

Generation of Hope

Perspectives on Life, Identity, and Vulnerability in a Palestinian Boy's Home

Jeel al-Amal School and Boy's Home in Bethany, Palestine



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Spring 2018, Trondheim

Preface: Hope

May 15, 2018 - In a peculiar coincidence, the submission date for this thesis is on the 70th anniversary of ‘al-Nakba’ (the Catastrophe) for Palestine. Palestinians commemorate this day as the day Israel was created and at least 750,000 Palestinians were displaced and became refugees, my grandparents included. This thesis revolves around ideas of belonging, connection, identity, adversity, resiliency, vulnerability, and hope. Hope for more understanding and hope for a brighter future.

During my time spent in Palestine conducting fieldwork, a friend interviewed me for his doctoral thesis on the idea of hope within the context of Palestine. Through this discussion with him, I realized that the hope I held for the conflict was not an idea of the situation getting better but of the people remaining steadfast (*sumud*) in their determination. My hope for Palestine lies with the people -in their resiliency against the unending struggle, the perseverance to remain, and the courage to try to be free.

The struggle and hope that is passed on and carried on by younger generations fulfills the demand for ongoing resistance against the occupation. This fighting spirit is partly passed down through stories and memories of past events, both nationally and personally. This generational memory is crucial to the sustainment of resistance and is foundational in Palestinian society and culture. Even I, as a US born-and-raised Palestinian who does not have a Palestinian identity card, am aware of where my family was before the ‘al-Nakba’ in 1948, where they fled to during the war, and again where they took refuge from the 6-day war. I know about my great-grandfather who went missing during the war, and my great-uncle who persuaded my grandmother and mother onto the bus that he was driving refugees to Jordan to in 1967. More dramatically, I can picture, through my mother’s eyes, the Israeli warplanes that flew around right before they got on the bus and became refugees, unknowingly losing their Palestinian citizenship, and perhaps in some way – identity. Our story of displacement is not a unique tale for Palestinians. It is a common thread that holds us together, even though we are so spread apart. In a way, it brings us closer together as a community, and it brings purpose to our struggle.

This thesis is dedicated to the strength and resilience that Palestinians demonstrate daily, just by existing. It is dedicated to the indescribable beauty that Palestine holds. And above all, it is dedicated to a free Palestine.

Acknowledgements:

My sincere thanks, appreciation and respect goes to every Palestinian I have met both through this study and in other moments in life. Your courage, resilience, and passion for a free Palestine was the inspiration I needed to do this. If you can live through that, I can write this.

For the Inspiration, Experience and Love

Jeel al-Amal – My deepest appreciation goes to all the participants and people of Jeel al-Amal who have made it one of the most special places in Palestine. The amount of love, friendship, laughs, and special moments you allowed me to share with you all was a truly beautiful experience for me. I sincerely appreciate the time spent with you, the conversations we had, and the powerful insight into your lives you allowed me to enter into. I look forward to joining you all again in the near future inshallah.

For the Muse

Sito - You are why I am.

For the Guidance

Yama - You set a high bar for your kids to follow, thank you for that. And of course, thank you for the real important things you've given me like help with Arabic translations, dance moves and life. Bahibik bimoot alaiki.

Baha – Shukrun for your abundant wisdom and friendship.

Vebjørng Tingstad – Thank you for the conversations, feedback and comments that helped shape this thesis into what it is.

For the Fighter

Bilal - Thank you for your unstoppable spirit, strength, and resistance in the face of horror.

For the Encouragement

Andrew - Thank you kindly for your endless support, love, and money!

Nadine & Muna – Shukr kteer for your sense of humor & reminding me that nothing really matters anyway and to be happy with taking a nap.

Aurora & Nathalie – Tusen takk for the friendship, talks, and hugs. It's been a pleasure being with you so much during this journey

All the friends, near and far, who offered words and/or hugs of encouragement and support and shoulders to lean on, I really appreciate your existence in my world.

Abstract

In a political conflict and ongoing occupation such as the one that exists in Palestine and Israel, one may make the argument that all aspects of life are affected. As childhood is thought of as a social construct, the goal of this thesis is to identify unique and contributing factors that shape the lives of children who grow up in an institution away from their biological families in this context. To this effect, aspects of the immediate micro contexts, such as the home and school, were identified and discussed in connection with specific children's rights including their right to life, education, protection, and agency. The participant's perspectives on their wellbeing, safety, and future opportunities were used in deliberation of their perceived and evaluated cognitive and social development. This developmental process takes place on a daily basis, and was displayed by the youth in frequent caring behaviors replicated from their immediate environment such as sharing, loving, respecting and protecting others around them. However, especially in an ongoing conflict, wider macro contexts also play a significant role in the development of youth. The societal beliefs, generational memory, historical narrative in educational textbooks, religious traditions, and a sense of belonging to a place and people contribute to an understanding of oneself as part of a social group, in this case – Palestinians. Through this identification of oneself as part of a group, the collected data suggested that the participants, although considered children, had active opinions and awareness on the social and political life surrounding them. By identifying as Palestinian, a common national struggle was acknowledged that built resilient attributes in the participants as well as coping mechanisms like constructing normality that helps navigate their understanding of life. Combining the influences of the micro and macro contexts present in Palestine then revealed an interesting finding that the youth growing up away from their biological families in an institution were arguably better provided for in terms of necessities and education and more protected than children in the rest of the country, especially those who live in refugee camps. This contributed to the conceptualization of the youths' perceived vulnerability and of adults' perception of children's vulnerability in this specific context. As compared to statistics of Palestinian youth arrests, injuries and murders that are directly linked to the occupation, it was found that the youth in the institution were less vulnerable and provided with more opportunities even though they do not live with their biological families. This interesting aspect counters the traditional western notion that the family home is the best place for a child.

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List of acronyms:

ARIJ	The Applied Research Institute of Jerusalem
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
DCIP	Defense of Children International - Palestine
DFLP	Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDF	Israeli Defense Forces
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
oPt	occupied Palestinian territories
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PA	Palestinian Authority
PCBS	Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics
PFLP	Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine
PLO	Palestinian Liberation Organization
PPP	Palestinian Peoples Party
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Emergency Fund
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNCTAD	The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East

Arabic glossary:

Aidi	Normal
Al-Nakba	The catastrophe
Al-Eizaria	Bethany (city)
Al- Quds	Jerusalem
Allah	God
Amal	Hope
Awda	Return
Hadir	Present (figuratively meaning understood or I heard you)
Haram al-Sharif	Temple Mount
Hilo/Mish Hilo	Nice/ not nice
Imam	Islamic religious leader
Intifada	To shake off (referring to the Palestinian uprisings)
Jasous	Collaborator
Jeel	Generation
Masjid Al Aqsa	The Al-Aqsa mosque
Sababa	Excellent
Salah Al-Fajr	Daybreak prayer
Shaheed	Martyr
Sumud	Steadfast
Towjihee	Final assessment test at the end of secondary education
Yahud	Jew
Yateem	Orphan

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of study

Globally, childhood is commonly understood as a time to grow, explore, discover, and be taken care of. But, the individual characteristics of childhood within local contexts implies that childhood is ambiguous; meaning that the concept of childhood depicts a different connotation to all who think of it. The ‘new paradigm’ of childhood denotes that childhood is a social construction that is unique depending on the settings and environment that it occurs in (James & Prout, 1997). Still, through the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), universal rights were devised and ratified by all countries in the world (excluding the United States) to guarantee the protection, participation, and provisions of all those under the age of 18 years considered as children. The establishment of the UNCRC demonstrates the common Western view that children are in need of special guidelines regarding their development, well-being, and safety. It also endorses the general notion that childhood is a time of vulnerability and that those with power are responsible for guaranteeing the basic rights necessary for children's growth. The UNCRC asserts these rights with special consideration to the ‘best interest of the child’. Article 3 in the convention states that the child's wellbeing is secured through their provision of care and protection and should be in their best interest. Moreover, Article 20.1 emphasizes the need for special protection of children who are removed from a family setting, such as orphans and street children, and denotes that special considerations should be made as to their upbringing outside of a family environment (UNCRC, 1989). To this, adult guardians and state parties are charged with the endorsement of these rights, and it also implies that children, especially orphans and children living away from family, are a population that is of higher vulnerability and in need of special care. These measures are deemed necessary for the young population to grow into adults that will be beneficial and productive members of society.

A critique of this lies in the lack of details of what constitutes the ‘best interest of the child.’ The best interest is a philosophy of social construction that is relative to time and place and thus is “dependent on normative and cultural evaluations made by different bodies and actors within the contexts in which the UNCRC is implemented” (Kjørholt, 2008, p. 29). The administration

and provision of the articles of the UNCRC are also dependent on the contexts of life and the access to resources in which childhood exists in. “There is not one childhood, but many, formed at the intersection of different cultural, social and economic systems, natural and man-made physical environments” (Frønes, 1993, in Cashmore, 2014, p. 1). In this study, the location of the field site, a school and home for needy boys in the West Bank, has been occupied since the six-day war of 1967 (Pappe, 2004; Sharvit, 2016; Tilley, 2012). This contributes to the unique circumstances of being a vulnerable child in a vulnerable state.¹ Moreover, this categorization of vulnerable children in Palestine differs from the associated stigma that the label of ‘orphan’ carries in other parts of the world due to the contextual factors present in the ongoing conflict. An interesting note to be understood in this specific childhood, is that all children under military occupation are vulnerable, or open to the possibilities of harm. And as such, deserve special protections under international humanitarian law. The focus in this study was on children growing up away from their family home, socially labeled as orphans or unwanted, but here, will be addressed mainly as OVC (orphans and vulnerable children). Accepting the ‘new paradigm’ and understanding childhood as being dependent on the social and contextual constructs of which it occurs in, then this research focuses on the idea of being an OVC as it relates directly to the social, political, economic and religious context of a situation.

As of 2015, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) estimates 140 million orphans globally (UNICEF, 2015). This number include children who have lost either both parents or their father or their mother. Since there is no universally agreed upon definition for what an orphan is, the terms ‘single-orphan’, ‘double orphan’, ‘aids orphan’ and ‘social orphan’ are used to describe different aspects of parentless children (Ennew, 2005). These refer to the death of one parent (single-orphan), both parents (double orphan), children made parentless by the AIDS virus (AIDS orphan), and children who are unwanted or unable to be cared for by their parents (social orphan). As the ideal childhood is thought as one that is spent in the family unit, all children in this study who are living away from the family unit are considered as orphans and therefore vulnerable, due to their need of support and protection from members outside the family.

¹ Vulnerability will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 3.

Objective of the thesis

The objective of this research was placed on understanding the tactics, tools, and organization to provide the security, provisions, and education to vulnerable children growing up in institutions in the hopes that the knowledge can be transferred to other organizations to provide similar care to that particular population. Another goal is to establish an idea as to what is beneficial to children growing up in an institution regarding development, care and safety and to identify any possible obstructions to the process that may be present in the institution. Overall, however, the main ambition for this study is to gain an understanding of how children view their lives, upbringing, and well-being and using their words and expressions to convey life as a child in an institution inside an ongoing conflict. As such, specific questions were formulated to try to gain an adequate view of life as a child and the multiple dimensions and variables that play a part in the formation of that life.

Research Questions

As a central point of interest for me with this study was to gain the perspective of the children living inside an institution as to their views on identity, experiences, hopes, fears, and day-to-day interactions, then a goal of mine was to understand the fundamental workings of the institution, as well as to identify the correlation between contextual factors and their effect on the idea of ‘vulnerability’. Within this mindset, I intended to pose questions like:

- How are the children at the institution provided for in relation to UNCRC rights?
- What are the perspectives of the children on their personal lives and the social-political situation that they live in?
- How do the contextual factors of society influence social identity development in the youth? What characteristics, if any, are shared by the participants in connection with social identity?
- What are coping mechanisms used by the participants to deal with the situation?
- In what ways do the micro and macro contexts of the situation affect the idea of ‘vulnerability’ in a child?

Relevance of Study

A limitation and consequently an inspiration for this research study was the lack of previous relevant data available on the research topic and geographic location. Although many studies have focused on different dimensions of Palestinian life, the bulk of previous research did not take into consideration elements of micro *and* macro contextual life and instead concentrated on either one or the other in relation to their research questions. A previous study by Al-Adili et al., (2008) looked into the physical health levels of orphans in Palestine compared to children of the same age living in their family homes and touched on the micro-contextual factors that contribute to the findings. However, the overall macro-contextual factors were not addressed nor did that study explore the cognitive, emotional and resilient capacities of these children. There has been previous research on the psychological aspects of Palestinian childhood, such as Sloutsky (1997) who focused on the cognitive, social and emotional development of orphans compared to children of similar ages living with their families. He discovered connections between the cognitive development of orphans pending on their age when they arrived at the institution and the length of their stay and also identified a substantial difference between the orphans' ability to recognize the emotions of others and the children who lived in family homes' ability, with the latter group testing higher in the study. However, the study identified the micro-context of the institution as the profound context that impacted the children's development and did not comment on macro-contextual factors such as politics, culture, and biological influences. Still, regarding everyday life and a child's perspective, Marshall (2013) articulated, "...research and political analysis on the everyday lives of Palestinian children is surprisingly lacking" (p. 54). Indeed, there is little information about the perspectives of orphans in general for Palestine, and this compelled the idea for the research design. A more thorough discussion on previous research both with Palestinian children and with those children deemed orphans or vulnerable children (OVC) and displaced children will be made in chapter 3.

Personal Inspiration:

I remember that in my childhood, my parents would include my siblings and me in their volunteer work during summers in Jordan and Palestine working with children and refugees in different programs. These experiences motivated me to continue trying to help people, especially children in difficult situations. As an adult, this motivation transformed into drive as I

became more interested in working with orphans, unwanted youth and children with special needs. In the last few years, a growing focus of mine has been placed on learning how state parties, institutions, and community aid assist each other in providing for children. Especially in the case of unwanted children, a growing attention was on how so many children in need of care are provided for inside institutions and in which ways can an institution substitute the love and care that is supplied from family presence. Palestine holds special meaning to me as my heritage stems from there. Moreover, academically speaking, as the ongoing conflict in the geographic area and the decades of oppression has affected life for everyone in the region, I assumed that the perspective of children there would be unique and insightful in understanding the social construct of what childhood is. Through this study, I gained more understanding of the fundamental organization and intricate details of institutional caregiving in a conflict area as well as the unique and personal perspectives of the inhabitants living inside.

Thesis Structure:

The organization of this thesis will break down the study into chapters consisting firstly of the background chapter containing relevant historical and political information of the geographical location of the field site and the institution. Then, theoretical reflections will be made to give information on theories that are deemed relevant in the discussion of micro and macro contexts in this specific childhood. Within this, previous research with Palestinian and non-Palestinian children, orphans, refugees, and displaced children will be overviewed along with a clarification of definitions and explanations of different social constructed ideas such as vulnerability, resilience, and normality. Following that will be a breakdown of the methodology used in the research design that will underline reasons for the use of qualitative research in this field, highlight the data collection tools, and discuss the ethical considerations that were present during the research process. The proceeding analytical chapters will consist of two chapters highlighting the micro contextual factors that shape the participants' immediate lives and then the macro contextual factors that play a broader and more abstract role in the development of their identity and their methods of coping. The concluding chapter will explore how the combined micro and macro contexts of life for the participants influence the idea of their vulnerability as children living under occupation.

Chapter 2: Background & Context

Introduction

This chapter is designed to shed some light on historical events and existing features of Palestine that have shaped and continue to shape the current social, political, economic and religious contexts that are present there today. As the conflict is long-lasting and complex with many different contextual frameworks, I will attempt to highlight issues, events, and characteristics of life in occupation to focus on and understand the subject matters present in this research.² It is impossible to talk of Palestine without talking about Israel – they are the same place with two different names. For clarification in this thesis, the terms used to describe the geographic area will be Palestine or occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) when referring to East Jerusalem, the West Bank or the Gaza Strip. Historical Palestine or Israel will be used if the subject is regarding pre-1967 land or events. Relatedly, both terms ‘occupation’ and ‘colonialization’ are used to describe elements of Israel’s control over Palestine. Military ‘occupation’ is used to describe their methods of ‘temporary’ control over an area, while other aspects, such as the permanent resettlement of Israeli citizens to the West Bank and expansion of land control constitutes colonization (Tilley et al., 2009). The outline for this chapter starts with major and historical events that will be discussed in order to understand the creation and continuation of the situation presently. Following that will be a discussion on the contemporary situation in and around the field site, which leads to different contextual factors that are present inside the West Bank and inside the institution that data collection took place.

Historical Events: The Creation of Israel and the Occupation of Palestine

Although many events have occurred to shape the current political geographies of Palestine and Israel, three pivotal events will be presented to place the situation within a historical context.³ The first event is the Balfour Declaration which was made in 1917 and was the British government’s statement calling for a homeland for Jewish people inside Palestine. This

² Due to the bias affiliated with the conflict and sources available for the information to be communicated, careful consideration has been placed on which sources to use for this chapter. As such, the bulk of the information derives from academic peer-reviewed articles as well as Israeli, Palestinian and foreign human rights organizations and NGOs in the aim of establishing a well-rounded background chapter in order to convey the situation as accurately as possible.

³ For more detailed information, read *A History of Modern Palestine* by Ilan Pappé.

document opened the pathway for the influx of Jewish immigration into historical Palestine. It should be noted that the declaration also read, “it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine...” (Balfour, 1917). The statement’s consequences have been popularly stated as the start of a Jewish homeland and as the fundamental reason for the ongoing conflict (Pappe, 2004).

The release of the Balfour Declaration may have given formal consent for Jewish immigration into Palestine, but it was in 1948, with the British occupying forces withdrawal from Palestine, that Israel was created during their ‘War of Independence’ otherwise known as “al-Nakba” or the catastrophe for Palestinians. Along with the creation of Israel, the Palestinian population experienced widespread and profound displacement, death and destruction. Many families of Palestinian villages located inside the new state took refuge in the West Bank which was under Jordanian authority (Berry & Philo, 2006). The British government estimated that the war forcibly displaced 810,000 Palestinians from Palestinian areas that became Israel, making them refugees, while 150,000 Palestinians remained inside the newly made Israeli state (Gilbert, 1999 in Berry & Philo, 2006).

Almost two decades later, the third pivotal geo-political event transpired - the Six-Day War of 1967, in which, the Israeli military defeated the Egyptian, Syrian and Jordanian armies and captured and occupied the West Bank, Gaza Strip, (Arab) East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights (see Map 1). The war again initiated a mass exodus of the Arab population from those territories that includes estimates of 250,000 residents from the West Bank, 70,000 from Gaza Strip, and 90,000 from the Golan Heights (Harris, 1980). Many refugees fled to neighboring countries – Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Egypt; and those refugees who attempted to return to their previous homes were met with bullets (Berry & Philo, 2006). Since 1967, the illegal Israeli military occupation of these territories has persisted. The year this research was conducted, 2017, Palestinians worldwide lamented the centennial of the Balfour Declaration and the half-century anniversary of the occupation. Within the half-century of the Israeli occupation of Palestine comes a plethora of systematical violations, violence, and logistical strategies that create the context of living under occupation and will be discussed in the framework of this research.



Map 1: Loss of Palestinian land from the founding of the state of Israel in 1948.
Source: <http://ifamericaknew.org>, accessed 20 November 2017.

Palestinian Resistance – Intifada - the “Uprisings”

An essential element to the ongoing occupation is the Palestinian response of the five-decade-long domination. Intifada is the Arabic term literally translated as ‘to shake off’ and is the term used for the two acknowledged *uprisings* or rebellions by the Palestinians against the occupation. The first intifada started in 1987 and lasted until the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993. During the uprising, civil disobedience was the form of popular resistance used by Palestinians such as displaying the national flag (an illegal act in the first intifada), ignoring curfews as a community, destroying the identification cards issued by Israeli authority, organizing a tax revolt and protesting that included stone-throwing. During the first intifada, Palestinian schools – primary, secondary and higher education institutions – were closed for months on end and public services were withheld by Israel. The death toll of both intifadas was

substantially higher for the Palestinian population due to the imbalanced military advantages that Israel had. The total fatalities of the Palestinians in the West Bank during the first intifada totaled 1,200 and 200 of these victims were under the age of 16 (Nasrallah, 2013).

The second intifada began in 2000 and ended in 2005 (although some argue that it continues to this day). It is also known as the al-Aqsa Intifada as it was started when the former Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon provocatively walked with armed guards around the Muslim holy site *Haram al-Sharif* (the Temple Mount) in 2000. This intifada was marked with much more violence than the first and Palestinians took to bombings, notably suicide bombings, as their weapon of choice. The death toll of the second intifada, if we accept that it ended in 2005, was enormous - 3,135 Palestinian deaths by Israeli forces and 950 Israeli deaths by Palestinians. In these numbers, 627 Palestinian youth and 78 Israeli youth (under the age of 18) were killed. The People's Voice documented that over 2,500 Palestinian children (under the age of 18) were arrested since the beginning of the second intifada and by the end of 2005, at least 340 children were still being held in Israeli prisons (in Pappé, 2006). The struggle and resilience of the intifadas has been memorialized by Palestinians. Both intifadas marked an increase in violence, death and social destruction and the opinions of Palestinians on the benefits of the uprisings are vast – this will be discussed later as the viewpoints of the youth participants demonstrated the variety of feelings associated with fighting and in essence dying for their homeland.

The Reality of Occupation

To understand the social-political-economic reality of life inside the West Bank, one has to recognize that every aspect of life is controlled and dominated by the state of Israel in its military occupation. What is an occupation? According to The Hague Regulations (1907), a "territory is considered occupied when it is actually placed under the authority of the hostile army" (Article 42). In other words, occupation is the complete control of a place and people by an opposing foreign and hostile government and military. In reality, occupation is present in every aspect of life in the oPt – from the legal rights of Palestinian residents to access and use of resources, from their ability to travel freely to employment and educational obstacles, and from physical obstructions to daily life to routine military presence and aggression. The occupation is the driving force of the living standards inside the West Bank.

The maintaining of an occupation relies on the separation of those being occupied. This is done in a number of ways in historic Palestine. One such way is with the identification card systems organized and administered by the Israeli administration for the Palestinian population. As effectively summarized in “Access and ID Cards” (2004) there are three identifications that Palestinians are assigned and legally required to carry at all times. First, the green ID card allows for movement only within the West Bank only. This is assigned to Palestinians living in the West Bank who are not allowed to travel into Jerusalem or historic Palestine without permission. On the ID card, the holder is identified by name, religion (Muslim or Christian), marital status, and their mother and father’s names. It omits information about Palestinian citizenship. Secondly, the blue card - also known as the Jerusalem ID is assigned to Palestinians living in Jerusalem and requires them to pay taxes to Israel, although Jerusalem was annexed by Israel and is only recognized as Israeli by Israel and the United States of America. The right to live in Jerusalem is not fixed for Palestinian citizens, instead they have to document their ‘center of life’ as being inside the made-boundaries of Jerusalem. If they leave and reside outside of Jerusalem for seven years, their Jerusalem ID is revoked and they become displaced (Jefferis, 2012). At the end of the 2016, at least 14,595 Palestinian citizens of Jerusalem have had their citizenship revoked (“Israel: Jerusalem Palestinians Stripped of Status,” 2017). Lastly, the Palestinians living inside Israel are issued Israeli ID cards that then consider them to be citizens of the state. This card used to identify the individual as Arab, Druze, Jew or by other ethnic grouping but was eliminated in 2002. Individuals with this ID are legally prohibited from entering into the West Bank; although the reality on the ground indicates otherwise – as the Israeli checkpoints are only manned on the passageways going towards Jerusalem and historic Palestine and are not manned for those entering into the West Bank (Tawil-Souri, 2011).

To simplify the situation in Palestine as much as possible without losing valuable context, the Israeli occupation will be discussed in terms of the systematic legal organization set up in the West Bank. This organization is based on the categorization of the land and the social, economic and political effects that these regulations have on the families and youth who experience it. Subject matters will be addressed as they have played a role in one way or another in the lives of the participants and were addressed during the study. However, due to page restrictions, other issues that also play a role in the situation will not be addressed.

Geography and Demographics of Palestine

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) estimates that the number of Palestinians inside historic Palestine (including Gaza, West Bank, Jerusalem and Israel) at the end of 2015 was 6.22 million (2017). In 2016, 4.8 million Palestinians were registered inside the West Bank and Gaza Strip (2.9 million and 1.9 million respectively) and the remaining 1.3 million Palestinians living inside Israel and Jerusalem. Of these numbers, 36.5% are children, 14 years old or younger, and another 21.2% are in the 15-24 age range. An accurate figure of all Palestinians under the age of 18 is not available. Although recognized Palestinian land, there are 380 illegal Jewish-Israeli only settlements in the occupied West Bank, East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and approximately 592,000 Israeli settlers living inside them (CIA, 2017). All three Abrahamic religions stem from the same geographic location and religion plays a significant role in the current situation. According to the CIA (2017), Islam is the predominant religion of Historic Palestine with 80-85 percent of the population, followed by 10-12 percent of the Jewish faith and 1 to 3 percent identifying as Christians and other denominations. The religious context will be elaborated on further in relation to coping strategies and social benefits received by the institution and the participants due to the religious obligation of caring for parentless children.

Palestinian Refugees and Internally Displaced Persons

As of 2016, the number of Palestinian refugees living in the West Bank was 942,184, and another 193,000 internally displaced persons (Palestinians who fled their homes but did not cross internationally recognized borders) were documented (PCBS, 2017). Israel denies the right of return for Palestinian refugees; therefore, the descendants of Palestinian male refugees are also considered refugees and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine (UNRWA) was developed specifically to deal with the humanitarian needs of Palestinian refugees (BADIL, 2016). An exact number of Palestinian refugees living outside of Palestine is not available, but it is estimated that there are 6-8 million Palestinian refugees worldwide (Falk & Tilley, 2017).

Refugee Camps

According to UNRWA, a Palestinian "refugee camp is defined as a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs". UNRWA offers educational, health and social services to refugees living in the camps. There are 58 Palestinian refugee camps inside of the oPt (including East Jerusalem) and in neighboring countries – Jordan, Syria, Lebanon. Inside the West Bank, there are 925,191 registered refugees of which 223,602 (16.8 percent of total refugees) were officially registered inside one of 19 official refugee camps (BADIL, 2016). The camps are generally poor in economic standards, crowded with high numbers of populations, and a lacking infrastructure ("Palestine Refugees ", n.d.). Politically speaking, the amount of youth involvement in political parties is elevated inside the camps for a variety of reasons: such as the physical closeness of inhabitants, the unproportioned rate of night raids, arrests, injuries, and martyrs from Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Virtually every Palestinian in oPt knows someone who has been arrested, detained, beaten or martyred by the Israeli forces; this is especially the case inside the refugee camps that witness the bulk of the violence (Khalil, 2007). Due partially to these reasons, youth join different political factions to show their support to the Palestinian cause. Different factions under the umbrella party Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) include Fatah (current political party of the West Bank), Hamas (current political party of the Gaza Strip), Palestinian Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP), and the Palestinian Peoples Party (PPP), among others (Link, 2017). The political density inside the occupied territories creates an environment, especially inside the camps, that makes knowledge and opinions of the political nature commonplace to hear from adults and youth alike.

