

## The Position of the Hamas Movement on the Political Participation of Palestinian Women

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### Abstract

The importance of this study lies in illustrating the role of Palestinian women in the development of Palestinian society as a result of their political participation and aims to examine the position of the Hamas movement on the political participation of Palestinian women during its various stages since with the movement's founding, leading to its assumption of power after winning the legislative elections. A qualitative research methodology used to address the study objectives by conducting 4 personal interviews. The researcher interviews Palestinian women leaders of the Islamic women's movement affiliated with Hamas, who participated in the political and social work fields, in addition to their participation in the management of ministries after Hamas's assumption of power. The interview includes 6 semi-structured questions. Personal interviews have been conducted in Gaza. Later, comparisons with previous studies have been made, analyzed, and reviewed. The study has several results, the most important of which are that the Palestinian woman in Hamas enjoys a large area of participation in political work of all kinds as Hamas' interest in women's affairs has been proven since the early stages of the movement's founding. This is evident as Hamas has allowed women to work in advocacy and to assume leadership positions within the social and educational institutions, leading to assuming power, after being elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council and obtaining their membership in the Palestinian Ministry. Nevertheless, women's political participation is still weak and limited in formal and informal institutions and decision-making places. Finally, the researchers recommend that future research deal with the political participation of Palestinian women on other dimensions, including social, cultural, educational, economic, and political factors.

**Keywords:** Palestinian Women, Hamas Movement, Political Participation, Islamic Women's movement, Gaza, Palestine.

**Introduction**

Societies' interest in women and their political participation varies according to the structure of these societies, the level of freedoms they enjoy, and social and cultural values. These factors may encourage the participation of women, and they may be discouraging and sometimes an obstacle in the way of such participation (Al-Saraji, 2012). Sustainable development cannot be achieved without a fair partnership between women and men, where women have a contribution to the development of sustainable development programs and have a share of their outputs (PCBS, 2020). It is not possible to advance local affairs or to achieve any kind of development without the participation of women alongside men and without the political and social presence of women who believe in their ability to bear responsibility (Amaideh, 2018). Therefore, women's political participation has become a reflection of their position in society, and an expression of their active participation in all fields. Political participation increases citizens' loyalty to their homeland, improves their performance in their work, puts an end to power abuse and exploitation, and grants citizens the right to hold officials accountable for their negligence in their work, which leads to the improvement of government work (Abdullah, 2019).

The participation of women is a requirement to meet the needs of political systems. The democratic choice requires the participation of both women and men to promote the principle of good citizenship. Enabling women's participation without discrimination grants the prevalence of the values of equality in all political parties and other institutions. Besides, women's participation requires allowing them to make decisions at different leadership levels, formulate programs, and draw up plans and policies (Mohanna, 2013).

Hamas is the largest Islamic movement in Palestine. The movement has been assuming power since 2006 after winning the parliamentary elections. In addition, it is stated in one of the articles of the movement's charter issued in 1988 that women have a role in the struggle against occupiers alongside men since they are the ones who raise children according to the Islamic values and concepts. Women have assumed some leadership positions in the movement's institutions, the most important of which are gaining memberships in the Parliament and ministers in the government, as well as gaining advanced positions in local institutions. Accordingly, the researcher believes that the involvement of Palestinian women in public life and their access to leadership positions are evidence of the achievement of the values of justice and equality in Palestinian society. Also, women's current participation reflects the reformist vision of Hamas and its position on women. Therefore, this study is an introduction to understanding the position of Islamic movements adopting political Islam to reach power and governance towards women and understanding the Hamas movement's vision of Palestinian women and their political role.

**Objective**

This study aims to know the position of the Hamas movement on the political participation of Palestinian women by focusing on the movement's systems and its visions for women's political participation and studying the reality of the political participation of Palestinian women and their various positions in official institutions, as well as identifying the most important features of women's political participation and examining the most important obstacles facing their political role.

