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[INTRACTABLE CONFLICT: THE ISRAEL-PALESTINIAN CONFLICT AND JERUSALEM ISSUE EXAMINED]

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is intractable, given its long-lasting nature and its resistance to resolution. This paper unpacks the notion of intractable conflict. Attributing intractability to ancient hatreds, or other meta-narratives, is not sufficient. Rather, these conflicts are rooted in issues of resource competition, and in turn the threats to socio-economic and personal security, lack of potential prosperity, and political restriction that the resulting conflict engenders and feeds from. This paper points to both the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in general, as well as the specific issue of Jerusalem, to demonstrate that the efforts of the international community have fundamentally failed to bring about resolution to the conflict. This essay argues that the efforts of the international community have been excessively state-centric in nature, focusing on issues of borders and political arrangement. To reach a resolution to this conflict, the efforts of the international community need to target the people, namely the Palestinians, through efforts to provide physical safety, economic/political opportunity, and an overall sense of future prosperity. Efforts must provide a positive impetus not to engage in conflict for the populace in order to disempower the cyclical nature of intractable conflict. Further research is required to understand the motivation of empowered actors to continuously engage in conflict, though it is suspected that the drivers are also resource and socio-economically based. The understanding of intractable conflict presented in this paper would benefit from additional vetting against other notable areas of intractable conflict around the world.

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Introduction

Intergroup conflicts are not uniform in nature, given the various intricacies of each situation. The more traditional notion of conflict often rests on the idea of the belligerent parties engaged in armed forces conflict with one another for an expressed purpose, with clear, or at least possible, solution in the future. However, other conflicts are more long-lasting, evade solution, involve various actors, and take a heavier toll on the parties involved – physically, emotionally, politically, and economically. What is more, these conflicts have a more profound effect on the region, and the international community in general. This notion of intractable conflicts represents the overarching theme of this paper.

This essay explores intractable conflict, highlighting the multifaceted nature that allows these conflicts to continue in a self-perpetuating, self-reinforcing, and self-worsening manner. This will be completed for two purposes: to provide the reader with a more in-depth understanding of conflict, and to make clear the approach that this paper will take when examining the Palestinian-Israeli conflict itself. Although these conflicts are self-perpetuating in nature, a review of the literature indicates that the driving force for these conflicts is with the people themselves, and how the sentiment and opinions of the people are reflected, reinforced and polarized at the political and state level. To be more specific, intractable conflict is not the result of overarching metaphysical notions such as culture clash or ancient hatreds, but rather is a self-perpetuating process of violence fueled by micro-level socio-economic inequalities, themselves rooted in the conflict. This popular discontent amongst the disadvantaged

group, namely the Palestinians in this case, shapes the political atmosphere in such a way that it enables the conflict to perpetuate between the opposing groups. This, in turn, recreates the conditions that predispose the ongoing conflict to intractability as the parties engage and reengage in the violence and counter-violence. Ultimately, when people remain perpetually disadvantaged and under threat, they have no impetus to disengage from conflict.

With this understanding made clear, this paper will then examine the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, paying specific attention to the Jerusalem issue. Since the influx of Jewish migrants into the historic land of Palestine in the late 19th century, there have been obvious and extreme tensions between the Jewish and Palestinian peoples. This conflict will be explored both in the broad sense, and then looking at the microcosm that is Jerusalem. More specifically, this paper provides an examination of American efforts pre-2001, then turning to the role of the Middle East Quartet, and its setbacks. This paper will then look at the stance of the European Union as it pertains to the Israel-Palestinian conflict in general and Jerusalem, as it too represents a key player in dealing with the Arab-Israeli peace process. Jerusalem has been seen as a sticking point in the resolution of the conflict. Examining the Jerusalem issue specifically provides the reader with an understanding of how the international community has both viewed the conflict in general (i.e. as one of borders and security) and how the community has attempted and failed to address this conflict. It is here that this paper will critique past and present approaches of the international community to the conflict, and Jerusalem specifically, as misdirected, failing to address real and deteriorating human issues and thus enabling the perpetuation of the conflict, as noted in this paper's

examination of the phenomenon. Given the nature of intractable conflict, issues such as Jerusalem, though important, are highly symptomatic in nature or are at least secondary to the central forces behind the perpetual conflict. The solutions that have been proposed are path dependant and constrained by state-centred logic – they fail to grasp this form of thinking. In many ways, the international community is attempting to apply the same approach of division, border negotiations and security, which initially enabled the conflict, in hopes of finding a resolution. Instead, there is a need to address the effects that this conflict has had on those involved, primarily the more disadvantaged group (e.g. the Palestinian people), in order to stall the intractable nature of the conflict itself before moving on to seeking resolution.

To put it another way, this paper holds that past efforts at addressing the conflict in general, as well as the specific issue of Jerusalem, have failed to counter the intractable nature of the conflict. They have been improperly targeted at the macro- or sovereign state-level. Instead, this paper argues that the conflict should be addressed at the micro, or human agency level. Many of the proposed solutions are structural in nature; they attempt to address the conflict through such things as borders, political reforms and state structure. These solutions fail to address issues of poverty, economic disparities, and real or perceived victimization of individuals. It is upon these issues that intractable conflict feeds at the grass roots level.

Remaining focused on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and with the developed understanding of intractable conflict in mind, this essay will then focus on the importance of enabling positive human agency in order to break the cyclical pattern of this intractable conflict. It is highly important that individuals, especially those of the

disempowered party, are able experience livable conditions and foresee a real and positive future. If this does not occur, then the intractable conflict cycle will not only continue, but also become further empowered.

This paper argues that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, as an intractable conflict, has resisted resolution due to the fact its socio-economic drivers have gone unaddressed. Past and current international efforts have been poorly focused, directing efforts at state-level solutions (i.e. borders and security), and failing to address the key socio-economic factors fueling the conflict. These efforts have attempted, rather, to simply manage the conflict rather than create fertile ground for a solution. Intractable conflict is rooted in human suffering and therefore efforts should be targeted at alleviating the many aspects of human suffering, as generated by intergroup competition as well as the ongoing conflict itself; areas important to address are economic opportunity, physical safety, and opportunity for positive political expression. There is potential for such efforts to disempower the cyclical nature of this intractable conflict itself, and to move forward to an eventual resolution.

1. Intractable Conflict: A Conceptual Review

Between 1816 and 1992 there were 1,100 conflicts globally and many ended within 3 years, only 5% lasted 20 years or longer.¹ These are the conflicts that could be considered to be intractable – and it is this notion of intractable conflict that sits at the core of this paper. The purpose of this section is both explicatory and exploratory in nature. An examination is provided below that attempts to first define the term ‘intractable conflict’, then delve deeper into specific facets of both what defines intractable conflict, and, in turn, what feeds into it. Ultimately, this examination will provide a base upon which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Jerusalem issue can be analyzed.

1.1. Defining Intractable Conflict

1.1.2. Ancient Hatreds and Cultural Incompatibility: Convenient Definitions

Guy and Heidi Burgess note that intractable conflicts possess characteristics that predispose them to intractability, as they are often “high-stakes, win-lose [scenarios ...] that have no zone of possible management [... These] are conflicts from which participants see no way out ... because the solution would require giving up some very important value”.² For Burgess and Burgess, the idea of intractable conflict is part and parcel with the notion of “seemingly irreconcilable moral differences and struggles”.³ That is, these are conflicts that centre on binary notions such as ‘right and wrong’ and

¹ Licklider, Roy, *Comparative Studies of Long Wars*, in Crocker, Chester A., Hampson, Fen Osler, & Aall, Pamela R. (Eds.) *Grasping the Nettle: Analyzing Cases of Intractable Conflict*. (Washington: The United States Institute of Peace, 2005), 37.

² Burgess, Heidi and Burgess, Guy M., *What Are Intractable Conflicts?* (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium,, 2003) , Link in Bibliography.

³ Ibid.

'mine and yours'.⁴ Given this, these authors argue that such conflicts can often be sourced in the juxtaposition of or worldviews. This would mean that it is not necessarily short-term victory that is sought, but rather engagement in the longer, moral struggle.⁵

Bercovitch echoes these thoughts, noting that intractable conflict often involves states or groups with historic and long-standing grievances, coupled with a desire for redress, identity conflicts, contested sovereignty, or irreconcilable beliefs.⁶ These predetermining factors, according to these authors, lay the groundwork for violent and destructive acts, polarized debate and resistance to resolution. The author goes as far to note that these situations often appear within buffer zones between larger civilizations.⁷ However, reflecting on this, such a stance on the nature of intractable conflict seems lacking— it borders on assuming that the conflict always has and always will exist, or that there are pre-existing, inborn factors. Claiming that such complex situations as intractable conflict are attributable to overarching cultural narratives and ill-defined ancient hatreds is not convincing. This is not to say that these authors do not highlight valid points in the search for the understanding of intractable conflict - identity conflicts, contested sovereignty, or seemingly irreconcilable beliefs, for example, do come into play, though it is contestable that they are causal in nature. This paper takes a somewhat different approach; a review of the literature makes clear that intractable conflict is not so much a predisposed reality, but rather a self-perpetuating process set in motion as a result of an initial set of competitive tensions. Burgess and Burgess do note that intractability is somewhat of a spectrum, while some conflicts are easily

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

solved, others are extremely difficult to address.⁸ Conflicts that exist on the latter end of this spectrum are those that can be considered intractable in nature, or at least approaching intractability. This further supports the notion that this form of conflict is something that develops, not something that exists merely by virtue of the parties involved.

1.1.3. What is Intractable Conflict? Seeking Definition

Chester A. Crocker, Fen Osler Hampson, and Pamela R. Aall note that the form of long-lasting conflict seen in the Arab-Israeli issue, as well as in other conflict zones, has been called “intractable, protracted, self-sustaining, deep-rooted, [and] the products of ancient hatreds”.⁹ They also highlight the fact that the efforts of the international community often fail to bring any lasting peace in areas defined by said forms of conflict. With respect to Israel, this failure has spanned upwards of half a century, given that there have been continuous outbreaks of violence, crystallization of public opinion, and continued threats to global and regional stability.¹⁰ These authors further argue that as a result of their long lasting nature, the notion of conflict intractability is often misunderstood to mean ‘unsolvable’ rather than resistant to resolution – intractable conflicts “are conflicts that have persisted over time and refused to yield to efforts – through either direct negotiation by the parties or mediation with third-party assistance – to arrive at a political settlement”.¹¹

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Crocker, Chester A., Hampson, Fen Osler, & Aall, Pamela R., *Introduction: Mapping the Nettle Field*, in Crocker et al., *Grasping the Nettle*, 3-4.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid., 5.