Life as a Palestinian in the West Bank: *Area A, B, and C*

The categorization of land inside the West Bank was divided into three areas, labeled Area A, Area B and Area C. These three labels dictate and limit the physical jurisdiction of the Palestinian Authority (PA) and their level of control over Palestinians. They were decided upon

and implemented during the Oslo Accords⁴ in 1993 and the 1995 Interim Agreement (OCHA, 2015; Tilley, 2012; Pappé, 2004). Simply put, *Area A* primarily consists of highly-populated Palestinian towns and cities and is under full PA control. *Area B* includes mostly rural Palestinian communities where PA provides the civil services and security is shared between the PA and Israeli authority. *Area C* is under full Israeli control and is governed by Israeli military, not civil, law; however, Palestinian agencies are still responsible for education and healthcare provisions (Falk & Tilley, 2017). An estimated 70 percent of *Area C* is off limits to Palestinians and reserved for settlement building and Israeli military use (see Map 2). An important consideration though is that regardless of the amount of control given to the PA over an area – it is dictated and controlled by the Israeli authority (UNSCO, 2017). Within these three areas, the life and effects of the occupation are felt in varying degrees. Focus will be given to *Area C* as it includes roughly 60 percent of the West Bank and is where the research site is located. The town that the field site is located in is partly divided into *Area B* and *C*. The issues that arise from this mixed organization within the city will be expanded on later in the chapter.

In *Area C*, under Israeli government control and requiring Israeli authorization, building permits are difficult if not impossible to obtain. Construction for Palestinians are effectively prohibited in about 70 percent of *Area C* and are either labeled as nature preserves or reserved for settlement expansion (OCHA, 2009). In the remaining 30 percent, there is a number of restrictions that substantially reduce the number of permits allotted for building. This is evidenced by the fact that between 2010 and 2014, out of the 2,020 building permit applications submitted by Palestinians in *Area C*, only 33 (or 1.5%) were approved by the Israeli Civil Administration (ICA) (OCHA, 2015). This includes the building permits for construction of schools, hospitals, and other social services. Even expansions for housing to accommodate growing families are often denied, and many families build without the permits. This leads to a profound number of demolition orders – 14,087 in *Area C* from 1998 to 2014 (OCHA, 2015).

⁴The Oslo Accords was signed in 1993 by the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization with the aim of the creation of a Palestinian governed West Bank and Gaza Strip. Some of the important features of the accords were the determination of borders, Jerusalem's status, Palestinian refugees right of return and the future of Israeli settlements. The accords were never fulfilled and by the end of the mediator, Bill Clinton's presidency, the region was again in a period of aggression and fighting ("The Oslo Accords and the Arab-Israeli Peace Process").

The emotional toll and physical consequences of which are overwhelming for many families living in the West Bank. Economically speaking, the prevention of Palestinian construction creates a demographic and economic degradation that fails to attract investment for development and more directly reduces the employment opportunities of the local population (UNSCO, 2017).

Right to Movement: The Separation Wall and Checkpoints

One cannot discuss life under occupation without detailing the limitations to movement present. The West Bank is subjected to Israeli controlled checkpoints (*Area C*), buffer zones, and most profoundly, the separation wall (also known as the security wall, apartheid wall, and separation barrier). The separation wall is, in part, eight-meter-tall concrete walls and multiple layered barbed wire fencing, encloses the West Bank. 85 percent of the wall's route cuts as deep as 8 kilometers into Palestinian territory, and steals 6 percent of the land. As of 2012, 62 percent of the wall was complete and the entire structure, planned and built, is 709-kilometers long which is twice as long as the armistice border (1967 borders) (B'Tselem, 2011) (see Map 2). What this means on the ground is that the wall divides and cuts into Palestinian villages and major cities (such as Bethlehem), significantly cutting off families from each other and forcing them into different areas that then allows them a different set of laws and standards that they live by. It is illegal for West Bank citizens to cross the wall borders without an approved permit by Israel. Consequently, this significantly limits the opportunities for Palestinians in the West Bank in terms of education and available employment. For example, according to OCHA (2014) due to the planned route of the wall upwards of 31,000 Palestinians will be caught in the 'buffer zone' on the west side of the wall but the Israeli government does not allow them to have Israeli citizenship. While another approximately 230,000 Palestinian Jerusalemites will be considered as West Bank Palestinians which then significantly shortens their prospects for the future concerning education, work opportunities and travel. The separation wall also forces some children to cross an armed checkpoint to get to their schools (Myre, 2006).

Considerable emphasis is placed on the separation wall as it is a severe restriction to movement in the occupied territory. Due to the amount of settlements inside the West Bank, a road system was created that allows Israeli settlers to drive from inside historic Palestine to their settlements called bypass roads. These are shared roads for Palestinians and Israelis, but their vehicles are distinguished by license plate colors, allowing soldiers at the checkpoints to clearly

distinguish between the Israeli settlers' vehicles (allowed to pass unchecked) and the Palestinians' vehicles (often stopped, questioned, and searched). This network of roads further isolates Palestinian villages and citizens and creates hardships when trying to travel from one place to another (BADIL, 2016). According to B'Tselem (2017c), there are 41 roads or sections of them that are restricted or completely banned for Palestinians to use that total over 700 kilometers. Along the accessible roads around the West Bank, there are 98 fixed Israeli military controlled checkpoints, including 39 Israeli checkpoints that control movement from the West Bank into historical Palestinian which cannot be accessed without an Israeli-approved permit thereby hindering the movement of Palestinians significantly. There are many side effects of this matrix of checkpoints and forbidden roads for Palestinians.

The restrictions on freedom of movement also limit the access of Palestinian villagers to hospitals in nearby towns; the educational system suffers because many schools, primarily village schools, depend on teachers who live outside the community and must commute to the school; also, family ties and social connections are adversely affected.

(B'Tselem, 2011)

Other means of freedom restrictions involve physical roadblocks and internal checkpoints. Roadblocks include such measures as concrete blocks and trenches and are usually placed at the entrances of towns and villages, effectively eliminating travel to and from those places. As of January 31, 2017, there were 59 internal checkpoints located inside and around Palestinian cities inside the West Bank. 18 of these are located inside the city of Hebron where a Jewish only settlement has advanced and are permanently manned by Israeli forces who regularly check Palestinians that walk past (B'Tselem, 2017b). The economic drain that a city can experience as a direct result of checkpoint placements and settlement expansion is unfortunately demonstrated in Hebron. "Throughout the second intifada (and, indeed, up to the present), Israel frequently closed any and all of these borders (checkpoints), thereby disrupting travel, trade, taxation, postal services, banking, and medical and educational activities" (Nasrallah, 2013, p. 64). Hebron's economic situation has collapsed so much under the occupation due to reoccurring settler violence, military aggression, increasing movement restrictions, curfews, and declining populace, that poverty is now widespread. During the time of the second intifada, 1,141 Palestinian owned businesses were closed with 440 of these mandated from Israeli army orders

(B'Tselem & Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2007). As of 2009, 86 percent of families who live in restricted areas of Hebron's old city live in relative poverty (ICRC, 2009).



Map of Area A, B, & C and the Separation Wall Route
 Source: United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2011) www.ochaopt.org, accessed on 10 December 2017.

Life in Area C: Access to Resources

The natural resources of the oPt are also controlled entirely by Israel. Two will be presented here: land and water. OCHA (2015) states that the bulk of substantial and fertile agricultural and grazing land available for Palestinian use is within the borders of *Area C* and therefore controlled by Israeli authority (p. 4). The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) reported that “Agriculture contributes significantly to Palestinian income, exports, food security and job creation” (UNCTAD, 2015, p. i). *Area C* accounts for almost two-thirds of the West Bank's agricultural land however only 1% is designated for Palestinian use by Israeli authorities. The UNCTAD also states that the root of the core issues in the agricultural sector of Palestinian development is primarily due to the lack of access to land and water resources (2015, p. 12). This obviously then affects greatly the livelihood of Palestinians who rely on their land to generate their incomes.

In 1995, Israel took full control over every water resource and now ‘subjects the Palestinian population to a mostly man-made water shortage’ (B’Tselem, 2017d), resulting in severe water shortages to Palestinian communities while nearby Jewish-only settlements have ample water sources. As a consequence, Palestinian farmers use wells as their water source. However, before digging a new well, they need to obtain Israeli approval for new construction, which from the years of 2010 to 2014, Palestinians had a 1.5 percent success rate of obtaining Israeli permission (B’Tselem, 2017a).

As previously mentioned, 70 percent of *Area C* is reserved for settlement expansion and nature preserves. Due to this and the building limitations faced by Palestinians, space for children is limited severely. Meaning for children living under occupation there is the lack of space for playgrounds and the lack of security in regards to being harassed by Israeli forces and settlers in the area. A walk around cities and villages inside *Area C* demonstrates how this lack of space has created a society of children playing on crowded streets with objects not readily identified as toys for children (“Space to Play”, 2017), such as tires, sticks, stones and discarded rubbish. This aspect of childhood will be assessed more thoroughly in this thesis.

Occupied Childhood: Night Raids, Arrests, Violence

According to Defense for Children International Palestine (DCIP), Palestinian homes, especially those in refugee camps experience nightly raids and there are 500-700 Palestinian

children, on average, arrested and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system per year (DCIP, 2017b). As of March 2018, there were 326 Palestinian youths held in Israeli jails (Addameer, 2018), of which four were currently being detained under administrative detention⁵ (B'Tselem, 2018). Since 2015, when Israel renewed the practice on minors, 25 minors have been held under the administrative detention (DCIP, 2018). Children and youth are arrested for a variety of reasons - the most common of which is stone-throwing, a charge that now carries a maximum 20-year conviction (DCIP, 2017b). An associated aspect of these arrests is the recruitment of these youth (and adults) as informants or collaborators known by the Arabic word of “*jasous*”. The social stigma associated with being identified as an informant is severe in Palestinian society. Many informants are ostracized by the community totally, if not killed. DCIP (2017a) has documented at least 20 attempts by Israeli forces to recruit Palestinian youth as informants during the interrogations after their arrests but admit that gaining an accurate statistic of this nature is impossible as people do not want to be identified even as a possible informant. In 2017, DCIP also collected 137 affidavits from minors in the West Bank who were detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military courts, “the data shows that 74.5 percent of children endured some form of physical violence following arrest and 62 percent were verbally abused, intimidated, or humiliated” (DCIP, 2018).

Arrests and interrogations of minors are not only executed by Israeli forces on the Palestinian youth but also by Palestinian security forces. In 2017, DCIP reported 16 detainments of Palestinian minors by Palestinian security forces who were being investigated for human rights violations against the youth including using torture techniques and solitary confinement (2018). The consequences of these practices on youth, regardless of the arresting party, vary – with some displaying symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) such as bed-wetting, anxiety, panic attacks, social exclusion, and depression and other youth becoming more violent natured and angry (Doek et al., 2015).

An aspect of living in occupation also lies within the fact that violence is abundant. According to DCIP (2018), as of January 2018, 89 Palestinian children were documented with

⁵Administrative detention is the practice of detaining and holding individuals for an indefinite amount of time based on ‘secret’ information. They are detained without charge or trial for 3-6 month increments which can repeatedly be renewed. For further information and statistics: https://www.btselem.org/topic/administrative_detention

injuries stemming from Israeli forces in the oPt, including injuries sustained by live ammunition, rubber-coated bullets, and crowd control weapons. In 2013, there were 31 documented attacks targeting Palestinian minors by illegal Israeli settlers (DCIP, 2013); and there were 14 Palestinian minors killed by IDF in the same year. In 2016, there were 27 Palestinian minors killed by Israeli forces, one as young as nine years old (DCIP, 2018).

Within the family unit, it becomes evident from an early age to many Palestinian youths that their parents cannot protect them from the threat of violence or death from the Israeli occupation. For several reasons, including the trauma and psychological consequences of night raids, arrests, torture, injuries, and killings - violence in the family home, and in Palestinian society itself, is widespread (UNICEF, 2010). The use of corporal punishment on youth is common in schools, neighborhoods and within the family unit - including non-nuclear members of the family (Elbedour, et al., 1997; Eldeeb et al., 2016; Khoury-Kassabri, 2010).

Future Aspirations – Education and Employment

A significant factor of inequality inside Palestine comes to play when discussing educational needs and subsequently unemployment rates. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) articulated the educational issues in Palestine as:

Although the population is one of the most literate in the world, the education system is in disrepair and failing, due largely to effects of the Israeli occupation: insufficient school infrastructure, lack of adequately trained teachers, and a lack of access to schooling in marginalized areas. (UNDP, 2014, p. 1)

Education is affected in two ways here – by the occupation and by the Palestinian Authorities ability to efficiently administer materials, educators and space to learn. In regards to the occupation, access to schools may contain physical obstructions, such as checkpoints, settlements, and Israeli security, that significantly discourage students from attending. If they are made to wait at checkpoints, the wait can last for hours, and they subject themselves to the possibility of "intimidation, assault or arbitrary arrest...by Israeli soldiers" and assault and harassment from settlers (DCIP, 2017c). The occupying forces also arrest and detain Palestinian teachers and administrators, especially during times of unrest (Yair & Khatab, 1995). The PA and UNRWA provide private and public schooling to the children in Palestine from the first to tenth grade. At the completion of the tenth grade, students are offered a choice of completing

academic education to gain admission into university or to complete partial academic education and partial vocational training to learn a trade instead of continuing their education in university. For those students continuing their education at university, they have to take a final year assessment test called the ‘towjihee’ which they spend the final year of secondary school studying for. Their scores on this test dictate which programs they are allowed to study at the university level.

The UNSCO (2017) adequately stated the issue in their report to the Ad Hoc Liason Committee, “In the second quarter of 2014 unemployment affected 16.0 per cent of the labour force...Some groups were particularly affected by the lack of jobs, notably those aged 15 to 29 years and women, with unemployment rates of 25.3 and 26.9 per cent respectively" (p.9). The city that fieldwork was conducted in has an even higher unemployment rate at 60 percent (Dhaher, 2014). A sad reality exists in the fact that a majority of Palestinian labor workers work inside the Jewish-only settlements, constructing buildings and homes for a population that is actively displacing them. According to conversations I had with some of these workers during the time of fieldwork, the answer given to why they work there is the same, it is the only way they can earn money for their families.

The Field Site – Al ‘Eizariya/Bethany

All of the factors and conditions discussed previously play a part in the city the field site is located in called Al ‘Eizariya or Bethany in English. Located in a city of upwards of 25,000 inhabitants (Dhaher, 2014), it is a middle point between the north and south West Bank and designated as partly *Area B* and *C*. Many inhabitants relocated to the city in the hopes that it will be annexed by Israel as part of East Jerusalem making them Jerusalem citizens and not West Bank citizen - which offers much less in terms of opportunity and living standards (Dhaher, 2014). It is overcrowded due to a lack of and inability to build and expand for the growing population (Shahin, 2005, p. 332; Dhaher, 2014). It is located 3.2 kilometers away from Jerusalem and before 1967 was considered a district of Jerusalem. Since the Separation Wall was erected in 2002, it is located on the east of the wall and residents cannot enter Jerusalem without Israeli approved permission.

Being partly under full Israeli control and partly the joint responsibility of both the PA and the Israeli forces presents an array of living conditions and contexts that are often chaotic, but

simultaneously unique to the city. The physical characteristics of the city that one notices upon entering are a large number of people, high-rise buildings, traffic jams, unmarked vehicles, the amount of trash in the streets and the apparent display of drug use. The former mayor Ziad Abu Zayyad explained how being classified as *Area B* and *C* created the issues that exist today, “around 25,000 inhabitants are left without National Security Forces (Palestinian Police). This has made al-‘Eizariya a perfect place for outlaws and explains the current security chaos” (in Dhaher, 2014, p. 2). The city is bordered at one end by the separation wall and on the other end by a large settlement called Ma’ale Adumim that houses an estimated 40,000 Jewish-only settlers and is the third-largest settlement in the West Bank, by population (Jarzmik, 2017).

Since the erection of the wall, the city was cut off from the local hospitals in East Jerusalem, and there are three health centers inside the city but for more complex or emergency situations inhabitants must travel to Jericho (21 kilometers) or Ramallah (16.3 kilometers) for their medical needs (ARIJ, 2012a). There are eight government schools and six private schools in the city that serve the educational needs of the children and six kindergartens (ARIJ, 2012a).

The Applied Research Institute –Jerusalem (ARIJ) has identified and categorized the requirements of the city in categories of infrastructure, health, education and agricultural needs of which they indicate that there are strong needs for basic infrastructural necessities such as rehabilitating the water networks and construction of water reservoirs and providing containers and vehicles for waste collection. The health needs include new health care centers and purchasing of medical equipment and tools. Strongly needed educational requirements include the building of new schools, purchasing new equipment for schools and rehabilitation of old schools. Moreover, the agricultural needs include rehabilitation of agricultural lands, building rainwater harvesting cisterns and the need for veterinary services (ARIJ, 2012b).

The field site, Jeel al-Amal boys’ home and primary school, was established in 1972 by a Palestinian couple - a teacher and a social worker. In 2017, the institution celebrated their 45th year anniversary. Currently, it houses 75 boys between the ages of four to 18 and also functions as a co-ed school for 250 children from low-income families around the area. More detailed information on the institution will be given in the methodology chapter. In the next section, I will elaborate on the theoretical framework and concepts that were used to inform the study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Perspectives & Concepts

As many previous studies on children living in difficult situations often focus from a psychological standpoint, I intended to emphasize on contextual and social issues present in children's daily lives. An aim was to explore how the children view everyday life, being Palestinians and living in an institution. Theoretical concepts from previous research were considered to inform and support the study. Due to my prior knowledge on the history of Palestine, the ongoing conflict, and the general way of life inside Palestine, it was important to search for a variety of sources, trying to avoid the risk of being too biased. In the beginning, it proved to be a challenge to remain impartial when I did the theoretical reflections. From experience, I was aware of the difficulty, and I carefully chose a route for my theoretical reflections in order to understand and discuss fruitfully the phenomenon of childhood in conflict, from the perspective of childhood studies and from the substantial field that is so politically tense in many ways.

A primary consideration in my study involved understanding the contextual insight of living inside an institution as a vulnerable child under occupation. I considered this population vulnerable due to their categorization as children and also their living arrangements taking place away from their biological family settings. This focus differs from previous studies on Palestinian children as many research questions concentrated on psychological and physical aspects of health, including nutrition, psychological trauma, resilience, etc. and less on the social and contextual considerations that affect daily life for children. For instance, Al-Adili (2008) looked into the nutritional standing of motherless children in Palestine and found that being motherless did not affect the children's nutritional status but instead being of a particular gender, age and economic class did. Other researchers focus on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and other emotional and mental conditions that stem from living in conflict environments during adolescence (Attanayake et al., 2009; Dimitry, 2011; Khamis, 2005 ; Thabet et al., 2002). Relatedly, much of the past research has also focused on resilience and protection factors in children (see Beasley, Thompson, & Davidson, 2003; Boyden & Mann, 2005; Garmezy, 1991; Luther, Cicchetti, & Becker, 2000; Masten, 2001, 2009; Theron & Engelbrecht, 2012; Wyman, 2003) – some of which will be discussed in this chapter.

A distinctive modification of this research design and those mentioned is that much of that research is done *on* children, not necessarily *with* them. My research aim was developed within the idea of the paradigm of childhood studies (James, Jenks, & Prout, 1998; James & Prout, 1997) and required involvement of the children and youth in as much of the process as possible in order to gain insight from the children themselves on their living situations, instead of focusing on adult-centric measurements to speak for the children. Due to its importance in the research design, several aspects of the social studies of children and childhood will be presented and discussed in this chapter.

With childhood studies as the theoretical backdrop when entering the field, theoretical reflections started to merge with experiences in the institution. Due to my proximity to the subject matter, I experienced what I interpreted as positives and negatives when entering into the field with regards to assumptions of what to expect in responses with the participants. Two prominent patterns or themes emerged - children's provisions of rights and their construction of normality. This chapter aims at providing the theoretical frameworks that aid in understanding the patterns that emerged and the phenomenon of childhood in this context.

Previous Research

Another distinction between this research and others is that due to the widespread diaspora of Palestinian refugees and for logistical issues surrounding safety, a considerable amount of the past research has been done with refugees living outside of Palestine as participants. Narratives, national identity, and perceived happiness are themes that have previously been explored within the displaced communities in foreign refugee camps by Hart (2002; 2004) and Veronese et al., (2011) and in the broader Arab ethnic demography by Witteborn (2007). Previous studies on the micro-contextual aspects of orphan hood and vulnerable children also exist in multitude on AIDS orphans in Africa conducted by Abebe (2007, 2008, 2009b, 2010, 2012), Abebe and Skovdal (2010), and Meintjes and Giese (2006) while other researchers have focused on orphan hood as a global phenomenon (Ennew, 2005). The geographical placement and contextual factors of childhood in this study can potentially offer additional and unique data on displaced childhood research that can add to the growing knowledge of the social construction of childhood.

My focus in this chapter is, to begin with, a discussion on the primary theoretical framework used in the study- childhood studies. Then looking specifically at literature about refugees and

orphans, a discussion conceptualizing children's rights, agency and vulnerability will be made. With childhood studies as the backdrop for the study and having an understanding of the aforementioned notions, a discussion on the theoretical perspectives used to inform the study will follow. Including that of the contextualist perspective used in connection with socialization and a sense of belonging, then social identity theory and identity of place to highlight the influences these concepts have on dimensions of social identity including the shared national struggle and construction of normality for those who live under occupation. Finally, resilience and coping mechanisms will be discussed as protective factors that developed within this population as discussed by the participants.

Social Studies of Childhood

The paradigm of childhood posited by James et al., (1998) theorized childhood as a social construct existing in variation globally and maintained that children should be viewed as active agents in the construction of their lives. As such, an interconnectedness exists where children are shaped by society but also are active in shaping society. Furthermore, Boyden (2003) observed that children in situations of tremendous hardship “consciously act upon and influence their environments” (p. 84). Woodhead (2009) furthered support for children taking an active role in the research process by explaining that children create meaning through their interactions with and understanding of their lives. Therefore, children possess valuable and unique insight that makes them worthy of being studied in their own right and offers support for their active involvement in the process. Moreover, Lerner et al. (2006) support that, especially in exceptional circumstances, children's experiences and understanding drive their development and therefore their viewpoints are indications of how they are coping, processing and how well they are developing. Additionally, this research study aimed to further understand the idea that there is no consistent understanding of childhood, but instead, each is dependent upon the cultural, social, political and economic factors of life and creates an immensely personal understanding of it for children, even within the same society (Frønes, 1993). The childhood paradigm plays a fundamental role in the objectives and design of this project as the understanding of the children's perspectives are essential. These essential points of the paradigm argue for researchers to consider children's autonomy in relation to their idea of childhood, life

and meaning as well as with their interaction with others (Corsaro, 2005) and their dependency and inter-dependency (Lee, 2001).

Children's Rights and Agency

Article 12.1 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) articulates that the child has the right to express their views in matters that affect them, “with due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child” (UNCRC, 1989). This article allows children to assert agency; although the degree of agency is limited to their age and maturity levels, the right to be heard is present. However, within societies and countries, the agency permitted to children varies greatly. Article 20 of the UNCRC, gives the right of ‘special protection and assistance’ to children deprived of their family environment. The creation of the convention itself demonstrates the common idea that childhood is a time frame that needs specification and guidelines signifying the vulnerability that children hold and directing states and guardians in ways that are viewed as most beneficial to children and in the “best interest of the child” (Article 3.1).

Further demonstrating that childhood is a contextually constructed phenomenon, certain demographics of children are deemed more vulnerable than others and in need of distinct measures for their development; among these, as stated in Article 20, are children living outside of their family environment, in this case – orphans and ‘other vulnerable children’ (OVC). However, I am critical of this notion since even children living in ‘proper’ family environments may be highly vulnerable. Vulnerability is dependent on many variables, not only the presence of a family and therefore belongs to a private sphere.

Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Many variations and definitions for orphans exist worldwide depending on context and location.⁶ Some examples include maternal orphan, paternal orphan, double orphan, social orphan, AIDS orphan, and so on. For the purpose of this research, focus will be placed on social orphans to simplify the subject and to concentrate on the research participants, all of whom were placed at the institution out of need and inability of surviving parents to support their

⁶ See Abebe, 2007, 2009a, 2009b, 2010; Bray, 2010; Dabla, 2010; Lassi et al., 2011.

development. Social orphans are children who have been abandoned either by both parents or solely by their father (Ahmed et al., 1999), meaning that a fatherless child is considered as disadvantaged to those with fathers, even with their mother present. This exists in Palestine as the religious connotation of society relies heavily on Islamic texts and Sharia law that express that women and children are grouped as socially and economically dependent on men, and as such, fathers have custody rights over children in cases of divorce. More specifically, those men are the legal guardians of their children, but a divorced woman may be given custody of her son until he is ten years old and of their daughters until they are 12 years old (Azzouni, 2010). Logically, due to the physical and emotional consequences of the continuing political conflict, the number of orphans – social or otherwise- is increasing, although exact figures are not readily available for orphans in Palestine.

Orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) is a term used in light of the non-consistent and limited definition of ‘orphan’ in literature but to include those children seen to be more vulnerable or in need of special protection. For instance, in Africa, due to the AIDS virus and the number child-headed households and working children is growing, but the labeling of these children as orphans is not considered as they do not fit the predetermined criteria of losing a parent; but they are labeled as vulnerable children therein becoming applicable for special protection and assistance. Therefore, OVC is a theoretical and social construct that requires the determination of explanation as it is used and depends on several factors (Skinner et al., 2006), including geographic location and social norms. For instance, in patriarchic societies, as many Muslim countries are, a child whose father has died is an orphan regardless of whether the mother is alive. Moreover, if the mother remarries it is the new husband’s decision to care for the children from the previous marriage or not; if not, the child becomes a ‘social orphan’ and therein vulnerable.

Risk & Vulnerability

Since children are in a state of physical, mental, and emotional development, then childhood is seen as a period of vulnerability where children are dependent, in varying degrees, on adults for care, love, and affection as well as developmental needs such as socialization and skills (Mann, 2001, p. 47; Sandberg, 2015). Theoretical perspectives from psychology and law stress that consequences stemming from the military occupation, including military raids, arrests,

protests and killings, make all Palestinians living in the West Bank, regardless of age, inevitably vulnerable and exposed to the possibility of harm. However, due to the predisposed vulnerabilities of children and their dependency on others then focus here will be on children and not people in general. Various factors of life influence the perceived vulnerability of a child. Factors such as their age, gender, race, ethnicity, mental or physical handicaps, developmental level, health status, level of dependence, food security status, protection, education level, socioeconomic status, family care and support, access to resources, and social networks (Peek, 2008; Skinner et al., 2006, p. 623). Each of these factors influences to some degree how adults perceive the vulnerability of a child and how a child understands his or her own vulnerability.

In general, the increased level of perceived vulnerability of children provides children with special assistance and protection. Distinct support is articulated in the UNCRC for those recognized to fall within those identified factors, including children ‘temporarily or permanently deprived of his or her family environment’ as articulated in article 20 that specifies that these children are “entitled to special protection and assistance by the state” including alternative care solutions where “due regard shall be paid by the desirability of continuity in a child’s upbringing and to the child’s ethnic, religious, cultural and linguistic background” (UNCRC, 1989, Article 20.1-3). This idea of vulnerability will be explored further in the analytical chapters.

