Beyond the numbers: Implications of the Palestinian Female Election Quota for women in local government

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Beyond the Numbers: Implications of the Palestinian Female Election Quota for Women in Local Government

This thesis is presented in partial fulfilment of the degree of Bachelor of Arts Honours (Politics and International Relations)

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Abstract

Palestinian women have contributed a rich and diverse history of political participation amidst the complex and anarchic political landscape of Palestine. The informal contributions of Palestinian women have played an integral and significant role in democratisation, peace-building efforts and the progression of women's rights. Despite forging and maintaining an active political presence, the political roles of women have been largely informal, localised and heavily contested. The recent establishment of female election quotas have greatly progressed the formalisation of women's political roles, brought about an increase in political participation and the representation of women in political institutions. In spite of these significant gains, Palestinian women remain markedly underrepresented in local and legislative political institutions and remain largely excluded from political processes. This thesis traces the impact of the Palestinian local female election quota system on the political role of women in the West Bank. Utilising a case study methodology to investigate the Palestinian local elections of 2004-2005, this thesis examines the correlation between the quota system and the evolvement of women's political roles. The theoretical perspective of Islamic feminism frames this research, ultimately drawing a relationship between the Palestinian Islamic feminism movement and the development and outcomes of the quota system. I argue that despite the significant increase in female political representation in local councils following the legislation of the quota system, the capacity for women to fully participate politically is ultimately limited by enduring patriarchy, political instability and increasing occupation.
Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not, to the best of my knowledge and belief:

(i) incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any institution of higher education;

(ii) contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text; or

(iii) contain any defamatory material.

Signed: Elke Taylor

Date: 05/11/2018
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I extend my appreciation to Tony Tawil, for generously translating a number of documents used in this thesis.

This thesis is written in recognition and respect to the women past and emerging, who demand and defend the right to be seen, the right to be heard, and the right to be represented.

And lastly to the women of Palestine, whose fierce determination and resilience inspires great courage.
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Glossary

AWRAD – Arab World for Research and Development
CEC – Central Elections Commission - Palestine
CEDAW – Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
GUPW – General Union of Palestinian Women
HCLE – Higher Commission for Local Elections
Miftah – The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy
MoLG – Ministry of Local Government
MoWA – Ministry of Women’s Affairs
NDI – National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
oPt – Occupied Palestinian Territories
PCHR – Palestinian Centre for Human Rights
PLC – Palestinian Legislative Council
PLO – Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PNA – Palestinian National Authority
PWWS – Palestinian Working Women Society for Development
UN – United Nations
UNDP – United Nations Development Program
UNSCR 1325 – United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325
UN WOMEN – United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
UPWC – Union of Palestinian Women Committees
Map

The Occupied Palestinian Territories - West Bank
Chapter One – Introduction

Set against a historical backdrop of conflict and instability, Palestinian women have long maintained a significant role within the complex and challenging political landscape of Palestine. Despite this rich and diverse history of informal political participation, Palestinian women remain largely underrepresented in formal political institutions and excluded from political negotiations and decision-making positions (Jad, 2010; PWWSD, 2016; UN Women, 2013). The influence of the expanding feminist movement and the formation of a national coalition aimed at legislating positive intervention for women, has led to the establishment of female election quotas in both local and national political arenas. Legislated by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in 2004 prior to the commencement of the 2004-2005 local elections, the local female election quota system was instrumental in helping women achieve 15% of the contested seats in the West Bank (CEC, retrieved 2018; Miftah, 2014). Following the success of the quota system in the local area, a female quota system was then established at the national level, prior to the second elections of the Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC). Despite the achievements of the quota system in bringing about an increase in female representation, disempowering cultural and political contexts continue to limit the capacity for Palestinian women to be equally represented and actively participate in the evolving politics of the Palestinian state.

Research into the Palestinian female election quota system and its consequent influences on the political role of women in local government is particularly relevant and timely, as the changing political role of women is an increasingly important aspect within Palestinian democratisation, the progression of women's rights and the evolvement of Palestinian feminism. A dramatic change in political policy, such as the establishment of the female election quota system in 2004-2005, requires thorough assessment in order to understand the current political roles of Palestinian women, and to what extent the legislation of the quota system has advanced these roles. The primary aim of this research thesis is to establish the influence of the Palestinian female election quota on the political role of women in the local political context of the West Bank.

The State of Palestine is situated amidst the Middle East bordered by Israel, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon. Palestine exists as a state of de jure sovereignty, embroiled in
violent and enduring political, religious and cultural tensions with neighbouring Israel since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 (Azzouni, 2010; Turner, 2009). Violent attempts to seize control of the region by Israeli forces have defined much of Palestine's contemporary history, exposing the region to constant conflict relative to issues of sovereignty, political authority and legitimate rule. At present, the State of Palestine includes the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, however sovereign borders are not collectively recognised by international actors and much of the Palestinian territories remain under strict Israeli occupation, which ultimately jeopardises the stability, authority and progression of the Palestinian political system. The drive for an independent and internationally recognised Palestinian state is significantly linked to the establishment of a democratic political system, with the advancement of women's political rights and the inclusion and representation of women at all levels.

Amidst decades of ongoing political instability and conflict, “Palestinian women have been visible and effective in politics for decades, even if their representation has been low” (Azzouni, 2010, p. 23). Driven by the progress of the Palestinian Women's Movement and Palestinian feminism, women forged distinct and significant roles within the political landscape following the outbreak of the first Palestinian Intifada in 1987. As political activists and members of women's organisations among the broader national struggle for independence, Palestinian women demanded and sustained a political presence that “constituted themselves as a movement and gained important access to the public space” (Jad, 2010, p. 83). The recent drive to formalise the political role of women is inherently linked to the role women played during the first Intifada, as the involvement of women in organisations and committees taught them “the skills needed to be politicians and strategists, and the intifada taught them how to be political leaders” (Giacaman cited in Elrashidi, 2005).

Under former President, Yasser Arafat, the first legislative elections for the PLC took place in 1996. Prior to the election women were reluctant in calling for a quota, believing that “based on their pivotal role in national liberation struggles and their participation in national politics, people would vote for women equally as men” (Jad, 2010, p. 84). Following the defeat of the 1996 elections in which only five women won seats, feminists formed a national coalition to demand a political quota for women to deliver an increase in political participation whether through running as political
candidates or encouraging women to participate in democratic processes. The coalition strongly argued that the establishment of a quota system would provide an affirmative action strategy to negate patriarchy and address the historic lack of female representation. Feminist activist and PLC member, Hanan Ashrawi, joined the coalition and urged the PNA to enact a quota. Ashrawi argued, “I believe we should maintain a minimum number of female candidates for elections. Some people call it a quota, I call it affirmative action – positive intervention” (Ashrawi, 2017, para. 28). Following mounting pressure from the feminist coalition group, progressive politicians and international political actors, the PNA eventually committed to formalising the political role of women through the legislation of the female election quota in 2004.

In the 2004-2005 elections that followed, the political landscape witnessed a dramatic increase in female political participation and representation. In the West Bank alone, out of the 2,520 contested seats, women won 377 of them - equating to 15% of all council seats (CEC, retrieved 2018; NDI, 2005). With the quota system in place, female candidacy and voter turnout also increased significantly from the previous 1996 election, which is also attributed to the legislation of the quota system (Miftah, 2013; PWWSD, 2016). Despite the initial success of the quota system in bringing about an increase in localised female political participation and representation, the ability for women to participate fully and affect change in the current political climate of Palestine hinges on the enduring political and cultural contexts that limit the political role of women (AWRAD, 2015; Miftah, 2014; PWWSD, 2016). Former Minister for Women's Affairs, Rabiha Diab, argues that the quota system represents only a small step in attaining political equality for women, stating that, “the struggle still continues, to achieve what is best for the Palestinian women and their future requirements of development” (cited in AWSCW, 2014, p. 1).

The following research questions will be addressed:

1. How has the influence of the Palestinian female election quota progressed the political role of Palestinian women in the West Bank?
2. In what ways has Islamic feminism influenced the discourse surrounding the Palestinian female election quota?

3. What is the interaction between the Palestinian political and cultural contexts and the local impact of female election quota?

This research project is concerned with tracing the impact of the quota system in the political context of the West Bank only, for two main reasons; Firstly, the fracturing of the PNA administration in 2007; and secondly, the lack of local elections in the Gaza Strip. Since 2007 the PNA has been fractured into two separate administrations following the dismissal of the Hamas government in 2006 and the subsequent coup, which saw Hamas annexed to the Gaza Strip. Since this division of government, the Fatah lead government - which governs the West Bank - has been internationally recognised as the legitimate government body of the PNA, based on the willingness of the Fatah leadership to continue negotiations with Israel. Due to the ongoing legitimacy dispute between the Fatah and Hamas leaderships and the enduring political division that has ensued, the contexts of each territory must be given separate consideration.

Municipal elections have not taken place in the Gaza Strip since the 2004-2005 elections, due to political division. Hamas have boycotted all municipal elections in the Gaza Strip since 2005, refusing to cooperate without political reunification of the Fatah and Hamas factions. Hence, due to the irregularity of elections in the Gaza Strip, tracing the impact of the female election quota beyond 2005 is problematic.

The Palestinian female election quota system represents a significant area of research for several reasons. Firstly, the role of women in the Palestinian political landscape is constantly developing and becoming increasingly important to the democratisation and legitimacy of the State of Palestine, meaning the sustainability of the quota could have a meaningful influence on the future political role of women. Secondly, the legislation of the quota system represents a significant change in government policy that indicates changing societal attitudes towards the formalised role of women in political positions. At present, contentious debates driven by the feminist movement have arisen across the oPt, calling for a minimum quota of 50% to be legislated (Jalal, 2016; Miftah, 2015, 2016, 2017). These debates demonstrate a widespread political and social drive to incorporate a greater number of women into formalised political roles. Under these
circumstances, understanding the influence of the quota system in the local context is imperative to the analysis of any future developments to the quota system. Lastly, this thesis will contribute to the literature in the fields of politics and international relations. As there is limited academic literature on the formal role of Palestinian women in the political arena, this thesis aims to offer a contribution to closing that gap.

The theoretical perspective of Islamic feminism will frame this research project, as feminist theory “provides the analytical tools for assessing how expectations for men’s and women’s behavior have led to unjust situations” (Cooke, 2000, p. 92). A feminist perspective also allows for a cross-cultural lens to “identify moments of awareness that something is wrong in the expectations for women’s treatment or behavior, of rejection of such expectations, and of activism to effect some kind of change” (Cooke, 2000, p. 92). Islamic feminism is arguably the most appropriate perspective through which to explain the contemporary political progressions of Palestinian women given the rich and diverse history of Islamic feminism in Palestine.

The Palestinian female election quota will be analysed through an Islamic feminist perspective to establish how much of an influence this perspective had in the establishment of the quota system, how the perspective continues to influence the formation of political gender based policies in Palestine, and how it has ultimately affected the advancement of women's localised political contributions. There has been a significant change in the political role of Palestinian women in the West Bank immediately prior to, and during the implementation of the female election quota in 2004-2005. Following the legislation of the system into Palestinian Local Elections Law, there was a notable increase in female voter participation, election candidacy and ultimately dramatic increases in women attaining political office (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006; PWWSD, 2016). This thesis aims to assess the relationship between the rise of Islamic feminism in the political discourse and the increased role of women in the local political arena.

In the most recent decades, a growing number of Islamic feminists are becoming more deeply involved in the political processes of the state, so much so that Moghadam (2002), argues that the interpretation of political events across the Arab world cannot be without recognition of the vast contributions of Islamic women to democratic reform.
and liberalisation. Given the recent and current progressions of women's political rights and political representation in the Middle East, it is impossible to underestimate the important role that “Muslim women have played (and are playing) in the articulation and application of new concepts and paradigms in national and international politics” (Adújar, 2014, p. 78).

Islamic feminism represents a diverse discourse of feminist scholarship and activism, grounded in a distinctly Islamic framework (Mir-Hosseini, 2004). Leading theorist Margot Badran (2009) explains that Islamic feminism is a “feminist discourse and practice articulated within an Islamic paradigm...which seeks rights and justice for women, and for men, in the totality of their existence” (p. 242). Miriam Cooke (2000), an influential scholar in the field, considers Islamic feminism as an opportunity for a “double commitment: to a faith position on the one hand, and to women’s rights both inside and outside the home on the other” (p. 93), resulting in the agency of women’s rights in social, judicial and political contexts. Islamic feminism demands the equality of rights not only within the private sphere of the household, but “more visibly within the realm of the state” (Mojab, 2001, p. 126). The political context has become an increasingly important discourse of Islamic feminist thinking (Eyadat, 2013; Salah, 2010), and as a result, the rise of Islamic feminism has become synonymous with women’s increased political consciousness and political participation, particularly throughout the Middle East (Eyadat, 2013).