Crocker, Hampson and Aall touch on similar notions as the Burgesses and Bercovitch, arguing that this form of conflict has roots in polarized, zero-sum notions of identity; however, they provide a slightly more nuanced examination of the issue. The polarization of views, for these authors, is not based on supposed cultural *über-*narratives, but is rather a result of an accumulation of grievances that can become part of each group's vision of history, with each side viewing itself as a victim, coupled with the reinterpretation or adoption of religious or cultural symbols to perpetuate both a sense of conflict and/or resentment. Within the context of these protracted conflicts, violence and hatred can become a way of life for those involved – it is tied to the idea of cultural conflict and survival. As a result of this, the people can become a driving force of the intractability of the conflict as they become immersed in the conflict itself.¹² Ray Licklider similarly highlights that the concept of intractable conflict is subject to interpretation, but cautions against oversimplification of intractable conflicts, indicating that intractable conflicts are not common and should not be simplified as stemming from such things as ancient hatreds and other macro-level theoretical musings.¹³

Additionally, there is seemingly an ongoing reinforcement or propagation of these grievances. A core source of this is the failure of negotiations; when these efforts fail, they can have negative impacts on peacemaking, as they generate cynicism between the parties and amongst people. And, as efforts continue, and animosity builds, experience in negotiation can lead to one side or the other manipulating talks. Increasing external pressures can also lead to resistance to mediation while the failures

¹² Ibid., 7.

¹³ Licklider, *Comparative Studies of Long Wars*, 33-37.

of the past lead to each side putting forward various preconditions to negotiation.¹⁴

What is important to take from this discussion is that the idea of ancient hatreds, though potentially appealing to those examining the issue, is not necessarily the most practical explanation of the stark differences in opinion of either side of a given conflict. Within an intractable context, opinions are pushed further apart over time as cynicism and animosity builds as a result of the ongoing conflict.

This difference in opinion and animosity is further propagated as a result of a number of other key characteristics of intractable conflicts, one of which is third-party interlopers and unaccountable leaders with vested and strategic interests in the conflict. These actors exploit the situation in order to maintain power and, at times to gain wealth. This can result in shift from the original reasons or cause for the conflict itself to one of holding power or winning, creating a winner-takes-all mentality.¹⁵ Additionally, this form of leadership often exists within a weak decision-making structure, making it difficult to build and maintain peace. Crocker, Hampson and Aall further note that there are also deep rooted communal or ethnic cleavages as a result of the conflict wherein each side refuses to acknowledge the other's identity – this is often exacerbated and exploited by elites who define themselves and their cause by the conflict itself.¹⁶ Furthermore, these conflicts often occur in what can be termed 'bad neighbourhoods', meaning that the conflict itself is subject to a wider range of interests, allowing for increased politicization and polarization.¹⁷ With respect to the Arab-Israeli conflict,

¹⁴ Crocker et al., *Introduction: Mapping the Nettle Field*, 8-9.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 14-21.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

there are issues of poor trade, strategic importance, and lack of accountability.¹⁸

Although this is important, these authors fail to delve deeper and explore how these cleavages are generated and how they are exacerbated by leaders as well as economic and social context.

Moreover, though there are many opinions on what constitutes intractable conflict, there is significant overlap between them. Louis Kiesberg provides an outline of the phenomenon indicating that it consists of a number of interrelated and interdependent dimensions: (1) such conflicts are protracted, often spanning generations; (2) they are distinctly destructive in nature; and (3) attempts at resolution fail to end or change the conflict itself, which in turn contributes to the conflict's intractability.¹⁹ Clearly then, the idea of intractability is somewhat of a slippery label, it can be applied to more obvious cases, of which the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is one. Moreover, within this basic definition of intractable conflict lies both the reason why efforts at addressing the conflict have been in large measure unsuccessful – such conflicts are resistant to negotiation as well as political and structural solutions – in addition to its Achilles' heel – if solutions around political structure, geographic territory, and like-minded negotiations do not work, perhaps the solution lies elsewhere. Empowering human agency in a positive fashion and making efforts at negating the destructive overtones of the conflict on those that suffer the most may reduce the expression of frustration and thus disempower the conflict cycle.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Kriesberg, Louis, *Nature of Intractability* (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium, 2003), Link in Bibliography.

Issues for individuals get worse as the conflict drags on, accordingly Licklider argues that real resolution is not likely possible in the short or medium term, and this is especially true when dealing with prolonged conflicts. The prolonged conflict itself may have exacerbated the reasons for the original conflict, breeding deeply rooted sentiments of animosity and worsening inequality, thus resolution is more difficult, and it is simpler to attempt to manage the conflict; however, ongoing animosity and inequality will likely remain. Resolution is made all the more difficult in the intra-state context, as existing political structures or systems are not conducive to addressing the issues at hand, and political engagement essentially means surrendering to a system partially controlled by an enemy.²⁰ What becomes clearer here is some of the reasoning behind the resistance of intractable conflict to political and structural solutions. What is more important is that, as Licklider indicates, there is a strong human component to intractable conflict – something that exists at a grass-roots level and that has far-reaching implications. This relates directly to the notion this paper presents, that is that macro-level structural, political and territorial efforts will not necessarily be effective in bringing about an end to intractable conflicts as they fail to address the inequalities and animosities that fuel the conflict itself, favoring engagement with the manifestations of the tensions rather than their cause.

Louis Kriesberg also argues that intractable conflict is the result of various key elements. There exists a persistent and long-lasting nature of intractable conflict despite efforts to bring about some form of resolution.²¹ For Kriesberg, intractability is in many ways social in nature, defining social conflicts as “a relationship in which at least

²⁰ Licklider, *Comparative Studies of Long Wars*, 35-37.

²¹ Kriesberg, *Nature of Intractability*, Link in Bibliography.

one party believes it has incompatible goals with another”.²² Intractable conflicts, in particular, are very likely to have all of these factors present – identity, social status questions, privilege, and resource distribution/access in some form of conjunction with moral elements. These factors bare similarity to those discussed above. Burgess and Burgess point out that the greater the presence of these in a given conflict, the more it moves towards intractability. This results in these conflicts being difficult to address and being highly dangerous for both the region in question and global security.²³

It is clear that there is a need to recognize the history and length of the conflict, the hardened positions, and that the conflict runs deep. However, the layers of the conflict are important as well; these authors point out the relationship between the elites and their constituents, through which political action derives its support – a support that is often fickle in nature, leading to difficulty in making positive progress and resulting resistance to settlement.²⁴ What these authors note, and others fail to point out explicitly, is that there is a driving force to intractability of a conflict to be found within the populace, and, in turn with their relationship with the political system and societal environment in total. In other words, there is a fundamental human aspect to these conflicts. This paper holds that issues that present themselves at a human level (e.g. inequality, injury, disempowerment, emotional strain etc.), are key to understanding these conflicts, and ultimately addressing them. In the subsequent sections, this paper will further deconstruct select elements of intractable conflict in order to demonstrate

²² Ibid.

²³ Burgess et al., *What Are Intractable Conflicts?*, Link in Bibliography; & Bercovitch, Jacob, *Characteristics Of Intractable Conflicts* (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium, 2003), Link in Bibliography.

²⁴ Chester et al., *Introduction*, 9 & 15-18.

that, although there is a self-perpetuating nature to these forms of conflict, there is a fueling of these conflicts from populace.

1.2 Unpacking Intractable Conflict: Exploring Protraction, Emotion, and Construction

1.2.1 Protraction

As is somewhat obvious, one of the key features of intractable conflict is that it is a process that is protracted in nature; the length of the conflict is both a by-product and a contributing factor. Intractable conflicts can intrinsically envelope generations, rather than months and years, and continue on in a pattern of violence that defines the lives of those involved, thus fostering an environment in which the conflict is perpetuated. As Berconovitch states:

An intractable conflict is thus, first and foremost, a process (not just a single violent episode) of competitive relationships that extend over a period of time, and involves hostile perceptions and occasional military actions. The term itself acts as an integrating concept connoting processes where [belligerents] become enmeshed in a web of negative interactions and hostile orientations. This pattern is repeated, indeed worsened, every so often, with the parties involved unable to curb, or manage, the escalation of their relationships.²⁵

The long-running nature of these conflicts is often based on two often interrelated concepts of competition: resource distribution or territory. Additionally, these conflicts come to involve conceptions of morals or values over time and the longer that these conflicts continue, the more likely they are to foster issues that come to be seen as non-negotiable.²⁶ Bercovitch's assertion resonates in the arguments of Brad Spangler and Heidi Burgess who note that "deep-rooted conflicts over these types of issues tend to be

²⁵ Bercovitch, Jacob. *Characteristics Of Intractable Conflicts* (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium, 2003), Link in Bibliography

²⁶ Ibid.

drawn out and highly resistant to resolution, often escalating or evolving into intractable conflicts.”²⁷

Hassner further expands on this temporal aspect of intractable conflict. He argues that states caught in these conflicts come to suffer from an entrenchment of the conflict itself. Again, the longer the conflict continues, the more likely it is that the dispute becomes more resistant to resolution. This is characterized by an increasing reluctance to compromise or negotiate, coupled with an increase in hostile rhetoric and action.²⁸ This ultimately results from the fact that as the dispute goes on, alternatives seem increasingly less obvious, and, one could argue, the more likely it is that new issues arise.²⁹ According to Hassner, in order for issues to be resolved the belligerent parties need to agree to a partition of the territory in question, demonstrate flexibility around boundaries, and be willing to accept other compensation. However, this too becomes much more difficult over time as the conflict becomes further engrained.³⁰ Unfortunately, Hassner assumes that these actions will resolve all issues; however, they fail to address issues of inequality and competition.

The movement towards intractability occurs over time through various avenues of entrenchment for Hassner. In other words, changes brought about by the conflict are increasingly more difficult to alter, either physically or within the collective psyche. The author notes that entrenchment occurs on different, yet overlapping, fronts. For instance, material entrenchment occurs as infrastructure is increasingly developed

²⁷ Spangler, Brad and Burgess, Heidi, *Conflicts and Disputes* (Boulder: Conflict Research Consortium, 2003), Link in Bibliography

²⁸ Hassner, Ron E., *The Path to Intractability: Time and the Entrenchment of Territorial Disputes* (International Security, 2007), 109.

