

Palestinian Youth Perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict

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Abstract

Key Words: Palestinian youth, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Mannheim, Generation units, Political ideology, YOUCAN Facilitation, Participatory Action Research, Ethnography.

The Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the longest ongoing protracted conflict in contemporary times. This research seeks to gain insight on the root of the conflict based on Palestinian youth perceptions and to make meaning of their experiences. Research was conducted on two levels. First, an innovative third party neutral, Participatory Action Research-based YOUCAN Facilitation was conducted within Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. Second, ethnography was utilised as the researcher was fully immersed in Palestinian youth society for four months.

Using Grounded Theory, the Palestinian youth groups' self-produced themes of problems of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict could be grouped into nine super themes of problems. Allocating the groups' self-assigned priority to each theme within the super themes, the most important category of conflict could be identified. Based on Palestinian youth perceptions, Ideological, racism and differentiation problems are the most important problems underlying the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These results give a voice to the perceptions of Palestinian youth and bring to light a shocking explanation of a life of terror and conflict as experienced by Palestinian youth, whether it is mental, physical and/or emotional.

The ethnography led to a major discovery in the order and structure of Palestinian youth's everyday lives. The Palestinian youth generation was observed to be clearly divided into six Mannheimian generation units that are based on political ideology affiliation. These generation units are Political Islam, Nationalist, Apolitical Islam, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam. Affiliation with a political ideology was observed to heavily impact and direct social, cultural, educational and political activities and interactions among Palestinian youth.

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Problematique

Palestine-Israel is claimed to be the epicentre of instability in the Middle East. (Boniface, 2004)¹ As the longest ongoing conflict in contemporary times, the events of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have international repercussions.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Palestinians sought self-governing statehood, just as their neighbours did, in the height of “imagined communities,” defined by Benedict Anderson as the mentality of imagining a connectedness between a people unseen to create a nation.² Palestine was never granted its nationhood by the British. Instead the United Nations voted to partition the territory, allowing the creation of Israel in 1948. The immediate war that followed, along with Israel’s victory, led to the displacement of over 700,000 Palestinians,³ some of whom believed they would soon be able to return; however, a significant number were expelled from their homes.

From that time until the present day, a continuation of political instability along with traumatic events caused Sewellian events of protracted destabilisation resulting in deep divisions between groups of Palestinians.⁴ One such event was the first *intifada*, which caused an irrevocable split between the Palestinians into two camps, the secular-nationalist Fateh and the Islamist Hamas. But the destabilisation didn’t end there. The conflict continued to grow and presently, in the Gaza Strip, Palestinians suffer from a complete siege on land, air and sea mobility. Also, there is a

¹ Boniface, Pascal. "The ‘Clash of Civilisations’ and the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict." *The International Spectator* 39.3 (2004): 7. Print.

² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2006. Print.

³ Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.1. Print.

⁴ Lybarger, Loren. “Palestinian Political Identities during the Post-Oslo Period: A Case Study of Generation Effects in a West Bank Refugee Camp.” *Social Compass* 52.2 (2005): 147. Print.

stagnant economy and a quickly disappearing source of drinking water. Those in the West Bank suffer great obstacles such as mobility restrictions, due to the construction of the Wall and growing settlements, coupled with land loss and deprivation of access to agricultural crops and water sources. Palestinian citizens of Israel live as a minority and feel a sense of discrimination and differentiation on a political and social level. Finally, Palestinian refugees live in 66 refugee camps spread out in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.⁵ Their houses are made from concrete slabs that were meant for temporary use and frequently lack a proper roof or adequate water or electricity supply.⁶ The camps are slum-like and usually lack proper sewage systems and are rampant with unemployment. Palestinian refugees rely vitally on United Nations Relief and Works Agency for fundamental needs such as water, food, shelter, and education among others. Those in Jordan face strong political and social discrimination and racism from Jordanians although they possess either full or partial citizenship.

1.2 Research Question

The research seeks to investigate the lives of Palestinian youth within these scattered parts of historical Palestine and its surroundings. The current Palestinian youth generation is made up of youth who are exposed to the same external conditions and circumstances and thereby form a cohesive generation. The research goal is to determine the perceptions of Palestinian youth regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Deeper than just the surface perceptions, this research seeks to provide an in-depth understanding of the lived reality of Palestinian youth through an examination of the conflicts they face, whether they live in the occupied land of the West Bank or Gaza Strip, as Palestinian citizens of Israel or refugees outside of Palestine-Israel.

⁵ UNRWA: Relief and Social Services Programme. 2008. www.unrwa.org. Web. Retrieved March 15, 2013.

⁶ *ibid.*

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The research questions are: What are the perceptions of Palestinian youth of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict? What do they perceive as being the underlying conflict? What do they perceive as being the most significant problem? What is perceived as being the least important problem? How does this conflict affect their everyday lives? What kind of lives do Palestinian young people live?

These questions were approached through a new third party neutral, Participatory Action Research-based method that uses Youth Canada Association's (YOUCAN) Facilitation model. Palestinian youth participated in facilitation sessions in which they expressed their perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its implication for them in a brainstorming session. Next, the group self-produced themes to capture categories of the ideas and finally self-prioritised the themes based on the group's understanding of the importance of each. Afterwards, using Grounded Theory, the researcher used Axial Coding to find super themes from the cumulative themes from all nine facilitation sessions. Based on the Palestinian youth's priority ranking, the super themes could be placed in order of importance to highlight the most important super theme.

The results of the facilitated sessions were very useful in beginning to scratch the surface of the lives of Palestinian youth. In order to get a more in-depth look on their lives, an ethnographic study was concurrently undertaken through the four months of being completely immersed in Palestinian youth society in Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. This part of the research is about the experience, perceptions and understandings of Palestinian youth as relayed to the ethnographer and as seen through the ethnographer's eyes. The emphasis is on making meaning of Palestinian youth experiences.

1.3 Limitations of Research

This research captures the perceptions, attitudes and experiences of Palestinian youth within nine facilitation sessions: four in the West Bank, three in Israel and two in a Jordanian refugee camp. The participants totalled 81 people. Also, there were informal conversations with Palestinian youth whose experiences are reflected in this research. There were no participants from, nor research conducted in, Gaza. Therefore this research cannot claim to be representative of all Palestinian youth. Also, it must be mentioned that approximately 70% of the participants and interlocutors were male and 30% female; however, given the cultural setting, Arab man and woman mixing in social settings is less common and generally speaking, it is more likely for the male researcher to have conversations with other men and to have male interlocutors.

While the research does not present comprehensive statistical data on the details of the lives of Palestinian youth, it does provide a significant window into how they perceive and understand their realities. At another level, the theory-informed reflections on the subjective experiences of the researcher as ethnographer, deeply immersed in the interlocutors' environment, bring significant depth to the understanding of the perceptions and experiences of Palestinian youth. While this is a significant study of a limited number of a diverse cross-section of Palestinian youth—diverse in terms of context and political persuasion—it is not comprehensive. Further research would be needed to corroborate the conclusions and make them generalisable.

1.4 Outline of Chapters

After this introductory chapter, chapter two gives detailed historical and political contexts of Palestinians based on a review of historical literature. It provides

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an historical overview of Palestine, emphasising past political events that led to the political fractures of Palestinians.

Chapter three introduces three lenses through which the researcher approaches the research of Palestinian youth perceptions of the conflict. First, Karl Mannheim's concept of generations and generation units is used to frame the research, that is, to focus on Palestinian youth who are linked cohesively through the exposure to the same external circumstances. Next, the third party neutral, Participatory Action Research lens is explained as an empowering process enabling Palestinian youth to self-produce the research results through an inclusive and enlightening facilitation session that explores their perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Lastly, ethnography is the final lens through which Palestinian youth perceptions are explored. This participant observation method aims to combine the objective observer with the subjective participant to immerse the ethnographer into the interlocutors' lives.

Chapter four explains the practical methodology of the facilitation sessions, which is based on the third party neutral, Participatory Action Research-based YOUCAN facilitation model. The steps of the YOUCAN facilitation session are: Brainstorming, Theming and Prioritising. First, the group of Palestinian youth brainstorm all the ideas and perceptions of the research question, "What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?" along with its variations and subsequent probing. Next, the group self-produces themes to encompass the ideas and then ranks them in order of importance. Grounded Theory is used subsequently to further group the summation of all themes produced by the Palestinian youth into super themes and assigns the youth-produced priority to the themes within each super theme to determine the most important super theme based on the Palestinian youth perceptions.

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Chapter five outlines the written results of the facilitation sessions along with their analysis using Grounded Theory to group together the Palestinian youth's self-produced themes into super themes of problems of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as perceived by Palestinian youth. The nine super themes are ordered in terms of prioritised rank as follows: *Ideological, racism and differentiation; Political; Land, separation and dispersion; Economic; Rights and freedom; Security; Cultural; Media; and Social Problems*. Each is explained and a sampling of direct quotes from the brainstorming sessions is used to bring texture and colour to the concepts. Based on the number of ideas or quotes within each super theme, *Political problems* ranked as the highest. The compilation of all super themes and quotes therein revealed troubling realities of the lives of Palestinian youth based on their perceptions.

Chapter six presents the ethnographic analysis and reflections of the participant observer researcher, leading to the discovery of a particular structure in the Palestinian youth society in order to explore from another perspective the aforementioned troubled lives of Palestinian youth. Within the Palestinian youth generation, there are distinct groupings, dubbed Mannheimian generation units that are based on political ideologies: Political Islam, Nationalist, Apolitical Islam, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam. These six generation units were observed to have particular group mentalities and barriers that divided them from one another but bound them to their group. The only collective aspect of the entire Palestinian youth generation was the terror they all faced in their everyday lives as described in detail.

Finally, chapter seven concludes the research and provides suggestions for future research.

Chapter Two

Historical and Political Context

2.1 Outline of the Chapter

Historically speaking, Palestine has always been an exception to the case.⁷ While all the surrounding territories achieved statehood and independence, Palestine, it seemed, was destined to ensure the establishment of a Jewish homeland. After seven major wars, the internationally recognised 1967 borders left two pieces of land to be what most of the world today recognises as Palestine. But these two territories have always been clouded with instability, so much so that in 2006, a political schism occurred within the Palestinian de facto government that continues to define the political discourse of the day.

The West Bank continued to be ruled by the secular-nationalist Fateh political group while the Gaza Strip began to be governed by the Islamist Hamas political movement. Fateh gained widespread support from the Palestinian people since its inception in 1959 with a goal to establish a Palestinian state and rid it of Zionism but after many failures, Fateh lost the people's faith. The West Bank currently struggles over mass land loss due to the increasing presence of Jewish settlers, the construction of the Wall, mobility restrictions and inability to access water and agricultural crops. In the wake of the first civil uprising, the Palestinian people showed the world that they exist and they voiced their want for the apolitical, social services-based Islamic Collective to take on a political role. This eventually led to the formation of Hamas.

In a time of cronyism and corruption alongside the heavy Israeli military presence and handicapped infrastructure, Fateh is not currently able to adequately support the people of the West Bank. In the Gaza Strip, the grassroots-type initiative

⁷ Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage: the Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006, p.37. Print.

by Hamas is struggling with the siege on Gaza, the periodically destroyed infrastructure and the disappearing water supply. Palestinian citizens of Israel suffer discrimination, limited job opportunities, and a feeling of betrayal from all sides.

Inhabitants of the 66 refugee camps in Palestine and the surrounding countries of Jordan, Syria and Lebanon live in tent-converted concrete houses intended for temporary use. Many camps lack proper roofs, sewer systems and access to water. They are highly dependent on aid for all fundamental needs, i.e. food, water, education, all provided by United Nations Relief and Works Agency. Refugees in Jordan constitute the largest population of Palestinian refugees. They face severe discrimination from the indigenous population although about half of them have been granted full citizenship. Only with time can the status of this non-voting observer state be finalised as can that of the dispersed Palestinians.

2.2 An Anomaly in the Neighbourhood

The story of Palestine and Israel is long and momentous and involves many players. In the wake of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the British occupation of Palestine began at the same time Palestinians, like others in the Middle East, were developing their national movement and seeking self-determination. However, Palestine stood out as an anomaly in the neighbourhood of newly independent states—Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Transjordan—while it remained under British high commissioner rule and headed towards the establishment of a Jewish homeland.⁸ In 1917 the British Empire's Balfour Declaration was released, which called for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Later on, the League of Nations' Mandate for Palestine carried on this intention and never mentioned the Palestinians as a people or their hopes for sovereignty, all the while recognising the Jewish minority

⁸ Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage: the Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006, p.37. Print.

fully along with their right for a state. The widespread Israeli and international representation of Palestine during the Mandate period was of two populations enjoying advantages and working through disadvantages, more or less equally. This is best seen in Tom Segev's *One Palestine, Complete*, in which he illustrates Palestinians and Jews as having equal rights, opportunities and relationships with the British.⁹

In contrast, Rashid Khalidi argues that the entire structure of building the Jewish state in Palestine—founded on this mandate—worked on the basis of excluding the Palestinians of the same right.¹⁰ In fact, the mandate only mentioned national rights for the Jewish community and privileged this miniscule 10% population of Palestine, while applying certain rights for Jewish people in the Diaspora. The British imposed legal and constitutional obstacles on the Palestinians that severely affected their political, economic and social spheres.

In looking at the neighbouring countries in that region at the time, Palestine stood out as an anomaly. All former regions under Ottoman Empire rule received provisional recognition in Article 4 of the League of Nations' Covenant, deeming them independent states and essentially international bodies with the exception of Palestine. By means of the Class A mandates, full independence was attained by Iraq in 1932, Lebanon and Syria in 1943, and Transjordan in 1946.¹¹ While these states had kings, prime ministers or presidents and temporary British guardianship, the British high commissioner incongruously ruled Palestine, allowing participation only for Jewish national institutions. Even in looking at other colonial or semicolonial territories in the Middle East or North Africa, the case of Palestine was anomalous.

⁹ Segev, Tom. *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*. New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000. Print.

¹⁰ Khalidi, Rashid. *The Iron Cage: the Story of the Palestinian Struggle for Statehood*. Boston: Beacon Press, 2006, p.32. Print.

¹¹ *ibid.* p.37.

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This, however, was not simply due to a lack of Palestinian initiative to achieve sovereignty, quite the contrary. Even with the constitutional handicap imposed on the Palestinians by the British, which favoured the Jewish minority's national rights, they nevertheless implored the British to rightfully grant them national (to self-govern) and political (to achieve self-determination) rights. Palestinians based their demands on many legitimate documents or initiatives. One of them was Article 4 of the Covenant of the League of Nations that ascribes Ottoman Empire territories as provisional independent states. Another, being the Fourteen Points, was declared by American president Woodrow Wilson as the basis of American participation in World War I—the twelfth point promising self-determination of all territories of the Ottoman Empire. Lastly, the promises made by the Allies to the Arabs for independence in World War I were among the initiatives on which the Palestinians based their demands, without forgetting their natural rights as a people.¹²

However, the British repeatedly denied those demands, stating that the Palestinians must first accept the Mandate for Palestine, something they could not do because that mandate subordinated them to the minority Jewish population, denied any political and collective rights to be afforded to them and blatantly did not recognise them as a people. The Palestinians could not agree to a mandate that was not in their favour and placed them as second-class subjects to a land that they felt was their own and had been so for many centuries. For this reason, while other neighbouring territories in the area achieved statehood, self-determination, independence and self-rule, along with Israel, Palestine was never allotted the same privileges and rights that all of its neighbours enjoyed.

¹² *ibid.* p.33.

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In 1947, the United Nations (UN) proposed a partition plan to split historical Palestine into a Jewish state and an Arab state. Tensions rose and a civil war erupted in Palestine, when the Palestinians and Jews committed several atrocities against one another, including the Jewish massacre and expulsion of Palestinians in Lydda in 1948.¹³ The Palestinian community had been devastated by its anticolonial revolt against the British, the Great Revolt of 1936-1939,¹⁴ which left them no match to the highly trained and heavily equipped Jewish Yishuv army.¹⁵ On May 15, 1948, the Zionist leadership declared the Jewish state of Israel. Following the creation of Israel, the ensuing Arab-Israeli war in which Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan attacked Israel also resulted in Israeli victory. In this case, the Arab countries never worked together and individually were of no match to the steadily growing numbers of the Yishuv army (96,441 soldiers by December 1948).¹⁶ UN-negotiated mediations concluded the war with the signing of the Armistice Agreements in 1949 of the Arab nations Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan with Israel. Egypt was given control of the Gaza Strip while Jordan seized the West Bank.¹⁷ By the end of the war, over 700,000 Palestinians were displaced from their homes¹⁸ resulting in the creation of (the still unsolved problem of) refugee camps in South Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. These Palestinian refugees were not privy to any advantages produced by this accord. The conflict was not resolved, and several wars would ensue with the Arab states, including the 1956 Suez War, the Six-day War of 1967, The War of 1973, the Lebanon invasions in 1978 and 1982. There were also confrontations

¹³ Shavit, Ari. "Lydda, 1948." *The New Yorker*. 21 Oct. 2013. Print.

¹⁴ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

¹⁵ Shlaim, Avi. "The Debate About 1948." *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 27 (1995): 294.

¹⁶ *ibid.* Print.

¹⁷ Barak, Oren. "The Failure of the Israeli-Palestinian Peace Process, 1993-2000." *Journal of Peace Research* 42.6 (2005): 719-36. Print.

¹⁸ Morris, Benny. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem Revisited*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004, p.1. Print.

with the Palestinians: the first *intifada* in 1987 and the Al-Aqsa *intifada* in 2000, all of which deeply affected the Palestinian populace and political movements. To this day, the Palestinians still strive for statehood with self-government but for various reasons such as unending instability, Israeli refusal, and international noncompliance, they have not been able to achieve that goal.

2.3 Fateh and Hamas

To the world today, two major political parties or ideologies are known, those of Fateh and Hamas. But the historical sequence of events that led to the popularity of each party is rarely discussed. This history is very important to understand why the majority of the Palestinian population at times turned to Fateh and at others to Hamas.

The first *intifada* of 1987 was a pivotal moment for the Palestinians because it forced Israel and the world to recognise them as a people internationally. Nationally, it later caused a great divide between the people, the secular-nationalist and the Islamist. The first *intifada* in 1987 to the Oslo peace process in 1993 and through the Al-Aqsa (second) *intifada* in 2000 were coupled with notable variations in political identities of the Palestinian people.

Although the media would have one believe that Fateh and Hamas stand for two very specific and binding mentalities, the reality is that these two political ideologies are non-confining and lie in a spectrum of political ideas and ideals. Before delving into the differences between the prevailing identities, the terms “secularist” and “Islamist” must be defined along with their contextual methodologies. Esposito and Tamimi suggest that the PLO movements, mainly Fateh and other leftist groups, represent the secular camp that aspires for a non-sectarian democratic state functioning pluralistically with various lifestyles. Hamas and the Islamic *Jihad* groups on the other hand, cannot be clumped together as one camp; however, they represent

the Islamist camp that aspires for a *Shari'a*-run Islamic state that uses institutions and customs from Islam to create a uniform society. Let it not be forgotten that each group has its separate idea of what a Palestinian state would be. It is also important to note the spectrum of both political ideologies. Fateh members distinguish between the conservative and extremist Muslim, thinking that the former can fulfil his or her Islamic religious duties in harmony with a non-sectarian (PLO nationalist) political mindset. The latter however, places Islam over everything and cannot reconcile his or her uniform religious ideology with the nation thereby resulting in a repressive totalitarianism. Hamas members on the other hand can conceive of the notion that a Fateh member could in theory fulfil his or her obligatory Islamic duties and hold a secularist political ideology. They believe it is possible to act jointly with a secularist on a practical sense to achieve the common goal of prevailing against the occupation of Palestine and the injustices committed in it.¹⁹ Therefore the political ideologies are not mutually exclusive and surely overlap. There are differences woven into that overlap.

In fact, up until the present day, the constant destabilisation of 26 years (since the first *intifada*) has caused this divergence of political ideologies, which can be dubbed as the root cause of the fracture of unity of the Palestinian people. Sewell theorises that a protracted upheaval leads to a situation in which uncertainty and dislocation subverts the legitimacy of preconceived identities, which are then questioned and possibly reoriented.²⁰ In the case of Palestinians, this reorientation continually happens generationally as discussed later in chapter six. Beginning with the unrest and tensions that reached a pinnacle, namely the first *intifada*, this crisis

¹⁹ Esposito, John L. and Tamimi, Azzam, eds *Islam and Secularism in the Middle East*. New York: New York University Press, 2000. Print.

²⁰ Sewell, William H. "Historical Events as Transformations of Structures: Inventing Revolution at the Bastille." *Theory and Society* 25.6 (1996): 841–881. Print.

manifested in the propagation of two main competing socio-political spheres, a secularist and an Islamist.²¹

2.4 The Rise and Fall of Fateh

Prior to 1948, the upper class was comprised of the leaders of the Palestinian nation along with the religious institutions under their reign. Islamic solidarity—or one might even say Arab/Muslim solidarity—was connected to Arab/Palestinian nationalism in the region, which is why the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had chapters in Gaza, Jerusalem and Hebron. But after the civil and inter-state wars from 1947-1949, the upper class gave way to new guerrilla movements with layers of new ideologies that fell in shades of grey. Examples were pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism and militant Palestinian nationalism, which especially planted itself in refugee camps, the inhabitants of which are the greatest victims of the war. Let it be noted that most historians, such as Gelvin²² and Khalidi,²³ would agree that there was already Palestinian nationalism, but at that point, leadership and focus changed. These new political directions were represented by several movements established during the following decades.

The first was the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO), created with the Pan-Arabist mindset in 1964. One of the great leaders for pan-Arabism was Jamal Abd Al-Nasser, the president of Egypt from 1954 to 1970. It was Nasser who established an official representative body for the Palestinian people in the Arab League, the PLO, in 1964 at a conference in Cairo where thirteen Arab leaders approved the motion. Right away, the Palestine National Charter was drafted that

²¹ Shikaki, Khalil "Palestinians Divided," *Foreign Affairs* 77.4 (2002): 89–105. Print.

²² Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

²³ Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity*. New York: Columbia United Press, 1997. Print.

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listed Palestinians' right to exist in historical Palestine (the area controlled under the Palestine Mandate), their right to liberate it and to subsequent self-determination.²⁴

Among the Palestinians themselves, one of the main formations was the Palestinian Liberation Movement (Fateh) in 1959, formed outside the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Under the leadership of Yasir Arafat, its stated purpose was liberating Palestine using independent armed struggle. The pan-Arabist, secularist and socialist Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM) was also established to topple and reform governments and to establish revolutionary authorities as a means to defeating Israel.²⁵ And it wasn't until the cataclysmic defeat of the Arabs in the 1967 war that Palestinians lost hope in the idea of pan-Arabism liberating Palestine and started to subscribe to Fateh's mandate of self-reliant armed struggle. From then and on until the first *intifada*, Fateh was on the rise, gaining Palestinian support at an exponential rate. The best example was the battle of Karameh in 1970, where 300 and some odd Palestinian guerrillas who had set up camp in the Jordanian town triumphed over an Israeli army three times their size.²⁶ The word *karameh* in Arabic translates to honour and also translated into a mythic and epic victory against Israelis. This victory gave Palestinians the hope and pride to put faith in Fateh as the representative liberators and promoted the belief that liberation would only come from their own hands.²⁷ And in those hands, in a time when armed struggle was rampant in the world, such as the bloody case of the Algerian Revolution (1954-62), the PLO amended its charter in 1968 to note that,

²⁴ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.198. Print.

²⁵ Lybarger, Loren. "Palestinian Political Identities during the Post-Oslo Period: A Case Study of Generation Effects in a West Bank Refugee Camp." *Social Compass* 52.2 (2005): 144. Print.

²⁶ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.199. Print.

²⁷ Cobban, Helena. *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power, and Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984: 21-2. Print.

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Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine. This is the overall strategy, not merely a tactical phase...Commando action constitutes the nucleus of the Palestinian popular liberation war. This requires...the achieving of unity for the national struggle among the different groupings of the Palestinian people, and between the Palestinian people and the Arab masses, so as to secure the continuation of the revolution, its escalation, and victory.²⁸

Therefore it is no surprise that when Fateh took over the PLO in 1969, it proceeded to incorporate every nationalist group formed such as ANM and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP)²⁹ in 1966 and was primarily able to do so because its objective was simply to restore an independent state of Palestine that would be democratic and have equal rights for all its citizens no matter the religion.³⁰ The PFLP is a leftist group that represented Marxist-Leninist and anti-Zionist ideology that strongly promoted Palestinian nationalism and stood for the liberation of Palestine. Fateh leader Yasir Arafat decided on a policy of inclusion and consensus building therefore amalgamating many factions into the greater PLO so as to avoid rifts with other competitor groups. The PFLP consistently gained the second largest amount of support from the Palestinian populace after Fateh and it chose to stay within this umbrella from fear of losing much support if it stood on its own with its far-left ideology criticised and rejected.³¹

But things began to go downhill when critics could easily point out that Arafat was spending too much time appeasing each and every group rather than focussing on Fateh and PLO goals. Also, since Israel had outlawed the PLO and its presence in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as well as Palestinian participation in its

²⁸ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.202. Print.

²⁹ Sayigh, Yezid. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

³⁰ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.203. Print.

³¹ Sayigh, Yezid. *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement, 1949–1993*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. Print.

institutions, Fateh was reduced to an outsider looking in, bouncing from centralising its base in Jordan to Lebanon to Tunisia. The meagre institutional link between Fateh and Palestinians in the OPT played a major role in the populace's sway towards the Islamic Collective in events leading up to and after the first *intifada*.³² Over the decades, Arafat's poor choices severely undermined Palestinian support of the PLO, namely his support of the PFLP in Jordan leading to the horrific death of thousands of Palestinians in Black September in 1970, his support of Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait in 1990, which led to the expulsion of 75,000 Palestinians from Kuwait and last but certainly not least, his formal recognition of Israel and signing of the Oslo Accords also hurt Palestinian faith in Fateh.³³ Gelvin put it nicely in recognising that "...the Palestinian national movement found itself led by a politician when what it required was the leadership of a statesman."³⁴ After the signing of the Oslo Accords, the PFLP decided that Fateh had gone too far in dealing with the enemy and recognising it as a legitimate state. The PFLP stood for a one-state solution and could no longer ride along under the "treacherous" umbrella of Fateh. Despite all these failures, the biggest being that Fateh has not been able to accomplish any of its goals such as achieving Palestinian statehood or improving the lives of Palestinians, the world still views the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. But the international view of legitimacy was far different than the internal civil view.

2.5 Islamic Collective on the Rise

In the meantime, a new movement was forming primarily in Gaza in the late 1980's when the Egypt-trained Islamist leaders revived previous Muslim Brotherhood

³² Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p.206. Print.

³³ *ibid* p.207

³⁴ *ibid*. p.208

groupings generating the Islamic Collective. It was a mosque-based social services network that concentrated on social activism thereby evading Israeli retaliation³⁵ and was able to build itself up to later compete with the hegemony of PLO although it is important to note that that was not its original intent. In fact, the original Islamist movement was initiated to swerve away from nationalistic aspirations since it is widely accepted that nationalist endeavours are contradictory to the complete solidarity to Islam, in that those nationalistic endeavours put nationalism at the same level as the identification and spirituality of being a Muslim. The mentality was “Islam-first” and that was the only way to claim victory against Israel therefore the Islamic Collective became politically irrelevant to Palestinian political parties—because it was not a competitor—and to Israel. From the mosque, services offered to the public ranged from day camps, day care to pre-school and afterschool religious teachings and tutoring.

For this reason, where Israel saw an opportunity to divide and conquer or at the very least sow discord, it began to aid the Islamic Collective, allowing it to do business abroad and facilitating permits while taking severe measures against the PLO.³⁶ Some Palestinians began to be suspicious of the Islamic Collective and of course Fateh used every opportunity it could to accuse it of being a collaborator with Israel but that wasn't enough to turn Palestinians away from the very well established social services the Islamic Collective offered the populace. In fact, Fateh knew it had to compete with the Islamic Collective to gain back the support of the people it had lost and began running similar social services such as women's organisations, labour unions, student groups and relief committees. However, even these PLO initiatives

³⁵ Mishal, Shaul and Sela, Avraham. *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000. Print.

³⁶ Hroub, Khaled Hamas. *Political Thought and Practice*. Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 2000. Print.

ended up shifting power dynamics within the movement once the first *intifada* sprang, when Palestinians used these established groupings as networks and bases of support and encouragement to rise up against Israel—dubbed the United National Command of the Uprising—rather than listening to their politician-leader who lived far away, outside of the Palestinian territories.

2.6 Mannheimian Generational Fragmentation

The first *intifada* was a major event for the Palestinian people. Lybarger makes the claim that this pivotal moment termed a Sewellian event of “prolonged mass destabilisation leading to a structural change”³⁷ forever shifted the course of Palestinian history. Lybarger claims that it caused an irrevocable split between the Palestinians into two camps, a secular-nationalist Fateh and an Islamist Hamas. And the reform was generational in character in a Mannheimian sense, accounting for the activists in the *intifada* being young adolescents from the late teens to the mid twenties. They had grown up in unstable conditions and during a mobilisation of opposing secular and Islamist spheres.³⁸

It is interesting to note that the new leaders of the PLO, Fateh and Islamic Collective in the OPT all shared the experience of a direct impact of Israeli occupation and this generated distinctive circumstances for reforming the political field. The evolution of the two camps transpired very differently. While Fateh leaders could not compete with the Islamic Collective and their efforts to emulate it backfired and caused even more of a threat to them, the Islamic Collective embraced the changing circumstances. At the time of its birth, the Islamic Collective refused to even address political issues due to its “Islam-first” mentality but when the first

³⁷ Lybarger, Loren. “Palestinian Political Identities during the Post-Oslo Period: A Case Study of Generation Effects in a West Bank Refugee Camp.” *Social Compass* 52.2 (2005): 147. Print.

