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Abstract

This thesis analyses the role of Palestinian women during the first Intifada and draws special attention to women's organisations. Aim of this thesis is to highlight how and why women participated in this grassroots resistance, building on previous research on women in conflict resolution and the Middle East. Aside from the analysis of Palestinian society during the first Intifada, the thesis also draws from fieldwork conducted by other scholars during the first Intifada as well as media reports. There seems to be a strong influence in terms of socio-economic class and tradition that determines in what way and to what extent women participated in the resistance, which does not undermine their impact negatively the Palestinian national movement. In applying a combined lens of gender, class and values, the causes and courses of conflicts may be better understood, which could be beneficial to the pacification process and the reconciliation process post-armistice, post-agreement or post-conflict.

Abstract

In dieser Arbeit wird die Rolle der palästinensischen Frauen während der ersten Intifada analysiert, wobei den Frauenorganisationen besondere Aufmerksamkeit gewidmet wird. Ziel dieser Arbeit ist es, aufbauend auf früheren Forschungsarbeiten über Frauen in der Konfliktlösung und im Nahen Osten aufzuzeigen, wie und warum sich Frauen an dieser Bewegung beteiligten. Neben der Analyse der palästinensischen Gesellschaft während der ersten Intifada stützt sich die Arbeit auch auf die Feldforschung anderer Wissenschaftler:innen, während der ersten Intifada durchgeführt wurde, sowie auf Medienberichte. Es scheint einen starken Einfluss der sozioökonomischen Klasse und der Tradition zu geben, der bestimmt, auf welche Weise und in welchem Ausmaß Frauen am Widerstand teilnahmen, was auch die palästinensische Nationalbewegung beeinflusst. Durch die kombinierte Betrachtung von Geschlecht, Klasse und Werten können die Ursachen und Verläufe von Konflikten besser verstanden werden, was für den Befriedungs- und Versöhnungsprozess nach dem Waffenstillstand, nach dem Abkommen oder nach dem Konflikt von Nutzen sein könnte.

On my honour as a student of the Diplomatische Akademie Wien, I submit this work in good faith and pledge that I have neither given nor received unauthorized assistance on it.

Katharina Fürnkranz

Acknowledgements

This thesis marks 20th anniversary of my time in formal education. While it brought me from Vienna to Leeds, then to Lisbon and back to Vienna I have learned a lot about – although this thesis has reminded me once again that I know in fact very little. It has been clear then, and still holds true that without my parents Maria da Graça and Reinhard, I would not be where I am today. I am deeply grateful for their support and the support of my friends, near and far but I owe a very special thanks to Lena and Conny for being my friends and my rocks for more than a decade. To borrow the words of Mariza, *as coisas vulgares que há na vida não deixam saudades, só as lembranças que doem ou fazem sorrir.*

If researching this thesis has taught me one thing, then that the following words are true and words to live by:

Peace is too important to leave it to just the men – Johanna Dohnal¹

We cannot all succeed when half of us are held back - Malala Yousafzai

Treading softly for tactical reasons has always been proven to be a mistake – Johanna Dohnal²

¹ Der Friede ist zu wichtig, um ihn den Männern allein zu überlassen.

² Aus taktischen Gründen leise zu treten, hat sich noch immer als Fehler erwiesen.

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1 Introduction

The Middle East and specifically the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been in focus of scholarly debates, the international community and international media alike. The conflict remains to be considered as a threat to the stability in the Middle East and consequently to global security. Despite the interest, time and effort key actors of the international community, such as the United Nations and the United States, have spent on the conflict, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict persists and flares up regularly. At its basis, it is not just a territorial dispute, but also one of ideologies, with Zionism, i.e. the idea of a Jewish homeland, opposes Palestinian nationalism fundamentally and in principle. While before the emerge of Zionism, there was already a strong sense of locale or territorial belonging, the 'Palestinian' persona was complex and multi-layered but there was not a tangible movement in the same way as it materialised with the emerge of Zionism. In a sense, the movement and as an extension, the Palestinian identity, needed this external threat to be established.³ Both nationalist movements, however, are influenced and depend on other ideologies that are displayed alongside or simultaneously to the nationalist struggle.⁴

This thesis focusses on the role of Palestinian women in the conflict during the first Intifada and considers their role in society, politics and ultimately the resistance. Translating the term 'intifada' highlights that it is a 'spontaneous awakening that results from a hard strive or a shock', that involves a process of fundamental change – or at least the attempt thereof.⁵ The organisation of women's groups during times of conflict is examined more closely and throughout the thesis comparative examples of other conflicts and circumstances are provided in order to highlight the aspects that are not unique to the region and might be connected to patriarchal structural elements that might be considered to be universal.

The thesis aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the role of women in conflict situations and grassroots movements, highlighting the diverse ways in which women shaped the resistance and their role in Palestinian society during the first Intifada. Aside from the challenges and possible opportunities to change structures

³ Khalidi, Ahmad Samih „The Palestinian national movement: From self-rule to statehood“ in The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, ed. Joel Peters and David Newman (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 20.

⁴ Abdo, Nahla, “Nationalism and feminism: Palestinian women and the *Intifada* – No Going Back?,” in Gender and National Identity, ed. Valentine M. Moghadam (London: Zed Books Ltd), 149.

⁵ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 148.

fundamentally during the conflict are considered. The expectation to identify windows of opportunities stems from the scholarly discussion that periods of conflict are viewed as a time of change where women may be able to redefine their position and role, as well as societal expectations in a post-conflict environment.⁶ To understand to what extent this applies to the first Intifada is part of the analysis and is supported by selected comparisons of conflicts and processes elsewhere. Included comparative examples are either of a conflict that could also be described as colonial, such as those experienced in Northern Ireland⁷ or are tied to a specific to a 'female function' in the course of the conflict, such as the participation of women in formal political processes. The underlying question this research tries to answer is how and why women participated in the first Intifada. While there is no universally accepted definition of feminism, as this is often tied to the general political identity of an individual, this thesis does not contribute to fundamental questions in relation to the definition of feminism as an ideology, nor does this thesis attempt to present paths towards peace between Israel and Palestine.

The first Intifada is a key event in the course of the conflict, as it was the first time Palestine resisted the Israeli occupation a widespread and widely supported uprising, whereby the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) and the Israeli were both caught by surprise and responded differently. As the first Intifada had its beginnings at the end of the Soviet Union, the global power balance influenced the uprising and its actors, too.

While the ideological struggle during the Cold War at the global level was between communism and capitalism, the Middle East was torn between "the authoritarian Arab nationalism promoted by Egypt and the political Islam, centred on Wahhabism and absolute monarchy, that was purveyed by Saudi Arabia".⁸ Regardless, 1967 marks a change in the consideration of the global level, as UN Security Council Resolution 242 saw a new tolerance for Israeli territorial gains, allowing Israel to extent its borders to ensure Israeli security, as determined by Israel.⁹ Up until this point, over two hundred

⁶ See for example: Harders Cilja. 2011. *Gender Relations, Violence and Conflict Transformation. Advancing Conflict Transformation: The Berghof Handbook II.* eds. Austin, Beatrix, Martina Fischer and Hans J. Giessman (Opladen/Farmington Hills: Barbara Budrich Publishers).

⁷ See for example: Gidron, Benjamin, Stanley N. Katz and Yeheskel Hasenfeld, eds. *Mobilizing for Peace: Conflict Resolution in Northern Ireland, Israel/Palestine and South Africa.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

⁸ Khalidi, Rashid. 2020. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine.* London: Profile Books, 103.

⁹ United Nations, *Security Council Resolution 242*, 1382nd meeting of 22 November 1967, S/RES/242(1967), 8-9.

settlement were created, arguing that Palestinians under occupation lived a in “an enlightened occupation”.¹⁰ While some Palestinians were intimidated by Israel and accepted the new situation, with some of them profiting from their employment in Israel, the settlements would become one of the most contagious points in the conflict.¹¹ In addition, the ambiguous language of SC 242 does not aid in resolving this dispute. The wordings of the French and English versions are not identical in their meaning and leave room for interpretation.¹²

The region of the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have enjoyed a lot of scholarly attention, both from scholars of the Global North and the region as it remains one of the dominating issues in terms of attention by the international community, media, policy-makers and academic community. As an ongoing conflict that has been flaring up from time or in connection to incidents that draw global attention to the region, such as the shot Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. In social sciences, various aspects of the conflict have been considered, from peace efforts, the role of domestic politics and foreign influences, selected issues of the conflict such as the disputed territories or the role of Jerusalem.¹³ Other research has considered questions of identity in the region and the diaspora abroad¹⁴, the perception and role of the media (abroad).¹⁵

The value of a gendered perspective in international affairs is also recognised by the international community in form of the 2000 Security Council Resolution 1325, it is recognised by the international community that the inclusion of women in conflict and peace-building processes is necessary to achieve sustainable and lasting peace and security.¹⁶ While some research on the gendered implications of and during conflict, both considering men and women, grows in general, so does the attention to the Middle East and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.¹⁷ There is seemingly a general consensus in

¹⁰ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 170.

¹¹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 170.

¹² Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 105.

¹³ See for example: Peters, Joel and David Newman, eds. *The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. Oxon: Routledge, 2013.

¹⁴ See for example: Weinzimmer, Julianne Melissa. 2011. *Homeland Conflict and Identity for Palestinian and Jewish Israeli Americans*. El Paso: LFB Scholarly Publishing.

¹⁵ Dunsky, Marda. 2008. *Pens and Swords: How the American Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*. New York: Columbia University Press.

¹⁶ Shepherd, Cassandra K., “The Role of Women in International Conflict Resolution”, *Hamline University's School of Law's Journal of Public Law and Policy* 36, no. 2, 64.

¹⁷ See for example: Ghoussoub, Mai and Emma Sinclair-Webb, eds., *Imagined Masculinities: Male Identity and Culture in the Modern Middle East*. London: Saqi Books, 2000.

the literature that women engage in conflict but their roles are connected to different tools and tactics than those available to men. This includes aspects such as the motivations to assume a more active role in the conflict or the way of resistance is expressed and carried out. Moreover, the specific tools, strategies and narratives that are connected to those activities differ across regions and conflicts.

With this in mind, the analysis of the role of Palestinian women in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is supported by accessing personal accounts, especially through interviews conducted by other researches who were conducting fieldwork research in Palestine during the first Intifada, as well as news reports published in that period to extent the insight into the sentiments of that time.

In the context of the growing debate on women's roles in conflict, this thesis is a contribution that attempts to link not only elements of women's participation over time but also draw attention to other instances where similar steps were taken by women. This master thesis is a multidisciplinary work as it considers a specific historic context through the lens of international relations. In considering cultural, identity building and discursive elements through literature and first-hand accounts, it is expected to gain a broad insight into the dynamics of the first Intifada. The conclusions may also help to better understand the development of women's participation in other conflicts, as well grassroots movements in general. Although these interviews only reflect the experiences and circumstances of an individual, they still give an insight into the realities of peoples' lives in the region that help to understand how high politics affects communities and the individual level. Many would consider the conflict as a territorial dispute between two people with two nationalist movements, creating a narrative of ownership and dispossession.¹⁸ The idea to attempt to give each people one part of the territory and use partition as the mean to end the conflict has been first introduced by the 1937 Peel Commission and has been later picked up by the UN partition plan of 1947 and the 2003 Road Map.

¹⁸ Peters, Joel, „Introduction: Understanding the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict“, in Khalidi, Ahmad Samih. „The Palestinian national movement: From self-rule to statehood“ in *The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. Joel Peters and David Newman (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 1.

In the analysis, I consider the conflict dynamic to be similar to Northern Ireland¹⁹ and therefore a colonial struggle, following scholars such as Rashid Khalidi²⁰, Noam Chomsky and Ilan Pappé and considers the conflict dynamic at its core a colonial struggle.²¹ After a brief introduction to women in conflict resolution, key events of are discussed and functions as a framework in which the role of women is considered. The development of the first Intifada is at the centre whereby a chapter is dedicated to the uprising.

Generally, women assume secondary positions in politics and conflict, which excludes them from formal political processes, positions of power and authority, including the military branch, while at the same time, they are subservient and dependent upon men.²² Thus, how and in which way women are able to influence politics, conflict and negotiation highly depends on the socio-political framework women find themselves in. Therefore, the composition and traditions of society are also discussed. In including those elements in the framework in which women moved, the way and degree to which conflict affects women differently from men can be better understood.

As their roles in society and therefore in conflict differ, resulting in diverging lived experiences for men and women.²³ Even before violent conflict breaks out, women and men experience the preparation period differently. As government spending often moves from social services to war materials, it is women and children who experience this shift as more costly and are the first ones to bare the consequence of conflict.²⁴ As Beckwith and Cowell-Meyers argue, how the social construction of women's experiences is played out vary, as the process itself is not only influenced by the context of construction, but also vary "across and within states and across time".²⁵ Therefore, the motivation for women to assume a more active role in the conflict is not unified and ranges from a more traditional "motherist" to a feminist driver.²⁶

¹⁹ Mitchell, Thomas G. 2000. *Native vs. Settler: Ethnic Conflict in Israel/Palestine, Northern Ireland and South Africa*. London: Greenwood Press.