This thesis will be conducted through the use of a case study methodology, using the local Palestinian elections of 2004-2005 as the case. A case study methodology is one that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon in its real-world context” (Yin, 2014, p. 2). According to Bryman (2012), the objective of case study research is to develop an in-depth understanding of a case through “detailed and intensive analysis” (p. 66). Sarantakos (1998) suggests that a case study methodology is particularly appropriate when the researcher is concerned with a specific phenomenon to understand its “structure, process and outcomes” (p. 192). The use of a case study methodology is essential to this project, as it will allow for the detailed analysis of a political system through critical consideration of the contexts in which it occurs and how these contexts are influenced. Keith Punch (2014) recommends that in order to achieve an analysis that is holistic, a case study methodology requires the triangulation approach to data.
analysis. According to Punch (2014), the aim of data triangulation is to ensure the consistency of findings through the convergence of “complementary quantitative and qualitative data on the same topic” (p. 309). Similarly, Sarantakos (2005) suggests that the triangulation of data is the most appropriate method for data analysis in a case study methodology as it allows the researcher to attain a “higher degree of validity and reliability” (p. 69). Here, the use of data triangulation is particularly important because it will allow for a wide range of sources to be analysed comprehensively, in order to fulfil the research aims and answer the research questions.

As part of a case study methodology, document analysis and discourse analysis will be used in conjunction to identify and interpret the primary arguments regarding the Palestinian female election quota and its implications following the 2004-2005 elections. Document analysis involves the “collection, review, interrogation and analysis of various forms of written text as a primary source of research data” (O’Leary, 2014, p. 348). Flick (2009) explains that document analysis serves as an important method for research as it is “instructive for understanding social realities in institutional contexts” (p. 262). For the purpose of this thesis, document analysis will involve both quantitative and qualitative approaches, to interpret both the empirical data and contextual meanings of primary documents. While document analysis can be used as a stand-alone method of analysis, Punch (1998), argues that “documents and texts studied in isolation from their social context are deprived of their true meaning” (p. 231), therefore Flick (2009) suggests document analysis as a “complementary strategy to other methods” (p. 255).

Discourse analysis will be used as a secondary method of analysis. Punch (1998) describes discourse analysis as method for understanding how language is constructed and used, its intended outcomes and the context in which it exists. Worrall (cited in Punch, 1998, p. 226) explains that discourse analysis is an important method of analysis, as it reveals the “ideas, statements or knowledge that are dominant at a particular time, among particular sets of people”. Discourse analysis is particularly important to this research design, as it allows for the critical investigation of the ways in which the election quota is discussed within the political and cultural contexts of the case itself. The convergence of document analysis and discourse analysis will afford a layered and holistic analysis of how the political role of women in Palestine has
changed since the introduction of the quota in 2004-2005, while revealing the political and cultural contexts in which it operates.

Using a case study methodology that employs document analysis and discourse analysis, my research will be concerned with the interpretation of a range of primary and secondary source material including: Palestinian Local Elections Laws, electoral records, governmental and non-governmental reports, research reports from international actors and institutions, and newspaper articles and interview transcripts pertaining to the case study. The analysis of these sources will establish: firstly, the social and political context in which the establishment of the Palestinian female election quota system is situated; secondly, how the quota system has influenced the political role of women in local politics in the West Bank since the introduction of the system in 2004-2005; thirdly, how the establishment and implications of the female quota have been influenced by the progression of Islamic feminism; and lastly, to what extent the Palestinian political and cultural contexts affect the political role of women in local politics.
Chapter Two – Literature Review

This literature review focuses on four areas of enquiry: first, a brief overview of the Palestinian political system; second, an overview of the theory and discourse of Islamic feminism; third, political quotas as a tool for increasing female representation; and lastly, the implications of international women's rights frameworks in the Palestinian context.

To understand the position of women in the Palestinian political system, it is necessary to first examine the central structures of Palestinian governance and the relationships of power between the government bodies. While women are represented at all levels of government, the endurance of political patriarchy has shaped the historic underrepresentation of women within these political structures, ultimately leading to a severe lack of political gender parity (Høigilt, 2016; Shitrit, 2016).

Founded in 1964 by the agency of Egypt and the Arab States, the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) has remained central to the evolution of Palestinian governance (Goldman, 2013). Since its formation, the PLO has established itself as the embodiment of the Palestinian national movement (Hilal, 2010; Pina, 2006), and is recognised by the international community as the “sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people” (Ghanem, 2010, p. 183; Parsons, 2005, p. 23). Throughout its tumultuous evolution, the PLO has represented the foundation of Palestinian politics and is key to the construction of the Palestinian identity. Furthering this point, Yezid Sayigh (cited in Biçakci, 2007) asserts that the “PLO has not only achieved a major role in international relations and the struggle against Israel, but has also been a major actor in domestic politics” (p. 65). Biçakci (2007) presents a similar conclusion, stating, “the emergence of the PLO as a legitimate actor in international politics also defined the sphere of politics within the Palestinian territories” (p. 65). The PLO encompasses representatives from a varied range of political, non-political and private sectors, to form an “umbrella organization that acts as a forum for communication and decision-making among various Palestinian factions” (Bhasin & Hallward, 2013, p. 78). The PLO encompasses a broad range of perspectives and objectives, as Turner (2006) explains, the organisation “covers a wide range of largely secular ideologies of different Palestinian movements committed to the
struggle for Palestinian independence and liberation” (p. 743).

The prominence of the Arafat leadership has been central to the development and influence of the PLO, not only in shaping the internal political landscape but also in cementing a notorious position within the international community. To this point, Goldman (2013) remarks, “Arafat became the first non-state leader to address the UN General Assembly and shortly afterwards the United Nations granted observer status to the PLO” (p. 365). Following decades of political unrest, negotiations between the PLO and Israel culminated in the signing of the Oslo Peace Accords in 1993, which directed mutual recognition and Palestinian governance of areas within the West Bank and Gaza (Guzansky & Michael, 2016). The foremost governing body of the PLO is the Palestinian National Council (PNC), which is referred to as the parliament of all Palestinians. The PNC is the direct executor of PLO policies and is responsible for the election of members in the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee functions as the daily representative body of the PLO and representative of the PLO in the international community. Chaired by President Mahmoud Abbas, the Executive Committee executes PNC policies while ensuring the functionality of the PLO.

By virtue of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority (PA) - formerly the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) – was established in 1994 as the interim administrative body of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006; Frisch & Hofnung, 2007). During this time, the primary responsibility of the PA was to establish self-rule and stability in preparation for a future Palestinian state (Guzansky & Michael, 2016). As Jad (2010) explains, “the PA controls its population but does not have true sovereignty, especially rights over land, resources and external security” (p. 82). The literature reveals that under the leadership of Arafat, the PA quickly became concerned with issues of sovereignty and occupation, rather than establishing infrastructure and democratisation (Guzansky & Michael, 2016). As Michael (2017) clarifies, “the PA did not use the decade controlled by Arafat to create the institutions of state or the establishment of national infrastructures of the scale and quality sufficient to enable them to serve as a proper foundation for an independent, functional and accountable Palestinian state” (p. 386). Following the death of Arafat in 2004, Mahmoud Abbas became President of the PA, signalling a new political era. Pina (2006) notes that many in the international community believe that “the Abbas victory marks the end of an
autocratic era dominated by the late Yasir Arafat and the increased possibility of improved prospects for Israeli-Palestinian peace” (p. 1). Fatah assumed central power within the PA, following the dismissal of the illegitimate Hamas government in 2007, which effectively divided political power within the oPt, with the PA governing the West Bank and Hamas claiming rule over the Gaza Strip (Falk, 2013; Turner, 2011; Zreik, 2003). In 2013 the PA was dissolved and replaced by the State of Palestine. According to Abbas (cited in Whitbeck, 2013), the interim body of the PA was no longer necessary as it had ultimately “served its purpose by introducing the institutions of the State of Palestine”.

Islamic feminism remains a contentiously debated perspective with a multitude of interpretations, discourses and applications (Ahmad, 2015; Eyadat, 2013; Moghadam, 2002). The literature reveals that this discursive perspective is grounded upon the principle of gender equality between men and women within an Islamic frame of reference (Badran, 2009; Cooke, 2000). Key theorist Margot Badran (2009) argues that the principle of gender equality between men and women as both an ideology and practice is inherent within true Islam, as “the Qur’an affirms the equality of all human beings” (p. 247). The works of renowned theorist Amina Wadud (1995, 1999, 2006, 2009) considers the rights of women within Islam, declaring that within the Qur’an men and women are “given the same or equal consideration and endowed with the same or equal potential” (1999, p. 29). Similarly, Barlas (2002) contends that the Qur’an ultimately establishes ontological equality between men and women in the totality of their existence, suggesting that the teachings “hold both men and women to the same standards of behaviour and applies the same standards for judging between them” (p. 140). Furthermore, Barlas (2002), concludes that “not only does the Qur’an not define women and men in terms of binary oppositions, but that it also does not portray women as lesser or defective men, or the two sexes as incompatible, incommensurable, or unequal” (p. 129).

Islamic feminism argues that much of the readings and interpretations of Islamic texts have been produced through a male-orientated perspective, thereby directing an almost monolithic interpretation of Islam which consequently subordinates women (Ahmed, 1982, 1992; Carland, 2017; Mernissi, 1991; Wadud, 1999). Theorists believe that the overarching influence of cultural patriarchy that is manifest in Islamic culture has led to
a misinterpretation of the Qur’an. Leading theorists contend that the discourse of Islamic feminism is primarily constituted through a methodology of feminist-orientated readings and re-interpretations of fundamental Islamic texts, namely the Qur’an and Hadiths to deconstruct patriarchal ideologies (Adújar, 2014; Mir-Hosseini, 2004; Sonbol, 2002; Wadud, 1995). Barlas (2002) explains that understanding the Qur’an and other texts is dependent upon the reader, acknowledgement of contexts, and the methods of interpretation used by the reader (Barlas cited in Carland, 2017, p. 124-125). Barlas (2002) furthers this point, maintaining that Islam is not a monolithic ideology, rather “different readings of the Qur’an (and of other texts) can yield what are for women “fundamentally different Islams”” (p. 4). Badran (2009) argues that through a methodology of reinterpretation and reappropriation of Islamic texts, women are able to locate a means of empowerment and justice. Similarly, Abugideiri (2014) suggests that through a feminist method of enquiry that combines a number of interpretive methods, women are able to “locate their work of transforming practices of gender asymmetry within a broader quest for social justice” (p. 125).

The development of women's empowerment and women's rights in the public sphere is an increasingly important objective of Islamic feminism (Carland, 2017; Haddad, 2014; Mernissi, 1991). Ahmad (2015) suggests that Islamic feminist discourse pertains to the advocacy and promotion of women's rights, arguing that the perspective and approach of Islamic feminism is concerned with “recovering and enforcing the undisputed rights that women can lay claim to within the structure of Islam but that have become obscure because of cultural norms” (p. 6). Cooke (2000) theorises that the emergence of a women's rights discourse within Islamic feminism has significantly influenced women's access and contributions in the public sphere, citing that women are more active “in ways that were earlier unobtainable to them and on conditions they define and choose for themselves” (Ask and Tjomsland cited in Cooke, 2000, p. 93). Adújar (2014) and Ahmadi (2006) argue that Islamic feminism maintains that Muslim women possess not only the right, but also the ability to pursue an active participation in all political, social, economic and religious aspects of Islamic society. Badran (2009) reaffirms that “Islamic feminism argues that women may be heads of state, leaders of congregational prayer, judges…prime ministers” (p. 250). This thesis aims to contribute to the developing literature regarding the correlation between the Islamic feminism movement in Palestine and the progressive political role of women.
Women are significantly under represented in political institutions, occupying just 23.4% of seats in national parliaments worldwide (Inter-Parliamentary Union, 2017). Political analysts consider the application of gender quotas to be one of the most successful mechanisms for achieving political gender equality, particularly in states where women are under represented in society (Celis, 2009; Tadros, 2010). The UN (2005) maintains that electoral quotas constitute an important aspect in achieving progress for women in politics, in both local and national contexts. Additionally, the UN (2013) proposes that gender quotas are a necessary measure to ensure that women are included and represented in all areas of political institutions. The literature categorises political gender quotas into three distinct measures; reserved seat quotas, legislated candidate quotas and party quotas. The thesis case study provides a holistic examination of the various implications and outcomes of gender based election quotas for women in the context of Palestine.