### **Methodology**

Based on the nature of the study and the objectives it seeks to achieve, the researcher uses the qualitative method, which is a suitable method for this type of political sociology study, in obtaining data. The qualitative approach is one of the methods of analysis based on sufficient and accurate data about the subject of the study that helps in reaching practical results. The researcher also has resorted to research, scientific articles, and previous studies related to the study of data to address the theoretical side of the study. The researcher conducted four personal interviews with women leaders who are affiliated with Hamas, and who have social and political contributions. In light of the results of the interviews, the researcher has conducted the necessary comparisons and discussions to reach the results of the study.

### **Literature Review**

Taking into account the charter of Hamas, its intellectual and media discourse, and its political practice since its founding, the interest of Hamas in Palestinian women is evident due to the women's educational, social and jihadist role that they have assumed throughout history alongside men. The position of the movement on supporting women has been strengthened following the movement's assumption of power. Since its founding in 1987, the Hamas movement has given special attention to women's activities and has expressed pride regarding the role of women in the educational process, and their role in preserving the family and society. Women's work began concurrently with the founding of the movement. Mosques were the starting point. The Islamic University of Gaza, which was launched following the foundation of the movement, also embraced women's advocacy, educational, media, political, and later resistance work. As for the reasons for the political role of women in Hamas from an Islamic point of view (Abu Al-Qumsan, 2010).

Hamas has well understood the importance of the foundational role of Muslim women as women contribute to creating a generation of good character and integrity according to Islamic principles. If the girl is raised according to Islamic principles and based on good manners and patriotism, the Palestinian people will win their holy battle against the Israeli enemy (Al-Zaeem, 2019). The tenth item of the electoral political program of the Change and Reform Bloc of Hamas movement (2006) on issues of women, family, and children states the following: "Women must be regarded as essential partners in the work of resistance and jihad. In addition, women must be protected, their rights must be preserved, and they must be empowered economically and developmentally. The right of women to political participation must be supported, and all their legitimate rights must be ensured". On the other hand, Hamas has gone through several different political events and regional and international circumstances culminating in the imposition of siege and isolation by regional and international countries for more than thirteen years thus prompting it to reformulate its charter of 1988. Despite the intellectual flexibility that the new amendments carried in line with the nature of the political phase, these amendments have preserved accuracy and objectivity. Hamas has also preserved its principles even while it is at the head of the government that it has formed and led after winning the legislative elections (Abu Shamala, 2017).

### **Hamas and Political Participation**

Hamas is one of the most prominent Palestinian resistance movements. It is a movement that has enjoyed and still enjoys wide popularity in the Palestinian community. It is a movement

that adopts Islam as a doctrine. Hamas follows the Muslim Brotherhood ideology of moderate Sunni Islam (Saleh, 2015). The political thought of the movement can be understood by examining the articles of its charter of 1988 and examining its statements in which it presents its vision, perception, and ideas on the Palestinian issue (Al-Mabhouh, 2010). The victory of Hamas in the elections marked the beginning of a new era and an introduction to political life. This victory is considered a culmination of the movement's great efforts in various fields through which it has sought to set its foot in the internal political life (Al-Zubaidi, 2010). Moreover, there is a noticeable development regarding the movement's vision of women. The movement considers that women should work in the advocacy and social field. The movement sees the importance of involving women in public life for their role in raising generations and pushing them to sacrifice and jihad. From the movement's point of view, women are the most patient in education and care of children, in addition to their great role in raising awareness in the field of Islamic national upbringing, values, and moral concepts (Abdul Hadi, 1999).