²⁰ Khalidi, Rashid. 2020. *The Hundred Years' War on Palestine*. London: Profile Books.

²¹ Chomsky, Noam and Pappé, Ilan, *On Palestine*, Edited by Frank Barat. London: Penguin Books, 2015, 56-58.

²² Kaufman, Joyce P. and Williams, Kristen P., *Women and War: Gender Identity and Activism in Times of Conflict* (Sterling, VA: Kumarian Press, 2010), 15.

²³ Shepherd, *Women in International Conflict*, 54.

²⁴ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 126.

²⁵ Beckwith, Karen and Kimberley Cowell-Meyers, "Sheer Numbers: Critical Representation Thresholds and Women's Political Representation," *Perspectives on Politics* 5, no. 3, 554.

²⁶ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 31.

However, as women are confronted with barriers that are specific to a region and a conflict and hinder them to advance into formal politics. Those barriers are often related to women's social roles, which also often define their interests in the conflict. For example, in their role as mothers, their children's well-being and security of high interest and importance to women. In addition, the characteristics of their role also influence the available set of participation tools and methods at their display in times of conflict. Despite the fact that women generally make up one half of the population, their skills and interests are often overlooked, under-valued and under-utilised in conflict resolution.²⁷

Generally speaking, women in conflict are first and foremost civilians rather than combatants. In their role as women however, they are confronted with gender-based violence in ways that are exclusive to them.²⁸ As women occupy more often than not primarily the private rather than the public space, times of conflict may offer women the opportunity to become more visible and advocate for their interests, needs and preferences, with the potential of a new role in a post-conflict setting.²⁹

Within the private space, women often organise themselves and unite over universal experiences and issues that are connected to conflict, such as the need for housing, childcare or healthcare. While this organisation initially happens within the own community, some cases have seen collaboration among women that transcended ideology lines, effectively forming an alliance with members of the adversary group over a shared experience. Such an example is the Northern Irish Women's Coalition that was led by a Republican and a Unionist woman, respectively. At the beginning, the coalition was a way to unite women's civil society groups across Northern Ireland but was later elected to be a negotiating party at the negotiations that led to the 1998 Belfast Agreement.³⁰ Thus, women who may start their activities to meet basic needs and provide for their families without self-identifying as political or consider those actions as political, it does have a rather informal political element to it and can be

²⁷ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 15.

²⁸ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 126.

²⁹ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 30.

³⁰ Kilmurray, Avila and Monica McWilliams. 2011. "Struggling for Peace: How Women in Northern Ireland Challenged the Status Quo." *Solutions Journal* 2, no. 2: 1 – 12, 2-3.

considered as activism, especially as groups' organisational structures grow more sophisticated.³¹

Regardless, it cannot be just assumed that women are 'naturally' more peace-loving and always refrain from engaging in conflict in a more traditional 'masculine' way. Women also support and actively participate in nationalist causes, including nationalist conflicts and some women are not necessarily in favour of emancipation processes.³² Therefore, women can also be political actors in more 'traditional' and formal spaces, even though their activities may be inconsonant with their social roles at first glance. As this thesis is also going to underline, women's participation in spaces and activities and are usually occupied and carried out by men are tolerated or, in some cases, welcomed if they align with the political interest of the leadership.

As women also carry symbolic functions of a group identity, their roles in society allow them to support and participate in conflict, albeit generally in a more covert way.³³ Thus, a group or a conflict cannot be fully understood unless women's (supporting) roles are considered in analysis, which relates to the argument that peace treaties are more successful when women participate in the negotiation process, as their participation allows for an inclusion of more perspectives.³⁴

The final subchapter focusses on the women's organisations of the first Intifada, highlighting how women in the Occupied Territories within Palestine organised and tried to find a unified female voice. The question of economic independency as a form of emancipation is also briefly discussed, as the creation of co-operations was part of the first Intifada. Therefore, this thesis focusses on the multidimensional tension women were confronted with at the onset of the beginning of the first Intifada and highlights that they were active agents in their resistance, depending on their societal, economic and political circumstances.

³¹ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 127.

³² Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 16.

³³ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 16.

³⁴ Hayes, Bernadette C. and Ian McAllister. 2013. "Gender and consociational power-sharing in Northern Ireland." *International Political Science Review* 34, no. 2: 123-139, 124-125.

2 Women and Conflict Resolution

The stereotype of peaceful women and war waging men is ancient – it can be traced back to Greek mythology as the Greek *goddess* of peace is Eirene but Greek mythology also reminds us that the stereotype falls short as Athena is also the *goddess* of war.³⁵ Regardless, negotiation research suggests that how men and women behave in conflict resolution in general cannot be traced back solely to their gender and is connected to societal circumstances and learned roles.³⁶ In fact, in considering gender as a social construct, the need to analyse societal structures is highlighted. Conflict resolution and peace negotiations generally take place in a formal, Track One, setting and an informal, Track Two setting. While generally in Track One negotiations the highest diplomatic representatives are part, Track Two is the context for civil society groups, community representatives and non-governmental organisations to engage and attempt to influence Track One. In some cases, Track Two members can enter the space of Track One if they are invited to formal talks.³⁷ While women have been underrepresented in Track One negotiations, they have probably always been part of the informal peace process, regardless of if there were negotiations on-going or not.³⁸ After all, as a group, it is in their interest to shape their surroundings but the degree of success and sustainability depends on the very same context.

Yet, the role of women remains to be overlooked in social sciences, including international relations. Even though the discipline is relatively young, the realist theorists who helped defining the field in its early stages, such as Hans Morgenthau, never truly considered the role of women in their work. Rather, they assumed that women simply do not have a place in high-stakes games.³⁹ In defining power as masculinist “to the extent that it presupposes androcentric notions of strength, competition, aggression, and coercion and because it focusses on power understood only in terms of public-sphere activities that are dominated by men”⁴⁰, the role of high politics and hard power was elevated at the expense of low politics and soft power. In arguing that “the way in which realists describe the individual, the state, and the

³⁵ Pax is the equivalent to Eirene and Minerva to Athena in Roman mythology.

³⁶ Olekalns, Mara, “Natural-Born Peacemakers?” in *The Handbook of Conflict Resolution*, ed. Peter T. Coleman, Morton Deutsch and Eric C. Marcus (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2014), 375.

³⁷ Jones, Peter L. *Track Two Diplomacy in Theory and Practice* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2015), 7-11.

³⁸ Sheperd, *Women in International Conflict*, 58.

³⁹ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 19-20

⁴⁰ Peterson and Runyan cited in Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 20.

international system are profoundly gendered; each is constructed in terms of [...] idealized or hegemonic masculinity. [...] In the name of universality, realists have constructed a worldview based on the experiences of certain men”, Tickner highlights that the worldview offered by realists is limited.⁴¹ A realist approach, therefore, neglects the power, agency and interests of a substantive part of the globe’s population, even though women are key in maintaining key societal responsibilities during conflict. Regardless, women’s experiences, views and skills are often undervalued and underutilised in conflict resolution.⁴² Some scholars suggest gender neutral conflict resolution, arguing that to level the field, women need to adopt men’s strategies.⁴³ This argument, however, assumes that the ‘male’ strategy is the ‘right’ one and disregards the body of literature suggesting that a gender-sensitive approach and the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace negotiations lead to more lasting and effective peace.⁴⁴ This approach does relate to the suggestion that times of crisis and conflict seem to give women an opportunity to move into new circles. This could be a move from the private more towards the public sphere where women are more confined to the private sphere at the beginning of the conflict. A widely known example of such a move is the Second World War in the United States where the societal position of women in the workforce was not only radically transformed but also actively supported, resulting in iconic advertising figures such as *Rosie the Riveter*. Even in terms of formal political power, a number of recent examples suggest that times of crisis can be an opportunity for women but both in the example of the US-American workforce and the area of formal political power, there is not guarantee that this would translate in a more permanent situation. There seems to be a tendency that women retreat back into the private space, once the conflict resolution process is under way after an agreement or once the momentum of the movement cannot be sustained any longer.⁴⁵

However, especially in regards to formal political power positions, it seems that women actually face a glass cliff, rather than breaking a glass ceiling for the next generations.

⁴¹ Tickner cited in Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 21.

⁴² Sheperd, *Women in International Conflict Resolution*, 54.

⁴³ See for example McGuinness, Margaret E., „Women as Architects of Peace: Gender and the Resolution of Armed Conflict, *Michigan State University College of Law Journal of International Law* 15, (2007) 63-85.

⁴⁴ Kray, Laura and Babcock, Linda, *Gender in Negotiations: A Motivated Social Cognitive Analysis in Negotiation Theory and Research*, ed. Thomson, Leigh L. (London: Routledge), 203.

⁴⁵ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 29-30.

Instead the glass cliff presents them with a situation in which she is set to fail.⁴⁶ The British Conservative party is an illustrious example. With David Cameron's resignation after the 2016 Brexit referendum, Theresa May was ultimately unopposed elected, after the second woman running withdrew, in the election for the party leadership and Prime Minister. No man decided to run in the election and ultimately shied away to demonstrate leadership in a clearly turbulent time, dominated by the uncertainty following the referendum. Arguably, those men, which includes Boris Johnson, chose to let May to fall off the glass cliff first before presenting themselves as more capable and, to incidentally suggest that women are not fully capable to lead. It seems that, at the moment, this strategy works out for Johnson, as May's Premiership is not remembered as a particularly successful one and he still is Prime Minister. While this example of a glass cliff is specific to the internal British politics, it still highlights how volatile roles within groups can be and that there is a gendered aspect to be considered.

Women and Conflict Resolution in the Middle East

In analysing the implications of the conflict to the emancipation of women, Abdo (1999) offers two approaches.⁴⁷ First, the Feminist Structured Analysis that considers socio-economic and political forces that shape gender relations and the state. It offers a rather pessimistic outlook in regards to the potential of woman's liberation and equality in the Middle East. It identifies the state as dominated by a male elite, that exercises economic and political power that consequently exploits women. Women in turn only enjoy a low legal status and are under-represented in politics and formal decision-making. The second framework is an agency-based approach by feminist activists that focusses on lived experiences of women and emphasises on their abilities to legal, economic and social change at all justice and structural levels.

In following Shalhoub-Kevorkian's suggestion to combine both approaches when considering aspects such as identity, nationhood, law and space and their respective relationships to each other, the examination of women's status and roles is needed to

⁴⁶ MacGregor, Jena, „Forget the glass ceiling: Women in leadership are facing the glass cliff“, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 2016, Accessed on 08 June 2022. Available at: <http://www.smh.com.au/comment/forget-the-glass-ceiling-women-in-leadership-are-facing-the-glass-cliff-20160712-gq4gyt.html>.

⁴⁷ Abdo cited in Shalhoub-Kevorkian, Nadera, „Tribal Justice and Gender: Perspectives in the Palestinian Society,“ in *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Middle Eastern Societies – Between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Albrecht, Hans-Jörg, Simon, Jan-Michael, Rezaei, Hassan, Rohne, Holger-C., Kiza, Ernesto, Berlin: Duckner & Humboldt, 2006, 536.

understand both internal and external processes. Situations experienced by women in Palestine highlight how not only their gender but their Palestinian identity contributes to their realities. As Shalhoub-Kevorkian points out “when the Israeli military forces position a road block (military checkpoint) exactly opposite a Palestinian girls’ school and fear of gender abuse, increases [...] then concern regarding ‘honor’ and sexual crimes intensify.”⁴⁸ In this example, the perceived threat to their status of women stems from the male military personnel who hold power and authority over them, in addition to the power imbalance based by the their ethnicity, as the Israeli military is clearly in control of the situation. While men may also be affected by the actions of Israeli military personnel, such as during a night raid for example, their status may be indirectly in danger when women are separated from their families or men and may be bodily checked and harassed by the military. Therefore, women are not only faced with the patriarchal implications stemming from within Palestine, but also experience the Israeli oppression differently because they are women. While men’s bodies are also endangered due to (armed) violence, (sexual) harassment and rape are often in conflict a regular occurrence for women – regardless if they flee or stay.

A key aspect in which women’s bodies are affected by conflicts differently, relates to their reproductive system, especially in a motherist sense, that can also serve nationalist movements. In it, a focus on a woman’s role as mother not only within her family but also in extension for the interest of the nation, is placed. In the discourse, usually composed by men, women are considered as society’s “maintainers and reproducers of national soldiers, national heroes and manpower”.⁴⁹ Therefore, women’s roles as mothers are key in national struggles because in bearing many children, she provides the nation with a future and thus secures its existence. However, in focussing on national soldiers, it emphasizes women’s main function as mothers, ‘producing’ soldiers for the nation who in turn defend territory and the sole existence of the nation. While some women are certainly comfortable in this position and may agree that this is one way to support the nationalist cause, it should not be the only or the main one. The basic idea of women becoming mothers of multiple in order to increase the number of group members, regardless of if that is tied to a specific nation or not,

⁴⁸ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 536.