Reserved seat quotas require, through a process of constitutional reform or election law, that a stipulated number of seats within a political assembly be reserved for female candidates (Dahlerup, 2003). Krook (2009) explains that reserved seat quotas guarantee female presence by “revising the mechanisms of election to mandate a minimum number of female representatives” (p. 9). Dahlerup (2009) and Derichs (2010) argue that reserved seat quotas prove particularly advantageous in male dominated political systems where female representation is traditionally limited. They contend that oftentimes women are not required to contest in elections in order to attain representation. Ford and Pande (2011) reaffirm this view, explaining that reserved seat quotas fast-track female political representation in male dominated institutions by strategically reserving “positions for which only female candidates can compete” (p. 8). However, reserved seat policies can act as a double-edged sword, adversely affecting women’s abilities as political actors once elected (Derichs, 2010). According to a report by UN Women (2018), such election quotas are often viewed negatively as they result in “women members who are seen as having less legitimacy as elected representatives than their male peers” (p. 7). Derichs (2010) ascertains that women who are elected through reserved seat arrangements face prolonged criticism and stigma, given that “women who enter reserved seats are sometimes regarded as candidates who have not
had to compete and prove their political skills, thus being merely “quota women”” (p. 20). Yoon (cited in O’Brien & Rickne, 2016) reveals that women elected through this system routinely report being treated as “second-class” and receive limited recognition. Furthering this point, O’Brien and Rickne (2016) argue that such quotas can ultimately “result in a trade-off between an increase in women’s representation in the legislature and their subsequent access to leadership posts” (p. 116). The UN (2005) concludes that despite the drawbacks of reserved seat quotas, this arrangement “almost always brings about an increase in women’s representation” (p. 28).

Gender based legislated candidate quotas require that a specified number of positions, or a proportion of positions on electoral lists be allocated for female candidates in accordance with constitutional law or legislation (Krook, 2007, 2009). Legislated candidate quotas differ from reserved seat policies, in that they apply to the number or proportion of women in electoral candidate lists rather than the proportion of female candidates elected. Such quotas often come with conditions, typically stipulating the position of female candidates on electoral lists. Researchers agree that providing the conditions of the quota are not violated, legislated candidate quotas can secure contentious places for women on electoral lists and a legitimate chance to run for election (Derichs, 2010; McCann, 2013). Norris (cited in McCann, p. 8, 2013) notes that the effectiveness of legislated candidate quotas is attributed to “whether the proportional representation list is open or closed, the existence of placement mandates, district magnitude, and good faith in party compliance”. Similarly, Dahlerup (cited in McCann, p. 8, 2013) notes that the success of such systems depends on the ambiguity of the regulations, explaining that “the more vague the regulations, the higher the risk that the quota regulations will not be properly implemented”. Ford and Pande (2011) however, consider legislated candidate quotas to be the least successful system to guarantee female representation outside of electoral lists, declaring that “enforcing placement of women on candidate lists does not necessarily guarantee that they will get elected, and their success often depends on the type of electoral system”(p. 14). Furthermore, Costa (2014) concludes that if female candidates are not provided contentious positions on electoral lists, “the whole point of the quota tends to be lost, given that decisions are generally in men’s hands” (p. 62).
Party quotas are enacted voluntarily through the statutes of political parties and require a certain proportion of female candidates among the overall candidates to be nominated for electoral party lists (Dahlerup, 2009; Squires, 2004). The adoption of party quotas is frequently indicative of a positive shift away from patriarchal ideologies, as Ford and Pande (2011) explain, “voluntary quotas are often related to changing public attitudes and signify party commitment to gender equality, which also contributes to higher levels of female representation” (p. 14). Krook (2009) suggests that party quotas are more effective in generating increases in female representation in contrast to reserved seat and legislated candidate systems, as “they generally mandate a much higher proportion of women, usually between twenty-five and fifty percent of all candidates” (p. 9). However, Dahlerup (2008) maintains that the long-term success of party quotas is largely dependent upon the consistency of pressure from government and non-government actors to ensure a gender quota is maintained. Dahlerup (2009) further explains, “the political parties are the gatekeepers to elected positions in party based political systems, because it is the political parties who control the nominations” (p. 36). Ultimately, women in male dominated societies remain critical of the sustainability of party quotas to increase female representation in the long-term, citing the overarching influence of patriarchy.

International Conventions underscore the importance of female participation as a necessary component of democracy and political stability (CEDAW, 1979; S/RES/1325; UN, 2005). The literature reveals that the principles of UN Conventions regarding women’s rights have long been established in the social contexts of Palestine, predating recent ratification. Such Conventions including S/RES/1325 and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) have significantly influenced the construction of a Palestinian women’s rights dialogue, and continue to drive the progression of women's rights, particularly in the political space. To this end, it is important to examine the international measures that support and encourage the participation of women.

In 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security (S/RES/1325). S/RES/1325 calls upon the international community to ratify a gender perspective on the importance of female contributions in conflict and

S/RES/1325 represents a landmark instrument in defence of women's rights. El-Bushra (2007) declares, “Resolution 1325 is a key milestone in the international recognition of women’s rights in policy and in international human rights and humanitarian law” (p. 132). The Resolution reaffirms:

The important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security, and the need to increase their role in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution (S/RES/1325, 2000, p.1).

While UN agencies celebrate S/RES/1325 as a landmark document (UN 2004), others question the essentialist binaries it promotes between “women/peacemaker/victim and men/warrior/protector” (Väytnen cited in Richter-Devroe, 2009, p.158). Cockburn (2007) and Enloe (cited in Farr, 2011) raise concerns that S/RES/1325 does not challenge conflict from a gendered, feminist or human rights perspective; it merely reinforces the position of women in pre-existing frameworks of discrimination. Furthering this point, the literature suggests that S/RES/1325 remains largely unwelcomed by Palestinian women, where questions centre on the overall usefulness and effectiveness of S/RES/1325 in the Palestinian context amidst overlapping social and political oppression (Al-Botmeh, 2012; Farr, 2011; Izen et al., 2016; Miftah, 2009). Kutttab (cited in Anderson, 2015), asserts that “resolutions such as 1325 are largely irrelevant...We can’t keep thinking that the state of Palestine is a normal state...what works here doesn’t work anywhere else, we are unique in that sense”. This commentary is generally supported by a large majority of Palestinian women who argue that S/RES/1325 do not correspond to the needs and priorities of Palestinian women (Abu-Duhou cited in Anderson, 2015; Kevorkian, 2010). Additionally, the Jerusalem Centre for Women (cited in Richter-Devroe, 2009) asserts that many women on the ground reject S/RES/1325 as an abstract Westernised concept, arguing “the need to adapt it to the specific context of foreign occupation in Palestine”. Nazzal (2009) critiques another challenge, stating that the Women's Movement does not fully incorporate S/RES/1325...
into its agenda, and many feminist organisations remain unaware about S/RES/1325 due to overarching gender-blind policies of the government. Richter-Devroe (2011) concludes that despite grassroots efforts, S/RES/1325 has had a limited impact in the lives of Palestinian women due to the overriding context of occupation and patriarchy.

Adopted in 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) represents an internationally recognised bill of women's rights. CEDAW urges States to implement sustainable measures to end gendered discrimination against women in key areas such as education, employment, politics, and even in such private matters as marriage (Barron, 2002; CEDAW, 1979). Palestine formally ratified the Convention in 2014; aligning its interests to end gendered discrimination with those of the international community, where article 3 of the Convention states:

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women (CEDAW, 1979, p. 2).

International actors and Palestinian women's groups argue that the implementation of CEDAW into the Palestinian context remains challenging for political and cultural reasons (CEDAW/C/PSE/1, 2017; GUPW, 2017; The Independent Commission for Human Rights, 2013). A UN evaluation report on the implications of CEDAW in Palestine (CEDAW/C/PSE/1, 2017) argues, “Palestinian women suffer from a system that is discriminatory at every turn” (p. 12), and “suffer from inherited customs and traditions that assign them subordinate status and focus on their reproductive role” (p. 13). Another challenge to the implementation of the Resolution within Palestine lies in the criticism of the assumed universality of women's rights (Kevorkian, 2010). Abou-Bakr (2015) debates that many Islamic women object to the Westernised lens of CEDAW, declaring that “each society has to shape its understanding of rights in a way that respects its culture and religion and responds to its specific socio-economic context” (p. 218). Arguably one of the most significant implications of the implementation of CEDAW in Palestine has been the affirmative action to instate “appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country” (CEDAW, 1979, p. 3). The establishment of the female election quota system is considered by many to be an affirmative strategy that complies
with the obligations of CEDAW, in relation to increasing the representation of women in politics (Ballington, 2011; Dahlerup, 2003; PWWSD, 2016).

A substantial body of literature is dedicated to exploring the historical influence of Palestinian women within the political landscape, however much of this literature explores the role of women as activists and members of organisations. The literature considering the contemporary role of women amidst political institutions or the involvement of women during elections remains underdeveloped. However, the available literature in this particular area has drawn increasing attention and analysis in recent years, since the establishment of the female quota system in 2004. In light of the increased political contributions of women since the establishment of the quota, there remains a necessity for this aspect of Palestinian politics to be more thoroughly analysed in order to gain an understanding of the political status of women in Palestine. To analyse the impact and outcomes of the quota system, the perspective of Islamic feminism will be used. However, the literature concerning Palestinian Islamic feminism, particularly its emergence in the political context remains scarce, which is the limitation this thesis will pursue.
Chapter Three: Activism and Empowerment: A History of Female Leadership

Throughout the turbulent history of Palestine’s political context, women have forged a significant profile of political action that has helped define not only the contemporary role of women in politics, but has influenced the overarching political landscape of Palestine (Jabali, 2009; Richter-Devroe, 2009). Yet, many of the political roles held by women have been informal, largely fragmented, and restricted due to enduring patriarchal ideologies that exist within social, cultural and political contexts (Biggs, 2015; Finkel, 2012; MoWA, 2011). Despite such tangible setbacks, Palestinian women have long constituted alternative and effective political roles beyond representation in political institutions that have been, and continue to be essential aspects of national peace building efforts, social justice, women's rights, and the development of the Palestinian state (Barron, 2002; Jad, 2010; Razavi, 2006; Richter-Devroe, 2009).

The complete breadth of women's political history in Palestine is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, this chapter considers the key events in which women's informal and formal political identity is articulated, and the social and political situations that ignited the women's coalition, leading to the establishment of the quota system in 2004-2005. The chapter is separated into ten areas of research: the development of the Palestinian Women's Movement; the integration of women into the PLO; the involvement of women during the 1976 local municipal elections; the development of the grassroots movement; the role of women during the first Intifada; the advent of the 1996 legislative elections; the establishment of local women's organisations; the appointment of women to local councils in 2000; the position of women during the second Intifada; and the formation of the national women's coalition.

Colonialism, Nationalism and Feminism
The emergence of the Palestinian Women's Movement in 1929 inaugurated the involvement of Palestinian women in a deliberately political movement. The Women's Movement represents the founding articulation of Palestinian feminism, which situated its perspective amidst an exchange and competition of nationalist ideologies, feminism and colonialism (Fleischmann, 2000). Within the context of violent conflicts between
Palestinians and Israelis, The Women's Movement formalised their efforts and ultimately convened in Jerusalem for the Palestine Arab Women’s Congress, in October 1929 (Fleischmann, 2000; Jabali, 2009; Peteet, 2011). The Congress brought together more than 200 women from primarily Christian and elite backgrounds, to advance resolutions and delegations that formally addressed the unfolding national situation and called for an end to British rule over the region. Here, women actively participated in public demonstrations and protests, which ultimately expanded the political and social presence of women in the public space. In the decades that followed, the momentum of the Arab Women’s Congress - which later developed into the Arab Women’s Executive Committee (AWE) - initiated the rise of localised organisations and women's committees with the aim of furthering the Women’s Movement beyond the activities of the AWE. Here, the Women's Movement was fluid and became concerned with advancing a socialist agenda through a feminist perspective, ultimately sparking the female political consciousness that would later provide the backbone to the national resistance movement (Ababneh, 2014; Fleischmann, 2003; Kuttab, 2008).