Women have received great attention from the founder of Hamas, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin because he acknowledged the role of women and the dimensions of their involvement in advocacy and educational work and their impact on Palestinian society. Therefore, we notice that the establishment of the Department of Women's Work in the Islamic Council founded by Sheikh Yassin is evidence of his interest in the role of women and the fulfillment of the requirements of the role of women in the fields of education and advocacy (Yassin & Dajani, 2007). On the other hand, the social role of women has gradually begun to increase within the movement system, in conjunction with the Rule of Law in Social Change. This law has contributed to pushing a woman affiliated with the movement to assume a ministerial position for the first time in the local political history after years of work that included their participation in municipal and legislative elections and the leadership of many cultural centers. It should be noted that Hamas and social systems are in perfect harmony. Since the aspirations of the society are stronger than any political program, the role of women in society is gradually advancing (Al-Masry, 2014)

### **Palestinian Women during the Founding Phase of Hamas**

Al-Halabi (2021) considers that the launch of the Palestinian Islamic feminist movement was in 1979 at the hands of Sheikh Ahmed Yassin. The start of the Islamic feminist movement was from mosques, and then it proceeded to the Islamic University. The Sheikh also gave women a lot of independence, which in turn gave women the ability to lead themselves by themselves. In the beginning, they had an administratively independent body. In addition, they had communication and joint work with the male members regarding matters of public interest. They started their journey in the Islamic University when they established a female student council. The meetings were held regarding the files of cooperative work, preaching, guidance, and cultural work. Since its founding, Hamas has attached special importance to the role of women in promoting its values and principles.

It was stated in Article 18 of the movement's charter that a woman, whether a mother or a sister, has the most important role in caring for the home, raising children under moral concepts and values derived from Islam, and raising her children to perform religious duties so that they are ready for the jihad role that awaits them. Hence, the movement's keenness to take care of schools and the curricula according to which the Muslim girl is brought up to be a good mother and aware of her role in "the battle of liberation" The Charter of the Islamic Resistance Movement Hamas, 1988. Al-Halabi (2021) believes that the charter and

regulations were not set for the man only, but also the woman. As for the movement's charter, and although women did not participate in its drafting, it still concerns both men and women, and some provisions specifically pertain to women and that enhance their role in participation.

### **The Role of Palestinian Women in Political Participation**

Safi (2007) attributes in his study that the reason behind the scarcity of previous studies on the role of Islamic women in political work is the relatively recent founding of Hamas, compared to other parties. In recent years, Hamas has been preoccupied with the work of resisting the occupation thus preventing it from presenting studies from within the movement for security reasons. None of the movement's studies has specifically dealt with the movement's position on the role of Palestinian women in the political and military struggle. Most of the studies focus on the movement's founding, its origins, its political discourse, its position on the Palestine Liberation Organization, and its struggle with the Zionist enemy.

The researcher Khanafsah (2014) indicates in her study that women's participation in Hamas has been because of their role in the upbringing and their political participation. Women within the Hamas movement have had a major role in attracting other women and persuading them to join the movement. Women were able to ascend within the leadership levels of the movement to their membership in the movement's Shura Council. An Israeli study shows that Palestinian women were behind the victory of Hamas in the elections by mobilizing women in large numbers, especially university students, who persuaded a large number of citizens inside and outside universities to vote for the movement. The study states that Hamas has involved women in democratic electoral campaigning due to the possibility of its male activists being arrested. The study has results contrary to the prevailing Western concept of Hamas' position on women claiming that it wants to keep women as servants (Amram, 2007)

### **Representing Palestinian women within the frameworks and bodies of Hamas**

Undoubtedly, the presence of Palestinian women at the top of senior executive positions and decision-making centers is not new as women have assumed leadership of several senior positions for decades. Women now preside over decision-making places outside the framework of their families and away from the societal stereotype. Palestinian women also have managed the process of development through official institutions led by women along with men. The role of women has become essential and central, even though they have not yet obtained their full opportunity for equal rights (Al-Masry, 2014).

Al-Adlouni (2021) considers that the representation of women, since the founding of the Hamas movement to the representation in bodies and frameworks, is a result of the effectiveness of women in all fields, politically, socially, advocacy, and militarily. As for their actual contribution, women in the movement's Shura Council have been able to vote and run for elections. Recently, Sister Jamila Al-Shanti was elected a member of the movement's political bureau, which is concrete evidence of the representation of women in political life. Al-Halabi (2021) reports that the women with Hamas have representation in the political circle of the movement and have a presence in the media and most of the current political matters such as national relations, institutions, and union work.

