Abu-Lughold, 2002; Zayzafoon, 2005). For example, Arabocentric narratives claim that women have no reason to ask for an elevated position because they have already been granted a different, but equal, status 1,500 years ago with the coming of the Prophet Mohammad and the creation of Islam. Thus, according to this

line of thought the seemingly unequal distribution of power within Muslim households is a myth that has been perpetuated by Western discourses to justify wars, modernization, and the need for cultural superiority (i.e., the “liberated” Western woman has a better life than her Muslim neighbor; Abu-Lughold, 2002). Critics of the Arabocentric narrative contend that gender-related Arab-national discourses are also used by those within each Arab nation to pursue their ideological ends and political ambitions (Zayzafoon, 2005).

An historical example of the reproduction of Muslim, specifically Libyan, women to reach political gains can be seen in the change in political policies among the different Libyan leaders from the 1950s to 1970s. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Libyan official policies granted women rights and statuses which had previously been denied to them, such as the right to vote, seek divorce, and own property. The increase in women’s rights is thought to have been the outcome of international attention to women’s issues worldwide. However, with the coming of a new, more fundamental, political party, the 1970s saw a shift in policy towards “equal but different.” The essential Libyan woman as mother and homemaker was reproduced and emphasized. Additionally, traditional family life was regarded as sacred (Attir, 1985). Thus, the image of a true Libyan woman shifted from being an independent and self-sufficient female to one who gladly accepts her ultimate position as wife and mother and is exclusively concerned with the matters of the home. Consequently, during these two political eras stereotypes and national discourses of Libyan women were produced and used by different political leaders to promote their ideologies and to achieve political gains and acceptance whether it be from the international community or within their own political parties.

Relatedly, in Palestinian society, which is estimated to be 97% Muslim (Hasso, 2011) in the oPt, there is a significant overlap between political and religious doctrines in that the major political groups, such as Fateh and Hamas, are both influenced, although to different degrees, by Islamic creeds. From a religious perspective, these groups differ in the degree to which they promote traditional gender roles in

the family and society. For example, Fateh, a secular political group formed in 1959, is driven by a nationalistic political agenda which does not ascribe to the fundamental tenets of Islam regarding gender scripts (i.e., women are not allowed in the public sphere). Rather Fateh's focus is on achieving a Palestinian state alongside Israel. Essentially, the Fateh leadership does not dictate the role of women in Palestinian society beyond what is culturally defined (Lybarger, 2007; Peteet, 1991).

In contrast, Hamas (formed in 1987) is characterized as a militant, orthodox fundamentalist group in which the political agenda is driven explicitly by their interpretations of Islamic doctrine. For example, Hamas desires to create an Islamic state in all of Palestine (i.e., including present day Israel) that is reflective of traditional gender roles. Accordingly, this Islamic state would allow the Hamas leadership to dictate appropriate behaviors for men and women (Lybarger, 2007). During the first Intifada (1987-1993), Hamas urged the people to return to their religious roots, including the return of women to the domestic sphere (Hunter, 1993; Lybarger, 2007; Peteet, 1991). Scholars, such as Moghadam (2002) and Rubenberg (2001), have claimed that Hamas politicized gender during the first Intifada by equating Palestinian victory in the first Intifada with a return to traditional gender scripts for all females regardless of their religious preference. It is interesting to note, however, that some empirical studies provide evidence that many women did participate openly and actively in the first intifada (e.g., Spellings et al., 2012).

From Western scholarship, the literature examining the influence of the religious context on family life has focused predominately on examining the influence of religious congruence or incongruence between husbands and wives on the marital relationship. In general, the literature has shown that religious influence on marital quality does not depend on whether the couple adheres to a specific religious tradition, but on the level of similarity or dissimilarity of each partner's religious devotion and beliefs (e.g., Lichter & Carmalt, 2009; Vaaler, Ellison, & Powers, 2009). Though this body of literature has contributed to an understanding of marital dynamics, it has done so only in contexts

where there is variability in religious affiliation. For those cultures where religion is not primarily a personal endeavor (i.e., as a focus on individualistic spirituality), but part of one's social identity and connection to the community, assessing levels of religious congruence among couples is not of central importance. Rather, as described above, Arab scholarship has suggested that the religio-political views of a family or community as well as structural forces enhancing or impeding peoples' ability to realize their religious obligations have more implications for family life than disagreements among couples.

In conclusion, despite debates as to whether Islam is repressive for women, there is agreement that Islam generally promotes a more traditional division of household labor in which the caring and raising of children are delegated to wives, and that husbands are charged with the provision and protection of the family unit (al-Khatteb, 2007; Hasso, 2011). Additionally, Islamic doctrine has been used for political purposes to promote a particular version of the Muslim woman (i.e., repressed vs. separate but equal) which has implications for roles, responsibilities, and dynamics of power within families. As has been already discussed, economic and structural forces intertwine with these religious values to impact the family environment.

**The political environment as a context.** Recently, there have been additions or adaptations to the World Health Organization quality of life framework with the inclusion of a fifth domain – the political domain. Specifically, Giacaman and colleagues (2007) argued that the traditional four-domain framework (physical, psychological, environmental, social) is neither comprehensive nor adequate, particularly when trying to understand families and individuals who are affected by persistent and chronic political constraint and turmoil such as Palestinians living in the oPt. The four-domain framework fails to consider commanding political conditions, such as freedom and stability, as essential components of overall functioning. Specifically, from focus group discussions of Palestinian youth and adults, Giacaman and colleagues identified the Israeli occupation as well as factional conflicts among Palestinians as affecting their perceptions of overall quality of life. In regards to the Israeli occupation

and its policies and practices, participants discussed issues of displacement, siege, closures and resulting feelings of humiliation, loss of dignity, incapacitation, and fear as central to their overall assessment of quality of life. Additionally, the lack of a Palestinian state, lawlessness, and corruption within Palestinian society were also said to impact assessments on life (Giacaman et al., 2007). Similarly, Barber and colleagues (2012) found the following political concerns relevant to contemporary Palestinian experience in the oPt: issues surrounding the occupation (i.e., structures and features, Israeli tactics, perceived impact, and activism against it); safety, security, and stability; freedom and rights; and government responsibilities (i.e., provision of services).

Though specific instances of political constraint and conflict can occur in one's neighborhood, school, and workplace, nation-wide policies, ideologies, and beliefs are the drivers behind these conditions which appear to make their influence on individuals and families all the more intense. For example, Palestinians living in the oPt experience significant instances of political instability and insecurity. They are often denied access to freedom of movement even within their own territories (e.g., 60% of the West Bank is controlled completely by Israel [Area C]), are at risk of losing their home or land without the opportunity to advocate for their property rights, and, particularly for those in the Gaza Strip, are continually at risk for direct political violence (Barber et al., 2012; Giacaman et al., 2007; Hunter, 1993). Indeed, it is the experience of these events *as well as* the threat of political constraints, insecurity, and instability that are felt in everyday life but are rooted in the political ideology and intentional policies of the Israeli government.

Perhaps the most commonly studied element of the political context is political violence. In general this body of literature has been grounded in a Western deficit model focusing on assessing the direct impact of exposure to violence on an individual's psychological functioning. Traditionally there has been little focus on the relationship between political violence and family systems and structures. Instead, researchers typically have taken a human development perspective arguing that war is a

catastrophic stressor and when experienced in critical moments in development (e.g., childhood and adolescence), the individual is at risk for negative adaptation and functioning. While there are some who have called for more comprehensive models that more adequately capture the complexities of lived experience (e.g., Barber & Olsen, 2009; Eggerman & Panter-Brick, 2010; Giacaman et al. 2010), the focus of the research is still primarily on individual level outcomes (Barber, 2013, in press). Rarely do researchers study political conflict from a family systems perspective. Examining the influence of this societal stressor on one cohort of individuals neglects the full reach of political conflict. This is unfortunate given that each individual within a family in a given community experiences the stressors of war. Political conflict does not simply target family members of a specific age but rather family and community systems. Otherwise stated, political conflict is often experienced collectively, at the community level, with repercussions reaching beyond an individual's mental health to issues of community safety and security (Giacaman, et al., 2006).

A recent review of the conflict literatures identified an increasing trend in which many scholars have included a focus on elements of the family context (Barber, in press). They have examined aspects of family life such as issues of parental health, positive relationships among family members, and the quality of parent-child interactions. For example, Betancourt and colleagues (2010) found that among former Sierra Leonean child soldiers who had been reintegrated into their families and communities, higher levels of family acceptance was related to decreases in depressive-like symptoms among youth. Merrilees and colleagues (2012) study of the multi-generational impact of the Troubles on Northern Irish youth found that adolescent's psychological adjustment was impacted by their mother's mental health. Somewhat differently, Guttmann-Steinmetz and colleagues (2011) found no link between Israeli and Palestinian children's internalizing and externalizing behaviors and maternal attachment. Despite an increased attention to the family ecology, the focus of these studies is not to examine how conflict

impacts family life. Rather conditions within the family are used to explain the link between conflict exposure and children or youth's psychosocial outcomes.

Focusing somewhat more broadly, a few studies have examined the influence of political conflict specifically on family life. For example, in al-Krenawi and Graham's (2011) study of Palestinian youth, exposure to political conflict was related to lower levels of family functioning. Unfortunately, these authors did not discuss nor examine specific qualities of family life that are affected by political conflict. Rather, they only included general assessments of the family climate. Moreover, this study utilized a pre-established measure (FAD; Epstein Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983) to assess family functioning which was developed for use in Western, non-conflict settings, resulting in a questionably valid assessment of family life among Palestinians (see Summerfield, 2000, for a critique of the use of Western measures in non-Western contexts).

Differently, Jabbra (2004) examined the impact of the Lebanese Civil War on age of marriage, family size, women's education and employment, and family values. Findings suggested that the war had a direct influence on Lebanese family formation such that average age at marriage increased and family size decreased primarily due to deteriorating economic conditions. Additionally, women's employment rates increased as a result of the economy. Though this study is unique in its attention to detailed elements of family life, specifically family formation, it did not assess how broader conditions of political constraint and insecurity influence family life. Indeed, exposure to political violence is only one manifestation of political conditions.

Different from a Western deficit model and its narrow focus on the effects of violence exposure, within Arab scholarship there has been a notable amount of discussion of the linkage between political conditions and families, specifically among Palestinian families. For example, scholars have documented Palestinian husband's disenfranchisement within the family and his inability to fulfill the culturally- and religiously-endorsed role of the primary breadwinner. This appears to be directly linked to an unstable

economic context created by the Israeli occupation and associated constraints on mobility, trade with the outside world, and employment within Israel (Hasso, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Kuttab, 2006).

Relatedly, Giacaman and Johnson (forthcoming) detailed the effects of political imprisonment of Palestinian men on their wives and mothers who have had to assume the role of the primary provider and sustainer of family life. Due to the difficulty men face in receiving permits to visit family members in prison, mothers and wives are often the only visitors to Palestinian prisoners in Israel. In turn, these women are often left with the responsibility of providing emotional comfort and legal advocacy for the political prisoners. Palestinian women who must assume responsibility over the financial and legal health of their families in their husbands' and sons' absence threaten the traditional patriarchal system. This change in the delegation of roles and responsibilities has implications for relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, and the family with the community (Naleh, 2006).

The difficult political conditions which Palestinians face threaten the existence and continuity of families. Many Palestinians interpret the Israeli government's actions, such as the continued building of settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, checkpoints, the separation wall between Israel and the West Bank, and the siege on the Gaza Strip and associated economic implications, as tools to reduce the Palestinian population and colonize all of the oPt (Johnson, 2006). In turn, Palestinian families and communities have responded with an increasing focus on solidarity among family members. Indeed, recent analyses have shown that Palestinian adults who have experienced consistent and chronic exposure to political violence, specifically verbal abuse and humiliation, reported higher levels of marital quality and community belonging than those exposed to conflict less frequently (Barber et al., 2013). Marriage to extended kin, high fertility rates, and a preference for larger families is thought to become central to survival because it solidifies the necessity of pooling together resources to aid the larger family unit (Johnson, 2006; Kuttab, 2006). The inability for Palestinians to achieve political independence has stalled the development of public institutions which support the nuclear family unit and has created

an atmosphere in which connection to a kin group continues to impact one's economic and employment opportunities (Farsoun, 2004).

In addition, the ability to remain connected to one's kin group has been viewed by some as a source of resistance against the occupation (Taraki, 2006). Specifically, Johnson (2006) stated "everyday practices of marriage and 'kin work' are sites where Israeli colonialism is contested and Palestinian identity is constituted" (p. 53). Continued connection to one's family and kin group despite Israeli imposed restrictions on mobility (and the implication that these restrictions are meant to destabilize Palestinian families) perhaps is a means through which Palestinians advocate for their right to statehood and political security. The stability of Palestinian families has been framed as a political message showing the resolve of this marginalized group to continue to work towards an independent Palestinian state and resist the occupation (Taraki, 2006). Thus, it is not only the case that the political context acts upon families – for it surely has its effects – rather Palestinian families also utilize their own strengths and values to ensure their survival, political identity, and resistance.

In sum, despite the majority of the research documenting the link between exposure to political violence and individual mental health, scholars have advocated for the centrality of a political dimension and its relationship to other domains of functioning. It has been noted that political conflict is experienced collectively by families and communities, thus providing evidence for the necessity of better understanding the linkage between political wellbeing and family relations. For Palestinian families, issues of family solidarity and cohesion are perhaps most visibly related to the political context in both their necessity for individual and collective survival as well as an avenue for political activism and resistance against the Israeli occupation.

**Summary**

In conclusion, though literature on Arab culture provides insights into the functioning of families and the family's relationship to other domains of life, there is little information as to the relative importance of family wellbeing to a holistic conceptualization of quality of life, particularly under such demanding economic and political conditions. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation was to give needed and explicit attention to family as a fundamental element of quality of life in the context of chronic political constraint. In so doing, the study will document the degree to which family is highlighted in discussions of quality of life/wellbeing by Palestinian adults. It will also attend to the specific elements of family life that might be included in those discussions, as well as scrutinize if and how discussion of family issues are interlinked with other domains of functioning (e.g., economic, religious, political).

First, in regards to examining the role of family to holistic notions of wellbeing and quality of life, this study sought to answer the following question:

1. To what degree are family relationships salient to discussions of quality of life for Palestinian adults living under conditions of consistent political constraint?

Second, in regards to elements of family life which are central to issues of family functioning, this study attempted to answer the following question:

2. What are the specific elements of family life that Palestinians describe in their narratives?

Third, in regards to linkages between family and other domains of wellbeing, this study sought to answer the following question:

3. Do Palestinian adults link their descriptions of family to the other domains of their lives? And if so, how?

Finally, in response to the traditional division of household labor that is common in Palestinian culture, this dissertation was attentive to differences between men and women in the centrality of

family, specific elements of family, and inter-linkages between family and other domains of functioning by answering the following question:

4. To what degree are the salience of family relationships, elements of family life, and linkages between domains of wellbeing described similarly and differently by men and women?

## Chapter 3: Methods

This study analyzed interview data to explore the centrality of the family to Palestinian perceptions of quality of life/wellbeing. Data for this study came from the first phase of the *Impact of Political Conflict on Youth: Assessing Long-Term Wellbeing via an Event History-Resource Model Project* (hereafter referred to as PAL). The PAL project is directed by Brian K. Barber as PI and was funded by the Jacobs Foundation, Zurich, Switzerland. It began in 2010 and will continue through 2014. This dissertation's author was instrumentally involved in Phase 1 of the PAL project, including participating in the group interviews.

The overall aim of the PAL project is to understand the impact of political conflict on the long-term wellbeing of Palestinian youth as they have transitioned into adulthood. This particular cohort of individuals was adolescents during the first Palestinian intifada (1987-1993), a group who participated to unprecedented levels in political conflict (Barber & Olsen, 2009; Hunter, 1993; Qouta, Punamäki, & Sarraj, 2008). Since that time, these individuals have continued to experience episodes of political conflict and constraint, as well as declining economic conditions until the present day. The PAL project utilized a mixed method approach which began with and emphasized a qualitative methodology followed by quantitative methods (see Morgan, 1998). Specifically, interview data from Phase 1 were used to create a culturally-grounded survey of quality of life. The survey has been used alongside a culturally-specific event history calendar to link life trajectories, including exposure to political conflict, to current levels of functioning.

The method of Phase 1 of the PAL project was to assess wellbeing and quality of life from a holistic and culturally grounded perspective. Specifically, a series of group interviews were conducted to elicit perceptions of what it means to be functioning well and not well in contemporary Palestinian adult society. Interviewers did not prompt the respondents by asking questions about specific domains of

functioning determined a priori to the interviews. Rather, respondents were free to nominate, describe, and discuss any characteristic or element of life that they deemed relevant to wellbeing.

Similar methodological strategies have been used by conflict scholars to understand local perceptions of mental health among displaced children in North Uganda (Betancourt et al., 2009a) and Rwandans (Bolton, 2001), as well as indicators of successful reintegration among former female child soldiers in Sierra Leone (Stark et al., 2009). Though a strength of these studies is the focus on local idioms of health, they are limited in the narrow focus on specific health indicators (e.g., mental health and reintegration; see Barber, in press for a review). Thus, the work of the PAL project diverges from this previous work by assessing wellbeing holistically to include all relevant domains of life.

The method of Phase 1 of the PAL project is well suited for the purposes of this dissertation primarily because it allowed for an examination of the importance of the family domain to overall conceptions of quality of life. Unlike a project that from the outset intended to study family - or any particular domain of functioning - the method of the PAL project allowed for all relevant domains and sub-domains to emerge. Thus, any discussions of family life in the group interviews show the relative centrality of this domain to quality of life. Accordingly, descriptions of elements of family life and any linkages with other domains of wellbeing found in the interviews further illustrate the importance of family life in understanding overall health because these descriptions emerged organically in the interviews of the participants without prompting from the interviewers.

**Methods of PAL Phase 1**

In February 2010, group interviews were conducted by the Center for the Study of Youth and Political Conflict at The University of Tennessee (Center) in partnership with the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research (PSR) in Ramallah, West Bank. A total of fourteen group interviews were conducted in the West Bank (4 group interviews), East Jerusalem (2 group interviews), and the Gaza Strip (8 group interviews). To maximize representation of key variation in conditions, groups were

composed with respect to (a) gender, (b) region, (c) residential location, and, in Gaza, (d) political affiliation. Following a purposive sampling method (see Betancourt et al., 2009a for similar sampling strategy in qualitative work with conflict populations) PSR fieldwork supervisors recruited persons who met the inclusion criteria for one of the fourteen groups (i.e., political affiliation, refugee status, sex, area of residence).

As to region, Palestinians live in three distinct areas: the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, each of which has its unique circumstances relative to mobility, economy, and identity. One major difference between those living in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip are the ways in which Palestinians interact with the Israeli government and military. For example, those living in the West Bank must pass through Israeli checkpoints, often daily, when traveling to and from work, visiting family, or pursuing an education. Checkpoints can close without notice. The ease at which one passes though the checkpoints is seemingly determined haphazardly – with some being quarantined for an undetermined amount of time while others pass through relatively quickly after being searched. It is at these checkpoints that many Palestinians are humiliated and harassed to such a degree that some individuals choose to constrict their own movement so as to avoid such interactions with the Israeli military (Barber et al., 2013). Additionally, Palestinians in the West Bank are not allowed to travel into or through Israel without special permission from the Israeli government, which in effect prohibits many West Bankers from going to East Jerusalem and certainly the Gaza Strip. Further, the presence of Israeli settlements and Israeli civil and/or military control of the majority of the West Bank creates an environment which forces many Palestinians living in the West Bank to interact daily with the Israeli security, police, or border officials.

Differently, some living in East Jerusalem are able to travel both within Israeli borders as well as throughout the West Bank. In general, East Jerusalemites experience a higher standard of living than those in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for Palestinians in East Jerusalem have access to the Israeli

sponsored health care system and a relatively healthy economic context (particularly in regards to tourism as the Old City is located in East Jerusalem – a place that holds religious significance for Christians, Jews, and Muslims). However, those living in East Jerusalem lack political and property rights that would give stability to families. For example, East Jerusalemites must go through a lengthy and expensive process seeking permission to build on their own land; many are denied this permission. It is common to hear East Jerusalemites speak of the fear that their land will be confiscated and homes demolished in order to expand Israeli communities as well as build the Separation Wall – a border between Israel and the West Bank which cuts through many Palestinian communities. In East Jerusalem this wall zigzags like a snake through the Palestinian communities segmenting and occupying Palestinian land. Similar to those in the West Bank, East Jerusalemites are also exposed to harsh and humiliating conditions when they travel back and forth from the West Bank to visit family, work, or school.

Those living in the Gaza Strip face an even different set of political constraints. Since 2005 all Israeli settlements and checkpoints were removed from the Gaza Strip, and in 2007 a siege or blockage was imposed on the area – in effect cutting off any access to the outside world. Though in the past few years the Israeli government has relaxed the conditions somewhat, allowing for the increase in the number of goods to enter Gaza, it is still very difficult for the average Gazan to be granted permission to leave the Strip. Travel through the Erez Crossing into Israel is typically only granted for those with severe medical conditions and top UN (or other NGO) officials. At the time of the interviews, many goods and materials were coming to the Gaza Strip through tunnels connected to Egypt. Relative to the crossing into Israel, Gazans found it easier to travel outside of the Strip through the Rafah crossing into Egypt. However, travel through the Egyptian border was costly, thus prohibiting many Gazans from leaving the Strip. (At the writing of this dissertation, the border crossings with Egypt and tunnels have been closed by the Egyptian government.)

In effect, the economy within the Gaza Strip has stalled. Prior to the siege, many Gazans would travel to work in Israel. The inability to leave the Strip and associated loss of jobs has contributed to the unemployment rate rising to upwards of 50% (M. Daher, personal communication, September 13, 2013). Additionally, the siege has created a context in which living conditions have deteriorated, such as access to clean water and increased reliance on humanitarian aid. Though within the borders Gazans are free to travel between towns and villages, many liken the conditions within the Gaza Strip to living in a very large prison where there is little contact with the outside world and little chance to improve living conditions within the prison (M. Daher, personal communication, September 13, 2013).

One year prior to the group interviews (December 2008-January 2009), an air strike operation (Operation Cast Lead) was carried out by Israeli military forces on the Gaza Strip. The strike was ostensibly in response to rocket attacks from Gaza to Israel. This was a 22 day military assault on the Gaza Strip which resulted in destruction of over 3,000 buildings and homes, displacement of thousands of Gazans, and the death of over 1,400 Palestinians, mostly civilians (Institute for Middle East Understanding, 2012). The inability to escape the violence due to the blockage created a context of intense fear and insecurity among the people, a refrain that is repeated often in the group interviews.

In addition to region, residential location was taken into account when comprising the groups. Specifically, Palestinians living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are split between those inhabiting refugee camps and those living in cities, towns and villages. The latter are those whose families have historically inhabited the area and the former are those whose families came to the area as refugees during the 1948 and 1967 wars. Because of basic differences in life circumstance between these two groups their perspectives on functioning may vary significantly. Therefore it was important to interview persons from both groups. For example, refugees receive U.N. support for education, medical, and relief needs whereas those living in villages and cities do not.

Finally, as to political affiliation, there are two major political factions in Palestine currently – Fateh and Hamas – with the former being characterized as a secular political faction and the latter a fundamental Islamic faction. For the West Bank and East Jerusalem interview groups, no attempt was made specifically to select individuals that had a known political affiliation. In contrast, interview groups in the Gaza Strip were formed explicitly to include acknowledged members of both political factions.

After Hamas won elections in 2006, tensions and conflict arose between Hamas and Fateh. Internal conflicts arose in many Palestinian communities throughout the Gaza Strip and West Bank over which party would represent and govern the Palestinian people. In 2007, Hamas militarily took over the Gaza Strip, an act which resulted in a split with Fateh remaining in control of the West Bank. Although this internal schism is relevant to all Palestinians, tensions between the two parties continue to be particularly high in the Gaza Strip such that many Fateh supporters dare not speak out against the Hamas leadership for fear of retaliation. To further exacerbate the situation, Israel and the United States consider Hamas a terrorist organization and thus will not deal directly with them or officially include the Hamas leadership in peace talks. Thus, it was of interest to interview participants of both major political factions in the Gaza Strip separately, both to assess differences in perspectives and to avoid any within-group tensions.

In sum, interview groups were comprised as follows:

| West Bank | East Jerusalem | Gaza Strip |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Refugee Males | 1. Males | 1. Refugee, Fateh Males |
| 2. Refugee Females | 2. Females | 2. Refugee, Fateh Females |
| 3. Non-Refugee Males | | 3. Refugee, Hamas Males |
| 4. Non-Refugee Females | | 4. Refugee, Hamas Females |
| | | 5. Non-Refugee, Fateh Males |
| | | 6. Non-Refugee, Fateh Females |
| | | 7. Non-Refugee, Hamas Males |
| | | 8. Non-Refugee, Hamas Females |

**Protocol.** Groups were sex –specific as appropriate to the culture and consisted of five participants each. One exception was the East Jerusalem males group, which consisted of only three

participants due to transportation restraints. Each group interview was held in a private location, such as an office building, and lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The interviews were conducted in Arabic and lead by a PSR field work supervisor. Additionally, two research team members from The University of Tennessee (the PI and this dissertation's author) attended the group interviews to provide further clarification, answer any questions, and to ensure the content of the group interviews was consistent with the purpose of the study as there is no direct translation of the word wellbeing in Arabic. These two members sat in the back of the room, away from the group, with a simultaneous interpreter. Both the group interviews (Arabic) and the simultaneous interpretation (English) were tape recorded. The Arabic interview transcripts were then translated and transcribed into English. This English version of the interview transcripts was used for data analysis in this dissertation.

This strategy of having members of the American research team present in the interviews appeared to work well for this project because the participants did in fact have questions as to the purpose of the study and the dissemination of research findings. Additionally, due to language barriers and potential misunderstandings of words or phrases, the simultaneous interpretation of the group interviews allowed the American team members to interject with additional questions or requests for clarification.