Amidst efforts to strengthen and expand the newly established PLO, the General Union of Palestinian Women (GUPW) was formed in 1965 as an official branch of the PLO under Yasser Arafat, in a strategic attempt to reform the Women’s Movement into the national body. Initially the GUPW aimed to function as the foremost political body representative of Palestinian women, closely incorporating the activities of the Women's Movement within the administration of the PLO (Jad, 2010; Kuttab, 2014). The establishment of the GUPW reflected the PLO’s developing gender consciousness and the beginning of women's formal political role, as women were given access to the PLO leadership and political factions as a means to incorporate female voices into the political discourse (Jad, 2001). In the early stages, the GUPW remained committed to furthering the Women's Movement and promoting female action in the public space, by encouraged women to become members of political parties and to participate in demonstrations (Abulhadi, 1998). However, over time the activities of the organisation became increasingly concerned with the politics of the Israeli occupation, and prioritised women's role in the national struggle over driving a female presence within the PLO (Gluck, 1995; Graham-Brown, 2001).
The 1970’s: Rights Beyond the Home

In the 1970’s, the Women's Movement reemerged as a nationally unified, mobilised and empowered movement, characterised by the emergence of grassroots activism and a feminist agenda that coincided with the activities and objectives of the international feminist movement (Jad, 2010). During this time, the activities of the Women's Movement became increasingly shaped by the worsening political situation within Palestine, as women seized new opportunities to voice a feminist agenda (Abdulhadi, 1998). Women’s rights and gender equality beyond the home became the primary discourses of the Women's Movement, with women collectively demanding “the right to struggle, to work, to be educated and to be represented equally in political decision-making” (Kuttab, 2008, p. 104). In response to the nationalist movement, the feminist agenda of the Women’s Movement became situated within the wider context of the national struggle, as women viewed their efforts as being grounded within the emerging Palestinian identity. Although, women insisted on the autonomy of the feminist movement and fought to separate the identity of the Women's Movement from that of the national struggle by exclusively voicing concerns for women's issues and the development of a women's agenda within the establishing political system (Fleischmann, 2000). This collective grassroots political activism channeled the voices of vulnerable and marginalised women across Palestine, which fundamentally expanded the interests and priorities of the Women’s Movement beyond those of educated middle class women (Dana & Walker, 2015; Kuttab, 2014). While the majority of the movement’s leadership was characterised by Christian women who greatly benefitted from the international second wave of feminism, large numbers of Muslim women were quick to develop their own feminist agenda and thereby “join the national struggle, establish their own organizations, and transcend religious boundaries” (Jad, 2008, p. 3).

Throughout the 1970’s, Palestinian Islamic feminism gained momentum as a feminist discourse amidst the context of the Women's Movement. It should be noted that the Palestinian Islamic feminism movement did not occur outside of the broader Palestinian feminism movement; rather it flourished amidst the expanding umbrella of Palestinian feminism and became established as an alternate discourse (Jad, 2011; Kuttab, 2014). Palestinian Islamic feminism projected the distinctly and arguably progressive feminist agenda of Muslim women in Palestine, locating the rights of Muslim women within the
overarching Palestinian struggle for independence, democracy and equality (Kuttab, 2010). During this time, the deepening political consciousness within Palestine was reflected in the developing political agendas of the Women's Movement. The politicisation of the Women's Movement in turn drove the emergence of the political discourse within the Islamic feminism movement, as Muslim women began incorporating political rights and political empowerment within the Islamic feminist agenda. Palestinian Islamic feminists assumed a progressive campaign, arguing the right for Muslim women to have an active role in the public space, particularly in the political context, despite the prevailing discriminatory ideologies imposed on women through cultural Islam (Kreichati, 2014; Kuttab, 2014). With the establishment of a Palestinian Islamic feminist agenda, Muslim women joined the ranks of the Women's Movement, which significantly advanced the public profile of Muslim women and challenged the traditionalist ideologies that dictated the role of Muslim women in the public arena. This golden era of Palestinian feminism transformed the localised socialist agenda of the Women's Movement into a national political movement that embodied a diverse agenda of women's rights and strengthened the grassroots political movement and women's access to the public space in turn (Jad, 2010). Despite the anticipated autonomy of the Women's Movement, it developed in parallel to the PLO and thus became integrated. The PLO drew parallels between the political agenda of the Women's Movement and the national movement and actively sought to include a women’s agenda, with the intention of capitalising on the momentum of the women's movement.

**Local Elections: 1976**

The Palestinian municipal elections of 1976 took place in a new political atmosphere; following the recognition of the PLO as the legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, an increase of PLO supporters quickly spread across the territories (Jad cited in Ababneh, 2014). Not only did the elections signal a change in the broader political atmosphere of the state, it represented a new direction in the political involvement of women in electoral processes. The 1976 elections inaugurated female participation in political elections as both eligible voters and political candidates, following the landmark amendment of the 1975 Military Law which granted women suffrage and political rights (AWRAD, 2013; Elrashidi, 2005). Leading into the 1976 elections, the Islamic feminist agenda became increasingly concerned with the expression of women’s political rights. The Islamic feminist discourse actively confronted traditionalist
ideologies that discouraged and often prohibited women's political participation, arguing the right for women to participate in political elections as campaigners, voters and candidates. The aspirations of Palestinian women to participate and to be represented in these elections was evident, however the outcomes for women were limited, with only four women competing as candidates and female voter turnout only reaching 34.8% (Ma’oz, 2015). The prevalence of enduring gender ideologies and the institutionalisation of political patriarchy proved an extreme hindrance to the capacity for women to run for election and also damaged the likelihood for female candidates to be elected (AWRAD, 2013). The notable absence of women's grassroots initiatives during this time also hindered the effectiveness of the female political campaign, as there were very few mass-based women's organisations to channel the activist energies of women (Kawar, 2001). However, against the reality of women’s failed attempts to be elected during the 1976 election, the experiences for women as both participants and candidates channeled a national enthusiasm to develop opportunities to enhance female political capacity and empowerment.

1980's Grassroots
The heightened political consciousness of women following the 1976 elections gave way to the emergence of the grassroots movement in the early 1980’s, which became characterised by the rapid establishment of both grassroots political organisations and non-governmental organisations alike (Jad, 2008). Many of the women’s committees that thrived during the early decades of the Women’s Movement now transitioned into women's affiliates of political parties, reflecting a growing demand for women to engage directly with political representatives and contribute to political change. Organisations including the Palestinian Working Women's Society for Development (PWWSD), the Union of Palestinian Women's Committees (UPWC) and the Women's Affairs Technical Committee (WATC), quickly emerged as leading mass-based organisations that channeled the diverse political voices of Palestinian women into tangible and influential initiatives on the ground (Azzouni, 2010; Jad, 2010). Chartered by high-profile feminists and activists of the Women's Movement, women's organisations began situating their activities amidst a growing demand for a more localised approach to female political progression. Many organisations quickly established themselves as avenues that “gave the majority of women a direct voice in matters that affected their lives, making their agendas and programs more responsive,
relevant and sensitive to women’s priorities and needs” (Kattub, 2014, p. 225). Women's organisations presented a united front of women's collective political ambitions, and focused on implementing political education programs and strategies to promote the participation and inclusion of women in political mechanisms and the decision-making processes of the state.

With the newly established capacity of the grassroots movement, the national Women's Movement became deeply fractured, demobilised and eventually abandoned. The local context provided a more accessible arena to diversify Palestinian feminist agendas and mass-based grassroots organisations were more equipped to overcome gender discrimination and patriarchy (AWRAD, 2013). Considering the growing politicalisation of the grassroots movement, many women's organisations inevitably incorporated the agendas and policies of popular political factions into their own campaigns and initiatives. In light of this, women's membership to popular political factions increased significantly and as such, a growing number of local political groups became more accessible and inclusive to women and more accepting of a women's agenda. Throughout the grassroots movement, the political role of Palestinian women became defined by their positions as active leaders and members of women's organisations, which afforded women an increased social and political standing and widened the opportunities for feminist activists (Hilterman, 1991; Jad, 2010).

The Intifada. Feminist Consciousness - Private and Public

Following escalating tensions between Palestine and Israel - instigated by the expanding occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip - the first Intifada broke out in 1987, marking the beginning of six years of Palestinian uprising. The Intifada - meaning a shuddering awakening - unlocked a new phase in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict that throughout its endurance caused mass civil violence, widespread economic crisis and disrupted political stability within Palestine and the surrounding region. Despite the destructive outcomes of the Intifada, the contributions of women to the national movement and the development of feminist consciousness are widely recognised as a central aspect in the contemporary role of women in the public sphere, particularly in terms of political involvement (Elrashidi, 2005; Golan, 1995). The efforts of Palestinian women during the uprising are widely regarded as the height of women's informal political engagement (Abdo, 1999; Fleischmann, 2000; Holt, 2003; Kattaneh, 2013).
The first *Intifada* mobilised a greater number of Palestinian women than any other movement, combining the voices of women from cities, towns, isolated villages and refugee camps in collective action (Graham-Brown, 2001). Palestinian women played diverse and enduring roles throughout the first *Intifada*, “ranging from being members of the united national leadership that guided the *Intifada* (uprising), to being political party members, community leaders, development practitioners and leaders of popular committees” (Kattub, 2014, p. 226). Anxious not to be excluded from the national struggle, women's grassroots organisations too played a crucial role in the uprising by providing opportunities for women to collectively mobilise their energies while ensuring services for women in the areas of political engagement and education continued (Jad, 2010). Longstanding charity organisations that emerged during the inauguration of the Women's Movement also undertook responsibilities to advocate female empowerment, by supporting the endeavors of the grassroots movement through the recruitment of “women in their administrative bodies and general assemblies” (Jad, 2004, p. 38). Organisations and committees encouraged women’s affirmative action by supporting the participation of women in public protests, violent and non-violent demonstrations and maintaining a public presence to promote the social and political rights of women amidst the advocacy of the national Palestinian identity. These newly forged roles overlapped with women's more traditional roles as wives and mothers, thereby forging a public-private dichotomy that dissolved much of the social attitudes about a women's role in society and her responsibilities (Jabali, 2009; Kattub, 2014).

The role of women as both activists and leaders during the *Intifada* fundamentally challenged the culture of traditionalist patriarchal norms in Palestine (Holt, 2003). The *Intifada* provided a compelling situation for women to reconsider and challenge the conservative roles assigned to them by condition of cultural patriarchy, and gave women valuable access to the public domain and experiences as community and political leaders (Golan, 1995; Jabali, 2009). Women occupied active, visible and distinct roles as leaders that “proved their presence, the momentum of their expansion and their national and progressive identity” (Kattaneh, 2013). Ultimately, the most significant outcome of the *Intifada* for Palestinian women was “the transformation that took place in women's consciousness of their roles” (Holt, 2003, p. 231). Ultimately, the transformation of women's consciousness during the first *Intifada* changed the course of
women’s political engagement and participation in the years that followed.

The Oslo Accords: Challenging Old Norms
Following the Oslo Peace Agreement of 1993 between the Israeli government and the PLO, Palestine was ushered into a new period of political transformation, characterised by state building and the establishment of political institutions. The signing of the Accords brought about the establishment of the PA, a quasi-governmental institution responsible for directing authority within specified areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Bhasin & Hallward, 2013). In 1996, elections for presidency and the PLC took place - a watershed development in democratisation.

Given the vast contributions of women during the Intifada and the grassroots movement, women assumed that society would not uphold traditional gender biases towards women during the elections and “expected a strong participation in the decision-making bodies of the new political structures of the PA” (Abdo, 1999, p. 42). During this time, a momentum for the establishment of a gender-based quota system for women was building at the grassroots level. However, activists and women's organisations ultimately dismissed the necessity for a quota system, believing that women would be considered equally and “could gain more seats than the quota might give them” (Jad, 2010, p. 83). However in spite of women's high expectations, only five women won seats in parliament - representing just 5.6% of elected members. Following this overwhelming defeat, women again mobilised and constituted an affirmative dialogue and strategy to further the representation of women in government (Jad, 2010). This dialogue quickly strengthened within the grassroots movement and evolved to include the provision of a female election quota.

The Ashrawi Transformation
In 1998, prominent feminist activist and former member of the PLC, Hanan Ashrawi, founded the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy – Miftah – building on the momentum of feminist activism during the first Intifada and the 1996 PLC elections. For many years, Ashrawi had played an instrumental role in advancing women's political rights and was seen as an instrumental figure to challenge social and political prejudices against women (Biggs, 2015; Graham-Brown, 2001; Naets-Sekiguchi, 2007). With Ashrawi at the forefront, the establishment of Miftah
delivered yet another transformative era to the progression of women's political roles. By grounding its voice and agenda in the promotion of good governance, *Miftah* sought to enhance female participation in local government processes particularly in the areas of negotiation, policy development and decision-making (Miftah, 2013).

In collaboration with a number of established women's NGO’s, *Miftah* initiated a wealth of programs that provided women with the political education and training to transform women's activist energies into formalised political roles (Miftah, 2010). Leaders of the Women's Movement trained female activists to become political candidates by equipping women with “practical skills such as how to run an election campaign, how to fundraise for it, how to mobilize support, how to mobilize a constituency, and how to deal with the media” (Tadros, 2014, p. 25). Women were also given access to opportunities to become educated about the structure of the Palestinian political system, the role and importance of local councils and how to interpret election laws, policies and international laws and conventions pertaining to women's rights (Azzouni, 2010; Jad, 2010; Miftah, 2013; Tadros, 2014). *Miftah* sought to not only promote the voices and contributions of women in political institutions, but advocated for the participation of women in all public sectors of society, arguing that the active inclusion of women would enhance social justice, women's rights and advance a positive Palestinian narrative (Miftah, 2013). As the *Miftah* initiative gained momentum through its engagement with a range of women's issues, the number of politically empowered and educated women grew significantly and attentions turned to the legislation of a gendered quota into the Palestinian political system.