²⁹ Ibid., 110

³⁰ Ibid., 112

within the disputed territory, which in turn creates incentives for greater settlement. Similarly, functional entrenchment occurs as borders, originally vague, become more defined as time progresses and claimants increasingly stake claims. Symbolic entrenchment happens when it becomes increasingly difficult for disputants to find suitable replacement territory, as symbolic meaning is attached to the land or specific attributes of the area.³¹ Here, it is important to understand that, as these authors have highlighted, intractable conflicts are not simply conflicts that last a long time. Rather, these conflicts are processes that are competitive and self-perpetuating, and that they increasingly engrain themselves within a given region and within the minds of those involved as time goes on as a result of the consequences they engender. The subsequent paragraphs will further explore the notion of how these conflicts become so omnipresent in society, contributing to the continuity of conflict. It will be made clear that the negative situation faced by the people feeds into the political and symbolic realms, further polarizing the involved parties, thus encouraging, recreating, and even expanding the one-the-ground conditions that perpetuate the conflict. These conflicts occur when an initial grievance leads to lasting and propagating popular discontent, which is then reflected, reproduced, and manipulated at the political level.

1.2.2 Destruction and Emotion

Burgess and Burgess note that a key feature of intractable conflict is its “especially destructive” nature.³² That is, “intractable conflicts are conflicts that are doing substantial harm, yet the parties seem unable to extricate themselves – either

³¹ Ibid., 114-117; & Burgess et al., *What Are Intractable Conflicts?*, Link in Bibliography .

³² Burgess et al., *What Are Intractable Conflicts?*, Link in Bibliography.

alone or with outside help because the perceived costs of "getting out" are still seen as higher than the costs of staying in".³³ Thus these conflicts continue on and demonstrate increasing levels of tension and hostility. As a result of this, peace building strategies are markedly unhelpful in this form of conflict.³⁴ These conflicts subject those involved to ongoing patterns of violence and tensions, resulting in a continued push towards the intractable end of the conflict spectrum.³⁵

Linked with the notion of damage and ongoing violence, Bar-Tal highlights the obvious emotionally charged atmosphere that intractable conflict encourages and in which said form of conflict flourishes.³⁶ Societies that are in the midst of an intractable conflict tend to be subject to a collective sense of fear, rooted in past experiences and day-to-day threats posed. The prolonged experience of intractable conflict has an effect on the collective behaviours of a society, resulting in them focusing on threats and dangers as well as the malevolence of their perceived enemy.³⁷ This collective fear "cuts deeply into the psychic fabric of society members and becomes linked with a societal ethos of conflict".³⁸ The result of this is a society that seeks readiness for potential threats, promotes suspicion, increases solidarity amongst members of that society in view of threats to the society itself, and mobilizes the society to fight for its survival as an entity. Although these sentiments are somewhat to be expected, such a collective consciousness may lead to a freezing of beliefs for a society within an intractable conflict. This will dictate their views of the enemy, seeing them as

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Bar-Tal, Daniel, *How Does Fear Override Hope in Societies Engulfed by Intractable Conflict, as It Does in the Israeli Society?* (*Political Psychology*, 2001), 605.

³⁷ Ibid., 608.

³⁸ Ibid., 609.

illegitimate and untrustworthy, as well as their views for potential solutions, as expectations for future success are heavily influenced by past failures and other negative events. This results in an inability to consider other, and perhaps more, novel solutions.³⁹

Shamir and Sagiv-Schifter give further insight into the effects that ongoing threats and destruction have on individuals and society in general. They note that conflict begets intolerance between ethnic groups. The authors note that during periods of violence there is an increase in identification with one's own ethnic group in conjunction with a growing perception of the opposing group as the enemy, and that this goes through a process of crystallization as the conflict continues. Periods of violence further reinforce the notions of threat with respect to those committing, or those associated with, violent acts. Additionally, intolerance between groups during episodes of violence increases across the political spectrum, indicating that something more salient than political affiliation is the driving force.⁴⁰ This notion runs counter to the idea that there are ancient hatreds, pointing rather to a generation of animosity between groups that drive them further apart.

Moreover, fear often overrides notions of hope in the context of intractable conflict, binding expectations for the future to events of the past, making it difficult to pursue solutions to the conflict as any violence reignites fears, deflating any perceived hope, and sending progress into retreat. It is clear then that emotions are major

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Shamir, Michal and Tammy Sagiv-Schifter, *Conflict, Identity, and Tolerance: Israel in the Al-Aqsa Intifada* (Political Psychology, 2006), 569 & 588-591.

obstacles to peace-making.⁴¹ This was the case following the Intifada, at which time the perception of an Arab threat was greatly increased in comparison to what was the case before the conflict. Increased intolerance between groups during the Intifada increased across the political spectrum, indicating that something more salient than political affiliation as the driving force.⁴² As noted in the previous section, there is a natural linkage between the protracted nature of intractable conflicts and the ongoing and self-reinforcing cycle of violence that characterizes them. It follows that this direct effect on the people of a society, especially a more disempowered group, would only worsen over time, further dividing those on either side as the conflict continues. The subsequent paragraphs compliment this idea of emotional charge, physical destruction, and the resulting polarization by highlighting how conflict becomes framed in the minds of people, further fueling the conflict as their sentiment and situation is reflected, and reproduced at the political and state levels.

1.2.3 Support Seeking and Issue Framing

The previous section suggests a linkage between popular sentiment and the politics of the conflict – more precisely, what political options become viable within the context of the conflict and how it plays out in the minds of the people. This section will lay bare how the political process is both shaped by the desires of the populace, as well as how the political approaches taken polarize each side of the conflict, while also politicizing other areas of society as elites attempt to foster support. As noted previously, central to many international conflicts, and especially true for intractable

⁴¹ Bar-Tal, Daniel, *How Does Fear Override Hope*, 601, 609, & 619.

⁴² Shamir & Sagiv-Schifter, *Conflict, Identity, and Tolerance*, 569 & 588-591.

conflicts, is the notion of indivisibility of territory, as well as the physical and cultural resources of said territory, and the resulting harm that this competition engenders. Goddard helps to explain how the sentiments of indivisibility become manifest, arguing that that it is often as much a creation in the minds of people than an actual fact.

Indivisibility is a fluid concept in that territory can at one time seem divisible, and at other time seem indivisible.⁴³ Indivisibility is a constructed phenomenon, a product of how actors represent the territory. Whether a territory is divisible hinges on how actors “legitimate their claims to the territory during the bargaining process”.⁴⁴ It is worth noting at the outset that, building upon this idea of constructed elements of a conflict, other key issues that are presented as sticking points within intractable situations, such as religious sites, may draw on notions of indivisibility. This also enables other elements (e.g. religion and moral values) to link to the notion of conflict, and opens related avenues of authority to exploitation as actors seek routes of legitimization.

For Goddard, indivisibility results from the process of legalization, through which actors can either expand or reduce the space for bargaining by either convincing others of the legitimacy of their claims, or by appearing illegitimate to the opposing side. When referring to strategies of legitimization, actors use “public and recognized reasons” when seeking to substantiate a claim.⁴⁵ When political actors attempt to legitimize their claims they can become trapped into positions in which they are unable to recognize the claims of the opposing side as also being legitimate. This means that each side of the

⁴³ Goddard, Stacie E., *Uncommon Ground: Indivisible Territory and the Politics of Legitimacy* (Center for International Studies, 2005), 15.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 2-3.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 7.

negotiation can come to the table with claims that cannot be reconciled, resulting in the territory being seen as indivisible. Furthermore, this construction of indivisibility has momentum, according to Goddard, and is not easily changeable within the path-dependent nature of intractable conflict.⁴⁶ Essentially, Goddard argues that in order for an actor to be legitimate in their demands, they must be seen as legitimate by, at least, some actors. From this, it can be argued that these groups see the position as legitimate for a reason, whether it is that a given actor represents maintenance, a grievance, or a solution to their current situation. Furthermore, in engaging with these opinions, the political players help to crystallize opinion in a manner that promotes intractability.

To elaborate further, legitimacy for Goddard is not a neutral concept, but rather derived from the context in which the claim is taking place. The legitimacy of a claim is dependent on the position of the actor within social and cultural institutions (e.g. political or religious). These actors are often part of various institutions, thus providing them with a choice of avenues, often exploiting many simultaneously through ambiguous claims. Goddard notes that since actors are able to choose their strategies of legitimization, and often make use of various avenues of legitimization, they must support each claim with reasoning, posing the question of why an audience should view their claim as legitimate. In doing so, actors can become trapped in incompatible claims as they cater to various bases of support and frame the issues accordingly.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Ibid., 2-3.

⁴⁷ Ibid., 7-9.

As actors engage in seeking legitimization, the avenues that are available to them are constrained by context and the structure of socio-cultural institutions and connections. That is, they effectively become “locked-in” as a result of their targeted efforts at legitimization.⁴⁸ The constraints imposed by the process of legitimization can ultimately result in a loss of flexibility in bargaining, and eventually a position in which actors are structurally forced to reject all other claims as illegitimate and a situation of intractability.⁴⁹ It can also be contended that when political players invoke their roles within these various institutions, whether they are religious or otherwise, the actors essentially contribute to the politicization of those institutions, making them a factor within the conflict itself, or at least allowing issues of that nature to be framed in relation to the conflict. Religion is a salient example of this, especially in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, specifically with respect the Jerusalem aspect:

Religion expresses [...] important primordial values, particularly in Palestinian society, and is often a crucial dimension of collective identity. It is only natural, then, that nationalists use religious groups and their symbols as a means in the struggle to achieve their national or state-centred goals.⁵⁰

Similarly, Mirjam, Gleditsch, and Strand suggest that there is little importance of religion in conflict itself, but rather that religion is a focusing point empowered by other political, social and economic factors.⁵¹ Additionally, it is arguable that religion then represents a potential political tool for those able and willing to exploit it. Berrebi and Klor note, for instance, that increases in violence and terrorist attacks in Israel is positively correlated with the likelihood of the election of a right-wing party, who tend to

⁴⁸ Ibid., 10-11 & 13

⁴⁹ Ibid., 15.

⁵⁰ Frisch, Hillel., & Sandler, Shuel. *Religion, state, and the International System in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (International Political Science Review, 2004), 77.