³⁸ *ibid.*

intifada sprang and continuing on afterwards, this Islamic movement decided to heed to the pleas of the very people to whom it was providing unending social services.

Islamic Collective leader Shaykh Ahmad Yasin took the route of reform and in 1988, in the climax of destabilisation, created the Islamic Resistance Movement a.k.a. Hamas, with “Allah [being] its target, the Prophet its example and the Koran its constitution.”³⁹ This was a definitive change in the course of the Islamic Collective because this new movement put the old and sacrosanct “Islam-first” principle on the backburner and introduced a “Palestine-first” goal. This nationalistic objective of Palestinian statehood and self-determination was a way to compete with the secularist movement because the Islamists feared that their continuing evasion of active participation in the struggle for statehood would allow the secularist Fateh to continue to lead the Palestinian people.

But it would be wrong to assume that this generational fragmentation created two groups and nothing more. In fact, the by-products were a secular-nationalist movement, an Islamic-nationalist movement and everything in between without forgetting the traditional “Islam-first” movement, which was not erased nor was the far-left PFLP. Until today, these groupings are still present among Palestinians and a dominant figure has yet to appear; however, Palestinian parties continue to modify and adapt to the issues and conditions in the present moment. Although there are political divergences among Palestinians, there is still a core agreement on the problem at hand, that of the occupation. For the Palestinian case, every generation, as defined by the experiences and conditions they are faced with, forms generation units that represent political affiliation and directly correlated to identity as will be discussed in chapter six.

³⁹ The Covenant of the Islamic Resistance Movement, “art. 5” Last modified 2008. http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/hamas.asp.

2.7 From *intifada* to Peace to *intifada*

In the words of Jonathan Schanzer in his book comparing Hamas and Fateh, the Palestinians are a “house divided, marked by sharp political differences and sporadic violence.”⁴⁰ The unrest of the first *intifada* ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords by the PLO-led Fateh leader Yasir Arafat but the peace wouldn’t last long. The Oslo Accords created as many problems as it sought to solve. With Fateh now in legitimate relations with Israel yet the reality on the ground worsening for most Palestinians in the OPT, more and more Palestinians began turning to Hamas for true liberation from Israeli occupation as it was considered that the PLO had become Israel’s partner. While most Palestinians initially were hopeful of change due to peace, it became clear with time that the Oslo Accords were an occasion where the strong party was able to crush the weaker one and the end result was the dismembered and impoverished Palestinian entity not attaining statehood or autonomy.⁴¹ Oslo brought with it military “apartheid” roads in the West Bank along with increased settlements. Later years would also bring the construction of the “Apartheid Wall” as a claimed security barrier. Oren Barak goes as far as claiming that the Oslo Accords were a failure because they went to address an interstate conflict with interstate representation; however, they couldn’t resolve the true conflict, which was intergroup.⁴² There was a failure to realise the interests of the parties or address their needs. The Palestinian National Authority never received autonomy but remained a powerless observer with innumerable checkpoints later created within its territory that further weakened it.

⁴⁰ Schanzer, Jonathan. *Hamas vs. Fatah: the Struggle for Palestine*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008, p.2. Print.

⁴¹ Said, Edward. *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*. London: Granta, 2000. Print.

⁴² Barak, Oren. “The Failure of the Israeli–Palestinian Peace Process, 1993–2000.” *Journal of Peace Research* 42.6 (2005): 719-36. Print.

And one cannot forget the return of intragroup as well as intergroup tensions that led to the second civil uprising, the Al-Aqsa *intifada*, between 2000 and 2005, where over 3000 Palestinians were killed (double that of the first *intifada*).⁴³ Shortly thereafter, in 2006, Palestinians had the chance at a democratic election. Hamas never envisaged that it would win the elections, let alone by such a landslide, winning 76 of the 132 seats in Palestinian parliament. Fateh won 43 seats and PFLP won 3 seats with two seats each going to other minor groups in the PLO. The basis of the matter was that secularist Fateh and the PLO had over ten years to lead PA Palestinians but were incapable of attending to the people's practical worries, daily lives or achieving a Palestinian state due to widespread corruption and cronyism.⁴⁴ Hamas also never conceived that Fateh would impede its integration into the PLO and attempt to sway its authority over the people. Political and social tensions grew and with the 2006 complete Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip came an ultimate political divide between the Hamas led-Gaza Strip and the Fateh-led West Bank. Leading up to this physical and political segregation, Palestinians saw some of the bloodiest and atrocious confrontations between Fateh and Hamas members. Presently, the Palestinian population is separated into four distinct geographical regions along with the general diaspora throughout the world. Each location has different living conditions, different ruling political parties but the same Palestinian population.

2.8 Palestine and Israel Today

1) The West Bank

Currently, the West Bank is populated by 2.4 million scattered Palestinians and more than 400,000 Jewish settlers who live in 137 settlements and 100 outposts,

⁴³ "B'Tselem – Statistics – Fatalities," September 29 2000 – January 1, 2005, accessed on November 15, 2013, <http://www.btselem.org/statistics>

⁴⁴ Hamdan, Abel Majeed. "Secularism in the Middle East, Palestine as an Example." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 31.1 (2011): 122. Print.

the nuclei for future colonies.⁴⁵ Although some of them are illegal even under Israeli law,⁴⁶ all settlements are illegal under international law as the West Bank falls into The Hague Convention of 1907 and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 as an occupied territory. Jewish settlers have become aggressive towards the Palestinians and Israeli authorities are not taking steps to remedy the situation. Attacks against Palestinians have become more serious and coordinated. The UN considers settler violence as the main threat to security personnel in the West Bank. The European Union aims to compile a blacklist banning the entry of Jewish settlers who are known to be violent into their countries.⁴⁷

Israel's expenses on West Bank settlements are up 38% since Netanyahu became Prime Minister in 2009. Therefore, the Jewish population grew 2.5 times faster than that of Israel, with a 4.5% increase of Jewish settlers in the West Bank in 2012.⁴⁸ Jewish settlements are one of the most controversial issues in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and are considered the main obstacle to a peaceful solution.⁴⁹

Israel built the dividing "apartheid" Wall in 2000 around the West Bank; caging the Palestinians and severely limiting their access to multiple resources, namely their agricultural lands and water. The Israeli side refers to it as a "security fence" while the Palestinian side dubs it the "Apartheid Wall."⁵⁰ More than 10% of

⁴⁵ Usher, Graham. "The Wall and the Dismemberment of Palestine." *Race & Class* 47.3 (2006): 9-30. Print.

⁴⁶ Haklai, Oded. "Religious—Nationalist Mobilization and State Penetration." *Comparative Political Studies* 40.6 (2007): 713-39. Print.

⁴⁷ Ravid, Barak. "EU looks to compile blacklist barring entry to 'known violent' Israeli settlers" *Haaretz*. November 26, 2012. Web. November 26, 2012. <http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/eu-looks-to-compile-blacklist-barring-entry-to-known-violent-israeli-settlers.premium-1.480497>

⁴⁸ Sherwood, Harriet, "Israeli spending on West Bank settlements up 38%," *The Guardian*, July 31, 2012, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2012/jul/31/israeli-spending-west-bank-settlements>

⁴⁹ Massoud, T. G., "Fair division, adjusted winner procedure (AW), and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict." *Journal of Conflict Resolution* 44 (2000): 333-358. Print.

⁵⁰ Rogers, Richard and Anat Ben-David. "Coming to Terms: A Conflict Analysis of the Usage, in Official and Unofficial Sources, of 'security Fence', 'apartheid Wall', and Other Terms for the Structure between Israel and the Palestinian Territories." *Media, War & Conflict* 3.2 (2010): 202-29. Print.

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the West Bank was seized as a buffer zone, most of which was agricultural land belonging to Palestinians, which supported their livelihoods. This dividing wall is a policy of segregation based on political, social, and economic discrimination. Kimmerling affirms the “security fence” as *politicide*, defined as “the dissolution of the existence of the Palestinian people as a legitimate social, political and economic entity.”⁵¹ This 8m high wall is built on Palestinian land in the West Bank and extends for 800 km throughout the country through villages and farmland.⁵² It controls the flow of Palestinians in the West Bank and those seeking to enter Israel. Around the Gaza Strip, there exists a similar wall or trenches and barbed wire surrounding the tiny enclave.⁵³ The wall limits the movement of Palestinians from city to city in addition to 640 checkpoints, with limited hours of entry and exit.⁵⁴ To cross into Israel and neighbouring villages, Palestinians must obtain permits that could be rejected for unspecified “security reasons.”⁵⁵

Another 20% of the West Bank land is taken as land reserves or security zones. Within them, there are many main roads that are exclusive to Israeli citizens while Palestinians would be sentenced to six months in prison if caught on the same road. Finally, the above-mentioned settlements and outposts take up 40% of the land in the West Bank.⁵⁶ Experts estimate that less than 15% of land from the internationally recognized borders of the West Bank remains. All in all, the West Bank continues to dissolve into nothingness. The major hardships of the people in the

⁵¹ Kimmerling, Baruch. *Politicide: Ariel Sharon's war against the Palestinians*. London, Verso: 2003. Print.

⁵² “The Apartheid Wall.” Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://www.stophthewall.org/subject/palestine/apartheid-wall>

⁵³ *ibid.*

⁵⁴ Barghouti, Mustafa. Speech on Gaza and Palestine. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East CJPME. University of Ottawa. December 3, 2012.

⁵⁵ “Israel and the Occupied Territories: The place of the fence/wall in international law” *Amnesty International*. February 19, 2005, pp 10-11. Print.

⁵⁶ Usher, Graham. “The Wall and the Dismemberment of Palestine.” *Race & Class* 47.3 (2006): 9-30. Print.

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West Bank are summarised as a continuation of the violent and unjust loss of land and a life of apartheid as Palestinians would call it,⁵⁷ with dissolution of use of natural resources like water and agricultural lands and the severe movement and mobility restrictions.

Even with the continual Israeli military presence in the West Bank, Sayigh observes that “[t]he Palestinian National Authority is expected to perform as the government of a state while lacking control over its borders, basic resources, and many of the social determinants of health.”⁵⁸

And with rampant corruption and cronyism within Fateh,⁵⁹ political instability has segued to system and social instability. However, a major obstacle remains to be the Israeli occupation. Even when Fateh takes steps to remedy problems that its population experiences, the uninterrupted Israeli presence and Fateh’s subordination severely impede any attempts at rectification, which further drives the populace from Fateh. The World Bank reported that the resulting devastated Palestinian economy more than likely continues to fail any attempt at repair: “Occupation policies of separation, isolation, and segregation have created uncertainty, raised transaction costs, and shrunk markets, resulting in critical constraints on the survival of the Palestinian economy as a whole.”⁶⁰ The PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people won by a landslide in the UN to become a non-voting observer status member of the UN general assembly. This was the world’s formal recognition of Palestine as a legitimate country no matter how many times its claims were vetoed

⁵⁷ “The Apartheid Wall.” Palestinian Grassroots Anti-Apartheid Wall Campaign, accessed November 15, 2013, <http://www.stopthewall.org/subject/palestine/apartheid-wall>

⁵⁸ Sayigh, Yezid. “Inducing a failed state in Palestine.” *Survival* 49 (2007): 7–39. Print.

⁵⁹ Halevi, I. “Self-government, Democracy, and Mismanagement Under the Palestinian Authority.” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 27 (1998): 35–48. Print.

⁶⁰ World-Bank. “Two Years after London: Restarting Palestinian Economic Recovery Economic Monitoring Report to the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee,” accessed November 15, 2013, <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/AHLCMainReportfinalSept18&cover.pdf>.

in the Security Council by the United States. This major step helped gain international recognition but has yet to change anything on the ground, all the while peace talks continue.

2) The Gaza Strip

The Gaza Strip consists of a hundred square miles and is populated by 1.7 million inhabitants. It is the most densely populated area in the world, of which 52% are under the age of 18.⁶¹ The source of drinking water is almost non-existent and continuing to disappear at an alarming rate.⁶² Israel allocates only one tenth of the Gazan coastal aquifer water to the residents of Gaza, takes the remainder and digs hundreds of illegal wells, which prevents the natural replenishment of the aquifer.⁶³ The Israeli military causes periodic destruction of critical infrastructure of the Gaza Strip, which perpetuates humanitarian emergencies. This leads to immediate threats to human health of the people of Gaza.⁶⁴

Since the siege of Gaza in 2007, Israel imposed a complete blockade on movement by land, air and sea from the strip. Fishery is prohibited and international aid to Gaza is denied, as was evident by the high-profile killings of eight Turkish and one American activists of the aid flotilla destined to Gaza in 2010. The people are forbidden to leave the contained area without explicit permission from Israel and airfields are restricted to the discretion of Israel.⁶⁵ The economy is stagnated because Israel restricts any import or export from Gaza and with the illegal underground

⁶¹ “Protecting Children From Unsafe Water in Gaza” Strategy, Action Plan and Project Resources, Summary Documents. Unicef – occupied Palestinian territory, 2011. Print.

⁶² *ibid.*

⁶³ Barghouti, Mustafa and Tremonti, Anna Maria. “Independent Palestinian Legislator Mustafa Barghouti Interview.” *CBC The Current*. December 4, 2012.

⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵ Turner, James “The Four Big Lies of Palestine-Israel Media Coverage,” *Z Net*, November 18, 2012, accessed November 26, 2013, <http://www.zcommunications.org/the-four-big-lies-of-palestine-israel-media-coverage-by-james-turner>.

tunnels recently discovered and barred, Gazan economy is at an all-time low. As Palestinian Economist Ajluni notes,

...imagining a rational system of planning and financing is difficult when Israeli policy has greatly damaged infrastructure and impoverished the population. The intensified siege and closure of the Gaza Strip has complicated already difficult reform efforts; and the uncertainty about future developments, imposed by a fruitless peace process, aggravate the situation further.⁶⁶

Israel severely complicates the import of equipment for water and waste water treatment as well as the sewage contamination as a result of the Gaza War in 2008-2009.⁶⁷ The result is that 30% of Gazans are in urgent need of water⁶⁸ and 36.1% say that water is insufficient.⁶⁹ Two-thirds of Gazans feel that water is unhealthy to drink but they have no alternative source left.⁷⁰ Experts from UN agencies estimate that 95% of the water is too contaminated to drink.⁷¹ The water is contaminated with high levels of chlorites, nitrates and other pollutants six times higher than those recommended by the World Health Organization.⁷² And finally, the first war on Gaza occurred in 2008, when Israel dropped bombs from the sky for three uninterrupted weeks, supposedly targeting Hamas leaders but killing more than 1400 Palestinians, mostly civilians. More than a thousand bombs crippled the critical infrastructure of Gaza.⁷³ Afterwards, the second war on Gaza erupted on November 14, 2012 when

⁶⁶ Ajluni, S. "The Palestinian Economy and the Second Intifada." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32 (2003): 64-73. Print.

⁶⁷ Sewell, Anna. "Water in Gaza Not Fit for Human Consumption Say Charities." *Digital Journal*. June 16, 2012. Web. October 5, 2012. <http://digitaljournal.com/article/326774#tab=comments&sc=>

⁶⁸ "Survey on the Impact of War and Siege on Gaza Strip" Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS), April-June 2009. Table 29.

⁶⁹ "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Household Survey – Gaza" UNICEF/PHG, April 2010, p. 46. Print.

⁷⁰ "Press Release on the Occasion of World Water Day" PCBS. March 22, 2010. Print.

⁷¹ "Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Household Survey – Gaza," UNICEF, March 2010, p. 2. Print.

⁷² Sewell, Anna. "Water in Gaza Not Fit for Human Consumption Say Charities," *Digital Journal*, June 16, 2012, accessed November 15, 2013. <http://digitaljournal.com/article/326774#tab=comments&sc=>

⁷³ "Gaza Humanitarian Situation Report." United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. January 2, 2009. Print.

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Israel supposedly targeted a Hamas leader. In one week's time, hundreds of bombs were dropped and 174 Gazans were killed, mostly innocent civilians.⁷⁴

So there are two primary categories of hardships that the people and youth of Gaza face that affect their daily lives. The first is the Israeli blockade of Gaza, the severe destruction of infrastructure and growing death tolls with periodic bombings. The second is the environmental degradation caused by Israel, that is to say the contamination and depletion of drinking water. With Hamas leading a tiny caged piece of land with a stagnated economy and lack of water, the odds are against them; however, they still enjoy the complete Israeli withdrawal of 2006 that gives the Gaza Strip the closest semblance of self-governed Palestinian statehood.

3) Israel

The rest of historical Palestine is recognised as Israel, a relatively small country populated by 5.9 million Jews and 1.6 million Palestinian Arabs, Christians, and Muslims.⁷⁵ Since the end of World War II, the tension in the Middle East, including Israel and Palestine, has led to the creation of many security policies in the region in order to minimize the violence that occurred because of the conflict, the most prominent being the “apartheid” Wall of 2003. Although contrary to international human rights, the Wall was justified by Israel to ensure the safety of its citizens. Security measures taken by Israel against the Palestinian people during the past two decades have demonstrated a commitment to the securitisation of its citizens. But within those boundaries, live Arab Palestinians. They have been forced to cohabit with Israelis.

⁷⁴ Barghouti, Mustafa. Speech on Gaza and Palestine. Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East CJPME. University of Ottawa. December 3, 2012.

⁷⁵ "Latest Population Statistics for Israel." Jewish Virtual Library. September 2012. Web. November 26, 2012.

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With the end of the 1948 War, the extended areas of Palestine that were amalgamated to Israel brought with them over 156,000 then—now 1.2 million—Arabs, who became Israeli citizens. And after the Six-Day War in 1967, captured and occupied land areas that were further amalgamated into Israel were South Palestine, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights. Palestinian Arabs, newly Israeli citizens became functionally bilingual, speaking Hebrew as a fluent second language. It is important to note Palestinians in East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights were later offered Israeli citizenship but the majority rejected it. By Israel's categorisation of religious affiliation, most are Muslim and the rest fall under Christian, Druze or Bedouin minorities. As Israeli citizens, they are supposed to be entitled to municipal services, voting rights and free to participate in political professions. While equal to Jewish citizens in theory, most Arabs still face a considerable amount of racism and are denied many jobs due to "security reasons." Nevertheless, Arab and Jewish Israelis have coexisted and cohabitated in Israel since 1948. However, they live in segregation with villages either being Arab or Jewish. There exist cities in which a considerable number of Arabs live alongside Jews but even then, they live segregated in Arab or Jewish neighbourhoods with minor overlap. Arabs and Jews go to their respective schools until they are forced to study alongside each other in universities. Israel's law governs that university degrees can only be attained in Hebrew. For most youth, their first encounter with the other is on the university campus where there exists a considerable age difference since all Israelis have to serve two or three years in the military service for women and men, respectively. There is an exception for Arabs (Christian or Muslim); however, Druze and Bedouins are not privy to this exemption. Feelings of Palestinian nationalism are still alive within Israeli Arabs who

continue to identify as Palestinians, the majority of whom prefer to be identified as Palestinian citizens of Israel.⁷⁶

4) Refugee Camps

There are over 4.6 million Palestinian refugees who populate more than 66 refugee camps within the region of Palestine.⁷⁷ They are spread across more than 13 refugee camps in Jordan, 12 in Lebanon, 9 in Syria, 19 in the West Bank and 8 in the Gaza Strip. Jordan absorbed the most refugees and now contains about 42% registered refugees. Lebanon currently has 23%, the West Bank with about 16%, 10% in Syria and 9% in the Gaza Strip.⁷⁸ The living, socio-economic and political conditions for Palestine refugees in each of the aforementioned countries is different but all camps are over-crowded, ghetto-like and most “suffer severe flooding in winter while sewage leaks through the crumbling water supply pipes causing contamination. In addition, water supply sources are insufficient to meet demand.”⁷⁹ The original tents that habituated the refugees who fled Palestine in light of the 1948 Arab-Israeli war were eventually replaced with concrete houses by the UN, intended as temporary housing. Until today, the same poorly built houses in very densely packed areas house the refugees. The houses are in poor living condition, overpopulated, not all houses have proper roofs, leakage is a major problem and some lack a water heater or refrigerator.⁸⁰

Food aid, cash subsidies, emergency assistance and education are all fundamental necessities that refugees have to depend on organisations such as

⁷⁶ Rouhana, Nadim N. *Palestinian citizens in an ethnic Jewish state: identities in conflict*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997. Print.

⁷⁷ UNRWA: Relief and Social Services Programme. 2008. www.unrwa.org. Web. Retrieved March 15, 2013.

⁷⁸ *60 Years Serving Refugee Camps*. Department of Palestinian Affairs. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Amman: United Media, 2012, p.24. Print.

⁷⁹ Camp improvement UNRWA Lebanon. 2010. www.unrwa.org. Web. Retrieved March 15, 2013.

⁸⁰ Camp improvement UNRWA Lebanon. 2010. www.unrwa.org. Web. Retrieved March 15, 2013.

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UNWRA to provide.⁸¹ All other social and administrative services are also provided and autonomy is a far from fathomable for just about all the Palestinian refugees being foreign citizens within a country other than their own precludes any notions of autonomy or self-sufficiency. In fact, the refugee problem is always cited as one of the major irreconcilable consequences to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Palestinian refugees in the 66 refugee camps are unable to satisfy most of their fundamental needs and suffer many collective identity problems such as denationalisation.

In Jordan, the government works closely with UNRWA to provide essential needs to the Palestine refugees and established a sector in its government called the Department of Palestinian Affairs within its Ministry of Foreign Affairs for that very purpose.⁸² The schools built by UNRWA are insufficient to educate the children and youth so they work on a rotation system where there is a morning and afternoon shift of overcrowded classrooms. Camps usually contain fresh food markets in order to serve the need of the overpopulated camp and dually serve the neighbouring villages. This also serves as the primary means of employment of the inhabitants of the camp. Unemployment is a major obstacle to improving the lives of present and future generations. Jordan granted full citizenship without prejudice to all Palestine refugees and their children in refugee camps built after the 1948 Arab-Israeli war. However; the refugees and their decedents in refugee camps built after the 1967 war or later received Jordanian citizenship with limitations such as a higher frequency to renew passports. There exists severe discrimination to all Palestine refugees no matter where they live. In Jordan, there is a clear societal differentiation between Jordanians, Jordanians of Palestinian decent and Palestine refugee with Jordanian citizenship. In

⁸¹ UNRWA: Relief and Social Services Programme. 2008. www.unrwa.org. Web. Retrieved March 15, 2013.

⁸² *60 Years Serving Refugee Camps*. Department of Palestinian Affairs. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Amman: United Media, 2012, p.15. Print.

summary, Palestinian refugee camps hold some of the worst living conditions in the Middle East.

2.9 Summary

While the existence of a historical Palestine is a topic of contention, no one can deny the restless political movement of the Palestinian people. Even before the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, the displacement and expulsion of over 700,000 refugees and the geographical divide of Palestinians between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Israel and 66 refugee camps, Palestinians have sought self-governing statehood. A Sewellian event of protracted destabilisation, namely the first *intifada*, caused an irrevocable split between the Palestinians into two camps, a secular-nationalist Fateh and an Islamist Hamas.

Fateh started out as the main contender for Palestinian support, seeking the liberation of Palestine and the establishment of a sectarian democratic state for all lifestyles. But with its continued failures, inability to tend to the population's needs, growing corruption and cronyism as well as the unstable infrastructure of the occupied West Bank, the populace withdrew its support for the primary party of the PLO. Meanwhile, Hamas, which spurred from a grassroots, social service-oriented "Islam-first" organisation, began to gain the trust and support of Palestinians. When the population sought reform and nationalist aspirations, Hamas responded in taking on a political platform to heed the people's desires and interest.

Presently, the people of Gaza suffer from immobility due to the siege imposed by Israel coupled with a stagnant economy and an almost non-existent source of drinking water. Palestinians in the West Bank live in a self-proclaimed life of apartheid encircled by the "Apartheid Wall" coupled with growing land loss due to

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increasing Jewish settler colonisation. Also, mobility restrictions and land grabs from Israel prevent access to crops and water sources.

Palestinian citizens of Israel constitute a large 30% minority of the country's population and feel a sense of political and social discrimination and differentiation. Palestinians who live in the 66 refugee camps in Palestine, Jordan, Syria or Lebanon face severe hardships and are almost fully dependent on UNRWA to satisfy their fundamental needs, i.e. food, water, shelter, education and the like. They live in poorly constructed concrete wall houses meant for temporary use in highly overcrowded, slum-like neighbourhoods. They do not have adequate roofs, proper sewer systems or full access to electricity or water. Those in Jordan face severe social and political discrimination although nearly half have been granted full citizenship rights and the remainder specialised citizenship. Only time will tell what the future will hold for both Hamas and Fateh, and more importantly the question of Palestine and the dispersed Palestinians.

Chapter Three

Theoretical Methodology

3.1 Outline of the Chapter

In order to conceptualise a methodology for identifying and exploring Palestinian youth perceptions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a theoretical lens must be determined and established that fits the research question. Since this conflict has been ongoing for over six decades, it is very important to identify which generation is being analysed. Therefore there are three major levels of this research or theoretical lenses if you will.

First, Karl Mannheim's concept of generations and generation units is established in order to identify the focus of the research, that of Palestinian youth who are linked cohesively through the exposure to the same external circumstances.

Next, the Participatory Action Research lens is explained to empower Palestinian youth in self-producing the research results through the inclusive and enlightening facilitation sessions to explore their perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Lastly, ethnography is the final lens through which Palestinian youth perceptions are explored. This participant observation method aims to combine the objective observer with the subjective participant to immerse the ethnographer into the interlocutor's life. It is only then that he can begin to have similar experiences to the population being researched. He can then relay the experience through his own eyes in connection to the population to gain an insider's perspective of the research question, in this case Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

In looking through these three lenses, this research aims to illuminate the lives of the current Palestinian youth generation and the subsequent generation units.

3.2 Mannheim Generations

Opposing the traditional positivist approach, German romantic and historicist Dilthey argued the validity of a theory of experiential qualitative analysis of generations over that of a linear temporal measurement such as years. Dilthey contended that different generations co-exist but there is a cohesiveness to bind individuals into a single and distinct generation when they are exposed to the same conditions, be it intellectual, social and/or political. This was a new definition of generations that surfaced to challenge the historically accepted notion of generations as a continuing order of groups over time, placing qualitative over quantitative distinctions.⁸³

Dilthey began the concept of non-linear procession. Generations are not quantitatively measured but experienced qualitatively; they are therefore not temporal. The importance is not placed on a one after the other order but rather on co-existence. In this sense, time becomes dependent on the qualitative influences of the generations.⁸⁴

Pinder went on to explain the contemporaneity of generations:

Everyone lives with people of the same and of different ages, with a variety of possibilities of experience facing them all alike. But for each the “same time” is a different time—that is, it represents a different *period of his self*, which can only share with people of his own age.⁸⁵

Dilthey builds on this and continues in explaining that:

For the time being, the most natural assumption would appear to be that on the whole, both the degree and the distribution of ability are the same for each generation, the level of efficiency within the national society being constant, so that two other groups of conditions [cultural situation and social and

⁸³ Mannheim, Karl. “The Problem of Generations”, in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 281. Print.

⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁸⁵ Pinder (1926) in Mannheim, Karl. “The Problem of Generations”, in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 283. Print.

political conditions] would explain both the distribution and the intensity of achievement.⁸⁶

A generation is formed socially and not by a mental or spiritual link that can be broken with a lack of proximity of organisation with a specific purpose. Willed links are what drive the generation together, when the place in society is the same or close to it and this all depends greatly on context. Living or existing in the same time period does not constitute being in a generation, rather it is being exposed or living through the same set of factors, circumstances and experiences in the social, political, economic and other realms.

Mannheim laid all this as his base to argue that generations are in constant contact with one another but each generation is at its own place in the grand scheme of progress. Older generations will transmit information to new or younger generations and the latter will incorporate it into their minds and mentalities as accepted truth of reality. Mannheim contends that youth, roughly from around the age of 17, begin to reflect upon what they have already accepted and consciousness commences through a reorienting of the truth based on personal experience to replace taught or instructed truth. Reflection occurs on the conscious level that begins a destabilisation of which they must take sides and the final stage is manifestation into the actual habits.⁸⁷

A generation is a community of people born in the same time period, in the same geographical region that comes in contact with the same experience. This is what ties them together as a generation and forms the basis of comparison with generations that differ either in historical or geographic context. They can be termed an actuality that can create several inner groups such as “two polar forms of the

⁸⁶ Dilthey (1875) in Mannheim, Karl. “The Problem of Generations”, in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 285. Print.

⁸⁷ Mannheim, Karl. “The Problem of Generations”, in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 300. Print.

intellectual and social response to an historical stimulus experienced by all in common.”⁸⁸ These inner groups are dubbed generation units. Mannheim makes the distinction as follows:

Youth experiencing the same concrete historical problems may be said to be part of the same actual generation; while those groups within the same actual generation which work up the material of their common experiences in different specific ways, constitute separate generation units.⁸⁹

Mannheim explains the concept of belonging to a social group, in this case a generation unit. A member of that group will have perceptions not based on single perceptions here and there but rather on a global perception as perceived by the group. Mannheim uses the *Gestalt theory* of human perception to prove this notion, which is that humans begin with an overall outlook on something and do not form this outlook through the summation of individual pieces of information. Participants form a generation unit who see context and form based on the outlook of that group. Entire assimilation occurs only when they move past accepting this outlook on things and they themselves can experience anything and everything in the distinct manner of the collective group, in particular intellectually and psychologically.⁹⁰

In Benedict Anderson’s book *Imagined Communities*,⁹¹ the history of the idea of a nation to represent an imagined community is explored. With the break of sacred language and the break of kingsmanship, the imagination of a commonality within a large community began. Latin American Creole nations were the precursors to the European and later African and Asian “nation-states.” Anderson’s concept has been widely accepted in the world and frequently utilised as the basis of many intellectuals’ arguments. Rashid Khalidi’s use of the imagined community for the Palestinian case exemplifies this very well.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* p.304

⁸⁹ *ibid.* p.304

⁹⁰ *ibid.* p.306

⁹¹ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2006. Print.