Orphan Care

The special provisions afforded to children living outside the family environment as indicated by UNCRC indicate that care and protection for children living outside of their family environment are paramount; but the abilities, resources, and actions taken by states, organizations, and society vary significantly, as does the idea the what care is needed. As such, institutional facilities for orphaned and other vulnerable children vary in strategy, organization, and implementation of care to the children. Several studies have revealed, and perhaps generalized, an overwhelming negative effect of institutionalized care to children in terms of psychological and social development, nutrition, education, and safety (Bhargava, 2005; Dabla, 2010; Gilborn et al., 2006; Gindis, 2012; Syed, Shawkat, & Showkat, 2015), while other researchers have argued that the contextual factors and organization of institutional care to vulnerable children does not adversely affect the development of youth (Tizard et al., 1972; Tizard & Rees, 1974). Contextual aspects of life and the influences it could have on the

developmental process of a child will now be presented.

Contextualist Perspective

The development and socialization of children are dependent upon compartmentalized categories of environments and contexts regarded as micro and macro contexts. These contexts are used in the creation of a unique understanding of childhood under military occupation and colonialization and are directly related to the interaction between children and their environments in the development process (Barker, 1978; Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Vygotsky, 1987 in Sloutsky, 1997, p. 133). Micro contexts are understood as proximate surroundings such as the home and school while macro contexts consist of broader and more conceptual backdrops such as culture and societal beliefs. These contextual factors are discussed in terms of absence and presence, such as the absence of a family unit (micro) or the presence of religious dogmas (macro); previous psychological research has linked progressive patterns in children and adolescents who have the presence of multiple micro and macro contexts (Youngblade et al., 2007) while Sloutsky (1997) maintains that within this perspective, those with or without these contextual factors cannot be compared to one another and instead the developmental course should be considered as a separate process within a distinct context. These contextual elements play a role in the development process as well as the construction of identity – both individual and social as children learn, reason and make sense of day to day interactions and wider social and cultural norms.

Constructing Identity and Creating Normality

The formation of personal and social identity is a life-long process, made through a plethora of psychological, social, emotional and cultural variables (Giddens, 1991; Jenkins, 1996). To add clarity in understanding the concept of identity, a definition by Hammack (2008) will be used in this thesis as an “ideology cognized through the individual engagement with discourse, made manifest in a personal narrative constructed and reconstructed across the life course, and scripted in and through social interaction and social practice” (p. 222).

It is not my intention to discuss all aspects involved in the creation of an identity but instead to focus on three prominent themes that arose during data collection and that will be the topics of

analysis: belonging to family and peers, attachment to a place and categorization of oneself in distinction from others otherwise known as ‘the self’ and ‘the other’. Since childhood, as previously discussed, is seen as a socially constructed concept and unique depending on the context of life in a specific time and space, then so too is the concept of ‘normality’ within childhood. To further discuss this, I intend to explore whether some aspects of group identity could be traced through dimensions of everyday life, processes and psychosocial consequences in the creation of the ongoing constructions of normality. First, some information of the processes will be discussed presently.

Socialization and Belonging

The family setting is widely believed to be the most beneficial place for a child to develop, although to dismiss the benefits of other living arrangements for children solely due to the lack of biological family members would be naïve. Still, there is significant critique of orphanages and institutions related to their ability to provide the amount of love, comfort, and support to the children with staff members who call the institution ‘work’ and the children who call the institution ‘home’, thus creating distance and dissimilarity between the adults and the children. Freud and Burlingame (1944), Casler (1961), Spitz (1945), and Dennis (1973), among other psychiatrists and researchers of past days, proposed a significant contribution in the negative effects of institutionalism as being the separation of children from a mother figure thereby preventing their emotional attachment from developing; however, nowadays it is increasingly recognized that these attachments may come from other caregivers and not just mothers (Maan, 2001). To supplement for this, some institutions have established a family-like environment with house mothers and fathers with designated roles and functions.

The socialization process develops within everyday interactions and is a process of adaptation and inclusion into different societal groupings (James & Prout, 1997; Nilsen, 2009). Children learn, makes sense of and adjust their knowledge with those around them and vice versa. The function of a family is fundamental here as families require participation in dyads and multiads that then create the roles of the family such as father, mother, son, brother sister, etc. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1986 in Sloutsky, 1997, p. 134). Within this regard, the most evident difference between a family system and an institutional system is the fixed social positions assumed by behaviors and roles instead of the collaboration of family dynamics. However, it is

suggested that "institutions such as schools and organized community groups can supplement protective factors at the individual and family levels by providing a supportive context for children" and that these childhood institutions "compliment the traditional roles and functions of the family. During crises, they may replace the family altogether" (Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 7).

Family dynamics are multi-faceted and intergenerational and do not only include those between parents and children but also those between siblings and peers. Abebe and Kjørholt (2009) posit that socially, children experience interdependently instead of independently; and as such, the microsystems of the family, friends, and space maneuver and merge the child's positioning into a role and their negotiation in that role in different situations (Punch, 2002 in Abebe & Kjørholt, 2009, p. 178). Within interactions between generations and between peers, the socialization process is continuous. Mann (2001) states that the support from other peers for separated children should not be underestimated since they learn tools to negotiate, support, lead and understand as well as share domestic tasks that promote interdependence (p. 47). If we accept that the goal of many cultural understandings of childhood is a time to prepare children for a life of adulthood then the responsibilities, roles, and support developed within peer dynamics are crucial as it shapes the child's understanding of care and obligations, and is accomplished through a number of techniques including role-playing. In living situations where there are many children and few adults, the importance of peer-peer relations is arguably greater than on adult-child relations for the socialization and development of the youth (Tietjen, 1989).

The importance of the socialization process is in part due to the realization of the connection and the interplay one has with their surroundings and the sense of belonging that is felt through it. Hagerty et al., (1992) recognized the defining attributes of belonging as two-fold, "(1) the experience of being valued, needed, or important with respect to other people, groups, or environments, and (2) the experience of fitting in or being congruent with other people, groups, or environments through shared or complementary characteristics" (p. 173). Miller (2003) recognized 'sense of belonging' as referring to a social connection and being used primarily in three circumstances: a sense of connection to a community of people, to a particular historical connection or tradition, and to a geographic location or living space (p. 217). Furthermore, a study by Hagerty et al. (1996) found a connection between indicators of social and psychological functioning and feeling a sense of belonging. Additionally, from a psychological perspective, positive development stems from dynamics within the family set-up through the attachment,

belonging⁷ and caring connections that exist there (Allen et al., 2007; Feldman & Matjasko, 2005; Freud, 1989; Grossman & Grossman, 1991; Hess & Torney-Purta, 2005).

Identity of Place

Identity is also partly formed within existing spaces and places that support existence (Proshansky, Fabian, & Kaminoff, 1983). Morrow (2001) suggests that it is the home and family that are primary sources of the sense of belonging (p. 19). A stance that Scourfield et al. (2006) support with their research that indicates “the local realm (including the most local of all- the family home) is clearly the most salient to them (children) – psychologically, socially, and culturally” (p. 98). Still, a sense of belonging to a place is often discussed by children in relation to other connections and their perceptions of their micro and macro contexts are often compared with their knowledge and experiences of other places. Meaning that their opinions are shaped by their experienced knowledge or their perceived knowledge of other contexts. This transforms into an active description of physical surroundings in terms of good and bad concerning people, activities, landscape and crime prevalence (Scourfield et al., 2006).

Place identity influences children’s development into adulthood as they learn in social situations by modeling adults’ involvement in families, communities, religious groups, and wider society thereby encouraging the child as they develop their personal and their social identity (Bronfenbrenner, 1970). Moreover, developmental research has indicated that religious beliefs and spiritual practices have a positive impact on children’s outcome as interpretive frameworks (Roehlkepartain, 2014). Several researchers (see Hedegaard, 2002, 2009; Rogoff, 1990, 2003; Vygotsky, 1998) agree with this idea that children practice agency by using modeling as a teaching tool, and “contributing to their own conditions for learning and development in their everyday practice” (Hedegaard, 2012, p. 57). As such, children actively mimic and adopt the observed and traditional behaviors that exist in society, especially those of people they feel a sense of belonging to.

⁷ The use of the psychological concept of attachment is used in this thesis predominantly in quotes. Instead, sense of belonging, or sometimes just belonging, is used since it is more modified and refers to what I can observe or be told.

Social Identity Theory – The Self and Other

Along with belonging to a place, the other prevalent theme in this study on the formation of identity develops within the idea of ‘self’ *through* the identification of the ‘other’, or in terms of ‘us’ and ‘them’ or as Tajfel and Turner (1979) called it – the ‘in-group’ and the ‘out-group’. According to the Social Identity Theory, auditory, visual and perceptual modes allow us to distinguish between ourselves and others in more detail.⁸ Introduced by Tajfel and Turner (1979), creates the distinction between the self and the other by three mental processes – social categorization, social identification and social comparison. Each stage is used to systematically identify traits that are relevant to ourselves, adapt to the social roles of the category/categories that we identify with, and recognize negative traits of others that then creates a positive attitude on our own identity and to create comparisons between the in-group and the out-group or in other terms, the ‘self’ and the ‘other’. It is also a person’s affiliation and inclusion into various social groups including nationality, religion and race that holds emotional significance to the member of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Sharing a social identity indicates that a group of people have shared similar social and political experiences that shape their understanding of and interaction with themselves, each other and with the outside world (Tilley, 2012, p 29). When one feels a sense of belonging to a social group based on a shared characteristic, they are able to categorize themselves into in-groups, helping to make sense of the world around them and negotiating their role and influence in it thereby better controlling the unpredictable factors that may be present. ‘Identity markers’ are used in the creation of social and individual identities and are defined as characteristics that carry symbolic importance that are a signal to others as to the categorization of oneself.

In my opinion, within the context of this study, a powerful tool in the establishment, conveying and continuation of a social identity lies within the educational curriculum, religious traditions, and texts as well as on adult pressure on younger generations to support the national beliefs, values, and practices. Educational textbooks and religious texts especially have the power and influence to maintain national norms, social beliefs and the formation of identity. Prevalent behaviors that arose in this study revolve around models of caring, loving, sharing,

⁸ The discussion on Social Identity Theory is limited as per space, but more thorough information can be read in Tajfel & Turner (1979), Giddens (1991), and Jenkins (1996). Here, I use the terms social identity and shared identity interchangeably to elaborate on the theory.

protection and resistance. Although generational knowledge is dependent on the individual agency, negotiation and interpretive reproduction of the child (Corsaro, 2011), the emerging sharing and caring behaviors are demonstrated in Palestinian society by the lack of homelessness and hunger despite low economic status and opportunities. These elements merge into a conglomerate of narratives being transferred and perhaps transformed between generations (Alayan, 2012; Appel & Christian-Smith, 1991, Roehlkepartain, 2014).

Memory, Narratives and National Struggle

I start this section with an anecdote from the world of animals. In the animal kingdom, research with wild African elephants has established a correlation between the sharing of memories from older generations to the young, passing on the social knowledge and developing a communal identity that extends to the clan which benefits them in detecting threats, finding watering holes, and within the social spheres of life (McComb et al., 2001). Further research with elephants has supported similar memory sharing theories (Bates et al., 2007; Moss, Croze, & Lee, 2011; Poole & Granli, 2011). Much like elephants, memory propels the collective narrative within certain societies and people to create a shared sense of social responsibility, communal struggle, and societal beliefs. Within the Palestinian society, this is exemplified in the continuation of the struggle and resistance against Israeli occupation with the hopes of establishing a free Palestine.

Many terms⁹ are used to describe the stories and memories being transferred between generations by various researchers and authors of different disciplines. In many ways, they conceptualize the same idea -a shared understanding of self and community through different narratives, past and contemporary, referred to as a 'social identity' (Rouhana, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Narratives are defined essentially as "a story about events that took place in history or are taking place in the present" and are "etched in the memory because of its internal cohesion" (Auerbach, 2010, p. 101). National narratives include historical narratives that focus on dramatic stories from the country's past and these historical narratives are used to influence present-day narratives (Daoudi & Barakat, 2013).

⁹ These terms include 'collective memory,' 'national narratives' and 'historical narratives.' For more details of these different terms in Auerbach, 2010; Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Rotberg, 2006.

To establish a social identity, historical narratives are used to “claim moral attachments to specific territories, motherlands or homelands, and posits time-honored links between people, polity, and territory” (Malkki, 1995, p. 1). The Palestinian people share a national narrative, passed on through stories and experiences depicted by media, documentation, and word of mouth for generations that build a strong case for the shared struggle continued by the younger generations. Often, stories passed on through generations are those of distress and trauma induced by the conflict (Auerbach, 2010; Bar-Tal & Salomon, 2006; Rotberg, 2006) and these stories are regarded as a tactic for dealing with “time, memory, change, pain and conflict” (Daoudi & Barakat, 2013, p. 54; Herman et al., 2005). Lonni (2002) conceptualizes the efficiency of connecting with historical narratives:

A group that is building its collective identity has a significant advantage if it can identify in its own past - an event which can be dated as the beginning of the road that sooner or later would lead to the creation of a nation: an event whose meaning cannot be challenged by anyone - inside or outside the group. This event must possess a great emotional charge and strong legitimizing value, better still if it has the taste of tragedy. It is when a group is defeated that then the need for self-assertion emerges. (p. 75)

The daily occurrence of threat, danger, discrimination, and harm is likely to reinforce the importance of preserving and protecting a person's social identity (Northrup, 1989, p. 66), and strengthening the national struggle of Palestinians by identifying a common enemy. Although many similar identification markers can be shared between the self and the other, focus is placed on the differences between them and the ‘enemy’ to strengthen the social identity and shared national struggle. This national narrative ‘fuels the fire’, so to speak, for resisting the status quo and is a vital tool of remaining connected with their land, ancestry, and identity while also reinforcing the idea of national struggle and the need to resist.

Resilience and Coping Mechanisms

When one speaks about risks and vulnerability, it is important to also address the coping mechanisms and resiliency that is developed from it. Previous researchers have clarified that the difference between resiliency and positive development in children and youth is the presence of risk or threat (Barber, 2013; Masten et al., 2002). Therefore, resiliency exists because risk is present; and subsequently, the amount of risk and adversity present in a child’s life then

increases their capacity for resiliency against that risk. However, an issue with the construct of resiliency is the multiple definitions and explanations of what it is, and how it can be measured. For clarification purposes, two definitions of resiliency are used in this thesis: Boyden & Mann (2005) definition of resilience as “an individual’s capacity to recover from, adapt, and remain strong in the face of adversity” (p. 5) and Veronese and Castiglioni (2015) definition as “an unexpected ability to maintain positive functioning in adverse conditions” (p. 7). If we think of resiliency in these frameworks then children’s resiliency “must be acknowledged every bit as much as their vulnerability” (Schaffer, 1996, p. 47, in Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 5). To be resilient, one has to experience adversity and have factors of vulnerability (Masten, 2001); Individuals who do not experience a significant threat to their development, therefore, are not considered resilient. Reversely, children in prolonged military and political violence are reported to develop higher levels of resiliency than those who are not (Barber, 2008; Cairns & Dawes, 1996; Punamäki et al., 1997; Sagi-Schwartz, 2008 in Veronese et al., 2011).

A wide variety of resilient resources can be genetic, biological, psychological and environmental including personal temperament, family members, friends, and institutional providers such as schools and religious institutions (Beasley et al., 2003; Wyman, 2003). Donnon et al., (2003) support the notion that resiliency is not only an internal characteristic but is also derived from external variables. Powerful tools in resiliency are developed through connections with caring adults and peers, positive self-images, progressive cognitive skills, and self-motivation - all of which are considered global factors that aid in the healthy development of children (Garmezy, 1985; Luthar et al., 2000; Masten et al., 1990; Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Masten et al., 2009; Wyman et al. 2003).

It has been acknowledged that people are born with resilient traits but that these are strengthened and improved by effective development, being nurtured and living in a supportive environment (Beasley et al., 2003; Pharoah et al., 2004 in Tefera & Mulatie, 2014). Specifically, institutions like schools or orphanages that have programs that support and protect youth can promote resiliency (Ferrari & Fernando, 2013). The factors that encourage the resiliency in children living in adversity can stem from genetic, biological, psychological and environmental features and influences children’s development actively. Daniel and Wassell (2002) identify six domains that influence resilience in adolescence as having a secure base with family and friends, education, talents and interests, positive values and social competencies (p. 14). A study

conducted by Lothe and Heggen (2003) suggests that resilience is fostered by hope, religion, personal history and an understanding of one's roots and historical belonging.

Barber (2013) summarized that “it appears in much of the literature that the construct of resilience is defined and justified by its distinction from normative adaptation” (p. 234). Although, he did not agree with past literature and instead argues that the distinction of normative adaptation and resilience is unclear and trivial. I argue that the contextual aspects of life mandate that resilience is part of normative adaptation in an ongoing conflict. The consequences of life under occupation that has lasted for generations indicates that the normative adaptation and general competent functioning of children manifest from their resilience. Daiute (2013) iterates in her piece *Relational Resilience* that “since human development is a mutual process of individuals and societies, resilience in displacement is a social phenomenon” (p. 147).

Summary

With Childhood Studies as the main theoretical perspective of the study, I intended to focus on using the participants' words, actions, drawings, and even silence in the empirical process to try to convey the participant's life through their perspectives. This approach aimed to explore the relationship between the institutional upbringing and children's rights and protection. As such, key concepts emerged, both before the empirical work started, throughout the fieldwork period and they aided me to focus in the whole design of the analytical chapters. In the next chapter, I will discuss the methodological features involved in this study.

The micro and macro context of the participant's lives offered some of the most insight as to my understanding of their understanding of life and how they see it. Within those contexts revealed many concepts that were useful in the framing of analysis, these include their perspectives on themselves as a group and as others as the 'out-group', and the national and historical narratives that create a social identity that they may or may not identify with as Palestinians. These concepts, amongst others, were the foundation for analyzing the data in order to better understand the participants' vulnerability and resiliency, as demonstrated and iterated by the participants themselves.

Chapter 4: Methodology

Introduction

This research was designed as an empirical and ethnographic case study using qualitative tools to try to gain an understanding of the perspectives of the youth and children living in the institution. Qualitative in design since it is "a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live" (Holloway, 1997, p. 1 in Greig, Taylor, & MacKay, 2013, p. 136). Ethnographic in nature due to the location of the field site – inside the natural setting of the participants – and also stemming from a research goal to understand and describe the construct of childhood for children living inside an institution in an ongoing conflict and empirically designed as per the knowledge obtained by observations (Greig et al., 2013). Conducting research with the participants in the ‘natural setting’ of their home and school was intended to be beneficial and in retrospect, offered a great worth of information and ‘ecological validity’ (Greig et al., 2013, p. 110). Rooted within an idea of ethical research *with* children rather than on children, participatory methods were utilized. Understanding the opinions and viewpoints of the boys who live inside the institution was paramount for me, and the research design was created in light of this effort. A few primary focuses were established for this study: firstly, to try to understand the life inside institutional care through the eyes and voices of those who live there; secondly, to identify unique characteristics that applies to this institution and its inhabitants in the present social context; and thirdly, to distinguish the differences of life for children inside institutions and those who live in their family homes in the same ongoing conflict. That is, I aimed to understand the social, economic, religious and political contextual factors that lead to the interesting and distinctive aspect of living life as a ‘vulnerable’ child – such as orphans and social welfare children - in an ongoing conflict.

Aim

The study aim was to explore the influence of micro and macro contextual factors on childhood living inside an institution in an ongoing conflict, with a focus on the provision of rights, protection, and education of the children in the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt). I was curious about the foundational structure, power relations, social dynamics, roles, agency, tools and techniques existing in the institution to gain an insight on the social, emotional, mental

and physical impact on the children, and how these factors play a different role for the participants than Palestinian children of similar age living with their families using statistics from different sources. I also wanted to explore the predisposition of these contextual aspects on individual and shared characteristics of the children and the coping mechanisms that are created in light of the situation.

Research Site

The field site, Jeel al-Amal Home for Needy Boys, is located in Bethany (in Arabic – al-‘Eizariya), Palestine and was the primary setting for data collection for two months in July and August of 2017. Jeel al-Amal translates to ‘Generation of Hope,’ and I believe it is in this idea that the institution functions as a place that provides hope and opportunities to the youth who reside there. It was created in 1972 and currently cares for 75 boys, ages four to 18, who are technically labeled as orphans or unwanted. However, the staff insist on not using labels such as orphanage to describe the institution as the term carries a stigma; they instead call it Jeel al-Amal home and school. Due to strict adoption laws in Palestine, many of the youth stay in the institution until they age out at 18 years old. Jeel al-Amal relies heavily on fundraising and donors’ generosity to provide for the youth. During the school year, it also functions as a primary school that educates approximately 250 boys and girls from the surrounding area. The field site served as an ideal location due to the length of time it has been operational and providing for children, 45 years, and for its proximity to Jerusalem and its location inside the West Bank. As described in the background chapter, the institution is located in a Palestinian city named Bethany in the West Bank that is under Israeli military/government control (Area C) and the Palestinian Authority civic duties (Area B). This mixture of military and civil control leads to disorganization and lack of civic services and police patrol which has an impact on the social patterns present in the city, which is known to be a haven for drug use (Dhaher, 2014). This offers a unique perspective from the youth participants who are aware of the issue.

It should be noted that I have past experience with Palestine, as I have travelled there many times in my life. Consequently, my proximity and history with the culture, society, and life there led to knowledge of the context and the present situation. Therefore, some aspects of life under occupation were already known to me and some ‘truths’ were already determined. However, for the sake of this thesis, I attempted to distance myself from these ‘truths’ to adequately explain

the situation, the processes, and the consequences of life under occupation as impartially as possible. For this reason, when describing certain facets of life, more attention was placed on the explicit elaboration of concepts, perceived reality and legalities to help construct a picture of what it is like to live with the occupation.

Methods Focused on Children's Rights

Drawing on previous participant-based research designs, a mosaic approach design (Clark & Moss, 2001) was used with the aim of collecting data that offers a glimpse of life for these children; such methods included individual and group interviews, drawings, and tours. Individual roles and responsibilities and how they play a role in the dynamics of the institution were of particular interest to me. Observations and documentation were made of the daily life of the participants and the relational dynamics between them (of varying ages) and between the adult caregivers in order to understand the techniques and tools utilized within the institution that aids in the establishment of a developmentally friendly upbringing. The adult participants in the facility were also interviewed and observed to gain a better understanding of the organization of the institution as well as any personal feelings of satisfaction or struggles in the institution. The focus for this part of the study was to identify how functionality and logistical planning were involved with caring for so many children, as well as the steps taken to ensure a successful transition into adult life for those who age-out of the institution at 18.

With a focus on Article 12 of the UNCRC which states the right for children to be able to express their views freely and for those views to be given due weight in matters that concern them (UNCRC, 1989), my study design was made participatory and collaborative – giving the youth and child participants a say in the direction and methods of data collection. Another important element of this approach identifies that children are ‘experts in their own lives’, that they are talented communicators, rights-holders, and meaning makers. Therefore, they are worthy of being studied in their own right, and their perspectives and social interactions can be independent of adult construction and at the same time influence the lives of the people and societies around them (James, 1997, p. 4; Abebe, 2009; Clark, 2001, p. 6). Moreover, several researchers including Barber, Buchanan, and Daiute suggest that it is necessary in research to listen to the voices of children and youth involved in conflict themselves and not just focus on

the physical, emotional and psychological assessments they have in relation to conflict (Ferrari & Fernando, 2013). In this respect, utmost value was placed on the views of the participants.

Gaining Access

Special considerations were made during the entire fieldwork process, especially in regard to gaining access to the participants through their adult gatekeepers. Coordination with the gatekeepers was made through email correspondence in the spring of 2017. An agreement of start and end dates of the research process, methods to be used, and different ethical considerations such as the participation consent of those under 18 years old and the anonymity of potential participants was established. It was also communicated that the director of the field site does not require the name of the institution to be anonymized or concealed and reversely, requested that the name be used, as it was created to highlight their philosophy of what the institution can achieve with the youth and children.

Establishing the Role of Researcher

Entering and exiting the field was planned for in a manner that would ensure the least amount of disturbance in the children's lives and schedules and also offered time for acclimation of the researcher in their everyday lives. I started by visiting the institution to gain rapport with the inhabitants as well as to make the purposes of research known. The participants were aware of me from previous years' visits with them, although this was the longest and most in-depth time I have spent at the institution, so gaining rapport with them was not as time-consuming as it may have been. Due to the relatively high numbers of visitors weekly at the institution, the youth are also very accustomed to the presence of adults who come with gifts and toys for them. A main difference between myself and those visitors was the duration of stay inside Jeel al-Amal and that gifts were not given by me. However, I did arrange a circus performance and an end of the summer cake party for all of the youth.

Interestingly, how the youth and adults of the institution view me, a Palestinian with US citizenship, also aided in the establishment of me as a researcher. Typically, I am seen as a foreigner by most Palestinians for a number of reasons including my legal documents, my physical appearance, and interestingly, my motivation for being in Palestine, as will be discussed in chapter six. This understanding of me as a foreigner by the participants was especially significant during the study with the participants, as it allowed the informants to explain their

ideas to me in ways that they would with someone who had never been in Palestine before. This proved to be beneficial to understanding the reasoning of the participants as they elaborated on their viewpoints which led to greater insight into the mental processes they had when forming their ideas.

Participant Selection

Trying to remain within an ethical principle of inclusivity, I welcomed any youth¹⁰ who wanted to participate in any or all of the mixed methods of data collection. I adapted the methods to fit the capacities of the children depending on their age, maturity and ability level. From the 25 children present during the summer holidays in Jeel al-Amal, eight youth between the ages of 12 and 17 were considered ‘full participants’ and participated in every method used. The remaining 17 children of varying ages from four to 12 years old participated in at least two methods of data collection and were considered ‘partial participants’. The organization of partial and full participants in similar age brackets was purely coincidental. All the participants consented to participating in the research and were reminded of and understood that their participation was voluntary and if at any point, they did not want to participate, it would be allowed without consequence. Fortunately, the participant’s contribution in the different data collection methods offered an array of insight into their opinions of life, home, and conflict. Data analysis took the information from all the participants into consideration, but the bulk of the analysis comes from the older, full participants.

As well as the children and youth participants, three adult participants were interviewed and observed. A director and coordinator of the institution, a ‘father’ supervisor who is with the children from the early morning to after they are in bed, and a ‘mother’ caregiver who lives with the children 24 hours a day. All of the adult participants have extensive knowledge and history with the institution, and two of the adults have spent the majority of their lives there. The supervisors’ roles are to organize the children’s recreational time and activities, provide support and guidance to them, aid the children in their educational and social needs, discipline the

¹⁰ Throughout this thesis, I use the words youth and child(ren) to describe the participants and the other inhabitants of the institution. There is no distinction empirically between the words. In the analytical chapters, I refer to them as *shabab* (young man) which was the term they preferred I used.

children when needed, and perhaps above all, to love and protect the children. They are labeled as supervisors because the hierarchy of roles in the institution indicates that the house-mothers report to them of children's behaviors, issues, and other important 'in-home' details that should be communicated. Although there are more than three adults who are responsible for the children and provide for them, I selected the three who had the most experience, knowledge, and understanding of the institution to interview as to focus mostly on the children and youth themselves. The other five adults, one 'father' supervisor and three 'mother' caregivers filled out questionnaires and consented to observation to provide further data.