⁵¹ Sorli, Mirjam J., Gleditsch, Nils Petter, & Strand, Havard, *Why is there so much Conflict in the Middle East?* (Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2005), 148.

draw support from religious groups.⁵² The saliency of the conflict and the associated strife in the minds of the voters is easily exploited by those seeking power, and this is done through a number of avenues, as noted previously, with religion being one of those potential routes. This is seen in Israeli-Palestinian conflict, where conflict has been at the centre of Israeli and Palestinian life for much of the last century, and thus has often been at the centre of the area's politics.⁵³

Shamir and Shamir highlight the fact that conflicts generally come to be addressed in terms of symbols and sentiment, noting that much of the debate in Israeli elections, for instance did not focus on the substantive issues of the conflict, but rather on the conflict in terms of the images and emotions that it elicited, as well as salient current events. The representation of the conflict within Israeli politics was a reflection of public sentiment and reflected their preferences around the conflict.⁵⁴ What these authors illustrate is the relationship between the conflict, as it exists on the ground or at least as it is perceived at the grass-roots level, how this is expressed at and pandered to at the political level, how the options at that level are constrained as the actors attempt to garner support through rhetoric and various avenues, and in turn how this further feeds into the polarization found within these conflicts as positions become more solidified and political options are thus constrained. This contributes to the intractability and deepening of the conflict. Ultimately, public opinion feeds into and is expressed at the political level, but it is also susceptible to framing efforts and the ability of actors to

⁵² Berrebi, Claude and Esteban F. Klor, *On Terrorism and Electoral Outcomes: Theory and Evidence from the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2006), 924.

⁵³ Shamir, Michal, and Jacob Shamir. *The Israeli-Palestine Conflict in Israeli Elections* (International Political Science Review. 2007), 484-485.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

define their own winning goals, as well as the goals of their adversaries.⁵⁵ This is especially possible when there is a lack of information in the public, or lack of engagement with fact, that enables leaders to maneuver public opinion according to their purposes.⁵⁶ As a result of this, polarization is exacerbated, and there is less likelihood of ending the conflict. As Ifat and McCauley note, “If most members of a group see a zero-sum competition with the outgroup, more positive feelings towards the outgroup may be difficult to achieve and have little impact on intergroup relations”.⁵⁷

Cruze highlights this polarization and the issues of framing more explicitly, noting that identity is formed as a result of collective memory and contextual forces, which further frustrates political polarization within an intractable conflict situation. In addition to this, “[a]ctors’ own rhetorical struggles can destabilize their purposive aims and alter their legitimate claims to power [... These] shifts restrict or enhance actors’ perceptions of their “realistic” options as they go about the business of connecting their self-seeking pursuits to their group’s beliefs and expectations”.⁵⁸ The rhetorical frames that actors generate shape identities and structure the political space in which they operate, thus an empowered and informed citizenship is important.⁵⁹

This means that there are no quick fixes for the noxious sentiments and the barbaric strife that often accompany identity-driven clashes. Improving the changes for pluralist peace in conflict-ridden societies [requires] making discerning citizens of [all involved] capable of

⁵⁵ Ibid., 311 & 325.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 325.

⁵⁷ Ifat, Maoz & Clark McCauley. *Psychological Correlates of Support for Compromise: A Polling Study of Jewish-Israeli Attitudes towards Solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Political Psychology, 2005), 805.

⁵⁸ Cruz, Consuelo. *Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember their Pasts and Make their Futures* (World Politics, 2000), 310-312.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

distinguishing between history and fate [...] But the objective is always the same: deny exploitive entrepreneurs the ring of truth.⁶⁰

When political actors are able to successfully engage public sentiment through the various avenues available to them, the conflict, identity and culture are politicized. As a result of tensions at lower social levels are reflected and changed via political actors. At this point we see the development of an identity-level conflict that is reproduced at the state level. This essay contends that as a result of this imprinting of suffering and discontent on the macro-level of politics, through the process highlighted previously, the issues at hand are mistakenly dealt within the international sphere – an area where sovereignty and security are the ‘name of the game’. Richmond agrees that this bottom-up phenomenon exists for groups facing challenges at lower levels of the societal ladder – they feed their discontent upwards. He argues that groups (i.e. ethnic groups) often seek sovereignty for the purpose of protecting their culture or identity, as a result of power-lust from elites, and as a means of political expression.⁶¹ However, Richmond notes that “[...]sovereign claims produce their own dilemmas both for ethnic groups and states, and pits them against each other in the context of an international system which promotes a myth of absolute state sovereignty as the guarantee of security, independence and legitimacy, but ultimately provides neither”.⁶² Sovereignty provides a flawed mechanism for dealing with intergroup issues and claims. The state-

⁶⁰ Ibid, 310-312.

⁶¹ Richmond, Oliver P., *States of Sovereignty, Sovereign States, and ethnic Claims for International Status* (Review of International Studies, 2002), 393-394.

⁶² Ibid., 402.

centric model of current global politics generally fails when it comes to issues of ethnic claims.⁶³ Richmond notes:

Given the emergence of ethnic claims for sovereignty it has become important that smaller, homogeneous, political units become viable and integrated parts of an international system that preserves civil values and identity and avoids the binary replication of the enclosure within the concept of the nation/national state encourages with respect to identity.⁶⁴

In other words, addressing the issue through the lens of sovereignty does not allow for the expression of shared space. Rather, “the discourses of territory are exclusive and compete with each other as ethnic groups seek self-rule, often at the expense of other minority groups residing within the same space”.⁶⁵ When negotiations around independence of a given group takes place between the state and a sub-national group, there is the possibility that the desires of the sub-national group will be seen as a quest for statehood, which disrupts the territorial integrity of the state itself.⁶⁶ However, failing to adequately address the needs and claims of sub-national groups enables the recreation of tensions between these groups and the classical state system.⁶⁷ Essentially, when conflict becomes a threat to a state, especially when they hold, or have generated, an ethnic component, they become much more difficult to deal with at the national and international levels. This is perhaps why third-party intervention in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has failed – these conflicts are fueled by issues at a low, almost individual level, while efforts at curbing the conflict are directed at the state level – a system that is ill-equipped to address the issue of groups that have been polarized

⁶³ Ibid., 400

⁶⁴ Ibid., 401

⁶⁵ Newman, David & Ghazi Falah, *Bridging the Gap: Palestinian and Israeli Discourses on Autonomy and Statehood* (Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, 1997), 111-129.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 114.

⁶⁷ Richmond, *States of Sovereignty and Ethnic Claims for International Status*, 400-402.

in such a fashion. The international system, relies on what it understands – drawing lines (i.e. borders) – a similar logic from which the original conflict resulted.

1.3 Discussion

The preceding discussion made an effort to explore and define the notion of intractable conflict. Drawing on central features of intractable conflict, an understanding of the issue has been generated, and a somewhat argumentative exploration of these conflicts has been undertaken. Some authors, namely Burgess and Burgess, focus on high-level narratives as the starting point for intractable conflicts. Others, such as Bercovitch, indicate that these conflicts are rooted in long-standing grievances, identity and conflicts, and irreconcilable beliefs. Through its review of the literature, however, this paper contends that the former is, in many ways, incorrect, while the latter lacks nuance. Contrary to these stances, it has been indicated that intractable conflicts are ultimately rooted in initial and ongoing competition for resources, as many conflicts are; however, their self-perpetuating nature is fueled by their perceivably perpetual poor conditions of safety, security, and political/economic opportunity experienced by the populace – the root causes for intractability are socio-economic in nature.

Furthermore, there is an interrelationship between these factors, the crystallizing and engraining effects of the conflicts' duration, and the effects popular discontent on the political system. The political system, itself premised on these micro and meso-level tensions and part of the realist-oriented (e.g. security-, border, and structurally-focused) international system, is ill-equipped to facilitate a constructive end to the conflict and, in fact, propagates it enabling those very conditions that negatively impact the people. These are notions supported by Crocker, Hampson, and all; Kreisberg; Linklider;

Bercovitch; Hassner; Goddard; and, to some degree the Burgesses themselves, to name but some of these authors.

To simplify somewhat, the review of the concept above provides the reader with what this paper holds to be some of the key causal and driving factors for intractable conflict, namely resource competition and related consequences (e.g. suffering of individuals as well as the loss of political/economic ability). The resulting public polarization, in-group identification, and emotion is reflected and exacerbated within the given political context. It, in turn, further enforces the initial root causes (i.e. inequality and suffering) of conflict intractability, enabling its protraction and worsening nature:

“Generally speaking, we can say that conflicts over deep-rooted issues (e.g. identity and human needs) tend to generate more strife and violence and become protracted. Intractable conflicts are not just longer-lasting conflicts, they are also more likely to be violent and destructive, and of course more difficult to deal with or manage. We use the term intractable conflicts to describe conflicts that sink into self-perpetuating violent interactions in which each party develops a vested interest in the continuation of the conflict. Deep feelings of fear and hostility coupled with destructive behavior make these conflicts very difficult to deal with, let alone resolve.”⁶⁸

In sum, given the discussion above, and for the purposes of this paper, it is important to note that efforts at addressing intractable conflict need to be properly targeted. Although the initial conflict may be premised on issues of territorial and resource control, efforts that focus on addressing issues such as ongoing disputes of geopolitical control, religious group interaction, physical border disputes will not likely find success if they fail to explicitly address humanitarian problems centered on socio-economic issues, such as physical and emotional danger, economic wellbeing, healthy political expression, and so forth. The subsequent section takes a more literal look at the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. With this understanding of intractable

⁶⁸ Bercovitch, Characteristics of Intractable Conflicts, Link in Bibliography.

conflict in mind, this specific conflict is then addressed. This essay will then, in the final section, return to the notion of how to address this conflict in line with the examination presented here.

2. The Arab/Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

With the discussion of the intricacies of intractable conflict completed, this paper now turns to a discussion of the Arab/Palestinian-Israeli conflict more specifically. This section of the paper provides the reader with both an overview of the conflict from its inception, highlighting key international efforts at addressing both the conflict in general, but also the specific aspect of the conflict that is Jerusalem. As noted at the outset of this essay, international efforts have been predominantly concerned with issues of the state, operating in the realm of sovereignty, security and borders. This section of the paper makes an effort to lay bare the realities of this failure on behalf of the international community in how it has dealt with issues between the Palestinian and Israeli people in the historic land of Palestine. As a result, the driving forces behind the conflict, as it is defined by the theoretical overview of intractable conflict, have not been addressed, and in many ways have been frustrated. International efforts have not focused on issues of equality and quality of life to the degree that would allow more political-level efforts attempted to be successful.