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In Rashid Khalidi's book *Palestinian Identity*,⁹² Khalidi seeks to prove that Palestine and Palestinians have always existed in order to refute the commonly contested notion that Israel's creation was not at the expense of Palestine since a state called "Palestine" never existed. Khalidi lays the basis of his argument in citing Anderson that nationalism is a modern term that didn't exist until the 20th century. Palestinian imagined nationalism could not be concretised as the rest of the world's imagined communities could because of unfortunate timing (for them) with the creation of Israel.

In concurrence with Benedict Anderson's argument, Mannheim explains that the members in a generation who may never meet are thus linked when the members of generation units interpret experiences in the same manner to create an identity of responses yielding distinguishable and sometimes antagonistic units.

The particular response of each generation unit to conditions can only be created when the members of the unit are in contact with one another. When close-knit interactions to stimuli occur between the members of a generation unit, cohesive and distinct attitudes are formed that can only then be exported into the broader application to the generation unit—used by all members—and subsequently used as a standard to future interpretation, feelings, and attitudes to later experiences. This is only the case when that wider sphere of the generation unit and/or generation is also experiencing the same external conditions. It is important to note that such a distinct interpretation is not temporal and not transferable over time, remembering that generations are not temporal units of time but rather qualitative aspects of a particular group of like-aged, like-located people responding to the same external circumstances. Another thing to keep in mind is that not all generations will create

⁹² Khalidi, Rashid. *Palestinian Identity*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997. Print.

entirely new and unique generation units. This is the case because certain aspects and factors may remain constant to recreate the same reaction that is relative to the independent speed of social and cultural change.⁹³ While the same or similar conditions can lead to the same response and therefore more or less the same generation unit, new emerging factors can push some members to generate a new generation unit in response to these recent developments.

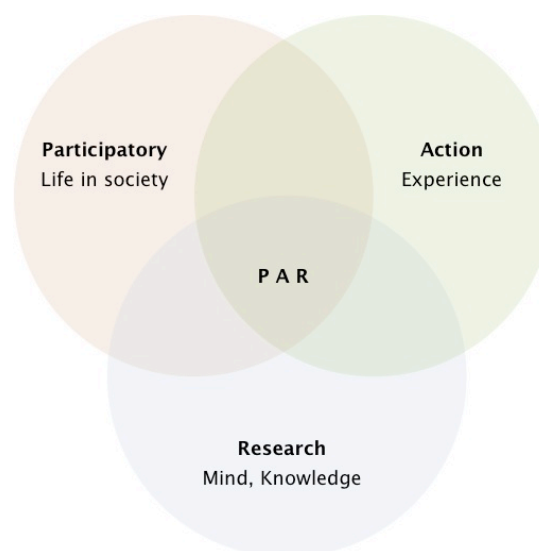
It can be theorised that the faster the progress of social change, the more generation unit formation. When similar factors appear, the same units will be produced whereas when new factors arise throughout social change, new units can be formed as a response. Finally, reverting to previous factors is another possible reaction to deal with the new factors at hand. But again, it is not about going back to an already formed unit but rather having the same reaction to the previous conditions as a manner to manage the new conditions. Therefore, this is a new unit in and of itself since generation units are a particular response to particular events and experiences. Therefore, it becomes understandable how throughout the progression of generations, the same and different generation units are created in response to new external experiences and conditions.

Most research relies on quantitative methods in order to gain credibility. However, it is very difficult to gain an insider perspective of a conflict solely using quantitative data. My research question is to identify the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from a youth's perspective therefore I chose to do qualitative research to learn exactly what youth perceive as the conflict. My research design and methodology were conceptualised to incorporate a number of fields of data collection and subsequent interpretation.

⁹³ Mannheim, Karl. "The Problem of Generations", in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 309. Print.

3.3 Participatory Action Research

The primary intent of Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Youth Participatory Action Research (YPAR) is to simultaneously produce research or research data that is as accurate as possible through the inclusive and self-produced results of a collective group process and empower the youth themselves to learn about the issue at hand. PAR will combine the three elements of participation of the people in society, action of involving the life experience, and research bringing about awareness of facts or information. It can be illustrated visually as the intersection of these three domains⁹⁴:



If the issue to be researched is a conflict, YPAR can engage the youth to reflect on and imagine possible routes to overcoming the conflict. YPAR researchers and advocates Julio Cammarota and Michelle Fine explain:

Young people learn through research about complex power relations, histories of struggle, and the consequences of oppression. They begin to re-vision and denaturalize the realities of their social worlds and then undertake forms of

⁹⁴ Chevalier, J.M. and Buckles, D.J. *Participatory Action Research: Theory and Methods for Engaged Inquiry*, UK: Routledge, 2008, p.10. Print.

collective challenge based on the knowledge garnered through their critical inquiries.⁹⁵

What differentiates YPAR from typical critical youth studies is that YPAR specifically aims as one of its objectives to ensure that the youth actually grasp the conflict at hand, the one being researched by the collective group.

...young people and adult allied experience the vitality of a multi-generational collective analysis of power; we learn that sites of critical inquiry and resistance can be fortifying and nourishing to the soul, and at the same time that these projects provoke ripples of social change. YPAR shows young people how they are consistently subject to the impositions and manipulations of dominant exigencies.⁹⁶

As YPAR researcher Shawn Ginwright explains, "...research is most useful when young people develop skills to explain systemic causes of issues that shape their lives..."⁹⁷ That is exactly the train of thought that this research seeks to employ.

In utilising the in-depth input of the participants and having self-produced results of the collective group through a consensus-building method, Palestinian youth were able to produce accurate results and simultaneously feel empowered to reflect and really understand the conflict that affects their daily lives and has a strong impact on their identities.

3.4 Ethnography

There have been many criticisms of ethnography or research based on encounters in the field. In the early 1970s, there was a clear shift from participant observation to observation of participation.⁹⁸ However, there is a growing acceptance

⁹⁵ Cammarota, Julio and Michelle Fine. *Revolutionizing education youth participatory action research in motion*. Routeledge: New York, 2008, p.2. Print

⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁹⁷ Ginwright, Shawn. *Collective Radical Imagination: Youth Participatory Action Research and the Art of Emancipatory Knowledge. Revolutionizing Education: Youth Participatory Action Research in Motion*. New York: Routledge, 2008, p.21. Print.

⁹⁸ Tedlock, Barbara. "From participant observation to the observation of participation: the emergence of narrative ethnography." *Journal of Anthropological Research* 47, p.78. 1991.

of ethnography or auto-ethnography as the missing link to contemporary research methodology.

Past criticisms include the power asymmetry of Western researchers brought into the field and that no real knowledge is produced from encounters. Therefore, written work is substituted for the missing encounter-gained knowledge on the ground. In exploring this topic, John Borneman recounts the philosophy of Jacques Derrida in stating that, “the co-presence of speaker and listener has no distinct epistemological status separate from the nonsimultaneous relationship of the reader to writing.”⁹⁹

Borneman further explains that, specifically for the case of the Middle East, one must “be there” to experience the life of the people who are being researched because if one simply falls back on writing on the matter, one is merely left with orientalist perceptions and leaves out the unique knowledge that can be captured from encounters with the subject. Also, written accounts always deal with the past, sometimes distant past. Borneman is in favour of epistemology for encounter-based ethnographic fieldwork. And a major reason for this type of research in unison with the writing-based research is that it doesn’t omit three factors: the present as a time frame, the place of the researcher interacting with the interlocutors to produce knowledge and lastly, a generation of comprehensible facts that are socially notable and lead towards an unknown future.¹⁰⁰ Borneman asserts that:

Fieldwork is the registering of sensory impressions, and fieldwork encounters are the beginning of a process of mutual subject discovery and change. Along the way, these encounters may result in dialectical objectification that make the other—or, more precisely, communicative possibilities with the other—present in written accounts.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Borneman, John and Abdellah Hammoudi. *Being there. The Fieldwork encounter and the making of truth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p.237. Print.

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* p.256

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* p.256

Ethnography is therefore knowledge derived from interlocution. It does not base the field encounter on theory or make assumptions as such or by the socio-political situation. As the researcher finds something shocking, surprising or of significance, he will begin to delve into the matter through relation-building interactions with the people.

Leo Coleman takes this concept even further by reminding us that anthropologists truly value the people they are researching to the point where mere mention of them is done in a way to express that. Clear examples would be the use of terms such as interlocutor over informant and engaging in conversations over patronising or condescending on the subjects of our research. Therefore, along this path, the anthropologist cannot solely depend on the written data collected on the field but the experience and encounter itself is another part of the research results to bring to light to the academic world. This can be done through ethnography and falling back on countertransference (the emotional reaction to the interlocutor's contribution) and the ethnographer's obligation to incorporate it into their research findings.¹⁰²

Another important factor to keep in mind is the tie between reflexivity and objectivity. Most times, researchers will attempt to eliminate the biases that can be produced by reflexivity by completely distancing themselves from the interlocutors. Over time, this has morphed into a complete rejection of reflexivity as an important and crucial tool in research. Reflexivity can be loosely defined as self-reference.

Ethnographer Charlotte Aull Davies asserts that the ethnographer's active participation in the field will lead to theories and drawn conclusions that are just as valuable and insightful as purely objective and thereby distanced research.¹⁰³ Davies maintains that the research produced from the fieldwork of ethnographers is unique

¹⁰² Coleman, Leo. *The obligation to receive*. Ed. Borneman, John and Adbellah Hammoudi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p.114. Print.

¹⁰³ Davies, Charlotte Aull. *Reflexive Ethnography*. New York: Routledge, 1999, p.4. Print.

and crucial to painting an accurate and complete picture of the people being researched. She brings into light similar claims by other researchers. For example, Powdermaker argued that, “participant observation requires both involvement and detachment achieved by developing the ethnographer’s ‘role of stepping in and out of society’.”¹⁰⁴

Davies argues that such subjectivity is necessary in contemporary research and it must reject epistemological criticisms planked firmly atop it. Davies sets out a few rules or guidelines to follow in order to allow ethnography to be accepted as credible and substantive research. The first is to avoid complete reflexivity that overbears on the actual interlocutors and interlocutors’ culture to focus solely on the ethnographer’s thoughts and experiences. Secondly, one must seek several perspectives and avoid generalised overviews of the interlocutor’s society. There needs to be a balance between critical analysis and subjective experience to yield a complete research base of interlocution and study.¹⁰⁵

Ethnographer Dimitris Papageorgiou further corroborates this method by proposing an intersection of objective meaning to subjective experience in a situation where those being researched are integrated to the researchers themselves.¹⁰⁶ He explains that subjective interaction with the interlocutors is crucial to field research to ensure the research goals can be met. Time is another important factor. Enough time in the field is needed to discern true patterns and tendencies of interlocutors. Also, it is needed to further the ethnographer’s relationship with the culture being studied and its inhabitants. Time is needed to get over the initial shock and in immersion comes understanding. In addition to data being collected, the ethnographer’s direct

¹⁰⁴ Powdermaker, H. *Stranger and friend: The way of an anthropologist*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996, p.19. Print.

¹⁰⁵ Davies, Charlotte Aull. *Reflexive Ethnography*. New York: Routledge, 1999, p.25. Print.

¹⁰⁶ Papageorgiou, Dimitris. *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork*. Ed. McLean, Athena and Annette Leibling. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p.222. Print.

experience with the interlocutors in the environment is crucial to complete the picture of research. Papageorgiou makes light of the suppression of the sentiments and subjective data experienced as a simile to David Bowie's lyrics, stating it would be like "putting down (researchers') fire with gasoline."¹⁰⁷ Papageorgiou finishes by explaining that researchers must continually evaluate their research findings, during and after the experience. In doing so, the ethnographer will construct, deconstruct and reconstruct understandings of the research and interlocution.

Barbara Tedlock puts it nicely in explaining that, "Since we can only enter into another person's world through communication, we depend upon ethnographic dialogue to create a world of shared intersubjectivity and to reach an understanding of the differences between the two worlds."¹⁰⁸ Building off of this ideology, Tedlock goes on to assert that many researchers have begun to reject the concept that a researcher's objectivity to analyse and subjectivity to experience the native culture being studied are mutually exclusive. Paul Rainbow also solidifies the contradiction in the concept of anthropology and the expectation of anthropologists:

As graduate students we are told that "anthropology equals experience"; you are not an anthropologist until you have the experience of doing it. But when one returns from the field the opposite immediately applied; anthropology is not the experiences which made you an initiate, but only the objective data you have brought back.¹⁰⁹

Examples of well balanced narrative ethnographies include Dennis Werner's *Amazon recount*,¹¹⁰ Gladys Reichard's *Spider Woman: A Story of Navajo Weavers and Chanters*¹¹¹ and Michel Leiris' Djiboutian and Ethiopian ethnography entitled

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* p.227

¹⁰⁸ Tedlock, Barbara. "From participant observation to the observation of participation: the emergence of narrative ethnography." *Journal of Anthropological Research*: 47, p.70. 1991.

¹⁰⁹ Rainbow, Paul and W.M. Sullivan eds. *Interpretive Social Science*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977, p.10. Print.

¹¹⁰ Werner, Dennis. *Amazon Journey: An Anthropologist's Year among Brazil's Mekranoti Indians*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984. Print.

¹¹¹ Reichard, Gladys. *Spider Woman: A Story of Navajo Weavers and Chanters*. New York: Macmillan, 1934. Print.

L'Afrique fantôme.¹¹² As commenter Robert Smith put it, such works are the “only attempt known to me to present within an analytical framework the subtleties of what the author calls ‘the human experience’ of field work.”¹¹³

Recently, there has been a growing acceptance to a shift back to participant observation over observation of participation. The reasons for this shift are the intellectual doubt of epistemology, the growing use of reflexivity in anthropology and the public’s growing excitement to learn of ethnographical accounts. Also, there has been a broadening in the pool of ethnographers with more women, middle-class and diverse races joining the profession. This has led to more ethnographers who can revisit their ethnic or native homeland for ethnographical research.

In ethnography, the researcher cannot possibly remove himself from the ethnography and present an objective narration of the study. Rather, he must place himself as a character inside the study and readers will therefore not focus on the ethnographer but instead on the ethnographic interlocution and experience.¹¹⁴

Jean-Guy Goulet outlines a process in which to successfully execute ethnography in contemporary times. He explains this process through his experience in ethnography with the DeneTha Aboriginal Tribe in Alberta, Canada. First, he explains how the ethnographer must be conscious that he can learn through observation and not through teaching. Learning becomes possible through experience and therefore the traditional separation of observer and participant needs to be distanced. It is important to not only reflect on the experience had with the people being studied but in one’s own inner self. This is the only way to get a complete account of the complete immersion or experience. The limitations are obvious in that

¹¹² Leiris, Michel. *L'Afrique fantôme*. Paris: Plon (Terre Humaine), 1934. Print.

¹¹³ Berreman, G.D. *Behind Many Masks: Ethnography and Impression Management in a Himalayan Village*. Society for Applied Anthropology, Monograph 4. Ithaca: Cornell University, 1962, p.3. Print.

¹¹⁴ Tedlock, Barbara. “From participant observation to the observation of participation: the emergence of narrative ethnography.” *Journal of Anthropological Research*: 47, p.78. 1991. Print.

the ethnographer can never claim to have fully integrated into the culture being studied or to have become one of “them” (the interlocutors) but that does not demean the level of insight the ethnography contributes to research.

The ethnographer must go on the basis of balancing the self and the other all the while avoiding self-indulgence in focussing completely on himself and his own thoughts and experiences in giving an ethnographic account. The ethnographer will recount the world as they see it through their own eyes with the given that they are immersed in the interlocutor’s world and they are being strongly affected by it. He cannot and shouldn’t claim to present the interlocutor’s world through the interlocutor’s eyes. The experience is a joint one of the researcher in participation and the people with which the interaction is taking place. This is deemed an experiential ethnographer.¹¹⁵ The final point of Goulet is to avoid the temptation to reify the research. The ethnography done at a specific time in a specific location is not forever lasting and can change at any moment. At most, the ethnographer can present his account of the experience he shared with the people being studied and the implications as seen through the researcher’s eyes. This holds true for that particular situation at that particular time. This does not demean the research, rather it stabilises it and places it in a particular place.

These strategies were followed while immersed in Palestinian youth culture and society for four months in Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. In being a participant among Palestinian youth in conversations, prayers at mosques and familiarising myself with the cities, I could begin to integrate into the society and try to experience similar yet personal events to Palestinian youth. Then, an objective analysis of this subjective experience could be relayed ethnographically.

¹¹⁵ Goulet, Jean-Guy A. *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the DeneTha*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998, p.254. Print.

3.5 Summary

The Palestinian-Israeli has been researched for decades using countless theoretical frameworks. To avoid reinventing the wheel, this research aims to specifically look at the conflict as pertaining to Palestinian youth, in identifying Palestinian youth perceptions of the conflict using a multi-levelled theoretical base.

First, Karl Mannheim's breakthrough application of Dilthey and Pinder's romantic approach to groupings of individuals proves vital. Mannheim expanded on Dilthey and Pinder statements that generations are atemporal; people are linked through exposure to the same external conditions. Generations coexist but each generation is distinct in that the individuals are brought together by the exposure to those outer conditions and the close contact between each other while reacting to those common conditions. The different reactions in a collective sense represent the inner groupings named generation units.

This concept of an imagined link between individuals is also conceptualised by Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities*. Anderson explains the formation of the imagined links of nation states and Rashid Khalidi's applies this to prove the cohesiveness of the Palestinian people in his book *Palestinian Identity*. Lastly, it is to be noted that each generation is distinct in its specific reaction to external conditions; however the same reaction can be used for new conditions thereby alluding to the repetition of generation units. But these constitute new generation units since they are the same reactions to different external conditions.

In applying this to the research at hand, the Palestinian youth are identified as individuals who live in a the same geographical region and like-aged in the sense that they are facing the same set of external conditions and are thereby linked together. The perceptions of this generation was executed using an inclusive research method

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aimed at empowering youth by involving them fully in the process in order to produce accurate results as well as empowering them to understand the conflict at hand and take action with this knowledge. This is called PAR—Participatory Action Research and it was used to facilitate the question “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?” to Palestinian youth.

Ethnography was also utilised as a method to understand the inner workings of generation units of Palestinian youth. Ethnography seeks to push a shift back to participant observation and combine the past tense written data of a population observed with the present and subjective experience of immersion and integration of the ethnographer. He will relay the experience of being there within the interlocutor’s society and recount his experiences through his own eyes, which is the closest a researcher can get to the interlocutor himself. Through these three realms of research, that of Mannheimian generations, PAR and ethnography, perceptions of Palestinian youth can be accurately portrayed in the present time.

Chapter Four

YOUCAN Facilitation/PAR Practical Methodology

4.1 Outline of the Chapter

The methods used in this research are two-pronged and are very well woven together through the same concept of grouping ideas together into categories to create order out of a large number of ideas. The first step was the facilitation sessions in which Youth Canada Association's (YOUCAN's) Facilitation model was employed. As a neutral and seasoned facilitator, I used variations of the research question "What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict" with various groups of youth across Palestine, Israel and Jordan. YOUCAN's Facilitation model works in three steps: Brainstorming, Theming and Prioritising. First, all the ideas were facilitated followed by group-produced themes into which all the ideas are group-assigned. Lastly, the group ranks the themes in order of importance to them, maintaining group consensus. The end result of each of the nine facilitation sessions was a large number of ideas, grouped into themes and ranked by order of importance.

Grounded Theory was employed afterwards for further and comparative analysis of the nine groups' themes and ideas. YOUCAN's Theming step constituted Grounded Theory's step one—called Open Coding—therefore Axial Coding was used to group the themes from all the facilitation sessions (or codes if you will) into larger super codes. This was done to identify the major themes among the entire pool of the nine groups. Lastly, Selective Coding allowed the identification of a major theme to be analysed qualitatively. The overlap of the two methods is essential to the unique and Participatory Action Research (PAR)-based approach that this research seeks to promote in order to produce accurate results from the youth.

4.2 YOUCAN Facilitation Model

In comparing the group sessions of Palestinian youth scattered across Palestine, Israel and Jordan, I used a case-study comparative research method. This method allows the researcher to compare particular cultures in depth. This type of comparative research does not broadly generalise the research findings but helps identify factors that are constant.¹¹⁶ After identifying constant factors of the groups of youth in the different locations, comparison of Palestinian youth perceptions was possible. The purpose was for a comparative study of several groups of Palestinian youth to identify Palestinian youth's perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and how important they rank them.

A method that is growingly popular to gather qualitative data is that of focus groups. According to W. Laurence Neuman's *Social Research Methods*,¹¹⁷ focus groups are to be homogenous, including a small group of people who are free to express their opinions on a directed topic by a facilitator. This is a very effective way to ascertain a population's opinion on a certain matter and may be used to illuminate any quantitative analysis. The great advantages of focus groups are the insight to a group's attitudes or opinions on certain matters and the empowerment felt by the group to provide such details.

Using a case-study comparative research method with use of a focus group-oriented methodology in a Participatory Action Research style, I incorporated my extensive experience as a facilitator. This research worked in developing a new research method. It is qualitative, semi-structured, and similar to the focus group method that is often used to determine participants' thoughts and ideas; however, this new method was more open-ended. It empowered Palestinian youth in giving them

¹¹⁶ Eid, Mahmoud. *Research Methods in Communication*. Pearson: Boston. 2011, p.473. Print.

¹¹⁷ Neuman, W. Laurence. *Social Research Methods*. Pearson: Montreal. 2006, p.592. Print.

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more power to control the session and work through the flow of the group, resulting in self-produced and self-ranked importance of ideas and perceptions.

After acquiring an ethics certificate from the Research Ethics Board at Saint Paul University, Palestinian youth were recruited through interactions throughout Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. Upon establishing the research goal of ascertaining and understanding Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the snowball technique was employed to recruit more participants: the first contact would recruit his or her friends or acquaintances and so on. Each group comprised of youth between the ages of 18 to 25 and the groups varied in size between 5 and 19 participants. The facilitation sessions were conducted in Arabic and subsequently translated into English by the researcher. There were a total of 9 groups throughout Palestine, Israel and Jordan.

In dealing with youth, Youth Canada Association—YOUCAN's style of facilitation¹¹⁸ was used. YOUCAN is a for-youth-by-youth non-profit organisation. It is a conflict resolution organisation aimed at the prevention and intervention of conflict. All members of YOUCAN are youth between the ages of 12 and 30. YOUCAN also strives to empower youth by giving them the tools to become youth leaders and model healthy friendships and relationships with their peers and surroundings. Having been trained in YOUCAN's style of facilitation and having facilitated hundreds of sessions with thousands of youth, I am confident in this method as a youth-g geared process. Also, as the facilitator and in identifying with an Arabic and Palestinian culture, an appropriate cultural environment could be maintained.

¹¹⁸ Farthing, Dave, et. al. *YOUCAN Peacebuilder 5 Facilitation: Participants Resource Guide*. Ottawa: YOUCAN, 2010. Print.

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Using a community-based method, similar to Participatory Action Research, YOUCAN's facilitation model was used and expanded on. Participatory Action Research seeks to understand the world by attempting to change it, collaboratively and collectively, combining participation of the facilitator as well as the participants, action of all and research into a subject matter. Building on the Participatory Action Research mentality and YOUCAN's facilitation model, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was explored with Palestinian youth.

YOUCAN is based on 8 Peacebuilding Principles©:¹¹⁹

Know Your Stuff: Know your triggers, your biases and everything that makes you who you are so that you don't bias the group's facilitation.

Respond NOT React: Always think and respond to a situation rather than have an impulse reaction.

Listen, Listen, Listen: Practice active listening rather than passive listening or hearing.

Judgement NOT Judgement: Judge the situation and not the person.

Place, Position, Presence: Pick a neutral place for the facilitation, position the group in a circle to maintain equality and have a neutral presence.

Time, Task, Tools and Ground Rules: Be aware of the time, my task as a neutral facilitator of the process, bring the necessary tools and have the group set up ground rules to be respected throughout the facilitation.

Permission and Mandate: Always get the permission of the participants for the facilitation and once earned, I will have a mandate to proceed.

Process NOT Content: Always keep in mind that a neutral facilitator's role is to facilitate the process and not focus on the content.

Acting as a neutral facilitator focussed on the process not the content, one facilitation session based on the YOUCAN style of basic facilitation (YOUCAN facilitation manual appended) was conducted for each of the nine groups.

All YOUCAN facilitation sessions are voluntary. All participants were reminded of this in the recruitment and facilitation session steps of the research project.

Being trained by YOUCAN, conflict resolution skills were at times used to de-escalate tensions that arose from the participants during the sessions.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.*

4.3.0 YOUCAN Facilitation Guide©

The following is the in-depth agenda from YOUCAN's Facilitation module.¹²⁰ It is a guide to the facilitator on preparing an agenda and presenting it to the group, the stages of a facilitation, reminders on how to preserve neutrality and tips how to empower the youth.

YOUCAN Facilitation Agenda© Applied to the Palestinian Youth Perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict Facilitation Sessions

Introduction + Ground Rules

Introduction Circle

“What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?”

Brainstorming

Theming + Prioritising

Closing Circle

All YOUCAN facilitation processes followed the general scheme of:

1. Brainstorming
2. Theming
3. Prioritising

4.3.1 Introductions in Facilitations + Brainstorming 101©¹²¹

- Here are the things that a facilitator must remember to say or do in their introduction: introduce themselves, give directions to surrounding facilities, ask about special needs, go through the facilitation agenda, introduce the

¹²⁰ ibid.

¹²¹ ibid.

facilitation process and talk about their role, introduce the ground rules, do a round table of introductions and talk about confidentiality.

- Brainstorming is when members of a group try to come up with as many ideas as possible around one topic or issue. The facilitator's role is to ask the question, rephrase it and ask related questions (in a neutral fashion) and to write all ideas on the flipchart.

- Rules for brainstorming:
 - Do not evaluate the ideas that members generate
 - Everything gets written down in the words of the participant
 - Generate as many ideas as possible
 - Combine and build upon ideas already generated
 - Every idea is a good idea

The YOUCAN facilitation model was applied to facilitate the question of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict with Palestinian Youth as follows: after an introductory circle, the participants seated in a circle were asked variations of the question “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?” as listed below.

4.3.2 Sample Brainstorm Questions Used in the Palestinian Youth Facilitations:

Conflict:

What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?

What would you tell a foreigner if they asked you that question?

What do you identify as the major conflict?

What do you identify as secondary conflicts?

Which conflicts are never mentioned?

What conflicts exist that are not worth discussing in a global discussion?

If you could appeal to an international leader, what conflict would you bring to his or her attention?

What conflict would you not find worth mentioning to him or her?

Afterwards, YOUCAN's Facilitation model was followed for steps 2 and 3:

4.3.3 Theming and Prioritising¹²²

- Theming: Grouping together the brainstorming ideas into categories. This should only be done once as many ideas as possible have been expressed. Try to keep the number of themes between 3 and 6.

- Make sure that the group as a whole agrees on each category. Once the categories have been decided upon, go through each brainstorming point and assign it to a category. This is a good way to make sure that no points are left out. You should check off each point as they get assigned and you could also write the point number on the flipchart under the appropriate theme.

- Prioritising: Ranking the themes in order of importance. This is often used when action planning.

- Vote: Ask every participant to pick the theme that they find to be the most important and ask them to lift their hand when you call out that theme.

Consensus: Use a round table process to let people discuss why they believe a certain theme to be most important. Continue the discussion until everyone agrees on the ranking order.

¹²² *ibid.*

4.3.4 Closing Circle for the Palestinian Youth Facilitations

Each participant is allotted time to express how their own perception and attitude that was or was not represented within the group's consensus as well as express any final thoughts of the session's process and content.

*The entire facilitation session lasted approximately 1.5 hours.

After the Brainstorm step, the students grouped the ideas into self-produced themes. This step of YOUCAN's facilitation model works along the concept of Grounded Theory, where YOUCAN's "themes" denote Grounded Theory's "open coding." The open codes were self-produced by the collective youth (theming step). The next step of Grounded Theory, axial coding, was executed by the researcher in creating super themes. In other words, the student-produced themes were grouped along greater themes and this gave insight into Grounded Theory's final step, selective coding. By tallying up the group-assigned priority rank to each code, the most important conflict, based on collective Palestinian youth perceptions, could be identified.

4.4 Grounded Theory

In order to move forward with the data collected in the facilitated sessions, Grounded Theory was used to analyse the data. Grounded Theory is a qualitative research analysis tool used to identify descriptive categories, themes and fill in the gaps of the data. It uses a bottom-up approach in which a large sampling of ideas is used to create themes and subsequent super themes until all data is incorporated. Its creation challenged the standard approach of testing a hypothesis through research by asserting that research itself produced useful theories.

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Grounded Theory was invented by Barney Glasser and Anselm Strauss in 1967 and later developed by Strauss and Corbin in the nineties and finally by Kathy Charmaz in 2001. Using Grounded Theory allowed collecting as much data as possible from the participants and to get as close to their experiences and lives in Palestine.

Grounded Theory comprises three steps: Open Coding, Axial Coding and Selective Coding. Open Coding entails the analyst's identification of themes or categories from the perspective of the participants to group the data collected.