**The Position of the Palestinian Woman within Hamas Organization and its Charter**

Previous studies indicate the maturity of the political experience of Hamas after it has assumed power in 2006 due to experience and the complexities of the Palestinian political situation. The movement has become more open to international political systems and more accepting of democratic systems in the context of its international relations, its practice of governance, and its principle as a national liberation movement. Palestinian women have enjoyed a great deal of political participation at all levels, especially their participation in legislative elections, participation in the government, and their access to senior administrative positions in official institutions. The movement has singled out two articles of its charter to highlight the role of women in society. Article 17 states: "The Muslim woman in the battle of liberation has a role no less than that of a man". Women have a great role in guiding and raising generations. The enemies realize their role. They believe that if they can bring up women in the way they want, away from Islam, then they will guarantee victory in the battle."

Accordingly, women in Hamas have an important role in the battle of liberation (Al-Adlouni, 2021). On the other hand, the study of (Younis, 2010) addresses the women's movement in Hamas, and the contemporary social and political participation of Palestinian women based on a textual analysis of the movement's charter in 1988 and the electoral program of the movement in 2006, as well as interviews with women in the local media. The study concludes that the movement has promoted the roles of women within the national project and the movement. The principles of Hamas regarding the role of women intersect with the concepts of Arab and Islamic identity, and the concepts of liberation against the Zionist occupation. Hamas also uses its women in gender roles to pave the way for other women to engage in the Palestinian national project. Strategically, Hamas has wanted these visions to allow the restructuring of Palestinian society to resist the occupation forces.

**The Position of the Hamas Movement on the Political Participation of Palestinian Women**

Hamas' position on women's participation stems from the ideological position of the Muslim Brotherhood. Muslim Brotherhood adopted the position of allowing women to take over the public mandate, while the issue of assuming the caliphate remained open and a matter of debate and discussion according to what was stated in the document issued by the group in 1994 (Safi et al., 2007). Sheikh Ahmed Yassin also viewed women as the cornerstone of the establishment of the home and the Muslim community. Therefore, women have full rights provided that their participation do not conflict with their role in raising generations and caring for her home. Women must be educated and allowed to participate in public life (Abu Hashish, 2005). Hamas realizes the pivotal role of Palestinian women in resistance and construction. The Palestinian woman is an integral part of the Hamas political system because the primary role of the Palestinian woman is the educational work

Hamas has singled out a special organization for women's work. Hamas movement has established a special organization for women's work that has its consultative institutions, leaders, and special activities. Women have played an important role in the advancement and expansion of the movement. Through their presence in the movement, women have proven their ability to participate in strategic decision-making and to assume senior leadership positions within the movement. The movement has also established several projects to reform society through women and organized some training courses to raise the efficiency of women, to mobilize women, improving societal culture, and activating the role of women in society (Al-Yousef, 2017). Hamas has also been interested in establishing institutions that take

care of women and children, promising its voters in its 2006 electoral program that it would be keen on the "Palestinian family and its cohesion. The Palestinian woman is a partner in jihad and resistance, a partner in construction and development, and her civil and legal rights are guaranteed." Therefore, it is necessary to "guarantee women's rights and complete the legislative framework that complements their rights. It is critical to maintaining the Palestinian Muslim woman's chastity, modesty, and commitment character (Change & Reform Bloc, 2006).

### **The Features of the Political Participation of Palestinian Women Following Hamas's Assumption of Power**

There is no doubt that women's representation at the leadership and consultative levels of the movement is still limited, and their participation in decision-making places is still weak. Moreover, the participation of women in the Legislative Council and municipalities is restricted by the gender quota and does not reflect the position of the movement on women. Many obstacles still stand in the way of women's progress. Nevertheless, women still participate in women's committees, conferences, and educational meetings. The participation of women in political life has also increased, as has women's role in national relations, the great marches of return, and mass action (Shehadeh, 2021). Al-Halabi (2021) considers political freedom to be the most important achievement of Hamas after assuming power.

