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**Caroline Mall Dibiasi**

**The Transformation of Palestinian Political Activism from the First to the Second Intifada: A Convergence of Politics, Territory and Society**

The central question this thesis poses is how and why the modes of Palestinian political activism have changed from the first to the second intifada. The thesis will explore the underlying major political, territorial and social developments that created a new environment for the second uprising that was no longer conducive to the mass protests and acts of civil disobedience, which had dominated the first intifada in the late 1980s. The decline of civil society, the reassertion of Palestinian political factionalism and the unique geographical dislocation of the Palestinian territories, which created new physical obstacles to resistance but also caused division within society, were the key factors in reshaping the context of the second intifada. In addition, rising support for violent resistance among the population was rooted in the sense of hopelessness and frustration that re-emerged over the Oslo period. Much of the population's frustration was directed at Israel's colonial regime but in part it was also a response to the rule of the Palestinian Authority, which had failed to fulfil its commitments to its own population in view of its obligations under Oslo toward Israel. In the absence of alternative non-violent outlets within either politics or civil society, what took root instead was individual activism via militant organisations.

As such, this thesis offers an account of the development of Palestinian political action (and in particular political violence) that is indebted to an effort to employ historical and contextual analysis in ways that deepen the insights available from explanations of behaviour drawn from political science.

**The Transformation of Palestinian Political Activism from  
the First to the Second Intifada: A Convergence of Politics,  
Territory and Society**

Caroline Mall Dibiasi

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2012

## Contents

<b>List of Illustrations</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>List of Abbreviations</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Statement of Copyright</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>1. Studying the Palestine Question</b> .....	<b>18</b>
1.1 Introducing the Palestine Question .....	19
1.2 Debates on the Palestine Question .....	25
1.3 Palestinian Political Violence .....	32
1.4 Central Features of the Palestine Literature .....	34
1.5 Studying Palestinian Political Violence in Political Science and is there Scope for Hybrids?.....	36
1.6 Looking Beyond Palestine.....	48
1.7 Formulating Key Questions.....	51
1.8 Methodology .....	53
1.9 Research Methods .....	60
<b>2. From the First to the Second Intifada: Transformations in Politics and Civil Society</b> .....	<b>67</b>
2.1 The First Intifada: the Power of the People .....	70
2.1.1 The Challenge of Palestinian Factionalism .....	78
2.1.2 The Rise of the Islamists .....	82
2.1.3 Achievements of the Intifada .....	84
2.2 Oslo: The Roadmap from Hope to Despair .....	86

2.2.1 Setting Up a Narrative of Palestinian Incompetence and Complicity in Terrorism .....	87
2.2.2 The Reality of the Agreements .....	90
2.3 The Decline of Civil Society and the Reassertion of Factionalism .....	102
2.4 Hopelessness Revisited: The Rise of Violent Resistance .....	106
2.5 Conclusions .....	112
<b>3. Fragmenting Territory and Society .....</b>	<b>116</b>
3.1 The Significance of Territory and Its Continuous Fragmentation .....	118
3.1.1 Space and State .....	119
3.1.2 Memory, Society and Space .....	122
3.1.3 Territory in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict .....	128
3.1.4 Territorial Transformations and the Second Intifada .....	131
3.1.5 Suicide Bombing as a Territorial Statement .....	138
3.2 Dividing Palestinian Society .....	147
3.2.1 The Impact of Loss of Land and Restricted Mobility .....	148
3.2.2 Social, Cultural and Ideological Disintegration .....	152
3.2.3 Solidarity and Social Action .....	159
3.2.4 Identity .....	162
3.2.5 The Islamist and Secularist Divide.....	164
3.3 A Policy of Disempowerment or Natural Course? .....	166
3.4 Conclusions .....	169
<b>4. Explaining Suicide Bombing .....</b>	<b>171</b>
4.1 A Context of Violence and Organisational Rationale .....	172
4.2 The Psychological Impact – the Individual .....	182
4.3 Territorial Fragmentation: Organisational Changes, the Individual, and Social Networks .....	186

4.4 Social Fragmentation: Geographic Origins and Social Backgrounds of Suicide Bombers .....	190
4.4.1 Bombers and their Origin .....	192
4.4.2 Rural & Refugee Camp Residents vs. Urban Dwellers .....	196
4.4.3 Regional Distribution of Settlements and Checkpoints .....	199
4.5. Political Fragmentation and Competition: Inter-Group Relations and the Lack of Strategy .....	204
4.6. Women and Suicide Bombing – Escape Route or Emancipation? .....	210
4.7. Explaining Suicide Bombing, the Relationship between Politics & Violence, and Questioning the Importance of Strategy .....	221
<b>5. Drawing Conclusions .....</b>	<b>227</b>
5.1 Summary of Findings and their Relevance.....	227
5.2 Reflections on the Research Process .....	235
5.3 Areas for Future Research .....	245
<b>Bibliography .....</b>	<b>248</b>
<b>Appendix I</b>	
<b>Map</b>	

## List of Illustrations

### Figures

4.1. Number of suicide bombers between October 2000 and the end of 2004 according to governorate .....	192
4.2. Distribution of bombers across governorates per year in percentages .....	194
4.3. Regional distribution of suicide bombers .....	196

## Abbreviations

ANM	Arab Nationalist Movement
ARIJ	Applied Research Institute Jerusalem
DAVO	Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft Vorderer Orient
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IALIIS	Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies
ICAHD	Israeli Committee Against House Demolition
IDF	Israel Defence Force
JNF	Jewish National Fund
JPS	Journal of Palestine Studies
JWC	Joint Water Committee
NIHC	National Islamic High Committee for the Follow-up of the Intifada
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OCHA oPt.	OCHA occupied Palestinian territories
OT	Occupied Territory
PA	Palestinian Authority
PASSIA	Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PHRMG	Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group
PNA	Palestinian National Authority
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organisation
PFLP	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PFLP-GC	Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine General Command
PRCS	Palestine Red Crescent Society
PSR	Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research
UNLU	United National Leadership of the Uprising
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency
WCLAC	Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling



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Any errors, omissions or views (unless explicitly cited) are all my own and not the responsibility of people mentioned here.

## Introduction

Palestinian political activism has changed dramatically over the years. Why and how it has changed is the subject of this thesis. The news from the territories of the first intifada were predominantly of large-scale protests, stone-throwing youths, and mass strikes. The pictures of the second uprising were much grimmer with seemingly unremitting explosions on Israeli buses, in shopping centres, cafes and restaurants. More concealed to the eye of the Western observer remained the personal tragedies of Palestinians suffering under continued repression, heavy-handed military tactics and collective forms of punishment.

The signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993 marked a major milestone in the conflict, promising a solution based on a two-state model. However, almost twenty years later, rather than looking closer to its resolution, the conflict has become more complicated, bitter, and entrenched. The violence of the second intifada, the reoccupation of the Palestinian-controlled areas of the West Bank, the construction of the Separation Wall and the growing distrust between the two sides almost nullified any achievements that may have been attained through the Oslo peace process. Over the years the peace process began to adopt a life of its own, no longer to be primarily a vehicle for the resolution of the conflict. In Deborah Sontag's words, it 'involved considerably more process than peace.'<sup>1</sup> It attracted international attention and aid and to many international players it offered the gratification to be seen to be doing something. The focus on aid often reframed the 'problem' to a humanitarian one when, in fact, the question of Palestine always was and still is an essentially political problem, one that necessitates a political solution.

Successive Israeli governments have looked less likely to accept a land for peace deal. Instead, unilateralism has dominated the agenda. Sharon's withdrawal from Gaza was often portrayed as a concession to peace but in fact it merely turned Gaza into an open air prison and re-focused settlement strategy on the West Bank. The building of the Separation Wall on a route that only intermittently coincides with the internationally recognised pre-1967 armistice line was, again, commenced without international or Palestinian consultation. This wall, hailed as the ultimate answer to suicide bombings inside Israel, has left many questions unanswered. Since a substantial length of the wall

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<sup>1</sup> Deborah Sontag, "And Yet So Far: A Special Report. Quest for Mideast Peace: How and Why It Failed," *New York Times*, 26 July 2001, <http://www.nytimes.com/2001/07/26/world/and-yet-so-far-a-special-report-quest-for-mideast-peace-how-and-why-it-failed.html?pagewanted=all&src=pm> (accessed 11 October 2011).

has been completed, suicide bombings have largely ceased. However, there is reason to doubt whether the relationship between these two events goes much beyond correlation. What is certain is that the Separation Wall had a detrimental impact on the daily life of many Palestinian communities and many of the repercussions are yet to be felt as whole villages and towns along the route of the barrier have become encircled by it and separated from their lands and livelihoods. Al-Walajah in the Bethlehem governorate, which after the completion of the wall in the area will only be accessible through one road into the village guarded by a checkpoint and separated from the village's farmland, is an exemplary case in point.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the construction of the wall further entrenched the physical and psychological division from what for Palestinians used to be their cultural, social and economic, even if not political, hub: East Jerusalem. Since Oslo, access to East Jerusalem had always been difficult, reaching East Jerusalem without a permit has with the construction of the Separation Wall, however, become near to impossible.

In the meantime, Palestinians are also plagued by problems of their own. Factionalism, corruption, and financial crises have all contributed to debilitating the performance of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Arafat, of course, also deserves mention here. The fighter turned politician, has become the symbol of Palestinian nationalism. He was able to unify Palestinians like no one else, yet his autocratic rule deeply crippled the potential for future democratic development.

Since 1948 the fragmentation and dispersion of the Palestinian population has been one of the major challenges for Palestinian nationalism. What Palestinians are left with at present, are three physically separated territorial entities that experience very different conditions. In the long term, this status will further weaken the Palestinian project of an independent state. In addition, there is a very large diaspora of Palestinians around the world, a substantial number of which still live in often dilapidated refugee camps under very poor conditions in Arab countries. The stance of the host governments towards the refugees on their territory could be at best described as ambivalent.

One of the perennial difficulties for the Palestinians has been that they have nothing to give except peace. With virtually no control over land or resources, they could only bargain over things they did not have. This thesis will enter its final stages as Palestinians embark on a new strategy. In part, it is a return to an old approach. In

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<sup>2</sup> See B'Tselem, "Separation Barrier Strangles al-Walajah," 14 November 2010, [http://www.btselem.org/separation\\_barrier/20101114\\_al\\_walajah\\_separation\\_barrier](http://www.btselem.org/separation_barrier/20101114_al_walajah_separation_barrier) (accessed 11 October 2011).

1947 Palestinians had rejected UN General Assembly Resolution 181 calling for the partition of the British-ruled Palestine Mandate into independent Jewish and Arab states and a special international regime for the City of Jerusalem.<sup>3</sup> In the decades to follow, the UN as a broker for peace became side-lined in favour of the United States. Now Palestinians are returning to the UN to submit an application to seek recognition as a member state. In how far this will in reality change the Palestinian situation remains to be seen. What is certain is that the Palestinian statehood bid, even in its failure, directly challenges the American administration and its role as the ‘neutral’ third-party broker in Palestinian-Israeli negotiations. Moreover, it has exposed the persistence of underlying power dynamics as none of the traditionally powerful have embraced the statehood bid as a positive step and seized this moment constructively to push forward a resolution of the conflict. In the absence of progress in the long-stalled negotiations and any innovative alternative proposals, the very obvious and important question as to what are the remaining options for Palestinians to achieve self-determination arises, and the return to violence is a possibility to be taken seriously.

While the conflict from its early stages had always been violent, violence began to reach new heights in the aftermath of the Oslo period. Baruch Goldstein’s massacre of 29 worshippers in the Ibrahimi Mosque in Hebron on 25 February 1994, was followed by a series of suicide bombings against civilians inside Israel as well as in Gaza, a trend which paused at times yet never quite subsided over the post-Oslo period.<sup>4</sup> While Hamas was the Palestinian group that initiated this tactic, other groups adopted it too. It was, however, not until the second intifada that the phenomenon almost took on a life of its own. The year 2002 saw an average of one bombing per week. This sudden surge in suicide bombings carried out by Palestinian groups attracted much attention in academic circles as well as in the media. It was not a new phenomenon, yet it seemed to take a new turn. The sheer number of volunteers, the ferocity of the bombings, and their unpredictability raised many questions. This thesis, however, will cast its net much wider. Rather than focusing on one aspect of Palestinian action against Israel, it will trace evolving Palestinian political activism from the first to the second intifada and

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<sup>3</sup> UN General Assembly, Resolution 181 (II), “Resolution Adopted on the Report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Palestinian Question,” 29 November 1947, <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/IP%20ARES%20181.pdf> (accessed 11 October 2011).

<sup>4</sup> The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs dates the first suicide bombing attack 13 April 1994. Hamas claimed responsibility for the attack on a bus in the central bus station of Hadera. See “Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of Principles (Sept 1993),” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Suicide+and+Other+Bombing+Attacks+in+Israel+Since.htm> (accessed 11 October 2011).

show how the modes of violence that emerged in the second intifada were connected to transformations in the post-Oslo period and could as such not have emerged in the circumstances of the first intifada. Essentially, it asks how the shift from a mass-based non-violent uprising to an uprising dominated by violence occurred and how we can understand suicide bombing, which almost eclipsed other forms of political activism in the second intifada. Central to this is the convergence of transformations in politics, territory and society which shaped the conditions within which political activism would change. Political activism is understood here as a very broad term referring to activity that is articulated as political vis-à-vis the Israeli occupation, encompassing violent as well as non-violent means ranging from civil disobedience and protest to political violence. Considerable controversy surrounds the terminology used to describe the phenomenon of suicide bombing. Scholars have used a number of different terms, including suicide terrorism, suicide attacks, human bombings, and martyrdom, which all reflect differing ontological, epistemic and even methodological assumptions. While the term ‘suicide bombing’ is lacking in various ways – it does not, for example, include the intention to harm others in its semantics, rather it overemphasises the goal of self-harm which appears to be far removed from how the individuals themselves as well as their communities see the phenomenon – the thesis opts for a pragmatic approach and retains the term ‘suicide bombing’. The central reason for this is that the concept is widely used, and in want of a better term, the discussion can easily refer to an overarching body of literature.<sup>5</sup>

The discussion of the research will be structured as follows. The *first chapter* will locate the thesis vis-à-vis other literature in the field and formulate a set of research questions examining how and why Palestinian political action has changed from non-violent mass protests and civil disobedience in the first uprising to violent action in the second intifada. The topic of Palestinian political violence is generally addressed from a political science perspective that seeks to deliver explanations valid across cases with predictive power, while the dominant type of analysis within the Palestine literature is interpretative, historicist and contextualised. The thesis will locate itself methodologically in between the two. As such, the chapter will outline significant debates in the literature on Palestine as well as relevant contributions to the political violence literature and identify key features of both strands of literature. The discussion

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<sup>5</sup> The thought process here is similar to Gunning who suggests that despite his reservations on the term ‘terrorism’, he still sees the benefit of retaining it as an organising concept for research in the field. See Jeroen Gunning, “A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies,” *Government and Opposition* 42, no.3 (Summer 2007): 382-4.

will highlight a gap in the debates on political violence, namely the link between territorial fragmentation and forms of Palestinian political protest. While the continued fragmentation of territory available to the Palestinians, starting with the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, is a key theme in the Palestine literature, its relevance has almost entirely been ignored in work on political violence. The thesis will examine this link and argue that it is central in itself for explaining the emergence and persistence of violence in the second intifada but also because it fosters violence indirectly through shaping political and social fragmentation. The focus on territorial and social fragmentation stems, at least in part, from the methodology advocated in this thesis which seeks to break down abstract concepts such as ‘territory’ and ‘society.’ The latter part of the chapter will establish interpretative understanding as a methodological framework for studying the topic, and drawing on Giddens and Wendt an approach that considers agency and structure as mutually constitutive. Semi-structured interviews constitute the core component of the empirical aspect of this thesis and the section on research methods will set out the rationale behind the use of this kind of data collection for the research project.

The *second chapter* begins the core discussion of the thesis by setting out the changes in the political context. To begin with it sketches out the main characteristics of the first intifada with a particular insight into the rise and fall of mass-based popular action. The main reasons for the decline of civil society and its potential for mobilisation lie to a significant extent in Arafat’s autocratic style of rule but are also in part simply a consequence of the establishment of the Palestinian Authority (PA) which was a direct product of Oslo and replaced pre-intifada self-organising mechanisms. Problems were further compounded by the failure of the PLO to democratise and the weakening of political parties. As a result, there was no effective institutional outlet for the population through channels of either politics or civil society which could mobilise and direct frustration and grievances. Hence, the popular activism through demonstrations and civil disobedience that dominated the first intifada was very short-lived. Instead, what took root was individual activism by those who were already inside the framework of militant groups, and later on in the course of the intifada with the increase in violence against the civilian population and the crumbling structure of organisations due to Israeli military operations, those outside these frameworks, lacking any political affiliation were also attracted. Moreover, the chapter highlights where much of the population’s frustration came from. The Oslo Accords had promised final status negotiations within five years and nurtured the expectations of the establishment

of an independent Palestinian state. The primary object of frustration was hence the failure of Oslo as it failed to deliver a state to the Palestinians. More immediately, however, frustration was directed at the PA. The PA's failure was symptomatic of the dual role it was expected to play, trying to satisfy two sets of incompatible needs. As an offspring of the Oslo agreement, which was primarily designed to protect Israeli security, it ended up policing its own society without, however, being able to protect its own citizens. Neither was it capable of providing basic services to Palestinians without full control over water and territory. Hence, central to the PA's failure to fulfil expectations on either side is the contradiction of how sovereignty was exercised as was simultaneously expected, denied and performed. The PA's incompatible roles were also reflected in the ambivalent approach it took to the second intifada: it neither stopped it, nor did it embrace it outright and develop a strategy.

Yet, political fragmentation alone cannot account for the absence of mass-mobilisation. Recent developments in Egypt, Tunisia and Libya have shown that strong charismatic leadership and the involvement of strong organisations which shape the movement, be they political or social in nature, are not necessary ingredients for successful mass-mobilisation.<sup>6</sup> Although conditions on many aspects of the uprisings differ in these countries, and I seek in no way to embark on a detailed comparison here, this observation should at least urge us to look beyond the explanation, even though it is an important one, that the failure of the second intifada is due to the debilitating impact of political fragmentation.

The *third chapter* continues the project of contextualisation and focuses on the role of territory in this conflict. The chapter will borrow from political geography and ask where Palestinian political activism occurred during the second intifada, if the location changed since the first intifada and if yes, why. Territory has always been at the core of this conflict, yet to date the unique geographical dislocation has received little attention in the literature on Palestinian political violence.

Confrontations during the second intifada were concentrated in particular geographical areas and the discussion will be whether socio-economic factors have shaped the pattern of geographical distribution or whether it is the result of the spatially

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<sup>6</sup> Gudrun Krämer described the Arab spring movements as missing three components: charismatic leaders, organisations that shaped the movement, and an overarching ideology. Gudrun Krämer, "The End of Exceptionalism: The Middle East in 2011" (keynote speech, 18<sup>th</sup> Annual DAVO Congress, Free University Berlin, 6 October 2011).



defined nature of the occupation. That confrontations occurred at certain flashpoints, namely where Palestinian administered areas meet those areas still fully controlled by Israel both in terms of security and administration, is not an entirely new observation. Less convincing are the accounts put forward to explain the propensity of suicide attacks within Israel proper and the chapter will reflect on the underlying rationale of this Palestinian tactic and its implications. However, the thesis will not only ask where confrontations occurred and what that means; but it will also, in a second instance, consider whether we can identify particular localities that people who engaged in activism came from. If so, we are moved to ask: why these particular localities and not others? The chapter will contend that, rather than socio-economic differences, it is the un-equalising effect of occupation policies that, at least in part, explains why suicide bombers predominantly came from certain geographical areas. It is here where, territory, politics and society meet. The increasing fragmentation of Palestinian territory through division of administrative control, as well as control over movement and essentially the experience of different modes of governance, has affected society differently. The underlying fragmentation has also translated into a reconfiguration of identity and how the individual relates with the rest of society. While it is important that we do not overemphasise fragmentation in the sense that we do not allow for the possibility of collective action, we need to ask these questions. All too often, society is treated as one coherent body without, in any way, taking into account its multi-layered dynamic character. One of the objectives of the third chapter is to challenge the abstraction of both space and society that tends to dominate traditional geopolitical discussions of the Palestinian territories.

The *fourth chapter* will present a contextual analysis of suicide bombing during the second intifada, revisiting the major themes examined in the previous two chapters. Israeli aggression, symptomatic of the inability of the PA to protect its own citizens, will be identified as a significant factor, both in terms of the psychological impact on individuals as well as a justification for retribution by organisations. Changes in the structure of organisations will be traced back to the territorial fragmentation identified in chapter three as well as Israeli military operations. The relevance of social fragmentation, also discussed in chapter three, will be assessed against the geographic origins and background of suicide bombers and the section will conclude that they primarily came from rural areas and refugee camps. These are the areas that in the preceding chapter will be identified as those being the most affected by occupation policies. Political fragmentation discussed in chapter two is particularly relevant in

explaining the inability to find a common platform and strategy among the political parties, and the chapter will demonstrate that there was a strong disagreement among the different parties on the use of violence inside Israel. The chapter will close with a section on women as females, for the first time in the Palestinian context, participated in suicide bombings. It will challenge the widespread analysis that women's motivations differed from that of the male suicide bombers and it will highlight how women also formulated their motivations to engage in political activism in response to the Israeli occupation. Bringing the different strands of argument together, the chapter finally contends that suicide bombing remains a phenomenon that should be understood in political terms.

The thesis will conclude in the *fifth chapter* by recapitulating the central arguments that were developed throughout the thesis. Additionally, the conclusion will offer reflections on the research process and propose avenues for further research.

## 1. Studying the Palestine Question

*I have no hope of theoretical simplicity, not at this historical moment when so many stable oppositions of political and intellectual life have collapsed, but I also have no desire for simplicity, since a world that theory could fully grasp and neatly explain would not, I suspect, be a pleasant place.<sup>1</sup>*

*To understand place requires that we have access to both an objective and subjective reality. From the decentred vantage point of the theoretical scientist, place becomes either location or a set of generic relations and thereby loses much of its significance for human action. From the centred viewpoint of the subject, place has meaning only in relation to an individual's or a group's goals and concerns. Place is best viewed from points in between.<sup>2</sup>*

Contrary to traditional approaches in political science to studying Palestinian political action, this thesis will offer a contextual and historical approach to explaining Palestinian political activism. It will contend that in order to understand why political action in the second intifada took the form it did, it is mandatory to look at how social, political and cultural developments have influenced and shaped behaviour over time. The difference in modes of political action is striking when comparing the first and second intifada which necessitates the question, why and how has it changed? Palestinian political action, then, is varied, changeable and adaptable and suicide bombing is only one tool employed by the Palestinians. Studying how this phenomenon relates to political action as a whole will produce a more complex and complete picture of when this particular form of political violence is used. In addition, the key concepts that the argument will rest on, such as space and society, are not seen as monolithic and fixed, but rather as fluid, multi-layered and subjective. By moving beyond the abstractions of 'territory' and 'society', the thesis will uncover the significance of different geographies, which in the Palestinian case is particularly relevant because of its territorial dislocation. Moreover, it will offer an insight into the different layers of Palestinian society. Adopting this kind of perspective opens up a number of interesting questions in relation to political protest and political violence.

In order to answer the overarching question, why and how Palestinian political activism has changed, one initial pressing question that arises will be, what happened to

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<sup>1</sup> Michael Walzer, "The Idea of Civil Society," *Dissent* 39 (Spring 1991): 293.

<sup>2</sup> J. Nicholas Entrikin, *The Betweenness of Place – Towards a Geography of Modernity* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 5.

the unity and mass-based popular action that were so characteristic of the first intifada? Why and when did it begin to decline? Naturally, a key event between the two intifadas was the signing of Oslo and thus the impact of the establishment of the PA and, the political arrangements agreed on in more general terms, necessitate further enquiry. One of the most visible and lasting legacies of Oslo is the territorial fragmentation that has become institutionalised with the agreement and has in recent years, especially under Ariel Sharon's rule, developed into a vast network of control. This aspect, despite a general obsession with the 'territorial' in political science, is strikingly absent from such studies of Palestinian political violence.

In response to, what this thesis identifies to be a gap, it will explore the relationship between Palestinian territorial dislocation and the transformation of Palestinian political action. Instead of drawing on perspectives from terrorism studies or social movement theory this thesis will rely on geographic insights as the core component in its explanation. It will contend that the 'where' is central in asking and answering questions about political activism. The particular geographically structured power arrangements instituted over Oslo, the patchwork of multiple borders created between Israeli and Palestinian-controlled areas, and the social impact of different forms of governance in the various zones of control, have crucially shaped the changes in Palestinian political action.

Answering these questions, the thesis contends, will offer new insights into political activism over the two intifada periods, but especially also the use of suicide bombing in the al-Aqsa intifada.

## **1.1 Introducing the Palestine Question**

The Palestinian Israeli conflict has proven to be one of the most intractable, volatile and complex conflicts in modern history. Current developments, especially the continuous and unhampered growth of settlements in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem, a fiercely enforced geographical division which began with Oslo, and the strengthening of right-wing elements within Israeli society leave us little hope that this conflict will be resolved in the near future. Lack of will power, opportunism, and strategic miscalculations, have often been the main perpetrators of a failed solution. The Oslo Accords that were signed in secret negotiations between Israeli government representatives and the PLO gave a brief glimpse of hope. Many that had lived the daily

realities of violence, occupation and destruction hoped for their own future state that would finally after more than two decades of occupation allow them to take their lives into their own hands. From a Palestinian perspective, the biggest compromise was made with the recognition of the state of Israel, and the renouncing of 78% of the land which had been historical Palestine. In a trade-off between peace and independence a Palestinian state within the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital was proposed. Most Palestinians had given up the goal of regaining the whole of Mandate Palestine, but many did retain the idea of a one state-solution with the land being shared by both peoples. The latter, however, until now, were often silenced by a political elite that wanted to impose its will and on the Israeli side the option was never a popular one. In the case of a one-state solution, demographic realities would mean certain demise of the idea of a Jewish state as Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem combined with Palestinian citizens of Israel would soon outnumber Jewish citizenry. For similar reasons the return of refugees has always met with opposition. While some refugee families have managed to settle and establish themselves in Europe or America, a large number still live in refugee camps, with those in Lebanon being widely known to be the most squalid ones. The right of return keeps looming over any potential for a settlement of the conflict. How many would in actuality want to return to their former homes is contested but there are certainly some, especially the older generations who grew up with the still very vivid narrative of the idyllic Palestinian village. The declaration of the state of Israel soon after its establishment that absentees were not allowed to return, including the semantically curious category of ‘present absentees’ (those present within the boundaries of the state but not on their properties), garnered criticism from international governments at the time.<sup>3</sup> Israel stood by its decision and even destroyed most of the Arab villages in order to deter those who attempted to return and to ensure that there was nothing to return to. While a practical and just solution would have been possible at the time, the passing of decades has made it much more difficult to find a resolution of the refugee issue. The two-state solution appears to follow a similar course. Since the Oslo Accords Israeli governments have been busy creating facts on the ground. Paradoxically, despite the two-state discourse settlements grew rapidly over the Oslo period, and so did the infrastructure and security to support

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<sup>3</sup> The Lausanne conference in 1949 was based on UN Resolution 194 and proposed an unconditional return of refugees, a two-state solution, and the internationalisation of Jerusalem. The UN, US, the Arab world, the Palestinians and even Israel foreign minister Moshe Sharett accepted this comprehensive approach but these efforts were blocked by both Ben Gurion and Jordan’s King Abdullah who themselves had very different plans for the Palestinian territories. See Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), 213-4, 237.

them. The territorial fragmentation created through checkpoints, barriers, bypass roads will be a key theme in the thesis. These growing Israeli population centres that, together with their infrastructures, reach deep into Palestinian territory, enclose and separate Palestinian areas, make day by day a two state solution less viable.

One of the key weaknesses of Oslo was of course that none of the 'meaty' issues were dealt with at the time. Effectively the Accords did what they promised: they were simply a declaration of principles. All of the questions that constituted the essence of the conflict were postponed to be tackled at a later stage of negotiations. Here Kimmerling perceptively points out how for Israelis all the benefits of the agreement were delivered essentially with the signing of the Accords (recognition by the PLO and effectively an assurance of security through the establishing of the PA and its role in policing its own society). For the Palestinians, on the other hand, the benefits were to be delivered through final status negotiations.<sup>4</sup> Before reaching this stage they were required to prove to Israel as well as the international community that they would be fit to govern themselves and, perhaps most crucially, to keep Israel safe. Oslo basically institutionalised a relationship of dependency that was already a given in this asymmetric conflict. Hence, for most astute observers, like Edward Said, the Oslo Accords were bound to fail. Nevertheless, they were greeted with relief and celebrations by many among the local communities. The Accords instilled hope after the catastrophe of 1948 and the later setback of 1967. This hope however, as Mahmoud Darwish in his poem 'A State of Siege' observes, has almost turned into a 'chronic illness' for Palestinians and it was, in fact, the frustration and disappointment of the failure of Oslo which lay behind the outbreak of the second intifada.<sup>5</sup>

One reason for the lack of a concerted effort on the Israeli side to find a solution to the conflict may be the fact that it does not existentially affect daily life in Israel in the same way it does for Palestinians who have to live with the frustrations and humiliations of occupation every day of their lives. Moreover, for Israel, the conflict is a much wider issue and includes the question of its relations with its neighbours and its position within the region. Hence Israeli priorities in the conflict have fluctuated between seeking a Palestinian solution and seeking recognition from its Arab neighbours.

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<sup>4</sup> Baruch Kimmerling and Joel S. Migdal, *The Palestinian People: A History* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 357-361.

<sup>5</sup> Mahmoud Darwish, "A State of Siege," in *The Butterfly's Burden*, trans. Fady Joudah (Highgreen, Tarsnet: Bloodaxe Books, 2007), 120-173.

Inevitably, perceptions of the conflict have changed. One reason for this is the transformation of the historical context. In the aftermath of the Second World War sympathies lay firmly with the Jewish population and a quick solution to this question was welcomed. In reality however, much of the way for the establishment of a Jewish state in Mandate Palestine was paved by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The first Zionist congress formulated this goal in Basel under the leadership of Theodor Herzl and immigration already began at the turn of the century. An increased influx of Jewish immigrants already led to noticeable tension between the Jewish and Arab populations in the 1920s, while Jewish persecution in Europe reached its peak much later. Sympathies with the Jews as the victims of the Holocaust and their association with Western civilisation as mostly European emigrants has dominated the perception of the Palestinian Israeli conflict for a long time. Rosemary Sayigh articulated this succinctly as follows:

The indifference of the outside world to what had really happened in Palestine during 1948, and the destruction of Palestinian national institutions, meant that many years were to pass before survivors of that War were able to record their experiences. If what happened to them had happened to the Jews, or to Armenians, the whole ‘civilised’ world would have been vibrating with horror and disapproval. But because this time the persecutors were Jews, and the victims Arabs, no one wanted to know.<sup>6</sup>

Throughout the establishment of the Israeli state and up to fairly recently, Israeli public relations were very successful in portraying themselves as the victims of Arab aggression, without interlocutors for peace on the other side, and a Western outpost under siege in a hostile region. Palestinians, on the other hand, without state and institutions were rendered voiceless. For decades the only organised voice came from the PLO which with its often highly publicised resistance tactics gave Palestinians the image of the terrorist. It was precisely this misrepresentation and imbalance that motivated Edward Said in writing *The Question of Palestine*. He explains in his foreword that he wants to present the complexities of the Palestine question to the Western reader, going beyond the image of Palestinians as merely violent terrorists, and to highlight the roots of the conflict that precedes the occupation of the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem in 1967 but are inalienable from the dispossession of 1948.

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<sup>6</sup> Sayigh, Rosemary, *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries: A People's History*. (London: Zed Books, 1979), 81.

It is no secret that when the British took on the Mandate they were from the beginning more sympathetic towards the newly arrived Jewish immigrants from Europe than the local population. A deeply ingrained racism and sense of superiority towards the non-Western world, its customs and habits, in the imperialist thinking manifested itself also in the articulation of the mandate:

To those colonies and territories, which as a consequence of the late war have ceased to be under the sovereignty of States which formerly governed them, and which are inhabited by peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, there should be applied the principle that the well-being and development of such peoples form a sacred trust of civilisation, and that securities for the performance of this trust should be embodied in this Covenant. The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such people should be entrusted to advanced nations.<sup>7</sup>

While a complexity of reasons may explain the favouritism towards the Jewish immigrants over the indigenous population, the dominance of the Judeo-Christian conception of the world in Europe was undoubtedly a decisive factor. A sense of superiority over the Palestinians has persevered until the present time and is perhaps best summarised in a very popular Israeli catch phrase that maintains that Israel made the desert bloom. Although the skyline of Tel Aviv, the resorts in Eilat and the nature parks and forests across Israel may momentarily impress the visitor, this statement should be treated with caution for a number of reasons. A survey carried out by the British Mandate authorities in 1945 and 1946 demonstrates that Palestinian production in relation to its land use is either slightly less, more or less the same, or higher, than Jewish agricultural production proportionate to land use.<sup>8</sup> In the 1930s Palestine was also the second biggest exporter of citrus fruits after Spain.<sup>9</sup> Hence the suggestion that Palestinians did not make use of the land is a flawed one. Moreover, since 1948 social realities and modes of governance have had inhibitory effects on the Palestinian development while Israel has received an immense influx of aid. US support for Israel is most indicative here and a conservative estimate would measure US aid at almost

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in Gudrun Krämer, *A History of Palestine – From the Ottoman Conquest to the Founding of the State of Israel*. Translated by Graham Haman and Gudrun Krämer (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2008), 146.

<sup>8</sup> J. V. W. Shaw, *A Survey of Palestine: Prepared in December, 1945 and January, 1946 for the Information of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry* (Institute for Palestine Studies, 1991), 323. The survey is available electronically at <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Acre/Books/Story831.html>. For page 323 see <http://www.palestineremembered.com/Articles/A-Survey-of-Palestine/Story6764.html>.

<sup>9</sup> Ted Swedenburg, *Memories of Revolt: The 1936-1939 Rebellion and the Palestinian National Past* (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press, 2003), xxiii.



\$114 billion between 1949 and 2008.<sup>10</sup> Much of the aid received on the Palestinian side goes into alleviating the damage and destruction caused by decades of occupation, conflict and outright war. Moreover, since the occupation of the territories, the Palestinians never had full control over land or water, making it impossible ‘to make the desert bloom.’ While Israel’s achievements may be sizeable for its short existence, this is ultimately only one side to the story. A Palestinian whose land is flooded by sewage from settlements, whose village is surrounded by the Separation Wall, and who has to find his way daily through a maze of ugly concrete constructions of bypass roads, checkpoints, barriers and road blocks, may just wonder where it is that this desert is blooming.

On the level of academic analysis, the way much social science is conducted has changed too, over the years, having become more self-reflective and critical. Some scholars have become much more aware of their own self when they study others and question the tools and mechanisms that they employ in their research. A significant contribution in opening up postcolonial debates in relation to the Middle East has, of course, been made by Said’s *Orientalism*. Said is not only concerned with how the Orient is represented in Western literature and culture but also how Orientalism has been used as a discourse ‘for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.’<sup>11</sup> The discourse surrounding the war in Iraq and George W. Bush’s Freedom Agenda are good recent examples here. Such an agenda does not only echo the imperialist traits of the Mandate era in the sense that a civilised nation must assist people who cannot yet fend for themselves, but the selectivity in the application of the espoused principles, which in themselves are not neutral concepts, is an obvious manifestation of this intrinsic link of the discourse to power and politics.

Many of the problems in the literature stem from unquestioningly applying our own concepts to different cultural contexts and the condensing of diverse societies and cultures into monolithic blocks. Judging others to our own standards without asking themselves about their views reflects, at least, a subtle form of imperialist scholarship. Simplifying the world into civilisations, Islam, and the West creates entities that do not in this way exist. Although Muslims all over the world have a common base in what they believe, Muslim societies differ hugely not the least because of their large

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<sup>10</sup> ShirI McArthur, “A Conservative Estimate of Total Direct U.S. Aid to Israel: Almost \$114 Billion,” Congress Watch, *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs*, November 2008, 10-11, <http://wrmea.org/component/content/article/2452008-november/3845-congress-watch-a-conservative-estimate-of-total-direct-us-aid-to-israelalmost-114-billion.html> (accessed 05 September 2011).

<sup>11</sup> Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1977), 3.

geographical spread from Indonesia to Morocco and Turkey to the Sudan. How Islam is lived is part of a complex negotiation between traditionalist culture in these societies, socio-political and economic conditions. The treatment of women in Muslim societies is always a popular topic among Western scholars and policy makers who engage with the region. While abuse, lack of freedom, and rights are often manifest in traditional Muslim societies, creating a natural connotation between Islam and the abuse of women is large-scale paint brushing. The conventional pairing of Islam with terrorism in much scholarship in the aftermath of 9/11 is another expression of this kind of thinking.

Talal Asad in *On Suicide Bombing* questions why violence committed by terrorist groups invokes so much horror but atrocities committed by Western democracies seldom do. It is not a clash of civilisations that Asad identifies to be at the core of these sentiments, but rather a perception that the latter occur in the context of conflicts between the ‘civilised’ and the ‘uncivilised’ and hence all rules of civilisation can be put aside and any means justified.<sup>12</sup> Asad, in essence, reduces the question of violence to one of death. More precisely, it is about how one deals with death, one’s own and that of others.<sup>13</sup> One may imagine that suicide bombers select their targets because they do not attribute great value to the life of their victims but for Asad, the same is true for many politicians and intellectuals in the West: ‘The perception that human life has differential exchange value in the market when it comes to “civilised” and “uncivilised” people is not only quite common in liberal democratic countries; it is necessary to a hierarchical global order.’<sup>14</sup>

Keeping in mind the discourses that surround this mode of violence the thesis seeks to step away from state-centric paradigms and also critically views violence that is justified on the grounds of upholding freedom, democracy and security. Through its interpretive, historicist and contextual methodology the study will demonstrate that the question of Palestinian political violence, especially suicide bombing, is much more complex than portrayed in much of the literature on suicide bombing.

## 1.2 Debates on the Palestine Question

Attempting to gain a due insight into the literature on Palestine within a limited time frame and limited space is a challenge that is beyond this chapter. The literature

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<sup>12</sup> Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (New York: Columbia University Press 2007), 38.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 94.

on the subject has grown exponentially decade by decade. While until the 1990s contributions may have been comparatively modest, with the outbreak of the first intifada and the signing of the Oslo Accords the Palestine question attracted the attention of international media and political class, as well as academic audiences. This is even truer now. The incessant spurts of violence and deteriorating humanitarian situation of Palestinians, despite huge aid-influxes, and intermittent talks about peace, have attracted writers from all levels of the spectrum from the hard-core pro-Zionist camp which questions the existence of a Palestinian people to those who advocate a one-state solution. Some of the quality of the literature is dubious and often more driven by emotive issues rather than scholarship. What carries particular relevance for this thesis is the literature presenting the Palestinian narrative on root causes of the conflict which is normally completely evaded by the traditional political science approach. Of particular note here is the literature dealing with the events of 1948, which while for Israelis marks the *War of Independence*, by Palestinians these events are referred to as the *nakba*, or catastrophe. In fact, in order to completely understand the events after the end of the Mandate and some of the decisions made at the time, it is necessary to go back to the nature of British rule and the different alliances formed. Especially interesting are the contributions made to this by Israeli historians who took a new turn in debates on the Palestinian exodus. Until then the widespread and dominant official narrative was that Palestinians did not form a coherent body within the British Mandate of Palestine and that they left their homes and possession behind out of free will, often instigated by their Arab leaders. Moreover, Israel's war efforts in 1948 had been depicted in a purely defensive fashion as the nascent state was under threat from aggressive Arab states on all sides. Naming it the *War of Independence* also naturally gives it an anti-colonial ring despite the fact that the Mandate had already come to an end. These debates are of particular interest here because in the traditional approach to studying Palestinian political violence this literature is largely ignored. The history of dispossession of Palestinian refugees plays a key role in contextualising the Palestinian drive for national independence and the structural constraints as well as internal division that still haunts the Palestinian project of self-realisation, remain central themes in the literature. This kind of literature provides an essential context for understanding how within the Palestinian field political violence is viewed and portrayed and discussions on armed struggle tend to tap into this long history of suffering and dispossession as well as resistance. Another event central for the contextualisation of the conflict is, of course, Oslo which marks a crucial milestone in Palestinian history because it is the

only peace agreement that has been signed between the two parties. Its importance also lies with the repercussions it has had and the way it has shaped the continuation of the conflict. Discussion of the Accords is significant primarily for two reasons: first, the political arrangements it introduced and second, the geographical consequences it has had through territorial division of control. Chapter 2 will deal with literature on Oslo and chapter 3, in particular, will discuss at length the resulting geographical dislocation.

In the late eighties the fairly radical ideas of the New Historians caused much uproar leading to intense debates within Israel. A significant contribution to the debate on 1948 and the question as to why Palestinian refugees left was made by Benny Morris in a meticulous and much-praised study of the Palestinian exodus.<sup>15</sup> Using archive material that had recently been declassified, Morris identifies 369 localities and describes in detail the reasons for leaving as well as the different stages of the war. Although he acknowledges the expulsion of the inhabitants in many cases, the intimidation and psychological warfare, and atrocities committed by the Jewish armed forces, he concludes that the refugee exodus was simply a side-effect of the war and not the result of a systematic policy of expulsion. Morris is an interesting case because his views changed drastically in his later work, and in a Haaretz interview that caused much controversy, he came to the conclusion that ethnic cleansing was justified in particular contexts. While he does not negate his previous research findings and, in fact, confirms that newer research showed that rape and massacres were committed by Israeli forces during the 1948 expulsions on a much larger scale than he had previously assumed, Morris also admits that transfer was integral to Ben Gurion's plans. Morris believes that for the creation of the Jewish state the expulsion of around 700,000 Palestinians was justified. He argues that executions came to no more than 800 people, describing this as small war crimes in the light of other crimes in history. He also very clearly states that the non-completion of the transfer in 1948 was a mistake because a large number of Palestinians were left in Gaza, West Bank and parts of Israel. For Morris, nations like the US could have never been established without the annihilation of the Indians. Interesting in the interview is also Morris' culturalist explanation. Islam, in his view, does not accredit the same value to human life as the West. He describes Palestinians as wild animals and serial killers that need to be kept in a cage and the root for this problem lies with Arab culture and Islam, which, for Morris, are inherently barbarian.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Benny Morris, *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem: 1947-49* (Cambridge: CUP, 1987)

<sup>16</sup> Ari Shavit, "Survival of the Fittest: An Interview with Benny Morris," *The Haaretz*, 9 January 2004, <http://www.logosjournal.com/morris.htm> (accessed 18 November 2011).

Ilan Pappé, being the most radical of the New Historians, goes much further than Morris in his assessment of the Palestinian refugees. Pappé seeks to replace the paradigm of war in the debates on 1948 and the view of the Palestinian exodus as collateral damage. While Morris came to the initial conclusion that the massacres were by-products of war, inevitable in warfare and the creation of a state, Pappé argues that ethnic cleansing of all of Palestine was the goal of the Zionist movement because it envisaged the land as the location for the creation of the new Jewish state. Much of the cleansing and expulsion already occurred whilst the British were still in control, with little interference from the latter. Pappé demonstrates this in the case of Jerusalem where in the Western neighbourhoods Palestinian residents were expelled in April 1948 but in the small quarter of Sheikh Jarrah a British commander stepped in to stop full implementation.<sup>17</sup> Pappé articulates his study as an alternative to the Zionist Israeli narrative, which predominantly argues that the local population left voluntarily, and the Palestinian narrative of the *nakba* dealing with the events from the perspective of expulsion. Neither narrative deals with the actors behind the events.<sup>18</sup>

The ensuing refugee crisis in the aftermath of 1948, the question of property, and the right of return, as well as refugee identity have all received attention in academic debates.<sup>19</sup> Numerous cultural and research centres in Palestine and abroad have collected testimonies from refugees about the *nakba*, in an attempt to give the victims of the conflict a voice, but these potential sources for research have often received little attention in Western and especially Israeli academic debates.

The myth that Israel has lived under constant threat from its neighbours and with no partners for peace, which has been a large building block in its justification for militarisation and establishment of its vast security apparatus, has been challenged very articulately by Avi Shlaim. In *The Iron Wall* Shlaim traces the policy of the various dove and hawk governments towards their Arab neighbours and contends, contrary, to the main Israeli narrative that Arab leaders were at various stages willing to recognise Israel, and even make peace with it.<sup>20</sup> He shows for example how Syrian Colonel Husni Zaim as early as 1949 in his very brief reign between 30 March and 14 August pursued negotiations with Israel over a peace agreement and even offered to absorb 300,000

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<sup>17</sup> Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 98-9.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi-xvii.

<sup>19</sup> Michael Dumper, *The Future of Palestinian Refugees: Towards Equity and Peace* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007). Julie Peteet, *Landscape of Hope and Despair: Palestinian Refugee Camps* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005). Michael R. Fischbach, *Records of Dispossession: Palestinian Refugee Property and the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003).

<sup>20</sup> Avi Shlaim, *The Iron Wall: Israel and The Arab World* (London: Penguin, 2000).

Palestinian refugees in Syria.<sup>21</sup> Ben Gurion's response, however, was a negative one, preferring to focus on armistice agreements with the neighbouring Arab countries because a pursuit of peace would have come at a higher cost for the Israelis and, from an Israeli point of view, there was no need to hurry.<sup>22</sup>

The events of 1948, especially the *nakba*, are recurring and crucial debates, especially from a Palestinian perspective. They are seen as the origins of the conflict and are hence closely tied to the question of who bears responsibility and what a just and lasting solution to the conflict would entail. The most common Israeli viewpoint is that the problems with the Palestinians started in 1967 and the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, which is reflected in the fact that little scholarship on the Palestinians focuses on the displacement of the refugees as the origins of the conflict, and that even by Israeli NGOs engaged with the Palestinian issues there is little recognition of 1948 as the root of the conflict. Israeli activism, where it exists, largely tends to focus on the occupation.

One very pressing question, that until then had largely been neglected, was posed by Rashid Khalidi. He explores in *The Iron Cage* why the Palestinians were unable to avert the *nakba* and argues contrary to general assumptions, that the Palestinians were not less educated or backward in comparison to their neighbours at the time, but that it was surrounding conditions that inhibited Palestinian self-determination. From the beginning they were destined for something different in comparison to their neighbours and subject to special regulations devised to foster Zionist claims to national self-realisation.<sup>23</sup> For Khalidi, the British favoured the Jewish immigrants from the outset while they hampered any political developments among the indigenous population and barred them from involvement in the administration, which prevented Palestinians from beginning to build their own national institutions.<sup>24</sup> The divide and rule principle that was so typical of the imperialist regimes significantly contributed to the fragmentation of society. Reading Sayigh, however, one gets the impression that the problem was at least in part also an internal one. She maintains that even in the presence of a strong leadership it would have been difficult to unite the different segments in society:

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<sup>21</sup> Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations* (London: Verso, 2009), 62-76.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 73.

<sup>23</sup> Krämer, *History of Palestine*, 165.

<sup>24</sup> Pappé also demonstrates that the British aided the Zionist movement considerably in terms of military preparation. See Pappé, *Ethnic Cleansing*, 15-7.

There were sectarian differences between Muslim, Christian, and Druze which, though largely suppressed by the growth of Arab consciousness during the Mandate, still existed at the level of the peasants. There were also the ancient class categories of peasant, nomad, and city-dweller, distinguished by marked differences of status, occupation and way of life. And on top of these traditional categories were new ones introduced by 'modernisation'. The drift of landless peasants to the cities had begun to create an Arab proletariat, while the slow spread of modern education gave birth to an intelligentsia distinct from the traditional liberati.<sup>25</sup>

Unlike the Jewish Zionists arriving in Palestine who managed to forge a social and ethnic conglomeration on a national level that transcended ethnic and social class lines, internal power struggles inhibited Palestinian mobilisation towards the goal of national liberation.<sup>26</sup> The semi-feudal system in Palestine and the leadership it produced are particularly significant in explaining the internal power struggle behind some of the strategic decisions taken:

Such a leadership was naturally alarmed by the central role played by the peasants during the twenties and during the 1936-1939 revolution and consequently sought to compromise with the British through the mediation of Arab regimes thus initiating progressive dependence on the Arab regimes.<sup>27</sup>

These debates on the *nakba* give context to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The now over six decade old history of the conflict is largely ignored in studies on Palestinian violence. In particular there is an absence of engagement with the longstanding violence against and dispossession of Palestinians. Anat Berko's 'revelation', for example, that suicide bombings did not start with the second intifada, but much earlier, and that Palestinian violence goes back even further to hijackings in the 1960s and 1970s is not balanced by an equal appraisal of the 1948 expulsion of Palestinians and the violence and discrimination dominating the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza since 1967.

Other themes that have received attention in the literature are the PLO, the Palestinian national movement and the first intifada. Much debate was naturally

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<sup>25</sup> Sayigh, *Peasants to Revolutionaries*, 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibrahim, Dakkak, "Back to Square One: A Study of the Re-emergence of the Palestinian Identity in the West Bank 1967-1980." In *Palestinians over the Green Line: Studies on the Relations between Palestinians on Both Sides of the 1949 Armistice Line Since 1967*, ed. Alexander Scholch (London: Ithaca Press 1983), 66.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

generated by Oslo which was a turning point in Palestinian-Israeli relations and had significant aftereffects.<sup>28</sup> One of these legacies is the separation of the two populations, the closures and the division of territory into different areas of control. These aspects have been crucial in shaping society and politics in the coming years and much of the discussion in this thesis will be devoted to how these changes have shaped the transformations in political activism. Initially greeted with euphoria, Oslo and its failure to bring a resolution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have generated much debate. By the end of the first intifada Hamas had gained popularity and not long after the signing of the Accords the movement staged the first suicide bombing, giving it international attention.<sup>29</sup>

With the exception of refugees, debates on the Palestine Question and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, have at least in the English literature, primarily focused on the political elite level but less literature has been devoted to societal transformations. Although the gender literature would lend itself to offer insights into societal aspects, even here the occupation, militarisation and politics often dominate the agenda.<sup>30</sup>

Moreover, the literature shows relative scarcity when it comes to Palestine in relation to regional and international actors. This is partly a symptom of the focus in IR on states and the absence of statehood in the Palestinian case but is also in practical terms a by-product of Israeli occupation and in academic terms a reflection of the field. Israeli occupation, particularly its control over movement, is not conducive to academic exchange as it exercises restrictions on the free movement of Palestinian academics as well as control over foreign academics visiting and even more so over those wishing to work in the territories. The increasing closure or isolation of Palestinians makes the question of why one should have an interest in other regions outside the Middle East

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<sup>28</sup> Edward Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Granta, 2000). Edward Said, *Peace and Its Discontents: Gaza – Jericho 1993-1995* (London: Vintage, 1995). Graham Usher, *Dispatches from Palestine: The Rise and Fall of the Oslo Peace Process* (London: Pluto, 1999). Graham Usher, *Palestine in Crisis – The Struggle for Peace and Political Independence After Oslo* (London: Pluto Press, 1995). Oslo is more positively viewed by Kimmerling who applauds the achievements of the Accords. Kimmerling, *The Palestinian People*.

<sup>29</sup> Hamas has generated much interest in academia, but most influential have been Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela. *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Khaled Hroub, *Hamas: Political Thought and Practice* (Washington DC: Institute of Palestine Studies 2000). Jeroen Gunning, *Democracy, Religion, Violence* (New York: Columbia University 2009).

<sup>30</sup> See, for instance, Nahla Abdo, "Palestinian Munadelat: Between Western Representation and Lived Reality," In *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (London: Zed Books, 2008). Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin (ed.) *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation* (New York: Berghahn Books 2002). Tamar Mayer (ed.) *Women and the Israeli Occupation: The Politics of Change* (London: Routledge, 1994). Suha Sabbagh (ed.), *Palestinian Women of Gaza and the West Bank* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1998). Even this more general sounding latter volume focuses on the role of women in the intifada and the impact of the occupation on women and their roles.



(and indeed how one would acquire such knowledge and experience) a less immediate one. However, the absence of such literature is also a function of the nature of area studies itself within which particular areas are seen as unique and different and hence looking beyond such confines is not seen as desirable or even possible.

### 1.3 Palestinian Political Violence

Within the Palestine literature only a small proportion deals with the topic of political violence. Authors who contribute to debates on radicalisation and Palestinian violence tend to make their contributions through discussions on Islamic fundamentalism, Hamas, the Israeli occupation, the PLO and development.

One possible explanation for the absence of a clear-cut subfield on violence may be the political sensitivity of the subject. Another convincing explanation is also the fact that the phenomenon is not viewed as a freestanding issue but rather as a symptom of underlying causes and because of that is discussed in relation to other topics. Debates on the transformation of forms of resistance and the evolution of political violence throughout different contexts are rare. It is especially noticeable that only a small body of literature comes to terms with the second intifada. Some authors have tried to make sense of the second intifada in terms of the first intifada, asking how it changed and why.<sup>31</sup> Ramzi Baroud's work on the second intifada offers an account of the major events of that period but it is journalistic in style and is therefore limited in its analysis of events beyond the uprising. Ami Pedhazur and Clive Jones' edited work on the second intifada is a quest for understanding what kind of conflict the second intifada should be understood as. There is even less literature on the evolution of political activism and how political activism and its more violent manifestations have emerged in particular contexts. Mazin Qumsiyeh, who is himself a political activist, describes different phases of the non-violent resistance but his account is a collection of personal experiences and is not academic in its nature.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Rema Hammami and Jamil Hilal, "An Uprising at Crossroads," *Middle East Report* 219 (Summer 2001). Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, "The Second Uprising: End or New Beginning." *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no.2 (Winter 2001): 5-25. Penny Johnson and Eileen Kuttab, "Where Have all the Women (and Men) Gone? Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada." *Feminist Review* 69 (Winter 2001): 21-43.

<sup>32</sup> Mazin B. Qumsiyeh, *Popular Resistance in Palestine: A History of Hope and Empowerment* (London: Pluto, 2011)

Julie Norman in a recent examination of civil resistance in the second intifada explores attitudes of youth towards both non-violent means of struggle as well as violence. Her findings suggest that the majority of youth thought that violence was the most effective means of challenging the occupation. However, 64.3% of those respondents also agreed or strongly agreed that both violence and non-violence are effective means of resisting the occupation. Norman concludes from this that the majority of those that support violence still acknowledge the benefits of non-violent action.<sup>33</sup> For Norman, one of the major reasons for decline in non-violent activism was the reframing of non-violence in the context of dialogue and peacebuilding during the Oslo period, which eventually led to an understanding of non-violence as accommodation instead of resistance.<sup>34</sup> This, together with the institutionalisation of NGOs and the repression of resistance by the PA and Israel, debilitated non-violent activism.<sup>35</sup> The reframing of non-violent activism as accommodation swayed those that sought resistance toward violence.

Rosemary Sayigh, Ted Swedenburg and Yezid Sayigh deal with the armed struggle of a different historical period. Rosemary Sayigh's study of refugee camps in Lebanon finds that Palestinian peasants were the most active during the whole period of the British occupation and contributed more than other classes to the national resistance movement but they never came close to leading it, or stamping it with their own character because of their exclusion from knowledge and decision-making.<sup>36</sup> Sayigh also looks into the connection between militancy and class division, finding that the national leadership fluctuated between struggle and negotiation, while the mercantile and middle classes contributed little to the struggle.<sup>37</sup> Greater participation in militancy from the poor rather than middle classes, especially after 1948, was rooted in the greater oppression that they experienced and which made the return to Palestine an absolute priority.<sup>38</sup> Swedenburg's work focuses on one particular set of events in the Palestinian struggle before 1948, the 1936-39 revolts. Focusing on how the revolts were remembered by the peasantry and challenging the standard accounts of both Western and Palestinian historiography, his work is essentially about how memory is constructed and deconstructed. What role armed struggle served in the Palestinian national movement from 1949-1993 was a focus for Yezid Sayigh. He argues that armed

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<sup>33</sup> Julie Norman, *The Second Palestinian Intifada: Civil Resistance* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), 70.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 105.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>36</sup> Sayigh, *Peasants to Revolutionaries*.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 152-3.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 153.

struggle was central in re-mobilising Palestinians after 1948 and provided a key basis for state-building but it had only limited use in terms of actual ‘military’ achievements. Total liberation was impossible under the given historical circumstances in which Palestinian national liberation waged its struggle after 1948. Western nations and even the Soviet Union and its allies were firmly committed to the survival of Israel after the Holocaust.<sup>39</sup> However, the complexity of the regional environment and multiplicity of its actors always opened crucial avenues at critical moments to Palestinians.<sup>40</sup> Hence, Sayigh presents a very detailed, complex and contextual account of Palestinian violence during this period which shows its roots, strategies and the different kind of roles it has played in the national project. A continuation of this study, namely how armed struggle related to national politics in the aftermath of the Oslo Accords is missing in the Palestine literature.

Debates on suicide bombing within the Palestine literature are very limited. They occur in the framework of political strategy<sup>41</sup> or as part of the discussion of organisations, especially Hamas.<sup>42</sup> Violence, however, is not the central focus in scholarship on Hamas and Islamic politics. Contributions normally draw attention to the political and social aspects of these movements, as well as their complexity, adaptability and development over time.<sup>43</sup>

#### **1.4 Central Features of the Palestine Literature**

One can identify some central features of the body of ‘Palestine literature’. It is characterised by an interpretative, historical and contextualised approach. We have seen this in our review of the major debates on the subject. The Palestine literature favours an approach from within, rather than a detached analysis from the outside. What is also a very clear characteristic of the field is its emphasis on the uniqueness of

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<sup>39</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1997), 663.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 664-5.

<sup>41</sup> Azmi Bishara “The Quest for Strategy,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no.2 (Winter 2003): 41-9. Rashid Khalidi, “Toward a Clear Palestinian Strategy,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, No.4 (Summer 2002): 5-12.

<sup>42</sup> See for instance, Azzam Tamimi, *Hamas: Unwritten Chapters* (London: Hurst, 2007), 198-207.

<sup>43</sup> Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). Milton-Edwards, Beverley, *Islamic Politics in Palestine* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996). Jeroen Gunning, *Hamas in Politics: Democracy, Religion, Violence* (London: Hurst, 2009).

the case. It is almost universally emphasised within the field that the Palestinian situation is different and this needs to be taken into account for the study of any aspect of the problem. Understanding the occupation and its characteristics are crucial, for example, for understanding women in the Palestinian context. The eruptions of the first and second intifada cannot be explained without an understanding of the development of nationalism, dispossession and identity formation since the British Mandate. What is also key is the emphasis on the uniqueness of Israel's colonialism. Israel's occupation is the longest lasting contemporary occupation and has a number of unique facets which are necessary to understand in order to explain the course of the conflict. The combination of Zionist ideology and the post-Holocaust trauma explain the strong emphasis on security, the drive to create and retain a Jewish state and the continuous seizing of land.

In terms of political violence, the Palestine literature views the phenomenon as the outgrowth or reaction to particular conditions in the Palestinian context. Its roots are seen in the nature of the occupation and Israel's colonialism, the continuing dispossession and discrimination, the deadlock of negotiations, Palestinian powerlessness, political as well as military, against an overwhelmingly strong opponent, backed by the one remaining superpower.

This has been especially relevant since 9/11 when Sharon succeeded in framing the discourse on Palestine in terms of security and the war on terrorism by equating the nature of 9/11 with the events of the Al-Aqsa intifada, and by the same token Palestinian militant groups with al-Qaeda. Hence, the 'Palestine Question' was no longer a discourse on occupation but became one on Israeli security. Much effort in studies on Palestine has been invested in drawing out and emphasising the particularities of the Palestinian situation, in disconnecting the discourse on the Palestine question from the prevalent terrorism discourse and in highlighting the historical grievances, injustice and violence of the occupation.

The thinking that the Israeli occupation has particular characteristics that need to be taken into consideration has also permeated more policy-oriented thought. Edward Said for example, a fierce critic of the Oslo negotiations, criticised negotiators for not having sufficient knowledge of the situation on the ground. In his view the leadership had no grasp of the extent and permanent nature of the settlements that had begun to spread throughout the territories, and hence completely misjudged the implications of the Oslo agreement. Ghada Karmi also emphasises in *Married to Another Man* the need

to understand the Zionist drive behind the establishment of the state of Israel and the current occupation in order to fully grasp the issue at hand and its implications.

Understanding the threat to Palestinian independence; i.e. understanding the occupation and what fuels it, would be key to developing adequate strategies for resistance and a resolution to the conflict. Equally, a thorough understanding of the local context and how Palestinians themselves perceive it, is mandatory for understanding how Palestinians formulate resistance strategies.

## **1.5 Studying Palestinian Political Violence in Political Science and its there Scope for Hybrids?**

Although the literature on suicide bombing has burgeoned since 9/11, only few of the theories put forward have made a significant impact. Two notable examples here are Pape and Bloom. The former proposes a theory focused on the strategic logic of organisations while the latter centres on the domestic level, advancing a theory of internal competition. Pape's core thesis is that foreign policy and not religion is the driving force behind suicide terrorism. Terrorist organisations use suicide attacks as a last resort in the struggle to free their homeland of foreign occupiers (particularly democracies). He defines foreign occupation as 'one in which a foreign power has the ability to control the local government independent of the wishes of the local community.'<sup>44</sup> These organisations are generally the far weaker party to the conflict, often faced by opponents with vastly superior military resources and technology. In a situation of asymmetric power relations suicide terrorism is often seen as the most effective means of confrontation. Foreign occupation, by creating a sense of shared threat, unifies the community and has even an impact on those who previously had not harboured any nationalist sentiments.<sup>45</sup>

Pape acknowledges the role of different levels of actors in suicide terrorism - the individual, the organisational and the societal level – and a need to explain how they jointly account for the occurrence of suicide terrorism.<sup>46</sup> Although Pape's account is a multi-level explanation it is not multi-causal. For Pape, there is one central factor: foreign occupation. It is the common denominator which explains why individuals

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<sup>44</sup> Robert Pape, *Dying to Win – The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005), 46.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 20-2.

inspired by altruistic motivation decide to die for the sake of liberation of their community; why societies support and even applaud suicide attacks; and why organisations strategically deploy it. Nationalist sentiment is the key driving force and suicide attacks are particularly likely to occur when the predominant religion of the occupiers is different from the predominant religion of the occupied. Religious schism hardens the boundaries between national communities allowing the organisation to portray the conflict as zero-sum, to more easily demonise the enemy, and to gain support among the population for martyrdom. Pape concludes that suicide attacks are proliferating because terrorist organisations have learnt that they pay.

Bloom, too, interprets suicide terrorism as strategic violence but in her view it is targeted at two audiences: an external audience – the perceived enemy – and an internal audience – the organisation’s community.<sup>47</sup> According to Bloom, suicide terrorism needs to be understood in the context of national liberation and internal state-building processes.<sup>48</sup> Organisations use suicide tactics under two conditions: when other military tactics have failed against the external opponent and when the organisation is in competition with other rival groups for popular support and financial resources.<sup>49</sup> Such competition is especially acute in the absence of a monopoly over force. In such circumstances groups compete over a ‘positive’ image to appear proactive and to have the ability to inflict damage on the enemy.<sup>50</sup> In Palestine, more and more groups jumped on the bandwagon of suicide bombing and even secular groups which had previously eschewed suicide tactics started using religious language in order to bandwagon onto popularity achieved by Hamas. In an attempt to outbid each other groups started to vie for a right to claim responsibility for each attack.<sup>51</sup>

Whether suicide operations are sanctioned or rejected by the civilian population depends on specific conditions endogenous to each case. Bloom explains (rather unclearly) that these conditions may depend on personal, economic, structural and organisational issues.<sup>52</sup> In other sections in her book she offers more concrete

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<sup>47</sup> Hoffman and McCormick propose an argument that too focuses on internal audiences. They suggest that organisations use suicide attacks as a signaling tactic to appear strong in the eyes of their target audiences. In an environment of incomplete and asymmetric information violence is used as a surrogate measure to determine the strength of the group and its political prospects; Bruce Hoffman and Gordon H. McCormick, “Terrorism, Signaling, and Suicide Attack,” *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 27, no.4 (July/August 2004): 243-81.

<sup>48</sup> Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 22.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 26, 29-31.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 28-29.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 81-2.

examples of circumstances that may drive a population to support suicide attacks: Such tactics particularly resonate against the backdrop of economic hardship and fading hope for peace.<sup>53</sup> In some cases, it may depend on where the funding comes from. In Sri Lanka, where the resistance had primarily been funded through taxes from within the community, the population became war-weary more quickly.<sup>54</sup> Bloom also suggests that heavy-handed counter-terrorist measures play a crucial role.<sup>55</sup>

There is of course literature that is much more firmly located in the political science camp than Pape and Bloom's accounts but border cases are of much more interest here because they seek to achieve the standard of predictability and generalisability aspired to in political science but also attempt to contextualise their topics to some extent. They are thus more challenging but also more useful for testing our case against, rather than those approaches that fall squarely into the political science literature, because they will enable us to show that despite limited contextualisation, these studies ignore central issues in studying the Palestinian case and come to some misleading conclusions. In his article 'A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies,' Jeroen Gunning argues that within the traditional terrorism literature there are some scholars who have sought to historicise the phenomena they study at least to some extent and question the dominant state-centric paradigm in the field.<sup>56</sup> Drawing on Cox's notion of a 'problem solving' approach he identifies the uncritical nature of terrorism studies as the underlying source for the shortcomings of terrorism research.<sup>57</sup> A critical approach goes beyond states as the sole legitimate referents, beyond state-centric notions of security, to encompass a wider notion of human security and contextualises and historicises the conflict.<sup>58</sup> For Gunning, the two approaches should be seen as two end-points on a continuum rather than a clear-cut division and hence we can identify scholars who use a combination of elements pertaining to each approach.

Pape engages with the occupational practice of democratic states as producing suicide terrorism but does not articulate particulars of the occupation and how they motivate individuals to engage in this form of violent resistance. In fact, he argues that the severity of the occupation does not matter in motivating suicide attacks. He

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<sup>53</sup> Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, 28.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 36.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, 82.

<sup>56</sup> Jeroen Gunning, "A Case for Critical Terrorism Studies," *Government and Opposition* 42, no.3 (Summer 2007): 363 -93.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 371.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 376-7.

measures severity by casualties inflicted by the occupation and concludes that Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza is, together with US presence on the Arabian peninsula, among the least harmful cases of occupation, but Israeli and US occupation account together for 43% of suicide attacks.<sup>59</sup> The figures Pape uses here are slightly problematic because he dates the beginning of the dispute from 1994 but appears to use data covering the second intifada period from 2000-2003. This is, of course, questionable on two accounts. Firstly, it excludes casualties incurred over the Oslo period and the first intifada and secondly even then it ignores another 27 years of occupation, in addition to the dispossession in 1948. However, most importantly, measuring the severity of the occupation by casualties betrays ignorance of the true mechanisms of Israeli occupation. Occupation is also treated as an inert block that remains stagnant with no changes, and hence cannot explain why at some points suicide bombings became almost the norm and at others the phenomenon has died down.

Similarly, Bloom acknowledges the occupation and Israeli violence but does not problematise the concepts she applies.<sup>60</sup> Her discussion of women suicide bombers is illustrative here. She espouses a clearly Western perspective and sees women as exploited by their conservative patriarchal societies, as being pushed into such acts by their cultural environments, and at best, adopting this role in order to achieve some kind of tragic equality, ignoring the clear political grievances of these women and their capacity to formulate political or even militant strategies to act on these.<sup>61</sup> In doing so, she herself divests women of equality with men.