⁴⁹ Gerner, Deborah J. 2007. *Mobilizing Women for national Agendas: Palestinian Women, Civil Society and the State-building process*. ed. Valentine M. Moghdam, *From Patriarchy to Empowerment* (New York: Syracuse), 2007, 18.

can be found in other instances as well. Relatively recent examples would include Nazi Germany that had a reward system in place, depending on how many children a woman would birth “for the nation”. Another instance where the same basic narrative is presented, relates to the Orthodox Jewish community where women are expected to reproduce the Jewish nation.⁵⁰ In all three examples are united in a very specific role that is ascribed to women despite other ideologies that are part of the nationalism are very much contrasting.

In this sense, the nexus of motherism and nationalism also relates to regulations that target women’s bodies. In light of the expected overturn of *Roe v. Wade* in the US, the supreme court ruling that allowed for safe and legal abortion, one is reminded of this battleground that goes beyond the complicated question of when life starts. While not necessarily at the centre of attention, the way how Israel deals with abortions, differs. Arab women are encouraged to use contraception and are able to access abortion clinics more easily, while Israeli women face obstacles to the access of contraception. The intention of Israel is clear: less Palestinians would increase their demographic power and may thus contribute to a claim to territory. In other cases, such as the Northern Irish case, demographics also play a key role in regards to a possible referendum on Irish reunification or rather the secession from the United Kingdom. Thus, the number of group members may influence some aspects of the conflict. With this clear intention, the Palestinian response to this patriarchal structure is to do the exact opposite and continue the effort in raising more Palestinian children.⁵¹ While it may not necessarily be on those grounds in which the conflict is resolved or escalated, it does showcase how women are needed in projecting power and in providing the nation with its most crucial asset: members. Without any members or rather citizens, no nation and no nationalistic strive is sustainable.

As members of society, women are political activists and contribute to democratic development. As all women in a society experience some degree of political exclusion, but the degree of exclusion and the manner in which they participate may be influenced by class and their economic situation. As women are not ‘per nature’ apolitical, they do seek to challenge their political exclusion and gain the power to shape the frameworks they move in. It should be highlighted however, that a movement that is initiated or led

⁵⁰ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 150.

⁵¹ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 151.

by women pursues automatically progressive or follows an inclusive understanding of feminists. Therefore, in analysing women's roles in conflict resolution, the attached political ideologies also need to be considered.⁵²

⁵² Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 28-9.

3 A Brief Introduction to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Considering the Middle East as the setting for the analysis of women during the first Intifada, this thesis focusses on one of the most studied conflicts in the regions. A number of conflicts with different issues at stake have been fended in the region and continue to do so. Some are related to political, economic, military religious and/or religious concerns. Within the region, the conflicts can be grouped into Arab-Israeli conflicts, inter-Arab conflicts, Arab-non-Arab conflicts, for example Turkey and Syria, Israel-non-Arab conflicts, superpower-Arab conflicts, superpower-non-Arab conflicts and finally superpower-radical Islamic group conflicts. Given the number of conflicts in the region, the number of actors and the various issues at the centre of each conflict, there are overlapping interests, that may result in a situation in which those conflicts influence each other. No conflict and no region exists in a vacuum but rather in a broader framework. In examining the broader circumstances of a conflict, the roles of each actor or group within one conflict party can be better understood because they are influenced by the circumstances as well.⁵³

The conflict between Israel and Palestine is a longstanding Arabi-Israeli conflict that has been studied extensively. Some add the conflict to the category of colonial conflicts, as Israel acts like a colonial power; it occupies Palestinian territory, either through illegal settlements or war, and controls (natural) resources and key public services such as the supply of energy.⁵⁴ The course of the conflict is in turn also influenced by the situations that Israel faces in other (simultaneous) conflicts. For example, the settlement of the Israeli-Egyptian conflict had wider implications to the Arab-Israeli conflicts, especially the disintegration of the Arab coalition, as it increased the instability in the Arab world.⁵⁵

In the colonial nature of the conflict, Palestine attempts to preserve as much of the nation and its nationalism as possible. The occupation transformed and changed the territory and the society fundamentally. It saw the confiscation of land and the expropriation of national resources. Farmers' access to water is denied and diverted to Israeli settlements and Israeli forces control what crops may be planted, according

⁵³ Bar-Simon-Tov, Yaacov. 2016. *Interlocking Conflicts in the Middle East: Structural Dimensions*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. eds. Albrecht, Hans-Jörg, Jan-Michael Simon, Hassan Rezaei, Holger-C. Rohne, Ernesto Kiza, *Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in Middle Eastern Societies – Between Tradition and Modernity*. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot), 216.

⁵⁴ Bar-Simon-Tov, *Interlocking Conflicts*, 217.

⁵⁵ Bar-Simon-Tov, *Interlocking Conflicts*, 217-223.

to the needs and demands of the Israeli consumer market. The Israeli occupation drained the territory economically, politically and culturally and banned trade unions, denying women and students to organise.⁵⁶

In this context, Palestine turns to the past to draw strength in the resistance of the occupation. As Mernissi argues “[we react] by sliding, sorrowfully, wounded, and infantilized back towards our origin, towards an anesthetizing of the past where we were protect, were we had dominion over the rising and setting of the sun.”⁵⁷ Thus, traditions and ‘cultural authenticity’ are considered as important aspects that should be safeguarded and preserved from the change of time. While traditions are important in the creation of a sense of belonging and therefore to (Palestinian) nationalism, this inflexibility affects women’s, children’s and family issues as well, as traditions extent merely cultural artifacts but are also closely tied to behaviour and societal preferences.⁵⁸ Regardless, as the circumstances of the occupation change, through political decisions or external changes at the global level, those traditions may also be challenged from within – in the case of women this relates to their roles and expectations of society.

3.1 From the Beginnings to December 1987

In considering the war between Israel and Palestine as a war of national liberation or a war of independence of colonial power, it relates into a certain trend that has been accelerated since the end of the Second World War. Other cases that have been used in the comparison to the Palestinian-Israeli case, such as South Africa, have no significant religious element to the course of the conflict, while others, such as the case of Northern Ireland, do. However, what unites all three cases, is the exercise of colonial power by one conflict party. The colonial nature of the Israeli-Palestine conflict lies not only in the behaviour of Israel but also at the very root of the conflict itself. The tensions and the unresolved issues are deeply rooted in European colonialism and especially with the British and the 1917 Balfour Declaration, as well as the emerge of Zionism. The basis for it is a letter by Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild, in which he states that “his Majesty’s Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a

⁵⁶ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 155-6

⁵⁷ Mernissi cited in Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 537.

⁵⁸ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 537.

national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best abilities to facilitate the achievement of this object” and that “nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status by Jews in any other country”.⁵⁹ Therefore, the British declared their unwavering support of Zionism, disregarding that Palestinians already lived in the same territory. As Noam Chomsky points out, a big driver to support the Zionist aspirations was to avoid refugees and an increase of the Jewish population, effectively supporting the goal out of anti-Semitism.⁶⁰

In the Israeli-Palestinian case, 1948 a key year in which, the course of the conflict manifested itself. While the beginning of the conflict can be traced back to at least the early 20th Century and the gaining prominence of Zionism, the creation of the state of Israel as at the expense of Palestinians who themselves were also promised statehood is significant.⁶¹ As the Balfour Declaration favoured the small Jewish minority over the Arab majority’s political rights, demands for some form of self-governance emerged. For example, one of the numerous Muslim-Christian Associations called for self-determination by the Arabs in a 1918 petition, asking “how is it thus conceivable that the minority should be granted self-rule and that Palestine should be considered their homeland” and finally calling upon Britain and France to not “make any decision regarding the fate of Palestine before consulting us in the belief that the state of Great Britain that saved us from the Turks will not hand us over to the Jews.”⁶² The calls were ignored and the tone for the future was set.

With the Resolution 181 in 1947 the creation of two states and the internationalisation of Jerusalem was set out but did not materialise in reality. Instead, the region continued to be under pressure and a year later after Britain’s withdrawal and the subsequent Israeli declaration of independence, a war between Israel and its neighbouring Arab states broke out. By 1949, Israel increased its territory by 21% in comparison to the UN partition plan and with the armistice agreement, Jordan took control of the West Bank and Egypt of the Gaza Strip. The hope for Palestinians to form an independent state was lost and three quarters of a million Palestinian refugees were scattered

⁵⁹ Balfour Declaration 1917, 2nd November 1917, Accessed on 10 June 2022. Available at: <https://web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/gender-sexuality/balfourdeclaration.pdf>

⁶⁰ Chomsky and Pappé, *On Palestine*, 62.

⁶¹ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 22-3

⁶² Khalidi, *Palestinian National Movement*, 21.

across the Arab World and faced *al-Nakba* (catastrophe). Israel in turn was strengthened as it managed to defeat the combined forces of the Arab world.

Fleischman points out that Palestinian women activists were already very active in the early 20th Century but political unrest and especially the 1948 *al-Nakba* (catastrophe and loss of land) and the establishment of the state of Israel halted their activities. As Israel was established with the help of 'modernising empires', i.e. former empires that were forced to give up their colonial territories but tried to retain their sphere of influence, shows that processes at the global stage exceed influence to the individual level.⁶³ Until the first Intifada, the Palestinian national movement was in the background and Palestine was overshadowed by the broader Israeli-Arab rivalry in the broader context of the Cold War. Other conflicts in the region influenced Palestine, such as the Six Day/June War 1967 as Israel's victory once again rewrote the geopolitical order in the region as by then, Israel controlled all territory that was originally allocated for the Israeli and Palestinian state according to UN partition plan. Even though Israel emerged victorious, it remained to be encircled by its enemies. However the threat that was perceived from the neighbourhood, acted as a source of strength and an Israeli sense of unity.⁶⁴ In identifying this enemy, Israel was further bound together as a nation.

The expression of Palestinian nationalism was severely suppressed by 1976, banning the flying of the Palestinian flag, voicing support for the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) or any other resistance organisation, the organisation of trade unions and displaying the Palestinian colours, as well as protesting the occupation publicly or in print. Aside from fines, beating and jails, deportations were among the chosen punishments. Resistance that involved violence resulted in collective punishment, house demolition, imprisonment without trial and extrajudicial murder. Even some elected PLO mayors were deported in 1980, accused of incitement and some others being removed forcefully in 1982, provoking unrest.⁶⁵ As a consequence, the PLO abroad was weakened, but as the first Intifada showed, strengthened the Palestinian national movement in Palestine.⁶⁶

⁶³ Fleischman 2003 cited in Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 538.

⁶⁴ Peters, *Introduction*, 2-3.

⁶⁵ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 170-1.

⁶⁶ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 168.

3.2 1987 to 1993: The First Intifada

“The Intifada, therefore, must be seen as not only an integral part of the continuum of the Palestinian national struggle, but also as the logical culmination of 20 years of military occupation.”⁶⁷ The effect of two decades of occupation resulted in a grassroots uprising that had no connection to the formal political Palestinian leadership. Its length and intensity highlight the backing it enjoyed from the population that was involved in the organisation of the uprising. Activists came from virtually every part of society, transcending class and gendered division lines. The Palestinian youth played a key role, after growing up in the Occupied Territories, the years prior to the Intifada saw a number of mass demonstrations by young Palestinians, coming out with public expressions of support for the PLO in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.⁶⁸ Women, too, supported the uprising and stepped up into leadership roles, entering the realm of formal male-dominated politics. Some women, most notably Hanan Ashrawi, who acted as a spokesperson of the Palestinian delegation and was later appointed Minister for Higher Education and Research.

Mamdouh Noufal, Arafat’s advisor, attributes some causes to the outbreak of the first intifada. The relative poverty and the feelings of humiliation arising from living under Israeli occupation, as well as the growing sentiment that the Palestinian armed resistance from abroad will not liberate them and the feeling that the Palestinian cause was altogether abandoned by the Arab states at the Arab Leader’s Summit in Amman in October 1987, where they focussed on threats from Iran. The set-up of the first intifada is characterised by four decades of defeat, futile asymmetrical resistance, colonial suppression, land expropriations and occupation.⁶⁹ In this general sentiment of disappointment, struggle and unhappiness, a crash between an Israeli army vehicle and a car with four Palestinian passengers happened to be the spark of the resistance. While the incident seems like an unfortunate accident, a rumour that the crash “had not been an accident at all but a cold-blooded act of vengeance by a relative of [an] Israeli stabbed to death [in Gaza] two days earlier”.⁷⁰ As the rumour spread throughout

⁶⁷ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 156

⁶⁸ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 171.

⁶⁹ Nasrallah, Rami „The First and Second Palestinian Intifadas“ in *The Routledge Handbook on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, ed. Joel Peters and David Newman (Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 56-7.

⁷⁰ Schiff, Z., and Ya’ari, E. *Intifada: The Palestinian Uprising – Israel’s Third Front*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000, 18.