**Women on Council**

In response to the 1996 legislative elections, talks for the establishment of democratic elections for local councils in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were set in motion. During this time, democratic municipal elections had not yet been established under the PNA and councils had instead been established through nominations that were “controlled according to a system of regional and tribal balancing” (Balawi, 2006, p. 127). In 1998, the Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) issued a letter to all councils instructing the immediate appointment of at least one woman into political office in every local and
municipal council in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (Hass, 2005; PWWSD, 2016). This letter however, was not legally binding and the outcome was limited to the appointment of only 61 women out of a total 3,739 council members in 2000. Of this result, all of the appointed women were localised to the West Bank with councils in the Gaza Strip collectively boycotting the initiative due to mounting political tension (PWWSD, 2016). The appointment of women into office in 2000 showcases an important change in the Palestinian political and social atmosphere, because for the first time, women were represented in municipal councils. However, many women quickly became critical of the process, arguing that the appointment of women was merely tokenistic and “based on tribal representation; this encourages some families to select weak members to be able to control them later” (AWRAD, 2013, p. 15). With the appointment of women into formalised political roles, the momentum to increase female political representation intensified as women's organisations further strengthened the discourse and began talks to develop a coalition.

The Second Intifada: Feminist Roadblocks

In response to a growing background of Palestinian discontent, the second Palestinian Intifada broke out in September 2000. Despite the promises of the 1993 Oslo Accords to deliver a sustainable peace solution between Palestine and Israel, “the reality on the ground did not match the expectations created by the peace agreements” (Pressman, 2003). Increased Israeli occupation further intensified the restrictions placed on the movements and liberties of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, creating a heightened atmosphere of public discontent. The gradual dissolve of the Oslo Accords drew criticism from the Palestinian people, who in turn challenged the PNA’s ability to secure and maintain a long-term peace settlement (American Friends Service Committee, 2005). The failure of the peace negotiations between Arafat and former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak at the Camp David Summit in 2000, ultimately laid the groundwork that sparked five years of Palestinian Intifada. Unlike the first uprising that came about through resistance to Israeli Occupation, the onset of the second Intifada was primarily attributed to deteriorating internal social conditions and a growing discontent towards the PNA.

Again women actively participated in the Intifada, albeit against increasingly challenging and restrictive circumstances (Kattaneh, 2013; Razavi, 2006; Richter-
Devroe, 2009). The increased militarisation of the second *Intifada* exaggerated gender biases and had a stifling influence on the capacity for women's organisations to conduct meetings and channel women's contributions, with the advent of “closures, curfews, checkpoints and the construction of the wall dividing the West Bank into several isolated cantons” (Richter-Devroe, 2009, p. 164). The restrictions placed on freedom of movement significantly limited women's access to the public domain, and many of the women's organisations that had developed and thrived throughout the first *Intifada*, now struggled to function in the collective interests of women. Ultimately, these organisations became increasingly unable to prioritise the issues of women amidst the social insecurity and conflict that had developed, and many of these initiatives were disbanded.

Against the violent conflict, women pursued a participation in both violent and non-violent acts of political activism by taking to the streets in demonstrations, blockades and sit-ins. Unlike the atmosphere of the first *Intifada*, the role of women in the second uprising was heavily criticised and condemned. In public demonstrations and rallies, “women would often appear in the back of the crowd, hidden behind veils and hijabs” (Kattaneh, 2013). This notable shift in women's participation marked “the start of society’s adaptation with the prevailing conservative culture” (Kattaneh, 2013). Essentially, the events of the second uprising weakened the empowerment of women and disrupted the progression of feminist agendas. Much of women's public status that had been relentlessly forged in the first *Intifada*, and which flourished throughout the grassroots movement was dissolved by the militarisation of the second uprising.

Ultimately, during the period of the second *Intifada*, “women’s popular and informal roles within the struggle were hijacked, and women’s positions and roles in public life [were] threatened” (Kuttab, 2014, p. 227).

**From Camp David to Election Quotas**

In response to the course of legislative and presidential elections and a growing interference from the United States, the question of establishing municipal elections became a central priority and was integrated into “Palestinian internal political and social struggles and demands” (Balawi, 2006, p. 127). The American administration - which had previously facilitated the Camp David Peace Summit in 2000 - became an instrumental actor in the establishment of what would become the 2004-2005 municipal
In an appeal to convince Arafat to establish democratic elections, American President George Bush had stated that, “the organisation of elections and the emergence of new leaders was a [crucial] condition for the creation of The Palestinian State” (Balawi, 2006, p. 127).

In the midst of these heightened negotiations women launched a national coalition, which assembled under the National Campaign to Advance Women’s Participation in Elections, and began lobbying the government to secure a quota for women (Jabali, 2009; Shitrit, 2016). The coalition included the voices of feminist activists from the Women's Movement, community leaders that emerged during the Intifada’s, and progressive political leaders from Fatah and the PLO. The coalition was driven by the GUPW and strengthened by other women's groups that included Miftah, and the PWWSD. The momentum of the women's coalition was driven by the underlying and increasing persistence of patriarchal attitudes, embedded into the Palestinian social and political systems. This systematic patriarchal influence led to “women's lack of faith in their political parties and groups to field women or to support their candidature” (Jad, 2010, p. 84). The National Campaign to Advance Women’s Participation in Elections - which in many ways now echoed the efforts of the Palestinian Women's Movement - set in motion an affirmative strategy to bring about systematic political change that would deliver political gender equality for women.

The history of women's informal political contributions is incredibly diverse and significant to the current status of women's political positions in Palestine. Through the struggle for rights, liberation and gender equality, Palestinian women have forged distinct political identities and contributed to the sustainability and democratisation of the Palestinian State.
Chapter Four – Entering the Arena: A Case Study of the 2004-2005 Palestinian Local Elections

The PNA’s decision to hold local elections in 2004-2005 constitutes a historic and important turning point in the political history of Palestine, despite conflicting perceptions about the participation of women. The elections, held in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, represent a fundamental contribution towards the establishment of democratic governance, political legitimacy and the progression of political rights (Amayreh, 2004; The Civic Forum Institute, 2004; UN, 2005). These elections also represent a defining moment in the advancement of female participation and representation in the local political arena. With the establishment of the female quota, the elections presented an opportunity to increase the representation of Palestinian women by enforcing a change to the concept of electing women (Birzeit University, 2004, 2005). The elections however, also presented a challenging situation for women. Escalating Israeli occupation, a return to conservatism following the death of Arafat, and the inability of the PNA to establish political consensus and stable institutions greatly impacted the capacity for women to participate fully in the elections.

Prior to legislation, the female election quota was not without generous and fierce opposition. While most Palestinian factions resisted the establishment of the election quota, the Islamic Resistance Movement - Hamas - was the only faction to publically oppose it. Hamas claimed that a gender based quota was in violation of the Palestinian Basic Law, which prohibits gender discrimination (Kawar, 2001; Palestinian Basic Law, 2003, article 9; Shitrit, 2016). Hardline Hamas conservatives also questioned the political capabilities of women, claiming that the inclusion of women would jeopardise the integrity and function of the Palestinian political system at large (Hass, 2005; Jad, 2011). Hamas positioned this assumption on the long-standing view that women should be prohibited from serving in the position of head of state, based on a matter of Islamic Law which centers on the idea that “a people that places their affairs at the hand of a woman will never prosper” (Lahlouh cited in Shitrit, 2016, p. 787). Opposition to the quota was also visible from within Fatah, with conservatives admitting that despite Arafat’s newly formed feminist perspective they “were not prepared to give women competitors the advantage in a quota of seats” (Hass, 2005). This widespread opposition
reveals an entrenched tradition of male alliance and political patriarchy that transcends party politics. It also reveals that despite the underlying role of women in Palestinian society, the political leadership of the time essentially opposed the inclusion of women into the political realm. Despite this political resistance, the national campaign remained focused on legislating a quota, arguing that in order for women to be represented politically, gender discrimination must be accounted for by means of a legislated quota system (AWRAD, 2013).

The national lobby group - which now spanned across both the West Bank and Gaza Strip - established a defined and unified objective; to bring about legislation that establishes a quota of reserved positions for women in local and national political contexts. Through strategic meetings with political figures, public rallies, and media advertisements the coalition applied considerable pressure to the Fatah leadership and branches of the PLO, affirming the notion of positive intervention for women through a quota system (Jabali, 2009; Shitrit, 2016). Although Arafat’s initial position was against the idea of a women’s quota - once stating, “I prefer that women be elected because of their efforts and their qualifications” (Hass, 2005) - he was eventually persuaded by the mounting resistance and publicly committed his support for a 20% quota for women in local and legislative elections (Allabadi, 2008; Hass, 2012). As it turns out, Arafat was a key orchestrator in the establishment of the female quota system even after his death - an action that Palestinian feminists claim as Arafat’s defining legacy (Ashrawi, 2017; Kawar, 2001).

Renewed efforts for the establishment of a female quota system into the Palestinian political system began late in 2002, alongside talks to hold the second elections of the PLC. For feminist activists and progressive members within the Fatah leadership, negotiations to hold local elections represented a pivotal “opportunity to demand the encouragement of women's participation in the political arena” (Hass, 2005). During this time, the efforts of the feminist lobby group gained rapid momentum with the support of Palestinian NGO’s, leftist groups within the PLO and from key figures within the Fatah leadership who viewed the participation of women in politics as central to the progression of democracy. Fatah affiliate and member of the General Federation of Palestinian Women, Khadija Abu Ali, drafted a public document calling for positive intervention on behalf of Palestinian women in order to challenge the traditional
perceptions about the role of women in political life (Hass, 2005; PCHR, 2005). This document became an influential tool in establishing a women's rights dialogue from within the political system itself and the notion of positive intervention became a cornerstone of the feminist objective. The activities of the campaign drew strong support for the legislation of the quota system with public opinion polls showing that as much as 70% of Palestinian society was in favour (AWRAD, 2013; Birzeit University, 2004). Campaign efforts also spurred strong support from the PLC, with 45 members committing to endorse the quota concept (Birzeit University, 2004).

In response to growing demands for local elections, in 2002 the PLC urged the PNA to undergo a political reform and implement electoral preparations in order to host elections as soon as possible. In 2003 following a series of preparations by the HCLE, the Minister for Local Government declared that municipal elections would likely be held across the oPt in 2004 under the condition that appropriate conditions were available (PCHR, 2005). In 2004 the question of municipal elections remained at the forefront of local and national political debate and public demands for democratically elected councils was increasing. During this time, political division within Fatah was mounting with the internal leadership “acting in the face of opposition from Arafat and his close associates to hold elections for the local councils” (Hass, 2005). The escalating pressure from the American administration, international actors and growing public discontent forced Arafat to concede to the demands of his own party and organise municipal elections for December 2004 – a move which Arafat had been resisting through fear of a political takeover by Hamas (Balawi, 2006; Ibrahim, 2005; Jad, 2010). By authorisation of the HCLE, the elections were scheduled to take place in five rounds across the West Bank and Gaza Strip, marking the first such voting since 1976 and the first elections to draw the participation of Hamas (Amayreh, 2004; Biçakci, 2007; Jad, 2010). Following the authorisation of the 2004-2005 elections, a number of amendments were made to the Palestinian Local Elections Law - namely the introduction of the gender quota system.

**Inaccuracies and Results**

The election statistics presented in this case study endeavour to reflect accurate results. However, due to the unavailability of a number of documents and inaccuracies in official statistics from the CEC and HCLE, some information has been supplemented by
reports from local and international observers. This supplementary information was
gathered during the time of the elections from credible sources. While every effort has
been taken to ensure accurate results are reflected, variances in official statistics may
exist. The available election results pertaining to each round of the 2004-2005 local
elections are presented in detail in the appendices.

**Legislative Amendments**

Amendments to the Palestinian Local Elections Law were introduced through the PLC
by an ailing Arafat, who had campaigned his own party for the establishment of the
quota system. Prior to the commencement of the 2004-2005 elections a number of
amendments were made to the Elections Law to introduce the gender quota. However,
following the death of Arafat in November of 2004 a series of additional amendments to
the quota system were passed under incoming President Abbas. Palestinian Local
Elections Law No. 5 of 1996 was amended on three separate occasions throughout the
election period, with each amendment reconsidering the structure of the quota system.
Consequently, each of these amendments had a dramatic impact on electoral processes
and outcomes for women, ultimately influencing female voter behaviours and candidacy
rates (PWWSD, 2016). Decisions to change the legal framework in the midst of the
election period imposed significant challenges for electoral administrations, political
factions, candidates and voters. Ultimately, international observers found that these
changes were contrary to election protocol and “did not meet international standards
that require clear rules that enable candidates and the voting public to prepare
accordingly” (NDI, 2005, p. 5).