Axial Coding involves rearranging the data in a different way when the primary codes can be recoded, essentially grouping the groups into larger groups. As Corbin and Strauss put it, "a set of procedures whereby data are put back together in new ways after open coding, by making connections between categories."¹²³

Finally, Selective Coding entails identifying the core issue of your research data and recoding the data according to that core issue or idea. Further research may also be conducted in the pursuit of more information with the core idea now having been identified.

In using PAR, Open Coding was completed by each group as the group collectively thought of themes (i.e. codes) to represent the ideas they had expressed and subsequently assigned each idea to a theme (code). These themes can therefore be called "in vivo codes"¹²⁴ since they were self-produced by the participants themselves and not the analyst. Axial Coding linked the themes through the creation of super themes. Finally, Selective Coding was determined by tallying up the participants' assigned priority to each of the themes.

¹²³ Corbin, Juliet and Strauss, Anselm. *Basics of qualitative research: grounded theory procedures and techniques*. California: Sage Publications, 1990, p.96. Print.

¹²⁴ Charmaz, Kathy. *Constructing grounded theory: a practical guide through qualitative research*. London: Sage, 2001. Print.

It is therefore evident that this procedure does not follow the traditional procedure of Grounded Theory because the participants are given more power to self-produce the final results by conducting the open coding and prioritising the codes. This challenges the traditional method of collecting data from participants in the field, after which a completely removed analyst would code the data, group them and determine the core variable. This hybrid PAR-GT method utilises the participants' complete input and priority ranking of ideas along with an analyst's experienced and trained ability to group ideas and determine the important and core issue. Also, the ethnographic aspect of this research adds the level of participant observer analysis, which adds to the credibility of the results to accurately represent the thoughts and perceptions of Palestinian youth.

The value of such empowerment and utility of participants input was described in Barniskis' research entitled "Embedded, Participatory Research: Creating a Grounded Theory with Teenagers."¹²⁵ Very similar to my research, Barniskis coupled Participatory Action Research with contributing participant coding in Grounded Theory. The difference is that my research is a completely group-run, consensus-building, for youth by youth facilitation session. Barniskis incorporated some youth into the research team while researching the youth. The result was producing a participant-validated theory that can immediately be put into practice. This method was highly successful and recommended for future researchers because it "activates teens' voices. It gives them a venue to speak for themselves with support from an interested and often advocacy-minded adult."¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Crawford Barniskis, Shannon. *Embedded, Participatory Research: Creating a Grounded Theory with Teenagers*. Evidence Based Library and Information Practice 8:1, p.47-58, 2013. Print.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*

4.5 Summary

In order to gain insight on Palestinian youth's perceptions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, a research method based on Participatory Action Research was sought out and implemented. Building on extensive experience with YOUCAN—Youth Canada Association—as a trainer, coach and facilitator, YOUCAN's Facilitation model was employed to pose the question “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?” to nine groups of Palestinian youth. Seated in a circle, the question and its variations were asked to probe for all ideas on the subject. This entailed the first step of YOUCAN's facilitation model, named Brainstorming. The next step was Theming in which the youth themselves created three to six themes and then placed each idea into a theme. The last step of Prioritising was employed to rank the themes in order of importance as according to the group. Consensus-building was used throughout the facilitation sessions and the facilitator remained neutral throughout, meaning that no input was given on what the conflict was all the while using facilitator skills to probe for more information.

Subsequently, Grounded Theory, which YOUCAN's Facilitation model is based upon, was used for further analysis in order to compare the results of the nine group sessions. YOUCAN's Theming step constitutes Grounded Theory's first step of Open Coding, in which ideas are grouped together based on a theme, or in this case code. Step two of Axial Coding consists of grouping the codes into larger super codes or family codes. Lastly, Selective Coding allows the researcher to determine the central idea to be further analysed qualitatively. These two methods (YOUCAN's facilitation and Grounded Theory) worked very well together because they compliment each other to produce a PAR-based, youth group empowering and

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accurate findings since the youth participants were given equal—if not more—control of the research results.

Chapter Five

What is the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict?

Palestinian Youth Themes of Problems

5.1 Outline of the Chapter

This chapter provides the bulk of the direct field data results of this research study. First, a narrative of the process of recruiting and executing the facilitation sessions is recounted. In Palestine, Israel, and a Jordanian refugee camp, Palestinian youth were recruited through chance interactions on the street or city and once recruited would then employ the snowball recruiting technique in calling their friends or acquaintances to join. After the facilitated sessions, the researcher took the cumulative groups' self-produced themes of problems for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and grouped them together by finding common threads. Using Grounded Theory, nine super themes were categorised. Allotting the groups' self-produced priority to each of the themes within the newly grouped super themes, the order of importance was as follows: *Ideological, racism, and differentiation; Political; Land, separation, and dispersion; Economic; Rights and freedom; Security; Cultural; Media; and Social problems.*

Through summaries of each super theme along with sample quotations from the facilitation sessions and interpretation of the cumulative data, each super theme is explained in detail to illuminate Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. While *Ideological, racism and differentiation problems* were listed as the most important, *Political problems* ranked highest in terms of the number of ideas within each super group. The most commonly quoted word among all facilitated sessions was 'the occupation'.

These results give a voice to the perceptions of Palestinian youth and bring to light a shocking explanation of a life of terror as experienced by Palestinian youth, whether it is mental, physical, or emotional.

5.2 Narrative of Execution of Facilitation Sessions

Throughout Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp, I travelled to cities and recruited youth for my research between May and July 2013. The snowball recruiting technique was employed. I would meet one youth on the street or in the city and ask him to join my research study in providing the important details such as my background, residence in Canada, my research question and the proposed length of the session to be approximately one hour. Once recruited, I would ask this person to recruit his friends and introduce me to others who could partake in the research. This recruitment technique was employed for all nine facilitated sessions.

Most of the participants were rather wary in the recruitment stage. They felt uneasy and it was apparent. Their physical anxiety was the first sign. Later, they would verbalise their worries that this session would be reported to the Israeli government at which point they believed they would be imprisoned. This occurred in both the West Bank and Israel. This was shocking as the facilitated session was simply to hear their opinions and perceptions on the conflict.

In the West Bank, there was a high level of unease in talking about the conflict but there seemed to be a general consensus among the youth that they should in fact be allowed to voice their opinions but expressed how they still feared unjustified repercussions for that voice. In Israel, there was the highest level of anxiety at the thought of speaking a Palestinian opinion because they believed that they would be imprisoned or heavily fined by the Israeli government if they received word. The anxiety was so high that many participants already recruited but awaiting other

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participants to arrive or to join would opt to leave from fear of repercussions. In the Jordanian refugee camp on the other hand, the youth appeared very relaxed and comfortable to express their opinions as though it was commonplace knowledge that everyone knew. There was no visible sense of anxiety among the participants.

The commonality expressed by all the youth participants in all nine sessions was a sense of relief and release at being given the opportunity to express their opinions and perceptions about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict or about their difficult lives in general. What anxiety they felt in the recruitment stage was seemingly forgotten in the heat of the session as the consensus-building atmosphere pulled them into the process. This is common in most PAR sessions since one of the aims and outcomes of PAR is participant ownership and empowerment. There was one exception to this trend—one group in Israel—where some participants expressed so much anxiety and worry about repercussions that they actually left during the session and never returned.

There were nine facilitated sessions: four in the West Bank, three in Israel and two in a Jordanian refugee camp. The recruitment took the longest, about one week in each location as it took a while for the interlocutors to feel as though they could trust me or sometimes it was simply due to time restrictions on their part. Once one interlocutor was recruited, he was the primary recruiter, using the snowball technique in recruiting his friends or random strangers, and I was simply there to answer any questions. In fact, most of the participants were met for the first and last time on the day of the session. There were more male than female participants, with approximately 70% participation being male and approximately 30% female. The groups were mixed male and female, except in the refugee camp where the sexes were segregated, as is the norm in refugee camps. The Palestinian youth were between the

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ages of 18 and 25. The facilitated sessions lasted between one and two hours, close to one and a half hours each. The following table illustrates the demographics of the participants in each group:

Table 1. Number of Participants and Average Age of Participants in the Nine Group Facilitated Sessions in Palestine, Israel and Jordan

Group number	# of Participants	Average Age (approx.)
1	11	22
2	8	20
3	7	22
4	8	22
5	8	21
6	5	22
7	8	22
8	19	18
9	7	18
TOTAL	81	20

In the nine facilitated sessions, Palestinian youth, seated in a circle, expressed their perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The question posed was simply, “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?” with subsequent variations and probing. After writing all the ideas, I directed the group to self-construct themes to encompass all the ideas and then each idea was placed into one or two themes. The results of the nine facilitation sessions with subsequently group self-produced themes are illustrated in Figure 1. Finally, the themes were prioritised. The results of the nine sessions with prioritised group self-produced themes are illustrated in Figure 2, with nine facilitated groups and forty-three themes. It is important to note that each group self-produced the themes and therefore there were substantial differences between groups with considerable overlap. Major self-produced themes were cultural, economic, ideological, media, political, refugee, security and social problems.

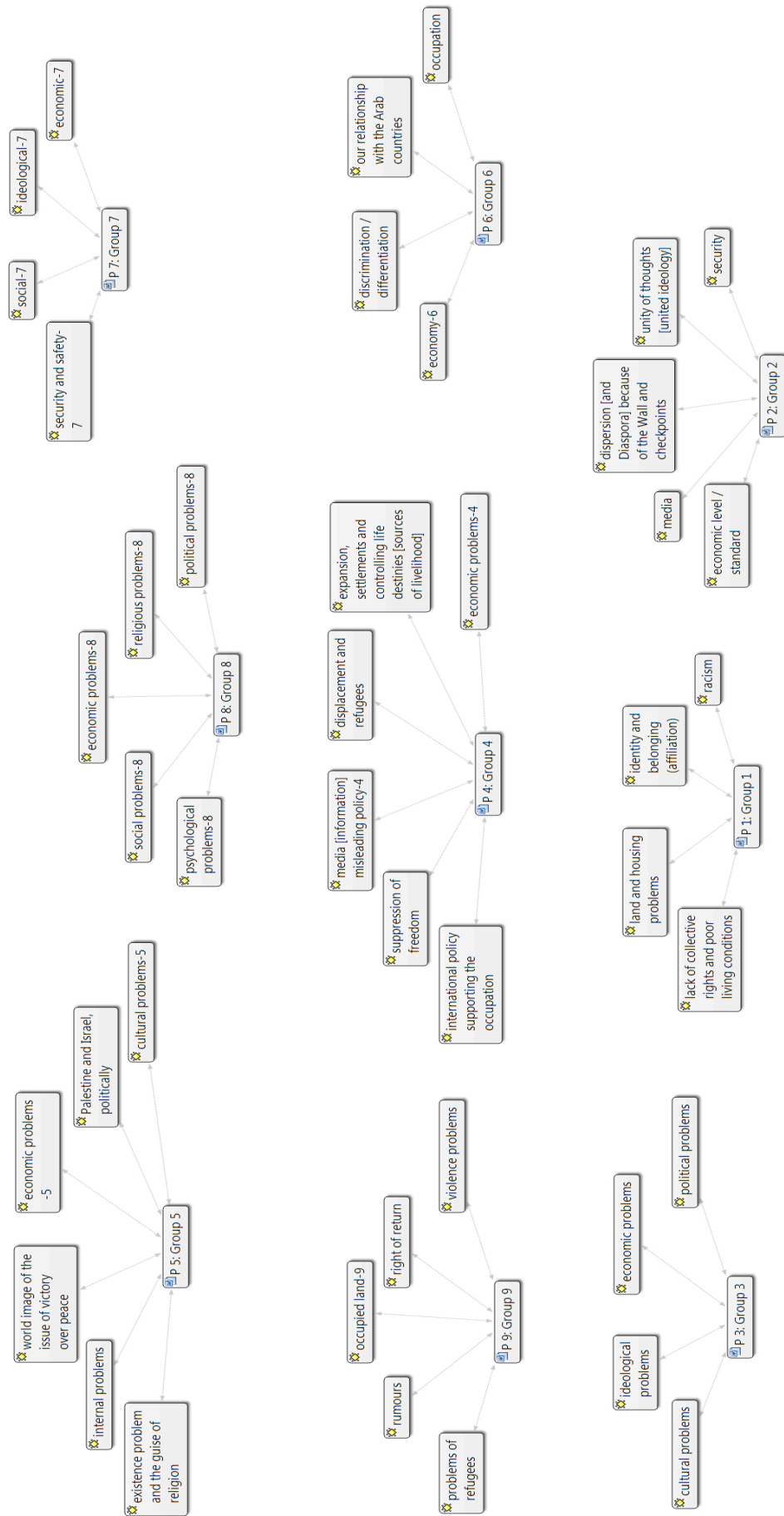


Figure 1. Palestinian Youth Perceptions of Themes of Problems of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Nine facilitated sessions along with 4, 5 or 6 themes of problems self-produced by the groups.

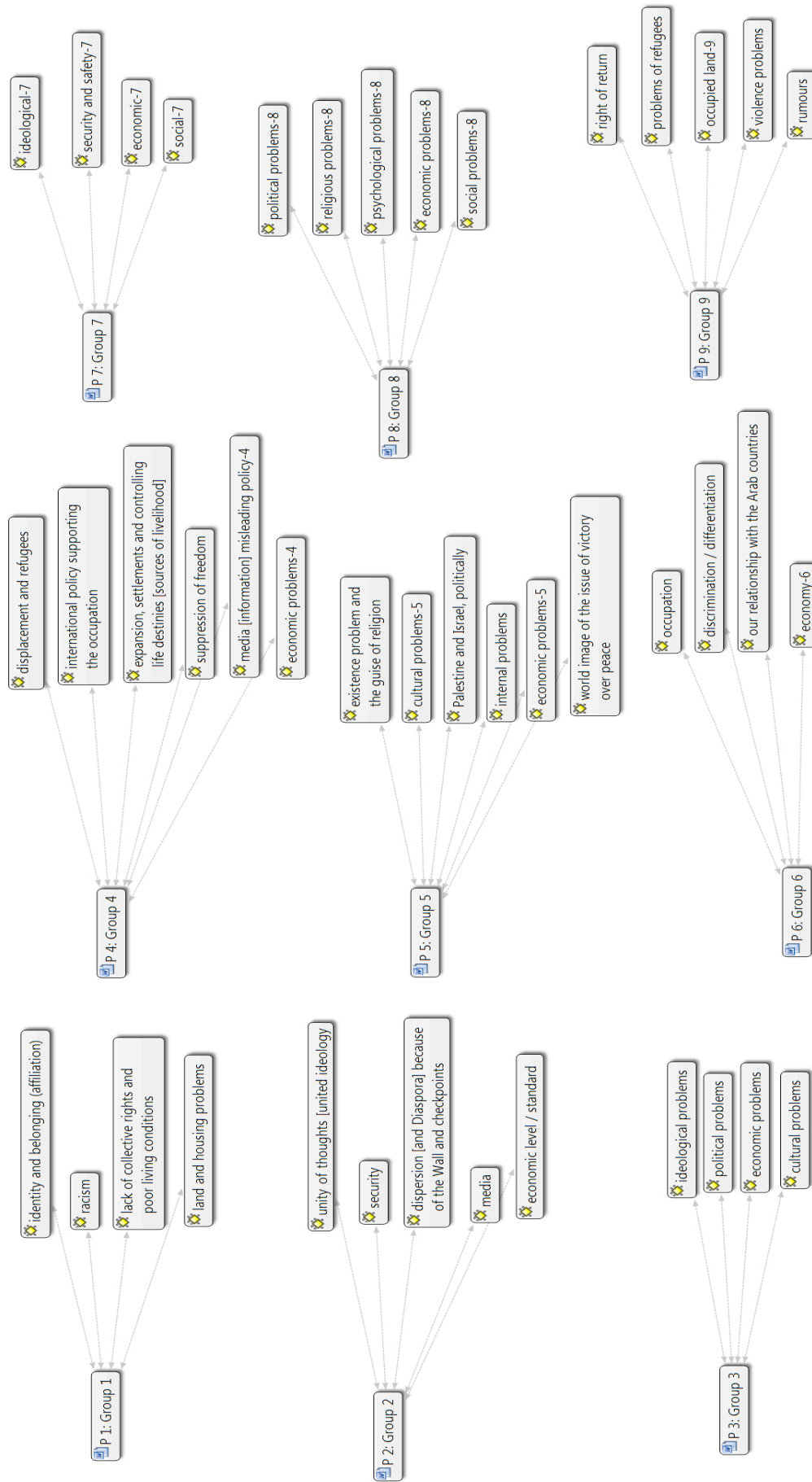


Figure 2. Palestinian Youth Perceptions of Themes of Problems of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Nine facilitated sessions with themes of problems self-produced and self-ranked by the groups in order of importance.

5.3 Prioritisation

Following the priority as ranked by the youth in each facilitation session, each theme was given its rank between 1 and 6 and each super theme could then be given an overall priority. This is the essence of the research and it produced the results of Table 2, illustrating the order of importance of super themes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict based on Palestinian youth perceptions in Palestine, Israel and Jordan.

Table 2. Palestinian youth perceptions of the priority of themes of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Number of themes within the super themes, the number of ideas within each super theme (Grounded), Grounded Rank, Prioritised Points and subsequent Rank with and without the 5th and 6th themes.

Super Themes of Problems	Themes within	Grounded	Grounded Rank	Prioritised Points	Priority Rank	Excluding 5,6 themes	
						Points	Rank
Ideological, racism and differentiation	9	67	2	45	1	27	1
Political	7	79	1	33	2	19	2
Land, separation and dispersion	7	54	3	32	3	18	3
Economic	6	45	4	17	4	6	6
Rights and freedom	3	14	9	14	5	7	5
Security	3	18	5	13	6	7	4
Cultural	2	18	6	8	7	4	7
Media	4	14	8	8	8	1	8
Social	2	18	7	5	9	1	9

Super Themes of Problems: Using Grounded Theory, as the analyst, I grouped together the cumulative 43 themes self-produced by the nine groups. Step 1 of Grounded Theory is Open Coding and was completed by the participants in each group to create the themes. Super themes represent Step 2) Axial Coding of grouping similar Open Codes (themes).

Themes within: represents how many self-produced group themes each super theme encompasses.

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Grounded: the combined number of ideas or sentences in each of the themes within the super theme as expressed in the Brainstorm phase of the facilitation session.

Grounded rank: the order of super themes based on the cumulative number of ideas they encompass as expressed by all Palestinian youth participants in all nine facilitation sessions.

Prioritised Points: the summation of points of the self-produced themes within each super theme based on the self-assigned priority given to each theme by the Palestinian youth in the facilitation sessions.

Priority Rank: the rank of super themes based on the prioritised points.

Excluding themes 5 and 6: the prioritised points for each super theme and subsequent prioritised rank based on a point system that excludes themes that rank #5 of #6. This was done to see how different the prioritised rank would be if themes #5 and #6 were excluded because some groups produced 4 themes while others produced 5 and others 6 themes.

Network representation of the groundedness of each super theme is illustrated in Figure 13 with a colour gradient from yellow to green where bright yellow represents a super theme that encompasses many ideas and dark green encompasses few colours. Figure 14 shows the same network representation with the number of ideas listed with each of the group self-produced themes.

Weighting each super theme according to the sum of prioritised points of each theme it encompasses, graphical representations were then made to compare the importance of each super theme. Figure 15 is a bar graph of the prioritised super themes and Figure 16 is a pie chart to illustrate a percentage representation of the priority of themes of Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Figure 17 illustrates the result if the 5th and 6th themes are removed from

consideration. This is done to reveal the limitation of the calculation method. The differences are very minute and can therefore be disregarded.

5.4 Prioritised Super Themes

The following is an account of the results of the facilitated sessions, of which the participants grouped and ranked their perceptions in order of importance. Subsequent grouping by the analyst brought to surface the major themes of Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Using Grounded Theory, I carefully analysed the content of each theme and further grouped the forty-three themes into nine super themes as illustrated in Figure 3. Figures 4 through 12 illustrate the individual super themes with each of the 43 themes that it encompasses. Let it be noted that the super themes were created by the analyst while the themes are self-produced by the Palestinian youth participant groups within the 9 facilitated sessions. The super themes contain themes that originate from at least two and up to nine groups' themes. Therefore, each super theme encompasses a mixture of the entire results of the research, grouped based on categories as decided by the analyst.

The super themes and a detailed description of the Palestinian youth perceptions with sample quotations follow in order of their ranked importance. The first super theme was ranked overall as the most important and the last super theme was ranked overall as the least important. The sample quotes are direct quotations from the ideas expressed by the Palestinian youth in the first step of Brainstorming of the YOUCAN Facilitation model.

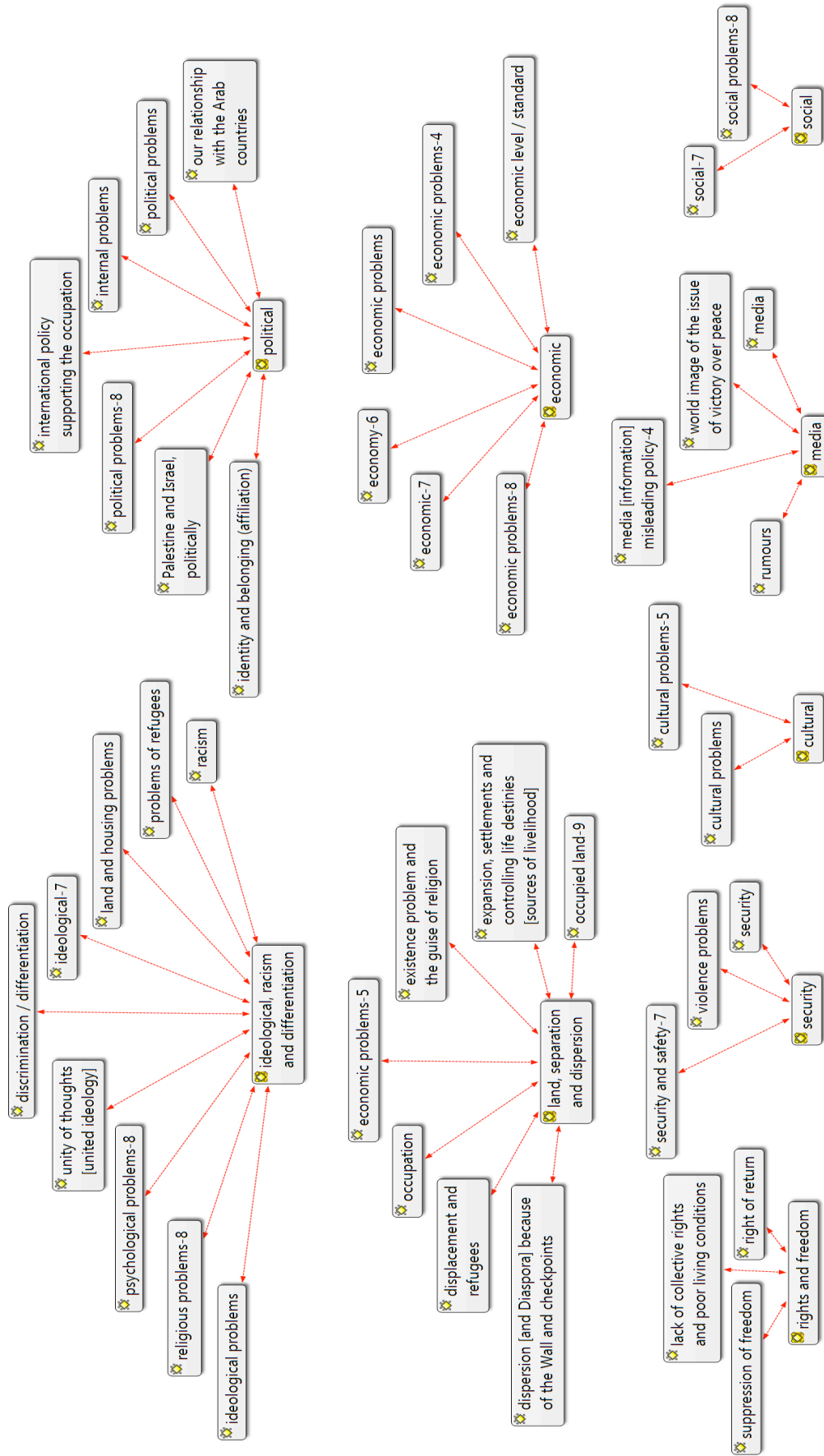


Figure 3. Super Themes of Problems based on Palestinian Youth Perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict. Nine super themes of problems encompassing the forty-three self-produced group themes of problems.

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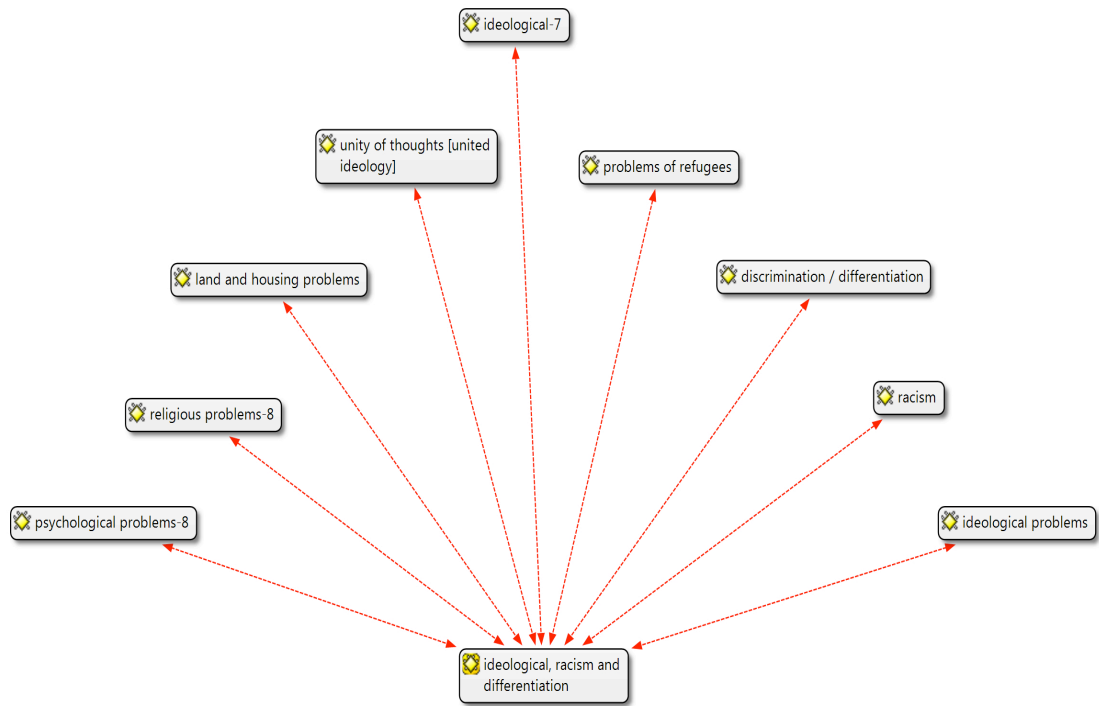


Figure 4. Ideological, Racism and Differentiation Super Theme of Problems.

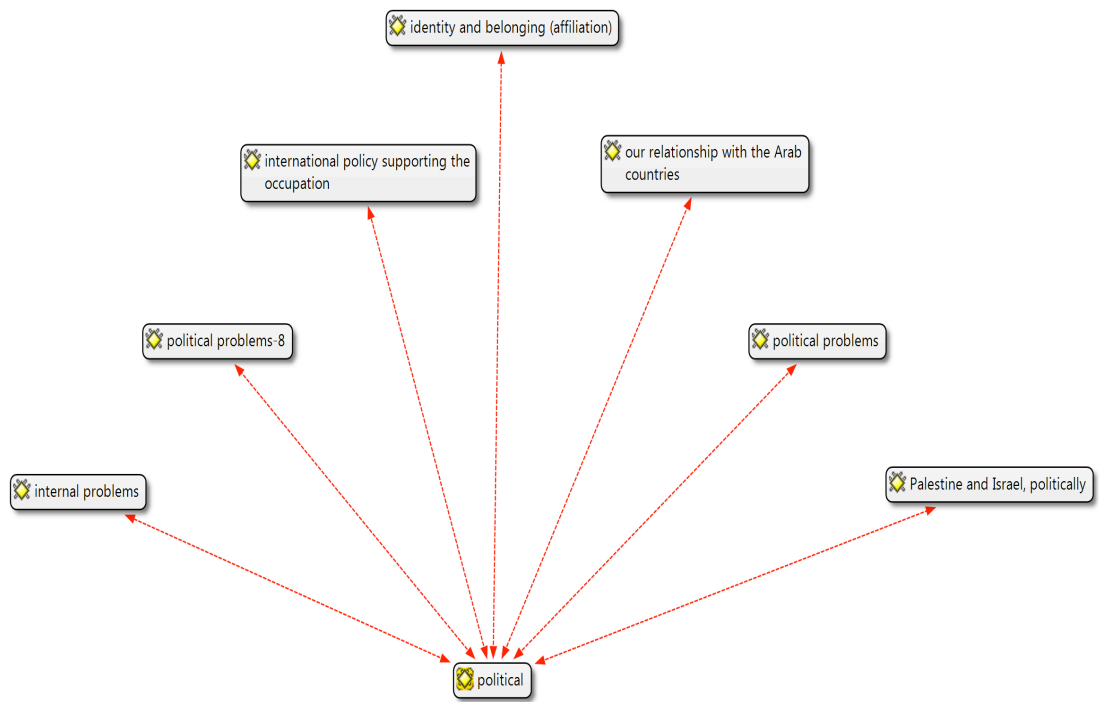


Figure 5. Political Super Theme of Problems.