In addition to Pape, Gunning suggests that Sageman, makes some effort in locating the phenomenon within its historical context and problematising it, because in contrast to other authors, he considers the negative impact of state policies.<sup>62</sup> However, historicisation and problematisation occur in a very limited way. Sageman's *Understanding Terror Networks* certainly made a significant contribution to the field of terrorism studies as he highlights one aspect of groups that engage in such activity, namely how they are linked as a network.<sup>63</sup> This is particularly relevant for understanding al-Qaeda which in its form is much more loosely configured than some of the more traditional or hierarchical groups. In chapter four we will see how Pedahzur

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<sup>59</sup> Pape, *Dying to Win*, 58-60.

<sup>60</sup> Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, 23,37.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 143, 162-3, 165.

<sup>62</sup> Gunning, "Critical Terrorism Studies," see footnote at 372.

<sup>63</sup> Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (University of Pennsylvania Press: Philadelphia 2004).



and Perlinger apply network analysis to the second Palestinian intifada and combine it with a competition model, similar to that presented by Mia Bloom. Sageman understands the global Salafi jihad in largely structuralist terms as a self-generated network. Social network theory does offer a partial explanation on why individuals join these groups, tracing members' participation back to their kinship and friendship links with others inside such organisations. As such joining the jihad is, for Sageman, a process and not simply a single decision. While he acknowledges, in his conclusion, that the outcome of the US-led war against Iraq will be crucial in determining the strength of the jihadi movement,<sup>64</sup> his analysis is bereft of a larger reflection on the impact of US policy in the region. He identifies anti-American sentiment as a central ideology that jihadist groups feed on,<sup>65</sup> yet he does not investigate the basis of such a sentiment. A very different approach here is put forward by Mahmoud Mamdani who sees the events of 9/11 as an outgrowth of the history of the Cold War. In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, he skilfully demonstrates how terror movements have grown out of a culture of impunity created by America's patronage of state terror during the Cold War.<sup>66</sup>

More promising for a contextual approach may at first sight seem the more recently emerging complex, often described as multi-causal and or multi-level studies. Hafez's *Manufacturing Human Bombs* is the most extensively elaborated example in this category. The incorporation of different levels of analysis would promise some level of historicisation or problematisation but Hafez disappoints on both accounts. Drawing on social movement theory, Hafez develops an integrative theoretical framework for explaining the making of suicide bombers in which he identifies three levels of analysis.<sup>67</sup> He explores individual motivations, organisational strategies and societal contexts using an interdisciplinary approach incorporating culturalist, rationalist, and structuralist approaches in order to present a more comprehensive explanation of suicide bombing. In accordance with the three different levels he identifies three central questions for the study of suicide bombing: First, why do individuals commit suicide attacks? Second, why do organisations adopt it as a tactic? Third, why do some societies venerate 'martyrdom' and celebrate suicide bombers as

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<sup>64</sup> Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks*, 183.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

<sup>66</sup> Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War and the Roots of Terror* (Three Leaves Press: New York, 2004), 118.

<sup>67</sup> Mohamed M. Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure in the Making of Suicide Bombers: A Preliminary Theoretical Synthesis and Illustrative Case Study," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 29, no.2 (May 2006): 166.

their heroes?<sup>68</sup> According to Hafez, these three levels and the corresponding research questions are interdependent and cannot be understood in isolation. The Palestinian suicide campaign during the al-Aqsa intifada acts as an illustrative case study but Hafez claims that his theoretical framework is also applicable to suicide bombing campaigns in other cultural contexts.<sup>69</sup>

The organisational level provides the central nexus in Hafez's approach between societal conflicts and the individual suicide bombers. The structure of the organisation enables aggrieved individuals to act out violence in a sustained manner.<sup>70</sup> Without the financial and material resources, the infrastructure, intelligence and logistics provided by organisations, suicide attacks would be limited in scope and magnitude.<sup>71</sup> Rationalist approaches explain how organisations make strategic choices based on cost-benefit calculations about their tactics. Being the weaker party in an asymmetrical conflict, terrorist organisations use suicide bombers because they deem them to be inexpensive, versatile and effective weapons to achieve their desired goals against the stronger opponent.

Culturalist approaches, on the other hand, explain how militant groups use cultural symbols and discourses such as religious texts and rituals to frame suicide bombing as an opportunity to demonstrate heroism, religious devotion, and gain personal redemption.<sup>72</sup> As such, militant groups create an environment in which suicide bombing is deemed rational, legitimate and a means to achieve desired ends. Hafez argues that the cultural framing approach answers the question that rationalist approaches cannot find a satisfactory response to, namely why individuals become suicide bombers. Within the specific cultural framework of self-sacrifice suicide bombing can become a rational choice for the individual.<sup>73</sup>

A structural approach on the societal level helps to explain how such violent acts become possible. By focusing on opportunities, resources, threats, and resonance it explains the permissive conditions that can either enable or restrict the occurrence of suicide bombing. Moreover, it could potentially explain the scope, timing and social acceptance of suicide bombing.<sup>74</sup> Hafez claims that suicide bombing becomes possible when three different conditions converge: First, the dominant cultural norms in society

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<sup>68</sup> Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure," 165.

<sup>69</sup> Mohamed M. Hafez, *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2005), 67.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>72</sup> Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure," 166.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 170.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 171.

include belief systems, narratives and traditions that accept and celebrate martyrdom. Second, legitimate authorities acquiesce to or even promote such forms of extreme violence. Third, communities feel victimised and threatened by external enemies.<sup>75</sup> When these three conditions converge it becomes more likely that society will embrace and venerate suicidal violence.

The difficulties that arise in Hafez from an interpretive and historicist perspective are, firstly, that he sees the drive behind suicide bombing simply located in an intense feeling of victimisation of Palestinians but neglects the underlying reasons that drive this victimisation, including the decades of military occupation, the use of excessive force, and continuing dispossession; rather he portrays it simply as subjective feelings.<sup>76</sup> His account is devoid of any substantial engagement with the political and military realities, or Israel's colonial objectives, surrounding the phenomenon. Moreover, with Hafez's understanding of organisations as the cultivators of a culture of martyrdom which succeeds in framing the phenomenon as rational, 'he portrays militant organisations mainly as cynical, coldly calculating groups that somehow act upon their societies from the outside [...].'<sup>77</sup> For Hafez, the militants belonging to these organisations seem to be somehow detached from the very society that has 'produced' them and are capable of imposing the meaning of these deeds on a society that appears to be deprived of any agency in this process.<sup>78</sup> For Lori Allen, what is needed, is an approach from within: 'a deeper understanding of suicide bombing and the people involved requires a more accurate analysis of Palestinians' own understanding of, debates about, and justification for political protest, and how they conceive of the audiences that those explanations must reach.'<sup>79</sup>

Rashmi Singh, similarly defines her own research on the use of suicide bombing by Hamas as a multi-level and multi-causal approach. However, her focus on Hamas locks her into an organisation-focussed perspective and her multi-level approach is limited to a dynamic between the individual and the organisation. For Singh, both the individual and the organisational level need to be studied simultaneously in order to understand emergence and sustainability of the attacks because a dialectical relationship exists between organisational and individual rationalities and motives and hence neither

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<sup>75</sup> Hafez, "Rationality, Culture, and Structure," 166.

<sup>76</sup> Lori A. Allen, review of *Manufacturing Human Bombs: The Making of Palestinian Suicide Bombers*, by Mohammed M. Hafez, *Journal of Palestine Studies* 36, no.1 (August 2006): 85-6.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*

can be successfully examined in isolation.<sup>80</sup> In fact, '[s]uicide attacks are therefore understood as the converging point of multiple rationalities and a complex amalgamation of expressive and instrumental violence where organisational and individual motivations in the Palestinian setting are identified as broadly conflated along three lines, i.e.: survival, retaliation and competition.'<sup>81</sup>

In addition to rationality, nationalism and political Islam are also key concepts in Singh's analysis. She argues that, as the image of the heroic martyr who is willing to sacrifice his or her life for the homeland has become an intrinsic part of Palestinian identity, it has driven the increased militarisation of resistance and framed it as a necessary response to Israeli policies. In contrast to Hafez, Singh is more specific about why this narrative of the heroic martyr resonates so well with Palestinians. Yet her account of Palestinian suffering and humiliation is merely presented from the perspective of a tool bag used by organisations to further their own ends.<sup>82</sup> Essentially, Singh identifies suicide bombing as a tool utilised by Hamas in the construction of Palestinian identity as well as the state, reframing suicide attacks as the culturally entrenched norm of militant heroism. Political Islam, in Singh's view, has facilitated the pairing between resistance activities and the Palestinian national narrative, framing Palestinian resistance, including suicide bombing, as a necessary jihad against the Israeli state in order to protect and defend the Palestinian nation.

Singh's study offers some historical introduction into the conflict, tracing back the origins of the conflict to Jewish immigration in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. However, on the whole, her account remains limited to political parties and political processes. Further, by focusing solely on Hamas' use of suicide bombing Singh runs the risk of overemphasising the role of the notion of jihad in its articulation of suicide attacks as a resistance strategy to preserve the homeland. Finally, because Singh does not engage with other forms of resistance, suicide bombing is de-contextualised and the study is unable to demonstrate why and when suicide attacks have occurred in relation to other tactics.

Particularly interesting in terms of challenging the standard orthodox terrorism discourse is Jason Franks' approach. Through the use of critical theory and discourse analysis he presents an alternative to the traditional orthodox discourse on terrorism, which he argues is still a remnant of the Cold War state-centric realist and positivist

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<sup>80</sup> Rashmi Singh, *Hamas and Suicide Terrorism: Multi-Causal and Multi-Level Approaches* (London: Routledge 2001), 51-74.

<sup>81</sup> Singh, *Hamas*, 9.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, 76-96.

understanding. He locates his alternative complex and multi-level approach within the field of conflict studies which enables Franks to analyse the conflict on different levels. The traditional orthodox terrorism discourse locks debates on terrorism into a legitimacy vs. illegitimacy dynamic, constructing non-state violence as terrorist, while state violence is deemed to be legitimate and as such, this approach is unable or unwilling to engage with the roots debate. Orthodox terrorism approaches can explain how it works, and what it seeks to achieve, but is silent on why it occurs.<sup>83</sup> Hence these orthodox studies espouse an emphasis on intelligence, surveillance and counter-terrorism in their recommendations rather than conflict resolution. Franks' critical perspective exposes four levels in examining conflict which are not mutually exclusive: the state, non-state, structure and the individual. An investigation of the historical and cultural context, Frank argues, can be particularly helpful for understanding the structural causes behind the conflict and is necessary for a more comprehensive understanding of the root causes of terrorism. Combining the terrorist and conflict approach into a hybrid analytical framework, allows for a much more comprehensive and holistic account of the roots of terrorism. While Frank's approach and his study of the Palestinian-Israeli case offers useful insights into the Palestinian perspective and a counterpoint to the Israeli state-centred orthodox terrorism discourse, it can only provide a limited contextual understanding of Palestinian violence as it does little to account for internal dynamics or changes over time. His framework is primarily an appeal to the field of terrorism studies, an area that he calls largely dormant, to 'reform' a step beyond the state-centric and positivist understanding, to include other perspectives on terrorism.

The field of 'Critical Terrorism Studies', as proposed by Jeroen Gunning, calls for more contextualisation and a move away from state-centrism. Dalacoura, for example, highlights how Middle East area studies can make a contribution to terrorism debates by focusing on the politics of the region more widely and more deeply, and most crucially, taking 'indigenous' discourses more seriously.<sup>84</sup>

A field that has engaged with violence, albeit to a more limited extent, is social movement studies where scholars have tended to explain such political action in a more complex and contextual fashion.<sup>85</sup> One particular factor in the de-contextualisation

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<sup>83</sup> Jason Franks, *Rethinking the Roots of Terrorism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006), 3,9,43.

<sup>84</sup> Katerina Dalacoura, "Middle East Area Studies and Terrorism Studies – Establishing Links via a Critical Approach" in *Critical Terrorism Studies – A New Research Agenda*, ed. Richard Jackson, Marie Breen Smyth and Jeroen Gunning (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009), 131.

<sup>85</sup> See, for instance, Donatella Della Porta, *Social Movements, Political Violence and the State: A*

within terrorism perspectives is the reification of ‘terrorism’ that divorces the phenomenon from other forms of protests or politics more generally.<sup>86</sup> Charles Tilly, by contrast, has treated different forms of collective violence not as distinct types with their own laws but rather as multiple varieties of collective violence in different phases of the conflict.<sup>87</sup> Collective violence belongs to the realm of contentious politics, ‘where people make discontinuous, public, collective claims on each other.’<sup>88</sup> Because not all contentious politics is violent, for Tilly, the challenge is ‘to explain when contention takes a violent turn.’<sup>89</sup> Drawing on these insights the question of how forms of protest have changed over time in the context of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict, especially from non-violence to violence, is a legitimate and important question.

Wendy Pearlman poses exactly this question in relation to the Palestinian national movement. She examines when and how Palestinian resistance turned violent over the period beginning from the British Mandate and ending with the second intifada. In relation to the literature above Pearlman offers both detail and context as well as generalisable claims. Essentially, Pearlman pursues the reverse of Yezid Sayigh’s argument: rather than driving the development of state institutions, she argues, it is weaknesses in the Palestinian state formation that are key factors in contributing to armed struggle.<sup>90</sup> Drawing on social movement theory and conflict studies she brings together a number of different perspectives and accepts that a multiplicity of factors explain the development of Palestinian forms of protest but argues that her organisational mediation theory can explain when and why violence eclipses non-violent mass-based protest. Her basic thesis is that movement cohesion facilitates non-violent mass protest while fragmentation in a national movement leads to the persistence of violence. While strategic decision-making, internal competition, access to resources all offer useful explanations they cannot by themselves answer the question of when and why violence erupted and persisted. Rather, it was the structure of the Palestinian national movement that filtered all the various other factors and determined the use of violence. Lack of strategy and cohesion of the national movement are not new lenses of analysis and indeed, commentators in the second intifada have repeatedly

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*Comparative Analysis of Italy and Germany* (Cambridge: CUP, 1995).

<sup>86</sup> See discussion in Charles Tilly, “Terror, Terrorism, Terrorists,” *Sociological Theory* 22, no.1 (March 2004): 5-13. Also, Della Porta, *Social Movements*, 5.

<sup>87</sup> Charles Tilly, *The Politics of Collective Violence* (Cambridge: CUP, 2003), 18.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> Wendy Pearlman, *Violence, Nonviolence, and the Palestinian National Movement* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), 63.

pointed to these as reasons for the failure of the uprising.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, Pearlman's observation that non-cohesive structures become more brittle under external pressure and prone to fragmentation is not a particularly innovative conclusion.<sup>92</sup> However, what Pearlman does is to apply it as a theory over an extended period of time, namely from the Mandate period to the second intifada.

One of Pearlman's central objectives is to counter the reification of composite political actors. She defines 'a movement's cohesion as the degree to which it, which is not actually an "it", acts as if it were. Fragmentation is the degree to which it does not.'<sup>93</sup> A movement's level of cohesion or lack thereof is measured by 'factors that facilitate cooperation among individuals and enable unified action.'<sup>94</sup> The factors that, for Pearlman, are crucial in understanding a movement's cohesion are leadership, institutions and the population's sense of collective purpose.<sup>95</sup> Pearlman convincingly makes the point that fragmentation is especially significant where movements for self-determination are concerned because these non-state groups are presented with very similar challenges to states in terms of centralising decision making and guaranteeing social order but they lack the power of a state, in particular the monopoly over violence.<sup>96</sup>

Although the theme of fragmentation is also central in this thesis, the explanations offered here differ in a number of ways. Firstly, Pearlman's question is more general. She examines when and why violence was used in the Palestinian national struggle starting from the revolts under the British Mandate to the outbreak of the second intifada. This thesis focuses on the transition from the first intifada to the second and specifically engages with the phenomenon of suicide bombing. In fact, Pearlman has little to say on suicide bombing except that: 'The decision of major factions to engage in suicide attacks did not reflect the enactment of a new policy in the national movement as much as free for all in the context of Israeli repression and fragmentation.'<sup>97</sup> Moreover, she does not ask what kind of violence was generated by the political fragmentation she identifies and why. Second, although she opens the 'black box' of political organisations or movements she leaves that of 'Palestine' and its

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<sup>91</sup> Azmi Bishara "The Quest for Strategy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no.2 (Winter 2003): 41-9. Rashid Khalidi, "Toward a Clear Palestinian Strategy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no.4 (Summer 2002): 5-12.

<sup>92</sup> See Pearlman, *Violence*, 21.

<sup>93</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 165.

society largely unopened.<sup>98</sup> She does acknowledge the Palestinian territories' geographical fragmentation but dismisses it as a central explanatory factor. For Pearlman, '[t]he factors of repression and geography are important. Yet they focus on the relationship between Palestinians and Israelis and neglect the organization of relationships among Palestinians themselves.'<sup>99</sup> This comment betrays Pearlman's focus on endogenous Palestinian factors in explaining violence which ignores the importance of how changing geography has necessitated the transformation of forms of protest. She fails to explain why the relationship between Israelis and Palestinians is less important than internal cohesion. This is particularly apparent in her lack of discussion of how the Oslo agreement, the ambivalent role of the PA, and Israel's growing settlement project and its unilateralism, especially in matters of security, affected the fragmentation of the national movement.<sup>100</sup> It is indeed questionable whether strong institutions, which Pearlman clearly views as a key component of safeguarding movement cohesion, could realistically arise in the Palestinian context. Moreover, although she acknowledges that a sense of collective purpose can build cohesion from the bottom-up there is little discussion on social transformations in Palestinian society and their significance.<sup>101</sup> Her focus on movement cohesion also makes her appear fundamentally uncritical of a number of developments under the Palestinian Authority, especially the growing lack of freedom and democracy.<sup>102</sup>

Fragmentation in this thesis is not viewed as a filter of other factors but what is central is the convergence of fragmentation in the political, geographical and the social spheres. Pearlman's approach does not explain why suicide bombing participants came predominantly from rural areas, refugee camps and the North. Her theory explains why an environment existed that facilitated violence but not why individuals engage in violent acts or who in society supported it. While Pearlman's book is more about why and when violence cannot be contained, this thesis is more about when and why violence comes to be seen as the only effective way to protest.

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 223.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid 161

<sup>100</sup> Although she briefly touches on economic and political disappointments over Oslo and frustration with the PA, Pearlman's chapter on the Oslo period primarily focuses on internal political developments.

<sup>101</sup> Pearlman, *Violence*, 10.

<sup>102</sup> While Pearlman in her conclusion briefly points to the tension between centralisation and democratisation under weak institutions and talks about Palestinian factionalism, she does not say anything on the growing restrictions on the freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the curtailing of non-violent protests by the PA. For Pearlman's comments see Ibid., 228-9.



## 1.6 Looking Beyond Palestine

The aspect that has largely been ignored in analyses of political violence is the geographical fragmentation of the Palestinian territories. The importance of geography and the particular geographical structures in terms of power distribution, security control and social division is missing in these accounts. Yet, geography has always been of relevance in anti-colonial and national liberation movements. Fanon, writing against the background of the anti-colonial struggle in Algeria 1954-62, describes territorial structures of colonialism:

The colonial world is a world divided into compartments. It is probably unnecessary to recall the existence of native quarters and European quarters, of schools for natives and schools for Europeans; in the same way we need not recall apartheid in South Africa. Yet if we examine closely this system of compartments, we will at least be able to reveal the lines of force it implies. This approach to the colonized world will allow us to mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be reorganized.

The colonial world is a world cut in two. The dividing line, the frontiers are shown by barracks and police stations.<sup>103</sup>

As already referred to by Fanon in this passage, another prime example of separation was apartheid South Africa. Although segregation had begun much earlier, from the late 1960s onwards the government pursued a concerted policy to collect all black South Africans into designated Homelands except those that were needed by white employers as labourers.<sup>104</sup> In order to reduce the influx of rural Africans into the major urban centres, the government implemented a policy that prohibited them from visiting towns for more than 72 hours without a special permit.<sup>105</sup> However, the government's policies were not limited to territorial racial segregation but also implemented a system that was intended to create internal division within the non-white community:

Besides their common lot as victims of apartheid, Blacks had varied experiences. Black residents of the cities, the white farming areas, and the African Homelands had vastly different lives. The government accentuated black ethnic differences, favouring Coloreds and Indians over Africans and encouraging internal ethnic divisions among Africans. The government also promoted class divisions among Blacks. It supported collaborators and provided relative security of urban residence for some Africans, whereas it

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<sup>103</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (New York: Grove Press 1963), 37-8.

<sup>104</sup> Leonard Thompson, *A History of South Africa* (New Haven: Yale University Press 1990), 193.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*

kept African laborers tied to white farms and made it illegal for Africans to leave their Homelands, except as temporary migrant workers.<sup>106</sup>

Drawing on Murray and Boal, Feldman describes how violence is significant in shaping spatial structures in Northern Ireland.<sup>107</sup> During periods of calm elements of both communities moved out from the segregated enclaves to mix, but during times of crises then regrouped again along more rigidified sectarian divisions.<sup>108</sup> The burning out of houses and businesses that started with the riots in 1969 forced many residents to resettle within their ethnic communities. However, the reverse is also true. Spatial structures determine the lines of confrontation. Loyalist parades, which Feldman describes as a synthesis of commemorative history, the command of space and boundary transgression, offer a useful example:<sup>109</sup>

The typical spatial pattern of these parades is the movement from the centre of the community (physical and/or symbolic), where the parade audience is ethnically homogenous, to a march along the boundaries demarcating an adjacent community composed of the opposed ethnic grouping. Marching along the boundaries transforms the adjacent community into an involuntary audience and an object of defilement through the aggressive display of political symbols and music.<sup>110</sup>

Loyalist marches could be particularly provocative as there was a tradition to include a new street into the parade route every year. These new streets were usually on the boundary or within the recognised territory of a Catholic community.<sup>111</sup> The following year, Catholics and often the police sought to stop the Loyalists from entering these 'new' streets. Boal and Murray use the term 'interface' to describe these boundaries and observe that most of the inter-group clashes have taken place along the boundaries between Protestant and Catholic areas.<sup>112</sup> Hence geography shapes to a significant extent the dynamics of violence because it creates borders, frontiers and clear vulnerabilities. Moreover, where space is largely sectarian there is no room for civil action. Regardless of the intent of social actors, street marches or sitdowns, which have their origins in the moderate American civil rights movement, had very different

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<sup>106</sup> Thompson, *History of South Africa*, 201.

<sup>107</sup> Allen Feldman, *Formations of Violence – The Narrative of the Body and Political Terror in Northern Ireland* (Chicago: Chicago University Press 1993), 26.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> F. W. Boal and Russell Murray, "A City in Conflict," *Geographical Magazine* 44 (1977): 364-71, cited in Feldman, *Formations*, 28.

implications in Northern Ireland where marching through an area signifies the assertion of a territorial claim.<sup>113</sup>

Frances Hasso observes a further dimension of spatial order in conflict. She has pointed out that the Palestinian-Israeli geography is not only 'racialised' but also gendered. Female suicide bombers challenged their placement within their own normative cultural gender-sexual structures and at the same time also Israeli assumptions that it is male bodies that pose a threat to Israel's spatialised ordering and not female bodies.<sup>114</sup> Where the women chose to carry out their attacks, for Hasso, demonstrates these women's awareness of this racialised geography and their clear intention to challenge it.<sup>115</sup> They challenged this geography by participating in these attacks but also conformed to it by dressing as Western-looking Israelis. The efficacy of the mission was dependent on their invisibility as both Palestinians and as women.<sup>116</sup>

Ricolfi links strategic thinking with spatial reordering in the case of suicide attacks in Lebanon. He proposes that spectacular suicide attacks stopped after 1985 because after the Israeli army left there were fewer targets with a higher concentration of people that were within the reach of the militants.<sup>117</sup> The checkpoints and barracks that had been the main targets of militants in the early attacks were now either no longer there or no longer staffed. However, Ricolfi offers no further evidence for this but suggests that a historical-geographical analysis of the location and concentration of Israeli military and diplomatic personnel in addition to information on movement restrictions of people and goods following the withdrawal of the Israeli army would shed light on such an interpretation.<sup>118</sup> The Israeli government justified its invasion of Lebanon on the grounds that PLO attacks on Israeli territory were organised from the Palestinian refugee camps inside Lebanon. The Lebanese population in the south had initially welcomed Israel hoping it would expel the PLO.<sup>119</sup> The southern region had suffered the most from retaliatory attacks. The invasion launched in 1982 was one of the most devastating and left between 4 June and 31 August 19,000 people (Palestinians

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<sup>113</sup> See discussion in Feldman, *Formations*, 21-2. In particular also, Paul Bew, Peter Gibbon, and Henry Patterson, *The State in Northern Ireland: Political Forces and Social Class* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1979), 171, cited in Feldman, *Formations*, 21.

<sup>114</sup> Frances S. Hasso, "Discursive and Political Deployments by/of the 2002 Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers/Martyrs," *Feminist Review* 81 (2005): 24.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>117</sup> Luca Ricolfi, "Palestinians, 1981-2003," in *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, ed. Diego Gambetta, 77-130 (Oxford: OUP 2005), 90.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Augustus Richard Norton, "Hizballah and the Israeli Withdrawal from Southern Lebanon," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no.1 (Autumn 2000): 23.

as well as Lebanese) killed in military attacks on predominantly civilian targets, including cars, buses, apartment buildings, hospitals, an orphanage, a home for the disabled, and Red Cross ambulances.<sup>120</sup> The resistance to Israeli presence began on a small scale with boycotts against Israeli goods and developed into massive civil resistance in villages in the south and among thousands of prisoners held at Ansar Camp. These included women demonstrations in front of prison gates, prisoner hunger strikes and the burning of tents in the camp.<sup>121</sup> Alongside this, Lebanese militant groups also used a wide range of guerrilla style tactics against Israeli and international military targets. The earliest and most spectacular suicide attacks targeted US and French military presence in the country and later focused on Israeli targets in the south of the country.<sup>122</sup> Hezbollah was not the only group engaging in suicide bombings but Amal and some secular organisations under Syrian control were responsible for at least half of the attacks from 1983 onwards.<sup>123</sup> Over the 1990s suicide bombings against IDF targets decreased dramatically, especially those attributed to Hezbollah.

That violent forms of protest take over when non-violent resistance becomes ineffective is an observation that has also been made in relation to Sri Lanka where Tamils experienced a relatively swift radicalisation.<sup>124</sup> Hopgood observes that when non-violent resistance was failing younger Tamils began to consider more violent options.<sup>125</sup> Tamil radicalisation has to be seen in the context of Sinhalese indiscriminate violence against the Tamil population, day-to-day humiliation at checkpoints, and repression under hegemonic unitarist rule.<sup>126</sup> The reason why non-violence was ineffectual in the Palestinian case was the geographical dislocation of Palestinian centres of control and the unequal experience of occupation policies.

## 1.7 Formulating Key Questions

This discussion has raised a number of questions that will help set the agenda for the rest of the thesis. We can observe distinctly different forms of political action in

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<sup>120</sup> Salt, *Unmaking the Middle East*, 257.

<sup>121</sup> Fawwaz Traboulsi, *A History of Modern Lebanon* (London: Pluto, 2007), 222.

<sup>122</sup> Christoph Reuter, *My Life is a Weapon – A Modern History of Suicide Bombing* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 66.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Daya Somasundaram, "Suicide Bombers of Sri Lanka," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38 (2010): 423.

<sup>125</sup> Stephen Hopgood, "Tamil Tigers, 1987-2002," in *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, ed. Diego Gambetta, 43-76 (Oxford: OUP 2005), 47.

<sup>126</sup> Sumantra Bose, "State Crisis and Nationalities Conflict in Sri Lanka and Yugoslavia," *Comparative Political Studies* 28 (1995): 96-7, 100; Somasundaram, "Suicide Bombers," 428.

the first and in the second intifada. Pearlman examined internal political mechanisms which created an environment conducive to violence. Her work, however, gives little consideration to the kind of impact that the geographically defined division of control had on PA governance, how the Oslo agreement itself put the PA in a situation where it was not able to take a clear stance on violence, and how its ambivalent position consequently also generated support for violence among the population.

We have seen that in other cases of national liberation struggles space and violence are intimately linked. The question that arises in the Palestinian case is, how has the continuous fragmentation of Palestinian territory, and in particular the enclavisation of the Palestinian population, affected the forms of political action that Palestinians have used? Connected to this, is also the question of how the territorial dislocation has impacted the populations that live in these dissimilarly affected locations where they are subject to different forms of governance. Ricolfi has proposed a historical-geographical analysis to understand the decline of suicide bombings in Lebanon, one that looks at the distribution of military personnel and the population's movement restriction over time. This thesis will use a similar kind of analysis to explore why violent political action rose dramatically over the second intifada.

Finally, the thesis is not only interested in why violence occurred but also, more specifically, it will ask, what explains the use and persistence of suicide bombing during the second intifada? How can the transformations in politics, geography and society explain the rise of this phenomenon? Which strata in Palestinian society were most likely to participate, and what role did gender play in these attacks?

## 1.8 Methodology

When we look at events in the world we do this with certain preconceptions about how things work. We may not apply these preconceptions consciously but they act like patterns, filters or lenses that help us identify, categorise and make sense of information. Through them we make sense of the interaction between individuals, groups of individuals and the impact of larger and more abstract entities, place emphasis on some entities over others, explain origins or causes of phenomena, and choose to zoom into events or zoom out and step back to look at the larger picture. These preconceptions are not rigid, however, and certain events or observations will inform and change them. In research we are required to reflect on them and when we embark on social enquiry and explain social phenomena we have to reflect on our choice of social systems, how we identify relevant agencies, and what their relationship is. If we want to make a valuable and coherent research contribution and if we want our conclusions to stand up such choices and processes need to be laid bare for scrutiny.<sup>127</sup> This research project is based on a set of claims which will be explored further in this section. It contends that social phenomena are complex, fluid, and the product of a unique configuration of a number of individual agencies as well as overarching structures.<sup>128</sup> Phenomena are hence best understood through detailed studies of the multiple agencies and contingencies within their particular contexts. Looking at the ‘inside’ of the story will reveal these complexities and what they mean.

### ***Science vs. History***

Social phenomena are complex and much of their meaning is lost when they are reduced to simple explanations. Pape and Bloom, discussed earlier in this chapter, have attempted to provide perhaps the most overarching or parsimonious explanations of suicide bombing. Pape endorses the argument that suicide bombing is a strategic response to foreign occupation while Bloom goes a little further to argue that suicide attacks are not only targeted at the perceived enemy but also at a domestic audience and

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<sup>127</sup> Michael Crotty, *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process* (London: Sage, 1998), 13.

<sup>128</sup> Édouard Conte and Roger Heacock, “Disciplinary Building Blocks, Space – Time Reconfigurations,” in *Critical Research in the Social Sciences: A Transdisciplinary East-West Handbook*, ed. Roger Heacock and Édouard Conte (Ibrahim Abu-Lughod Institute of International Studies Birzeit University and Institute for Social Anthropology Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2011), 8.

are a means of competing with rival groups for power and public support. What is so appealing about these explanations is their simplicity and their potential for general application. Their strength lies in their predictive power and scope for generalisation. However, the reason they work is that they simplify and decontextualise the concepts they use. Pape's use of democracy, for instance, is rather liberal. Although he acknowledges that Russia, Sri Lanka and Turkey are only rated as 'partly free' by Freedom House, a non-profit organisation which monitors the status of democracy across the world, he contends that what is crucial is that these countries elect their chief executives and legislatures in multi-party elections and have seen at least one peaceful transfer of power. He concludes that this makes them 'solidly democratic by standard criteria.'<sup>129</sup> Although multi-party elections and peaceful transfers of power may be sufficient conditions for a country to qualify as a democracy, in practical terms, it is still a long stretch between what democracy entails in Russia or Sri Lanka and the more long-standing democratic institutions in France, Britain or the US. Some of the emerging democracies are also not necessarily stable and their status fluctuates easily. This is especially true in the case of Russia which subsequently was downgraded again by Freedom House to 'not free'. Pape hence widely applies this concept without taking into account the specifics of the various cases he is dealing with. We have also seen in an earlier section how Pape's treatment of the concept of occupation is problematic. Again, he decontextualises the various occupations in different countries around the world and simply reduces the concept to a numerical understanding, namely the severity of occupation is measured by the number of deaths inflicted on the occupied population. As this thesis will demonstrate, Israeli occupation is a complex multi-faceted mechanism that works on several different levels, reducing it to numbers of casualties misrepresents its true meaning for the daily life of Palestinians. When concepts such as democracy and occupation no longer grasp the true reality on the ground, the usefulness of the generalisability and predictability of such scientific approaches becomes questionable as their results become distorted.

Hollis and Smith refer to such approaches as looking at stories from the outside. This outside way of accounting for behaviour is modelled on the methods of natural science and is articulated in terms of a search for causes. The underlying assumption is that events are governed by laws which apply whenever similar events occur in similar conditions.<sup>130</sup> Based on this we can arrive at widely applicable theories and make

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<sup>129</sup> Pape, *Dying to Win*, 45.

<sup>130</sup> Martin Hollis and Steve Smith, *Explaining and Understanding International Relations* (Clarendon

predictions about future developments. This kind of tradition has its roots in the rise of the natural sciences after the 16<sup>th</sup> century and particularly Comte's articulation of positivism. By contrast, the story from the inside is able to convey the meaning of events and therefore provides us with a much richer and detailed account and can lay bare the intricate relationship of the various components that constitute or trigger such events. Hollis and Smith explain: 'We must know how actors defined the issues and the alternatives, what they believed about the situation and each other, what they aimed to achieve and how. Only then can we ask more pointed questions about their clarity of vision, their underlying reasons, and the true meaning of episodes.'<sup>131</sup> The concern over such approaches, however, is that they disintegrate into anecdotal detail and have nothing to say that is applicable beyond their immediate subject, making no contribution to the advancement of knowledge. Moreover, the researcher is directly involved as the interpreter of these meanings but also partly in generating them as he or she is a direct participant in his or her research environment. The scientific approach to studying human affairs negates such a role for the researcher but instead posits his or her role as an objective observer from the outside or from an Olympian position: detached from the events under investigation.

This debate has translated into the study of politics as a dispute between the discipline and area studies. Social scientists within politics seek law-like regularities in human behaviour and use the same analytical categories and variables across any region in the world. The aim is to arrive at general theories and to identify and test hypotheses derived from them. Area studies specialists, by contrast, strive to understand regions in depth and expertise in the field ranges from politics, history, literature to languages with a view to understand events more fully. Because of this focus on detail and context-boundedness, the central criticisms directed at area studies is that their tendency to descriptiveness and dearth of theory development bars them from making a contribution to the advancement of knowledge.<sup>132</sup>

However, for Dalacoura, area studies can make a significant contribution when it comes to the study of political violence and terrorism. She highlights that while contemporary studies have focused on religion and Islam in particular, as the source of the so-called 'new terrorism', area specialists tend to point to secular political objectives and ideologies which lie underneath the religious imagery and discourse that is used by

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Press: Oxford, 1990), 3.

<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 2.

<sup>132</sup> See discussion in Robert Bates, "Area Studies and the Disciple: A Useful Controversy?" *Political Science and Politics* 30, no.2 (June 1997): 166-9.



many of these groups.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, Middle East area literature highlights the considerable ambiguity that surrounds state action and how the description and definition of these actions are contestable and politicised. Middle East area studies is able to disentangle facts from emotions and polemics: ‘[...] the meticulous and careful study of specific government policies and the use of case studies from the Middle East can reveal the dominance of state interests in the production of terrorism knowledge and terrorism discourse.’<sup>134</sup> Hence area specialism reveals the subtleties of local politics, and the underlying meaning of symbolisms and rhetoric. Without this sensitivity for local history and politics research findings and the conclusions drawn from them become superficial, even distorted, and unhelpful in explaining political trends and what to do about them.

### ***Between Aggressors and Victims***

There is a tendency to portray Palestinians as either victims or aggressors. Palestinians are hence seen as either locked into a position where they are at the receiving end of Israeli aggression and suffering within a complex system of discrimination and as a result are completely divested in such accounts of their own agency. Alternatively, and this is often the case in traditional terrorism studies, they are seen simply as the aggressors against which the Israeli state has to protect itself and its citizen. The context which has shaped their identities, motivations and interests is completely lost in such accounts. This thesis will argue that Palestinians are somewhere between ‘aggressors’ and ‘victims’. They are caught in system of power asymmetry that determines every area of Palestinian life from movement and labour to water and food and from which they can never quite escape but at times they are also active participants in shaping this very context. Hence, it will be helpful to think of agency and structure in a more complementary and dynamic fashion.

Alexander Wendt, for instance, argues that the challenge is not to establish which has more explanatory power – structure or agency – as if the two were separate, instead we ought to understand structure as having constitutive effects on agents constituting his or her identity and interests. One of the central concepts here for action is meaning, which according to Wendt arises out of interaction with other entities.<sup>135</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Dalacoura, *Middle East Area Studies and Terrorism Studies*, 128.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>135</sup> Alexander Wendt, “Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics,”

Previously to Wendt, Giddens had already argued for a symbiotic relationship between structure and agency. He contends that in social theory the notions of action and structure presuppose one another but the recognition of this dependence requires a re-working of the understanding of the concepts.<sup>136</sup> ‘The structural properties of social systems are both the medium and outcome of the reproduction of the practices which constitute those systems.’<sup>137</sup> This is what Giddens refers to as the duality of structure. For Giddens, it is social practices that form the basic component of social life rather than individuals or collective groups. In fact, all social action consists of social practices which are located in time and space and are the result of the conduct of knowledgeable individual agents.

The central idea of the re-production of social practices may, nevertheless, still leave a slightly structural aftertaste with individual actors almost fully absorbed by the dynamics of structure as both medium and outcome.<sup>138</sup> Agents in this context, however, are not ‘mechanical’ rule followers. ‘Rules tell the actor how to go on and yet are constructed from the interpretations which actors place on this guidance.’<sup>139</sup> Such agents abide with the demands of social life but at the same time also have the capacity to revise social conventions. Wendt’s theoretical framework, for instance, does allow for the idea of change through intentional efforts by individual agents. Under certain conditions, he argues, ‘actors can engage in self-reflection and practice specifically designed to transform their identities and interests and thus to “change the games” in which they are embedded.’<sup>140</sup>

The account of Palestinian political activism presented in this thesis is an attempt to highlight the various external contingencies that shaped the context for Palestinian activism but it also seeks to demonstrate how Palestinians are agents in shaping their own environment. In particular, it will argue that the transformation in political activism during the second uprising was a response to a context where political expression was no longer possible through the existing mechanisms. The use of suicide bombing, particularly on the Israeli side of the Green Line then changed the Israeli experience and understanding of the conflict, albeit with negative consequences from a Palestinian perspective. It helped reframe it into a more clearly existentialist discourse

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*International Organization* 46, no.2 (Spring 1992), 403.

<sup>136</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Central Problems in Social Theory – Action, Structure and Contradiction in Social Analysis* (London: MacMillan Education, 1979), 53.

<sup>137</sup> Anthony Giddens, *The Constitution of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1984), 69.

<sup>138</sup> See Martin Hollis, *Philosophy of Social Science*, revised and updated (Cambridge: CUP, 2002), 181.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Wendt, *Anarchy*, 419.

for Israel and reinforced the already dominant security framework within which Israel operated. The fact that Palestinian suicide bombing has largely stopped demonstrates that these practices are not fixed but the result of a complex negotiation between individual agency and environmental permissibility. The subsequent chapters will demonstrate how the Palestinian experience has fluctuated between structural limitations and attempts to regain agency. Suicide bombing, in particular, was an attempt to reassert agency amid a context of asymmetric power, manifested in multiple ways through military aggression, assassinations, sieges, curfews, closures, and widespread destruction of property.

### ***How is it relevant?***

The interpretive approach from within has its roots in the 19<sup>th</sup> century ideas of history and the manner in which history is writing from the inside.<sup>141</sup> Cox notes that ‘[...] Waltz’s work is fundamentally ahistorical. The elegance he achieves in the clarity of his theoretical statement comes at the price of an unconvincing mode of historical understanding.’<sup>142</sup> By contrast, the explanation advanced here does not envisage general or universally valid laws but sees the nature and structures of human interaction as changeable and context-dependent, enabling us to understand events and processes within the historical framework within which they occur. Gardiner writes about historical explanation that ‘[h]istory is about what happened on particular occasions. It is not about what usually happens or what always happens under certain circumstances; for this we go to science.’ He adds, however, that uniqueness does not preclude any form of generalisation and that the historian will, despite his attention to the individual and unique, have to rely on some general laws in his reconstruction.<sup>143</sup> Understanding the local history is crucial for getting a better grasp of political reality, especially in complex and longstanding conflicts. The Palestinian case is so rich in cultural and historical intricacies that it is difficult to see how it could be analysed and understood in isolation from its context. Although some similarities with the Basque movement and the IRA exist – independence and territory playing a crucial role in all three cases – in the Basque region and Northern Ireland we do not have the particular history of the 1948 expulsion; Jewish fears of elimination emanating from a trauma of century-long

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<sup>141</sup> Hollis and Smith, *Explaining and Understanding*, 1.

<sup>142</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

<sup>143</sup> Patrick Gardiner, *The Nature of Historical Explanation* (Oxford: OUP, 1961), 41, 44.

persecution and discrimination; the on-going military occupation, the territorial fragmentation and settlement enterprise, as well as its particular dynamics originating from Israel's position within the region and its close alliance with the US.

The policy relevance of interpretive and historicist studies is often questioned because they do not deliver generalisable results and offer no basis for prediction. However, what they do is provide a deeper understanding of the conflict and offer more insightful, meaningful and plausible conclusions that touch directly at the roots of the conflict. Israel's response to Palestinian violence has to date primarily been one of pre-emption, prevention and punishment but not one of conflict resolution. Its dealing with the Palestinians is firmly located within a security discourse and hence its articulation of responses in terms of counter-terrorist policies targeted at organisations and their leaders is not surprising. But it has also included whole-sale punishment of the Palestinian population: the siege of Gaza, the construction of the wall and the curfews during the second uprising being just a few examples. Implicit in Israel's policy is the desire to retain the status-quo. Any form of conflict resolution would have to include relinquishment of territorial control, at least a partial return of refugees and a compromise on Jerusalem. Alternatively, a solution could take the form of a bi-national state which would, however, mean the end of Israel as a Jewish state. This thesis will contribute to strengthening the dialogue on conflict resolution approaches and will point out the kind of risks the continuation of current trends in the absence of a resolution will pose to Palestinian society itself and ultimately, also to Israel.

## 1.9 Research Methods

Having established the fundamental underlying theoretical framework of this research strategy in the previous section the pressing question that has to be confronted now is how to collect data in order to construct an explanation of the changing trends in Palestinian political activism and in particular the rise of suicide bombing during the second intifada. The rich, in-depth and context-sensitive account that this thesis is striving for directly affects what data need to be collected and what methods of data collection are used. As Bryman explains: ‘[...] methods of social research are closely tied to different visions of how social reality should be studied. Methods are not simply neutral tools: they are linked with the ways in which social scientists envision the connection between different viewpoints about the nature of social reality and how it should be examined.’<sup>144</sup> For this project a research technique is required which can tease out a multiplicity of factors across individuals, collectives and their environment and that allows those who are part of the conflict to speak for themselves. Semi-structured interviews, with their ability to give the interviewee the space to situate events within their own contexts are the most appropriate study tool for this type of research. In combination with documentary analysis this method will provide a confident analysis of the complex processes behind the changes in Palestinian political activism between the first and the second uprising.

The field of political violence and terrorism studies has been repeatedly criticised for its weakness in research methods. Andrew Silke bemoans the absence of statistical methods in the field and observes that the majority of research relies on qualitative and journalistic approaches which, he argues, lack the reliability and validity that is expected in high-quality social science research.<sup>145</sup> Silke’s criticisms can be divided into two separate statements: one about data collection and the other about data analysis. First, he suggests that qualitative research methods are insufficiently rigorous. He believes that interviews in the field are often carried out on an ad hoc basis and can hardly ever be conducted in a structured and systematic fashion.<sup>146</sup> Because of the nature of the subject field interviews are largely carried out through opportunity sampling which raise concerns for the representativeness of the research findings. If

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<sup>144</sup> Alan Bryman, *Social Research Methods* (Oxford: OUP, 2004), 4.

<sup>145</sup> Andrew Silke ed., “An Introduction to Terrorism Research,” in *Research on Terrorism: Trends, Achievements and Failures* (New York: Frank Cass Publishers, 2004), 11.

<sup>146</sup> Andrew Silke, “The Devil You Know: Continuing Problems with Research on Terrorism,” *Terrorism and Political Violence* 13, no. 4 (Winter 2001): 6.

interviews are to be used, Silke clearly favours the structured interview as it can prevent bias and minimise the impact of the interviewer on the data collected.<sup>147</sup> Second, he stresses the importance of statistical analysis and its use in looking at broader patterns. Statistical methods are useful for looking at relationships and patterns and expressing these patterns with numbers. Silke believes that both the quality of data collected, the closer one gets to the individuals engaging in militant activities, is lacking as is the level of analysis of data, and in the process essential information is lost. In his view, the weakness of the data could, however, be compensated for by rigorous statistical analysis.<sup>148</sup> As such, Silke represents a typical social science perspective.

Qualitative methods, however, need not necessarily be weak and insufficiently rigorous. Moreover, the debate between quantitative and qualitative methods should not be one of superiority of one over the other. Rather, the two methods should be seen as providing answers to different types of questions and exhibit a difference in ontological and epistemological assumptions.<sup>149</sup> As Silke points out the strength of statistical analysis lies in its ability to offer insights into broad patterns. However, while it is useful for testing hypotheses, quantitative data analysis fails to offer new insights into a phenomenon, and with its numerical description of the world misses out on the detailed narratives and the more complex accounts of human perception. Qualitative interviewing is largely based on an ontological position that postulates ‘that people’s knowledge, views, understandings, interpretations, experiences, and interactions are meaningful properties of the social reality which research questions are designed to explore.’<sup>150</sup> Qualitative research allows the researcher to study these processes and to discern relationships between a multiplicity of factors. Essentially they enable factors to be presented as embedded in their context and as perceived by the respondent. An interview approach generally assumes that asking questions and listening to people is a legitimate and meaningful way of generating data on social phenomena.<sup>151</sup> What this research seeks to understand is how social processes and individuals’ perception and understanding of the social and political factors around them shape and influence the changes in Palestinian political activism and increases the propensity to engage in militant activity. This can only be achieved by speaking and listening to individuals actively involved in the given environment. Listening carefully ‘to hear the meanings,

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<sup>147</sup> Silke, “The Devil You Know,” 8.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 11-2.

<sup>149</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 19-21.

<sup>150</sup> Jennifer Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (London: Sage, 2002), 64.

<sup>151</sup> Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, 64.

interpretations, and understanding that give shape to the worlds of the interviewees' is a crucial skill in qualitative interviewing.<sup>152</sup>

Qualitative interviews span a wide spectrum from completely unstructured conversations to interviews that follow a relatively fixed and rigid set of questions with little scope for change in direction. One of the most significant strengths of qualitative interviewing lies in its potential for flexibility but, at the same time, this freedom also poses the greatest challenge for the researcher. Striking the right balance between control and flexibility is one of the most difficult tasks in qualitative interviewing.<sup>153</sup> How interviewees responded to the semi-structured method during the fieldwork differed and hence the ability to adapt on the part of the researcher was required. Some respondents felt fairly comfortable to elaborate on the topics freely, others needed to be prompted with additional questions regularly. One respondent posed a particular challenge as she answered most questions with two sentences but with persistent follow-up questions I attempted to obtain fuller answers.

The semi-structured interviews used for this research followed a list of questions on a number of specific topics. This form of enquiry ensures that some degree of comparability is maintained while at the same time leaving sufficient room to 'explore fully all the factors that underpin participant's answers, reasons, feelings, opinions and beliefs'.<sup>154</sup> The semi-structured format enables the interviewer to seek clarification and elaboration on the answers given.<sup>155</sup> It gives the researcher the freedom to follow the direction in which the interviewee may take the interview and the researcher may re-adjust the focus of the research as a result of key issues that emerge from the interview.<sup>156</sup> Questions may be asked that are not in the interview guide as the interviewee may raise interesting issues that are worth pursuing further. The emphasis of the interviews for this research project was on how the interviewee explains and understands events and behaviour within his or her political and social context and what elements he or she views as important.<sup>157</sup> In contrast to questionnaires, where responses are made through pre-set answers, this method allows the respondents to answer in their own words and on their own terms and produces as a result much thicker and richer

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<sup>152</sup> H.J. Rubin and I.S. Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing* (London: Sage, 1995), 7.

<sup>153</sup> Peter Burnham et al., *Research Methods in Politics* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 214.

<sup>154</sup> Robin Legards, Jill Kegan & Kit Ward, "In-Depth Interviews," in *Qualitative Research Practice*, ed. Ritchie J. and J. Lewis, 138-169 (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 141.

<sup>155</sup> Tim May, *Social Research – Issues, Methods and Process*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001), 123.

<sup>156</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 320.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 321.

data.<sup>158</sup> Interviews offer the depth and nuance that this research project is looking for. The more narrative approach to data collection also allows the researcher to grasp the interaction between various factors involved and gain contextual understanding of the issue in question. Three groups of people were interviewed: academics, party members and NGO representatives. While in all three groups an attempt was made to cover the same topics as much as possible, each group also allowed for specific topics to be explored in more depth. While a question on the characteristics of political activism in the second intifada was a question asked in all groups, for parties the focus then shifted particularly to specific activities pursued by the party during the uprising, the stance towards specific tactics, decision making on tactics, cooperation with other parties, and perceptions of the needs of Palestinian society and ways to tackle those. In interviews with NGOs, questions focused on changes in society, provisions made to society during the intifada, ways in which organisations tried to affect politics during this period, and what kind of non-violent alternatives emerged, if any. Interviews with academics were taken as an opportunity, in addition to the general questions, to explore more specific topics such as changes in identity or the particular impact of territorial division on the intifada. In interviews with women, the role of women, how women were affected by the second intifada, what significance the participation of women in suicide bombing had, and the significance of personal motives versus political ones were explored.

Within the social sciences there has recently been an increased focus on reflexivity. Except for structured interviews which follow questionnaires rigidly and where the impact of the researcher is arguably minimal, any interview approach that allows for some flexibility and freedom for both the researcher and researched will have to answer questions on reflexivity. The concept of reflexivity entails an awareness of the researcher's cultural, social and political context, and more specifically, refers to a self-awareness of beliefs, values, attitudes and their effects on the setting that is being studied. This also includes a self-critical approach to one's choices of research methods and application, which enhances the evaluation and understanding of the research findings.<sup>159</sup> While Reinharz emphasises the importance of being aware of the variety of selves and their impact on others that a researcher brings to the field,<sup>160</sup> Patai warns of an excessive emphasis on self-reflexivity.<sup>161</sup> Patai criticises a tendency she identifies in

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid., 320. Mason, *Qualitative Researching*, 65.

<sup>159</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 500.

<sup>160</sup> Shulamit Reinharz, "Who Am I? The Need for a Variety of Selves in the Field," in *Reflexivity and Voice*, ed. R. Hertz, 3-20 (London: Sage, 1997).

<sup>161</sup> Daphne Patai and Noretta Koertge, *Professing Feminism: Cautionary Tales from the Strange World of*



academia to think ‘that you can never tell *enough*’ when it comes to self-reflexivity. Although the context in which the research occurs and the impact of the researcher are certainly significant this ‘bias’ and ‘impact’ on the part of the researcher do not necessarily undermine qualitative research as Silke suggests, rather an awareness of these will improve our understanding of the research findings.

There is a general assumption in the literature that sharing experiences and cultural background with the interviewee will enhance the interview process while an absence of such shared ground will make the process more difficult.<sup>162</sup> Important characteristics that come to mind here and that will inevitably have some impact on the research is the gender of the researcher and status as a foreign national. While both could be a disadvantage in a culturally very different setting, being an outsider and stranger can sometimes be of benefit as Reinharz recognised in her research on the elderly in the kibbutz.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, shared experiences may in some circumstances also have the effect that the respondent may give less detailed answers on the assumption that the interviewer ‘knows what it’s like.’<sup>164</sup> How the interviewer’s identity and particular background impacted on the research process will be elaborated in more detail in the concluding chapter.

While Silke has pointed out some serious flaws and weaknesses of qualitative research and made some valid criticisms in its use for studies on political violence, many of these shortcomings can be remedied. The use of semi-structured interviews will provide the researcher with some control over the data and allow a certain degree of comparability between the different accounts. While bias and the impact of the researcher cannot be completely eliminated, valuable knowledge can still be obtained beyond this and an awareness and acknowledgement of the factors influencing the research process will open up the research process for full scrutiny. In interpreting the data, a sign of good-quality academic work is an approach that engages critically with conflicting explanations and contradictory points of view.<sup>165</sup> A Palestinian academic voiced the opinion that you could believe less than 20% of what people involved in politics in Palestine would tell you and hence interviewing as a research technique is only partly useful. In the analysis, comments were never taken at face value but evaluated according to the context they were presented in and against other sources.

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*Women’s Studies* (New York: Basic Books, 1994), 52.

<sup>162</sup> See, for instance, J. Lofland and L.H. Lofland, *Analyzing Social Settings* (Wadsworth Publishing: Belmont, 1995), 13.

<sup>163</sup> Reinharz *Who Am I*, 13.

<sup>164</sup> Legards et al., *In-Depth Interviews*, 160-1.

<sup>165</sup> Burnham et al., *Research Methods*, 216, 218.

When party members were asked what kind of concrete activities they pursued during the second intifada, for example, the common response was that the party was very engaged but when prompted for specific examples the answers were vague. This included a party without a militant wing and hence the vagueness of the answer is more likely connected to the lack of activities rather than a security concern in sharing this information. However, it should also be said that it was generally difficult to obtain specific examples of events and this may in part be also due to the significant time lapse since the uprising. Another example for the critical engagement with the data is the reconstruction of the second intifada in the current political context which will be discussed further in chapter two. The accounts presented of the second intifada were carefully read within the political context at the time of interviewing. The stance taken here is that the existing political climate reconfigured the understanding of the second intifada and contributed to portraying it as a very different movement to the first, driven primarily by organisations and detached from the rest of society. Some of the meanings that emerged in the interviews were visible on the surface, others much more deeply buried. There was undoubtedly an effort to give a good impression of the Palestinian people and their cause to someone who represents the Western world. Given that the conflict is still on-going, in combination with fast-paced changes in the political environment, there was also some lack of interest apparent in talking about events that were not current, as more pressing issues were at hand.

Interviewees were primarily selected through snowballing. However, the experience during this research project was that recommendations for further interviewees were not always easily obtained. Some individuals, however, were specifically targeted because of the role they played in parties or the expertise they had. Seven of the interviews were conducted with women, two in their capacity as party members, one as a representative of an NGO, four in their role as academics of which one was at the time actively involved in NGO work and one had previous involvement in activism. One way of making qualitative research more reliable and open to assessment is to apply the method of triangulation.<sup>166</sup> For the purpose of this research project, data collected through semi-structured interviews will be supplemented with documentary analysis and compared to findings in secondary literature. A variety of reports and data produced by Israeli and Palestinian NGOs were used to supplement the interview material. Moreover, agreements between Israel and the Palestinians, international agreements, UN documents and reports by other international bodies were

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<sup>166</sup> Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, 275.

also consulted. The research process and the particular difficulties it posed will be explored further in the concluding chapter of the thesis.

## 2. From the First to the Second intifada: Transformations in Politics and Civil Society

They folded the scene  
allowing us space to go back to the others  
diminished.

Smiling, we entered the movie screen,  
since we're supposed to be on a movie screen.  
We improvised a speech prepared for us beforehand,  
regretting the martyr's last option.  
We took a bow, surrendered our names  
to pedestrians walking on either side  
and returned to our tomorrow  
diminished.

They folded the scene.  
They triumphed.  
They summed up our yesterday from beginning to end.  
They forgave the victim her mistakes  
when she apologized  
for words that were about to cross her mind.  
They changed time's bell  
and triumphed.<sup>1</sup>

...

Palestinian modes of resisting Israeli rule and threats to national self-realisation have taken a variety of forms since the British Mandate period. The first and the second intifada have constituted, to date, the most intense, persistent, and widespread manifestation of Palestinian political activism. For Palestinians, the two intifadas are intrinsically connected but at the same time also markedly different. The first intifada that erupted in 1987 saw wide participation from all sectors in society and was predominantly characterised by civil disobedience and mass demonstrations. It was deeply embedded within a society's quest for participation and emancipation and was as such inherently democratic. The second intifada, on the other hand, was much more violent and visible participation was limited to a small number of militant groups. Armed action had become politicised and more organised. Rather than mass protests, it was suicide bombing which came to be the phenomenon most associated with the second intifada and rocketed to an average of one per week during 2002. Yet, for

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<sup>1</sup> Mahmoud Darwish, "A Non-Linguistic Dispute with Imri' Al-Qays," in *The Adam of Two Edens: Poems* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press 2000).

Palestinians this was just a small part of their experience of the second intifada as they became engulfed by waves of violent retaliations, targeted assassinations, prolonged curfews, and reoccupation.

The fact that the two uprisings diverged so drastically raises the question as to what had changed in the interim period; what social, cultural and political developments had influenced this transformation and who were the actors that determined this new course. The position taken here is that understanding the political arrangements put in place with the Oslo Accords is crucial for explaining why the uprising in 2000 took the form it did. The first intifada created a sense of Palestinian unity through the power of popular movements that managed to overcome the political factionalism that Palestinian politics was so notorious for in the 1970s. The uprising was central in creating the opportunity of Oslo which promised a solution to this decade-old conflict within five years. However, as Palestinians soon came to realise, Oslo was an inherently unequal agreement reflecting the enormous power asymmetry on the ground. The Oslo agreements assigned a dual role to the Palestinian Authority, whose incompatible commitments it was unable to meet, laying the ground for a narrative, particularly pursued by the Israeli political elite on the right, of Palestinian incompetence, corruption, division and complicity in terrorism. The Palestinian Authority's obligations towards Israel's security as enshrined in Oslo and its commitments to foreign donors guaranteeing its own survival, often contrasted starkly with its responsibilities towards its own population. Without any real sovereignty, especially over the essential resources of water and land, it was unable to adequately provide for and protect the Palestinian people. Moreover, the establishment of the Palestinian Authority and its quasi-state institutions and, not least, Arafat's autocratic style of rule undermined the strong civil society networks established during the first intifada, and to some extent, even made them redundant. The decline of civil society that had emerged with and sustained the first intifada was accompanied by a reassertion of factionalism which came to the fore during the second intifada. While deeper divisions were still held at bay during the large scale Israeli military operations in Palestinian population centres this trend became most evident after the end of the uprising with the electoral victory of Hamas and the subsequent division between the West Bank and Gaza. In contrast to the first intifada, the second uprising failed to generate a sense of unity that translated into a mass popular participation. Rising Palestinian frustration at the failure of Oslo, and increasingly at what was seen as collusion by the PA in suppressing Palestinian resistance against Israeli occupation, generated the willingness among the

majority of the population to re-engage with, or at least tolerate, violent resistance to Israel and, eventually, also the PA. At the end of the first intifada, as institutions of a nascent Palestinian state began to crystallise and the PLO had signalled its intention to negotiate a settlement with Israel based on a two-state model, armed struggle was no longer a viable source of legitimacy. Hence, the PLO as it had originally been conceived as an alliance of resistance groups with its goal to liberate Palestine through armed struggle became anachronistic.<sup>2</sup> However, the continued, albeit more sophisticated and often less visible, repression of Palestinian population over the Oslo period to which the PA out of necessity, even if often unwillingly so, was party to, brought armed struggle back on the agenda. The increasing support for violence among the population was cultivated by the realisation that the political option, through negotiations and state-building, had failed to realise Palestinian national independence.

This chapter will offer an account of the development of Palestinian political activism and political violence that is indebted to historical and contextual analysis and will deepen the insights available from explanations of political behaviour based on political science models. While this account will confirm some of the observations made by Pape and Bloom, for example, on party competition, social isolation and political violence as coercion it will also highlight the shortcomings of such accounts. In the more traditional political science approaches peace agreements are seen simply as opportunities to end the conflict but how they contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict is largely neglected. Acts of political violence are interpreted as spoilers that intend to disrupt agreements that they reject or as attempts of coercion, but the ways in which the very nature of an agreement institutionalises the conflict remain unexplored. Moreover, the significance of the role of civil society, for example, is neglected in both Pape and Bloom's political science models. Such approaches tend to depict society merely as a potential pool of recruits and a support base for acts of political violence. They do not consider its potential as an organised body offering alternative pathways of political activism. Even if the growing frustration and desperation at the deteriorating conditions during the Oslo period are taken into consideration, as we have seen in Hafez in the previous chapter, their source still remains undefined. Finally, accounts modelled on political science methodology do not acknowledge the existence of multiple narratives. The discussion in this chapter will demonstrate how the PA constructs a dominant narrative of the past, and the understanding of peace and conflict, as a key

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<sup>2</sup> Jamil Hilal, "PLO Institutions: The Challenge Ahead," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 23, no.1 (Autumn 1993): 56.

political move, one that cannot be captured by models that rest on epistemological claims of neutrality and impartiality.

The first intifada, the impact of Oslo, the role of the PA, and the decline of civil society will be the subject of this chapter. The next chapter will then discuss how the movement restrictions resulting from Oslo led to a territorial fragmentation that limited the options for resistance and made confrontations between the Israeli army and Palestinians inevitably more violent. Moreover, it will also look at the long-term implications this territorial fragmentation has had on the make-up of Palestinian society and how this in turn has affected modes of political activism. This will set the stage for the fourth chapter, which will contextualise suicide bombing and examine how territorial transformation and the political, societal and cultural context have determined its nature.

## **2.1 The First Intifada: the Power of the People**

The outbreak of the first intifada took onlookers as well as Palestinian political organisations by surprise. It occurred at a time when the PLO was weak, having lost its central bases of operation in Jordan and Lebanon, and now with PLO leaders exiled in Tunis, it was cut off from direct interaction with the large Palestinian communities, especially in Lebanon and Syria.<sup>3</sup> The outbreak of the intifada, for the first time, shifted the focus to the occupied territories themselves which had never functioned for the PLO as the main arena for struggle but had always been seen as playing a supportive role.<sup>4</sup> The eruption of the uprising was not orchestrated or called for by political organisations but it was the spontaneous collective expression of an accumulation of the unique experience of twenty years of occupation by the population in the Palestinian territories combined with the convergence of larger social and political transformations. The trigger for the outbreak was a traffic accident, which although tragic in itself, was a seemingly minor incident but the running of an army truck into a van that transported Palestinian workers and killed four was perceived by Palestinians as a revenge attack for the stabbing of an Israeli two days earlier in Gaza city.<sup>5</sup> When soldiers then shot dead a 21-year old during the subsequent funeral demonstrations in the Jabalya camp,

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<sup>3</sup> Jamil Hilal, "PLO Institutions," 46-50.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ann M. Lesch, "Prelude to the Uprising in the Gaza Strip," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no.1 (Autumn 1990): 1.

the Gaza Strip erupted in anger and the demonstrations quickly spread to the West Bank.<sup>6</sup>

Despite its apparent spontaneity, the first intifada is the result of a number of long-term processes, the convergence of which gave the accumulated frustration direction and provided the evolving activism with sustenance.<sup>7</sup> Protests and confrontations had occurred since the territories had been occupied in 1967 but accelerated substantially in the year before the outbreak of the intifada.<sup>8</sup> The destruction of the local municipalities and their replacement with an Israeli administration in the early 1980s,<sup>9</sup> a more rigorous implementation of taxation coupled with low investment into Palestinian infrastructure and public services,<sup>10</sup> the growth of Israeli settlements, the creeping annexation of the Palestinian territories economically into the Israeli economy were all clear manifestations of Israeli repression. Parallel to this state of affairs Palestinians experienced deeper social and political changes. Lisa Taraki argues that what had happened in the territories over the decades was a crystallisation of Palestinian political consciousness which was the product of a variety of factors and events that had shaped Palestinian collective experience. The most significant factors in this development were the ambivalent position of the Arab states towards Palestinian nationalism, the rise of Palestinian resistance in the 1960s, the growing in strength and influence of the PLO, and the special circumstances of life under Israeli occupation. For Taraki, this political consciousness is distinctly Palestinian, as opposed to Arab or Jordanian, and is based on the idea that only the establishment of a Palestinian national authority can realise Palestinian national aspirations.<sup>11</sup> Beyond parties and fronts, it was a number of frameworks through which this political consciousness was developed including mass organisations, artistic and literary groups, the press, universities and community colleges as well as charitable

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<sup>6</sup> Lesch, "Prelude," 1.

<sup>7</sup> For a discussion on different theories of the outbreak of the intifada, especially on whether it is best understood as a spontaneous eruption of mass anger, agitated by outsiders or the result of political processes see Samih K. Farsoun and Jean M. Landis, "The Sociology of an Uprising: The Roots of the Intifada," in *Intifada: Palestine at the Crossroads*, ed. Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock (New York: Praeger, 1990), 53-72.

<sup>8</sup> Lesch, "Prelude," 12.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 5,8.

<sup>10</sup> Norman Finkelstein, "Bayt Sahur in Year II of the Intifada: A Personal Account," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no.2 (Winter 1990): 63-4. On Israeli efforts to undermine the indigenous public health services and to create Palestinian dependency on the Israeli health sector see Mustafa Barghouti and Rita Giacaman, "The Emergence of an Infrastructure of Resistance: The Case of Health," in Nassar and Heacock, *Intifada*, 74-81. Also, Andrew Rigby, "Coping with the 'Epidemic of Violence': the Struggle over Health Care in the Intifada," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no.4 (Summer 1991): 87.

<sup>11</sup> Lisa Taraki, "The Development of Political Consciousness among Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, 1967-1987," 53.



societies.<sup>12</sup> By the time the first intifada erupted this evolving political consciousness provided an organised, articulate and substantial social base for the Palestinian national movement.<sup>13</sup>

In addition to a rise in politicisation, the socio-economic changes in the territories began to expose all strata of society to the effects of occupation policies in one form or another. The unifying experiences that Israel's occupation generated were crucial for the intifada to take hold as they fostered social bonds and transcended original schisms. While the 1980s had already seen protests of professional groups in response to new taxes introduced by the Israeli government, their power remained limited because they only focussed on their own narrow agendas and wider mobilisation hence failed to materialise.<sup>14</sup> Moreover, the land-owning elite had an interest in keeping the status-quo and sought a *modus vivendi* with the occupier.<sup>15</sup> Any mobilisation of the poorer masses would have challenged their position. However, due to socio-economic developments, the financial leverage of these elites decreased significantly over the 1970s as more and more poor Gazans gained an alternative source of income through labour in Israel. In addition to this, a rise in Israeli restrictions and taxes caused Palestinian landowners significant losses in the citrus industry, further undermining their financial powerbase.<sup>16</sup> Over the years occupation policies were felt by all and had an intrinsically equalising effect. Both students and professionals, for example, faced very similar restrictions imposed by the Israeli government regardless of their background, including restrictions on education and the practice of professions as well as limited career opportunities.<sup>17</sup> The growing settlements impinged on both the indigenous population and the refugee residents, bringing the two traditionally distinct population groups together through a shared sense of problems and grievances.<sup>18</sup> Whilst the thinning out of refugee camps through harassment or settlement projects had been an Israeli policy in order to bring an end to the refugee question,<sup>19</sup> the mixing of the urban poor and resettled refugees rather than depoliticising the refugees politicised the urban masses.<sup>20</sup> Hence, what was so central during these stages of the occupation, and as we will see in more detail represented a significant difference to the Oslo period

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<sup>12</sup> Taraki, "Political Consciousness," 54.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> Lesch, "Prelude," 5.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. Also Adil Yahya, "The Role of the Refugee Camps," in Nassar and Heacock, *Intifada*, 92, 104.