The interviews were semi-structured and participants were asked to describe wellbeing and its converse ill-being by completing five tasks. In order to aide in transcription of the group interviews, participants selected their own pseudonym and were asked to say their "name" each time they began speaking. First, participants were asked:

> "Think of two people of your age that you know well – one who you think is doing relatively well in life and the other who you think is not doing well in life. Without telling any identifying information about these people, please describe these persons. What is it about their life that leads you to conclude that they are doing ok or not ok?"

(see Miller, et al., 2006 for a similar interview protocol used to create a culturally grounded mental health checklist for Afghan adults). Because it was important to identify any gender specific domains of functioning, if the majority of the participants described men (or women), then the facilitator repeated the question asking the group to think of individuals from the other gender. This occurred in about half of the group interviews. For each person being described, participants were asked to give him or her a pseudonym. This helped participants to think of characteristics of concrete people and not ideal situations.

Second, participants were asked to free list components or characteristics of wellbeing (see Betancourt et al., 2009a; Bolton, 2001 for similar interview strategies). Specifically they were asked:

> "Now think of the characteristics that lead to a good life. What are these characteristics?"

Third, once a list was compiled, participants were then asked to prioritize the list by indicating their top three components of wellbeing or a good life. Specifically:

> "Now from this list of characteristics, what are the three most important qualities of a good life? List them in order of importance, starting from the most important one."

Fourth, participants were asked to describe components of wellbeing for the Palestinian society in general. Due to the collective nature of this society, this question helped capture a different dimension of wellbeing (i.e., individual level versus group level). Specifically, the respondents were asked:

> "Now we are going to talk about things that if they were provided for the Palestinians would make life better. What are the characteristics that would give better lives to Palestinians?"

Finally, to the degree that time allowed, the facilitator asked participants to consider which domains of wellbeing might have been most affected by their specific experiences with political conflict. Specifically:

"Palestinians have lived a difficult life, particularly with much exposure to and involvement in political conflict. We want to understand how living through repeated conflicts impacts wellbeing. Where will we see the impact of living through conflict – on what part of wellbeing?"

All tasks were answered sequentially such that each participant was given a turn to respond to the specific interview task before the next participant was asked to comment. It is plausible that this method may have resulted in participants responding to the comments of the others in the group rather than attending to a specific research task. However, the interview tasks were designed in such a way that guarded against this type of group effect. Specifically, by requesting that each participant describe the lives of individuals they knew well, it is unlikely that those descriptions were impacted by what was said previously in the group. Additionally, participants were never asked to respond to the comments of others in the group.

**The interview setting.** As noted above, the interview groups were separated by respondent's gender so as to be culturally appropriate and encourage the participants to speak openly. The original intent was to have a male facilitator lead the male groups, and a female facilitator lead the female groups – again with the attention of being culturally appropriate. In reality, however, a female and male facilitator co-led the West Bank and East Jerusalem groups. A male facilitator led all groups in the Gaza Strip. Upon learning of the gender composition of the facilitators, concern was expressed to the director of PSR that the respondents would not feel comfortable to express themselves to someone of the opposite sex. The director assured that based on his extensive experience doing household surveys in the oPt that this would not be an issue. And indeed it did not appear to be. In addition to the facilitator(s) and respondents, the PI (a man), this dissertation's author (a woman), and a female interpreter were also present in the group interviews.

Scholars who study dynamics within the interview setting would not necessarily agree with the view of the PSR director. Such scholars have asserted that how men and women respond in interviews is

the result of gender socialization. For example, Schwalbe and Wolkomir (2003) stated that men are taught to seek control and will assert themselves in social situations to show conformity to their gender. In the interview setting men are asked to give control over to the researcher – a situation which can make some men uncomfortable, especially if the researcher is a woman. A lack of comfort and trust can result in respondents withholding information or choosing to answer questions in a way that brings the interview quickly to an end (see also Briggs, 2003; Ellis & Berger, 2003). Relatedly, Reinharz and Chase (2003) have suggested that women are taught to be silent and submissive and can perpetuate this behavior by holding back information the researcher may find valuable. Respondents limiting their own voices are more likely to occur when the researcher (or facilitator in this cause) is unable to create rapport with the respondents – as might be the case with a male facilitator of a female group.

It is difficult to say whether the composition of those in the interview rooms affected what was shared for we do not have female only or male only interview settings in which to make comparisons. However, it is certainly possible that some women may have self-restrained their voices. There were women who were quite vocal in their opinions and thoughts, but there were also those who were restrained and did not offer more than a few comments. However, there were men who did this as well.

Care was taken to respond to the respondents' unspoken requests for gender separation. For example, in the Gaza Strip where gender segregation is more pronounced than in the West Bank, the PI did not extend his hand to the women respondents as they entered and exited the interview room. Instead this dissertation's author stood at the door, shook their hands, and thanked them for coming. In contrast, the PI took over that role for the men's interviews, particularly the interviews with Hamas men. In the West Bank the majority of the men and women respondents shook the hands of both American team members. Even for those who did not, they came up to both the male and female American team members and thanked them for listening. None of the participants stated that they were uncomfortable in the mixed group nor did anyone publically refuse to participate.

There are at least two possibilities as to why the gender composition of the interview settings likely did not strongly influence respondents' willingness to participate. First, perhaps utilizing a group instead of an individual interview setting aided in creating an atmosphere open for dialogue such that any potential awkwardness of being in the presence of someone from the opposite sex lessened in comparisons to the presence of the majority of same-sexed individuals. During female group interviews there were never more than two men present (one Palestinian facilitator and the PI) and for the men's group interviews there were never more than three women present (one Palestinian facilitator [West Bank and E. Jerusalem groups only], one Palestinian translator, and this dissertation's author). The scholars cited above primarily have gained their insights into gendered behavior in the interview setting through conducting and analyzing individual interviews. Having the groups consist of either all women or all men, despite the sex of the facilitator and researchers, perhaps helped to create a psychologically safe atmosphere.

Second, it is common practice for PSR when conducting its public opinion polls to send one male and one female fieldworker to each respondents home. Though the male fieldworker typically interviews the male respondents and the female fieldwork the female respondents, both are present in the interview setting. Thus, although there are gender differences in Palestinian society, it appears to be common practice in professional, research settings such as this for men and women to be together and interact.

**Sample.** In total there were 68 Palestinian adults (33 males, 35 females) who participated in the group interviews. Participants were between the ages of 20 and 53 and represented the major regional, residential, and political divisions within the oPt. Before each group interview, the PSR fieldwork supervisor documented demographic data on the participants, including age, marital status, and employment status. For those men who were employed, occupations included accountant, counselor, teacher, taxi driver, researcher, and government employee. For those women who were employed,

occupations included personal administrator, researcher, psychologists, accountant, teacher, engineer, and housekeeper. Relevant sample characteristic are presented in Table 1 in Appendix A.

**Analysis of Interview Data**

For this dissertation, the interview data was analyzed thoroughly to answer the four research questions relative to: the importance of family life, specific components of family wellbeing, the inter-linkages between the family and other domains of functioning, and differences between men and women. Principles from a grounded theory approach as outlined by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (2008) were used for these analyses. Specifically, open, axial, and selective coding techniques were used to identify themes in the interview data related to family life.

Because all interviews were collected a few years prior to analysis of the interview data and the purpose of the original interviews differed from the purpose of this dissertation, it was not possible to employ a fully grounded theory method of data collection and analysis. As a consequence emergent themes were unable to be fully developed (i.e., reach saturation). Nevertheless, the principles of a grounded theory approach align closely with the goals of this study. Specifically, grounded theory suggests that theoretical constructs are not derived solely from previous knowledge but, rather, from information gathered from individuals who experience a particular phenomenon or experience a similar set of circumstances (Creswell, 2007). Though the literature on Arab families provides some insights into salient aspects of family wellbeing as well as linkages of family to other domains of quality of life, a grounded theory lens stresses that theory building should emerge from the interview data without being confined to what is known in related areas of study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

There are a variety of approaches to grounded theory which are related to one's epistemological [i.e., how one comes to know reality(ies)] and ontological (i.e., belief in the nature of reality) positioning. For example, Glaser and Strauss (1967) originally described this methodology from a positivistic

perspective, whereas Clarke (2005) developed a form of grounded theory methodology called situational analysis in response to postmodern thinking. Differently, Charmaz (2000, 2003) approached qualitative data analysis from a social constructivist perspective that suggests that realities are co-constructed by multiple actors (i.e., participants and researchers) and no one single reality exists. Charmaz's approach to grounded theory is a particularly useful lens to approaching this study for two reasons. First, a social constructivist paradigm allows for the existence of multiple and conflicting realities, which is particularly salient given the diverse political and regional characteristics of the sample. For example, a man living in the Gaza Strip who is affiliated with Hamas (a fundamentalist Islamic political group) may have different beliefs about the characteristics of healthy marital relationships than a Christian woman living in a city in the West Bank. A social constructivist paradigm doesn't force the researcher to choose one perspective over another in search of "reality," but encourages the inclusion of both realities.

Second, and perhaps most important, the nature of the data collection (e.g., interviews conducted in Arabic) and analysis (e.g., translated English versions of the Arabic transcripts) for this study support drawing on principles from a social constructivist perspective. Not only are the participants speaking of their perceptions and understanding of reality, but the translator is inserting her own assumptions of what the participants are saying by the word choice and sentence structure in the English transcript. As a cultural outsider, any findings are influenced by my own biases of my understanding, or lack of understanding, of family life in Arab culture.

**Positioning.** Because I am seeking to understand and describe the experiences of those in a different cultural context, it is important for me to describe my exposure to and experience with Palestinian families. My first trip to the Middle East occurred in February 2010, the date of the group interviews. For that initial trip, I remained in the region for three weeks traveling to West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip. Throughout the next three years, I traveled to the region on five

additional trips with stays lasting as long as one week and as short as three days. The purpose of each trip was to advance the PAL project, most often by meeting with key informants and PSR colleagues. In addition to my travels, I have tried to learn about Arab and Palestinian families through my graduate studies. Most visibly this can be seen in the topic of my thesis and related publications– political activism among Palestinian youth. When appropriate, I used class papers to further explore my interest in Palestinian families.

Though I have some experience in the region and was present during the group interviews, my understanding of the findings arises from my perception of the English version of the Arabic transcripts. Cultural nuances and meanings can be lost in translation. There is the risk of the cultural outsider placing undue emphasis on a word or phrase that has a particular meaning in her language but a different meaning in the participants' native language. Further, as a student in the Child and Family Studies Department my familiarity with Western theories and literatures on family functioning has the potential to influence my understanding of the transcripts.

In addition to language gaps, the most profound difference between the Palestinians who participated in the group interviews and me is the degree of freedoms I experience as an American woman. My nationality and the political context in which I live allow me to travel freely between cities, states, and most other countries. I have never directly experienced political conflict or violence nor do I fear the threat of future violence. Although since the time of my youth America has been engaged in two wars – Iraq and Afghanistan –neither of these conflicts has been fought directly on American soil. The attacks on September 11, 2001 were by far the closest I have ever come to beginning to understand the fear, anxiety, and the uncertainty of political violence. However these feelings were relatively short-lived as I was living in a small college town in the mid-west, "forced" by my college professors to continue to plow through the syllabus, and lacking any real connection to the individuals and families directly affected by the attacks. The increased presence of American security forces in airports following

September 11th was the first and only time I have seen the integration of the military into my community in a combat-like role. Thus, substantially, the extent of my exposure to war is in having friends, family members, and family members of friends who serve in the U.S. military. I do not know what it is like to live in conditions of prolonged conflict such that even in periods of relative peace, political constraints and the threat of conflict have become normal.

Additionally, although I am a woman and, as some have argued remain disadvantaged in regards to societal power and privileges as compared to men, I am rarely aware of experiencing discrimination due to my sex. Though with the birth of my daughter my family life has shifted to reflect a more traditional division of household labor, my family, friends, and the society at large has continued to encourage me to pursue and fulfill my career aspirations. I can travel with ease, choose clothing based on my personal style and not how much skin it covers, and go to a movie by myself without the worry of the appearance of impropriety. Members of my family, particularly my father, have a more liberal view of gender roles in the family and this has seeped into my subconscious, molding the values and beliefs I hold to this day. Thus, I am faced with the challenge of representing the words, thoughts, and values of a people who live in cultural and political circumstances vastly different from my own.

**Protection against cultural biases.** Though I will never be able to completely divorce myself from my understanding and presentation of the findings (see Holstein & Gubrium, 2003), in an attempt to guard against gross misunderstandings and over interpreting (or under interpreting for that matter) the respondents' words, I have shared portions of the Results chapter with one of the PAL project's key informants – a Palestinian woman who for the purposes of the PAL project goes by the name of "O". "O" is a woman in her 40s who has lived the majority of her life in the West Bank and, at the time of interviews, worked for a prominent Palestinian research firm. "O" has received degrees both from Palestinian and American universities. For the West Bank and East Jerusalem group interviews "O" provided simultaneous interpretation to the two American team members. She is especially suited to

comment on this dissertation because of her knowledge of social science research, exposure to the interview data, and proficiency in Arabic and English.

Unfortunately, it was difficult to get "O" to respond to email requests for feedback from my dissertation advisor or myself. I was, however, able to receive partial feedback on the second draft of the Results chapter. In general, "O" wrote that the paper was "excellent" and "has almost no flaws in it when it comes to interpreting the data from the workshops" (personal communication, January 28, 2014). In the few places where "O" did suggest changes, I took care to attend to her concerns. For example, previous drafts highlighted the respondent's use of the term "orphan" to refer to children who had lost their fathers but not mothers. "O" wrote that in Palestinian society "orphan is used for children who lost either or both of their parents…and not used to identify kids who lose only the father" (personal communication, January 28, 2014). In response, the paragraphs to which "O" was referring were cut from the final draft.

In addition, previous drafts described the fighting between family members who are associated with different political parties as reflective of a division within Palestinian society. "O" suggested that these quotations reflected "extreme polarization inside families" and "it should be noted and stressed all over the writing that the respondents are talking about the second intifada and not about the current Palestinian situation" (personal communication, January 28, 2014). In response, I altered the section *Barriers to family connection: The influences of political factions* to clarify the selected quotations.

I had hoped to share my interpretation of the interview data with at least one other Palestinian. Another of the PAL key informants, Dr. Giacaman, is a professor in Public Health at a university in the West Bank. I contacted Dr. Giacaman asking her if she had a student who is interested in this type of research and would be willing to review successive drafts of the findings. Unfortunately, it was quite difficult to find a student who was both proficient in English and Arabic and had the time to commit to this type of project. Despite my willingness to compensate this individual – either financially or

academically by including this person as an author on any future publications – Dr. Giacaman was unable to identify a second reviewer for my dissertation. Similar to the other PAL key informants, Dr. Giacaman's demanding work load prevented her from having time to comment on my writings.

**Procedure of data analysis.** The project's PI and I completed memos during each group interview to make notes of the topics or important statements that were made. After the completion of the West Bank and East Jerusalem interviews, the PI and I independently grouped our notes into broad categories of wellbeing. We then met to discuss our groupings and determined that we were identifying similar constructs. This procedure was the initial coding scheme that was used to analyze the interview transcripts, and, in turn, the creation of a wellbeing instrument used in later phases of the PAL project.

For the present analyses, I decided not to rely on the previous coding structure. Instead I decided to re-read all of the interviews so as not to limit myself to portions of interview text. Additionally, I chose to code and analyze the group interviews separately for men and women so as to better examine gender differences in the ways men and women described family life and how family is associated with other domains of life. By using *Atlas-ti* (version 6.2.27), I began with the women's group interviews and used an open coding strategy of assigning initial codes to each relevant line of the interview text. I considered a piece of text relevant if it included the use of a family term (i.e., wife, brother, son, married, etc.). I also included texts that did not make explicit reference to family life but were part of a conversation about individuals' roles within the family. For example, when a respondent described a woman doing well as one who is married and obeyed her husband and then the other individuals in the group interview continued the conversation by commenting more broadly on women's roles and freedoms in the society, I coded the whole conversation as I saw it as an extension of women's position in the family.

Drawing from Charmaz (2000), I attempted to use active words as I coded line by line. Active words are thought to aide in defining actions or events, giving insights into what people are doing,

facilitating making comparisons, and illuminating interrelated concepts. Additionally, I relied on Charmaz's (2000) methodology of comparing codes from different people (or groups of people), data from the same person, data within a category, and categories with other categories. In total I generated 371 open codes while reading the women's group interviews (see Appendix B).

Next, I grouped the open codes into broader categories as is commonly done in axial coding. I organized the open codes from the women's interviews into 39 categories (or Family Codes to use *Atlas-ti* terminology) such as "separation/connection with family," "family as a reflection of culture," "independence as a value," "good parenting – providing for children," "husband /wife role," and "linking family to employment" (see Appendix B for a full list). It is here that I stopped working on the women's transcripts and turned my attention to the men's transcripts. I made this decision when I started reading through the women's quotations on the marital relationship and found myself drawing conclusions to such a degree that I worried that a thorough treatment (i.e., analyzing quotations and connections between quotations and categories) of the women's interviews at that time would bias my coding of the men's interviews. Therefore, in the same manner I had approached coding the women's interviews, I began open coding, line-by-line, the men's interview transcripts. For the men I created 287 open codes and grouped these codes into 46 code families or categories (see Appendix C). Examples of code families from the men's interviews include: "family as a stressor;" "being a good wife;" "personal contentment;" "linking politics and family;" "marital quality;" and "discussions of the role of women in families and society."

After coding and organizing the codes separately for the men's and women's interviews. I returned my attention to the women's transcripts and further examined the relationship between categories as is done in axial coding. In addition, at this stage I attempted to integrate categories into a more formal theoretical structure as is done in the selective coding stage of analysis (see Appendix B; see Corbin & Strauss, 2008 for further descriptions of open, axial, and selective coding). Upon

completion of a document which presents the findings from the women's interviews, I turned my attention back to the men's interviews to engage in axial and selective coding (see Appendix C). After attending to both the men's and women's interviews, I noticed that there appeared to be substantial overlap in the core themes between the male and female respondents. Therefore, my final step in the data analysis was to integrate these core themes into a proposed model while at the same time attending to gender-specific nuances in the ways men and women described these main elements.

Throughout the data analysis process, I relied heavily on memos to detail how I was thinking about a code (textual memos) and to document potential linkages between concepts and categories and how it may differ for men and women (theoretical memos). Further, I used memos to report on my reactions to the group interviews in the hopes of becoming aware of any biases I was reading into the transcripts (reflexive memos; Daly, 2007; LaRossa, 2005). The memos were useful in guiding the organization and presentation of results.

The procedure of data analysis described above was utilized in order to answer three of the four research questions. Specifically, RQ2: What are the specific elements of family life that Palestinians endorse in their narratives?; RQ3: Do Palestinian adults link their descriptions of family to the other domains of their life?; and part of RQ4: To what degree are the elements of family life and linkages between domains of wellbeing described similarly and differently by men and women?

In order to address the first research question and part of research question four I examined the respondents' answers to the interview task that asked them to prioritize domains of wellbeing for mentions of family life and relationships. Additionally, I examined the transcripts for discussions of a hierarchy of functioning such that one domain of quality of life affects or is affected by other domains. Once these sets of texts were identified, I analyzed them to see whether or not an element of family life was mentioned and, if so, how.

## Chapter 4: Results

As stated in Chapter 3, the data for this dissertation come from Phase 1 of the PAL project. The purpose of Phase 1 was to assess wellbeing and quality of life from a holistic and culturally grounded perspective. Specifically, a series of group interviews were conducted to elicit perceptions of what it means to be functioning well and not well in contemporary Palestinian adult society. The method of Phase 1 of the PAL project is well suited to the purposes of this dissertation primarily because it allowed for an examination of the importance of the family domain to overall conceptions of quality of life. Any discussions of family life in the group interviews show the relative centrality of this domain to quality of life. Accordingly, descriptions of elements of family life and any linkages with other domains of wellbeing found in the interviews further illustrate the importance of family life in understanding overall health because these descriptions emerged organically in the interviews of the participants without prompting from the interviewers.

In Phase 1 respondents were asked to complete up to five tasks during a group interview. The first task required participants to identify and describe two individuals – one doing well in life and the other doing poorly. The second task required participants to free list any element of life that they believed was related to wellbeing. Third, participants were asked to prioritize the elements identified in the second task by indicating the three most important characteristics of wellbeing. Fourth, participants were asked to describe components that would make life better for the Palestinian society as a whole. And finally, to the degree that time allowed, participants were asked to describe how living through instances of political conflict affected their quality of life.

In order to identify the degree to which family issues were salient to broad conceptualizations of quality of life and wellbeing, responses to the third interview task were examined. These results are presented in the section *Salience of Family Wellbeing*. Second, to understand which elements of family life were central to conceptualizations of family wellbeing, how these elements are linked to other

domains of quality of life, and the degree to which these themes may differ for men and women full interview transcripts were examined. The results from this analysis are presented in the next sections G*ender Differences in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing, Commonalities in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing*, *Female-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing*, and *Male-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing*.

**Salience of Family Wellbeing**

**Descriptive results: Overall project.** From previous analyses, Barber and colleagues (2012) identified eight domains of functioning or wellbeing described by the respondents. These domains included: *economic, education, employment, family, health (mental), personal, political,* and *religious.* As would be expected from this Arab culture, references to the family domain were prominent. Of the females, 97% referred to both the family and economic domains at least once throughout the interview (i.e., in response to any interview task). This is in contrast to the much smaller proportion of the women who referred to the other domains, such as religion (34%) and mental health (37%). Of the males, 94% endorsed economic issues and 85% endorsed some aspect of family as central to quality of life. In contrast, a lower proportion of the men mentioned other domains, such as personal characteristics (55%) and religion (36%). For both men and women, family issues surfaced most often in response to the task that had participants to describe individuals doing well and not well. Seventy-one percent of men and 94% of women referenced family life when describing such individuals.

Although family issues were raised often throughout the interviews, when the participants were asked to prioritize domains of wellbeing (Task 3) only 19% ($n$=11) of respondents nominated family life as one of the three most important components of quality of life. Participants in interviews one and four were not asked to prioritize domains of wellbeing and thus were not included in these calculations. Of the 58 participants who were asked to prioritize domains of functioning, family wellbeing was the sixth most frequently nominated domain, preceded by the political, economic, education, employment, and

religious domains. When viewed separately by the respondent's gender, family wellbeing remains the sixth most commonly nominated domain of quality of life for females (nominated by 20%of females [*n*=6]) and shares the fourth most commonly nominated domain for males, equal to religion and personal characteristics (nominated by 17% of males [*n*= 5]). Figures 1 (females) and 2 (males) presents the full results of the proportion of domains of wellbeing reported by the respondents in Phase 1 of the main project anywhere throughout the interview or to the third interview task.

Of the 11 respondents who nominated an aspect of family life as a top component of wellbeing, three (two women and one man) listed family as the most important component. Four respondents (three women and one man) placed family relationships as the second most important characteristic, and four respondents (one woman and three men) listed family as the third component.

As to the specific aspects of family life considered salient to overall understandings of wellbeing, the respondents most often listed healthy relationships among family members. They made statements such as "good relations between family members," "having a united integrated family," and "stability in the house and between family members." Other elements of family life given were "marriage," "raising kids in a good way," and "a good faithful wife."

**Descriptive results: Family in the hierarchy of functioning.** In addition to the respondents' prioritizing domains of functioning in response to a specific interview question, 35 times throughout the group interviews the respondents described hierarchical relationships among domains of wellbeing. Of these 35 quotations, 21 (60%) included references to the family domain. The 21 references came from five separate interviews – West Bank refugee women, West Bank refugee men, Gaza Strip non-refugee men (Fateh), Gaza Strip refugee women (Fateh), and Gaza Strip non-refugee women (Hamas) – and 15 different respondents, 10 women and five men. Three women and two men discussed a hierarchical relationship among domains of quality of life more than once in an interview.

Of the 21 quotations that include the family domain in a sequence of hierarchical functioning, 57% (*n* = 12) described the conditions within the family domain as directly affecting functioning in other domains:

1. Seven quotations list healthy family functioning as a basic need one must have before one can have wellbeing in other domains. An exemplar quotation is:

   "The basic components of a happy life are housing which comes in the first place; second component is the certificate or scientific qualification because this can build other things in life. The job comes in the third rank. Then, marriage at a reasonable age and not very young and establish a good home because this would lead to a happy life. To educate the kids and provide them with good schooling; this gives a strong foundation for the future of the kids. Safety and security in life; this is important here in Gaza." (Linda, refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Fateh)

2. Two quotations show how good relationships within the family weigh more heavily in evaluations of quality of life than ill-being in other domains. One exemplar is:

   "The human being must have good relations with his family at home and his colleagues at work. The position is not important; money is not important; a simple laborer can be very happy and can lead a happy life if he follows the points I mentioned above." (Abu Hussam, non-refugee man, Gaza Strip, Fateh)

3. One quotation illustrates how family functioning impacts social relationships. (Note: social relationships were not included in the write-up of the analyses of Phase 1 because overall there was little mention of it, aside from more specific treatments of the social, as in family relationships).