Gaza and the West Bank, the Arab language newspaper *al-Fajr* published in East Jerusalem, “denounced the ‘murder’ of the four passengers as ‘maliciously perpetrated’”.⁷¹

Despite the opening act of the first Intifada being Palestinian youth throwing stones against the forces of the Israeli occupation, the movement turned into a largely non-violent resistance that was organised by grassroot organisations, aiming for the self-determination, the end of the occupation and statehood for Palestine. The first Intifada was supported by Palestinian society, participating in non-violent strategies of resistance. Israeli products were boycotted and VAT payments, taxes and fees to Israel were withheld. The Israeli administrative and military authority was challenged through resigning from the Israeli police force and the tax collecting authority, as well as destroying Israeli-issued ID cards and the organisation of strikes, marches and demonstrations despite a ban of the Israeli government and orders of public and commercial curfews. In terms of communication, not only was an underground radio station created, but anti-Israeli graffiti and posters, as well as the Palestinian flag were displayed.⁷² Therefore, the resistance worked at all levels, individually and at an organisational level, targeting Israel economically and ensuring the continued support through displaying imageries holding up the morale.

The Israeli response to the Intifada was twofold: public services such as schools were closed for months and power and communication utilities were often shut down, forcing Palestinians to create alternatives to meet their needs but also to support the activities of the Intifada. The second pillar of the Israeli response was deploying force and the conviction that violence was needed to crack down on the resistance. After a month of unrest, Defence Minister Yitzhak Rabin ordered the forces to use “force, might, and beatings”.⁷³ But the widely televised images of heavily armed soldiers brutalising teenage Palestinian protesters, created a major media backlash in the United States and elsewhere. In perceiving and recognising that the power balance, abilities and resources were in favour of Israel and that Israel was a capable military power, it risked its reputation abroad.⁷⁴ Even Rabin recognised this, as a New York Times interview

⁷¹ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 57.

⁷² Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 57.

⁷³ Clines, Francis, X, „Talk With Rabin: Roots of the Conflict“, *The New York Times*, 5 February 1988. Accessed on 07 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.nytimes.com/1988/02/05/world/talk-with-rabin-roots-of-the-conflict.html>

⁷⁴ Khalidi, *Hundert Years' War*, 169.

opened with “Palestinian rioters have been winning the public relations battle against Israel in the world press, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin conceded today, stressing that the army is confronting something new and complex: a widespread uprising born of decades of Palestinian frustrations.”⁷⁵

Even though Rabin seemed to recognise and be aware of the damaging consequences of the response to the Israeli public image abroad, the violence persisted assessed that “the use of force [...] including beatings, undoubtedly has brought about the impact we wanted – strengthening the population’s fear of the Israel Defense Forces.”⁷⁶ While he might have succeeded it that, it neither ended the Intifada as expected nor did it contribute to an easing of tensions, increasing the opportunity cost to enter in eventual negotiations. If anything, it can be argued that the failure start a credible cooperation process between Palestine and Israel with the end of the First Intifada contributed to the outbreak of the Second Intifada. While the reasons for that are multifaceted, the continuing radicalisation and the subsequent rise of extremist views contribute also to today’s situation, making it almost impossible to find a moment in which the conflict would be as ripe to be solves as it has been at the end of the First Intifada.⁷⁷

It should be noted that just like the young Palestinians grew up in the Occupied Territories with no recollection of their own of the ‘before’, the young draftees of the Israeli army grew up with a constant anti-Palestinian narrative that argued that Israel had no other choice than picking violence to deter the Arabs.⁷⁸ Regardless the violence that was used against the uprising, the Intifada has made clear by the early 990s that the continuation of the occupation in the same way as before the outbreak was unattainable.⁷⁹

Another global aspect that influenced the region was the end of the Cold War and the subsequent end of the Soviet Union, not only because it weakened the Palestinian left, but it also left the US as the sole international guarantor and sponsor of any Palestinian-Israeli peace process.⁸⁰ At the onset of the first Intifada, the PLO has been

⁷⁵ Clines, Talk with Rabin, no pagination.

⁷⁶ Broder, Johnathan, “Iron-Fist Policy Splits Israelis”, *Chicago Tribune*, 27 January 1988. Accessed on 06 June 2022. Available at: <https://www.chicagotribune.com/news/ct-xpm-1988-01-27-8803270825-story.html>

⁷⁷ Kaufman, Stuart J., “Narratives and Symboly in Violent Mobilization: The Palestinian-Israeli Case” *Security Studies* 18 (2009), 433.

⁷⁸ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 171.

⁷⁹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 174.

⁸⁰ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 181.

in exile since 1960 and had established its headquarters in Tunis in 1982 after its defeat in Lebanon.⁸¹ While the official PLO leadership was located in Tunis during the Intifada, the local (political) Palestinian leadership started to meet and organise without the guidance of the leadership abroad. In late 1986, the local leaders of Fatah, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) and the Democratic Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DPFLP) agreed to unite and to establish the framework of the United National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU) under the slogan “No voice is louder than the voice of the intifada.”⁸² While it makes sense to unite the leadership of the various organisations in Palestine to ensure coordination amongst them, it effectively created a second representative body of Palestine. With the PLO being in Tunis, often unaware of the actual situation in Palestine and no cooperation taking place between the bodies, a gap between the voices emerged. Consequently, once the PLO entered negotiations, it was not able to truly represent the perspective of the local population and a gap between the local and the PLO preferences emerged.

With being physical removed from the Occupied Territories, it was not always possible to fully understand the sentiments of the population there. Not only the beginning of the first Intifada is an example for the gap between the reality in the Occupied Territories and the PLO leadership as it caught them by complete surprise. Further, the PLO continued to be publicly devoted to the armed struggle, despite some voices like Pakistani intellectual Eqbal Ahmad have been calling for such a move away. With the Intifada’s character, the gap became crystal clear and the PLO leadership was forced to reconsider its stance.⁸³ Despite the change within the PLO, it was ultimately unsuccessful in utilising the first Intifada as a catalysator to shape the process. Instead, the PLO ended up in a process that was designed by Israel and the US with the underlying goal to maintain the occupation, which was not in the interest of the PLO.

As the PLO was regarded as the legitimate representative and the embodiment of Palestinian nationalism, but its strategic vision was short-sighted due to their limited understanding of the circumstances and realities of occupation and Israeli society and arguably damaged the cause. Its management of the uprising became more intrusive, sometimes ignoring the preferences and views of those who initiated the movement.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 61.

⁸² Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 58-9.

⁸³ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 180-1.

⁸⁴ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 175.

This problem grew more acute with the assassination of leading figures by Israel, such as Lieutenant Abu Jihad who was closely observing the situation in Palestine and was one of the few who was deeply knowledgeable on the Palestinians and the Israeli on the ground.

Even though the grassroots activism and the strong support for the cause, the first Intifada also saw the rise of Hamas, who is also the political leadership of the Gaza Strip today. Founded in 1987, Hamas quickly became involved in street confrontation against the occupation and thus chose a different avenue than the vast majority of organisations active in the first intifada.⁸⁵ As Nasrallah highlights, the “Hamas considered all of historical Palestine to be an Islamic *waqf* (a land that cannot be given away, sold or entitled to another entity) belonging to the Palestinians and thus called for resistance to expel the Israeli occupation and establish an Islamic state. It rejected any type of political settlement with Israel and also rejected the principle of two states.”⁸⁶ In addition, the Hamas also rejected joining the UNLU framework, which, in combination with its stances, placed them outside of the mainstream of the first intifada. The Hamas did not only attempt to offer an alternative, more radical response to the mainstream but also understood to utilise the vacuum that the PLO left, who was physically removed from the everyday struggle of the occupation.⁸⁷

Aside from the (slow) emergence of a more radical group, the first intifada brought the political from abroad back to the homeland and created a new elite, consisting of local leaders, activists and the UNLU. Even though Israel ignored this new elite, the first Intifada demonstrated the people’s ability to self-govern and to remain to be largely non-violent while facing an oppressive occupation.⁸⁸ But in the context of an increasing popularity of Hamas and the acceptance of increasing credibility of the Islamic orientation and the emphasis on confrontation turned Hamas into the PLO’s rival.

By the turn of the decade, the Gulf War and the 1991 Madrid peace conference organised by the United States, slowed down the resistance.⁸⁹ Instead of joining virtually all major Arab powers in the US-led coalition to forcibly reverse Saddam Hussein’s violation of Kuwait’s sovereignty, Arafat tried to steer a ‘neutral’ course. The

⁸⁵ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 176.

⁸⁶ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 59.

⁸⁷ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 61.

⁸⁸ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 60.

⁸⁹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years’ War*, 169.

decision to essentially support Iraq was partly motivated by Arafat's long-standing and fierce antipathy toward Hafez al-Asad's Syrian regime but resulted in an increasing dependency on Iraq, as Egypt could no longer act as a counterweight after its separate peace with Israel. With its dependency on Iraq, the PLO was expected to support Iraqi positions and was punished if it failed to do so. Aside from the threat of other groups trying to become a credible alternative to the PLO within the network of Palestinian organisations, such as Hamas, groups based in Iraq also threatened to undermine PLO activities.⁹⁰ Eventually as Kuwait was liberated, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from Kuwait were uprooted and the Gulf states halted all financial support to the PLO. Consequently, the PLO was isolated and friendless among the Arab states while the US, and thus Israel's closest ally in the conflict, was strengthened by its victory over Iraq but especially by the end of the Cold War. With the PLO's negotiating position severely weakened, a peace conference in Madrid was planned to be taking place in October 1991. Arafat and his colleagues accepted their seat at the negotiating table but the pressure they faced and their eagerness to return to Palestine, distracted them from realising that they were disadvantaged. Their power was however severely constrained as the PLO agreed to the condition that no independent Palestinian representation would be present at the conference, despite the conference's goal being to determine the fate of Palestine. Instead, some Palestinian delegates formed a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation, from which the Palestinians were later allowed to separate. However, Israel held veto-powers over the representatives and blocked anybody in connection to the PLO, from Jerusalem or from the diaspora. Only with the intervention of US Secretary of State James Baker some were allowed to join the delegation but remained to be barred from the formal talks with the Israeli delegation. But not only in terms of participating people, but also in issues to be discussed, essential issues, such as Palestinian self-determination, the control of land and water or the return of the refugees, were not brought on the agenda. Those issues were tabled until later but in reality, were never discussed while the status quo remained and Israel was able to continue the occupation, the expansion of the settlements and to administer the Occupied Territories how they please – until today.⁹¹

At the global level, however, the first Intifada contributed to two persisting images: first, the Israeli government as a bully who responds with excessive force to non-violent

⁹⁰ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 182-3.

⁹¹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 186-7.

resistance and the recognition of the Palestinians as an oppressed people who is by far more disadvantaged on the power-balance vis à vis Israel.

The tainted public image of Israel abroad did not mean that the United States or other key actors of the international community seriously reconsidered or changed their position. While part of the reason is arguably that former imperialist empires, the support Israel's endeavours because, as Chomsky puts it "that there is a kind of intuitive feeling in the part of the population. Look, we did it, it must be right. So they are doing it, so it must be right. The settler-colonial societies have a different kind of mentality. We did examine or expel the indigenous population so there has to be something justified about it – superior civilisation or other ideas."⁹² The PLO leadership also partly contributed to this as it failed to fully understand the United States' perspective and motivation in the conflict and did not engage with the US-American public or media in a similar way as Israel did. As a consequence, the PLO failed to be considered as a serious party for peace talks through the late 1980s. Instead, the PLO needed to adapt its principles and accepted a two state-solution and committed to a peaceful resolution in the 1988 Palestinian Declaration of Independence. An accompanying political communiqué accepted SC 242 and SC 338⁹³ as the basis for a peace conference.⁹⁴ The acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 were reiterated in Arafat's statement accepting the US's conditions for entering a bilateral dialogue and recognising Israel's right to exist in peace and security and in renouncing their armed resistance, as it was considered as terrorism by the US and Israel.⁹⁵

In accepting SC 242, the PLO accepted that Israel would withdraw from "territories occupied" but which territories that would include was up for debate. Further, the Resolution does not mention the Palestine question or the conception of an Arab state, as laid out in 1947 UNGA Resolution 181 or specified the return of refugees as set out in UNGA Resolution 194 of 1948.⁹⁶ As such, SC 242 is a flawed basis for any negotiations on the territory in question and the detrimental effect of such ambiguous language continues to influence the situation until today.

⁹² Chomsky and Pappé, *On Palestine*, 56.

⁹³ SC 338 called for a ceasefire and the end of the Yom Kippur War.

⁹⁴ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 177-8.

⁹⁵ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 187-180.

⁹⁶ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 181.