<sup>20</sup> Lesch, "Prelude," 7.

and the second intifada, was that it affected all strata of society and this shared experience unified Palestinian society in its quest for national liberation.

For the most part, and especially in the early stages of the first intifada, participants in civil disobedience were not armed. The main tools employed were mass demonstrations, strikes, throwing rocks and burning tyres. In an attempt to crush the uprising quickly Yitzhak Rabin, then Defence Minister, notoriously ordered his soldiers to break the arms and legs of those participating in the intifada. However, these brutal measures did little to abate waves of protests. Arrests were made at an unprecedented level, completely overwhelming the capacity of Israeli prisons, and prisoners had to be accommodated in tents and new detention facilities were opened in Ramallah, Bethlehem and the South of Israel. The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs (PASSIA) estimates that between 1987 and 1994 210,000 Palestinians were arrested.<sup>21</sup> The Israeli administration imposed curfews, movement restrictions, (particularly at night) and sought to reverse any decision made by the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) often through military orders.<sup>22</sup> Hospitals were required to report anyone injured to the authorities so that the army would then arrest them on the assumption they had taken part in demonstrations. Moreover, anyone who was a member of any committee was liable for a sentence of up to ten years.<sup>23</sup> Israel's response to the uprising was multifaceted. In addition to the more obvious and condemnable activities such as curfews, arrests, harassment, violence and the targeting of activists, administrative controls played a key role in the Israeli response with a view to dispense collective punishment and exhaust the population.<sup>24</sup> However, what was so striking was the energy and creativity espoused during the uprising. Through bureaucratic delays the Israeli authorities sought to assert their control over the Palestinian health care system 'while avoiding the stigma of appearing to play the dirty game of punishing the victims of ill-health and injury.'<sup>25</sup> In response to this medical committees bought normal commercial vehicles and converted them into 'quasi-ambulances' or simply listed the vehicles as 'health-buses', thus avoiding the

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<sup>21</sup> The Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs, "Palestinian Political Prisoners," March 2011, [http://www.passia.org/home/2011/publications/Prisoners\\_Web.pdf](http://www.passia.org/home/2011/publications/Prisoners_Web.pdf) (accessed 17 September 2011).

<sup>22</sup> One example for this is how Israel sought to disrupt the strike schedules called for by the UNLU by trying to force shopkeepers to do the opposite of what the UNLU had asked for. See Kuttab, "The Palestinian Uprising," 37-8.

<sup>23</sup> INTERVIEW #4.

<sup>24</sup> Joost R. Hiltermann, "Israel's Strategy to Break the Uprising," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no.2 (Winter 1990), 87-98.

<sup>25</sup> Rigby, "Epidemic of Violence," 95.

requirement for specially licensed drivers.<sup>26</sup> Another illustrative example here is the tax revolt in the middle-class, majority-Christian, town of Bayt Sahur, which epitomises the perseverance and deep sense of solidarity that characterised the first intifada. During a 42-day military closure and curfew on the town between 20 September and 31 October 1989, Israeli tax authorities confiscated property and money valued between 1.5 and 7.5 million dollars belonging to 350 families in the town who the Israeli authorities claimed failed to pay income tax and VAT.<sup>27</sup> The large-scale confiscations had essentially destroyed the productive base of the town and much of its financial base had been seized or frozen. The people of Bayt Sahur as a form of non-violent resistance refused to pay taxes to the Israeli authorities and to file tax returns.<sup>28</sup> The protest was particularly targeted at the introduction of VAT, questioning the legality of this tax as an occupying power is not permitted under international law to institute new taxation that did not exist prior to the occupation.<sup>29</sup> Many Sahuris had their homes almost completely emptied during the confiscation process and despite the serious hardships they faced as a result, observers noted the unity among the population, its confidence and the energy with which they planned for the future.<sup>30</sup> While the first intifada is often associated with mass demonstrations, and these did indeed characterise the early stages of the uprising, it evolved over time to adapt, which ensured its continuation. Activism became less spectacular but it transformed itself in such a way that it allowed for life to continue.<sup>31</sup> Interestingly, after the first year of the first intifada debates over the use of arms in the uprising arose and supporters of this option argued that Israelis were apathetic to the intifada because they did not see Israeli casualties on a daily basis like they did in Lebanon. The fourteenth leaflet of the UNLU contemplated the possibility of an armed element to the uprising. It seems then, that the armed option that prevailed in the second intifada was already considered early on in the first intifada because it was felt that civil disobedience did not have a sufficient impact on Israel.<sup>32</sup> However, armed

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<sup>26</sup> Rigby, "Epidemic of Violence," 95-6.

<sup>27</sup> Anne Grace, "The Tax Resistance at Bayt Sahur," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 19, no.2 (Winter 1990): 99, 101.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 101. For a brief discussion on the introduction of new taxation by the occupying power under the Hague regulations and the Supreme Court of Israel's interpretation thereof see Yoram Dinstein, "Legislation under Article 43 of the Hague Regulations: Belligerent Occupation and Peacebuilding," Occasional Paper Series (Program on Humanitarian Policy and Conflict Research : Harvard University 2004), 11.

<sup>30</sup> See Grace, "Tax Resistance," especially 103-4.

<sup>31</sup> Finkelstein, "Bayt Sahur in Year II," 64-5.

<sup>32</sup> See Daoud Kuttub, "The Palestinian Uprising: The Second Phase, Self-Sufficiency," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 17, no.4 (Summer 1988): 43.

action, which was particularly popular with Hamas groups,<sup>33</sup> never gained the upper hand and the first intifada remained a popular unarmed mass-based movement.

Providing a practical link between the ambitions of the intifada and the grassroots were the popular committees that began to spring up throughout the Palestinian territories from December 1987 onwards, in particular in the area of food relief.<sup>34</sup> Palestinians had begun to establish committees providing social services to the community with a view to replace the Israeli-run administration of the territories. These committees covered a variety of functions and were largely needs-based. With the closing of schools and universities, committees of alternative education were established; an economic committee was in charge of finding neglected land and growing vegetables for the community; a special committee was established to oversee and enforce the boycott of Israeli products. In total around 45,000 committees were established during this period.<sup>35</sup> Community action and grassroots activity created a feeling of solidarity amongst the population that was one of the central factors in keeping the intifada alive for seven years. What differentiated these committees from the organisations that had developed in the territories previously was that they were not organised along political lines but participation was open to everyone. By establishing shadow administrative structures as an alternative to Israel's administration in the Palestinian territories, which the population had rejected for the last 20 years, they succeeded in institutionalising and legitimising the intifada at the grassroots level.<sup>36</sup> While the services provided by the committees could not have replaced the public or private sector in the long-term, they did prove to be capable to cope should the need arise and in this way managed to dissipate the onset of mass anxiety.<sup>37</sup> Committees established before the outbreak of the first intifada, which had developed in the areas of youth, students, women and workers continued and expanded their activities; especially women's committees and those focusing on health and agriculture were particularly active. What differentiated them, however, from the intifada popular committees is that they continued to be affiliated to one of the political parties.<sup>38</sup> The extensive network of popular committees highlights the achievement of the intifada in fostering a popular inclusive response to immediate needs transcending factional division.

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<sup>33</sup> See, for instance, Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no.4 (Summer 1993): 15.

<sup>34</sup> Jamal R. Nassar and Roger Heacock, "The Revolutionary Transformation of the Palestinians under Occupation," in Nassar and Heacock, *Intifada*, 198.

<sup>35</sup> INTERVIEW # 4.

<sup>36</sup> Nassar and Heacock, "Revolutionary Transformation," 202.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

The driving force behind mobilising the grassroots was the United National Leadership of the Uprising which issued weekly communiqués, and with its directives provided cohesion and order to the activities implemented by the committees. It was composed of the four factions active in the territories: Fateh, the Popular Front, The Democratic Front, and the Palestine Communist Party.<sup>39</sup> It was essentially a point of coordination between the political organisations in the territories but it was by no means a centralised or personalised leadership of the intifada.<sup>40</sup> ‘Indeed, the decision jointly to coordinate intifada strategy never blunted broader differences, which arose on many occasions over a variety of questions.’<sup>41</sup> However, the parties in the UNLU succeeded in overcoming these differences by prioritising the continuation of the intifada over differences in opinion over long-term objectives or ideology.<sup>42</sup> The communiqués were the product of ongoing interaction between the leadership on the outside and the UNLU on the inside.<sup>43</sup> This interplay between the inside and outside was crucial and it was the UNLU that through its interaction with the PLO acted as the connecting node between the leadership on the outside and the population inside the territories. Despite the spontaneity and indigenouslyness of the uprising, the involvement of the PLO situated the events within a clear strategy of the national movement encompassing all Palestinians.

Parallel to building alternative services which was accomplished by committee work there was also a call for dismantling the Israeli Administration’s rule in the Palestinian territories and dealing with Palestinians that collaborated with the Israeli authorities. For this purpose, those working for the civil administration were asked to resign and the UNLU issued communiqués to this effect. As one would expect, such measures were not always welcome as the economic situation of those who were previously employees of the Israeli-run civil administration deteriorated considerably. Communiqués were also issued asking collaborators with Israel to cease cooperation. As a result hundreds of collaborators handed their weapons over at mosques and churches. Palestinian action against those collaborating with Israel was uncompromising as proven by the massacre of Qabatye village. The killing of a collaborator by a group of villagers after he refused to cease working for Israel signalled

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<sup>39</sup> INTERVIEW # 4.

<sup>40</sup> Nassar and Heacock, “Revolutionary Transformation,” 197.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 197.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 192-3.

that Israel could no longer protect its collaborators among Palestinians. As punishment for the killing, Israel imposed a 42 day curfew on the village.<sup>44</sup>

Women were particularly active in the grassroots movement during the first intifada and the difference between the two intifadas is perhaps most illustrative when looking at women's participation. The first intifada had a much more inclusive social agenda. It provided a context for women's empowerment and women were able to carve out a role for themselves within the larger movement for political change. They were most active in organising and providing social and community services. According to Islah Jad, it was not new for women to take on a political role but what was significant, was the scope of these roles and their various manifestations.<sup>45</sup> 'From the start, women of all ages and social classes took part in the demonstrations that broke out on December 9, 1987, throwing stones, burning tyres, transporting and preparing stones, building roadblocks, raising Palestinian flags, and preventing soldiers from arresting people.'<sup>46</sup> These activities were most widespread in poor neighbourhoods in the towns, in the villages and refugee camps.<sup>47</sup> Although women in refugee camps and villages were very active in these mass demonstrations their participation in committees was rare.<sup>48</sup> It appears then, that the more conservative social structures in these areas also translated into committee formation, excluding women from such roles.<sup>49</sup> That women could not liberate themselves from their social contexts becomes even more evident when we recognise that women activities were essentially an extension of their traditional roles as educators and carers.<sup>50</sup> Hiltermann, in fact, highlights the limitations of the women's movement by pointing out that the UNLU leadership only recognised women achievements in a very limited way and excluded it largely from its own

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<sup>44</sup> Sa'ad Nimr, "The First Intifada," (lecture, Palestine and Arabic Studies Programme, Birzeit University, 17 July 2010).

<sup>45</sup> Islah Jad, "From Salons to the Popular Committees: Palestinian Women, 1919-1989," in Nassar and Heacock, *Intifada*, 133.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 135.

<sup>49</sup> Iris Jean-Klein identifies similarities of form between the home and popular committees. She argues that roles adopted by participants in political activism were acted out in a very similar way to the roles within families. These roles and their relationship to one another were determined by gender, age and genealogical status. Such similarities would confirm that women's political roles in the intifada did not differ substantially from the ones they held within their own homes but it would also suggest that their status in relation to other members of society did not change. Women who participated in demonstrations, for example, acted in a support role to the shebab as sisters would support their brothers or mothers their sons. The participation of unmarried women was also structured vis-à-vis other roles in a way that reflected the way life was organised within the household. See Iris Jean-Klein, "Into Committees, out of the House? Familiar Forms in the Organisation of Palestinian Committee Activism during the Intifada," *American Ethnologist* 30, no.4 (November 2003): especially, 561, 565.

<sup>50</sup> Jad, "From Salons," 135.

decision making apparatus.<sup>51</sup> Jad, in particular, criticises the low level of feminist consciousness of the women's movement at the time. Despite the fact that women now worked inside and outside the home, they still remained at the lower end of the family hierarchy.<sup>52</sup> The risk of disunity, especially once the Islamists began to gain strength, sidelined women's issues as demonstrated by Rema Hammami's account of the hijab campaign in Gaza. Concerted efforts by Islamist supporters to pressurise women into wearing the hijab began in 1988, including harassment, threats and attacks on women by youth. It took the UNLU over a year to respond by which time, although the statement had an immediate impact and the atmosphere for women in the streets changed, it was too late to reverse the trend.<sup>53</sup> For the sake of nationalist goals then, women's issues were simply postponed. While this was naturally a setback for women activists, the extent of the concern of avoiding any ruptures along political lines can only be fully grasped when looking at the deep-rooted factionalism that characterised Palestinian politics in the 1970s.

### **2.1.1 The Challenge of Palestinian Factionalism**

Considering the dispersal of the Palestinian population since 1948, subjecting the various segments of its society to distinctly different experiences, and in the absence of a permanent territorial base, deep division within the Palestinian national movement were not surprising. Perhaps precisely because of the absence of a permanent territorial base, Palestinian political developments were particularly vulnerable to wider regional trends as the Palestinian leadership was financially and logistically dependent on external supporters. The weakening of the left in the Palestinian context has internal reasons, but is undoubtedly also connected to the demise of the Soviet Union, both in ideological as well as in financial terms. Similarly, the rise of religious parties has internal as well as external causes; as the Islamic movement gained strength in Palestine, so it did elsewhere. The defeat of the Arab states by Israel in the 1967 war, led to a change of course whereby Palestinians would no longer rely on Arab states to fulfil their nationalist ambitions. This is the platform that the growing Fateh party adopted at the time: in order to regain their independence Palestinians needed to rise up

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<sup>51</sup> Joost R. Hiltermann, "The Women's Movement during the Uprising," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 20, no.3 (Spring 1991): 53-4.

<sup>52</sup> Jad, "From Salons," 139.

<sup>53</sup> Rema Hammami, "Women, the Hijab and the Intifada," *Middle East Report* 164/165 (May-August 1990): 24-28, 71, 78.

to the task themselves. Political developments and collective identities are mutually formative. The failure of Arab secular nationalism strengthened the emergence of a Palestinian identity but also set in motion a process by which the Islamist movement would later fill the gap left by the weakened nationalists. The growth of the Islamist movement was also reflected in the strengthening of religious identity among the population.

With the 1967 Arab defeat, support for independent Palestinian guerrilla action increased dramatically. It also enabled Fateh, which initiated this idea, to adopt the quasi-official status of controlling the PLO.<sup>54</sup> The subsequent two years saw a growth of other Palestinian guerrilla organisations partly because all the pan-Arabist-oriented Arab regimes and parties sought to establish their own position within the rapidly growing guerrilla movement. Moreover, Fateh was also not able to absorb the scores of new volunteers to the Palestinian cause.<sup>55</sup> While to the outside, as Helen Cobban argues, it may have seemed that these new emerging groups were at times challenging the dominant position of Fateh, in reality Fateh's leadership was never seriously at risk.<sup>56</sup>

One of the emerging groups was the *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*. The PFLP was originally created as the Palestinian wing of the Arab Nationalist Movement (ANM). It was founded in 1967 by George Habash, a Palestinian Christian, whilst at the American University in Beirut. The party embraces a secularist ideology, socialist economic ideas and advocates armed struggle. It attracted considerable notoriety with a series of aircraft hijackings during the 1970s. The PFLP's armed wing, the Abu Ali Mustapha Brigades, carried out several suicide bombings (mostly against settlers and IDF personnel) during the second intifada<sup>57</sup> and also took responsibility for the assassination of right-wing Israeli Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi. With Hamas operating outside the PLO framework, the PFLP is the second largest party after Fateh in the PLO. The party rejects the Oslo Accords, and advocates a one-state solution in the form of a single bi-national state.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Helena Cobban, *The Palestinian Liberation Organisation: People, Power and Politics* (Cambridge: CUP, 1984), 139.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> See, Michele K. Esposito, "The al-Aqsa Intifada: Military Operations, Suicide Attacks, Assassinations, and Losses in the First Four Years" *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no.2 (Winter 2005): 105-10.

<sup>58</sup> See for example Ahmad Saadat's statement in "Jailed PFLP leader: Only a One-State Solution is Possible," *Haaretz*, 5 May 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/jailed-pflp-leader-only-a-one-state-solution-is-possible-1.288412>.



The *Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine* was formed as the result of a split between the PFLP and some of the left-wing elements within the movement that were to form the core of the new organisation in 1969.<sup>59</sup> It was primarily those within the PFLP that had been under attack and subject to harassment from mainstream PFLP members who wanted to leave. Only with the intervention of the Fateh leadership, the left-wingers led by Nayef Hawatama were able to split from the PFLP under the condition that they would renounce any claim to being the authentic PFLP. The DFLP participated from the beginning, unlike the PFLP, in Fateh-dominated bodies such as the PLO and throughout its existence retained a stance of loyal opposition towards the Fateh leadership. Already early on, the DFLP showed signs of innovative thinking accepting some form of Israeli or Jewish cultural nationhood and was one of the first parties to advocate the idea of a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza alongside Israel.<sup>60</sup> It opposed the Oslo Accords because it saw them as undemocratic and leading to the marginalisation of the PLO, but it did not reject the idea of a two-state solution.<sup>61</sup> During the second intifada the party took responsibility for a number of shooting attacks (but was not involved in suicide bombings). In 1990 in an internal split *the Palestinian Democratic Union* or *FIDA* was established which takes a more moderate stance towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict than its parent organisation and has no armed wing.

The *Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command* (PFLP-GC) has its origins in a group of Palestinians that had served in the Syrian Army in the 1950s. Ahmed Jibril, a former Palestinian officer in the Syrian Army has been the leader of this group throughout. Initially, the organisation was referred to as the Palestine Liberation Front. Once Fateh had begun to engage in armed struggle, in early 1965, Jibril's group sought to unite with Fateh. Its inclusion into Fateh was one of the conditions imposed on Fateh by Syria in return for logistical support from Damascus.<sup>62</sup> However, Jibril's alliance with Fateh did not last long. In 1967 the Palestinian Liberation Front responded to an appeal for guerrilla unity issued by George Habbash and so came to cofound the PFLP.<sup>63</sup> However, after a PFLP conference in 1968 the Palestinian branch of Habash's ANM was completely absorbed into the PFLP and as a result Jibril split from the ANM group within the PFLP. The group that came to

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<sup>59</sup> Cobban, *Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, 152.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 153-4.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 161.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

surround Jibril was named the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine - General Command. Jibril entered another alliance later, with the Rejection Front, of which he was also a founding member but the alliance ended with the secession under a former Jibril lieutenant assuming the original name of Jibril's group, the *Palestinian Liberation Front*.<sup>64</sup> The PFLP-GC's primary focus is armed struggle and it essentially lacks a political platform. It operates outside the PLO framework and rejects any settlement with Israel. The organisation did not take part in any high-profile activities during the second intifada.<sup>65</sup>

*Al-Saiqa* is also the product of Syrian involvement in the Palestine question. Saiqa is the name of the armed wing of the 'Vanguards of the Popular War of Liberation' but usually the whole party is referred to as Saiqa. It was established as the Palestinian wing of the pro-Syrian Baath Party.<sup>66</sup> In its ideological outlook it is Arab socialist and nationalist with a strong commitment to pan-Arabism. The party was kept under tight control of its parent organisation which throughout two decades of control of the Syrian state apparatus from 1963 had its own direct interest in the Palestinian issue.<sup>67</sup> With Oslo and the end of the Lebanese war the party however has lost its usefulness to Syria and this is now reflected in its state and size.<sup>68</sup> There is no record of activity during the second intifada.

*The Palestinian People's Party* was founded in 1982 as the Palestinian Communist Party. In 1987 it joined the PLO. The party was one of the four members comprising the United National Leadership during the first intifada and played an important role in mobilising the grassroots for the uprising but subsequently lost influence.

Over the years splits within leftist parties considerably undermined their influence in the Palestinian territories and divided their supporter base: After Ahmed Jibril broke away from the PFLP to form the PFLP-GC, the DFLP formed a separate organisation and later FIDA split from its parent organisation, the DFLP. With the decline of the leftist parties the political map began to be dominated by a two-party antagonism between Fateh and Hamas, with the left parties often swinging from one side to the other.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Cobban, *Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, 162.

<sup>65</sup> INTERVIEW #16.

<sup>66</sup> Cobban, *Palestinian Liberation Organisation*, 157.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> This affected their credibility among the supporter base. INTERVIEW #21.

### 2.1.2. The Rise of the Islamists

Whilst up to the first intifada the parties competing with Fateh emerged mostly from pan-Arab secular movements, the movements with religious agendas were both break-away parties from the Muslim Brotherhood and were a critical response to the Brotherhood's perceived passivity towards Israeli occupation.<sup>70</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood Society emerged in the late 1930s in Egypt. It was founded by Hasan al-Banna and a small group of his compatriots. The Muslim Brotherhood society's involvement in Palestine began in 1935 with a visit by Abd-al-Rahman al-Banna, Hasan al-Banna's brother, to Palestine where he met with Hajj Amin al-Husseini, who was the then Mufti of Jerusalem and head of the Higher Islamic Council.<sup>71</sup> During the revolt of 1936, the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt initiated a propaganda campaign to support the Palestinian cause. In October 1945 the Muslim Brotherhood opened its first branch in Jerusalem. Two years later twenty-five Brotherhood branches had been established in the country with a membership ranging from twelve thousand to twenty thousand active members.<sup>72</sup> Many Muslim Brotherhood volunteers joined the 1948 war, which increased the movement's popularity considerably.<sup>73</sup> After 1948 the Brotherhood went through a distinctly different experience in the West Bank compared to its counterpart in the Gaza Strip. While in the West Bank the Muslim Brotherhood could flourish in loyal opposition to the Jordanian king, Egypt who banned the Brotherhood on its own soil in 1949, kept tight control on the movement in the Gaza Strip which was under its administration until 1967.<sup>74</sup>

For the Muslim Brotherhood all of Palestine is Muslim land and nobody is in a position to concede any part of it. The society rejects the establishment of a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, as this entails the concession of the rest of Palestine to Israel.<sup>75</sup> From the Brotherhood's perspective the jihad for Palestine will begin after the completion of the Islamic transformation of Palestinian society. Only after internal

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<sup>70</sup> Even several leaders in Fateh had been involved in the Muslim Brotherhood Society or were sympathetic to it. See Ziad Abu-Amr, *Origins of Political Movements in the Gaza Strip 1948-1967* (Acre: Dar Al-Aswar 1987), 85-8. (Arabic), cited in Mohammed K. Shadid, "The Muslim Brotherhood Movement in the West Bank and Gaza," *Third World Quarterly* 10, no.2 (April 1988): 658.

<sup>71</sup> Ziad Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism in the West Bank and Gaza: Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Jihad* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 1.

<sup>72</sup> Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 3.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 23.

social change can Palestinians be liberated and the call for jihad be meaningful.<sup>76</sup> It is here that Hamas and Islamic Jihad have both taken a different route from the Brotherhood. Both groups have embraced armed struggle to advance the goal of the liberation of Palestine, yet Hamas has at the same time still retained elements of social transformation through education and charity work within the core of its programme while the Islamic Jihad's focus has remained distinctly military.

Many Western commentators have, since the movement's inception, always referred to and often sought to understand Hamas through its Charter. Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, however, have emphasised the movement's adaptability and pragmatism.<sup>77</sup> The Hamas Charter was drawn up less than a year after the founding of the movement and it was a direct response to the first intifada when its very *raison d'être* was armed struggle against the occupation.<sup>78</sup> Khaled Hroub argues that Hamas has gone through significant transformations over time in response to political developments. By 2005 and 2006 Hroub notes a progressive de-emphasis of religion and a strong emphasis on state-building in some of the organisation's documents. Its proposed national unity government programme implicitly recognised a two-state solution and 'without a hint of the "liberation of the entire land of Palestine" or the "destruction of Israel" found in the charter.'<sup>79</sup>

Because of its focus on military actions only, the much smaller *Islamic Jihad*, could not extend its supporter base in the same way Hamas had done. The organisation was founded by Fathi Shiqaqi in Gaza in the early 1980s. Shiqaqi had been a member of the Muslim Brotherhood before he was expelled. For him the liberation of Palestine was a priority because the Palestinian situation was the source of all other problems and hence should be the central cause of the Islamic movement.<sup>80</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, did not at the time put Palestine before Islamic issues and focussed on their social reform programme centring on education and charitable activities. Shiqaqi was the leader of Islamic Jihad and was then succeeded by Abdallah Ramadan Shallah, after his assassination in 1995. When Israel came to regard him as a threat, Shiqaqi spent a brief period in prison in 1983 where he made acquaintances from a number of organisations that had participated in resistance activities. As they had

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<sup>76</sup> Abu-Amr, *Islamic Fundamentalism*, 23.

<sup>77</sup> See for instance, Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision, Violence, and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006).

<sup>78</sup> Khaled Hroub, "A 'New Hamas' through its New Documents," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 6-27.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-7.

<sup>80</sup> Tamimi, *Hamas*, 43.

experience of armed struggle they were ideal recruits for his project.<sup>81</sup> The group was particularly active with a number of daring operations in the run-up to the first intifada and also organised suicide bombing operations in the second intifada.

The appearance of the Islamists in the Palestinian political arena added a new dimension to Palestinian factionalism. In the early stages Hamas did not contradict or challenge the UNLU and its directive openly but did issue separate leaflets. Obvious differences in instructions did not appear until late August 1988.<sup>82</sup> On 9 September Hamas used strong-arm tactics, frightening shopkeepers into closing their shops, to enforce a strike in Ramallah that had not been called for by the UNLU.<sup>83</sup> These scenes were repeated in other locations in November but led to general public disapproval even in the more Islamic-oriented areas such as Nablus and Gaza and as a result Hamas returned to synchronise with UNLU directives.<sup>84</sup> The pressure of the public then and Hamas' fear to remain isolated led the party to backtrack on its course and hence reversed potential division.

### **2.1.3 Achievements of the Intifada**

Talking to Palestinians one quickly gets a clear sense that the first intifada is a proud moment in Palestinian history. Although in retrospect some aspects will most certainly be idealised it did produce some clear achievements. One of the most surprising accomplishments was that it managed to overcome the deep political factionalism that was so characteristic of Palestinian politics in the 1970s. However, these divisions never quite disappeared, as is evident in debates within the UNLU, but even more obvious in the decline of the popular committees towards the end of the intifada when their open and democratic frameworks were replaced by factional committees.<sup>85</sup> It was no doubt the popular dimension of the intifada that succeeded in overcoming political divisions. Once the grassroots involvement and democratic participation ceased factional schisms reasserted themselves. It was the common decision to reject a return to normalcy and determination to continue the intifada until the demands of Palestinian self-determination, the establishment of a state and the PLO's recognition as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people were

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<sup>81</sup> Tamimi, *Hamas*, 44.

<sup>82</sup> Nassar and Heacock, "Revolutionary Transformation," 195.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>85</sup> Hilal, "PLO Institutions," 54.

met, that for Nassar and Heacock marked the Palestinians' revolutionary transformation.<sup>86</sup> The intifada made Palestinians more united and proud of their national identity and most importantly unarmed Palestinians managed to expose the brutality of the Israeli military occupation and by transforming the image of Palestinians in the international community, succeeded in garnering support for an independent Palestinian state. It is on this latter aspect that the second intifada has failed most blatantly.<sup>87</sup>

Beyond overcoming the stumbling block of internal factionalism the intifada also delivered clear external political achievements. Central here was King Hussein's renunciation of any claims to the West Bank and the recognition of the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. Furthermore, through its grassroots organisations, the PLO and the UNLU, the intifada also led to the declaration of an independent Palestinian state in 1988.<sup>88</sup> However, it also set new challenges. The acceptance of the principle of a two-state solution at the Palestinian National Council in Algier in 1988 and the participation of Palestinians in the negotiations in Madrid in 1991 set in motion a process where armed struggle could no longer be the main legitimating source for the PLO. Armed struggle had fulfilled an important role giving the Palestinian national movement a focus, but no longer seemed viable in the changing context, especially as the PLO tried to portray itself as moderate and open to reasonable compromise and with a clear intention to disassociate itself from international terrorism.<sup>89</sup> Hence, it faced the challenge of restructuring if it wanted to survive, moving away from an overly bureaucratic apparatus and opening itself up to democratisation.<sup>90</sup> Internal reformation was especially pressing as it faced challenges from the outside. In the absence of democratic elections the true strength of the Islamic movement was unknown at the end of the uprising but its following was growing.<sup>91</sup> In addition, being in opposition it had the luxury of being able to hold on to ideological maxims while the PLO, if it wanted to deliver results, would be required to make painful compromises.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Nassar and Heacock, "Revolutionary Transformation," 193.

<sup>87</sup> Kuttab, "The Palestinian Uprising," 36-45.

<sup>88</sup> Nassar and Heacock, "Revolutionary Transformation," 198.

<sup>89</sup> Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations* (London: Verso, 2009), 154-5.

<sup>90</sup> Hilal, "PLO Institutions," 49, 57-60.

<sup>91</sup> Abu-Amr, " Hamas," 15.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.

## 2.2 Oslo: The Roadmap from Hope to Despair

The iconic handshake between PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and the Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the White House lawn in 1993 sealing the Oslo Peace Accords, promised Palestinians a first step to self-determination. The Oslo Accords constituted a framework for future negotiations and agreements between the two sides. The negotiations were largely greeted with euphoria inside the territories as well as by the diaspora. Many Palestinians truly believed that a Palestinian state would only be a stone's throw away. One interviewee recounted that she left her life and job in London to return to the West Bank in order to be part of building the new state.<sup>93</sup> Polls conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Survey and Policy Research in September 1993 suggest that the majority of the Palestinian population supported the so-called "Gaza-Jericho First" agreement with 64.9% being in support of the agreement, 6.6% being unsure about it, and 27.9% disagreeing with it. Confidence that the agreement would lead to a Palestinian state and achieve rights for Palestinians was slightly lower, with 44.9% responding yes, 34.1% saying no and 20.6% being sceptical. Interestingly, the population was divided over whether the intifada should be stopped to ensure the success of the agreement. A substantial group within the population thought that the intifada should be continued alongside negotiations. A clear majority believed it necessary that the Palestinian people should be polled over the proposed agreement and almost 60% thought that negotiations over Jerusalem, settlements and refugees should not be postponed to the 'final status' talks.<sup>94</sup> The majority of respondents were confident that Oslo would bring economic improvement to the West Bank and Gaza.

The road from the first intifada to Oslo was neither an immediate nor a straightforward one. The replacement of Shamir with Rabin was key to the progress in negotiations between the two parties. Both described as hawks by Shlaim, the former's unwillingness to negotiate with the Palestinians was rooted in his ideological commitment to the land of Israel while Rabin's primary concern was security.<sup>95</sup> On security issues Rabin was uncompromising and his views were tougher than those of some of the Likud ministers.<sup>96</sup> He ordered the military to 'break their bones' in the first intifada, closed the borders to Palestinian workers from the territories resulting in

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<sup>93</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>94</sup> PSR, "The Palestinian-Israeli Agreement: 'Gaza-Jericho First' September 10-11, 1993," Public Opinion Poll No.1.

<sup>95</sup> Shlaim, "Israel and Palestine," 177, 185.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 176.

collective punishment of nearly 120,000 families, and gave orders for the deportation of 416 Hamas activists to Lebanon.<sup>97</sup> Yet, Rabin's pragmatism enabled him to accept a deal with the PLO as long as it would not put Israel's security at risk.<sup>98</sup> The development of the Palestinian national movement to a point where it was in a position to devise a clear political strategy, and demonstrated pragmatism in its programme combined with efforts at portraying itself as reasonable and open to compromise with the Israeli side were the other essential ingredients for the agreement to come to fruition. Moreover, what the intifada had done was to draw attention to the suffering of Palestinians under military occupation, creating an environment of international support for a resolution to the conflict. It is easy to understand the enthusiasm for the Oslo Accords at the time. It marked the first occasion that Palestinian and Israeli representatives had come together to negotiate on the practical issues of sharing the land between the two peoples and came to some kind of agreement, or at least basic principles.

### **2.2.1 Setting Up a Narrative of Palestinian Incompetence and Complicity in Terrorism**

Ironically, in practice, Oslo inverted many of the achievements of the intifada years, paving the way for a narrative that associated the Palestinian leadership with incompetence, weakness and terrorism. Key in this process was the role that was assigned to the PA for protecting Israel's security. In fact it was a dual role, a self-government authority on the one hand and a policing force on the other, controlling its own people in order to safeguard Israeli security. This set-up put the PA routinely in situations where it was expected to act against its own population, sacrifices that were not substantially rewarded with increased autonomy or control over resources from the Israeli side. The existence of the PA gave both the Palestinians and Israelis someone to blame for the dire state of internal affairs. Moreover, Israel made the PA accountable for any instance of Palestinian violence and imposed punitive measures when it did not fulfil its security obligations towards Israel.

By making the PA responsible for threats against Israel's security, Israeli leaders temporarily conferred sovereignty to the Palestinian government. Sovereignty was

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<sup>97</sup> Shlaim, "Israel and Palestine," 176, 181-2.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 185.



projected on the PA despite its very limited control over territory and its population whenever it was made accountable for security within the territories. Derek Gregory identifies such cartographic performance as being essential to what he calls the 'Colonial Present'. Sovereignty is performed when ruptured spaces are treated as coherent spaces or states.<sup>99</sup> The occupied territories, similarly to Iraq and Afghanistan, are simulated as coherent states in order to make political action meaningful. The PA is treated as sovereign when it is made responsible for activity occurring in the West Bank of which it only fully controls around 20%. During the second intifada Israel held the Palestinian Authority accountable for the ever more violent and militant response from the Palestinian side. The PA was accused of not doing enough to reign in the militants and curb people's reaction to Israeli policies.<sup>100</sup> Despite a series of assassinations targeting leaders and militants across the different parties, the main wrath of Israel during its campaign in the West Bank focussed on the Palestinian leadership, most notably Yasser Arafat. While the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, an offshoot of the Fateh movement and under the leadership of the young guard, were active participants in many militant operations as well as suicide bombings, together with Hamas and Islamic Jihad, the PA was largely absent from the scene.<sup>101</sup> During the siege of Ramallah, Arafat was confined to his compound and at the same time it was demanded of him to put a stop to militant operations. It is controversial how much control Arafat had over the intifada as a whole and individual operations.

The question of sovereignty is intrinsically tied to the issue of legitimate use of violence. Under the conventional understanding in international relations it is the sovereign state that holds the monopoly on violence. A reflection on the kind of entities we are dealing with in this conflict necessarily follows. Ami Pedahzur in his observations on the nature of the al-Aqsa intifada notes that Israel has recognised the legitimacy of national aspirations of the Palestinian people through the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. Hence the conflict appeared to have the trademarks of an inter-state conflict, albeit within the framework of an unmistakably asymmetric power relationship.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, with Israel being the only member state of the United Nations that has not yet declared its borders, the absence of borders is for Pedahzur a defining issue and tips the scales in favour of an intra-state interpretation of

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<sup>99</sup> Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 50.

<sup>100</sup> INTERVIEW #10.

<sup>101</sup> Roger Heacock, "Seizing the Initiative, Regaining a voice: The Al-Aqsa Intifada as a Strategy of the Marginalized," in *Subalterns and Social Protest – History from Below in the Middle East and North Africa*, ed. Stephanie Cronin (New York: Routledge 2007), 303.

<sup>102</sup> Jones and Pedahzur, *Al Aqsa Intifada*, 2.

the conflict within the frame of civil war and terrorism as its main public manifestation.<sup>103</sup> In his analysis, Pedahzur very appropriately points out that the terminology used in describing a conflict says more about the political positions of the speaker, than it does about the nature of the conflict itself.<sup>104</sup>

Israel was quick to pursue its campaign during the second intifada as one aimed at eradicating the structures of terrorism. The use of the word terrorism is in itself an act of politics because it defines certain forms of violence, political goals and agency as illegitimate while at the same time making others legitimate.<sup>105</sup> While this statement is not intended to defend the killing of innocent civilians, it does seek to challenge the framework through which we examine some of the acts of violence that were committed, especially on the Palestinian side. In the absence of a defined status of the PA and legitimate mechanisms for the protection of its civilians, Palestinian policing is caught between two types of legitimacy: the legitimacy among the community from which it was recruited, and the legitimacy conferred to it by Israel and the international community which is dependent on the PA fulfilling its commitments towards Israel. The Palestinian police force had not been established to provide services and security for its own people, but rather its main purpose was to ensure security for another state and its citizens.<sup>106</sup> As many security employees turned into militants and began guerrilla style operations against the Israeli army they saw themselves as protecting their own population.<sup>107</sup> The peace process however, had never foreseen any role of protection of the Palestinian population against the Israeli army. Their role was to provide internal security and to perform duties commensurate with the protection of Israeli citizens. Israeli decision makers always determined the remit for Palestinian police, controlled the size of the force, and even had the power to reject recruits.<sup>108</sup> Now that the forces turned against Israel and employed their arms against the military they were no longer legitimate.

The policy of attributing blame to the Palestinian Authority for events in the West Bank despite its limited level of control has continued to the present day. The PA is held fully accountable for controlling its own population to such an extent that any

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<sup>103</sup> Jones and Pedahzur, *Al Aqsa Intifada*, 2, 7.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>105</sup> Colin Flint, *Introduction to Geopolitics* (London: Routledge, 2006), 162.

<sup>106</sup> Lia Brynjar, *A Police Force Without A State: A History of the Palestinian Security Forces in the West Bank and Gaza* (Reading: Ithaca Press, 2006), 269.

<sup>107</sup> Raja Shehadeh, *When the Bulbul Stopped Singing: A Diary of Ramallah Under Siege* (London: Profile Books, 2003).

<sup>108</sup> "Gaza – Jericho Agreement, Annex I: Protocol Concerning Withdrawal of Israeli Military Forces and Security Arrangements," 4 May 1994, art. 3, sec. 4.

form of violent activism is repressed. As a result, some of those considered to be security risks for Israel are now in Palestinian prisons and not Israeli prisons.<sup>109</sup> Despite these momentous efforts on part of the Palestinian Authority to prove good governance even at the cost of democracy and its basic principles such as freedom of speech, it has never looked likely that Israel will agree to grant full sovereignty to the Palestinians. As it is, the Palestinian Authority is a body that takes responsibility for Palestinians, is accountable for this to Israel and at the same time relieves the Israeli government of this burden both in financial and administrative terms. This client relationship with Israel leads to resentment, especially when the police force is required by Israel to go against its own people.<sup>110</sup> The PA's inability and at times unwillingness to reign in the militants enabled a narrative driven by the Israeli political elite, especially on the right but also more moderate elements, of Palestinian incompetence, division and indebtedness to terrorism.

## 2.2.2 The Reality of the Agreements

At the time, only very few were openly critical of the Accords. Edward Said was one of the most prominent and vocal critics of the agreement. In a series of articles published throughout 1993 and 1994, mainly in the London-based *Al-Hayat* and Cairo's *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Said describes the agreement essentially as surrender. In these articles he highlights a number of significant shortcomings. Said is critical of the PLO decision to end the intifada, which stood for the right of Palestinians to resist, despite the fact that Israel was still occupying the West Bank and Gaza.<sup>111</sup> Moreover, he points out that the documents clearly put Israel's security first and say nothing about the protection of Palestinians from Israeli incursions.<sup>112</sup> The documents do not demand an end to Israeli violence against Palestinians nor do they suggest it should compensate victims of Israeli policies since 1967.<sup>113</sup> For Said, the agreement was inherently unequal, and for Arafat's recognition of Israel's right to exist, he got little in return.<sup>114</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> INTERVIEW #10.

<sup>110</sup> Amira Hass, "For Palestinian Police in the West Bank, Israel is Still Laying Down the Law," *The Haaretz*, 14 February 2011, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/for-palestinian-police-in-west-bank-israel-is-still-laying-down-the-law-1.343269> (accessed 20 December 2011).

<sup>111</sup> Said, *Peace and Its Discontents*, 7.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid.

<sup>114</sup> Even the Israeli newspaper Haaretz pointed out in the aftermath of Hamas' election victory that Hamas had little incentive to recognise Israel given that recognition from the PLO had so far brought Palestinians only more settlements, bypass roads, house demolitions, land expropriation and violence. Danny

The concession made by Arafat carried with it a number of renunciations such as the PLO Charter, the use of violence and terrorism, and all relevant resolutions, except resolutions 242 and 338, which do not include anything on Palestinians, their rights and aspirations.<sup>115</sup> In Said's view there had been much more favourable opportunities for agreements in the past but those opportunities were missed. However, the Oslo Accords were signed when the PLO had begun to lose both external and internal support. With the end of the Cold War the former Soviet Union would no longer be a powerful ally. Moreover, Arafat's siding with Iraq in the Gulf War had serious financial repercussions for the PLO as the Gulf States cut off financial assistance to the organisation. When it came to the 1991 Madrid conference the PLO was not represented. Instead, Israel held talks with Lebanon, Syria and Jordan and a Palestinian delegation, which was in consultation with the PLO, but without official ties to it. As Arafat and his organisation were losing external support the pressure to deliver increased. Furthermore, a strong inside leadership had developed during the first intifada from among the people. In response, the PLO, which was not a direct participant in the territories during the first intifada, sought to reassert control over the events as well as the inside leadership. By initiating secret talks at Oslo and reaching an agreement, Arafat and the PLO had managed to regain power and support from the Palestinian people.

As a consequence, one of the central issues was of course, that the Oslo Accords were primarily negotiated by an outside leadership that had no real grasp of the internal situation and Israeli strategy. Said writes in October 1993: 'Neither Arafat, nor any of its Palestinian partners negotiating with the Israelis in Oslo, has ever seen an Israeli settlement. There are now over 200 of them, principally on the hills, promontories, and strategic points throughout the West Bank and Gaza. Some may shrivel and die, but the largest are designed for permanence.'<sup>116</sup>

Soon after the signing of the Accords, Sara Roy voiced her concerns that the Accords would have a detrimental effect on the Palestinian territories, especially on the already very weak Gaza Strip. The closure policies that the Israeli government had begun to implement in Spring 1993 hit both the West Bank and Gaza hard. However, labourers from Gaza were particularly dependent on employment in Israel. With Oslo these closure policies became institutionalised which led to a significant deterioration of the economic conditions in the Palestinian territories. For Roy the terms of the process

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Rubinstein, "Why Recognize Israel?" *The Haaretz*, 25 September 2006, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/why-recognize-israel-1.197954> (accessed 9 September 2011).

<sup>115</sup> Said, *Peace and Its Discontents*, 6.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

were inherently unfair and hence did in no way strengthen the Palestinian position. The power asymmetry between the two parties became enshrined in this framework for future negotiations. The paradox of separating the two peoples while integrating their economies, principles initiated by the Israeli government under Oslo, were targeted at providing security but also ensuring Israeli state control over Palestinian resources in case of unforeseen or unwanted political outcomes.<sup>117</sup> Palestinians in Gaza in particular became quickly disillusioned with the process due to the rapidly deteriorating economic situation, the realisation that Israel retained control over the key resources – land and water – and disappointment with the visibly corrupt and incompetent Palestinian Authority under Arafat. For Roy, Oslo's devastating impact on the Palestinian socio-economic base cannot be fully grasped in terms of underdevelopment. To describe the situation in the Palestinian territories she coined the term de-development, which differs from underdevelopment in that it does not allow for any form of economic development:

De-development ensures that there will be no economic base – even one that is malformed – to support an indigenous economy (and society). Another way to think about it is this: Whereas the effect of underdevelopment is to reorder economic relations into a less meaningful, less integrated and disfigured whole, the effect of de-development over the long term is to damage those relations so that no whole can, in fact, emerge.<sup>118</sup>

The huge influx of aid that came with the Oslo Accords did little to counteract this trend. The Palestinian territories are among the highest aid recipients in the world. From 1994 – 2000 annual disbursements averaged US \$500 million. In total, the international community provided US \$9 billion to the Occupied Territories between 1993 and 2004.<sup>119</sup> Despite this high level of aid the Palestinian economy has not just failed to grow but it has even declined, and has left the Gaza Strip one of the poorest regions in the world.<sup>120</sup> One cause of the failing economy is the corruption of the PA, but a more significant factor is the tight control of Israel over the West Bank and Gaza and its sources of production i.e. the very structures that became institutionalised with Oslo. Anne Le More highlights the adverse effect that prolonged international aid has had on the Palestinian economy and the consequences of aid, when it is used as a substitute for politics in conflict situations. International aid came as a direct response

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<sup>117</sup> Roy, *Failing Peace*, 32, 81, 103.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, 33-4.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>120</sup> *Ibid.*

to the peace process and had the specific political aim of keeping the process alive.<sup>121</sup> This being the overriding aim, politics became sidelined and the peace process became a goal in itself. Because of the dominant Israeli-US power relationship donor funding was also the only option for other parties to be involved in the process.<sup>122</sup> While Israel established facts on the ground that deprived Palestinians of any opportunity to establish a long-term viable economy, aid continued to pour into the territories to alleviate the humanitarian crisis that Israeli policies were creating. This gave the appearance that something was being done for the Palestinians while at the same time allowing Israel to pursue its own plans. In essence, this pattern reinforces the power asymmetry between Israel and the Palestinians and took any urgency away from a resolution of the conflict. Israel was no longer responsible for the welfare of the population despite still occupying the territories with its military. Under international law an occupying power holds a number of obligations towards the occupied population.<sup>123</sup> Rather than conflict resolution the peace process became an exercise in the management of a humanitarian situation. Foreign donor funding is the most significant source of government revenues. According to figures from the PA Ministry of Finance, foreign aid covered over 50% of the PA budget in 2003, 2004 as well as in 2005.<sup>124</sup>

What has to be problematised in relation to Oslo and its failures, is not just the continued repression by the Israeli government, but the illusion of sovereignty that the Oslo peace process created while at the same time eroding the very principle. The PA is visible but it is essentially powerless. Oslo created a semi-sovereign entity and transferred responsibility for running the daily lives of Palestinians to the Palestinian Authority. The Declaration of Principles outlines the interim self-government arrangements and the Cairo agreement, being a plan for transferring authority to Palestinians within Gaza and the West Bank town of Jericho, set out the specific conditions for the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. The PA was envisaged as an interim administrative body to take over from the Israeli military administration in the populated centres until the conclusion of final status agreements, which were set to take place five years from the signing of the Declaration of Principles. The remit of the

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<sup>121</sup> Anne Le More, *International Assistance to the Palestinians after Oslo: Political Guilt, Wasted Money* (London: Routledge, 2008), 19.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 172.

<sup>123</sup> In International Humanitarian Law it is the occupying power which bears primary responsibility for ensuring adequate supplies of foods and medicines as well as the availability of medical services to the population. Israel is a signatory to the Geneva Convention. See "Convention (IV) Relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in the Time of War," Geneva: 12 August 1949, sec 3, art. 55 and art. 56.

<sup>124</sup> MIFTAH, "Fact Sheet: The Palestinian National Authority Sources of Funding," February 2006, [http://www.miftah.org/Doc/Factsheets/MIFTAH/English/PA\\_Sources\\_of\\_Funding2.pdf](http://www.miftah.org/Doc/Factsheets/MIFTAH/English/PA_Sources_of_Funding2.pdf) (accessed 23 March 2011).

PA covered civilian matters and internal security but not external security and foreign affairs. The Oslo II Interim Agreement signed in 1995 also gave the Palestinians self-rule in Bethlehem, Hebron, Jenin, Nablus, Qalqilya, Ramallah and Tulkarm, and some 450 villages.<sup>125</sup> The Cairo agreement signed in 1994 had already outlined that the territory of the West Bank and Gaza Strip would come under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority in a phased manner within 18 months from the inauguration of the interim self-governing body except for issues to be negotiated in the permanent status negotiations. The agreement foresaw three phases of redeployment all occurring after an interval of six months. The first phase of redeployment included land in the populated areas (Areas A and B) including government and *waqf* land. Moreover all civil powers as well as responsibilities, including planning and zoning, as regards area A and B, would also be transferred to the Council during the first phase of the redeployment. In area C Israel was envisaged to transfer all civil powers and responsibilities which do not relate to territory to the Council. This division into Areas A, B, C was supposed to expire in 1999, five years after the signing of the Oslo Accords. The PA was intended as a purely temporary administrative body. Its lack of sovereignty and control over crucial resources such as land and water severely limited its possibility to develop and improve the lives of the people it was supposed to govern. Moreover, it lacked the ability to protect its population from outside attacks.

The existence of the PA is one of the main features that differentiates the two uprisings as its existence altered the dynamics of the uprising significantly. An intifada according to the model of the first, was no longer possible because quasi-state structures were now in place. Quasi-state institutions had been established that were intended to deliver services to the population. However, with little control over land, resources and mobility it was difficult to provide services and implement policy. The creation of the PA and its institutions fostered the illusion of a kind of normalcy that was not sustainable. However, the PA cannot issue building permits for area C which comprises 60% of the West Bank. The 1995 Interim Agreement (Oslo II) had called for the

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<sup>125</sup> "The Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement," Washington: 28 September 1995. Annex I of the document contains details on the phased redeployment and a map marking the cities, towns, villages and hamlets that the Israeli military was required to redeploy from under the agreement. After the first redeployment from the major urban centres, three further redeployments were required at six month intervals. After the completion of these phases the army would only be stationed in Jerusalem, settlements, borders and specified military locations. One of the issues arising from Oslo in terms of Israeli redeployment is that Israel determines what areas Jerusalem, settlements, borders, and military locations constitute. Moreover, redeployments are dependent on PA performance and its ability to satisfy Israeli security needs. As a consequence Israel has not fulfilled the requirements. See Graham Usher, *Palestine in Crisis – The Struggle for Peace and Political Independence After Oslo* (London: Pluto Press, 1995): 86-7.

gradual transfer of power and responsibility regarding planning and zoning in Area C to be transferred from the Israeli Civil Administration to the Palestinian Authority, yet this was never implemented.<sup>126</sup> Consequently, any type of structure (private home, animal shelter, or donor-funded infrastructure) cannot be built without approval from the Israeli Civil Administration, which is under the authority of the Israeli Ministry of Defence. Around 70% of Area C (around 44% of the total West Bank area) is largely designated for the use of settlements, the Israeli military or has been declared a nature reserve.<sup>127</sup> In the remaining 30% there are a number of other restrictions in place which limit the ability of Palestinians to obtain a permit for construction.<sup>128</sup> Construction for Palestinians is effectively only permitted where it is consistent with an approved planning scheme, and normally permits are only successful where construction is proposed within the boundaries of an Israeli Civil Administration or special plan. Those plans cover less than 1% of Area C.<sup>129</sup> The Oslo II agreement also provides the most up-to-date agreement on water distribution. Article 40 of the Protocol on Civil Affairs details the understanding on water issues. Although the agreement is often seen as transferring responsibility for the water sector to the Palestinian Authority, it did not in essence change Israel's remit of control.<sup>130</sup> The agreement did not foresee any redistribution of the existing shared sources. It specifically stipulated that there would be no reduction in the existing quantity that Israel extracts from the shared sources, both for the use within Israel and the Israeli settlements.<sup>131</sup> Based on this principle, additional water for Palestinians would have to be provided from previously unutilised sources.<sup>132</sup> According to an Amnesty International Report in 2009, Palestinian consumption in the Territories is about 70 litres per day (and in some cases barely 20 litres per day) and is significantly below the average recommended 100 litres per capita daily by the World Health Organisation. Israeli daily per capita consumption, on the other hand, stands at around 300 litres.<sup>133</sup> Moreover, according to B'Tselem, 134 villages in the West Bank are not connected to the running water network. An

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<sup>126</sup> OCHA, *Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank*, Special Focus, December 2009, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/special\\_focus\\_area\\_c\\_demolitions\\_december\\_2009.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/special_focus_area_c_demolitions_december_2009.pdf) (accessed 19 September 2011), 2.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>130</sup> B'Tselem, "Water Crisis: Issues under the Oslo Accords," [http://www.btselem.org/english/water/oslo\\_accords.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/water/oslo_accords.asp) (accessed 19 September 2011).

<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters – Palestinians Denied Fair Access to Water, Israel- Occupied Palestinian Territories*, 2009, 4. <http://www.amnesty.org/en/library/asset/MDE15/027/2009/en/e9892ce4-7fba-469b-96b9-c1e1084c620c/mde150272009en.pdf> (accessed 15 March 2011).



additional 190,000 Palestinians live in communities in which the water system is limited and where residents rely mainly on rainwater collected in nearby pits during the autumn and winter months.<sup>134</sup> Pursuant to Oslo II the Joint Water Committee (JWC) was established, representing both parties, and charged with approving every new water and sewage project in the West Bank. All decisions are agreed by consensus. The lack of a mechanism to settle disputes where a consensus cannot be reached, means that Israel can easily block any request by the Palestinians to drill a new well. Even if a well is approved in the JWC but it is located in Area C, additional permits must then be gained from the Israeli army.<sup>135</sup> When Israel took control over the West Bank and Gaza Strip in 1967, the Israeli army issued a number of military orders regarding control over land and water resources. Military Order 92, issued on August 15 1967, granted complete authority over all issues related to water in the occupied Palestinian territories to the Israeli army.<sup>136</sup> On 19 November 1967 the army issued Military Order 158 stipulating that Palestinians cannot construct any new water installation without prior permit from the Israeli army. Military Order 291 issued on 19 December 1968 annulled all previous arrangements concerning land or water which existed prior to the occupation. These military orders are still in force to this day and do apply to Palestinians only. Israeli settlers in the Occupied Palestinian Territories are subject to Israeli civilian law.<sup>137</sup>

Permits are not only required for projects such as wells, pumping stations, reservoirs and sewage treatment plants, but also for installing or repairing water mains and supply pipes, which are intended to connect water distribution or sewage collection networks in Area A and B, as well as those which pass through Area C.<sup>138</sup> The process of obtaining such permits is normally lengthy and difficult. Many applications are rejected or subject to long delays. Even if a permit is granted, whether the project can go ahead, depends on the Israeli army's 'security considerations' at the time the work is scheduled for. Subject to the army's security considerations, areas can be out of bounds for Palestinians for hours, weeks, months, or indefinitely.<sup>139</sup> While part of the blame certainly lies also with the Palestinian Authority itself and its corruption and inefficiency, Israeli restrictions and scope of control have placed severe limits on the ability of the PA to access water to provide for the needs of its own population. Hence,

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<sup>134</sup> B'Tselem, "The Water Crisis – Villages Not Connected to a Water Network," [http://www.btselem.org/english/Water/Without\\_Running\\_Water.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Water/Without_Running_Water.asp) (accessed 15 March 2011).

<sup>135</sup> Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters*, 35.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*

despite the establishment of the PA the Palestinian Water Authority did not acquire any control or decision-making powers over water resources. Rather, it simply gained the responsibility for managing an insufficient supply of water allocated to the Palestinians and for maintaining and repairing long-neglected water infrastructure that was already in a dire state before the PA took over.<sup>140</sup> During the dry hot summers the Palestinian Authority is unable to alleviate the water shortage. Ramallah is generally less affected by the shortage but in some areas the Water Authority could not provide water at weekends during the summer of 2010, for example. Because of the scarcity, Palestinians have to severely ration their water consumption and sometimes have to buy water from owners of private water-tankers at often inflated prices while the Israeli settlements that surround them enjoy unrestricted water supplies on a daily basis.

The implications of Israel's control over resources in the Palestinian territories go beyond access to water and land and affect PA performance in all sectors. Movement restrictions, for instance, limit the effectiveness of services provided to Palestinians severely. While the PA, for example, provides hospital and medical services, it cannot ensure the free mobility of ambulances and access to victims in areas controlled by Israel.<sup>141</sup> The failure to provide services to Palestinians became of course very apparent during the second intifada. The government ceased to function and so did its services. For most of the intifada only emergency rooms in hospitals were able to operate. Charities and UNRWA assumed responsibility for providing for the population and the latter even began to distribute food to non-refugees.<sup>142</sup>

Investment in education can only pay off if the Palestinian Authority can create jobs. Economic development is limited under occupation and the frustration of those

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<sup>140</sup> Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters*, 21.

<sup>141</sup> The delaying of ambulances is a frequent practice implemented by the Israeli army especially during conflict. Ramzy Baroud includes numerous examples and testimonies of this especially in regard to the siege of Jenin. Ramzy Baroud, *Searching Jenin: Eyewitness Accounts of the Israeli Invasion* (Seattle: Cune Press 2003), for example 59, 63, 65, 66, 68, 78, 85, 99, 195. Also "If I Were Given the Choice...?", Palestinian Women's Stories of Daily Life during the Years 2000 to 2003 of the Second Intifada," Women's Centre for Legal Aid And Counselling, Jerusalem 2007, 41-2. The Palestine Red Crescent Society files monthly and quarterly reports starting February 2007 on violations against their medical teams. For February 2007 the report records 40 incidents that include delays, several cases of physical and verbal abuse toward the medical staff and three cases of shooting. In 25 out of the 40 cases access was denied. The situation has not improved to any significant extent over time. For the quarterly report July-September 2011 the PRCS notes 113 incidents in which sick or wounded Palestinians were denied access to hospitals. For February report see PRCS, "PRCS Violations Report 1 February – 28 February 2007," <http://www.palestinercs.org/reports/feb.pdf>. For July – September 2011 see PRCS, "Continuous Violations of Israeli Occupation Forces Against PRCS Teams and Facilities – July –September 2011," 1 November 2011, <http://www.palestinercs.org/reports/Q3%20English1%20.pdf> (accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>142</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

educated in not finding employment can be particularly significant.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, the higher education system can only flourish and be competitive if institutions have resources and stability. Currently universities draw on a significant number of faculty with foreign passports, many from the Palestinian Diaspora, but the PA cannot grant work visas and therefore employees have to enter Israel on tourist visas and are subject to Israel's discriminate and unpredictable policy of access.<sup>144</sup> Israeli travel restrictions also affect the ability of Palestinian academic staff to participate in the wider research community. West Bank ID holders are not permitted to travel from Ben Gurion Airport. Instead, they have to travel via Jordan, which is more expensive and time-consuming. As most countries do not have consular representation in Ramallah, visas have to be obtained from the destination country's consulate in Jerusalem. In order to do this, West Bank ID holders have to request a permit from the Israeli Authorities in order to visit Jerusalem. Such permits are often not issued.<sup>145</sup> Universities and colleges have also been subject to closure by the Israeli Authorities. Some universities remained closed for prolonged periods prior to, and following the first intifada. When Human Rights Watch investigated the closure of Birzeit University following the al-Aqsa intifada the IDF was unable to provide any specific security considerations motivating the decision.<sup>146</sup> General travel restrictions affect the ability of staff and students to reach universities to deliver and attend lectures and the frequent installation of flying checkpoints throughout the West Bank makes travelling unpredictable. For this reason, most facilities on campus tend to close early in order to allow staff and students to get home safely (most services at Birzeit University, including the library, close at 4pm during term time and 3pm outside term time). However, these measures restrict access to learning facilities and resources for students.<sup>147</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> On unemployment and suicide bombing see, for example, Edward A. Sayre, "Relative Deprivation and Palestinian Suicide Bombings," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38 (2010): 442-461.

<sup>144</sup> During my visit, an Assistant Professor in the History Department at Birzeit had just been denied entry in the middle of the spring semester. Foreign guest-speakers are also regularly denied entry. For instance, Noam Chomsky was due to give a lecture at Birzeit University during the summer semester 2010 but after being held and questioned for four hours he was denied entry at Allenby crossing because of his political opinions and his wish to speak in the West Bank only. See Ali Waked, "Noam Chomsky Denied Entry to Israel," *Ynetnews*, 17 May 2010, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3890355,00.html> (accessed 18 December 2011).

<sup>145</sup> David Robinson, *The Status of Higher Education Teaching Personnel in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza*, Education International and Canadian Association of University Teachers (January 2010) 40, <http://download.ei-ie.org/Docs/WebDepot/The%20Status%20of%20Higher%20Education%20Teaching%20Personnel%20in%20Israel,%20the%20West%20Bank%20and%20Gaza.pdf> (accessed 15 March 2011).

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>147</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

In terms of civil administration, the PA acquired through the Interim agreement responsibility over the population register which was the result of a census carried out by the Israeli administration shortly after occupying the Palestinian territories. Although the PA was authorised to make changes to the registry there was no guarantee that Israeli officials would make the same changes to their copy of the registry. Naturally, Israel would rely on its own copy for its decision making and military operations. This is particularly significant for Palestinians with Gazan addresses residing in the West Bank. Many have lived in the West Bank for years, are married or even born there but Israel has, in many cases, not transferred residence in its records.<sup>148</sup> Under Israel's permit regime these individuals require a special permit to reside in the West Bank and the process of obtaining such a permit is extremely difficult.<sup>149</sup> A subsequent Military Order (no. 1650) which came into force in April 2010 and defines anyone present in the West Bank without the correct permit as an infiltrator, calling for him or her to be deported or sentenced for up to seven years,<sup>150</sup> is thought to affect this category of Palestinians in particular, but also international passport holders married to Palestinians, those working in the West Bank, or those simply intending to visit. The Palestinian family-reunification process is controlled by Israel and in 2000 Israel froze all applications preventing thousands of individuals to legalise their status in the West Bank.<sup>151</sup> As a result, international spouses have to leave and re-enter the country every three months on a tourist visa or risk deportation if their visa expires. Hence, Israel has complete control over the movement in and access to the Palestinian territories.

Not only did Oslo fail to provide an adequate framework to enable the Palestinian Authority to deliver services to its population but it also did not incorporate any mechanisms for protecting Palestinians against Israeli aggression. The Oslo agreement included provisions for the establishment of security and a police force but not a military for the protection of the Palestinian people from external threats. Article 8 of the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements, permits

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<sup>148</sup> On 4 August 2011 the Palestinian Authority's Civil Affairs Committee received approval for changing 1,956 addresses of people living in the West Bank who had been registered in the Israeli version of the population as residing in Gaza. It is estimated that currently 35,000 Gaza registered residents live in the West Bank who are unable to change their address. See Gisha, "Israel Authorized Address Changes for More than 1900 People Living in the West Bank," [http://www.gisha.org/item.asp?lang\\_id=en&p\\_id=1393](http://www.gisha.org/item.asp?lang_id=en&p_id=1393) (accessed 11 January 2012).

<sup>149</sup> Al-Haq, "Al-Haq's Legal Analysis of Military Orders 1649 & 1650: Deportation and Forcible Transfer as International Crimes," REF 61:2010, 13 October 2010, 5-6, <http://www.alhaq.org/pdfs/legal-analysis-of-new-israeli-military%20Orders.pdf> (accessed 15 December 2011).

<sup>150</sup> Hamoked, "Israel Defence Forces, Order Number 1650 - Order Regarding Prevention of Infiltration (Amendment No. 2)", *trans.* Hamoked, 13 October 2009, [http://www.hamoked.org.il/items/112301\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hamoked.org.il/items/112301_eng.pdf) (accessed 20 March 2011).

<sup>151</sup> Al-Haq, *Legal Analysis*, 7.

the establishment of a ‘strong police force’ to ensure ‘public order and internal security for the Palestinians of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.’ At the same time ‘Israel will continue to carry the responsibility for defending against external threats, as well as the responsibility for overall security of Israelis for the purpose of safeguarding their internal security and public order.’<sup>152</sup> The Israel-PLO agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area signed in 1994 set out the arrangements for Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the Jericho area. The agreement outlines in more detail the conditions for the establishment of a police force and its area of remit. Annex I, Article 3 elaborates on the functions: the police force will perform normal police functions, including maintaining public order and providing security; it protects the public and its property; adopts measures necessary for preventing crime and protects public installations and places of special importance.<sup>153</sup> The agreement foresees an integral unit under the command of the Council, which will consist of four branches: civil police, public security, intelligence, emergency services and rescue. In addition to this, a coastal police will also be established.<sup>154</sup> The agreement reiterates that Israel will continue to carry responsibility for defending against any external threats and Article 9 clearly states that no other armed force except the Palestinian Police force and the Israeli military forces shall be established or operate in the area.<sup>155</sup>

Israeli security forces are reported to have used excessive and indiscriminate force against civilians during the early months of the intifada. In many cases the Israeli response went beyond traditional means of riot dispersal such as tear gas and rubber coated bullets as Palestinian casualties had sustained wounds from live bullets in the upper parts of the body demonstrating clear intent of killing.<sup>156</sup> When protestors at peaceful demonstrations were met with excessive force at Israeli checkpoints, the crowds became infuriated with the PA police on their return to the urban centres and challenged them to use their guns to protect their own people.<sup>157</sup> The presence of arms among Palestinian security and police undoubtedly contributed to the militarisation of the intifada. Under the provisions of the Oslo framework, the PA is not authorised to protect its population with its own security personnel against the Israeli army.<sup>158</sup> It was

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<sup>152</sup> “Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements,” Washington, 13 September 1993, art. 8.

<sup>153</sup> “Agreement on the Gaza Strip and the Jericho Area,” Cairo, 4 May 1994.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, ann. 1, art.3.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>156</sup> “The IDF’s Riot Dispersal Means,” Israel Defence Forces, 17 May 2011, <http://dover.idf.il/IDF/English/News/today/2011/05/1702.htm> (accessed 18 September 2011).

<sup>157</sup> INTERVIEW #23.

<sup>158</sup> This contrast has perhaps always been most apparent in Hebron. As outlined in Oslo II and the 1997

this dissonance between the presence of the PA and its powerlessness when it came to confronting the Israeli military that fuelled the frustration of the population but the PA's existence also provided the means for a more institutionalised and violent response to the occupation.

The PA's ambivalent status arises from the absence of any explicit reference to national independence in the agreements. Palestinians had recognised Israel's right to exist and with Oslo Israel had acknowledged Palestinian national aspiration even if it did not explicitly accept the existence of a Palestinian state.<sup>159</sup> In fact, none of the agreements as part of the process stipulate the establishment of a state for the Palestinians. The aim of the negotiations as stated in the Declaration of Principles signed in 1993 is the following:

The aim of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the current Middle East peace process is, among other things, to establish a Palestinian Interim Self-Government Authority, the elected Council (the "Council"), for the Palestinian people in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, for a transitional period not exceeding five years, leading to a permanent settlement based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.<sup>160</sup>

The declaration calls for the establishment of an interim self-government and postpones negotiations on 'Jerusalem, refugees, settlements, security arrangements, borders, relations and cooperation with other neighbours, and other issues of common interest.'<sup>161</sup> It does not explicitly call for the establishment of a state for Palestinians but refers to a 'permanent settlement', a state of affairs which is open to interpretation. As Edward Said noted, UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 do not include anything on the right of Palestinians to self-determination. Resolution 242 calls for the withdrawal from territory acquired through war, respect for the territorial integrity and political independence of every State in the region, and a just settlement of the refugee

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Protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron the Israeli army withdrew from H-1 where Palestinian police subsequently assumed responsibility. The Israeli military retained control over area H-2 in terms of internal security and public order. In this area around 500 Jewish settlers live in the heart of the old city among approximately 30.000 Palestinians. In order to protect the small number of settlers, severe restrictions are placed on Palestinians that affect their quality of life drastically. B'Tselem, "Hebron City Centre," <http://www.btselem.org/english/hebron/> (accessed 15 March 2011); also, Guided Tour of Hebron H-2, Breaking the Silence, July 2009.

<sup>159</sup> Clive Jones, "Introduction: Between Terrorism and Civil War: A Framework of Analysis" in *Between Terrorism and Civil War: The Al Aqsa Intifada*, ed. Clive Jones and Ami Pedahzur (London: Routledge, 2007), 2.

<sup>160</sup> "Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements," Washington, 13 September 1993.