   "I want to be talk briefly. If a person has provided for them in their family a quality and good interrelationships, then, they'll be able to form good successful relationship in the society." (Ansar, refugee woman, West Bank)

4. One quotation links conditions in the family domain to self-satisfaction (personal domain).

   "I want to mention a point, I'm totally with her, but I think it all complements each other, how can we say a person might have a self-satisfaction when he grew up in a dysfunctional family? He grew up seeing their father beats their mother, has no opinion, can't do this, can't do that, suppressed, has no character or personality, how would this person be satisfied of themselves." (Diala, refugee woman, West Bank)

5. One quotation describes the impact family wellbeing has on economic quality of life.

   "My family's situation is very good financially, and that's because my father had succeeded in his marriage." (Anonymous, non-refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Hamas)

The remaining 43% (*n*= 9) discuss how family functioning is directly affected by the conditions in other domains:

1. Four quotations suggest that family functioning is directly affected by the political context. One example is:

   "I can't find a person who has a great happy life. I am thinking, but I can't find a person. Even if a person has money, he is under occupation. I am under occupation and under unstable political situation, and I am also a refuge. And here, I am speaking about myself. All of this, and even if I had a job and money, won't make me attain a happy life. I do not have freedom and I don't have the ability to move. No one can promise me freedom, not even personal freedom, nor in the family, and not even freedom of speech nor though. I can't attain them until now. So what kind of stability would I have, so I can attain a happy life? This is how it is for the rest of the people. No one has a happy quiet life here. Misery is the general case here. No one is the same, and there is no one who has a stable life here." (Yousef, non-refugee man, West Bank)

2. One quotation describes how self-satisfaction (personal domain) creates good relationships within the family.

   "Now, with satisfaction with myself, I'll be happy, and will enable me to push and support my kids, my spouse, to fulfill their ambitions, and hence will lead to happiness. But if I'm unhappy with myself, I'll destroy myself and destroy everyone around me." (Hiba, refugee woman, West Bank)

3. One quotation links economic wellbeing to the family domain.

   "The second need is to have economic stability, for me to have a stable job that pays well that pays for the necessities, without being rich, just having stability. This point leads to stability in the house and between family members." (Yousef, non-refugee man, West Bank)

4. One quotation discusses how religious devotion affects the quality of the marital relationship.

   "I have a university degree, and my husband has only middle school degree, but I consider myself the happiest woman in Gaza Strip, I believe that faith and religiosity and mutual religious motivation for both of us are the same for me and him, we have a mutual understanding." (Um Aziz, non-refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Hamas)

5. One quotation illustrates the impact of educational and economic wellbeing on spousal relationships.

   "But I believe that if a woman has education and her own work, she will be happier than not working because she will have her own being. She will have the ability to make decisions in the house the same as the husband through dialogue. (Yousef, refugee man, West Bank)

6. One quotation shows how personal freedom directly affects who one marries.

> "A happy life is when I have the freedom of my decisions. If I have freedom to take my decision, then I will decide to receive education and if I achieve this, I can have independence. The right to live a good life. Then, I can have my free decision to marry the person I want and have a good house and to have an educated husband and to raise kids in a good manner." (Huda, refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Fateh)

In sum, although the majority of respondents did not list the family domain as one of three most important components of quality of life, the respondents spontaneously described how elements of family life (i.e., quality of relationships among family members; whom one marries) both affect and are affected by other domains of functioning. In regards to gender, of those who included family as a priority domain, more women than men listed family as one of the most important components of quality of life. Additionally, more women than men described a hierarchical relationship between family life and other domains of functioning. However, overall, family life was ranked as being relatively less important than other domains by both women and men.

The lack of prioritization of the family domain is understandable given the pervasiveness of political and economic constraints experienced by Palestinians. From the same group interviews used in this dissertation, Barber and colleagues (2012) found that the respondents described the political context as driving wellbeing in that political wellbeing is central to functioning in other domains of life, including family. Figure 3 is a conceptual model developed by Barber and colleagues from the analyses of Phase 1 of the overall project that illustrates the saliency of the political domain and the interlinkages between all eight domains of functioning. As is illustrated in the model and in Figures 1 and 2, even though family life is not central to overall understandings of wellbeing, it is a prominent component.

Having situated family within a quality-of-life framework, attention is now turned to the task of examining what elements of family life were discussed by men and women and how the respondents

described the linkages or overlap between family and other domains of wellbeing. In order to provide a context for understanding and interpreting the emerging themes, a section is first provided to better illuminate differences between men's and women's descriptions of family life.

**Gender Differences in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing**

In general, the male respondents spoke less about family relationships in the interviews than did the female respondents. I coded 209 pieces of text in the women's interviews as being related to family life whereas 137 pieces of text were identified in the men's interviews. Examples of coded pieces of text from the women's interviews are:

- "Second point which is also important is that marriage should be based on love. The spouses need to love each other. This is very important. To see understanding between the husband and wife and if they cannot achieve that, they need to be separated from the beginning." (Sireen, refugee, Gaza Strip, Hamas)
- "If the mother is ignorant, or not educated, or only studied till elementary school, how would she teach her children or help them do their homework?" (Muna, refugee, West Bank)

Examples of coded pieces of text from the men's interviews are:

- "I just want to be able to support my family…I do not want people to give me charity. I want if my son says 'dad, I want a pair of pants or a suit' to be able to secure it for him just like any other human being, any father to his children." (Abu As'ad, non-refugee, Gaza Strip, Hamas)
- "How much a family is stable. How much a woman is in harmony with her husband as no one threatens her presence and her house. She has more freedom and more happiness than a woman who is married and fights neck to neck with her husband." (Nasar, refugee, West Bank)

Across all seven women's group interviews, there were between 27 and 36 quotations referencing family life in each interview. Comparatively, the number of family quotations in the men's interviews

ranged from 10 to 24, with the exception of the non-refugee men's group from the West Bank identifying family life 34 times throughout the interview.

The one major difference in the number of times men and women spoke of family life in the interviews was in response to the first interview task that had respondents describe one individual who was doing well and one individual who was not doing well. Women were more likely than men to include the context of an individual's family life in descriptions of these individuals. When men did use family characteristics to describe those doing well/not well, they were more likely, interestingly, to do so in regards to characterizing women than men. As an unnamed refugee man from the West Bank said in response to the facilitators probing for examples of women doing well and not well:

"We need to think of a woman who is married, because from there, happiness begins." Additionally, women were also more likely than men to include an element of family life when free listing components or characteristics of quality of life. Figure 4 displays the proportion of female and male respondents, respectively, who cited family life in response to the first three interview tasks.

These differences in the number of times men and women invoked family life in discussions of wellbeing is consistent with the culture's traditional division of household labor. As was discussed in Chapter 2, Palestinian women are given the task of caring for the family and raising children, whereas men's lives are in part defined by their participation in the public arenas. The men's focus on wives' wellbeing in the context of family (instead of focusing on husband's wellbeing) and the frequency with which many of the women raised family issues signifies the cultural belief of the centrality of marriage and family in Palestinian women's lives.

In regards to the types and numbers of themes that emerged from the interviews, the men appeared to discuss four themes which are central to their understandings of family wellbeing. These themes are: 1.) autonomy; 2.) economic security; 3.) respect; and 4.) religious devotion. The themes of autonomy and economic security also appeared in the women's interviews alongside three others

(totaling 5): 1.) autonomy; 2.) economic security; 3.) connection and closeness; 4.) educational attainment; and 5.) safety and security. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to describing each of these core themes, first by discussing the two themes that are common among men and women followed by descriptions of the gender specific themes.

**Commonalities in Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing**

As mentioned above, many of the men and women identified issues of economic security and autonomy as being central to conceptualizations of family wellbeing. In regards to economic security, the respondents described the importance of financial provisions for husbands' and fathers' sense of self. Secondly, respondents pointed to the importance of autonomy and freedom for individual family members. Though there were commonalities in the ways that men and women spoke about these issues, differences were apparent in the way men and women processed these themes. For example, when discussing the consequences of economic insecurity on family life, men focused on the injury to a father's sense of self whereas women tended to describe an increasing trend of wives' entry into the formal workforce. In regards to autonomy, women focused their discussion on the importance of autonomy for both wives and children, whereas men used examples of a lack of wives' autonomy to comment more broadly on the lack of freedom for women in the Palestinian society. Accordingly, when presenting each theme, attention is paid to both the areas of commonality and difference in the way the men and women spoke of these issues.

**Economic security.** To begin, one of the common themes across both the men's and women's interviews centered around the issue of economic security and stability. Many of the men and women discussed the importance of *men's* attainment of employment and economic stability prior to marriage. For example, when describing a man who is doing poorly, Yumma, a non-refugee female respondent from the West Bank, said he "doesn't have a stable constant job, till now he can't start a family, or even provide housing or any of life's needs." Similarly, an unnamed refugee woman from the Gaza Strip

(Hamas) described a man who is also not doing well because "he is young, engaged, and cannot get married…He goes to the mosque in order to collect money from the young men…for the wedding costs…This is a situation that moved me a lot and affected me. I see him not being able to afford getting married, though he works." Similarly, Sami, a refugee man (Gaza Strip, Fateh) described a single man as doing poorly because "he didn't work and he couldn't start a family…he didn't get married because he cannot earn and save money to get married and start a family."

In addition to affecting when a man can marry, some of the men and women linked discussions of financial provisions to a *husband and father*'s ability or inability to fulfill the traditional breadwinner role. For example, Nida, a refugee woman from the West Bank, included securing "his kids financial wise" as part of a description of a man who is doing well. Conversely, Linda, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described a man not doing well by saying that he has "five children and he is not capable of taking care of them." Similarly, Um Mahmoud, a non-refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), included her husband being able to provide for their family as a critical element of quality of life. Specifically, she said "I want my husband to get a job and not to be forced to stay at home…most important thing is that my husband gets a job." Um Mahmoud desired for her husband to find employment so that he could have a reason to leave the home each day. Managing the home – cooking, cleaning, and caring for children and the elderly – is part of Um Mahmoud's responsibility as the wife. Her husband's role is to be out in the community working, a role that he has been, until now, unable to fulfill.

From the men's interviews, Abu As'ad, a non-refugee man from the Gaza Strip (Hamas), said: "I just want to be able to support my family…I do not want people to give me charity. I want if my son says 'dad, I want a pair of pants or a suit' to be able to secure it for him just like any other human being, any father to his children." Similarly, Abu Medhat (non-refugee, Gaza Strip, Fateh) described a man who "does not have money to spend or give to his wife or kids. He has no happy life now. He cannot have a

job. His situation is extremely bad." Indeed, this theme of financial provision and wellbeing for men was so prevalent that it was discussed by 53% of the male respondents and 40% of the female in response to the two-person interview task (Task 1). Abu Mohammad, a non-refugee man (Gaza, Hamas) stated it nicely when he said "of course the financial situation has a huge effect on the family's happiness. When the father can get his children food, water and clothes, and life's basic demands – I am not talking about luxury and accessories – the basic things, he will be happy." Thus, being able to provide for one's family is tied to a Palestinian father's role within the family.

***Barriers to economic security: Political conditions*.** Though financial provisions were described as being salient to Palestinian fathers' sense of self, respondents identified factors external to the individual that hinder a man's ability to acquire employment and economic stability. They noted that it is not qualities inherent within a particular man (e.g., laziness) that impede his ability to acquire a level of economic comfort; rather, it is due to the conditions inherent to the political context. For example, Linda, a refugee woman living in the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described the influence of the political context on a man's ability to secure employment and provide for his family.

> "Before the last war, there were some job opportunities, but he found himself with no income at all after the coup and due to the bad situation in Gaza [siege]…He is in a very bad condition that he is not capable of providing his children anything, even bread. This is one of the bad examples in Gaza Strip after the last events and stages that it went through."

Relatedly, Abu Al-Bara, a non-refugee man living in the Gaza Strip (Hamas), described a man who became unemployed and "could not support his family…after the way to Israel was closed" (i.e., a consequence of the siege on the Gaza Strip). Abu Al-Bara went on to say this man has a "miserable life" for two of his seven children became fatally ill (one with kidney failure and one with cancer) and this man was unable to pay for treatments or to take his children abroad to quality medical facilities because of the siege. Similarly, Ehab, an East Jerusalem man, specifically linked a "father's money problems [as

being] related to the Occupation, since they [the Israeli government] do not allow Palestinians to live normally or to have a good job with a good salary to get their needs." In response, families often live in overcrowded homes for even if a father could afford to build home additions, "the Israeli authorities do not allow building new houses in Jerusalem and to have a building permission is impossible [for Palestinians]."

Unfortunately, even for those who can provide the basic needs, the economic and political context is such that they cannot achieve a level of economic comfort. Yousef, a refugee man living in the West Bank, described how many are forced to work two jobs in order to provide for their children – and yet cannot reach a level of economic security. Specifically, he said:

> "In our society, these who do not work two jobs, can't live. I am one of the people who have two children, a boy and a girl. We are four, my wife and my two children and me. My wife and I work in governmental sectors. I also work a second job….and even with that I can't provide better ways of living. I still don't have a house that belongs to me…I wish to go once a month to a restaurant with my wife and children. I don't want to eat in the house. I want to change that but I can't …I have a car and it's mine. I still have to pay for it in payments, but I wish that when my kids ask me to go out on a ride, that I say yes. But I fear the costs of gasoline. It's expensive for me…These are the things I want, but I can't attain them."

Relatedly, Jihad, a respondent from the same group interview, described a man who is doing poorly as one who must work all the time in order to provide for his family.

> "I know a person who works 24 hours a day. He does not have time for his family, his friends, and his house. He does not have time to rest. He has health problems and he always worries about how to get money."

Thus, even for those who are able to find employment, the economic climate makes it difficult for fathers to make enough money to provide him and his family with economic comfort and security. It

is not as though men such as Yousef are not working or seeking to provide for their families. Rather, the political and economic contexts make it so that many of their efforts are in vain. For husbands and fathers, the ability to fulfill the breadwinner role is conditioned by the political which creates a context that constrains their economic potential.

***Community support as a safety net.*** In addition to showing the effects of the political context on a man's ability to provide for his family, the male respondents described the role of community organizations and neighbors in providing tangible aid to families in need. Though men from both the West Bank and Gaza Strip discussed the important role of community charities, the majority of the discussion surrounding this issue came from Hamas men (both refugee and non-refugee groups). For example, Abu As'ad (non-refugee) detailed his own personal experience being the recipient of community support. Specifically, he said:

> "I had a son who was in need of a surgery…I did not have this amount [for the surgery] and good people gave us this money as charity for the surgery of planting bones for my son."

Though Abu As'ad went on to say that he would rather not be in the position of receiving aid, his family and son clearly benefited from people in his community. Related, Mahmoud (refugee) described a man "in a very bad situation" who "awaits getting food reliefs from the UNWRA or from one of the charity associations to aid his children" after the siege on the Gaza Strip forced his "financial condition [to] deteriorate."

In extreme situations, the political and economic context is such that some men decide to become martyrs so that their families can qualify for financial support. Tayseer, a non-refugee man from the West Bank, explained it well when he said:

> "When a person is killed by the Occupation, all the people in the village or town stand and support the family of a martyr because that martyr lost his life for the sake of the Palestinian homeland and cause."

Yousef, a refugee man living in the Gaza Strip (Hamas), further explained this choice when he stated:

> "There are special cases like a martyr's wife who receives financial supports from charity associations. Her husband might have had no job before his martyrdom and the family conditions were extremely bad. In the wake of his death, people would start looking at the children as orphans who lack shelter and a source of living. Their life will consequently improve given the extensive care from charity associations. I can even mention specific cases in which women tell their husbands 'go and be killed in order for us to live'."

Though these situations are indeed rare, economic insecurity constrains families to the extent that some feel forced to consider extreme measures in order to provide for their families. Thus, it is in these dire economic conditions that community support is essential to the survival of the most vulnerable families – support both through official organizations such as UNWRA as well as from friends and neighbors. Although somewhat reluctantly – perhaps because it goes against the cultural value of being the primary breadwinner—men turn to these supports for help and assistance in caring for their families.

***Consequences of economic insecurity.*** In addition to identifying the structural constraints on a father's ability to provide for his family, the respondents also discussed specific consequences of economic insecurity on family life. Specifically, many of the men described how their inability to provide for their families affected their psychological health and the stability of the family unit. Differently, many women described how economic insecurity expanded the wife's responsibilities within the family to include that of economic provider. The female respondents provided examples of wives entering the formal workforce due to husbands' chronic un- or under-employment and the impact formal work had on a mother's wellbeing. Each of these sub-themes is explored below further.

*Family instability.* Specifically in the Gaza Strip, men spoke at great length of the consequences of economic insecurity on the stability of the family unit. Some men linked political insecurity and its associated economic constraints to a husband's psychological health and the quality of interactions

between spouses. For example, Abu Al-Bara'a (non-refugee, Hamas) illustrated the cascading effect of the siege on Gaza on unemployment, mental health, and family life. Specifically he said:

> "The siege must end because it is the source of most problems and disasters. Be it lack of income and living in need. Be it a patient who cannot travel abroad for treatment and dies at the crossing or dies here or there. All of this affects the personal life of people. For example, when I come home and my sons asks for a shekel and I do not have it, my mood and psychological state will be bad. I also might fight with my wife and there could be problems."

Similarly, Nidal, a refugee man (Hamas), stated that while he has a job that provides economic comfort and stability, many of his friends are "suffering from psychological problems after they have lost their jobs. As a result many of got divorced."

Mahmoud, a non-refugee man (Hamas) illustrated this theme most vividly when he described the impact of financial instability and poverty on his decision to divorce his second wife.

> "I made myself, and I built an honorable house and had a good income. In 2006, I got married to a second wife. When I got married, I lost my income. I became the supporter of two families. And when this happened, my salary was 600 shekels [170 USD] a month for 11 souls. With the new conditions, I divorced one wife. I had two daughters from her. I became chased by the court and police. I ran away from them fearing jail, because there were complaints against me in court, and I owed alimony.… While I was in bed on a Friday I told her 'Go, you are divorced.' She said, 'What are you doing?' and I replied, 'That's it. As I told you, you are divorced.' I had two daughters, one aged 1 year and 4 months, and …. She said, 'Fear God. What are you doing? These girls are under your responsibility. What am I going to do, where will I go with them?' I told her, 'These conditions are not under my control. Enough. Leave me alone now.'… And [one day] I ran into a little girl. I had then not seen my daughter for months. So she looked at me. And I looked at her. Who is this girl looking at me? I stared at the girl, and she at me for 5-10

> minutes. Then I noticed her mother at court and I realized she was my daughter that I have not seen for over a year. I went out and began crying, and saying, 'If this is my daughter and I did not recognize her, this is a disaster.' I returned my divorced wife…I do not even have mattresses for the girls. I begged and got a mattress and a half. I brought two blankets. And one friend brought me a blanket and said, 'Cover yourself.' Before the mattress, I used to lay my girls to sleep on a duvet… Till now, it has been a few months they do not sleep because they would get bruised by the closet…the kids would wake up at midnight or 1 o'clock and bump into the closet and the bed because the space was too narrow. I look at what happened… my wife asked me, 'Mahmoud, why did you divorce me?' I said, 'I did not divorce you without a reason. When I asked for your hand, my situation was good. When we got married, my situation became extremely hard.'"

The financial strain and hardship Mahmoud faced drove him to look for ways to lighten his load. Even though he returned his wife and two daughters to his home, his sentiments express his continued desperation to find ways to provide for his family and its stability. Interestingly, it is men from the Gaza Strip who spoke most poignantly of the effects of unemployment on family life. Perhaps this is due to the deteriorating economic conditions, particularly since the 2006 Israeli imposed siege. Indeed, 55% of the Gazan men were unemployed at the time of the interviews. In sum, many of the male respondents detailed the cascading effects of a poor economic context, specifically within the Gaza Strip, on a father's emotional health and the health and stability of the family unit.

*Wives entry into the formal workforce.* Different from men, some of the women described how economic insecurity alters the traditional division of household labor in Palestinian families. Specifically, women have been forced to enter the workforce and add the responsibility of financial provider to their roles as mothers and wives. For example, refugee women from the West Bank discussed the trend of women's expanding role in the family. Ansar began by saying:

> "Most of our husbands are either martyrs, jailed, in Diaspora [abroad looking for employment], or do not have jobs. I believe that 75% of our families are built on women. They provide for the family, they raise the kids, bring the money to the households, and fulfill all the social obligations and commitments. So 75% of the families are built and dependent on women."

Noor continued the conversation:

> "There are so many families that women are heading and facilitating their lives…women are the ones who go plow the land, plant the seeds, harvest, sell the products."

Diala added:

> "I once conducted a research that after the Nakba [mass displacement of Palestinians following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948], men used to sit in cafés and women go to work, and they even build their brick houses with their own hands…The women are the ones who used to put food on the tables after the Nakba happened."

Thus, echoing what has been described previously, political constraints have depressed men's employment opportunities and created a context in which women have been forced to enter the formal workforce and thus become primarily responsible for the financial health of families.

Just as the political impacts families through creating a depressed employment context, the female respondents described how political identity and constraints on movement separate families and place the burden on women to be both mothers and fathers to their children. For example, Palestinians from Jerusalem whose spouses are from the West Bank face the stressors of being physically separated due to Israeli-imposed constraints on West Bankers' freedom of movement. As is described by Najwa, a woman from East Jerusalem, the inability of husbands to reside with their wives and children places additional burdens on the shoulders of women.

> "She lives in Jerusalem and has a blue ID, while her husband has a green ID [residency in the West Bank]…She lives in struggle and can't provide the essentials for her children…In her work,

> they ask her to work fixed hours…This takes lots of her time and when she does come back to her house she doesn't have time to cook, teach her children, nor clean the house. The money they give her is not enough to fully support her…Her children who are adolescent and young kids need at this time to have both of their mother and father with them. The father is very far away from his children and she can't be both a mother and a father."

Relatedly, Tahreer, another woman from the same group interview, discussed the impact of checkpoints and constraints on movement in her own life. Although both she and her husband reside in East Jerusalem, Tahreer has taken a job in the West Bank to contribute to the family's finances. She wakes "up at 5:30 so [she] can pass though Qalandya checkpoint [a large checkpoint between Jerusalem and the West Bank]. " Tahreer went on to say:

> "I stay away from my children, my husband, and my family for ten hours a day, only so I can provide a little amount that would let me have a good life. That is why I think the Israeli checkpoints affect our life to the extreme. Even as I sleep, I can't rest completely. I always think about the condition of the checkpoint, will it be open? Will it be easy for me to pass? I can't continue talking."

The emotional strain, stress, and fatigue of Tahreer's daily commute is so overwhelming that she could not continue in the interview to recount the effect of political constraints on her family. The unpredictable conditions at Qalandya and the family's economic need caused Tahreer to remain separated from her family for large portions of the day. Thus, the political conditions negatively affect wives both by creating a depressed economy as well as by contributing to the separation of men and women from their families (a theme that is further explored in the section *Connection and Closeness*). It is out of necessity that women have been forced to shoulder increased responsibilities within the family to manage the home as well as to contribute to the family's finances.

It is important to briefly note that not all women who work do so because their husbands are un- or under-employed. For some women, the decision to work is based out of personal desire to find fulfillment in a role other than that of a traditional homemaker. For example, Rana, a woman from East Jerusalem, identified a woman who is doing well in part because she focused on her career not out of financial need but out of personal choice. Rana said this woman "wants to live a good life. She got married and still works…[she] postponed having children and decided to save money for a better future for her kids." Though this example demonstrates the diversity of Palestinian families, the majority of the discussions of women's entry into the workforce were given in the context describing the linkages between a family's financial need and structural barriers to economic stability.

In summary, most of the men and women spoke in depth about the centrality of economic provision to a husband and father's role within in the family. Men were described as doing well if they had the financial ability to provide for their children. The opposite was true for those fathers who were unable to achieve a level of economic comfort. Economic security was also shown to affect whether or not a man was able to get married. Both men and women described conditions in the political context (i.e., Occupation, siege on the Gaza Strip, etc.) as barriers preventing men from finding adequate employment, and, from women's perspectives, as forcing wives to enter into the formal workforce. Specifically, men from the Gaza Strip recounted the crippling effects of the stress of chronic un-or under-employment on a father's sense of self and, in turn, his interactions with his family. Differently, women from the West Bank and East Jerusalem detailed the impact of a depressed economy on wives decisions to work outside of the home. Associated with such decisions were descriptions of role conflict and impacts on women's emotional health.

**Autonomy.** In addition to the theme of economic security, both men and women spoke of the importance of individuals within the family showing independence or autonomy from others. The majority of these discussions centered on the role of women in families and the broader society and the

general lack of freedom many women have. Camilia, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Hamas) conveyed the general sentiment of both men and women when she said:

> "There are specific areas…where a girl can be prevented by her family to continue her education beyond junior high or high school. They say 'it is enough. She should sit at home and wait for the groom to come'…They do not support the idea of (a higher) education because they think that a girl, once got educated and took her freedom, will have aspiration…she will have more demands…The problem is that the society in the Gaza Strip is patriarchal."

Despite living in a patriarchal society, both the male and female respondents asserted the importance of women's autonomy. Jihad, a refugee man from the West Bank summed it up nicely when he said "the more freedom you give women, the better life and wellbeing she has. It all depends on freedom after all."

***Women's autonomy in the family.*** For female respondents, discussions of autonomy were related to the degree to which a woman had the freedom to choose whether or not to marry and when to get a divorce. For example, Noor, a refugee woman from the West Bank, described a woman who "lived in a very bad family environment" because she lacked control over her own life in that she was forced by her parents into two separate marriages. Relatedly, Diala, a different respondent from the same group interview, described a woman who "was not successful [not doing well]" and was also forced by her family to get married at a young age. Diala went on to say "No one was treating her with any respect. [Her family] treats her as if she is a mentally sick person. They laugh at her. Harass her."

Differently, women who were free to choose a marital partner were described as doing well. This appears to be due to the independence they have in controlling important aspects of their lives and the respect for their individuality that it communicates. Specifically, Huda, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described a happy life as one:

> "When I have the freedom of my decisions. If I have freedom to take my decisions, then I will

> decide to receive education and if I achieve this, I can have independence. The right to live a good life. Then, I have my free decision to marry the person I want and have a good house and to have an educated husband and to raise kids in a good manner."

This quotation, though part of a larger discussion of the role of women in the Gaza Strip and their lack of independence compared to men, illustrates the connection between freedom of choice for women in whom they marry and the link to happiness and the ability to fulfill other aspects of family life (e.g., raising children).

In addition to issues of autonomy surrounding whom to marry, women also noted that a lack of control in deciding when to end one's marriage was also related to quality of life. Specifically, Yumma, a non-refugee woman from the West Bank described a female whose husband left her to go live in America with his American wife and family. Despite being educated and having a means to provide financially for herself and her daughter, this woman's "situation is very bad because she is not living a normal life. She is not having a marriage nor a divorce. Even a divorced woman lives a better life." Similarly, Muna, a non-refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh) described a situation where a wife:

> "can't get a divorce, and can't come back to her family to see her brothers or her parents, because if she leaves, she'll not be able to get a divorce or to get anything from this person, who refuses till today to divorce her…her life is not stable, and not good, because she [in addition to failing to finish her education and being away from her family of origin] …couldn't divorce her husband."