Regardless, as peace talks started in 1991 in Madrid, the PLO tried to halt the Intifada instead of recognising the strategic value of the continued resistance to the talks, especially in the context of the US's role as broker. As such, the classic tit for tat process that is usually part of negotiations was flawed. The US had a historic track record of being biased towards Israel, with Gerald Ford's 1975 commitment to Rabin to not present a peace proposal that would include points that Israel would disprove.⁹⁷ Thus any concessions by the PLO did not necessarily mean that Israel would also be required to concede at a similar level or be willing to concede to Palestine.⁹⁸ As part of the 1991 Madrid Conference, the US said in a letter of assurance that it "encourages all sides to avoid unilateral acts that would exacerbate local tensions or make negotiations more difficult or preempt their final outcome" while setting out that "no party should take unilateral actions that seek to predetermine issues that can only be resolved through negotiations."⁹⁹ Those claims were words with no substance and were anyway compromised by the US's behaviour during the conference. Each issue was discussed with the Israeli side beforehand to determine what would be feasible or accepted to be discussed, which was later presented as the US's suggestion. Consequently, the building of settlements and the barring of residents of the Occupied Territories to enter Jerusalem continued.¹⁰⁰

The situation only worsened when Bill Clinton's administration commenced as he had a strong personal affinity for Labour Zionism and a deep admiration for in June 1992 elected Israeli PM Rabin. Those personal ties gave little hope to a reconsideration of the US' approach. In addition, peace-process professionals, highly educated people who have not spent any or very little time in the region – except for Israel, entered the process and further solidifying the bias. In it, individuals of the state department, like Daniel Ross, were not only very overt in the portrayal of their bias but also made their own assessments of what Israel would deem acceptable and presented them as facts. These were often proven wrong, such as when it came to the recognition and involvement of the PLO that Ross had deemed as unacceptable while Rabin eventually agreed to involve the PLO in the negotiations.¹⁰¹ Rabin as Israeli PM did not considerably change the Israel's approach to Palestine and rejected the proposal to a

⁹⁷ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 187.

⁹⁸ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 181.

⁹⁹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 187.

¹⁰⁰ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 189.

¹⁰¹ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 191-2.

Palestinian Interim Self-Governing Authority (PISGA), which included a Palestinian governmental entity, elected by the residents of the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, Jerusalem and those displaced in 1967 and deported since. As no serious counterproposal was submitted, the subsequent Washington talks concluded with no concrete outcome.

Another undisclosed negotiating track was opened separately that reached an understanding that included the possibility of officers of the PLO to be allowed to enter the Occupied Territories.¹⁰² Israel effectively recognised the PLO as representative organisation of the Palestinian people. In return, the PLO recognised the state of Israel. In practice, however, this agreement also meant that key demands of the Intifada were not met as Israel was able to continue to military occupation and the construction of settlements, although the agreement marks an admitting that the sole use of force was no longer sufficient to control the Occupied Territory and some concessions needed to be made.¹⁰³ Over the course of the negotiation, the PLO was not only the weaker party, but also let it to be weaker. While returning to the Occupied Territories is a win, it came with high costs. As we already know that the conflict not only continues but has seen a political radicalisation on both sides, the PLO arguably failed to use the potential that the situation, especially at the beginning of the intifada presented to them. Finally, the liberation movement recognised the authority of its oppressor, pushing the possibility of liberation or a recognition from others even further. Why would a state support Palestine in its claims if Palestine recognised the right to existence of its oppressor over the very same territory.

The power imbalance between Israel and Palestine was also illustrated during the talks as the Israeli delegation was comprised of experienced Israeli experience while the Palestinians had no diplomatic experience and were depended on the decisions that the PLO leaders in Tunis took, who, at a physical distance, lacked a comprehensive understanding of the process.¹⁰⁴ This imbalance continued during the Oslo process. The representatives that were sent by the PLO were weak when it comes to details and lacked the linguistic and legal expertise, especially vis à vis the experienced US and Israeli personnel. As Khalidi assesses “the Palestinian envoys at Oslo were simply out of their league, lacking resources and training, none of them having been in

¹⁰² Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 195-6.

¹⁰³ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 198.

¹⁰⁴ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 189.

occupied Palestine for decades, and having failed to study and absorb the results of our ten rounds of negotiations with Israel. The deteriorating situation of the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories after Oslo since the mid-1990s has been in large measure the result of the choice of envoys whose performance at Oslo was inept, and of 'Arafat and his colleagues' willingness to sign the defective agreements they drew up."¹⁰⁵ Ultimately, the Palestinian negotiators ended up accepting a barely modified version of the Begin autonomy plan with no substantial self-rule as Israel retained the control over land, water, borders and much else.¹⁰⁶ In hindsight, it is highly questionable if the Oslo plan can be considered as a success for the Palestinian nationalist cause, as the occupation continues regardless. While Rabin had his own limitations, bias and a relentless opposition at home, his assassination closed a small window of opportunity for decades and set the tone for more radical and hardened positions on both sides. This was also highlighted visually in the construction of new military checkpoints and walls, disrupting travel for Palestinians and especially residents of the Gaza Strip.¹⁰⁷

4 Women in Palestine

In this context, civil society initiated and led the first Intifada. In it, youth and women were key in the organisation of the resistance and highlighted that they are not passive targets of policies or cultural norms but rather shapers and makers of social change. As a group, women hold different degrees of socio-economic power and are accustomed to various cultural arrangements. They hold individually different political opinions and subscribe to different ideologies. Not all of them follow the same religion or traditions and not every woman is per se a feminist and even within the group of feminists, each of them may identify with another category of feminism – if any.¹⁰⁸

Neither is Palestine is not a uniform. There are differences between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank that have been exacerbated over the course of the conflict. It is not an exclusive Muslim territory, but has a sizable Christian population, as well as a certain

¹⁰⁵ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 199-200.

¹⁰⁶ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 200.

¹⁰⁷ Khalidi, *Hundred Years' War*, 203.

¹⁰⁸ Moghadam, Valentine M. *Modernizing Women: Gender and Social Change in the Middle East*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1993, 10.

leftist tradition as it has been home to many communist organisations.¹⁰⁹ A considerable share of the middle class has been educated in a Western style.

The roles of women and their societal status are structurally determined by state ideologies, for example the orientation of the government as generally a right wing parties hold different opinions on women's rights than left wing parties, as well as the judicial system and the level of economic development, as well as the type of economy and the class location. In addition, religion and culture shape those structures, too and therefore gender systems as well. While sex refers to the biological sex, gender is primarily a social construct, resulting in gender systems that manifest differently.¹¹⁰ What is considered as "masculine" and "feminine" is not only shaped by customs, but also by law, in the sense that men and women do not have the same access to political power and economic resources. Inequalities do not occur 'naturally' but are taught and learned. As Moghadam summarises, "the legal system, educational system and labour market are all sites of the construction and reproduction of gender inequality and the continuing subordination of women."¹¹¹ Therefore, gender systems operate in a larger context, influenced by socio-economic class, ethnicity, religion and age.¹¹²

As a result of the occupation, the private spheres remain to be one of the few areas in which Palestinians kept their agency through preserving cultural rituals and activities which may seem incompatible with an individualistic society, as traditionally, individual security and well-being is provided through and depended on the protection of the collective, which is not limited to the core family and includes the extended family whose members all share the duty to care for and provide security and safety for their family. It should be noted that the desire to focus on traditional family structures is not exclusive to Palestine nor the Middle East.¹¹³

Similar processes can be observed in the Global North, albeit the circumstances are different. Taking Europe as an example, Conservative political present the nuclear family consisting of a married couple, exclusively a man and a woman, who have some children as the ideal. Who else is included into that family bond, depends on some extent on the location – in Southern Europe, the extent family is often closer to the

¹⁰⁹ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change* 10-1.

¹¹⁰ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 14-5.

¹¹¹ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 15.

¹¹² Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 16.

¹¹³ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 538.

nucleus than in Central or Northern Europe. On the other side of the political spectrum, progressive political parties on the left, often redefine family in other terms. Their definition is not necessarily limited to a married heterosexual couple but may include queer couples. In essence, family is an important subgroup within a society across the globe and is subject to political influences.

Palestinian Nationalism

In regards to the role of nationalism in the Palestinian struggle, it should be highlighted that nationalism is not neutral and its goals, display and actors depend on other ideologies that are displayed alongside or simultaneously to the nationalist struggle.¹¹⁴

Conservative and populist right wing discourses like to highlight the ‘inferiority’ of Middle Eastern people – especially when they arrive in Europe as refugees and gloss over the fact that many of the aspects they hold against them, remain to be the case in Europe as well. Women of the West have been disadvantaged for a long time, albeit some would argue that they continue to be disadvantaged. Further, there is not one uniform situation of women in the West, as for example, the circumstances, rights and opportunities for women in Scandinavia differ to those of the US.¹¹⁵ Taking reproductive health as an example, the US is the only nation of the Global North that does not offer paid maternity leave and with the expected overturn of *Roe v. Wade* is set to become the first nation to ban abortions again. Regardless of the differences within the West, no nation has achieved full equality on any quantitative indicators. Attributing this division based on an Islamophobic argument is not only wrong but also fails to consider that other religions also place women on a lower, less values level. In Christianity women are not allowed to become priests (unless they are Protestants) and women’s main role is still considered to be a wife and a mother. Therefore, “the gender configuration that draw heavily from religion and cultural norms to govern women’s worth, published praxis and other aspects of their lives in the Middle East are not unique to Muslim or Middle Eastern countries”.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁴ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 149.

¹¹⁵ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change* 5.

¹¹⁶ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 5.

Similar to the West, the rights and status of women is not uniform across the Muslim world, as the application of legal codes differ and even within one single Muslim society, various degrees of sex-segregation based on class are present.¹¹⁷ Therefore, a women of a high socio-economic class may enjoy more or different opportunities than a man of lower socio-economic classes, highlighting that the question of class is fundamental when considering a gendered perspective.

Women in Palestinian Society and Politics

Like any other region, the Middle East is connected to political structures, cultural institutions, economic processes, class structures and religion that act as the framework of society. Applying a Marxist framework, the infrastructures and superstructures society functions in is made up from a number of different levels and types of transformations from one level to another. This relationship is interactive and linked to the “consciousness” of each level, both in the Marxist sense of class but also in a feminist sense of gender.¹¹⁸ While the social formation is subject to influences of national class structures, the respective regional context, it is also subject to the global system of states and markets. Thus, no major social change occurs isolated and is exposed to the global context.¹¹⁹ In analysing a group’s role in a social context, one needs to therefore consider multiple influences, including the economic development and the political changes of a region.

This thesis considers socio-economic class in the Marxists sense, meaning that the main deterrent of class affiliation is based on the possession or control of the means of production.¹²⁰ As socio-economic class shapes cultural practices, patterns of consumption, lifestyles, reproduction and worldviews, this aspect has to be taken into account in order to gain a comprehensive understanding, especially given that women’s access to resources, including largely determined by class location.¹²¹

While the informal sphere is much more permeable, the formal political system includes barriers that are imposed by social and political realities that result in groups with

¹¹⁷ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 6.

¹¹⁸ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 1.

¹¹⁹ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 3.

¹²⁰ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 16.

¹²¹ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 16.

different levels of power. Those who find themselves in a secondary position within the system are generally subservient to and dependent on those who hold more power. In addition secondary groups are excluded of political decision-making, positions of formal power, including the military.¹²² Thus, secondary groups are generally only able to express their power when and if the most powerful group allows them to. They may be offered a place to voice their opinions on an issue and present their suggestions for actions, but if those are realised in practice depends on the will of others.

Amal Jamal identifies three categories of Palestinian communities of the Palestinian society. First, one group are Palestinian refugees who live in Arab countries, followed by Palestinians living in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank respectively and finally those who have been living in Israel since its creation in 1948 and have been naturalised since, holding an Israeli citizenship.¹²³ This thesis focusses especially on the second group as they are at the centre of the Palestinian politics, albeit especially refugees have been influencing Palestinian politics significantly.

Social order is organised hierarchical and fixed, with individuals adhering to the directions given by those higher on the scale. This applies to smaller groups such as a family, but also to larger society. Considering the gendered implications of this order, women and children are generally at the base whereas young women must obey older women. This structure is one of the traditional patriarchal elements that emphasises the importance of customs and tradition while maintaining stability and harmony in the hierarchy of social relations. While the desire of those on the top of the hierarchy to keep the order to their advantage is one of the reasons, the main motivation may be closer tied to the fear of losing the cultural authenticity due to the occupation and its influence. The attempt to preserve the organisation of the Palestinian (private) space can be understood as an attempt to both distinguish the group from others and an act of resistance.¹²⁴ Regardless, the way how societies and groups organise themselves cannot be fixed in practice in the sense how some would like to see it and members of a group may advocate for change. In the case study of this thesis, Palestinian women's organisations are one group that advocate for the advancement of social

¹²² Kaufman and Williams, *Woman and War*, 15.

¹²³ Jamal, Amal. 2016. *Political and Ideological Factors of Conflict in Palestinian Society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. eds. Albrecht, Hans-Jörg, Jan-Michael Simon, Hassan Rezaei, Holger-C. Rohne, Ernesto Kiza, Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in Middle Eastern Societies – Between Tradition and Modernity. (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 229.

¹²⁴ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 538.

transformation and the formulation of new gender roles.

Key political organisation in Palestine and especially during the first Intifada is the PLO. Founded in 1964, as a resistance organisation and a political actor, its members are part of the political elite of Palestine.¹²⁵ At the onset of the first Intifada, the PLO has been in exile and had established its headquarters in Tunis in 1982 after its defeat in Lebanon.¹²⁶

Into the PLO elite in exile and national elite groups of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip respectively. Apart from location, another fragmentation line is the status of religion, as some want to see Palestine as a secular state and others wish to for Islam to play a bigger role in the state. Both groups are also confronted with implications related to class and gender – regardless if they acknowledge that openly or not.¹²⁷

While the Palestinian society and community per se is already fragmented, applying a gendered lens highlights that men and women move differently within society. Generally speaking, women may act as symbols of group identity, who may support and participate in national causes. As an individual they both have gender and a national identity that may influence each other. Further, it should be noted that identities are not fixed and may change due to a variety of reasons.¹²⁸

While women are relevant to group identity, albeit not always at the forefront, the patriarchal nature of political systems is biased against women's participation. As a result, men move freely in the public sphere and at high formal power levels while women tend to be more limited to the private sphere and the family. However, "decisions made by the decision-makers affect not only the nation and the society, but clearly individual women who pay the price when the country is in a state of conflict".¹²⁹ It should be added here. However, gender does not necessarily trump class, meaning that elite women may have more power than men of a lower socio-economic class. The question of who is able to make decision is therefore not a purely gender-based question but encompasses more elements.