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, art. 5.

problem.<sup>162</sup> Resolution 338 issued in response to the 1973 Arab-Israeli war demands the implementation of Resolution 242 and the commencement of negotiations to establish a ‘just and durable peace in the Middle East.’<sup>163</sup> The two resolutions then, denounce Israeli occupation of territory occupied since 1967, call for a solution for refugees, the inviolability of territorial integrity of existing states, and a resolution of the conflict. Neither of the resolutions refers to Palestinian nationalist aspirations,<sup>164</sup> nor do they stipulate a right of return for refugees.<sup>165</sup>

Nevertheless, the Oslo Accords were clearly embedded in a discourse of a two-state solution. Much foreign donor funding went into the building of institutions and projects aimed at the strengthening of democracy and governance in order to prepare Palestinians for independent statehood. On the ground, the PA developed what Palestinians, at least, refer to as ‘ministries’ covering all essential areas of government to provide services to the Palestinian population, including a Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The weakness of the PA and its own corruption, its need to meet the demands of foreign donors for its own survival and its suppression of violent resistance, while at the same time not being able to meet the needs of the population, led to growing dissatisfaction with its performance.

### **2.3 The Decline of Civil Society and the Reassertion of Factionalism**

Looking at the two intifadas and their very different manifestations, the obvious question that poses itself is what happened to the informal forms of politics and grassroots mobilisation that were so wide-spread during the first intifada? Why was the Palestinian ‘street’ largely absent from the second uprising? If the violent forms of activism took precedence in the second intifada, what happened to the structures that

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<sup>162</sup> U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 242,” (S/RES/242), 22 November 1967.

<sup>163</sup> U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 338,” (S/RES/338), 22 October 1973.

<sup>164</sup> It is United Nations General Assembly Resolution 181, accepted by both the United States and Israel, which offers the legal basis of Palestinian statehood as it calls for the establishment of independent Arab and Jewish states. Yezid Sayigh, “Redefining the Basics: Sovereignty and Security of the Palestinian State,” in *Journal of Palestine Studies* 24, no. 4 (Summer 1995): 8.

<sup>165</sup> The right of return is enshrined in U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194 which states: “[r]esolves that refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbours should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss or damage to property which, under principles of law or equity, should be made good by Governments or authorities responsible”. U.N. General Assembly, “Resolution 194 [Palestine – Progress Report of the United Nations Mediator],” (A/RES/194 (III)), 11 December 1948.

facilitated other forms of political activism during the first intifada? While the militarisation and excessive violence against Palestinian civilians may be one explanation for the lack of popular participation, the reasons for the population's absence go deeper than that.<sup>166</sup>

The vibrancy of civil society during the first intifada led many to hope for the rise of a genuinely democratic and pluralistic Palestinian state.<sup>167</sup> Civil society in Palestine, which largely consists of NGOs,<sup>168</sup> has been influenced by two developments: the occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority.<sup>169</sup> According to Giacaman, ensuring the Palestinians' continued presence on the land, especially after the occupation in 1967, required the development of organisations that would provide services, create a support system, network and mobilise. This resulted in the rise of a new generation of organisations that would satisfy some of the needs of the Palestinian population outside the framework of the Israeli administrations and that were distinctly different from charities that had been operating in the field previously.<sup>170</sup> Of course, the absence of a state in the Palestinian context warrants some reflection. 'The idea of civil society is the idea of a part of society which has a life of its own, which is distinctly different from the state, and which is largely in autonomy of it. Civil society lies beyond the boundaries of the family and the clan and beyond the locality; it lies short of the state.'<sup>171</sup> Normally, one of the central roles of civil society 'is either to insure the democratic nature of the state or hold the state accountable for its offenses.'<sup>172</sup> Until Oslo there had of course never been a Palestinian state-like structure on Palestinian territory to monitor or demand accountability from. In the absence of a state and under occupation Palestinian civil society faced particular challenges. The associational forms that arose did so in opposition to an illegitimate power with survival as their central goal, and not democratisation.<sup>173</sup> For Roy this explains why civil formations failed to transcend problems such as factionalism, tribalism, classism and parochialism as they were unable

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<sup>166</sup> The new geography taking shape during the Oslo period also partly determined its nature. This will be discussed further in Chapter Three.

<sup>167</sup> Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 153.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, 175.

<sup>169</sup> George Giacaman, "Perspectives on Civil Society in Palestine" (conference paper presented at a conference held by the Welfare Association, Ramallah, 14-16 February 2000), <http://www.muwatin.org/george/welfare.html> (accessed 15 September 2011).

<sup>170</sup> Giacaman, "Perspectives on Civil Society in Palestine". Also see Roy, *Failing Peace*, 131.

<sup>171</sup> Edward Shils, "The Virtue of Civil Society," *Government and Opposition* 26, no.1 (January 1991): 3.

<sup>172</sup> Roy, *Failing Peace*, 125.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.



to see beyond ending the occupation. At the same time, putting an end to occupation is a necessary precondition for civil society in order to move beyond satisfying basic needs. This dual challenge is also manifest in the women's movement: women have to address gender issues in an emerging state while also responding to the need for independence.<sup>174</sup> As funding for NGOs comes primarily from international donors, NGOs have to adapt their goals to donor agendas. However, the focus on developmental goals by the international donor community addresses Palestinian needs in a very limited way, primarily in the context of state building, but not the need for an end to occupation and genuine democracy.<sup>175</sup> Over time, this dependency led to the depoliticisation of NGOs.

Besides the challenges posed by the Israeli occupation and international donor agendas, it is the PA's authoritarian nature which severely stifled the development of civil society. The particular situation of the PLO – a movement of national liberation in the diaspora – demanded an all-encompassing organisation in order to ensure its survival, the continuation of national struggle and the 'development' and preservation of national collective identity.<sup>176</sup> Hence, the PLO model does not distinguish between government and civil society; in addition to exercising the role of the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people, it also includes in its structures unions, research centres and NGOs.<sup>177</sup> With its authoritarian features, this unitary model, when transplanted onto the Palestinian territories, posed a considerable threat to the advance of civil society. Further, the establishment of the PA and its quasi-state institutions have called the role of NGOs into question. Not only did it marginalise the role of NGOs in promoting the nationalist agenda, the PA also replaced NGOs in providing services through the expansion of the PA apparatus. The return of the leadership allowed for some of the NGO proxies to be dissolved, which had been affiliated with the leftist factions while also replacing welfare provision functions of NGOs with centralised programmes.<sup>178</sup> Many of the professionals in the NGO sector were also absorbed into the emerging PA apparatus, essentially demobilising them. Centralisation efforts and new legislation also resulted in increased control over NGO activity and a

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<sup>174</sup> Penny Johnson and Eileen Kuttab, "Where Have all the Women (and Men) Gone? Reflections on Gender and the Second Palestinian Intifada," *Feminist Review* 69 (Winter 2001): 28. The organisations have largely responded to the challenge in three phases: during the first intifada building up for resistance and endurance against the occupation was the main focus; then, attention shifted to building a state; and third, after the second intifada the main concern is survival as Israeli separation policies threaten the holistic Palestinian nationalist ambition. INTERVIEW #23.

<sup>175</sup> Kuttab and Johnson, "Where Have all the Women Gone?" 29.

<sup>176</sup> Giacaman, "Perspectives on Civil Society".

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 177.

weakening of their political role. The mass-base and grassroots involvement that was so central to the first intifada came to be replaced by advocacy, educational and developmental activities.<sup>179</sup> Moreover, the interests of the professionals working for these NGOs often differ from the interests of the people they seek to represent. The women's movement for example is largely run by middle class women whose needs and interests are not necessarily aligned with women in Gaza of which, prior to the outbreak of the second intifada, around 40% lived in households that were below the poverty line.<sup>180</sup> The decline of mass organisations then, together with the weakness of the leftist parties left Palestinian public space to be dominated by the Palestinian Authority.<sup>181</sup> While changes in the civil society sector were partly due to the impact of foreign funding, they were also primarily a function of the failure of the PLO to heed Hilal's advice to reform its overly bureaucratic apparatus and become more representative.

It would be inaccurate to say that civil society had no role during the second intifada: rather, it had no influence on the politics of the intifada.<sup>182</sup> The initial absence of a state, Israel's occupation and later the establishment of the PA, all determined the reverse development of civil society from a vibrant active mass base movement being the central driving force of the first intifada to a largely marginalised onlooker in the second, offering no option of alternative politics for the population, aside from political violence.

Parallel to this decline of civil society we can observe a reassertion of factionalism. The difference is most obvious when looking at how the intifada was directed. By the time the second intifada erupted the number of parties had increased significantly. Similarly to the first intifada, there was also an effort to establish coordination between the different parties through the establishment of a coalition named the National Islamic High Committee for the Follow-up of the Intifada (NIHC). This thirteen party committee comprised Fateh, Hamas, the PFLP, the PFLP-GC, DFLP, FIDA, the Palestinian People's Party, the Palestinian Popular Struggle Front, the Palestinian Liberation Front, the Arab Liberation Front, the Islamic Jihad, the Palestinian Arab Front, and al-Saiqa.<sup>183</sup> Hence, it included PLO-members as well as parties outside the PLO framework. Compared to the UNLU the National and Islamic

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<sup>179</sup> Kuttab and Johnson, "Where Have all the Women Gone?" 25.

<sup>180</sup> Ibid., 30.

<sup>181</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>183</sup> Some sources suggest the committee was made up of fifteen parties and according to other sources it was fourteen. See Nigel Parsons, *The Politics of the Palestinian Authority: from Oslo to al-Aqsa* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 240.

Forces were not as active and effective. Explanation for this lies in part in the difference in nature and purpose of the two unions. The UNLU's purpose was to take the lead in driving the grassroots movement. The idea behind the NIHC by contrast, was to coordinate agendas between the parties and draw up policy. Rather than mobilising the population the NIHC was intended to institutionalise cross-factional cooperation and present a unified front. To the people, it offered direction instead of leadership.<sup>184</sup> Inside the committee however, there was radical disagreement on tactics and positions. Intense debates ensued over whether military operations should be confined to the occupied territories, or extended to Israel and whether attacks on civilians were legitimate.<sup>185</sup> The disagreement was however, at least initially, not sufficiently significant to break up the coalition. After the first two years and with the onset of major Israeli incursions, the committee became however largely ineffective and the leadership more fragmented with each faction becoming its own decision-maker.<sup>186</sup>

## 2.4 Hopelessness Revisited: The Rise of Violent Resistance

Ariel Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount on 28 September 2000 may not have been the cause for the uprising but it certainly acted as a trigger. His unwelcome intrusion into what Palestinians call the Noble Sanctuary or al-Haram al-Sharif, which for Sunni Muslims houses the third holiest site in Islam, led to clashes between Palestinians and Israeli police in the Old City of Jerusalem, resulting in dozens of injuries on both sides.<sup>187</sup> Demonstrations, confrontations and violence quickly spread to the West Bank, Gaza and even Palestinian areas inside Israel, leading to a death toll of at least 74 in a little over a week's violence.<sup>188</sup>

The Temple Mount, as it is referred to by Jews, is the most contested religious site in Jerusalem. The mount is holy to Jews because it is considered to be the site of the first and second temple. It now houses the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa mosque, sacred to Muslims. The compound is guarded by Israeli police but the Muslim

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<sup>184</sup> Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 240.

<sup>185</sup> INTERVIEW #19.

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> "Shots Fired at Jerusalem Holy Site," *BBC*, 28 September 2000, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/945894.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/945894.stm) (accessed 16 September 2011); also, Suzanne Goldenberg, "Rioting as Sharon Visits Islam Holy Site," *The Guardian*, 29 September 2000, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2000/sep/29/israel> (accessed 20 April 2011).

<sup>188</sup> See "Palestinians Die on 'Day of Rage,'" *BBC*, 6 October 2000, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/958837.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/958837.stm) (accessed 16 September 2011).

areas are administered by the Jerusalem Islamic Waqf. Normally, right-wing Jewish groups are banned from visiting the area due to the sensitivity surrounding the location. However, Sharon's visit went ahead despite clear concerns expressed in internal police and army reports as was found by a later investigation into the events.<sup>189</sup> An army intelligence report dated 27 September, one day before the event was due to take place, warned against Sharon's visit. In this particular case, the nature of the visit was not only provocative because of its destination but also because of the nature of the individual. The report referred to reasons articulated by the Palestinian leadership in the Occupied Territories for their opposition to the Likud leader's visit citing Sharon's role in the 1982 massacre of Palestinian refugees in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Lebanon,<sup>190</sup> his provocative house purchase in the Muslim Quarter of the Old City, and his actions and positions against Palestinians as well as Arabs more generally.<sup>191</sup> The Sharm al-Sheikh fact-finding mission headed by George Mitchell found that from an Israeli viewpoint Sharon's visit was a domestic political act, but it concludes that it was poorly timed and highly provocative.<sup>192</sup> In a resolution adopted on 7 October 2000, the UN Security Council also criticised the events at al-Haram al-Sharif in Jerusalem on 28 September 2000 as provocative.<sup>193</sup>

While Sharon's tour of the Temple Mount was highly incendiary for Palestinians, clearly signalling Israeli claims over this very sensitive area, the causes of the uprising were much more deep-rooted. The visit has to be seen against the backdrop of Palestinian economic decline, the failed peace process and the incessant expansion of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian areas. Contrary to the assumptions that Oslo would bring economic growth to the Palestinian territories, the increasing dependency of the Palestinian economy on Israel, in combination with the prolonged closures of the West

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<sup>189</sup>The Or Commission was set up by the Israeli government to investigate the causes of the wide-spread protests among Palestinian citizens of Israel resulting in the killing of 13 unarmed protestors during October 2000.

<sup>190</sup>The Kahan Commission, established by the Israeli government in 1982 to investigate the Sabra and Shatila massacres, found Ariel Sharon personally responsible for the events and recommended his dismissal from his post as Minister of Defence. See Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Events at the Refugee Camps in Beirut," 8 February 1983, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Foreign%20Relations/Israels%20Foreign%20Relations%20since%201947/19821984/104%20Report%20of%20the%20Commission%20of%20Inquiry%20into%20the%20e> (accessed 16 September 2011).

<sup>191</sup>Adalah: The Legal Centre for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, "October 2000 – Law and Politics before the Or Commission", July 2003, 16. [http://www.adalah.org/eng/features/commission/oct2000\\_eng.pdf](http://www.adalah.org/eng/features/commission/oct2000_eng.pdf) (accessed 16 September 2011).

<sup>192</sup>European Union External Action Service, "Sharm El-Sheikh Fact-Finding Committee Report: 'Mitchell Report'," 30 April 2001, [http://eeas.europa.eu/mepp/docs/mitchell\\_report\\_2001\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/mepp/docs/mitchell_report_2001_en.pdf) (accessed 17 September 2011)

<sup>193</sup>U.N. Security Council, 4205<sup>th</sup> Meeting, "Resolution 1322 [On the Situation in the Middle East, Including the Palestinian Question]," (S/RES/1322), 7 October 2000, <http://www.un.org/Docs/scres/2000/sc2000.htm> (accessed 17 September 2011).

Bank and Gaza that resulted in vast job losses for Palestinians who had previously worked in Israel, the Palestinian economy had been continuously declining.<sup>194</sup> In addition, the rapid increase in settlements in the period from the signing of Oslo to the outbreak of the second intifada, epitomised the failure of the peace process and the demise of any hopes for a future Palestinian state.<sup>195</sup> The euphoria and expectations surrounding Oslo had quickly vanished over the subsequent years as facts on the ground betrayed the weaknesses of the process. The tunnel riots in 1996 offered a precursor to the second intifada and a reliable indicator of the frustration with the status quo among the Palestinian population. The riots erupted following events surrounding the very same site that four years later would be the centre of the outbreak of the second intifada: the al-Haram al-Sharif. The 1996 riots were sparked by the opening of an exit from the Western Wall tunnel onto the Via Dolorosa, leading underneath the Umariya Elementary School in the Old City's Muslim Quarter, on the orders of the then Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Driven by fears that the tunnel might damage the foundations of the Al Aqsa Mosque, the clashes resulted in over 80 deaths and lasted for several days.<sup>196</sup> A research group at the Institute of Palestine Studies identified the underlying causes as “[...] the accumulated wrath and frustration born of the closures, the political impasse, the proliferation of byroads, the official green light to new settlement activity, Israel's insistence on renegotiating Hebron, the sense that Netanyahu was not intending to implement the agreement, and so on ...”<sup>197</sup> One member also pointed out how the fragmented Oslo map posed a strategic challenge to the IDF in a general uprising and how the direct confrontation between Palestinian police and IDF in area A, which under Oslo is under full Palestinian control, had broken a taboo and changed the rules of engagement.<sup>198</sup> Gal Luft, a lieutenant colonel in the reserves of the IDF, argues that the Palestinian security services evolved as a hybrid between police and army. The concomitant tendency to militarisation, he argues, changed the dynamics of confrontation during the 1996 tunnel crisis which was no

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<sup>194</sup> For Roy closure is the primary underlying factor of Palestinian economic decline and where growth did occur during the Oslo years it was largely in response to the easing of closures, and not due to market forces or internal structural reform. See Roy, *Failing Peace*, 250 – 293.

<sup>195</sup> According to Peace Now, the settler population almost doubled in the period from 105,400 in 1991 to 198,300 in 2000. See Peace Now, “West Bank settlements – Facts and Figures,” June 2009, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/node/297> (accessed 17 September).

<sup>196</sup> The Haaretz reported that 70 Palestinians and 17 Israeli soldiers were killed in the course of the 1996 riots. Akiva Eldar, “Jerusalem Demolitions May Spark Repeat of 1996 Riots”, *The Haaretz*, 10 March 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/jerusalem-demolitions-may-spark-repeat-of-1996riots-1.271808> (accessed 23 September 2009).

<sup>197</sup> “The Tunnel Crisis,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 26, no.2 (Winter 1997): 95.

<sup>198</sup> *Ibid.*, 95-6; 98.

longer simply a civil uprising as seen during the first intifada, but ‘a large-scale use of armed forces supported by the Palestinian masses.’<sup>199</sup> Luft also identifies the friction points during the confrontations as the outskirts of Palestinian cities and isolated Jewish settlements and enclaves, and correctly predicts these to be the central friction points of future confrontations.<sup>200</sup> Chapter three will look at the territorial changes behind this. In terms of underlying reasons, the militarisation of the conflict and the sites of confrontation, the 1996 tunnel crisis set a precedent for what later came to materialise during the second intifada.

The failure to reach a final status agreement at Camp David in July 2000 undoubtedly also contributed to disillusionment and frustration fuelling the outbreak of the second intifada. The talks failed despite what in the aftermath were, mostly by American and Israeli sources, described as generous offers to Yasser Arafat. In fact, the Israeli offer still entailed a major compromise on the Palestinian side.<sup>201</sup> Arguably, Israel’s position was ultimately just an extension of the occupation in a different guise.<sup>202</sup> However, even after the lack of success at Camp David and the unfolding violence after September 2000, negotiations continued. In December 2000 President Clinton put forward a US plan which formed the basis of negotiations in January 2001 at Taba where the parties came closer to a deal over the final status issues than ever before but the summit was discontinued because of the upcoming Israeli elections which were won by Ariel Sharon.<sup>203</sup> The fact that Ariel Sharon, who never accepted Arafat’s position, succeeded Ehud Barak as Prime minister strongly indicates that the majority of the Israeli public did not support Barak’s position on the talks. With Bill Clinton leaving office after serving the maximum of two terms, there was also a changeover on the American side. Within a fragile and changing political environment, especially on the Israeli and American side, the Taba summit failed to halt the ensuing cycles of violence.

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<sup>199</sup> Gal Luft, “The Palestinian Security Services: Between Police and Army,” *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 3, no.2 (June 1999), <http://meria.idc.ac.il/journal/1999/issue2/jv3n2a5.html> (accessed 26 October 2011).

<sup>200</sup> Ibid.

<sup>201</sup> Avi Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine: Reappraisals, Revisions, Refutations* (London: Verso 2009), 271-5. Deborah Sontag, “And yet so far. Quest for Mideast Peace: How and why it failed,” *The New York Times*, 26 July 2001. Also see Jeremy Pressman, “Visions in Collision: What Happened at Camp David and Taba?” *International Security* 28, no. 2 (Autumn 2003): 5-43. Pressman puts forward an alternative view to both the Palestinian and Israeli accounts and does not fully endorse either. However, he acknowledges that although Barak made an unprecedented offer at Camp David, the proposal neglected various elements that were necessary to a comprehensive settlement such as the contiguity of the Palestinian state in the West Bank, full sovereign control in the Arab areas of Jerusalem and a compromise on the right of return for refugees.

<sup>202</sup> Pressman, “Visions in Collision,” 37.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid; especially 20-2.

The Oslo process had promised sovereignty to Palestinians within five years of the signing of the Declaration of Principles. The Accords paved the way for the establishment of an administrative body that took care of civil matters and internal security in areas under its control and in essence this is what the Palestinian Authority has always remained. An increasing awareness of this by the people has brought with it disillusionment, criticism and even distrust. As the expectations for an independent Palestinian state failed to materialise the gap between reality and illusion became increasingly more difficult to bridge. For Nigel Parsons the discrepancy lies in what Palestinians believe they have a right to under the principles of justice and international law, and what they could realistically achieve within the framework of the Oslo peace process.<sup>204</sup> Drawing on Ted Gurr's concept of relative deprivation and its capacity to lead men (and women) to rebel, Parsons argues that it is this gap between what Palestinians thought they deserved and what Oslo was able to deliver that explains the return to an uprising.<sup>205</sup> However, while this is a very valid observation, it appears the problem is not just one of 'what ought to be' and 'what is'. Rather, dissonance was also intrinsic to Oslo itself and manifested by the practices accompanying the process as sovereignty was limited, fostered, as well as demanded at the same time. According to Leon Festinger's theory of cognitive dissonance humans naturally strive to obtain a state of harmony and therefore seek ways to reduce, eliminate or avoid any kind of conflicting cognition.<sup>206</sup> Possibilities to achieve this include the change of one's behaviour, the change of one's social environment, or the adding of new cognitive elements that tie in with our beliefs. Reducing dissonance may have been exactly what underpinned the action of the returning protestors into the city centres as they were urging PA security to use their arms to defend the population against Israeli forces' violence at Palestinian demonstrations.<sup>207</sup>

An article by Sayigh suggests that this dissonance could have also been eased considerably had the Palestinian leadership engaged with the restrictions on Palestinian sovereignty in a more realistic fashion. He cautioned that Palestinian policymakers may not have fully considered the package of Oslo in its entirety, specifically what sovereignty means in the context of the arrangements accompanying Palestinian statehood.<sup>208</sup> Constraints from the Israeli side including conditions of demilitarisation,

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<sup>204</sup> Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 226.

<sup>205</sup> Ibid.

<sup>206</sup> Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1957).

<sup>207</sup> INTERVIEW #23; INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>208</sup> Sayigh, "Redefining the Basics," 5-6.

the determination to keep Jerusalem and the refusal to accept refugee return are unlikely to be relaxed by most governments. Nor is the balance of support from the international community for the Israeli and Palestinian positions likely to change considerably.<sup>209</sup> The absence of contiguous territory, the mixed population concentrations and the consequent overlapping of jurisdictions, the limitations on refugee return and sovereignty in East Jerusalem – both Palestinian national symbols – would all threaten meaningful Palestinian statehood.<sup>210</sup> In Sayigh's assessment, an insistence by the Palestinians on a clearly demarcated territory and politically sovereign entity, may result in losing even more territory. As Palestinians have little ability to compel Israel to make concessions, their only means for achieving better terms 'will be to view sovereignty as a multifaceted, multi-layered attribute in which the degree of Palestinian control varies from zone to zone and from level to level.'<sup>211</sup> It is not quite clear in how far a Palestinian state with layered sovereignty and soft borders as envisaged by Sayigh, would adequately protect Palestinians against Israeli expansionist attempts, especially given Israeli propensity over the last two decades to establish facts on the ground irrespective of legal constraints. Nevertheless, the failure to engage with the realities of Palestinian statehood and to devise a strategy accordingly is a real shortcoming on the part of Palestinian policy makers and may ultimately have contributed significantly to exacerbating Palestinian frustration over the sense of fragmented sovereignty.

The existence of the PA is crucial for explaining why the second intifada was markedly different to the first. At its core, the purpose of the uprising had remained the same: Palestinians wanted to rid themselves of the Israeli occupation. However, an element of domestic dissatisfaction with the performance of the PA merged with anti-Israeli sentiments. With easy access to means of violence a different kind of political activism took place in a changed political arena: changes in the party constellation had shifted influence away from the left and fostered an increasingly entrenched dichotomy between Fateh and Hamas; the ability of civil society to mobilise had been seriously weakened, and the establishment of a quasi-government and quasi-state institutions had made much of the self-organising capacity of the masses superfluous. However, at the same time the grip of control by Israel over Palestinians themselves, their movement and access to services, and their resources had tightened. Having focussed in this chapter on the transformations in politics and civil society since the first intifada, the

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<sup>209</sup> Sayigh, "Redefining the Basics," 5.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.*, 17.



next chapter will explore the role of territory and society. More specifically, it will look at how Israel's territorial policies implemented after Oslo determined the modes of how the second intifada could be conducted and how Israeli control over land also fragmented society in a number of ways, shaping the social landscape of the second intifada.

## 2.5 Conclusions

While observations made in both Bloom and Pape on party competition and social isolation were confirmed with this account of Palestinian political factionalism and embedded power asymmetry, crucial developments in this period, are overlooked by traditional political science accounts of Palestinian political violence. The particular shortcomings that this chapter has sought to highlight are the superficial view of Oslo, the neglect of civil society, and the failure of traditional political science accounts to acknowledge the existence of multiple narratives.

In political science approaches, Oslo is seen as a missed opportunity which could have brought a solution to the conflict but also provided a possibility for those that were excluded from the political and economic benefits of the agreement to seek its disruption. Walter and Kydd suggest that Hamas suicide bombings are a result of their intention to derail the Oslo peace process and develop a model that demonstrates that attacks coincided with particular agreements. Pape supports the opposite scenario of Walter and Kydd's spoiler theory. In his view groups like Hamas saw themselves as exerting pressure on Israel to ensure they would comply with agreements.<sup>212</sup> The spoiler theory does tie in with Hamas' efforts of trying to portray itself as continuing the resistance and not playing by Israeli rules, whilst, of course, at the same time playing into Israeli hands with their use of violence. As we have seen in this chapter the PA, by contrast, began to be seen as complicit in Israeli policies and the Hamas' electoral victory in 2006 was a reflection of this sentiment within the Palestinian population. Spoiler theory and Pape's variation of coercion do not engage with the nature of the Oslo Accords and their structural implications with locked the PA into incompatible obligations and paved the way for an Israeli narrative of Palestinian incompetence, division, corruption and complicity in terrorism. Bloom notes in her account on

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<sup>212</sup> Pape, *Dying to Win*, 66-76.

Palestinian violence in the second intifada that the absence of strong leadership was one of the main factors in generating party competition. However, this absence of a strong leadership remains undefined. The ambivalent role played by Arafat was not simply a sign of leadership weakness, rather it was a clear tactical decision within an setting that had its roots in Oslo and did not allow him to fully put his weight behind the intifada if he wanted the PA to survive but did also not permit him to reign in the uprising if he wanted to keep the population's support. Hence, without a contextual and historical analysis the absence of leadership in the second intifada remains unexplained.

The second significant shortcoming is the neglect of the role of civil society. As far as political science models go beyond political parties and militant organisations, they do not conceive of society as an organised political body. In Bloom it is society who gives support to militant groups when they compete for power. Similarly in Hafez, society is the source of support and the organisations' target of manipulation through religious language and symbolism as well as the pool of recruits. In Pape too, society features as a base of support and not as an alternative form of organisation that offers the potential for non-violent protests. In fact none of these works consider the relationship between the first intifada and the second intifada and hence do not ask how the modes of political activism have changed and why.

As this chapter has demonstrated, civil society played a crucial role in the first Palestinian intifada. The unity established via mass popular movements was able to overcome the party factionalism that Palestine was so notorious for in the 1970s. The strong role of the inside grassroots movement, created the opportunity of an outlet that was not violent and truly participatory. With the establishment of the PA and its replacement of the services which had previously been provided by a lively civil society network, Arafat's autocratic style of rule and an increased influence over these organisation's agendas by foreign donors, civil society was seriously debilitated over the Oslo years. As these organisations lost their grassroots base they were no longer able to mobilise and offer a non-violent alternative outlet for the hopelessness and helplessness that had remerged over the Oslo period.

The desperation and helplessness that were the topic of the final section in this discussion were identified in Hafez, for example, but its origins and content remained largely undefined. The discussion in this chapter has given body to these observations and explained how the frustration and despair at the continued repression, the PA's failure to alleviate it and even more so its collusion in it, generated growing support among the population for violent resistance against Israel, and increasingly also the PA.

A great deal of this discussion has focussed on the weaknesses of the PA but it would be an oversimplification to cast it solely as a victim of Oslo. The Palestinian leadership has used its power and position to assert a particular kind of narrative of the peace process, and more generally, what peace and resistance have come to mean, in a political move to ensure its continued rule. This was in part a response to efforts on the Israeli political right to discredit the PA but also targeted at internal audiences, in particular its main competitors. The PA's pursuit of a strategy of good governance, its attempt to build a Western-oriented secular culture in the West Bank and its endeavour to fulfil its security obligations toward Israel in order to be rewarded with an independent Palestinian state, situates it in distinct opposition to Hamas which is, by Israel and much of the West, seen as a terrorist organisation incapable of negotiation and peace. Violent resistance was for the parties that accepted the Oslo process no longer viable and activism became the remit of NGOs, which since Oslo became dependent on foreign funding, and hence required to meet developmental and no longer political goals.<sup>213</sup> Hamas, on the other hand, continued to use violence against Israeli targets, portraying itself as the party that carried on the history of resistance against the Israeli state, a narrative that began to resonate particularly well against the backdrop of increasing frustration among the population with the process. The re-emergence of factionalism in the second intifada and debates among the parties over the most appropriate tactics highlighted the existence of these different narratives. Over the second intifada it was violent resistance that momentarily won the upper hand. With the end of the second intifada and coming into power of Mahmoud Abbas activism against Israel in the West Bank gradually declined and is now no longer permissible. Those who are suspected of it or engage in it end up in Palestinian prisons, instead of Israeli ones. Even non-violent activism encounters increasing scrutiny and harassment from police and security officials.<sup>214</sup>

Finally, this chapter has also raised a methodological issue. The more traditional political science-rooted explanations of political violence do not acknowledge the existence of multiple narratives. The most prominent one has been the narrative adopted by Israeli political elites, particularly conducive to the political right, which portrayed any kind of Palestinian political activism as terrorism, understanding it as an essential threat to Israel's security. Such a narrative has of course its roots in traditional

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<sup>213</sup> Rema Hammami, "Palestinian NGOs since Oslo: From NGO Politics to Social Movements?" *Middle East Report*, no.214 (Spring 2000): 17. INTERVIEW #22.

<sup>214</sup> "A Prospect of Palestine: Can Palestinians Peacefully Build a State?" *The Economist*, 20 May 2010, <http://www.economist.com/node/16167856> (accessed 20 October 2011).

political science and the realist IR tradition which posits the state as the central actor in the international system. We have seen in the first chapter that Jason Franks challenges the state-centric positivist discourses advanced by the Israeli state with an alternative framework that reveals a multi-dimensional understanding of root causes to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. However, what Franks has not done, is to look at the multiple competing narratives within the Palestinian context itself which were highlighted in this chapter by looking at how the PA has imposed its own dominant narrative of the past and its understanding of peace and resistance as a political move to ensure its own survival. This existence of multiple narratives challenges traditional political science models because they rest on epistemological claims of neutrality and impartiality and espouse an ontology of fixed entities, and can therefore not capture such diversity.

Beyond undermining PA governance and weakening civil society, which had been so crucial in sustaining the first intifada as a popular movement of national liberation, Oslo spatially dislocated the Palestinian territories. This is a factor that has been neglected pretty much entirely by the political science literature on Palestinian political activism to date. The next chapter seeks to fill this gap by examining how territorial fragmentation has shaped the second intifada through its unique geographical configuration.

### 3. Fragmenting territory and society

The stability of geography and the continuity of land – these have completely disappeared from my life and the life of all Palestinians. If we are not stopped at borders, or herded into new camps, or denied reentry and residence, or barred from travel from one place to another, more of our land is taken, our lives are interfered with arbitrarily, our voices are prevented from reaching each other, our identity is confined to frightened little islands in an inhospitable environment of superior military force sanitized by the clinical jargon of pure administration.<sup>1</sup>

Since its establishment in 1948 and the occupation of Palestinian territories later in 1967, Israel's various forms of control have gradually diminished the land accessible to Palestinians. Contraction of Palestinian space and its consequences have received much attention in recent academic debates on the conflict.<sup>2</sup> The cantonisation of Palestinian territory has had severe economic, political and social implications. The literature, however, has not paid much attention to how Israel's territorial policies and its consequences may have affected the dynamics of the second intifada, a key event in Palestinian history. Scholarship has largely focused on political processes and the strategy and tactics of the leadership,<sup>3</sup> military aspects as well as militant campaigns.<sup>4</sup> Less has been said about the role of structural changes and internal social dynamics.

This chapter will engage with the unique dislocation of the occupied Palestinian territories, an aspect that is almost entirely ignored by the political science models of Palestinian political violence. It will trace the history of the fragmentation of the territories and demonstrate how it has affected the conduct of the second intifada on the ground and highlight the kind of impact it has had on Palestinian society. As such, the

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<sup>1</sup> Edward Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986), 19-20.

<sup>2</sup> Harker notes the proliferation particularly of geographical studies on the geography of Palestine and the Palestinians. Christopher Harker, "New Geographies of Palestine/Palestinians," *The Arab World Geographer* 13, no.3-4 (Autumn/Winter 2010): especially 200.

<sup>3</sup> Rema Hammami and Jamil Hilal, "An Uprising at Crossroads," *Middle East Report* 219 (Summer 2001), <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer219/uprising-crossroads> (accessed 20 January 2012). Rashid Khalidi, "Toward a Clear Palestinian Strategy," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, No.4 (Summer 2002): 5-12. Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari. "The Second Uprising: End or New Beginning," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no.2 (Winter 2001): 5-25.

<sup>4</sup> See, for instance, Michele K. Esposito, "The al-Aqsa Intifada: Military Operations, Suicide Attacks, Assassinations, and Losses in the First Four Years," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 34, no.2 (Winter 2005), 85-122. Yoram Schweitzer, "Palestinian *Istishhadia*: A Developing Instrument," *Studies in Conflict and Terrorism* 30, no.8 (August 2007), 667-89. Clive Jones and Ami Pedahzur (ed.), *Between War and Terrorism: The Al-Aqsa Intifada* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2005).

chapter continues from the discussion of the previous chapter on transformations in politics and civil society over the Oslo period to look at the territorial and social implications of the peace process, and will find that the disintegration of Palestinian unity and the resurfacing of political factionalism were further exacerbated by territorial dislocation and growing social division.

Any engagement with the realities of territoriality in the Palestinian case is strikingly ignored in the major works on suicide bombing. While Pape acknowledges the importance of territory in his thesis by arguing that suicide bombing is grounded in the logic of national liberation and hence admits to the territorial nature of the conflict, he does not deal with the territorial particularities of the Palestinian-Israeli case. More specifically, his study does not recognise how territorial transformation has affected the circumstances in which political activism is possible. The rupturing of territory through closures and checkpoints that started with Oslo and grew in sophistication over the years, prohibited mass-based mobilisation which, combined with the division into different zones of control, rendered mass-based forms of resistance ineffective. Access and division of control created an environment where only confrontational activities can have an impact on Israeli forces and authorities.

One reason why such concerns have been absent from explanations modelled on political science, is the dominance of the nation-state type of territorial homogeneity which tends to be prominent in the study of international relations and politics. Such an understanding of territory has been the target for critical political geography for many years. With this thesis taking a contextual and historical approach the territorial developments originating from the Oslo agreements play a key role in examining political activism during the second intifada. It is impossible to entirely get away from the concepts of territory, sovereignty and the nation; Palestinians do seek national independence in form of a sovereign state on territory within the 1967 boundaries and identity formation is intimately tied up with territory on both sides of the conflict. However, as Sayigh suggested, it would be much more conducive and realistic from a Palestinian point of view not to consider these concepts in absolute terms.

In an attempt to further break down monolithic conceptions, the chapter will argue that the occupation has affected society unequally and as the subsequent chapter will show there is some indication that the strata of society whose living experience was most affected by manifestations of the occupation were also those most likely to engage in suicide bombing. Political science accounts of society tend to treat it as uniform and internal dynamics are routinely overlooked. In Bloom, Hafez, Pape and Merari society

takes the role of the supporter. In these accounts we do not learn much about ‘society’ except that its support is central for the continuation of attacks. Pape’s homogenisation is perhaps most explicit as he identifies difference in religion between the occupier and the occupied as a crucial indicator for whether militants will employ suicide bombings. For Pape, then, ‘official’ religious affiliation is the key identifying factor of a people.<sup>5</sup> If internal differentiations are taken into account it is usually in economic terms, as in Sayre for example, but the argument here will be that the distinctly different geographical experiences have shaped attitudes vis-à-vis political activism. Instead of treating Palestinians simply as a homogenous population, the chapter will make an effort to explore Palestinians as communities affected by the occupation, especially along the lines of urban, rural and refugee residents. Hence the approach in this chapter will question the abstraction of both space and its subjects that is so characteristic of traditional geopolitics.<sup>6</sup> Finally, the point that this chapter seeks to make is not that political violence is simply a reaction to the discrimination, hardships and injustice experienced by Palestinians but that their very structure and instantiation has determined the modes of political violence in the second intifada.

### **3.1 The Significance of Territory and its Continuous Fragmentation**

In ‘*Des Espaces Autres*’, a manuscript which formed the basis of a lecture delivered in 1967, Michel Foucault observed that while the nineteenth century had been that of time, the current century was that of space.<sup>7</sup> Space is a fundamental concept in understanding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict both in a horizontal sense as the control over land, movement and borders, as well as in its vertical sense as the control over resources underground, on the ground and the air-space above ground. Division and terms of control over the various instantiations of space have been hotly contested and are key to any negotiated settlement. In essence, the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is one of two peoples seeking control over a small piece of land in a region with limited resources. The desire for control may be shaped and driven by different motives for different groups but in essence it remains a dispute over who is in charge of a particular spatial entity.

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<sup>5</sup> Pape, *Dying to Win*, 87-8.

<sup>6</sup> Harker, “New Geographies,” 203-4.

<sup>7</sup> Michel Foucault, “Of Other Spaces,” *Diacritics* 16, no.1 (Spring 1986): 22.

The land which had formerly comprised the British Mandate has seen significant transformation resulting in continuous fragmentation over the last sixty years. Palestinian hills have become dotted with red-roofed Jewish settlements, separated by bypass roads – marked out for use by Israelis only and perhaps most significantly separated from East Jerusalem, some West Bank land, and the pre-1948 Palestinian territory by the separation barrier constructed on security grounds in 2003. A visitor from the British Mandate era would also note changes in the appearance of the landscape beyond the Green Line, with many olive groves replaced by mixed-shrub forests, especially in the vicinity of Jerusalem, and most of the original Palestinian villages destroyed or in ruins. Landscapes seldom remain the same over time. Many transformations take place during periods of intense economic development such as the industrial revolution, but in this case many of the changes, especially on the Palestinian side of the Green Line where economic development has been lacking, are distinctly political. The most salient recent development from a Palestinian point of view, at the time of writing, is the physical and political severance between the West Bank, and Gaza (and, to some extent, also East Jerusalem) which, some believe, will in the long-run inevitably lead to an ideological division also.<sup>8</sup> The territorial fragmentation experienced by Palestinians has many facets and a number of wide-ranging consequences, raising questions about the future of the Palestinian national project. The structural transformations of the land inhabited by Palestinians have deeply impacted on all aspects of their lives as well as the avenues open to them for affecting change.

### **3.1.1. Space and State**

Humans have always organised their lives around space; however, not until more recently in human history has spatial organisation come to be institutionalised. The dominant concern over space in politics is with the institution of the state, the territory it controls, and the boundaries that contain it. The concept of the sovereign territorial state has dominated IR theory for some time but has more recently been called into question, both conceptually and practically. Andreas Osiander calls the IR narrative of the peace of Westphalia a myth. The agreements of 1648 contain nothing on the issue of sovereignty, and the ‘sovereign state’ as we know it, is a development of

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<sup>8</sup> See Roger Heacock, “Of the Advantages (and Perils) of the Deficit of Secularism in Contemporary Palestinian Political Culture,” in *Temps et Espaces en Palestine*, ed. Roger Heacock (Beirut: Institut Français de Proche-Orient, 2008): 293-305.



a much later period, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, where industrialisation led to a much more extensive and at the same time integrated economy, calling for central administration over large territorial areas and resulting in more power of central governments. Hence, under these conditions, the state developed into a socially, economically and politically more closed circuit.<sup>9</sup> Modern nationalism was the functionally crucial ideology to bind this political unit together. This congruence of society and state are a transitory phenomenon which has its roots in particular historical circumstances. As industrialisation and with it division of labour increased in scale, growing interdependence across state borders began to challenge states as cohesive, 'self-sufficient' units.<sup>10</sup> While these changes may have their roots in economic development challenges to borders have become more complex. In addition to developments in trade, communication, migration, it is also the emergence of international terrorism networks and transnational criminal organisations that have called the traditional role of the sovereign state into question and necessitate increased institutionalised forms of economic as well as political cooperation between states. The concept of the sovereign state has long acted as the ultimate benchmark that change in the international system was judged against. However, if, as Osiander argues, the sovereign territorial state is not indispensable or central to international relations, but that different forms of relationships between autonomous actors have existed at different points in history, we can draw three conclusions. First, and a point made extensively by Osiander, current phenomena of integration will seem less revolutionary. Second, it challenges the place of the sovereign territorial state as the central unit of analysis in IR. Third, national movements that seek self-determination would have a number of different viable options of autonomous governance available to them. Here we have already seen the criticism levelled at the Palestinians by Sayigh who maintained that the Palestinian leaderships' emphasis on a clearly demarcated territory and political sovereign entity may lead Palestinians to lose out on even more territory. Palestinian official discourse has since the late 1980s been dominated by the two-state solution. Although there have always been vocal supporters of a one-state solution, which would envisage some kind of power sharing arrangement between the two peoples, what such an option would look like has not yet received a comparable amount of attention. However, the call for a one-state solution has intensified among the

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<sup>9</sup> Andreas Osiander, "Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Westphalian Myth," *International Organization* 55, no.2 (Spring 2001): 281.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, especially, 282-3.

general population especially in the aftermath of the second intifada as facts on the ground are making the two-state model increasingly unviable.<sup>11</sup>

Thinking about the sovereign territorial state as the only meaningful form of governance is described by John Agnew as a ‘trap’.<sup>12</sup> Falling into the territorial trap limits our ways of thinking about alternative spaces that co-exist with the territorial state and the failure to progress in the way we are thinking about this, despite the functional transformations of the sovereign state, has affected political thinkers and actors alike.<sup>13</sup> The next section will demonstrate how deeply entrenched this way of thinking is in the Palestinian-Israeli case and highlight the centrality of identity in binding society and territory together, and ensuring their congruence by rendering other societies invisible.

In domestic terms, spatial arrangements also order our lives. They regulate which areas we can lawfully access and which we cannot on the basis of different spheres of control. The market square or Hyde Park are for everyone to enjoy, while one cannot expect to be able to walk freely into other people’s homes, their gardens, or even their wood – or farmland. Here the notion of space is linked to property and the division between the public and private. These spatial arrangements shape the way we conduct our lives and changes to this could easily turn our life upside down.<sup>14</sup> For Palestinians, it is not so much the division between private and public that is the central mechanism of spatial organisation of daily life but rather it is identity that has come to define space, interweaving with public and private spheres in complex ways. Access to and mobility in public places is based on what kind of identity card (Palestinian, Jerusalemite, Arab Israeli, Israeli) one carries (and sometimes also on age and gender)<sup>15</sup> and rules of where one can go and when may change at an instant’s notice, often at the discretion of a single soldier. In the private sphere, different procedures apply to Jews and Palestinians in terms of buying, owning land and accessing one’s land, as well as

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<sup>11</sup> INTERVIEW #4.

<sup>12</sup> John Agnew, “The Territorial Trap: the Geographical Assumptions of International Relations Theory,” *Review of International Political Economy* 1, no.1 (Spring 1994): 53-80.

<sup>13</sup> Alexander B. Murphy, “Identity and Territory,” *Geopolitics* 15, no. 4 (November 2010): 771.

<sup>14</sup> David Delaney, *Territory: A Short Introduction* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005), 5.

<sup>15</sup> During Ramadan Israel allows Palestinian women over the age of 45 and Palestinian men over 50 with West Bank IDs access to East Jerusalem for Friday prayers without permits. See, for example, OCHA, “Protection of Civilians, 17-24 August 2010,” 24 August 2010, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/A01DACAE64FD97A18525778C004FBCB4> (accessed 8 March 2011). In this respect, Muslims from Gaza are discriminated against on two accounts. Unlike Christian worshippers from Gaza, as well as Muslims from the West Bank, Muslims from Gaza do not receive permits to visit holy sites in Israel during religious holidays. See Gisha, “Israeli Defense Ministry – for Worshippers from Gaza Access to Holy Sites Allowed for Christians Only,” 9 March 2011, <http://occupiedgaza.blogspot.com/2011/03/gisha-israeli-defense-ministry-for.html>. See also, “AdmPet 11268-01-11Kishawi v Ministry of Interior,” Court of Administrative Affairs in Beer’Sheva, trans. Gisha, 11 May 2011. Moreover, age and gender restrictions for access to the al-Aqsa compound are often even enforced on East Jerusalem ID holders throughout the year on security grounds.

constructing and maintaining property. Because Palestinians are subject to military law their private spheres are much more precarious and house demolitions and military incursions regularly target these private spaces as a form of punishment or simply as an assertion of power.<sup>16</sup>

### 3.1.2. Memory, Society and Space

Although the manifestations of a territorial conflict are inevitably first and foremost spatial, time too plays a role. This is perhaps nowhere else more evident than in the case of the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. While many Jews may feel that Israel provides a safe haven for their people, a significant number do believe it to be the Promised Land for the chosen people that they have now, after almost two thousand years, been able to return to. For this latter group in particular, Israel's legitimacy to exist is rooted in the history of the Jewish people. History and archaeology have therefore become prime tools in legitimising claims to sovereignty over this land. Excavations and studies into demography and migration are intended to prove the roots of the Jewish people as some of the oldest inhabitants of the land. In order to reinforce this link, historical events and sites have come to occupy a central role in contemporary Israeli national narrative and practice. It is telling that Masada, the desert fortress which is thought to have been the site of the collective suicide of the Sicarii rebels refusing to submit to Roman conquest, is the site for the swearing-in ceremony of soldiers who have completed their IDF basic training.<sup>17</sup>

In the previous chapter we have already seen competing Palestinian narratives over the concepts of resistance, peace and conflict as well as the narrative favoured by the Israeli right of Palestinian incompetence, weakness and complicity in terrorism. This chapter will explore the development of 'historical' narratives, or how a people remember themselves, through the connection between identity and territory.

Palestinians are often criticised for having failed to understand the importance of constructing a collective identity as part of gaining independence. In order to become a nation in the formal sense, a people must be something more than a collective of

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<sup>16</sup> On the targeting of Palestinian public and private spaces during the second intifada see Ghazi-Walid Falah and Colin Flint, "Geopolitical Spaces: The Dialectic of Public and Private Space in the Palestine-Israel Conflict," *The Arab World Geographer* 7, no.1-2 (Spring-Summer 2004): 117-34.

<sup>17</sup> Drawing on Zerubavel, Whitelam describes the political appropriation of Masada as a national symbol of liberation that has divorced itself from the past and although the historicity and significance of Josephus' account of Masada are contested, it is accepted uncritically by Israeli popular culture. See Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel: The Silencing of Palestinian History* (London: Routledge, 1996), 16-7.

tribes.<sup>18</sup> Israel on the other hand, has been very successful in creating a collective identity, especially given how diverse Jewish immigrants were in terms of places of origin, original language and culture. Palestinian society, on the other hand, was highly homogenous in ethnic, cultural and linguistic terms, but was divided internally by political and social differences.<sup>19</sup> These political and social differences, often nurtured by their occupiers, divided Palestinians deeply despite their common ethnic background and meant they were unable to clearly define and act on a common national interest. The newly immigrated Jews, on the other hand, were united and driven by their political ambition to secure a homeland and their narrative of the ancestral roots.<sup>20</sup>

Critical to the shaping of the Israeli discourse and ensuring its dominance over other narratives was, according to Whitelam, the emergence of biblical studies. Palestine had always been home to many diverse people and histories but biblical studies turned the story of the Israelites – the chosen people - into the dominant narrative.<sup>21</sup> Krämer too demonstrates that the Jews, for a large part, occupied a minority among a population which had always been mixed and further finds that the term ‘Palestinian’ had been in continuous use and was not a later invention.<sup>22</sup> The ancient history of Palestine was gradually replaced by a largely fabricated image of ancient Israel, which in reality had played only a small role in geographical Palestine, but by biblical studies was represented as the root of Western civilisation.<sup>23</sup>

Since the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948 a number of measures were taken to eradicate remnants and reminders of its previously largely Palestinian inhabitants. Although Palestinians are also participants to this ‘game’, their potential and impact is severely limited because of the existing power asymmetry between the two parties.

One of the most obvious measures taken to destroy the memory of Palestinian presence was the physical destruction of Palestinian property, including 418 Palestinian villages that had been depopulated during the 1948 war.<sup>24</sup> The levels of destruction in these villages vary. In some cases houses have been completely destroyed, in other cases most houses show major destruction, and in some instances houses are now

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<sup>18</sup> Whitelam, *Invention of Ancient Israel*, 16-7.

<sup>19</sup> Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 21.

<sup>20</sup> Jeremy Salt, *The Unmaking of the Middle East- A History of Western Disorder in Arab Lands* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 123.

<sup>21</sup> Whitelam, *Invention of Ancient Israel*, 2-3, 5, 11.

<sup>22</sup> Gudrun Krämer, *History of Palestine*, 3-17.

<sup>23</sup> Whitelam, *Invention of Ancient Israel*, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Ghazi Falah, “The Transformation and De-Signification of Palestine’s Cultural Landscape” in *The Landscape of Palestine*, ed. Ibrahim Abu Lughod et al., 97-106.

occupied by Jewish families.<sup>25</sup> With the passing of the Israeli Absentee Property Laws in 1948 it became impossible for Palestinian refugees to return to their former homes.<sup>26</sup> Under this law, the confiscated Palestinian land and property were initially transferred to a custodian and then later passed on to the development authority. Two million dunams of land of ‘missing persons’ – that is property belonging to Palestinian refugees – was purchased by the Jewish National Fund from the government in the 1950s.<sup>27</sup> The JNF turned some of the village lands into forests and parks named after international dignitaries or countries. Canada Park for example was established in 1973 on the ruins of three Latrun villages: ‘Imwas, Yalu, and Beit Nuba which were captured and destroyed in 1967.’<sup>28</sup> For Palestinians, the ruins of former Palestinian villages, where they still exist, keep alive the claim that Palestinians feel they have to this land.<sup>29</sup>

Expropriation of Palestinian property has continued to the present day and is at the time of writing perhaps most significant in East Jerusalem, in the neighbourhood of Sheikh Jarrah, where several Palestinian families have lost legal battles to keep their homes. Most of the families affected are Palestinian refugees who moved to the area under an UNRWA-sponsored housing scheme under which 28 Palestinian refugee families were granted funds to build homes on land made available by the Jordanian government under the condition that they renounced UNRWA food assistance. After paying nominal rent for three years, ownership of the land and properties would be transferred to them.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Falah, “Transformation and De-Signification”, 99-104.

<sup>26</sup> Absentees’ Property Law 5710-1950, 14 March 1950, art.4.

<sup>27</sup> “Ex-Minister Rubinstein: State Should Reclaim Land Given to JNF,” *The Haaretz*, 24 July 2007, <http://haaretz.com/news/ex-minister-rubinstein-state-should-reclaim-land-given-to-jnf-1.226146> (accessed 8 March 2011). Habitat International Coalition and Adalah, “Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and All Forms of Discrimination,” Statement submitted to UN Commission on Human Rights 60 – 2<sup>nd</sup> session, (13 March – 21 April 2006), 1; <http://www.adalah.org/eng/intl06/un-i6-jnf.pdf> (accessed 18 February 2011).

<sup>28</sup> Eitan Bronstein, “Restless Park: On the Latrun Villages and Zochorot,” *Zochorot*, trans. Charles Kamen, 2-3; [http://www.zochrot.org/sites/default/files/latrun\\_booklet\\_english\\_supplement.pdf](http://www.zochrot.org/sites/default/files/latrun_booklet_english_supplement.pdf) (accessed 13 January 2012).

<sup>29</sup> Falah, “Transformation and De-Signification,” 105. Many cultural centres and projects in and outside Palestine have collected the testimonies of the 1948 *nakba* witnesses and material on the fate of the various villages. Such organisations and projects include the Khalil Sakakini Centre, Badil, The Palestine Remembered Nakba Oral History Project, the Palestinian Association for Cultural Exchange etc.

<sup>30</sup> The Hanoun and al-Ghawi families, for example, were evicted from their homes on 2 August 2009. The cases in East Jerusalem are so controversial because the Jordanian government never registered the refugees as owners. The Legal and Administrative Matters Law of 1970 enables Jews to make claims on property that belonged to Jews before 1948. This has, of course, created a double standard because Palestinians are not able to reclaim the property they owned before 1948 in West Jerusalem or anywhere else in Israel due to the Absentee Property Law. Moreover, the application of Israeli law, administration, and jurisdiction in East Jerusalem is not recognised under international law because East Jerusalem is considered occupied territory in international legal terms. Security Council Resolution 252 ‘[c]onsiders that all legislative and administrative measures and actions taken by Israel, including expropriation of land and properties thereon, which tend to change the legal status of Jerusalem are invalid and cannot

A more subtle, but widely practiced, approach to eradicating memory is the renaming of places. The Hebraisation of the map began shortly after the establishment of Israel. Arabic names of villages and towns were largely replaced with Hebrew names: Isdud was changed to Ashdod; Asqalan to Ashqelon; Bisan to Bet She'an etc. While Hebrew names within Israel have become largely accepted, names for areas in the West Bank, for example, are still hotly contested and controversial. An Israeli tourism map issued by the Israeli Ministry of Tourism displayed on the London underground network in 2009, referring to the West Bank as Samaria and Judea, attracted significant criticism and had to be withdrawn.<sup>31</sup> However, sometimes the politics of toponymy is more subtle; road signs for Jerusalem, for example, in Arabic script do not use the Arabic name for Jerusalem, which is 'al-Quds', but the Hebrew 'Yerushalayim' in Arabic script.

Filling the gap of the disappearing history of one people are the acts of claiming presence of another. The most efficient way to achieve presence is to settle one's people on the given territory. Settlements are among the most controversial issues in peace negotiations and as the evacuations from Gaza in 2005 and debates over a construction freeze in 2009 and 2010 have shown, a highly emotive topic within Israel. Although settlements may be a very effective means for establishing presence on a given a territory, they are economically and politically very costly. Hence, Cohen argues, that Israel is unable and unwilling to settle large parts of the land with people. Trees, on the other hand, can establish presence at a much lesser cost. The afforestation projects around Jerusalem serve as a suitable example. Previous to 1967 Israel had begun to plant forests around West Jerusalem and after 1967 and the expansion of the Jerusalem municipal boundary, the municipality continued its afforestation efforts to complete a green belt within the new municipal boundaries.<sup>32</sup> This went hand in hand with one of the primary goals of Israeli national policy which was to create and

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change that status.' See U.N. Security Council, Resolution 252, "The Situation in the Middle East," 21 November 1968, <http://daccessddsny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/248/33/IMG/NR024833.pdf?OpenElement>. Also see OCHA oPt, "The Case of Sheikh Jarrah," updated version, October 2010, 1,3; [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_sheikh\\_jarrah\\_Factsheet\\_2010\\_10\\_11\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_sheikh_jarrah_Factsheet_2010_10_11_english.pdf). (accessed 13 February 2011). Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity, "The Legal Struggle In Sheikh Jarrah," <http://www.en.justjlm.org/what-is-our-struggle-about/sheikh-jarrah-solidarity/the-legal-struggle-in-sheikh-jarrah> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>31</sup> Associated Press, "Controversial Israeli Tourism Poster Pulled from London Tube," *The Haaretz*, 22 May 2009, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/controversial-israeli-tourism-poster-pulled-from-london-tube-1.276552> (accessed 12 January 2012).

<sup>32</sup> Israel increased the area of the Jerusalem municipality by 200%. See Shaul Ephraim Cohen, *The Politics of Planting: Israeli-Palestinian Competition for Control of Land in the Jerusalem Periphery* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 1. On politically-motivated planting in the green belt see *Ibid.*, 112-5, 116-7.

consolidate an enlarged capital for Israel.<sup>33</sup> However, these projects often infringed on the land and livelihood of Palestinians in the surrounding villages and continued to create conflict over the years.<sup>34</sup> The JNF is particularly active in land development with a view to consolidate and expand Jewish presence. It was founded in 1901 with the primary objective of purchasing land for the establishment of a Jewish state in the then Ottoman-controlled Palestine.<sup>35</sup> The organisation prides itself of having planted 250 million trees, developed over 250,000 acres of land and created more than 1,000 parks amongst other things in the past 109 years.<sup>36</sup> Many of the JNF's forests and recreational parks were built on the land of destroyed Palestinian villages. The JNF is well known for its preference of conifer trees – mainly pine trees – despite the fact that they are not suitable for the local climate, rather than indigenous species such as olive trees, which for Palestinians have become somewhat of a national symbol.<sup>37</sup> Hence, even the choice of trees in planting projects has turned into a political statement.<sup>38</sup>

Palestinian responses to Israeli claims on the land have taken a number of forms. At the core of Palestinian resistance to being 'forgotten', is the concept of *sumud* which has its origins in a pan-Arabist nationalist ideology that strives for independent statehood but has come to mean 'the struggle of the Palestinians under occupation to "stay on the land" and develop into a viable community with social, economic, and educational institutions.'<sup>39</sup> Maintaining Palestinian presence on the land is central to this concept, which is often translated with 'steadfastness'. Numerous planting projects in various localities, especially along the separation wall and near settlements, have been initiated to achieve exactly that, through reclaiming land by planting olive trees.<sup>40</sup> Such efforts usually remain purely symbolic, with no real impact, as the army in the West Bank regularly interferes with such projects and soon uproots any saplings. Declaring Jerusalem as the capital of Arab culture in 2010 is another example of

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<sup>33</sup> Cohen, *Politics of Planting*, 1-2.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> See Jewish National Fund, "Our History," under "1901: It All Started with A Dream..." <http://www.jnf.org/about-jnf/history/> (accessed 18 February 2011).

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Cohen, *Politics of Planting*, 8. The Stop the JNF Campaign takes particular issue with the planting of pine trees by the JNF and its environmental impact. See Stop the JNF Campaign, "Environmental Destruction and Racism: The JNF Destroys Natural Environments and Ways of Life," [http://stopthe.jnf.org/jnfkklintro\\_environment.html](http://stopthe.jnf.org/jnfkklintro_environment.html) (accessed 7 January 2012).

<sup>38</sup> See Cohen, *Politics of Planting*, 115-6.

<sup>39</sup> Emile A. Nakhleh, "The West Bank and Gaza: Twenty Years Later," *Middle East Journal* 42, no.2 (Spring 1988): 213; also Giacaman, "Perspectives on Civil Society in Palestine".

<sup>40</sup> The Arab Group for the Protection of Nature for example launched a five year project which aimed to plan approximately one million trees (not exclusively olive trees) on Palestinian land razed by Israeli bulldozers or in areas where settlements and Israeli bypass roads are expanding. See Arab Group for the Protection of Nature, "One Million Trees Project," [http://www.apnature.org/Project01\\_project.html](http://www.apnature.org/Project01_project.html) (accessed 12 January 2012).

Palestinian efforts to establish their presence. In a contested city such as Jerusalem cultural activities inevitably have a political message. Several of the cultural events taking place in Jerusalem prompted harassment from the Israeli police or were even banned.<sup>41</sup> Maintaining cultural presence is particularly difficult for Palestinians in East Jerusalem. More and more Palestinian think tanks and NGOs are moving away from East Jerusalem to neighbourhoods closer to the West Bank because they find it increasingly difficult to function in East Jerusalem. Unsurprisingly, sites with political symbolism are particularly a target for Israeli pressure or closure. Orient House, the PLO headquarters in East Jerusalem, was closed for the first time by Israeli forces in 1988 for security reasons. The site re-opened in 1992, only to be closed down again on 10<sup>th</sup> August 2001. Until then, Orient House was the official body in charge of negotiating the final status of Jerusalem.<sup>42</sup> In the last raid, Israeli army and police confiscated computer equipment, files, data and any valuable and confidential information regarding Jerusalem that was intended for use in negotiations with Israel.<sup>43</sup> Any efforts to re-open the site have until now been unsuccessful.

In a conflict between two national movements that seek to control territory, establishing presence is an exclusionary practice. For many Israelis and Palestinians the conflict is an existentialist one: it is either us or them.<sup>44</sup> If the Zionist imperative is to create a state with a Jewish majority the ideology is not compatible with the presence of another people.<sup>45</sup> In *Sacred Landscapes* Benvenisti suggests that eliminating another people's memory is inevitable in this conflict. In his view, had the Arabs won the war, they would have done the same to the Jewish landscape,<sup>46</sup> and would have equally excluded the Jewish narrative from their cultural celebrations or museums and historical sites.<sup>47</sup> One gets the sense from reading Benvenisti that this is an inherently

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<sup>41</sup> See "Jerusalem Artists Go underground," *BBC*, 3 November 2009, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8338316.stm> (accessed 12 January 2012). "Israel Bans Palestinian Cultural Events," *Ynetnews*, 20 March 2009, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3689673,00.html> (accessed 12 January 2012). Varsen Aghabekian, "Under Occupation: Celebrations and Contradictions of al-Quds Capital of Arab Culture 2009," *Jerusalem Quarterly* 38 (Summer 2009): 78-82.

<sup>42</sup> In its platform for the 1999 elections Likud had committed itself as part of its policy for Jerusalem as a united capital of Israel to ensure that "[n]o diplomatic activity will be permitted at Orient House." See "Likud Platform," Knesset, Lists Running in the '99 Knesset Elections, [http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections/knesset15/elikud\\_m.htm](http://www.knesset.gov.il/elections/knesset15/elikud_m.htm) (accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>43</sup> See "About the Orient House," The Orient House, <http://www.orienthouse.org/about/index.html> (accessed 13 February 2011).

<sup>44</sup> Author, informal conversations, August 2009.

<sup>45</sup> Karmi, *Married to Another Man*, 7.

<sup>46</sup> Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of the Holy Land since 1948* (Berkeley: University of California Press 2000), 3.

<sup>47</sup> Meron Benvenisti, *City of Stones: A Hidden History of Jerusalem*, trans. Maxine Kaufman Nunn (Berkeley: University of California Press 1996): 1-10.



irreconcilable conflict in which there is no room for both an Israeli and a Palestinian narrative.

For now, due to the Palestinians being the weaker party in this conflict, it is their spaces that have continuously been shrinking. The majority of Palestinians lost access to the territory that, after 1948 became Israel, as entry to Israel is now controlled by a strict permit system. Since Oslo, the expansion of settlements, the frequent closures, the division into different zones of control, have impeded Palestinian mobility severely; the construction of the separation wall, the political split between Gaza and the West Bank, and the physical severance from East Jerusalem have further aggravated this situation. These developments have seriously called into question the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state within the Green Line. In June 2009, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for the first time acknowledged the possibility of a Palestinian state, albeit with considerable limitations: a demilitarised state, without control over its borders with Jordan<sup>48</sup> or its airspace, and banned from entering military agreements with other states.<sup>49</sup> Conceiving of a state without an army to control its territory and borders and a contiguous territory to be controlled,<sup>50</sup> would certainly be a radical break from the understanding of the traditional territorial sovereign state. That the territorial sovereign state is still the dominant paradigm for political actors is demonstrated by the fact that Palestinians do not appear likely to accept the offer of a powerless Swiss cheese state.

### **3.1.3. Territory in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict**

The beginnings of the Zionist project of establishing a state for Jews in this very land is often dated with the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897, where the congress, chaired by Theodor Herzl, declared its central programme: ‘Zionism seeks for the Jewish people a publicly recognized legally secured homeland in Palestine.’<sup>51</sup>

Settlement activities had begun long before the war in 1948 in a Palestine that was then under the mandate of the British Empire. The British were sympathetic and

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<sup>48</sup> B’Tselem, “Israel Has De Facto annexed the Jordan Valley,” 13 February 2006, [http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20060213\\_annexation\\_of\\_the\\_jordan\\_valley](http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20060213_annexation_of_the_jordan_valley) (accessed 12 January 2012)

<sup>49</sup> Rory McCarthy, “Netanyahu Backs Independent Palestinian State for the First Time,” *The Guardian*, 14 June 2009, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jun/14/binyamin-netanyahu-israel-palestinian-state> (accessed 18 February 2011). For excerpts of speech see “Netanyahu Speech – Key Excerpts,” BBC, 14 June 2009, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/8099749.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/8099749.stm) (accessed 18 February 2011).

<sup>50</sup> There was no indication in Netanyahu’s speech that he intended to evacuate settlements in the West Bank. On the contrary, he stated that settlements needed to be able to accommodate natural growth.

<sup>51</sup> The Herzl Museum, “First Zionist Congress: Basel 29-31 August 1897,” <http://www.herzl.org/english/Article.aspx?Item=544> (accessed 3 January 2012).

supportive of the Zionist project, as perhaps best showcased by the Balfour Declaration of 1917.<sup>52</sup> With the writing of the Balfour declaration into the mandate, the British created, what Jeremy Salt refers to as double colonialism: ‘the occupying British did not settle the land themselves but held the door open so that their protégés could.’<sup>53</sup> For Rashid Khalidi, the clear favouritism for the Jewish population in all sectors put the Palestinians at a clear disadvantage, pushing them into a corner or an ‘iron cage’ from which Palestinian independence could not have escaped. While the *yishuv*, with British support had built quasi-state structures by the time it came to the war in 1948, Palestinian party formation had been delayed due to the firm grip of the British on the administration and a continuous denial of access to state structures to the Palestinians. The British kept the indigenous population under tight control by practicing a politics of division and ensured that the interests of the notables were closely tied up with the British.<sup>54</sup> When it came to the confrontation with the Haganah, the Palestinians were divided, badly equipped, not organised and without credible leaders.

What for Jewish Israelis marks the independence and establishment of the Israeli State, is for Palestinians the ‘catastrophe’, or in Arabic, the *nakba*. For a long time official Israeli historical narrative denied the fate of the approximately 750,000 refugees that fled to neighbouring countries or ‘settled’ outside the main urban centres in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, then both under Jordanian control, and in Gaza which was then governed by Egypt. The official Israeli narrative maintained that the Palestinians left their homes out of free will, that they were instructed to do so by their Arab leaders, and that at the time Palestinian national identity was not sufficiently developed to constitute a people<sup>55</sup> until it was challenged, as we have seen in chapter two, by the New Historians.

Until 1967 the West Bank (with East Jerusalem and the Old City), and Gaza remained under the control of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Egypt respectively. When Israel occupied these areas after the six-day war, it began not only to control the territory but also the lives of Palestinians. Israel controlled these areas militarily, but also civilian daily affairs came under Israeli administration. However,

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<sup>52</sup> The British position changed later, most notably with the White Paper of 1939, giving political recognition and representation for the Arab population, limiting Jewish immigration, and recommending the creation of an independent Palestine governed by Palestinian Arabs and Jews in proportion to their representation in the population.