In both of these examples, it is the wives who find themselves unable to get a divorce and thus exert ownership over their lives. Conversely, their husbands control the outcome of the relationship and are given societal permission to have more than one wife at a time – a privilege which all but one of the husbands in these examples were noted to have embraced.

In addition to the women's voices, two men from the West Bank discussed the theme of women's autonomy within the family. Specifically, they described the effect of wives' entry into the formal employment sector on women's freedoms within the marital dyad as well as personal contentment. For example, Yousef (refugee) described how educated women who work for pay outside of the home will have a better quality of life and better relationship with their husbands, because they will have greater freedoms within the marital relationship. Specifically, he said:

> "I will say that economical dependency is an important issue for a member of the family to obey and listen to the other. I will talk about two married women. One of them works, is economically independent, and can make her own decisions, while the other person does not work and she follows her husband's orders…But I believe that if a woman has education and her own work, she will be happier than not working because she will have her own being. She will have the ability to make decisions in the house the same as the husband through dialogue. You will be in harmony and stability with your wife if you have the ability to converse and speak with your wife…I see that women's freedom from the husband's economical dependency…through her work or education will sharpen her character and give her more stability than the woman who does not work. Why? Because the woman who does not work will be forced to obey orders, and this does not mean that she will be stable and relaxed but the other person will be stable and happy even if she fought and had disagreements with her husband, she will still be more comfortable and stable."

According to Yousef, education and employment for women is beneficial for both husbands and wives for it increases the level of dialogue and communication within the marital relationship. Wives who work will experience a level of personal fulfillment and satisfaction that will positively influence their interactions with their husbands or at the very least their sense of self. Similar to this way of thinking, Jihad (refugee) described a woman not doing well as one who "is a housewife who stays in the house."

Whereas a woman with wellbeing is a housewife who "has freedom to express her opinion, freedom to get educated. She has culture and education and now she is working."

Thus, a woman's family can either inhibit or support her autonomy to make her own life decisions. Some women described a lack of control over fundamental decisions such as whom to marry and when to divorce. Other discussed the effect of a woman's freedom to pursue educational attainment and employment on her sense of personal contentment and interactions with her husband. Indeed, at least two men believed that women's independence is beneficial for both husbands and wives. As the next section shows, this degree of control over family life is a reflection of a broader issue of women's freedom within the Palestinian society.

***Women's autonomy in the community.*** Interestingly, men also discussed the theme of women's freedom and autonomy; however, they did so by discussing it within the broader context of the community. For example, Mohammad, a non-refugee man living in the West Bank, answered the two-person question by saying "everyone knows that women in the Palestinian society can hardly get a chance to develop themselves." Later in the group interview, Mohammad went on to say:

> "I think that the most important thing for women in our society is to do whatever they want if this thing is really right and she thinks it is the right thing to do and to stick to her opinion in front of others. This would be the most important thing for shaping her first step into a new great life. However, if she would abide by everything she is told to do, even if she thinks that this is not the right thing to do, she will be taking the first step into the miserable life."

Relatedly, Sami, a refugee man from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described Loubna's life to show that all Gazan women are doing poorly because of the societal restrictions placed on them. Specifically Sami said:

> "As for the second example, it is Loubna who lives in Gaza and because she lives in Gaza, she faces all kinds of concerns and restrictions like any young woman who lives in Gaza and who

> studies... She lives in a closed society. She tries to contact institutions that can have a different look and that believe in equality between men and women and that believe in females as competent human beings who can be creative and that women constitute half of the society. She faces problems on a daily basis like all other young women living in Gaza. She faces problems in her freedom of movement and in expressing her opinion; you can always feel that she suffers from an inferiority complex and that the society gives males better chances. She struggles and tries to act and make the society believe that women can also be productive and creative and that women can be more creative than men in certain fields."

In contrast, Sami identified Christina, a woman living in Australia, as one who is doing well.

> "She enjoys her life and enjoys all rights like people in the West. She enjoys freedom of movement and freedom of expression…there is no harassment; there is no oppression. There is nothing that can restrict her freedom."

The reasons why Loubna and Christina are doing well or not do not appear to be due to their own personal decisions or personal life circumstances; rather, each illustrates the quality of life for women who live in contrasting societies – one which permits displays of autonomy and the other which restricts women's freedoms. Interestingly, Sami identified himself as a member of a secular Palestinian political party (Fateh). Perhaps his commentary on women's restrictions is pointedly directed towards the societal conditions that Hamas (the political party currently in authority over the Gaza Strip) is imposing on women in Gaza – conditions which he likely opposes.

In line with the discussion of the relationship between a lack of freedom and independence and wellbeing for Palestinian women, Ahmad, a non-refugee man living in the West Bank, illustrated how these conditions manifested themselves in how boys and girls are raised. In response to his own question "What is a good life?," Ahmad said the following:

> "We need to go back to how we were raised. Has there been originally justice between boys and girls at home? Has there been utmost free will for men, girls, and people? Many people are forced to study a specific subject, and are also forced to marry specific women. Girls on the other hand are forced to do things in an even worse way. Parents start to control their daughters since they are 3 or 4 years old, while their personality is still not shaped, by saying for example: 'don't do this, don't do that, this is forbidden, don't go to the street, be careful of cars, don't get beaten, don't, don't and don't ...' Girls originally are something incomplete since their raising process. When a girl is 7 or 8 or 10 years old, she sees her brother who is doing whatever he wants without even arguing with his parents. Parents would not mind if their son wants to go out, and stay out late, and see his friends or even invite them home but they would not accept any of that from their daughter…As a result, we can see the contradiction between the ways girls and boys are raised by at home; males and females who are the two main genders forming the society. Automatically, boys grow up being arrogant, saying: 'I am a boy, thank God I am a boy.' After all, the boy starts to take control of the house. Sometimes he would prevent his sisters from doing things even if his sisters are older than he is by 2, 3 or 4 years."

Though both Palestinian boys and girls lack full autonomy in making life decisions, Ahmad's illustration suggests that it is difficult, perhaps even impossible, for Palestinian girls and women to have full, happy lives in comparison to their brothers. From early childhood Palestinian girls receive messages from their family and the society that they are inferior to their brothers through the tight control parents have over their daughters' behaviors as well as the authority young men have over their sisters.

Perhaps what is most interesting about the respondents' commentary on women's freedom in society and family is input from the male respondents. These men provided descriptions that were full and rich with commentary pointing to the marginalized position women have in Palestinian society and the impact this injustice has on women's wellbeing. Though two of the men reported that they held

professional jobs such as teacher and counselor, over half of those speaking about the theme of women's freedoms were unemployed at the time of the interviews. Although their educational level is unknown and thus little inference can be made about any effect of education on men promoting women's freedoms, a cross-section of men – from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, professional and unemployed, married and single – spoke poignantly of familial and societal controls on women and the need for increases in women's autonomy.

***Parenting: Instilling autonomy in children*.** Finally, the theme of autonomy and freedom also arose when the female respondents described the importance of providing opportunities for children to become independent from their parents. Specifically, some women described how being a controlling parent or too involved in a child's life was linked to poor outcomes for both children and parents. For example, an unnamed woman from the Gaza Strip (Hamas) described a man who is doing poorly because his mother was too involved in his finances to the point of preventing him from getting married. Similarly, Kholoud, a refugee woman from the West Bank, described a man who has "failed" in life because:

> "he thinks that he should run their [his children's] lives…He considers himself responsible for everything and they [his children] go back to him as well…He is holding everyone's strings in his hand and he doesn't have anyone or allow anyone else to help so he considers anything they [his children] do as a failure unless his is involved…He has to train his children to depend on themselves and work on their own…He thinks selfishly, he can't achieve anything and can't control his children as he wants."

Though this man's children are educated and capable by societal standards of making their own decisions, this man is uncomfortable allowing his children to step into adult roles. Kholoud goes on to describe this man as "carrying too many burdens" because of his attempts to control the decisions of his adult children.

Further, Nida, a refugee woman from the West Bank, described a man who “is a failure in life” because “he was very spoiled” and his parents “were over protective of him…they were controlling him.” The effect of his parent’s over-involvement led this man to continually question his own ability to fulfill adult roles and to have confidence in himself. Specifically, Nida said that this man’s parents:

> “made him feel that he will never be capable of doing anything he wants with his life…he doesn’t have emotional maturity. He can’t depend on himself. He doesn’t have any economic or financial independence. He doesn’t even have emotional or psychological independence to be able to do anything…he felt he will never be able to achieve anything on his own, which caused him a weak personality and character.’”

The emphasis in these examples is that the adult children have not learned how to be independent. The implication is that as adults, children should have a level of separation from their parents to be able to step into adult roles and responsibilities. Parents, then, have the responsibility to teach their children how to trust themselves and have self-confidence to make their own decisions. In essence, parents are tasked with the chore of supporting the development of autonomy and independence in their children.

In addition to the two common themes of autonomy and economic security, men and women identified five themes as being central to family wellbeing. Specifically, the women spoke about the importance of family connection and closeness, educational attainment for specific members of the family, and a family’s physical safety. Differently, men brought up issues of respect among family members and the impact of religious devotion on family life. Accordingly each of these gender-specific themes is discussed below beginning with the women’s voices.

**Female-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing**

In addition to the common themes of economic security and autonomy, the women spoke of three additional themes related to family wellbeing. First, many of the women spoke of the importance of connection and closeness among family members. This theme manifested itself in general discussions of the overall family environment as well as in examples of relationships among specific family members (i.e., husband and wife, sisters, etc.). Second, most women illustrated the priority of education in Palestinian family life. These women spoke of the importance of educational attainment for preparing women to be wives and mothers as well as the desire for parents to provide both sons and daughters with an education. Third, some women discussed their desire to protect their children from political insecurity and a lack of political safety. Each of these themes is discussed in more detail below.

**Connection and closeness.** To begin, respondents from the female group interviews discussed the importance of remaining connected both geographically and emotionally to one's family. For example, when describing a woman who was doing poorly, Um el Barra, a non-refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Hamas), said "her family is living in Jordan, and she lives here alone. She has no one, no relatives." Similarly, Muna, a non-refugee woman living in the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described a woman who is not doing well in part because she lives in Norway and her family lives in the Gaza Strip. Due to legal constraints, she cannot leave Norway to "come back to her family or see her brothers or her parents."

One consequence of living separately from one's family is a lack of protection in situations of spousal abuse. Um elBarra went on to describe the abuse the exemplar woman was receiving from her husband by saying "her husband was abusing her because she has not one of her relatives to defend her." Another consequence is the inability to contribute to the care of individual family members. As Muna put it, the woman living in Norway desires to return to Palestine to be with her family and "to

come back home to raise her young siblings…and to come back to her father to take care of him and the family needs."

In regards to emotional connection and closeness, respondents identified the importance an overall healthy familial climate. For example, when listing the components of a good life, an unnamed respondent from the Gaza Strip (non-refugee, Hamas) stated "I think mutual understanding and love in a family are really very important." Similarly, Ansar, a refugee woman from the West Bank, included having an "interrelated family with strong and loving ties, with understanding and love between the parents, their relationship between siblings [are] good" as a characteristic of a good life. Rana, a woman from East Jerusalem, believed that in order to have a good life one needs "to be living in a happy functional family. There should be family integration and support between parents; brothers should take care of each other." Indeed, family environments characterized by closeness and respect for family members support the emotional and psychological health of all family members and can be an important resource in trying times.

***Connection in the marital dyad.*** Though some women described the importance of connection among all family members, this theme appeared most prominently when describing the marital dyad. For example most women identified love and compatibility - characteristics signaling closeness between husbands and wives – as being part of a good marriage. In regards to love, Huda, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described a woman who is doing well by stating that "she is a happy person, and she and her husband love each other so much." Similarly, Sireen, a different woman from the same group interview nominated mutual love between spouses as a component of a happy life. Specifically, she said:

> "Second point which is also important is that marriage should be based on love. The spouses need to love each other. This is very important. To see understanding between the husband and wife and if they cannot achieve that, they need to be separated from the beginning."

Related to having a marriage based on love, women described couples who were doing well as being compatible and agreeing on core values such as life goals, approaches to conflict, and strategies for raising children. For example, Izdihar (non-refugee, woman, West Bank) described a woman who is doing well by saying her happiness is due to:

> "Mutual understanding with her husband, love and harmony. They have consensus on almost everything. They do not have problems. The way she and her husband think are almost the same."

Similarly, Fouzya (non-refugee, woman, West Bank) described a couple who has a "well planned and organized life. They know how to spend their money…even how to raise their children, to which schools to send them. Everything is organized and well planned." Fouzya went on to discuss that this couple is able to plan and organize their life because "they have mutual understanding on everything, even how to manage conflict or any problem. They can solve it with dialogue and open minds. They…discuss their problems thoroughly." Thus, the ability to come to consensus on issues of parenting, finances, and conflict management are reflected in a broader idea of a positive connection between a husband and wife, signaling their cohesiveness as a couple. It is this type of understanding that is related to happiness and personal and family wellbeing.

In addition to describing specific components of mutual understanding, Fouzya (non-refugee, woman, West Bank) went on to discuss the condition that led to mutual understanding - coming from similar or "matching" backgrounds. After being prompted by the facilitator to explain the difference between the couple who is doing well and not well Fouzya said:

> "One of them comes from a city, the other from a refugee camp…they come from different backgrounds. They do not have any common grounds or common consensus on anything in their lives. They do not have any understanding or thought compatibility…But the people on the

> other hand who are doing well…there is mutual understanding and homogeneous environments and backgrounds."

Further, Fouzya, seemed to believe that different cultural values and backgrounds created contexts that lead to conflict between husbands and wives. When describing the couple who does not have mutual understanding and is doing poorly, Fouzya said "the way they manage their finances are not good. They don't agree on the way they run the family's resources…They can't get to a mutual understanding on this issue. One problem leads to ten other side problems." Perhaps, then, coming from "matching environments" provides a strong foundation on which husbands and wives can begin to build their lives together. According to Fouzya, it appears that spouses who are attempting to merge differing values into one foundation begin their marriage in contention and the inability to compromise on major life issues and family values leads to other sources of conflict. Differently, coming from similar backgrounds provides a common ground in which husbands and wives can begin to come to agreement on family and life decisions.

***Barriers to family connection: Constraints on mobility***. When it comes to describing the importance of family connection and closeness, some female respondents identified political forces as a large contributing factor to the geographical separation of family members. Women from the West Bank and East Jerusalem described the Israeli procedures of limiting the freedom of movement for Palestinians as barriers for family members to remain connected to one another. For example, Fouzya, a non-refugee woman living in the West Bank, described how the blockade on the Gaza Strip has cut ties between families members. Specifically she said:

> "Sometimes people lost their mothers or fathers where they die and sons and daughters cannot attend the burial ceremonies, especially if they are from the Gaza Strip and their children live in the West Bank."

Other respondents illustrated that it is not only between territories but also constraints on movement within the West Bank itself that make it difficult for families to connect. Tahreer, a woman from East Jerusalem, put it as follows:

> "The Israeli checkpoints forbid us from visiting and socializing. For example, I have a green ID [West Bank Identification Card] and my parents live in Jerusalem. But I can't reach them the way my friends reach their parents. I might see them only once a month and the main reason is because of the Israeli checkpoints. I feel that the checkpoints have cut family ties and connections."

The constraints on movement for those living in the West Bank and East Jerusalem also have impacts on whom one marries, for parents were described as desiring to remain close to their newlywed daughters. An unnamed respondent from the same group interview described how East Jerusalem parents sometimes forbid their daughters from marrying men from the West Bank.

> "The first thing a mother asks if a suitor comes for her daughter is if he has a blue ID [Jerusalem Identity Card] or green one [West Bank Identity Card]. This has led to a lack of harmony in Palestinian cities. They have removed ties between Palestinian families. Right now people are not ready to give their daughters away to men who are mentally compatible to their daughters because of IDs and insurance and tax [Palestinians living in East Jerusalem are eligible for health insurance from the Israeli government]."

Structural barriers preventing marriages can lead not only to disagreements within the family but also between families and communities. Families in the West Bank and East Jerusalem are faced with the challenge of promoting cohesion in the face of political obstacles that divide families.

Importantly, there was some disagreement as to the effects of the political context on family interactions. Specifically, Ansar (refugee, West Bank) suggested that political imprisonment can cause families to form emotional bonds and connections.

> "My own opinion is that when a father is in prison, the family comes around more related and it strengthens the ties and they become more supportive of each other."

Despite this alternate interpretation as to the effects of imprisonment on the interconnectedness of family members (for indeed Ansar was the only respondent with this view point), women from the West Bank and East Jerusalem otherwise consistently described how current Israeli political practices affect the quality of relationships among family members.

***Barriers to family connection: The influence of political factions.*** Just as women identified Israeli policies and procedures as impeding a family's ability to remain connected, so too did some women discuss the impact of the split between the two major Palestinian political parties – Fateh and Hamas – on family life. In general, women from both the West Bank and Gaza Strip described how the polarized internal political climate, particularly during the second intifada, led to divisions among family members. For example, Mahira, a non-refugee woman from the West Bank said:

> "In the same family now you can find one brother Fateh and the other is Hamas. From a social point of view, this has affected the families and people. There will be fights between bothers and between cousins around those issues."

Related, Sireen, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip affiliated with Fateh, said:

> "The problem is the leadership. They brainwashed the young men. They take them at an early age and train them and educate them in a certain way…and obeying him [the leader of the group] is more important than obeying the instructions of the parents…I blame the leadership for the hatred found in the hearts of young people nowadays…There are brothers and cousins. A family became divided because of the Hamas-Fateh conflict. One son is from Hamas and the other is from Fateh and this divided the family."

Further, Izdihar, a non-refugee woman from the West Bank, stated that the Fateh-Hamas conflict has not only caused a division within Palestinian families but also it removed the united focus of the Palestinian people.

> "In the same family they have a 10 year old and a 13 year old. The older one is Fateh and the younger one is Hamas. Even if the Fateh brother would write the name of Fateh on a piece of paper, a fight would erupt between the two brothers…Fateh and Hamas should go back to their minds and get united again. We have one enemy, Occupation, and what we need is getting rid of the Occupation."

The split between the two major Palestinian political parties specifically during the second intifada affects the society such that friends, neighbors, and family members became estranged from one another, harbored animosity towards one another, and even physically injured each other as a show of solidarity—not to one's family identity but one's political identity. This runs counter to the values of family closeness and connection. According to these women, loyalties shifted from one's family to one's political party and this caused deep divisions within families. These examples illustrate the divisions within the Palestinian society. Just as families have an identity that facilitates bonds between members, so too Palestinians have a connection to one another based on their "nationality," and this connection carries the responsibility of caring for one another as blood relations do. Respecting family member's differing political views is tied to a larger societal issue. In these examples, conflict within families signaled the conditions in the broader society.

In sum, the respondents discussed the importance of being connected to one's family as impacting the quality of family life as well as overall wellbeing. Both emotional and geographic closeness appear to be valued and included in descriptions of family wellbeing and specifically when discussing the marital dyad. Many of the women described how Israeli political structures and policies prohibit families from visiting with one another thus contribute to separation between family members. In addition,

some of the women discussed the impact of the split between the two major Palestinian political parties on family closeness and connection. Though, according to these women, families seek to remain connected and supportive of each other, political tensions and policies have become barriers to family cohesion.

**Educational attainment.** The second theme surrounding family life that was apparent in the women's interviews centered on the value of education for all family members. For example, most often when describing men and women who were doing well, the female respondents included statements such as "she got engaged to an older man, but he is educated" (Mahria, non-refugee, West Bank), "he started a family; his wife is educated" (Najwa, East Jerusalem), or "to get married to an educated man" (Sireen, refugee, Gaza Strip, Fateh). Though educational attainment is important for both brides and grooms, most of the female respondents focused the majority of these discussions on the benefits of education for wives specifically as it relates to the age at which a woman marries and her ability to fulfill the homemaker role.

Often when describing women who were doing poorly the respondents made statements such as a woman "married at a young age, when she was still studying in the university" (Muna, non-refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Fateh) or "she married at a very early age; she is not educated (Sireen, refugee woman, Gaza Strip, Fateh). Similarly, Noor, a refugee woman from the West Bank, described a young woman who is doing poorly by stating she "got married at age of 16, despite being so good at school." The implication appears to be that upon marriage this young girl no longer continued her education. Relatedly, women who received their education prior to marriage were viewed favorably because they waited until they were "ready for marriage" (Rana, East Jerusalem).

According to some of the respondents, the importance of receiving an education prior to marriage was reflected in the belief that being educated prepares women for marriage and

motherhood. Izdihar, a non-refugee female respondent from the West Bank, put it this way when describing two women, one not doing well and the other doing well:

> "She has a complex of some kind, you can sense this complex in her behavior, it's because she married at age 14 and didn't get her education…I believe she should have studied and got her education and then got married and started a family. I know another woman who married at age 24 years and got her education and higher education, got a job, got married, started a family and had kids. Despite that she started at age 24, but she is still in the beginning of her life. She is now fully educated, knows a lot of things. Her life is very good, God bless...
>
> Facilitator: Would you please tell us what do you think the other factors had made the life of the the woman feel that her life was going well…?
>
> Izdihar : …she chose to study and get her education. She waited till she got mature enough to get married. When she had a matured mentality to enable her to judge and control her good life and to carry her responsibilities and burdens, she would gain the experience to enable her [to] raise her children. Not like a 14 year old who will never have that maturity to be able to run a marriage and a family."

Further, education for women allows them to educate their own children. As Muna, a non-refugee woman from the West Bank, stated "if the mother is ignorant, or not educated, or only studied till elementary school, how would she teach her children or help them do their homework?" Education prepares a woman to be a wife as well as a mother. It is an indication that a woman is ready to raise children in a good and proper way. Though being educated can also give women the skills to work outside of the home it appears that the female respondents believed that the main reason for educating women is to prepare them for motherhood. It is associated with being mature and being able to manage and properly raise one's children.

Some of the female respondents discussed the importance of husbands supporting their wives' educational attainment. For those women who marry prior to completing their education, the female respondents discussed the importance of husbands supporting their wives so that the wives could continue their schooling. For example, Huda (refugee, woman, Gaza Strip, Fateh) described a woman doing well whose husband encouraged her to finish her education. "She insisted on studying, and her husband supported her." Similarly, Noor (refugee, woman, West Bank) described a woman who was forced into marriage at a young age, divorced, and remarried to a man who "allowed her to go back to school and continue her education…She lives happily. She is about to finish her higher education." These two women were identified as doing well because their husbands supported their desire to go back to school.

Conversely, a lack of support from husbands was described to affect wives' mental health. For example, Hiba, a refugee woman from the West Bank, described a divorced woman who was not doing well in part because her husband refused to support her in continuing her education. In response Hiba said "her husband destroyed her and broke her spirit." Similarly, Asmahan, a refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Hamas) described a woman who suffered in her marriage because her husband refused to allow her to continue with her education. Thus, wives who received support from their husbands to continue their education benefited both from a positive marital relationship and the attainment of a college degree – a status for women that was linked to their ability to care for children and manage the home.

In addition to the importance of women's educational attainment, female respondents, particularly from the Gaza Strip, described the importance of being able to provide children with a good education. For example, when listing the components of a good life, Linda and Sireen, two refugee women living in the Gaza Strip (Fateh), included "to educate the kids and provide them with good schooling" (Linda) and "to providing good schooling for the kids" (Sireen). Relatedly, when describing

individuals who were doing well, respondents from the Gaza Strip (refugee, Hamas) said “she [the exemplar woman] sent all of them [her children] to schools and universities” (anonymous) and “he [the exemplar man] sent all his children to colleges, he provides them with everything they need” (Hana).

In contrast, Awatef, a refugee woman living in the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described a man who, although he had the financial ability to send his children to university, did not invest in his children’s education. Specifically, Awatef said:

> “His financial condition was very good…[but] he did not show attention and care to his kids. His children grew up and none of them knows how to read or write…His indifference led to the failure of his children who are a total failure. Now, one of them works in a car mechanic workshop; others work in the tunnels [between Egypt and the Gaza Strip]. Their daughters could not provide their children with money to study. Their situation is really bad. It is a tragedy because of the indifference of the father and mother. They did not pay attention to the education of their children.”

Neither the mother nor the father invested the time or money into teaching their children basic literacy skills, and this lack of interest in their education has led to the children’s own failure. They are unable to secure good jobs or even provide for their own children’s education. The children’s wellbeing is a direct reflection of their parent’s decisions and behaviors. Thus, the effects of a lack of provision for education appear to have an intergenerational impact – affecting the wellbeing of parents, children, and grandchildren.

In sum, education is valued in the Palestinian society and parents who are able, despite economic barriers, to support their children’s education are viewed as doing well. Discussions of educational provision extended to both male and female children. Taken together with the discussion of the value of education for wives, the women’s narratives illustrate both the common value of education

in Palestinian society for males and females, as well as gender specific reasons for educational attainment: preparation for motherhood.

**Safety and security.** Lastly, the women's discussions on family life pointed to the importance of physical safety and security for family members, particularly children. Different from other themes, women did not identify those doing well as being able to provide safe environments for their children. Rather, some women focused their discussion on the impact of political insecurity and political violence on parents and children's emotional wellbeing. Through the use of personal examples, some women spoke of their desire to protect their children and bring them up in a safe and secure political environment. Women from both the Gaza Strip and West Bank contributed to this theme; however, there appears to be regional differences in the types of political violence experienced.

To begin, some women from the Gaza Strip described the emotional strain of fearing for their children's safety during the next Israeli attack on the Gaza Strip. For example, Um Midhat, a non-refugee woman (Fateh), said:

> "After the previous war [2009], all our children became stressed and traumatized…I got stressed and terrified. It was a very difficult period of time for me. All our children get terrified and scared to death just hearing the sound of [a] small plane flying over and [it is] very hard to convince them that these are not war planes."