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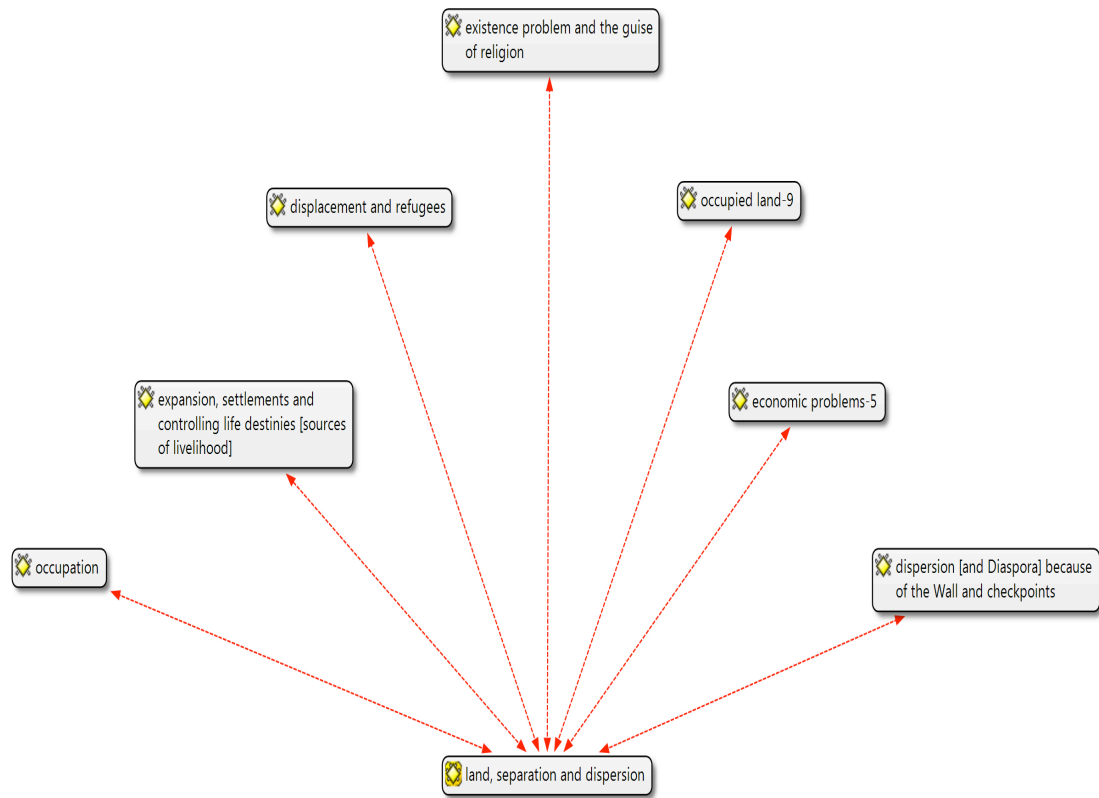


Figure 6. Land, Separation and Dispersion Super Theme of Problems.

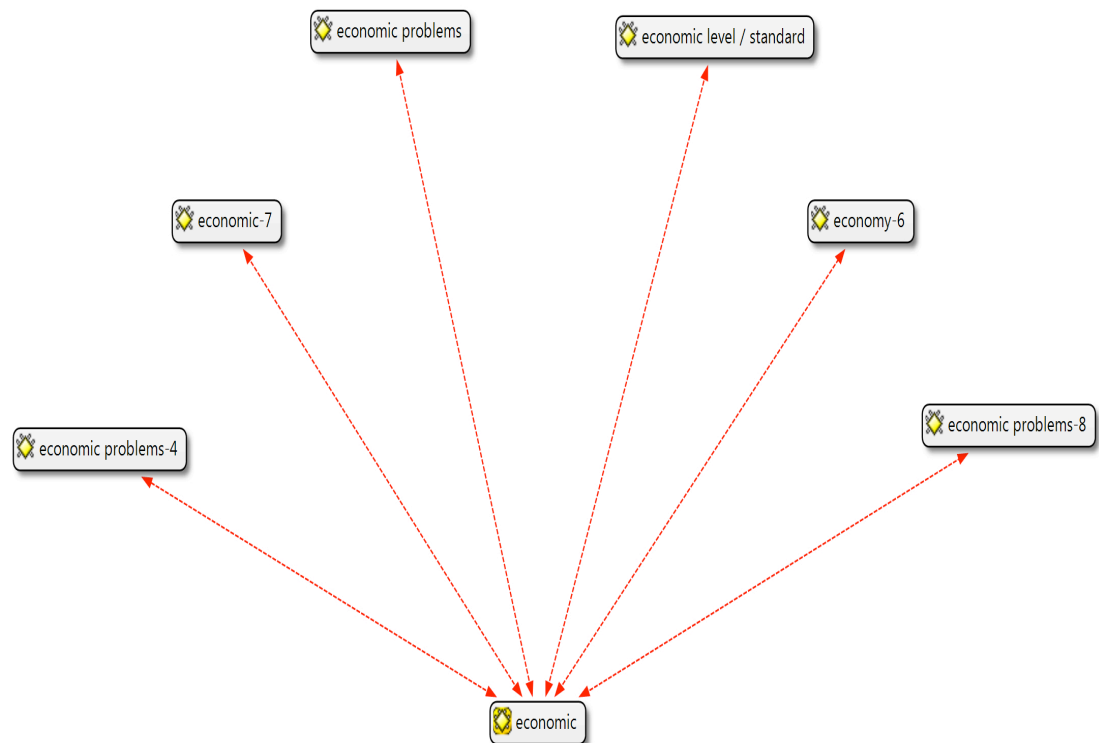


Figure 7. Economic Super Theme of Problems.

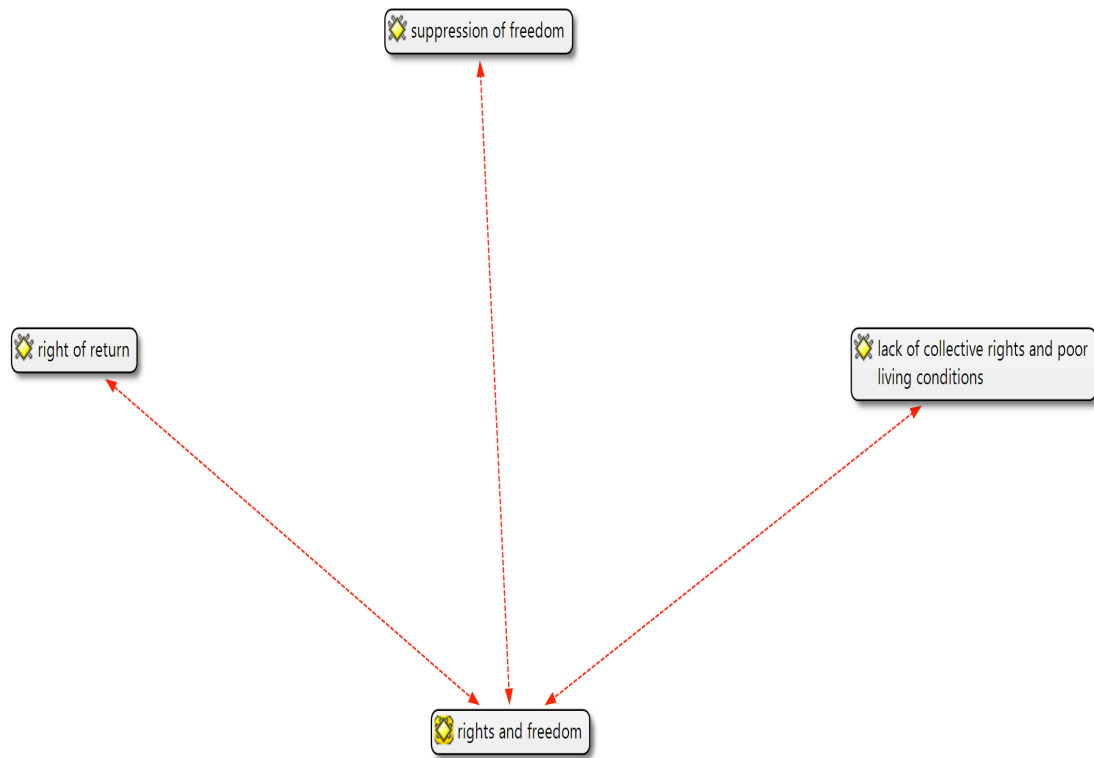


Figure 8. Rights and Freedom Super Theme of Problems.

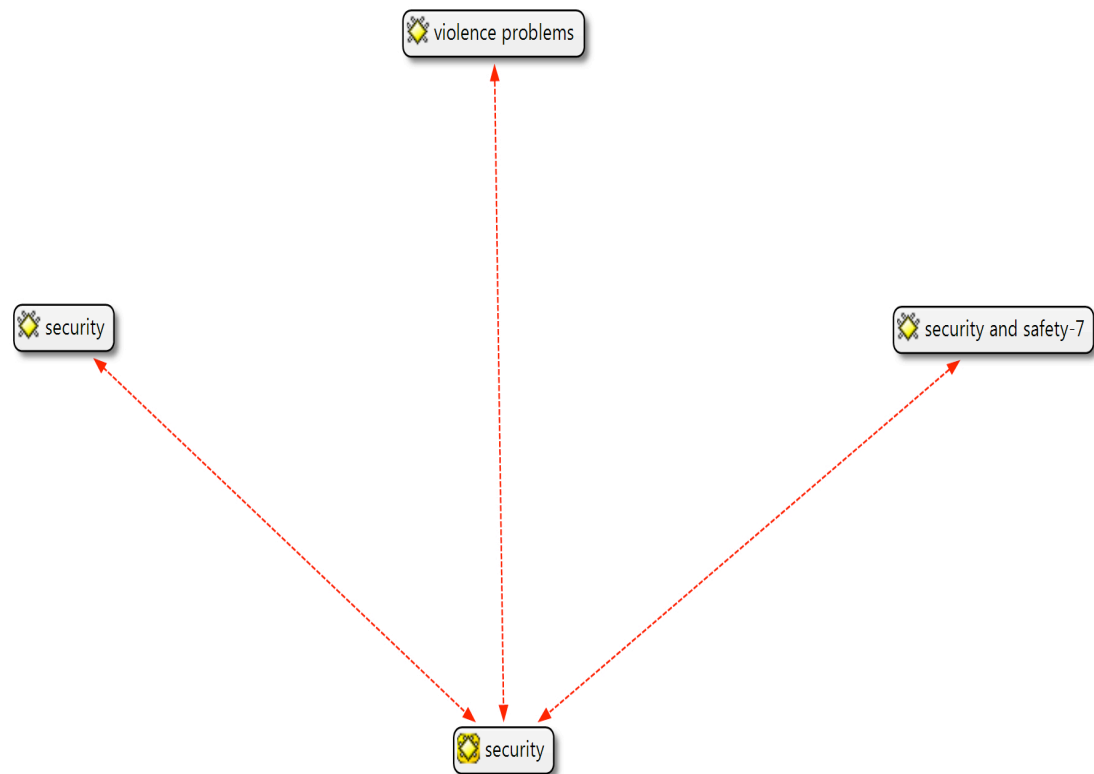


Figure 9. Security Super Theme of Problems.

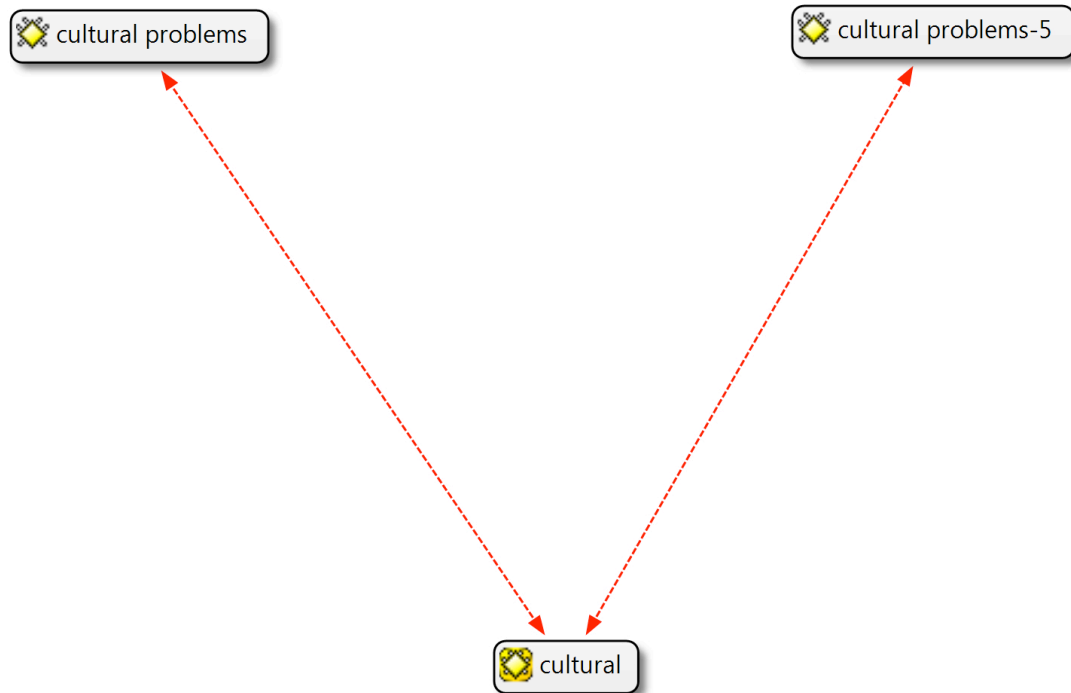


Figure 10. Cultural Super Theme of Problems.

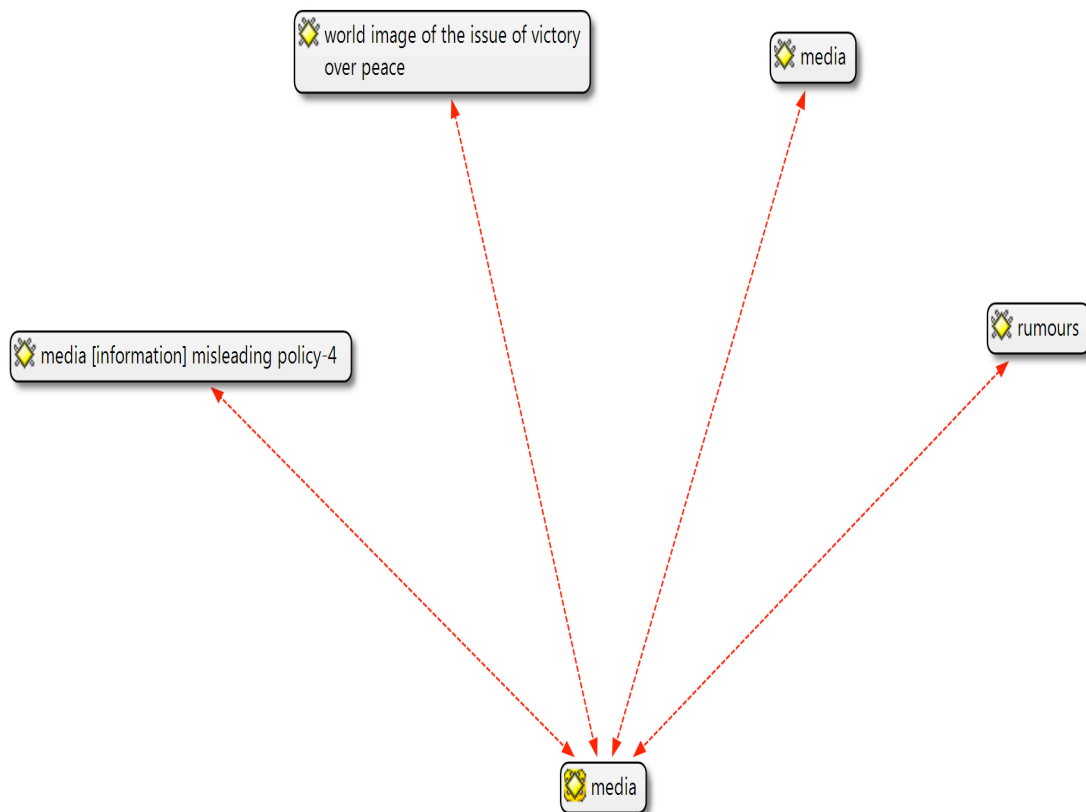


Figure 11. Media Super Theme of Problems.

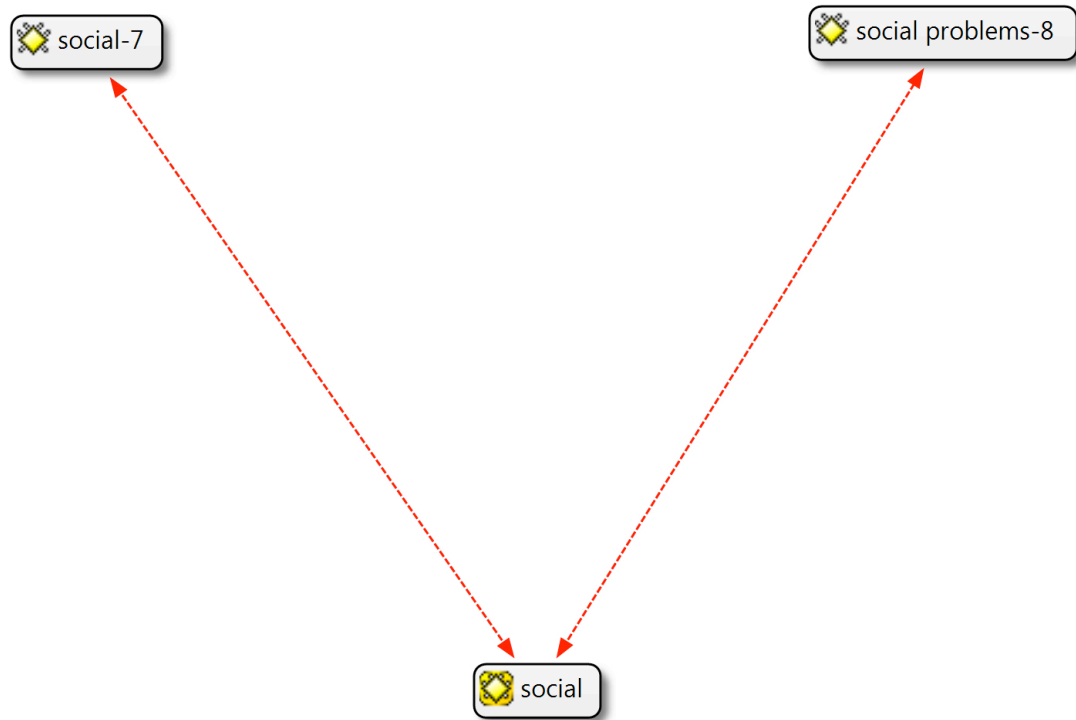


Figure 12. Social Super Theme of Problems.

PALESTINIAN YOUTH PERCEPTIONS OF THE PALESTINIAN-ISRAELI CONFLICT

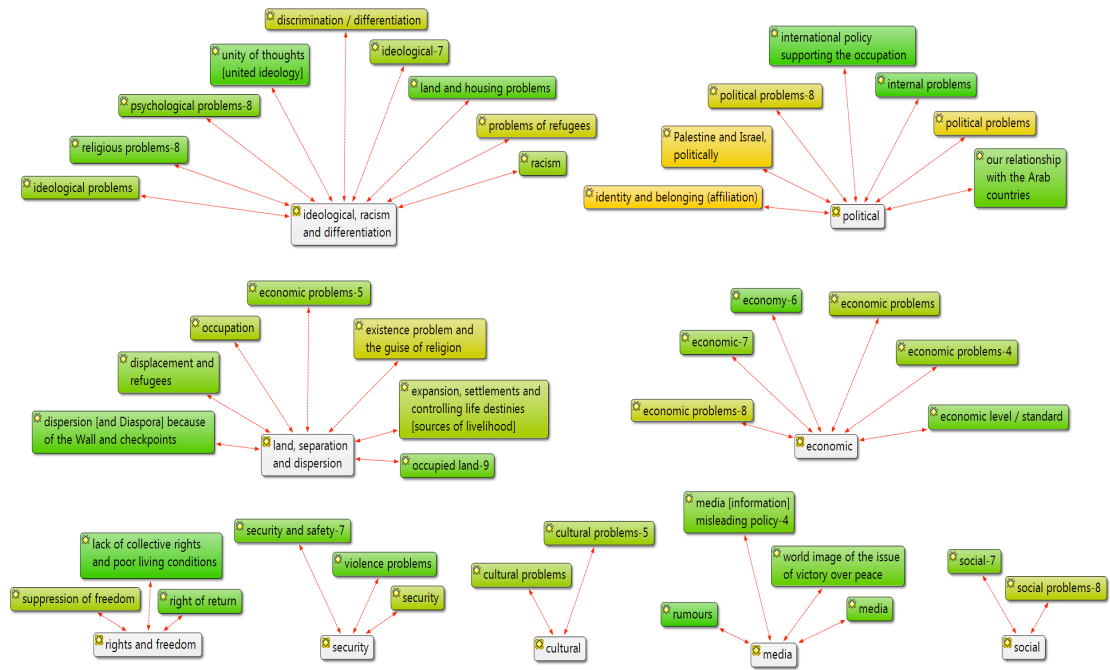


Figure 13. Network Representation of Super Theme Groundedness. A colour gradient from yellow to green, where bright yellow represents a super theme that encompasses many ideas and dark green encompasses few colours.

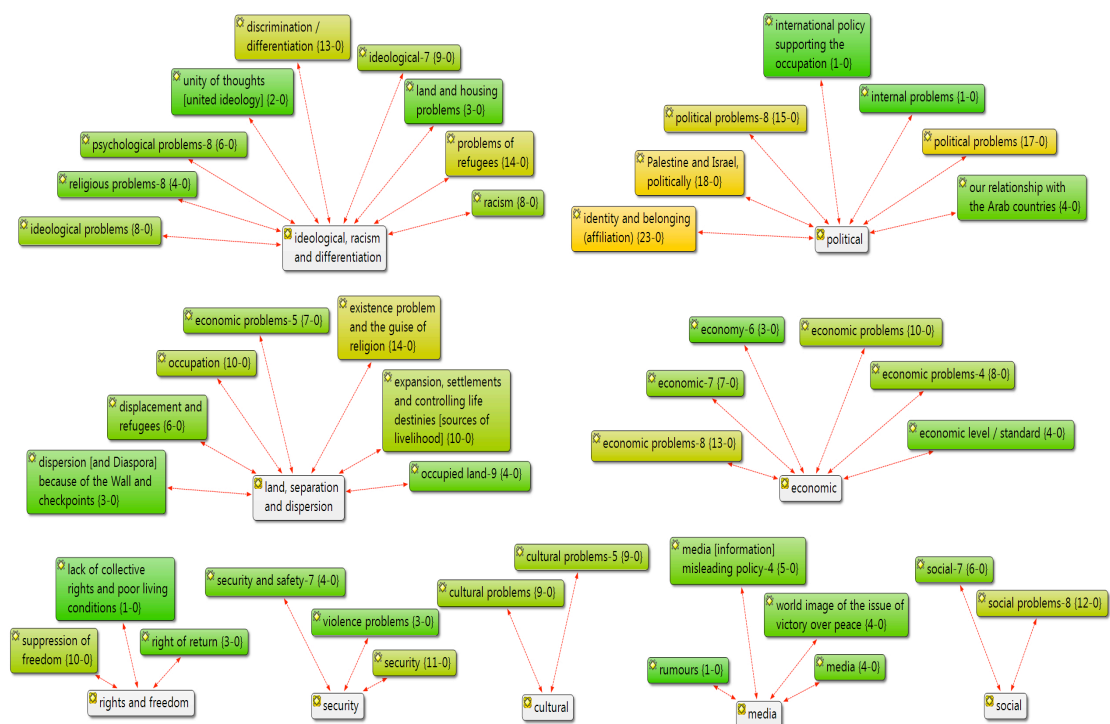


Figure 14. Network Representation of Super Theme and Theme Groundedness. The number of ideas is listed with each of the group self-produced themes. A colour gradient from yellow to green, where bright yellow represents a super theme that encompasses many ideas and dark green encompasses few colours.

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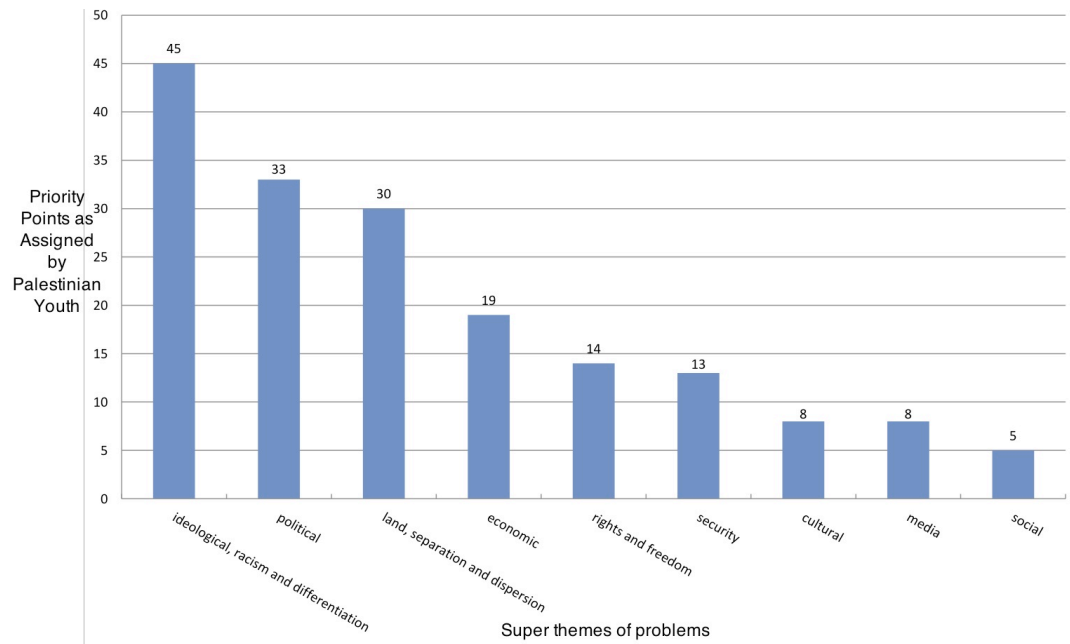


Figure 15. What is the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict? Palestinian Youth Super Themes Prioritised Bar Chart. Total priority points as assigned by Palestinian Youth for the Super Themes of Problems.

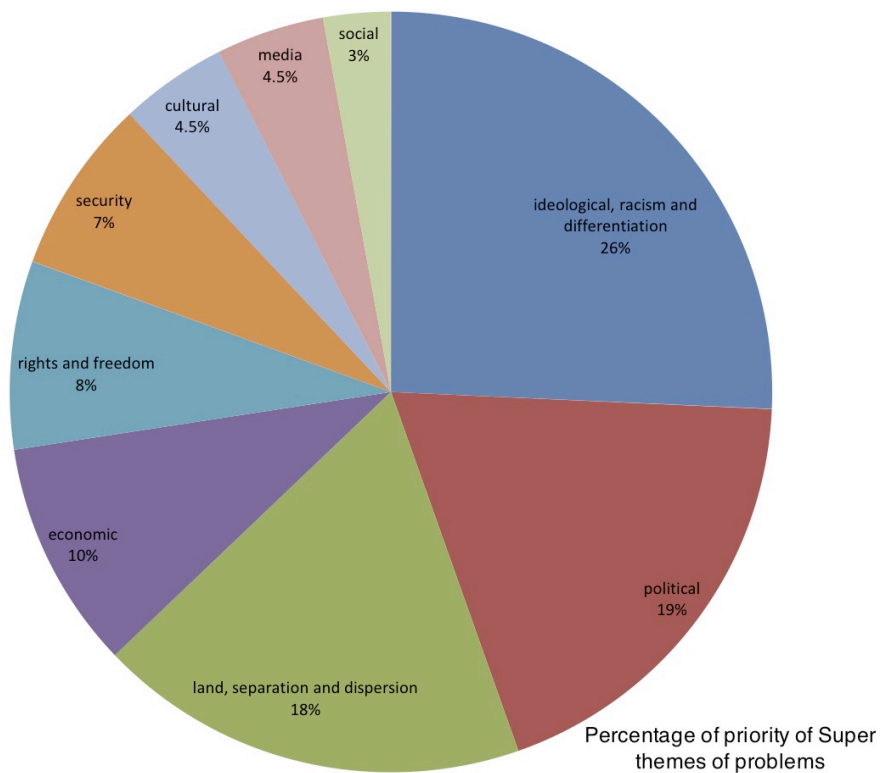


Figure 16. What is the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict? Pie Graph of Super Themes Prioritised Based on the Percentage of Priority.