Women have been able to take advantage of this political freedom through their participation in various events and with the expansion of the circle of women's activism and the increase in the number of women, women have had an independent political body called the "women's movement". The vision and objectives of the women's movement are about the establishment of a strong, integrated, and effective Islamic women's organization, rooted in the community and internationally connected. The mission of the women's organization is that the women in Hamas seek to spread the Islamic call in Palestinian society, especially among women, and to consolidate the spirit of jihad and resistance through an integrated women's organizational building capable of engaging in societal and international work (Al-Adlouni, 2021). However, when looking at the reality of Palestinian women's political participation in official institutions, decision-making, and policy-making, several other studies show that the level of Palestinian women's political participation is still weak (Al-Dalu, 2011 & Rahal, 2010).

### **The Political Achievements of Palestinian Women Following Hamas's Assumption of Power**

Palestinian women have contributed to the spreading of political awareness in society through several means. Furthermore, Women have played an important role in the victory of Hamas in the municipal and legislative elections through their active participation in persuading women, in particular, to exercise their electoral rights. Politically, women have presented a unique model of a Muslim woman with values and virtues, while at the same time defending the rights of people and the nation. Women have also demonstrated a high ability to play successful political roles, as they have succeeded before in the humanitarian, advocacy, and military fields. Women have played a pivotal role in addressing the suffering of the Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli prisons, and have participated in decision-making in major cases (Al-Adlouni, 2021)

However, the situation of Gaza has limited the achievements of the government and the Legislative Council. Despite this, women have had a presence in political decisions in general.

The Legislative Council's support for legislation and policies that support women has been evident and has been a result of the influence of women. Women have influenced international opinion on the Palestinian issue through regional and international communication (Haroun, 2021). Shehadeh (2021) believes that one of the most important achievements of Hamas is the presence of women in the Legislative Council and the government. This has strengthened the status of women and given them political knowledge, experience, and practice those women have acquired by themselves and with the help of others. Al-Adlouni (2021) believes that women have not joined Hamas to only achieve political gains, but rather to play their role towards their people and homeland.

### **Challenges Facing the Women's Movement in Hamas**

Many obstacles are facing the women's movement in Hamas. Obstacles are often related to the social and cultural structure of Palestinian society as the society still does not believe in the eligibility of women to enter the political field and to hold high positions in the state. They consider the field of politics to be exclusively for men. Men also believe that they alone have the capacity in this field, and do not agree with the right of women to participate or compete. The issue lies in the culture and conviction of both sexes in society, not in one particular party (Al-Qutb, 2012).

Al-Adlouni (2021) believes that one of the most prominent obstacles facing the women's movement after Hamas's assumption to power is that women still suffer in the West Bank from Israeli arrests and raids. The situation is similar to the one in Gaza where women suffer from the Israeli siege, restrictions, and travel bans. Another political obstacle to the participation of Palestinian women is the impact of the political system on the work of women's institutions in terms of the electoral system, which limits women's political participation. The form and nature of the applicable election law hinder the work of women's institutions, especially when adopting the electoral district system, which has enhanced the opportunities of the tribal society to politically rule the country (Hanafi & Tabard, 2005).

Haroun (2021) considers that the most important challenges for women's participation are the low level of awareness and negative culture towards their political participation. Haroun adds that there is a lack of confidence in the performance of women, and there is a fear of their participation related to the fear of compromising their roles in the family. There is also rejection to what is being proposed in the West regarding encouraging women to participate in politics. Other obstacles include women's reluctance to participate, and the lack of satisfactory models, both in number and in quality. On the contrary, researcher Al-Masry (2014) believes that the political division in Palestine after 2007 has negatively impacted national unity in general, and the women's movement and its institutions in particular, as all institutions not affiliated with the ruling party were closed down and seized. This contributed to the dispersal of the feminist base and negatively which affected women's participation and political presence.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