Similarly, Um Mahmoud, a woman from the same group interview, said:

> "I live with my in laws in an open space, in an orchard, which made me scared all the time for the safety of my children and my family."

Further, Sireen, a refugee woman affiliated with Fateh, described her reaction to the lack of safety and security following the Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip (2005).

> "When the Israeli Occupation withdrew, we were supposed to feel safe and secure but this never happened; we continued to feel unsafe. I would take my kids and run away from my

> house in the evening because we felt that an incursion would take place by the Occupation force."

At the time of these interviews, only one year had passed since the 2009 bombing campaign by Israeli forces on the Gaza Strip. It is clear that these women, as well as the Palestinian children, were at a heightened state of alert which caused them to fear for their safety and the safety of their family. One almost senses a feeling of helplessness in these women's voices for they truly are unable to protect their children and keep them safe.

Some women from the West Bank also discussed fearing for their children's safety, but in a somewhat different manner. These West Bank women described situations in which their children would be arrested by the Israeli forces. For example, when listing the top three components of quality of life, Fouzya, a non-refugee woman, said:

> "The third one is the political situation, so that you will not live under constant fear that no one would come at 3am to arrest one of your kids or your husband. Those things will make you restless and uncomfortable and will cause you fear and lack of feeling safe and secure."

Ansar, a refugee woman, expresses the same sentiments when she said:

> "If there is political stability, there will be stability on other aspects of living…there will be comfort and safety. There will be no horror, no fear. Not like when my son goes out at night, I'll be scared and worried about him till he comes back. I'll be worried of an Israeli attack."

Both community-wide attacks as well as targeted arrests are components of the political context that create feelings of fear and helplessness for these women. They fear for the safety of their family knowing that the threat of future violence is out of their immediate control. Ansar summarized it nicely when she said:

> "The state should provide me with [a] comfortable situation to enable me [to] raise my kids, providing me with the feelings of safety and security so that I can pass on those feelings to my kids."

Thus, not only are mothers' emotional health affected by features of the Occupation, but also their children are likely to feel unsafe and burdened by a lack of political stability.

In sum, women spoke of the impact of the lack of political security and safety on a mother's sense of her ability to protect her children. Through the use of personal examples and the examples of others, women described both their desire for children to grow up in safe environments as well as an understanding that, without a change in the political situation, they cannot protect their children from the dangers of political conflict. Although there were regional differences in the manifestations of this theme, women from both the West Bank and Gaza Strip described the effects of instability and insecurity on parents' and children's feelings of worry and fear.

In total there were five themes of family life discussed in the women's interviews. The themes of economic security and autonomy were also present in many of the men's interviews. Unique to the women's interviews was the emergence of the themes of connection and closeness among family members, importance of educational attainment for women and children, and protection and safety for one's family.

**Male-Specific Illustrations of Family Wellbeing**

In addition to the themes of economic security and autonomy, there were two themes of family wellbeing that arose in the men's interviews: respect for authority and others and religious devotion. These two themes were not endorsed by representatives from each group interview; rather a smaller subset of men discussed each concept. However, the uniqueness with which they spoke of these themes warranted that attention be given to them.

**Respect**. Related to the theme of women's autonomy in the family, a few of the men discussed the importance of wives respecting their husband's role as head of household and the respect and freedom that women, in turn, receive. For example, Tayseer a non-refugee from the West Bank illustrated this theme in his comparison of women doing well and not well. When describing the woman doing well, Tayseer said:

> "I think a woman should be kind. Some women accept the situation they are in, and if they know how to make their life work, no matter what their husbands' financial or social situation is a millionaire that has a cars or a poor one, they will be able to comfort their husbands and live a good life…The first wife adapted herself with the new situation [husband marrying second wife due to perception that his first wife was infertile] in a good way. All people in the neighborhood respected her because she is a good respectful woman…she is a mature, wise woman. She lives a great life and her husband really appreciates her wisdom…Moreover she knows her husband very well, and she knows his likes and dislikes. She obeys him without thinking that even if her mother was dying and was told not to go see her, she would not go!"

The woman that Tayseer described shows contentment in her situation and obedience to her husband no matter what the situation. From Tayseer's point of view, this woman is respected in her community for knowing her husband and her place within her marital relationship – one that is subservient to her spouse. In contrast, Tayseer described the second wife as one who does not obey her husband and thus is not respected by others.

> "She [the second wife] kept disobeying her husband just to annoy him, she also did things he asked her not to do. She kept doing the opposite of everything he asked her to do…she left her house. Her children do not respect her anymore, and her daughters stopped caring for her…[her son told her] 'if you do not go back to my father and if you keep disrespecting him, I will not respect you'…the second wife would not obey her husband even if he asked her not to go to see

> an enemy. I mean she would go even if she did not want to, just to make him angry. I think this is called selfishness and love of control."

Another man from the West Bank described how harmony between spouses leads to freedoms for wives. Specifically, Naser (refugee) described wellbeing as:

> "How much a family is stable. How much a woman is in harmony with her husband as no one threatens her presence and her house. She has more freedom and more happiness than a woman who is married and fights neck to neck with her husband."

Immediately preceding Naser's description of wellbeing, he said:

> "This show [a famous Syrian soap opera] took us back to the old traditions and norms of our society that are derived from our religion. I am not a religious person, but the reason why people liked the show is because they felt the manhood of a man, the sacredness of a house, and the sacredness of a woman as well of the man and his respect."

Perhaps the implication is that marital stability and harmony allows women greater freedoms within the family context because the husband trusts his wife and does not feel the need to restrict her behavior or question her honor. Harmony between spouses appears to be understood in the context of a relationship where a wife accepts and respects her husband's authority as head of household. They do not quarrel over gender roles in their marriage, and, in turn, a wife experiences the benefits of a stable marriage and increased freedom in the home.

In addition to respecting a husband's place as head of household, a few of the men discussed the importance of children respecting others and the role of education in teaching this core value. For example, Abu Hussam, a non-refugee man from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), stated that "in order to lead a happy life" a person must "have kids and provide them with good education and teach them to be honest and to respect each other and respect the people." Similarly, Abu Mohammad, a refugee man living in the Gaza Strip (Fateh), said that even though Palestinians live under Occupation they can "raise

our kids and teach them the values of unity and we can provide our kids with education." Though teaching children respect was not explicitly stated by Abu Mohammed, the ability to be unified as a group requires that individuals respect the diversity of opinions, beliefs, and behaviors of others. It is through education that children learn how to be tolerant of others' views while also finding points of commonality that unite individuals and groups.

**Religious devotion.** A second theme described by some of the men related to family wellbeing was the value of religious devotion. For example, a few men from the Gaza Strip, described husbands as doing well if they married a religious woman. These men used phrases such as "a good faithful wife" (Abu Majid: refugee, Fateh) or "perfect wife by all means. She is by means of manners, ethics, beliefs and she is a Muslim" (Abu As'ad: non-refugee, Fateh) to identify men who were thought to have a good quality of life. Additionally, one male respondent provided examples showing that a man's religious commitment was considered by some to be more important than economic stability. Specifically, Abu Al-Abed (non-refugee, Hamas) described his own situation in which he was able to get married because his father-in-law was looking for a religious man to marry his daughter.

> "One needs 5,000 or 10,000 Dinars [Jordanian currency used by some Palestinians] in order to get married. When I went to ask for my wife's hand, I had only 5 shekels in my pocket… I went to ask for my wife's hand, I was thinking to myself: 'I'm going to get married and all I have in my pocket are 5 shekels. [Israeli currency used by most Palestinians]' It did not sound logical to me. And it is not logical in anybody's eyes. I swear, I went and I saw her. And her father told me: 'O not worry. We look for the good man, who obeys his God and prays and worships. One should not look mainly at the money.' And how I got married, thanks to God, I still do not know. There are many examples."

Further, men described how religious faith led to a sense of personal happiness and contentment and positive relationships between spouses. Muhammad (refugee, Hamas) illustrated this

theme when he described a man whose family life improved when he decided to commit to "prayers and worship."

> "Today I talk to him and he is just fine. I tell him 'you are broke and do not have a shekel. Concerning money, in the past you did have money and used to buy things [this man used to work in Israel]. You always had problems with your wife and today everything is fine.' He told me 'I found out that the happy life is not money nor anything connected to money. Life since god showed me the way and I got committed to my prayers and worship. I found out that my life changed entirely…I used to work in Israel and earn a lot of money, but I would come home and fight with my wife, and my children did not used to pray or anything. Even my son used to disobey me. Today I take him to the mosque and he has become committed to worship. And if I tell him I need something, he'd go running to get it for me.'''

Thus, according to some men from the Gaza Strip, religious commitment is a valued characteristic for both husbands and wives. These sentiments are echoed in comments from one female respondent who described the importance of "mutual religious motivation" among married couples (Um Azia: non-refugee, Hamas, Gaza Strip). Though the men who spoke about religion did not talk about similar levels of religious commitment between a husband and his wife, their comments demonstrate the importance of religious devotion for both sexes. Interestingly, the majority of these quotations came from men who were affiliated with the political group Hamas, a group with fundamentalist Islamic leanings. Perhaps for those who already ascribe to fundamental religious teachings, as is seen in their political affiliation, the effect of the belief in and commitment to Allah is all the more salient to conceptualizations of an ideal marriage and buffers spouses from the stressors of economic ill-being.

**Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing**

Figure 5 was developed to provide a graphical representation of the themes described in this chapter. The two intertwining circles in the middle of the figure represent men's and women's conceptualizations of family wellbeing. As shown by the figure and described above, issues of autonomy and economic security were central to family life for both men and women. Thus, the circles overlap in these two areas to show the commonality of themes. Other themes which were gender-specific, such as safety and security, educational attainment, and connection and closeness for women and respect and religious devotion for men, are included within their respective circles. Because only a sub-set of the men discussed the importance of respect and religious devotion, those portions of the male perspective circle of family wellbeing are smaller than the portions for autonomy and economic security – themes which were discussed by men from both regions and refugee statuses. Differently, the themes within the women's circle are spaced evenly, so as to convey representativeness of each of these themes across the women's interviews. Within each circle, the dotted lines separating each core concept are meant to convey the interconnectedness (all pointing to the broader concept of family wellbeing) yet separate nature of each theme.

The gender-specific circles of family wellbeing are cradled within the cultural context. Culture is the foundation for understanding what themes of family life were described, how, and by whom. For example, it defines how close and connected families should be, why education is important in unique ways for women, and the specific roles of men and women in families. It is this cultural context that is reflected in the discussions among the respondents not only in the identification of particular themes of family life but also in the ways in which each theme was discussed. For example, compared to their male counterparts, women spoke more often about family issues and the internal dynamics of the family (i.e., issues of closeness and connection). I proposed this is because family life is central to a woman's place in her community. Even her educational preparation is completed in order to increase her ability to

manage her home and raise her children. Differently, the salience of economic security for husbands and fathers was seen in the frequency with which men spoke of this theme throughout the interviews, particularly relative to other themes in the men's interviews (i.e., religious devotion and respect).

Finally, the arrows coming down from above represent the influence the political context has on family life. Specifically the respondents described how the political context created barriers in the ability of families to live out cultural goals or ideals. For example, policies and politically motivated constraints on movement alter a family's ability to remain connected to one another. The link between cultural values of interdependence and the degree of connection in an individual family is in part dependent upon both Israeli political policies (i.e., separation wall, checkpoints, siege on the Gaza Strip) and the degree of infighting between Palestinian political parties. Relatedly, a father's ability to fulfill his culturally assigned role as the family's breadwinner is, for many men, directly tied to the political conditions and their impact on the economic context. In turn, the respondents described the changing roles for wives in Palestinian families. This expansion of wives' employment outside of the home was described not in response to women's demands for gender equality but rather as an adaptive strategy.

The degree to which the political context creates barriers for a family's ability to live out culturally sanctioned goals and ideals is not equal for all themes in the model. Indeed, issues of respect between family members, women's educational attainment, compatibility and mutual understanding between husbands and wives, and a family's level of religious devotion were not discussed explicitly as being affected by the political context. This is not to suggest that qualities of the marital relationship (for example) are immune to the consequences of Occupation, for indeed a few respondents described the negative impact of political stressors on the interactions between husbands and wives. Rather, as compared to other aspects of family life, such as connection and employment and economic stability, the quality of interactions between spouses appears to be more controlled by the behaviors of husbands and wives than by the structural conditions. Stated a different way, it is under the umbrella of

political Occupation that Palestinian families live. However, some aspects of family life can perhaps be shielded from the negative consequences of political insecurity, whereas other aspects come into direct confrontation with political structures and policies.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

As was argued in Chapters 1 and 2, the established literatures on wellbeing and quality of life lack adequate attention to the role of family both in identifying the central aspect(s) of family life that are salient to conceptualizations of wellbeing and in examining the degree to which family is linked to other domains of quality of life. This is particularly true for those who are impacted by political conflict and constraint. To address this void, this study examined the role of family in broad and culturally grounded conceptualizations of wellbeing/quality of life among Palestinian adults – a population who have lived their entire lives under political occupation and experienced at least two major periods of political conflict. Consistent with Palestinian culture, this study also considered the degree of commonality and difference among men's and women's descriptions of family life and its relationship to other domains.

Analyses of fourteen group interviews with Palestinian adults revealed that although family was not nominated as the most important domain of wellbeing, it featured prominently in discussions of quality of life, both as affecting and as being affected by wellbeing in other domains. The role of family as found in these analyses is depicted in Figure 5: The Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing. There, autonomy and economic security are themes related to family life that were identified by both men and women. Respondents across the majority of the groups discussed issues of women's autonomy and the need for fathers to attain economic security to care for their families. Three additional themes emerged from the women's interviews. These themes included connection and closeness among family members, the importance of educational attainment for women and children, and desires for the physical safety of one's family. Some of the men also discussed the roles of respect and religious devotion. Though there were differences in the themes that emerged from the men's and women's interviews, both groups described how the political context creates barriers that prevent families from achieving wellbeing.

The balance of the discussion section is structured around the specific research questions the study addressed. Each research question is considered separately.

**Family as an Element of Quality of Life/Wellbeing**

A strength of this study was its design; namely, situating family wellbeing in a broader understanding of quality of life. Though a targeted, in-depth investigation of family would have provided a more comprehensive picture of family dynamics and processes, this study was concerned with identifying elements of family life that appear salient when considering the wellbeing from a holistic perspective. Throughout both the men's and women's group interviews issues surrounding family life surfaced regularly with the majority of respondents referencing family life at least once in the interviews. Although family life was not regularly nominated as one of the top three components of quality of life, it featured prominently throughout the group interviews.

The mere fact that family life was mentioned in these interviews suggests that the predominate focus in the wellbeing literatures on economic health is too narrow and essentially neglects other contexts that influence perceptions of overall health – specifically the family context (McGillivray, 2007; Tay & Diener, 2011). Though respondents described the salience of fathers' economic stability to their mental health and interactions with other family members, it was but one theme describing overall family wellbeing. Indeed, respondents also discussed the importance of other themes, such as educational attainment, connection, and autonomy, without linking those elements to economic security.

Differently, Stevenson and Wolfers (2008) have avoided the single emphasis on economic health by defining wellbeing broadly as overall life satisfaction. However, this approach does not probe into the complexity of human experience. For example, (in these same data) Barber and colleagues (2012) found eight unique domains to be relevant to Palestinians' understandings of wellbeing, of which family was one. The findings from this dissertation go further and suggest that there are multiple domains within

family life that contribute to overall understandings of wellbeing. Thus, even when narrowly looking only at family life, we see a complexity of values, each of which is a component of a broader construct of life wellbeing, a complexity that is lost in questions which assess overall life satisfaction.

Further, the findings from this study have implications for the quality of life literatures in that there are additional elements of family life beyond satisfaction with personal relationships and support from family and friends that are relevant to family functioning (WHOQOL, 1998). Specifically for Palestinians, it is not only relationships among family members that contribute to quality of life, but also the ability of individuals to meet gender-specific expectation. For example, the ability for husbands to acquire economic security and the ability for women to attain a higher education were described as reflecting wellbeing. The focus of these elements of family life is on the attainment of specific characteristics that are related to gender roles within the family. Though, the attainment of these characteristics was described as having implications for relationships among family members, the essence of these themes was not only on the quality of relationships but rather on the ability of husbands and wives to enact valued gender roles. Thus, the sole focus in the quality of life framework on the quality of family relationships neglects the influence of one's functional role within the family on conceptualizations of overall health. These findings show the limitations of the quality of life and wellbeing literatures and argue for the need to include not only family life in the broad sense but also multiple elements of family in conceptualizations of functioning.

**Core Values of Family Life Related to Wellbeing**

A second prominent contribution of the findings is highlighting the specific core values of family life which appear salient to understandings of family wellbeing, specifically for Palestinian adults. As illustrated in Figure 5, both the men and women described the roles of economic stability and autonomy as they are played out in context of the family. Additionally, the women discussed the roles of cohesion, educational attainment, and safety and security. Differently, a few of the men described the roles of

respect and religious devotion within families. Although some of these themes were described more frequently than others, they all represent discrete characteristics of family wellbeing. Interestingly, at least three of the themes are constructs that appear to be salient across diverse settings: connection, autonomy, and economic security.

**Connection**. First, the theme of connection and closeness is consonant with the documented role of cohesion among Palestinian family members (Alsharekh, 2007; Taraki, 2006). Though scholars have noted a demographic shift towards more urban-nucleated households, the prevailing thought is that Palestinian families continue to value closeness and connection (Giacaman & Johnson. 2002). Indeed, Palestinian refugee and non-refugee women from all regions spoke to the importance of closeness among family members. Although it is unknown if these women lived in nucleated or extended family homes, the presence of this theme across a diversity of interview groups suggests that cohesion among family members continues to be valued in Palestinian families. This may be an example of culture defining the values important to family life, as depicted in Figure 5.

Beyond confirming the values of connection to Palestinian families specifically, the findings from this dissertation contribute to theoretical frameworks that purport the importance of connection among family members as being central to family life. For example, many prominent family functioning frameworks developed primarily among Western populations include elements of family cohesion and solidarity in descriptions of healthy family relationships. Connection is one of two main dimensions in Olson and Gordall's (1993) circumplex model used to classify families as "strong" or "weak." According to the McMaster model of healthy family functioning, emotional closeness among family members is one of six dimensions used to define healthy families (Epstein, Baldwin, & Bishop, 1983). Further, commitment to the family unit, relational maintenance, and spending quality time together are three of six qualities thought to be characteristic of strong families in the family strengths framework (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985; Stinnett et al., 1997). In line with these Western theoretical lenses, many of the female

respondents attributed wellbeing to the degree of closeness to one's family. They used phrases such as "integrated family" and "strong family ties" to describe the general context of the family unit. A few of the women even provided examples of situations in which parents were hesitant to allow their daughters to marry men from other regions so as not to loosen the bonds they had with their daughters.

When describing specific relationships among family members, many of the women illustrated the theme of cohesion by discussing interactions between husbands and wives. It is no surprise that women discussed the marital dyad when describing Palestinian families because of the essential role of marriage in Arab and Palestinian culture and its role in maintaining kinship ties (El Saadawi, 2007; Farsoun, 2004). However, what is unique about the findings of this current study is the role of love in Palestinian marriages. Some scholars have described Arab and Palestinian marriages as functional with emotions and feelings being marginal, or at the very most secondary, to the larger purpose of marriage as a display of religious devotion (i.e., al-Khateeb, 2007; Hasso, 2011). Though the respondents discussed the normalcy of marriage and its salience to a woman's role within the family, female respondents in this study spoke often of the importance of emotional closeness and connection between husbands and wives. The respondents used words such as "love," "mutual understanding," and "compatibility" when describing couples who were doing well. Women who chose to marry for reasons other than love were criticized. Husbands and wives who communicated well with their partners were used as examples of people who have a good life.

These descriptions of Palestinian marriages being nurtured by loving relationships are in fact consonant with the broader literature on marital quality and satisfaction. Specifically, based primarily on studies conducted among Western couples for whom the primary purpose of marriage was increasing life satisfaction, there is evidence that feelings of love and contentment are closely related to the longevity of the relationship (e.g., Fincham & Beach, 2010; Knapp & Lott, 2010). Though the findings from this study cannot speak to the relationship between love and marital stability as that was not

formally tested, the narratives of the men and women echoed the importance of the emotional climate of the marital union. It appears that the literature on Arab family life perhaps overemphasizes the functional role of marriage or at the very least underemphasizes the role of love and compatibility.

One explanation for this finding is Farsoun's (2004) claim of a cultural shift in the role of marriage in Palestinian society to include elements of mutual respect and understanding as characteristic of well-functioning relationships. Farsoun writes of the move towards increased urbanization and associated effects on the nucleation of the family unit. These demographic shifts coupled with an increase in individual choice of a marital partner are pointed to as possible explanations for the rising importance of the emotional health of the marital unit (Farsoun, 2004; see also Giacaman & Johnson, 2002, for documentation of demographic changes in the Palestinian society). If these patterns hold true, men's and women's voices echo the increasing importance of love in Palestinian family life. Taken altogether, the focus on the importance of connection and cohesion within Palestinian families and between specific family members, along with the salience of this construct in the family functioning and marital quality literature, points to the transcendence of family connection across a diversity of cultural contexts.

**Autonomy**. Somewhat unexpected was the theme of individual autonomy and independence as also contributing to the wellbeing of Palestinian families. The literature on Arab families has given little attention to issues of autonomy within the family. Rather the focus of much of the literature has been in documenting the collectivist nature of the society and how that value plays out in family life (Alsharekh, 2007; Ata, 1986; Taraki, 2006). Writings on parent-child relationships within Arab families have focused primarily on the ways in which parents socialize their children to remain connected to the family unit (Barakat, 1985; Nahleh & Giacaman, 2002). Differently, however, the participants in this current study spoke at length of the role of individual autonomy as affecting family wellbeing. For example, many of the women spoke of the importance of parents allowing children to develop a sense of autonomy so

that as adults they were not overly dependent. Women also spoke of the need for girls to assert themselves in the process of mate selection and educational decisions. Similarly, some of the men described the importance for wives to have ownership over major life decisions as it relates not only to women's wellbeing but also to husbands' quality of life.

The role of autonomy as indicative of healthy family functioning is not unique, of course, to Palestinian culture. Indeed, Western theoretical frameworks include elements of autonomy or independence in descriptions of well-functioning families (Epstein et al., 1983; Stinnett et al. 1997). Typically, the focus is on independence as a barrier against enmeshment or too much cohesion among family members. Accordingly, these theoretical lenses often position connection and independence as opposite ends of a bi-polar continuum, as though the presence of one indicates the absence of the other (Broderick, 1993; Olson, 2011). Differently, the findings from this study illustrate the co-occurrence and separateness of these two constructs. As was stated above, the women used phrases such as "integrated family" and "strong family ties" to describe the cohesiveness of the family unit. The women also spoke to the development of independence and autonomy for individual family members. Thus the focus of these two constructs – one being at a more general level and the other at an individual level – differs. The implication therefore is that connection and autonomy in Palestinian families are not opposite ends of a single dimension as is posited in popular family functioning frameworks (i.e., Epstein et al., 1983; Stinnett et al. 1997).

These findings and implications complement scholars who argue against any mutual exclusivity between respect for individuality and connection (Anderson & Sabatelli, 1990; Barber & Buehler, 1996, Kagitcibasi, 1996, 2013). For example, Kagitcibasi (1996) posits that there are two separate dimensions of the development of the self: agency and interpersonal distance. Separation and relatedness/connection are the two ends of the continuum on the interpersonal distance dimension. Heteronomy and autonomy are the two extremes on the agency dimension. According to her

framework, individuals classified as the autonomous-related self are high on both autonomy and relatedness.

Similarly, Kagitcibasi ‘s (2013) family change theory proposes three types of family models that differ in the degree to which they integrate both connection and autonomy in family life. Her family model of psychological interdependence is a synthesis of high values on relatedness and close-knit family ties alongside values of individuality particularly in relationship to the ability to make life decisions. According to this theory, the value of autonomy within families is, in part, dependent on the economic conditions of the society. Modernization, affluence, and associated shifts away from rural lifestyles towards urban-nucleated living are thought to be related to an increase in the value that families place on independence. Though Palestinians live in a context of economic and political constraint, there has been a shift towards urbanization (Giacaman & Johnson, 2002; Roy 2007). Perhaps previous scholarship on Palestinian family life has not focused on autonomy, because autonomy’s relative importance has only recently increased with this demographic shift.

**Economics and family wellbeing**. A third theme that arose in the group interviews which appears to be salient across diverse cultural contexts is the role of economic security. Much has been written in scholarship describing Palestinian family life about the impact of a depressed economy on men’s sense of self (Ayesh, 2002; Hasso, 2011; Farsoun, 2004). Consistent with this scholarship, the respondents, particularly many of the men, vividly described the impact of their own inability to provide for their families on their emotional health. In this context economic provision appears to be closely tied to a man’s identity such that the inability to embody the role of the traditional breadwinner has direct consequences on his self-worth. Mahmoud’s own account of struggle to secure financial stability and the resulting decision to divorce his wife when they had two young daughters illustrates this principle vividly.

Elsewhere in the conflict literature scholars have also identified the gender-specific link between economic provision and men's health. Among Afghan men, Eggerman and Panter-Brick (2010) found that the inability to provide for one's family was related to a loss of authority and decreases in self-worth. Similarly, Cambodian men reported feeling humiliated when they were unable secure financial stability (Mollica, 2006). Further, studies among Palestinians have documented husbands' disenfranchisement within the family resulting from the inability to fulfill the provider role (Hasso, 2011; Johnson, 2006). Findings from this dissertation add to the small but growing body of literature in conflict studies on the salience of the role of financial provider for men.

Western family studies literatures have also focused on the role of economic security in family life, generally finding that economic hardships have negative consequences for the family. The scope of this work has most often been to conceptualize economic insecurity as a stressor impacting specific relationships within the family, such as marital quality and stability. A family's economic context is typically conceptualized as a risk factor placing families at risk for negative outcomes (e.g., Conger et al., 1990; Cutrona et al., 2003; Elder 1981). The findings from this dissertation complement Western scholarship in that they illustrate the importance of economic security to family life in non-Western settings. However, these findings extend this body of work by showing that financial insecurity is not only a stressor in the environmental context (as it is often framed in Western scholarship), but it is intimately related to some men's identity as husbands and fathers.