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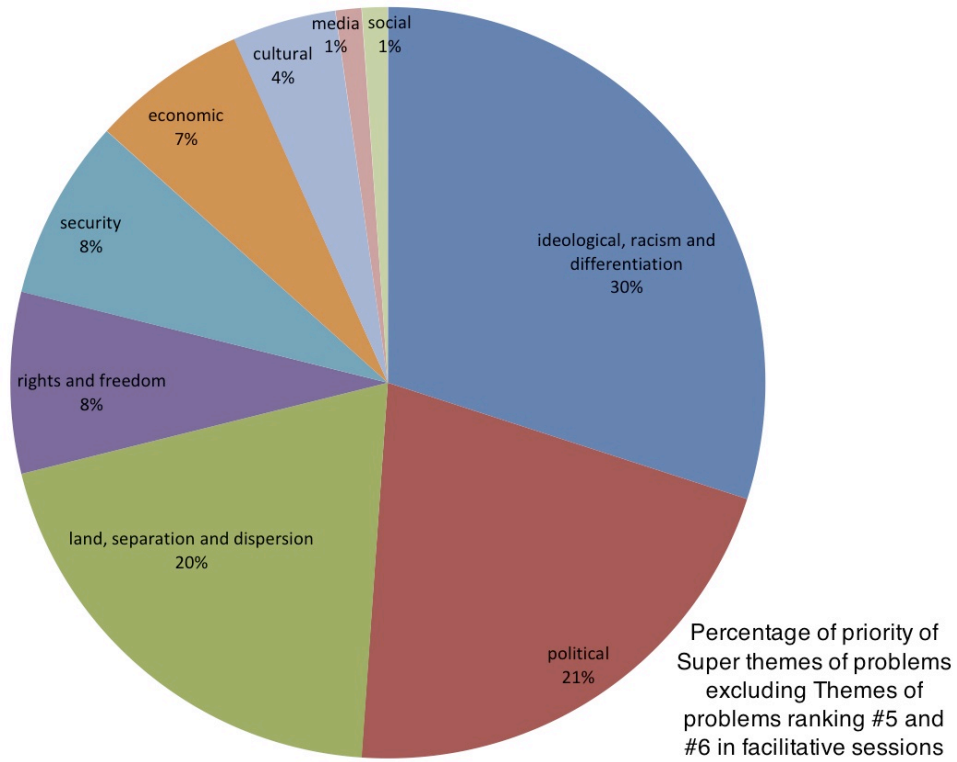


Figure 17. What is the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict? Pie Graph of Super Themes Prioritised Based on the Percentage of Priority Excluding Themes #5 and #6.

1. Ideological, racism and differentiation problems

Based on the contents of this super theme, the Palestinian youth perceptions were as follows. Continually, throughout almost all nine facilitation sessions, the first perception mentioned was the occupation of Palestine and its non-recognition as a problematic ideology. What participants interpreted as the ideological aspect of the conflict were observations such as the Israeli perception that Palestine doesn't exist and that the land of Palestinians is rightfully that of Jews. Racism from the Israeli government to Arabs living within Israel was felt especially at the university level. It was observed that the government differentiates Arabs from Jews socially, politically, and educationally and this is reinforced on a societal level. Additionally, the observation was made that the Israeli government differentiates Arabs on a more scrutinous level based on their religion, race or nationalistic affiliation, which further divides the Palestinian population. Also it was reported that Palestinians in the West Bank are treated without regard to human rights because of the ideology that they are lesser than Jews. Some argued that there is strong marginalisation of Arabs in Israel and Palestinians in the West Bank by Israelis and/or the Israeli occupation military. Some noted that racism is rampant in Jordan towards the Palestinians living in the refugee camps—Palestinian refugee camp dwellers are discriminated against by Jordanians on social, educational, economic and systematic levels. Differentiation of Arabs from Jews by the Israeli government and of Palestinians from Jordanians in Jordan as an “other” was posed as a deep-rooted ideological problem. Noted were problems of oppression, persecution as well as sectarianism between religions on ideological levels. There exist internal problems within the Palestinian population such as the division between Palestinian political parties because of the difference of

ideology. The right to Jerusalem is also ranked high as a priority and is dubbed an ideological problem.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“The occupation and the non-recognition to the occupation.”

“The Zionist¹²⁷ movement [project] was based on the conception that one race has precedence over other races, while our struggle aspires for equality.”

“Any Jew in the world has the right to immigrate to Israel, while the Palestinian refugee cannot.”

“The Israeli regime distinguishes against me on a class/rank and nationalistic basis.”

“Ethnic cleansing: the Israeli Organisation [government] by all means aspires to force me to emigrate and pillage my right to my land.”

“The Jerusalem problem is the #1 problem, it’s considered an ideological problem.”

“We are the landlords but don’t have the right to manage it the way we wish, while the occupier does.”

“Classifying Arabs according to their religion (Druze, Muslims, Bedouin, Christians).”

“Basic law [foundation] that Israel is a Jewish state but not for all its citizens.”

“The Israeli intellectual belief that Palestine is [actually] called Israel.”

“Racism between the Jordanians and the Palestinians.”

¹²⁷ The word Zionism is a very emotionally charged word. The participants expressed their perception of the word “Zionism” and their use of it as per a meaning system of how they experienced it, that Zionism excludes them to the rights and freedom to the land of Palestine and that Zionism gives the rights to people around the world who are Jewish.

Interpretation

The perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict being that of an ideological, racism or differentiation-rooted conflict was a little surprising. What was more surprising was the fact that the themes that encompassed such ideas and perceptions were given the highest rank of importance. However, upon reflection, this is not surprising granted that these appeared to be the conflicts, problems, and obstacles that deeply affected Palestinian youth no matter where they lived in the present moment. Palestinian youth in Israel expressed their feelings of being severely marginalised as a minority and the hatred they felt from Israeli Jews. Their perceptions were based on the obstacles of being forced to take university classes in Hebrew (there are no Arabic classes offered), being targeted to be searched more than Jews (to enter universities or malls), being treated as inferior intellectually and socially as well as being deprived of their expression of Palestinian nationalism. Palestinian youth citizens of Israel classified all these troubles as stemming from the ideological problem that Israel was created for Jews and they were not part of the plan. They also expressed feeling stuck in the middle, never being accepted as equal Israeli citizens (at least in practice on the social, educational and arguably political levels) and being seen and treated as traitors from the Palestinian population outside of Israel (for holding an Israeli passport or mixing with Israeli Jews).

Palestinian youth in the West Bank expressed the hard lives they live due to the occupation and how in their opinion, it created an apartheid system in which they were unable to access their own land for crops, water and visit relatives. They expressed how they are treated as “lower than human beings” at checkpoints and by the occupying Israeli army that periodically entered the West Bank to commit raids, instil terror through tear gas, sound bombs and fire bullets. Palestinian youth in the

West Bank also continually expressed being deprived of entering Jerusalem as a holy site for prayer. All these problems were dubbed as ideological problems because of the perception that Israel believes it has a “right” to all the Palestinian land (meaning the West Bank and Gaza Strip).

Lastly, Palestinians living in the Jordanian refugee camp expressed extreme difficulty in living due to marginalisation, differentiation, and racism from Jordanians on a social level that extended into education, laws and permits. Although being granted full citizenship or partial citizenship, Palestinian youth refugees expressed the perception that they weren’t wanted to use up all the resources such as monetary governmental aid, UNRWA aid, and special privileges that Jordanians believe should be given to them first. The root cause of these problems was always dubbed ideological.

It seems that the binding perceptions between Palestinian youth were the ideological problem of the Israeli or Jewish right to the land of historic Palestine, their deprivation to it, the occupation of Palestine and the subsequent racism they felt. Palestinian youth expressed perceptions of also being deprived of rights to resources, land, and human rights due to ideological reasons.

2. Political problems

The perceptions in this theme pertained to the historical political events that led to the present state of Palestine: the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Picot Treaty to the British Mandate for Palestine, the Zionist national movement to seize Palestine, the 1948 and 1967 wars among others, the ensuing occupation, the Palestinian civil uprisings (*intifada*), the Oslo Accords, etc. Also included were the present-day internal political problems between Palestinian political parties and the political discord between the Palestinian political parties, Israel and the surrounding countries.

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The Israeli occupation of Palestine, settlements in the West Bank, the Wall, Judaisation of Jerusalem and drilling under the Temple Mount were repeatedly mentioned as political problems of grave negative effects to Palestinians.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“The Sykes-Picot Treaty was a convention to establish a national homeland in Palestine [for Jews].”

“Nihilism [the absence] of the right for self-determination.”

“The first intifada [civil uprising]: Oslo was a logical solution for the Palestinians and here began the Israeli project [plan/movement].”

“The second intifada [civil uprising]: a historic transformation began between us (the Arab people) and the Israeli Authority.”

“The rise of Hamas and the fundamentalist movements in Gaza and the [Gaza] Strip. Hamas is wrong to have divided the Gaza Strip from the West Bank.”

“The attempt to fuse Palestinians with the Israeli Authority [government] and our Israelisation [converting us into Israelis].”

“Planting discord between religions and the absence of cultural self-rule [deprived sovereignty].”

“Domination [hegemony] of people from every direction and autocracy on them.”

“Forcing people to emigrate through the creation of natural circumstances by means of economic problems.”

“Judaisation and destruction of some lands in order to steal them.”

“The struggle for recognition of the Palestinian state.”

“The captives of war.”

“The right of return [for Palestinians]—the scattered expelled ones [Diaspora]

cannot be waived.”

Interpretation

Seeing as how the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has been ongoing for over six decades, there are many political developments that occurred, many of which transpired before the birth of the Palestinian youth in the facilitation sessions. All the landmark political events of the conflict were mentioned cumulatively by the nine groups but not one group mentioned them all in one session. In fact, major agreements, treaties or declarations such as the Balfour Declaration, the Sykes-Picot Treaty and the British Mandate were only mentioned once or twice between all nine groups. This was very surprising but, in retrospect, most of the groups were expressing problems that affected their present generation and would only make allusion to past historical events to situate the present state of their lives. Granted, the perceptions of present-day problems still ranked very high in terms of importance. So many ideas were dubbed as political problems.

The perception of political problems was four-fold. First, the perceptions were on the social level between Palestinians in the dispersed geographical regions of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Israel, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the greater Diaspora. Next, there was the perception of the divide on the Palestinian political level, namely that of Fateh and Hamas. Thirdly, there was the perception of the political problems between Palestine (the PLO) and Israel. Lastly, there was the perception of an international political problem, where the world didn't uphold justice for the Palestinian people, seeing Israel as the victim, and a sense that Palestinians are misrepresented to the world. There was an overall common perception that the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was created politically and it was enforced and justified politically as well therefore it affected their lives on many levels.

3. Land, separation and dispersion problems

Palestinian youth perceptions expressed in this super theme revolved around the occupation of historical 1948 Palestine leading to the present-day occupation. Problems varied from expulsion, forcible emigration, seizure of land, expropriation of lands, house demolitions and the like. The Wall was a big problem that was mentioned repeatedly and its effect was expressed as disastrous and continually perturbing to Palestinians. They mentioned mobility restrictions, being separated from family on the other side (of the Wall), furthering the Palestinian diaspora, land having been stolen, inability to reach agricultural land and long times for travel from one city to another. In particular, the West Bank was mentioned to suffer a grave effect from the occupation. Perceptions expressed include that cities are being isolated from each other through the Wall and many checkpoints. Settlements are another form of occupation by seizing and expropriating Palestinian land and subsequent theft of natural resources, namely water. Their perception is that water is stolen from the West Bank and only one tenth is then sold to Palestinians for an increased price. Roads within the West Bank that lead to settlements are made exclusively for Israeli citizens and restrict Palestinian use with threat of six months in prison if found using them.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Expulsion, emigration and taking over the land by force.”

“[Forcible] displacement.”

“Using methods of demolishing houses and expropriation of lands.”

“Building the separation Wall...social dispersion due to the Wall.”

“Separating the Palestinian cities and dividing the West Bank, Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip from each other.”

“Isolating the cities in the West Bank through military checkpoints of the

occupation.”

“Isolating cities from each other.”

“Suffering due to displacement (driving away), detaining fathers, detaining children, attacks, wounds and preventing travel [abroad].”

“The problem of settlements and checkpoints.”

“Every Israeli that lives in Palestine is an occupier of my land.”

“Settlements and their distribution.”

“Expropriation of roads between the Palestinian cities as a result of building roads between the settlements.”

“Seizure of water wells and preventing well drilling [digging wells] in the West Bank.”

“Enslaving Jerusalem citizens (taxes and demolishing houses).”

“Judaisation of Jerusalem.”

Interpretation

While land did not rank as the top conflict by the Palestinian youth, it was still expressed in great detail as gravely influencing them. Although there were already land conflicts before 2003, the construction of the Wall was expressed as a major conflict that negatively impacted their everyday lives. The perceptions expressed were that the Wall separated them from their families, seized their lands, created mobility restrictions to crops and water, encaged them and was a visible sign of apartheid. The growing and expanding settlements also had the same effects. There was consensus in the perceptions from most of the groups that cities in the West Bank were being isolated from one another through the creation and expansion of settlements, the Wall, checkpoints and expulsion of lands that Palestinians lived on.

The Palestinian youth observed that this was further separating the Palestinian

populace. In a sense, they perceived these separating events to be almost equivalent to the 1948 and 1967 wars that yielded the geographic separation of the Palestinian people into the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, Israel, Jerusalem, refugee camps in Jordan, Syria and Lebanon and the greater Diaspora. The perception was that now, cities being isolated from one another was for the purpose increasing Palestinian dispersion by dispelling even more Palestinians from the West Bank and always ensuring that refugees cannot return.

This was expressed as furthering the disunity among Palestinians, not only politically but also geographically, socially and intellectually. Palestinian youth could all agree that land, its forcible seizure, the separation it created, and the dispersion of Palestinians that ensued were very problematic.

4. Economic problems

Palestinian youth expressed that the Palestinian economy has been demolished. The youth explained the forced dependency of the Palestinian economy on the Israeli economy, in a situation created by Israel, with all its negative effects. Also, they mentioned how Israeli theft of natural resources, such as water, olive trees and agricultural land, severely cripples the Palestinian economy. These and other problems caused by the Israeli government such as imposing taxes on all imported goods, limiting or restricting imports, denying aid to Palestine, again hurts the economy in an effort to create seemingly natural conditions that would force Palestinians to leave or sell their lands due to lack of money. Another result is that many Palestinians are left with no option but to work with the Israeli occupying power as labourers or illegally because the Palestinian economy is so destroyed and unemployment is at its highest so there is no work. Refugees face similar conditions and cannot get out of the vicious cycle of unemployment in Jordan.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Correlation of the Palestinian economy with the Israeli economy.”

“Chances of work after graduation are minimal [unavailability of opportunities for employment].”

“Breaching human rights and spread of poverty.”

“Problems within the society (poverty, unemployment, etc.).”

“Theft of natural resources and their deprivation to Palestinians.”

“[Israel is] harassing farmers, burning crops and preventing them from getting to their [farming] lands.”

“The standard of living has decreased in the West Bank because of the seizure of most of the natural resources and the prevention of import of goods.”

“Imposing taxes on goods imported into Palestine.”

“Denying aid to Palestine.”

“Difficult political conditions force youth to emigrate.”

“Forcing people to emigrate through the creation of natural circumstances by means of security problems.”

“Judaisation and destruction of some lands in order to steal them—for example, the Judaisation of the Al-Aghwar area [Jordan River Gorge between Jordan and the West Bank] that caused economic weakness due to the [lack of] agricultural planting.”

“Working conditions with Jews is better than those with Arabs.”

“The [Palestinian] refugees are suffering from the lack of heeding to the request for educational facilities, i.e. the [temporary] one or two years passport.”

Interpretation

The economic problems expressed by Palestinian youth were of two

categories. Either there were economic problems that exacerbated the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, such as the perception that Israel instilled a dependency of the Palestinian economy on the Israeli economy, which meant that the two were linked and the Palestinian economy could not flourish independently. Instead, it had to in a way support the Israeli economy to see improvements. Another example was the denial of foreign aid to Palestine, denying its delivery to Palestine or imposing taxes on imports thereby weakening the Palestinian economy. The other side was the perception that problems caused by Israel had devastating economic repercussions. Examples given were the Israeli theft of Palestinian resources such as water, the creation of the Wall, and the ensuing mobility restrictions, denying access to agricultural land and burning crops or cutting olive trees, which are the sources of Palestinians' livelihood.

Palestinian youth were very well aware of the exhausted and drained Palestinian economy and were very keen to point out economic problems in the Brainstorming Step or place ideas into an economic theme in the Theming Step of the YOUCAN Facilitation model. In fact, the "economic problems" theme was the most recurring direct group-produced theme among all nine groups, being cited in seven of the nine groups directly. It was very apparent that many economic problems were perceived by Palestinian youth. This far-reaching effect of the economy was also repeatedly expressed and reiterated by all groups.

5. Rights and freedom problems

Palestinian youth perceptions revealed their daily lives are filled with extreme fear and terror. It was manifested in their perceptions of a suppression of freedom and universal human rights such as movement restrictions, constant fear of unlawful arrest, detainment, torture and homicide by the occupying government and military,

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raids and being bombed. These events have become so commonplace that although Palestinian youth expressed their knowing that these are breaches of universal human rights, they have seemingly accepted them as the way they will live the rest of their lives.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Non-recognition of laws and human rights.”

“Breaching human rights.”

“The suppression of freedom.”

“Detention, terror and homicide.”

“Bursting into [raiding Palestinian] houses at night.”

“Security refusal [ex. denying permits because of “security” reasons] and refusing [the ability to] travel abroad.”

“There exists a problem in the exclusionary mentality of the occupiers [to further the occupation] therefore they are using terror, arrest, murder and refusal to live with ‘the others’ [the Palestinians], which is going as far as even surpassing the Hitler Nazi mentality.”

“Bombing Gaza and killing its children, continuous downfall of martyrs [more Palestinians are being continually killed] in the West Bank. Moreover, the suffering of prisoners.”

Interpretation

Each participant had a story to tell about the experience he or she had with a perceived breach of their freedom or rights, be it freedom of speech or opinion, freedom to protest, freedom to question authority, or unlawful detainment. The experiences were themselves surprising to hear but added to that was the surprise at the sense of normalcy of the group while hearing the recounts of the participants.

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Although these problems gravely affected their lives, the Palestinian youth did not rank them very high giving the sense that these were consequences to the much larger problems that were ranked more important. They also expressed perceptions that no pleas for help would be answered, since they had lived through these conflicts their whole lives unchanged.

They expressed their frustration with mobility restrictions, such as Israel's denying them entry to pray on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem for "security reasons," without further explanation. The death toll of civilians killed in Gaza within the past Israeli Operations were also recounted as violations to human rights in killing civilians. Again, no one in the group appeared perturbed or anxious in hearing this.

6. Security problems

Palestinian youth expressed that they are living in terror, completely and utterly lacking any security while Israel holds all the power, both physically through weapons, and mentally through control of the economy, society and mobility. Another common perception was that there is constant instability of life and Israel consistently detains youth and children without cause for extended periods of time to instill a sense of terror, inferiority and submissiveness.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

"Living in terror [from Israel], feeling unsafe inside one's home."

"Israel freely enjoys power and security."

"Israelis' gain of weapons."

"Jewish terror gangs [armed Israelis not affiliated with the Israeli army]."

"Problems within the society (violence)."

"Political detention."

"Parents' fear for their children."

“[Israel] killing children.”

Interpretation

Perceptions within this super theme were the most striking and shocking. Palestinian youth recalled numerous breaches in law and human rights but it was coupled with seeming acceptance as though it was never going to change. The Palestinian youth gave firsthand accounts of houses being raided, friends being unlawfully arrested, children being arrested to instil fear in the community and set an example for others and fathers being imprisoned to force their sons to turn themselves in, among others. Also, a common perception expressed was that there was systematic terror being implemented by the Israeli government to keep Palestinian youth and children in check and far from challenging the Israeli government, military or authority. Palestinian youth expressed that every parent feared their son or daughter would be unlawfully imprisoned and this would devastate the family emotionally, mentally and economically. Finally, there was the perception that Israel enjoys the full right to gain and stock arms to use at their leisure and these arms were perceived to be used to perpetuate a system of terror among Palestinians.

7. Cultural problems

The problems perceived in this super theme are two-fold. First, the perception that the Israeli government is (succeeding in) exacting Palestinian culture and history and any way it can be manifested; i.e. denationalism. They expressed how Palestinian youth nowadays are weak in their ability in the Arabic language, lack motivation for developing critical minds, intellect and awareness of the conflict or Palestinian culture and traditions. The second part is the perception that Palestinians and Palestinian society are not making enough of an effort to resist these strongly influencing impositions.

Sample Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Extortion [forcible exaction] of Palestinian culture.”

“Occupied areas of 1948 [Palestine]—there’s no interest or concern in the Arabic language and attempting to extract the Palestinian case / issue from school curriculums so the young generations will live without knowing or caring about the Palestinian issue.”

“Gradient [progression] to distract [the Palestinian] people from their foundational issue.”

“Awareness in the present and the past differs; the conception is that today, awareness is higher than it was in the past.”

“Lack of intellectual and political awareness.”

Interpretation

This super theme brought to surface the Palestinian youth’s concerns and worries for the future based on their troubled perception of the present. They expressed anxiety over future generations completely lacking vital things such as Palestinian culture, knowing anything about Palestinian history, intellect, political consciousness, proficiency in the Arabic language and knowledge about the Palestinian narrative of the conflict. This super theme did not rank high by the group’s consensus because it seemed as though not all the members in each group were aware of these conflicts. In fact, it was usually one participant in each group who made mention of such conflicts and he or she was very passionate about cultural problems and their severe repercussions on future Palestinians. This seems to follow the previously noted trends that the Palestinian youth in this research study weren’t focussing too much on the past and—as is seen here—on the future but rather in the present. The perceptions of conflicts expressed were mostly pertaining to the present

state of matters.

8. Media problems

The main perception in this super theme was that the international media is highly biased in favour of Israel; Palestinian suffering is never shown, only that of Israelis or Jews. The state-terrorism inflicted by the Israeli army on the Palestinians is sidestepped to portray Palestinians as terrorists. Gross violations of the Palestinians' human rights and murder are omitted from international media reports. Also, the perception that the media's false representation of Palestinians as being anti-Semitic when in fact, they [the Palestinians] oppose Zionism¹²⁸ and the occupation and not Jews.

Samples Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Overturning the facts of Jewish terrorism.”

“Israeli takeover of foreign media [controls foreign media coverage].”

“The wrong idea is what reaches the outside [the wrong truth is what is told abroad].”

“The problem is only with the Jews occupying our land and not all the Jews in the world.”

“Influence on media, giving a false and reverse account and portraying Palestinians as the terrorists (i.e. killing the child Mohammad Oudah).”

Interpretation

All of the Palestinian youth in all nine groups expressed their perceptions of the misrepresentation of Palestinians in foreign media. Although not ranking high on their list of important conflicts, the perception of the international media solely

¹²⁸ The word Zionism is a very emotionally charged word. The participants expressed their perception of the word “Zionism” and their use of it as per a meaning system of how they experienced it, that Zionism excludes them to the rights and freedom to the land of Palestine and that Zionism gives the rights to people around the world who are Jewish.

supporting and sympathising with Israel and Jews was recounted many times throughout the nine facilitation sessions. Also, the perception that was repeated time and again was that they (the Palestinian youth) had no quarrels with Jews as is usually mediatised, rather their problem is with Zionism, settlers, the Israeli government and its supporters.

9. Social problems

Based on Palestinian youth perceptions, there exist many problems in Palestinian society. Other than their perceptions of the racism, terrible working conditions for Arabs, killing, terrorism and hatred of Israel and Israelis towards them, Palestinian youth expressed the dire condition of a poor health system. Through mobility restrictions, the Wall and claims of “threats to security,” Israel denies entry to the good hospitals and health care centres in Jerusalem for Palestinians in the West Bank. Also, Palestinians living in refugee camps face similar but less extreme difficulties to get adequate and proper health care in Jordan.

Samples Quotes From the Brainstorming Step of the Facilitation Sessions:

“Jews with [living with] a nation of Muslim majority.”

“Language is an obstacle to communication with Jews.”

“Health status quo.”

“Difficulty in getting health treatment unless by the Jews’ approval.”

“The Jordanian gets services very easily while the Palestinian faces hardship to get them.”

Interpretation

Ranking as the least important problem, this super theme dealt with problems that transpired as a result of the major problems in the higher ranked super themes. These problems were seemingly ranked as the least important because they are

perceived to be temporary or sporadic problems that arise when, for example, a Palestinian is gravely ill and needs to be hospitalised. However, the perceptions reveal strong obstacles for Palestinian youth to coexist in Israel, to have proper healthcare in the West Bank and Jordan and these social problems overlap mobility restrictions and differentiation.

5.5 Summary

In summary, Palestinian youth are living a very unstable life. The first and foremost conflict expressed and observed was a constant sense of terror. Based on the perceptions expressed, tear gas, sound bombs, and firing is constantly released into the cities in the West Bank and Israeli military presence is very visible either on foot or in various checkpoints between the large cities as well as along the Wall. Palestinian youth face numerous hardships from the Wall, such as movement restrictions, mobility delays and inconveniences, separation from relatives and furthering of the Palestinian diaspora. The occupation was almost always the first perception mentioned in each of the facilitation sessions and it can be found in almost all the above mentioned super themes as Palestinian youth believe that it gravely affects their everyday lives in the severe negative. To most groups, the straightforward answer to the initial question of “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict,” was simply “The occupation.” The youth believed this one word was the only answer I needed to hear if inquiring about the conflict. Coupled with the occupation were the growing problems of settlements, checkpoints that were perceived to aim at separating and isolating West Bank cities and people from one another. Later they would reveal problems of denationalism, extortion of Palestinian culture, false media reports, and Judaisation of Palestine and Palestinians.

The Palestinian economy is perceived to be highly dependent on the Israeli economy, a scheme hatched by the Israeli government, which wreaks havoc on Palestinians and forces a dependence of Palestinians to Israel. Theft of natural resources, namely water, olive trees, agricultural land, their deprivation of them and the subsequent selling of water at a higher cost were notable problems expressed with high passion by several groups.

Racism was also very prevalent and was strongly expressed by Palestinians in the West Bank, in Israel and the refugee camp in Jordan. Palestinians inside Israel perceive discrimination as they are treated as lowly and uneducated Arabs, in the West Bank as inferior and low class residents (not citizens), and in Jordan as second-class citizens. The politics and ideology of the conflict surfaced as the primary perception and they were interlinked; Israel and Zionism¹²⁹ seeks to eliminate Palestinians from their homeland because of an ideology that is in and of itself racist. The political events that led to the current situation of Palestine as well as the current instability of internal, external and international politics were highly stressed as factors to the continuing condition of the conflict.

5.6 Word Cloud

Figure 18 represents a word cloud that contains words quoted by the research participants in order of incidence. The words range from 40 quotations to 7. It is not surprising to see the words 'Palestine', 'Palestinian', 'Israel', 'Israeli', or 'problem' to have the highest incidence. However, it is interesting to note that the following most commonly quoted words are 'occupation', 'economic', and 'political'.

¹²⁹ The word Zionism is a very emotionally charged word. The participants expressed their perception of the word "Zionism" and their use of it as per a meaning system of how they experienced it, that Zionism excludes them to the rights and freedom to the land of Palestine and that Zionism gives the rights to people around the world who are Jewish.

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Subsequent quantitative analysis of words quoted revealed that self-identifying words ('me', 'mine', 'my', 'our', 'us', 'we') totalled twice that of other-identifying words ('them', 'their', 'they') 42 to 22 times. Self-identifying nationalistic, religion or race-based group terms ('Palestine', 'Palestinian', 'Arab(s)', 'Muslim(s)', 'Christians', 'Druze', 'Bedouin') were also quoted almost twice as much as the other-identifying nationalistic or religion-based group terms ('Israel', 'Israeli(s)', 'Jew(s)') 93 to 55 times.

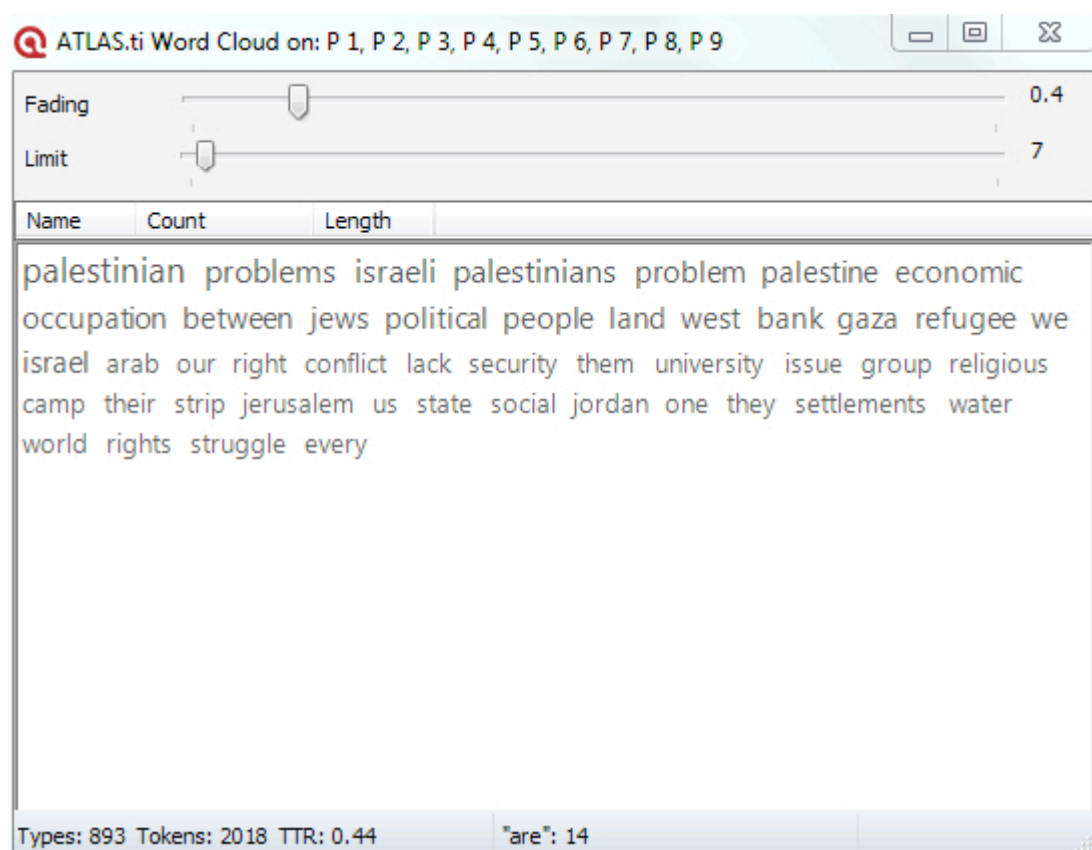


Figure 18. Word Cloud of the top quoted words by Palestinian Youth in the facilitated sessions.