This study employs the qualitative approach to address the study objectives by conducting four personal interviews, they are Palestinian women leaders of the Islamic women's movement affiliated with Hamas as shown in Appendix A, the interviews were designed in English and then translated into Arabic language, with six semi-structured questions protocol as shown in Appendix B, were designed for the interview for easy and quick response. As such, respondents spent took about 45 minutes with the interviewer. The interview parameter



consisted of the respondent's assessment and status political participation of the Palestinian women and the position of Hamas movement on the Palestinian women. The questions were the primary concern of the study, they explored the extent to which Palestinian women occupy a position to Hamas movement according to the movement's regulations and charter, in addition to identifying women's achievements and their contribution to political life. Reviewing was made between the result of this current study and previous studies, and then they were critically analyzed and discussed in order to obtain the practical results.

### **Result**

Hamas' position on Palestinian women stems from a strategic vision. Taking into consideration the charter of Hamas, its intellectual and media discourse, and its political practice, its interest in women becomes evident in the educational, social, and jihadist role that they have enjoyed alongside men. The movement's supportive position for women in political life has been strengthened after it has assumed power. Women in Hamas also enjoy a large area of participation in political life. Hamas' interest in women's affairs has been evident since the early stages of the movement's founding. Since the early stages of the Hamas movement, women have had an active role, ranging from political meetings, participation in elections, participation in parliament, and support for the Palestinian prisoner's cause. On the other hand, the results of the current study show that the representation of women at the leadership and consultative levels of the movement is still limited, their participation in decision-making places is still weak, and many obstacles still stand in the way of women's path to exercising their role and achieving their mission.

The results of the study also indicate that there is great satisfaction among the leadership of women in the Hamas movement with the performance of the women's movement and its various achievements. On the other hand, there is a relative satisfaction with the organizational independence of the women's movement and its presence in all the central issues of the movement. However, the women's movement still hopes to obtain more of its rights and to be present at the level of leadership representation in the movement regardless of what it has achieved in the movement's last internal elections in early 2021 when women succeeded in getting two seats in membership of the movement's political bureau in Gaza, which is considered a historic achievement for the women's movement as the women's movement has not been represented in the movement's political bureau before. On the other hand, the results of the study show that the administrative structure of the movement in addition to the internal system of the movement has not completely resolved the issue of the independence of the women's movement. This restricts the women's movement's freedom in some decisions. Some aspects of the joint work within Hamas are run by the leadership of the movement of men under majority rule. The electoral systems have not given women the full opportunity to be present in decision-making circles. Women could not reach the highest levels of the organizational ladder of the movement as a result of direct election. Among the most important achievements that have had a profound impact on Islamic women in Palestine is their advocacy contribution that has transformed society from a society whose customs, traditions and behavior were affected by the dominant socialist and leftist thought to a society that is proud of its Islam and is preoccupied with its authentic heritage, religion, and belief. The Palestinian women have reshaped the religious awareness of Palestinian society and revived the spirit of jihad through the concepts that they have established through educational institutions

On the other hand, the political contribution of Palestinian women and their presence in decision-making positions is still apparently limited regardless of what Palestinian women have provided over decades in the fields of education, advocacy, education, and jihad. This is due to some reasons, the most important of which are women's lack of awareness of their rights, their lack of awareness of their potential, their lack of awareness of the strength of their influence, and their failure to realize the importance of their contribution to society in the absence of democratic institutions, as all of them have become an obstacle on the way for women to reach high leadership positions. One of the most prominent challenges facing women within Hamas after the movement has assumed power lies in the lack of experience due to their lack of gradation in political roles as a result of the quota system that has undermined the presence of women in power. The movement was obliged to select some of the women of the movement according to the quota system. These women were not experienced nor had prior political training. Women in the movement also face several obstacles that hinder their political participation, including the suffering of women in the West Bank due to arrests by the Palestinian Authority, the Israeli occupation, and the decline in freedom of expression.