2.1 The Core of the Conflict:

The larger Arab-Israeli conflict that was seen for much of Israel's existence has at its core the conflict between the Palestinians and Israel. Although it is tempting to claim biblical roots for such tension, Dowty notes that this conflict finds its true roots in the migration of Jewish people from Europe, beginning in the 1880s, many of whom would ultimately come to settle in *Erezt Yisrael*. At this time the area was ruled by the Ottoman Empire - the more distinct Arab-Israeli conflict would become apparent much

later in the mid-twentieth century. Furthermore, harkening back to the previous discussion of intractable conflict, Dowty holds that the ethnic and religious dimensions of the conflict are more rooted in the conflict itself, rather than being the cause. These elements of the conflict ultimately became more important as the conflict developed and continued. Historically in fact, both Judaism and Islam, contain provisions that accept, at least in theory, the existence of the other.⁶⁹

Interestingly, Dowty notes explicitly that the conflict is primarily tied to resource competition between the two distinct groups. He argues that given the fact that the two sides claim the same territory as their own; a zero-sum game is generated resulting in severe consequences for the losing side. Although it is tempting to consider such things as land as negotiable, Dowty notes that when more layers are placed atop the issue, things become exceedingly more difficult. Here, it is important to take into consideration the value that is placed on the land by each side, how they express and perceive their positions on the land itself. Ultimately, this conflict is a territorial one overplayed by political and moral sentiment and attachment.⁷⁰

2.2 Timeline of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict:

The following is a historical overview of the conflict in a broader sense. The Jerusalem issue will then be examined more specifically as a method of demonstrating the state-centred approach to this conflict favored by the international community. Linkages will then be made with the theoretical discussion on intractable concluded in the previous section. In order to do this, this section will first look at the roots of Jewish

⁶⁹ Dowty, A. "Israel/Palistine." (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2005), 1-3

⁷⁰ Ibid, 4-5, 7, & 11.

migration to the historic land of Palestine, including the emigration of European Jews to the region and the roots of the Zionist calling. Subsequently, this section will provide the reader with an understanding of key historical periods and events, paying specific attention to Jerusalem in order to provide an understanding of the conflict that we now see in more modern times.

2.2.1 Persecution, Anti-Semitism, and Zionism

The move towards the establishment of Israel is steeped in a history of persecution, a drive to achieve a sense of security and safety, and territorial homeland, as noted below. These are some of the core values that one can see within Zionist discourse today. For the purposes of this paper, it is important to understand this history and the context which it provides in relation to the development and continuation of conflict between the actors involved.

Zionism, a movement calling for the establishment and protection of the state of Israel and the Jewish people, is rooted in the latter half of the 1800s. Zionism itself is a response to ongoing anti-Jewish sentiment in Europe coupled with the wave of nationalism, that swept the continent in the latter half of the 19th century. From the beginning, the movement called for the establishment of an independent Jewish existence in the area of historic Palestine.⁷¹ While at the time, in Western Europe the treatment of Jews could be characterized by longer periods of tolerance interspersed with more hostile approaches by the Christian majority. This was not the case in the

⁷¹ Smith, Charles, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict: A History with Documents* (Boston, Ny: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2007), 26, & 512-542.

Eastern portion of the continent.⁷² In Eastern Europe, the Jewish people were increasingly becoming targets of hostility within society, and made out as scapegoats for political leaders in response to popular unrest.⁷³ This exclusion and persecution of the Jewish people first came to a head under the rule of Russian Tsar Alexander III. Under his rule, pogroms or violent attacks on Jewish communities, were encouraged as a means of diverting public discontent away from the regime. It was these violent encounters that served as a catalyst for the Jews of Eastern Europe to seek refuge in the historic land of Palestine. Upwards of 1.5 million Jews emigrated from Russia as a result of these pogroms. The majority of these people went to America; however, many did go to Palestine between 1900 and 1914.⁷⁴

Theodor Herzl, an assimilated Jew from Vienna, further contributed to the development of Zionism from Western Europe. It would be the trial for treason of Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jew who was falsely accused, that acted as the central reason for Herzl's commitment to the European Jewish cause. As a result of the trial, Hrezi composed *Der Judenstaat*, one of the most central and important publications for Zionism. Hrezi envisioned the creation of an independent Jewish state as a means to mitigate the suffering of the Jewish people at the hands of other groups. Flowing from Herzl's efforts, the World Zionist Organization was formed in 1897 with the goal of creating a Jewish state in Palestine. In 1901, the World Zionist Organization established the Jewish National Fund, which enabled the acquisition of land in Palestine

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 28.

for Jewish settlements.⁷⁵ The purchase of land, coupled with the expressed desire of the World Zionist Organization to establish an independent home for the Jewish people in Palestine, generated apprehension amongst the Arab populations in the area by the end of the second *Aliya*.⁷⁶ Consequently, the stage was set for increasing tensions based on what was fundamentally a clashing of distinct groups around claims to various resources (physical, moral, and so forth).

2.2.2 World War One, the British Mandate and World War Two:

It was during the World War era that the Jewish presence in the region would begin to become more defined, and ultimately the method through which the call for a Jewish state would crystallize, not only in the mind of the Jewish people, but in the circles of international opinion as well.

During the World War I, the Allied Powers entered into covert discussions to divide areas of the Ottoman Empire once the Allies were victorious. They originally decided on an internationally controlled area of Palestine. However, Great Britain entered into a number of other agreements in order to court support in the Middle East and ultimately destabilized the Ottoman Empire itself. These agreements included promising the Hashemite Sharif of Mecca support for a state under Hashemite rule. At the same time, the British attempted to garner the support of the Zionist movement by issuing the Balfour Declaration in 1917, which supported “the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people”.⁷⁷

⁷⁵ Ibid., 29-32

⁷⁶ Ibid, 33.

⁷⁷ Dowty, *Israel/Palistine*, 70-71.

At the end of WWI, the area of Palestine fell under British authority, and did not become an international mandate. In 1922, the British issued a White Paper indicating that Great Britain's commitment was to the establishment of a national home for the Jewish people, which did not entail the creation of an actual state in Palestine. The White Paper also limited migration to Palestine to a level that the British felt the area could absorb. However, at the same time, the persecution of the Jewish people continued in Europe, ultimately peaking in the 1930s and 1940s as a result of the rise of Nazism.⁷⁸

By this point in time, both the Zionists and the Palestinian people were beginning to view the other as a potential adversary. While the Jewish migrants to Palestine ultimately desired a Jewish majority state with an Arab minority, the Palestinian Arabs also viewed the Jewish population as a threat to the potential for an Arab state in Palestine.⁷⁹ This was reflected in the British Peel Commission's final report in 1937, which indicated that the two groups shared no commonality and that the conflict between them would not be resolved through the establishment of two sovereign states for each of the ethnic groups.⁸⁰

World War II itself provided what most would consider the most compelling argument for the existence of a Jewish state. Dowty notes that the Holocaust represented the murdering of nearly one-third of the Jewish people at the hands of the Nazi regime in Germany. Following the war, the ideas espoused by Zionism were

⁷⁸ Ibid, 72-74.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 77.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 78-79.

accepted by nearly all Jews, but also garnered greater acceptance in the global community, as it was seemingly an issue of actual physical survival of a people.⁸¹

2.2.3 From 1947 Onwards: the Establishment of Israel

On May 14, 1947, Israel declared its independence, marking the end of the British Mandate in Palestine. The next day, the Egyptian, Transjordan, Syrian and Lebanese armies attacked Israel, but would ultimately be pushed back. It was 1949 that marked the signing of armistice agreements between Israel's four neighbouring countries.⁸²

A final point that must be highlighted is the 1967 war. As a result of numerous compounding factors, the 1967 war was one that represented a central turning point within the Arab-Israeli conflict. False information provided to Egypt by the Soviet Union indicating that Israel was about to attack Syria, following a period of high tensions between the two countries, resulted in Egypt amassing forces in the Sinai and demanding the removal of international forces positioned there. Egypt then closed passage to the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships. Subsequently Egypt, Syria, and Jordan entered into a mutual defence pact. When diplomacy failed, Israel attacked capturing the Sinai, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights.⁸³ It was during this time that Israel captured Eastern Jerusalem as well.

⁸¹ Ibid., 80-86.

⁸² Ibid., 86-87.

⁸³ Ibid., 106.

2.2.4 Discussion

Key themes can already be drawn from this brief overview of the conflict in general. The first of these is that there is a prolonged history of resource competition and conflict, something that has continuously worsened over time, as the Jewish population in the region increased, and as claims to territory crystallized. The second theme is that there has historically been an overarching state-centric discourse, which meant ongoing questions of resource and territorial security rather than more humanitarian concerns. These are notions that link directly into the core of this paper, that the intractability of the conflict is primarily rooted in the socio-economic situations experienced by the disadvantaged group, namely the Palestinians in this case. Furthermore, the international community and its realist mantras of security, borders, and so forth have not only failed to address the conflict in an effective manner, but have also, in many ways, contributed to it.

The following sections take a closer examination of the roles played by international players throughout the history of the conflict. In order to do this, Jerusalem will be examined in more detail, as a way of exemplifying the territorial competition, the manner in which this conflict has been addressed by the international community, and how they have failed to address it in a functional fashion. Prior to moving into this section, it is important to note that although it is tempting to assign religious overtones to discussions of Jerusalem, given this paper's previous discussion on framing, it holds that although this territory is coveted for religious and cultural reasons, these arguments

are, in fact, empowered by the underlying social, economic, and safety concerns that fuel intractability.

2.3 On Jerusalem

This section highlights how Jerusalem has factored into key events throughout Israeli's history, while also underscoring efforts at peace by international players, namely America, the Middle East Quartet, and the European Union in an effort to exemplify the state-centric manner in which the international community has approached the Palestinian-Israeli issue. Throughout history Jerusalem has represented highly contested and coveted real estate, given that the city is considered sacred to all three of the major monotheistic religions: Judaism, Islam, and Christianity.⁸⁴ Jerusalem itself exemplifies the manner in which the international community has tried to address the conflict – mainly by proposing new lines and administration of contested space.

From the outset that Jerusalem would represent a sticking point in a peaceful coexistence of the Palestinians and the Israelis. Recognizing this reality, even before the creation of Israel in 1948, the international community, namely the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine, called for the end of the British Mandate in Palestine (1922-1948) and subsequently the creation of two states. At the same time, the

⁸⁴ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 1; & Bell, Michael., Malloy, Michael J., Bell, John, and Evans, Marketa, *The Jerusalem Old City Initiative: Discussion Document – New Directions for Deliberation and Dialogue* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), viii; & Roskin, Michael G. & Coyle, James J., *Politic of the Middle East: Cultures and Conflicts* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson-Prentice Hall, 2008), 113.