**The First Amendment**

The first amendment to the Local Elections Law No. 5 of 1996 came on November 30
of 2004 and was quickly enacted into legislation by the PLC on December 1. Law No. 5
of 2004 introduced a minimum representation of women, through the allocation of two
seats for female candidates on each local council (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006;
PWWSD, 2016). Article 28 of Local Elections Law No. 5 of 2004 states:

> Wherever women are nominated for candidature, the representation of women in
local councils must not be less than two seats to be afforded to those who win
the highest number of votes among female candidates.
In the event that women do not receive enough votes to win a council seat, the two female candidates with the highest number of votes will be automatically appointed to the final two seats on any given council. This amendment was based on a simple majority system of representation, despite the majority of the Palestinian public calling for a change from the majority system based on electoral districts, to a system of proportional representation based on party lists (El Fassed, 2004; NDI, 2005). International observers together with the Independent Palestinian Elections Group called upon the PNA to change the system to one of proportional representation, arguing that the majority system made it difficult for candidates from minority factions to be elected. However, Arafat rejected the push to renegotiate the legal framework and the first two phases of the local elections were carried out according to the majority system (CEC, retrieved 2018). Following this amendment, local elections commenced in four rounds across the oPt.

**Election Round One**

The first round of local elections took place in two phases; the first was held in the West Bank on December 23, and the second phase in the Gaza Strip on January 27, 2005 (CEC, retrieved 2018). International actors welcomed the first round of elections, with local agencies reporting that, “Palestinians were determined to see democracy grow even amidst the Israeli occupation (The Civic Forum Institute, 2004, p. 5). Under the authority of the HCLE, voting took place in 26 municipalities across 11 districts in the West Bank as candidates competed for 306 contested seats. Local reports initially suggested that voter turnout was high and reached 80%. However, official statistics from the CEC argue that voter participation was much lower than first reported, instead reaching 60.4% of registered voters (CEC, retrieved 2018; Focus, 2005). This result indicates a visible public enthusiasm for democracy and legitimate local governance. Among the eligible voters, participation was largely gender balanced with female participation reaching 48% in contrast to male participation, which secured 52% (CEC, retrieved 2018; NDI, 2005; PWWSD, 2016). These results reflect a gender participation gap of 4%. While the high turnout of female voters was not unexpected given the efforts of the feminist lobby movement, the legislative developments to institute the quota system dramatically influenced the participation of women as voters (Azzouni, 2010; PWWSD, 2016). The legislation of the quota also influenced the candidacy rates for women. Prior to legislation, 56 women were registered as candidates for the first round,
however the number of female candidates jumped to 139 following the adoption of the quota (Hass, 2005). This increase in female candidacy clearly demonstrates that the intervention of the quota system was necessary to overcome the cultural prejudices that hinder female political participation. Contrary to the gains in female candidacy the number of male candidates far outweighed female candidates, reaching a total of 748. Official results published by both the CEC (retrieved, 2018) and the NDI (2005) show that a total of 53 women were elected into local councils across the West Bank in the first round, achieving 17% of the contested seats. Of this result, 19 female candidates were appointed via the quota system, while 34 candidates were elected through competition (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006). In other words, 6.2% of winning female candidates were appointed through the quota. These results show that women were able to overcome prevailing patriarchal structures and attitudes to attain leadership positions, often without the assistance of a quota. Fatah succeeded in 14 municipal councils with Hamas claiming victory over 9 councils, signaling the beginning of a formidable opposition by the Islamic movement.

**Election Round Two**

The second round of local elections were carried in May of 2005, almost three months after the completion of the first round. During this time, presidential elections had also taken place in early January, seeing Mahmoud Abbas claim an anticipated victory. The second round of local elections again took place in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, amidst a prolonged atmosphere of fierce campaigning and celebration (Ballas, 2004; El Fassed, 2005). Across the West Bank, elections for local councils spanned 76 municipalities, where candidates competed for 823 contested seats (CEC, retrieved, 2018). The participation of actual voters in the West Bank increased only marginally from that of the first round, reaching 65% of registered voters. However in spite of low voter turnout, women made up 48.5% of all voters with male participation reaching 51.5% (CEC, retrieved 2018; PWWS, 2016). These statistics reveal that the difference between male and female voter turnout was just 3%. Out of the 823 contested seats in the West Bank, women secured 149 seats. Reports concluded that 97 of the 149 winning female candidates gained seats without the assistance of the quota, while 52 candidates were appointed by virtue of the quota system (CEC, retrieved 2018). Proportionally speaking, women secured 18% of the contested seats in the second round, which is an increase of 1% from the first round. Out of the total number of successful female
candidates, the percentage of women who gained seats through the quota system was 6.3%. Similarly to the first round, the election quota again proved useful in securing places for women in local councils. Regarding political factions, Fatah again secured more seats over Hamas (“Fatah prevails but Hamas gains”, 2005; “Fatah wins Palestinian local polls”, 2005). Although, the official results remain widely contested due to a contradiction in official statistics (“Hamas rejects Gaza election recount”, 2005; “Palestinian election results delayed”, 2005; “Ruling deals Hamas election blow”, 2005). Following the conclusion of the second round of elections, local and international agencies concluded that the majority of electoral proceedings were transparent and carried out fairly.

Second and Third Amendments: Annulment and Replaced

Immediately following the first two rounds of the elections, Palestinian Local Elections Law was amended for a second time. This amendment included a significant change to the electoral system and a revision of the female election quota system. On August 13 of 2005 the PLC legislated Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005, which was then authorised by President Abbas two days later on August 15 (CEC, retrieved 2018). Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005 annulled the pre-existing Law No. 5 of 2004 and replaced the majority system with a system of closed proportional representation lists (CEC, retrieved 2018; NDI, 2005). This important amendment meant that political parties were now required to compete for contested seats, rather than individual candidates. The NDI (2005) found that this change to the electoral system proved difficult for both political candidates and factions, “leaving them no time to develop a strategy or possible coalition agreements between small parties” (p. 3). Law No. 10 of 2005 also established a revision of the gender based quota system, based on the adoption of the proportional representation list system. Article 17 of the law again reinforced a 20% quota requirement, with the condition that guarantees a minimum representation of women on party lists (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006). Article 17 of Law No. 10 of 2005 states:

The representation of women in any of the local councils should not be less than 20%. Each list shall include at least a minimum representation of women:

a) One of the first three names on the list
b) One of the four names that follows
c) A woman among the names that follow

Interpretation of the new quota requirements by the HCLE was met with widespread confusion, as the majority of political factions “struggled with adequate composition of their lists and order of candidates” (NDI, 2005, p. 3). Under the pressure to form lists that adhered to the new legal requirements, many factions selected women based on family affiliation or the ability of the party to utilise women for political gain (Miftah, 2017). One female candidate from the West Bank revealed:

When selecting female candidates for local leadership positions or for representing their factions in the women quota, the factions prefer to select obedient women who have a high sense of loyalty and who are easily controlled and do everything which is asked from them. On the other hand, the factions avoid women who have an independent personality, ideas and perspectives because the male leaders are afraid that these women would bring them a headache (cited in Miftah, 2017, p. 74).

The third amendment was passed in September of 2005 under the authorisation of President Abbas (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006). A number of minor corrections were made to the Elections Law during this time, although the most significant change was another revision of the female election quota system. This amendment annulled the previously stipulated quota of 20%, and instead allocated a minimum of two seats to be reserved for female candidates in each council and required that every party list include two female candidates (Al-Botmeh, 2012). Article 17 of the amended Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005 states:

1. In the local body in which the number of seats does not exceed 13, the women representation should not be less than two seats:
   a. One woman shall be among the first five names
   b. One woman shall be among the next five names

2. In the local body in which the number of seats exceeds 13, a seat shall be allocated for women among the five names that follow paragraph 1 (b) mentioned above.

3. Local bodies in which the number of voters is less than 1000 according to the final table of voters are excluded from provisions of paragraph (1) mentioned above. In such a case, the option for selecting places allocated for women among the candidates shall be left for the electoral lists.
This amendment was again met with delayed and limited interpretation from the HCLE. Due to the lack of transparency from the HCLE in the communication of the amendment, the registration of political candidates was heavily delayed and the composition of party lists was compromised by the inability of factions to meet the legal requirements (El Fassed, 2005). While many Palestinians argued that the quota stipulated in the third amendment was too low to achieve a significant change, women's groups maintained that it was an important and necessary step to increase female representation (Miftah, 2017). Despite tireless efforts by women's groups and progressive political members to incorporate the quota into electoral law, there is no penalty for political factions that fail to meet the quota requirements (Ludsin, 2011). Meaning, there is a greater potential for political factions to reject the quota requirements. Following this amendment, the third and fourth rounds of local elections commenced across the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

**Election Round Three**

On September 29 of 2005 the third round of elections took place, solely throughout the West Bank. Despite concerted efforts by the HCLE to establish democratic and transparent processes, the third round was characterised by electoral inconsistencies, a lack of legal framework and widespread accusations of distorted results (“Hamas says election results distorted”, 2005). Arbitrary decisions by the HCLE enforced abrupt changes to the elections calendar and directed the cancellation of elections across the Gaza Strip and a select number of districts in the West Bank (NDI, 2005). The HCLE claims that the decision to cancel elections was necessary, due to increased security risks and political tensions in a number of districts. However, the decision to indefinitely postpone these elections was met with outrage from Palestinian human rights groups and independent electoral observers, who accused the HCLE of corruption and stalling democracy (PCHR, 2005). The advent of Israel’s withdrawal from areas of the Gaza Strip during this time had a dramatic impact on the electoral processes of the third round (“Palestinians vote in local elections”, 2005). Escalating tensions between Israel and Hamas sparked violent unrest in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip, resulting in the arrest of Palestinian civilians and political candidates (“Hamas: Arrests hurt polling chances”, 2005; NDI, 2005). The establishment of additional military checkpoints and roadblocks in response to the violence presented another challenge to the electoral processes, as campaign efforts became restricted and voters were prevented...
from reaching polling stations (“Palestinians vote in local elections”, 2005). This chain of events ultimately caused widespread inaccuracies in the official election results for the third round.

According to the results from the NDI (2005), voting took place in 82 districts out of 104, as voting was cancelled in 22 districts. Voter participation was highest in the third round, reaching 86% of registered voters (CEC, retrieved 2018). Female voter participation remained steady, earning 48.4% in comparison to male participation, which achieved 51.6% (CEC, retrieved 2018). The gender difference in voter participation increased slightly in the third round, growing to 3.2%. In consideration of the lack of accurate statistics from the HCLE, observer agencies report that 2,479 candidates competed for 1,010 contested seats (“Fatah ahead in West Bank vote”, 2005; Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006; NDI, 2005). In the final results, 152 women succeeded in the third round, with 112 of the winning candidates gaining seats through competition (Miftah, 2014). A further 40 female candidates secured seats through the quota system, representing 11% of winning female candidates (Miftah, 2014). Proportionally speaking, female candidates won an overall 15% of all contested seats in this round, which indicates a decrease of 2% from the first round and 3% in the second round. Following amendments to the official election results by the HCLE, Fatah secured a comfortable victory over Hamas by gaining control of 51 councils (“Fatah scores over Hamas”, 2005). Hamas secured just 13 councils, which party leaders attribute to the arrests of candidates and disruptions to voting and polling processes (“Palestinians vote in local elections”, 2005). The remaining 40 councils in the West Bank were won by minority factions (Butenschøn & Vollan, 2006).