<sup>53</sup> Jeremy Salt, *Unmaking of the Middle East*, 122.

<sup>54</sup> Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 21-2.

<sup>55</sup> Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir famously said: ‘There is no such thing as a Palestinian people. It is not as if we came and threw them out and took their country. They didn't exist.’ Statement made by Golda Meir, *The Sunday Times*, 15 June 1969.

the West Bank and Gaza were not annexed by Israel, and Palestinians in these areas were never given any political representation in the state of Israel. East Jerusalem, on the other hand, was annexed and Israel declared Jerusalem the united capital of the state of Israel. Prior to 1967 East Jerusalem contained an area of around 6 km<sup>2</sup>. After the war Israel annexed approximately 70 km<sup>2</sup>, including 64 km<sup>2</sup> which mostly belonged to 28 villages in the West Bank.<sup>56</sup> It is clear that the objective of the Israeli decision-makers was to guarantee a Jewish majority within the city: while many of the Palestinian villages were placed outside the boundaries of the municipality, their lands were included within the boundaries.<sup>57</sup> Palestinians resident in Jerusalem, and present during the time that the Israeli census was taken after the annexation, began to occupy a different status and received special Jerusalem identity cards. Their status is one of permanent residents, the same status which is granted to foreign citizens i.e. immigrants who have chosen to come to live in Israel.<sup>58</sup>

Holders of a Jerusalem identity card are not subject to the movement restrictions that affect those holding a West Bank or Gaza identity card, and they also have access to social security benefits and state healthcare. However, since 1995 Israel has begun to revoke permanent residency of Arab residents who could not prove that their centre of life was in Jerusalem. This policy was implemented without any prior warning and affected thousands of former Jerusalemites,<sup>59</sup> as they had moved outside the city's limits for employment,<sup>60</sup> better housing,<sup>61</sup> or had moved to live with their West Bank or Gazan spouses.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> The majority of the land had previously belonged to the municipalities of Bethlehem and Beit Jala. B'Tselem, "Legal Status of East Jerusalem and its Residents," [http://www.btselem.org/english/jerusalem/legal\\_status.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/jerusalem/legal_status.asp) (accessed 3 January 2012).

<sup>57</sup> Examples here are Beit Iksa and Beit Hanina in the north, and Beit Sahour in the south. Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> It would be possible for them to become Israeli citizens on certain conditions. They would, for example, have to swear allegiance to the Israeli state, and would have to renounce any other nationality they may hold. Jewish Israeli citizens, on the other hand, can be nationals of more than one country. Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> B'Tselem, "Revocation of Residency in East Jerusalem," [http://www.btselem.org/English/Jerusalem/Revocation\\_of\\_Residency.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Jerusalem/Revocation_of_Residency.asp) (accessed 19 March 2011). Shahr Ilan, "Interior Ministry increasingly revoking East Jerusalem Arabs' Residency Permits," *The Haaretz*, 24 June 2007, <http://www.haaretz.com/news/interior-min-increasingly-revoking-e-j-lem-arabs-residency-permits-1.223926> (accessed 19 March 2011); Amira Hass, "Palestinian Jerusalemites go Work Abroad and Get Residency Revoked upon Return," *The Haaretz*, 20 June 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/palestinian-jerusalemites-go-work-abroad-and-get-residency-revoked-upon-return-1.297136> (accessed 23 September 2011). For a detailed report see Hamoked and B'Tselem, *The Quiet Deportation – Revocation of Residency of East Jerusalem Palestinians* (April 1997), [http://www.hamoked.org/items/10200\\_eng.pdf](http://www.hamoked.org/items/10200_eng.pdf) (accessed 13 January 2012).

<sup>60</sup> East Jerusalem which had previously been the hub of Palestinian economic and social life has suffered significantly, especially in economic terms, since the construction of the Separation Wall.

<sup>61</sup> It is extremely difficult for Palestinian residents in Jerusalem to obtain a building permit and the permit regime is much more rigorously applied to Palestinians than to Jews. From the territory that was annexed under the extension of the municipal boundaries, Israel expropriated about a third of the territory for

The movement restrictions that have so come to characterise the lives of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are a development of the later years of the occupation. Israel's policy of closure became institutionalised with Oslo and its logic of division of control and separation of the two peoples. Prior to Oslo Palestinian youths went to Tel Aviv to night clubs to dance and enjoy themselves without being stopped or harassed by anyone.<sup>63</sup> Moreover, a large percentage of the Palestinian labour force had been absorbed by the growing Israeli market. The movement restrictions with Oslo cost many Palestinians their income. Paradoxically, it was also during the Oslo period that settlement expansion intensified.<sup>64</sup> Settlement construction began in the 1970s and was often driven by religious groups which committed themselves to the project of repopulating the areas known in Jewish history as Judea and Samaria but also included those that were attracted by cheap housing and government subsidies. Palestinian frustration, fuelled by the lack of any real economic or political returns from Oslo and the growing reports of the corruption of the Palestinian leadership, culminated in the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000.

### **3.1.4. Territorial Transformations and the Second Intifada**

As already established in the previous chapter, there is almost unanimous agreement that the second intifada, or al-Aqsa intifada, was a very different kind of movement from the first intifada. While the first intifada was a spontaneous popular eruption, characterised by public demonstrations and civil disobedience, the second intifada is largely perceived to have been an organised militant 'uprising' led by certain political and militant groups. Only the first few months were dominated by public

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residential construction. By 2001 over 45,000 housing units had been constructed for Jews on this land, and not one single one for Palestinians who constitute a third of the city's population. In its outline plans for all the Palestinian neighbourhoods, the Jerusalem municipality declared around 40 % of the land as "open landscape areas" on which construction is forbidden. B'Tselem, "East-Jerusalem – Discrimination in Planning, Building and Land Expropriation," [http://www.btselem.org/english/jerusalem/discriminating\\_policy.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/jerusalem/discriminating_policy.asp) (accessed 15 January 2012).

<sup>62</sup> In July 2003, the government issued a statute that prohibits Israeli citizens and residents married to residents of the Occupied Territories to live with their spouses in Israel. The statute was initially only valid for one year but was prolonged through Knesset approval. B'Tselem, "Residency and Family Separation: Family Unification and Child Registration in East Jerusalem," [http://www.btselem.org/english/family\\_separation/east\\_jerusalem.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/family_separation/east_jerusalem.asp) (accessed 15 January 2012).

<sup>63</sup> Author, informal conversations, Summer 2010.

<sup>64</sup> Between 1993 and 2000 the total settler population grew by 77% from 110,000 to 195,000. These statistics exclude settlements in Jerusalem and environs. The annual implantation of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza rose from an average of 9,600 in the ten years between 1986 to 1996 to over 12,000 in 6 years from 1994-2000. See Mouin Rabbani, "Rocks and Rockets: Oslo's Inevitable Conclusion," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no.3 (Spring 2001): 75.

demonstrations but then the more organised violence took over.<sup>65</sup> The previous chapter had examined how changes in the political environment had affected the ability of civil society organisations and political parties to mobilise the masses. Here we will see how Israeli-driven transformations of Palestinian geography have altered the modes of predominant political activism during the second intifada.

One of the central structural features that drove the transformation of political activism during the al-Aqsa intifada is the division of Palestinian territory into different zones of control. As a result, the Israeli army was no longer present in the cities, villages, and refugee camps and no longer among the Palestinian population on a daily basis. Instead, the army had moved outside the population centres guarding the transport network and the access routes to and from Palestinian population centres. This has created spaces within which the Palestinian population can move fairly freely, and spaces in between, where they cannot. As discussed in the previous chapter, this system of control has its roots in Oslo and was devised by the military, dividing the West Bank territory into Area A (Palestinian control over administration and security) Area B (Palestinian administration and joint Israeli control over security) and Area C (full Israeli control over administration and security).<sup>66</sup> The declared intention behind this categorisation was a gradual redeployment of the military from the Palestinian areas as envisaged under the Oslo Accords.

With these changes and the arrival of the PA, which was subsequently responsible for the running of daily affairs in the territories, the Israeli government had alleviated itself of a great administrative, military and financial burden. Israel was no longer in charge of the daily running of Palestinian lives. However, this set-up enabled it to still control Palestinian lives through controlling movement and access. Even without being present within the urban centres, Israel was in full control and could easily bring Palestinian movement to a complete standstill by closing just a few checkpoints.<sup>67</sup>

In order to maintain control, Israel implemented a multifaceted system of restrictions on movement including permanent and temporary checkpoints,<sup>68</sup> physical

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<sup>65</sup> There was a general consensus in the interviews that the second intifada was characterised by the absence of the masses.

<sup>66</sup> Camille Mansour, "The Palestinian-Israeli Peace Negotiations: An Overview and Assessment," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22, no.3 (Spring 1993): 5-31.

<sup>67</sup> The only route for Palestinian travellers that connects the South of the West Bank with the Centre, for example, is through Wadi Nar; if the checkpoint in Wadi Nar is closed there is no alternative route and the traffic to and from the South comes to a standstill.

<sup>68</sup> In October 2010, there were 99 fixed checkpoints installed, 62 of which were internal checkpoints. B'Tselem, "Checkpoints, Physical Obstructions, and Forbidden Roads," <http://www.btselem.org/>

obstructions such as concrete blocks, iron gates or trenches, the Separation Wall, forbidden roads or roads with restrictions for Palestinians,<sup>69</sup> and a complex permit system. By implementing these restrictions, Israel effectively divided the area into five distinct geographical zones: the North, Centre, South, The Jordan Valley, and the northern Dead Sea. The resulting cantonisation of the West Bank will become evident to any visitor travelling throughout the area using Palestinian transport and roads and any reference to the 'West Bank' in the sense of a contiguous territory will seem naïve or misleading.

Consecutive Israeli governments, then, have managed to establish a situation in which Israel is no longer responsible for the daily affairs in the West Bank, but still controls mobility and even more importantly, the essential resources for sustaining lives and ensuring economic growth: land and water. By retreating from the population centres, Israel allowed the PA to take over administration in the urban centres and some control over security in certain areas, but did not lose control of the territory as a whole nor its resources. It is less costly to withdraw and implement and control through an authority that would be made responsible for what happens there.<sup>70</sup> At the same time, Jewish settlements expanded relatively undisturbed both in the West Bank and in East Jerusalem. Moreover, with this system in place Israel still maintains final control over its security. A resolution of the conflict would mean loss for Israel of one sort or another. Whilst managing the conflict Israel can still reap the benefits of the land's resources.

Jeff Halper, the director of the Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, describes Israeli policies towards Palestinians as a matrix of control by which he means a system that enables Israel to control every aspect of Palestinian life while at the same time endeavouring to keep the occupation invisible under the guise of 'security', 'proper administration', 'upholding the law', and 'keeping the public order.'<sup>71</sup> With this outward bureaucratic and legal appearance, international criticism is being deflected and

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freedom\_of\_movement/checkpoints\_and\_forbidden\_roads (accessed 06 January 2012). A recent Amnesty International Report estimates that there is a total of over 550 checkpoints, blockades and obstacles across the West Bank and East Jerusalem. See Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters*, Map 2.

<sup>69</sup> According to statistics issued by B'Tselem in August 2010, Palestinian vehicles are barred from travelling on 73.3 km of the West Bank road network. See B'Tselem, "West Bank Roads on Which Palestinian Vehicles are Forbidden," 31 January 2011, [http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/forbidden\\_roads\\_table\\_eng.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/forbidden_roads_table_eng.pdf) (accessed 06 January 2012)

<sup>70</sup> Camille Mansour, "Israel's Colonial Impasse," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no.4 (Summer 2001): 84.

<sup>71</sup> Jeff Halper, "The Key to Peace: Dismantling the Matrix of Control," The Israeli Committee against House Demolitions, [http://www.icahd.org/?page\\_id=79](http://www.icahd.org/?page_id=79) (accessed 8 March 2011).

control can be maintained indefinitely.<sup>72</sup> For Camille Mansour this project of division and control was ingrained in the Oslo Accords and the on-going territorial fragmentation is not the result of an Oslo gone wrong.<sup>73</sup> The ensuing separation and failure to redeploy was the result of a particular reading of the agreement that Israeli policy makers chose and implemented from the beginning. In fact, the prevalent opinion among Palestinians is that Israel's intention is to simply manage the conflict and not to resolve it.<sup>74</sup>

The shift to the 'matrix of control' is the outcome of a realisation that the continuation of the occupation as it was could no longer be sustained. However, for Gordon it is elements in the occupation's structure, rather than the decisions made by particular individuals in politics or the military establishment that explain the changes in the forms of control. For many years Israel's occupation of the territories followed the colonisation principle which seeks to administer people and normalise the occupation. Colonisers attempt to manage the lives of people not for the sake of administering the population but in order to facilitate the extraction of resources.<sup>75</sup> Initially, for the first two decades Israel was managing the population in a non-violent way whilst at the same time exploiting the Palestinian labour force for the Israeli market, and the area's important natural resources such as land and water for its own use.<sup>76</sup>

However, with Oslo, Israel gradually began to pursue a principle of separation under which Israel no longer administers people's lives but still seeks to exploit the land's resources. Gordon argues that it is the exclusive focus on resources and the lack of interest in the lives of the local population that characterises the principle of separation and explains the recent increase in lethal violence. The occupation has cost more lives because it directly and indirectly harms the local population by limiting movement, enclosing Palestinians in enclaves while at the same time exploiting resources that the local population becomes deprived of. This shift occurred at some point during the first intifada when Israel realised that the colonisation principle was no longer viable as the basic principle that would allow it to continue its occupation.<sup>77</sup> The logic of the separation principle does not offer a solution (especially not in terms of a withdrawal from the territories) but it alters and reorganises its power in order to continue occupation of the territories.

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<sup>72</sup> Halper, "The Key to Peace."

<sup>73</sup> Mansour, "Colonial Impasse," 84-5.

<sup>74</sup> INTERVIEW #7.

<sup>75</sup> Neve Gordon, *Israel's Occupation* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 199.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid. 199-200.

Israel acted differently in comparison to other colonial powers. In other cases, after the withdrawal of troops, movement within the country was no longer controlled by the former colonial power. In the West Bank and even in Gaza, however, Israel has maintained its control over movement.<sup>78</sup> The withdrawal of troops to the outskirts of urban centres may have wrongly given the impression that Israel transferred sovereignty to the Palestinians. On the contrary, Israel has implemented internal and external closures and has as such retained ultimate power over decisions affecting the daily lives of Palestinians. As Gordon points out, ironically, when the Israeli government adopted the separation policy, it implemented strategies that further shrank Palestinian space:<sup>79</sup> ‘Following the adoption of the separation principle, only those Palestinians who want to move within the OT or to leave the region are subjected to Israel’s disciplinary practices and must, in order to become moving subjects, adopt a series of normative fiats. Palestinians who do not want any contact with Israel must remain within the confines of their refugee camp, village, town, or city.’<sup>80</sup> In order to impose this ‘unnatural’ form of separation, Israel resorted to a three-level remodelling of space through walls, barriers, tunnels and bridges in order to reconnect the fragmented spaces to build two separate, one almost invisible to another, but overlapping national geographies.<sup>81</sup>

In the context of an uprising these measures alter the nature and possibilities for confrontation considerably and have played a significant role in determining the nature of the second intifada as a violent and militarised uprising. With the administration no longer in direct control of the population and no visible Israeli presence inside the urban centres, civil disobedience would not be effective. Civil disobedience in the first intifada included strikes, marches, demonstrations, and the alternative organisation of social services. Kindergartens and parallel education were set up and catered to satisfy these important needs with low-level capabilities.<sup>82</sup> Women in particular, played an important role in organising these alternative services.

However, now with the situation on the ground changed, acts of civil disobedience and mass protests would no longer have any impact in Israel. There was

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<sup>78</sup> Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 208-9. A report by Gisha highlights that despite Israel’s withdrawal of troops and settlements from Gaza, ‘Israel continues to control Gaza through an “invisible hand”: control over borders, airspace, territorial waters, population registry, the tax system, supply of goods, and others. Gaza residents know that their ability to use electric lights, to buy milk, or have their garbage collected depends on decisions made by Israel.’ Sari Bashi and Kenneth Mann, “Disengaged Occupiers: The Legal Status of Gaza,” January 2007, 9, <http://www.gisha.org/UserFiles/File/Report%20for%20the%20website.pdf> (accessed 11 January 2012).

<sup>79</sup> Gordon, *Israel's Occupation*, 209.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 212.

<sup>81</sup> Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation* (London: Verso 2007), 182.

<sup>82</sup> INTERVIEW # 17



no incentive to organise alternative services for the population either because the PA had established quasi-institutions fulfilling this role. The mass demonstrations, as witnessed during the first intifada, were no longer effective because the Israeli military was no longer stationed within the population centres so there was no opportunity for confrontations of this kind. Any demonstration inside Ramallah under these changed circumstances would have been purely for the benefit of TV cameras and would have had no direct impact on the Israeli military. In order to hold mass demonstrations during the second intifada people had to go to checkpoints. When demonstrators reached Qalandia, for example, which, situated 10 km inside the West Bank near Ramallah, is the main access point for Palestinians (if they hold the correct permit) to East Jerusalem, they found the army in their barracks, behind barriers, protected by concrete, sand, and walls. Under such circumstances, a ‘civil or political’ confrontation is not possible.<sup>83</sup> For the Israeli army it was easier to protect itself and to confine the insurgency to specific sites while the first uprising inside the urban centres was harder to control because it was more widespread.<sup>84</sup> The fractured map imposed on Palestinians generated a fractured uprising with checkpoints and settlements as the focal points of confrontation,<sup>85</sup> moving to borderlines with areas from which Palestinians had been marginalised through Oslo.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, there is also a practical issue that merits consideration. If people have to go to checkpoints to protest, they have to get there in the first place. With the Israeli military controlling access between urban centres and villages it would be difficult to transport large numbers of protestors to demonstration sites without interference from the army. This is also true of the current situation and raises questions about what kind of peaceful options of resistance are available to Palestinians. When demonstrations occur in the Bethlehem vicinity, for example, or at Qalandia, the army at the checkpoints *en route* carry out much more thorough checks and questioning in an effort to intercept potential protestors. This became very apparent during the unrest in the West Bank, especially in Hebron, Bethlehem, Nablus, and Qalandia in February and March 2010 after Benjamin Netanyahu granted Israeli national heritage status to religious sites located in the West Bank. In one instance, PA security even erected their own checkpoint on the route from Ramallah to Qalandia, stopping outgoing traffic to check drivers’ and passengers’ identity documents and purpose of

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<sup>83</sup> INTERVIEW #7.

<sup>84</sup> Hammami and Tamari, “Second Uprising,” 11.

<sup>85</sup> Nigel Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 270.

<sup>86</sup> Johnson and Kuttub, “Where Have all the Women Gone?” 31.

travel. The weekly demonstrations in Ni'lin and Bi'lin also provide a good example here. In February 2010 the OC Central Command signed two orders proclaiming a military zone imposed on Bil'in and Nil'in.<sup>87</sup> It is evident that the military use their control over access in a variety of ways to curb even peaceful expressions of resistance. However, the military has gone even further in its legal approach to suppress Palestinian protests. Since 2010 the army has also reinstated Military Order 101, which originates from 1967 and prohibits any assembly, procession or vigil of ten or more persons for political reasons or which may be construed as such, unless a permit from a military commander has been obtained beforehand.<sup>88</sup> The revival of this order seriously undermines the freedom of Palestinians who live in Area B or C to demonstrate.

Maintaining demonstrations is also a question of 'manpower'. Because the main population concentration lies within the urban centres and the camps, people would be required to travel outside these centres in order to participate in demonstrations at checkpoints, in villages, near observation towers etc. It is normally villages that lie within or the near the remit of Area C and they do not have the size of population to maintain protests over a long time on a large scale.<sup>89</sup> This makes the issue of mobility even more salient.

These changes on the ground and the absence of the military among the population favoured more confrontational encounters.<sup>90</sup> One recurring theme among interviewees is the emphasis on the excessive violence used by the military against peaceful and unarmed protestors.<sup>91</sup> Interviewees recounted how each peaceful demonstration saw 'martyrs'<sup>92</sup> sustaining injuries in the upper parts of the body.<sup>93</sup> Mass demonstrations continued, albeit with little impact, until the second year of the intifada.<sup>94</sup> They largely ceased after the invasion and reoccupation of the West Bank cities by the Israeli army. The confrontations thereafter were mostly limited to armed Palestinian groups and the Israeli military. When the military invaded the cities it

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<sup>87</sup> B'Tselem, "Demonstrations in the Territories: Army Uses Legal Measures to Quell Demonstrations Against the Separation Barrier," 15 July 2010, [http://www.btselem.org/english/separation\\_barrier/20100715\\_right\\_to\\_demonstrate.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/separation_barrier/20100715_right_to_demonstrate.asp) (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. For a translation of the order see Israel Defense Forces, "Order Number 101: Order Regarding Prohibition of Incitement and Hostile Propaganda Actions," trans. by B'Tselem, 27 August 1967, [http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/19670827\\_order\\_regarding\\_prohibition\\_of\\_incitement\\_and\\_hostile\\_propaganda.pdf](http://www.btselem.org/sites/default/files/19670827_order_regarding_prohibition_of_incitement_and_hostile_propaganda.pdf) (accessed 05 January 2012).

<sup>89</sup> INTERVIEW #7.

<sup>90</sup> INTERVIEW #7.

<sup>91</sup> See also Roger Heacock, "Seizing the Initiative," 303.

<sup>92</sup> For Palestinians a martyr is anyone who is killed by or because of the occupation.

<sup>93</sup> INTERVIEW #23; INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>94</sup> INTERVIEW # 17; INTERVIEW #18.

imposed prolonged curfews which made mass action and demonstrations impossible.<sup>95</sup> These closures also impeded the organisation and mobilisation of the grassroots movement, which had been so active during the first intifada. Most of the leadership of the women's organisations, for example, was based in Ramallah and could not travel outside Ramallah to organise or coordinate activities.<sup>96</sup> During the first intifada, on the other hand, despite curfews Palestinians were still largely able to travel anywhere they wanted.<sup>97</sup>

The changes in the system of control over Palestinians altered the possibilities of resistance. In particular, how the Israeli military controlled the territory had a significant impact on transformations in the means available for resistance. Mass demonstrations and civil disobedience were no longer viable and sustainable during the second intifada. The separation principle, which according to authors such as Camille Mansour had already been on the agenda for Israelis since Oslo, and is now epitomised by the Separation Wall, has shifted the confrontations to 'borderlines' and has therefore made it necessarily more violent. When protestors reached the checkpoints they found soldiers behind barricades responding with disproportionate use of force. There was structurally no possibility for the masses to take the lead in the second intifada with non-violent action. In essence, territorial fragmentation had also fragmented the uprising, making any large-scale coordination impossible and creating focal points of conflict.<sup>98</sup>

### **3.1.5. Suicide Bombing as a Territorial Statement**

The question of space and territory is not only relevant for assessing the structures that existed for formulating the Palestinian response to the occupation but Palestinians themselves also shaped the spaces available to them. More specifically, Palestinian suicide bombings inside Israel made a territorial statement and had an impact on how Israelis experienced and perceived space. During the al-Aqsa intifada numerous suicide bombing attacks were carried out by various factions inside Israel. Although this is not a new phenomenon (suicide bombings had been carried out inside the Green Line before by both Hamas and Islamic Jihad), with the al-Aqsa intifada the

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<sup>95</sup> See, for example, Raja Shehadeh who describes Ramallah under Siege in spring 2002. Raja Shehadeh, *When the Bulbul Stopped Singing: A Diary of Ramallah under Siege* (London: Profile Books, 2003)

<sup>96</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Point made by Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 269-70.

phenomenon reached new dimensions with an average of one bombing per week in 2002. Some of the bombings took place on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, the 1967 Armistice Line, which for Palestinians who accept a two-state solution demarcates the borders of what they aspire to be their future state. Most of the bombings during the second intifada, however, occurred on the Israeli side of the Green Line.<sup>99</sup>

Debates on suicide bombing in the second intifada often centre on the distinction between civilian vs. non-civilian targets and this is indeed a helpful prism for viewing the phenomenon. The attacks have targeted both civilians and non-civilians, yet the overwhelming majority of victims during the second intifada were of the former kind. Killing is part of the concept or, we might even say, it is the goal of such operations, but I would argue there is also an important spatial and territorial aspect to it. The target of suicide bombings may have been civilians but there was also a message about taking the conflict to the public sphere in Israel, in spite of and perhaps particularly because of the ghettoisation and movement restrictions imposed on Palestinians. It has always been Israel's strategy to isolate its civilian population from the dangers of conflict while at the same time controlling as much of the land as possible.<sup>100</sup> With the logic of separation gradually consolidating after Oslo, it is not only the effects of war that the Israeli population was spared, but the occupation was also painstakingly kept out of sight and at low cost to Israeli civilians. Although the majority of Israelis perform national service and hence will have some experience of the conflict, it is also true that in West Jerusalem, for example, there would be no signs of the daily confrontations and conflicts a mere 15km away, were it not for the intermittent bombings in the city. What Jeff Halper identified as the matrix of control helps to disguise the reality of the

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<sup>99</sup> Interestingly, however, according to BBC statistics, the total number of fatalities on both sides is roughly similar, with 431 civilians and 83 members of security forces having been killed by Palestinians in Israel. On West Bank and Gaza territory 218 Israeli civilians and 218 Israeli security forces were killed by Palestinians. In terms of location of the attacks however, the clear majority of attacks occurred on the Israeli side of the Green Line with 73 out of the attacks included in the analysis in chapter four taking place inside Israel and 52 on occupied Palestinian territory. (In regard to Jerusalem, when it was clear that attacks occurred on what is under international law occupied territory such as East Jerusalem or the French Hill settlement, both being located on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, attacks were classified as having occurred on occupied territory). It should be pointed out that some attackers did never reach their intended destination as they were intercepted by security personnel and often detonated their explosives prematurely. Hence, speculation on target location can only be limited. However, if anything that may weigh the balance in favour of attacks inside Israel as it would have been much more difficult to reach destinations inside Israel than checkpoints in the West Bank. The 'failed' or 'premature' attacks inside the West Bank may have been destined for Israel, while it is highly unlikely that any attacks taking place inside Israel were intended for the West Bank or Gaza. See "Intifada Toll Sept 2000 – Sept 2005," *BBC*, 30 September 2005, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/3694350.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/3694350.stm) (accessed 15 January 2012).

<sup>100</sup> Hroub, 247-8.

occupation even from Israel's own population. Careful selection of terminology and a strong security discourse are essential tools in keeping up the appearance. The military government over the occupied territories, for instance, is called the 'Civil Administration', despite the fact that it is headed by a colonel and is under direct control of the Ministry of Defence.<sup>101</sup> With this legal and bureaucratic exterior, it is only by digging deeper, discovering how laws are implemented and by questioning the basis of the laws applied to Palestinians, that injustice, discrimination and violence are exposed.

The debate on the distinction between civilians and non-civilians is not clear cut, particularly when it comes to how Palestinians perceive Israelis. It is often argued that Palestinians do not distinguish between Israeli civilians and non-civilians because military service is compulsory for all Israeli citizens, men and women, except for Palestinians resident within 1948 borders and religious observant Jews. However, there was no indication with most interviewees that Palestinians do not distinguish between civilians and non-civilians.<sup>102</sup> Rather most of the interviewees made a clear distinction between civilians, on the one hand, and settlers and the military on the other. Several stressed that any operations that targeted women and children were particularly abhorrent.

The distinction that Palestinians make between civilians and non-civilians is a geographical one: they distinguish between Israelis to the east of the Green Line i.e. settlers and army, and Israelis to the west of the Green Line.<sup>103</sup> Palestinians often point to the Fourth Geneva Convention as justifying any means of resistance to the occupation within their borders of the Green Line.<sup>104</sup> They view settlers as part of the occupation and their civilian status is compromised because of the territory they find themselves on. What are considered to be legitimate 'targets' then is evaluated on the basis of an anti-colonial rationale. For Parsons, settler colonialism is the single most

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<sup>101</sup> Jeff Halper, "Key to Peace."

<sup>102</sup> However, interviewees may have felt such views may be too controversial to discuss with a Western researcher.

<sup>103</sup> The same distinction is used in surveys conducted by the Palestinian Centre for Policy and Survey Research.

<sup>104</sup> Richard Falk makes a case for a Palestinian right of resistance. UN Resolutions 242 and 338 affirmed the legal obligation for Israel to withdraw from the territory occupied in the 1967 war. Instead, Israel has upheld its occupation for over 30 years in defiance of the will of the international community. Until Israel fulfills this obligation, the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War is applicable in terms of international law, in particular those provisions that require the occupying power to protect the status quo, human rights and the prospects for self-determination of the occupied people. Israel has failed on all three grounds. Because Israel refuses to respect this framework of belligerent occupation and more specifically the fundamental continued denial of the right to self-determination, Palestinians have a legitimate right to resist the occupation. However, Falk adds, that specific acts by the Palestinians are also subject to international humanitarian law. See Richard Falk, "International Law and the al-Aqsa Intifada," *Middle East Report* 261, (Winter 2011), <http://www.merip.org/mer/mer217/international-law-al-aqsa-intifada> (accessed 05 January 2012).

important cause behind the outbreak of the second intifada. It is the rapid and unrelenting growth of settlements that dwarfed the capacity of the PA and ‘distorted Palestinian social, economic and political development.’<sup>105</sup> Undoubtedly, it was the desire to retain as much as land as possible and to protect settlers’ homes as well as transport networks that led to territorial fragmentation and the ensuing political, social and economic difficulties for Palestinians. Settlers represent the extension or the ‘civilian face’ of the military occupation in the Palestinian territories. Conversely, one could also argue that they are simply a means to an end because it is their very existence that justifies the continued presence of the army in the occupied territories. From this anti-colonial perspective, settlers are seen as legitimate targets because they are part and parcel of Israel’s military occupation.<sup>106</sup>

Furthermore, in the eyes of Palestinians, their civilian status is also undermined because they often carry arms and frequently commit attacks against Palestinians and their property.<sup>107</sup> However, Israeli human rights organisations such as B’Tselem, for example, deny the validity of such a claim and argue that neither the fact that settlers live in the occupied territory, that many of the settlers belong to security services, nor the illegality of settlements under international law, justifies any kind of violence against them, and does not undermine their civilian status. B’Tselem’s official line is that ‘settlers constitute a distinctly civilian population, which is entitled to all the protections granted to civilians by international law.’<sup>108</sup> B’Tselem, however, does not comment in its statement on the often organised nature of violence carried out by settlers. It is difficult to establish how wide-spread violence among settlers is because there is only limited research, media coverage, or legal action on the issue. However, it is clear that settler violence is rapidly increasing. The OCHA office responsible for the

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<sup>105</sup> Nigel Parsons, *Politics of the Palestinian Authority*, 226.

<sup>106</sup> Opinion Polls conducted by the PSR show that while the support for bombings against civilians inside Israel was relatively high and declined slightly from 58% in July 2001 to 53% by November 2002, the support for bombings against soldiers in the West Bank and Gaza and settlers was much higher, standing at 92% in December 2001, and minimally decreased to 91% and 89% for soldiers and settlers respectively by November 2002. See PSR, “Public Opinion Poll no.2,” 5-9 July 2001, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p2a.html> (accessed 11 January 2012); “Public Opinion Poll no. 3,” 19-24 December 2001, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p3a.html> (accessed 11 January 2011); “Public Opinion Poll no.6,” 14-22 November 2002, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2002/p6a.html> (accessed 11 January 2012).

<sup>107</sup> OCHA, in the first ten months of 2008, records 290 incidents of settler aggression against Palestinians. The report also notes that increasingly such attacks are being carried out by groups rather than individuals. OCHA, “Unprotected: Israeli Settler Violence against Palestinian Civilians and Their Property,” December 2008, <http://www.palestinecampaign.org/files/ochasettlerreportdec08.pdf> (accessed 11 January 2012).

<sup>108</sup> B’Tselem “Attacks on Israeli Civilians by Palestinians,” [http://www.btselem.org/israeli\\_civilians](http://www.btselem.org/israeli_civilians) (accessed 12 September 2011).

Palestinian territory has declared that in comparison to 2010, settler violence had increased by 40% in 2011, and in comparison to 2009, by 165%.<sup>109</sup> In July 2011 a whole community of 127 people was displaced due to repeated settler attacks and attacks on places of worship have also increased.<sup>110</sup> Nevertheless, settler violence is far from being a new phenomenon. In the 1980s Jewish settler councils and militias frequently engaged in vigilante violence against Palestinians.<sup>111</sup> In 1979 Israel had created six regional councils to serve the needs of West Bank and Gaza settlers. Five years later the settlers created an umbrella organisation known as *Moetzet Yesha* which became politically very influential<sup>112</sup> and later began to develop its own militia.<sup>113</sup> The militias received weapons from the military for self-defence. Settler patrols worked with nearby military units and were led by hired security coordinators.<sup>114</sup> Their purpose during peacetime was to patrol locally, but in practice what they did was policing nearby Palestinian villages, and their conduct earned the Judea Company a reputation for brutality.<sup>115</sup> Since the first intifada around 150 Palestinians had been killed by Israeli civilians. (During the second intifada 34 Palestinians were killed by Israelis). Some may have acted in self-defence, but settler violence is much more comprehensive and some activities betray a clear agenda of forcing Palestinians to leave. Settler violence ranges from chasing and firing at stone throwers; attacks on Palestinians using weapons and ammunition received by the IDF that are meant to frighten or deter them; preventing Palestinians from reaching their land, effectively creating ‘no go zones’ in areas surrounding settlements and outposts; harassment during harvest season; blocking roadways so as to impede life and commerce; shooting solar panels on roofs; torching cars; shattering window panes; destroying crops and uprooting trees; and abusing merchants and stall owners at the market.<sup>116</sup> According to findings by Amnesty International, settlers have also poisoned Palestinian wells, cut and diverted water pipes

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<sup>109</sup> OCHA oPt. “Israeli Settler Violence in the West Bank,” Factsheet, November 2011. [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha\\_opt\\_settler\\_violence\\_FactSheet\\_October\\_2011\\_english.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/ocha_opt_settler_violence_FactSheet_October_2011_english.pdf) (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos – State Violence in Serbia and Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 167.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 169.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Meron Benvenisti, *West Bank Data Project: A Survey of Israel’s Policies* (Washington: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1984), 41, cited in James Ron, *Frontiers and Ghettos*.

<sup>116</sup> B’Tselem, “Violence by Settlers,” [http://www.btselem.org/english/Settler\\_Violence/Nature\\_of\\_the\\_Violence.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Settler_Violence/Nature_of_the_Violence.asp) (accessed 12 September 2012). Yesh Din, “Criminal Accountability of Israeli Civilians,” <http://www.yesh-din.org/cat.asp?catid=3> (accessed 12 September 2011). Eli Ashkenazi and Arnon Regular, “Settlers cut down 200 olive trees near Nablus,” *The Haaretz*, 27 November 2005, <http://haaretz.com/news/palestinians-settlers-cut-down-200-olive-trees-near-nablus-1.175232> (accessed 12 September 2011).

leading into Palestinian villages to fill their own swimming pool, and sabotaged a truck carrying water supplied by Oxfam to the Palestinian village of Susyia by placing spikes across the road prior to the scheduled arrival of the truck.<sup>117</sup> In recent years many of the acts have been motivated by a distorted kind of punishment, carried out under the banner of a price tag policy, a morally very dubious practice that enacts revenge on Palestinians for what settlers perceive to be injustices imposed on them by the government. Israeli Authorities tend to respond with an undeclared policy of leniency to settler violence. Many acts of violence are not investigated. In the rare cases where settlers are tried and convicted, the offenders are generally given extremely lenient sentences.<sup>118</sup> According to Yesh Din, around 90 % of the files opened by the Police (and monitored by Yesh Din) investigating settler attacks against Palestinians or their property since 2005 were closed without an indictment being filed, due to investigation failure.<sup>119</sup> By contrast, if Palestinians are suspected to have harmed Israelis, the authorities respond with an iron fist. Towns and villages near where the incident occurred are placed under curfew, which can last for days, and intensive searches and questioning are conducted and arrests are made. In many instances, the army also seals or demolishes the suspect's home. If Palestinians are tried and convicted of the offences they are accused of, they normally receive the maximum sentence.<sup>120</sup> While it may be less explicitly legally articulated than in the case of ownership, property acquisition, and construction, a dual system of law is in force yet again. Likewise, the press is complicit in 'discrimination' too. Weeks of settler attacks on Palestinians and their property go almost entirely unnoticed, while one act against settlers catches the media's undivided attention and immediately puts the spotlight on Palestinians.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters*, 71 -2.

<sup>118</sup> B'Tselem, "Settler Violence: Authorities Handling of Complaints Regarding Settler Violence," [http://www.btselem.org/english/Settler\\_Violence/Law\\_Enforcement.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Settler_Violence/Law_Enforcement.asp) (accessed 13 January 2012).

<sup>119</sup> Out of 642 investigations conducted by the Samaria and Judea District Police that Yesh Din is presently monitoring, the investigating and prosecution forces have completed decisions for 539 cases: in 48 cases indictments were filed against the defendants, 3 case files were lost and hence not investigated and 488 cases were closed without filing an indictment. 90.4% of the files that were closed without indictment were closed for reasons that suggest investigative failure such as the inability of the police to identify suspects (315 cases), or failure to collect and present sufficient evidence (115 cases). The failure rate in the investigations of violent and property offences is particularly high. See Yesh Din, "Yesh Din Monitoring Update – Law Enforcement upon Israeli Civilians in the West Bank," Data Sheet, February 2011, 2-4, [http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/datasheets/YESH DIN\\_LawEnforcementMonitoring ENG\\_2011.pdf](http://www.yesh-din.org/userfiles/file/datasheets/YESH DIN_LawEnforcementMonitoring ENG_2011.pdf) (accessed 15 January 2012)

<sup>120</sup> Ibid.

<sup>121</sup> Late February and early March 2011 settlers (especially in the Nablus area) caused havoc for weeks blocking roads, burning tyres, torching Palestinian buildings and cars as part of conducting price tag operations in response to the dismantlement of an illegal outpost on 28 February against Palestinians which went largely unnoticed by the press outside the Palestinian territories, so did also the attacks on Palestinians and Palestinian property (revenge attacks were also taken against property of Palestinian Israeli citizens) in the aftermath of the gruesome murder of five members of the Fogel family. While



Taken out of the context of weeks of settler violence, a Palestinian attack would naturally appear to be an irrational and inexplicable act of violence.

Even if we accept the Palestinian interpretation and view settlers as non-civilians, the attacks on buses, restaurants, cafes, shopping malls in Jerusalem, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Hadera should clearly be understood as attacks against Israeli civilians for whatever motivations. Such attacks brought the conflict to public spaces in Israel and reshaped the experience of space for Israelis. It also changed its exterior. Cafes and restaurants became fortified with gates and security guards checked bags and tried to identify visitors' accents. Many Israelis started to retreat to their homes for entertainment and began to avoid public areas. Even now, several years after the end of the second intifada, shopping centres, large stores, bus stations and even several smaller shops operate security checks for customers. As suicide bombings moved the conflict into public spaces in Israel, it served to signal that the separation principle failed. Here, the civilian vs. non-civilian framework for discussing suicide bombing is a useful one. However, if we adopt B'Tselem's view that settlers are civilians, the territorial aspect becomes particularly salient in this reading of suicide attacks. We need to pose the question why civilians, and their public spaces, were targeted in Israel at a higher rate than in the Palestinian territories? There may be operational considerations such as ease of access, for example. Settlements are well protected but it is questionable if they are better guarded than the crossing points to Israel. Falah and Flint have offered a geographical interpretation of suicide bombing during the second intifada, arguing that: 'Israeli public space is [...] a target for suicide bombers because carnage in the public arena illustrates the impossibility of Israel's attaining security through a policy of violent subjugation of the Palestinian people and confiscation of their territory.'<sup>122</sup> Even on this geographical reading, however, we have no explanation of why it is public spaces in Israel proper and not in settlements in the West Bank or Gaza that were targeted. The message which it sent to the Israeli public and that the government capitalised on was that it was Israeli territory and the state of Israel that were at stake. If the focus on territory within Israel proper was a political strategy of Palestinian organisations, this turned out to be a strategic faux-pas for those who had committed themselves to a two-state solution. If the purpose was to bring the conflict to the

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there is, of course, a big difference in scale of the attacks, settler attacks on Palestinians over an entire month received no attention at all in the international media. For attacks on Palestinians during this period see "Settler Violence since Outpost Demolition," *Ma'an*, 22 March 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=371129> (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>122</sup> Falah and Flint, "Geopolitical Spaces," 130.

general Israeli public it still appears to be logically disjointed from the claim that Palestinians objected to the presence of settlers and soldiers on what they perceived to be their future state, but would accept the Israeli state as a neighbour.

In 1993 Yasser Arafat as the chairman of the PLO had officially recognised Israel and its right to exist in peace and security, and this acceptance became enshrined in the Oslo Agreement. Since then the public discourse of Arafat and the PLO had always promoted a two-state solution. However, the two-state solution poses an essential difficulty for Palestinians. The recognition of a Jewish Israeli state on 78% of the original land of historical Palestine would preclude the return of refugees in any form because any influx of a non-Jewish population would threaten the Jewish majority of the state of Israel. Yet, maintaining a Jewish majority is at the heart of Zionist ideology. The two-state solution leaves untouched the nature of the state of Israel and the ideology it promotes.<sup>123</sup> However, many Palestinians saw it as the only possibility to salvage what was left of the historical lands of Palestine, to regain social integrity and to strengthen a Palestinian identity that had been severely damaged by Israel's decades-long occupation.<sup>124</sup>

Since the failure of Oslo, especially after the end of the second intifada, the voices for a one-state solution have become much louder despite the fact that the official discourse still promotes a two-state solution. The main issue with the two-state solution is not just one of justice for refugees but it is also a practical one that is becoming more and more apparent. Any traveller in the West Bank will note the large number of settlements that dot the hills around cities, villages, in the north, the south, as well as in the centre. As Edward Said noted, everywhere one looks Jews and Palestinians live together, and therefore the notion of separation and partition is not feasible.<sup>125</sup> With an adamant refusal by the current Israeli government to freeze any settlement construction, it is difficult to see how this course could be halted and even more difficult to see how it could be reversed. Further, taking into consideration the public outcry in Israel over the evacuation of the Gaza settlements, and keeping in mind that the West Bank had always been more at the heart of the Zionist project, housing some of the most significant religious sites such as the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron, Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem, or St Joseph's tomb outside Nablus, a withdrawal from the West Bank looks

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<sup>123</sup> Karmi. *Married to Another Man*, 228.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>125</sup> Edward Said, "Palestine: Memory, Invention and Space," in *The Landscape of Palestine: Equivocal Poetry*, ed. by Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Roger Heacock, Khaled Nashef, (Birzeit: Birzeit University, 1999), 19.

unlikely. Moreover, the West Bank possesses more significant resources, especially the large underground water aquifers, the fertile land of the Jordan valley, and access to the Dead Sea as a major economic resource for tourism as well as industry. The overcrowded and poor Gaza Strip, on the other hand, had for some time been a burden to Israeli decision makers.<sup>126</sup>

Given that Yasser Arafat, as leader of Fateh and chairman of the PLO had recognised Israel and officially pursued a two-state solution, it was, in Khalidi's view, a significant policy misjudgement to 'quietly' condone suicide operations inside Israel by the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, which is widely assumed to have been affiliated with Fateh.<sup>127</sup> Thus, to 'unofficially' condone suicide bombings within Israel undermined their own earlier policies and played into the hands of Israel who could now point at Yasser Arafat and his party as being inconsistent and breaking previous commitments. It enabled the Israeli government to garner support among the Israeli population because the conflict could now be framed in existentialist terms. It helped to convince the public that Palestinians do not distinguish between inside and outside what they had claimed to be their future state. This has led to increased public support for anything that is done in the name of security.<sup>128</sup> Carrying out suicide bombings inside Israel may be consistent with the policy of Hamas and Islamic Jihad because they do not accept a two-state solution, and envisage a state for Palestinians in historical Palestine. Rendering the land that is attractive to Jews, repellent to potential immigrants by making its residents insecure may also be part of Hamas' logic.<sup>129</sup> However, suicide bombings inside Israel did not conform to Fateh's and the PLO's official political discourse and therefore even silent tolerance was an illogical policy step and shows a clear breakdown between objectives and tactics.

Khalidi argues that campaigns that are intended to bring an end to occupation by attacking the civilian population are generally ineffective at breaking the will of the society under attack. By contrast, Pape argues that organisations resort to suicide bombings because they have learnt they pay and they are perceived to be especially effective against democracies because they are thought to have low 'thresholds of cost

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<sup>126</sup> In the initial stages of the Oslo negotiations Israel only offered autonomy in Gaza to Arafat but Arafat insisted on having a part of the West Bank included in the agreement, resulting in the 'Gaza and Jericho first' plan. Peres expected a withdrawal from Gaza to be a welcome relief. See Shlaim, *Israel and Palestine*, 189.

<sup>127</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Strategy," 8-9.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Point made by Hroub, *Hamas*, 247.

tolerance and high ability to affect state policy.<sup>130</sup> However, attacking civilians in Israel's public spaces has hardened Israeli public opinion. What is necessary in changing the balance of forces is the increase of potential supporters for the Palestinian cause, and at the same time a decrease in the supporters for occupation and settlements.<sup>131</sup> By tacitly allowing suicide bombings to be carried out in Israel, the Palestinian leadership has failed to change this balance of power. Although the atrocity and violence of the acts ensured intense media interest, the sympathies of the audiences were overwhelmingly with the Israeli victims.<sup>132</sup> In the light of the 9/11 attacks and the resultant call for a war on terror Israel's leadership seized the opportunity to capitalise on the US administration's rhetoric while the Palestinian leadership policies proved to be misplaced and damaging to their cause. As a result the Palestinian leadership did not succeed in refocusing international attention on the continued occupation of Palestinian territory, and the ultimate source of the uprising, but lost the battle against an ever growing security discourse propelled by each new suicide attack.

### **3.2 Dividing Palestinian Society**

As societies elsewhere, Palestinian society has not been immune to changes over the years. In the Palestinian case in particular, it is major political events which deeply affected the fabric of society and the Palestinian way of life. Heavily agriculture based societies have undergone significant transformations with the advancement of urbanisation. This development has left the West Bank and Gaza largely untouched due to Israeli restrictions. No major urban growth has taken place. Rather, what we have seen is the development of medium sized cities and labour migration has remained largely localised.<sup>133</sup> Nevertheless, the life of villagers has been altered significantly through the loss of land and movement restrictions, both connected to the proximity of villages to settlements.

What Palestinians identify with has changed too. After a slow beginning for Palestinian nationalism, interrupted by the war in 1948 and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians, Palestinian identity began to flourish with the outbreak of the first

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<sup>130</sup> Pape, *Dying to Win*, 44-5, 61-7.

<sup>131</sup> Khalidi, "Palestinian Strategy," 11.

<sup>132</sup> For imbalance in reporting, especially by American media, see Baroud, *Second Palestinian Intifada*, 47.

<sup>133</sup> Majdi al-Malki and Yasser Shalabi, *International Migration and Palestinian Returnees in West Bank and Gaza* (Jerusalem: Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, December 2000), 1-2.

intifada, and although it remained the strongest identity over time, other identities began to gain on it. Mi'ari's survey shows that both religious and clan identities have become stronger post-Oslo.<sup>134</sup> However, almost paradoxically, despite the strengthening of clan identities, rifts along political lines within families have become more significant and apparent. While previously the family had been the backbone of Palestinian society, political ties have become more powerful and successful in rupturing family affiliations.<sup>135</sup> It is interesting too that, despite the cantonisation of Palestinian territory, local or regional allegiances have not become a more significant object of reference. Although localised cultures do exist and are perhaps becoming more differentiated, the above-mentioned survey did not register local allegiance as strong a factor as nationalism, religion and clan loyalty.

Israeli measures of control have undoubtedly contributed to a difficult economic situation. The desire for economic well-being has supplanted the importance of the national project among the younger and more depoliticised generation. Looking out for oneself and one's family is a natural desire. Over one third of yearly emigrants are young Palestinians in pursuit of education, employment opportunities and better life conditions.<sup>136</sup> As the national project has lost importance the question arises whether the social fragmentation has occurred as a side effect of policies or whether fragmentation is actively encouraged as a policy to weaken the Palestinian drive for an independent state.

### **3.2.1. The Impact of Loss of Land and Restricted Mobility**

Loss of land and restrictions on mobility have significantly affected Palestinian villagers. What was traditionally primarily a peasant society has experienced significant transformations in the past sixty years. Beginning with the expulsion and exodus of Palestinians from the land that is now Israel, around 750,000 Palestinians from over 400 villages as well as some urban neighbourhoods sought refuge under the protection of neighbouring countries (Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, the West Bank and East Jerusalem

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<sup>134</sup> Mahmoud Mi'ari, "Transformation of Collective Identity in Palestine," *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 44, no.6 (December 2009): 579-598.

<sup>135</sup> Traditional authority came to be challenged as fathers and mothers were no longer able to provide for and protect their children. See Roy, *Failing Peace*, 59; also Johnson and Kuttab, "Where Have all the Women Gone?" 36-7.

<sup>136</sup> See study conducted by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, "First Migration's Survey in the Palestinian Territory, 2010, <http://www.miftah.org/Display.cfm?DocId=22971&CategoryId=8> (accessed 06 January 2012).

which was under Jordanian administration, and Gaza which was then under Egyptian administration). A significant number of these refugees and their descendants, now in the third generation, still live in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, and in the neighbouring Arab countries. UNRWA currently counts 4.7 million refugees overall, with 779,000 registered refugees in the West Bank of which a quarter live in 19 refugee camps.<sup>137</sup> In Gaza the refugee population makes up three quarters of the total population which is over 1.5 million. These previously rural communities are now packed into small dense areas on the outskirts or inside the cities of the West Bank and Gaza. Balata is the most densely populated refugee camp in the West Bank with approximately 30,000 people living in an area of less than 0.25 square kilometre, and Beach Camp in Gaza counts as one of the world's most densely populated places with approximately 82,000 people living on less than one square kilometre. Fewer camps were established in rural areas, Far'a near the Jordan valley being one example. The huge refugee influx added an additional category to the two-tiered rural vs. urban Palestinian society. This has particularly affected cities as the majority of refugees settled in camps in the cities or near cities, adding to the urban population originally village-based dwellers. As we have seen in the previous chapter, through Israeli resettlement plans, housing projects, house demolitions or sometimes as a result of economic betterment some refugees relocated to the urban centres but on the whole refugee camps remain closely-knit communities.<sup>138</sup> They are particularly renowned for their political organisation which according to Yahya is characterised by intensity, radicalism, violence and dedication.<sup>139</sup>

Since the start of the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza, Israel's land policy and settlement constructions have continuously diminished the land accessible to Palestinians to grow their produce and farm their animals. The construction of the Separation Wall, which began in 2003, also swallowed up much farmland and made it inaccessible to villagers along its route. The Bethlehem Governorate provides a useful example for illustrating the effects and the scale of these policies. In 1967, Israel annexed approximately 10km<sup>2</sup> of land in the Northern Bethlehem Governorate contrary to international law. Most of this land was incorporated into the new municipal boundaries of Jerusalem. Much of the land was confiscated for settlement construction, infrastructure related to settlements and later,

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<sup>137</sup> See UNRWA, "In Figures," January 2010, <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/20100628261.pdf>.

<sup>138</sup> Yahya, "Refugee Camps," 92, 104.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, 93.

the construction of the wall. The loss of land for a society that is still heavily reliant on agriculture, is particularly significant. For example, nearly 50% of the land traditionally belonging to the village of Beit Jala has been confiscated and so has up to 75% of the land which used to belong to the village of Al Khader. Most of the olive groves traditionally belonging to the village of Bayt Sahur are separated from the village by the wall and now only those farmers that can obtain a permit issued by the Israeli military can access their lands.<sup>140</sup> The number of permits issued to farmers to access their land which is now located on the other side of the wall have dropped drastically. According to figures the state provided to the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the number of permanent permits given to farmers living east of the Barrier to enable them to work their land west of the Barrier, dropped by 83% from 2006 to 2009 (from 10,037 to only 1,640).<sup>141</sup> During this period, the amount of Palestinian land west of the Barrier grew by 30%, and now stands at approximately 119,500 dunams.<sup>142</sup> In January 2009 Israel issued a military order declaring the land annexed to the Israeli-controlled side of the wall as a closed military zone.<sup>143</sup> Moreover, land loss through settlement expansion continues. The major settlements located in the Bethlehem Governorate are all due to be expanded including Gilo, Har Gilo, Har Homa and Efrat and in addition, plans for a new settlement called Gi'vat Yael in the al-Walaja area have also been submitted.<sup>144</sup> The Bethlehem Governorate is no exception. Most villages and towns along the separation wall or adjacent to settlements are affected. In the Jordan valley Israel has prevented the growth of Palestinian communities by cutting off their water supply or declaring large areas as live fire zones.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> PLO Negotiation Department, "A New Christmas Story: Bethlehem under Occupation," Media Brief, 15 December 2010, <http://www.nad-plo.org/print.php?id=163> (accessed 05 January 2012).

<sup>141</sup> B'Tselem, "The Separation Barrier," [http://www.btselem.org/English/Separation\\_Barrier/](http://www.btselem.org/English/Separation_Barrier/) (accessed 15 September 2011).

<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> PLO Negotiation Department, "Bethlehem Under Occupation."

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

<sup>145</sup> Amira Hass, "IDF Destroys West Bank Village After Declaring it Military Zone," *The Haaretz*, 21 July 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/idf-destroys-west-bank-village-after-declaring-it-military-zone-1.303098> (accessed 15 January 2012). Israel has implemented a complex permit regime for the Jordan valley which has similarities to the seam zone along the separation wall. Only Palestinians listed as residents are allowed to enter the Jordan valley. Around 47,000 Palestinians live in this area in about twenty permanent communities, including the city of Jericho, and thousands more live in temporary communities. Palestinians who have farmland in the Jordan valley but live outside it need to acquire a permit to access their lands. Seven permanent checkpoints are installed in the area to control movement. Although Palestinians can enter Jericho without permit, travelling north of Jericho to other parts of valley, including travel by residents of Jericho is prohibited except for holders of a permit. See B'Tselem, "Settlements and Land: Israel has de Facto Annexed the Jordan Valley," 13 February 2006, [http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20060213\\_annexation\\_of\\_the\\_jordan\\_valley](http://www.btselem.org/settlements/20060213_annexation_of_the_jordan_valley) (accessed 15 January 2012).

The village in its traditional sense no longer exists because most villagers seek work in the cities or the Israeli labour market. Developments in machinery and large-scale production have made it difficult for small-scale farmers to remain competitive in many parts of the world but expropriation of land, and restriction on mobility to access land (and also to market products), have deteriorated the situation of Palestinian farmers even further.<sup>146</sup> It was mostly the rural labour force (and the refugee camp residents) that headed for the Israeli labour market. When access to Israel became more difficult, many sought work in the nearby settlements. In 1987, for example, around 108,000 Palestinians were employed in Israel, the number diminished in 1993 to around 84,000 and then in 1996 further to 62,000, but before the outbreak of the second intifada at the end of 2000 the numbers had again increased to 145,000.<sup>147</sup> Despite the fact that many Palestinians feel it is degrading to seek work in Israel or in settlements and within nationalist circles these workers are often seen with resentment,<sup>148</sup> there are clear economic incentives with wages in the Palestinian territory being on average significantly lower than what a worker employed in Israel would earn.<sup>149</sup> While the Palestinian share in the Israeli labour market has been shrinking since the first intifada, since 2006 Israel has begun to make a concerted effort to reduce its dependence even further on Palestinian workers for both economic and political reasons.<sup>150</sup> With the boycott campaign against settlement goods and labour in settlements initiated under

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<sup>146</sup> A joint research study between McMaster University and Econometric Research Limited and the Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem (ARIJ) looking at the effects of Israeli occupation on agricultural production on the West Bank and Gaza, concludes that the sector suffered severely from Israeli policies. For example, the average cultivated land in the West Bank, between 1980 and 1994 was 1,707 km<sup>2</sup>, which constitutes a reduction by 30% of the area cultivated in 1965. Further, selling agricultural products within Israel requires special permits and internal transportation is hampered by movement restrictions. Access to water is also limited with Israel taking more than 85% of Palestinian water from the West Bank aquifers. Experiments were conducted in which constraints on water and export markets varied. The study concludes that lifting or improving the constraints on either would significantly improve agricultural output and income. See David Butterfield, Jad Isaac, Atif Kubursi and Steven Spencer, *Impacts of Water and Export Market Restrictions on Palestinian Agriculture* (McMaster University, Econometric Research Limited and Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem 2000), <http://socserv.mcmaster.ca/kubursi/ebooks/water.htm> (accessed 13 September 2011). According to the World Bank: 'The cost to the economy of foregone opportunity in irrigated agriculture is significant, with upper bound preliminary estimates that could be as high as 10% of GDP and 110,000 jobs.' See Amnesty International, *Troubled Waters*, 18.

<sup>147</sup> For statistics see Farsakh, *Palestinian Labour Migration*, 188-90.

<sup>148</sup> Salim Tamari, "Building Other People's Homes: The Palestinian Peasant's Household and Work in Israel," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 11, no.1 (Autumn 1981): 49.

<sup>149</sup> The Jerusalem Post reports the rate of a reported day's work in Israel was around NIS 141 in 2008, while the rate of a worker without a permit is around NIS 124. This is high in comparison to the daily wage in the Palestinian economy which is around NIS 85. Sharon Wrobel, "Cheap Palestinian Workers Impact Local Labour Wages," *The Jerusalem Post*, 1 April 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Business/BusinessNews/Article.aspx?id=172180> (accessed 13 January 2012).

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.* For developments over the Oslo period see David V. Bartram, "Foreign Workers in Israel: History and Theory," *International Migration Review* 32, no.2 (Summer 1998): 303-4.



Salam Fayyad, now this source of income has also become out of bounds for villagers. According to the Manufacturers Association of Israel around 22,000 Palestinians are employed by settlement businesses.<sup>151</sup>

Despite the significant impact Israeli policies have had on villages, only very few have taken an active role in mobilising against the Israeli occupation. The villages of Nil'in, Bi'lin and Nabi Saleh are exceptions and their weekly protests attract journalists and international solidarity activists. The suffering caused by the occupation no longer appears to lead to collective action, and Palestinians only come to protest when they are directly concerned.<sup>152</sup> Large-scale political activism no longer takes place and if it does it is severely curbed by PA police presence or even intervention as has been described in the previous chapter.<sup>153</sup>

### 3.2.2. Social, Cultural and Ideological Disintegration

As Israel's land and access policies have almost disproportionately affected rural areas, they have also created social division. After the separation of the West Bank into three different zones of control, the majority of the rural areas came to belong to Area C which puts them under full Israeli security and administrative authority. Although villages are often designated Area B, their adjacent lands may be situated in Area C. Most refugee camps, because they are located within cities or near cities are under full Palestinian Authority control in Area A, with the exception of Arroub, Fawwar, Jalazone, and Deir' Ammar, which are located in Area B which is under joint Palestinian and Israeli control, and Shu'fat camp (within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem) and Qalandia camp, which both are in Area C.<sup>154</sup> With an increase in settlement construction during and after Oslo, and since the start of the construction of the

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<sup>151</sup> Harriet Sherwood, "Palestinian Boycott of Israeli Settlement Goods Starts to Bite," *The Guardian*, 29 June 2010, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jun/29/palestinian-boycott-israeli-settlement-goods> (accessed 16 January 2012).

<sup>152</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>153</sup> The PA police prevented any forms of protest in Ramallah during the unrest in the West Bank in February and March 2010 after Netanyahu's designation of West Bank religious sites as Israeli national heritage sites. Moreover, a demonstration at al-Manara, in Ramallah, in response to the military order 1650, a *nakba* commemoration march by school children, a protest in solidarity with Gaza and the raid on the Turkish aid flotilla were kept brief and small by PA security. An interviewee recounted a story of a group of students from Birzeit University who went on a protest to Qalandia checkpoint during the war on Gaza and ended up being beaten by PA police and perhaps more surprisingly some of the female protesters were grabbed by the neck by male security forces. On measures the PA government has come to use, at best, to control but more likely to oppress any forms of popular protest see "A Prospect of Palestine: Can Palestinians Peacefully Build a State?" *The Economist*, 20 May 2010.

<sup>154</sup> Information to be found on UNRWA website.

separation wall rural areas came to be disproportionately affected by the occupation. Those residing or having property in area C are more vulnerable to Israeli policies. Beyond having to cope with various movement restrictions, they have to rely on Israel for anything related to territory, such as obtaining construction permits and securing access to water.<sup>155</sup> Within zone A of the urban centres, on the other hand, the population can go about their daily lives mostly undisturbed with little or no contact with the Israeli army or administration for long periods of time. A divide between rural and urban is not unusual or surprising but in the Palestinian case it has become more entrenched and accentuated because of Israeli policies. A survey conducted by the PSR in 2000 found that 1.7% or 56,000 of the total Palestinian population changed their place of residence as a result of current Israeli measures. For 60% for those who changed their place of residence, the proximity of residence with contact areas with Israeli settlements or the Israeli army was the main reason for relocation.<sup>156</sup>

The question of what kind of roles the different groups – urban dwellers, villagers, and refugees – played in the run-up and during the intifada is difficult to answer. Responses in interviews were neither very informative nor conclusive. Refugees were thought to always have been the most vulnerable and villagers to have become most affected by settlements and the occupation after Oslo. Members of political parties emphasised that all strata of society were represented in the intifada but these responses were not substantiated with much detail.<sup>157</sup> The main participatory activities during the intifada appear to have concentrated on the refugee camps and the cities but in the villages activities were more specific, focusing on land loss, settlements and checkpoints.<sup>158</sup> As has already been pointed out above, action was difficult to coordinate across the different locations during the second intifada because the leadership was based in Ramallah and due to severe movement restrictions travel was not possible for prolonged periods.<sup>159</sup> Centralisation does not work when mobility is impeded. A woman interviewed by the Women's Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling (WCLAC) during the second intifada commented that: 'the closures and barriers that were forced on us by the Occupation, which denies us the freedom of movement, was a main reason

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<sup>155</sup> For restrictions on access to water see Amnesty International, *Troubled Water*. For the effects of restrictions on the use of land see West Bank. World Bank, *The Economic Effects of Restricted Access to Land in the West Bank* (October 2008), <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTWESTBANKGAZA/Resources/EconomicEffectsofRestrictedAccessstoLandintheWestBankOct.20,08.pdf> (accessed 21 January 2012). OCHA, *Restricting Space: The Planning Regime Applied by Israel in Area C of the West Bank*, Special Focus, December 2009.

<sup>156</sup> Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, *MAS Social Monitor No.5* (2002), 11.

<sup>157</sup> INTERVIEW #19.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

that we couldn't play the supportive role to each other as before or participate in the events in the different regions.'<sup>160</sup> What is true on the level of social action may also apply to militant action, which will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

In addition to creating a division between urban and rural dwellers, the movement restrictions have also created distinct geographical zones which could foster the emergence of localisms.<sup>161</sup> The consolidation of localised cultures would in the long-term undoubtedly undermine the Palestinian national project. Although the aforementioned survey by Mi'ari does not suggest that local or regional affiliation have become a significant factor of Palestinian identity, Palestinians do have a strong sense of where they are from and prejudice towards those from other areas: people from Ramallah often look down on those originating from the north and see them as conservative, while people from the north are eager to point out how conservative and narrow-minded society in Hebron is. Trends in education point towards a localisation of Palestinian's centre of life within their own regions. The number of students attending universities located within their own regions has progressively increased since 1996.<sup>162</sup> This trend may partly be motivated by financial considerations but partly also has its roots in the growing system of movement control. Localisation also manifests itself in terms of disparate social and economic experiences. Economic figures from the late 1990s suggest an increasing disparity between the different regions with poverty being particularly high in Bethlehem, Jenin and Jericho. In a report issued in 1999 the Palestinian Economic and Policy Research Institute identified declining standards of living in the north of the West Bank and Bethlehem.<sup>163</sup> This trend continued, with the Institute's subsequent report stating that families with the lowest standards of living were in the south and the north and that the gap in comparison to other regions was widening with the centre being best off.<sup>164</sup>

Meanwhile, Ramallah has turned into somewhat of an anomaly. With access to Jerusalem having become increasingly difficult since Oslo, Ramallah has developed into a 'temporary' capital. All government offices are located in Ramallah and a number of countries have established representations in the city. It is an exceptional case when it comes to internal migration too. While internal migration in the West

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<sup>160</sup> WCLAC, "If I Were Given the Choice," *Palestinian Women's Stories of Daily Life during the Years 2000 and 2003 of the Second Intifada* (Jerusalem 2007), 50.

<sup>161</sup> Lisa Taraki, "Enclave Micropolis: The Paradoxical Case of Ramallah/Al-Bireh," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, no.1 (Summer 2008): 6-20. EK

<sup>162</sup> Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, *MAS Social Monitor*, no.2 (1999), 13-4.

<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.

<sup>164</sup> Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute, *MAS Social Monitor*, no.3 (2000), 38, 40.

Bank to urban centres is low because of slow urban development, Ramallah has attracted educated employees to work in services and educational institutions.<sup>165</sup> Ramallah, designated as area A and under full control of the Palestinian Authority, is often described as a ‘five star’ occupation and is the one place in the West Bank where occupation is least noticeable on a day-to-day basis. Life in Ramallah stands in stark contrast to how it is experienced in other parts of the West Bank.

The city is also hailed to be the most liberal place in the West Bank because of the presence of a Christian minority. However, this cannot be the sole factor because Bethlehem, for example, has a Christian minority, too, but is not as free and liberal. Rather, Ramallah’s special status is more likely to be explained by the lack of close family ties among its residents. Young educated Palestinians move away from their families to Ramallah in search of employment. In other West Bank cities, such as Nablus, for example, family networks are much stronger within the city, keeping a check on the behaviour of family members. The constraints then appear to be more of a social rather than religious nature. Perhaps it is precisely because of its status as liberal, that the election results of the 2006 were so surprising. Out of four available seats<sup>166</sup> in the constituency vote in the Ramallah and al-Bireh district all four went to Hamas which stood as Change and Reform and only the Christian quota seat went to Fateh. In Jenin on the other hand, which was described by Israel during the second intifada as the hotbed of extremists and terrorists,<sup>167</sup> two seats went to Fateh and two to Hamas.<sup>168</sup>

Ramallah has also attracted a high number of international NGOs as well as international organisations and with it many international employees. Some restaurants and cafes in Ramallah cater solely for these internationals and the globalised Palestinian elite (which also includes returnees from the USA).<sup>169</sup> Indeed, in many ways Ramallah’s outlook is almost more international than Palestinian. For Lisa Taraki, Ramallah, in contrast to the more parochial cities of the West Bank like Hebron, Nablus or Jenin, incorporates more cosmopolitan aspects similar to the large metropolises in the region such as Cairo or Beirut. At the same time, being subject to the same regime of spatial control, it is just like the other cities of the West Bank in being insulated from its

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<sup>165</sup> Al-Malki and Yasser Shalabi, *International Migration 2*.

<sup>166</sup> One additional seat is a Christian quota seat.

<sup>167</sup> See, for example, article by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Jenin’s Terrorist Infrastructure,” 4 April 2002, [http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000\\_2009/2002/4/Jenins%20Terrorist%20Infrastructure%20-%204-Apr-2002](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/MFAArchive/2000_2009/2002/4/Jenins%20Terrorist%20Infrastructure%20-%204-Apr-2002) (accessed 07 January 2012).

<sup>168</sup> “Palestinian Election: Results in Detail,” *BBC*, 16 February 2006, [http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle\\_east/4654306.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/middle_east/4654306.stm) (accessed 11 March 2011).

