

Abstract

This study aims to address the factors and the actual causes of the existing imbalance in the distribution of domestic roles and responsibilities among spouses within the families where wives work outside the home. It further explores the perceptions that are related to the fairness of the distribution of household tasks and their origin of these perceptions, the relationship of these perceptions and factors with interactions that occur within these families with respect to domestic work, and to identify the strategies and mechanisms women are using and can use to impact on the process.

The importance of this study stems from the research respondents being studied, comprised of a group of working wives who structurally transformed from the private sphere into the world of productivity. Hence, the research is considered a point of departure for assessing the impact of women's participation in the economic life by estimating the value of domestic work and its impact on the women's productive role and on the relationships within the family in particular and the society in general.

The study consistently concluded that the existing gaps in the distribution of domestic work between couples in Palestinian

households are not merely materialistic, but that gender-related traits, gender ideology, and the stereotyping formulation of gender identity that mostly crystallize through nurturing of generations and social environment have emerged as the most important dominant factors among spouses, who, regardless of their views on the fairness of the distribution of responsibilities and gender roles, are constantly trying to maintain their gender identities that are identified for them by the community and which are certainly linked to the roles that they do. Equally important, the impact of the economic contribution of the wife's work is limited because of the socially entrenched ideology; while family economic needs for the wife's income sometimes tolerated negotiations on domestic work, it inversely appeared as an opposing effect in some of the cases where the wife's income is high or being the primary family income, which caused Gendered Identity Crisis among husbands.