¹²⁵ Keddie, Nikki R. 2007. *Women in the Middle East: Past and Present*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. eds. Albrecht, Hans-Jörg, Jan-Michael Simon, Hassan Rezaei, Holger-C. Rohne, Ernesto Kiza, *Conflicts and Conflict Resolution in Middle Eastern Societies – Between Tradition and Modernity*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 130.

¹²⁶ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 61.

¹²⁷ Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors*, 232-235.

¹²⁸ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 27.

¹²⁹ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 16.

Traditionally, *al'izwa* (the social support system for an individual in times of crisis and need) is significant to the Palestinian society. It includes male supporters who have power over the decision-making process within the extended family. A man's standing in society is influenced by his extended family, which in turn is strengthened through marriage. How big and how well his family network functions, thus also influences his ability to fulfil his traditional duty of reacting in a crisis and providing help when needed. One such instance is the act of revenge in order to restore pride, honour and power to the extended family of the injured person. If those traditional social rules are applied to Palestinian society, women and girls are required to rely on *al'izwa*, which is considered as a blessing as it does provide security. The price of relying on *al'izwa* and other modes of male protection, comes with the price of submitting to the male hierarchy.¹³⁰ 'Good' women are those who "conforms to proper modes of conduct, acts in socially suitable ways, is obedient, and keeps silent about her pains."¹³¹ Women who do not follow this pattern and may resist or refuse abuse by their husbands may not only end up divorced, but may also lose the custody of children, as she may be able to return to her family but they may consider the children to be belonging to their father. Thus, in order to not be separated from their children, women may 'tolerate' abuse out of 'necessity' rather than choice.

Regardless, institutional structures are relevant to the analysis of women's roles as they do not only reflect a certain class structure, but also a set of gender expectations, enshrined in custom, law, as well as the cultural understandings of what is 'female' what is 'male' within a regional context. No state, regardless of its location, is gender neutral and does "promote and support policy practices primarily in the interest of men",¹³² which also results in women as infrequent actors of the state. Allowing states to ignore social justice issues or neglecting basic human rights, through arguing for the preservation of a 'masculine' understanding of sovereignty, gives the state permission to such a neglect, as in this argument, national sovereignty is allocated a higher value than other aspects, such as social justice and human rights.¹³³

Like the considerations of the international system, security can be understood through various approaches. At its basis, security describes the need to protect the nation state

¹³⁰ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 540.

¹³¹ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 541.

¹³² Tickner quoted in Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 18.

¹³³ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 23-4.

and its people and is thus the responsibility of political decision makers.¹³⁴ Considering the concept of security through a gendered lens, it becomes clear that women and children are affected differently than men in times of war and during military occupation. Generally, it is assumed that women engage in security matters in order to assure security for themselves, their families and communities. After the personal and local level, women may consider their nation as well. While this might be the case for individual women, it may overlook the fact that women with a high political conscious level may also chose their priorities the other way round: they prioritise the security of the nation as the condition to ensure their community's and families' security.

Some feminist perspectives on security assume that violence whether it be in the international, national, or family realm is interconnected.¹³⁵ This also includes economic security, as the choices of militarised society affect women during and after a conflict. As Johann Galtung (1969) put it, "violence is built into the structure and shows up as unequal power and consequently as unequal life changes".¹³⁶ The circumstances that are connected to phases of economic recession or crisis that are often a result of (armed) conflict, take a toll on women in the home, as member of society and as group within the nation in a different way than for men.¹³⁷ As a result, inequalities along the lines, but also class are exacerbated.

Given the numerous aspects that influence women's roles in any society, it is thus "necessary to examine economic development and political change – which in turn are affected by regional and global development".¹³⁸ As Moghadam assessed, women of Muslim countries are considered to be worse off than anywhere else, regardless of the region. Their societal role is to be perceived to be limited to that of wife and mother, which shape their duties: to marry and reproduce in order to earn status. To earn money and provide for their family in economic terms, they are said to require their male guardian's permission. In her roles, women are perceived to be the source of family honour and the maintenance of the good reputation of their family within the community. Family honour and reputation but also the possible negative consequences are thus tied to how women conduct themselves. If they 'act out' and

¹³⁴ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 25.

¹³⁵ Tickner quoted in Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 26.

¹³⁶ Galtung quoted in Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 26.

¹³⁷ Kaufman and Williams, *Women and War*, 27.

¹³⁸ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 3.

her environment does not agree with her actions, the negative consequences may be felt by the whole family.¹³⁹ This traditional dynamic is supported by informal and formal justice in Palestine, which also reflects the relatively weak status of women within especially informal justice. Taking cases of rape, abuse, and alleged adultery as an example, female voices are often denied or silenced, sometimes through murder.¹⁴⁰ Even if women may not have to deal with such grave consequences, women have been denied a voice with which they are able to resist to violence, as such a resistance may be interpreted as a threat to “national security” or a denouncement of masculinity, which in turn is regarded as needed to resist the enemy. Thus, women who stand up against the violence they experienced, by being confronted that this act endangers the core of the resistance because men are indispensable to it. This argument, however, neglects that women have been and are a vital part of the resistance and just because they may be considered to be at the bottom of the societal hierarchy, they still act as the foundation of said societal structure.

In linking violence against women with the national struggle and the role of masculinity, the framework for the creation of moral panic in certain circumstances is provided. For example, after protesting, a group of Palestinian girls were arrested by the Israeli law enforcement. Not all members had the same experience after their release. Some were celebrated and treated as national heroines, while others were forced to participate in virginity testing, to make sure that their ‘honour’ has not been tarnished. Some were prevented to return to school and, in some cases, were forced into marriage.¹⁴¹ Thus, not only was there no uniform response for all girls, but most of them had to face negative consequences twice – one time by the occupier and a second time by their own community.

However, Fares and Khalidi’s fieldwork conducted in the early 2000s and thus after the first Intifada, highlights that the interviewed women, regardless if they are part of the formal justice system or not, did not express any particular disdain for their lack of influence in the informal justice system. Asking a female judge how to best deal with “honour” crimes, such as rape, she responded that the best option would be “to marry

¹³⁹ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 4.

¹⁴⁰ Fares, Samer and Khalidi, Dima. „Formal and Informal Justice in Palestine: Between Justice and Social Order“, in *Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Middle Eastern Societies – Between Tradition and Modernity*, ed. Albrecht, Hans-Jörg, Simon, Jan-Michael, Rezaei, Hassan, Rohne, Holger-C., Kiza, Ernesto, Berlin: Duckner & Humboldt, 2006, 523.

¹⁴¹ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 539.

the girl to the offender, in order not to create social disorder, which she deemed more important than bringing such an offender to justice in a court of law.”¹⁴² While this is only one voice, it does suggest that holding a position of formal power does not equal a disregard of informal justice and that justice may be considered as a collective right, rather than an individual right.

Aside traditional concerns in regards to female purity, the historical legacy of the Palestinian struggle is partly connected to the fears relating to female sexuality and family honour. Since the start of the Israeli occupation, new methods of ‘protecting’ women and girls have emerged and include depriving them of schooling, early marriages, a high rate of polygamy and restraining women’s mobility, which may result in physical and sexual violence, effectively provoking the opposite effect.¹⁴³

In this series of assumptions, that is often expressed by actors of the Global North, the status of women in the Muslim countries is fundamentally shaped by a set of assumptions of Islam. However, similar to other religions, Islam is not uniform and depends on the interpretation of scripture. In addition, with this stark focus on religion, the broader economic, societal and legal aspects are overlooked. In not considering those aspects, women’s roles, regardless of their or the dominant religion of a region, cannot be fully understood. In addition to the assumptions of the Global North, that can be perceived as imperious, attention to the fact that women have been disadvantaged in the Global North as well and, in some aspects, continue to be so. In addition, there is no uniform status of women across the Global North, as women live in different legal and societal frameworks within this region, as for example, the social policies of the United States and Scandinavia differ, creating different legal frameworks that have unique implications to a woman’s life in either region.¹⁴⁴

In this approach of the Global North to women in the region, it also neglects the fact that women have held an historic role in the national liberalisation movement of Palestine, both in areas that are traditionally considered to be ‘female’, such as the family, but also on the frontlines, as part of the effort to promote democracy, respecting different views and as members of NGOs focussed on state-building. However, despite the active role they have played over the course of the Palestinian struggle, women

¹⁴² Fares and Khalidi, *Formal and Informal Justice*, 523.

¹⁴³ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 539.

¹⁴⁴ Moghadam, *Gender and Social Change*, 5.

were generally not significantly included into the formal power structures of either in regards to the core of the Palestinian Authority (PA) that was established after the first Intifada nor one of the various opposition movements.¹⁴⁵ Within the government, women only have held a few high positions but it appears that they are not able to significantly influence the government, neither on gender-specific issues, nor in more general areas. Gerner identifies three reasons that influence the situation. While women have expressed critical perspectives as part of (local) institutions of civil society, the responsiveness to their concerns of the institutionalised government has been very low. Therefore, while women have been expressing their concerns and have presented suggestions on how to improve issues, the power centre as shown little interest in including their perspective. Given that especially since the 1993 Oslo Agreement, the governance of the PA has become more authoritarian.¹⁴⁶ Regardless of the Palestinian case, other instances have shown that nationalism or the national struggle has served as an opportunity for societal reforms and that they are not per se at odds.

Further, the relationship between feminism and nationalism is constrained. At its centre, nationalism acts as the glue holding a community that builds a nation together and can have an influence on positive change, relating to democratisation, emancipation and exiting imperialistic ties. However, it can also be used to promote particular conception of what issues are considered as significant for the nation to address (e.g. in regards to state power) and what is considered as subordinate. Therefore nationalism can influence consequently key values and structures of society. Taking the discrimination against women as an example, nationalism can play a role in the definition of what constitutes discrimination and who gets to make the judgement of what is discrimination in practice and what roles men and women are expected to assume and carry out.¹⁴⁷

Especially in the motherist sense, a gendered approach serves nationalism. This approach focusses on a woman's role as mother not only within her family that in turn influences the nation. In the discourse, usually composed by men, women are considered as society's "maintainers and reproducers of national soldiers, national

¹⁴⁵ Gerner, *Mobilizing Women*, 244.

¹⁴⁶ Gerner, *Mobilizing Women*, 18.

¹⁴⁷ Gerner, *Mobilizing Women*, 18.

heroes and manpower".¹⁴⁸ Therefore, women's roles as mothers are key in national struggles because in bearing many children, she provides the nation with a future and thus secures its existence. However, in focussing on national soldiers, it emphasizes women's main function as mothers, 'producing' soldiers for the nation who in turn defend territory and the sole existence of the nation. While some women are certainly comfortable in this position and may agree that this is one way to support the nationalist cause, it should not be the only or the main one. The basic idea of women becoming mothers in order to increase the number of group members, regardless of if that is tied to a specific nation or not, can be found in other instances as well. Relatively recent examples would include Nazi Germany that had a reward system in place, depending on how many children a woman would birth "for the nation". Another instance where the same basic narrative is presented, relates to the Orthodox Jewish community where women are expected to reproduce the Jewish nation.¹⁴⁹ In all three examples are united in a very specific role that is ascribed to women despite other ideologies that are part of the nationalism are very much contrasting.

In the Palestinian case, not only Palestinian nationalism influences the roles of women, but also the legacy and the present implications of the Israeli occupation. With the Palestinian territory being occupied and not being universally recognised, the Palestinian nationalism with its emphasis on territory, self-government and state building has enjoyed a higher ranking than gender issues. However, even if Palestinian nationalism were to be neglected and considering that men retain the vast majority of formal power, gender issues would still not be ranked much higher and considered as less important than, for example class struggles. This neglect of gender-specific issues, that in practice are connected to disadvantages to both men and women, can be observed across the globe, albeit it is often more covert.

Despite the unique struggles and dangers women face by the occupiers and their own community, the Palestinian population, including men, are confronted with places that increase the risk of abuse or harassment, especially since the creation of the Israeli Separation Wall as this also brought checkpoints, controlled by Israeli officials. Aside from inflicting violence against women, Palestinian men also experience violence. Shalhoub-Kevorkian argues that the humiliation experiences by Palestinian males,

¹⁴⁸ Gerner, *Mobilizing Women*, 18.

¹⁴⁹ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 150.

leads to a need to regain his 'manhood' by re-emasculating the injured and offended patriarchal body.¹⁵⁰ Thus, the consequences of violence and humiliation experienced by Palestinian men also has implications for women more broadly, suggesting that notions of masculinity influences women's lives, too.