<sup>169</sup> It is particularly noticeable, that many only offer a menu in English much to the annoyance of many locals.

surroundings. These two contradictory aspects – spatial restriction and globalised outlook – turn Ramallah into a kind of paradoxical case of a globalised localism.<sup>170</sup> Ultimately, the sense of freedom and global connectivity are simply an illusion that is easily shattered when stepping out of the perimeter of the city.

For Rema Hammami the processes taking place in Palestine are akin to what has been taking place in other parts of the world. The Palestinian experience is comparable to the more global convergence of new forms of inequality as well as a global convergence in how inequality is controlled through policing and securitisation rather than conflict resolution.<sup>171</sup> As inequality has become spatially manifested, particular geographies and landscapes of exclusion have emerged. Connected to this is the issue of mobility. While in the age of globalisation global capital and elites are extremely mobile, the underclasses, as Hammami calls them, are made immobile and are forced into confined spaces of territory. While these new forms of inequality have similarities with the situation of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation, it is different in that the driving force in the Palestinian case is not economic, as it is in other parts of the world, but essentially colonial and political.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, Hammami argues that Palestinians are subject to this as a whole nation because they lack citizenship.<sup>173</sup> However, what Hammami fails to point out is that within Palestinian society these measures have affected Palestinians unequally and have created a rift between a more mobile elite and a disadvantaged majority. In fact, this has occurred in two ways. Firstly, as we have already seen the spatial regime has created a division between the marginalised, mostly rural, society who bear the brunt of the movement restrictions and settlement expansions, and the urban dwellers with easier access to services and opportunities. Second, the political processes linked to Oslo have also created a political elite that enjoys certain benefits despite the Israeli occupation. For example, the PA leadership receives special VIP passes from the Israeli Civil Administration that allow them to move around relatively freely, give them priority at checkpoints, and also

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<sup>170</sup> Lisa Taraki, “Enclave Micropolis: The Paradoxical Case of Ramallah/Al-Bireh,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 37, no.1 (Summer 2008), 6-20.

<sup>171</sup> Rema Hammami, “Human Agency at the Frontiers of Global Inequality: An Ethnography of Hope in Extreme Places,” (inaugural address, Prince Claus Chair in Development and Equity, Institute of Social Studies Public Lecture Series 2006, no. 2, Hague: Institute of Social Studies, 20 April 2006) <http://www.princeclauschair.nl/userdata/download/64InauguralHammamiApril2006.pdf> (accessed 12 September 2011). See also Rema Hammami, “Qalandiya: Jerusalem’s Tora Bora and the Frontiers of Global Inequality,” *Jerusalem Quarterly* 41(Spring 2010): 29-51.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

<sup>173</sup> Ibid.

permit travel to Israel.<sup>174</sup> In addition, Oslo had also created an economic elite with strong political connections benefiting from privileges in the private sector<sup>175</sup> as well as a new social class through the influx of international funding into NGOs. ‘NGOs are among the few workplaces perceived to operate according to professionalism. They have thus become desirable workplaces for a new generation of middle class professionals who view NGO employment as a career path to more lucrative salaries and prestigious jobs in international organisations. Speaking English, dressing well and maintaining a nice office are all part of this culture.’<sup>176</sup> The salaries of NGO professionals stand in stark contrast to those of other Palestinian employees, especially the appallingly underpaid public sector, including teachers, social workers and the police. The Palestinian Civil Servants Union chief stated in 2011 that most employees’ salaries run out within two weeks of each month.<sup>177</sup>

The social divisions in Palestinian society came to the fore at the outbreak of the second intifada and lead Heacock to conclude that the second intifada was an uprising of the marginalised masses against the globalised elite. Had Arafat not refused to accept the terms set by Israel and the US at Camp David, Palestinians might have been ready to turn against the Palestinian Authority.<sup>178</sup> After Palestinians realised what the consequences of Oslo were and with increasing corruption within the PA, unrest may have easily erupted against the Palestinian Authority. Arafat’s rejection of Camp David brought back some popularity for himself and his party. Issues such as the status of Jerusalem and control over holy sites and refugees were not perceived to be negotiable and for refusing to compromise on these issues, Arafat was greeted by the population as a hero on his return to Gaza from Camp David.<sup>179</sup>

Scholarship on the second intifada has largely focused on the political processes but has overlooked the social cleavages and internal struggle. The second intifada was an uprising against the continuation of the Israeli occupation but at the same time, as we have seen in chapter two, also a reaction to the failure of the PA. It was a movement imposed by the marginalised masses on their own political social and cultural elites who

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<sup>174</sup> This inequality appears to create considerable discontent among the average Palestinian population which are all subject to Israeli mobility restrictions. INTERVIEW #16.

<sup>175</sup> Hammami and Tamari, “Second Palestinian Uprising,” 16.

<sup>176</sup> Hammami, “Palestinian NGOs,” 27.

<sup>177</sup> “Union Chief Disputes Fayyad’s Salary Rise Claims,” 21 January 2011, *Ma’an*, <http://www.maanneews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=353032> (accessed 12 August 2011).

<sup>178</sup> INTERVIEW #22.

<sup>179</sup> INTERVIEW #2.

were made responsible for the deterioration of the living conditions and the widespread corruption since the establishment of the Palestinian Authority:<sup>180</sup>

There was no question for anyone witnessing the events as to who was from the start at the forefront: the Palestinian masses, self-organized and led by their organisations, Fateh's Tanzim and al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades under populist and opposition-minded people like Marwan Barghouti, as well as the militias of Hamas – 'Izzedin al-Qassam Brigades – and the Islamic Jihad – Saraya al-Quds. The PA was marginalized from the beginning, and very rapidly it dissolved de facto through its absence from the scene. This absence was noticed by all, and when mass rallies could be held, which was not frequently possible because of the violence of the Israeli response to crowds approaching their positions, they were neither organised nor frequently addressed by PA members.<sup>181</sup>

While grassroot militants were able to attract a mass audience nobody in the PA was able to do so, contrary to conventional accounts, which emphasise the control by the leadership over the events, and Arafat's popularity.<sup>182</sup>

Indeed, one may even go so far as to suggest that the leadership abandoned its people during the intifada. Raja Shehadeh notes in his diary on the Israeli siege on Ramallah in Spring 2003, that the militants were left to defend Ramallah and fend for themselves without any instructions or protection from the leadership against the might of the Israeli army.<sup>183</sup> A female respondent in an interview carried out by the WCLAC during the second intifada expressed her frustration at the lack of leadership:

The informed ones, however, did not buy the PNA's line of talk. They were out there participating in both *intifadas*. The leadership, however, didn't leave them alone, but went after them. There was never a time when the leadership was on the front lines, neither in the first or the second *intifada*. The leadership used to call for the people to follow, it actually was the leadership who followed ... There was a big gap between the young people participating in the *intifadas*, the ones who were continuing to struggle, and the PNA leadership. In my view, the leadership played a destructive role by trying to calm the situation, and they were always in collaboration with the Israelis.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> Heacock, "Seizing the Initiative," 303.

<sup>181</sup> Heacock, "Seizing the Initiative," 178.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid. Heacock refers here specifically to Rema Hammami and Salim Tamari, "Anatomie einer anderer Rebellion," in *Befreiungskampf in Palästina* ed. Fritz Edlinger (Wien: Promedia 2001): 141-2.

<sup>183</sup> Raja Shehadeh, *When The Bulbul Stopped Singing – A Diary of Ramallah under Siege* (London: Profile Books 2003) 27-8, 132.

<sup>184</sup> WCLAC, "If I were given the choice," 50.

Quiet tolerance of the uprising and quasi self-dissolution may have been the only option for the PA, as it lacked the structural requirements for balancing armed struggle and broader civil disobedience. Throwing its full force behind the struggle would have amounted to political suicide, so would have policing and oppression of its people in the new intifada.<sup>185</sup> In fact, Palestinians kept their leaders in check. When Mahmoud Abbas repeatedly condemned the militarisation of the intifada he rapidly lost public support.<sup>186</sup> Palestinians disliked his insistence that they should cease violence while Israel was imposing collective punishment on the entire population.<sup>187</sup> It was clear that if Abbas had been able to obtain more power he would have curbed the resistance groups.<sup>188</sup> The strong commitment he made to ending what he referred to as Palestinian violence in a speech during a televised ceremony in the course of the Aqaba summit in 2003, cost him popular support and accelerated the demise of his government.<sup>189</sup>

### 3.2.3 Solidarity and Social Action

Rosemary Sayigh argued in *From Peasants to Revolutionaries* that the custom of giving and providing, central aspects of family solidarity, and help in times of sickness or unemployment has been far more the basis for economic survival of the Palestinian refugees than assistance provided by UNRWA.<sup>190</sup> It is, in fact, this ability to organise themselves and their daily lives that has helped Palestinians to cope with the conditions of the occupation for decades. Despite the military and economic measures and closure policies, localism and traditional family economics have enabled Palestinians to continue their lives. It is noteworthy that the intifada continued despite the rapid deterioration of economic conditions.<sup>191</sup> The brunt of the efforts and sacrifices

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<sup>185</sup> Camille Mansour, "The Impact of 11 September on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no.2 (Winter 2001): 10.

<sup>186</sup> In 2002 he delivered a highly controversial speech to a closed meeting of the heads of the popular committees of the Gaza Strip refugee camps in which he called for the cessation of the militarisation of the intifada, advocated negotiations as the best path forward and also criticised the involvement of Palestinian Israeli citizen in the early stages of the intifada (October 2000 events); for transcript see "Mahmud Abbas's Call for a Halt to the Militarization of the Intifada," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no.2 (Winter 2003): 74-78.

<sup>187</sup> Tamimi, *Hamas* (London: Hurst, 2007), 203.

<sup>188</sup> Ibid.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Rosemary Sayigh, *The Palestinians: From Peasants to Revolutionaries: A People's History* (London: Zed Books 1979), 23-4.

<sup>191</sup> In the Nablus area, for example, unemployment tripled with the outbreak of the intifada and only began to decrease again in 2004. See Edward A. Sayre, "Relative Deprivation and Palestinian Suicide Bombings," *Asian Journal of Social Science* 38 (2010) 456-7.



of the uprising was borne by the people in the refugee camps and the villages, many day labourers, some peasants, and many unemployed.<sup>192</sup>

However, solidarity appears to have become less widespread and less organised in the second intifada. The first intifada created small institutions that fostered solidarity.<sup>193</sup> In the second intifada such institutions did not emerge for two reasons: Firstly, by the time the second intifada erupted, PA institutions providing services for the population had been in place and functioning, in either a sufficient or insufficient manner, for several years. Unlike in the first intifada where the administration was under Israeli control, there was little scope and reason to create alternative institutions alongside these services. Nevertheless, as the intifada unfolded, the government was no longer in a position to provide health services. Hospitals for instance, were closed and only emergency rooms operated.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, as already mentioned earlier, movement restrictions made any form of large-scale organisation and co-ordination impossible and, as such, precluded the possibility of far-reaching support efforts. In the absence of governmental provisions, non-governmental mobilisation was crucial and spurts of social action among the population did occur, especially when in direct contact with Israeli violence. As political violence intensified, people began to organise themselves again. In a sense, it was a reactive approach to particular situations and extreme problems in comparison to the first intifada, where civil society actively mobilised and pursued strategies. For example, several hotlines were set up when Ramallah was under curfew from 18 March to 23 April. Doctors, for example, could phone in to request mattresses or medical equipment. These requests were then coordinated with Um al Fahm, an Arab town just over the Green Line. Donations were collected in support of Palestinians and once the curfew was lifted the much needed equipment was transported to Ramallah.<sup>195</sup> Raja Shehadeh also describes how the medical services, together with the media and a group of foreigners managed to save 21 men trapped in a building near Arafat's compound. In a similar incident the day before, five men trapped in a building were shot by the Israeli army.<sup>196</sup>

Class divides and concerns of social conduct also disappear under such extreme circumstances. During attacks people would shelter in any house they could find and doors would be open to anyone who needed assistance. One interviewee recounted the

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<sup>192</sup> Heacock, "Seizing the Initiative," 308.

<sup>193</sup> INTERVIEW # 17

<sup>194</sup> INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid.

<sup>196</sup> Shehadeh, *Diary of Ramallah*, 38.

story of a conservative women she knew who was living with her children by herself. Despite the consequences this might have for her she hid men who were trying to escape the army in her house. When confronted with the Israeli army, she put at risk the job she had with an international organisation and potentially exposed herself to scrutiny over her social conduct by harbouring these men.<sup>197</sup>

The decrease of solidarity and cooperation, however, can also be interpreted as a shift of focus to the external world. While in the first intifada Palestine was comparable to a large village, during the second intifada the availability of technology enabled people to communicate with the outside world. The fact that Palestinians were now connected with the world shifted focus away from the community.<sup>198</sup> Rather than community action, then, it was the dissemination of information through the internet to the outside world that played an important role during the second intifada. This fits in with what Khalili depicts as a trend of a discourse of suffering which, driven primarily by solidarity activists and NGOs, and juxtaposes the imagery of a heroic narrative embraced by militants as well as agents of the quasi-state, albeit in different ways.<sup>199</sup> The shift from community action and participation in the first intifada to information dissemination about human rights violations by the Israeli military and security forces embodies a sense of passivity of society at large that characterised the second intifada. Instead, responsibility for resistance was relocated to international actors.<sup>200</sup> In the first intifada it had been the entire public that participated in heroic acts, while in the second uprising, the people were primarily victims with the exception of martyrs who became tragic heroes that sacrificed their lives for the community.

Palestinian society's non-participation and focus to the outside, was in large part due to the fact that it was unable to participate because it had become physically but also structurally impossible and one of the advantages of access to the internet, however, was that it enabled Palestinians to bypass the more selective media channels and in this way were able to mobilise their 'audiences' worldwide directly. It should be stressed, however, that this was nevertheless a limited phenomenon as technology is not available to all Palestinians equally. Although mobile phones appear to be widely used in the West Bank now, few homes have computers and even fewer have an internet connection. A survey conducted by the PSR in February 2000 suggests that home

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<sup>197</sup> INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>198</sup> INTERVIEW # 17

<sup>199</sup> Laleh Khalili, *Heroes and Martyrs of Palestine: The Politics of National Commemoration* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 190-211.

<sup>200</sup> Phenomenon described by Khalili. *Ibid.*, 204-5.

phone ownership stood at 54% and mobile phone ownership at 39%. Satellite dish ownership was at 44%, home computer ownership at 13%, home internet subscription at 6%, and office internet subscription at 5%.

### 3.2.4 Identity

As everywhere else in the world, identity for Palestinians has not remained static but has developed according to events and trends both within Palestinian society and outside it. Rashid Khalidi argues that identity in the context of Arab peoples should be understood as multiple foci of identity. Given the lack of a state or a unified educational system, a Palestinian would most likely refer to identity as a number of 'historical narratives', each carrying a somewhat different message.<sup>201</sup> Hence, Palestinian identity cannot be explained without looking at its interrelation with broad powerful transnational foci of identity, especially Arabism and Islam, and other influential regional as well as local identities.<sup>202</sup>

The earlier cited study by Mahmoud Mi'ari suggests that while Palestinian identity has remained the prominent identity for most Palestinians, by the time the second intifada erupted, religious identities as well as identification with the clan (or *hamula* in Arabic), had gained significantly on Palestinian identity. Arab identity was the strongest identity during the Mandate period and after the *nakba* but its strength deteriorated with the failure of the Arabs to achieve Arab unity and liberate Palestine which culminated in the Arabs' immense defeat in 1967. The conclusion that Palestinians drew from this was that they would have to rely on themselves to regain control of Palestinian territory. After the 1967 war, Fateh began to dominate the Palestinian national movement and took over the PLO which had been established in 1964. Fateh emphasised Palestinian nationality by adopting a Palestinian nationalist ideology rather than an Arab nationalist ideology promising that Palestinians would be liberated through Palestinian action rather than Arab unity. While Palestinian identity continued to be the strongest identity, it lost dominance under the PA, as a result of the strengthening of other identities, especially Muslim identity.<sup>203</sup> Under the PA Palestinians became nearly polarised between those who consider themselves foremost Palestinian and those who consider themselves primarily Muslim. However, this

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<sup>201</sup> Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 146.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*, 145.

<sup>203</sup> Mi'ari, "Collective Identity," 585.

polarisation was weakened during the al-Aqsa intifada in favour of national identity.<sup>204</sup> The strengthening of the Muslim identity is best explained by the increasing popularity of Hamas and Islamic Jihad, coupled with other factors such as the deterioration of socioeconomic conditions, the failure of the political peace process and growing reports of corruption within the ranks of the PA.<sup>205</sup>

Traditional identities, such as the *hamula* identity, have also strengthened under PA rule, especially during the al- Aqsa intifada.<sup>206</sup> Traditional social institutions gained importance and provided solutions to some problems faced by society.<sup>207</sup> The same factors that strengthened Muslim identity during the years under PA control also strengthened traditional and parochial ties. In addition to this, the weakening of the Palestinian parties, and PA support for clan structure also contributed to its rise. What is interesting, however, is that clan identities have become stronger while family ties appear to have lost importance.<sup>208</sup> Particularly, after the election of Hamas in 2006 (Mi'ari's survey ends in 2006), we have seen severe political divisions in Palestine, primarily between supporters of Fateh and supporters of Hamas, often within the same families.<sup>209</sup>

Identities are often manipulated or even created in order to gain or maintain power. Divide and rule was widely practiced by colonial powers, including the British, in Mandate Palestine and elsewhere, in order to keep the indigenous population under control. The politics of division applied by the British was later also emulated by the Israeli government both on a regional as well as local level. Karmi argues that Israel and its supporters have been pursuing a politics of fragmentation in the entire region of the Middle East in order to ensure the supremacy of Israel but also to guarantee the survival of Israel as a Jewish state. Because Palestinian land was already inhabited, it required considerable force and coercion in order to appropriate and retain the land.<sup>210</sup> The newly created state would have to maintain itself through military superiority which was guaranteed through the support of strong Western powers. The fragmentation of Arabs into small minorities would ensure the supremacy of the Jewish state as one cohesive entity. On the domestic level, Israel applied this principle of division by categorising Israel's non-Jewish population into Muslims, Christians and

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<sup>204</sup> Ibid.

<sup>205</sup> Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*.

<sup>206</sup> Mi'ari, "Collective Identity," 592.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid.

<sup>208</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid. INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>210</sup> Karmi, *Married to Another Man*, 1.

Druze and so disrupting the collective identity of the Arab inhabitants of the land.<sup>211</sup> In fact, from the beginning Israeli governments bestowed a semi-privileged status on the Druze population. The majority of the Druze consider themselves to be a distinct religious group, but the Israeli government also designated the Druze as a distinct ethnic group in 1957. Culturally, the Druze are considered Arab and their language is Arabic, but they did not pursue Arab nationalism with the establishment of Israel in 1948.<sup>212</sup>

The politics of identity practised by consecutive Israeli governments also led to a polarised and increasingly influential focus of religion in the conflict. The division on the basis of religious identity, the rhetoric of the Promised Land, and the desire for recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, has strengthened the influence of religion on the Palestinian side too. Ghada Karmi succinctly summarises this as follows: ‘As a Jewish state, it had established a concept of statehood based on religion, in contradistinction to the modern state whose citizens are not defined by their creed. It should be no surprise that this paradigm promoted by Israel and its supporters so fervently, in time provoked a reaction in kind, with Islam as the counter point to Judaism.’<sup>213</sup>

Changes in identity and growing divisions are intrinsically tied to the Palestinian national project and find their expression in political activism. The strengthening of both the *hamula* and religious identity have also found their expression in political activism during the second intifada, a topic that will be further examined in the next chapter.

### 3.2.5 The Islamist and Secularist Divide

Although Islamist and secular trends appear to presently co-exist in Palestinian society, Mahdi Abdul Hadi argues that secularists are losing their footing while the Islamists are extending their influence. Secularists are increasingly less able to affect public opinion and they are also less willing to speak out publicly. Their influence among the middle classes in particular, has diminished and for Abdul Hadi, it is this

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<sup>211</sup> Ibid., 28. On the deliberate fragmentation of Palestinians into religious groups as a political strategy also see Nahla Abdo, “Dislocating Self, Relocating ‘Other’: A Palestinian Experience,” in *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation*, ed. Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books 2002), 132-3.

<sup>212</sup> Oren Yiftachel and Michaly D. Segal, “Jews and Druze in Israel: State Control and Ethnic Resistance,” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 21, no. 3 (May 1998): 483-4, 486. John E. Hofman and Nadim Rouhana, “Young Arabs in Israel: Some Aspects of a Conflicted Social Identity,” *Journal of Social Psychology* 99, no.1 (June 1976): 78.

<sup>213</sup> Karmi, *Married to Another Man*, 41.

class that had suffered the most from the deprivations of Palestinian society.<sup>214</sup> Those marginalised through Israeli policies and PA misrule have come to see themselves more represented by Hamas. As people have become disillusioned with the leftists who could not offer a solution and the nationalists who have failed to achieve any tangible results, it appears the population is increasingly turning to religion.<sup>215</sup>

It is, for instance, noticeable that in Ramallah, despite its liberal status, the rules of Ramadan are strictly enforced by the police. In the past, restaurants in Ramallah were open for eating out during Ramadan. Those that wanted to fast could, but those who did not could still freely have a meal in public.<sup>216</sup> This is no longer the case. Throughout the month of Ramadan all restaurants are closed and although some prepare food during the day it is only available for take-away. A handful of the more Western-oriented cafes are open, but very discreetly so. A shopkeeper even sent a hungry customer away for fear of police punishment when he asked if he could eat his sandwich and drink his coke inside the shop.

It should be noted, however, that secularism in Palestine is not comparable to secularism in Europe where religion and the state are considered separate entities. There are very few true secularists in Palestinian society.<sup>217</sup> Even leftist parties usually use religious language in an attempt to broaden their support base. Women have even begun to appear at leftist rallies wearing the hijab.<sup>218</sup> Arafat too used religious elements in his speeches extensively because he wanted to appeal to a wider audience.<sup>219</sup> It is, of course, often mistakenly assumed that Fateh is a secular party, when in fact it would more correctly be described as a movement incorporating a wide spectrum of ideologies from the far left to Islamists.<sup>220</sup>

During the field work for this thesis, I attended a graduation ceremony of the Nursing College in al-Bireh. Throughout the entire ceremony, which took place in the courtyard of the college, religious language was used and the ceremony also included a prayer. By contrast, graduation ceremonies that are held at Durham University and

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<sup>214</sup> Mahdi Abdul Hadi, "Social Impact of the Islamist-Secularist Struggle," Carnegie Endowment Website (PASSIA, September 2006) [http://www.passia.org/about\\_us/MahdiPapers/Islamist-Secularist-Struggle.html](http://www.passia.org/about_us/MahdiPapers/Islamist-Secularist-Struggle.html) (accessed 14 September 2011).

<sup>215</sup> INTERVIEW #1. This is not an unusual strategy and also seems to apply to post-revolution Egypt. See, for example, respondent in Angie Ghanam, "Islamist in Egypt's Tourist Spots Win Surprise Vote," *BBC*, 28 December 2011, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-16348229> (accessed 05 January 2012).

<sup>216</sup> INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>217</sup> Author, informal conversations, July 2010.

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>219</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>220</sup> Author, informal conversations, July 2010.

which take place in Durham Cathedral clearly state before the commencement of the ceremony that this is not a religious service, in order to accommodate those visitors that belong to a different faith or who are not religious at all. Another example that may illustrate how deeply intertwined religion and society are in Palestine is the following. During a language session at Birzeit University, one student was asked by the teacher what her religion was. She openly stated that she was not religious. This was so inconceivable to the instructor that the rest of the teaching session could not move on until she gave in and said that she was Christian. For the teacher everybody was religious; one either had to be Christian, Jewish or Muslim.

A traditional split between secular nationalism and Islamism does not exist in Palestine for cultural and historical reasons. The Islamic movement in Palestine is not considered to be in antithesis to the national movement and most of the early Fatah leaders had been close to the Muslim Brotherhood and these influences continued to pervade the party.<sup>221</sup> However, the spatial and political divide between the West Bank and Gaza has now almost artificially imposed such a split between secular and religious.<sup>222</sup> Some division between Gaza and the West Bank has always been apparent. In the Palestinian Legislative Council, for example, there was a traditional divide between those members originating from the West Bank and those from Gaza.<sup>223</sup> The current impasse between the political parties and the siege on Gaza, has created two de-facto governments and two quasi-sovereign entities, a reality that would publicly never be admitted.<sup>224</sup> In the long-term this separation could have much more serious consequences for Palestinian national unity because it geographically reinforces historical, political and potentially ideological divisions.

An insight into the relationship between the secular and religious in Palestinian society will set the context for better understanding the debates that ensued on the role of religion in the al-Aqsa intifada and religious motivations behind suicide bombing. This will be discussed further in the following chapter.

### **3.3. A Policy of Disempowerment or Natural Course?**

As suggested by Heacock's analysis, some see the divisions created within Palestinian society as a policy pursued by Israel and the international community to

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<sup>221</sup> Heacock, "Secularism," 293.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid., 304.

<sup>223</sup> INTERVIEW #21

<sup>224</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

weaken Palestinian national ambitions. Keeping Palestinians fragmented and dependent certainly has had a visible impact. Dependency on foreign donors, in particular, provides a very effective check on political developments inside the Palestinian territories.<sup>225</sup> The elections in 2006 are naturally the most obvious example here. When Palestinians embraced democracy and cast their vote, foreign donors punished the Palestinian people for what to the international onlookers as well as Israel was evidently not an acceptable choice.

Internally, the presence of the Palestinian Authority gives a misleading illusion of sovereignty and independence. Indeed it creates a deceptive state of normalcy, especially for those that live directly under its control rather than those in the more rural parts that are confronted on a daily basis with the effects of occupation. This bubble of illusion easily burst, even for Ramallah, with the outbreak of the second intifada where the leadership, partly unwilling but also partly powerless, was unable to protect and alleviate the strains on the population throughout the duration of the uprising. As we have already seen in chapter two, this discrepancy between the expectations relating to a semi-sovereign entity, and the actual situation played a significant role in fuelling the frustration of the population at the outbreak of the intifada.

It is not only analysts that come to this conclusion. It is a development that many residents of Ramallah in particular, seem to be acutely aware of. The ‘Ramallah Syndrome’ blog website was created precisely as a response to this sense of ruptured reality between occupation and illusive sovereignty and economic well-being. The site describes its purpose as the following:

Ramallah Syndrome is the side effect of the new spatial and social order that emerged after the collapse of the Oslo “peace process”. It is manifested in a kind of “hallucination of normality”, the fantasy of a co-existence of occupation and freedom. It is as if the establishment of a sovereign Palestinian state – in effect, indefinitely postponed – will be achieved through pure illusion. The consequence of this perpetual persistence of a colonial regime has not been sufficiently discussed. The colonial legacy is a vital link in national identity, and it must be resolved. Ramallah Syndrome

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<sup>225</sup> Sara Roy argues that aid has depoliticised the roots of the suffering of the Palestinian people. Focusing solely on the humanitarian consequences of the occupation, Palestinians are deprived of their voices and desire for self-determination. See Sara Roy in “Strangled by Aid,” *Palestine Monitor* 3 October 2010, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article1556>. Ilana Feldman has also pointed out that humanitarianism and aid are frequently used as a tool against Palestinians’ political aspirations. See Ilana Feldman, “Gaza’s Humanitarianism Problem,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 38, no.3 (Spring 2009): 22-37.



is ultimately about the critique and potentiality associated with forms of resistance and subjugation in a colonial context.<sup>226</sup>

For participants in this blog, Ramallah has turned into a safe space, a bubble, where people do not care what occurs in the rest of the territory and where consumption takes priority over political activism.

However social fragmentation could also be a natural course of development towards statehood. One interviewee related a discussion with a painter working in her family home during the first intifada. While the interviewee clearly stated that she was happy about the intifada and felt that things were going the right way, the painter challenged her view and argued that there will be no liberation before Palestine has seen a civil war. He pointed to Europe and argued that Europeans could not have built their democratic states without a civil war. By the same token, Palestinians must 'tidy' their homes first before they can build an independent state.<sup>227</sup>

Certainly, there has often been much blame directed at the occupation for all the difficulties and problems in Palestinian society and politics. In a brief lecture on the American Civil Rights Movement delivered by Professor Clayborne Carson to a small group of students at Birzeit University, his suggestion that without internal social struggle justice against oppression cannot be achieved left most of the students rather unimpressed. Many certainly seemed to abide by the motto: occupation first, then internal reform.<sup>228</sup>

Returning to Rashid Khalidi's observation on the social and political divisions in the wake of 1948, it seems that it was still political and social differences, albeit in a slightly different form and for different reasons, that were plaguing the Palestinians at the outset of the second intifada. Oslo had created a spatial system of control that certainly affected some more than others, and created privileges for a small political elite. Those marginalised turned their frustration against the leadership and followed the lead of the opposition-minded Young Guard of the Fateh movement and Hamas. How this context of political and social division has impeded the re-emergence of the kind of political activism of the first intifada was discussed in this and the previous chapter. How it has given rise to militancy, especially the phenomenon of suicide bombing, during the second uprising will be the subject of the following chapter.

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<sup>226</sup> "Ramallah Syndrome – Side Effects of A Post-Oslo Spatial Regime," Ramallah Syndrome Blog, <http://ramallahsyndrome.blogspot.com/> (accessed 12 August 2011).

<sup>227</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>228</sup> Clayborne Carson, "The History of the Non-Violence Movement in the Context of the US Civil Rights Movement," (Lecture, IALIIS, Birzeit University, 4 March 2010).

### 3.4 Conclusions

The previous chapter had discussed the reassertion of political factionalism over the Oslo period, the rising frustration at occupation policies and the PA's weakness at alleviating these and delivering services to its own population. This chapter has dealt with social division, primarily emerging from the territorial dislocation that the Palestinians have experienced, especially since 1967. The chapter has explored the unique situation of the Palestinian territories as a ruptured space, directly challenging accounts of Palestinian political violence based on a homogenous understanding of territory. Moreover, it has continued to highlight the existence and construction of competing narratives, this time between Palestinians and Israelis in relation to the ownership of the land, which again challenges the epistemological claims to impartiality and neutrality implicit in explanations anchored within the political science discipline.

An insight into the particular configuration of the territories also takes issue with some of the ontological claims made by explanations based on traditional political science models to fixed entities that do not vary across space and time. Treating territory as homogenous and ubiquitously similar, leads inevitably to a distortion of the explanation of suicide bombing in the second intifada. Such models cannot explain why this particular form of political violence asserted itself vis-à-vis other tactics during this period and who within society engaged in it. By looking at the unique territorial configuration of the Palestinian territories and the impact of the occupation, this thesis can offer a much clearer answer to these questions.

The dislocation of the territories through Israel's occupation policies has unsurprisingly created a number of different Palestinian lived geographies. Hence this chapter has opened up the question as to how the occupation has affected the population in different ways, especially along the lines of urban, rural and refugee camp residents. Harker has noted that a few authors have begun to explore how the realities of the occupation 'weave in and out of the daily lives of Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.'<sup>229</sup> Rather than treating Palestinians simply as populations, approaches that break society down into individuals and communities allow for much richer accounts.<sup>230</sup> Nevertheless, there is still a general dearth of studies investigating the particularities of these heterogeneous spaces, particularly in the traditional political

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<sup>229</sup> Harker, "New Geographies," 204.

<sup>230</sup> Ibid.

violence literature where the tendency is to treat Palestinian society as a homogenous whole.

The previous two chapters have traced the transformation in how the Israeli authorities have governed both the Palestinian territories and its people. The Oslo Accords have played a key role in re-structuring the occupation in political, economic and territorial terms. What has developed out of the discussion so far is that 'different occupations' enable different strategies of national liberation and this is why political activism has changed from the first to the second intifada. Analysts such as Pape who treat occupation as a monolithic universally applicable principle, and measure its impact in terms of casualties, are unable to offer insights into the changing nature of political action, and answer why at certain points in time some forms of activism have prevailed over others. The insights offered in this chapter are a critical response to accounts that ignore the changing nature of the occupation as well as those who compare it unquestioningly to other colonial instances. The subtleties of this occupation, its relation to the territory and how it governs Palestinians can only fully be comprehended through an understanding of how the Israeli national project grew out of a particular set of historical circumstances, political ambitions and ideological justifications in relation to this particular plot of land. The impact of which cannot simply be measured in casualties. Israel's desire to join the ranks of Western liberal democracies has imposed some constraint and has necessitated justification for its policies and treatment of Palestinians. These have largely been formulated within a security framework, a discourse that resonates particularly well against the backdrop of century-long discrimination, persecution and killing of Jewish communities. The primary concern of subsequent Israeli governments with territory has set in motion a process accomplished through bureaucratic, legal as well as military means that seeks to depopulate as much of this territory as possible and takes the form of house demolitions, denial of permits, discriminatory water distribution, and withdrawal of residency amongst other measures. Hence, the argument here is that knowing the intricacies of Israel's occupation policies and how they affect Palestinians is essential for understanding how they connect to Palestinian political activism.

The next chapter will bring the discussion of the previous two chapters together, examining how the territorial, political and social developments identified so far, have shaped the emergence and perseverance of suicide bombing as a means of Palestinian political activism during the second intifada.

## 4. Explaining Suicide Bombing

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*You standing at the doorsteps, enter  
and drink Arabic coffee with us  
(you might sense you are human like us)  
you standing at the doorstep of houses,  
get out of our mornings,  
we need reassurance that we  
are human like you!*

...

*The martyr clarifies for me: I didn't search beyond the expanse  
for immortal virgins, because I love life  
on earth, among the pines and figs, but  
I couldn't find a way to it,  
so I looked for it with the last thing I owned:  
blood in the lapis body*

*The martyr teaches me: no aesthetic outside my freedom*

*The martyr cautions me: Don't believe the women's zaghareed  
and believe my father when he looks into my picture tearfully:  
How did you swap our roles, my son,  
and walk ahead of me?  
Me first  
and me first!<sup>1</sup>*

The aggression used by Israeli military forces, especially in the early stages of the uprising, undoubtedly contributed to the escalation of the violence. Bloom notes that Sharon's aggression led to a rise in support for suicide bombings among the Palestinian population. However, the central argument advanced here is that Palestinian violence was not simply a reaction to Israeli military violence but, rather, it was deeply structured by the political, territorial and social developments that were discussed in previous chapters. Territorial fragmentation and social division in participation as an outcome of unequal impact of the occupation will be central themes in the discussion. Territorial fragmentation will prove useful both for explaining participation but also recruitment patterns. This highlights, again, that neglecting the unique territorial dislocation in the Palestinian case is a major weakness of political science models of Palestinian political violence. The political

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<sup>1</sup>Verses taken from Mahmoud Darwish, "A State of Siege," 121 – 78.

fragmentation which came to the fore during the second intifada, further demonstrates that organisations can also not be treated as homogenous as the question of suicide bombing did not only cause intense debates among the different political organisations but was even disputed internally, especially between military and political wings. Finally, the chapter will conclude with a section on women to engage critically with de-contextualised accounts of female suicide bombing.

#### **4.1. A Context of Violence and Organisational Rationale**

The bulk of studies on suicide bombing focus exclusively on the manifestation of this phenomenon and do not see it as embedded in the wider range of tactics employed by groups and Palestinians in general. Singling out suicide bombings portrays an imbalance in the range of activism made use of by Palestinians against Israel. As stated at the outset, this thesis explores the transformation of political activism over a period of time and is as such able to provide a much more holistic insight into the reasons for its emergence. Naturally, suicide bombings are more likely to attract attention because of their high lethality, the dramatic and graphic effects and its premeditated nature. Looking at the second intifada as a whole, however, several strands of activism can be identified which at various stages took precedence over other tactics: in the early stages non-violent mass demonstrations and activities similar to the first intifada dominated the popular level; the PA leadership fluctuated between tacit consent and political strategies; militant activities of various forms, driven predominantly by the militant wings of the political factions were widespread throughout the intifada and peaked particularly in the intermediate years. These activities ranged from suicide bombings to more guerrilla-style tactics such as shooting attacks against military targets and settlements.<sup>2</sup> While, according to data provided in the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 135 suicide bombings were carried out since the outbreak of the second intifada until

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<sup>2</sup> Ricolfi's statistical analysis of incidents during the second intifada reports three levels of conflict: extremist Palestinian militancy which include suicide and fratricidal missions; military combat; and popular street violence. Hence suicide bombings were only one tactic used alongside other more guerrilla-style tactics by organisations during the second intifada. See Luca Ricolfi, "Palestinians, 1981-2003," in *Making Sense of Suicide Missions*, ed. Diego Gambetta, 77-130 (Oxford: OUP 2005), 127.

the end of 2004 as well as 84 non-suicide bombing attacks,<sup>3</sup> it is much more difficult to obtain data on other kinds of Palestinian militant activity. However, interviewees did report of shooting attacks against Israeli targets, often from Palestinian residential areas, or from among Palestinian crowds during demonstrations.<sup>4</sup> RAND's terrorism database logs 112 armed attacks in Israel (including settlements) between 1 October 2000 and the end of December 2004.<sup>5</sup> Although the identity of the perpetrators is not always identified the vast majority of these attacks appear to have been carried out by Palestinians or from Palestinian areas, especially Bethlehem and Beit Jala, which run alongside major Israeli settlements in the Jerusalem vicinity.

That suicide bombing is heavily contextualised is also supported by the fact that suicide bombings almost entirely stopped with the end of the intifada. While Israeli administration points to the separation wall as the main measure for protecting its citizens and indeed it has made it more difficult for Palestinians to reach Israel, it does not explain why suicide bombings stopped against settlements, settlers, or military personnel and checkpoints. Although settlements do have tight security restrictions, soldiers at many checkpoints are quite exposed, and some sections of the West Bank road network are shared which would offer further opportunities for attacks. While such attacks may not result in a high number of casualties compared to attacks in Israel during the second intifada, the PFLP for example, and some Islamic Jihad attacks targeted settlements and checkpoints throughout the height of the second uprising. It is interesting then, that these attacks were also largely discontinued.<sup>6</sup>

Recent studies into employment and labour in Israel also point to a considerable number of Palestinians working in Israel without permits, offering an attractive labour force to Israeli employers because they cannot claim insurance or social security, and there have been cases of Palestinians that worked in Israel without permits in order to support their families and were subsequently caught by Israeli police.<sup>7</sup> Hence, some Palestinians are still able to reach Israel without permits,

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<sup>3</sup> Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 105-11.

<sup>4</sup> INTERVIEW # 11.

<sup>5</sup> For RAND's terrorism database see RAND, Terrorism Incident Database Search, [http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search\\_form.php](http://smapp.rand.org/rwtid/search_form.php) (accessed 13 September 2011).

<sup>6</sup> One notable incident that occurred during the fieldwork was the shooting of four settlers in the West Bank 2010 by a previously unknown group. "4 Israelis Dead in West Bank Shooting Attack," *Ma'an*, 02 September 2010, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=312242> (accessed 13 September 2011).

<sup>7</sup> The earlier cited article in the Jerusalem Post from 2010 claims that 16,000 Palestinian workers out

albeit at high risk. Both the absence of suicide bombings against targets inside the West Bank and the fact that Palestinians still manage to enter Israel ‘illegally’ suggests that Israel’s separation measures cannot be the sole factor in deterring suicide bombings.

None of the strategic goals for Palestinians have been achieved: no state, no end to occupation, no end to movement restrictions, and no end to settlements. However, suicide bombings have not continued, which suggests that contextual factors are no longer conducive to this tactic and hence resistance activities shifted to other means. It certainly appears to be the Palestinian viewpoint that suicide bombing stopped because it was no longer in the interest of Palestinians.<sup>8</sup> This would suggest that the phenomenon is rational, controlled and contextualised but it is not itself a strategy.

The phenomenon is normally studied in a way that is disconnected from the military context in the occupied territories which deprives it of certain strands of explanation. Hamas and the PFLP for example, have maintained repeatedly that their activities are a direct response, or reaction, to Israeli violence (especially assassinations) against Palestinians, usually members of either the political or military wing of a party.<sup>9</sup> Contextual approaches are sometimes seen to deflect responsibility away from perpetrators, yet they do not seek to justify the killing of innocent civilians; lifting actions out of context makes it difficult to explain why certain events occurred. Bates presents the following problem: When we observe how someone is inflicting damage on someone else we rely on contextual knowledge in order to assess the political relevance of the act. A family head may refuse the request for bridal dowry; a faction leader may withhold patronage; and a mayor may use law enforcement to rid himself of a political rival. While in all three cases harm may be inflicted, it is only through knowledge of the context that we can make assumptions about the motivation and strategy of these behaviours. Without the

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of 44,000 employed in the Israeli economy from the West Bank lacked a work permit, taking its figures from the Israeli Central Bank. However, the figures do not differentiate between workers in settlements (who, also require work permits but these are easier to obtain) and workers in Israel. Sharon Wrobel, “Cheap Palestinian Workers.” The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics claims that 17,000 Palestinians worked in Israel or Israeli settlements without a work permit in the last quarter of 2010 and estimates the number of Palestinian workers employed in the Israeli economy for this period at 78,000. See “Few Options for Educated Youth Under Occupation,” *Ma’an*, 1 June 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=392229> (accessed 03 September 2011).

<sup>8</sup> INTERVIEW #4.

<sup>9</sup> INTERVIEW #15.

local knowledge the act of inflicting harm is ‘observationally equivalent’.<sup>10</sup> Extracting Palestinian violence from the surroundings of all violent and non-violent manifestations of military occupation, daily discrimination as well as settler violence, makes Palestinian violence inexplicable. Anat Berko’s book *The Path to Paradise* exemplifies such a de-contextualised analysis. Her analysis of her interviews with imprisoned potential or ‘failed’ suicide bombers and leaders advocating and supporting such acts, most notably the late Shaykh Ahmed Yassin, ignores the long list of political frustrations, injustices, and humiliation that interviewees regard Palestinians to have suffered at the hands of Israel. She concludes that suicide bombers are motivated to commit these violent acts by deep-felt hatred against Israel and blinded by a religious promise for a guaranteed path to heaven. She talks in detail about the waves of hatred she feels emanating from one interviewee in particular towards herself but offers no reflection on the impact of her own identity, a Jewish career officer in the IDF, on the interview process or the content it produced. Her unwillingness to ‘listen’ to the Palestinian narrative is exemplified in the following excerpt:

According to Nazima, her father’s family came from a village near Ashdod and her mother was born in a village near Bersheeba. Her mother told her about how the Jews shelled them and how they fled from their villages, although judging by her age it is hard to believe she could remember anything, and it is more probable that she heard stories from other people. During the interviews I heard many stories about the experiences of refugees. In 1947, after the Israelis accepted, the Arabs rejected the UN partition plan and the armies of all the Arab states attacked the Jewish state that had been established in Eretz-Israel. In the wake of Israel’s War of Independence, the Arab population which fled during the fighting, concentrated in refugee camps established in places like Gaza Strip (which was Egyptian), the West Bank (which was Jordanian), Lebanon, and Syria. Only Jordan absorbed the Arab refugees as citizens, and the term “Palestinians,” meaning Arabs living in Israel and the territories, only came into use around 1967. Though there is some truth in the stories, they are often elaborated with imaginary experiences. The younger generation is brought up hearing them and

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<sup>10</sup> Robert Bates, “Area Studies and the Disciple: A Useful Controversy?” *Political Science and Politics* 30, no.2 (June 1997):168.



imbued with the trauma of being a refugee, perhaps the longest stretch of refugeedom in history.<sup>11</sup>

Berko's depiction of 1948 and the Palestinians is an exemplary account of the standard Israeli view of the historical events. The view of the nascent Israeli state under threat from the mighty Arab armies, the de-contextualisation of the Palestinian rejection of the UN partition plan, the rejection of the existence of Palestinians as a people and their forceful evictions from their homes, are all characteristic of this view that has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Although she is very critical of the stories of refugees, she does not appear to be so in relation to her own history. Particularly interesting is also her comment on refugeehood. While self-victimisation is regular rhetoric on both sides, refugee children do not need to be imbued "with the trauma of being a refugee," for most of them, in the overcrowded and poor camps in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon it is a daily lived reality. To Berko's final remark one may cynically retort that a 60 odd year memory of refugeehood pales in comparison to an almost 2000 year old memory of the right of return.

There is a tendency to define peace in the Middle East in terms of absence or presence of Palestinian attacks.<sup>12</sup> While Palestinians live under constant military occupation and its daily manifestations of violence and aggression, assessments of 'peace' and 'peaceful' are Israeli-centred. Periods free of Palestinian attacks against Israeli targets are usually described as relatively calm. By the same token, violence during the second intifada is often measured based on violent attacks carried out by Palestinians against Israeli citizens. Violence against Palestinians, on the other hand, remains often unreported. Because suicide bombings primarily target civilians and have the potential to result in high numbers of casualties, they attracted media attention worldwide. Israeli operations by contrast remained relatively unnoticed to the outside world despite the fact that they caused high numbers of fatalities among Palestinians, leading to almost four times as many casualties on the Palestinian side as the Israeli side.<sup>13</sup> According to JPS data 3,588 Palestinians were killed during the

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<sup>11</sup> Anat Berko, *The Path to Paradise: The Inner World of Suicide Bombers and their Dispatchers*, trans. Elizabeth Yuval (Westport, Praeger, 2007), 3.

<sup>12</sup> Baroud, "Second Palestinian Intifada," 88.

<sup>13</sup> The understanding of peace in the Israeli-Palestinian context is hence normally one of a negative asymmetric peace where an absence of violence against Israelis denotes a calm or peaceful situation while violence against Palestinians goes mostly unnoticed or is framed as a necessary mechanism of

Al Aqsa intifada up to the end of 2004, 273 were assassinated, and 76 Palestinians died because of denial of medical treatment.<sup>14</sup> Al-Haq also reported 27,600 injured and 8,000 in detention. On the Israeli side, JPS recorded 930 Israeli casualties as the result of the intifada.<sup>15</sup> The destruction of homes of suicide bombers became one of the major forms of punishment practiced by the Israeli military in response to suicide bombings. B'Tselem reports that 3,700 houses were destroyed during the intifada. However, while 620 homes were demolished as punitive measures against Palestinians who carried out or were suspected of having carried out violent offences against Israeli civilians or members of the security forces, 2,270 houses were demolished for general 'security' reasons, and more than 800 houses were demolished because owners lacked the required permits.<sup>16</sup>

At the beginning of the intifada, with Ehud Barak still in power and peace efforts still ongoing, Israeli operations focussed mainly on isolating Palestinian population centres and used disproportionate force to break up protests.<sup>17</sup> According to an IDF estimate during the month of October between 850,000 and 1.3 million 5.56mm bullets were used despite the fact that Palestinians were still mostly using stones, and only on a limited scale Molotov cocktails or firearms.<sup>18</sup> Figures from the Palestinian Red Crescent Society support this observation, logging 5,984 injuries from live ammunition, rubber/plastic bullets and tear gas, and 141 deaths during the first month of the intifada. In the second month injuries amounted to 3,838 and 123 deaths were counted. Only in the third month are the figures considerably lower, recording 781 injuries and 63 deaths.<sup>19</sup> Comparing this to the overall figure of injuries until the end of 2004 which amounts to 28,372, the first three months account for 37% of injuries. The preparedness of the Israeli military and police for a confrontation with the Palestinians, discussed in chapter two and three, played a significant role in this heavy-handedness in the first months of the intifada. For the rest of the period injuries fluctuated from a low of 34 in July 2003 to a high of 932 in 2001. As for fatal injuries, the first three months claimed 327 deaths. In contrast to

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control to ensure a state of calm on the Israeli side.

<sup>14</sup> Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 98.

<sup>15</sup> Up to the end of 2004.

<sup>16</sup> Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 100, see footnote 21.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> PRCS, "Daily Numbers of Deaths and Injuries – West Bank & Gaza," 30 September 2000 – 31 August 2008, <http://www.palestinercs.org/reports/casualtiestable1.pdf> (accessed 20 January 2012).

injuries, the highest death toll is not found at the beginning of the intifada but in March and April 2002 with 234 casualties in March and 245 casualties in April, a period that covers two major Israeli operations: ‘Operation Colourful Journey’ and ‘Operation Defensive Shield.’

While the phenomenon of suicide bombing is often seen as the hallmark of Palestinian resistance during the second intifada, the first operation was not carried out until a month into the uprising. As already discussed above, the early stages of the intifada were dominated by demonstrations and stone-throwing, with a disproportionate violent reaction from the Israeli forces, resulting in a high level of casualties among Palestinians. The three bombings carried out at the end of 2000 targeted crossings or settlements in the occupied territories. The first bombing took place on 29 October 2000 at the Kissufim crossing<sup>20</sup> and was claimed by Islamic Jihad, wounding one. The second bombing targeted an IDF boat off the Gaza coast and the third bombing the Mehola settlement in the Jordan valley. Both the latter two were unclaimed and resulted in neither injuries nor casualties.

After the first suicide bombing claimed by Islamic Jihad and which injured one soldier, Barak implemented a plan aimed at pressuring Yasser Arafat to halt Palestinian violence. The new IDF strategy targeted the offices, security posts and personnel of Fateh and Force 17.<sup>21</sup> Israel’s first targeted assassination was carried out on 9 November 2000. As of August 2001 the IDF began to implement operations with a clear aim, limited time frame, a sealing of the target area and a significant deployment of troops. Such operations succeeded one another without much delay except for a brief pause between November 2002 and October 2003, which was the result of concerted diplomatic efforts to bring the parties to return to negotiations. Israeli activity was, however, not limited to these military operations. The number of Palestinian casualties recorded outside these operations was twice as high.<sup>22</sup> Once the IDF had essentially destroyed the PA infrastructure by the end of 2002, operations were aimed at establishing new security lines: preparation for Israel’s disengagement of Gaza, the establishment of buffer zones on the northern and southern borders of Gaza, and the construction of the separation wall.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Located in the Gaza Strip.

<sup>21</sup> Esposito, “Al-Aqsa Intifada,” 86.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 86-7.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 87.

Israeli incursions and sieges had an impact on Palestinians that went far beyond what can be said in figures. Interviews conducted with Palestinians during the second intifada describe how houses were besieged and destroyed, property was damaged during the occupation of homes,<sup>24</sup> houses were bombed, electricity and water were cut off leading to acute water shortage, prolonged curfews led to food shortage, women had to deliver babies under curfew without medical assistance in some cases resulting in the death of new-borns, and there was no possibility to bury the dead.<sup>25</sup>

A journalist during the intifada describes his experience as follows:

So, I've been in cities such as Nablus and Jenin where bodies remained for almost a week for people being killed or even...I worked on a story where people...who died for normal causes were not able to be transferred to the hospital or to cemeteries to be buried. So, this can tell that, the situation was totally different and fear existed among people to leave their houses because the moment the people opened the door a bullet was expected to be shot in their direction. And I witnessed also battles where fighters were carrying only rifles were confronting a tank, and F16, or Apache.<sup>26</sup>

The most intensive year of the intifada in terms of suicide bombing was certainly 2002, which at the same time also saw the most intensive and prolonged incursions into Palestinian residential areas. 28 bombings were carried out in 2001, while in 2002 the phenomenon reached an average of one bombing per week with 54 bombings taking place. During 2003, 24 bombings were recorded and the frequency declined in 2004 to 13 bombings.<sup>27</sup> (These figures do not include suicide attacks.) What is interesting is that during the height of the operations of the IDF in the West Bank, the reoccupation of population centres, the prolonged curfews imposed, and

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<sup>24</sup> Many Palestinians have experience of their houses being searched and occupied by the Israeli army and have stories to tell about the damage to property and theft. See for example Majdi al-Malki's story at Majdi al-Malki, "Personal Account: How Israeli Soldiers Terrorized a Palestinian Family, Ransacked and Urinated all over Their Home," Redress Information and Analysis, 7 April 2002, <http://www.redress.btinternet.co.uk/mmalki.htm> (accessed 15 January 2012). Governmental as well as non-governmental offices were also searched and occupied. Al Haq's office was broken into by the army during the 2002 incursion into Ramallah and much of the office equipment was damaged. The IDF also occupied the building of the Ministry of Culture located in al Bireh several weeks, leaving behind it floors covered in faeces and urine. See Amira Hass, "Someone Even Managed to Defecate into the Photocopier," *The Haaretz*, 06 May 2002, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/features/someone-even-managed-to-defecate-into-the-photocopier-1.46032> (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>25</sup> See for example interviews conducted with women by WCLAC, "If I Were Given a Choice."

<sup>26</sup> INTERVIEW #20.

<sup>27</sup> Based on statistics provided in Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada."

the extensive operational plan to isolate different areas from one another through movement restrictions, suicide bombings continued regardless of these restrictions. During Operation Defensive Shield, which lasted around six weeks, 13 bombings were conducted. However, six of the operations were carried out on occupied territory, either targeting checkpoints or settlements. This suggests that the deployment of troops and general movement restrictions during this period may have made it more difficult to carry out attacks on the other side of the Green Line.

The question of whether suicide bombings are connected to Israeli violence and incursions into Palestinian territories naturally arises. For Ricolfi, there is no statistical connection between suicide bombings and Israeli military operations.<sup>28</sup> He identifies a causal relationship between terrorism and anti-terrorism but not vice versa. Statistically seen, suicide missions have had two main effects: they sparked off Israeli military response and they incited the crowds. However, he argues that there is no causal relationship in the other direction.<sup>29</sup>

By contrast, Brym and Araj come to exactly the opposite conclusion; their paper argues that much of the impetus for suicide bombings during the second Palestinian intifada can be explained by a desire to avenge the killings of Palestinians by Israelis, and that much of the impetus of Israeli killings of Palestinians is driven by a desire to retaliate for suicide bombings.<sup>30</sup> Their study points to the interactive nature between suicide bombing and Israeli military operations, locking both sides into destructive cycle of violence. Brym and Araj relied on content analysis using newspaper sources and databases to determine the individual motives, organisational rationales and precipitants. Ricolfi, by contrast, appears to have used a purely time-related analysis, ‘using markers of one factor as dependent variables and the markers of the other two, lagged by one week, as independent variables.’<sup>31</sup> Brym and Araj’s analysis on the other hand identified primary, secondary, and tertiary motives, rationales and precipitants. The preceding events affecting the timing of the suicide bombings were divided into reactive and proactive. The analysis concluded that 82% of the 106 precipitants that were

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<sup>28</sup> Ricolfi, “Palestinians,” 127.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Robert J. Brym and Araj Bader, “Suicide Bombing as Strategy and Interaction: The Case of the Second Intifada,” *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 2006): 1969-86.

<sup>31</sup> Ricolfi, *Palestinians*, 127.

identified in the article were reactive.<sup>32</sup> The article also points out that, due to Israeli security measures following a spate of particularly lethal suicide bombings in early 2002, the time between precipitant and Palestinian reaction increased. Hamas' response to Israel's assassination of Shaykh Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantisi came four and five months later while in the early stages of the intifada the typical response time was around three weeks. The assassination of Rehavam Ze'evi in 2001 by the PFLP in response to the assassination of the party's secretary general Abu Ali Mustafa through rockets fired from Israeli Apache helicopters, although not a suicide bombing, also fits into this pattern: Rehavam Zee'vi was assassinated on 17 October 2001 while Abu Ali Mustafa had died around four weeks earlier. It appears that Ricolfi underestimated the response time and hence claimed there was no causal relationship between Israeli military policies and Palestinian suicide bombings.

Israel carried out 273 definite assassinations with 170 bystanders killed and 550 wounded; 99 possible assassinations with 27 bystanders killed and 25 wounded; 83 definite assassination attempts with 63 bystanders killed and 315 wounded; 10 possible assassination attempts with 2 bystanders killed and 1 wounded.<sup>33</sup> The term bystander in these figures does not denote civilian but also includes militants that were in proximity of the target but were not themselves the target of the assassination. Nevertheless, Israeli assassination practices resulted in a significant number of civilian casualties. The assassination of Hamas military leader Salah Shehade in Gaza City in 2002 led to an intense debate about the legality of such practices. The assassination which killed Shehade also killed 19 bystanders and injured 140. In response to pressure from human rights organisations, an Israeli panel concluded its probe into the legality of the Hamas leader's assassination in February 2011 and found that the assassination was justified despite the death of 13 civilians, including 8 children, and women. The human rights organisations had argued that dropping a one-ton bomb on a densely populated residential area such as Gaza City, constituted a criminal offence.<sup>34</sup>

Hamas repeatedly argued that suicide bombings were in retaliation for the assassination carried out by the Israeli military. A PFLP member stated that all

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<sup>32</sup> Brym and Araj, "Suicide Bombing," 1978.

<sup>33</sup> Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 121.

<sup>34</sup> "Israel: Shehadeh Assassination Justified Despite Mass Casualties," *Ma'an*, 28 February 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=363986> (accessed 03 September 2011).

militant actions against Israel are a ‘reaction’ to Israeli policies.<sup>35</sup> The PFLP took responsibility for the assassination of Israel’s far-right Tourist Minister Rehavam Ze’evi in Jerusalem’s Hyatt hotel on 17 October 2001.<sup>36</sup> This was the first assassination of a political leader by a Palestinian group since the establishment of the State of Israel. Rehavam Ze’evi was well known for his extremely hostile stance against Palestinians, he openly advocated the transfer of Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza to Jordan, he called on Sharon to ‘lay waste’ to the Palestinian Authority, and he loudly supported Israel’s assassination policy of Palestinian militant as well as political leaders, even Yasser Arafat.<sup>37</sup> In fact, it was the assassination of their own leader, Abu Ali Mustapha that prompted the PFLP to kill Ze’evi.<sup>38</sup>

#### **4.2 The Psychological Impact – The Individual**

While there is a strong argument that Israeli violence against Palestinian political and militant figures elicited a direct response from militant groups and supporters of these groups, there is also a question of how the ongoing level of violence may have affected the ordinary population and in what way this could have influenced individuals to volunteer for suicide bombing operations. The individual bombers themselves may have been primarily affected by violence they experienced personally, or violence experienced by their friends or relatives, or even the violence to which the Palestinian people as a whole are subjected. While organisations may stage attacks to avenge their leaders, feelings of revenge may be much closer to home for the actual perpetrators. Indeed, Israeli violence Palestinians has always been part of any Palestinian life, not only the violence Palestinians experienced during the second intifada. Almost all Palestinians would have come into contact

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<sup>35</sup> When I used the word ‘violence’, the interviewee objected very strongly and said that this was not violence but a reaction to Israeli activities.

<sup>36</sup> See PFLP statement on Zeevi’s assassination “October 17: The Heroic Operation,” *PFLP*, <http://www.pflp.ps/english/?q=october-17-heroic-operation> (accessed 07 May 2011). The PFLP also claims in that Zeevi’s assassination was a response to Israel’s assassination policy which, the party claims, to that point was responsible for seventy Palestinian victims. “Statement on PA Banning of PFLP Military Wing,” *PFLP*, <http://www.pflp.ps/english/?q=statement-pa-banning-pflp-military-wing-2001> (accessed 07 May 2011).

<sup>37</sup> Suzanne Goldberg, “Far-Right Leader Who Fell Victim to His Own Ideas,” *The Guardian*, 18 October 2001, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2001/oct/18/israel2> (accessed 03 September 2011).

<sup>38</sup> This as a turning point in the intifada when the leadership began to lose control over the events.

with military occupation at one time or another during their lives through checkpoints, closures, curfews, house searches, arrests, imprisonment, and some may even have experienced the death of a relative, someone among one's circle of friends or acquaintances. Mental health specialists have investigated over the years what kind of effect various manifestations of Israeli violence have had on different age groups of Palestinians as well as the different gender groups. While effects and grievances emerging from the humiliation and frustration over lack of opportunity developed over decades of occupation will be the topic later on in the chapter, here we focus on how violence may have made individuals more prone for engaging in conflict and may have created feelings of revenge.

Eyad Sarraj, a Gazan psychiatrist who has extensively researched the mental health effects of the conflict on Palestinians, especially children and youth, commented that suicide bombings and all other forms of violence committed are only symptoms or reactions, and in order to stop suicide bombings the real pathology – the ‘chronic and systematic process of humiliating people in an effort to destroy their hope and dignity,’ needs to be treated.<sup>39</sup> Until the causes of the ‘illness’ are treated i.e. a just and dignified solution to the conflict and a national process of reconciliation that allows Palestinians to come to terms with their trauma and pain,<sup>40</sup> violence will not end. Sarraj predicts that if no fair political solution is found, the next intifada will be even more violent and the first indicator for this is that it is the children of the first intifada that became the suicide bombers of the second intifada.<sup>41</sup> As children witnessed how helpless their fathers, normally the authority figure in the family, were in the face of occupation (55% of children had witnessed how Israeli soldiers beat or humiliated their fathers in the first intifada), the martyr has become a symbol of power that many have eagerly embraced. Although it may appear slightly absurd or contradictory that someone destined to die is empowered, the martyr sacrifices his life for the sake of his community, as a symbol for the struggle to obtain freedom for the Palestinian people.<sup>42</sup> As such, the bomber fulfils a powerful and important role in the eyes of the community. Sarraj also recounts how Palestinian children no longer dream to be doctors or lawyers but they want to

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<sup>39</sup> “Suicide Bombers: Dignity, Despair, and the Need for Hope. An Interview with Eyad Sarraj,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 31, no.4 (Summer 2002): 73.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 75-6.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>42</sup> One interviewee commented that suicide bombers make a huge sacrifice for the sake of their communities. INTERVIEW #14.



become martyrs. The stories of small children, who celebrate the death of such martyrs and dream of meeting the same destiny one day, were picked up eagerly by sensationalist journalists and reporters. However, as we are all deeply shaped by our environments, it does not seem very surprising that for individuals who grow up in this daily reality of violence, manifestations of violence no longer seem anything out of the ordinary but become the norm.

There is some suggestion that experiencing violence as a collective may have less damaging effects on mental health, and act as protection. Knowing that everyone else is in the same boat and being able to talk about shared experiences may alleviate the potential damaging effect that violent or traumatic events may have on the mental health of individuals.<sup>43</sup> Based on this assumption it would seem that shelling, bombardment, curfews and checkpoints are less likely to have damaging effects than arrests or administrative detention, for example. However, a survey conducted of Palestinian 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade adolescents (15-18 years old) from the Ramallah District concluded, contrary to the initial hypothesis, that individual exposure to violence did not consistently have a greater negative effect on health outcomes than collective exposures. The study was concluded in 2002-2003, during what was the most intense period of the conflict.<sup>44</sup> Army invasions, the destruction of homes and property, prolonged curfews, house searches, and the erection of the separation wall, led to direct and intense exposure to violence.<sup>45</sup> The survey found that, in terms of individual exposure, 35% of the respondents had their homes searched; 14% had their homes occupied whilst they were in them and 9% were thrown out in the process of house occupation; 15% were beaten by the Israeli army; 2.4% were beaten by Israeli settlers; 6% were used as a human shield; 30% were body searched; 17% were detained or arrested; 23% were humiliated; 2.1 % were stripped in public; 13% were interrogated; 4.8% were tortured; and 1.7% saw their homes demolished. Naturally the percentage of exposure to collective violence is higher: 31% experienced shelling in the neighbourhood; 60% reported they were exposed to teargas and 63% to sound bombs; 80% saw shooting, 50% explosion/shelling; 67% saw a stranger being humiliated; 62% saw a stranger being arrested; 49% saw a

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<sup>43</sup> INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>44</sup> Rita Giacaman, Harry S. Shannon, Hanna Saab, et al., "Individual and Collective Exposure to Political Violence: Palestinian Adolescents Coping with Conflict," *European Journal of Public Health* 17, no.4 (November 2006): 361.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 361.

stranger being injured; 28% saw a stranger being killed; 35% saw a neighbour or friend being humiliated; 37% saw a friend/neighbour being arrested; 37% saw a friend/neighbour being injured; and 11% saw a friend/neighbour being killed.<sup>46</sup>

The study showed a strong relationship between exposure to trauma and violence and the adolescents' mental health. Girls tended to show more signs of depressive-like symptoms than boys, and such symptoms were also more prevalent among adolescents living in refugee camps than those living in cities, villages or towns. The investigators of the study concluded that it is because of the particular meaning of identity and culture in the Palestinian context that, contrary to their initial assumption, individually experienced violence did not have a greater health impact than collective violence. While in other situations collective violence may have a protective function, for Palestinians this may not be the case. As Palestinians have a strong sense of community and family, violence against these social entities may have a stronger traumatic effect on individuals, rather than a protective one, because they identify with the collective.<sup>47</sup> Moreover, the findings of this particular study appear to suggest that violence has resulted in depression rather than aggression. However, there is also evidence that the trauma of the second intifada triggered more reactionary and aggressive emotional states. For a Fateh member, who articulates suicide bombings as a struggle of a people under occupation when faced with Apache helicopters, experiencing house demolitions and other policies by the occupation, the violence of suicide bombings and the violence of the Israeli military are intrinsically connected.<sup>48</sup> How suffering, emotional pain and humiliation developed into hatred and desire for revenge becomes evident in interviews conducted by WCLAC with women during the second intifada.

The loss of dignity is a central and recurring theme for Palestinians. However, the sentiment is more borne out of discrimination and humiliation rather than aggression and violence. Humiliation and loss are not necessarily personal but the result of a traumatisation of a whole people through historical events as well as the present situation. Similar to the point made in the study above, Palestinians have a strong sense of themselves as a people and therefore the humiliation experienced as a collective in the past and in the present determines how individuals see themselves.

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<sup>46</sup> Giacaman et al. "Individual and Collective Exposure," 364.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 364.

<sup>48</sup> INTERVIEW # 17

Although ‘dignity’ was interestingly not a frequently used term during interviews (however concepts related to dignity such as humiliation did occur), in informal conversation humiliation, impotence in the face of Israeli policies and loss of dignity are recurring and crucial notions. While such concepts are difficult to measure scientifically and its causal relations perhaps even less so, they are apparent and omnipresent to the alert observer: the long queues at Qalandia in the mornings of men waiting patiently for up to two hours to pass through the checkpoint to go to work in Israel, the shouting of disinterested teenage soldiers, the random closing of terminals and changing ID requirements for queues at will; young men kneeling at the road side, hands bound to the back and eyes to the floor, guarded by a soldier while their car is being searched; the segregation of cars at checkpoints within the West Bank where Israelis can pass freely while Palestinians have to get into a separate lane and wait patiently to be checked by the Israeli soldiers; the celebratory display of flags and honking of cars driving through West Bank territory on Israeli independence day, the same event that for Palestinians marks the *nakba*; perhaps the humiliation and dispossession was most acutely felt by the young men in the dilapidated refugee camps with high unemployment rates, whose families wistfully speak about their origins in villages inside Israel, their previous lives – often as farmers and fishermen – and their property which is no longer accessible to them.

### **4.3 Territorial Fragmentation: Organisational Changes, the Individual and Social Networks**

Chapter three discussed at length the impact of territorial fragmentation on social and economic aspects of life. This section seeks to establish if the fragmentation also affected the organisational and operational running of the militant activities and in what way this may have shaped the phenomenon of suicide bombing. Some analysts have suggested that the structure of militant organisations changed with the second intifada. While Hamas, for example, was previously more hierarchically structured, its configuration, at least in terms of its military wing, became much looser, based on cells organised around individual leaders.<sup>49</sup> This new structure gave militant groups a great deal of flexibility. Despite the assassination of

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<sup>49</sup> A shift noted by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perlinger, “The Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks: A Social Network Perspective,” in *Social Forces* 84, no. 4 (June 2006): esp. 1988.

over 273 members of organisations, some belonging to political branches and some to militant wings, and many of them top leaders, the operations continued. It appears that political and militant organisations were much more flexible and able to adapt to new circumstances than civil society organisations. How civil society organisations were unable to offer support and organise themselves efficiently during the second uprising due to movement restrictions and the centralisation of their structures was already discussed in detail in chapter two. Unlike the militant groups, they seem to have been unable to organise themselves more locally and independently and to adapt to the new environment quickly in order to make an impact. One possible explanation for the swifter response from militants is that they necessarily had to adapt due to Israel's widespread assassination policy, while civil society organisers certainly did not face threats to themselves or their organisation's existence on the same scale. Moreover, the Oslo period had weakened what had promised to flourish into a lively, pluralistic civil society after the first intifada. Palestine's civil society, now largely made up of NGOs had lost touch with the grassroots and this lack of grassroots-level involvement meant that during the second intifada NGOs were not able to mobilise the masses. Militant groups, on the other hand, had a much easier task as they did not have to develop a political programme and did not have to mobilise the masses directly. Visible resistance to the occupation in general, and the 'spectacular' suicide bombings in particular, succeeded in galvanising the masses.