Research Design - Mosaic Approach

Case studies call for a variety of data collection methods in order to be in-depth and thorough (McGregor, 2006; Greig, 2013). Using the mosaic approach familiarized by Clark and Moss (2001), a number of different methods were utilized in order to gain information as well as provide different levels of involvement for the participants. I designed the research plan according to the mosaic approach for the many practical qualities it offers in data collection as well as its focus on ethical treatment of children in research. The latter point will be discussed later. The benefits in using multiple methods for data collection are numerous, but the emphasis was placed on listening to the children, not only with their words but also with their actions, thereby drawing analysis from spoken and non-spoken information being conveyed. Another benefit is that using different methods allowed participation by all the children as per their preference and competency. For example, some children are comfortable with talking whereas others express themselves better with drawing; some are more forthcoming in a one-on-one scenario while others thrive in group settings; some are competent with speech and writing while others may feel inclined to role-play. For these reasons, the mosaic approach proved to be beneficial for the amount of data collected. The tools utilized included participant observation, questionnaires, individual interviews, drawings, touring, and a group interview – each method will presently be detailed further.

Participant Observation

Participant observation and subsequent field notes amassed wide-ranging information as well as being the most inclusive in terms of youth participation. Every participant was observed to reveal schedules, dynamics, attitudes, and characteristics that are unique in their own way and some of which are not expressed verbally (van Donge, 2006). This tool was utilized from the very first correspondence with the gatekeepers of Jeel al-Amal and continued throughout research, and proved to be beneficial due to the variety of information obtained. Another benefit of participant observation was the shortening of the amount of time needed to gain rapport with the participants. Becoming a participant in the children's lives offered the opportunity to listen to the child as well as to interpret into the child's body language and other non-verbal displays of information. Insight through observation was used in the development of more focused questions in interviews and to aid in the interpretation of the children's behaviors and words. Fine and Sandstrom (1988) stated that "participant observation can be an effective method of learning more about young children's ways of seeing" (p. 37). In this study, I consider participant observation an ideal tool as the extent of data and insight of spoken and non-spoken interactions became evident and documented. Patterns and analysis were established from these observations and the inclusivity of all the boys, regardless of age, was beneficial in the aim of the project – to understand the life of these boys through their eyes and with their voices.

Questionnaires

The use of questionnaires allowed for factual information to be determined, such as age, family status, interests, length of time at the institution, previous family history, future aspirations, piety, and daily activities (Simon, 2006). The answers from the questionnaires helped organize participants based on time and involvement in the different dynamics of the institution. Through these questionnaires, a more detailed and personal interview guide was developed for the participant's interviews. Special considerations were made for the participants who had issues with their reading and writing abilities by asking the questions verbally to the participant and writing the answers in front of them as well as framing questions to match the participants' competence, comfort, and interest levels.

Semi-Structured Individual Interviews

One-on-one semi-structured interviews were conducted at the beginning and end of the fieldwork with the seven full participants. An additional six informants under the age of 12 participated in the first interview and three adult participants were also interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured to allow space for the participants to guide the conversation, to allow the researcher to touch upon certain subjects and to allow for flexibility in the interviews (Willis, 2006). They were conducted in the aim of gaining more insight and understanding of the individual participants' opinions, attitudes, political knowledge, hopes and fears as well as the youths' interpretation of different themes and elements of life. During these one-on-one interviews, factual questions along with more abstract and open-ended content were asked and built upon developing rapport with the participants and opening up a dialogue. Further opinions on the perceived positives and negatives of the institution were revealed through these interviews. Although the first individual interviews were held with some participants under the age of 12, they all did not want to participate in the second interview. In hindsight, I considered it strategic as the second interview was focused on contextual meanings and understanding which even the older participants had a challenging time answering. The full participants, all over the age of 12, have aged out of the school section of Jeel al-Amal and are continuing their education in a public school in the town, meaning they have more interactions in the town and with the people. The interviews then also focused on their connections to the 'outside world' which provided insight into their attitudes and feelings about life outside the institution, possible hopes and fears about the future aging out process and other interesting reflections.

The interviews were semi-structured in format to allow greater flexibility in conversation which resulted in a greater collection of data. Moreover, two interviews were important to the project design as it provided space for remarks on expectations the participants had for the research as well as offering the opportunity to add closure as the project came to an end. Another benefit of using multiple interviews stems from the reoccurrence of certain questions during the interviews. Clark (2010) expands on this further as it allows children to revisit their previous answers and also gives the researcher the opportunity to notice and reflect upon the answers given throughout the entire process.

Group Interview

One group interview was conducted with the seven full participants and one partial participant. It served as a means for the participants to contribute, and share similar and opposing ideas, views, feelings and thoughts amongst the participants, as well as to gain an understanding of the dynamics between them (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). Using a picture based model, I showed the participants 35 photographs of different locations around the world, historical figures, politicians, sports stars, symbols, and notable moments throughout history. It was found to be useful in opening up a dialogue between the youth offered them the opportunity to voice their opinions on certain themes explored. A beneficial element for using this method along with one-on-one interviews has been described by Clark (2010) as, “Some children will only respond to interview questions if asked in a group session, whilst others will only answer if asked in a one-to-one situation” (p. 34). A participant who was hesitant to speak his mind on a one-on-one basis was very vocal in the group setting, and reversely another participant, who was vocal during individual interviews, would only offer his opinion if he was directly asked and even then, was hesitant. This involvement of individual participants in the group interview and the insight gained from the dialogue was used in the development of discussion points for the second interview.

Drawings & Tour Guiding

Drawings were used with most of the participants and explored different topics such as home, safety, futures, dreams, and reality in an attempt to understand the children’s ideas of home, family, love, care, happiness, sadness, and their views of the occupation. The participants were all asked for dialogue of their interpretations on their drawings. The participants own words helped create a narrative for the drawings, and encouraged them to share the ideas they were trying to convey and helped lessen the misinterpretation by the researcher (van Blerk, 2006). Another visual tool that was used was participant-led tours. The tours, which were done by three participants, allowed the youth participant free-reign on content as long as it stayed within the realm of ‘my life at Jeel al-Amal’. It was beneficial to the understanding of life through their eyes and what they deemed necessary to show me. The inability to travel freely for the children (and adults) living in the West Bank is an important consideration to their

understanding of life, borders, movement and freedom. Using visual tools helped open conversations about opportunities and limitations they feel, as well as provide other interesting discussion matters that the participants initiated during the process.

Ethical Considerations

Specific acknowledgments were taken during the research process to ensure the ethical and moral treatment of the youth and children participants, and will be detailed presently. Firstly, the power relations between the adult researcher and the youth participants were reflected upon and fine-tuned to lessen the power difference. As foreign adults can be perceived as particularly overwhelming (van Blerk, 2006), special consideration was given by the researcher who although is of Palestinian origin, was born outside of Palestine and is considered by many inside Palestine as a foreigner. To compensate for this, the youth and children participants were asked for ideas for their involvement in the research such as what they wanted to draw, talk about, and show me on their tours. Another compensation for this was to adopt a technique dubbed by Christensen (2004) and supported by Mayall (2000) as the ‘unusual adult’. This method involves the conscious effort of the researcher to not assume traditional adult roles and instead adopt an unusual adult presentation that presents themselves as someone genuinely interested in the perspectives of children about their social worlds (Tisdall, Davis, & Gallagher, 2009).

Another important ethical consideration made was the sensitive nature of the topics discussed. As children and youth living under occupation and away from their biological family, sensitive topic materials arose during the interviews. As the adult researcher, I reflected upon the interview guide beforehand and took visual and silent cues from the participants as the discussions progressed to ensure that they were not feeling distressed and I would not press for more information about sensitive materials they did not want to share. At the same time, distressing subjects were not entirely avoided, but when such moments arose, they were handled with techniques to destress the participants (Boyden & Ennew, 1997; Robson, 2001 in van Bler, 2006). Techniques included talking about favorite memories, funny moments they have experienced, and doing drawing activities that highlighted the security and positives of their lives.

Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) connected interview practices with a metaphor of mining or traveling. In both metaphors, knowledge is sought, but the means of extraction differs. In this

study, I related to the traveler for a couple of reasons: first, the premise of the study is to understand the life of children from the children themselves – thereby signifying the usefulness of the interviewer to "walk along with local inhabitants, asking questions and encouraging them to tell their own stories of their lived worlds" (p. 48). The traveler's method of interviewing also tries to take into account the surrounding contextual experience of the situation – another central aspect of the study. To this effect, probing questions were used during the individual interviews with the participants to serve a two-fold concern - the youth participants were not used to discussing their opinions, and the subject matters were not commonly thought about by them.

As minors in an institution, they are used to decisions being made for them about most aspects of their life, and for the most part, they were not asked about their opinions on matters. As minors in life, there were topics that some have never contemplated before. To counteract these issues, mostly during the first interview, I made sure to inform them that what I wanted to hear about was their opinion and that as an opinion, it cannot be right or wrong. This was a point that was repeatedly mentioned to make sure they understood. For this reason, as well, probing and delving deeper into their answers was attempted to open up the space for more in-depth conversations and it allowed the participants more time to think about their answers and to form fuller opinions on the subjects (Yow, 1994; Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). By the second interview, probing was less used as the rapport between us was built upon and they were more used to express their ideas and thoughts to me, with confidence.

Arabic is the mother tongue of the participants, and the field work was all conducted in Arabic. Minor issues arose with the different dialects used by the participants but were compensated for by inquiring into the meaning of some of the terminology used by the participants. A glossary at the beginning of this thesis can be utilized in order to grasp the true meaning of the words that do not translate adequately into English and lose part of their meaning if done so. For that reason, certain Arabic terms will be used instead of the English translation. Further language barriers were considered during the research process, such as the participants possibly misinterpretation of the questions. To compensate for this, the participants were given the questionnaires in Arabic, and the questions were discussed verbally first before they answered so that it was understood. For a few of the participants, the supervisors helped with answering the questionnaires to ensure that the vocabulary used was understood as some of the youth had writing difficulties. These questionnaires were used in the development of the

interview guides and drawing activities. A personal limitation of the project consisted of the researcher's ability to adequately converse with the children in their many different dialects. This was resolved by confirming the translations of the conversations with a native Arabic speaker – my mother.

With regards to two major pillars of ethical research - confidentiality, and anonymity – utmost importance was present in the research design. Due to the specific situations of some of the participants, the risk of identification through the data collected was possible, so, careful consideration was made during all stages of the data collection and writing of this thesis to ensure that the confidentiality of the participants was upheld. Another dilemma arose within the social context of Palestine. Culturally, abundant personal information about the participants was shared with the researcher by participants and gatekeepers. Reflection and deliberation of each bit of information was taken to make sure no personal knowledge was conveyed in the writing of this report and to keep the participant's identity confidential. Here, the youth participants are referred to *shabab* (young man), and their ages are not listed to ensure their anonymity. Logistically speaking, securing a location inside the institution that was both private and was not uncomfortable for the all-male participants was at first tricky but was established in the activity room. However, there were several disturbances from the other youth as they were intrigued by the research and locking the door would have been culturally unacceptable.

Personally speaking, an ethical issue that I was conscious of during the fieldwork was not to mix my role as the researcher with other roles that I may have taken on – such as mother or teacher – with the children and youth (Solberg, 1996). Another aspect I reflected upon during the fieldwork was my emotional closeness to the site and the participants. As emotional attachment is a delicate matter and the children are sometimes eager for love and attention, a clear boundary was maintained, and closure methods and activities were held in order to not negatively affect them when leaving the field.

Limitations

Certain limitations were present during the research study that should be identified. Ideally in an ethnographic study, the length of time for fieldwork should be longer to gain a better understanding of life inside the institution, but as visa length and personal finances dictated, I was only able to spend two months in the field site. Although, in these two months I gained

rapport and felt accepted by those living there, more insight and observations could have been possible with more time. Secondly, during the summer months, some of the youth return to their distant family's homes if it is available for them. In Palestine, there is an emphasis on care by the biological family. Jeel al-Amal tries to organize some family time for the children by arranging a visit for them to return to their family's villages. These visits could be as short as a day trip or last the entire summer - depending on the biological family's situation and ability to provide for the children during their visits. Because of this, during the summer months, there could be as few as 25 youth present as compared to the school year when 75 boys are present.

Another limitation is that all the participants, with the exemption of the female caregiver and the interim director of the institution, are males. This offers valuable insight into the perspective of growing up male in Palestine but does not provide any insight into a female perspective, which would probably have been very different. In regard to discussion points during interviews, having all-male youth participants proved to be a challenge. This is due to the cultural and religious norms present that indicate that certain subjects are inappropriate to discuss between males and females.

Translations - Transcriptions

Valuable data was collected during the fieldwork process that illuminated the youth's experiences and perspectives about different aspects of life. The bulk of the information gathered was from one-on-one interviews and the group interview. During these data collection methods, the participants' responses were tape recorded to ensure the appropriate translation, transcription, and understanding could be properly comprehended. The participants were aware of the tape recorder, and although I tried to hide the device, many of the youth were very intrigued by it and at several points in the recorded interviews are the curious questions from the participants. The participants were also filmed during the focus group discussion in order for me to distinguish who said what, but as I was already very familiar with their voices, this was unneeded, and the video recording was deleted.

The interviews were translated during the transcription period from colloquial Arabic to English. I focused on the translation and transcription of the full participants first, then the focus group and then partial participants interviews. It takes a great deal of time to translate and transcribe, so, for this reason, partial participants' interviews were listened to first, and based on

the content, it was decided on whether to transcribe the interview. A total of four interviews from partial participants were not transcribed, as the youth were all under the age of 10 years and were mostly interested in listening to their own voice on the tape recording. There are multiple benefits to transcribing your own data collection according to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009). Such benefits include the comprehension of the emotional and social aspects that were present during the interviews, the knowledge from the interviewing experience, and the familiarity with the data during the entire process that helped in the analysis of the material.

Analysis

As I had previous knowledge of the contextual situation and various perceptions of life in Palestine prior to the study, it was important for me to separate from and suspend my previous interpretation of reality and focus more on ‘entering into the world of the unique individual who was interviewed’ known as ‘bracketing’ (Hycner, 1985, p. 281 in Tesch, 1990, p. 92). Becoming familiar, comfortable and absorbed in the information was done through the reading and re-reading of generated data. Through this, themes emerged that created the initial segmentation of thematic coding that was done. As the data was rich with information, re-coding was necessary in order to distinguish certain patterns and similarities discussed by the participants. This process produced depictions of different dimensions of life were organized to provide a ‘limited’ view of the participant's lives. I say limited because as Gudmunnsdottir (1996) implied, studies could provide only a ‘limited’ depiction of the informants' reality. Alternatively, if speaking from a philosophical perspective then it applies to a truth as seen by someone meaning this limited view is simply the participants’ truth. This limited reality or this truth is what I am trying to convey in this thesis to the best of my ability.

Reliability & Validity

Reliability is a multifaceted presence in the data analysis process and refers to the reliability of the interviewer’s interviewing skills, reliability of the translation and transcription, and reliability of the interpretation of the participants’ responses. It also applies to the dependability of the findings (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Validity refers to the truthfulness and sound reasoning of data and the collection of that data. Was the data collection method appropriate in

terms of the aim and questions being asked, did it answer the question, and was the analysis of the data sound and defensible? (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Many factors came into play when deliberating on the reliability and validity of a study during the development and production of the interview guides, transcription and the analysis of collected data. True impartiality is challenging, perhaps impossible, to apply in a qualitative study as we associate meanings to the words, data and findings that emerge in the study. However, reliability is possible through careful consideration of the interview questions, the interviewing tactics used, the transcription and analysis of data, and "the consistency and trustworthiness of research findings" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 245). Validity is paramount while considering the research aim, research questions and forming the interview guides as to confirm that the findings answered the question. Mainly, that the knowledge generated from the research is sound in reason and collection and therefore the analysis and discussion reflect this validity. To this effect, probing questions were used to test the reliability and validity of the answers given during the interviews as well as to validate my interpretation to their answers. Although, it was also acknowledged that leading questions could open windows for communication but at the same time, can also close off other potential responses.

Another aspect of reliability and validity becomes apparent in the responses of the participants during different methods of data collection. Goffman (1959) used the terms front stage and backstage to distinguish between statements. It implies that validity of statements can be thought of in terms of statements someone may say in front of an audience and what they may say alone backstage. The value in backstage statements is great as it reveals a level of truthfulness or validity that is not necessarily present in front-stage statements. In this study, I ranked the different methods used based on these forms of statements and determined that I valued the data from one-on-one interviews higher than the focus group due to the prevalence of front stage statements in the latter. The questionnaires, tours, and children's drawings were useful but less valued than interviews because of the setting they were administered at. For instance, some participants drew what they thought I wanted to see and showed me different aspects of their room on tours in a matter of trying to impress me. Although these methods proved beneficial in data collection and building a rapport with the participants, less value was placed on them during analysis. The field observations are considered by me as backstage statements since, I can deliberate and document my experiences during the study about the

participants and dynamics but that is simply my truth, and it is used mainly in the analysis as a way to reconnect myself to the environment, and emotions that were felt during the study. The data generated, whether considered front stage or backstage, was used to discover trends, patterns, and themes during the analysis process. The following three chapters will present and discuss the data as follows: firstly, I focus on the micro-contextual factors of the participants' lives, especially aspects of the home and school with a discussion on the resulting socialization and sense of belonging that transpired from them. The next chapter presents data from the macro-contexts in the area in order to conceptualize how wider aspects of the society, community, conflict, and religion contribute to the developed identity of the participants as youth, as Palestinians, and as human beings in general and how these identifications impact their perception of normality and resiliency. Finally, in the conclusion the micro and macro contextual factors will be discussed connected to the perceived vulnerability of the youth.

Chapter 5: Heaven in Hell

Aspects of the Home and School & their Impact on Children's Rights, Provisions, and Protection

Introduction

As previously described, the Israeli occupation of the West Bank has been in place since 1967, and through the decades of occupation, the standard of living and the way of life in Palestine have been severely impacted. The field site, Jeel al-Amal boys home and school, is located in a city called Bethany within the West Bank and serves as a home for children and youth recommended by the social welfare department. The literal translation of the institution's name is 'Generation of Hope', and it carries an emphasis placed by the founders that hope for children is derived from their education and their upbringing into adulthood. The institution provides the educational, living, and what is regarded as developmental needs to the children and youth who reside there until they complete their secondary education around the age of 18 years old. The different methods, resources, and services they provide for the pupils in the immediate environment, or micro contexts, will be presented and discussed in this chapter. When traveling in Bethany, one can observe that the area is filled with negative consequences of the occupation, as was described in the background chapter; however, interestingly these elements seemingly remain outside the institution's walls. Of course, the occupation is felt at the institution but not to the extent of which it is felt outside of those walls. Trends, perspectives, and patterns emerged during data collection that illuminated dynamics of different areas of life for the children and youth inside the institution.

My goal for this chapter is to describe - using the participants' words, actions, drawings – the micro-contexts of their childhood inside an institution and explore the impact of life within a scope of children's rights including protection, provisions, participatory rights and welfare. These aspects of daily life will be discussed presently in terms regarding the physical, social, emotional and academic spheres of life and will be connected to the perceived development of the youth as they grow within their lives at the institution. I assumed, as childhood is specific to time and place and a social construct (James et al., 1998), that the participants' accounts of their lives in this specific context would be different from children in other parts of the world, especially those living with relative peace. As such, the contextual generalization of the data can

be extended to non-participants who also live at the institution but cannot logically be extended statistically to children and youth living outside of the institution as the participants were not chosen at random and the results are not quantified (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Micro Contexts – School & Home

Micro contexts include, as already mentioned, the physical surroundings that operate as both a boarding section and a primary school. The presence of these micro contexts, as posited by developmental researchers Youngblade et al., (2007), has a connection with constructive social and emotional developmental outcomes in youth. An aim of the institution as described to me by an administrator is to aid the children with their social and emotional development to prepare them for adulthood. Different aspects of the school and the home section of the institution will be detailed in relation to the perceived positive development of the youth through their progression of cognitive skills and in their self-value and self-motivation. Each will be currently discussed.

Provisions, Programs, and Opportunities

The youth of the institution benefit from programs and activities that are offered for educational, social and emotional developmental support. Examples include - a foreign music organization that offers workshops to the youth, the local university that teaches an internet technology class to them three times a week during the summer, different community groups organize a ‘day of joy’ with recreation activities, artists hold art workshops, volunteers run an annual summer camp, clowns perform comedic and magic shows and the director and supervisors organize sporting events for the youth to attend and participate in. Starting in Autumn 2017, a French organization began teaching weekly life skill training for the youth, the house-mothers and fathers, and the teachers at the school. These trainings include social skill developmental and teaching techniques for academic, emotional and psychological support. These programs and interventions are welcomed and appreciated by the adults and children alike, with many of the participants expressing their satisfaction and joy with the activities they have and the events organized by the institution. Even on day to day basis, I have observed the staff of the institution plan little parties and occasions to celebrate achievements made by the youth. On one occasion, the youth had a ‘wedding’ party planned for them in which they took turns as the

groom, dressed up in traditional grooms clothing, played music and danced. The youth were smiling and laughing as they entered into their 'wedding' being carried on the shoulders of their peers, and seemed to enjoy the attention that being a groom, even for a short time, brought them. These activities were listed as some of the best parts of living there by all of the participants individually at least once during the interviews.

Shabab 8: It is nice, and they plan a lot for us here. Life here is lovely.

The institution also spends resources and time to provide exciting 'adventures' for the children. To celebrate the youth completing another academic year, the children were taken on a field trip to the Mediterranean Sea. Although it is only an hour and a half away by bus, this was the first time many of the children saw the sea due to the travel restrictions placed on Palestinians by the occupation. Due to the fact that most of the adult staff and the youth over 16 years of age hold a green, West Bank only identification card, special allowance had to be retrieved from the Israeli government for the boys to cross the separation wall and travel to the sea. This was a tedious task of paperwork and personal appearances by the institution's interim director to the Ministry of Interior in Jerusalem, in which she achieved permission for about half of the youth. Disheartened, the director decided to try her luck at the checkpoint going towards Jerusalem to see if the soldiers on duty would allow the children to pass. In the end, all of the youth were allowed to pass except for the oldest boy who recently submitted his final school exams and two of the house mothers. The director recalled to me that the institution strives to uphold a policy of inclusivity with the youth, and due to this was going to cancel the trip for the children. However, the oldest youth, who was denied Israeli permission to travel to the sea, insisted that the group visited the sea without him. His younger brothers were on the bus and received permission to go, and he wanted them to see the sea, something they had not been able to do for a decade. The experience of going to the sea turned out to be one of the most remarkable for the participants who were allowed to go. This trip, amongst other field trips and planned activities, allowed the youth to leave their everyday micro-contexts, and were spoken optimistically about by the participants:

Shabab 3: Everything is good here. The trips we take, the swimming we do. I most like getting out of here on trips and seeing parts of the country and doing different activities.

During the fieldwork, and in past experiences with the institution, I have observed numerous visitors from the surrounding area and also from around the world who come to the institution bringing donations, gifts, food and candy for the children. Within the Islamic faith, there is an emphasis on supplying and caring for orphans. Decrees of this are present in multiple chapters of the Quran and the hadiths (moralistic stories about the prophet from trusted followers). Examples in the second chapter of the Quran include: “Worship none but Allah (God); treat with kindness your parents and kindred, and orphans and those in need; speak fair to the people; be steadfast in prayer; and practice regular charity...” (2:83) and “They ask thee concerning orphans. Say: ‘The best thing to do is what is for their good’” (2:220). The generosity, gifts and attention from visitors is valuable to the youth, as some of the informants expressed to me:

N.M.: What’s the best thing here in Jeel al-Amal?

Shabab 6: That a lot of people come to visit us and bring us supplies and gifts. A lot of people love us here, and we love them too. They bring us nice things. Everything here is great.

N.M.: How was fasting for Ramadan this year?

Shabab 4: It was good. We got a lot of visitors who brought us things, so that was nice. We are very good here.

Islam, although the dominant religion of the area, is not the only denomination that commands caring for needy. The Christian founders of the institution were influenced greatly by the religious duty to help needy children and even included it into their philosophy of care: "In what language does a child cry?"

Adult 1: The founder always said, “In what language does a child cry?” because if she saw the child wanting and needing help and wouldn’t care about religion or anything else but just needed to hug and care for that child. And that’s what all the religions talk about- compassion and loving everybody. Christianity even says, “Love thy enemy”, so of course you also love your own people.

Space to Play

In a situation of occupation where the area of land is either shrinking or prohibited from use, a major problem is space. In regards to children and space, a child’s space includes the home,

school and most identifiable – playgrounds (Clark, 2010). In Palestine, there are an insufficient number of playgrounds or safe areas for children to play in for the number of children present. This results in the constant use of streets to play in - a dangerous location as there are no barriers separating vehicles and pedestrians. In my past visits to Palestine, I have witnessed two separate incidents of children being hit by a passing vehicle as they played outside their homes. There are organizations who focus primarily on establishing playgrounds and soccer fields in the West Bank for children to use, but finding the space and resources to build a playground can be challenging. Contradictory to the deficiency of child-friendly areas in the surrounding area, Jeel al-Amal has a soccer pitch, two playgrounds, an indoor activity hall, and an indoor recreation room with foosball table, table tennis and a PlayStation – all of which are located inside the compound. The benefits of these elements are significant as it provides a safe place to play and interact as well as allow the adults to keep watch over them to ensure safety. The participants expressed their appreciation and enjoyment of these features, not only in words but in drawings as well. When asked to draw any part of Jeel al-Amal, 10 participants drew the soccer pitch and a playground, five drew the playground and the school, and one drew the living room area.



Drawing of Jeel al-Amal by a participant

Academic Opportunities

The staff, through evaluations of the pupils, have observed and documented behavioral and academic progress of the youth due to the schooling section of the institution. Here, two main aspects of the education provided will be discussed: the quality of education, and the focus on special needs. The staff evaluates the children's cognitive and social progress with comparisons from their initial entrance into the institution to present day through standardized tests and observations on social interactions and behavioral issues. Their aim, as described by an adult staff participant, is to prepare the youth for the growing responsibility of adulthood, to decide a direction for future careers in life, and to aid them in the educational goals set to achieve these future plans. The quality of education at the school helps develop the cognitive skills of the youth and allows them the experience of pursuing non-violent measures in interactions with others as well as distancing them from the outside macro contexts of the occupation and the subsequent activities associated with it.

Along with the programs and activities offered to the youth in the institution, they are also afforded special opportunities academically that are not readily available to others. A special needs classroom is in construction and is set to be opened in the Autumn of 2018. It is deemed a necessary addition to the school as a number of the youth suffer from learning disabilities and behavioral issues from past traumatic experiences. As disabilities (physical or mental) are stigmatic in the region and shunned, Palestine currently has no special needs schools or classrooms, making the need for them great.