4.1 Women's Organisations in the First Intifada

Just like in other cases, women's organisations were also founded in Palestine over the course of the conflict. They had different goals and attaching ideologies and they differ in their priorities, membership and actions. Women suffered from economic, political and military oppression by the Israeli forces, but also by some Palestinians. The autocratic and patriarchal tendencies of the Palestinian Authorities have done little to promote women's rights themselves. It should be noted that women's organisations did not operate in the vacuum of the Middle East but were able to meet other women at international conferences, such as the 1985 conference in Nairobi or 1995 in Beijing. Similar to other women's organisations of the Middle East, this provided them with an occasion to raise awareness for their struggle. Further, some Palestinian women activists rose to international recognition, most notably Hanan Ashrawi, who is somewhat an exception to the rule, as she served on the Diplomatic Committee between 1991 and 1993 as a spokesperson of the Palestinian delegation to the Middle East peace process and was later appointed as Minister of Higher Education and Research by the PA.¹⁵¹

Four women's organisations or committees, also known as *utors*, have been established in the late 1970s with the goal to bring likeminded women together. All *utors* can be considered as the women's wings of the four major political parties within the PLO whereas it is estimated that by the second year of the intifada, 10,000 women were members.¹⁵² However, membership was not balanced across the territory of Palestine, but rather especially concentrated in towns, villages and refugee camps in the West Bank. Each *utor* worked independently from each other but some coordination on the macrolevel ensured that large demonstrations and strikes could be organised. Further, some fundamental services and activities were carried out or

¹⁵⁰ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 539.

¹⁵¹ Keddie, *Women in Middle East*, 131-2.

¹⁵² Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 158-9.

offered by each utor and related to their function as a social support network for women, running day-care centres, literacy campaigns in villages and refugee camps, as well as providing community health services and education.¹⁵³ Thus, utors served especially a function that met basic and common needs. The need or the expectations of women to care for others binds them together in these groups in order to fulfil their 'duty'.

In the early 1980s, the organisation structures changed, initiating a 'war of institutions', as marginalised Islamist groups started to reach out at universities, villages and towns, challenging the representative character of the organisation by presenting their own political priorities.¹⁵⁴ While the increases support that went towards Islamist groups in general changed the dynamics of Palestinian politics, the foundation of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas, is considered as turning point in the conflict. While the creation of Hamas was not sudden, but rather one step in the continuation of the process of political mobilisation by religious Moslem Palestinians who considered faith as the best resistance strategy to Israel that goes back to the 1920s.¹⁵⁵ Regardless, as they assumed control in the Gaza Strip, influenced the balance of power within the Palestinian society. Until the mid-1980s, the Palestinian political elite in exile were the driving force of crucial decisions within the national movement. While both intifadas introduced new dynamics within the movement, ultimately the balance of power remained with the elites in exile.¹⁵⁶

1978 saw a new series of activist women's committees being created with different political connections. The Women's Work Committee was close to the leftist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, while three additional groups were close to the Communist Party and the Leftist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, as well as one additional less militant group close to Fatah.¹⁵⁷ While the groups different in political affiliation, the membership for each increased. In 1984 a framework for cooperation was set up and united all four secular groups that were united in their demands for women. Despite repressions, the women's movement in the Gaza Strip grew from the mid-1980s onward.

¹⁵³ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 159.

¹⁵⁴ Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors*, 244.

¹⁵⁵ Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors*, 245

¹⁵⁶ Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors*, 238.

¹⁵⁷ Keddie, *Women in Middle East*, 131.

The new committees included women of all classes, marking a change from the first groups. With their decentralised organisation, they were better able to deal with the need of local women in regards to economic, social, family, educational and health questions. For example, childcare centres and clinics were set up, literacy courses were offered and income-generating projects were started. Further, the new committees increased their efforts to give women public leadership roles, while continuing to join the nationalist struggle. Therefore, in meeting basic needs such as offering reliable and save childcare, women were able to use some of their time for their political engagement.¹⁵⁸

During the first phase of the first Intifada in 1988, attempts to unite the utors through the Higher Council of the Women's Committee failed. Regardless, the goal to increase economic independence persisted and the Federation of Women's Action Committees and Palestinian Committee actively interested in promoting co-operations for women in order to enhance their economic independence as a basis of their liberation because the organisers believed that in order to the liberation to be sustainable and long-lasting, women needed to be part of the labour force. Those co-operations would generally relate to the production of one agricultural product that is native to the region.¹⁵⁹

Co-operations have been considered as the ideal tool towards gender and class liberation. As one activist describes it, "in the context of traditional society where most of our women spend their time at home, these co-operations are a big step forward [...] women take part of their society".¹⁶⁰ Considering this view, co-operations may serve as an opportunity to women to assume responsibilities outside of their homes and to earn some money they are able to manage themselves. This sense of autonomy is certainly important in the emancipation process, but economic independence is just one element and its degree and sustainability depend on other factors, too. Some activists began to question how useful co-operations are to the emancipation process of women, as some saw very little economic and social value in the co-operations.¹⁶¹ As one activist from Bein Hannon in the Gaza Strip highlights "women are already overburdened with chores, more work in house means more isolation." While it might be contested if liberation or nationalism was the main motivation for the conception of

¹⁵⁸ Keddie, *Women in Middle East*, 132.

¹⁵⁹ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 159-60.

¹⁶⁰ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 160.

¹⁶¹ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 160.

the co-operations, one activist highlights that it “is easier to organise women around national issues than around their own cause as women”¹⁶² and that preserving their culture is important to them.

Therefore, co-operations were potentially never the holy grail of gender and class liberation, as economic independency is just one element of emancipation. In comparison with the West, the opportunity for women to enter the labour market and earn their own money also did not automatically ‘liberate’ them. Rather, inequality and certain traditional expectations still persists.

Some, albeit limited, data suggests that during the first two years of the Intifada women displayed some high levels of political consciousness, underlining that in this period, women were neither apolitical nor uninterested in politics. Over the course of the Intifada, the intensity and size of women’s protests declined but the number of direct confrontations with the Israeli army involving young people and women specifically increased. As Abdo describes it, “confronting the Israeli army has become a self-conscious act which hosts women carry fearless. Women take pride in confronting Israeli men”.¹⁶³ Those confrontations generally occurred in the form of protests, demonstrations and stone-throwing.

The intifada influenced not only palpable aspects of daily life, but also in terms of social practices and ideas, such honour. Generally, Arab cultures regard sex and sexual relations as a social taboo and to discuss such issues publicly, even if they are related to crimes such as rape, was difficult. During the Intifada, honour was politicised and has been especially discussed publicly when refugees were raped by Israeli soldiers, albeit some secrecy around rapes persisted at the beginning of the first Intifada. Later on, they were treated as political rapes and as a political issue of public concern and no longer as a sole matter of honour.¹⁶⁴ However, given that the social rapes and incest rapes were still treated as a taboo, this highlights that this new openness only related to cases where the perpetrator was the enemy. It does not mean that a new understanding or a more liberal culture of debate emerged. This distinction between treating actions in connection to the Israeli and those conducted by Palestinians can also be observed in the slight relaxation of the codes women were previously expected

¹⁶² Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 161.

¹⁶³ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 157.

¹⁶⁴ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 162.

to adhere to. For example, during the Intifada, women were hiding *shabab* (young Palestinian men) from the Israeli army. One woman recalls hiding one shabab in the shower with her daughters, explaining that at this instance the cause was more important than her daughter's honour.¹⁶⁵

The structure and content of the arguments against Israeli occupation changed over time, with the conclusion of the 1993 Oslo Accords marking a turning point. Before Oslo, the argument supporting the opposition to the Israeli occupation was shaped by a colonialism-based argument. Considering the broader global level, this argument also fit well with other anti-colonial struggles across the globe since the Second World War, proving Palestine not only with a source of solidarity but also using the attention of the global decision-makers who were already sensitised to the issue.¹⁶⁶

Aside the arguments against the occupation, the Oslo Accords also affected the resistance movement. Not only did it effectively contribute to a strengthening of a semi-militarised and 'masculinised' approach but also exacerbated the divide between those who considered resistance as an act against oppression in order to protect national security and those who view peace and non-violence as the main basis in the interest of social stability.¹⁶⁷ This division was also articulated in the dominance of two reactions after the Oslo Accords. One group saw the period post-Oslo as an opportunity to strengthen the cohesion of family and society while the other restored to social exclusion, family disequilibrium and violence.¹⁶⁸

Meeting with three representatives from women's committees in July 1990 in Beit Sahour, Abdo enquired if and to what extent the committees introduced changes in their households. Beit Sahour, a small Christian town east of Bethlehem has been an important centre of the non-violent resistance during the first Intifada. For example, the people of Beit Sahour cooperated to become self-reliant through strategies such as backyard gardening and secret diary farms, and most famously, the organisation of a tax revolt in 1989 under the maxim 'no taxation without representation'. Individuals withheld taxes and small business refused to pass on the collected VAT to Israel, to which the Israeli army responded with force, arresting forty residents whose possessions were confiscated to cover the debts. It is estimated that a value between

¹⁶⁵ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 163.

¹⁶⁶ Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors* 243.

¹⁶⁷ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 538.

¹⁶⁸ Shalhoub-Kevorkian, *Tribal Justice*, 539.

\$1.5 and 7.5 million were taken but either amount surpassed the actual debt. In addition, the town was declared a 'closed military zone' and besieged for 42 days with no telephone or electricity services, delivery of food supplies or coverage by journalists.¹⁶⁹

While two women describe that their husbands encourage and support their engagement in the committees, the third woman interjected that as long as women are not fully liberated, she would still be washing dishes and that "if we women have achieved certain things it is because of us and our determination [...] our men are still traditional and our job remains to liberate them".¹⁷⁰ This argument relates loosely on a very current debate on questions regarding to mental load and strategic incompetence and highlight that this woman interviewed in the 1990s shares the concerns and thoughts of some feminist leaders in the 2020s, underlining that this issue is not necessarily limited to Palestine of the 1990s during the first intifada, but rather a more common occurrence.

An interview in the Gaza Strip at the same time highlights similar sentiments, even though the general situation due to high rates of poverty and over population was worse than in the West Bank. Regardless, a woman said that "women are strong, we don't need the men to educate us or read to us about politics [...] we live politics [...] we need men just to cultured us and not to interfere in our chores". To which another added "the double standards of our society and of our men really bother me. No matter how politically committed you are, men still expect you to be a perfect mother, a perfect wife and a perfect traditional woman."¹⁷¹ This refocussing on a woman's traditional role seems to be an aspect that is not only almost universal but stands the test of times. Until today, women in leadership or merely in the public eye, are reduced to their (potential) roles as mothers, from politicians who need to explain to the public why they are not mothers to actors only being asked questions about their clothes and not on their work.

Islamism has been an important marker of Palestinian society but its visibility has increased in the 1980s. Consequently, arguments based on religion and the interpretation of scripture came to the forefront and issues of class, which have been

¹⁶⁹ Nasrallah, *First and Second*, 58.

¹⁷⁰ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 163.

¹⁷¹ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 164.

prior in closer focus, have lost some attention. Fundamental for this rise was the establishment of *al-Mujamma' al-Islami* (Islamic Complex) in 1973 by active religious leaders from a lower class background, which built the organisational infrastructure of the Hamas movement. In addition, the foundation of the “Islamic Foundation” and the “Islamic University” contributed to attracting a new generation of new religious leaders who would become involved in Palestinian politics. Thus, the Islamic movement is closely tied to educational structures and understood to utilise education as a tool to meet its interests.¹⁷²

The use of the slogan ‘no going back’¹⁷³ by women activists, but also follows a certain tradition of slogans and narratives that imply that including women into a decision making process or into politics in general is the way forward towards the future and suggests a progressive mindset. Roughly around the end of the first intifada and during the beginning of the second intifada, the Irish Women’s Coalition was campaigning to be elected as a representative group at the negotiations. In their campaign, they chose the slogan ‘Wave goodbye to dinosaurs’, also indirectly implying that voting for them ensures a female voice ensuring progress.

¹⁷² Jamal, *Political and Ideological Factors*, 245-6.

¹⁷³ Abdo, *Nationalism and feminism*, 148.

5 Conclusion

The first Intifada was an opportunity for women to be involved at the grassroots level and to support Palestinian nationalism through daily actions. In this context, some women saw the opportunity to attempt to redefine women's roles and societal expectations in Palestine, albeit the impact was limited and not necessarily sustainable, despite some women succeeding in entering the formal political elite. Women were key in the support of the Intifada, which highlights that applying a gendered lens in conflict analysis may open up new, until then overlooked aspects. In this analysis, socio-economic circumstances should also be taken into account as they shape the role and agency of women significantly and beyond a conflict situation.

Further research could explore the cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian women in the effort to peace, as groups like *Bat Shalom* (Daughter of Peace) have demonstrated together in 'Women in Black' vigils against the occupation and demanding full equality and democratic rights for Palestinians within the state of Israel.¹⁷⁴ This cooperation across conflict lines could be an interesting further point for research as in it, women come together in the interest to peace. While this thesis focussed on customs in regards to women, exploring the significance and influence of the notion of masculinity could improve the understanding of how those constructs influence conflicts and the discourse of conflicting parties.