In addition to the relationship between men's identity and economic provision, the impact of economic insecurity on the changing role of women in families is salient across a variety of cultural contexts. Though some of the men debated whether or not it was beneficial for women's sense of self for Palestinian wives to work outside of the home, the majority of discussions of wives' entry into the formal work sector centered around the resulting pile-up of responsibilities. Many respondents described how Palestinian wives have sought employment as a direct result of their husband's un- or

under-employment. These same respondents also discussed the strain and stress wives' employment had on women's perceived ability to balance work and family life.

Interestingly, the concept of El Saadawi's (2007) "triple-burden" for Arab working mothers did not surface in the interviews. El Saadawi wrote not only of the pile-up of responsibilities to one's children and work, but also of the continued responsibilities to Arab women's extended families. Differently, many women in this study focused their discussions of wives' entry into the formal work sector in terms of its impacts on their ability to care for their immediate family, rather than her extended family. In fact, throughout both the men's and women's interviews there was very little discussion of extended family members. Rather the focus of family life in these interviews was on describing the roles, responsibilities, and qualities of relationships among husbands, wives, and children. Perhaps it is not the case that the "triple-burden" does not exist, but rather that the absence of this theme is an artifact of the types of relationships most salient to this cohort of Palestinian men and women – men and women who most likely had coupled and had children still living at home.

Similar sentiments of role strain have been documented among women from diverse cultural contexts. For example, Jones (1985) wrote of the burden of the demands on African American women's work and the resulting frustration and remorse of many mothers for leaving their children unsupervised as they go to work. Mohsen (1985) documented middle-class Egyptian women's entry into the work-force as increasing their responsibilities to their families as they took on the role of the primary breadwinner. Further, Hochschild and Machung's (1989, 2012) study among American wives showed that responsibilities to the home and the associated stressors on women's time remained just as prominent, even for those who entered the work-force out of personal preference.

In sum, the respondents identified multiple elements of family life that contribute to a broader construct of family wellbeing (see Figure 5). At least three of these elements are not unique to Palestinian families, but rather common across diverse cultural groups. Themes of autonomy and

connection appear in prominent family functioning theoretical frameworks. Issues of economic insecurity have been documented to impact the roles and responsibilities of husbands and wives across a variety of contexts. The findings from this study reinforce the saliency of connection, autonomy, and economic security to multiple literatures focused on the family unit. Findings also expand and further clarify some of these literatures by highlighting the co-valuing of connection and autonomy in Palestinian families. Finally, as depicted in Figure 5, findings illustrate the complexity and multi-dimensionality of family functioning.

**Linking Family to the Broader Context**

In addition to highlighting the elements of family life that are important to Palestinian adults, the findings from this study illustrate the complexity with which family is intertwined with other domains of wellbeing. For example, it is not only the case that other domains in the socio-ecological context influence the family. It is also apparent from these interviews that domains thought to be outside of the family context were described as defining an element of family wellbeing. As Figure 5 shows, economic and employment issues were subsumed within the broader conceptualization of family wellbeing because of the salience of economic stability to Palestinian husbands' and fathers' sense of self and wives' responsibilities within the family. Similarly, religious devotion was described by a few of the men to be a characteristic defining the quality of family life, such that religious commitment of parents and children were thought to buffer the detrimental effects of economic insecurity. For some, a family's commitment to and faith in Allah determined their assessment of the health of the family unit.

Differently, the men and women described the political context not as being part of family wellbeing but as creating a barrier for families to achieve or live out cultural values. Accordingly, the model of family wellbeing proposed (see Figure 5) depicts the political context as coming down upon family wellbeing. Specifically, the ability for fathers to fulfill the breadwinner role and attain economic security was described as being directly tied to political practices and policies. As described by the

respondents, the Israeli-imposed siege on the Gaza Strip resulted in the loss of jobs and economic opportunities. In turn, many Gazan fathers have been unable to provide for their families and have suffered emotionally. As a second example, the constant threat of violence both from Israeli forces and Palestinian political groups was described by many of the women as impeding their ability to protect their children. They expressed desire for their children to grow up in an environment free from constant, yet, unexpected episodes of political violence. They lamented the fact that they could not protect their children and provide them with a safe living environment.

Further, politically imposed mobility constraints on freedom of movement were described by some of the women as limiting a family's ability to remain connected and close to one another. Checkpoints throughout the West Bank and the Separation Wall surrounding East Jerusalem has, as one female respondent from East Jerusalem put it, "cut family ties and connections." Thus, families are not free to foster the values of cohesion, protection, and economic security. Instead they must attempt to achieve wellbeing in these domains despite barriers resulting from political policies and practices. The respondents described the political context as stalling their ability to attain and live out cultural values for family life.

The positioning of domains in the broader context as both affecting and being part of family wellbeing (see Figure 5) differs from socio-ecological models which describe the individual or the family as being nested within environmental contexts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Clarke 1973). The assumption of socio-ecological models is that conditions within the environment impact the internal functioning or development of the family unit. Similarly, family systems (White & Klein, 2002) and family strengths frameworks (Stinnett & DeFrain, 1985) are grounded in the assumption that functioning within a family unit is determined by a family's ability to successfully respond or make adaptive changes to stressors in the external environment. Though the political context is most certainly a stressor affecting family life, respondents also described how economic and employment conditions were intertwined with

conceptualization of family wellbeing. Surely a lack of economic security is a stressor for Palestinian families. However, respondents described the link between the economic context and family life as being central to men's identities and women's roles within the family. It is not only a stressor external to the family unit but also a signal of the quality of family life. Accordingly, the labeling of themes related family wellbeing in the proposed model reflects this intertwinement of family with other contexts. Therefore, the findings from this study extend socio-ecological and family frameworks by suggesting that domains external to the family unit in part determine the quality of family life through the extent to which these contexts define elements of family wellbeing.

A second way the findings extend the family functioning frameworks is by shifting the focus away from what families do in response to environmental stressors and towards the degree to which conditions external to the family hinder wellbeing. For example, family functioning frameworks focus on the level of family connection or cohesion in response to environmental stressors. Healthy families respond to environmental stressors by becoming neither too enmeshed nor disengaged. Healthy or strong families are able to balance stability and change (i.e., Broderick, 1993, Olson, 2011). However, the findings from this current study illustrate that political constraints and conflict, in part, determine the extent to which families can express cultural values surrounding family life. For example, the inability for some Palestinian families to remain connected and close is not an indication of the dysfunction of a particular family unit, as would be the assumption in the family functioning frameworks. Rather, it is a symptom of politically motivated structural constraints. The ability to adapt to environmental stressors assumes a level of control that Palestinian families arguably do not have. Instead of a particular family being labeled as dysfunctional or weak and in need of intervention, findings suggest that in some contexts the need for change lies in the external context, which in this study is the political domain.

Respondents' linkage between the political and family contexts is supportive of recent work by political conflict scholars who have written of the need to expand quality of life frameworks to include a

political domain. Specifically among Palestinians, Giacaman and colleagues (2007) and Barber and colleagues (2012) posited that issues of political safety, security, stability, freedom and rights, and injustices stemming from Israeli and Palestinian political policies are central to defining the quality of life for Palestinians. Barber and colleagues (2012) proposed a model of functioning that positions conditions in the political context as being the core of wellbeing – influencing all other domains of functioning in which family is one (see Figure 3). Other studies conducted in the oPt have found that constraining conditions in the political context, such as restrictions on mobility, limitations on trade with the outside world, and political imprisonments, impact aspects of family life such as fathers' ability to provide for their families and wives' increased in participation in the formal work sector (Hasso, 2011; Johnson, 2006; Nahleh, 2006). Therefore, the salience of the political context to Palestinian family wellbeing described in this study supports this growing body of literature and provides further evidence for the centrality of a political domain of functioning.

The findings not only support the prominence of a political dimension of quality of life, but also clarify the ways in which political conditions impact family life. It was not the case that political conditions were barriers to all elements of family wellbeing. Rather, issues surrounding the importance of educational attainment for women, healthy relationships between husbands and wives (as subsumed under the theme of Connection), and teaching children respect were described as being unaffected by or separate from conditions in the political context. Analyses of the data from another phase of the PAL project have shown that chronic exposure to political violence can strengthen relationships among family members. Specifically, Barber and colleagues (2013) found that chronic exposure to politically motivated humiliation and verbal abuse was related to higher marital quality. Thus, findings both reinforce the salience of a political dimension of quality of life among Palestinians and begin to provide clarification as to which elements of family life are most impacted by the political domain. Indeed, the political context is central to some but not all elements of family wellbeing.

Finally, the descriptions of the ways in which the political context impacts family life have implications for the political conflict literature. The vast majority of this body of literature has conceptualized political conditions narrowly to include only a focus on political violence. Though more recent studies have included a focus on conditions within the broader socio-ecology (i.e., family, community, school, etc.) as influencing individual development, measurements of the political context continue to be narrowed to violence exposure (Barber, 2013, in press). Differently, findings from this study revealed a diversity of elements in the political context that impact family life. Experience with political violence was described to be related to only one element of family functioning, protection and safety. Other examples of elements in the political context described to be linked to family wellbeing included politically motivated mobility and economic constraints. Indeed, parents' desire to protect their children from political violence was salient to family wellbeing; however, it was not the only stressor in the political context impacting family life. A recent study by McNeely and colleagues (in press) reported similar findings at the individual level. In that study, political violence was linked only to trauma-related stress among Palestinian adults. Economic hardships resulting from political policies and practices and political constraints were related to other health outcomes such as depressive-like symptoms and local idioms of health. Though this study cannot address the impact of the political context on an individual level, the findings do highlight the variety of ways in which the political context impacts family wellbeing. A diversity that, perhaps, should be further examined when studying individual level outcomes.

In sum, as is illustrated in Figure 5, participants described two ways in which domains in the broader context are linked to family life. Economic and religious domains were described as contributing to the definition of family wellbeing. Differently, the respondents provided examples showing how the political context creates a barrier to families' achieving a good quality of life. The inclusion of domains external to the family as being part of family wellbeing expands the thinking of socio-ecological and

family functioning frameworks. Additionally, the findings suggest that the focus in the family functioning frameworks on the ability of families to adapt to external stressors oversimplifies the relationship between political wellbeing and Palestinian family life. Given political instability in the oPt and an increasing focus on the political domain as a key determinant of wellbeing, it is no surprise that the political context featured proximately in these interviews. Interestingly, the findings illustrate the complexity with which the political context is related to family life. This complexity is seen in terms of both the diversity of influences from the political domain as well as the connection of the political to some, but not all, aspects of family.

**The Influence of Gender on Conceptualizations of Family Wellbeing**

Finally, this study sought to examine the ways in which gender influenced men's and women's descriptions of family wellbeing. As is suggested in The Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing, the impact of gender on descriptions of family wellbeing is rooted in the cultural context. For example, the themes present in the men's and women's interviews reflected a traditional division of household labor - a characteristic of family life that is consistent with Palestinian culture (al-Khateeb, 2007; Hasso, 2011). Economic security, which was one of two main themes in the men's interviews, was described to be directly related to husband's and father's roles within the family. Although the women also paired economic issues with men's responsibilities, the dominance of this theme in the men's interviews is reflective of the centrality of economic provider to men's sense of self and place within the family (El Saadawi, 2007; Treacher, 2003).

Differently, the women described themes related to the health and wellbeing of the family unit (i.e., connection and closeness, and physical safety) as well as the wellbeing of individual members within the family (i.e., educational attainment). Even when describing the structural challenges to economic stability and its impact on family life, female respondents focused on issues related to their culturally defined roles as caretakers of the home such as family-work balance, separation from

husbands and children, inability to care for children, and the emotional toil of the inability to fulfill the mother role. In this cultural context, it is the women who are in charge of managing the home, and the themes that arose in the women's interviews are a direct reflection of this responsibility.

Additionally, women's descriptions of their participation in higher education were framed in the context of motherhood. Waiting until one has completed her education was linked to wellbeing in that educational attainment signaled one's ability to successfully manage the home and raise children. According to these women, the purpose of education for women is not to acquire skills to be used in the employment sector. Rather, education prepares women for their future roles as wives and mothers. These discussions as to the role of education are similar to discourse surrounding women's activism during the first intifada as female activism was framed as an extension of women's caregiving duties (Peteet, 1991). Indeed, scholars suggest that women's appearance in public spaces, of which schools are one, has historically been framed as a means through which to perpetuate the salience of motherhood (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2003; Treacher, 2003). The findings from this study relative to the purpose of educational attainment for women are perhaps just another example of this perpetuation.

Further, the differences between men's and women's discussions were reflective of issues of power and privilege. As suggested by Islamic scholars, the traditional division of household labor in Muslim households lends itself to giving power to husbands and fathers particularly over their wives and daughters (Barakat, 1985; Farsoun, 2004). This privilege was reflected in the group interviews in men's discussions in two main ways. First, it was the men who spoke of the theme of respect and the importance for wives to obey their husbands and children to obey their parents. Although only a small proportion of men referenced this topic, the presence of this theme demonstrates the male respondents' internalization of their culturally assigned place of authority within the home.

Second, issues of power and privilege can be seen in the men's discussions of the expanding role of women in Palestinian society beyond that of a traditional homemaker. Though the women also

pointed to issues of women's autonomy, they did so in relation to freedom in choosing a marital partner, not as part of a larger debate on shifting gender roles within the family. Commenting on an earlier version of this dissertation, the key informant wrote:

> "Having men talk about the freedom of women, more than the women talked about it, has much more in depth meaning than mentioned in the paragraph. Women usually internalize the societal norms as banning women from demanding their freedoms and start believing it's a taboo that they can't talk about."

Indeed, scholars note how power is reflective in language – what is said, in what company, and by what tone (see Ellsworth, 1994; Hyde, 2007). Because Palestinian men are the powerful and privileged, compared to women, they have the freedom to debate the benefits and consequences of an expansion of women's gender roles. It is the men as heads of household who decide what is most beneficial for their wives. Women, on the other hand, are not given the same privilege – particularly perhaps in mixed company as there were two men present in each interview. Therefore, the difference in how the men and women described the broader theme of autonomy is reflective of issues of power and privilege within Palestinian culture.

**Limitations**

Although this study has several important findings, there are important limitations that should be considered. First, the study is limited in the number of key informants who were able to comment on the themes presented in this dissertation. Despite efforts to find multiple Palestinians to provide culturally appropriate insights on the results, only one individual, a Palestinian woman, was able to dedicate the time to reading sections of this dissertation. In addition, this individual provided only partial feedback on one draft of Chapter 4. It would have been ideal to receive input from multiple Palestinians, both men and women, to guard against my cultural biases and misunderstandings of the interview texts.

Second, the composition of the group interviews limited the findings. As was mentioned in Chapter 3, there were members of the opposite sex present in all interviews. The presence of men in the women's groups and women in the men's groups perhaps altered the topics that were discussed by the respondents. Further, the inclusion of two Americans in the composition of the group interviews may have affected the topics of conversation. Perhaps there are elements of family life that are as salient to family wellbeing as those identified in this study that were not discussed by the respondents as those topics were considered inappropriate to discuss in mixed company or with cultural outsiders.

Further, examinations of the interview transcripts revealed situations of dominant voices, hostile environments, and the influence of the facilitator on respondent's answers. All dynamics within the group interview are thought to influence what participants say (see Carey & Asbury, 2012; Farnsworth & Boon, 2010). For example in one of the group interviews with women in the Gaza Strip (refugee, Hamas), Camilia was particularly forceful in expressing her opinions, periodically dominating the discussion. Although it is unclear the extent to which Camilia's opinions swayed others' views, it is clear that the other women did not speak as often or as long as did Camilia – in effect relinquishing control of what was discussed over to the dominant voice.

Relatedly, in the non-refugee Gazan women's interview (Hamas) two respondents with strong personalities argued throughout the interview creating what Fransworth and Boon (2012) identify as a hostile environment. Throughout the interview the facilitator made comments such as "please ladies, you have to respect each other's turns," "ladies, ladies, the discussion has now gotten to a debate stage. We agreed in the beginning to have a constructive discussion," and "ladies, ladies please stop this debate. Niveen, please you have to listen to me, please. Um Aziz, please." Unfortunately, the facilitator had lost control of the interview to the degree that he was having difficulty controlling the discussion and maintaining a safe atmosphere. The majority of the interviews were free from this level of antagonism and, indeed, many respondents were able to voice differing opinions in a respectful manner.

For example, refugee men from the West Bank discussed at length whether or not an individual has enough control over his life to be able to effectively manage his time.

Lastly, there were instances where the facilitator from the Gaza Strip either responded to the participants' thoughts with his own opinion or phrased the question in such a way as to lead participants to specific answers. For example, Um Mohammad, a non-refugee woman from the Gaza Strip (Fateh), described the importance of religious commitment to overall quality of life only to be contradicted by the facilitator when he says "no, no" and then goes on to insert his own opinion. In the group interview consisting of non-refugee Gazan men (Fateh), the facilitator begins the interview with stating that a "good or bad life are left for you to define" but then immediately begins to list components the respondents may want to include ("finance, education, and so on"). Thus, in some instances the ability of the facilitator to create and maintain a supportive atmosphere was less than ideal. It is unknown the degree to which the respondents censored their views in response to Camila's dominate voice, the disagreement between Niveen and Um Aziz, or the facilitator's injection of his own opinion. Indeed these instances are a limitation to the study. However, both reading through the interview transcripts as well as my recollections from being present in the group interviews, the majority of the respondents appeared to appreciate the opportunity to talk about their situation and express their opinions freely, particularly to non-Palestinians.

**Application and Future Studies**

Despite these limitations, the findings can be applied to those working directly with Palestinians and to politicians and policy makers. Clinicians and programmers can use these findings to better inform their understanding of what life is like for Palestinian families, what they desire, and what family wellbeing means to them. For example, programs aimed at promoting family wellbeing should include mechanisms for supporting the educational attainment of all family members, and perhaps, in particular uneducated mothers. Additionally, practitioners should also be sensitive to the importance of

connection and autonomy within family life – developing programs that support both of these values. Finally, programs aimed at economic growth would do well to provide and create sustainable job opportunities for Palestinian men.

Policy makers can use the findings relative to the impact of the political context on Palestinian family life to advocate for changes in policies and political stances. According to these participants, the greatest barriers to families' attaining a good life are conditions in the political context – checkpoints, the siege on the Gaza Strip, internal dispute among Palestinian political parties, etc. Thus, interventions aimed at enhancing the quality of family life for Palestinians would be most effective if they are directed at changing the conditions in the political domain. Policies aimed at the removal of the Israeli occupation (and its many restrictions on movement) and the creation of sustainable economic development within the territory would go a long way to supporting the health and wellbeing of Palestinian families.

Future studies can build upon these findings in two specific ways. First, future studies should examine how the elements of family life described here change over time. Particularly among the men, there were discussions of the changing role of women in the society. It would be of interest to see if indeed a cultural shift in women's roles affects how men and women describe family wellbeing. Additionally, changes in the political context (both freeing and further constraining) would likely impact the ability of families to live out cultural values. Documenting the influence of a changing political context on family life would help to situate these findings within their historical period. Attending to the impacts of time on understandings of family wellbeing would provide a more complete picture of the dynamic nature of human experience.

Related to time, future studies should examine how generational differences influence understandings of family wellbeing. To what degree does each generation subscribe to these core values? Do differences between men and women's views on family life become more pronounced or do

they converge with each new generation? This study examined the voices of one cohort of Palestinian adults. Perhaps the salience of family life and the elements that are important are different for adolescents or those firmly in the middle years of life. Likely it is one's position within both a specific historical period and a specific developmental phase that contributes to the nuances with which individuals describe family wellbeing. Nevertheless, this study provides a needed first look at the relative role of family life as it is situated within broad conceptualizations of quality of life. These findings can be viewed as a foundation upon which future studies can build upon.

# List of References

Abu-Lughold, L. (2002). Do Muslim women really need saving?: An anthropological reflection on cultural relativism and its others. *American Anthropologists, 104*(3), 783-791.

al-Khateeb, S. (2007). The oil boom and its impact on women and families in Saudi Arabia. In Alsharekh (Ed.) *The gulf family: Kinship, policies, and modernity* (pp. 83-108). London: Middle East Institute.

al-Krenawi, A., & Graham, J. R. (2011). The impact of political violence on psychosocial functioning of individuals and families: The case of Palestinian adolescents. *Child and Adolescent Mental Health, 17*(1), 14-22.

Alsharekh, A. (2007). *The gulf family: Kinship, policies, and modernity*. London: Middle East Institute.

Anderson, S. A., & Sabatelli, R. M. (1990). Differentiating differentiation and individuation: Conceptual and operation challenges. *The American Journal of Family Therapy, 18,* 32-50.

Ata, I. W. (1986). *The West Bank Palestinian family*. London: KPI.

Attir, M. O. (1985). Ideology, value changes, and women's social position in Libyan society. In W. Fernea (Ed.) *Women and the family in the Middle East: New voice of change* (pp. 121-133) Austin: University of Texas Press.

Ayesh, M. M. (2002). *Occupied families: A study of Palestinian families living under Israeli Occupation*. University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects. http://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_chanhonoproj/510.

Barakat, H. (1985). The Arab family and the challenge of social transformation. In W. Fernea (Ed) *Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voice of Change* (pp. 27-48). Austin: University of Texas Press.

Barber, B. K. (2001). Political violence, social integration, and youth functioning: Palestinian youth from the Intifada. *Journal of Community Psychology, 29*(3), 259-280.

Barber, B. K. (2009). Glimpsing the complexity of adolescents' experiences with political violence. In B. K.

Barber (Ed.), *Adolescents and war: How youth deal with political violence* (pp. 3-32). New York: Oxford University Press.

Barber, B. K. (2013). The experience of youth with political conflict: Challenging notions of resilience and encouraging research refinement. *Journal of Child Psychology and Psychiatry, (54)*4, 461-473.

Barber, B. K. (in press). Research on youth and political conflict: Where is the politics? *Child Development Perspectives.*

Barber, B. K., Buehler, C. (1996). Family cohesion and enmeshment: Different constructs, different effects. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 58*(2), 433-441.

Barber, B. K., McNeely, C., Olsen, J. A., Spellings, C., & Belli, R. (2013). Effect of chronic exposure to humiliation on wellbeing in the occupied Palestinian territory: An event-history analysis. *Lancet*, *382*, S7.

Barber, B. K., McNeely, & C., Spellings. C. R. (2012). Role of political factors in wellbeing and quality of life during long-term constraints and conflict: An initial study. *Lancet, 380,* S17.

Barber, B. K., & Olsen, J. A. (2009). Positive and negative psychosocial functioning after political conflict: Examining adolescents of the first Palestinian intifada. In B. K. Barber (Ed.), *Adolescents and war: How youth deal with political violence* (pp. 207-237). New York: Oxford University Press.

Barber, B. K., & Schluterman, J. M. (2009). An overview of the empirical literature on adolescence and political violence. In B. K. Barber (Ed.), *Adolescents and war: How youth deal with political violence* (pp. 35-61). New York: Oxford University Press.

Barber, B. K., Stolz, H. E., & Olsen, J. A. (2005). Parental support, behavioral control, and psychological control: Assessing relevance across time, method, and culture. *Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 70*(4).

Batniji R., Rabaia, Y., Nguyen-Gillham, V., Giacaman, R., Sarraj, E., Punamäki, R-L., Saab, H., Boyce, W.

(2009). Health as human security in the occupied Palestinian territory. *The Lancet, 373* (9669), 1133-1143. doi: 10.1016/S0140-6736(09)60110-0.

Baumrind, D. (1966). Effects of authoritative parental control on child behavior. *Child Development, 37*(4), 887-907.

Baumrind, D. (2012). Authoritative parenting revisited: History and current status. In R. E. Larzelere, A. S. Morris, & A. W. Harrist (Eds.) *Authoritative parenting: Synthesizing nurturance and discipline for optimal child development* (pp. 11-34). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Betancourt, T. S., Agnew-Blais, J., Gilman, S. E., Williams, D. R., & Ellis, B. H. (2010). Past horrors, present struggles: The role of stigma in the association between war experiences and psychosocial adjustment among former child soldiers in Sierra Leone. *Social Science and Medicine 70*(1), 17-26.

Betancourt, T. S., Speelman, L., Onyango, G., & Bolton, P. (2009). A qualitative study of mental health problems among children displaced by war in Northern Uganda. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 46*(2), 238-256.

Bolton, P. (2001). Local perceptions of the mental health effects of the Rwandan genocide. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 189*(4), 243-248.

Boothby, N. G., & Knudsen, C. M. (2000). Children of the gun. *Scientific American, 6*(282), 60-65.

Briggs, C. L. (2003). Interviewing, power/knowledge, and social inequality. In J. A. Holstein & J. F Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 495-506). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Broderick, C. B. (1993). *Understanding family process: Basics of family systems theory.* New York, NY: Sage Publications.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development.* Cambridge , MA: Harvard University Press.

Bronfenbrenner, U. (1989). Ecological systems theory. In R. Vasta (Ed.), *Annuals of child development* (Vol. 6, pp. 187-249). Greenwich, CT: JAI.

Carey, M. A., & Asbury, J-E. (2012). *Focus group research.* Walnut Creek , CA: Left Coast Press

Carter, B. C., & McGoldrick, M. (1999). The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives. In B. C. Carter & M. McGoldrick (Eds.), *The expanded family life cycle: Individual, family, and social perspectives* (pp. 1-26). Boston: Ally & Bacon.

Charmaz, K. (2003). Qualitative interviewing and grounded theory analysis. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.) *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 311-330). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Charmaz, K. (2000). Grounded theory: Objectivist and constructivist methods. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd ed., pp. 509-536). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Clarke, A. E. (2005). *Situational analysis: Grounded theory after the postmodern turn.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Clark, R. (1973). *Ellen Shallow.* Chicago: Follett.