Although this study was qualitative and cannot lay any weight to quantitative analysis, it can be hypothesised that these results suggest that Palestinian youth are self-critical and are able to analyse the problems within the Palestinian society, not only laying blame on Israel for all the problems they are faced with.

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Although the historical narrative and importance of the Palestinian people was covered when combining all nine facilitation sessions, it was not all mentioned by any one group. For example, the ‘Balfour Declaration’ was only mentioned once, ‘Britain’ three times, ‘Oslo’ twice, ‘Sykes-Picot’ once and ‘UNRWA’ once. The ‘United Nations’ was never mentioned. This illustrates a significant observation of Palestinian youth’s narrative of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Also, this says how educated and conscientised Palestinian youth are to the conflict. This was in fact one of the problems stated by the Palestinian youth themselves under the Cultural Super Theme. In fact, after one of the sessions, one of the youth approached me and said,

I didn’t say much in the session because I wanted to see how much the other youth actually knew about the history and the present-day happenings of the conflict. I was shocked to hear that they knew so little and left so much out! Participating in this session motivates me to educate my peers on what has transpired to bring us up to the present day.

After 66 years, the origins and history of the conflict are fading into the background of history and need to be addressed before a step can be taken forward towards a solution or reconciliation. This greatly affects the Palestinian youth narrative that will be used in future negotiations with the “other.”

5.7 Conclusion

In four months throughout Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp, Palestinian youth were recruited to partake in a research study that sought to learn about Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Recruitment was executed using the snowball technique in that one Palestinian youth interlocutor was met on the street or city and once recruited, he would then recruit his friends, acquaintances or strangers. The research took place in the form of nine facilitation sessions, in which the research question was asked, “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?” with variations and subsequent probing. Using a PAR-based YOUCAN

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Facilitation model, the participants were led through a Brainstorming phase followed by the group's self-produced themes to group the ideas. Finally, the themes were prioritised based on the group's rank of importance.

Following the group facilitation sessions, I combined and grouped the Palestinian group themes of problems into nine super themes of problems. Assigning the group-assigned priority to each theme within the super themes, the rank of importance of the super themes is as follows: *Ideological, racism and differentiation; Political; Land, separation and dispersion; Economic; Rights and freedom; Security; Cultural; Media; and Social problems*. Based on the groundedness of the super themes—the number of ideas encompassed within each super theme—*Political problems* ranked the highest.

Based on Palestinian youth perceptions, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is most importantly one of ideological, racism, and differentiation-oriented problems. The expressed problem being that establishing Israel in Palestine is the ideological right to Jews and disregarding Palestinians' rights along with the ensuing racism and differentiation problems for Palestinians. Political problems range from the historical recount of the politics that culminated in the creation of Israel as well as the subsequent political unrest until the present day, including Israel's hegemony over the Palestinians. Problems also lie in the realm of Palestinian dispersion, separation and Diaspora due to land confiscation, restrictions and expropriation from Israel due to the creation of the Wall, settlements and control of the land. Economic problems span from the forced Palestinian economic dependency on the Israeli economy to the devastating effects on the Palestinian economy due to Israeli imposition of heavy taxes, restriction of imports, and seizure of natural resources. Palestinian youth perceive their rights and freedoms being deprived in terms of movement restrictions,

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speech, unlawful arrest and human rights violations. Security problems pertain to living in a constant state of terror, null of security, while Israel enjoys full security both militarily and mentally. Israeli policies of denationalism as well as Palestinian extortion of traditions, language, history and narrative were expressed as cultural problems. Media problems encompassed the world's misrepresentation of Palestinians as hating Jews rather than Zionists and Zionism along with a skewed and omitted reporting of the human rights violations committed by Israel. Finally, social problems revolve around the difficulties in coexisting with Israelis and the lack of access to a working and proper health system. The most commonly quoted word was 'the occupation' and was usually the first problem expressed by Palestinian youth in all nine facilitation sessions.

This dimension of the study, that of a Participatory Action Research, group-based, self-created thematic representation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict from the Palestinian youth perspective is breakthrough and groundbreaking in terms of the innovative new method used as well as the results it brings to the surface. This study brings to light that Palestinian youth expressed perceptions of a very troubled and problematic life they live in, perceived as being rooted as an ideological conflict coupled with rampant racism and differentiation problems. This conflict had political, land, separation and dispersion, economic, rights and freedom, security, cultural, media and social levels as well.

There are however many limits to this study in that only 81 participants took part in the facilitated sessions and there were no participants from Gaza or Syrian and Lebanese refugee camps. Also, had there been Palestinian youth from the aforementioned missing areas of Palestinian inhabitation, this research still could not claim to be representative of Palestinian youth. It only took place in a few cities out of

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the hundreds that Palestinian youth live in. It digs deep and brings to light the lives of Palestinian youth through a qualitative study. This research seeks to discover Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in order to attempt to understand the lives they live and the experiences they face.

The results of the facilitated sessions could not offer enough of an in-depth outlook. For that reason, an ethnographic study of the researcher's own experience was simultaneously carried out to add an objective reflection to the subjective experience of the ethnographer while immersed in Palestinian youth society. The following ethnography chapter completes the picture of the experiences of Palestinian youth's lives as seen through the researcher's eyes.

Chapter Six

Political Affiliation Identity Groups/Mannheimian Generation Units

6.1 Outline of the Chapter

In going to Palestine, Israel and Jordan, I kept in mind that I would be immersed in Palestinian youth life and could not be immune to experiencing similar events to them and gaining a glimpse of their lives. This research aimed to learn of Palestinian youth perceptions through a unique Participatory Action Research-based YOUCAN facilitation approach all the while engaged in ethnography of Palestinian youth and their perceptions of the conflict. While the results of the facilitated sessions were written work on Palestinian youth perceptions, the ethnographic recount of my experience within the interlocutors' environment would complete the picture of their, or rather my, experience within the Palestinian youth society.

The fieldwork encounters throughout the 4 months within the Palestinian youth culture allowed for major discoveries in the order and structure of my and their everyday lives. Just as ethnography describes, when the researcher finds something surprising or shocking, he begins to dig deep into the matter through interactions with interlocutors to gain insight on the inner workings of this matter.¹³⁰ This is exactly what transpired for me in Palestine. After absorbing the surroundings and my new environment, I began to notice very particular trends among the social circles of Palestinian youth, which I would later correlate with the political affiliation, ideology, and their derivatives.

The Palestinian youth generation is subject to the same set of external conditions, particular to them at this present moment, which binds them together to form a distinct and separate generation. Through my observations as a participant

¹³⁰ Borneman, John and Abdellah Hammoudi. *Being there. The Fieldwork encounter and the making of truth*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p.257. Print.

observer, the Palestinian youth generation can be divided into six distinct generation units that represent political ideologies. They are Political Islam, Apolitical Islam, Nationalist, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam. Each generation unit represents a different ideology dealing with the same set of external conditions that all the members of the Palestinian youth generation face. In this chapter, first, I will show how Mannheim's concept of generation units applies to Palestinian youth and discuss the key events that contributed to their emergence. Second, I will provide an analysis of each of the six groups, based on my ethnographic research. Third will be a comparative analysis of the groups, and finally I will add my own personal ethnographic reflections.

6.2 Mannheimian Generation Units Causing Political Affiliation-Based Identification

These generation units and the political ideologies they represent have overtaken Palestinian youth's lives and affect their greater decision-making. The units cause friction in social interactions and further the separation and differentiation among the Palestinian population. Lastly, Palestinian youth appeared to not recognise the distinct lines between them, which form the particular generation units; however, they are quickly and accurately able to identify a fellow youth's political ideology affiliation. They were able to see the different groups but appeared to dismiss them or perceive the distinction and differentiation as minimal or negligible. These observations can only be attributed to the present Palestinian youth generation and it is not clear whether or not the distinction and separation will continue after the youth generation phase of their lives.

As previously established, the prolonged political destabilisation, which had effects on the economy, society and culture of Palestinians, caused a Sewellian

event—that is a “prolonged mass destabilisation leading to a structural change.”¹³¹

This structural change manifested in a split of identities into two major groups: a highly politicized nationalist group and an apolitical Islam group.¹³² Here, I argue that continued political destabilisation led to further splits. The Palestinian youth generation within all parts of historical Palestine experienced grave changes in their everyday lives that further worsened their lives and directly prolonged the political destabilisation.

The first trigger for a political destabilisation was the first *intifada*. Subsequently, the second “Al-Aqsa” *intifada* occurred from 2000 to 2005 followed by the Israeli complete withdrawal from Gaza in 2006. Hamas won the first democratic elections by a landslide and after subsequent internal political unrest, Hamas and Fateh split completely, governing the Gaza Strip and West Bank, respectively. The Israeli government began to construct the Wall in 2003 and to date has placed over 400km of 8m high slabs of concrete to segregate Palestinians in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. This caused severe movement restrictions and impediments to access to agricultural land and water and to visiting family and relatives. Settlements in the West Bank climbed to an all-time high with over 400,000 illegal Jewish settlers living in 137 settlements and 100 outposts. Corruption and cronyism became rampant in both the West Bank and Gaza Strip with unending political disharmony. Two major wars were waged on Gaza in 2008 and 2012 when Israeli retaliation bombs were dropped on the strip killing many innocent civilians and destroying the infrastructure. Finally, in 2012, Palestine was granted non-voting observer status in the UN with a landslide 138 of the 193 member states voting in favour of Palestine thereby formally recognising Palestine as a country.

¹³¹ Lybarger, Loren. “Palestinian Political Identities during the Post-Oslo Period: A Case Study of Generation Effects in a West Bank Refugee Camp.” *Social Compass* 52.2 (2005): 147. Print.

¹³² *ibid.*

With all these political, social and economic conditions along with the ever-present Israeli occupation of Palestine, I argue that a worsening and protracting political destabilisation, a Sewellian event of “prolonged mass destabilisation leading to a structural change”¹³³ caused a Mannheimian generation shift. This created a new generation in which Palestinian youth are forced to live in much different and worse conditions that differentiate them from the previous generation. Within this generation, new and seemingly similar to past generation units are formed as means to interpret and respond to the current conditions Palestinian youth face.

Here, I apply the concept of Mannheim generation units to Palestinian youth. Since Mannheim generation units are not temporal but rather experienced qualitatively, a qualitative description follows. A generation is formed socially when a group of individuals are exposed or living through the same set of factors, circumstances and experiences in the social, political, economic, etc. conditions. Generations do not occur one after the other but rather co-exist. Therefore, for the case of Palestinian youth, although they are living through more or less the same set of conditions and experiences as older or younger generations, their particular and unique interaction in universities, club activities, in public transportation (mostly for university students), in university housing or in social settings with each other, constitute a separate generation as an actuality.

Within this generation, there exist inner groups called generation units, in which a member of a particular group will have perceptions not based on single perceptions but rather on a global perception as perceived by the group. Participants form a generation unit who see context and form based on the outlook of that group. Entire assimilation occurs only when they move past simply accepting this outlook on

¹³³ *ibid.*

things and it becomes the worldview through which they perceive the world; they themselves can experience anything and everything in the distinct manner of the collective group, in particular intellectually and psychologically.¹³⁴

Particular responses of generation units are only created through close-knit interactions to form cohesive and distinct attitudes that are subsequently exported into broader use by the entire generation unit and applied as a standard to future interpretation, feelings and attitudes to later experiences.¹³⁵ In this case, Palestinian youth are in close contact with each other almost every day and mould distinct generation units. While the distinct interpretation of each generation unit cannot be transmitted over time since generations are not temporal units of time but rather qualitative aspects of a particular group of like-aged, like-located people responding to the same external circumstances; however, not all generations will create entirely new and unique generation units. Reverting to previous interpretations to past conditions is another possible reaction to deal with the new conditions at hand. This does not insinuate reverting to an already formed generation unit but rather having the same reaction to the previous conditions as a way to manage the new conditions. Therefore, it is possible that throughout the progression of generations, the same and different generation units are created in response to new external experiences and conditions. This explains the seemingly continuous presence of generation units over generations.

In the present case of Palestinian youth, a Sewellian event of protracted political instability caused the generation shift ensuing in the surfacing of six major identity groups (generation units): Political Islam, Apolitical Islam, Nationalist, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam. The breakup of the nine

¹³⁴ Mannheim, Karl. "The Problem of Generations", in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 306. Print.

¹³⁵ *ibid.* p.309

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facilitation groups into those six major generation units/political affiliation identity groups can be seen in Figure 19. Figure 20 is a network representation of the six major generation units/political affiliation identity groups encompassing the different participants in the nine facilitated sessions. The following is a detailed description of each identity group/generation unit as per my experience, completely immersed as a participant observer in the Palestinian youth environment for four months.

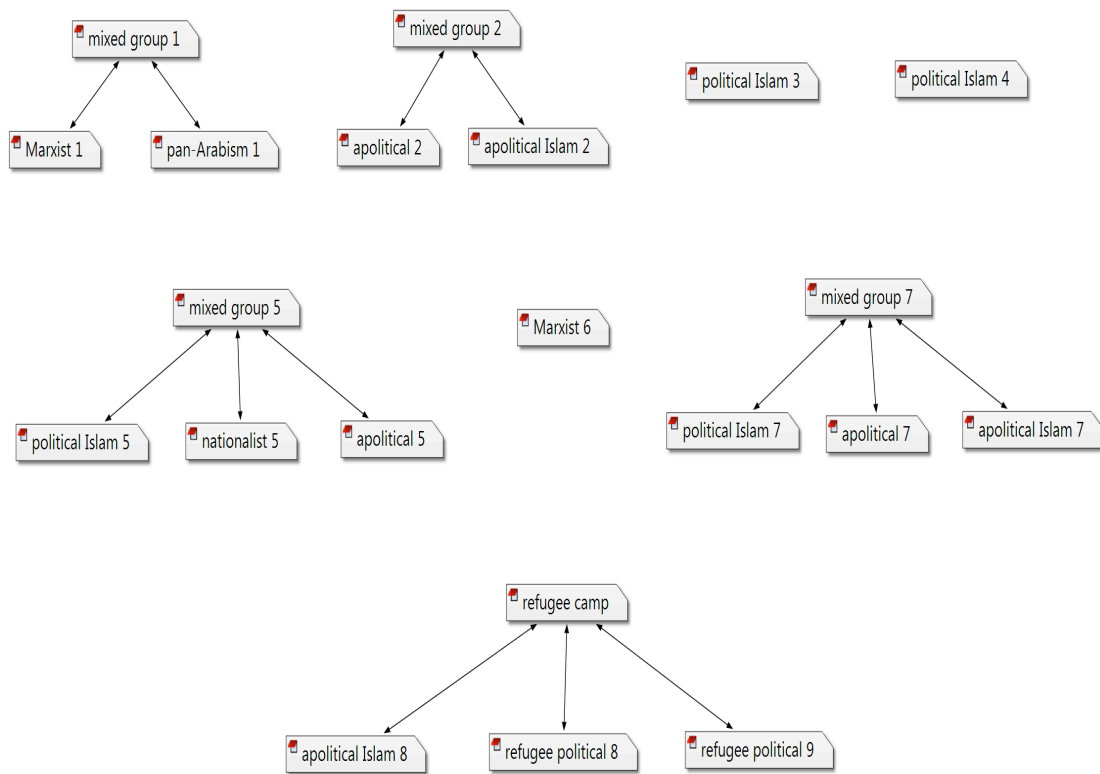


Figure 19. Breakup of the nine facilitated groups into the six major Mannheimian generation units/political affiliation identity groups.

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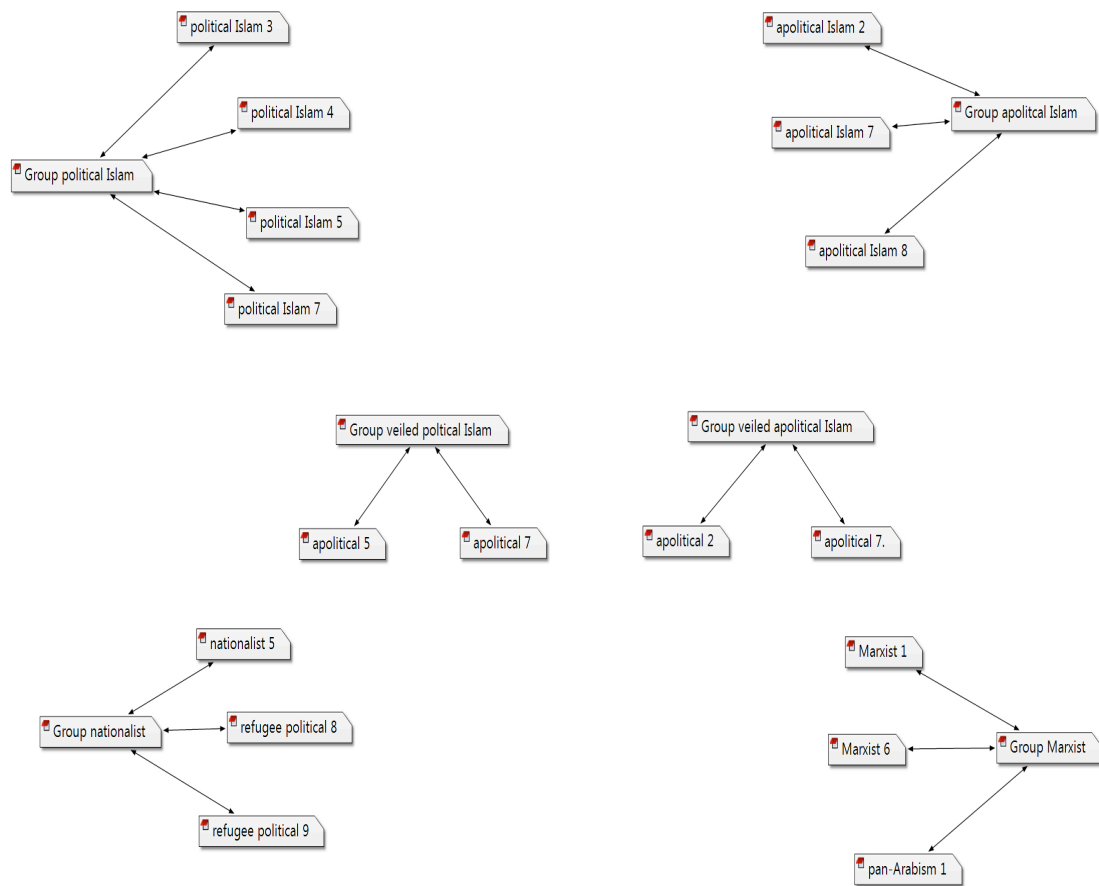


Figure 20. Network representation of the six major generation units/political affiliation identity groups encompassing the different participants in the nine facilitation sessions.

6.3 The Six Generation Units/Political Affiliation Groups

1. Political Islam

The basic ideology is that a political government that is intrinsically Muslim should govern Palestinians, and Arabs or Muslims in general. That means that Muslim *Shari'a* law should be the basic backbone of government and society. Minorities and other faiths should be protected and given entire freedom as stated in the fundamental rules of Islam and are excluded from fundamental Muslim practice in private but must maintain the norm in public (such as not eating publicly during Ramadan). The majority Muslim citizens must adhere to Islamic law, banning alcohol, drugs, gambling, prostitution, pork, etc. Society and culture are also heavily impacted. For example, men and women mixing should only take place under three circumstances when there are no other options: school or university, work, and in the general public such as the market. Otherwise, there should be no unnecessary mixing of the sexes. Women and men should adhere to the guidelines of clothing and dress as according to Islam: Women should be fully dressed with non-revealing, loose and modest clothes, with their heads covered in veils. Men should not wear tight or revealing clothes and nothing above the knee should be visible. An important aspect to note is that this ideology is derived entirely from Islam and Muslim morals and ethics, as outlined in the Quran, the Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) and the *Shari'a* law, which is derived directly from the Quran and Sunnah. Something would be deemed wrong if it contradicted or went against Islam and its teachings. The basic moral and ethical code is that of Islam. It is important to note that the Political Islam ideology is not in any way an extremist ideology; it is simply strived by devout Muslims who believe that a majority Muslim

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country should be governed according to the tenants of the religion that the majority follows.

Youth with this political ideology expressed that Oslo was the ultimate failure of the Palestinians and that it stagnated and legalised the occupation they are living in. Israelis now have more freedom to oppress them, worsen their lives and judge any resistance to the occupation as terrorism. Many Palestinian youth in different locations repeated almost the same exact phrase, “Now, anyone who opposes Israel is considered a terrorist. If I utter the single sentence that ‘I oppose Israel,’ I would be deemed a terrorist and Israel would have the ‘right’ to imprison me for six months.” The strived goal of this political ideology is the liberation of Palestine from the Israeli occupation and accomplishing a sovereign Palestinian government that adheres to *Shari’a* law.

When asked, “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?,” the answer was always, “The occupation.”

It is important to note that there are two subsections of this group. While the vast majority of youth in this identity group are devout Muslims who believe that religion should be the backbone of governance, a small portion of the youth within this identity group lean more closely to the political aspect of the ideology and don’t necessarily adhere strictly to the fundamentals in Islam. For example, they will be very active in politically-oriented activities with their group and will pray all prayers on time and in congregation but when on their own, they may delay praying or not wake up for sunrise prayer at all. The pull of their group and their identity lies with this mindset, which is very strong but there exists a small internal conflict of personal choice and collective group action for this minority within the group.

2. Apolitical Islam

The mindset is that Islam, being not only a religion but also a way of life, is the ultimate guide to lifestyle and daily living. Islam supersedes politics and all other ideologies that can distract a person from the code of conduct and living that is the guide to bettering oneself as a human being: Islam. Islam in its basic definition is the complete and total pledge of oneself to God as his slave and worshipper. Adhering to the commandments of God through the Quran and Sunnah (teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (may peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) are sacrosanct and should be the absolute centre of one's thinking. Palestinian nationalism should not preoccupy one's mind, nor should the Israeli occupation of Palestine. We are all equal as slaves of God and should think of ourselves that way. Each Muslim and any God-believing person should live one's life according to the prescribed teachings of the prophets who relayed the message of God. The five fundamental practices would be believing in God as the one and only god and that Muhammad is His messenger, five daily prayers at prescribed times, paying alms once a year amounting to 2.5% of one's fixed savings, performing a month of fasting every year and performing pilgrimage to Mecca in one's lifetime if financially and physically able. Following these basic five tenants, the word of the Quran and the teachings of Prophet Muhammad are the keys to a good life, bettering one's life, becoming a good person and improving the standard of living of all people. Atop of these basics and the extra teachings of the Sunnah, this identity group is active in reminding their fellow Muslims of their obligations as Muslims in a polite and kind manner. This is the only form of social interaction with the other identity groups although each sex would only approach and speak to the same sex and never to the opposite sex. Their gaze is always kept down

and they do not speak to the opposite sex in any setting unless absolutely necessary for modesty reasons.

Youth with this political identity are constantly reminded of the politically sparked world around them but they choose to remain completely outside the realm of politics. They choose to not discuss politics at all and deem any failure of Palestinians as a failure of Muslims. They identify first and foremost as Muslims and they don't place as high of an importance or weight to a Palestinian identity. Their struggles are Muslim struggles and they do not believe in armed combat. The Muslim, in his life, must first and foremost build a strong base to be a good human being and the means to achieve that is through religion. Before that is achieved, everything else is put aside and pushed out of one's thoughts.

When asked, "What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?," the answer was always, "The conflict is in fact a lack of religion, religious practice, and religious identification. That is the bigger problem and the one that needs to be remedied. Nothing else is important. After that is solved, then we can start to contemplate other conflicts at hand."

3. Nationalist

This identity group firmly believes in the liberation of Palestine as its main objective and that Palestinian nationalism trumps all other factors. It can be argued that this mentality is the same as that when Palestinian nationalism was first conceived in accordance to Benedict Anderson's argument. That is, that the world began to imagine communities in the 18th century in Latin American Creole nations, which were the precursors to the European and later African and Asian "nation-states."¹³⁶ And so it was only then that Palestinian and other "nation-states" were

¹³⁶ Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities*. New York: Verso, 2006. Print.

imagined as communities. It is also important to note that the presence of Zionism further strengthened that nationalism.¹³⁷ However, Palestinian nationalism has evolved and for the current Nationalist ideology group, the rules have somewhat changed as dealing with Israel and the Israeli government has seemingly become acceptable and not contradictory to the liberation of Palestine.

The Nationalist group prides itself in putting Palestine first and seeking the termination of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip for the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state based on the 1967 internationally accepted borders. The members of this identity group don't particularly like to communicate with Israel but deem it necessary to reach their goal. This does not remove criticism of Israel and its actions towards the Palestinian people since it began the occupation. Most notably, a policy of denationalism on the part of Israel is of great concern as a crucial part of the conflict and is seen as having been Israel's main motive to completely occupy Palestine.

A Palestinian youth that identified as a nationalist explained,

After the major wars of 1948 and 1967, the Palestinian people have been split geographically into the West Bank, Gaza Strip, refugee camps in the surrounding countries and inside occupied Palestine [present-day Israel]. We are all the same people; the Palestinian cause unites us all.

Historically and politically speaking, the Palestinian nationalist group was the first to form and is thought of by youth in this generation unit as still being the best way to achieve an independent Palestinian state. They see Palestine as not a land but a people.

The youth within this identity group/generation unit are very knowledgeable of the history and political history of Palestine and Israel in great detail as well as the

¹³⁷ Gelvin, James L. *The Israel-Palestine Conflict: One Hundred Years of Conflict*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005. Print.

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history of the nationalist movement. I sat with a youth who identified as a nationalist and he spent over two hours recounting the history of Palestinians, at which point he mentioned he still had halfway to go. They are not opposed to religion but it does not take a priority in their everyday life. They will rarely pray in the mosque.

When asked, “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?,” the answer was, “The occupation. The problem is why are the Israelis here?”

This identity group/generation unit encompasses many different subsections, including expelled refugees living outside Palestine in refugee camps. They feel as though their salient identity is the national cause of Palestine that unites them, differentiates them from the indigenous people of the country they reside in, and gives them hope to return to a home they have never been allowed to see. One refugee in Jordan said, “I don't know Palestine and I wish to see it.”

Another subsection is that of the highly educated who believe that the conflict is a lack of education. Resistance to the occupation should happen through knowledge resistance. One Palestinian youth completing a Masters degree and seeking to continue into a PhD explained, “We need to become more educated, then help our people with that power. Knowledge is power.” Although seemingly different from one another, these subsections all agree that the Palestinian cause is the greatest and most important issue at hand; a national conflict is at hand.

4. Marxist

The mindset is that there exists a large conflict for all Arabs with a lack of unity in mindset and mentality. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) is portrayed as the origin of this ideology, historically always having been the people's second choice for affiliation. However, at the youth level, it is one of the

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smallest groups to be affiliated. Youth who identify with this group are very secure in their ideas and readily express them.

The large conflicts brought up include Imperialism, capitalist intentions, a class struggle, class discrimination, and classifications that lead to differentiation. Conflicts are explained through a Marxist lens in the sense of there being a distinct difference between classes with conflicts taking place on those levels. They continually bring up the accusation they face of disloyalty or being dubbed as traitors by the rest of the Arabs when in fact they stand for equality on the same plane. Oslo was believed to be a failure and crucial turning point for the worse for Arabs. The only possibility and mindset for this ideology is a one-state solution. This identity group is small in number but stands alone and far from the others in terms of political ideologies so it seemingly has a loud voice. This group will readily express its opinion anywhere but seems to always be brushed off as naïve and unrealistic.

When asked, “What is the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?,” the answer was, “It can be divided into two core issues: the occupation and the non-recognition of the occupation and that any Jew can immigrate to Israel while the Palestinian refugee cannot.” Conflicts are seen on a class basis. Once given a chance to talk, their input was very detailed, very precise, and very passionate and they talked for a long time with little to no probing needed.

Most youth in this group are atheist of Muslim or Christian backgrounds. As most Marxists would agree, they argued that religion was a source of differentiation rather than equality. For example, one youth said, “I don’t like a political Islam ideology because they separate themselves from me [a Christian]; we are all Arab. They [Israel] differentiate us based on religion. I am against religion in law. I wouldn’t even like to live in Christian Lebanon.”

Another self-identifying Marxist explained in one of the facilitated sessions, “It’s better to have a human without religion than religion without humanity.”

This group highly values education. There are slight differences between those who are strongly Marxist or strongly pan-Arabist; however, the core ideology is the same: equality for all is the missing link and achieving that equality does not necessarily mean that Jews are excluded. Religion shouldn’t be taken into consideration. They identify as Arab first and Palestinian second. However, there exists a small overlap and contradiction of achieving a goal of equality for all and the liberation of Palestine because Palestinian youth Marxism is coupled with Palestinian nationalism and/or pan-Arabism.

5. Veiled political Islam

Youth in this group fall into it rather than necessarily choosing it. A large event in their life, most likely an encounter or event with the Israeli army, military, secret service, or government, has led to a fear of expression of political ideology. They believe in the same tenets and were previously in the Political Islam group; however, fear now pushes them to veil or obstruct from view their true political ideology. The fear may be that of going to prison, family being threatened, father being fired from work, blackmailing, etc. Some of the fears are rational and as a result of experience, and others can be from rumours heard about others’ experiences or examples they have witnessed in their surroundings.