Adult 1: It is something I am very excited about. You know in Palestine how disabilities, mental or physical, are not discussed openly; they are shunned. With this extension of the special needs classroom we can focus on individual student's needs. We have a few in the boarding section that we suspect are on the autistic spectrum, it is very difficult for them to learn in a normal classroom and it is difficult for the other children to learn with them there. We have 30-35 students for every teacher, so they are unable to receive the individual attention that will help them succeed. The new classroom will hopefully help this effort.

The availability of these programs and opportunities aims to help in the evaluated progression of the youth's cognitive, social, and psychological development and has the intention of creating new skillsets that may be useful in their everyday lives and later.

Adult 2: We try to prepare them daily for life outside Jeel al-Amal as an adult. We do this by teaching good manners and a positive attitude. After they turn 18, they become men, and still, we try to assist them with life as men. These programs they get, they help with that.

Stability Through Routine

Additionally, it was not only the opportunities and programs the youth appreciated, but it was also the organized structure of the routine that they have in place that designated time for recreation and academics. The schedule offered the youth a structure for their days and activities while also placing importance on studying for their education and subsequently their future by designating time after school every day for studying and homework. During these study times, the youth gathered in groups according on grade level, worked on their assignments and were helped by the house-mothers and ‘father’ supervisors. Within this specific micro context, the participants’ experience of and value on structures and routine were shared with me.

N.M.: Why do you like living here.

Shabab 5: Because living here is better because there’s discipline. We can study, play and write. I mean we can do those at my father's home, but it's different here than there. How do I tell you? At home, we are always going to the store or out in the streets. There’s no discipline, no constancy, and filled with chaos. Here I can study and go to school and it’s better here than at home for that.

This sentiment was shared by others as well:

N.M.: What is the best thing about living here?

Shabab 1: For sure the rules and schedule are the best. I like routines and I like being organized.

The daily routines present in the institution also had an influence on the understanding some participants had on long-term preparation for their development:

N.M: Why do you think is good about Jeel al-Amal?

Shabab 7: Here is better for building my future.

N.M.: Than where?

Shabab 7: Home, other orphanages. It’s better than anywhere else, especially for my future.

The effects of the combination of activities, programs, and schooling have been observed and described by the staff to me as beneficial to the youths' behavior, at least when compared to other youth in the area.

Adult 1: The methods here with the boys and the great job all the adults do for them shows in their behavior. When we have snacks, when we go on field trips, when we have visitors they are so interactive and polite and clean. They always clean up after themselves and the others. If I compare them with other children their age, the other children would be a disaster. Our boys know how to act in a new environment. I think it comes from the space they are given to feel comfortable with themselves and to think for themselves.

From a psychological perspective, developmental progress is strengthened by having a general sense of safety and protection (Freud, 1989; Hess & Torney-Purta, 2005). The protection, or lack thereof, felt at the institution will be discussed in three parts –protection from the occupation, protection from physical punishment in school, and protection from family and social norms. The participants' agency will also be discussed within the micro contexts of home and school.

A Shield from the Occupation

The violence that is experienced with the occupation is felt in a multitude of ways that have already been mentioned: namely, the presence of military and weapons, night raids, arrests, and protests. The presence of all of these elements are felt throughout Palestine. A recurrent theme in the interviews was a sense amongst interviewees that they were safe inside the institution. All the youth participants spoke of this safety inside Jeel al-Amal, and they felt that they were protected there. A participant even at one point said to me, “*You would protect us from the army if they came and wanted to arrest one of us*”. I responded by asking how I could protect them, to which he replied, “*You would not let them hurt us, we know that*”. The exact reasoning behind their sense of security was not specified although a couple of the informants used the term ‘forbidden’ when discussing why the Israeli Army does not enter the institution's property.

Shabab 5: When I went home when I was in fifth grade the army would come to our place at night. The army is there a lot at night until about five in the morning. They bother us when we are in our homes. My brothers are wanted by the army so they come at night to arrest them and

we go to the roof to throw stones at their heads.

N.M.: What happens if the army comes here?

Shabab 5: They go into Bethany but not here in Jeel al-Amal. It's forbidden for them to enter here.

Of course, considering the control the Israeli occupation has over Palestine, it is not 'forbidden' for the Israeli army to enter the institution, but they never have before. However, the informants use of the term portrays the level of security they feel. Ultimately, the boys expressed feelings of safety and assurance as a sort of protective shield against the occupation that stops the violence from entering and keeps the boys safe from danger within the walls of the institution. It was a shared sentiment that was widespread amongst the youth living there, and articulated in different settings with me by the participants.

Although violence in the region is common, it comes in waves. Within the timeframe that the study was conducted, two Palestinians were shot dead after an alleged attack on Israeli military on the religious Haram al-Sharif (Temple Mount) in Jerusalem, seven kilometers away from the institution. The Israeli government responded with the addition of metal detectors at the compound. This was met by the Palestinians with daily protests and demonstrations and an increased number of Palestinian casualties. During this time, I observed signs of this unrest in the streets and in conversations, including the shooting and killing of a 17-year-old recent high school graduate from neighboring village, Abu Dis, during a protest. However, I realized that the overwhelming tension of the current situation did not noticeably enter into the boys' lives inside the institution; in a way, they seemed safeguarded from the realities that other youth faced in the area. Through interviews and observations, I became aware that the youth are kept away from the violence of occupation as much as possible inside the walls of the institution, including a strict no-protest and no-stone-throwing rule that is enforced especially for the older boys who travel into town to their secondary school, and placing an importance on education, homework, recreational activities and sports. The reasoning for these methods include the physical safety of the youth as the army retaliates to protests with tear gas, rubber bullets, steel bullets, and arrests. A supervisor expressed the opinion that it is in the child's best interest to be kept away from these events as much as possible:

Adult 2: The kids have a better life here than the kids living outside because their school is here and they don't have the chance to go to protests or to throw stones at the wall and for the most part, they stay away from the soldiers and army. We organize their IDs, their schools, their life. They don't have to do any of those things. We make sure they stay away from the occupation as much as possible and they don't throw stones, and they don't idolize shaheeds (martyrs).

This tactic has reaped benefits with some of the children who expressed the negative aspects of attending the protests and throwing stones.

Shabab 6: Protesting isn't always a good thing to do. The army will bring 15 soldiers for every one of us. Why don't you protect your health instead?

Shabab 2: Stone-throwing does nothing. It's an empty action. It doesn't achieve anything, I respect it, but it doesn't do anything. Just gets them a bullet and a martyr's death.

Interestingly, the act of defiance against the occupation and army itself is not what some of the informants disagree with; for them, their disagreement is focused on the methods of resistance used.

Shabab 3.: We have to fight and this is one way, but it doesn't get us anywhere. They will shoot to kill us.

Shabab 5: I think the knife attacks achieve more, it makes the soldiers scared of us, at least.

During the group interview, the participants discussed together if they thought knife attacks were generally negative or positive. They agreed and offered the statement: *We have to do something, they (the army) shoot bullets, and they should pay for it.*

A Safe Place

The youth's perspectives on Palestinian violence towards the Israeli soldiers as defensive has, in part, been constructed by their lives and experiences in their family homes before coming to the institution. Along with the current unrest in neighboring Jerusalem, the daily life inside Palestine is met with threats and insecurities, such as night raids by soldiers in family homes, arrests and acts of bodily harm. These happenings are common in many cities, especially in the refugee camps spread across Palestine – some of which were the boys' homes before Jeel al-

Amal. Compared to the experiences of youth and children living in other areas of the West Bank, including towns and refugee camps, this sense of security the participants feel is unique.

N.M.: How do you feel when you are not here at Jeel al-Amal?

Shabab 5: I feel scared. I'm scared of someone attacking me, especially at night. But not here. No one can attack me here.

A relatively common aspect of life in Palestine includes arrests of minors under the age of 18. According to the Defense of Children in Palestine (DCIP), an average of 310 children were arrested and detained in Israeli prisons every month of 2017, the majority of these arrests occurred with youth who live in their family homes. Furthermore, DCIP also documented 14 Palestinian minors who were killed by Israeli forces in 2017, and 35 minors in 2016.¹¹ As depicted by the aforementioned quotes, these aggressive actions are met with resistance, often violent in nature, and include members of society from children to adults.

N.M.: Can you tell me something that you are afraid of?

Shabab 6: I don't get scared of anything but Allah (God). Jeel al-Amal makes me feel safe.

This feeling of safety and protection is not a sentiment of the youth alone in the institution; it was also expressed by the adults.

N.M: Do you feel the effects of the occupation?

Adult 1: In Bethany and Palestine as a whole, yes. We feel it when things are happening in the streets. But inside Jeel al-Amal, no, this is a safe place. But the atrocities that the Israeli soldiers commit against Palestinians is felt all around even if we don't experience it firsthand. But inside these walls we try to keep it a safe place.

Violence Free School Zone

In regards to violence, it is quite literally seen all around in Palestine, not only stemming from the occupation but also from internal Palestinian forces as well. Physical reprimanding is used within the society from those across the adult spectrum of a child's life including parents, uncles and aunts, teachers, neighbors and older siblings. However, in this institution, which

¹¹ Figures according to http://www.dci-palestine.org/year_in_review_worst_abuses_against_palestinian_children_in_2017

provides the youth with housing and education, it is expressly forbidden to use physical force against them in the school. This non-violent practice was indicated, by the informants, as a highlight in the institution, and was expressed at least once by every participant, as a feature they appreciate greatly. As the institute only provides primary education, the boys above the age of 14 continue their education either in vocational training at the 'industrial orphanage' located less than a kilometer away or in a secondary school in the town. These teenagers conferred to me during interviews that the non-violent discipline is an element they miss as they attend a school where physical punishment is used.

N.M.: You said before that Jeel al-Amal is the best place in Palestine, why do you feel that way?

Shabab 4: Because it is the best and the teachers in the school are good. They don't hurt us or anything. Even if we misbehave, they don't discipline us like that.

N.M.: Can you compare this school with the school you go to now for me?

Shabab 4: I love it here. The teachers care, and at the other school, it's like a prison with the other boys' problems.

Participants' experiences were detailed about the physical forms of punishment used in other schools, such as:

Shabab 3: They hit you with a ruler. Anything small that you do that's wrong they hit you in your hands. If you do something really bad, you get hit ten times.

The safety felt by participants at the institution was not only in regards to teachers but also with fellow peers. In past research, positive outcomes for youth were associated with schooling while negative outcomes were linked with interactions with delinquent peers (Youngblade et al., 2007). A participant discussed with me his views on his education in the secondary school he attends in the town and the peers in the school:

N.M.: What do you like about school?

Shabab 2: I don't like anything in that school but especially the other kids. They are not good kids, they don't behave, and they don't listen. Not like here.

Another informant spoke of the differences in experiences he has with peers at the industrial orphanage compared to Jeel al-Amal:

Shabab 4: I don't like that the kids aren't so friendly there, and they can get a little too much with the joking, as long as they don't joke too much then it's ok but I think this school is a lot better.

Although, the adults in the institution try to protect the children from any physical mistreatment, it is not always in their power to do so. As social and cultural norms support the use of physical discipline, their jurisdiction and ability to act on the matter ends at their property line.

The majority of misbehaving in Jeel al-Amal school is dealt in form of time-outs and taking an item away from the child for a time. Although, in the boarding section of the institute, physical punishments such as a 'light' slap on the back, back of the neck or on the hand is occasionally used on youth who misbehave throughout the entire day or hits a peer. It seemingly was understood by the participants that even the slaps are not as it would be if they were in the family home.

Shabab 1: It's a light slap. Exactly like what we would get if we lived at home with our father if we are lucky.

Instead, positive re-enforcement is encouraged inside the school and the boarding section of the institute. A particular tactic I observed was used with a youth who cleaned up a mess he did not create without being asked to. The 'father' supervisor announced to the other children the deed the youth did and that he did it because he was a good person. All the children clapped for him, and he was rewarded with a small present that he accepted with a big smile. This approach has been found by the adult guardians to yield more fruitful results with the youth.

Adult 1: We can't treat them the way they have been treated their whole lives, it doesn't accomplish anything for the boys. The amazing thing to see though is that once they see that dinner is served to them on a daily basis and is never taken away as punishment, that we don't use violence as a way of discipline, that this is your place, we love you, we care about you – bit by bit they start following the routine, the lifestyle here and they just feel relaxed from inside that things are going well.

Safety from Family

For a number of youth that were placed in the institution by the social welfare agency, the violence they experienced in their homes by family members was considered excessive compared to the local norms. As detailed, the institution's youth are sheltered from the use of physical discipline inside the school and the staff are urged to use alternative forms of discipline in the boarding section. However, the physical extent of that protection ends at the boundaries of the property grounds. Some of the youth have the possibility of returning to their family homes or villages for weekends or during the school breaks. Arguably though, due to the forbiddance of physical punishment at the institution, the vulnerability, or exposure to harm, of the youth and children increases if they return to family homes for holidays or weekends. This is especially the case if they were placed in the institution due to domestic abuse. Although, social norms and customs constrains the institution's ability to protect the youth when they are with their families, the staff still attempts to discuss with the adult family members alternate disciplinary tools that can be used. Ultimately, the receptiveness and acceptance of these suggestions are up to the family members and the staff are aware that they are unable to stop the use of violence used against the children when they are off the property. An adult informant spoke to me about past experiences in this and the methods used to try to protect the children from their biological families.

N.M.: Have you had the experience of a child returning to their family home for a break and returning abused?

Adult 1: Yes, once a boy came back from a holiday very abused and after that, we fought to keep him with us here during the breaks. It was a struggle though, especially with these social standards. It is unbelievably common to hit children here.

The youth's knowledge of what is best for them is partially learned from experience. As one participant expressed:

Shabab 5: My brothers and I don't go back home to my fathers. There's big problems there. A lot of yelling, fighting and hitting. Here is better, there is no fighting here.

The apparent benefits from this sense of the safety they feel in Jeel al-Amal was demonstrated in the youths' decrease of symptoms from abuse or neglect, such as bed-wetting, temper tantrums, social withdraw and an increase of socializing, laughter and playfulness, desires for attention, and requests to help. An adult participant spoke of the development in the youth:

Adult 1: It's in the little things that you really see it- when the child is no longer afraid to be near people, and he asks to be introduced to others and says, "hi, my name is..." this is really huge for us. When this used to be a boy who used to drop to the ground and start crying if he heard someone calling his name and now he gives hugs and feel more and more relaxed with himself. He knows he will be fed, cared for and loved here.

As I observed, the youth at the institution are provided protection from the occupation and from closer family relations that other children may not have due to ecological factors. However, it should be understood that the safety and security felt by the informants is ultimately controlled by the Israeli forces. Throughout the West Bank, in family homes and institutions including schools, constant undermining by the Israeli occupation impacts adults' abilities in terms of providing for children's safety and well-being. Realities such as high rate of unemployment, imprisonments of family and community members, home demolitions, and night raids by the Israeli army undermine the protection provided by adults and families to children in the home and impacts the stability in family dynamics. These factors affect the population in general, and youth specifically due to adults' perceptions of children's vulnerability (Veronese & Castiglioni, 2015). As I observed during the study, Jeel al-Amal attempted to lessen the amount of risk and vulnerability of the youth by focusing on their education, safety and development. Their use of non-violent practices produced a generally positive attitude in the youth who live there, who also recognized and spoke of their appreciation of the different (non-violent) treatment they receive there compared to their family homes and other schools.

Agency in Choosing their Home

Even with the previous history of abuse and neglect in the home, some youth are hesitant and unwilling to be in the institution. The agency the youth are able to practice in the matter of their

placement at the institution is minimal and more consideration of placement is given to the biological family members and the social welfare agency.

N.M.: Do the boys get a say about their living arrangements?

Adult 1: Not so much, you know Palestinian culture it has to do more with children abiding adults' decisions. They don't have much choice whether to be here or at home. But as a rule, the social welfare agency says that if the mother or father want the child, it is their right to have them.

The institution staff was observed to take into consideration the youth's views on their placement during breaks. Although, it was also acknowledged that social standards prohibit the staff's ability to always act upon the views of the youth.

Adult 1: One of the boys here pleaded with me after a few months of living here, "please, please don't send me back to my father." He wouldn't tell me that he was being abused when he went back but insisted that he likes being here instead. When the children are adamant about it, we try to heed it, although with societal rules, their family has a right to them.

Due to customs that emphasize the importance of family, the degree of consideration for the child's opinion on returning to their families' homes or to stay in the institution during breaks depends solely on their family's insistence but is usually met by the youth with a yearning to return to their family homes.

N.M.: Do the children have a say of staying here or returning to their families for breaks?

Adult 1: Sometimes the children can decide, and the family will accept it depending on the circumstances, other times the parents insist on taking the child and other times, in extreme cases, we insist that even if the family wants the child, it is for their best interest to stay here with us. There's always a longing to belong to their family. They just want to belong. In reality, most of the children are very excited to return to their families, even if it's just for a couple days, even if they know they will probably be beaten.

This draw to biological mothers and fathers is evident and seemingly understandable - even if the youth expressed sentiments of love for the institution, most also expressed love and respect for their biological families. Even those who refuse to return to their family homes showed evidence of this longing. In a drawing competition completed earlier in the year, a youth who had not returned to the family home in years drew a father and mother sitting at a coffee table

and a little boy playing in the front yard. When asked what he was expressing with the picture, he responded, “*a good life is with your family*”. His drawing won the competition and he was awarded a monetary prize that was placed in a bank account for him to access at the age of 18.

Regardless of the children’s opinions though, the level of agency that the youth practice is, in a word, minimal. Their government papers, identification cards, housing, schedule, activities, meals, roles, duties, and participation are handled, organized and arranged by the adults. Arguably, children living with their families are also allotted similar degrees of agency; however, a significant difference between the children inside the institution and those living with their families in Palestine is the amount of protection they are provided – both within the institution and within the external occupational experiences of the situation.

Selecting an Educational Path

Another advantage that the youth in the institute receive is the opportunity to decide their course of education after they complete primary education at Jeel al-Amal. They choose for themselves whether they would like to continue on an academic course and complete their secondary education at a nearby high school in the city or if they would instead take vocational training for trade work including mechanics, welding, construction, carpentry, plumbing and electrical training, among others. I determined from my observations of the youth and discussions with them about their futures, that the decision they made on their future educational course was where they could practice agency and simultaneously have the least amount of agency. Meaning, they practiced agency by deciding their educational path, vocational or academic, but at the same time, if they choose the vocational path, they move to the nearby orphanage to learn their decided trade and to live.

N.M.: What is something you would change here if you could.

Shabab 5: I don’t want to leave for school outside.

N.M.: So, if you could change anything then it would be that you can do your schooling here and live here?

Shabab 5: Yeah. It’s better here.

The adults at the institution are aware of these feelings and to compensate for them, they allow some of the boys to return to the institution on weekends to be with them. Several

participants discussed the value they placed in the education they received at the institution and commented on their desires that the school would provide primary and secondary education so that they could stay at that school for their entire education. The reasons for their desire of a secondary school were plentiful – not only was physical punishment forbidden but the teachers and administration are constantly working on building their lesson plans, their resources, and their ability to educate the children to the best of their ability. These efforts have not gone unnoticed by the youth who participated in this study, who expressed appreciation in many discussions.

Shabab 4: This is the best school in Palestine. The teachers, the kids, the things we learn, the activities we have – it's all so good here.

Even after the youth age out of the institution, they are still eligible for some benefits, such as a fully paid tuition to al-Quds (Jerusalem) University located in neighboring town, Abu Dis. Along with this, a fund has been set up for those pupils who wish to and are accepted to study in other universities.

The available resources, programs and opportunities combined with the regulation of a constant schedule and routine, and the security and protection the youth feel in the institution appears to, in my opinion, positively affect the development process and progress of the children. The various micro contextual aspects will now be discussed in terms of the staff's perceived and evaluated progress of the cognitive and social development of the youth.

Cognitive Skills & Personal Development:

The development of the youth's cognitive skills is indicative of the quality of education and care they receive, both at school and at home. According to reports from the institution staff, the progression of skills is compared to the youths' developmental stage at the time of their arrival at the institution. A adult participant detailed the importance of immediate adjustments of the children's behaviors as such:

Adult 2: We try to modify the behavior of the child with bad habits as soon as possible upon them coming here because it affects the other children. Like a box of tomatoes, if one goes bad then it'll affect all of them.

The assessment for progression was observed and documented by teachers, administration and the ‘mother’ and ‘father’ figures through the child’s behavioral, emotional, mental and intellectual actions and processes. An administrator expressed the potential that their non-violent policies have had on a youth who upon arriving to the institution, demonstrated violent and disruptive behavior.

Adult 1: We had a difficult time with him, as the supervisor and the director of the school had different ideas of what to do with him. We think he is autistic and was very violent in the beginning. He needs a lot of extra attention and the supervisor wanted to give him a chance because the boy needs a place. We accepted him and have worked hard with him. We've seen some progress, but it's slow because he came here a bit older. It's not 100 percent but, we've seen changes. He will listen more, is less aggressive, more responsive and most noticeably – he has started looking into your eyes when you talk with him. He never did that before.

Age was a determining factor in the rate of behavior-altering progression of behaviors deemed ‘right’.

Adult 1: We see a bigger change in behavior depending on the age of the child. So, the younger boys demonstrate more changes as it seems easier to talk to them and help reverse their behaviors. As they age, it becomes more difficult, not impossible though, it just takes more time and effort.

Socialization and Belonging

The process of social development and progression is undertaken constantly within the micro-contexts of home and school and also in the more abstract macro-contexts. As Scourfield et al., (2006) support, micro-contexts are more influential on a child’s development socially and culturally than the macro contexts; then these aspects of development will be discussed here in relation to the idea of home and family.

Since the very formation of the institution, family was a concept that was fundamental. The original organizers literally opened their family home to street children they found wandering the streets after the war of 1967. They left their front door unlocked and wide open. As an adult participant stated:

Adult 1: We don't want the children to feel like they live in an institution. Instead we want them

to feel at home. We don't use the term orphanage or institution in our labeling. This is a home, we are a family.

Several psychiatrists and developmental psychologists have suggested that a negative attribute to institutional care is that the emotional attachment is unable to be developed in children due to the lack of connection to a mother figure (Allen et al., 2007; Bowlby, 1969; Dozier et al., 2012). While other social scientists such as Mann (2001) have extended this attachment further than mothers to adult caregivers. Through this fieldwork, a few observations have been made in support of the latter postulation. As previously detailed, within the institution there is a family set-up consisting of 'father' supervisors, 'mother' caregivers who live with the boys in the boarding section and a mix of female and male teachers in the school. The assignment of supervisory functions for the 'father' figures is imitative of the wider society where males are heads of households and usually the breadwinners, and females tend to fulfill the everyday caring duties of the family inside the home. The mothers, who are all unmarried without biological children, live with the children in the boarding section for 35 days and return to their family homes for five before returning to the institution. This schedule allows the emotional attachment to them to develop as the youth and mothers share physical space and time, and frequent interaction. Each mother is assigned an average of 30 children under her direct care and their primary duties involve the children's cleanliness, safety, education and behavioral development, as articulated by a mother to me:

Adult 3: I provide the love, attention and care the children need at all times. I help with their needs, their cleanliness, their clothes, their school work, their lives, their emotions. I love them, and I'm happiest when they are provided for and happy.

The children, in return, displayed affection and a sense of belonging to the house mothers. Upon a return of one of the house mothers from her five days break back home with her parents, I observed her return to the boys filled with energy and smiling. The children present in the room ran to greet her and give a hug - two children specifically cuddled on the couch with her for a time afterward. She spoke of the connection she felt with all the children but especially these two boys.

Adult 3: They are like my sons, I love them dearly and if I could take them with me, I would. Even when I go home for my break, they get upset and ask me, "Why are you leaving? Can't you

stay with us?" I feel like all the boys' mother, and it's a sweet feeling.

Even though the fathers of the institute, who are married and have their own children, sleep at their homes, they consider Jeel al-Amal 'home'. Not only because they spend the majority of their time in the institute but also because, in unique circumstances which can be considered as a testimony to their sentiments for the institute, both 'father' figures had spent their childhood in the institution, left to attain their University degrees, and returned to the institute to work. When asked why they returned since both of them also had opportunities to work in higher paying fields, and outside the country, the 'father' figure stated:

Adult 2: Jeel al-Amal is a very special place and anywhere else I worked or studied did not compare to here. It would be wiser of me economically to work in Europe or in another field, but I had to come back here because I love it. I thought of the boys here when I was a kid, of how hard life was for us back then, not just us here but in all of Palestine. I wanted to come and bring comfort and make things easier for them then when we had it growing up.

This element holds significant meaning for the youth who demonstrated respect and sense of belonging to these men. They also shared their admiration for the 'father' figures in drawings, as four participants drew one of these two men when asked to draw someone they love. The youth were observed to learn from these men and imitate their behaviors, attitudes, and actions. In a way, the children expressed reassurance that they are loved and will get what they need because the 'fathers' know what is needed from experience, which thusly develops respect from the youth for the 'father' figures. As evidenced by several participants' thoughts about these men:

Shabab 4: They take care of me. Anything we need we get. They make sure of it.

Shabab 7: They take care of us and know what we need.

Shabab 6: They listen to me, and I listen to them because I respect them.

Shabab 3.: They love us a lot.

Respect was not only displayed for the adults though and extended to fellow peers.

N.M.: Who do you look up to out of the other children here?

Shabab 4: I get along with all the kids, and we all have mutual respect for each other.

The wider influence observed within the institution from having this set-up, from my interpretation, has yielded generally positive effects for the children and youth. Many participants expressed an admiration and love for a specific caregiver but reiterated at some point that all the adults there are good people.

N.M.: If you could stay here after you are done with school, would you?

Shabab 3: Yes, this place is everything. He (the ‘father’ supervisor) is like my father, and the house mothers are like my mother and all the other kids are like my brothers.

N.M.: (jokingly) So, you have 75 brothers? That’s a lot!

Shabab 3: Yeah, it is a lot but I found my friends when I came here and I know my family because of here. If I didn’t come here I wouldn’t know anything or anybody. It’s really wonderful I came here and met my family.

The Right to be Heard

Expressing love and appreciation for adults in the institution was widespread amongst the participants. Each informant identified an adult that they feel most connected to and articulated characteristics they appreciate in adults and those they do not like. Many informants spoke of the various amount of control and order certain adults had with the youth, and preferred the easy-going and gentle nature of the adults over more strict and disciplined individuals. I interpreted their preference for less control as an indication of their desire for more agency. When asked what were the qualities of a house mother he appreciates, one participant articulated:

Shabab 5: She has a lot of good qualities, she’s nice, she gives a lot of chances to the kids, anything you ask her she says hadir (understood). Basically, she is good all around.

A feeling of being listened to was highlighted by the participants, as evidenced in the above quotation. The word used, *hadir*, literally means ‘I am present’ and is conversationally used in dynamics of respect to acknowledge regard for a person’s words and requests. This sentiment of being listened-to or being heard was shared by others.

N.M.: Can you tell me something you like about the ‘father’ supervisors?

Shabab 1: Since I was little, they took to me and I took to them. They cared for me. They heard us, and we heard them.

In a way, the informants' appreciation of being listened to aims at achieving the youths' participatory right of being heard. Furthermore, the specific way in which the youth receive care and love was not the guiding factor of their feelings for the adults in the institution. It was just that they had adults who looked after them.

N.M.: Would you like to live with your father in his home?