Committee called for the internationalization of Jerusalem in order to mitigate conflicting claims to the city from a variety of ethno-religious players.⁸⁵

When Israel was created, it controlled only the western portion of the city of Jerusalem, while Jordan held the old city. In the 1967 war with its Arab neighbours, however, Israel captured the Sinai, the Golan Heights, and the West Bank from Egypt, Syria, and Jordan respectively. At the same time, Israel took the opportunity afforded to them to “fulfill a historic opportunity [...of] taking the old city of Jerusalem [from Jordan]”.⁸⁶ This conflict has clearly affected much of the relations with Israel’s Arab neighbours since, and only further exacerbated the need to address Jerusalem as a key issue in a lasting peace.

Since the 1967 conflict, all efforts to establish lasting peace and address Jerusalem have proven unsuccessful. The Madrid talks, which took place from 1991 until 1993 produced little results with respect to Jerusalem and the issues plaguing the region in general – ultimately they would be pre-empted by the Oslo Accord between the Palestinians and Israel in 1993. The Accord itself, which was produced independently from the Madrid process and without American involvement, was vague on issues such as Jerusalem and left much up to interpretation, ultimately leading to what was termed Oslo 2 in 1995.⁸⁷

Throughout both sets of talks, Israel avoided the contentious issue of Jerusalem, and actively contested the definition of “East Jerusalem”. Originally, East Jerusalem was taken to mean part of the Old City and the Temple Mount. However, when Israel

⁸⁵ Smith, *Palestine and the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 190-193.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 284.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 419-420.

annexed additional territory around Jerusalem, it expanded the definition of Jerusalem proper to include territory east of the city, and subsequently claimed that this territory was part of their unified capital and not subject to negotiation.⁸⁸

2.3.1 American Efforts pre-2001

In 2000, the Camp David talks sought a resolution to the conflict; these talks would ultimately address Jerusalem as well. It was at this point that the idea of two capital cities within Jerusalem would begin to take greater form. During the talks, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak suggested creating two capitals, Jerusalem proper for Israel, and Al-Quds for the Palestinians. However, al-Quds was a separate village outside of actual Jerusalem, resulting in the city itself remaining fully under Israeli control. The Palestinians, in turn, wanted control over the territory annexed by Israel in 1980, as well as the Old City where the Haram al-Shaif was located.⁸⁹ Israel eventually suggested a Palestinian control over pertinent neighbourhoods, including Muslim and Christian neighbourhoods in the Old City. In addition to this, the Palestinians would be granted “custodianship” of the Temple Mount through a United Nations resolution. Yassir Arafat was naturally suspicious of this offer, given the lack of clarity around ideas such as “custodianship”.⁹⁰

Later, in December 2000, President Clinton presented the Clinton Parameters, which suggested that Arab and Jewish communities within Jerusalem fall under the relevant authorities – either Palestinian or Israeli respectively. The parameters further

⁸⁸ Ibid., 437, 430-440, & 446-447.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 485.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 486-487.

indicated that there would be Palestinian authority over the Temple Mount and Israeli authority over the Western Wall and the land under the Horan, where religious relics were located.⁹¹ In the end, however, efforts on behalf of America under the Clinton administration proved to be unsuccessful.

What is clear from the historical elements presented above is that although there have been significant efforts on behalf of various international players, predominantly the United States, prior to 2001, there has been little progress on the issue of Jerusalem itself or on the larger peace effort. The two groups remain at odds and tensions remain high. This is seemingly a common theme with the other international players, as will be subsequently shown.

2.3.2 The Quartet:

When George W. Bush came into power in 2001 he sought to disengage from the Middle East in general. He viewed it as something that had monopolized the American presidency under the previous administration. This would ultimately change following the September 11th terrorist attacks, which forced Bush to re-engage in the Middle East Peace Process to a greater extent.⁹² Bush would openly call for a two-state solution to the conflict in a 2001 address to the United Nations General Assembly, something that was only implicit previously in American policy. Later, US Secretary of State, Colin Powell officially endorsed the two-state option on behalf of the

⁹¹ Ibid., 489.

⁹² Musu, C., *The Middle East Quartet: A New Role for Europe?* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 3.

Administration. *UN Resolution 1397* in 2002 also called for the creation of two states, and was openly supported by the United States.⁹³

Faced with challenges of surging violence in the region, and, consequently, Israel's occupation of the West Bank in 2002, the United States announced the creation of the "Middle East Quartet" later that year. The Quartet was composed of the UN secretary General, the European Union High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, and the Russian foreign minister. The Quartet represented a multinational approach favouring the two-state solution with the engagement of outside actors.⁹⁴ In the name of the Quartet, the US proposed a performance-based roadmap which focused on fostering the development of a democratic Palestinian state.

Presented to Israel and the Palestinian Authority in 2003, the Roadmap called for the Palestinian democratization, new Palestinian leadership, a written Constitution, centralized security organs, and counterterrorism initiatives. On the Israeli side, the Roadmap called for withdrawal, a halt to settlement activities, and an improvement of living conditions for Palestinians. Each phase would build on the previous one.⁹⁵

There were doubts on both sides as to whether this was possible. However, when Arafat died in 2004, many felt that there could be a political shift in the Palestinian Authority under the new leader– Mahmoud Abbas, a moderate.⁹⁶ This, combined with a decrease in support for military action against Israel, allowed for the negotiation of a

⁹³ Dowty, *Israel/Palestine*, 163.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 162-163; & Musu, C., *The Middle East Quartet*, 1.

⁹⁵ Dowty, *Israel/Palestine*, 165.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

ceasefire in 2005 between the two sides.⁹⁷ Furthermore, as the discourse began to shift towards the inevitability of a Palestinian state being created, Israel began to contemplate withdrawal from the occupied territories. In 2003, as a result of primarily demographic concerns, Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert advocated for the unilateral withdrawal of Israeli forces.⁹⁸

Although it appeared that there was a coming together of positions on what to do around the Palestinian/Israeli issue, the emergence of greater religious claims threatened this state of affairs.⁹⁹ In 2005, Hamas committed to the ceasefire negotiated between the Palestinian Authority and Israel, favouring a political, rather than militant, strategy aimed at gaining power through the elections and thus blocking Abbas' ability to sign a final peace agreement with Israel. In 2006, Hamas won a majority in the Palestine National Council. The election of Hamas can be largely attributed to a reaction to corruption on the part of Fatah.¹⁰⁰ In 2007 Fatah joined with Hamas in a unity government.¹⁰¹

In the summer of 2007, Hezbollah and Hamas captured Israeli soldiers, prompting Israel to launch attacks into Lebanon, weakening Hezbollah but not destroying it, thereby leading many Palestinians to view it as a Hezbollah victory. Support for the disengagement was severely weakened after this. Hamas also seized control of Gaza when President Abbas refused to cede control of security agencies. In response, Abbas dissolved the unity government and appointed a new cabinet;

⁹⁷ Ibid., 166.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 172.

⁹⁹ Ibid., 180.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 183.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 183-184.

however, the authority of this body only covered the West Bank. This effectively divided it from Gaza and further eroded the possibility of a Palestinian negotiation partner with respect to the two-state solution.¹⁰²

The election of Hamas in 2006 impacted the activities of the Quartet. The United States and Israel stressed the need to not support Hamas, leaving Europe in a diplomatic hotspot, while Russia actively engaged Hamas, highlighting a lack of divides within the Quartet itself.¹⁰³ International players, in unison, have seemingly been unable to coordinate, and thus affect substantial change in the general conflict, or with respect to the Jerusalem issue.

2.3.4 The European Union (EU)

The European Union is a member of the Middle East Quartet and player in addressing the Arab-Israeli conflict given its international standing as well as its ability to fund a variety of initiatives. Interestingly, the EU has, at least recently, been markedly more critical of Israel than many other mainstream international power-players. The EU represents a strong supporter of the two-state solution, as well as the use of Jerusalem as the capital city for both nations within the historic land of Palestine.

The staunch stance of the EU towards this issue is evidenced by a variety of issue statements and proclamations made by EU officials. For example, in December 2009, Sweden, the country then holding the rotating presidency of the EU, produced a draft document calling for Jerusalem to be the capital of a future Palestinian state.

¹⁰² Ibid., 184-185.

¹⁰³ Musu, *The Middle East Quartet*, 19.

Haaretz indicated that the EU would recognize “a unilateral Palestinian declaration of statehood”.¹⁰⁴ Israel criticized the EU’s actions, indicating that this could ultimately harm the peace process.¹⁰⁵ Specifically, the statement indicates that the EU:

[... Will] not recognize any changes to the pre-1967 borders [..., that the] EU stands ready to develop bilateral relations with Palestine [..., supports] steps towards [a] Palestinian state [..., that the] separation barrier] threaten[s] to make a two-state solution impossible [..., and that for there to be a genuine peace,] a way must be found to resolve the status of Jerusalem as the capital of two states.¹⁰⁶

That same month, the EU revisited its statement and called for the creation of Jerusalem as a capital for both Israel and a future state of Palestine. This was an idea that Israel was slightly warmer to, given the EU’s previous stance; however, Israeli officials indicated that “Israel regrets that the EU has chosen to adopt the text that, although containing nothing new, does not contribute to the renewal of negotiations”.¹⁰⁷ Conversely, the statement was welcomed by the Palestinian Authority as it promoted a two-capital Jerusalem and highlighted the illegality of Jewish settlements in the Eastern city.¹⁰⁸

These statements represent strong diplomatic pressures placed on the parties, particularly Israel, to not only address the issue, but to do so in a particular fashion laid out by the international community through such initiatives as the Clinton Parameters,

¹⁰⁴ Ravid, Barak, *Haaretz Exclusive: EU Draft Document on Division of Jerusalem* (*Haaretz*, 01 December 2009).

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*; European Union, *Presidency statement on settlement expansion in Jerusalem*, 18/11/2009; European Union, *Statement by the EU Representatives to the Palestinian Authority and the EU Council General in Jerusalem on the sentence of Abdallah Abu Rahma*, 20/10/2010.

¹⁰⁷ BBC News, *EU proposes two-capital Jerusalem* (UK, BBC:2008/12/08), Link in Bibliography; Council of the European Union, *Council conclusions on the Middle East Peace Process* (2985th Foreign Affairs Council meeting, Brussels, 8 December 2009).

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

and the Quartet. However, it also represents a method of maintaining international visibility of the issue.