Territorial fragmentation did not only lead to organisational adaptation but also affected individual participation. It may be one possible explanation of why suicide bombers tended to come from the same area. This coincides with an observation made by Ricolfi. He identified a 'clustering' of places of origin of the bombers and concludes that emulation and peer pressure were the underlying forces behind this phenomenon.<sup>50</sup> He argues that a tiny number of refugee camps around the towns of Hebron, Nablus and Jenin supplied the majority of suicide bombers.<sup>51</sup> For Ricolfi, the most telling example was the recruitment of 8 attackers from a football team of eleven players in Hebron. Six of the eight attackers were neighbours too and belonged to the Al-Kwassama clan.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Ricolfi, "Palestinians," 113.

<sup>51</sup> However, we will see in the next section where we will discuss regional and social origins of the bombers, that this is not an accurate observation.

<sup>52</sup> See Ricolfi, "Palestinians," 113. For original source see Guido Olimpio, "I ragazzi della squadra della morte: Da terzini di calcio a bombe umane," *Corriere della Sera*, 30 May 2003,

This phenomenon of ‘clustering’ may be best explained by emulation through social networks and while this is a helpful observation, we can only understand it in the context of territorial fragmentation and the contraction of space in which Palestinians go about their daily lives. With the territorial changes over the Oslo period, people’s social worlds have come to revolve around their immediate locality. Figures discussed in chapter two showed that students increasingly began to attend universities in their own districts. Labour migration was also largely limited to districts. These observations support the assumption that social interaction for Palestinians is confined to a relatively small geographical area. While the size of the West Bank is only around 5860 km<sup>2</sup> (only a little over twice the size of County Durham which in comparison covers an area of 2676 km<sup>2</sup>) travelling for Palestinians is time-consuming and unpredictable because of the complex layers of movement restrictions. During the second intifada between 2000 and 2009, the city of Nablus, for example, was surrounded by nine checkpoints, of which many were only passable on foot.<sup>53</sup> As a result travellers could not use their own vehicles but had to change transport several times throughout their journey. Even now in 2011 there are up to 1000 internal obstacles inside the West Bank that hinder movement.<sup>54</sup> On a shopping errand in Ramallah, the author struck up a conversation with a young shopping assistant who explained she had never left Ramallah and was fascinated to meet someone from abroad. She had relatives in Hebron but thought the journey was far too difficult and long.<sup>55</sup> The author also met a family, who had not left Ramallah for years because they did not have the right identity documents and were afraid they may be deported if stopped at a checkpoint.

We naturally tend to emulate the life style of those that we look up to around us. The clustering of suicide bombings is essentially the product of the drive for emulation combined with geographical contraction. The creation of martyr posters initiated a trend in which young teenagers went out to have their photo taken and

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[http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2003/maggio/30/ragazzi\\_della\\_squadra\\_della\\_morte\\_co\\_0\\_030530001.shtml](http://archiviostorico.corriere.it/2003/maggio/30/ragazzi_della_squadra_della_morte_co_0_030530001.shtml) (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>53</sup> In the summer of 2009 for the first time in nine years Palestinian could drive their cars in or out of the city.

<sup>54</sup> “Aid work delayed by barriers,” *Ma’an*, 11 May 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=386606> (accessed 12 September 2011)

<sup>55</sup> Although it may on most occasions be safe and unproblematic to travel from Ramallah to Hebron under the current situation, the sense of unpredictability and fear have a significant impact on decisions people take. Only a few years ago the journey to Hebron involved several changes of transport, passing of checkpoints on foot, and the journey could take up to four hours.

told their friends that if they would ever become a martyr they wanted this specific picture on the poster. The young generation began to dream to be martyrs, just as Sarraj had observed among small children. When a classmate died as a martyr, the children did not only want to remember him but they also aspired to be like him. Similarly, confronting the army became a manifestation of heroism. Initially, when the army reoccupied Areas A of the West Bank territories, youths were frightened and sought to avoid the army but then later began to climb tanks and dismantle and collect pieces as a sign of bravery.<sup>56</sup> In some cases teenagers even imitated to be martyrs and pretended to be suicide bombers on their way for a mission when in reality they did not even have explosives.<sup>57</sup> While it does not seem to have been reported by the IDF that youths were arrested and found without explosives, it is difficult to establish whether this was the case or not.

Although emulation in geographically contracted spaces provides some convincing insights into the motivations behind suicide bombing, following the example of those around us cannot be the full explanation. The problem with social network explanations is that they are selective in what networks or links they consider and do not explain why some individuals who are tied to people inside a given network are not part of the network: they are also linked through friendship and family but were not co-opted into the network. Similarly, people may be recruited through family and friendship ties but family ties in Palestinian society are vast, so we would still have to explain why certain family ties would be pursued and hundreds of others not. As such, social networks are a necessary but not sufficient condition for ‘membership’ in the network. However, they may be helpful for explaining the workings within organisations and give some insight to recruitment mechanisms but can tell us little about motivations behind ‘selecting’ certain individuals or the motivation on the part of the individuals seeking to engage in this kind of activity.

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<sup>56</sup> Observations made by interviewee in Jenin refugee camp. INTERVIEW #20.

<sup>57</sup> Interviewee also pointed that out that in some cases teenagers wanted to be arrested for financial reasons because of the lack of work during the intifada so that their families would receive a salary whilst they were in jail. INTERVIEW #20.

#### **4.4 Social Fragmentation: Geographic Origins and Social Backgrounds of Suicide Bombers**

While the previous section investigated how territorial fragmentation may have had an impact on operational and organisational aspects and how it may have affected the recruitment of the perpetrators through emulation via their social networks, this section will look at whether the divisions that Israeli measures created in Palestinian society are reflected in the social and geographic background of suicide bombers. The first question that will be examined is how regional inequality is related to the phenomenon of suicide bombing.

One comment received during the interviews was that suicide bombers predominantly came from the North, probably because the North was more affected by checkpoints and settlements.<sup>58</sup> This comment would suggest that a disproportionate geographic impact of Israeli territorial control would lead to disproportionate geographic participation in such operations. The third chapter established that the occupation had affected rural and refugee populations disproportionately in comparison to urban inhabitants.

Inequality in relation to suicide bombings is usually discussed in terms of relative deprivation. '[R]elative deprivation implies that the critical motivating factor for individuals is not an absolute measure of well-being, but it is the comparison between an individual's well-being, and that of some unspecified reference group. Second, relative deprivation implies that the importance of the difference between that individual's economic rewards and that of the reference group's is based upon the psychological impact of the inequality.'<sup>59</sup> Sayre's study of Palestinian suicide bombing considers three reference groups. Firstly, it compares economic development in the West Bank to economic development in Israel in the post-Oslo years, highlighting that economic performance in the West Bank worsened considerably relative to Israel. While the West Bank economy recorded more years of negative growth in this period than positive growth, the Israeli economy showed continuous growth without a single year of negative real GDP per capita growth. Second, Sayre also investigated the relationship between education and employment and looked at economic data for the different Palestinian regions. He finds that the

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<sup>58</sup> INTERVIEW #14.

<sup>59</sup> Sayre, "Relative Deprivation," 458.

standard of living for young educated males in particular had declined. Relative unemployment rates among youth were higher in 1999 and 2000 than in the subsequent years. Third, he conducted an analysis looking into the economic outcomes for youth according to individual districts and comparing it to the number of suicide bombers produced by district. In Sayre's analysis, Nablus and Jenin had particularly high unemployment rates and produced a high number of suicide bombers, while Bethlehem had a relatively good economic situation but relative to its population, still produced a high number of bombers. This leads Sayre to infer that his findings are inconclusive.

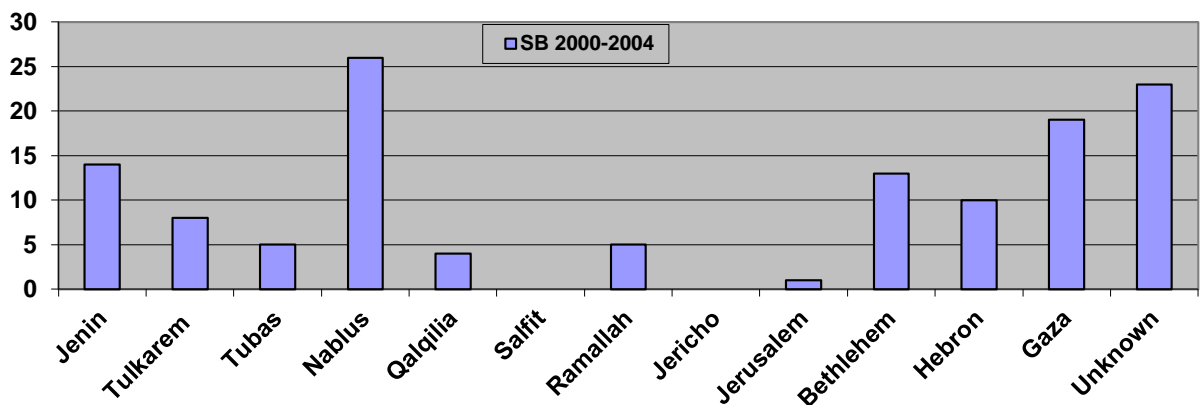
While relative deprivation may offer a helpful insight into the grievances of Palestinian suicide bombers, it leaves many others aspects of Israel's occupation regime untouched. Palestinians are aware that to a large extent it is the Israeli occupation, its tight control over mobility and resources and the presence of settlements that is responsible for their daily difficulties. Checkpoints and settlements are the direct and immediate manifestations of Israel's control and power over Palestinians. They obstruct free movement, devour Palestinian land and are the immediate obstacles to the political goal of the realisation of an independent Palestinian state. Settlements especially are also often the source of violence, harassment and humiliation. It would be logical to assume then, that people in closer and constant contact with settlements and checkpoints would be more likely to develop grievances against the occupation. Hence, the next section will examine the regional origins of suicide bombers in order to later assess this against the regional distribution of checkpoints and settlements. The subsequent section will then consider whether bombers originate from villages, towns or refugee camps. The second chapter of this thesis discussed how the occupation had an un-equalising effect on the Palestinian population and how those most affected by Israeli policies i.e. the rural and refugee populations were the driving forces behind the intifada. The question arises in how far they were also participants in suicide bombings relative to the urban population. While we will not be able to reach conclusive statements - as multiple factors may be associated with originating from any of the three localities, independent of the occupation – considering these geographical aspects will nevertheless help us establish if there is any ground that supports this assumption.



#### 4.4.1 Bombers and their Origin

Out of 127 suicide operations carried out between the beginning of the second intifada and the end of 2004, we do not know the origin of 23 of the bombers. This is because the bombers have either not been identified<sup>60</sup> or bombings are not recorded in the PHRMG data which provide the most detailed record on the bombers' origins.<sup>61</sup> Out of 104 known bombers, Nablus governorate had the highest participation in suicide operation with 26 suicide bombers, followed by Gaza with 19, Jenin with 14, closely followed by Bethlehem with 13. No suicide bombers originated from the Jericho and Salfit governorates, and only one came from the Jerusalem area. Although Gaza is divided into five governorates because of its much smaller size, it is in this analysis considered as one entity. In terms of urban, refugee and rural division, the same divisions are applied as in the West Bank, on the basis that MAS Social Monitor No.4 2001 identifies a noticeable socio-economic gap between the city of Gaza and the Gaza Strip regions.<sup>62</sup>

FIGURE 4.1. Number of suicide bombers between October 2000 and the end of 2004 according to governorate



<sup>60</sup> Organisations often do not claim responsibility; this seems to be particularly the case when the perpetrator is the only casualty.

<sup>61</sup> Based on data taken from the Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada" and PHRMG, "Palestinians who Carried out Suicide Attacks in Israel and the Occupied Territories during the Al-Aqsa Intifada," <http://www.phrmg.org/Resources%20Tables%20new/Suicide%20attack%20English.htm> (accessed 13 January 2012). While the PHRMG database includes suicide bombings as well as suicide attacks data included for this analysis only focuses on suicide bombings. See Appendix I for table.

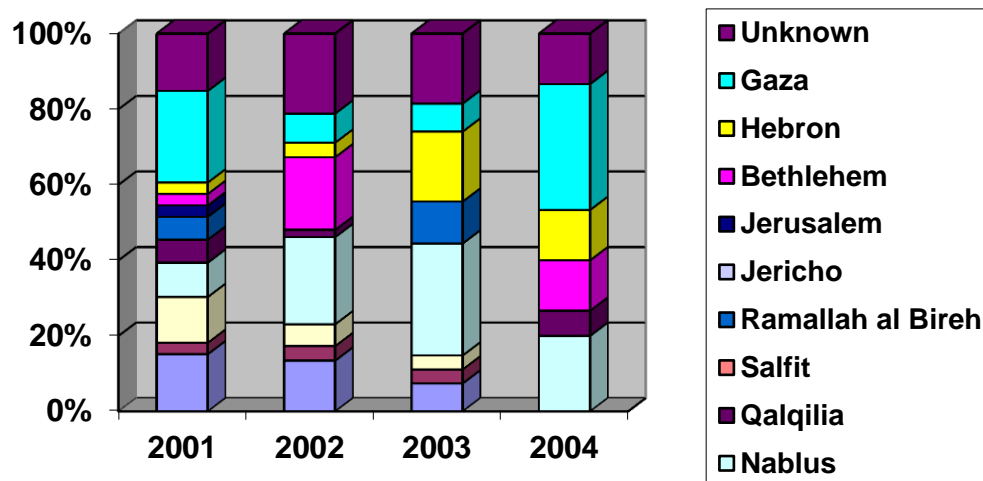
<sup>62</sup> MAS Social Monitor, no.4 (2001), 4-5.

If we break down suicide bombings according to years we can clearly identify regional trends. These findings tie in with the concept of emulation, especially through social networks, discussed in the previous section. In geographically limited spaces, individuals come to emulate what their neighbours and peers do. This is the case with the ordinary such as fashion and car trends, and may also apply the same to more unusual pursuits, such as suicide bombing. While Nablus and Jenin have largely been considered the main hotbeds for suicide bombers,<sup>63</sup> a break-down in years reveals that, initially, participants from Gaza were the driving force during the first year of the intifada, with bombers from Gaza carrying out 8 attacks. This was followed by Jenin with 5 attackers, while ‘only’ 3 suicide bombers came from Nablus in 2001. This trend changed in 2002 when Nablus took the lead accounting for 12 bombers, closely followed by Bethlehem with 10, and then by Jenin with 7. In 2003, Nablus still remained ahead with 8 bombers, but was followed by Hebron with 5. In 2004, 5 bombers came from Gaza, and 3 from Nablus. What is also interesting and further supports the notion of emulation is that regional participation in suicide bombings was often limited to specific periods of time. In the second year of the intifada, for example, the Bethlehem governorate produced 10 suicide bombers, a year later none came from that same area. Hebron was mostly active in the third year of the intifada, and in 2004 no suicide bombers came from Jenin. In percentages, Gaza had the highest number of bombers and accounted for 23.4% of bombings in 2001, followed by the Jenin district taking 14.7% of the share for that year. In 2002, Nablus produced 24% of suicide bombers in that year, Bethlehem 20% and Jenin 14%. In 2003, 32% of suicide bombers came from Nablus and 20% from Hebron, and in 2004 Gaza accounted for 33.3% of the bombings and Nablus for 20%.

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<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, Ricolfi claims that suicide bombers largely originated from a handful of camps around Nablus and Hebron. According to PHRMG data, however, a good number of suicide bombers came from the cities of Hebron and Nablus and not their camps. Moreover, although the majority of bombers did originate in the governorate of Nablus, Bethlehem and Gaza produced more suicide bombers compared to Hebron. See Ricolfi, “Palestinians,” 113.

FIGURE 4.2. Distribution of bombers across governorates per year in percentages



While on the face of it, Nablus, Jenin, Bethlehem, and Gaza produced the highest number of suicide bombers, the governorates differ considerably in size and population. If we adjust figures compared to population size of governorates we make an interesting discovery.<sup>64</sup> The highest ratio of suicide bombers to population is in the Tubas governorate with a rate of almost 13 bombers per 100,000 population. Tubas is followed by Nablus and Bethlehem with just under 10 per 100,000, Jenin with less than 7 per 100,000, then Tulkarem, Hebron, Ramallah, Jerusalem and Gaza. Given that Gaza had a population of just over a million in 2000, the 19 suicide bombers from Gaza result in a rate of under 2 bombers per 100,000. Hence, Tubas relative to its population size, was the most active in suicide bombings. This has so far been completely overlooked because suicide bombing figures are seldom considered relative to its population size.<sup>65</sup> Moreover, perhaps similar to the PHRMG database, in many other sources, localities in Tubas are often categorised as localities either in the Jenin or in the Nablus governorates. In the PHRMG data Tubas city was classified as being located in the Jenin area, al Farah Camp was

<sup>64</sup> Population projections for 2000 from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics were used. PCBS, "Estimated Population in the Palestinian Territory Mid-Year by Governorate 1997-2016, [http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/\\_pcbs/populati/GOV1997-2016.htm](http://www.pcbs.gov.ps/Portals/_pcbs/populati/GOV1997-2016.htm) (accessed 20 January 2012).

<sup>65</sup> Although Sayre does this, he does not come to the same conclusion, presumably because he uses figures that include Tubas in either the Jenin or Nablus districts.

allocated to the Nablus area, and the Jerusalem bombing from 08 September 2001 was attributed to someone originating from “Qubeia” but the bomber came from al-Aqabah village in Tubas.

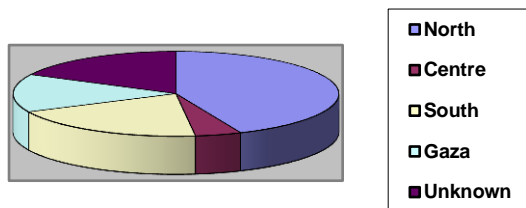
One question that poses itself at this stage is, why does the division into districts matter conceptually and what does it tell us? With the signing of the Oslo Accords the Palestinian Territories to be governed by the Palestinian Authority were divided into sixteen governorates (eleven in the West Bank and Jerusalem and five in the Gaza Strip) centring around major population centres. Given the low level of migration and the increased focus on localities as their immediate centres of life,<sup>66</sup> the quality of services provided within governorates, the overall living standard within this governorate, and Israeli interests in the area (settlements nearby, water wells, bypass roads, military zones etc.) will inevitably have an impact on the population in the area. One reason behind the unequal participation in the phenomenon may be the unequal experience of Israeli occupation and differences in standards of living.<sup>67</sup>

Sayre argues that the data on suicide bombers are not conclusive on relative deprivation because, while in Nablus and Jenin unemployment was high and would therefore correspond with the higher number of suicide bombers from these areas, unemployment rates in Bethlehem, a district that produced a high number of suicide bombers especially in the second year of the intifada, were low. Nevertheless, MAS data suggest that prior to the outbreak of the intifada living standards in the North and South of West Bank declined continuously. The previous chapter had also discussed how severely the Bethlehem governorate was affected due to land confiscation for settlements and the extension of Jerusalem’s municipal boundaries. Bethlehem’s proximity to Jerusalem has made its surrounding lands particularly attractive for Israel’s settlements and expansionist plans. Irrespective of the economic situation of Bethlehem, this creates considerable hardship and frustration for the population in the area.

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<sup>66</sup> The author met several people who had never or had for a long time not left Ramallah – fear of movement restrictions or problems with identity documents were cited as the reasons for this.

<sup>67</sup> Emulation through networks may also be a helpful concept here; nevertheless it does not answer the question of why, in the first place, it is a more frequent phenomenon in some governorates and less in others. One possible answer to this is the role of organisational networks – networks may have simply been stronger in some governorates than others, which will be briefly discussed later on. However, again one could then pose the question why would they be stronger in some than other districts.



#### 4.3. Regional distribution of suicide bombers

In terms of regional distribution the North has produced by far the highest number of bombers. The impression offered by one of the interviewees is hence confirmed by statistics. For the purpose of this analysis Jenin, Tulkarem, Tubas, Qalqilia, Salfit, and Nablus were included in the North; Ramallah, Jericho, and Jerusalem were considered as the Centre of the West Bank, and Bethlehem and Hebron constitute the South.<sup>68</sup>

#### 4.4.2 Rural & Refugee Camp Residents vs. Urban Dwellers

Looking at the ‘social’ distribution of suicide bombers we find that 24 out of the 104 suicide bombings where we know the perpetrator’s origins were carried out by residents of refugee camps, 41 bombing by residents of the major urban centres<sup>69</sup>, and 39 by residents outside the major urban centres. Consequently, over 37% of the bombings were carried out by ‘rural’ dwellers, around 39% by urban dwellers, and just fewer than 19% by camp residents. According to these figures, the clear majority of bombers, namely 63, originated from outside the major urban centre and from refugee camps which would support the claim that the suicide bombings were primarily committed by those marginalised through measures taken since Oslo. The distribution in favour of refugee and rural population is even more evident when we

<sup>68</sup> The same division is used in MAS Social Monitors.

<sup>69</sup> I use a different measure of urban and rural here compared to that employed by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. For the latter, most dwellings with over 2,000 inhabitants qualify as urban. However, I have only included the major urban centres in my definitions because it is only there that people can go about their lives with minimal disturbance from the Israeli Administration or military. I analysed refugee camps as a separate entity because refugees are inherently marginalised through their long-standing dispossession.

compare the number of perpetrators to their corresponding social groups. Then, we find that this translates to 3.7 bombers per 100,000 for refugee camp dwellers; 3.6 per 100,000 for those outside the major urban centres; and 2.4 per 100,000 for urban dwellers. While at first glance it may have looked like urban dwellers had the highest participation rate in suicide bombing operations with 41 bombers, the urban population is much larger at 1695730,<sup>70</sup> than the refugee population at 641995,<sup>71</sup> and the population outside the major urban centres with 1069692.<sup>72</sup> These figures would underpin the assumption that the rural and refugee population were more likely to participate in suicide bombings compared to the urban population. One reason why this might be the case is that Israeli regime of control put in place after Oslo affected the rural and refugee population disproportionately and as a result these segments in society may have harboured more grievances and have been more likely to engage in violence to voice their frustration. Within the major cities we find fairly open cohesive spaces, free from the interference from the Israeli military or administration. Perhaps the most significant and easily measurable manifestations of Israel's colonial regime are checkpoints and settlements. Although urban centres are not unaffected by the occupation as settlements limit their expansion, they experience water shortages over the summer months, and checkpoints guard the main entrances and exits of the city, normally inside the urban centres the population can go about their business relatively undisturbed by the day to day difficulties created by the Israeli occupation.<sup>73</sup> The most obvious example is Ramallah, which, as we have seen in chapter three, presents a face of relative normality and stability. Hebron, on the other hand, is an exception as it is the only area in the Palestinian territories where Israeli settlements are located in the centre of a city. However, after the separation of control between the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government, those on the Palestinian side of the city have a similar experience to the rest of the urban population in the territories.

While it is impossible to assess the effects of the occupation on each location from which suicide bombers originated, Aqabah in the Tubas governorate and Al-

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<sup>70</sup> Data for 2000 from Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>71</sup> Compared to a total of 675,670 registered refugees in the West Bank and 938,531 in Gaza. Data taken from UNWRA statistics for June 2004, "UNWRA in Figures," UNWRA (August 2004), <http://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/uif-june04.pdf> (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>72</sup> Based on PCBS.

<sup>73</sup> For this reason only the main cities are included within the concept of urban areas, as only they offer larger coherent spaces, free of the immediate impact of the occupation.

Khader in the Bethlehem governorate are instructive examples. Aqabah, the home town of Izz al-Masri who committed the Sbarro Pizza bombing in Jerusalem, lies in Area C where no construction is allowed and more than 2000 dunums have been confiscated since the occupation started in 1967. The village has also been severely affected by two military bases adjacent to the village, one in the south and one to the east.<sup>74</sup> The head of the village council, Hajj Sami Sadeq, described the situation in Al Aqaba to a Land Research Centre field worker as follows:

The Israeli Army has exerted extensive pressure on the residents of the village since 1967 to force them to leave. One of the methods used included declaring the entire village as a Closed Military Area as well as frequent shooting at the houses, herds and the residents. Moreover, military manoeuvres and trainings using live ammunitions were conducted frequently to terrorise and to, thus, force the residents out of their village. Such hostile acts have led to the martyrdom of 8 residents and the injury of more than 50 throughout the years. [...] There are a lot of barbaric acts committed by the Israeli Army such as what took place in 1999 when soldiers destroyed the electrical and phone networks as well as confiscating the heavy machinery used to rehabilitate the main and only road the village has. The Army also demolished a number of houses and barracks as we were prevented from building in the village since the occupation began in 1967.<sup>75</sup>

Al-Khader village, in the Bethlehem governorate which was home to Khaled Yousef Mohammed Musa who detonated his bomb at an IDF checkpoint in March 2002, lost a considerable amount of its land to the construction of six settlements and connecting bypass roads. The total village area consists of 20090 dunums, of which now 2791 dunums are taken up by settlements and 12 dunums by Israeli outposts.<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> "Al-Aqaba Village Profile, ARIJ, February 2005, 8-9, [http://vprofile.arij.org/tubas/static/localities/profiles/106\\_Profile.pdf](http://vprofile.arij.org/tubas/static/localities/profiles/106_Profile.pdf) (accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>75</sup> "Suffocation of all Forms of Viable Life in Al Aqaba Village," ARIJ and Land Research Centre, 11 May 2004, [http://www.poica.org/editor/case\\_studies/view.php?recordID=388](http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=388) (accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>76</sup> "Al-Khader Village to Lose its Land for the Construction of the Israeli Segregation Wall," 6 May 2009, ARIJ and Land Research Centre, [http://www.poica.org/editor/case\\_studies/view.php?recordID=1931](http://www.poica.org/editor/case_studies/view.php?recordID=1931) (accessed 17 January 2012).

#### 4.4.3. Regional Distribution of Settlements and Checkpoints

Settlements and checkpoints undeniably have a significant impact on those living outside the urban centres. They are the immediate visible manifestation of the occupation. In the previous chapter it has already been pointed out that a significant proportion of Palestinians who relocate do so because of the proximity of their homes to settlements. A study by the Land Research Centre found that attendance in schools in Hebron close to settlements has dropped to 50% since September 2000.<sup>77</sup>

Checkpoints affect the population's quality of life as they delay and restrict movement, often unpredictably. This, of course, can have a severe impact on how Palestinians organise their life; getting to work, lessons, or lectures on time can be a trial. For example, the distance between Ramallah and Bethlehem is just around 20 miles but in reality it takes much longer to travel between the two cities than the distance would suggest. On a good day, without any delays at the two checkpoints on the way (Juba and the Container checkpoint) the journey takes around one and a half hours. West Bank ID card holders cannot access Jerusalem but the route through Jerusalem would be much quicker. Instead, passengers find themselves zigzagging along Palestinian roads, shared highways and along settlements, first heading toward Jericho, then heading into the opposite direction back toward Jerusalem, along Ma'ale Adumim, and then on the Palestinian route through to the Wadi Nar valley and the Container Checkpoint. At rush hour and with delays at the checkpoints, the journey can easily take over three hours. The impact of checkpoints, however, can be even more severe. Palestinians are routinely denied passage at checkpoints when they seek to reach hospitals in urban centres. Even women in labour are often stopped from reaching hospitals. According to the World Health Organisation at least 69 Palestinian women gave birth at Israeli checkpoints between 2000 and 2006. As a result of the extremely unsanitary conditions and lack of assistance at checkpoints 35 of the new-borns died and also 5 mothers died.<sup>78</sup> In

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<sup>77</sup> "The Geopolitical Situation in Hebron Governorate, Palestine," Land Research Centre (Jerusalem, 2006), 11.

<sup>78</sup> "Checkpoints," Palestine Monitor, 17 March 2010, <http://www.palestinemonitor.org/spip/spip.php?article8> (accessed 09 September 2011).



total, the PHRMG recorded 110 deaths at checkpoints between 2000 and 2007, mostly when access to hospitals was denied.<sup>79</sup>

According to an assessment by OCHA in November 2004 a total of 61 checkpoints and 6 ‘partial checkpoints’<sup>80</sup> are located around the West Bank and along entry points to Israel.<sup>81</sup> If we match these to the respective governorates the distribution is as follows: Jenin 5, Tulkarem 2, Nablus 12, Tubas 2, Salfit 2, Qalqilia 3, Jerusalem 8, Ramallah 8, Jericho 3, Bethlehem 10, and Hebron 12.<sup>82</sup> In terms of regions, 26 checkpoints are situated in the North, 19 in the Centre, and 22 in the South. The North then, is the area containing the most checkpoints which underpins the assumption that it is the region most affected by Israeli movement restrictions. However, the South and the Centre show similar restrictions, which is not reflected by the disparity in the numbers of suicide bombers coming from the two regions. One possible explanation for this may be that several checkpoints in the Centre are last-entry checkpoints to Israeli-controlled areas (although they are not always located on the Green Line). In the North, checkpoints tend to be situated between Palestinian population centres where they have a much more significant impact on daily movement. Last-entry checkpoints are less ‘visible’ to the majority of the population as many would never acquire a permit to try to enter Israeli controlled territory. Moreover, only 4 out of the 16 last-entry checkpoints to Jerusalem are for the use of Palestinians with adequate permits, while the remaining twelve are for the use of settlers and Israeli residents (this does include blue identity card holders such as Palestinian residents of Jerusalem) only.<sup>83</sup>

In addition to these permanent and partial checkpoints, the army can and frequently does set up flying checkpoints. Because of the nature of these checkpoints it is impossible to provide any figures on their frequency and regional distribution. However, figures from OCHA suggest that flying checkpoints have been on the rise over the last three years.<sup>84</sup> Because of their unpredictability they

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<sup>79</sup> “Died At Checkpoints,” PHRMG, 2000-2010, <http://www.phrmg.org/Resources%20Tables%20new/Died%20at%20Checkpoints-%20English.htm> (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>80</sup> An established checkpoint that is periodically staffed.

<sup>81</sup> This latter category may not affect Palestinians as much as the majority of the population is unable to travel to Israel because they lack the necessary permit.

<sup>82</sup> OCHA, “West Bank Closures,” November 2004, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1\\_closure1Nov\\_04\\_A3.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1_closure1Nov_04_A3.pdf) (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>83</sup> OCHA oPt, “Movement and Access in the West Bank,” September 2011, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/8F5CBCD2F464B6B18525791800541DA6> (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>84</sup> OCHA oPt, “Movement and Access in the West Bank,” September 2011.

have a particularly significant negative impact on free movement. Forbidden roads are another means of restricting Palestinian movement. According to B'Tselem a total of 20.5km of road in the Northern West Bank are not usable for Palestinians,<sup>85</sup> 11.2 km in the Centre of the West Bank, 63.1 km in East Jerusalem, and 6.6 km in the Southern West Bank, all of which are located in the Israeli controlled H2 of Hebron.<sup>86</sup> Further obstacles also include trenches, earth mounds and gates. In terms of obstructions overall, the Hebron governorate tops the list with 210, which combined with 94 in the Bethlehem governorate amounts to 304 obstacles for the Southern region of the West Bank. The Centre has a total of 169 physical obstructions with the majority situated in the Ramallah governorate. In the North, the highest numbers of physical obstructions to movement are found in the Nablus governorate with 123, followed by Jenin with 44. Obstructions in the North total 202 which put it in second place after the Southern region.<sup>87</sup>

For many Palestinians the rapid growth of settlements during the Oslo period epitomises the failure of the Oslo process. According to B'Tselem data, East Jerusalem comprised 11 settlements with a sizeable settler population of 165,076 (in 2000). Peace Now, an Israeli NGO, estimates that in 2009 135 settlements were distributed across the West Bank, of which 119 were already established by 2000. Settlers in the West Bank in 2000 amounted to a population of 191,125 (according to B'Tselem 190,206). In the seven years since the signing of Oslo in 1993 the settler population in the West Bank had grown by over 80,000. The settlements occupied a total area of 149 square kilometres, or 2.6% of the total area of the West Bank, of which 50.6 square kilometres were land privately owned by Palestinians.<sup>88</sup> However, the official jurisdiction of settlements extends further and according to Peace Now stands at 9.3% of West Bank land.<sup>89</sup> In addition to this, 99 outposts were established between 1991 and 2004 with an estimated population of 5945, covering an area of just under 17 square kilometres, of which approximately 7 km<sup>2</sup> are

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<sup>85</sup> Both pedestrian and vehicular passage is prohibited for Palestinians.

<sup>86</sup> See B'Tselem, "West Bank Roads on Which Palestinian Vehicles are Forbidden."

<sup>87</sup> OCHA, "West Bank Closures," November 2004, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1\\_Closure1Nov\\_04\\_A3.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1_Closure1Nov_04_A3.pdf) (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>88</sup> Calculations are based on list provided by Peace Now and include settlement activity until 2000. For list of settlements see Peace Now, "Full Settlement List," under settlements and outposts, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/settlements-and-outposts> (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>89</sup> Hagit Ofra and Noa Galili, "West Bank Settlements – Facts and Figures," June 2009, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/node/297> (accessed 09 September 2011).

privately owned Palestinian land.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, 6.9 km<sup>2</sup> of the West Bank are occupied by nine Israeli industrial zones.

Settlements are not homogenous and this may be a further factor in determining their effects on their surroundings. Particularly significant here in terms of their relation to their Palestinian neighbours is their ideological orientation. The majority of the settlements are ideological, that is 38.96% of the settlements, 0.87% extreme ideological, 31.09% not ideological (but depending on cheap housing and quality of life) and 29.08% ultra-orthodox.<sup>91</sup> Ideological settlers use religious and nationalist arguments to justify their presence in the West Bank and are therefore less likely to agree to a withdrawal from Palestinian territory. Settlements of this kind tend to be located deep inside the West Bank, often near Palestinian population centres<sup>92</sup> and as a result, have a more significant impact on the Palestinian communities in their vicinity but also on the general cohesion of Palestinian life.

It is difficult to pin down the location of settlements into Palestinian governorates because they often extend across several districts. As for distribution in terms of regions, the Northern District comprises 35 settlements, the Central District a clear majority with 57 settlements, and the South 30 settlements. Interestingly, this does not confirm the assumption that regions with higher settlement density may have produced more suicide bombers as a result of the grievances connected to settler presence. While the Centre of the West Bank has the most settlements, it has produced, as we have already seen above, the least suicide bombers. The North and the South on the other hand produced more suicide bombers but house fewer settlements. An assessment of how settlements may relate to the grievances and frustrations that possibly drive suicide bombers cannot be conclusive as it is difficult to determine what kind of impact individual settlements have on their surrounding areas, which may depend on size, expansion and ideological motivation. Such an assessment would require further research into how settlements situate themselves within their neighbourhood, what kind of specific effects the settlers' presence has

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<sup>90</sup> Under the Road Map Israel is required to dismantle all outposts established after March 2001 as well as freeze all settlement construction, including natural growth settlement activity. See "The Road Map: Full Text," *BBC*, 30 April 2003, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/2989783.stm> (accessed 19 January 2012). For a list of outposts, see Peace Now, "Full Outpost List," under settlements and outposts, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/settlements-and-outposts> (accessed 09 September 2011).

<sup>91</sup> Ofra and Galili, "West Bank Settlements."

<sup>92</sup> Lara Friedman, "Quality of Life Settlers," January 2007, <http://peacenow.org.il/eng/content/quality-life-settlers> (accessed 14 March 2012).

had on the neighbouring Palestinian communities, whether there are any forms of direct interaction, and how Palestinians view these settlers, if they connect their suffering and grievances to their presence, and if these translate into any kind of political or violent action.

This section has sought to explore the relationship between suicide bombers and their place of origin. This was motivated by the assumption that suicide bombers may have been driven by grievances connected to the Israeli occupation, especially territorial policies such as movement restrictions, settlement expansion, restricted access to water and limitation of construction. Checkpoints and settlements represent the most immediate manifestation of Israel's colonial policy. An OCHA Report from 2009, concludes that more than 38% of the West Bank territory is inaccessible or only partially accessible to Palestinians as a result of being taken up by settlements, outposts, military bases and closed military areas, Israeli declared nature reserves or other related infrastructure.<sup>93</sup> The discussion found that the strata of society that were thought to have been most affected by the occupation and were the driving forces behind the second intifada produced proportionately the highest number of suicide bombers. In terms of regional distribution, the North produced by far the highest number of bombers whilst the Centre produced the smallest number. When we tried to measure the regional impact of the occupation in terms of checkpoints and settlements, regions with the highest number of checkpoints also produced the highest number of suicide bombers while the results for settlements did not immediately support our thesis as we found that the highest number of settlements can be found in the Central West Bank which produced the smallest number of suicide bombers. However, as already pointed out above, the real impact on the quality of life of the surrounding Palestinian community may have to be studied on the micro-level and measured through other factors such as ideology of the settlement, direct impact on the community, responsibility for land loss and access to water. Some settlements have a reputation for being confrontational or particularly belligerent such as Halamish in the Centre, its land confiscation leads to weekly protests from the neighbouring village Nabi Saleh, or Yitzhar, a settlement located in the North, which is at the forefront of price-tag reprisals. Without further

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<sup>93</sup> OCHA, *The Humanitarian Impact on Palestinians of Israeli Settlements and Other Infrastructure in the West Bank*, (July 2007), 8, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/TheHumanitarianImpactOfIsraeliInfrastructureTheWestBank\\_full.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/TheHumanitarianImpactOfIsraeliInfrastructureTheWestBank_full.pdf) (accessed 14 September 2011).

in-depth study into the impact of settlements on their surroundings it would be difficult to come to a valuable conclusion on whether they were a significant motivation factor for those that supported violence in the second intifada.

#### **4.5 Political Fragmentation and Competition: Inter-Group Relations and the Lack of Strategy**

The fragmentation of the political spectrum, identified in chapter two, has already alluded to the ensuing competition between Hamas and Fateh. This chapter will look at how political fragmentation, i.e. the division between and weakness of parties, and the inability of the leadership to take strategic political decisions, has affected the emergence of violence during the second uprising.

Factional competition is at the centre of Mia Bloom's thesis on suicide bombing. She sees the cause for the escalation of such attacks as a result of competition in the market place. Organisations engage in suicide bombing in order not to lose support in the street. Hence, for Bloom, suicide bombing is the product of competition between different political groups.<sup>94</sup> Naturally, this means that support for the tactic needs to come from the people. This would tie in with many assumptions we have made so far. Israel's disproportionate use of violence whipped up support among the Palestinian population for violent tactics against Israel. What is interesting is that this popular support for suicide bombings, and we have seen previously that in the early stages of the intifada it stood at 58% for attacks against civilians in Israel and over 90% for attacks against soldiers and settlers in the West Bank and Gaza; but this did not substantially translate into gains in support for the political parties. We have also heard that it was Fateh which was the driving force behind the early stages of the intifada and not the Islamists, yet support for Fateh dropped from 37% in July 2000 to 28% in December 2001, while support for the Islamists increased from 17% in July 2000 to 25% by the end of 2001. It is also striking that a large percentage of society must have considered themselves either unaffiliated or supported smaller parties.<sup>95</sup> For Bloom, the undermining of Arafat was crucial to the burgeoning of the phenomenon. Because of the lack of a centre of

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<sup>94</sup> Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, especially 29-31.

<sup>95</sup> PSR, "Public Opinion Poll no.3," 19-24 December 2001, <http://www.pcpsr.org/survey/polls/2001/p3a.html#popularity> (accessed 12 January 2012)

power, the groups began to compete and outbid one another with ever more spectacular bombings.<sup>96</sup> Bloom sees proof in this competition also in the fact that secular groups began to use religious language in order to not lose ground on the Islamists.<sup>97</sup> With the rise of Hamas religious identity had gained strength over the Oslo period, and a gradual 'Islamisation' of society had already taken place before the outbreak of the second intifada. As we had seen in an earlier chapter, Mahmood Mi'ari demonstrated that Palestinians' identification with Islam grew substantially over the Oslo period. For Palestinians, Hamas' continued use of militancy came to represent the continuation of the struggle against the occupation. An earlier cited poll conducted in the wake of the Declaration of Principles established that a significant number of Palestinians supported the idea of continuing the intifada alongside negotiations. For many this binary approach is still desirable because, in their view, without the continuation of the struggle, Palestinians have no leverage to bring about a fair settlement in negotiations.<sup>98</sup> Fateh's creation of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade was in a sense the party's attempt to control the resistance and send a message to the population that Fateh does not only lead negotiations but it also resists: Fateh never gave up its history of liberating Palestine.<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, religion and politics have always been intertwined in Palestine. Many early Fateh members, for example, had close ties with the Muslim Brotherhood or were at least sympathetic to it. Arafat, for example, always used religious language in his speeches. To use religious language and symbolism is hence not an innovation of the second intifada and it would also be wrong to assume that Fateh represents a secular party. As such, Bloom's observation of the competitive dynamics is superficial.

In addition, it is often wrongly assumed that the religious groups were at the forefront in the early stages of the intifada but several authors and witnesses to the events contradict this. Salim Tamari and Rema Hammami, both Palestinian academics, write:

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<sup>96</sup> Bloom, *Dying to Kill*, 27.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>98</sup> While Kydd and Walter have argued that groups use violence to 'spoil' the peace process, the evidence here suggests that for many Palestinians violent tactics are seen as a means to exert added pressure in order to obtain a more balanced agreement. Andrew Kydd and Barbara F. Walter, "Sabotaging Peace: The Politics of Extremist Violence," *International Organization* 56, no.2 (Spring 2002): 263-96.

<sup>99</sup> INTERVIEW #20.

While Hamas emerged as a major force during the first intifada, the religious character of that uprising was relatively muted. In comparison, religion has played a major mobilizing and symbolic role in the current uprising, even while the participation of Hamas has been largely confined (at least at the time of writing) to raising Hamas flags at funeral processions. Instead, the clashes have been dominated by secular groups (mainly Fateh, but with a visible presence of the Popular Front and other leftist organisations).<sup>100</sup>

Another more recent competition model is presented by Ami Pedahzur and Arie Perlinger, who argue that those that sent suicide bombers have more resemblance to a horizontal network centred around hubs rather than a hierarchical organisation. The reoccupation of Palestinian areas during the second intifada led most of the operational sectors to break up into regional cells.<sup>101</sup> The authors conclude from their research into the networks that they are normally based on friendship and family ties and the main motivating factor behind their activity is competition with other local groups. The strengthening of the hamula identity that we identified in chapter three is reflected in this new shape of organisational structure. In essence, they take the concept of social networks from emulation to competition and apply competition to a different analytical level: rather than competition for power on the national level of organisations, it is competition for power on the local level between networks.<sup>102</sup> Pedhazur and Perlinger even go so far to argue that loyalty to political factions was so weak that networks would sometimes switch their allegiances from one organisation to another. The question that Pedahzur and Perlinger's model does not answer is, however, how local networks garner support if the driving force is competition with other local networks and their political allegiance is unclear. Their model is able to explain participation but it seems to detach networks from their social base. If networks are rooted in primordial ties, how can support for them be generated and why would it even matter? Bloom's strong point is that she connects organisations with their social base. Her model also fits in with the veneration of martyrs that would explain support and participation in the phenomenon. Moreover, there is an interesting

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<sup>100</sup> Tamari and Hammami, "Second Uprising," 13.

<sup>101</sup> Pedahzur and Perlinger, "Suicide Attacks," 1988.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 1993.

discrepancy in Pedahzur's and Perlinger's model between the number of bombers dispatched and the local base of the networks, and the numbers of bombers and their place of origin: while the Nablus network, which according to the authors is one of the older and perhaps more traditional networks, 'only' dispatched 4 bombers, as we saw above, the highest number of bombers originated from the Nablus area with 26 coming from that governorate.<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the authors did not identify a Bethlehem network despite the fact that 13 bombers originated from the area. However, they acknowledge that some suicide bombers were sent by other networks outside the main four identified in their study and some individuals acted independently of any organisation.<sup>104</sup> While a localisation of group competition as described by Pedahzur and Perlinger did not clearly emerge from the interviews, the criminalisation of the resistance and an associated focus on local interest rather than political programmes did. After the destruction of PA infrastructure and its capacity to police and maintain order, Palestinian groups began to control the streets and started to impose the 'law'. These groups were described as being composed largely of 'uneducated people', presumably lacking strategy and political vision. In some cases they even demanded 'protection money' from merchants in return for defending the Palestinian streets.<sup>105</sup> Israel's assassination policy had managed to sieve off the top layer of the more traditional and respected political and militant leaders of Palestinian groups. As the new leaders and their practices began to take hold, the population's support began to wane.<sup>106</sup>

The outbidding factor is also acknowledged by Azmi Bishara who laments an absence of an overall strategy among political organisations during the second intifada:

The mentality and discourse of immature competition between Palestinian factions, of 'who did what,' of assessments over coffee that 'this operation was good,' or 'no it was bad,' of 'look how many martyrs we have,' and so forth, continue to accompany the Palestinian armed struggle. Palestinian political culture still measures achievements of factions by the number of their martyrs rather than by the losses they

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<sup>103</sup> It is also not clear how many were 'dispatched' before the second intifada as the Nablus network, according to the authors, already came into existence in 1996. Pedahzur and Perlinger, "Changing Nature of Suicide Attacks," 1986.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> INTERVIEW #17, INTERVIEW #20.

<sup>106</sup> INTERVIEW #20.



have been able to inflict. There is still the mentality of outbidding – that this faction has done such and such [...] <sup>107</sup>

The cooperation between groups in the Jenin refugee camp during the Israeli operations in the camp was cited as an exception to this competitive mentality. When under direct attack by the Israeli army the armed groups were working together. <sup>108</sup> For Bishara, a coherent strategy devised by the leadership is crucial to ending the occupation: ‘It is a comprehensive issue that addresses the relationship between the current situation and the goals we seek to achieve through various forms of political action.’ <sup>109</sup> It can only succeed if it makes Israeli society pay a high price, which however, cannot be achieved by killing civilians. Resistance is not necessarily at odds with state building and both can be pursued at the same time. In his view, however, most of the activities during the second intifada did not grow out of a clear strategy but are instead a product of vengeance, reaction, or anger. <sup>110</sup>

The lack of cooperation among the political factions and, indeed, the lack of leadership are particularly obvious when looking at the National and Islamic High Committee for the Follow-up of the Intifada (NIHC). The committee came to the surface in November, just a month after the beginning of the intifada, although it was apparently formed in the first week of the intifada. <sup>111</sup> Hamammi and Tamari point out that significantly, the committee did not follow in the footsteps of the UNLU of the first intifada and did not envisage itself as the ‘united leadership’ but simply calls itself ‘a follow-up committee’. <sup>112</sup> A similar body was also established in Gaza. <sup>113</sup> In its first leaflet the follow-up committee called for similar activities that had dominated the first intifada: ‘its operational suggestions to the population include the formation of defence committees, a boycott of Israeli products, the promotion of national products, the promotion of women’s inclusion, and general calls for unity of voices and actions.’ <sup>114</sup> One overall strategic objective can be discerned and that is that much of the action is targeted at settlements, including calls for a unified

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<sup>107</sup> Azmi Bishara “The Quest for Strategy,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no.2 (Winter 2003): 45.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid, also INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>109</sup> Bishara, “Quest for Strategy,” 42.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>111</sup> INTERVIEW #19.

<sup>112</sup> Hamami and Tamari, “Second Uprising,” 19.

<sup>113</sup> INTERVIEW #19.

<sup>114</sup> Hamami and Tamari, “Second Uprising,” 19.

isolation of the settlements and to disarm settlers, with a view to achieving their departure from occupied territory.<sup>115</sup> This would support our earlier thesis that settlements were a clear point of grievance and a target of action. The committee also published a calendar of events in the PA newspaper *Al Hayat al Jadida*, giving daily instructions to the population on activities, mainly calls for peaceful processions but also calls for escalation to break the siege of Palestinian towns and villages.<sup>116</sup> However, few of the parties had the mass support base to implement these calls, Fatah and Hamas being the exception.<sup>117</sup>

During the early months of the intifada attempts were made to find a common political platform in the NIHC. However, this proved to be difficult as Hamas and Islamic Jihad did not agree with the main elements of the PLO programme or even the PLO itself as a representative body. Rather than dissolving the committee after what would have been a very short existence, the decision was taken to continue on the basis of a minimum coordination of action. Rather than determining the main line of policy, the body's remit was then limited to deciding on the main plan of action. However, even when it came to tactics there was radical disagreement over whether armed actions in the intifada should be focussed on the territories or beyond the Green Line, and if the tactic of suicide bombing should be adopted, and whether civilians could be targeted. Despite the deep division within the coalition it did not break up until after the first two years of the intifada. With the rise to power of Sharon and tactics implemented by his government, for many members of the coalition it was obvious that the militants had played into Sharon's hands and this caused friction within the coalition. After the major Israeli incursions in 2002, the coalition began to be less effective, the leadership disintegrated and each faction came to revert back to its own centre of direction. Even Fatah was split between those who advocated the use of more extreme and militant tactics and others who thought that militancy was harmful to the intifada. The NIHC was incapable of taking decisions on militant actions not only because of different lines of policy pursued by the different parties but also because the military wings of organisations are not directly under the command of the political organisations.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> Hamami and Tamari, "Second Uprising," 19.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., 20.

<sup>118</sup> Interviewee observations. INTERVIEW #19.

This coalition of parties, then, was unable to agree on a common political programme and instead it decided to unify over the lowest common denominator. The different views on objectives and means to achieve those goals appear to have been insurmountable, so what the coalition agreed on was mass action similar to the first intifada and the result of this were the leaflets described by Hammami and Tamari. However, as the two authors describe, most parties lacked the political base to mobilise the masses for such activities. In essence, the political leaders failed to formulate an overall strategy, which should have been their crucial role in the intifada, but instead sought to direct mass action, which they had neither the means to bring about nor the ability to make count. Internal division and the lack of a clear programme had cost most parties their support base after Oslo. The fact that the subject of the NIHC primarily came up in conversation with politicians is symptomatic of its failure to reach beyond political circles. As for suicide bombing, which within the political ranks seems to have generated heated debates, it does not appear to have grown out of an overall political strategy.

#### **4.6. Women and Suicide Bombing – Escape Route or Emancipation?**

With Wafa Idrees' suicide bombing attack in Jerusalem 27 January 2002, the Palestinian conflict witnessed the first female suicide bomber. As several other Palestinian females followed in her footsteps debates began to arise on the 'new' phenomenon. Not much later, Daren Abu Ayshe, Ayat Akhras, and Andaleeb Takataqah followed suit with the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade claiming responsibility in all three cases. It is not certain whether Wafa Idrees' bombing was intended as a suicide bombing or if she intended merely to plant the bomb and it exploded prematurely.<sup>119</sup> It is also not clear to what extent she was affiliated with the Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades despite the fact that the group took responsibility for the attack. Although her brother was a Fateh member, her family disputed that she may have acted on behalf of a group or had any political affiliation.<sup>120</sup> This calls into question whether there was any intention to orchestrate a female suicide bombing attack by an

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<sup>119</sup> See, for instance, Yoram Schweitzer, "Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers: Myth vs Reality," in *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying for Equality?*, ed. Yoram Schweitzer (Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies, 2006), 25.

<sup>120</sup> Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 106, see footnote 5.

organisation or indeed by Idrees herself.<sup>121</sup> Regardless of what the true motivations and intentions behind the attack were, it certainly has opened the door for many other females who committed suicide bombing attacks for the various Palestinian organisations, even the more religious-oriented Islamic Jihad and Hamas. However, it was not until May 2003, about two and a half years into the intifada, that Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility jointly with Al-Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade for a female bombing, and in January 2004 Hamas for the first time took responsibility for a suicide bombing attack carried out by a female from Gaza: Reem al-Riyashi.

Interestingly, the participation of the Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigade in suicide operations started with, or just after Wafa Idrees' bombing operation. Suicide bombings in the first year of the intifada were dominated almost exclusively by Islamic Jihad and Hamas. This reflects an opposite trend of the general militant activities in the intifada. As seen in the above-cited passage from Hammami and Tamari, in the early stages, the nationalist groups associated with Fateh were the driving forces behind the intifada while Hamas' action was limited.

The involvement of women in militant activities in what is still a largely conservative society generated considerable interest among journalists and in Western academia. The inclusion of women bombers by the religious groups received particular attention as they are normally associated with the exclusion of women from the more public spheres of life. The common conception of women as nurturers runs contrary to witnessing them in the role of suicide bombers. However, women have made their mark as active participants in violent conflicts elsewhere, in conflicts in Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Colombia, as well as in the Palestinian context. Leila Khaled, who participated in several hijackings for the PFLP in the late 60s and early 70s, is an often cited example of female militancy.

At the same time women are also victimised and exploited in conflict. The occupation affects women disproportionately, partly because often the particular cultural context which makes women more vulnerable. Women as the caretakers of the home experience house searches and arrests by the IDF, they are less likely to

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<sup>121</sup> Palestinian sources tend to register more attacks as unclaimed while the IDF more readily tends to assign attacks to groups even when there are conflicting reports in the press as to the identity of the group or when it cannot be corroborated. Compare, for instance, Esposito, "The Al Aqsa Intifada," 105-8 with "Suicide and Other Bombing Attacks in Israel Since the Declaration of Principles," Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, <http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Suicide+and+Other+Bombing+Attacks+in+Israel+Since.htm> (accessed 21 January 2012).

obtain permits to visit Jerusalem because only a minority of women are part of the official labour force, and ultimately it is women who put the food on the table and worry about feeding their children during economic hardship.<sup>122</sup> Because of the high levels of unemployment in the territories, informal economy is widespread. For women there are various opportunities to seek alternative income often through handicrafts or cookery which can ensure the survival of the family when the husbands are out of work.<sup>123</sup> This often causes friction and violence within the family in what is still an essentially patriarchal society, in which men are expected to be the breadwinners. Local research has shown that there is a significant connection between male unemployment and domestic violence.<sup>124</sup>

Interviews conducted by WCLAC during the intifada, demonstrate how deeply women were affected by the immediate violence and destruction as mothers, wives and caretakers. A woman pharmacist from Nablus described to the interviewer how she and her husband were unable to help their firstborn child:

Waking on 12 April, I had a feeling there had been many bombings and a lot of gunfire in the night. I felt strange, and I was really aware of all the stress we were living under. The next day, I felt something. I didn't think it was labour pains because I didn't think I was due to give birth at that time. When I felt the pain increasing, I realised that I was in premature labour. I should have been in hospital because the baby was only 32 weeks old and needed an incubator and oxygen, of course, and medicine. We tried all means to get to the hospital. By then it was around 1:00pm. We tried coordinating with the ambulance, with the Red Crescent, and with the International Committee of the Red Cross. Nothing worked. The ambulance tried to reach our area twice to take us to the hospital. Israeli troops fired at it. The driver called us and told us what had happened and asked if he should try again. My husband said: No, it is too dangerous.<sup>125</sup>

The woman's husband, a physician, together with a neighbour, also a physician, delivered the baby. Through international institutions such as Save the

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<sup>122</sup> INTERVIEW #12. See, for instance, Sara Roy, "Black Milk: The Desperate Lives of Women in the Gaza Strip," in Roy, *Failing Peace*, 58-60.

<sup>123</sup> Traditional embroidery, for example, has become a widespread informal economic activity for women. Embroidery products such as traditional dresses, cushion covers, and scarves are crafted to be sold in local shops but are also very popular with tourists at the Palestinian market stalls in the Old City of Jerusalem.

<sup>124</sup> INTERVIEW #23.

<sup>125</sup> WCLAC, "If I Were Given a Choice," 9-10.

Children which contacted USAID and the Red Crescent, they tried to get an ambulance through because the baby needed oxygen as it was born prematurely. However, it was impossible because the area was under curfew. The baby only survived for a few hours.

The concept of helplessness was also at the core of a story told by a woman from Al Askar Camp in Nablus. During one of the Israeli incursions in 2002, which lasted for 17 days, the water supply in the area was cut off. She describes how difficult it was without water, especially for her mother who suffered from high blood pressure and was diabetic, and had to take medication as a result of which she needed water because the medicine is diuretic. By the end of the incursion her mother could no longer talk and had difficulty breathing. The woman describes how she tried several times to get out of the house to find water but every time the tank positioned near their house started firing. Neighbours also came to ask for water: 'The 17 days passed like 17 years. What made things worse was that our neighbour came to us asking for water. How are we to give her water? And her boy behind her crying and begging for water. You want to give it to him. It was too much to take.'<sup>126</sup>

One way to understand female suicide bombing is as an expression of emancipation and quest for gender equality. Through the militarisation of the intifada women became marginalised because the roles they had previously occupied as organisers or motivators were no longer available or relevant. Women have always participated in the Palestinian national struggle and they pushed for a role within the intifada.<sup>127</sup> Pressure came from women who wanted to be part of the resistance as they had been during the first intifada, and the more secular Al Aqsa Martyrs' Brigades enabled women to do exactly that. The underlying principle is that no matter what tactic women demand equality. So the question about female participation is more about the shape it takes rather than if females participate.

Penny Johnson and Eileen Kuttub describe the encounter between a group of young men and women among one of the largest candlelight vigils in Ramallah in mid-October 2000 organised by the women's movement. The young men were highly charged for the coming confrontation as they were heading for the checkpoint and some scoffed at the candles and encouraged the crowd to go to the checkpoint

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<sup>126</sup> Ibid., 38-9.

<sup>127</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

too. The slogans shouted by the young men were less political but more fiery. However, the women managed to quieten the young men and Kuttab and Johnson see this as one of the few instances where there was any level of discussion between civil society and the combatants.<sup>128</sup> As these public demonstrations received little publicity, those women who wanted their voices to be heard would have had to follow the men and participate in checkpoint confrontations.

More often, however, rather than active participants women are portrayed as victims of the cultural constraints of their societies, especially in Western literature. Wafa Idrees, according to most sources, was divorced, apparently unable to have children and worked for the Red Crescent. Many of those who reported her story suggested that her inability to have children and the subsequent divorce caused her so much distress that she decided to carry out a suicide bombing operation. For other women, personal motivations were found too: illicit relationships outside marriage, or before marriage, pregnancy, inadequacy or a quest to save the family honour.<sup>129</sup>

Interestingly political motivations are hardly ever attributed to women, especially by Israeli and Western analysts.<sup>130</sup> If we accept the central argument of these analyses, it appears then that women and men are motivated by two completely different sets of reasons. While male perpetrators grieve for the injustice and suffering caused by the Israeli occupation or are motivated by religious promises of paradise, women see suicide bombing as a dignified escape route when they have broken the rules of behaviour assigned to them by a society that does not endow

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<sup>128</sup> Kuttab and Johnson, "Where Have All the Women Gone?" 38-9.

<sup>129</sup> Barbara Victor, a journalist who interviewed family and friends of female suicide bombers during the second intifada, devoted a whole book to demonstrating that women were largely 'driven' by personal motives and the constraints in their conservative society to commit these acts. See Barbara Victor, *Army of Roses: Inside the World of Palestinian Women Suicide Bombers* (London: Constable & Robinson 2003). Also Schweitzer to some extent, see Schweitzer, "Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers," 32.38. Mira Tzoreff also focuses on the cultural pressures and confines placed on Palestinian women by their societies. Mira Tzoreff, "The Palestinian *Shahida*: National Patriotism, Islamic Feminism and Social Crisis," in Yoram Schweitzer, *Female Suicide Bombers*, 13-23. Raphael Israeli's account focuses on the oppression and discrimination of women in Islam but does not engage with the Palestinian political situation and concludes that female suicide bombing is an attempt to make women's voice heard. Raphael Israeli, "Palestinian Women: The Quest for a Voice in the Public Square Through 'Islamikaze Martyrdom,'" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16, no.1 (Spring 2004): 66-96.

<sup>130</sup> A much more balance assessment is provided by Ibrahim and Shuraydi who situate female suicide bombing in the context of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination in which both men and women participate. See Ibitsam Ibrahim and Muhammad A. Shuraydi, "Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers: Equal Partners in the Struggle for Liberation," *The Arab World Geographer* 9, no.2 (Summer 2006): 112-125.

them with equal rights. In his study of failed female Palestinian suicide bombers imprisoned in Israel, Schweitzer does acknowledge mixed motives for women but concludes from his research that women's motivations and justifications for attempting suicide operations were initially personal, but with prolonged imprisonment became more political. He attributes this development or indoctrination to the gradual influence from the more dominant political inmates within the prison environment.

Such logic empties Palestinian female action of any political content and at the same time vilifies Palestinian culture and society for pushing females into such actions as a last resort in situations where they see, within the confines of their culture, no other dignified way out.<sup>131</sup> The same logic has also discredited the image of Palestinian women and motherhood.<sup>132</sup> As funerals are turned into celebrations, wives and mothers in particular are shown to be proud of their husbands and sons, raising the question how mothers could willingly send their children to die and kill the children of others. A close reading of some of the interviews with mothers or wives of martyrs in the intifada, however, shows that they are deeply grieving the loss but their social surroundings do not always allow them to openly share these feelings. The concept of the martyr is a very complex and valuable concept in Palestinian society and he or she is seen as someone who sacrificed their life for the sake of the community.<sup>133</sup> As such, they are seen as deserving admiration for their deeds.

Questioning the basis of those who boil down the phenomenon of female suicide bombing to gender inequality and patriarchy, does not intend to deny the existence of severe restrictions on women within Palestinian society, nor can the unfortunate position that many women find themselves in be solely attributed to the Israeli occupation. Looking at other areas in the region women face similar difficulties in Egypt and Jordan, for example. Discrimination against women arises from a mix of deeply-rooted cultural practices and traditions and particular interpretations of Islam. Yet, the unique political situation in the Palestinian territories adds additional restrictions. The rise of the Islamic movement, largely due

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<sup>131</sup> Dorit Naaman, "Brides of Palestine/Angels of Death: Media, Gender and Performance in the Case of Palestinian Female Suicide Bombers," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 32, no. 4 (Summer 2007): 936.

<sup>132</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>133</sup> INTERVIEW #14.



to its opposition to Oslo, had undoubtedly a negative impact on women's liberation. Moreover, the division between Fateh and Hamas which came to the fore after the 2006 elections also deeply affected women. Women's bodies and personal rights became a political battleground. Wearing the hijab is as much a political statement for many women as it is a religious one.<sup>134</sup> Policies that affect women's personal rights are a manifestation of political control and power. Since Hamas took control of the Gaza Strip it advocated a number of policies restricting women's personal choices such as banning women from smoking *arguileh*, a Middle Eastern tobacco water pipe popular with both men and women throughout Palestine.

Women's liberation does still have a long way to go in the eyes of local activists. The context of the first intifada enabled women to carve out a role for themselves and formulate an agenda for women's liberation. As elsewhere, however, nationalist agendas began to take priority and side-lined women's issues 'temporarily,' but for many women national independence has to go hand in hand with equal rights for women. In their view creating a democratic state with equal rights for everyone is crucial to Palestinian independence. Hence, internal reform is essential.

To date, reform in family and penal law has been stalled by political interests and division. Arafat, for example, postponed any reform of the family and penal law in order not to sour the relationship with the Islamists. Since 2007 the PLC has been defunct following the division between Fateh and Hamas and large-scale arrests of Hamas members of the parliament. While reforms could be made through presidential decree, such a decree would no longer have had force in the Gaza Strip which since 2007 is under the control of Hamas, and Mahmoud Abbas' term expired in 2009.<sup>135</sup> The legal system in place in the Palestinian Territories is made up of an intricate mix of legal layers bearing witness to the complex history of the Palestinian Territories, including Ottoman, British Mandate, Jordanian, Egyptian and Israeli military law. Which laws are in force where and when seems to be beyond the comprehension of a non-legal mind. However, much of the penal and family law originate from Jordanian laws passed between 1948 and 1967. One of the most controversial legal remnants from that era, is the legal loophole in the case of honour killings. Under a Jordanian penal code, men who claim to have killed female

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<sup>134</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>135</sup> INTERVIEW #10.

relatives because they are suspected of having dishonoured the family, generally get away with relative impunity.<sup>136</sup> Although it is difficult to gather data on honour killings, some sources suggest they are on the rise in the Palestinian territories.<sup>137</sup>

The course of the women's movement after the end of the first intifada and with the signing of Oslo reflected largely the developments of the rest of civil society as discussed in chapter two. The signing of Oslo had divided Palestinian society over the suitable and most effective tactics and strategy to end occupation and to achieve independence. The transition from informal politics to formal politics is one central factor in the decline of mass activism.<sup>138</sup> As elsewhere in civil society, women activists became absorbed in the newly emerging PA apparatus after Oslo. Keeping one foot in the grassroots movement and one in the PA, largely rendered these 'femocrats' ineffective.<sup>139</sup> This institutionalisation of the women's movement is one of the main reasons why the movement was no longer able to mobilise and affect political developments. Moreover, the severe movement restrictions put in place during the second intifada did, of course, categorically impede any large-scale grassroots activism. Towards the end of the second intifada in November 2004 OCHA counted 61 checkpoints around the West Bank, 6 partial checkpoints, 102 roadblocks, 48 road gates, 374 earth mounds, 28 earth walls, 61 trenches, 39 observation towers. This amounts to a total of 719 physical obstructions in an area of 5640 km<sup>2</sup>. Nablus, for example, was surrounded by seven fully staffed checkpoints and two partial checkpoints.<sup>140</sup> Moreover, the IDF also implemented prolonged curfews. According to B'Tselem, Jenin, for example, was under curfew for just under 1800 hours with a break of just under 600 hours between 16 June and 15 August 2002. During the same time Nablus was under curfew for around 1700 hours with less than 100 hours break.<sup>141</sup> Under these circumstances, it was

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<sup>136</sup> In May 2010 Mahmoud Abbas announced a legal amendment to end legal leniency for men thought to have committed honour killings. See "Abbas orders amendment to 'honor killing' law," Ma'an, 14 May 2011, <http://www.maannews.net/eng/ViewDetails.aspx?ID=387466> (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>137</sup> Although the rise might be due to easier access to such information it does not change the fact that each year since between 2003 and 2010 has seen several deaths due to honour killings, amounting to a total of 49 reported honour killings. See PHRMG, "Deaths as a Result of Honour Killing," [http://www.phrmg.org/Resources%20Tables%20new/Hon\\_Eng.htm](http://www.phrmg.org/Resources%20Tables%20new/Hon_Eng.htm) (accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>138</sup> Kuttab and Johnson, "Where Have all the Women Gone?" 25.

<sup>139</sup> INTERVIEW #10.

<sup>140</sup> OCHA, "West Bank Closures," November 2004, [http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1\\_Closure1Nov\\_04\\_A3.pdf](http://www.ochaopt.org/documents/WB1_Closure1Nov_04_A3.pdf) (accessed 12 September 2011).

<sup>141</sup> Shlomi Swisa, "Lethal Curfew: The Use of Live Ammunition to Enforce Curfew," B'Tselem, trans. By Zvi Shulman (October 2002), 4, [www.btselem.org/Download/200210\\_Lethal\\_Curfew\\_Eng.doc](http://www.btselem.org/Download/200210_Lethal_Curfew_Eng.doc)

impossible for activists to mobilise and organise on a large scale. As already pointed out earlier in this thesis, with most of the leaders of the women's movement based in Ramallah it was not possible travel and mobilise outside the city.