Shabab 7: No, I want to stay here at Jeel al-Amal.

N.M.: Why?

Shabab 7: Because they take care us and know what we need.

N.M.: Who is someone you look up to?

Shabab 4: The fathers (supervisors), they look after me and take care of me.

The informant's admiration for people was not limited to the adults present in the institution but instead was extended to the other youth in the home.

N.M.: Who is your best friend?

Shabab 5: I have 75 best friends, not just one.

Understanding that socialization of children is an interactive and interdependent dynamic happening constantly (Abebe & Kjörholt, 2009), the combination of the home section of the institution with a school available to children from the surrounding area was deliberate tactic to aid the youth in building their social skills and their dynamic relationship with the wider community.

Adult 1: The whole idea of having both boarding and school is so the boys can socialize with the community and other children. The founders did not want the boys to feel isolated from society so they connected the two sections into what is known as Jeel al-Amal.

Coming of Age - Increasing Responsibility

Within the socialization process, children feel inclusion into social groupings, such as family, friends, children; and simultaneously they will feel excluded from others. Those who feel membership into a particular social group fulfill designated roles that aid in the functioning of the grouping (James & Prout, 1997; Nilsen, 2009). As the institute is designed to operate as a family, the existing roles are those of father, mother, children, brother, and son.

Adult 1: The life here at Jeel al-Amal is not a one-person job. Everyone shares responsibility and has their own role and duties to perform. We have a shared goal and we aim to accomplish it together.

Developing within these roles, the children's responsibilities and roles progress further as they age with added tasks from adults that require them to help in the home and school with activities and caring of the younger children, as a way of preparing for adulthood. One of the adult participants explained:

Adult 2: Although the space may be needed by younger children in need of a home, we like to keep three or four of the older boys here instead of transferring them to the other orphanage so that they can be the 'big brothers' and helpers. They run into town for errands and are called upon to get supplies and food from the suppliers. They help with the other boys and with the daily activities here. We put pressure on them to achieve great things because we think they can handle it. This also helps them for when they leave here and live their lives as adults.

To achieve this, the youth seem to utilize an imitation technique or role-playing and begin to take more caring, protective and even disciplinary roles with each other especially with their younger peers. During observations, many children took turns playing the role of one of the fathers and acting out different scenarios such as settling an argument, creating an activity, and assigning tasks to different children. Outside of this roleplaying, the dynamics between the youth themselves emerged frequent displays of respect, protection, care and love.

Respect, Caring, Loving, Protecting

Partially as a result of the care, protection and love the youth receive inside the institution and partially stemming from an increase of roles and responsibilities that are gained as they age, a similar relationship was observed between the older and younger boys that the youth have with

the caregiving figures. These relational dynamics that I observed included a noticeable connection to the adults and an urge to be around them, even accompanying them during their break time to the supervisor's break room. The younger children in the institution displayed actions and words of respect for the older siblings throughout fieldwork. They listened to the older youth's orders and requests and at points would not even need to be spoken to verbally to heed respect. This was demonstrated on a field trip to a swimming pool when an older youth entered into the bus, a younger child who was sitting closer to the front near the 'father' figure immediately and non-verbally stood up and walked to an empty seat in the rear of the bus allowing the older one to sit near the supervisor.

The urge to protect one another was documented frequently in my observations, which I interpreted as demonstrations of the care they feel for each other. The participants who are older siblings all stated their plans to provide a life for their siblings outside of Jeel al-Amal.

N.M.: What do you think will happen with your younger brother after you're done with school here?

Shabab 4: I'll set up a home, a mechanic shop and wait for him to be done with school too so we can live together. All my life I knew that I wanted to be a mechanic and I knew that he will come with me. I'll set up a home and a business and we will be provided for.

Other older siblings spoke of this role as necessary due to their experience with returning to the family home for short breaks.

N.M.: Did you enjoy your time at home with your dad?

Shabab 9: No, no, no, no. I don't want to return there. I will tell my brothers don't go back there. It's not good for us to be there. They will listen to me though because I am like a father to them. I will work and provide money for us to live together but we should not go back to that home. Only for very short visits. I will tell my brothers, they will listen to me.

This urge to protect and care for others extended to other youth and not just biological brothers. During the field trips to the swimming pool, I observed a constant display of protection from the older boys to the younger ones. Seemingly unassigned, each younger child was watched by an older peer. There were times when the adult supervisor would leave the indoor swimming area and without hesitation knew that the children would take care of each other. During these moments, I documented younger children jumping into the deep end of the pool,

although unable to swim, and immediately being lifted to the surface of the water by an older peer who preceded to scold the child and take him back to the shallow area. This protection has been viewed by the adults as well and is considered as a testament to the lifestyle they have there:

N.M.: What is something you take pride in when you see the children?

Adult 1: That the boys develop skills practically. The older boys start tending to and caring for the little ones, therefore teaching them what they need to do to provide not only for themselves but for others. They cooperate like a family and when we went to the sea I saw them taking care of the little boys, making sure they stayed safe and maybe you've seen this too. They take care of their rooms, their personal belongings, their shelves. We try to teach the boys to depend on themselves because knowing that they are able to do things then promotes their self-esteem and gives them confidence in themselves.

Along with physical protection of others, the youth also acted in other caring and helpful ways. Helpers were chosen for different tasks and chores while other youth volunteered to help.

N.M.: Do you have certain responsibilities or jobs here?

Shabab 5: Yeah, I make my bed, sweep the room floor and help whoever needs help. Every night I help two boys who have eye problems since we sleep in the same room. I'll walk them to the bathroom, and make sure they don't hit their legs on furniture.

From a personal perspective, the amount of caring and love I observed in different social dynamics within the institution was, in a word, abundant. These actions extended from the youth to other individuals, deemed poor and needy.

N.M.: Can you tell me more about your relationship with him? (I was referring to an adult male who was at the institution daily, but does not work there)?

Shabab 3: He's my friend, my brother. He doesn't have anybody – no family – he grew up here like the house fathers. So, I've taken him as a brother since he doesn't have anyone. He should feel like he has someone. Poor guy he comes and eats here and goes home. And he lives in a very small place and doesn't have anyone. He comes here every day to eat and hang out with us. You know, we're yateem (orphans) and you have to care for yateem. He's just like us and so we take care of each other. I don't like how he is treated in town because it could happen to anyone and you have to help others, especially when they are like you.

Another participant illustrated how the environment encourages his helpfulness:

N.M.: What is the best thing about it here?

Shabab 7: We help each other. If I saw an old lady with heavy bags, I'd go to help her to her house then go home after. And again, if I see someone fighting another person, I would go try to make peace between them.

Other displays of the emotional attachment the youth feel include the sharing of everything. As previously stated, the youth have a PlayStation, but it was purchased by an older youth there who subsequently allows all the other youth to play games on it and dictates when and how long each will play before putting it back in his closet. He set up a bracket system so that those who want to play get a chance and this is the system that they stick to mostly which helps keep order amongst the several youths who want to play. An interesting dynamic I observed during these PlayStation games and soccer matches, was the youth's use of encouragement with the others. Although, they were competing against each other in these games, the majority of the youth still gave compliments to the others on their techniques and strengths they had while playing.

Another demonstration of sharing involved a moment when a participant offered me a piece of chocolate, and upon seeing the chocolate, several younger children asked him for some candy. He immediately and without hesitation retrieved a bag of candy he collected from the holidays and distributed a piece out to every child, even jokingly saying, "*See how much I love you, I'm giving you my sweetness*". As per my observations, the only thing that was not shared was the soccer pitch, where the older youth had the first opportunity to play, and the younger children waited to be called in from the sidelines.

Summary

In this chapter, features of the home and school were analyzed in discussions of the participant's rights as children to provisions, protection, education, agency, and support. These micro contexts, in connection with theoretical concepts, were presented to convey the connection between home and family to social and cognitive development. In the next chapter, the broader (and more abstract) macro contexts of society will be elaborated on to further conceptualize how they may or may not form shared characteristics of social identity. The macro-systems present, along with shared identity traits will then be discussed in relation to the development of coping mechanisms in the face of the occupation, such as resiliency and the construction of normality.

Chapter 6: To Exist is to Resist

Macro Contexts & their Influence on Social Identity, Resiliency and the Construction of Normality

Aspects of Shared Identity:

This chapter is designed to illuminate shared and individual identity traits of the informants that have been interpreted as having been shaped by the macro-system of culture, society and language beliefs (Ferrari & Fernando, 2013). The macro factors that were revealed in my empirical data collection strengthened key identity forming features including aspects of belonging, place identity, religious dogmas, social norms, historical narratives and educational material. At the same time, identity markers, or categories that we use to identify ourselves, were spoken about that separated the participants inside the institution from other Palestinian residents, Israeli soldiers, Jewish settlers, Israeli citizens, the Palestinian diaspora and other foreigners, including me. These distinctions were analyzed and will be discussed in sub-groupings, or identity markers, that the participants themselves used. This will be done with the aim of establishing the elements that contribute to a shared group identity as Palestinians, and simultaneously to create a more personalized identity of the participants as individuals and as children themselves. In this chapter, the generated data from the focus group is used extensively to demonstrate the dynamics and manifestations of shared group identity.

To describe a social identity is no small feat and not something I undertook lightly. However, through the data collection phases, key themes were illuminated that shed light on how aspects of shared identity impact the ongoing national struggle for a free Palestine. Through this, another theme revealed itself in the form of a word that was frequently used to justify events, happenings, and feelings. The word used in Arabic was *aidi* meaning *normal* and is itself another concept of social construction. Usually, normal is relative and subjective, but when used in a matter so frequently, it bears exploration into the acceptance of life within this specific childhood. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the impact of macro contextual factors that influence the formation of shared group identity among the participants and how the idea of normality is constructed as a coping strategy. It should be acknowledged that all aspects of identity cannot be adequately explained - due to a lack of time and space but also to remain within the focus and aim of my study. I simply am aiming to convey aspects of the participants'

understanding of, maneuvering in, and influence on life.

Self and the Other - Categorization

Identities are partly formed from the distinction we make between ourselves and others. These distinctions are made with other groups based on three mental processes: categorization, identification, and comparison (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). When we categorize ourselves into groups based on a common trait, we deepen this identification by distinguishing between our groups and other groups. A sense of belonging is gained from the inclusion, respect, and value created through our interaction in groups we categorize ourselves in. The importance of categorization into groups is it allows people to make sense of the world around them thereby better controlling the unpredictable factors that are present. Analysis of these processes was focused around the participants use of 'in-group' terms such as 'we', 'our', 'us', etc. against 'out-group' words like 'they', 'them', 'those', etc. I will discuss further these groupings, identifications and comparisons made by the participants and those they considered 'others' in the following sections on about different macro frameworks.

Identifying with a place

As discussed in the third chapter, identity is partly formed within the physical spheres that support a person's existence. Within those various domains, it is suggested that the home is the primary source of this attachment to the place (Morrow, 2001). One could argue for the longing to be with biological family; however, the informants spoke frequently of their sense of belonging to the institution supporting Mann's (2001) suggestion that biological connection is not necessary for the socialization and development of children.

N.M.: After you leave here, will you return to your family's home?

Shabab 4: I would love to stay here, to be honest. I love my mother, don't get me wrong and I miss her very much but Jeel Al Amal is the best place. Even better than my family home.

A feature of place identity is the comparison of surroundings with knowledge of other contexts. This was demonstrated in the above excerpt as the participants compared the institution with his family home. Another informant offered this:

*N.M.: How is life here at Jeel A-Amal?
Shabab 8: It's good. It's better than home.*

As demonstrated these participants used comparison of the institution to the family home as they identified the institution as their preferred housing, even when the option of biological families dwelling was an option. In fact, of all the full participants, only one stated that he would stay at Jeel al-Amal or return to his family home, because both are equally good for him. This connection to the physical places, the institution, the city, and Palestine, was discussed in a multitude of ways including straightforward praise and positive evaluations as well, as in terms of qualities deemed good/lovely or bad/hard or by using the Arabic terms 'hilo' and 'mish hilo' meaning 'nice' 'not nice'. These qualities will be discussed in two parts: views about the town, Bethany and opinions on Palestine in general as compared to the participants understanding and identification of themselves.

Participants as Children of Jeel al-Amal

An adult participant discussed with me how the youth, regardless of personal history, all share a common reality:

Adult 1: Each child's story is different but they each share the common reality that there is no house and no family to take care of them.

The various social, economic, political and religious aspects of the town of Bethany have already been discussed in the background chapter as to illustrate what the youth experience when traveling within the town. To recap briefly though, it is a highly-populated area with mixed governing and civic responsibilities from the Israeli military and the Palestinian Authority (PA). The lack of communication and disorganization between the Israeli military and the PA results in the city having public and civic duties left unfulfilled. This is evidenced by the high rate of drug use and other criminal activity present in the city, due to a lack of police patrol. As well as, an incredible amount of trash on the roads, empty patches of land and even piling up the sides of buildings due to unorganized waste management for the city. These characteristics of the town were apparent to the youth at the institution and were spoken about frequently.

The aspect of place identity that compares between a person's surrounding with their knowledge of other contexts is not limited to contexts that they have actual experience in; but instead, can be a comparison between their actual experiences and their perceived idea of a place. This aspect was demonstrated in the focus group when the youth commented on this picture of a Norwegian fjord, a country none of the youth have visited:



Photo of Geiranger fjord in Norway. Source: norwayadventures.no, accessed 20 June 2017.

Shabab 2: It looks like heaven.

Shabab 5: Do Norwegians act like Arabs when there are foreigners?

N.M.: I would say no because all Arabs don't act the same to foreigners, right? But a lot of Norwegians keep to themselves so I feel better there than walking around Bethany because I get a lot of looks and some people like to yell things at me as well here.

Shabab 2: People in this town are garbage.

Shabab 1: It's not just in this town or in Palestine but even Jordanians treat foreigners badly. I agree though, people here in Bethany are terrible.

The youth first commented on the beauty of the picture, then asked contextual information about Norwegians and then commented on the difference between Arabs and Norwegians demonstrating aspects affiliated with place identity and establishing distance between themselves from 'garbage' Arabs. Some of the participants were able to travel to other countries in the past with the institution and they spoke on the comparisons between their surroundings with their actual experiences of places outside of Palestine.

N.M.: What do you think about life in Palestine?

Shabab 6: I think it's best for everyone to get out of Palestine. Life here is hard and life outside is better for everyone.

N.M.: Have you been outside Palestine?

Shabab 6: Yes, I traveled to a country¹² and it was a very good trip. They live a nice life there. It is so pretty and I really enjoyed it. Now I want to visit other places too like Germany and Spain.

¹² The actual country will not be named to uphold anonymity.

Palestine – Youth vs. other Palestinians

The perceived positive and negative qualities of Palestine were discussed regarding the environment, situation, and people. It should be noted that the Arabic word *yahud* meaning Jewish person/people is used interchangeably by Palestinians to mean ‘Israelis’ and people of the Jewish religion. Similarly, the youth also used the words ‘Palestinian’ and ‘Arab’ interchangeably to discuss Palestinians. Interestingly, it was noticed that the word ‘Arab’ was used predominantly when discussing perceived negative aspects of the society and culture and ‘Palestinian’ was used in discussions of strength and resilience.

N.M.: How do you feel about Palestine?

Shabab 3: I'm happy with Palestine. But the people are not so nice. They are dirty, and throw garbage on the ground. In Palestine, our land is beautiful but people make it dirty.

Here, the informant identified himself as both Palestinian when remarking ‘our land is beautiful’ but simultaneously separating himself from the adverse quality, as he understands it, by saying ‘the people are not so nice’, implying that other people make it dirty. Another participant reiterated the same idea.

N.M.: What is the best thing here in Palestine?

Shabab 2: It's beautiful the earth, the dirt. The people here are not good. I feel torn sometimes, I want to leave and I don't want to leave.

The participant used the term ‘the’ people to separate himself from his perception of negative qualities. This sentiment was not only used to address adult Palestinians but other children as well.

N.M.: What are some problems that you deal with?

Shabab 4: A lot of problems come from the kids at the other school. They fight. And they cause problems for the teachers and make it difficult to be in school with them.

Again, this notion of negative actions by ‘other Palestinians’ was shared in the group interview when commenting on a geographic photo of Palestine.

Shabab 2: We don't want it. Everyone in it is dirty, they keep it dirty and everyone fights with each other and they only care about money, not the land.

Shabab 3: Don't listen to him. Palestine is good and we want it. The nature, the earth – that's what we want.

Shabab 2: The people are not nice.

Shabab 4: Exactly, the people here are what makes it ugly.

Shabab 5: Some people, not all of them. The occupation too.

Shabab 1: The checkpoints, the wall, these are the bad things here, everything else is good.

Although voicing two opposing stances on 'wanting' Palestine, the participants were all supportive of the idea that the land is beautiful, but according to them, the people and aspects of the occupation are damaging. This notion was present in the individual interviews as well.

N.M.: What is something that you like about Palestine?

Shabab 6: I can tell you what's not good here – that Arabs throw their trash in the streets.

N.M.: What is a dream of yours for Palestine?

Shabab 2: That the problems end. That Palestinians think about everyone together and not just about themselves, that the environment gets better and the people too because the people ruin everything.

N.M.: So, what happens in the future for you here in Palestine?

Shabab 2: I'll work with the good ones and I'll stay away from bad people.

This participant demonstrated similar categorization of identity markers with his use of the words 'the people' when he identified negative characteristics, but also realized that there are good people along with the bad. At the same time, he grouped himself as a good person since he will 'work with the good ones'. This distinction between 'good' and 'bad' qualities in people and the environment allows the participants to develop their conceived notions of what makes things good or bad but also allows them to distinguish themselves in these assigned boundaries.

N.M.: I think Palestine is very difficult but at the same time very beautiful of a place because of the people and the land.

Shabab 6: It's lovely here but my wish is to leave because life is hard. You could be taking a walk on the main street here and near the wall and an illegal car will drive by and hit you and that's it, you die. That's how the Arabs are. It's not the same with foreigners; people will make sure that the foreigners are ok and will help them. It's hard for Palestinians to be here. We can die at any moment.

He distinguished between himself as an Arab and foreigners, and described foreigners as being more protected and cared about. The illegal cars he mentioned is a reference to cars stolen from inside Israel and driven without registration in the West Bank. A somewhat regular happening, also stemming from the lack of organized cooperation between the PA and the Israeli military. Using the word 'we', this informant grouped himself with Palestinians in general while talking about the toughness of life, but he also separates himself from Arabs when discussing how people are by using the word 'the' Arabs rather than 'us' Arabs. His perceived opinion about the lack of concern for Palestinian lives and his life, was apparent through his narrative.

However, in regards to the informant's perspectives on foreigners as others, they were mostly supportive and held positive opinions of them in Palestine. In the following excerpt, I discussed with an informant about how foreigners may have a difficult time in Palestine because of how different it is than their home countries to which he replied,

Shabab 2: Foreigners are the best people anyway. At least some of them. The ones that come here with organizations are the best sort of people. Their intentions are good and other people who go to town and not here are not the best people but that the ones that come here are the best sort of people. And foreigners love Palestine more than people here.

N.M.: Do you consider me, a Palestinian with a USA passport, a national or a foreigner?

Shabab 2: No, you are a Palestinian but I think of you as a foreigner because you love Palestine more than Palestinians here and you come and visit us and you care.

As demonstrated here, the youth distinguished between Palestinians and foreigners due to the quality he thought of the foreigners who visited and their love of the land. My interpretation of his words, though, was that he did not intend to dismiss Palestinians love for their own land, but that foreigners hold a voluntary connection to it. This perhaps lies within the idea that foreigners can leave the country without difficulties, and they, as Palestinians, need special permission. That is to say that foreigners *want* to be here and Palestinians *have* to be there. This concept was expressed to me in responses to the question: "Do you think I am Palestinian?"

Shabab 8: No, you live outside. But you love it here and you come back to see us and be here.

Shabab 2: I think of you more of a foreigner because you don't have to be here but you want to be here.

For some of the informants, the identity of a Palestinian is associated with their connection to the land, regardless of where they live in the world.

N.M.: How do you consider Palestinians who live outside Palestine?

Shabab 6: If they live outside but they forget about their Palestinian side then no they aren't really Palestinians. They have to want to be here.

This participant connected a persons' longing to be part of the Palestinian culture and society as a determining factor in their identity as a Palestinian. This was interesting from a personal perspective, as I was considered by the youth as a foreigner not only because of my voluntary desire to be in Palestine but also because of my legal documents from the United States. My passport, specifically, established a clear separation between the participants and myself. Other informants expressed their fascination at my USA citizenship and my passport:

Shabab 1: What color ID do you have?

N.M.: The US only has one color ID – it's a blue passport. (I hand him my passport)

Shabab 1: (Looking through the passport) Wow, you're a real foreigner, look at your passport. You get your passport for 10 years? We have to get our IDs renewed every 5 years, probably because they love taking money.

Shabab 3: So, how do you get into Jerusalem with this ID?

Shabab 1: She doesn't need permission because she has this passport and not a Palestinian ID.

N.M.: How do you feel about that?

Shabab10: I'll tell you something, if someone offered me money for my ID, I would give it to them in a heartbeat.

These assigned boundaries of social space are not only an abstract idea of identity development but extend to the physical space of the youth. These physical boundaries and the limitations on movement for the youth influence their shared reality and strengthens the understanding of what it means to be a Palestinians.

Freedom of Movement - Participants as Palestinians

Although the institution attempts to protect the children and youth from violence from Palestinians and from the occupation, as discussed in the previous chapter, the amount of protection that Jeel al-Amal is able to provide is limited. The occupation is literally all around

and the realities of it are realized by the youth. As the youth age, they begin to travel daily inside the town to the secondary school. At 16 years of age, the youth are issued identity cards, labeling them as West Bank only citizens and limiting their access to any area west of the separation wall, including the sea.

N.M.: How do you feel about being Palestinian?

Shabab 1: It's good and it's not good. It's good because it's normal life and it's not good because we can't go to the beach.

Again, keeping with place identity theory (Scourfield et al., 2006), the informant used variations of the term good to describe his reality. This lack of ability to travel freely also was a unifying factor for this informant as a Palestinian. His categorization as a Palestinian was demonstrated by his use of the word 'we' (instead of 'I') when discussing this feature of occupation. I will recap briefly on the physical context of the city that severely impacts Palestinians ability to move around: Bethany is cut off from Jerusalem by the separation wall, and there is a constant presence of Israeli military due to manned checkpoints at the entrance and exits of the city and because the third largest (by population) Israeli-only settlement, Ma'ale Adumim, is located across the street from the bottom of town (Jarzmik, 2017). These elements affect daily life and constrict the movement and traveling abilities of the residents. Once issued the green West Bank identity card, the youth are unable to enter Jerusalem or further to the Mediterranean Sea without Israeli authority approved permission and they are required to carry the ID on their person at all times. All the routes connecting Bethany to any other major city in the West Bank have an Israeli military controlled checkpoint situated on them where cars are slowed and identifications are checked, making the traveling of people with West Bank IDs, including youth difficult. The locations of the checkpoints¹³ are strategic in nature, as any closure of them then stops all flow of movement from one area of the West Bank to another for Palestinian commuters holding a green West Bank only ID. This reality is faced by the three oldest participants who have their green ID cards.

N.M.: What is something that makes you Palestinian?

¹³ They are also physical points of conflict as Palestinians are routinely arrested at checkpoints and some protests are focused at checkpoints as well.

Shabab 1: Because I have a green ID card.

N.M.: What is something you would change if you could?

Shabab 1: The checkpoints, the segregation, the two different IDs the - blue and the green. Just give us all the same color ID and let us be on our way.

N.M.: What are your thoughts about freedom? Do you think you have freedom?

Shabab 1: Yeah, we have freedom, but it's freedom inside a prison.

N.M.: How do you feel about being Palestinian?

Shabab 1: My dear, don't ask me that. Can I get rid of my ID?

Here the informant categorized himself as Palestinian, using the term 'us', due to the unifying trait of restrictions in movement because of his documentation. The restriction of movement is felt more by the older participants legally obliged to carry their ID card at all time and is depicted in their comprehension of the idea of freedom, or lack of. Reversely, those participants who have a parent inside of Israel will go through the bureaucratic process of receiving a blue ID card thereby allowing them access to Israel but no longer the West Bank. This process begins two years before they turn 16, since they have to prove they live in Israel for at least two years to obtain the card. In these instances, the informant identified himself as a member of the 'out-group' of blue Jerusalem ID holders, compared to the youth that stay at the institution and have their green West Bank ID cards, since the physical limitations of where they can travel to are then very different. For the informants who will leave the institution to obtain their Jerusalem ID cards, this process produces mixed feelings for them in regards to their longing to the institution and the substantial increase of freedom they will have with the ID card.

N.M.: When will you leave here?

Shabab 8: In another year, I will go to Jerusalem and live with my mother there to get my blue ID card and never return to the West Bank or Bethany every again.

N.M.: How do you feel about this?

Shabab 8: I feel normal about it. It has to happen and I will be able to be in Jerusalem and the beach. I will miss it here though, it's nice and they plan a lot for us. I will miss them.

All the participants over 16 and with a green ID card referred to their inability to travel freely around the land, to see Jerusalem or the sea or to travel abroad without special permission. This lack of freedom strengthens their shared identity by recognizing a common struggle. As to what their opinion was of the root of these limitations, they indicated:

Shabab 4: We don't have freedom because of the Israelis. Anything I want to do, I can do, but it has to be inside the West Bank. We can't leave or anything because of them.

This participant recognized that his lack of ability to move outside of the West Bank was due to 'them', the Israelis. This grouping of Israelis as a common enemy will be explored later in this chapter. The identity card is recognized as the physical emblem of their nationality but other factors were expressed to signal the participants' connection to the land. When asked "what do you think is something that makes you Palestinian?", some informants explained their belonging to Palestine with physical, environmental and hereditary truths they hold to be true.

Shabab 8: My blood and my ID make me Palestinian. My homeland is Palestine.

Shabab 6: The earth, the environment, the trees. Nature makes me Palestinian.

Another informant detailed his views on what it means to be Palestinian:

Shabab 2: Some people think it's blood that makes them something more than anything else. And other people who love the land and country. But there's a lot that have Palestinian blood who do not live here and only visit for short times.

N.M.: So, their blood needs to be Palestinian and they need to love this land?

Shabab 2: Yeah, but more than just passing time here. They need to do something good. Like you, you come here to us and get to know us because you love it here.

For these participants, being Palestinian comes from the genetic connection to the land, the assigned political documentation of identity, and perhaps most interestingly as pointed out by the last informant, the love, and longing for Palestine. While, the remaining participants under the age of 16 and still without their ID cards offered sentiments of having freedom in their lives mainly through the ability to practice agency and say yes or no to something. Such as this extract from an interview with a younger informant:

N.M.: What is your idea of freedom?

Shabab 7: You can tell people that you're free when they want you to do something, like clean the house or something. You could say, "I'm free so I want to clean the house" or "I'm free so I don't want to clean the house". But I always want to clean the house, I like cleaning.

N.M.: And what about your freedom in Palestine?

Shabab 7: I am free in Palestine, I'm free in my homeland, no one can mess with me - not Palestinians and not Israelis.