Cohen, A. B. (2009). Many forms of culture. *American Psychologists, 64*(3), 194-204.

Conger, R. D., Elder, G. H., Jr., Lorenz, F. O., Conger, K. J., Simons, R. L., Whitbeck, L. B., Huck, S. & Melby, J. N. (1990). Linking economic hardship to marital quality and instability. *Journal of Marriage and Family,* 52, 643-656.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques (*3rd *ed.).* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Creswell, J. W. (2007). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Cutrona, C. E., Russell, D. W., Abraham, W. T., Gardner, K. A., Melby, J. N., Bryant, C. &

Conger, R. D. (2003). Neighborhood context and financial strain as predictors of marital interaction and marital quality in African American couples. *Personal Relationships*, *10*, 389-409.

Daly, K. J. (2007). *Qualitative methods for family studies and human development.* Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.

Dupree, N. H. (2004). The family during crisis in Afghanistan. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 35* (2), 312-331.

Eggerman, M., & Panter-Brick, C. (2010). Suffering, hope, and entrapment: Resilience and cultural values in Afghanistan. *Social Science and Medicine, 71(*1-2), 71-83.

Elder, G. (1981). History and the family: The discovery of complexity. *Journal of Marriage and the Family,* 43, 489-514.

Ellis, C., & Berger, L. (2003). Their story/my story/our story: Including the researcher's experience in interview research. In J. A. Holstein & J. F Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 467-494). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Ellsworth, E. (1994). Why doesn't the feel empowering? Working through the repressive myths of critical pedagogy. In L. Stone (Ed.) *The Feminist Education Reader* (pp. 300-327). New York: Routledge.

El Saadawi, N. (2007). *The hidden face of Eve: Women in the Arab world.* New York: Palgrave MacMillian.

Epstein, N. B., Baldwin, L. M., Bishop, D. S. (1983). The McMaster Family Assessment Device. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 9*(2), 171-180.

Engineer, A. A. (1992). *Rights of women in Islam.* London: C. Hurst & Company.

Farnsworth, J., & Boon, B. (2010). Analysis of group dynamics within the focus group. *Qualitative Research, 10,* 605-642.

Farsoun, S. K. (2004). *Culture and customs of the Palestinians.* Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Fincham, F. D., & Beach, S. R. (2010). Marriage in the new millennium: A decade in review. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 72*, 630-649.

Giacaman, R., & Johnson, P. (2002). *Inside Palestinian households: Initial analysis of a community-based household survey.* Birzeit, Palestine: Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.

Giacaman, R., & Johnson, P. (forthcoming). My life is Prison: The triple captivity of wives and mothers of Palestinian political prisoners. *Journal of Middle East Women's Studies.*

Giacaman, R., Mataria, A., Nguyen-Gillham, V., Abu Safieh, R., Stefanini, A., & Chatterji, S. (2007). Quality of life in the Palestinian context: An inquiry in war-like conditions. *Health Policy, 81*(1), 68-84.

Giacaman, R., Rabaia, Y., Nguyen-Gillham, V., Batniji, R., Punamäki, R-L., & Summerfield, D., (2010). Mental health, social distress, and political oppression: The case of the occupied Palestinian territory. *Glob Public Health,* 1-13. doi: 10.1080/17441692.2010.528443.

Giacaman R, Rabaia Y, Nguyen-Gillham V, Batniji R, Punamäki RL, Summerfield D. (2011). Mental health, social distress and political oppression: The case of the occupied Palestinian territory. *Global Public Health 6*(5), 547-559.

Giacaman, R., Shannon, H. S., Saab, H., Aray, N. & Boyce, W. (2006). Individual and collective exposure to political violence: Palestinian adolescents coping with conflict. *European Journal of Public Health, 17*(4), 361-368.

Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. New York: Aldine.

Green, R. J., Werner, P. D. (1996). Intrusiveness and closeness – caregiving: Rethinking the concept of family "enmeshment." *Family Process, 35*(2), 115-136.

Guttmann-Steinmetz, S., Shoshani, A., Farhan, K., Aliman, M., & Hirschberger, G. (2011). Living in the crossfire: Effects of exposure to political violence on Palestinian and Israeli mothers and children. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 36(1),* 71-78.

Hammani, R. (2002). Divisions of labor inside the household. In R. Giacaman & P. Johnson (Eds.) *Inside*

*Palestinian households: Initial analysis of a community-based household survey* (pp. 163-172). Birzeit, Palestine: Institute of Women's Studies at Birzeit University.

Hasso, F. S. (2011). *Consuming Desires: Family Crisis and the State in the Middle East*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Hiltermann, J. R. (1998). The women's movement during the Uprising. In S. Sabbagh (Ed.), *Palestinian women of Gaza and the West Bank* (pp. 41-52). Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Hochschild, A., & Machung, A. (2012). *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home.* New York: Penguin Books.

Hochschild, A., & Machung, A. (1989). *The Second Shift: Working Families and the Revolution at Home.* New York: Penguin Books.

Holstein, J. A., & Gubrium, J. F. (2003). *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Hui, C. H., & Triandis, H. C. (1986). Individualism and collectivism: A study of cross-cultural researchers. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 17,* 225-248.

Hunter, F. R. (1993). *The Palestinian uprising. A war by other means*. Berkeley: California Press.

Hyde, J. S. (2007). *Half the Human Experience (7th Ed.).* Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin Company.

Institute for Middle East Understanding (2012). Fact sheet: Operation Cast Lead. Retrieved from http://imeu.net/news/article0021968.shtml

Jabbra, N. W. (2004). Family change in Lebanon's Biqa valley: What were the results of the Civil War?. *Journal of Comparative Family Studies, 35*(2), 259-270.

Jackson, A. P., Brooks-Gunn, J., Huang, C., & Glassman, M. (2000). Single mothers in low-wage jobs: Financial strain, parenting, and preschoolers outcomes. *Child Development, 71*(5), 1409-1423.

Johnson, P. (2006). Living together in a nation in fragments: Dynamics of kin, place and nation. In L.

Taraki (Ed.), *Living Palestine: Family survival, resistance, and mobility under occupation* (pp. 51-102). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Jones, J. (1985). *Labor of love, labor of sorrow: Black women, work, and the family, from slavery to the present.* Philadelphia, PA: Basic Books.

Kagitcibasi, C. (1996). The autonomous-related self: A new synthesis. *European Psychologists, 1,* 180 - 186.

Kagitcibasi, C. (2005). Autonomy and relatedness in cultural context: Implications for self and family. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology, 36,* 403-422.

Kagitcibasi, C. (2013). Adolescent autonomy-relatedness and the family in cultural context: What is optimal? *Journal of Research on Adolescence, 23(2),* 223-235.

Knapp, S. J., & Lott, B. (2010). Forming the central framework for a science of Marital Quality. *Journal of Family Theory and Review, 2,* 316-333.

Kuttab, E. (2006). The paradox of women's work: Coping crisis and family survival. In Taraki (Ed.) *Living Palestine: Family survival, resistance, and mobility under occupation* (pp. 231-274). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

LaRossa, R. (2005). Grounded theory methods and qualitative family research. *Journal of Marriage and Family 67,* 837-857.

Lichter, D. T. & Carmalt, J. H. (2009). Religion and marital quality among low-income couples. *Social Science Research*, *38*, 168-187.

Lopez, W. D., Graham, L. F., Reardon, C., Reyes, A. M., Reyes, A., & Padilla, M. (2012). "No jobs, more crime. More jobs less crime": Structural factors affecting the health of Latino men in Detroit. *Journal of Men's Health, 9*(4), 255-260.

Lybarger, L. D. (2007). *Identity and religion in Palestine. The struggle between Islamism and Secularism in the occupied territories.* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Mabuchi, K. (2003). The meaning of motherhood during the first intifada: 1987-1993. (Unpublished master's thesis). St. Anthony's College: University of Oxford.

Manzi, C., Vignoles, V. L., Regalia, C., & Scabini, E. (2006). Cohesion and enmeshment revisited: Differentiation, identity, and well-being in two European cultures. *Journal Marriage and Family, 68*(3), 673-689.

Markus, H. R., & Kitayama, S. (1991). Culture and self: Implications for cognition, emotion, and motivation. *Psychological Review, 98,* 224-253.

Mataria, A., Giacaman, R., Stefanini, A., Naidoo, N., Kowal, P., & Chatterji, S. (2009). The quality of life of Palestinians living in chronic conflict: Assessments and determinants. *European Journal of Health and Economics 10*, 93-101.

Merrilees, C. E., Cairns, E., Goeke-Morey, M. C., Schermerhorn, A. C., Shirlow, P., & Cummings, M. (2012). Associations between mothers' experiences with the troubles in Northern Ireland and mothers' and children's psychological functioning: The moderating role of social identity. *Journal of Community Psychology, 39*(1), 60-75.

McGillivray, M. (2007). Human well-being: issues, concepts, and measures. In M. McGillivray (Ed.), *Human well-being: Concepts and measurement* (pp. 1-22). Palgrave: New York.

McKay, S. (2005). Girls as "weapons of terror" in Northern Uganda and Sierra Leone rebel fighting forces. *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism, 28*(5), 385-397.

McNeely, C., Barber, B. K., Spellings, C.R, Giacaman, R., Arafat, C., Daher, M., El Sarraj, E., Abu Mallouh, M. (in press). Health and suffering admist political conflict in the occupied Palestinian territories: Disaggregating dimensions and linkages.

Milkie, M. A., Raley, S. B., & Bianchi, S. M. (2009). Taking on the second shift: Time allocations and time pressures of U.S. parents with preschoolers. *Social Forces, 88*(2), 487-518.

Miller, K. E., Omidian P., Yaqubi A., Quraishy A.S., Nasiry S., Karyar N.M. (2006). The Afghan Symptom

Checklist: A culturally grounded approach to mental health assessment in a conflict zone. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, 76*, 423–433.

Miller, K. E., & Rasmussen, A. (2010). War exposure, daily stressors, and mental health in conflict and post-conflict settings: Bridging the divide between trauma-focused and psychosocial frameworks. *Social Science and Medicine, 70*(1), 7-16.

Moghadam, V. M. (2002). Islamic feminism and its discontents: Toward a resolution of the debate. *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 27*(4), 1136-1171.

Mollica, R. F. (2006). *Healing Invisible Wounds: Paths to Hope and Recovery in a Violent World.* Orlando, FL: Harcourt.

Moors, A. (1995). *Women, property, and Islam: Palestinian experiences, 1920-1990.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moos, R. (1974). *The social climate scales: An overview.* Pal Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Morgan, D. L. (1998). Practical strategies for combining qualitative and quantitative methods: Applications to health research. *Qualitative Health Research, 8,* 362 – 376.

Mohsen, S. K. (1985). New images, old reflections: Working middle-class women in Egypt. In W. Fernea (Ed) *Women and the family in the Middle East: New voice of change* (pp. 56-71) Austin: University of Texas Press.

Nahleh, A. L. (2006). Six families: Survival mobility in times of crisis. In Taraki (Ed.) *Living Palestine: Family survival, resistance, and mobility under occupation* (pp. 103-184). Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Nahleh, L. A., & Giacaman, R. (2002). Preferences for numbers and sex of grandchildren and expectations in old age. In R. Giacaman & P. Johnson (Eds.), *Inside Palestinian Households: Initial Analysis of a Community- Based Household Survey* (pp. 125-131). Institute of Women's Studies, Birzeit University: Birzeit, Palestine.

Olson, D. H. (1993). Circumplex model of marital and family systems: Assessing family functioning. In F. Walsh (Ed.) *Normal family processes*(2nd ed., pp. 104-137). New York: Guilford Press.

Olson, D. (2011). FACES IV and the circumplex model: Validation study. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 37* (1), 64-80.

Olson, D. H., & Gordall, D. M. (2003). Circumplex model of marital and family systems. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity.* (3rd ed., pp. 514-548). New York: Guilford Press.

Panter-Brick, C., Goodman, A., Tol, W., & Eggerman, M. (2011). Mental health and childhood adversities: A longitudinal study in Kabul, Afghanistan. *Journal of American Academy of Child Adolescent Psychiatry, 50(4),* 349-363.

Peteet, J. M. (1991). *Gender in crisis: Women and the Palestinian Resistance Movement*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Punamäki, R. L., Qouta, S., & El Sarraj, E. (1997). Models of traumatic experiences and children's psychological adjustment: The roles of perceived parenting and the children's own resources and activity. *Child Development, 64,* 718-728.

Qouta, S., Punamäki, R. L., Sarraj, E. E. (2008). Child development and family mental health in war and military violence: The Palestinian experience. *International Journal of Behavioral Development, 32* (4), 310-321. doi: 10.1177/0165025408090973

Reinharz, S., & Chase, S. E. (2003). Interviewing women. In J. A. Holstein & J. F Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 73-90). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roy, S. (1995). *The Gaza Strip: The political economy of de-development.* . Washington, D.C.: Institute for Palestine Studies.

Roy, S. (2007). *Failing peace: Gaza and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict*. London: Pluto Press.

Rubenberg, C. A. (2001). *Palestinian Women: Patriarchy and resistance in the West Bank*. Boulder:

LynneRienner Publishers.

Sayigh, R. (1985). Encounters with Palestinian women under Occupation. In W. Fernea (Ed) *Women and the Family in the Middle East: New Voice of Change* (pp. 191-208) Austin: University of Texas Press.

Scabini, E. (1985). *Family organization between crisis and development.* Milano, Italy: Franco Angeli.

Schwalbe, M. L., & Wolkomir, M. (2003). Interviewing men. In J. A. Holstein & J. F Gubrium (Eds.), *Inside interviewing: New lenses, new concerns* (pp. 55-72). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2003). Liberating voices: The political implications of Palestinian mothers narrating their loss. *Women's Studies International Forum, 26*(5), 391-407.

Sharify-Funk, M. (2008). *Encountering the transnational: Women, Islam, and the politics of interpretation.* Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Sharoni, S. (1995). *Gender and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: The politics of women's resistance*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Spellings, C. R., Barber, B. K., & Olsen, J. A. (2012). Political activism of Palestinian youth: Exploring individual, parental, and ecological factors. *Journal of Marriage and Family, 74,* 1084-1100.

Stark, L., Ager, A., Wessells, M., & Boothby, N. (2009). Developing culturally relevant indicators of reintegration for girls formally associated with armed groups in Sierra Leone using a participative ranking methodology. *Intervention, 7*(1), 4-16.

Stevenson, B., & Wolfers, J. (2008). Economic growth and subjective well-being. Reassessing the Easterlin Paradox. Brookings papers on Economic Activity, Economic Studies Program, The Brookings Institution, vol. 39 (1, Spring), 1-102.

Stinnett, N. & DeFrain, J. (1985). *Secrets of strong families.* Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company.

Stinnett, N., Stinnett, N., DeFrain, J., & DeFrain, N. (1997). *Good families*. New York: Doubleday.

Stokke, L. V. (2001). Marriage patterns. In J. Pedersen, S. Randall, & M. Khawaja (Eds.), *Growing Fast:*

*The Palestinian Populations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip* (pp. 71-96). Fafo: Norway.

Summerfield, D. (2000). Childhood, war, refugeedom, and "trauma": Three core questions for mental health professionals. *Transcultural Psychiatry, 37*, 417-433.

Suh, E. M., & Oshi, S. (2002). Subjective well-being across cultures. *Online Readings in Psychology and Culture, Unit 10*. Retrieved from *http://scholarworks.gvsu.edu/orpc/vol10/iss1.*

Taraki, L. (2006). *Living Palestine: Family survival, resistance, and mobility under occupation.* Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.

Tay, L., & Diener, E. (2011). Needs and subjective well-being around the world. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology,* 101(2), 354-365.

Tessler, M. (1994). *A history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Treacher, A. (2003). Reading the other: Women, feminism, and Islam. *Studies in Gender and Sexuality, 4*(1), 59-71.

Triandis, H. C. (1996). The psychological measurement of cultural syndromes. *American Psychologists, 51,* 407-415.

Triandis, H. C. (2000). Cultural syndromes and subjective well-being. In E. Diener and M. Suh (Eds.) *Culture and Subjective Well-Being* (13-36). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press

United Nations (2013). Family. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/globalissues/family/.

Vaaler, M. L., Ellison, C. G., & Powers, D. A. (2009). Religious influences on the risk of marital dissolution. *Journal of Marriage and Family,* 71, 917-934.

Vandello, J. A., & Cohen, D. (1999). Patterns of individualism and collectivism across the United States. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 77*, 279-292.

Voyandoff, P. (2004). Implications of work and community resources and demands for marital quality. *Community, Work and Family*, 7(3), 311-325.

Walsh, F. (2006). *Strengthening family resilience* (2nd ed.). New York: Guilford Press.

Walsh, F. (2012). Family resilience: Strengths forged through adversity. In F. Walsh (Ed.), *Normal family processes: Growing diversity and complexity* (pp. 399-427). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

White, J. M., & Klein, D. M. (2002). *Family theories.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

WHOQOL Group (1998). The World Health Organization quality of life assessment (QHOQOL): Development and general psychometric properties. *Social Science and Medicine, 46*(12), 1569-1585.

Williamson, J., & Robinson, M. (2006). Psychosocial interventions, or integrated programming for well being. *Intervention, 4*(1), 4-25.

Zayzafoon, L. B. Y. (2005). *The production of the Muslim woman: Negotiating text, history, and ideology.* Oxford: Lexington Books.

# Appendix

**Appendix A:**

**Table 1**

Table 1.

*Sample Characteristics of Participants from PAL Phase 1 (N=68)*

| | Range | | Average/ Percentage | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Characteristics | Females | Males | Females | Males |
| Age (years) | 20-49 | 21-53 | 32.2 | 34.8 |
| Marital Status | | | | |
| Married | | | 71% | 85% |
| Single | | | 23% | 15% |
| Divorced | | | 6% | 0% |
| Employed | | | 49% | 55% |

## Appendix B:

## List of Open and Axial Codes from Women's Interviews

**Open Codes (371)**

Abandoning children - emotionally
Abandoning children and family - financially
Abandoning family - physically
Abused by spouse
Acting independently from family
Arranging marriages
Avoiding debt
Avoiding ignorance in a spouse
Balancing life leads to psychological wb
Balancing work and family
Barriers to family closeness (geographically)
Bearing children and economic wb
Bearing daughters
Becoming a second wife
Being a single-parent
Being a widower with children
Being abused
Being abused by siblings
Being affected by the stressors of life
Being an orphan with one parent
Being connected to one's family
Being constrained because of the political situation
Being content
Being denied ability to marry because of parents
Being dependent on children (financially)
Being divorced
Being divorced as negative
Being forced into marriage
Being influenced by family of origin in raising children
Being injured
Being lost
Being married
Being married (not always a good thing)
Being married at the right time
Being non-religious leads to family problems
Being overloaded with family life
Being patient with family members
Being physically separated from spouse
Being separated from family
Being separated from husband
Being separated from family
Being separated from family members
Being separated from spouse
Being sheltered by family
Being successful because your kids are
Being told what to do (as a husband)
Being too dependent on family
Being unmarried
Both parents having good education
Caring for siblings
Children's status as a reflection of the parent's wellbeing
Children asserting authority
Children succeeding in education and employment
Choosing political loyalties over family
Choosing the right spouse
Choosing unwisely
Collective nature of family provision
Conditions surrounding marriage affect wb
Conflict over money
Connected to family
Controlling children
Cutting family connections
Dangers of aspirations for girls
Deciding on the right time to marry (after education)
Defining family
Delaying childbearing to focus on career
Delaying educational goals for the family
Delivering appropriate supervision for children
Depending on family
Describing healthy family relationships
Desire to give children same opportunities as self
Desiring husband to be employed
Desiring to provide for children
Desiring to show family continuity in political identity
Developing children

Differing political views among family members leads to lack of family cohesion
Dissertation of culture
Disharmony in families due to the political situation
Dividing the family unit
Divorce as a negative
Domineering wife
Dying husband - separation from spouse
Economic overlap
Economic situation related to family life
Economic stability leading to opportunity to marry
Education as the gateway to a good life
Education overlap
Elevating women in society
Encouraging children to complete education
Engaging in conflict due to political differences
Engaging in leisure activities with children
Engaging in multiple social roles
Engaging in serial monogamy
Experiencing conflict between parents
Experiencing childhood physical abuse
Experiencing family abuse
Experiencing family violence
Experiencing parental domestic violence
Experiencing the consequences of independence
Exploiting family for personal gain
Expressing love between spouses
Failing to fulfill breadwinner role
Failing to provide and having small children
Failing to providing for children's education
Failing to teach children
Family and education
Family connection
Family connection (geographically)
Family stability
Fearing for children's safety
Fearing for the safety of your children
Fearing safety of children
Feeling along and isolated
Feeling support from family members
Feeling the constraints of politics on family's economic wb
Feeling torn between financially providing for children and physically protection
Feelings of safety in the family (outside forces)
Fighting against cultural values
Fighting between family members
Fighting between spouses
Fighting within families
Fighting within the family
Finding a soul mate
Finding compatibility between spouses
Finishing education first before marrying
Forced into marriage at a young age
Getting divorced
Getting married leading to a good life
Getting support from family to reach goals
Giving and receiving support among family members
Giving family planning education
Giving support to family members particularly the father/husband
Good relationships between husband and wife lead to wb in all aspects of life
Hating family members
Having a good marriage
Having a supportive spouse
Having children
Having children compared to financial situation
Having compatibility between spouses
Having consensus on all aspects of life (husband and wife)
Having healthy family interactions
Having high standards for a husband
Having mutual understanding between spouses
Having religious children leads to happiness
Having the financial ability to choose to stay home with children
Husband dying
Misbalancing work and family
Imparting educational values to children
Inability to fulfill family obligations
Inability to have children and not educated
Inability to protect family
Inability to provide for children
Inability to provide for children's education
Inability to provide for kids - basic needs and education
Inquiring about political identity in families
Instilling values of helping others in children
Intergeneration transmission of lack of education
Intergenerational effects of domestic violence

Intergenerational effects of family life
Intergenerational effects of family conflict
Intergenerational transmission of education
Internal discord leads to brokenness
Investing in children's success
Lacking family cohesion or harmony
Lacking family cohesiveness
Lacking family harmony
Lacking family protection
Lack of geographic cohesion due to political situation
Lacking harmony between husband and wife
Lacking support from family in providing for children
Lacking emotional family cohesion
Lacking family signifies money problems
Lacking family solidarity
Lacking family support
Lacking family violence
Linking community and family
Linking economics and family
Linking economics and family
Linking economics and family life
Linking economics and starting a family
Linking economics employment and family
Linking economics to off time marriage
Linking economics, education, and family
Linking economics, employment, and providing for children
Linking education and family
Linking education and maturity for women
Linking education to marriage
Linking education and economics and family
Linking education and family
Linking education to family
Linking education, employment, and family
Linking employment and family
Linking employment to family
Linking family and community
Linking family and economics
Linking family and education
Linking family and education and employment
Linking family and employment
Linking family and mental health
Linking family and mental health
Linking family and politics
Linking family and religion
Linking family and sibling support and education
Linking family economics and politics
Linking family life and mental health
Linking family to economics
Linking family with community
Linking family with economics
Linking family, community, and education
Linking family, politics, and economics
Linking mental health and family
Linking personal, family, and education
Linking political to family
Linking politics and family
Linking politics and family (raising children)
Linking politics and family and mental health
Linking politics and family and mental health and education and economics
Linking politics and family life
Linking politics and family relationships
Linking politics to economics to family
Linking politics to economics to marriage
Linking politics to family
Linking politics, education, and family
Linking politics, family, and mental health
Linking politics, family, and mental heath
Linking providing for family and marriage
Linking religion and family
Linking to issues of safety
Linking to political
Linking work and family
Living an ambiguous lifestyle (marriage vs. divorced vs. separated)
Living in a healthy family
Living in a healthy family environment
Living in a healthy family of origin
Living in between divorce and marriage
Living in poverty
Living under constant threat of being evicted
Living with healthy family relationships
Loosing authority in the home
Loosing status in the society
Loving marriage
Making calculated financial decisions that puts children first
Marring at the appropriate age
Marring off time - early
Marring someone similar to yourself in social standing and religion
Marring someone whose job is risky
Marring too young

Marrying an educated person
Marrying an educated wife
Marrying at a young age
Marrying at an early age
Marrying educated husband
Marrying for love
Marrying off time
Marrying religious person lead to happiness
Marrying within ethnic and cultural group
Monitor children's behavior
Mutual love between spouses
No love in marriage
Not being supported by family
Overcoming barriers to get married
Overcoming the odds (struggling for the betterment of the kids)
Overlap with community support
Overlap with economics
Parenting
Parenting - support
Parents being educated as the gateway to children's future/gateway to raising children
Parents setting the emotional climate of the family
Paying attention to children
Perpetrating family violence
Persevering for the children
Persevering for the sake of the children
Personal satisfaction allows one to be supportive of family members (education)
Political constraints prompting family conflicts
Political identity affecting marriage choices
Political identity causing conflicts among family members
Political identity over family identity
Political situation creates vulnerable groups within families
Political situation dictates the lives that children leave and ability to provide children with specific comforts
Political, religion, economic stability leads to family stability
Politics (i.e. the wall) separating family members
Preferring males
Preventing daughters from education
Prioritizing the home and children
Protecting children
Protecting family members
Providing children with a good education
Providing education for children
Providing for children
Providing for children's education
Providing for children's education - culture change
Providing for children - emotionally
Providing for children economically
Providing for children is related to education
Providing for children till they grow up
Providing for extended family
Providing for family
Providing for parents
Providing parenting classes for women
Providing religious education
Provision of children's education
Putting personal aspiration aside to care for family
Qualifying the appropriate age of marriage
Quality of family life
Quality of parent-child relationship
Quality of parent-child relationship
Raising children
Raising children in a good way assumes you need 2 parents
Raising kids in a good way includes financially
Raising successful children
Receiving support from spouse
Receiving support from family - emotional support
Reflecting a traditional division of household labor
Remarrying
Reputation of the father affecting the family wellbeing intergenerational
Resolving marital conflict
Sacrificing for children
Saliency of being married and having children as a normal life trajectory
Satisfaction with spouse
Seeking public assistance
Seeking religious congruence in marriage
Selling children because of inability to provide for them
Sending children to school despite financial barriers
Sending financial support to children