**Election Round Four**

The fourth and final round of the local elections was carried out simultaneously in the West Bank and Gaza Strip on December 15 of 2005 – one month before the 2006 PLC elections. Two days prior to the elections, Hamas again challenged the legislation of the female election quota. In a formal meeting of faction representatives, Hamas appealed strongly against the female quota, arguing that the quota system “creates a humiliating situation with regard to women, who should not be treated as a minority” (Newbury, 2006). Renewed efforts by Hamas to campaign against the female quota reveals the entrenched conservative ideology of the faction, despite the progressive attitudes of
opposing factions to strengthen democracy and women’s rightful place within it. The challenge by Hamas to revoke the female quota from Local Elections Law was quickly rejected by opposing political representatives who agreed that maintaining the election quota was an important aspect of Palestinian democracy. Similarly to that of the third round, the fourth round was plagued by electoral inconsistencies and an increased Israeli presence. The HCLE again executed arbitrary decisions to cancel elections in a number of districts throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip, citing an increased potential for security risks. In light of these cancellations a number of councils were appointed by decree of the PNA, meaning that voting did not take place (PCHR, 2005). In the West Bank, voting for 37 local councils took place across 4 districts. According to statistics issued by the CEC (retrieved 2018), voter participation reached 72% of registered voters, which reveals a 14% decrease in participation from the previous round. Female voter participation continued steadily in comparison to the previous three rounds, achieving 46.4% compared to male participation, which reached 53.6% (CEC, retrieved 2018; PWWSD, 2016). The gender difference between male and female voters was at its highest in the fourth round. The number of male and female voters were separated by 7.2%, which is almost double that of any of the previous rounds. Statistics regarding candidacy rates and successful candidates in the fourth round are highly contradictory and contested due to the cancellation of voting and inaccuracies in polling. However, the available statistics for the fourth round have been taken from the CEC election results. Candidates in the West Bank comprised 158 electoral lists and vied for 381 available council seats (CEC, retrieved 2018). Female candidates in the West Bank only managed to secure 23 council seats, making up just 6% of the winning candidates. To date, the CEC has not released statistics regarding the outcomes of the female quota for round four, however reports from the PWWSD (2016) claim that all of the winning female candidates in this round were appointed via the quota system. Hamas constituted a sweeping victory in a number of major cities and made progress in rural areas (“Hamas wins councils”, 2005), indicating a major socio-political change and the increased popularity of Hamas (Balawi, 2006; Ibrahim, 2005).

Election Round Five: Cancellation
A fifth round of local elections had been scheduled for early 2006, to establish voting in those districts that were cancelled in the fourth round. However, following the victory of Hamas in the 2006 PLC elections, fierce political tensions throughout the region were
reignited and the fifth round of elections were cancelled indefinitely.

Conclusions
The female election quota was enacted amidst a highly unstable and disempowering political context. Factional conflict, electoral shortcomings and the sustained Israeli occupation imposed hindrances upon electoral procedures, which proved damaging to women's capacities as participants and competitors. Despite these challenges, it is clear that the quota system delivered significant increases to the rates of female voter participation, female candidacy and ultimately the representation of women in local councils. In the West Bank alone, women achieved 377 seats out of an available 2,529 - which equates to 15% of all contested council seats. Many of women's successes as candidates were due to the quota system, which conclusively increased the percentage of seats gained by women in each election round. However, the case study also reveals that women were able to successfully contest a large portion of seats without the assistance of the quota. This achievement can be explained by the development of Islamic feminism within Palestine and the growing manifestation of this ideology into the Palestinian political discourse. The case study demonstrates that women were able to overcome patriarchal structures and constitute themselves as legitimate competitors to gain important access to the political arena. Additionally, the quota system helped deliver strong results in female voter participation, with male and female voter participation achieving near gender parity throughout the election period. Here, the establishment of the quota system encouraged women to actively participate in the voting process, as women are far more likely to participate in electoral processes when female candidates have a greater chance of standing for and winning elections (UN, 2005). The quota system also drew large numbers of female candidates, with women more likely to succeed as candidates with the advantage of the quota system to guarantee female representation (UN, 2005). Conclusively, the quota system proved beneficial in bringing about a significant increase to female representation in electoral processes and as members of local councils. However despite these achievements, the female election quota falls short of providing women with equal political representation in the local context of the West Bank.
Chapter Five – Women Make Tea, Men Make Decisions: Implications of the Female Election Quota

In spite of the immediate implications of the female election quota in assisting an increase in female representation in local councils across the West Bank, the ability for councilwomen to actively participate in political processes remains exceedingly challenging. In the context of an overarching patriarchal culture, women are unable to progress to positions of leadership, exercise political authority or implement policies due to the systemic exclusion of women from meetings, negotiations and public duties (Asfour, 2010; Miftah, 2017; MoWA, 2011). Essentially, the female election quota has created an all-too-familiar situation where in spite of women being represented in the political arena, their contributions are restricted and their presence is routinely condemned. The Palestinian Islamic feminism movement has helped sustain the discourse of the female election quota, in that women continue to work towards increasing the minimum quota requirements of the Local Elections Law and building political consciousness. This chapter presents an overview of the implications of the female quota system for councilwomen in the West Bank, following the conclusion of the 2004-2005 elections.

2012 Local Elections

In 2012, local elections were held across the West Bank – the first local elections in seven years since the 2004-2005 elections. Prior to the elections in 2012, local elections in the oPt had been routinely postponed throughout 2010 and 2011 due to the ongoing impasse between Fatah and Hamas following the dismissal of the Hamas government in 2007. Following public outcries for the establishment of elections and a return to local democracy, Abbas announced in early 2012 that elections would take place the same year. Following this announcement, Hamas declared a boycott of the elections citing a lack of collaboration on electoral proceedings between the two factions and a need for political unification. The decision to move forward with the elections without the participation of Hamas drew strong criticism from both Palestinians and foreign actors who argued that the lack of participation from Hamas ultimately “reduced the choice available to voters and meant that councils were less pluralistic” (The Carter Centre, 2012). Democratic processes were dramatically jeopardised during these elections, reflecting the ongoing deficiencies in establishing democratic governance. Driven by a
lack of political competition and incomplete electoral lists, the process of acclamation was implemented in more than half of the local councils. The large number of acclamations significantly violated equal voting opportunities, increased the potential for corruption and tribalism, and jeopardised local democracy. Ultimately, the process of acclamation limited the opportunities for female candidates to participate in democratic electoral processes and weakened the ability for female candidates to gain seats (UN Women, 2013, p. 96).

Given the turbulence of the political environment during this time, overall participation in the electoral processes was low, with voter participation struggling to reach 54% of registered voters. This regression in voter participation can also be attributed to the high degree of acclamation. Overall women made up 43% of the total voters, with men making up 57%. Female candidacy was unexpectedly low throughout these elections, straining to reach just 24% (Miftah, 2013; PWWSD, 2016). However, despite the low rates of female candidacy in the 2012 elections, this figure represents an increase of 5% from the 2004-2005 elections when female candidacy stood at 19%. Remarkably, two all-women lists ran for elections in 2012, in an attempt to dispel gender biases and provide voters with an alternative choice (“New group running”, 2012; Rudoren, 2012). Female leaders argued that it was a necessary step to ensure that women were given equal opportunities, stating “the way women are normally chosen for the lists here is based on appeasing the large families and according to clanships and tribalism…we wanted men to stop choosing on our behalf” (cited in Hatuqa, 2012). Disappointingly none of these lists received enough votes to advance.

The female election quota system again played a crucial role in helping women achieve contested positions on local councils during the 2012 elections. Statistics reveal that with the assistance of the quota, the number of women elected into council positions reached 21%, which is an increase of 6% from the 2004-2005 elections where women gained 15% (Miftah, 2014; PWWSD, 2016). An election report from UN Women (2013) reveals, “the proportion of women who won by quota amounted to 2.5% of the total number of winners and 12.1% of the total number of women winners” (p. 96). The report also shows that the percentage of women who won seats through acclamation was 21% of the total number of winners, and represents 64% of the winning female candidates (UN Women, 2013). Conclusively, an overwhelming 76% of
the total number of winning female candidates were elected either by virtue of the quota system or by acclamation. The final results indicate that only 24% of the winning female candidates won seats through competition. This statistic however, does represent an increase from the 2004-2005 election.

The overwhelming influence of tribalism and patriarchy continued to deter and obstruct in the ability for women to participate in the 2012 elections, both as voters and candidates (Miftah, 2014; PWWSD 2016). However, despite the endurance of this disempowering context, the data conclusively reveals that the female election quota improved the general outcomes for Palestinian women in the West Bank, by increasing female candidacy rates and the representation of women in local council positions.

**Representation vs. Participation**

Research indicates that political participation is to a large degree dependent upon culturally constructed gender ideologies that influence the behaviours and roles of both men and women (Clayton, 2015; Derichs, 2010; Toameh, 2016). Additionally, an increase in female representation in political bodies does not directly translate into active and equal participation once elected (Costa, 2014; Dahlerup & Friedenwall, 2009). This is particularly the case for Palestinian councilwomen in the West Bank, where the representation guaranteed by the quota system has merely afforded women a seat at the table rather than opened the doors for women to participate in political affairs. As political life - particularly in Middle Eastern nations - is largely dominated by men, political institutions are standardised and operate around procedures and facilities that ultimately disempower women and make it difficult for them to participate equally and function effectively as elected members (Ballington & Karam, 2005; McCann, 2013). According to an assessment of the quality of female participation in local government institutions throughout Palestine (AWRAD, 2013), the majority of councilwomen are actively deterred from participating in political processes once elected. Councilwomen in the West Bank argued that in spite of women serving valuable positions on local councils, women are rarely presented with opportunities to attend council meetings, take part in political education workshops or community meetings. One councilwoman argued:

“Males have all kinds of opportunities to provide their input even in an informal fashion as they meet with members in many settings; women are the ones who
are not really included” (Cited in AWRAD, 2013 p. 13).

Another councilwomen echoed this systematic culture of exclusion, stating:

“When the council wants to address the public, they always chose a male member to do that” (Cited in AWRAD, 2013, p. 12).

Additionally, a large number of councilwomen reported a high number of repeated attempts by male members to limit or completely block access to safe travel between meetings, with the aim of discouraging women from participating in the long-term. A councilwoman from Ramallah in the West Bank provided the following testimonial:

“When a male member wants to travel in official business, they make sure he gets the council’s car; but when I need to travel, they make all kinds of excuses to discourage me” (Cited in AWRAD, 2013, p. 14).

The study revealed that while Palestinian women in the West Bank recognise the significant positive shift in the representation of women in local councils, and attribute this achievement to the quota system, the majority of councilwomen cited a need to improve the quality of women's contributions (AWRAD, 2013, 2015). Nevertheless, for the reality of most Palestinian councilwomen, the female quota alone cannot solve the prevailing inequalities in political participation that exist between men and women. Rather, the ability for women to participate fully is dependent upon the deconstruction of patriarchal hegemony and disempowering cultural attitudes that in effect dissolve the ability for women to voice and action political change.

Ongoing Challenges
Palestinian women now occupy contested seats in almost all local councils across the West Bank, primarily due to the assistance of the female quota system. However the disempowering social, cultural, economic and political contexts continue to impair the capacity for women to function effectively as political leaders and maintain a commitment to political pursuits. Frameworks of patriarchy, systematic democratic deficit and an increasing Israeli occupation represent just some of the primary challenges to councilwomen in the West Bank and throughout the oPt more generally.
**Patriarchy**

The lack of gender equality throughout all contexts of Palestinian culture and society continues to impose a fundamental problem to the ability for councilwomen to enact change as leaders. Like most surrounding Arab nations, in Palestine the enduring culture of patriarchy has transcended into the political realm and ultimately - despite women achieving contested political positions - subordinates women based on gender and patriarchal hegemony (Bennett, 2010; Syed, 2004). While councilwomen in the West Bank hold valuable positions in the majority of local councils, the role that women play remains dictated by cultural conventions of patriarchy that reinforce gender stereotypes. Ultimately councilwomen are subordinated, excluded and their contributions are largely disregarded or restricted to those traditionally held by women (AWRAD, 2015; Mejiuni, 2013; “New group running”, 2012). One councilwoman from the West Bank explains how the systemic culture of gender stereotypes places great restrictions on the ability for female ministers to carry out council duties:

> “The council male members and staff view women from a stereotypical perspective; they want us to do the work that they don’t want to do; they like to keep us as secretaries” (Cited in AWRAD, 2013, p. 19).

Echoing this situation, another councilwomen from the West Bank testified that cultural Islam significantly impacted her ability to participate and reach contested leadership positions:

> “When the council gets an invitation for [an] event, the men start negotiating who of them should go; when we as female members ask about that; they say: you know our customs and tradition!” (Cited in AWRAD, 2013, p. 14).

Gender discrimination continues to serve as a significant obstacle for Palestinian women as society continues to uphold conservative attitudes that discriminate against the role of women as decision makers outside the home, particularly in political contexts. Although patriarchy is ever present and dominant amidst all sectors of Palestinian society, evolving social attitudes and a growing movement of Islamic feminism are challenging the patriarchal structures in the everyday lives of women (UN Women, 2017).
Democratic deficit

Since Arafat’s death in November of 2004, the State of Palestine has maintained a commitment to progress towards the goal of democratisation both locally and nationally. The advent of the 2004-2005 local elections, the presidential elections of 2005 and the second elections for the PLC in 2006 represent quantum leaps in democratisation and the establishment of legitimate governance. However in the years since these events, progress has strayed and ultimately stalled at both local and national levels (Ghanem, 2010, 2013; Guzansky & Michael, 2016). The current state of the Palestinian political system is plagued by systematic democratic deficit, attributed to the lack of political stability, widespread corruption and a lack of long-term political solutions. Prolonged Israeli occupation is also a significant factor contributing to the inability of the Palestinian state to sustain democracy. The Palestinian democratic deficit imposes a great challenge not only to the stability and legitimacy of the states political system, but it also hinders the capacity for women to participate within it. For Palestinian women, political participation and achieving representation in institutions is considered to be more important and more easily attained at the local level, compared to that of the national level (AWRAD, 2013, 2015). A lower rate of corruption and a focus on local issues means that women are afforded greater opportunities and the support to “take part in planning and applying related policies and legislations” (Jabali, 2009, p. 5). In spite of women’s gains at the local level, the revolving door of political leadership and ineffective legislation makes it more difficult for women to keep pace and succeed, particularly against an increasingly restrictive situation.