The informant's words and attitude towards the occupation and their idea of freedom being within the home offered insight into the macro contextual awareness they possess. It also indicates that their awareness of their macro-reality expands as they age and travel more often out of the institution and realizing the physical limitations of movement they have due to their ID card. For some of the participants, this awareness is a burden that is also a part of growing up.

Shabab 2: When you're little, you don't really feel the way you do when you get a little older, you understand more because you love Palestine and it's beautiful – the earth, the dirt. It'd be better if we all just stayed children, if we could, that would be the best. We grow up and we see things in the world, things we don't want to see.

Religious Identity – Participants as Muslims

Another macro feature of identity development derives from religious and spiritual texts, practices and traditions. As Palestine is majority Muslim and all the youth participants label themselves as Muslim with varying levels of piety, I discussed dimensions of their faith with them in order to conceptualize in what way their religious beliefs affect their everyday life and understanding of it. All of the participants participated in Ramadan by fasting from sun up to sun down, several of them performed prayers regularly and I observed some fasting on significant but non-obligatory holy days during the summer. The institution does not mandate prayer or observations of faith for the youth although socially pressured otherwise. An adult participant explained:

Adult 1: We try not to pressure the kids into any religion because we feel like it is something that should come from within. We had an official from the Ministry of Education who asked if children are forced to pray here. I told him no, we encourage a relationship with God and prayer but do not force them to. I know at the nearby orphanage, they force the children awake to perform the daybreak prayer but that's not how we do things here. Religion is important to know about and we want to educate them but we don't want to force. We want to encourage.

A developmental researcher, Roehlkepartain (2014), posits that performing religious and spiritual practices have a positive impact on children's outcome and in parts of interviews it

became apparent that these religious practices and lessons were contemplated on by the participants. Displays of the religion were observed and evident in less formal settings than formal ritual practice such as prayer or fasting. For instance, some of the youth were observed role-playing as the Imam (religious leader) of al-Aqsa Mosque, several drew themselves as the al-Aqsa Imam when asked to draw yourself in 10 years, before meals one of the boys always recites a short prayer, Quran was recited to the boys by the house mothers when they were not feeling well or even just relaxing in the afternoon to calm them down, and different religious expressions were used in casual conversation. As such, religion was also used as a form of guidance for some of the participants in their everyday behaviors. Such as the moment I saw one participant sweeping and asked him if he liked cleaning. He responded:

Shabab 7: I spilled something and I have to clean it up right away because the devil likes dirty places so we need to keep it clean.

Another participant acknowledged religion as an ethical compass within his life and a guide for his moral character.

N.M.: What does freedom mean to you?

Shabab 2: If someone is free then they can do as they please? No, I don't think that's freedom, I think freedom is good and they can do what they want within ethics and morals and within religious limits. Freedom of responsibility not just doing what you want to do. You can do what you like with within the borders of your faith and religion. Not anything more than religion allows. You can swim, play and live right and that's your freedom.

All of the participants also identified as Palestinian Muslims as they discussed Jerusalem and the religious significance of the al-Aqsa mosque.

N.M.: What is the best thing about Palestine?

Shabab 1: Al-Aqsa is the best thing here because it's the holy place.

Religious inferences were used in discussions of a political nature. Such as during the focus group, a picture of the separation wall was shown to them, through which the following words took place:

Shabab 1: Next! We don't want to see this thing.

Shabab 4: That wall was put by Israel to keep the Arabs from getting to al-Aqsa mosque and all the other places. It's because Arabs cause problems.

Shabab 2: *giving thumbs down* Show us the next picture, we see that one too much.

Awareness of Death

When asked about what is something that they are afraid of, every participant answered- Allah, the Arabic word for God. In Islam, Allah is all beneficent and all powerful. It is taught to followers that if they are true believers and strive to be better Muslims, then they will be rewarded in the afterlife; however, the power of Allah is so great that it invokes fear from the punishment of wrong doing. It is difficult to distinguish how much religion affects society and how much society affects religion but a prominent aspect in both segments of life is the awareness and prevalence of death. This realization was conversed about in different discussions, both formal interviews, and casual conversations. Different aspects of religion and death were discussed with the participants in several ways - in the realization of deaths imminence, in depictions of danger, in conversations about martyrs and others they knew to pass away, and in their fear of God.

N.M.: What do you think about peace, what is it?

Shabab 1: Peace is without bullets. That's when there's peace. I live in peace.

N.M.: So, you don't have bullets.

Shabab 1: No, I have eyes on the back of my head. But of course, if there's a sniper who is pointing his gun at you, then it doesn't matter if you have eyes on the back of your head. You see, every day you live, someone is preparing your grave.

Perhaps because of the frequency of deaths due to the occupation as well as from natural causes or because religion plays a role in their understanding of life and death, or perhaps a combination of both, but all the participants all discussed death in one or more form. One informant noted the strain felt during confrontations with soldiers and from news reports.

Shabab 6: We get stressed with there are confrontations with the soldiers like in al-Quds (Jerusalem) yesterday. When a Palestinian kills a soldier or two, the soldiers will shower the guy's feet with bullets so they can just injure him and take him to jail to torture him for information, but they killed him instead. He died. I saw the video in the middle of the grounds of al-Aqsa mosque. There were two soldiers crying saying the dead soldier was his best friend. He was crying a lot. The soldiers get stressed out too of course. But they still go and shoot us, it's normal for them.

The participants agreed during the group interview that repercussions for attacks against the Israeli army were severe. The same participant articulated simply his acknowledgement of death.

Shabab 6: Here, we can die at any minute.

In regards to death from the occupation the participants shared a general respect for martyrs. Although the idolization of martyrdom, in general, is discouraged in the institute the youth have knowledge of martyrs and all of the participants knew of the martyrdom of the son of an adult staff at the institution. When discussing martyrs in the group interview, a participant said:

Shabab 2: He's a martyr. He left this world for the next and may God be pleased with him.

Shabab 4: May God be pleased with him.

Shabab 2: It's the best way to die.

Shabab 1: He's a hero.

Shabab 3: It is so normal to be a martyr. We strive to either live or die as martyrs. God is pleased with those who fight and die for their homeland.

By using 'we', the participant demonstrated his self-categorization of himself as a Palestinian and uses religion within a social construct to justify fighting for their country. However, this respect was not necessarily shared by all the participants, with some voicing their opinions on the finality of becoming a martyr:

Shabab 6: When one becomes a martyr, that's it they die. It's over.

Belonging to Palestine

In the previous chapter, it was discussed that a sense of belonging is influenced heavily by the immediate micro contexts of life; in this chapter, the connection and belonging to Palestine

will be discussed within different macro contextual perspectives, including the participants' understanding of freedom and peace. Such as this informants' link between freedom for himself and freedom for Palestine:

N.M.: What do you think freedom is?

Shabab 5: Freedom for Palestine.

N.M.: And for you?

Shabab 5: If Palestine is free, I am free.

This participant signified his connection with Palestine by connecting his freedom with the freedom of his country. Macro contexts such as societal norms, religious beliefs, and connection to a place and to their categorized in-groups help to establish a sense of belonging to Palestine and contribute to the development of shared identity traits of the participants. Miller (2003) noted that a sense of belonging or a connection was used primarily in relation to a community of people, to a particular historical connection or tradition, and to a geographic location or living space. The preceding sections illustrated the participants' connection to a community and to the geographic or living space. The following sections will focus on the informants' connection with historical and traditional contexts while still discussing their categorizations into different groups.

Generational Memory & Narratives

The use of narratives passed on through generational memory is a foundational method of extending knowledge, perceived 'truths', societal beliefs, and moralistic stories.

People not only develop skills through their own activities, they also appropriate meanings that span generations of cultural-historical development and are manifest at the macrosystemic level – including meanings of person and ethnic identity and the narratives associated with them. (Vygotsky, Ferrari, & Fernando, 2013, p. 295)

A subject that emerged during data collection was the participants' knowledge of their family's villages from before the 1967 war. It was common to receive their family's current city *and* their pre-1967 home as answers to the question, "where are you from?". Although they have had never been in their pre-1967 location due to the physical limitations of the occupation, all of

the informants mentioned their ancestral villages in their response. The historical depictions of the villages were passed on to the youth from the older generation seemingly to maintain a connection with the land. This concept of historical belonging through narratives has been explored within the Palestinian context by Hammack (2010) and was discussed in conversations with the participants about what is taught in their educational textbooks and Palestinian Authority approved curriculum.

Education in Textbooks

Textbooks and Palestinian approved curriculum are powerful tools in terms of sharing the historical narrative and forming social identity properties in pupils. Textbooks, especially in the subjects of history and social science, are used to narrate historical events to younger generations while simultaneously providing them with common community values and societal beliefs that are carried on. Textbooks used in Palestine began development and design by the Centre for the Development of Palestinian Curricula in 1996 with final distribution in 2006 to all Palestinian students in the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem (Alayan, 2018, p. 80). Focus on democracy, human rights and social justice is prevalent in the textbooks and in the subject of history, emphasis was placed on Palestinian societal beliefs which reflects “its religion, its heritage, its values, its customs, the Palestinian people’s ambitions to protect their land, their historic rights, and their national identity...” (The Ministry of Education, 1999, p. 3 in Alayan, 2012, p. 4). According to Schisser (1989-90), the factual knowledge transferred to students through textbooks have a strong influence on their lives in and out of the classroom but the textbooks also are used to convey historical narratives, images, generational social values, and political and social stances. The social identity is formed in cooperation with these ideas and moreover, the history curriculum especially, concentrates on developing the national identity of students (Alayan, 2012, p. 5).

Catastrophic History

Historical narratives are presented in the textbooks as conceptualizations of major political and social changes of the land, including ‘al-Nakba’ or the catastrophe of 1948 and the 6-day

war of 1967. When shown a picture of displaced Palestinians walking towards safety carrying their belongings on their heads and back during the Nakba, the youth responded:



Shabab 2: Those are refugees from 1948.

Shabab 5: That's my grandma and grandpa.

Shabab 4: That's a picture of refugees from the Nakba. In 1948, they were in Palestine and then fled and now they are refugees. So many Palestinians had to flee then.

Photo of al-Nakba refugees in 1948. Source: HuffingtonPost.com, accessed 20 June 2017.

All of the participants were aware of 'al-Nakba' however, the details of the war were not known by any of the participants. Although, the older participants did indicate some knowledge on the impact and consequences of the war. In Palestinian textbooks, historical narratives from a Palestinian perspective are taught but Israeli narratives of events are missing, including education about the Holocaust.¹⁴ When Alayan (2016) asked a senior officer in the Palestinian Authority about its absence, the official responded:

To mention [the Holocaust] in our textbooks is not possible in the present situation. This decision is an internal issue of the Palestinian community, who will not accept it. They expect their textbooks to firstly teach their students Palestinian history and the disaster [Nakba] and the massacres that happened to them—the Palestinians.” The same official later said: “Our goal when we create textbooks is to give our students information about their state, Palestine, and what hardships it underwent throughout history, in order to strengthen their Palestinian national identity.

(Alayan, 2016, p. 90)

The official discussed the purposefulness of textbooks in the development of a shared identity, and the conscious decision not to teach about the Holocaust. Although the textbooks

¹⁴ Similarly, Palestinian narratives are not presented in Israeli curriculum. For more thorough analysis on the knowledge and 'truths' passed through Israeli textbooks read Nurit Peled-Elhanan's book *Palestine in Israeli School Books: Ideology and Propaganda in Education*.

contain information about WWI and WWII and events connected with them, they are narrated from an Arab mind frame, or as the events affected the Arab world and Palestine herself. When I displayed a photo of children in a concentration camp, a fascinating exchange occurred where it became clear the youth knew very little about the Holocaust, which was displayed by their comparison of Jewish children and Palestinian children:



Photo of children at Auschwitz concentration camp. Source: NationalGeographic.org, accessed 20 June 2017.

Shabab 7: They're Palestinians.

Shabab 3: They're Palestinians from a long time ago.

Shabab 1 They are refugees from Palestine.

N.M.: Actually, these are Jewish children in a concentration camp during the Holocaust, where 6 million people were killed, including kids because they were Jewish.

Shabab 7: They are not Palestinians?

N.M.: No, they were mostly Jews from Europe.

Shabab 2: It looks like Palestine.

This exchange was intriguing to me as it indicates two things: firstly, that the youth's perspectives of Palestinian childhood, at least historically, bears some resemblance to the photograph and secondly, that the Israeli narrative on the Holocaust is not echoed in Palestinian schools. Interestingly, the youth did recognize Adolf Hitler from a picture and knew that he had killed millions of people but did not reveal knowledge of further details.

Knowledge is, of course, gained inside and outside of the classroom. Cultural symbols, or representations of specific social structures and ideologies (Hammack, 2010), are not necessarily taught in the classroom but learned from society, including the iconic symbol of Handala. Handala is an iconic cartoon drawn by Palestinian refugee, Naji Al-Ali that depicts the back of a barefoot 10-year-old refugee child. The world will never see his face until the right of return is recognized for Palestinian refugees and he will not age until he returns to Palestine.¹⁵ This iconic image is used in Palestinian society as a symbol of longing for the homeland. When the

¹⁵ For more information on Handala, visit <http://www.handala.org/handala/>

youth saw a picture of the cartoon, their lack of knowledge on the subject revealed an interesting aspect left out of the textbooks but visually present in life outside of institutions.

Shabab 2: That's Handala but I never learned what he stands for.

Shabab 1: He's a refugee child, I know that.

I proceeded to tell them the story and significance of the cartoon they all were not familiar with the story before, but the participants who are from refugee camps said they saw the cartoon as graffiti on the walls of the camps. This feature in the camps indicates to me that the refugee struggle is more prevalent in everyday life within the camps than in institutional environments.

The Other – A Common Enemy

The curriculum strengthens the collective identity not only by recognizing what being Palestinian is, it also offers a conceptualization of what goes against their ideologies of self. Educational platforms attempt to establish social standards and political norms through a historical consciousness (Alayan, 2012). Within the Palestinian Authority approved curriculum, the idea of colonialism is stressed as the cause for the ongoing conflict, thereby going against the collective identity of Palestinians. Since the colonizers are Israeli, they are viewed as the 'out-group' that the youth identify against. Due to the violence associated with the conflict, the 'out-group' is viewed as the common enemy and strengthens the concept of being Palestinian.

In the textbooks, there is a distinction made between those who practice Judaism and those who identify as Zionists or colonizers (Alayan, 2018). Although, as was mentioned earlier, the distinction of 'Jew' and 'Israeli' is often not made in verbal conversation but instead the term 'yahud' (Jew) is used to represent both. Clarification of different Israeli citizens, such as settlers, the army and the Israeli government and citizens, were made after I asked for distinction. This general use of the term 'yahud' shapes the youths' shared perspectives on Jewish people generally regardless of whether they are Israelis or not. In the group interview a picture of Hasidic Jewish youth was shown to the Palestinian youth:

Shabab 5: They are the worst.

Shabab 7: They look like me. They are our cousins, I like them.

Shabab 4: They are impure people.

Shabab 3: They don't like Arabs.

N.M.: What if I told you that they are Jewish and not Israeli.

Shabab 2: Their hands are still dirty like Israelis here. Also, they are conceited people, and don't talk to others.

Shabab 4: The Jews outside Israeli have contact with Jews in Israel, right? They know what Israel does. So, there is no difference between them living outside or inside Israel.

N.M.: But there are Jewish people who are against the occupation too, and organizations like Jewish Voice for Peace that fight against the occupation.

Shabab 2: They try to help us?

N.M.: Yeah, they try to.

Shabab 2: Then trust in God.

This dialogue was compared with another that developed when shown a picture of Israeli settlers carrying an Israeli flag:

Shabab 2: May God keep them here.

N.M.: Why?

Shabab 3: I like the Israelis because they keep order here.

N.M.: Do you also feel that way if I said these men are settlers in a West Bank settlement?

Shabab 4: It's not Jews we have a problem with, it's them, the settlers. But they are just like Arabs. They don't help us, they just hurt us.

Shabab 1: They are no good. They don't help anything.

Shabab 3: Settlers don't help anything but the Israeli government is very good at keeping order.

Identifying themselves as Palestinians against the out-group of Israelis and settlers, the participants provided different stances on their opinions. They all agreed that settlers are not helpful and use various justifications for this. Moreover, the word 'Arabs' was used in comparison with settlers, and in one participant's view, both groups did not help Palestinians. He also used the term 'us', further grouping himself in a Palestinian framework and grouping settlers and other Arabs in another.

N.M.: Do you think Israeli's are generally good or bad?

Shabab 6: I think they are good because they are good at organizing and controlling.

N.M.: So, is the army good then?

Shabab 6: No, the army is not good. Just the Israeli government. And the settlers are garbage.

N.M.: And how about Israeli citizens living in Israel (pre-1948 land)?

Shabab 6: Yeah, they are fine, but not the army or settlers.

Interestingly, some of the youth expressed the view that Israel also keeps the order, signifying that Arabs do not or cannot. Another fascinating but realistic aspect of occupation is the social distance between Palestinians and Israeli civilians considering their geographical proximity. Except for the field trip to Mediterranean Sea earlier in the year, the youth do not have regular access to enter into Jerusalem or further west towards the sea, therefore they do not have the opportunity to interact with Israelis that are not soldiers or settlers. Due to their proximity to the Israeli army and settlers, they associate negative feelings towards them but not all the youth negatively view those they do not have direct experience with, as indicated in the above excerpt. In this way, they establish boundaries to the idea of 'enemy'.

N.M.: So, the consequences for Palestinians who protest are great?

Shabab 6: They (Israelis) train their little ones since their birth that...

Shabab 3: (interrupting) if they talk to us we talk. If they have problems with us, we have problems with them.

Shabab 6: Yeah, like when we went to al-Aqsa, Haifa, and Yafa for the field trip, the soldiers told us to have a nice trip.

Shabab 3: They were nice that day but you can't trust them.

The explanation of why Israelis are the enemy are as simple to the youth as they are complicated to outsiders.

N.M.: What is an issue here?

Shabab 5: The Jews.

N.M.: All Jewish people?

Shabab 5: No, the ones in Israel. The Israelis.

Similarly, the ways in which they are the enemy is clarified simply:

N.M.: What is an issue here in Palestine?

Shabab 8: The Israelis make problems with Palestinians.

N.M.: All Israelis?

Shabab 8: Kind of all of them but the soldiers and settlers are here and we have to deal with them. The Arabs need to be afraid.

This need of fear is a solidifying force in the creation of an enemy as one who causes harm and requires protection from. However, the ways the youth describe their dynamics with the army differs depending on the participants' individual characteristics.

N.M.: Do you see the soldiers? Are you afraid of them?

Shabab 3: Yeah, we see them but we are not scared of them. Not scared scared. It's normal.

Shabab 6: They're scared of us. They are scared we will attack them with knives.

When shown a photo of a Palestinian youth with a knife, an informant voiced his support:

Shabab 2: It's a way to fight the occupation and it's good because it scares the Israelis. They bully, hurt and kill us so we should do what we can to scare them.

By using the terms 'us' and 'them', this informant grouped himself into the in-group against the common enemy of Israelis and justifying actions by Palestinians as defensive against Israel's actions towards them as a group. The generational narrative, historical lessons in textbooks, and the identification of a common enemy creates an awareness of past and current political movements and events that shape the informants' current political opinions.

Political Awareness

In Palestine, children are seen as active members of the political community and are considered to be committed to the national struggle just as adults, although their level of agency differs (Hart, 2004a, p. 173), signifying that children and adults alike support societal beliefs and the national narrative similarly.

N.M.: Do the older boys ever want to participate in the protests?

Adult 1: We try as hard as possible to keep them from it but here in Palestine, even the small children know politics so well because they are living it every day, but we never involve the children in anything related to the political unrest in our country.

Regardless of the institution's policy of not involving the youth in the political unrest present, the participants still held knowledge and opinions about the current and former political situations, politicizing their shared identity due to the socio-contextual aspects of the environment which was detailed by the youth discussions with me. In individual interviews, the

youth expressed political opinions on the occupation, Israeli army and soldiers, protests, politicians and global politics. During the group interview, a common view amongst the participants was that Yasser Arafat, the president of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and the PA during both intifadas, was a hero and the hope of Palestine. They agreed that he was not a collaborator with Israel and that was the reason why he was killed. Simultaneously, they also agreed upon statements of condemnation against the most recent president Mahmoud Abbas and attributed him with negative traits they think he holds, including that of inaction against the occupation and corruption. The bridge between the opinions of the youth on Yasser Arafat and Mahmoud Abbas reveals a common ideology for resistance. As Arafat was acting president during the Palestinian uprisings, he is viewed as a hero while Abbas, who in his career as president has tried to calm the resistance and stop another uprising, is viewed as a pawn to the Israeli government. The greed the youth associate with him indicates their opinions that he is not interested in the national struggle but instead focused on himself. Through these dialogues, the participants indicated their support for resistance to the occupation with their support of Arafat.

The youths' knowledge of the political environment is not limited to Palestinian politicians but extends to the Israeli political sphere as well. Compared to their views on the past and current presidents of the PA, the informants had opposite opinions between the past and present prime ministers of Israel, Ariel Sharon and Benjamin Netanyahu. The youth agreed that the current prime minister, Netanyahu was '*doing a job and he does a good job*' but that Sharon, who was in office from March 2001 to April 2006 was 'garbage', possibly attributing to the Palestinian narrative of him being the provocateur and starter of the second intifada in 2000, and to the rivalry between him and the Palestinian national hero, Yasser Arafat.¹⁶

The political views discussed illustrate different aspects of the social norms and subsequent national narratives that is shared by the participants. I will now elaborate further on an opinion that was touched upon in the interview extracts above – the participants' views that Israel's control over Palestine is needed in one way or another.

¹⁶ The Palestinian narrative of 'the straw that broke the camel's back' and started the second intifada was on September 28, 2000 when he took an intentionally provocative tour of the al-Aqsa mosque compound. In response riots between Israelis and Palestinians began and spread to all of historical Palestine. For more info: <http://www.palestine-studies.org/resources/special-focus/second-intifada-then-and-now>

N.M.: Do you think that Israelis are good or bad?

Shabab 6: I think they are good because they are good at organizing and controlling. Listen, there's people here who would cause problems all the time and the Israelis keep them from doing that. If the Israeli's weren't here, the Arabs would fight and kill each other.

Another participant articulated the same belief that Palestinians would fight each other.

Focusing on a common enemy then provides them reasons to unify.

N.M.: What does peace mean?

Shabab 2: We don't know peace. We will never know peace. Even if the Israelis just left, then the Arabs would fight amongst themselves. We would fight over land and things like that. So, the Israelis should stay, it's better.

All of the youth, regardless of age, demonstrated some form of political awareness. Even if their opinions are viewed as naïve by adults, the awareness was present even in the youngest children at the institution. However, the older youth participants expressed more complex understandings of the political situation.

N.M.: What do you think about the situation with Israel and the army?

Shabab 4: The army...how do I say it? The Arabs cause problems and the army retaliates with tear gas and shooting at us. It is difficult and ongoing. It's a mix of both who cause the problems but I don't want to see anyone get shot or hurt in front of me. And if you see it, it affects you negatively. There's stuff Israel does that is good and stuff that is not good but without the Israelis, everything would not work. The Israelis are the ones who are keeping it organized, and put together for the Arabs. Arabs don't have the organization or the infrastructure and we need to rely on Israel.

Another youth described his view on reality simply by stating:

Shabab 2: Israelis destroy the Arabs and the Arabs destroy other Arabs. One tries to break the other.

If we accept “that each generation socializes the next to its ways applies less than in situations of cultural stability” (Daiute, 2013, p. 155), then due to the level of instability that exists in Palestine - the intergenerational narrative, beliefs, norms and struggles are passed on and imposed upon younger generations profoundly. Generational memory and the historical

narrative are used in Palestine as a way to explain the reasons and justify the cause for resistance and to extend knowledge of a land and time - as to not be forgotten.

The Palestinian ‘master narrative’ (Hammack, 2010) conveys the national struggle of resistance to the youth by all types of adults – parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers, lawyers, medical practitioners, activists, freedom fighters, prisoners, tour guides etc. Perhaps in other different contexts of childhood “being a national just ‘is’” (Pryke, 2001, p. 198); However, I argue that the adult pressure placed on children to identify as members of the social group of Palestinians, to associate themselves with the master narrative and to support the national struggle is more demanding on Palestinian children than children not living in a conflict area. This is due to the requirement placed on the children to continue the struggle against occupation and colonization as their parents and their grandparents have in the past. These adult pressures play out in different forms including acceptance of social identity, knowledge of ancestral heritage, willingness to fight for the cause, proactive resistance, and longing for the achievement of political and social agendas.

National Struggle & Children’s Resiliency

As Hart (2004a) appropriately posits about displaced Palestinian children in conflict, it is extremely difficult for growing children to “develop values and aspirations that do not accord with those of older generations” (p. 184), thus creating an environment that not only formulates social identity but also expects it. This notion counters the idea of children’s agency by implying that their individuality and sense of value is influenced largely by their environment, their education and societal pressure and as such, gives way for the continuation of the ongoing national struggle of Palestinians. The national struggle partly demands resistance, resilience, and *sumud* in the face of Israeli occupation, colonialism and displacement while also remaining connected with the ancestral homeland (historical Palestine). According to Rijke and van Teeffelen (2014), “*Sumud* carries the meaning of a strong determination to stay in the country and on the land” (p. 86). The closest English translation used in literature for *sumud* is steadfastness; but in my opinion, the translation fails to convey the social, religious, and emotional significance of the word.¹⁷ Resilience, although ambiguous, can be understood as an

¹⁷ For more understanding of *sumud*, read “To Exist is to Resist: Sumud, Heroism and the Everyday” by Alexandra Rijke & Toine van Teeffelen, 2014.

“individual’s capacity to recover from, adapt, and remain strong in the face of adversity” (Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 5).

The pressure of continuing acceptance of the national struggle and building resiliency is placed on children and is highlighted when considering the labeling of the youngest generation of Palestinians as ‘Jeel al-Awda’ (generation of the return) and ‘Jeel al-Aqsa’ (generation of the Aqsa mosque) (Hart, 2004b, p. 175). Arguably, for Palestinian children, the choice of remaining connected with their historical homeland and resisting the occupation is less of an option and more of an obligation, albeit an accepted duty.

Shabab 5: We have to fight for our homeland.

This simple statement was declared by a participant when he saw a picture of a stone thrower at a protest suggesting that resistance is necessary. The participants discussed different aspects of known social norms that were learned from the social environment and societal beliefs. These social norms contribute to their identity grouping as Palestinians and indicate their expected roles in the occupation. When discussing a picture of Palestinian women sling-shooting stones in the group interview this conversation ensued:

Shabab 4: Of course! Women, men, children, old people – we all have a role.

Shabab 1: Those are college students, they go out on their breaks from classes to the protests, they fight for their homeland and they return to their education. They have to; it’s almost like part of their education.

This extract reveals the participants’ perception of what is expected of them and highlights the placed importance and need for resistance of the occupational forces by comparing the demand for its presence to their education. To these participants, every person regardless of age, has an expected role to fill.

In regard to the national struggle, all the participants used unifying terms of ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’, etc. to express the collectiveness of their Palestinian identity. They also described Palestinians fighting the occupation in protests, knife attacks, stone throwing and other ‘acts of resistance’ against the military in terms of courage and strength. Such as this dialogue:



Photo of a Palestinian boy throwing a stone at an Israeli tank during the first Intifada.
Source: gettyimages.co.uk, accessed 20 June 2017.