Similarly, the “EU Heads of Mission Report 2010 – Jerusalem” is deeply critical of Israeli political action in the city, noting that:

[T]he city embodies the essence of the conflict: territory, nationhood and religion [... And that if] these current trends are not stopped [...] the prospect of East Jerusalem as the future capital of a Palestine state becomes increasingly unlikely and unworkable. This, in turn, seriously endangers the chances of a sustainable peace on the basis of two states, with Jerusalem as their future capital.¹⁰⁹

While highlighting that the EU does not view Israeli occupation of East Jerusalem as legal, it also notes that Israel is making efforts to exclusively emphasize the Jewish identity of the city itself through discriminatory policy and legal practices that promote Jewish settlement in traditionally Christian and Palestinian sections of the city, as well as generating literal and figurative barriers to both civil services and religious sites for those who are not Jewish.¹¹⁰

Even though the EU represents a strong international player, both as a member of the Quartet, but also as an independent political and economic entity, there has been little movement forward on the issue. This is made more salient by the fact that many of these statements and reports are in response to ongoing Israeli action against the Palestinian people, which is seen by the international community, namely the EU, to be counterproductive to the peace process and reaching a final agreement on Jerusalem.

¹⁰⁹ European Union, *EU Heads of Mission Report on east Jerusalem* (Al-Jazeera, Accessed April 5, 2011), Link in Bibliography.

¹¹⁰ European Union, *EU Heads of Mission Report – Jerusalem 2010* Found via Aljazeera.net), Link in Bibliography; & Council of the European Union, *Declaration by HR Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the Decision by the Government of Israel to build new housing units in East Jerusalem* (Brussels, 10 march 2010).

2.3.5 Discussion:

Most the efforts on behalf of the international community, as highlighted above have, not surprisingly, focused on issues of sovereignty, militarization, and security, or lack thereof. In the face of expansion, annexation, and aggression that were exacted throughout the history of the conflict, international players have predominantly focused on addressing the issue of borders and proposed solutions premised on division and territorial administration as a primary solution. The efforts of the UN Special Committee on Palestine, Madrid, Oslo, and Oslo 2 were largely ineffective, as were the Camp David Talks, the Clinton Parameters, and the efforts of the Quartet. It is here that this paper postulates that this was as a result of their failure to pay full attention to the context in which they were operating, presuming that the conflict was one of borders, rather than addressing the ongoing harm and socio-economic fallout resulting from the recourse and territorial centred conflict, as proposed in this essay. Even when compromise was seemingly working, popular discontent, especially among the Palestinians remained, as evidenced by their support for groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The *Roadmap* itself held that greater quality of life for the Palestinians would be one of the final steps in the process; however, it is arguable that this should be one, if not the primary, focus from which to address the conflict in general, and to ultimately set the stage to address the conflict itself as well as issues such as Jerusalem.

A form of path-dependent thinking, centred on sovereignty- and state-centric approach, is obvious in the literature, as scholar Rashid Khalidi notes:

More than any other issue of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Jerusalem has deep resonance for all the parties. Certainly, there will be no end to the [conflict], no

Arab-Israeli reconciliation, and no normalization for the situation of Israel in the region without a lasting solution for Jerusalem.¹¹¹

Khalidi argues that in order for there to be a satisfying solution to the Jerusalem issue, three core objectives must be accomplished: (1) Palestinians and Israelis must share the city equitably; (2) the city must become the capital of both states; and (3) people of all faiths must ultimately have access to Jerusalem.¹¹² Similar ideas are expanded upon by Segal, who notes that public and political opinion on both sides of the conflict make it impossible for either side to agree that the other should have exclusive sovereignty over the Temple Mount or the Old City. Accordingly, a way to address this issue is one in which neither party is specified as the exclusive sovereign.¹¹³ That is, the “Sovereignty belongs to God” option, under which political sovereignty is either overridden or viewed as inappropriate considering the unique nature of the areas in question. In pursuing this option, theoretically, each side could focus on administrative issues rather than attempting to establish sole sovereignty.¹¹⁴ Moreover, the Canadian-based “Jerusalem Old City Initiative” somewhat follows this vein of thought. The authors of this proposal argue that the Old City requires a single governance approach that will address the unique practical, territorial and spiritual needs of the city itself. The Initiative proposes to establish a special regime governed by both Israeli and Palestinian officials, in conjunction with an internationally appointed administrator which would operate within the two-state solution framework. This approach would support

¹¹¹ Khalidi, Rashid, *The centrality of Jerusalem to the End of Conflict Agreement* (Journal of Palestinian Studies, 2011), 82.

¹¹² Ibid, 82 & 84.

¹¹³ Segal, Jerome M.. *The Sovereignty Belongs to God Option for the Temple Mount/Haram al-Sharif and/or the old City: An Analysis* (Maryland, July 8, 2005), 1

¹¹⁴ Ibid, 1-2

equality and security in the day-to-day life of the city.¹¹⁵ All of these approaches, at their core, centre on notions of the state as both the root of, and answer to, problems in the international system, and therefore this conflict specifically. It is debatable, however, whether this logic can foster an end to the conflict given that it both fails to address the key factors noted in previous sections and, in many ways, represents the causal logic in which the original conflict is sourced.

It is debatable whether any of these solutions could be viable considering the environment that the conflict has fostered – the politics are toxic, fueled by, and recreating to, popular discontent and emotion of the situation. With the governing concept of this paper in mind – that notion that conflict intractability is fundamentally fueled by socio-economic inequalities – addressing issues such as borders will be ineffective if without efforts to address the quality of life factors, admittedly mostly with respect to the Palestinian people. There is a need to foster positive living conditions and to generate an incentive not to continuously engage in cycle of violence that inevitably empowers the intractable situation.

It is not surprising that the international system has favored this approach – these are the classic dogmas of this system: borders, security, and political sovereignty. Although some of the efforts have paid lip-service to providing a better life for the Palestinian people through military withdrawal, addressing the conflict has predominantly focused on separating the two belligerent parties politically and physically. To reiterate, given this paper's analysis of intractable conflict, it is clear why

¹¹⁵ Bell, et al, *The Jerusalem old City Initiative*, Executive Summary.

previous efforts have seen little success – they are attempting to treat the symptoms of the conflict rather than addressing the true causes and central forces behind it. The inherent competition for resources and territory, and the inequality and suffering that this breeds and feeds off of must be addressed in unison with other efforts if not before. The following section lays out the need for greater focus at the human level of the conflict – the realm of human safety, positive political expression and personal prosperity.

3. The Current Socio-economic Conditions for Arabs in Israel and the Territories

This paper argues that self-perpetuating poor socio-economic and, in turn, safety concern are key factors fostering an intractable conflict. It is further argued in the case of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the international community has turned a blind eye to said humanitarian issues. Proposed solutions have largely been focused on macro-level notions of borders, security, administration, and so forth. As has been noted in this paper's examination of this conflict's history, issues of borders and the resource competition and conflict that they engender, provided for both the onset of this conflict, as well as the conditions (e.g. marginalization, etc.) that enable its intractability. It is therefore difficult to believe that a solution to the conflict can be found within this conception of intergroup relations. In line with the arguments presented thus far in this paper, this section remains focused on the Palestinian-Israeli situation, and demonstrates the need to address the impoverished socio-economic conditions, to those whose in the occupied territories are subject, in order to mitigate the cycle of violence and truly facilitate an end to the intractable conflict at hand. The subsequent subsections follow-up with the historical overview conducted previously – it is demonstrated below how the conflict at hand has resulted in the political and economic marginalization of the Palestinians. It further notes how addressing these issues are key to fostering a more prosperous future, with less conflict.

3.1. Political Alienation

As a result of the ongoing conflict, there are real human issues and frustrations that come into play as a result of the conflict in Palestine. One of the key stated goals

of the current government of Israel is to “[P]reserve the Jewish character of the State and the legacy of Israel, as well as honor the religions and traditions of members of other religions in the country in accordance with the values of the Declaration of Independence”, while also maintaining the security of its citizens.¹¹⁶ As a result of historical forces, there has been a refusal by both the Zionist movement and those that support it to allow for political room for Palestinians. Doumani argues that, in light of this, the Israeli state would seek to decentralize only some powers to the Palestinian people, while maintaining overall control of the territory. Consequently, the “Palestinian problem” has been framed in a manner that any attempt of political expression is seen as potentially destabilizing.¹¹⁷ Yiftachel explores this further noting that “[t]ypically, ethnocratic regimes construct self-fulfilling prophecies. Minorities and groups marked as ‘anti-national’ are marginalized and oppressed, and when they resist, they are condemned as ‘disloyal’ and thus deserving of further exclusion”.¹¹⁸ This oppression is not limited to the Palestinian population in the territories, but rather affects Arab groups within the Israel proper:

Dozens of Bedouin villages [...] are now regarded as “unrecognized.” Residents are denied basic services, and pressured to move to planned towns, in order to shift further lands to state control [...] Occupation and settlement, which necessitates ever intensifying oppression of Palestinians with or without Israeli citizenship, have clear potential to make Israel gradually cave from within.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Government of Israel: Prime Minister’s Office, *Government Policy* (Consulted March 18, 2012), Link in Bibliography

¹¹⁷ Doumani, Beshara, *Palestine versus the Palestinians? The Iron Laws and ironies of a People Denied* (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2007), 53.

¹¹⁸ Yiftachel, Oren, *The Shrinking Space of Citizenship: Ethnocratic Politics in Israel* (Middle East Report, 2002), 42.

¹¹⁹ Ibid. 43-44.

Continuing on this exclusionary path presents a significant risk of deepening ethnic conflict, political instability, and economic decline in the long run.¹²⁰ Newman echoes this stating that this political exclusion, based on questions of territory and identity, goes hand-in-hand with economic and geographic marginalization.¹²¹

However, there is an increasing alienation of not only the Palestinians, but also the Israeli Arabic population. This culture in Israel has led to a withdrawal of Arab people from Israeli political life in favour of developing Arabic institutions. This 'pulling back' from Israeli institutions, however, further weakens the Arab population's ability to exercise its place within current society.¹²² Furthermore, the lack of ability for political group expression helps to foster further cyclical violence. As Barak notes, the failure of the Oslo Process and the "inability to gain tangible results through negotiations eventually promoted the Palestinians, the weaker party, to resort to violence [...] and the violence of the other side justified each side's escalation of violence to defeat the other".¹²³ As Yifachel demonstrates, this violence and polarization enables the intractability of the conflict:

After the failure of the peace talks in the summer of 2000, the eruption of the violent intifada, the October 2000 events within the Green Line, the growing brutality of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, the wave of Palestinian terror attacks in Israeli cities and the September 11 events, ethnic politics in Israel-Palestine are highly volatile. Framed by growing public hysteria about "us" and "them," anti-Arab sentiments and practices have become

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Newman, David, & Falah, Ghazi, *Bridging the Gap: Palestinian and Israeli Discourses on Autonomy and Statehood* (Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series, 1997), 126; & Doumani, Beshara, *Palestine versus the Palestinians? The Iron Laws and ironies of a People Denied* (Journal of Palestine Studies, 2007), 51-52.