6. Veiled apolitical Islam

Youth in this group also feel as though they fell into it rather than having actively chosen it. Again, fear propels them to veil their political ideology. Here, the fear is to be dubbed an extremist for a mentality that classifies Islam as life’s priority. Again, the fear can stem from rumours being heard or from the general fear of living

under the oppression of an occupation in the West Bank or as a marginalised minority in Israel. The powerlessness really affects their mentality and leads to a preference manifested as a duress to hide from the public their own ideology; that of apolitical Islam.

Both veiled groups, while holding very different political ideologies, hold binding veils that are coupled with confusion in identity because of the ensuing juggle of ideology and veil of ideology. Sometimes their fear of revealing this ideology would force them to suppress that ideology and its expression thereby pushing them out of the corresponding group and resulting in a feeling of alienation and segregation. Youth within the veiled group often find themselves alone.

It is important to note that youth in these veiled groups have been (in their opinion) forced by external circumstances to re-examine their expression of political affiliation or ideology. Their new form of dealing with the anxiety associated with this expression forces them to veil their orientation and thinking thereby putting them into a new generation unit of veiled ideology. This is exactly how new generation units are formed; a reorientation of expression of political ideology (in this case) as a response to a change in cultural situation and social and political conditions.¹³⁸

In one facilitated session, the fear of repercussions from expressing their opinions gradually increased and was proportional to their withdrawal from the session. One by one, they excused themselves for a short time only to never return. This event shocked and perturbed me as they were only expressing their perception of the conflict they live in. The fear they live in everyday greatly affects and thereby suppresses their sense of freedom and liberty.

¹³⁸ Mannheim, Karl. "The Problem of Generations", in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 285. Print.

6.4 Comparative Analysis of the Six Generation Units

All political ideologies (generation units) have strong (expressive) members and less expressive members but the political ideology itself is very distinct and differentiable into generation units. The Political Islam and Nationalist ideologies encompass the majority of youth (or more than 50%) and their ideologies are not mutually exclusive; however, each group creates a clear line or barrier between themselves and the other. There is much overlap and interaction of the youth from different generation units such as the Political Islam and Apolitical Islam groups possibly praying in the same mosque. Of course, the differentiation is strongly visible in universities as well as after class activities and it more or less directs and guides their pastimes.

A common event for all youth would result in a breaking up of the collective Palestinian youth generation into those different political ideology generation units, where each unit would hold its own respective event for the same theme. The Political Islam and Nationalist groups would have the largest attendance in their separate events. The difference in these two events would mainly be adherence to Islamic lifestyle. Both would have an active ambiance but the Nationalist group would hold a large event with both men and women mixed together in a large hall whereas the Political Islam group would separate men and women. The Apolitical Islam group would choose worship over attendance of such social events and would retract from participation. The Marxist group would hold a small event along similar lines as the other groups, mixing men and women. This kind of event would push the youth in the veiled groups to anxiety and a sense of stress. Because their active participation or withdrawal of participation would in a sense solidify their chosen affiliation and make

it apparent to the public, which is the exact thing they choose to veil. Therefore, they would waver and inconsistently join or abstain for different reasons.

The political ideology is so salient and differentiable that youth would know or could guess to a high degree of accuracy what political ideology each youth affiliated with. And one's social circle of friends would mostly fall within that group/generation unit. There is some overlap and there are floaters who attempt to mingle with several groups but in the end, Palestinian youth would be forced to allow a salient identity to surface because social, cultural and political choices, opinions and perceptions were observed to be heavily impacted by this affiliation. Also, as Mannheim explained, as the consciousness is developed, youth begin to make decisions based on their own experiences rather than what was instilled in them by past generations.¹³⁹ In choosing a manner to respond to the grave conditions they are faced with, which are highly political, Palestinian youth begin to affiliate with a generation unit. This affiliation continues until full assimilation allows their reactions to be that of the collective generation unit, reflecting the ideology of that particular generation unit.

Life for Palestinian youth has been focussed on the political aspect of the conflict. I argue this along the same lines as Sherene Seikaly who asserts that there has been a continuous and historical glossing over the social history of Palestine because of the preeminence of the political aspect: "The social history of Palestinian Arab society living in one contiguous space before its Diaspora has generally been overlooked. This gap is due in part to the overemphasis on 'official' history, defined by restricted notions of the political."¹⁴⁰ Referring back to the UN general assembly vote for Palestine's non-voting observer status, nearly all 9 countries that voted

¹³⁹ *ibid.* p.300

¹⁴⁰ Seikaly, Sherene. "Meatless days: Consumption and capitalism in wartime Palestine 1939-1948." Diss. New York University, 2007. Print.

against it or the 41 that abstained voiced an opinion that a focus should be on politically-mediated negotiations between both parties rather than a unilateral decision made at the international level. It becomes apparent that the entire world views the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as primarily a political one. With this emphasis on politics in narrating Palestinian history, assessing the need for UN voting rights and the policies agreed upon politically, such as the Oslo Accords, governing their everyday lives, it is no mystery why the present Palestinian youth generation units feel as though they must choose a political ideology to affiliate themselves with and through that affiliation they can make decisions about their everyday lives.

Therefore, it can be concluded that politics and political ideology have hijacked Palestinian youth's way of thinking and play a major role in their decision-making. In looking at the results of chapter five, although *political problems* ranked second in terms of priority given by the youth, it ranked number one for groundedness. It had the most ideas assigned to it of all the super themes created with 79 ideas while the *ideological, racism and differentiation* super theme got 67 ideas. The third ranked super theme of *land, separation and dispersion* encompassed 54 ideas. It is important to note the overlap of the ideas meaning that the youth sometimes decided to place an idea in more than one theme, usually to a maximum of two themes but sometimes up to four themes (such as 'the occupation'). As for ideas in the *ideological, racism and differentiation* super theme, 13% of them also fell into *political problems*. Within *land, separation and dispersion problems*, 26% also fell into *political problems*. Those percentages would amount to nearly 3.5% and 4.6% of the total ideas expressed. These figures along with the 19% priority of the total ideas associated with *political problems* would amount to over 27% importance of *political problems*. It can therefore be observed how the heavy weight of politics as observed

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in the Palestinian youth's lives is also reflected in the heavy emphasis of Palestinian youth's perceptions expressed for the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in this research study.

6.5 Political Affiliation Identity Group/Generation Unit Comparison and Contrast

None of the groups are mutually exclusive with the exception of Apolitical Islam, which by definition means that it rejects politics in its entirety. There are many things to compare and contrast the six major groups/generation units as seen in Table 3. But it is important to note that overlap does not detract from the unique and distinct interpretation of each generation unit.

Table 3. The Six Palestinian Youth Political Affiliation Identity Groups/Mannheimian Generation Units Compared and Contrasted.

political affiliation / points of comparison or contrast	Political Islam	Nationalist	Apolitical Islam	Marxist	Veiled Political Islam	Veiled Apolitical Islam
Islamic rule	Now	Mostly stand for secularism	Not now / after Muslims begin to practice Islam of their own accord	Complete secularism	Now	Not now / after Muslims begin to practice Islam of their own accord
Nationalism	Secondary to Islamic rule	The most fundamental base of identity	Superseded by Islam	As important as equality	Secondary to Islamic rule	Superseded by Islam
Political expression	Mostly open but still selective based on the person / setting	Completely open and transparent	Reject politics and affiliating any importance or time to it	Completely open and transparent but in the right setting	Completely veiled and avoids expression, even with like-minded or same group people, only stays with close friends	Completely veiled and avoids politics at all costs to avoid suspicion of affiliation
Social outings	Segregated and mostly politically-based	Mixed and politically or socially-based	Segregated and entirely same group based	Mixed and mostly same group based	Segregated and only with close friends	Segregated and only with close friends
Religious practice	Mostly pious and devout	Mostly laxed	Extremely pious and devout. Usually inviting others to join	Atheist	Mostly pious and devout but a little more distant than political Islam group	Very pious and devout but practice at home and sometimes privately
Attendance in the mosque for prayers	Almost 100%	Very little but not applicable to all members	100% for every prayer and always remain there for some extra time alone or in groups	Never	50%-90% Afraid to go to the mosque for fear of labelled affiliation	50%-100% Afraid to regularly attend the mosque for prayers for

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						fear of labelled affiliation
Outlook on the occupation	It is the major obstacle along with distance from religion	It is the major obstacle	It does not preoccupy one's mind	It is a major obstacle along with the class struggle	It is the major obstacle along minimally with distance from religion	It rarely preoccupies one's mind
Opinion on Jews	Problem is with Zionists	Problem is with Zionists	They are God-believers	Problem is with Zionists and Palestinians but can never agree 100% with Israeli Marxists	Problem is with Zionists and the Israeli government	They are God-believing. Problem is with the Israeli government
Appearance Men	Trimmed beard (does not extend off of the face), wear dress shirt	Clean shaven, wear stylish and mostly tight clothes	Long beard that extends down from the jaw, taqiyah (skullcap), long dishdasha (cultural robe reaching the ankles)	Mostly clean shaven but sometimes with a short beard. Western-style clothing or hippy style	Trimmed beard (does not extend off of the face), wear dress shirt and sometimes tight pants (mixed)	Medium-length beard that does not extend down from the jaw, mixed clothing
Women	Wears a hijab and modestly dressed in a black or bland colour simple-style aabayah (long robe)	Liberal clothes without a hijab (for the most part)	Wear a hijab and fully covered in a loose, non-revealing aabayah. Sometimes wearing a niqab or khimar (only revealing the eyes)	Mostly without hijab. Mostly western-style clothing	Wears a hijab, modestly dressed and mostly loose clothing	Wears a hijab and modestly dressed, doesn't wear pants or revealing clothes

***Let it be noted that the above information is based on my experience as a participant observer in the Palestinian youth community for 4 months. It is based on my specific experience and is how I observed the interlocutors through my own eyes.

There is a great similarity between the Political Islam and Nationalist groups. Both agree that the conflict is the occupation. They are both extremely passionate about their own ideals and ideologies. When a Palestinian youth was asked about the great variance between the two groups, the youth explained that, “it can be illustrated in four main factors: 1) ideology in general 2) predispositions [decision made before any action is taken—no matter what one will say, the other would always disagree] 3) divergent methods of struggle and 4) foreign effect on internal matters.”

6.6 Ethnographic Personal Reflections

After being surrounded by Palestinian youth for nearly four months, I slowly but surely gained the ability to distinguish and guess the political affiliation of any youth I came across. The reason being that I adapted to the situation, trends and

tendencies of Palestinian youth and began to integrate myself into their community. Just as Davies explains, I was able to construct a theory through my active participation within the Palestinian youth society.¹⁴¹ As Powdermaker put it, I could “step in and out of society”¹⁴² as a participant observer, i.e. ethnographer.

The differences I observed between Palestinian youth were ideological but they manifested in other ways as well, such as attending or abstaining from social events, political expression or lack thereof, religious practice, attendance in the mosque for prayers, and appearance. The gradient and scale was very broad from one end to the other. Also, not all youth could be classified in these exact generation units but I observed that the majority would fall into these specific tendencies based on their political affiliations, i.e. generation unit. What’s more, Palestinian youth are so engulfed by this social, cultural and educational division based on political affiliation that they cannot see it or identify it clearly, at least consciously. This was the biggest shock and it took a long time to discern the seemingly apparent structure of division and cohesiveness, apparent to me but seemingly invisible to them. Contrasting their mindsets on this notion, if any person was mentioned, almost immediately, his or her political affiliation was mentioned (therefore known or assumed to be known) and reactions to this person would more or less follow a predisposition based on the mould created by their respective generation unit. This can be corroborated by Mannheim’s explanation of a cultured generation unit, when all the members move past accepting an individual outlook on things and they themselves can experience anything and everything in the distinct manner of the collective group.¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Davies, Charlotte Aull. *Reflexive Ethnography*. New York: Routledge, 1999, p.4. Print.

¹⁴² Powdermaker, H. *Stranger and friend: The way of an anthropologist*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1996, p.19. Print.

¹⁴³ Mannheim, Karl. “The Problem of Generations”, in Paul Kecskemeti (ed.) *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1952: 306. Print.

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The effect of this political affiliation is so strong that I was pressured to choose a political affiliation both internally and by peer pressure from Palestinian youth. Leo Coleman explains that as an ethnographer, I was then responsible to reflect and relay my countertransference to the research findings.¹⁴⁴ Not only did I feel pressured to choose a political affiliation but also I felt as though I wanted to. While I attempted to maintain neutrality, I remained conflicted on this matter internally because I myself experienced the reality that my affiliation would in fact affect my social, cultural, mosque and general interactions and activities. And I was tempted to choose an affiliation, align myself solely with that group and treat the others as “my” collective group/generation unit did. This inability to remain neutral is all too common to ethnographers who throw themselves into the field and are immersed in the population they are studying and they inevitably (or attempt to) integrate. As ethnographer June Nash explained:

In Bolivia it was not possible to choose the role of an impartial observer and still work in the tin mining community of Oruro, where I had gone to study ideology and social change. The polarisation of the class struggle made it necessary to take sides or to be cast by them on one side or the other. In a revolutionary situation, no neutrals are allowed.¹⁴⁵

This struggle perfectly illustrates what an ethnographer will encounter in the field. And as Papageorgiou explains, the subjectivity is crucial to field research in order to meet the research goals.¹⁴⁶ My goal was to study Palestinian youth perceptions of the conflict and therefore learning the inner workings of a differentiation into distinct groups was a great discovery of which I continued to study.

¹⁴⁴ Coleman, Leo. *The obligation to receive*. Ed. Borneman, John and Adbellah Hammoudi. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009, p.114. Print.

¹⁴⁵ Nash, June. *Ethics and Anthropology: Dilemmas in Fieldwork*. M. Rynkiewich and J. Spradley, eds., 1976, p.150. Print.

¹⁴⁶ Papageorgiou, Dimitris. *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork*. Ed. McLean, Athena and Annette Leibling. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p.222. Print.

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I nevertheless attempted to contain my impartiality to which ideology I thought was right and wrong and which lifestyle was more appealing to me because the process wasn't so linear in that a political affiliation leads to a particular lifestyle. The inverse could also be observed, meaning that a person choosing a certain lifestyle would inevitably place him into a political ideology group (generation unit). This combat with individual choice and group choice was very prevalent.

For myself, I tried to shuffle between different political affiliations/generation units to gain a broad understanding of Palestinian youth perceptions. I did notice that life was extremely different for all political affiliation groups/generation units. While fear was the most vivid for the veiled groups, it was ever-present for all other groups/units as well. Fear and terror was what kept this Palestinian youth generation bound, it was their main cohesive link. Palestinian youth live in a constant state of fear and this fear only pushes them further into their chosen and affiliated circle (generation unit), which reinforces and solidifies their political ideologies.

In my four months in Palestine, I heard of houses being raided in the West Bank, houses being scheduled for demolition in the West Bank and Jerusalem, and Israeli army presence in towns in the West Bank either on streets or in front of university entrance gates. Also, nights would be filled with gunfire heard in the distance, sometimes hearing sound bombs and sometimes inhaling tear gas. In the extreme heat of the desert, windows being closed was a luxury most Palestinian youth couldn't afford but leaving them open would allow the tear gas to seep in and burn the eyes, nose and throat. The reason for tear gas being released into the town was never known to the Palestinian youth, nor was the Israeli army's raid or storming of the streets. Terror was ever-present in the eyes of the town folk of all ages but especially Palestinian youth. It was a known fact to them that if anyone was found on the streets

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during an Israeli road storm, they could be arrested and thrown into prison. The fear and terror was almost always present but coupled with it was a seemingly normalisation of that terror. The normalisation seemed to be due to the feeling of helplessness; however, all Palestinian youth grew up in these conditions since childbirth. They could identify that it wasn't "normal" but they also lived their lives as though there was nothing that could be done.

There was a very intriguing and disheartening plea to spread the word of injustice being committed against them all the while being defeated in the knowledge that nothing could or would change. It made me wonder the motivation for trying to spread the word of the oppression and occupation. I recount some Palestinian youth in Israel telling me "Did you know that sometimes Israeli youth doing their military service come to university campuses with their guns?! Have you seen or heard of any country that allows army forces to attend university classes bearing arms?" This fact shocked them, made them feel inferior and very intimidated but it was also normalised.

Another youth recounted to me that

My life is hell. I am always afraid that one day, the Israeli army will just pick me up and throw me in jail for no reason. I don't do anything illegal. I just work to try to earn a living but they don't need a reason to imprison me, they have all the power and I have nothing, no justice, no sense of security. And you want to hear the worst part? I don't know how I would live my life without this constant sense of unease, terror and anxiousness...I don't know how I'd live.

Saying those words out loud made the youth reflect a little at the obvious abnormal state they were living in but the youth quickly reverted back to the normal state. This normalised state of terror would remain as the most intriguing and worrisome observation made and felt while living in Palestine.

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These conclusions may seem subjective and biased but in fact, it is in the subjectivity, the bias and the subsequently biased and subjective perceptions that they hold weight. As ethnographers Charlotte Aull Davies, Powdermaker, Papageorgiou, Tedlock and Goulet assert, it is only through the total immersion of a researcher into his field between the “subjects” that he can begin to understand the target interlocutors. A combining of subjective reflexivity all the while seeking several perspectives were carried out just as Davies outlines for an ethnographer’s research to remain credible and to overcome the epistemological criticisms.¹⁴⁷ Following Papageorgiou’s guidelines, time was taken into consideration¹⁴⁸ what with 4 months of total immersion, living around Palestinian youth and almost solely interacting with them. After the initial shock of the living conditions they live in and the seemingly accustomed to terror attitude they had, I began to understand the environment and could begin to live a similar life to theirs and experience the events similarly. Just as Papageorgiou explains, I continually evaluated my research findings and subsequently constructed, deconstructed and reconstructed the reality I had seen and lived in for those 4 months.¹⁴⁹ The objectivity came in the analysis of the subjective experience in which I allowed myself to live a similar life to Palestinian youth in an attempt to experience their daily struggles and then relay it ethnographically through my eyes—the closest I can get as an ethnographer into their world—to the academic world. Just as Goulet explains,¹⁵⁰ I cannot claim that these findings are through the eyes of Palestinian youth today but they are through my own eyes as an integrated member of the Palestinian youth society in the particular time I was there.

¹⁴⁷ Davies, Charlotte Aull. *Reflexive Ethnography*. New York: Routledge, 1999, p.25. Print.

¹⁴⁸ Papageorgiou, Dimitris. *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork*. Ed. McLean, Athena and Annette Leibing. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p.223. Print.

¹⁴⁹ Papageorgiou, Dimitris. *The Shadow Side of Fieldwork*. Ed. McLean, Athena and Annette Leibing. Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2007, p.228. Print.

¹⁵⁰ Goulet, Jean-Guy A. *Ways of Knowing: Experience, Knowledge, and Power among the DeneTha*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998. Print.

6.7 Conclusion

In addition to the facilitation sessions conducted with Palestinian youth in Palestine, Israel and Jordan, I also consciously carried out an ethnographic study during my four-month immersion within the Palestinian youth society. As an ethnographer, I situated myself as a participant observer to try to subjectively experience the lives of the interlocutors so that I could similarly experience events and then objectively reflect on those experiences. The result was a major discovery in the order and structure of my and their everyday lives. I began to see a very clearly defined separation between Palestinian youth into six distinct groups that was based on political affiliation and was exported into defining social, cultural, educational and political interactions.

These groupings can be dubbed as Mannheimian generation units. Increasing political, economical, cultural and social problems faced by Palestinian youth such as the construction of the Wall, the civil uprisings, the growing settlements among many more, caused a Sewellian event of protracted mass destabilisation inducing a structural reconfiguration. The Palestinian youth generation was observed to be divided into six generation units: Political Islam, Nationalist, Apolitical Islam, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam.

The Political Islam ideology seeks a sovereign Palestinian state to be governed through Islamic *Shari'a* law. The Nationalist ideology strives for strengthened Palestinian nationalism and the liberation of Palestine. The Apolitical Islam group places religious practice above all aspects of one's life and rejects politics as a preoccupation. The Marxist group hopes for unity among Arabs to gain freedom by eliminating oppression and rule of the Israeli government and the removal of religion from governance. The Veiled Political Islam group believes in the same core tenants

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as the Political Islam group, which is to strive for a sovereign Palestinian state, governed by *Shari'a* law but hides their political ideology due to negative experiences with the Israeli government and fear of reprisals. The Veiled Apolitical Islam group also experiences anxiety at the thought of revealing their political affiliation from fear of being labelled extremists; however, they simply stand for adherence to Islam over political focus in one's life.

These six political ideologies are not mutually exclusive but were observed to place strong dividing barriers between each other to differentiate one another and strongly bind themselves to their own generation unit. All groups seemingly agree that the largest and most important conflict at hand, the root of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the Israeli occupation of Palestine. However, they each have a distinct and separate ideology on how to live one's life in the way they react to the same external conditions and this divides the Palestinian youth generation. Also, these generation units place a heavy weight on collective decision-making, where a collective mentality is exported into the individual decision-making process.

I believe that this political ideology-based differentiation is due to the overemphasis on politics both internally, through the events around Palestinian youth, as well as on the national and international levels when dealing with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Finally, the ethnography of four months with Palestinian youth surfaced a shocking reality that Palestinians live in an almost unbroken sense of terror from the Israeli occupying power. Palestinian youth recounted numerous stories of raids, street storming, hearing gun firing, tear gas, sound bombs, military presence and unlawful imprisonment as examples of the terror they live in and have seemingly normalised.

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All these events are dubbed as political problems or are interpreted and responded to by the political affiliation group/generation unit collective mentality.

This analysis and discovery was shocking and was constantly evaluated based on several ethnographers' outlines such as Papageorgiou and Goulet in order to be substantiated as credible and meaningful contributions to research. In essence, this ethnography sought to relay Palestinian youth perceptions of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and make meaning of their experiences.

Chapter Seven

Conclusion

7.1 Overview of Research Findings

The purpose of the research was to gain insight on Palestinian youth perceptions on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. What do they perceive as the underlying conflict and the most important problem? Additionally, to understand how the conflict affects their everyday lives whether they live in the West Bank, Israel or a refugee camp. The current Palestinian youth generation is made up of youth who are exposed to the same external conditions and circumstances and thereby form a cohesive generation. Using an innovative third party neutral, Participatory Action Research-based YOUCAN facilitation model, facilitation sessions were conducted with Palestinian youth in different cities. Four were in the West Bank, three in Israel and two in a Jordanian refugee camp. The total participants amounted to 81 with additional interlocutors throughout the four months of field research. In analysing the group self-produced themes of problems and their priorities, Grounded Theory was used to group the Palestinian youth's themes of problems into super themes and bring to surface the highest ranked super theme of problems. Alongside the facilitation sessions, an ethnographic study was carried out through the total immersion of the researcher for four months within Palestinian youth society. This allowed for a major discovery in the structure of the generation of Palestinian youth and the relations between them.

The research results can be divided into two distinct parts: the direct and objective data results as obtained through the nine facilitated sessions and the subjective experience-based ethnography of the researcher based on the four months of complete immersion within Palestinian youth society. Both parts of this research

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together combine to paint a picture of Palestinian youth perceptions of the conflict, the lives they live and attempt to give meaning to their experiences.

The results of the nine facilitated sessions with Palestinian youth revealed that the priority conflict based on their perceptions is that of an ideological, racism and differentiation problem. In more detail, this pertains to the ideological thought that Palestine doesn't exist and is rightly for Jews and Israel with complete disregard to Palestinians. Also, the subsequent and rampant racism and differentiation felt from Palestinians from Jews, Israelis or Jordanians depending on their location of inhabitation. The rest of the super themes in order of importance are: *Political; Land, separation and dispersion; Economic; Rights and freedom; Security; Cultural; Media; and Social problems.*

Political problems encompassed a historical recount of the past events that culminated in the creation of Israel as well as present political destabilisation internally, nationally and internationally, including Israel's hegemony on Palestinians. In terms of groundedness—the number of ideas and quotations within a super theme—*political problems* ranked as the highest super theme. *Land, separation and dispersion problems* revolved around the Palestinian Diaspora, land confiscation and expropriation, the numerous land restrictions and control by Israel through the creation of the Wall and the growing settlements in the West Bank. Also, the control of Jerusalem was highlighted. *Economic problems* were two-pronged: Israel's forced dependency of Palestinian economy onto the Israeli economy and Israeli restrictions of access to water, land through the Wall and mobility restrictions having grave economic repercussions.

Rights and freedom problems were perceived as the deprivation of the freedom of speech, unlawful arrest, movement restrictions and human rights violation.

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Security problems pertained to the perception that Palestinians live in a constant state of terror completely lacking any security while Israel enjoys full security both militarily and mentally. An Israeli policy of denationalism coupled with Palestinians' lack of maintaining their ability in the Arabic language, traditions, history and narrative were portrayed as *cultural problems*. *Media problems* were two fold; the world misrepresenting Palestinians as hating Jews rather than Zionists and Zionism as well as a distorted reporting of the actual situation thereby lacking reporting of Israel's human rights violations unto Palestinians. Lastly, *social problems* pertained to the difficulty in living side by side with Israelis and the inability to access a proper health care system. Within all the themes, the word "occupation" was the most commonly quoted throughout all facilitation sessions.

The result of the in-depth ethnography of complete immersion in Palestinian youth society for four months was a major discovery in the order and structure of my and their everyday lives. As a participant observer, I could see a clearly defined separation between Palestinian youth into six distinct groups that was based on political affiliation and was exported into defining social, cultural, educational and political interactions.

Within the Palestinian youth generation, the inner groupings, named Mannheimian generation units, were observed as follows: Political Islam, Nationalist, Apolitical Islam, Marxist, Veiled Political Islam and Veiled Apolitical Islam.

The Political Islam ideology seeks a sovereign Palestinian state to be governed through Islamic *Shari'a* law. The Nationalist ideology strives for strengthened Palestinian nationalism and the liberation of Palestine. The Apolitical Islam group places religious practice above all aspects of one's life and rejects politics as a preoccupation. The Marxist group hopes for unity among Arabs to gain freedom by

eliminating oppression and rule of the Israeli government and the removal of religion from governance. The Veiled Political Islam group believes in the same core tenants as the Political Islam group, which is to strive for a sovereign Palestinian state, governed by *Shari'a* law but hides their political ideology due to negative experiences with the Israeli government and fear of reprisals. The Veiled Apolitical Islam group also experiences anxiety at the thought of revealing their political affiliation from fear of being labelled extremists; however, they simply stand for adherence to Islam over political focus in one's life.

These six political ideologies are not mutually exclusive but were observed to place strong dividing barriers between each other to differentiate one another and strongly bind themselves to their own generation unit. Almost all the groups seemingly agree that the largest and most important conflict at hand, the root of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is the Israeli occupation of Palestine. However, they each have a distinct and separate ideology on how to live one's life in the way they react to the same external conditions and this divides the Palestinian youth generation. Also, these generation units place a heavy weight on collective decision-making, where a collective mentality is exported into the individual decision-making process.

This political ideology-based differentiation is believed to be the consequence of the overemphasis on politics through the constant and daily reminder of politics around the Palestinian youth generation and on the national and international levels with reporting and media.

The significance of this research brings to light the objective data results of facilitation sessions conducted with Palestinians in various locations across Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. These results illustrate that the Palestinian youth generation perceive that ideological, racism and differentiation-rooted problems are at

the base of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This reflects the effect such problems have on their everyday lives. However, in closely analysing the ideas expressed, political problems also surface as an important underlying issue. In fact, the ethnography of four months with Palestinian youth surfaced a shocking discovery of the lives of Palestinian youth. They were observed to live in a constant state of fear and terror that was seemingly normalised. The terror was perceived to be caused by the Israeli government and was perceived as both unjust and normalised. There was a great amount of effort from each generation unit to relay reports of the injustice while seemingly accepting that this would never change.

7.2 Limitations

There are many limitations to this research study. First and foremost, it only incorporates the perceptions of the 81 participants in the facilitated sessions and the handful of interlocutors spoken to outside of those sessions. There was also a larger representation of male voices than female. The research was intended for qualitative and not quantitative purposes. The findings of the facilitated sessions cannot be claimed to be representative as the sessions were only conducted in a few cities across Palestine, Israel and a Jordanian refugee camp. Gaza and refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon were not accessed. Also, the ethnography part of the research does not seek to provide an objective and accurate recount of the happenings in Palestine, rather to make meaning of the experiences of Palestinian youth society as seen through the eyes of the ethnographer while being a participant observer.

Finally, this research deals with the current Palestinian youth generation and cannot be reified or exported to other Palestinian generations. The findings are significant to the current and only the current generation within the current generation's time. Once the current Palestinian youth are exposed to different external

circumstances or they no longer engage in close-knit interactions, this research's findings no longer apply to them and the generation units are nullified.

7.3 Future Research

In order to check the validity of this research quantitatively, more facilitation sessions could be conducted in more cities as well as villages in Palestine and Israel. Also, the Gaza Strip is a missing piece to the representation of this study. More refugee camps could also be visited within Jordan but also in Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

After adequate research is done to be more representative of the voice of the Palestinian youth generation, an additional step or separate facilitated session could be held to ask the question, "What is the solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?" With the innovative third party neutral, Participatory Action Research-based YOUCAN facilitation model already created and established in unison with subsequent Grounded Theory analysis, this research would prove very useful. Firstly, it would allow the comparison of Palestinian youth's perceptions on possible and sustainable solutions. Secondly, using the same research method of facilitation sessions, it would allow the identification of the priority solution based on the opinions of Palestinian youth. Thirdly, it would allow a very interesting and enlightening comparison of the priority problem to the priority solution.

With all these future research studies conducted, Palestinian youth perceptions and perspectives could be used to add a missing voice to the ongoing negotiations that have continuously failed leading to an unending political turmoil in Palestine-Israel. It is vital to hear the voice of the Palestinian youth generation in order to move one step closer to a representative negotiation table for a possible or sustainable resolution to this protracted conflict.

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