¹⁷⁴ Cockburn, Cynthia. 2013. "When is peace? Women's postaccord experiences in three countries." *Soundings* 53, 145.

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7 Appendices¹⁷⁵

Timeline of conflict

1917- Britain seizes Palestine from Ottomans. Gives support to "national home for the Jewish people" in Palestine through the Balfour Declaration, along with an insistence that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities".

1920 - San Remo Allied Powers conference grants Palestine to Britain as a mandate, to prepare it for self-rule. European Jewish migration, which increased in the 19th century, continues.

1939 - British government White Paper seeks to limit Jewish migration to Palestine to 10,000 per year, excepting emergencies.

1940s - Nazi Holocaust of the Jews in Europe prompts efforts at mass migration to Palestine. Jewish armed groups in pursuit of independent Jewish state fight British authorities.

1947 - United Nations recommends partition of Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states, with international control over Jerusalem and its environs.

1948 - Israel declares independence as British mandate ends. Admitted to United Nations.

1948-1949 - First Arab-Israeli war. Armistice agreements leave Israel with more territory than envisaged under the Partition Plan, including western Jerusalem. Jordan annexes West Bank and eastern Jerusalem, Egypt occupies Gaza. Around 750,000 Palestinian Arabs either flee or are expelled out of their total population of about 1,200,000.

1949-1960s - Up to a million Jewish refugees and immigrants from Muslim-majority countries, plus 250,000 Holocaust survivors, settle in Israel.

1956-1957 - Israel colludes with Britain and France to invade Egypt during the Suez Crisis, in order to re-open canal to Israeli shipping and end armed incursions by Palestinians from Sinai. UN buffer force set up in Sinai and Gaza, Israeli shipping allowed through Suez Canal.

1962 - Improving relations and concerns about the Middle Eastern balance of power prompt the United States to sell Israel missiles. When France halts arms supplies to Israel in 1966, the United States increases sales.

1964 - National Water Carrier completed, to bring water from the River Jordan to the Negev. Tensions rise with Arab neighbours over Jordan water allocations.

1967 June - After months of tension, including border skirmishes, Egypt's expulsion of the UN buffer force from Sinai and its closure of the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping,

¹⁷⁵ BBC News. 2019. Israel profile – Timeline. *BBC News*. Accessed on 04/03/2022. Available at: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29123668>

Israel launches a pre-emptive attack on Egypt, and Jordan and Syria join the war. The war lasts six days and leaves Israel in control of east Jerusalem, all of West Bank, Gaza, Golan Heights and Sinai. Jewish settlements are set up in all of these areas in coming years, with government approval.

1972 - Palestinian "Black September" gunmen take the Israeli team hostage at the Munich Olympics. Two of the athletes are murdered at the site and nine more killed during a failed rescue attempt by the German authorities.

1973 October - Egypt and Syria launch co-ordinated attack against Israeli forces in the occupied Sinai and Golan Heights in the Yom Kippur or October War. Israel prevails, but only after suffering significant losses. Public mood turns against dominant Labour Party.

1974 - Gush Emunim (Block of the Faithful) movement formed to promote Jewish religious settlements on the West Bank.

1975 - UN General Assembly adopts a resolution describing Zionism as a form of racism. Rescinded in 1991.

1976 March - Mass protests by Israeli Arabs at government attempts to expropriate land in the Galilee area of northern Israel. Six Arab citizens were killed in clashes with security forces. The events are commemorated annually as Land Day.

1976 July - Israeli commandos carry out a raid on Entebbe Airport in Uganda to free more than 100 mostly Israeli and Jewish hostages being held hostage by German and Palestinian gunmen.

1977 May - Menachem Begin's right-wing Likud party wins surprise election victory, partly by harnessing non-European Jews' resentment at political hegemony of European-origin Jews. Launches economic liberalisation, brings religious Jewish parties into mainstream, and encourages settlements.

1977 November - Egyptian President Anwar Sadat visits Jerusalem and begins the process that leads to Israel's withdrawal from Sinai and Egypt's recognition of Israel in the Camp David Accords of 1978. Accords also pledge Israel to expand Palestinian self-government in the West Bank and Gaza.

1982 June - Israel invades Lebanon in order to expel Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership after assassination attempt by small Palestinian militant group on Israeli ambassador to London.

1982 September - Massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in Beirut by Israel's Christian Phalangist allies. Government commission finds Defence Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible and recommends his removal from office. Mass protests against massacre in Israel galvanise anti-war movement.

1984 July - Elections lead to a hung parliament and uneasy coalition between Likud and Labour, whose leader Shimon Peres alternates as prime minister with Likud's Yitzhak Shamir.

1985 June - Israel withdraws from most of Lebanon but continues to occupy narrow "security zone" along border.

1987 December - First Intifada uprising begins in Occupied Territories. Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza forms Hamas movement, which rapidly turns to violence against Israel.

1990 - Soviet Union allows Jews to emigrate, leading to about a million ex-Soviet citizens moving to Israel.

1991 January - Gulf War. Iraq fires 39 Scud missiles at Israel in failed attempt to regionalise conflict. Israel refrains from responding at US request.

1991 October - US-Soviet sponsored Madrid conference brings Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Palestinian representatives together for first time since 1949. Sets in motion talks to normalise relations. Yitzhak Shamir's reluctant participation, under US pressure, brings down his minority government.

1992 - Labour returns to power under Yitzhak Rabin. Pledges to halt Jewish settlement expansion programme, opens secret talks with PLO.

1993 - Prime Minister Rabin and PLO leader Yasser Arafat sign Oslo Declaration to plot Palestinian self-government and formally end First Intifada. Violence by Palestinian groups that reject Oslo Declaration continues.

1994 May-July - Israel withdraws from most of Gaza and the West Bank city of Jericho, allowing Yasser Arafat to move PLO administration from Tunis and set up Palestinian National Authority.

1994 October - Jordan and Israel sign peace treaty.

1994 December - Yitzhak Rabin, Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres jointly awarded Nobel Peace Prize.

1995 September - Mr Rabin and Yasser Arafat sign Interim Agreement for transfer of further power and territory to Palestinian National Authority. Forms basis for 1997 Hebron Protocol, 1998 Wye River Memorandum and internationally-sponsored "Road Map for Peace" of 2003.

1995 November - Jewish extremist shoots Yitzhak Rabin dead in Tel Aviv. Shimon Peres takes over as prime minister.

1996 May - Likud returns to power under Benjamin Netanyahu, pledges to halt further concessions to Palestinians. Nonetheless signs Hebron Protocol and Wye River Memorandum. Settlement expansion resumes.

1999 May - Labour-led coalition elected under Ehud Barak, pledges to move ahead with talks with Palestinians and Syria.

2000 May - Israel withdraws from southern Lebanon, although Lebanon disputes status of Shebaa Farms area.

2000 July - Talks between Prime Minister Barak and Yasser Arafat break down over timing and extent of proposed further Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

2000 September - Likud leader Ariel Sharon visits Jerusalem site known to Jews as the Temple Mount and to Muslims as Al-Haram al-Sharif. Palestinian protests escalate into new wave of violence.

2001 January - Failure of last-ditch efforts at restarting Israeli-Palestinian talks in Taba, Egypt, Ehud Barak loses elections to Ariel Sharon, who declines to continue talks.

2002 March-May - Israeli army launches Operation Defensive Shield on West Bank after spate of Palestinian suicide bombings. Largest military operation on West Bank since 1967.

2002 June - Israel begins building barrier in and around West Bank. Israel says barrier aimed at stopping Palestinian attacks; Palestinians see it as a tool to grab land. Route is controversial as frequently deviates from pre-1967 ceasefire line into West Bank.

2003 June - Quartet of United, States, European Union, Russia and United Nations propose road map to resolve Israeli-Palestinian conflict, proposing independent Palestinian state. Israel and Palestinian National Authority both accept plan, which requires freeze on West Bank Jewish settlements and an end to attacks on Israelis.

2004 July - International Court of Justice issues advisory opinion that West Bank barrier is illegal.

2005 September - Israel withdraws all Jewish settlers and military personnel from Gaza, while retaining control over airspace, coastal waters and border crossings.

2006 January - Ariel Sharon incapacitated by stroke. He dies in 2014, never having emerged from a coma. Succeeded as prime minister by Ehud Olmert. Hamas Islamist group wins Palestinian parliamentary elections. Rocket attacks on Israel from Gaza escalate. Met with frequent Israeli raids and incursions over following years.

2006 June - Hamas gunmen from Gaza take Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit hostage, demanding release of Palestinian prisoners. Major clashes between Israel and Hamas in Gaza follow.

2006 July-August - Israeli incursion into Lebanon, in response to deadly Hezbollah attack and abduction of two soldiers, escalates into Second Lebanon War. Government faces criticism over conduct of war, which left Hezbollah forces largely intact.

2007 November - Annapolis Conference for first time establishes "two-state solution" as basis for future talks between Israel and Palestinian Authority.

2008 December - Israel launches month-long full-scale invasion of Gaza to prevent Hamas and other groups from launching rockets.

2009 January - Discovery of major offshore natural gas deposits.

2009 February - Right-wing parties prevail in elections, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu forms government.

2010 May - Nine Turkish pro-Palestinian activists killed in clashes during Israeli boarding of ships attempting to break blockade of Gaza. Relations with Turkey approach breaking point. Israel apologises for deaths in 2013.

2010 September - Direct talks resume between Israel and the Palestinian Authority, only to falter over the question of settlements.

2011 Summer-Autumn - Rising prices prompt major protests. Government improves competition in food market and makes cheaper housing more available.

2011 October - Hamas release Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit in exchange for 1,027 prisoners in deal brokered by Germany and Egypt.

2012 November - Israel launches week-long military campaign against Gaza-based armed groups following months of escalating rocket attacks on Israeli towns.

2013 March - Mr Netanyahu replaces most religious Jewish groups with centrist and secular parties in government after the latter's strong showing in January elections.

2013 July - Talks resume with Palestinian Authority under US auspices but reach no conclusions.

2013 December - Israel, Jordan and Palestinian Authority sign agreement to save the Dead Sea from drying up by pumping water from the Red Sea.

2014 January - Energy and Water Minister Silvan Shalom attends renewable energy conference in Abu Dhabi, leading a business delegation in first visit to United Arab Emirates since 2010.

2014 July-August - Israel responds to attacks by armed groups in Gaza with a military campaign by air and land to knock out missile launching sites and attack tunnels. Clashes end in uneasy Egyptian-brokered ceasefire in August.

2015 May - Prime Minister Netanyahu forms a new coalition government after March elections with right-wing Bayit Yehudi (Jewish Home) party. Another right-wing party, Yisrael Beiteinu, joins the following year.

2015 October - Israeli couple shot dead in their car in occupied West Bank. It is one of the first incidents in what would become a wave of shootings, stabbings and car-rammings by Palestinians or Israeli Arabs.

2015 November - Israel suspends contact with European Union officials in talks with Palestinians over EU decision to label goods from Jewish settlements in the West Bank as coming not from Israel but from settlements.

2016 June - Israel and Turkey reach agreement over 2010 Gaza flotilla raid and normalise relations.

2016 December - Israel suspends working ties with 12 countries that voted for a Security Council resolution condemning settlement building, after the US for the first time abstained from the vote rather than using its veto.

2017 February - Parliament passes a law which retroactively legalises dozens of Jewish settlements built on private Palestinian land in the West Bank.

2017 June - Work begins on the first new Jewish settlement in the West Bank for 25 years. UNESCO votes to declare the Old City of Hebron a Palestinian World Heritage site, a move that Israel complains ignores the city's Jewish heritage.

2017 December - US President Donald Trump recognises Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, upsetting the Arab world and some Western allies. The following March, he recognises Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 war and later annexed. The international community does not recognise Israeli sovereignty.

2018 July-November - UN and Egypt attempt to broker a long-term ceasefire between Israel and Hamas amid an upsurge in violence on the Gaza border from March.

2019 April - **2020** March - Three sets of parliamentary elections pit Mr Netanyahu against a centrist alliance led by former armed forces chief of staff Benny Gantz, but do not produce a clear majority.

2019 November - US says it no longer considers Israeli settlements on the West Bank to be illegal. Benjamin Netanyahu is charged with bribery, fraud and breach of trust in connection with three separate cases.

2020 April - Benjamin Netanyahu and Benny Gantz agree to form a national unity government to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic.

2020 August - The United Arab Emirates become the first Gulf state to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

2021 May - Unrest over forced evictions of Palestinians in east Jerusalem leads to conflict with Hamas and communal violence in Israeli cities.

2021 June - Naftali Bennett of the Jewish nationalist Yamina party forms a broad coalition to oust Benjamin Netanyahu.

Transformation of Palestinian territory since 1947¹⁷⁶



Image 1 Transformation of Palestinian and Israeli Territory 1947 - 2005

¹⁷⁶ blergmonkeys. *Israel occupation of Palestine*. 2020. imgur. Accessed on 04/03/2022. Available at: <https://imgur.com/gallery/msukWBZ?nc=1>