### **Discussion**

The results of the current study indicate that the social role of women is gradually progressing within Hamas movement in conjunction with the Rule of Law in Social Change and considering the system of values. The results of this study are consistent with the results Al-Masry (2014). The results also indicate Hamas's interest in women as evidenced by granting women many of their political rights through the development of the movement's legislation and internal systems that guarantee women's equality with men and guarantee them a real partnership so that Palestinian women obtain their real role in political participation and their strong representation in all official institutions and their involvement in decision making. This position is consistent with (Abu Al-Qumsan, 2010), what is stated in the charter of Hamas (1988) and consistent with Al-Halabi (2021), and Al-Adlouni (2021), where they emphasize that the inclusion of items related to women in the charter aims to strengthen the role of women. The results of the study also show a remarkable development in the movement's attitude towards women, as they have held organizational positions, as well as the relative independence of the women's movement's decision-making process. This is consistent with (Al-Halabi, 2021 & Al-Zaim, 2019). Nevertheless, the results of the study differ in this regard from Shehadeh (2021), which acknowledges the existence of a dilemma in the movement's organizational structure regarding women. The organizational structure still separates women from men. This separation preserves women from social mixing with men, guarantees their rights, and prevents men from making decisions alone. However, it deprives women of gaining experience from men with more experience and practice.

On the other hand, and from a theoretical and practical point of view, the results of the study show that there is no difference in the political position of Hamas regarding the political participation of women in the movement's political thought. This is consistent with Shehadeh (2021); Al-Halabi (2021); and Al-Adlouni (2021), where they emphasize that there is no difference between the rights of men and women in Palestinian laws and legislation. The discriminatory culture between males and females in Palestinian society negatively affects the role of women in participation, resulting in a lack of experience and practice, and a bias against their electoral participation due to the quota system. The results also differ with Haroun (2021) where she believes that there is a clear difference between the political

representation of men and women in favor of men, as the participation of women in the movement's higher bodies is weak, and their participation in the Legislative Council and municipalities have been because of the quota system and not an expression of the movement's position.

Considering the results of the study, it appears that several obstacles are facing Palestinian women in political life, and these results are consistent with (Al-Qutb, 2012) in terms of the existence of social and cultural obstacles, often related to the social and cultural structure of the Palestinian society because the community still does not believe in the ability of women to enter the field of politics. The results are also in agreement with Al-Masry (2014), which considers the Palestinian division to be one of the most important obstacles to the political participation of Palestinian women. The results are also consistent with Shehadeh (2021), which attributes the weak political participation of Palestinian women to the existence of a discriminatory culture and education between males and females in Palestinian society, which negatively affects their role in participation. The results of the study also consistent with Al-Adlouni (2021), which considers that one of the most important obstacles facing the women's movement after Hamas has assumed power is that women are still suffering in the West Bank from the policies of the occupation and the Palestinian Authority, However, the results of the study differ from Haroun (2021), which considers that the most important challenges for women's participation are the low awareness and negative culture towards their political participation, and a lack of confidence in women's performance. The fear of women's political participation is related to the fear that their roles in the family will be undermined, as well as there is a rejection to what is presented in the West towards encouraging women to participate, as well as the reluctance of women to participate, and the absence of satisfactory women models in society.

### **Conclusion**

It is necessary to work on clarifying a strategic vision to support and direct women's political participation according to the Islamic discourse, culture, and national goals. We must also work on creating distinguished and influential Islamic women models in society through training and skills development, in addition to documenting women's participation in all stages, and highlighting women's roles and influence in society in the media. There should also be a re-evaluation of the criteria for selection and appointment to take up senior positions in institutions. The selection criteria should be based on competence, experience, skills, and qualifications, without discriminating between men and women. It is necessary to remove all obstacles facing women, which requires awareness-raising and legislative media efforts and the creation of an appropriate healthy environment in which women can participate in public life. Finally, future research should address Palestinian women's political participation in other dimensions, including social, cultural, educational, economic, and political fields. This approach stems from a basic perception that it is impossible to understand the political system of society without linking it to the social, economic, and cultural system of women and Palestinian society.

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