Israeli Occupation

The persistence of the Israeli occupation has become an underlying challenge to Palestinian governance and political progress. Subsequently, the occupation reduces the potential for women to participate in political processes due to the restrictions placed on women's rights and freedom of movement (Elrashidi, 2005). An increase in military checkpoints, curfews and impromptu border closures restrict women’s political empowerment and limits both formal and informal political participation (Dana & Walker, 2015). Increased restrictions on movement and security concerns has meant that for many councilwomen, attending council meetings is almost impossible and in many cases has led to a forced abandonment of political duties and a broader disengagement with politics (Björkman et al, 2012). For many women, the occupation
has forced a return to more traditional domestic roles, due to the escalating violence on the ground, a stalled democracy and a dire economic situation.

**Debating the Quota**

The Palestinian female election quota has been contentiously questioned, challenged and re-evaluated since its initial establishment in 2004. Arguments in favour of the quota, consider it to be an invaluable tool for progressing the political rights and empowerment of women in an increasingly conservative and restricting society (Miftah, 2015; PWWSD, 2016). Arguments against the quota claim it is merely tokenistic and allows underqualified women to succeed in place of others who are deemed more qualified or experienced (Abu-Hamad et al., 2016; AWRAD, 2013). At present, the debate over the quota remains fierce, while progress to increase the quota has been slow and limited. Driven by the momentum of the feminist movement, Palestinian political factions have undertaken additional strategies to promote the participation and representation of women. In 2010 the majority of political parties signed a charter that ensured women would represent a minimum 30% of all positions within the party. Although this action indicates a significant shift in building a more inclusive and equal political dynamic, inevitably a number of parties did not commit to enforcing this minimum standard and remain opposed to enforcing the quota for women beyond 20% (CEDAW/C/PSE/1, 2017). Further attempts to increase the number of political positions held by women in the West Bank is evident in the 2014 drafting of a new law to govern local council elections. The law directed a minimum representation requirement for women, whereas “women shall account for no fewer than 30 per cent of candidates and elected officials…” (CEDAW/C/PSE/1, 2017, p.17). Despite efforts by the feminist movement NGO’s to pass the law through legislation, a number of political factions continued to oppose the quota, ultimately reflecting the ongoing resistance to an increase in female engagement with politics and positions of leadership (Miftah, 2015). In spite of this tangible setback, the Palestinian feminist movement continues to advocate for increases to the quota system and is now calling for a minimum quota of 50% to be upheld at local and national levels (al-Amoudi, 2016; Kuttab, 2013). In the increasingly conservative society of Palestine, the culture of patriarchal norms threatens to jeopardise women's formalised political roles and the capacity for women to lead. The quota debate continues to progress and gain support from both within Palestinian society and the international community alike.
In the years since the legislation of the Palestinian female election quota in 2004-2005, the implications for councilwomen in the West Bank have been significant and far-reaching. However, although the representation of women has increased markedly, the establishment of the quota has not directed a considerable increase in the capacity for women to participate and carry out duties once elected. Prevailing patriarchal attitudes continue to impose great challenges for women in local politics, meaning that the ability for councilwomen to compete for and achieve leadership positions remains difficult and seemingly unattainable. The Palestinian Islamic feminism movement continues to push back against the ongoing cultural and political challenges that restrict the access women have to the political domain and their capacity to actively participate. In spite of these ongoing setbacks and the complexity of the Palestinian situation, had the PNA not legislated the female election quota in 2004-2005, the representation of women in the local councils of the West Bank would undoubtedly be limited beyond its current state.
Chapter Six – Conclusion

Palestinian women have been fiercely campaigning for equal participation and representation in all sectors of society for over one hundred years (Fleischmann, 2000; Gluck, 1995; Holt, 2003). In the midst of escalating Israeli occupation, political instability and enduring patriarchal ideologies, Palestinian women have contributed a rich history of political participation and forged strong political identities (Golan, 1995; Kuttab, 2008; Suad, 2011). However despite this history of political involvement, much of women's political contributions have been informal and restrained due to the complex political landscape and cultural structures of disempowerment (Jabali, 2009; Kawar, 2001). Against these tangible setbacks, women have constituted themselves as a collective movement to gain important access to the political arena and continue to serve invaluable contributions to the progression of the Palestinian state (Benoist, 2017; Jalal, 2016, 2016; Kuttab, 2015; Moore, 2005). The development of the Islamic feminism movement within Palestine and its current and future impact on the political contexts of Palestine is profound, and continues to evolve. Through the development of a discernable identity that flourished amidst the Palestinian Women's Movement, the ideology and framework of Islamic feminism has shaped the political consciousness of Islamic Palestinian women and championed women's political contributions (Boulby, 2009; Eyadat, 2013; Jad, 2014). While in general the role of women in the public domain has become more restricted in recent decades due to a societal regression towards conservatism, the involvement of women in almost all aspects of Palestinian political life has continued to develop (Kuttab, 2013).

In recent years, the political role of women has shifted dramatically from informal activists to formalised political representatives at local and national levels, primarily due to the legislation of the female election quota (Miftah, 2014). Following disappointing elections results for women in the 1996 PLC election, a national coalition was formed by local women's organisations to campaign for the legislation of a gender based quota system (Barron, 2002; Jad, 2010). Following almost a decade of relentless campaigning and political training through the initiatives of women's organisations, the Palestinian female election quota system was legislated and put into motion during the 2004-2005 local elections. The PNA’s decision to host local elections in 2004-2005 constitutes a crucial turning point in the political history of Palestine and the emergence of a positive
transition towards democracy and an increase in women's political rights and empowerment (Balawi, 2006; Butenschon & Vollan, 2006; PWWSD, 2016). Held across both the West Bank and Gaza Strip in four rounds, the elections represent a dramatic and sudden shift in the decentralisation and legitimisation of governance, and the exercise of women's political rights. With the establishment of the quota system, the elections provided women with fresh opportunities to participate in electoral processes and guaranteed women the representation in political institutions that they had long demanded. The legislation of the quota system enforced a dramatic change to the concept of electing women for political positions and ignited the discourse surrounding the contemporary role of women in politics (Birzeit University, 2004).

Throughout the local elections of 2004-2005, the female quota system played a central role in the participation of women as voters and candidates, and the ability for female candidates to win contested seats (Miftah, 2014). Across the West Bank districts alone, female candidates gained 377 contested seats in local councils, representing 15% of all winning candidates. Remarkably, of the total 377 seats gained by women, 243 of these were attained through competition without the assistance of the quota (CEC, retrieved 2018). The quota system was also fundamental to women's decision to compete as candidates, in that it guaranteed the opportunities for women to gain representation and therefore encouraged them to compete (PWWSD, 2016). The female quota also had a significant and unprecedented impact on the participation of women as voters. Throughout the elections, voter participation was largely gender balanced with women constituting almost half of the overall proportion of voters (CEC, retrieved, 2018; NDI, 2005). Essentially, with the assistance of the quota, women were able to overcome patriarchal conditioning and societal and political pressures to actively participate in the elections and gain significant representation as leaders in local councils (Daho, 2008; PWWSD, 2016).

In the years following the legislation of the female election quota system, Palestinian women - particularly in the West Bank - have enjoyed profound increases in political consciousness and representation at the local level, as evident in the 2012 local elections (Hass, 2012; Hatuqa, 2012; “New group running”, 2012). However, while the political role of women has become more formalised and female representation in local councils has increased significantly, the ability for women to participate without restriction once elected remains extremely challenging. Amidst an enduring context of patriarchal
hegemony and systematic gender discrimination, the role of women as political representatives, leaders, negotiators and decision makers is subordinated and routinely condemned (Asfour, 2010; AWRAD, 2013; Naylor, 2012; Toameh, 2016). Ultimately, the legislation of the female election quota system has done little to change societal attitudes towards women and the negative perceptions surrounding women in formalised political roles. In spite of these seemingly unshakable setbacks, the Palestinian Islamic feminism movement continues to sustain the contentious debate regarding the female election quota and champions the fundamental right for women to be political represented (al-Ghoul, 2015; Jalal, 2016; Kreichati, 2014). Palestinian women continue to work tirelessly towards building and maintaining political consciousness, progressing women's political rights and achieving equal representation in all areas of the Palestinian political arena.

The recent advancement of women into the Palestinian political sphere represents a significant and transformative era in the formalisation of women's political roles and contributions. However in light of this significant change, the research dedicated to investigating the evolving roles and contributions of women in the politics of the Palestinian state remains largely underdeveloped. This thesis provides a timely insight into the contemporary political roles of Palestinian women in the West Bank, through an analysis of the establishment and implications of the female election quota system. The framework of Islamic feminism can be used to trace the developments in women's political consciousness, mobilisation, and the affirmative action that has shaped the current state of women's political rights throughout the West Bank and broader oPt. The evolution of Palestinian Islamic feminism as both a movement and discourse has significantly influenced the establishment and positive outcomes of the female election quota for women in the West Bank. The evolving Palestinian Islamic feminism discourse, together with the affirmative actions of Palestinian women continues to drive the progression towards achieving equal participation and representation of women in political institutions, amidst the ever-changing Palestinian political landscape.
Bibliography


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## Appendix A – Palestinian Political Timeline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1964</td>
<td>The PLO is formed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 April 1976</td>
<td>Local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 December 1987</td>
<td>First Palestinian <em>Intifada</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 September 1993</td>
<td>Oslo I Accord is signed, marking the start of the Oslo Peace Process between Palestine and Israel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994</td>
<td>The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is formed under the Oslo I Accords.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28 September 1995</td>
<td>Oslo II Accord is signed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 January 1996</td>
<td>First elections for the President of the PNA and members of the PLC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>Hanan Ashrawi is elected to the PLC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 March 1996</td>
<td>Palestinian Legislative Council (PLC) is established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Government issues letter calling for the appointment of women to local councils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Second Palestinian <em>Intifada</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Ministry of Local Government appoints mayors and council members to local councils in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 November 2004</td>
<td>President Yasser Arafat dies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 November 2004</td>
<td>The female election quota system is introduced under Local Elections Law No. 5 of 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23 December 2004</td>
<td>First round of local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 January 2005</td>
<td>First round of local elections are held in Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 January 2005</td>
<td>Mahmoud Abbas is elected as President of the PNA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 May 2005</td>
<td>Second round of local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 May 2005</td>
<td>Second round of local elections are held in Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 August 2005</td>
<td>The female election quota system is amended a second time under Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005 – 20% quota stipulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2005</td>
<td>The female election quota system is amended a third time under Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 September 2005</td>
<td>Third round of local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Event</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 December 2005</td>
<td>Fourth round of local elections held in the West Bank and Gaza</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Female election quota is introduced to legislative elections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 January 2006</td>
<td>Second elections for members of the PLC commence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 October 2012</td>
<td>Local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29 November 2012</td>
<td>The State of Palestine is granted non-member observer state status by the United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 April 2014</td>
<td>The State of Palestine officially ratifies CEDAW</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 May 2017</td>
<td>Local elections are held in the West Bank</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Appendix D – Palestinian Local Elections Law No. 10 of 2005

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Appendix E – Palestinian 2004-2005 Local Elections: Round One Results

Available from:
Appendix F – Palestinian 2004-2005 Local Elections: Round Two Results

Available from:
Appendix G – Palestinian 2004-2005 Local Elections: Round Three Results

Available from:
http://www.elections.ps/Portals/0/pdf/resultsThird.pdf
Appendix H – Palestinian 2004-2005 Local Elections: Round Four Results

Available from:
## Appendix I – The 2004-2005 Palestinian Local Elections Results

### Summary (West Bank Districts)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Round</th>
<th>Number of Voters</th>
<th>Number of Candidates</th>
<th>Women Elected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>85,950</td>
<td>44,602</td>
<td>41,348</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>179,501</td>
<td>92,437</td>
<td>87,064</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>124,086</td>
<td>64,041</td>
<td>60,045</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>99,049</td>
<td>53,089</td>
<td>45,960</td>
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