¹²² Yiftachel, *The Shrinking Space of Citizenship*, 38 & 44.

¹²³ Barak, Oren, *The Failure of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process. 1993-2000* (Journal of Peace Research, 2005), 733.

common in Israeli Jewish discourse, leading to a notable marginalization of the state's Palestinian minority.¹²⁴

Falah argues that since the Second Intifada, Israeli military strategy has not only been focused on security, but also on special domination and “strangulation”. Israel has sought to both separate itself from the Palestinians, but also to dismember their territorial integrity. Additionally, according to Falah, Israel is using the Second Intifada and notions of security to dismember the Palestinians’ public and private space – thus making it difficult for them to achieve any form of sovereignty. Furthermore, the settlements break-up of territorial contiguity disempower any future Palestinian polity.¹²⁵ This makes it more difficult to develop effective leadership, let alone to better their general prosperity.¹²⁶

3.2. Economic Livelihood

The political ramifications and causes of the ongoing conflict provide a difficult scenario in which to foster any form of economic livelihood. Jonah states that “there can be no durable peace and stability in the Middle East until a just solution to the Palestinian plight is found”.¹²⁷ Numerous authors note that it is important that ideas of economic growth, and in turn the development of a higher quality of life, are considered in order to promote the end of conflict in the Middle East. Speaking more generally with respect to the region, Sorli, Gleditsch, and Strand argue that economic development and economic growth, along with prolonged periods of peace are important to lessening

¹²⁴ Yiftachel, *The Shrinking Space of Citizenship*, 39.

¹²⁵ Falah, Ghazi-Walid, *The Geopolitics of ‘Enclavisation’ and the Demise of a Two-State Solution to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (Third World Quarterly, 2005), 1341-1342 & 1366 (Similar to Falah, Ghazi-Walid, *War, Peace, and Land Seizure in Palestine’s Border Area*(Third World Quarterly, 2004)).

¹²⁶ Doumani, *Palestine versus the Palestiniens?*, 55 & 61.

¹²⁷ Johan, James O. C., *The Middle east Conflict: The Palestinian Dimension* (Global Governance, 2002), 413.

conflict in the Middle East and elsewhere. They conclude that economic diversification and development, in conjunction with improved resource management and governance, are key to preventing future conflict in the Middle East.¹²⁸ Abboud and Newton are of similar thinking, arguing for economic development through improving and exploiting resource extraction, industry, tourism, and education.¹²⁹

Giordano, Giordano, and Wolf highlight the fact that conflict is more likely when resources are in question, and when there is a lacking of institutional capacity to deal with this scarcity.¹³⁰ Claiming that economic betterment, and therefore developing a better life for those involved, is important does not mean that it is without challenge, especially within the Middle East context where ethnic and religious questions have entered the debate.¹³¹ Similarly, Simmons notes that economic betterment is most possible where there are clear lines of authority over geopolitical space, and this presents a challenge to the region in question. Simmons claims that once this is settled it is more likely that mutually beneficial trade is possible. The boundaries and murky authority over territory with respect to the Palestinian issue runs counter to this; however, this paper's examination of intractable conflict questions this logic, at least in part, as lines of authority are more difficult as a result of the violence and conflict taking place¹³² Abboud and Newton support the importance of addressing quality of life early on stating that: "[P]eace and goodwill flourish only when people have hope and a vision

¹²⁸ Sorli et al., *Why is there so much Conflict in the Middle East?*, 141 & 160.

¹²⁹ Abboud, A. Robert and Newton N. Minow, *Advancing Peace in the Middle East: The Economic Path out of Conflict* (Foreign Affairs, 2002), 15-16.

¹³⁰ Giordano, Mark. F., Giordano, Meredith A., & Wolf, Aaron T., *International Resource conflict and Mitigation* (Journal of Peace Research, 2005), 61.

¹³¹ Sorli et al., *Why is there so much Conflict in the Middle East?*, 141.

¹³² Simmons, Beth A, *Rules over Real Estate: Trade, Territorial Conflict, and international Borders as Institution* (The Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2005), 843.

of better lives for their children. Violence and acrimony take over when people believe things cannot get worse and they have nothing to lose. Without economic development and investment, there is no hope and no vision of better lives ahead".¹³³ They further note:

The Arab-Israeli conflict has defied peaceful accommodation, let alone resolution, for more than 50 years. Wars have been fought, people displaced, land occupied, law and order disrupted, economies shattered, and a cauldron for terrorism permitted to boil. Yet the United States and the Western world have never fully employed as essential recourse that they could bring to the search for peace: economic development, which created regional opportunities for trade, investment, and jobs [...] [E]conomic interaction often leads to political adhesion [...] Politics follows commerce because commerce provides mutual benefits across the broad expanse of the population, regardless of race, color, religion, or ideology [...] while also providing] multiple avenues for individual self-fulfillment¹³⁴

3.3. Discussion

This paper's discussion of intractable conflict highlights the centrality of territorial competition, and the role that the resulting perpetual inequalities as key drivers for intractable conflict. Section Two (2) of this paper reviewed the conflict as it has existed from a state-centric standpoint, pointing to Jerusalem as a specific example of how the international community has historically approached the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in a very state-centric fashion. It was argued that these efforts have largely been unsuccessful. This section, however, addresses the political and economic disparities that have befallen both Arab-Israelis and the Palestinian people in the territories. It has been noted that there is no real room for Palestinian people within the traditional political structure of Israel, as within said state structure their expression of an ethnic group can constitute a threat to the nation state, resulting in a political disempowerment and frustration. This political exclusion is based on both notions of territory, and a

¹³³ Abboud & Minow, *Advancing Peace in the Middle East*, 16.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 14.

generated sense of identity. As Newman argues, this worsens economic exclusion and geographic marginalization. As noted above, this marginalization and exclusion, as well as the inequality that it engenders, further enable the violence within the intractable conflict scenario.

Although a comparatively underdeveloped body of literature, at least specifically on the topic of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the authors referenced in this section underscore the importance of developing a better life for those enmeshed in conflict, and this speaks to the core of this paper. Intractable conflict is self-perpetuating in nature; this paper proposes that the driving force behind this intractability is inequality and poverty brought on by the initial conflict which, in turn, empowers the cyclical process as the resulting expressions of violence beget further violence. The efforts at addressing the conflict have essentially attempted to apply the same logic that resulted in the conflict itself – notions of borders, division, security, and so forth. This section notes that it is fundamentally important to address the issue of inequality and safety before any other, more structural solutions are possible, as otherwise violence and counter violence, will continue. The authors noted above argue that this may be accomplished through economic development coupled with a concerted effort at decreasing violence. Although this may be difficult to achieve within the confines of the conflict, theoretically, it is a necessary step in order to apply other, more structural solutions. If the thesis of this essay is correct, major past international efforts have largely been in vain, as demonstrated by sheer history. Targeted humanitarian and economic aid would be more fruitful; however, given the ongoing conflict, and not to mention the Israeli blockade of Gaza, fostering opportunity would be difficult, if not

impossible, without major international coordination and pressure. If at all successful, such efforts would directly impact the causal socio-economic engines of conflict intractability, as they have been outlined in previous sections of this paper, and foster fertile ground for a resolution to the conflict.

4. Conclusion

This paper has sought to explore intractability in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This was done to explain why past measures have failed to end the conflict, and to propose what areas need to be addressed in order to ultimately reach peace. At the outset, this paper examined the intractable conflict phenomenon, as it has been presented in academic literature. It is argued that conflict intractability is, in large measure, fueled by popular discontent with the socio-economic situation, largely as it is experienced by the disempowered or dominated group. This form of conflict is premised on inequality, suffering, and loss of power; these are sentiments that in turn feed into the political system, defining it, and empowering it to recreate the conditions under which the conflict can be propagated in a cyclical fashion. This essay argues that this understanding of intractability helps to frame the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and leads to a more fulsome understanding of what has contributed to their protracted nature, and how to disempower the self-perpetuation of violent.

In an effort to ground this understanding of intractable conflict, an overview of the history and evolution of the Palestinian- Israeli conflict, dating back to the late 19th century is presented. Particular attention was paid to the Jerusalem issue as a means of underscoring how international efforts at addressing the key issues of the conflict have fundamentally been misdirected, according to the logic outlined previously. Historical approaches to the conflict have failed to address the real, root causes of the conflict intractability itself. The solutions proposed by international community have been predominantly structural in nature and fail to address the agency-based momentum

behind the conflict – they often further frustrate the inequalities and suffering that feeds into macro-level political discourse.

The third section of this paper remains focused on conflict at hand, while attempting to lay bare the on-the-ground issues at the core of the conflict itself. In this section of the paper, issues of political alienation, marginalization, and economic segregation and disempowerment are shown to be central problems that must be addressed in order to enable a peaceful resolution. Development of positive human potential is key to fostering an end to the conflict – to blunting its intractability. International efforts need to be directed at enabling economic development, reducing violence, and providing humanitarian aid to lessen the impact of the perpetual conflict situation.

The international community has fallen victim to path-dependent thinking by attempting to address the conflict through mantras of borders and government structure, as demonstrated by solutions proposed regarding the Jerusalem issue. In doing so, it is applying the same state-centric frame from which the conflict was born, further frustrating the initial and perpetual socio-economic and safety issues that function as the driving force of the intractable situation.

In reflecting on this paper, one central theme comes to mind: 'Poverty'. It is held that the economic, social and political destitution of those in the occupied territories is a central factor in intractability. As has been noted, for a group that has only known marginalization, occupation and violence for decades, incentives to disengage from conflict will be required for it to come to an end. Admittedly, one of the fallbacks of this

analysis is that it focuses heavily on why the disempowered group, the Palestinians, have engaged in an intractable conflict. At first glance, this approach risks raising questions as to the motivations of the Israelis for engaging in the cycle of intractability, outside of reprisal, as they are less likely to be as socio-economically disadvantaged. Using the understanding of intractability outlined above, it is arguable that the motivations of the Israelis are also socio-economic in nature – they are, for all intents and purposes, simply winning at this point in history. Nonetheless, this does represent an area of potential future research. Does the understanding of intractability presented here do justice to the motivations of the Israeli side of the conflict? A more targeted approach may be required. Furthermore, it would be interesting to weigh this interpretation of intractable conflict against other potentially intractable situations, such as Northern Ireland, South Africa, potentially Afghanistan and Iraq, or even the Cold War in order to advance a clearer and more concise understanding of this phenomenon.

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