Separation from family
Sharing in responsibility of raising children
Showing compassion to family and community
Showing empathy
Showing independence
Showing independence from one's family
Showing independence in decision making
Showing resilience
Showing resilience
Showing resolve as a couple
Splitting loyalties
Stability includes having children
Starting a family
Starting a family offsite
Struggling to decide whether or not to work
Struggling to provide for children
Succeeding in marriage leads to good finances
Success of children reflected on parents
Success of children reflects on parents
Suffering for the kids' sake
Suffering in marriage
Supernatural intervention
Support from extended family
Supporting husband
Supporting the education of family members
Supportive family environment
Supportive wife overcomes bad odds
Taking a village to raise a child
Taking initiative to help with family income
Taking on multiple responsibilities/roles
Teaching children
Teaching resilience in the face of family problem
Terrorizing children
Transmitting values of financially helping family members
Unable to fulfill parenting roles
Unable to provide for children
Understanding between spouses
Unemployed husband
Using marriage as a political statement
Using family terms to describe relationships among those in the community
Visiting family
Voicing the need to respect others political views
Waiting at home for a groom
Wondering without a purpose
Working father
Working two jobs to provide for children's education
Working wife out of desire

**Axial Codes/Family Codes (39)**

Abuse
Choosing the right spouse
Conflict between parents and spouse
Defining family
Family as a reflection of culture
Good parenting – providing for children
Husband/Wife role
Independence as a value
Linking community and family
Linking community, family and education
Linking economics/employment and family
Linking economics, education and family
Linking education and family
Linking mental health and family
Linking mental health and family – balancing
Linking personal characteristics affecting family life
Linking personal characteristics, family and education
Linking physical health and family
Linking politics and family
Linking politics, economics, and family
Linking politics, education, and family
Linking politics, family, and mental health
Linking politics, family, mental health, education and economics
Linking politics, religion, economics and family
Linking religion and family
Marital status
Parent-child relationship
Parent-child relationship – failure of children
Parent-child relationship – good parenting
Parent-child relationship – successful children
Parent-child relationship – poor parenting
Politics as a stressor in family life – losing home

Politics as a stressor in family life – fear and protection of children
Relationships with siblings
Relationship with spouse
Right time and way to marry
Right time to have children
Separation / connection with family – emotional
Separation / connection with family – structural

**Selective Codes**

The family environment: Connection and closeness
- Barriers to family connection: Constraints on mobility
- Barriers to family connection: The influence of political factions

Ideal conditions for successful marriages
- Educational attainment
- Employment and economic stability
- Autonomy
- Mutual understanding and compatibility
- Mutual support and love

Parenting: Provision of resources
- Material
- Education
- Autonomy and independence
- Protection and safety

**Appendix C:**

**List of Open and Axial Codes from Men's Interviews**

**Open Codes (287)**

Abandoning children
Accepting one's situation despite societal pressures
Ambiguity in marital status
Asserting authority as eldest brother
Bearing children leads to wb
Becoming a widow
Becoming a widow
Becoming an orphan
Becoming disconnected from one's family
Becoming homeless
Becoming unemployed hurts ability to provide for family
Being a drug addict affects family relationships violently
Being a selfless wife to conform to social standards of family
Being a widow
Being concerned for son's welfare
Being confident for the safety of children
Being distant from brother
Being independent from children (wife)
Being injured from war
Being isolated from family
Being jealous of other women (suspecting infidelity)
Being limited to the home
Being manipulated
Being married
Being married for women leads to happiness
Being only a housewife vs. being educated
Being raised in a good way
Being self-centered - being selfish to the point of violence
Being separated from one's family
Being sheltered by family of origin
Belief in god helps deal with family issues
Benefiting from the social standing of one's father
Becoming a widow
Brothers acting like strangers
Building on the success of one's parent
Caring for injured husband
Causing division in the family
Cheating brothers out of an inheritance
Choosing a husband based on his qualifications
Choosing a wife from a good family
Choosing not to have children because children are doomed to be cowards or in jail
Choosing not to help one's family
Choosing the right spouse
Choosing the right spouse doesn't always lead to happiness
Choosing the wrong spouse
Choosing to remain single because of political despair
Coming from a dysfunctional family
Coming from a poor family
Coming from a poor family doesn't determine ones fate
Coming from a respectful family
Coming from a rich family leads to happiness
Coming from feudal family
Coming from the same family doesn't lead to the same life
Commentating on the societal conditions that make it difficult for women
Commenting on the conditions surrounding a divorced woman
Conditions for getting married
Conditions for marrying a second wife
Conflict between husband and wife over wife's honor
Conflict between siblings
Continual cycle of ignorant parents raising ignorant children
Controlling sisters as an effect of raising boys with more freedom
Creating obedient children through religion
Cutting ties to one's brother
Defining an orphan
Defining community as part of family
Defining family in community terms
Demonstrating importance of having children

Describing characteristics of a good wife
Describing conditions for marriage and having children - at societal level
Describing family relationships as part of a broader societal statement
Describing health interactions between spouses
Describing how to have children
Describing importance of education for women
Describing political conditions that make living conditions with a large family difficult
Describing the second shift in unjust terms
Describing traditional marriage as ideal
Desiring for children to live in a world without fear of political conflict
Desiring to care (provide) for family
Discussing origins of patriarchal society
Disobeying husband (failure to conform to wife role)
Disrespecting husband
Dividing loyalties between parents
Dreaming of marriage (women)
Duty of wives to comfort husband
Economic condition affection mental health affecting family choices and quality
Economic dependency leads to submissiveness for women
Economic independence allows women to have own being
Economic independence brings up the level of respect between spouses (power dynamics go down)
Economic independence leads to marital happiness and stability
Economics ruining the mental health of a father
Encouraging husband to have second wife
Engaging in serial monogamy
Enjoying spending time with spouse
Expecting political conditions to affect happiness of newlyweds
Expressing desire to provide for children
Expressing regret for relying on charity
Facing barriers to marriage - economics and employment
Failing because of spouse
Failing to provide children with education
Failing to provide for children
Failing to provide for children's education because of economics
Failing to receive support from community
Failing to support family
Failure to provide for children leads to health problems
Family sacrificing for the cause leads to ill-being
Family surviving the war
Fearing no more for children's safety
Fearing for the safety of children
Feeling constrained by economic condition
Feeling content in family relationships
Feeling negative effects of parental separation
Fighting about wife's employment
Fighting with spouse
Finding relief in children embracing religious education
Focusing on creating a good and healthy family as the gateway to happiness
Getting a good life off the achievements of children
Getting married to complete religion
Getting married without education is a sign of settling
Getting to know husband
Giving children a religious education
Giving extreme examples of providing for family
Giving for the cause leads to misery
Giving women freedom leads to wb
Going against family wishes
Going to extreme measures to provide for family
Going to extremes for failing to provide for children
Going to extremes to provide for family
Government providing services allows men to worry less about how many things costs
Hating own children
Having 2 different mothers creates distance
Having a goal of educating son
Having a respectable wife, desirable wife
Having a wife and children and sound financial situation
Having children
Having children who do not respect parents
Having children with mental or physical disability
Having family members who are martyrs
Having good relations with family

Having good relations with family as part of having good relations with community
Having good relations with spouse
Having good relations with wife
Having good relations with wife and children
Having good relationships with family
Having harmony between spouses
Having it all - good job, family, friends, leisure
Having loyalty to family
Having many children
Having many children and not being able to provide for them
Having more children than one can afford
Having multiple wives as a symbol of economic status
Having own money as a source of power (wife)
Having parents as bad influences
Having physical injury from conflict
Having qualities of a good wife
Having respect from husband
Having spousal problems
Having stability in the home leads to wb
Having successful siblings
Having to choose between family members
Lack of personal fulfillment affecting family relationships
Lacking freedom in the family
Lacking independence from controlling siblings
Leaving family to provide for them
Leaving one's husband
Leaving school early to help provide for family
Linking mental health and family
Linking economics and family
Linking economics, mental health, and family
Linking education and caring for children
Linking education and family planning
Linking education and wife role
Linking education and wily qualities
Linking education, economics and family
Linking education, family, and social status
Linking employment and family
Linking employment, mental health, and family (marital status)
Linking family and community
Linking family and mental health
Linking mental health, economics, politics, and family
Linking physical health and family
Linking politics, family, and mental health
Linking politics family and education
Linking politics, community, and family
Linking politics, economics, and family
Linking politics, education, and rising children
Linking religion and family
Linking physical health, economics, and family
Living apart from wife
Living in harsh economic conditions doesn't allow for the luxury of time management
Living in mutual success (between spouses)
Living off the benefits of a father
Living off the benefits of one's family
Loosing eye due to political conflict affecting marriage choices
Loosing family due to political conditions
Losing money because of pride
Losing only son to death
Making children feel happy is part of parenting
Marital stability brings freedom
Marriage as essential to wb for women
Marrying an educated man
Marrying people from reputable families
Marrying someone as a last resort
Moving up the social ladder
Needing economic stability to focus on husband wife relationships
Needing father to chaperone life
Needing good political context to improve the family context
Needing government services to have a family
Needing money to afford multiple wives
Needing stable employment to provide for family
Needing to feel secure before starting a family
Needing to work 2 jobs to provide for family
Normality of marriage for women
Not having anyone to help you
Not needing education to have a happy marriage
Obeying husband
Owning a home leads to family stability
Parents exercising control over children
Placing family in substandard housing
Process of getting a divorce
Providing children with education
Providing children a good education
Providing children with education

Providing economically for family
Providing education for children
Providing extras for children
Providing for children
Providing for children's education
Providing for children makes a father happy
Providing for two families
Providing luxuries for family is not always that important
Putting more restraints on girls than boys
Qualifications for parents giving their daughter away
Raise children in a good way
Raising a child affects their wb
Raising children
Raising children to value unity
Raising children as a single parent (widow)
Raising children the right way leads to their success
Raising children to value respect
Raising girls and boys differently
Raising girls to be successful in college
Rising children
Receiving education affects one's children
Receiving support from brother
Receiving support from community
Receiving disrespect from children
Receiving support from community
Receiving support from spouse
Remaining single as a reflection of pessimism
Resenting wife
Reasons for becoming a second wife
Seeking refuge in father's home
Selling children to combat financial poverty\
Sending children to receive mental health treatment
Showing the importance of children's success
Spending time with children
Standing by one's husband
Stating hierarchy within the family for children's inheritance
Stresses of financial situation of family affecting physical health of wife
Success of children reflecting on parents
Suffering - losing solidarity between family members due to political situation
Supporting children
Supporting children in their education lead to a good life for the child
Supporting family and community members
Supporting spouses
Taking care of another wife's children
Teaching children honorable characteristics
Trying to live off the reputation of one's father
Turning to religion solves marital problems
Turning to religion to buffer against the effects of poverty - unable to provide for family
Unable to provide treatment for children for their physical illness
Using a family term to describe social relationships
Using example of son as reflection of the Pal people
Using family members to resolve disputes
Using family terms as a reflection of the society
Using family terms in relation to non-family members
Using family terms to describe Pal unity
Using family terms to describe relations with neighbors
Using family terms to describe society
Using family terms to describe social
Using family to symbolize broader ideal
Using the term girlfriend
Utilizing family connections
Visiting children in prison as a sign of political and social solidarity
Work and family burdens for women bring instability to families
Working so much you don't have time for friends or family

**Axial Codes/Family Codes (46)**

Becoming a parent
Being a bad wife
Being a good wife
Broadening definition of family
Characteristics of a husband/father
Children's status – orphan
Choosing a spouse
Conditions for marriage
Connection or isolation from family
Discussing family from abstract / societal view
Discussions of the role of women in families and society
Family as a stressor
Family relationships as part / a reflection of wellbeing in other domains
Healthy / dysfunctional family relationships
Linking community and family
Linking community and family – charity
Linking economics and family
Linking economics, employment and family
Linking economics, mental health and family
Linking education and family
Linking education, economics and family
Linking education, social status, and family
Linking employment and family
Linking employment, mental health, and family
Linking mental health and family
Linking mental health, economics, politics, and family
Linking physical health and family
Linking physical health, economics, and family
Linking politics and family
Linking politics and family – fear for children
Linking politics, community, and family
Linking politics, economics and family
Linking politics, family, and education
Linking politics, family, and mental health
Linking politics, physical health, and family
Linking religion and family
Marital quality
Marital status
Marital status – having multiple wives
Parent-child relationship
Parent-child relationship – characteristics of bad children
Parent-child relationship – characteristics of good children
Parent-child relationship – children benefiting from parents' success
Parent-child relationship – provision for children
Personal contentment
Relationship with siblings

**Selective Codes**

Ideal conditions for successful marriages
- Employment and economic stability
- Autonomy/freedom and independence
- Religious commitment
- Respect and harmony

Parenting: Provision of resources
- Material
- Respect

**Appendix D: Figures**

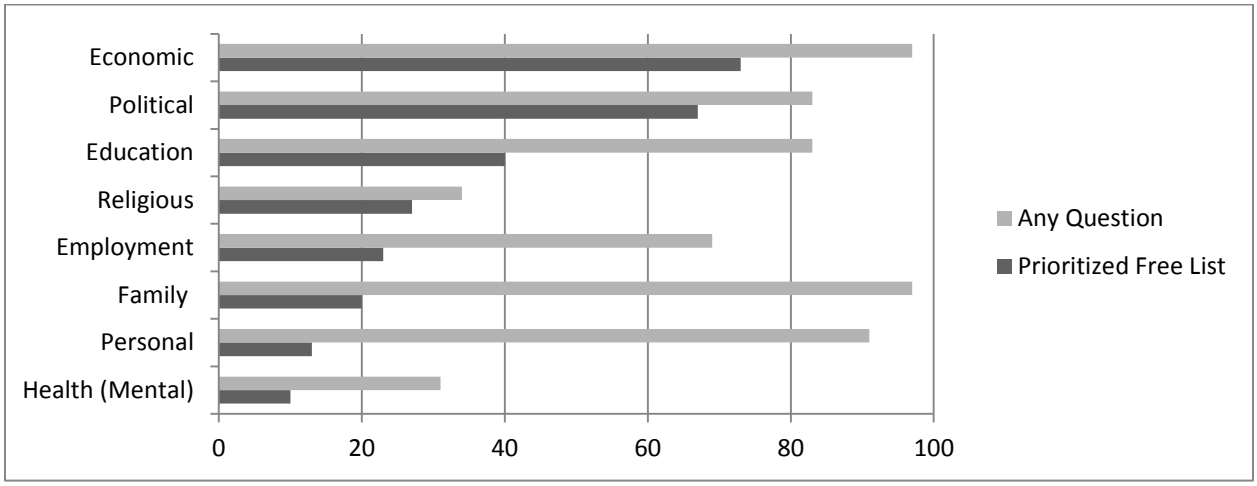


*Figure 1*. Proportions of Females Nominating Domains of Functioning

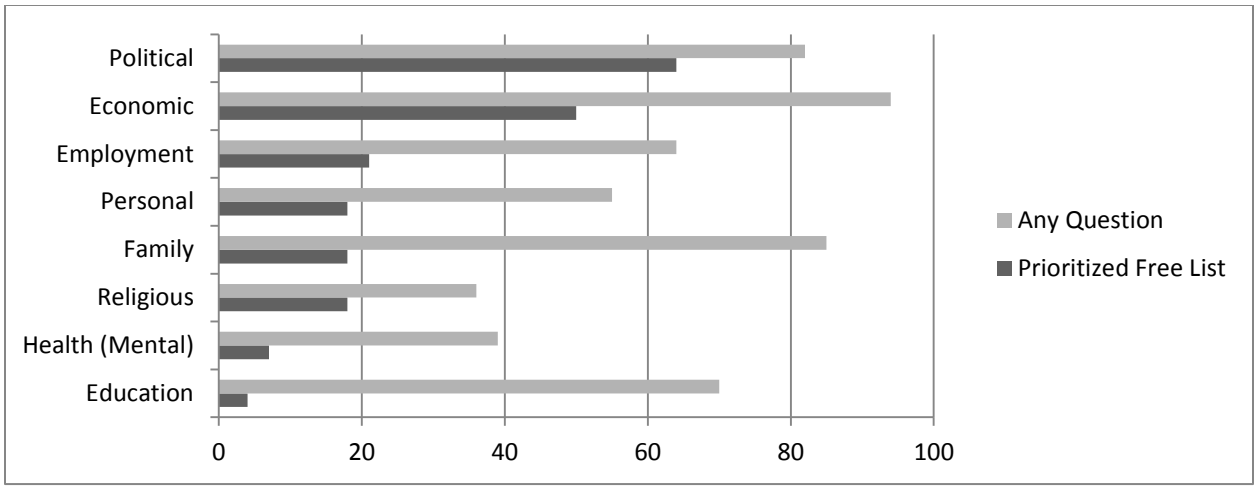


*Figure 2*. Proportions of Males Nominating Domains of Functioning

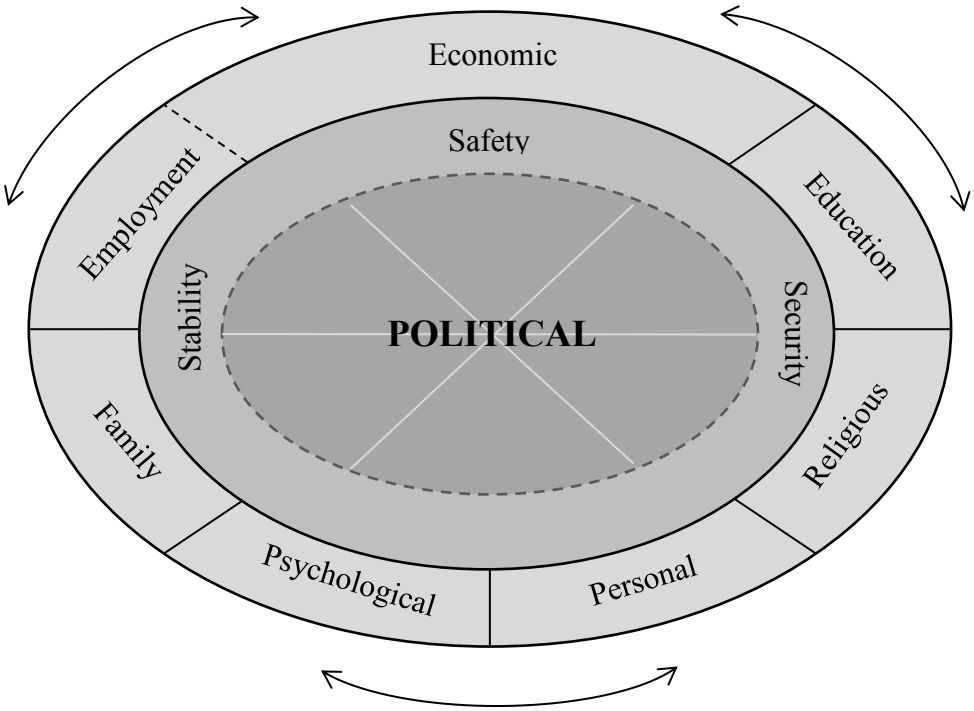


*Figure 3.* Data-Driven Model of Multiple Domains of Palestinian Adult Functioning (Barber et al., under review)

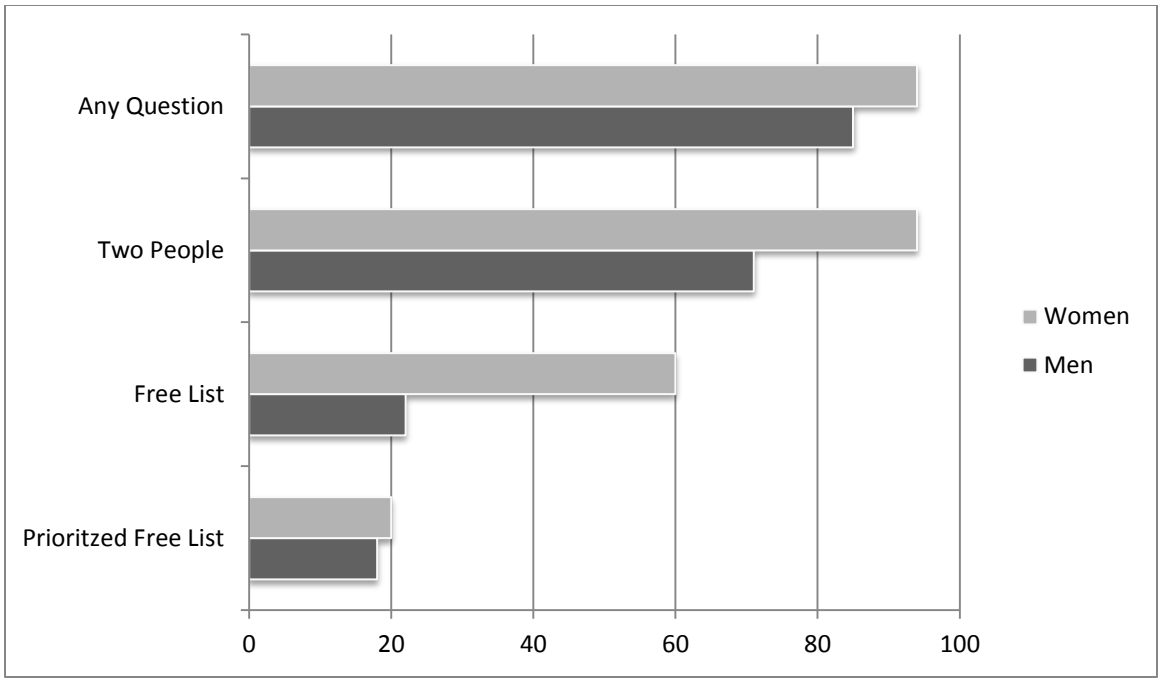


*Figure 4.* Proportion of Men and Women Citing Family Life, by Interview Task

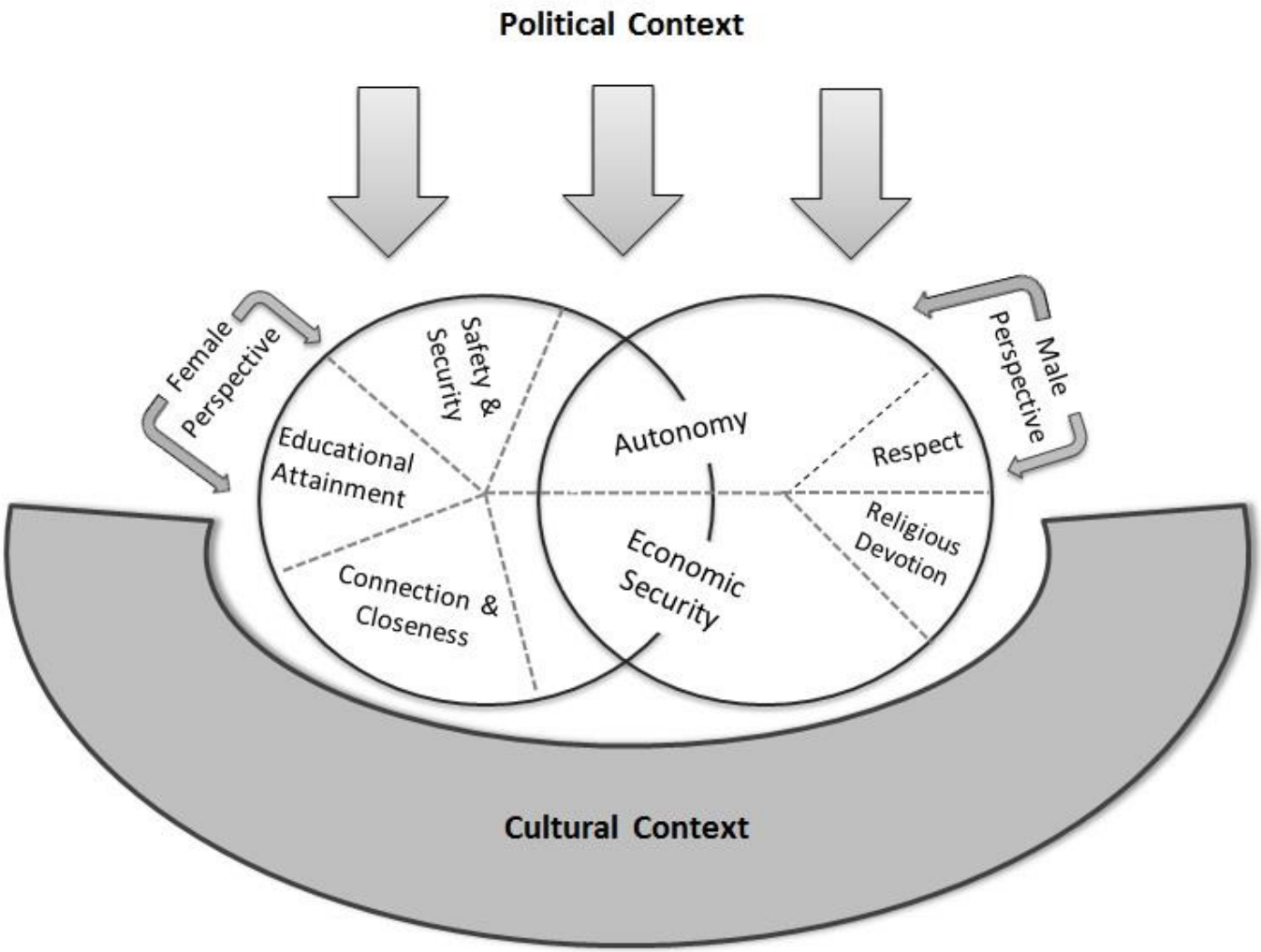


*Figure 5:* Proposed Model of Family Wellbeing in Context

**Vita**

Carolyn Reagh Spellings graduated in 2001 from Christ Presbyterian Academy in Nashville, Tennessee. She received her Bachelors of Science in 2006 and Masters of Science in 2009, both from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. Carolyn intends on using the skills she has learned in graduate school to teach undergraduate students about the research process in the social sciences.