The indirect consequences of the occupation such as unemployment, economic hardship and resulting domestic violence, was already touched on earlier, but women also suffered from the immediate impact of the violence during the intifada. One woman from Rafah, interviewed by WCLAC, questions the humanity of the sniper who shot her seven year old daughter whilst sitting in the car next to her. So does another woman, who describes how soldiers trapped young men inside a taxi with a tear gas canister, and stood by, watching how the car filled with smoke and the men began gasping for air.<sup>142</sup> For many women their experiences of loss and humiliation have turned into hatred for the people that they identify as the clear source of their suffering. Under such circumstances, making peace appears no longer possible.<sup>143</sup>

The woman, whose mother's state of health severely deteriorated because of the lack of water during the prolonged curfew of Nablus, explains her feelings:

I don't like to read or think of that story because every time I imagine my mother right in front of me I would have killed him. If a soldier were in front of me I would have killed him, believe me. I wanted to go down just to see them, to fight with them. What happened is so senseless! It is a tragedy! I've never held a grudge against them. I used to be against killing, but after that time I started to have the disturbing urge to kill (...).<sup>144</sup>

For most women it is clear who is responsible for their suffering:

It is the Israelis. They are the reason I couldn't reach the hospital in time to give my son the medical treatment he deserved. He should have had a chance to live. It's impossible for my husband and me to forget those moments where we were on the verge of exploding. We kept reliving them after his death. It is impossible to forget! We just keep remembering and crying.<sup>145</sup>

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(accessed 17 January 2012).

<sup>142</sup> WCLAC, "If I Were Given the Choice," 41, 63-64.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 61.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 63.

<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 62.

Loss and suffering often trigger severe emotional distress and sometimes channel into anger and hatred. When the pain is so big, logic stops, argues one interviewee.<sup>146</sup> A central theme in these interviews is the loss of humanity on both sides. The women question the humanity of those who inflict violence and suffering on them and at the same time they feel deprived of their own human dignity.

Retaining humanity is at the core of much unnoticed resistance activity. Resistance is a very comprehensive term for Palestinians: it even stretches to refusing to give way to army vehicles trying to cross a busy road for example, which normally would be considered a courtesy among drivers. Resistance does not only refer to armed attacks against Israel but is essentially also about carrying on with life. While we have already discussed the concept of *sumud* in an earlier chapter, which advocates maintaining presence on the land, some forms of resistance are broader than that and touch on the human side of continuing life: they may include making a birthday cake, making a salad, or going to work.<sup>147</sup> After weeks of prolonged closure of the West Bank in March 2010 and clashes across the major cities outside Ramallah, I wanted to get out of Ramallah for a day trip and asked a Palestinian colleague at the University if he thought it was a good idea to travel at the moment. He looked rather perplexed and answered: we have to go about our lives no matter what happens. I have to go to work every day whether there are clashes or not. I subsequently did end up going on a day trip to Bethlehem, on my return to Ramallah later that afternoon a battle had broken out near Qalandia checkpoint between the army and youths from the nearby refugee camp. Whilst fully armed soldiers exchanged mainly teargas but possibly also rubber coated bullets and sound bombs for stones, drivers had found themselves a small path to pass alongside these confrontations on the pavement. As traffic had built up it was slow moving. I kept turning around to observe what was happening only a few meters away from the car as I felt slightly uncomfortable about the proximity of the events, but none of the other passengers of the shared taxi even bothered to look twice. While I found it strange how passers-by were carrying on with their journeys as if nothing was happening, for the other passengers it must have been something that they were so familiar with that they simply considered part of their daily lives.

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<sup>146</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>147</sup> Women describe how they tried to celebrate a daughter's birthday or make the usual meals during the incursion when their houses were occupied. *Ibid.*, 58.

Hanadi Jaradat was an often cited example in interviews. A young lawyer from Jenin, both her fiancé and her brother had been killed by the Israeli army. It is difficult to distinguish in this case whether she carried out the operation for personal or political reasons. While losing a loved one is normally a very personal experience, in the Palestinian context many people lose their relatives and friends because of the political situation. The fact that both men were killed by the army made Jaradat's motivations also political and provided her with a clear target for her anger and suffering.

While equality in participation may not have been easily achieved, as far as reception in society was concerned, it appears that women martyrs were treated just the same as male martyrs: they received funeral processions, recorded last wills and appear to be venerated by the population in the same way as male martyrs. Posters of female martyrs still appear throughout Ramallah on the anniversary of their deaths, even years later. Nevertheless, female activism is not always welcomed by society. Women prisoners for example, receive a mixed message from society.<sup>148</sup> While Palestinian men who had not been in prison, at least up until the second intifada, are rather the exception than the rule, for a Palestinian woman to be an ex-prisoner is rather unusual.<sup>149</sup> Having been imprisoned by Israel earns a man respect from the community as he has shown loyalty to his own community.

The debates on female suicide bombers to date have largely centred on the cultural constraints imposed on women by their societies and women's quest for equality. However, the question for women seeking a role in the intifada went beyond equality with men. For many voices in the women's movement, it was rather a question of the emancipation of civil society, an emancipation of the masses.<sup>150</sup> The experience of women was hence merely symptomatic of the wider underlying discrimination against mass participation in the intifada. Mass participation occurred in the closed spaces of cities unheard by the international media and unseen by the Israeli occupation, the clear target of the people's frustration; and it occurred away from the public eye in people's homes as they endured prolonged hardship during closures. When the masses did seek to confront the soldiers at checkpoints they responded with disproportionate force causing them

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<sup>148</sup> WCLAC, "If I Were Given the Choice," 77.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

<sup>150</sup> On the exclusion and marginalisation of the masses and especially women see, for example, Johnson and Kuttub, "Where Have all the Women Gone?" 26,38.

to retreat. Those who wanted to voice their frustration in a public manner resorted to violence, choosing an approach that is more visible but also one that is more devoid of political content.

#### **4.7. Explaining Suicide Bombing, the Relationship between Politics & Violence, and Questioning the Importance of Strategy**

The intention of this chapter was to discover the central driving factors behind suicide bombings. The preceding chapters had outlined the major political, territorial and social trends since the end of the first intifada and explained how these transformations precluded the rise of collective forms of non-violent protest such as mass demonstrations and civil disobedience as the dominant tactics, but at the same time these developments prepared the ground for a more violent and fragmented intifada.

We have seen that suicide bombings were often reactionary to Israeli violence against Palestinians but most specifically a response to Israel's assassination policies. According to data of the Journal of Palestine Studies no assassinations were carried out between September 2000, immediately prior to the outbreak of the intifada, and early November. The initial three months of the intifada saw three suicide bombings with the first being conducted on 26 October 2000, wounding one, and the second on 9 November which is the same day that Israel's first assassination operation during this period took place.<sup>151</sup> By the time the third suicide bombing occurred on 22 December, Israeli security forces had in the span of a month and a half assassinated 13 Palestinians with political or militant roles, including a member of the DFLP which has a militant wing but did not engage in any suicide operations. This would suggest that the Israeli military, from the beginning, responded with full force against suicide bombings and that in the early stages, at least, Palestinians did not react with equal force.

Conversely, one could argue that assassinations, violent incursions, reoccupation and curfews were all a reaction to Palestinian violence, especially suicide bombings. This is certainly what Brym and Arraj sought to ascertain. For them Palestinians and Israelis became locked into an interactive cycle of violence.

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<sup>151</sup> For assassinations see Esposito, "Al-Aqsa Intifada," 111-21.

However, we have also seen indications that Israeli violence was not always reactionary. Before the outbreak of the intifada the Israeli military and security had already prepared themselves for major confrontations with the Palestinians and many Palestinians, especially in hindsight, feel that the leadership, by allowing the violence to go ahead, fell into the trap. Palestinian violence provided Israel with the pretext for major incursions and military operations which they had prepared themselves for, months before the outbreak of the intifada. Michele K. Esposito also points out in his overview of Israeli military operations during the intifada, that some operations were already initiated or approved before major Palestinian suicide bombing attacks occurred. Moreover, assassinations and incursions continued during periods of *hudna* on the Palestinian side.<sup>152</sup> Hence, at least in part, Israeli policies were pre-emptive and not reactionary.

Internally, the political fragmentation and division under the lack of national leadership and the frustration among the population after the failure of Oslo fuelled the organisations' activism, striving for popular support. Moreover, the excessive violence used by Israel against Palestinian civilians in mass demonstrations in the initial stages of the intifada increased the populations' support for violent action against Israel. Suicide bombings came to symbolise empowerment in the face of a vastly superior military force.

Interestingly, while Palestinian organisations appear to be strongly driven by military realities on the ground, their competitive relationship with other organisations and their populations' impetus, they showed little sensitivity to the international political mood. Palestinians gained international support during the first intifada as the David in an inherently unequal struggle against Goliath. In the second intifada, Palestinians were often framed as the sole aggressors against which Israel saw itself justified to deploy any means available to defend itself and its population. Suicide bombings isolated Palestinians, it allowed the conflict to be framed in terms of security, and completely side-lined the demand for an end of the occupation.

Perpetrators tended to come from communities that have been affected more severely by Israeli occupation, especially movement restrictions and

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<sup>152</sup> Baroud describes how the meeting by the various Palestinian factions with Abbas on 6 August was full of grievances brought forward by Hamas, the Islamic Jihad and others because despite the ceasefire that had started on 29 June 2003 Israeli assassinations, land confiscations, arrests and incitement had continued unabated. See Baroud, *Second Palestinian Intifada*, 71.

settlements, but also construction and access to water. They also tended to originate mainly from the North and the South of the West Bank, which had both seen a decline in living standards in the years prior to the outbreak of the second intifada. Hence, movement restrictions had created a fragmented physical as well as social geography. Individuals' lives were confined to fairly small social spaces leading to localised cultures and close social networks. With the rise of Hamas, religion had gained more influence in society but religion and politics had always been inseparable in Palestine and true secularism does not exist in Palestinian society. The failure of Oslo, the realisation of the true implications for Palestinians of the Oslo agreement and the Palestinian Authority's own failures, created an explosive political atmosphere among the population. People's frustrations and support from the marginalised masses for the intifada was in part also a very vocal objection to the Palestinian Authority's performance and could have easily turned against the Palestinian leadership itself. The use of excessive force by Israeli army and police against civilians participating in mass demonstrations, especially in the initial stages of the intifada combined with the accumulated frustration of Palestinian political aspirations created an atmosphere in which the 'martyr' became an admirable and desirable symbol of power in an otherwise hopeless situation. It appeared to introduce a measure of equality or parity where there was none on a daily basis. Amid this rise of the 'culture of martyrdom', emulating martyrs who were by many seen as heroes sacrificing themselves for their communities became a desirable goal, especially among the younger generation.

While some analysts argue that individuals (especially women) were victims of manipulation and pressure, others - particularly party members and leaders of organisations - argue that supply was bigger than demand and that individuals were the driving force behind this phenomenon. It is difficult to come to any authoritative conclusion on personal motivations, yet political frustrations among the perpetrators appear to have been a significant motivating factor. However, organisations also offer incentives such as financial security for anyone who joins them. Recruitment no longer seems to be as clear-cut as it used to be. While in the past individuals approached an organisation if they wanted to be politically active, this was not necessarily the case during the second intifada and short-term recruitment of people who had not been previously active for



organisations appears to have been widespread.<sup>153</sup> Female suicide bombing had caused much interest but the argument here has been that it was less an expression of gender equality in itself but, rather, it was symptomatic of the exclusion of the whole of civil society, and not just women, from a new more violent mode of uprising.

The role of violence in the second intifada merits some further thought. Beyond being a response to Israeli aggression, violence had always played a key role in the Palestinian national struggle. In the absence of a territorial base, Yezid Sayigh argued that armed struggle served as a key driving force in nation building, state building and the reviving of Palestinian national identity.<sup>154</sup> British Mandate policies, the establishment of the state of Israel and the concomitant collective dispossession and dispersal of Palestinians had weakened and delayed the formation of Palestinian nationalism, but armed struggle was capable of unifying Palestinians and driving the Palestinian political project forward. It was essentially of strategic value. With Oslo and the establishment of the Palestinian Authority on Palestinian territory this allegiance between politics and violence changed considerably. Using armed struggle to promote Palestinian independence was no longer a viable option for those groups that accepted the Oslo framework because the Oslo agreement does not include any notion of legitimate use of violence for the stateless Palestinians against Israel. Violence in the second intifada served no long-term strategy, it may have temporarily galvanised the masses, but it achieved next to nothing in terms of nation building or solidifying Palestinian identity.

That the political level failed to put forward a strategy, has been a recurrent theme in this thesis. Azmi Bishara argued that an uprising against Israel can only be successful with clear objectives and strategies to achieve these goals. While the point on the lack of strategy is a fair one, it is nevertheless questionable whether a political strategy is really necessary and if it would make a difference. The repeated failure of the Palestinian national project has less to do with the lack of strategy, but more with the dictates of power politics, because when political strategies are presented by the Palestinians, and the recent application for statehood at the UN is a good example here, such approaches bear little fruit. In essence, Palestinians still find themselves in what Rashid Khalidi had described as an iron cage. Rather than

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<sup>153</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

<sup>154</sup> Yezid Sayigh, *Armed Struggle and the Search for a State: The Palestinian National Movement 1949-1993* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1997), 23,665,668.

an iron one, it has now, at least politically, become an invisible one that for some time has blinded Palestinians themselves and those outside with promises of limited sovereignty, international funding, and temporary stability. However, on the ground nothing has changed. Israel still has ultimate control of every inch of Palestinian territory, even Area A, and any attempts to develop an independent economy or meaningful political rights are choked. Efforts to escape from the confines of this cage result in a wide range of punishments, even military action. Just like the British Mandate, where a complex legal and constitutional framework prevented the Palestinians from developing the means for achieving independence vis-à-vis the Jewish immigrants, Israel and the international community have, through a carrot and stick approach, kept the Palestinians, within the confines of a clearly defined route that grants minor concessions yet cannot lead to a fully independent national state for the Palestinians with East Jerusalem as the capital.<sup>155</sup> The turn away from a long-dead peace process and the proposal of a new strategy, namely the application to the UN, have shown that when the Palestinians diverge from the dictated route, funding is withdrawn by the US, Palestinian revenues are frozen by Israel, and even sanctions may be placed on the PA leadership.<sup>156</sup> Palestinians alone cannot determine their fate but they are reliant on a change in the political framework that governs their marginalisation.

Hence, it is very questionable if a more articulated and cohesive strategy would have ultimately led to any success in the intifada. While one may argue, as Khalidi has convincingly done, that it is due to the violent nature of the second intifada that Palestinians lost their moral battle, Palestinians always have used non-violent methods too, but only with limited success. In fact, Palestinians have used a wide range of non-violent means in their history of political activism against Israel, including mass demonstrations, strikes, refusal to pay taxes, planting trees, and more recently, riding on Israeli buses, attempting to drive on Israeli-only routes, or writing 'Free Palestine' on Shekel notes. These recent attempts especially have directly sought to challenge the physical restrictions that are placed on them.<sup>157</sup> How the conflict will evolve from here would be difficult to predict, and whether suicide

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<sup>155</sup> Khalidi, *Iron Cage*, 31.

<sup>156</sup> "Al Hayat: Israel Sanctions PA; Abbas' Movement Restricted," *Ynetnews*, 11 January 2012 <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4174151,00.html> (accessed 12 January 2012).

<sup>157</sup> Elijah Levy, "Facebook Protest: 'Free Palestine' on NIS," *Ynetnews*, 07 March 2011, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-4038561,00.html> (accessed 12 January 2012).

bombings will return to the scene in the future is also hard to tell. However, what we have seen in this thesis is that when there is no space for non-violent forms of protest to develop and make a contribution, violence will dominate the conflict.

## **5. Drawing Conclusions**

The key question that this thesis posed at the outset was, how and why has Palestinian political activism changed from the first to the second Palestinian intifada? Political activism was broadly defined as encompassing a wide range of action from non-violence to violence. This concluding section will summarise the main findings of this discussion and look at the implications of this thesis for the literature on Palestine and on political violence more generally. Beyond these reflections, this final chapter will consider the research process itself. Insights into the particular challenges of conducting research in the Palestinian context, the influence of the researcher herself on the process, and on the ownership and transfer of knowledge will be discussed. Some of these insights may be of particular interest to this field of enquiry and region, and little has been published to date on conducting fieldwork in the, in many ways, uniquely challenging context of the Palestinian territories, but some comments are also of a more general nature. Finally, the discussion in this thesis has at different junctures opened up a number of new questions and the concluding section of this chapter will identify some areas for potential future research.

### **5.1 Summary of Findings and their Relevance**

The first chapter introduced central debates in the literature on Palestine and highlighted the de-contextualisation of violence in key texts on suicide bombing, proposing a very different approach to the perspectives put forward in terrorism studies. The chapter argued for an interpretive and contextual model, one that moves away from abstract concepts but still has the ability to predict trends and what to do about them. Studies by social movement scholars have tended to produce richer and more historically embedded analyses. This thesis, however, instead of focusing on movement dynamics and structure, drew on insights from geography, emphasising the importance of key transformations of Palestinian geography and exploring their relevance to PA governance, modes of protest and social division.

The discussion in the subsequent chapter highlighted Palestinian political fragmentation in the run-up to the second intifada, how it demobilised political

parties as well as civil society. Cause for this fragmentation was certainly to a significant extent the autocratic rule and ambition for dominance of the largest Palestinian party and its leaders. However, the Palestinian Authority and its leading political party were also locked into an agreement that forced on them a role that they could never satisfactorily fulfil. The Oslo agreement, as has been pointed out numerous times in this thesis, was in its essence an agreement to protect the security of Israeli citizens. The Palestinian Authority hence had the role of policing its own society while at the same time having no powers of protecting its own citizens. This led to the fact that more and more Palestinians came to see the Palestinian Authority as a client of their colonial occupier writ large. This very difficult position that the PA occupies also explains the conflicting messages sent and activities pursued by the PA leaders during the second intifada. Finding the balance between resistance and cooperation, where cooperation never produces tangible results, is an impossible line to tread even for the most experienced and astute political leaders. It is this irreconcilable gap between the two, or dissonance in these two cognitions as it was referred to earlier in the thesis, that the population sought to bridge with the intifada. The Palestinian Authority has, despite its name, no authority when it comes to anything vital for its citizens. Water is the most obvious example here. As explained at length in chapter two, the Palestinian Authority has no control over West Bank aquifers or over water distribution. Any joint committees are purely nominal because Israel maintained veto-power. Building and construction, another essential service to citizens, are also largely in firm Israeli hands. Central to the PA's weak governance is the division of control mapped out geographically as isolated compartments on West Bank territory. While the Palestinian Authority can issue building permits in Area A and B, this amounts to less than 50% of West Bank territory. In many areas of the West Bank the existing housing does not satisfy the needs of the population and therefore many have begun to build illegally without permits, at the risk of being fined, and eventually their houses being demolished by the army. Ultimately, the Palestinian Authority does not even have control over its own population. It can arrest and prosecute Palestinians, but Israeli interests and measures concerning Palestinians always supersede any potential of the PA to protect its citizens, neither can the PA protect or control international passport

holders even within territory under its control (Area A).<sup>158</sup> Despite the continuous talk of the need for economic growth and the influx of international aid since Oslo, the situation for Palestinians has only improved marginally; however, without control over territory, resources and borders it is impossible to build a viable independent Palestinian economy. Said and other critics had already warned early on that Palestinian leaders had committed themselves to an agreement that was bound to manoeuvre them into a profound and essential contradiction between their citizens' needs and the conditions set by Israel, (and to some extent the international community).

Chapter 2 demonstrated how internal political events had 'disabled' political activism through parties and civil society, which had for the most part become ineffective at responding to and mobilising the grassroots. The only parties that had retained power were Fateh and Hamas, the former exercising it through PLO structures and the PA, while the latter had gained its popularity through its extensive charitable networks among the lower ranks within society. The developments during the Oslo years and even more so the increasingly visible competitive spirit between the two parties already paved the way for the devastating political division yet to come. The PA, which was ineffective in its politics in Palestinian eyes as it had no authority where it mattered, was also unable to channel its population's frustrations at the blatant failure of the Oslo agreement that had given so much hope. The dramatic rise of settlements in the occupied territories during the Oslo period, the continuing incursions, house demolitions, control over basic resources such as water and land, land confiscations and the increasingly tighter closure policies were a visible testimony to this failure that could not be ignored. However, because of the weakness of civil society organisations and political parties there was no effective 'institutional' outlet for the population through channels of either politics or civil society which could mobilise and direct frustration and grievances. The popular activism of the first intifada through demonstrations and civil disobedience was hence very short-lived during the uprising. What took root instead was activism by

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<sup>158</sup> See, for instance, Nir Hasson, "Report: Israel Cops Nab Czech Peace Activist in Ramallah Raid," *The Haaretz*, 21 January 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/report-israel-cops-nab-czech-peace-activist-in-ramallah-raid-1.261798> (accessed 12 January 2012). Also, Ali Waked, "High Court to Discuss Deportation of Peace Activists," *YnetNews*, 7 February 2010, <http://www.ynetnews.com/articles/0,7340,L-3845639,00.html> (accessed 12 January 2012).

individuals who were already within the framework of militant groups but also those outside them lacking any political affiliation.

Chapter 3 outlined the growing territorial fragmentation, how this territorial re-configuration shaped the possibilities of the second intifada, and how it contributed to accelerating social fragmentation. Since the end of the Mandate period, Palestinians increasingly lost access to territory that they historically considered theirs. Now, the majority of Palestinians are strictly confined to the West Bank and Gaza with a tight closure and movement policy in place, and a minority, only a third, have the freedom to move around relatively freely as citizens of Israel or Jerusalem residents. Through investigating the concept and realities of territory in Palestine and the nature of Israel's colonialism we discovered how deeply the conflict runs, how it encompasses every sphere of life, and the different levels it is being conducted on.

The imposed division between Palestinian and Israeli areas, and the resulting fragmentation of territory, especially the cantonisation of Palestinian life, uniquely shaped the possibilities for confrontation between the Israeli military and Palestinians in the second intifada. The division into different areas of control led to the withdrawal of Israeli military as well as administration from the Palestinian population centres which meant that Israel no longer had a day-to-day presence in the Palestinian-controlled areas. With checkpoints having become the only points of encounter between the occupied and the occupiers, these were the only visible spaces for voicing grievances and hence they became the location of popular protests, especially in the early stages of the second intifada. The demonstrations staged in the Palestinian population centres remained largely invisible to the international community and had no impact on Israel. The preparedness of the Israeli army and its determination to quench the uprising in its early stages undoubtedly contributed to the ensuing violence. The early months of the intifada, which were mostly characterised by peaceful mass demonstration on the Palestinian side, saw the highest number of casualties throughout the uprising. This in turn raised support among the population for a violent response. The retreat of the masses enabled militants to gain visibility and eventually, the upper hand in the confrontations.

The division into different zones of control has also created inequality among the various social groups. Rural dwellers were most affected by the settlements, land confiscation for settlement construction, military incursions, violent confrontations

with settlers, and water shortages, especially significant for those working in agriculture. Those living in Area C also find it almost impossible to obtain building permits. While refugee camps are normally located within urban centres or on their outskirts, refugees are inherently disadvantaged. They have been dispossessed for three generations with little hope of recovering their rights, property and, perhaps most significantly, a sense of dignity. Amid high unemployment rates in the camps it is difficult for refugee families to make ends meet; moreover, because of the difficulty of getting building permits, for many, moving out of the camp is not an option. Only the very poorest receive food assistance from UNRWA, which itself has dire financial concerns as its mandate has been much longer than intended and at least in part, is envisaged as financially independent from the United Nations regular budget.<sup>159</sup> Hence, refugees are already among the most vulnerable in Palestinian society. Refugee camps are often portrayed as the hotbed of violence but we have seen in our analysis in chapter four that a large number of suicide bombers came from the rural areas, proportionately almost in equal numbers, questioning the necessary link between refugees and violence. Nevertheless, refugee camps are often the target of military incursions leading to violence and destruction of property, often dispossessing refugees yet again.<sup>160</sup> Inhabitants of the major cities, on the other hand, enjoy a much larger radius of free movement as opposed to rural dwellers, within which they can, at least most of the time, go about their daily life undisturbed. Ramallah is the quintessential exception in the Palestinian territories and has almost become an anomaly, no longer representative of the general Palestinian experience but rather an almost carefree bubble devoid of any political motivation or engagement, but a place where commercialisation is the driving force. For any visitor to Ramallah or its inhabitants, the occupation is momentarily invisible. This difference in experience is reflected in the origins of suicide bombers as we saw in chapter four. Chapter three also raised the issue of changes in identity and a shift away from the national interest. As one interviewee put it, Palestinians

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<sup>159</sup> “General Assembly, Noting Grave Financial Situation of UNRWA, Calls for Institutional Strengthening through UN Regular Budget Financing,” UNRWA, 18 April 201, <http://www.unrwa.org/etemplate.php?id=956> (accessed 5 January 2012). “Note on UNRWA’s Financial Situation,” UNRWA, 1 November 2009, <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/4A97EE9D73C63AEB8525766C006DC088> (accessed 5 January 2012).

<sup>160</sup> The evictions of Sheikh Jarrah residents are a good example here, as well as house demolitions in Jenin refugee camp during the second intifada. On my visit to Balata Camp near Nablus, one of the employees at the cultural centre took me on a tour and explained that during Israeli incursions tanks destroyed whole rows of houses as they pushed themselves through the narrow paths in the camp.



are more concerned with their own survival now than the realisation of a state.<sup>161</sup> The very idea of a Palestinian state was directly challenged by the complete reoccupation of the West Bank during the second intifada, as the geographical division of control, which had initially signalled the phased withdrawal of Israeli forces but had then become a permanent state, was completely reversed. The now firmly entrenched closure policy, which physically divides the three entities that for Palestinians should form the future state, the unrelenting building of settlements on Palestinian land, and the continued division between Fateh and Hamas have further distanced the project of an independent state for the Palestinians. With the peace talks stagnating, a future Palestinian state seems further away than ever. The frustration and disappointment of the Oslo years and the sheer hopelessness of the current situation have caused Palestinians to look inward. What is clear is that more and more Palestinians accept that with all the facts created on the ground by Israel a two-state solution is no longer realistic. One interviewee explained; if they give it to us today we will accept it but there is no point talking about a two-state solution for tomorrow.<sup>162</sup> The two overlapping national geographies, as described in Weizman's analysis of Israeli architecture in the occupied territories, connected through tunnels and bridges and separated from one another through walls and barriers, are no longer neatly separable.

Chapter 4 offered a contextual analysis of suicide bombing during the second intifada and picked up on the major themes identified in the previous two chapters. Israeli aggression and retribution to such aggression was identified as one significant factor, both in terms of psychological impact on the individual and a relationship with justification of retribution for organisations. Changes in the structure of organisations were traced back to the territorial fragmentation as well as Israeli aggression. Social fragmentation was assessed against geographic origins and social backgrounds of suicide bombers and it was found that suicide bombers came primarily from rural areas and refugee camps while, proportionately, only a minority came from the cities in the West Bank. This further reinforced the initial hypothesis that suicide bombers were those that were most affected by the occupation, if we accept that villages and refugee camps have been the most vulnerable and susceptible to occupation policies. One very obvious manifestation of Israeli

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<sup>161</sup> INTERVIEW #12.

<sup>162</sup> INTERVIEW #1.

occupation is the presence of settlements, representing its 'human' extension. However, when we compared the regional distribution of suicide bombers with the regional distribution of settlements, findings were inconclusive. The same study of checkpoints, the occupation's military face, supported the thesis that suicide bombers came from geographical areas that were more affected by Israel's system of movement control.

Conventional accounts have emphasised the absence of the masses and at the same time highlighted the centrality of political and militant groups as the main actors in the events. This thesis has questioned both. While the armed attacks of the militant wings of the political parties, or their loose affiliates, were certainly the most visible activities in the second intifada, and although civil society as a cohesive organised body was largely absent from the struggle, society as a supporter and participant was not. The second intifada was an uprising supported and driven by particular groups in society, namely those that were disproportionately affected by Israel's occupation policy and who were at the same time excluded from the benefits that a Palestinian leadership would bring. In essence, the uprising was an expression of frustration of the disadvantaged. Female participation in political violence is no exception here. This thesis argued that thinking of female suicide bombings as an escape from the constraints of a conservative culture, itself deprived women of an equal voice in articulating national and political sentiments. Portraying the phenomenon as a means of emancipation, however, is also simplistic. Rather, just as those unable to express their frustrations through absent and ineffective social and political institutions, women claimed a place for themselves in this particular form of political activism.

This thesis, then, has sought to connect the rise in political violence during the second intifada to the underlying political, territorial and social fragmentation. In making its argument it tapped into the literature on Palestine in terms of the roots debate of the conflict, the continuous contraction of territory accessible to Palestinians that started with 1948, the territorial and political transformations over Oslo, women in Palestine and their role in violent as well as non-violent resistance, and the history of Palestinian political protest.

In turn, the study contributes to the literature on Palestine in two ways. First, it offers an account of Palestinian political violence in the second intifada that engages with the military and political realities of the situation but also incorporates

wider debates. Second, the thesis has brought together discussions on Palestinian geography, political violence and social inequality in a new way. This convergence has given rise to questions on where protests occur, what kind of protests they are and what they are an expression of. Furthermore, it follows a trend identified by Harker that differentiates people as individuals and communities rather than treating Palestinians simply as ‘a population’.<sup>163</sup> This thesis, in looking at how occupation was experienced differently in different spaces, made some judgement on ‘who’ and ‘why’ particular groups in society participated in violence during the second intifada and why others did not. Rosemary Sayigh concluded that peasants had been the key participants in previous resistance in her work on refugee camps in Lebanon. My work has suggested that it is still predominantly the rural population together with refugees that were the driving force behind violent action during the second intifada.

This geographic perspective in conjunction with the question of modes of governance, forms of protest and social division also speaks more widely to the literature on political violence. Chapter one outlined how geography and violence are closely connected in a number of different ways in Northern Ireland, Algeria, South Africa and Lebanon. The thesis adopted the premise that looking at ‘where’ human beings do ‘what’ will give us some interesting insights into the ‘why’.<sup>164</sup>

Violence is likely to occur where large-scale non-violent protests are ineffective. In Palestine this was an outcome of a complex division of control that rendered the PA powerless, large-scale non-violent protest activities ineffectual or invisible, and disadvantaged particular geographically-defined groups of society. Non-violent forms of protest may hence be eclipsed by violent forms of protest in other conflict zones where territorial fragmentation overlaps with division of power combined with excessive repression. Fragmentation of territorial control would suggest an increased escalation of violence as the entering of spaces controlled by the ‘other’ represents a clear challenge to this control. This would be the case in particular where such spaces are ethnically or religiously homogenous as in the case of Loyalist marches through Catholic streets in Northern Ireland. This combined with the absence of civil spaces for protest increases the likelihood of violence.

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<sup>163</sup> Harker, “New Geographies,” 204.

<sup>164</sup> André Bank, for example, discussed in a paper at the DAVO conference where Syrian protests against the government erupted and why. See André Bank, “Syrien: Protestdynamiken und Regimerepression” (paper presented at the annual congress of the DAVO, Free University Berlin, 7 October 2011).

The thesis has also contributed to understanding political violence as part of a range of political tools that populations under repression employ. Terrorism studies tend to divorce particular elements of violence from a much more complex set of tools that organisations use. Such approaches cannot fully account for why political violence occurs because they are unable to trace the evolution of violence and fail to understand when violent action supersedes non-violent political alternatives.

Finally, this thesis identified several trends within the Palestinian context. One such development is a trend away from violence, as the political leadership has re-defined the perimeter of acceptable political activism. The thesis has also suggested that when spaces for non-violent activism are ineffective or unavailable, violence will take over. While at present, at least to some extent, other forms of protest and ways to realise the national project are being pursued, including the application to the UN, a return to violence is not inconceivable. However, at the same time counteracting a return to violence is also a general trend of individualisation and a turning away from the national cause, partly fuelled by prolonged political frustration and partly by ‘distractions’ such as growing consumerism which have undermined the fervour of political activism. Away from the national priority of an occupied people, Palestinian priorities have shifted to human concerns shared the world over: obtaining work, building a home, and providing for one’s family.

## **5.2 Reflections on the Research Process**

Unsurprisingly, conducting research in Palestine is a challenging endeavour. The fragile political situation, the military occupation, and internal divisions all make the Palestinian Territories an extremely difficult terrain for research. While the safety of the researcher is always a justified concern, many of the difficulties encountered go beyond what meets the eye and in this sense are also relevant to how future research on projects like these should be conducted. Some of the aspects discussed here may be predictable by the outsider, but other difficulties cannot be known to someone who is not familiar with this particular research environment. In a recently published volume *Critical Research in the Social Science – A Transdisciplinary East – West Handbook*, Majdi al-Malki describes Palestine as a

hostile environment for researchers. What al-Malki refers to, however, is not physical risks to the researcher but he identifies elements in Palestinian history, society and politics that make Palestine 'resistant' to research. For al-Malki research methodologies are often adopted without any reflection on 'the historical, social and cultural specificities of the societies which produced them.'<sup>165</sup> If we accept that knowledge is a social production, research should be adapted to the culture the researcher finds himself or herself in. If the cultural context is not taken into account, the researcher risks affecting the quality of his research, the research process and its results.<sup>166</sup> In the Palestinian context it is a set of political, cultural and social factors that influence the researcher.<sup>167</sup> Many of the factors that al-Malki identifies affect Palestinian researchers in particular, but the transformation of the field due to instability and rapid political change as well as social fragmentation resulting from the political situation, is also relevant to outside researchers, generating their own data. Without significant knowledge of the context within which one is researching, the researcher is unable to devise his or her research problem suitably, choose adequate methodologies and ask the 'right' questions. What is also relevant in assessing the research process are the attributes of the researcher. Being foreign, female, not a journalist, and also being fairly young and still largely inexperienced in academia in comparison to many interviewees, all played a significant role in the interview process for this research and demand reflection. How these particular attributes affected the research process will be discussed below.

The field work proved to be an adventurous process with many ups and downs and a very slow start. Preparations for the fieldwork had already been made the previous summer when I attended an Arabic course at Birzeit and discussed the suitability of the research with a contact, who had proven helpful and reliable to other colleagues in the department, and who assured me the research would be feasible and that he could introduce me to relevant interviewees belonging to a range of different parties. However, on my return this contact did not respond to any of my attempts to get in touch and instead of being able to, more or less, hit the ground

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<sup>165</sup> Majdi Al-Malki, "Researching in an Unsuitable Environment: The Palestinian Case," in *Critical Research in the Social Sciences: An Transdisciplinary East-West Handbook*, ed. Roger Heacock and Édouard Conte, 191 - 212 (Birzeit: Ibrahim Abu Lughod Institute of International Studies Birzeit University and Institute of Social Anthropology Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2011), 191.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 192.

running, I had to start from scratch, which was an extremely difficult experience because, as I learnt throughout the process, being introduced by someone, was often essential for getting interview appointments. Because of the sensitivity of the research I was also extremely cautious about making initial contact. During the first three months of my visit these difficulties were aggravated further by an incessant wave of strikes by both students and academics at Palestinian universities. While the strike of academics was naturally an obstacle to getting the research process underway, the student strikes were equally inhibiting as they were enforced with absolute ferocity by representatives of the Student Union and on one occasion I was followed and physically stopped by a young male from reaching the university. Only after some careful negotiation and explanation that I was a foreign researcher visiting for research purposes, was I categorised as an 'employee' and let go. The clashes throughout March in the major cities of the West Bank, with the exception of Ramallah, at Qalandia and in East Jerusalem, also made travelling outside Ramallah unpredictable and unattractive.

Particularly difficult was also the period of Ramadan. During the 30-day fasting month, as well as the week prior and the week after, it was impossible to get any interviews. It was an unusually hot summer in the West Bank that year with several days reaching 40°C or more, to the extent that even locals complained about the heat, which made the fasting period an even more difficult one. Offices shut early and only the most necessary work was done. In the evening, after the breaking of the fast, everyone naturally wanted to be with friends and family. Whenever I tried to make interview arrangements in the run-up or during Ramadan I was told that I should ring back after *Eid al-Fitr*. This essentially took out six weeks of my research schedule. Instead, I tried to use this time to collect other useful research material from local NGOs and research institutes.

Finding the right means for making contact was also a challenge. Email was an incredibly inefficient tool for getting responses, which was rather surprising in the academic context. This also applied to fieldwork I had carried out for Birzeit University where emails received the lowest response rate and as such its unsuitability for making initial contact cannot have been connected to the sensitivity of my research subject. Moreover, over the summer months many of the secretaries appeared to be on holiday so phone calls could not be forwarded either. Phoning, where phone numbers were available was successful, or in the first instance, turning

up to a research institute, NGO or cultural centre to introduce myself and make enquiries was often a very good, even if it was a time-consuming approach as it usually involved several trips.

Sometimes obtaining interviews was also a very lengthy process and stretched over several months. I negotiated concerning three interviews with activists originating from Balata refugee camp for three months and unfortunately only one materialised shortly before I left. Beyond the difficulties of making contact and obtaining interviews a number of other challenges inherent in the Palestinian environment need to be tackled by the researcher.

### Formulating Research in the Local Context

The thesis has already outlined to some extent how, since the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Palestinians have undergone drastic and rapid social and political changes from the collapse of the Ottoman empire, to Palestine under the British Mandate, the establishment of the Israeli state and the subsequent *nakba* for Palestinians that dispersed hundreds of thousands to the West Bank, East Jerusalem, Gaza, the neighbouring Arab states or further afield, and the occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza after 1967. The rapid occurrence of events has and still does create complex social and political dynamics and shifts the fault lines of relevant debates swiftly, making it difficult for research to keep up and remain policy relevant. As with research anywhere, not having an insight into some of the local social and political dynamics may lead researchers down the wrong path and to overlook the salient questions in society while only posing those that seem relevant from the outside. One sizeable challenge in designing questions for research is, of course, to determine the significant components or representations of concepts that are to be explored or tested. For example, when wanting to learn about transformations in society in terms of gender, the kind of topics that are significant and relevant are not always immediately visible to the outsider. Cultural knowledge will indicate to the researcher which questions will not yield useful answers. ‘Outsiders’ often find it difficult to discern what does matter and what does not and some, as David Landy observes in his paper on study trips to Palestine, appropriate expertise and authority over local knowledge. Landy describes how some

participants in the study trip repeatedly asked the director of a Palestinian women's centre about the dangers of Sharia Law and disagreed with her assessment that Sharia Law was not an issue for Palestinian women.<sup>168</sup> Questions on economic standards are also particularly illustrative here. Accurate information on income and standards of living is unlikely to be gained through direct questions. Economic hardship is something that can be observed or discovered, especially if the researcher manages to build good personal relationships, but such information is not normally openly shared. Topics that generated little response in interviews were class and social background, not in the sense that they were not deemed significant, but there seemed to be an unwillingness to elaborate. Interviewees also tended to talk sparingly about religion. This experience ties in with the example referred to above, in which a local activist maintains that the role of religion is not as significant as it appears from a Western viewpoint. Sensitivities in talking about religion may play a role here but a significant part of the problem is posed by the application of Western-based concepts, the confusion over secularism, and the failure to see that politics and religion are subject to different dynamics in the Palestinian context.

#### The Researcher Self - Being Female, Foreign and Had I Been a Journalist...

Conducting research in conservative societies, where in many areas of life men and women are traditionally segregated, poses particular challenges to female researchers if their research stretches beyond gender boundaries, especially in terms of data gathering.<sup>169</sup> Here foreign females are often thought to be able to circumvent these limitations. Coming from a different culture and in the absence of the female's family networks that might prevent her from engaging with men, a foreign female can more easily move in male circles and hence obtain interviews that may be impossible for females within the culture.<sup>170</sup>

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<sup>168</sup> David Landy, "Authenticity and Political Agency on Study Trips to Palestine," in *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin, 189-205 (London: Zed Books, 2008), 193.

<sup>169</sup> Al-Solh, Kamilia Fawzi et al., *I do Research in my Country: Arab Women in the Field of Social Research* (Beirut: Centre for Arab Studies 1993) cited in Al-Malki, "Researching in an Unsuitable Environment"

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, 28.



Nevertheless, this is not always the case. One potential interviewee refused to meet with me because I am a woman and he did not want to be seen to receive me in his office. That women and men are not supposed to mix unobserved also contributed to the fact that in meetings doors to offices were always left open, as interviews always had to be conducted in the presence of other people such as in family homes or in public spaces such as restaurants or coffee houses. This raised a number of issues. When sensitive topics are discussed, especially in academic institutions, which are thought to be a hotbed of informants, it is questionable how honest or sincere an answer one will get. The same also applies to other public spaces for discussing sensitive, especially politically sensitive topics.

What also has to be taken into account is that, if public spaces are the desired meeting place for interviews, this will necessarily exclude some interviewees, especially women as well as particular social strata of society. Women are excluded in more than one way. There are very few places for women where one can meet in public, especially outside Ramallah. Coffee shops are the clear domain of men in Palestine. There are a handful of cafes in Ramallah that would make a suitable meeting place but they cater to a certain clientele and would never be frequented by the majority of Palestinians, partly because of their pricing and partly also because of what they represent. Most of these coffee shops and restaurants are the meeting places of the globalised elites, the professionals working in international or internationally funded NGOs, expatriates, and often returnees from America. People from villages or refugee camps, however, do not socialise in these more Westernised places. Hence such a requirement excludes a particular group in society and especially women because they would have no easy other alternative to meet publicly. It is, of course, also exclusive as regards the researcher because a female researcher would not be able to visit the places that are used by men from this excluded social group. In a family home on the other hand a researcher could be received as a guest, with all the extended family members present ensuring that proper conduct and cultural norms are observed. Hence, excluding family homes as an interview location, which was one of the conditions imposed on this fieldwork by the university for safety reasons, has favoured an approach that focuses on officials and academics who have public offices to receive interviewers in. What was also noticeable was that it was easier to obtain interviews with women than with men and the data these interviews generated was much richer.

The fact that I am foreign has given me slightly more liberties than a Palestinian female doing a similar project may have had. However, not being a Palestinian also mattered in other ways. Italians are generally viewed as being supportive of the Palestinian cause (many work in the area as doctors or for local NGOs) and as a Mediterranean people are perceived to have strong similarities with Arabs. Fortunately, the then Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's remark to Mahmoud Abbas on his visit, which coincided with my field trip, that he had not noticed the separation wall when he passed through the gate in the wall at the Bethlehem checkpoint and his outright support for Israel the day before was not taken all too seriously on the Palestinian side and did not colour in any way their positive view of Italians.<sup>171</sup> Several of the interviewees had some connection with Italy through relatives or had visited the country and this often provided a very good closing topic. However, undoubtedly some information would have been more readily disclosed to a Palestinian interviewer. On the other hand, the political climate that the research was conducted in was a difficult one and particular political opinions would probably also not have been shared with a fellow Palestinian. Suspicion was most evident when a member of the PFLP-GC refused to be interviewed. He met with me for coffee and very politely explained he would not agree to an interview because he could not be certain that I was not a spy and even if I were not, my work could be inadvertently used by Israel for their benefit. There is, of course, little one can say to convince someone else that one is no such thing. This incident highlights the deep-seated fear in Palestinians of Israeli intelligence and its resourceful ways of penetrating Palestinian society. Being attached to Birzeit University did certainly lend me credibility with some interviewees. On some occasions I was asked to elaborate a little more on my background. The length of my visit in the area, the fact that I lived in Ramallah and that I had previously attended an Arabic course at Birzeit all resonated very positively with the interviewees. During my stay my spoken Arabic improved considerably which visibly helped in making interviewees feel at ease as it allowed me to have some, even if still relatively simple, informal

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<sup>171</sup> Amira Hass and Jonathan Lis, "Italian PM Berlusconi in Bethlehem: We Mourn Gaza Victims Just as We Cry over Holocaust," *The Haaretz*, 4 February 2010, <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/news/italian-pm-berlusconi-in-bethlehem-we-mourn-gaza-victims-just-as-we-cry-over-the-holocaust-1.262721> (accessed 15 January 2012). Also see "Address by Prime Minister of Italy Silvio Berlusconi to the Knesset on February 3, 2010," Knesset, unofficial translation, 3 February 2010, [http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/doc/speech\\_berlusconi\\_2010\\_eng.pdf](http://www.knesset.gov.il/description/eng/doc/speech_berlusconi_2010_eng.pdf) (accessed 15 January 2012).

conversation in Arabic before and after the interview. However, the association with Birzeit and academia did not always work out favourably. A good example here was my visit to the cultural centre at Balata refugee camp where the view was certainly that academics were too far removed from the actual life of ordinary Palestinians, especially when it came to refugees, and that it had taken academics far too long to realise the refugee issue is central and needed to be tackled. In the light of my interview experience, attachment to a human rights NGO or a cultural centre in a refugee camp would have been more conducive to obtaining interviews with ordinary participants in the intifada and grassroots activists.

Being foreign also had an impact in other ways. One academic expressed a very strong resentment towards Western academic institutions and their apparent expectation that Palestinian academics could afford to see international students and researchers for free, given that they were considerably underpaid in comparison to their counterparts in Europe. This, I felt, was a rather unfair response to my interview request because I had given Birzeit University much of my time and commitment during my field work. I had tried to get in touch with this particular interviewee several months earlier but she explained later that she ignored all interview requests outside term time because she could not be expected to use her own time for foreign students and because of this I was only able to secure the interview once the autumn term had started. What did eventually sway this particular interviewee was my Masters degree from St Andrews University as it turned out her daughter had hoped to study at the same institution but was eventually unable to secure funding. This parallel and the fact that I had also moved away from my family to a different country in order to pursue my education, just like the interviewee's daughter, then added a much more positive note to the interview that followed. The resentment expressed by this particular academic may possibly be more widespread and explain why I found it so difficult to obtain interviews, especially over the summer months, even at Birzeit, despite the fact that I was myself based there. My experience in trying to arrange an interview with an academic at Bethlehem University followed similar lines. After several attempts to make contact, a friend who studied at Bethlehem University and used to be a student on her course, asked if I could arrange to see her. Her response was that it would have to be within her office hour and that was usually very busy with her own students so there was no guarantee there would be enough time. As a result I decided at this

stage of the process to focus on interviews in Ramallah rather than spending almost an entire day on a round trip to Bethlehem for an unlikely interview.

Participants naturally have motives for participating in interviews. One possible objective is the dissemination of one's views or more often a particular political agenda, which applies to politicians in particular. One recurring theme during my search for interviewees was that had I been a journalist, I would have more easily obtained interviews. Several people I talked to argued that I would find it much easier to obtain interviews, especially with party representatives but also some academics and journalists, if I were working for a newspaper or the media. Especially smaller parties are more likely to grant interviews as they seek exposure to compete with their larger and more powerful competitors. One journalist herself also openly declined to be interviewed because she could not see any benefit to herself in participating.

### Bargaining Over Knowledge

Individuals have ownership over their own knowledge and ultimately decide how much and in what way they want to share it. This manifested itself in various forms throughout the interview process. It was noticeable that academics had a tendency to point to their already published articles or theses or attempted to sell books published by their institutes, but it was not always clear whether and how this material answered the question I had posed. They also feel, perhaps sometimes rightly so, in a position to evaluate one's research and perhaps even more difficult and frustratingly, one's questions and research methodology. One interviewee responded to my concluding comment, whether there was anything more to add, by saying that there would be if I had asked the right questions. The participant thought my questions had been too general and criticised in particular my question on significant social changes regarding women in the period between the first and the second intifada, elaborating that such a question should have been replaced by several smaller questions on particular elements of society or culture, such as, how have weddings changed, or how had the relationship between daughters and their father changed etc. This approach clearly reflected that particular academic's

training and work in oral history. A discussion with an interviewee on the methodology that I had chosen was, although to some extent insightful, overall not particularly helpful.

Another instance where my questions encountered criticism was, when I asked a sociologist if and how the occupation had changed since the first intifada. The interviewee responded that he did not understand the question and when I elaborated he commented the question made no sense to him and as a result he offered no answer. In this instance, to see the occupation as an unchanging 'other' says more about the interviewee and his view of the Israeli occupation than of the occupation itself, or the question posed. It emerged in the course of the conversation that the interviewee was a Palestinian citizen of Israel and hence had a very different relationship to the occupation compared to someone from the West Bank or Gaza. Isis Nusair, who is herself a Palestinian citizen of Israel, explores in some of her work how Palestinian citizens of Israel view Israel as the distant 'other'.<sup>172</sup> Until 1966 Palestinians in Israel were subject to martial law. However, even since then they have been discriminated against in all spheres within Israeli society. Nusair's work suggests that this detachment from the state of Israel could be the result of having been 'othered' by the rest of Israeli society and being largely excluded from the Israeli narrative or also having its origins in a lack of engagement with Israeli institutions.

An interviewer, in essence, has to bargain for and negotiate for knowledge. How much the interviewee is prepared to disclose is, under normal conditions, naturally up to him or herself. The nature of questions appeared to be an essential component but commitment to the research and a willingness to genuinely understand the situation also are a factor. During my internship with the university a student who visited the university spent three days in the region to conduct interviews on Sharon's politics. One of the academics who had been interviewed by the student on the student's departure seemed very irritated by the fact that the student expected to gain valuable and insightful interviews on such a short visit.

Asking original and incisive questions to academics proved to be particularly challenging for a number of reasons. First, while in the European context

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<sup>172</sup> Isis Nusair, "Gendered Politics of Location: Generational Intersections" in *Women and the Politics of Military Confrontation: Palestinian and Israeli Gendered Narratives of Dislocation*, ed. Nahla Abdo and Ronit Lentin (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), 99.

information on academics and their expertise is readily available online, this is not the case in the Palestinian context where in most cases there is no information on research interests provided at all. While some academics have published in English and hence their research expertise is clearer, others predominantly publish in Arabic or French, languages that to date are not fully accessible to me. This combined with the snowballing technique made prior in-depth preparation before interviews more difficult. An additional issue is also that it is not always clear in advance what range of roles the interviewee holds as a small group of people in Palestine have their fingers in many pies. Some academics, are or were activists, are politically active within the framework of the PA, and are also involved in NGO work. In fact, NGOs seem to be run by a handful of intellectual and political elite as the same group of people appear in various capacities across a number of different organisations. While interviewees may often not want to disclose information for political or security reasons, it is not only in these cases that interviewees withhold information but, as has become apparent through the field research process, also in cases where the interviewer does not fulfil certain conditions set by the interviewer.

### **5.3 Areas for Future Research**

The discussion in this thesis has opened up several interesting questions for future research. I will limit myself here to discussing four potential avenues for further research.

The research presented has demonstrated how Israeli occupation has affected Palestinian society unequally and has, even if not created, certainly reinforced a particular kind of social division. Exploring in more detail how these different segments of society are affected by various policies of the occupation, and here a micro-level study of how settlements affect particular Palestinian neighbourhoods has already been suggested earlier, would be beneficial. A study of the Nablus area would also be rewarding here. The easing of movement restrictions around the city are expected to have had a significant impact on the surrounding villages. Naturally, such analysis would also have to include a study on the effects of the separation wall and its adjacent communities. Several villages on its route have made it onto the

international map through their weekly protests. Interestingly, others have not organised themselves, established committees and become active in demonstrations. In a further step, it would then be interesting to explore where these different segments of society stand in relation to political activism, what types of activism they support and engage in, and in particular whether there is support for political violence. A discussion of the fragmentation of Palestinian society will be relevant to the establishment of a future Palestinian state. How the experience of territorially demarcated different forms of governance will affect the establishment of a state would be interesting to see.

It would also be rewarding, albeit sensitive, to explore division within Palestinian society along different lines, namely religious ones. In one particular interview, resentment was at least implicit on the absence of the participation of Palestinian Christians in activism against Israel. When I then posed a question on Christian participation in activism to a PFLP member, a party which has traditionally enjoyed support from Christians, the response was very defensive. How Palestinian Christians relate to various forms of political activism, violent and non-violent, and to what extent they are participants in Palestinian resistance against the occupation would be a rewarding and also original study. While the Christian community in the West Bank is a small and dwindling one, its relation to the national struggle and the project of an independent Palestinian state is still a significant one. For the moment Palestinian Christians are united, so to speak, with Muslim Palestinians in their experience of discrimination and oppression by Israeli policies, but should there be a solution to the conflict the dynamics between the two groups is expected to change. While some research has been done on the Palestinian Christian minority in Israel it is yet to see what place a Palestinian Christian minority would occupy within an independent Palestinian state.

Third, this thesis has explored how Palestinian activism is rooted in the specific political situation of the Palestinians. From this a larger question arises, namely what is the relationship between politics and violence. In established states this relationship is much more clearly defined while violence used by non-state actors is legally, ethically and politically more ambiguous. The Palestinian National Authority is in essence, and despite the absence of any progress in settling final status issues, a state in the making. Much effort and international funding has gone into state building, including the training of a Palestinian police and security force,

and although the PA only holds civil powers over its population vis-à-vis the Israeli military regime, through its security and police force it also has control over violence. An investigation into the relationship between violence and politics in the Palestinian case hence promises to be a worthwhile one and one of wider theoretical interest. The conclusion in chapter four already briefly reflected on the changing nature of this relationship since the Oslo agreement. Although the thesis has discussed the various ways in which the political situation has motivated the use of violence during the second intifada, there was also a question in how far the violence still served national goals or if it became mainly reactive and, as suggested by some scholars, even deteriorated to an expression of local rivalries. If such an examination indeed finds that violence used has increasingly become devoid of politics, so to speak, it will be necessary to reflect on what this means and what the implications of this are when we speak of political violence.

Finally, what has emerged at different points in this thesis is the existence of multiple competing narratives on the Israeli and Palestinian sides, with both claiming ownership of the land, but also, debating political legitimacy as well as reconstructing meanings of peace and resistance. Such constructions of narratives as a key political move cannot be captured by models that rest on epistemological claims to neutrality and impartiality. Gleaning insights from social psychology, further study of the construction and role of collective memory in the conflict would methodologically enrich political science accounts of Palestinian political violence.

This thesis' study of the transformation of Palestinian political activism between the first and the second intifada has not only provided an in-depth analysis of the workings of activism against Israel amidst changing political, territorial and social circumstances but also provides the platform for further investigation into social and religious divisions in Palestinian society and how they intersect with national liberation, non-violent protest, armed struggle, and state building. On a more abstract level the thesis opens up the possibility for tracing the intricacies of the complex relationship between politics and violence over time as the Palestinian guerrilla movement grew into an emergent state. The methodological questions opened up in this thesis' analysis would make valuable contributions to political science perspectives on Palestinian political violence. Such examinations could contribute much to debates on Palestinian politics and society, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, and political violence.



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*Arab Association for Human Rights (HRA)*

*Badil: Resource Centre for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights*

*Breaking the Silence: Israeli Soldiers Talk about the Occupied Territories*

*B'Tselem: The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories*

*Gisha: Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement*

*Human Rights Watch*

*Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions*

*Israel Defense Forces*

*Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

*Jaffee Centre for Strategic Studies*

*Jewish National Fund*

*The Knesset*

*Land Research Centre (Arab Studies Society)*

*MIFTAH: The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue & Democracy*

*Palestine Economic Policy Research Institute*

*Palestine Red Crescent Society*

*Palestinian Academic Society for the Study of International Affairs*

*Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics*

*Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group*

*Palestine Monitor*

*PASSIA*

*Peace Now*

*PLO Negotiation Department*

*Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine*

*UN OCHA Occupied Palestinian Territories*

*UNRWA*

*Women Centre for Legal Aid and Counselling*

*Yesh Din: Volunteers for Human Rights*

*Zochorot (Remembering the Nakba in Israel)*

## Interviews

Only formal interviews are listed here. When marked with \* the interview was not recorded because the interviewee did either not wish to be recorded or the environment was not suitable for recording (due to high noise levels, for example).

### **Academia**

- #1 Birzeit, 12 June 2010
- #2 Birzeit, 12 June 2010
- #3 Birzeit, 15 June 2010\*
- #4 Ramallah, 17 June 2010
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- #7 Institute for Palestine Studies, 27 July 2010
- #8 Birzeit, 28 July 2010
- #9 Al-Najah University, Nablus, 12 August 2010\*
- #10 Birzeit, 30 August 2010
- # 11 Bethlehem, 1 September 2010
- #12 Birzeit 15 September 2010
- #13 Jerusalem, 20 September 2010\*
- #14 Birzeit , 22 September 2010

### **Politics**

- # 15 PFLP, Ramallah\* 28 September
- # 16 PFLP-GC, Ramallah, 20, 22\* &28\* September 2010
- # 17 Fateh, al-Balua, 23 September 2010\*
- # 18 FIDA, Ramallah, 27 September 2010
- # 19 DFLP, Ramallah, 28 September 2010

### **NGOs & Other**

- #20 Journalist, Ramallah, 18 June 2010
- #21 Judicial Centre, Ramallah,18 June 2010
- #22 Human Rights and Democracy NGO, Ramallah, 26 July 2010

#23 Women's NGO, Ramallah, 21 September 2010



Attacks located on the Palestinian side of the Green Line, including East Jerusalem

Attacks on the Israeli side of the Green Line

Date	Location	Organisation	Origin of Perpetrator
26/10/00	Kissufim Crossing	Islamic Jihad	Shajaiyeh neighbourhood, Gaza
??/11/00	IDF boat off Gaza beach	Unclaimed	Shatti Camp, Gaza
22/12/00	Mechola settlement	Unclaimed	Hebron
01/03/01	Northern Israel	Unclaimed	Unknown
04/03/01	Netanya	Hamas	Nour Shams Camp, Tulkarem
27/03/01	French Hill Junction, East Jerusalem	2 Islamic Jihad	Al-Bireh, Ramallah
28/03/01	Inside Green Line, near Qalqilia	Hamas	Qalqilia
22/04/01	Kefar Saba	Popular Army Front Return Battalions	Gaza
29/04/01	Settler bus, Deir Sharaf - Nablus	Unclaimed	Nablus
18/05/01	Netanya	Hamas	Tulkarem
25/05/01	Hadera	2 Islamic Jihad	Jenin and Jenin Camp
25/05/01	IDF post Gaza	Hamas	Beit Lahya, Gaza
01/06/01	Tel Aviv	Hamas	Qalqilia
22/06/01	IDF patrol Gaza	Hamas	Unkonwn
09/07/01	Near Gush Katif settlement	Hamas	Jabalia Camp, Gaza
16/07/01	Binyamina	Islamic Jihad	Unknown
08/08/01	IDF checkpoint West Bank	Unclaimed	Nablus
09/08/01	Jerusalem	Hamas	Jenin
12/08/01	Kiryat Motzkin	Islamic Jihad	Qabatiya, Jenin
04/09/01	Jerusalem	PFLP or Hamas	Aboud, Ramallah
09/09/01	Nahariya	Israeli Arab, maybe Hamas	Abu Shan, Israel
09/09/01	Beyt Lid	Unclaimed	Irtah, Tulkarem
13/09/01	IDF patrol Jenin	Unclaimed	Unknown
07/10/01	Kibbutz Shluhot	Islamic Jihad	Tubas

Appendix I: List of Suicide bombings with origins of bombers 2000-2004

17/10/01	IDF patrol, Gaza	PFLP	Zaytouna, Gaza
08/11/01	Baqa Sharqiyya	Hamas	Tulkarem
26/11/01	Erez crossing	Hamas	Jabaliya Camp, Gaza
29/11/01	Hadera	Islamic Jihad	Salat al-Daher, Jenin
01/12/01	Jerusalem	2 Hamas	Abu Dis, Jerusalem
02/12/01	Haifa	Hamas	Nablus
05/12/01	Jerusalem	Islamic Jihad	Artas, Bethlehem
09/12/01	Haifa	Hamas	Unknown
12/12/01	Near Neveh Dekalim settlement, Gaza	2 Hamas	Khan Younis, Gaza
25/01/02	Tel Aviv	Islamic Jihad	Beit Wazan
27/01/02	Jerusalem	Female, maybe AMB	Al-Amari Camp, Ramallah
30/01/02	Taibeh, Israel	Fatah	Anabta, Tulkarem
16/02/02	Karnei Shomron settlement	PFLP	Qalqilia
17/02/02	Hadera	AMB	Nablus
18/02/02	Settler car near Kissufim	AMB	Khan Younis
19/02/02	Near Mihola settlement, West Bank	Unclaimed	Unknown
27/02/02	Makabim checkpoint, West Bank	AMB female	Beit Wazan, Nablus
02/03/02	Jerusalem	AMB	Deheisheh Camp, Bethlehem
05/03/02	Afula	Unclaimed	Shlah al Tuher, Jenin
07/03/02	Ariel settlement	PFLP	Madamah village, Nablus
09/03/02	Jerusalem	Hamas	Al-Arrub Camp, Hebron
17/03/02	French Hill settlement, East Jerusalem	Islamic Jihad	Al-Doha, Bethlehem
20/03/02	Umm al-Fahm	Islamic Jihad	Jenin
21/03/02	Jerusalem	AMB	Talusah, Nablus
22/03/02	IDF checkpoint into Jenin	AMB	Ein Beit al-Ma'/Camp No. 1, Nablus
26/03/02	IDF checkpoint into Jerusalem	AMB	Al-Khader, Bethlehem
27/03/02	Netanya	Hamas	Tulkarem
29/03/02	Jerusalem	AMB female	Deheishe Camp, Bethlehem
30/03/02	Tel Aviv	AMB	Al-Farah Camp, Tubas

Appendix I: List of Suicide bombings with origins of bombers 2000-2004

31/03/02	Haifa	Hamas	Jenin Camp
31/03/02	Efrat settlement	Unclaimed	Bethlehem
01/04/02	Checkpoint btw East/West Jerusalem	Unclaimed	Deheishe Camp, Bethlehem
02/04/02	Checkpoint into Jerusalem	Unclaimed	Unknown
09/04/02	IDF patrol, Jenin Camp	Unclaimed	Unknown
10/04/02	Haifa	Hamas	Unknown
11/04/02	Hebron checkpoint	Unclaimed	Unknown
12/04/02	Jerusalem	AMB female	Bethlehem
19/04/02	Gaza checkpoint	Islamic Jihad	Khan Younis, Gaza
07/05/02	Rishon Letzion	Probably Hamas	Tulkarem
08/05/02	Haifa	Unclaimed	Unknown
19/05/02	Netanya	PFLP	Nablus
20/05/02	Afula	Unclaimed	Unknown
22/05/02	Rishon Letzion	AMB	Al-Doha, Bethlehem
24/05/02	Tel Aviv	AMB	Unknown
27/05/02	Petah Tikva	AMB	Balata Camp, Nablus
05/06/02	Megiddo	Islamic Jihad	Jenin
11/06/02	Herzliya	Unclaimed	Madamah Village, Nablus
17/06/02	Israeli border police, near Tulkarem	Unclaimed	Unknown
18/06/02	Jerusalem	Hamas	Al-Farah Camp, Tubas
19/06/02	Jerusalem	AMB	Unknown
17/07/02	Tel Aviv	Islamic Jihad or al-Nathir	Balata Camp, Nablus
30/07/02	Jerusalem	Unclaimed	Bethlehem
04/08/02	Northern Israel	Hamas	Jenin
18/09/02	Northern Israel	Islamic Jihad	Unknown
19/09/02	Tel Aviv	Hamas	Unknown
10/10/02	Bar Ilan Junction, Jerusalem	Hamas	Unknown
21/10/02	Tel Aviv	2 Islamic Jihad	Jenin
27/10/02	Ariel	Hamas	Nablus

Appendix I: List of Suicide bombings with origins of bombers 2000-2004

04/11/02	Tel Aviv	Islamic Jihad	Balata Camp, Nablus
21/11/02	Jerusalem	Islamic Jihad	Doura, Hebron
22/11/02	IDF boat off Gaza	2 Islamic Jihad	Al-Bureij Camp and Beit Hanoun, Gaza
27/12/02	IDF post in Gaza	PFLP	Gaza
05/01/03	Tel Aviv	2 AMB	Nablus
17/01/03	IDF boat off Gaza	Hamas	Unknown
09/02/03	Gush Katif settlement	3 Islamic Jihad	Gaza
18/02/03	IDF patrol, Gaza City	Hamas	Gaza
05/03/03	Haifa	Hamas	Hebron
30/03/03	Netanya	Islamic Jihad	Tulkarem
24/04/03	Kefar Saba	AMB – Nablus faction	Balata Camp, Nablus
29/04/03	Tel Aviv	2 AMB & Hamas	British citizens
08/05/03	Kefar Darom settlement	Unclaimed	Unknown
17/05/03	Hebron	Hamas	Hebron
18/05/03	French Hill	2 Hamas	Hebron
19/05/03	Afula	AMB & Islamic Jihad, female	Tubas
19/05/03	Outside Kefar Darom	Unclaimed	Unknown
11/06/03	Jerusalem	Hamas	Hebron
19/06/03	Baysan	Islamic Jihad	Unknown
07/07/03	Kfar Yavetz	Islamic Jihad – Jenin faction	Kofor Ra'e, Jenin
12/08/03	Rosh Ha'yan	AMB – Nablus faction	Askar Camp, Nablus
12/08/03	Outside Ariel	Hamas – Nablus faction	Askar Camp, Nablus
19/08/03	Jerusalem	Renegade Hamas	Hebron
09/09/03	Rishon Letzion, IDF base	Hamas	Rantis, Ramallah
09/09/03	Jerusalem	Hamas	Rantis, Ramallah
04/10/03	Haifa	Islamic Jihad, female	Jenin
09/10/03	IDF checkpoint near Tulkarm	AMB	Oref, Nablus
03/11/03	IDF patrol, Azun, West Bank	AMB	Rafidia, Nablus
25/12/03	Tel Aviv	PFLP	Beit Fourek, Nablus

Appendix I: List of Suicide bombings with origins of bombers 2000-2004

11/01/04	IDF patrol, Nablus	Unclaimed	Nablus
14/01/04	Erez crossing, Gaza	AMB & Hamas female	Al Zaytoun, Gaza
29/01/04	Jerusalem	AMB or Hamas	Al Aida Camp, Bethlehem
22/02/04	Jerusalem	AMB	Hussan village, Bethlehem
27/02/04	Outside Kefar Darom	Islamic Jihad	Unknown
14/03/04	Ashdod port	1 AMB, 1 Hamas	Jabalyia, Gaza
17/04/04	Erez industrial zone	AMB and Hamas	Beit Lahya, Gaza
28/04/04	Outside Kefar Darom	Hamas	Al Nusayrat Camp
22/05/04	Outside settlement near Nablus	PFLP	Unknown
28/05/04	Rafah crossing	Unclaimed	Gaza
31/08/04	Beersheba	2 Hamas	Hebron, Hebron
14/09/04	Checkpoint near Qalqilia	Unclaimed	Qalqilia
22/09/04	French Hill, East Jerusalem	AMB female	Al Askar Camp, Nablus
01/11/04	Tel Aviv	Not clear	Al Askar Camp, Nablus

*Data for this table has been taken from the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group and Michele K. Esposito, "The al-Aqsa Intifada: Military Operations, Suicide Attacks, Assassinations, and Losses in the First Four Years" Journal of Palestine Studies 34, no.2 (Winter 2005). Where inconsistencies emerged or information of the location was unclear, news sources were consulted.*

## Territorial Division of Control in the West Bank



### Border

- International Border
- Green Line

Israeli Unilaterally Declared Municipal Area of Jerusalem<sup>1</sup>

1. In 1967, Israel occupied the West Bank and unilaterally annexed to its territory 70.5 km<sup>2</sup> of the occupied area

### Barrier

- Constructed / Under Construction
- Planned

### Oslo Agreement<sup>2</sup>

- Area (A), (B)
- Area C & Nature Reserves

### Oslo Interim Agreement

2. Area A : Full Palestinian civil and security control
- Area B: Full Palestinian civil control and joint Israeli-Palestinian security control
- Area C: Full Israeli control over security, planning and construction

Map taken from United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Occupied Palestinian Territories, February 2011