Shabab 2: One courageous Palestinian.
Shabab 4: He's alone and he's just a boy.
Shabab 3: I think Palestinian children are stronger than other children.
Shabab 2: I think we have to be stronger because of the situation. Also, to show other people but there's a lot of pressure on Palestinians to leave Palestine. Money is being offered to them to leave. So, we have to be strong.
Shabab 6: I would not do what the boy is doing in the photo. I would be afraid.
Shabab 2: You can go to prison for 20 years now if you throw a stone and it doesn't do anything. You throw a stone, you get imprisoned or shot.

The participants dialogue indicated, to me, that due to their perception of danger from the Israeli army, there was a need to be strong, and that Palestinian children are stronger than other children since that risk is stronger. Along with the *need* for fighting against the common enemy, there is also a sense of righteousness to it. “To exist is to resist” is now a popular adage used by pro-Palestinians in protests, lectures, and literature. It is in acknowledgment of *sumud* and remaining resilient against adversity as a part of the Palestinian national struggle. The extract below further shows how the participant’s associated strength to remaining steadfast in Palestine and resisting the occupation.



Photo of young Ahed Tamimi in front of Israeli soldiers.
Source: Activestills.org, accessed on 20 June 2017.

Shabab 4: Those kids are strong.
Shabab 1: She's good and strong
Shabab 6? She's defending herself.
Shabab 4: That's right. She's defending herself and she's strong for it.
Shabab 1: They come from a strong family.
Shabab 2: Did you see when the soldier tried to arrest her brother and she and the women in the family stopped him? The kid's arm was broken, what was he going to do to the army anyway?

Here, the informants defended the actions of the girl and subsequently her family against the military and associated resistance as strength while at the same time downplaying the enemies' reason to arrest the boy, thereby undermining the enemy's reasoning and defending their own need for strength.¹⁸

N.M.: How does it make you feel when you hear the news that a 15-year old boy was shot in Jerusalem last week?

Shabab 6: It's all for nothing. See if we injure or kill one of them, they come and kill two. If we kill two, they kill five. Even if they leave others will come in their place. There is no end to them. Why not protect your health instead?¹⁹

This informant illustrates the reasoning for his opinion by iterating that the out-group of Israeli soldiers is endless in numbers and supporters. He instead argues for trying to control the factors of life that can be controlled by taking care of yourself instead.

Hope for the Future

In many ways, the informants shared ideals of strength and resistance against the occupation; but some of the participants also uttered defeated and more realistic views for the future goals of the national struggle. In the group interview, a picture of the symbolic key representing the right of return for Palestinians to their pre-1948 home was shown, to which a participant proclaimed:

Shabab 2: It doesn't exist. There is no home to put that key in; there is no return to go back to. It's sad but that's the reality.

Whilst a minority of participants agreed with this unrealistic hope of return, all expressed support for a free Palestine. Although they remained cognizant that without Israel as the common enemy, fighting would occur within the society.

¹⁸ The Tamimi family is now recognized from international headlines due to the arrest of 16-year-old Ahd. The photo of the attempted arrest of her brother was seen by the participants prior to the study. It can be viewed here: <https://www.rt.com/news/313807-idf-soldier-palestinian-boy/>

¹⁹ The Arabic expression he used literally translates to "It would be best to keep living with your health instead".

Hope in Themselves

Despite the participants' perspectives on the future of Palestine, Jeel al-Amal attempts to install a personal positive attitude and hopeful spirit within the youth for their present lives and the future. A staff member explained that it is beneficial for the supervisors to bring their biological children to the institution, not only to spend time with their fathers but also to aid them in their development from being around the boys at Jeel al-Amal. A participant explained further:

Adult 2: That's why she (the daughter of a staff member) comes here to play for an hour. Being around the boys and playing helps form a good attitude and a good attitude is most important in life. We try to instill good manners in us all and also to help them prepare for their futures and get a good sense of what it is they want with their lives. Being sure in your capabilities, self-reliant and hopeful is very important.

Boyden and Mann (2005) posited that youth's confidence in their current abilities transcends to future obstacles. They also stated that children who have a supportive adult around learn that they have others that will aid them when they need and this can "have an enormous impact on a child's resilience" (Ressler, Boothby, & Steinbock, 1988; Werner & Smith, 1992 in Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 7). A participant expressed to me his confidence in different abilities:

N.M.: How is school for you?

Shabab 1: It's good! I'm really good at bargaining and will be a lawyer, so I need top grades in school but that's doable. I'm a smart guy.

While other participants indicated a personal positive attitude in their ability to overcome future challenges, and if need be, to change their reality.

N.M.: If you could change anything here at Jeel al-Amal, what would it be?

Shabab 2: I wouldn't change anything but my attitude. If I change that, then everything gets better.

Shabab 5: I would change everything - my ways, my habits, my thinking, the things I've done. I'd change my crimes and it'd be different.

These informant's statements indicate a motivation to develop themselves and to control their realities by controlling their attitudes, habits, and thinking. Domains that heavily influence resiliency in adolescence have been identified by Daniel and Wassell (2002) as having a secure base with family and friends, education, talents and interests, positive values and social competencies (p. 14). Although each of these social-relational categories differ in nature, they each play a significant role in a child's resiliency (Daiute, 2013). I observed the participants demonstrate competency and security within the micro aspects of their lives and also their efforts to handle the macro contexts within the scope of their abilities to by focusing on talents, interests, values and social capability. It is important to be aware that the level of resiliency runs on a sliding scale with no fixed point and it is constantly fluctuating along with the risks and adversity that led to its creation (Masten, Best, & Garmezy, 1990). However, due to the ongoing violent and sometimes chaotic nature of the occupation, I expected that the participants of the study would display high levels of resiliency. Through the study, I realized that the participants, as social beings within a violent and oppressed environment, displayed resiliency not only as individuals but more so as a group.

Boyden & Mann (2005) remind us that it is important to acknowledge the involvement of "beliefs, feelings, competencies, actions, and children's own perspectives on their adversity and the strategies they employ for their own protection" in the development of resiliency and coping techniques (p. 19). These elements combined with macro structural influences create a shared consciousness; and in turn, normality is constructed as a coping mechanism to help negotiate with their reality by controlling their reactions to the unstableness present. This concept of constructing normality in the lives and perspectives of the participants will be explored further.

Constructing Normality as a Coping Mechanism

The construction of normality was revealed in the regular use of the word '*aidi*', the Arabic word for normal, in conversations that stemmed from themes around national struggle, place identity and self-categorization. In my past experience in Palestine, I knew that '*aidi*' was said often to describe situations and emotions, but only during the study did I grasp the frequency of its use. As "armed conflict and mass displacement are generally identified as being 'beyond the normal' range of human experience because they cause disturbance and upheaval, not just at a personal and familial level but throughout society" (Ager, 1996; De Vries, 1996 in Boyden &

Mann, 2005, p. 6), I was interested in exploring the creation of normality in this ‘beyond normal’ situation. Here, the functionality of constructing normality will be discussed using the individual and shared social perspectives of the participants on the social and political elements of society.

Social and Political Normality

Through socialization, children negotiate and learn from their social interactions. For children living in conflict areas, this process also helps them acquire tools and techniques that aid in adapting to the adversity they face. The construction of normality is influenced and is influenced by the societal norms, beliefs and happenings present. The participant’s perspectives on the social and political realities of their lives were subject to individual attributes but, as I observed, the labeling of ‘normal’ to their circumstances and situations was a function derived from a shared social consciousness. As social identity is shaped by the shared narratives, knowledge, opinions, and religious and cultural beliefs, it not only conveys a common enemy and shared national struggle it also creates a solidarity with the group. This indicates that describing things as normal requires that it happens to more than one person in the group. Due to the environment and situation, the social construct of ‘normal’ is unique, meaning that what may be ‘normal’ in Palestine might not be ‘normal’ elsewhere in different contexts. In this ongoing conflict, it is difficult to distinguish between exclusively social and political aspects of life. Therefore, these two elements of life and normality will be discussed in unison with each other.

Constructing normality is a way of negotiating reality, and helps to accept situations and events. It is a protective attribute that is used to lessen the emotional burden of living in everyday occupation. For instance, when shown the following picture of Israeli police detaining a Palestinian youth while appearing sympathetic to an Israeli youth of relatively the same age, the participants in the group interview commented:



Shabab 2: (laughing) The Israeli is treated like a baby and well taken care of while the Palestinian is treated like a criminal. It's typical here.

Shabab 4: It's not fair. It's a laugh in the face of all Arabs.

Shabab 2: He (the Palestinian youth) is a normal citizen that they will catch and jail.

Photo of Israeli police detaining a Palestinian youth.

Source: www.dci-palestine.org, accessed on 20 June 2017.

As a coping mechanism, considering something normal decreases the emotional impact it will have on a person. If one chooses to think of a situation or experience as normal, then it indicates that the response to it would also be normal, and therefore within their control. Other daily occurrences with soldiers and settlers such as protests, night raids, martyrdom, and a lack of ability to move freely were previously discussed within frameworks of being 'normal' for this situation. Indicating that 'normal' here means it happens on a regular basis and to many people in the group. In the following extract, the informant notes the normality of the violent aspects of life:

N.M.: What do you think about Palestine generally?

Shabab 8: There's an ugly life here inside Palestine.

N.M.: Why?

Shabab 8: The Arabs, there's a lot of things that are not good here. Israelis beating up on the Arabs, Arabs protesting, stuff like that. It's normal here though.

The excerpt below indicated a realization of a violent element of reality for Palestinians that is considered normal in the current situation but should not be prevalent in society.

N.M.: What does peace mean?

Shabab 8: Maybe just that the soldiers don't shoot at us. It's normal here but it shouldn't be.

He also demonstrated his categorization into the population being shot at with his use of 'us', thereby strengthening this informant's ties with his social identity. The youth in the institution are safeguarded from the more violent aspects of the occupation but they still played with toy guns and video games that involved shooting and killing opponents. The interesting point here, I

found, was that the youth were not allowed to use social media sites like Facebook due to advertisements of a sexual nature could be viewed but violence in their play activities was tolerable. This indicated, that as violence is prevalent in the wider society, it has been neutralized within the youth's inner social settings.

Interestingly, the youth's perceptions of normality play a role in their accepted membership into different groupings which changes their idea of normal based on their current physical location inside the institution.

N.M.: What was it like to live at your fathers' home?

Shabab 5: In the camp, the army is there a lot at night until about Fajr (the morning prayer around 5:00). They bother us when we are in our homes. We throw rocks at their heads. But that's normal there. The army doesn't come here.

This participant explained that it is normal to expect army raids into the camp at night but his placement at Jeel al-Amal changed his construction of normality. He distinctly changed his understanding of normal as he placed distance between himself and the incursions in the camp because of his current location. The participants also shared their view of the severity of violence by the army and described that for Israeli soldiers, their actions are also thought of as normal.

N.M.: Why do you think the soldiers are violent with Palestinians?

Shabab 4: If they go and shoot someone, it's normal for them. But we don't have guns to fight with. What the army does is spray bullets at anyone who attempts anything like yesterday at al-Aqsa. It's good no one was killed yesterday, but it's really normal for the army to kill us.

The informant recognized himself as Palestinian using identity words 'we' and 'us' while also acknowledging his understanding of the enemy and the risk they present to Palestinian lives. Demonstrated below is how the ambiguousness of the concept of freedom is formed by the physical restrictions experienced by the youth. Again, justifying the lack of ability to travel freely

N.M.: Are you free in Palestine?

Shabab 3: Yeah, I'm free in Palestine.

N.M.: How so?

Shabab 3: I can do as I like here at home. I have freedom here.

N.M.: And when you're not here at Jeel al-Amal but in Palestine?

Shabab 3: Well I can't go into Jerusalem or to the sea, so I guess it's not freedom but it's normal for here. I can do what I like here in the West Bank, so that's sort of freedom.

More globally accepted behaviors such as fighting, smoking and crying were described by the informants as normal. Although, the participants over the age of 16 shared the opinion that crying is natural but as they grew older, they have to be strong and not show sadness. Culturally, there is gender-based pressure placed on males to not show fear and to not cry as these are seen as a weakness amongst men in many societies (Barber, 2008; Veronese et al., 2011). Perhaps this pressure is present more so in Palestine due to the situation, and society expects males to take an active role in the national struggle requiring strength and endurance. This strengthening of morale and consequential lack of crying is demonstrated in the older participant's responses to how they think it will be when they age out of the institution.

Shabab 1: I feel normal about it. I've been here for over 10 years, for sure they are sick of me. I have to go and live my life after this, it's normal.

Other aspects of life, such as physical punishments used in the secondary school, were labeled as normal by the participants and directly linked with them getting used to the behavior.

*N.M.: Teachers in the other school use their hands to discipline the students?
Shabab 2: They use a ruler usually. It's normal. We are used to it.*

The adult caregivers in the institutions strive to give the youth a 'normal' childhood even within the ongoing situational contexts. In the following excerpt, an adult participant specified their idea of a 'normal' childhood:

*N.M.: What do you take most pride in here?
Adult 1: I feel pride here in the staff, the children who grew up here and came back to work. When you see the children laughing and smiling again and acting like children. It's very rewarding. We want them to focus on their future, live like children, enjoy their life.*

These ideas of what constitutes normal were expressed simply in terms of development and enjoyment. They indicated that the basics of being a child means smiling, laughing and 'acting like children', which was taken to mean living a more care-free life with fewer worries. However, this idea of a normal childhood is not always possible within social and political

contexts. Instead, normality is constructed in response to the micro and macro contexts present in society.

Constructing normality is used by the participants and the wider Palestinian community to cope with the ongoing situation, strengthen the social identity and to accept the national struggle expected of Palestinians. Only one of many coping mechanisms used, normality was also part of the informant's understanding of their risks and vulnerability in life. These themes will be discussed in the next chapter as I address the resounding outcomes of the micro and macro contextual factors in an ongoing occupation on children who grow up in this institution.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Life and Vulnerability of Displaced Palestinian Youth

Introduction

This chapter has two aims: firstly, to summarize the findings of the study as discussed in the previous analytical chapters through a discussion on vulnerability by way of answering the research questions listed in the introduction and finally, to provide recommendations and suggestions for future research. Given the research questions, the categories that emerged from the data emphasized the micro and macro contexts of life as experienced by the youth. These categories were presented and discussed in two empirical chapters separating them into microsystems and macro-systems. However, in some instances determining in which system certain aspects of life fit respectively into was difficult as the interplay between the systems and influences from them are widespread. These contexts will be summarized with the aim of discussing the perceived vulnerability of the participants as children not living in their family homes and in an ongoing conflict zone. The social construct of vulnerability was explored, due to the consideration that each society has their own understanding about children's vulnerabilities, and this understanding influences the methods used by adults with children in terms of education and development. These adult opinions of positive and negative factors shape the micro and macro contexts which influence the child's socialization, learning, and protection and therefore also develops the child's adaptation, resilience and coping mechanisms (Dawes & Donald, 1994; Super & Harkness, 1992; Woodhead, 1999 in Boyden & Mann, 2005, p. 12).

Presently, the participant's perceptions of their vulnerability and the surrounding adult's viewpoints of the children's vulnerability will be reflected on. These contexts will be summarized in groupings of micro settings that influence the protection, provision and participation rights of the youth, and the macro contexts that lead to the self-categorization of the youth into social groupings. Macro contexts, such as societal beliefs, national norms and social identity influence the presence and quality of micro contexts which then can hinder or strengthen the ability to provide for youth. Now, a discussion on aspects from both contexts and how they alter the youth's understanding of vulnerability as well as adults' understanding of children's vulnerability will be presented.

Micro-systems Influence on Rights, Provisions, & Protection

Within the immediate environment of the institution is a boarding section and a school. These components are considered fundamental in the well-being and development of children since they provide shelter, food, care, and education. These properties provide the children to different articles they are righted in the UNCRC, including the right to life, the right to protection, the right to provisions, the right of education, and the right to participation. Through the collected data in interviews and within my observations during the field work, it was found that the youth in the institution are provided for in these regards to the best ability of the staff with the resources possible through a variety of ways. Other examples of provisions that the youth receive inside the institution are clothes, educational materials, social and psychological support, and academic and recreational activities and programs.

A certain amount of exposure to the violent elements present in Palestine stemming from the military occupation – from night raids and arrests to protests and the making of martyrs – is inevitable for people living inside the West Bank. If we understand vulnerability to mean the possibility of being harmed then all Palestinians, regardless of age, can be considered vulnerable. If we understand vulnerability in terms of dependence then for children and youth who already considered a vulnerable demographic since they rely on others to support them; then those children who live outside of their family homes and carry a stigma of being unwanted or orphaned logically creates another layer of vulnerability. However, during the length of the research, it was realized that the youth living in the institution benefitted from the vulnerable label that is placed on them in regards to protection, education, and obtainment of necessities.

They have opportunities, resources, and services available to them that youth in the surrounding area may not have access to; demonstrating that the participants in this study had the right to special protection and assistance as afforded to them in the UNCRC. The participants shared examples of perceived safety inside the institution's walls as they spoke about the protection from the use of physical punishment in school and the protection they have at home, since in their view the army was forbidden to enter into the institution. Protection, opportunities and programs that are available to orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) was written about by Abebe (2012) where he found in his study in Ethiopia that the benefits of being categorized as orphans and therefore more vulnerable led to the exclusion of poor children from programs that would seemingly benefit them as well (p. 541). Similar findings emerged in this study, where in

Palestine, children growing up outside of the institution²⁰ were susceptible to more violence, less protection, and less structured programs than those growing up in this institution.

This assessment was made through comparing statistics of Palestinian children in various legal and social groupings. These statistics were detailed in the background chapter but will be recapped here for reference. 356 Palestinian youth were arrested by the Israeli army, and 16 were arrested by Palestinian security forces in 2017. In the same year, 61 Palestinian youth were injured and 14 were killed by Israeli army weapons (DCIP, 2018). The high prevalence of mistreatment, violence, and deaths of youth is documented in statistics and narrated about in the media and within society. The informants, either by direct or indirect experience, are aware of these issues and discussed arrests and night raids by the army, the threat of violence by other Palestinians, and risk of harm and mistreatment from Israeli practices. However, all of the participants spoke of their sense of security inside the institution and the differences found in life between the institution and their family homes, signifying the participants perceived vulnerability as being less than other Palestinian children not in the institution.

The participants also expressed appreciation of their fortune being placed at the institution, as it was detailed to me in different scenarios by them. They expressed feelings of love, admiration, and respect for those in the institution with them. The provisions, protection, programs, and opportunities that the informants have at the institution offers them security in the present and prospects for the future. Including preparing them for adulthood through the encouragement of roles and responsibilities, mimicking of caring and loving behaviors, and furthering their education.

In a situation where protection cannot be guaranteed and indeed life itself is uncertain, the informant's verbalized understanding of their situation can be viewed as an indication of their self-perceived vulnerability, as they convey that their life inside the institution is better than if they lived at their family homes. Perhaps the appreciation and overall positive opinions that were revealed in the study, of the institution can be summed up with one of the participants answers to the question – what is the best thing here?

Shabab 7: The life here is good, it's rare to find such a good life like the one we have here.

²⁰ Including youth from the institution who returned to family homes during holiday breaks.

Macro-systems influence on Social Identity, National Struggle, Normality & Resiliency

The children's display of shared social identity markers was discussed within their understanding of macro contextual aspects including social norms, religious identity, belonging to a place and categorization of themselves against those they considered as 'others'. It was posited that the communal identity category of 'Palestinian' strengthens the reasoning and defense of the national struggle and also aids in the creation of coping mechanisms used in the conflict setting. Such coping mechanisms include constructing normality and possessing resilient traits to resist the occupation and to support them in their personal experience as children living outside of the family environment. The construction of normality aids in the informants' coping and adaptation in unstable circumstances by controlling their understanding of it, thus making some aspect of the situation predictable while also offering a united acceptance of what happens to Palestinians. The construction of normality then, is not only shaped by social identity, it also plays a role in shaping social identity.

Through social identity and the development of resiliency, the participants discussed their views on their lives as children compared to other youth around the world. They identified with being stronger generally than others because of the struggle of being Palestinian and the attributes and personal capabilities built from living in the political and social situation. Interestingly, their construction of normality altered their understanding of their vulnerability as children in an ongoing conflict since the noticeable presence of risks and dangers were organized and adapted to as 'normal', and was also dealt with by the majority of people in Palestine.

In summary, these results show that vulnerability, like childhood is a social construct. The understanding of vulnerability is ambiguous and constantly changing due to external factors and internal characteristics. A persons' status, roles, responsibilities, and abilities greatly affects the meaning of the concept of vulnerability. As an adult, I presumed that the children at the institution were more vulnerable due to their reliance on others to provide the necessities in life and their exposure to the possibility of harm. However, I learned through this study that, at least for the youth in Jeel al-Amal, due to the efforts of the institution to provide for the youth, they were deemed less vulnerable than other youth in Palestine.

Further Research:

This study concentrated on a particular institution for needy children in Palestine, and although the data and analysis that emerged was rich and insightful, the scope of the research was limited. A number of limitations need to be considered in future research in order to provide more understanding on childhood under occupation. Firstly, a comprehensive study on other institutions for OVCs should be made in order to substantiate or contradict the findings in this study. The generalization of the findings in this study is very limited to the field site due to the unique circumstances present in the institution – including philosophy of care, the organization of the institution, and resources available. As all of the youth participants in the study are males under 18 years old, it offered a unique and focused consideration into this specific demographics' understanding of life but cannot be extended to females of similar age. Due to the unique factors that exist in the institution, then it is assumed that children's lives outside of this institution also have unique traits applicable only to them, which should be explored further.

Comparable research with slight changes in research design can produce different results, such as using different methods for data collection or focusing on female informants. Similarly, a cross-analysis of methods, resources, and care in different institutions in Palestine could produce very interesting data. These findings then could aid in improving the organization of institutional care facilities for OVC and other needy children with a researched logic of what provisions they need that would be considered 'in their best interest' and the most efficient methods to administer them. A comprehensive study on Palestinian childhood is also recommended, as the day to day life of children differs greatly from each other depending on social, economic, political and cultural contexts. Such studies can focus on different circumstances in the same situation based on living arrangements – including life of refugee children in the camps and how children's lives are altered from living in Area A, B or C. With such a complex situation in the area, the possibilities of further studies with children in Palestine are copious and should be explored.

I think it is essential to emphasize in research with children that the need for listening to the child's voice is paramount, especially in this geo-political environment. As previously discussed, due to the context of the situation, Palestinian children are viewed as politically aware and socially responsible, and therefore able to be active in the social issues present. They have

opinions, feelings, and ideas about the past, present and future of society and their insight is necessary in knowing what is 'their best interest'.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical approval letter from NSD

Appendix B: Information letter for guardians

Appendix C: Informed consent form for guardians Information letter for children and youth

Appendix D: Information letter for children and youth

Appendix E: Informed consent form for youth participants

Appendix F: Information letter for adult participants

Appendix G: Informed consent form for adult participants²¹

Appendix H: Questionnaire for adults

Appendix I: Questionnaire for youth

Appendix J: One-on-one interview guides

Appendix K: Interview guide for adult participants

Appendix L: Drawing and tour guide themes

Appendix M: Photographs used during the group interview

²¹ Appendix B – G were translated verbally to the participants and guardians to allow for questions and to confirm that they understood the goals and objectives of the research and to highlight their voluntary participation.



Vebjørng Tingstad

7004 TRONDHEIM

Vår dato: 04.08.2017

Vår ref: 54548 / 3 / LAR

Deres dato:

Deres ref:

Tilbakemelding på melding om behandling av personopplysninger

Vi viser til melding om behandling av personopplysninger, mottatt 27.05.2017.

Meldingen gjelder prosjektet:

<i>54548</i>	<i>Giving Care to Orphans in an Ongoing Conflict</i>
<i>Behandlingsansvarlig</i>	<i>NTNU, ved institusjonens øverste leder</i>
<i>Daglig ansvarlig</i>	<i>Vebjørng Tingstad</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>Neda Mustafa</i>

Personvernombudet har vurdert prosjektet, og finner at behandlingen av personopplysninger vil være regulert av § 7-27 i personopplysningsforskriften. Personvernombudet tilrår at prosjektet gjennomføres

Personvernombudet stiller råd forutsetter at prosjektet gjennomføres i tråd med opplysningene gitt i meldeskjemaet, korrespondanse med ombudet, ombudets kommentarer samt personopplysningsloven og helseregisterloven med forskrifter. Behandlingen av personopplysninger kan settes i gang.

Det gjøres oppmerksom på at det skal gis ny melding dersom behandlingen endres i forhold til de opplysninger som ligger til grunn for personvernombudets vurdering. Endringsmeldinger gis via et eget skjema. Det skal også gis melding etter tre år dersom prosjektet fortsatt pågår. Meldinger skal skje skriftlig til ombudet.

Personvernombudet har lagt ut opplysninger om prosjektet i en [offentlig database](#).

Personvernombudet vil ved prosjektets avslutning, 20.05.2018, rette en henvendelse angående status for behandlingen av personopplysninger.

Dersom noe er uklart ta gjerne kontakt over telefon.

Vennlig hilsen

Katrine Utaaker Segadal

Dokumentet er elektronisk produsert og godkjent ved NSDs rutiner for elektronisk godkjenning.

Appendix B: Information sheet for guardians

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate. If you decide to allow your child to participate we thank you. If you decide not to allow your child to take part there will be no disadvantage to you or your child of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of the project?

Neda is undertaking this project as part of her Master's Degree at Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The intention of this study is to encourage children to give Neda their general ideas and views on their daily life and situation.

The research proposes to examine what children think of their lives inside Jeel al-Amal as well as the life in Palestine. It will also be looking at the changing views of children and childhood within the orphanage and the different techniques they use as individuals and as groups to overcome challenges. The research will look at how these views of children and childhood may or may not help Jeel al-Amal's successful history of providing care to them through the years.

Who is participating?

Eight children of varying ages have been chosen to be full participants and any other children that want to be involved with the observation and creative tools used are more than welcome to participate.

What will participants be asked to do?

Participants will be observed by the researcher during the project to notice their schedules, daily lifestyles, and the social dynamics at Jeel al-Amal. This observation will be done by Neda as she participates with the children in their activities and daily life. Notes will be taken by Neda but a top priority is for the participants to remain anonymous in the notes.

Your child will be part of a questionnaire asking factual questions about their age, any siblings, length of time at Jeel al-Amal, hobbies and also opinion questions about life, religion, school and feelings. These questionnaires should take approximately 10-20 minutes.

Your child will also participate in one group discussion with seven other peers where they will discuss pictures and themes revolving around safety, the occupation, love, family, home, strength and opportunity. This discussion will take approximately 1 hour and they will be audiotaped so Neda can transcribe them onto written documents.

During the research, your child will participate in two individual interviews that will discuss answers given on the questionnaires, ideas discussed in the group discussion and their drawings and/or photography. Each interview will be held in a comfortable space for your child and is planned to last anywhere from 20 to 45 minutes each session. These interviews will also be audiotaped and transcribed by Neda. The final interview will include an emphasis on ending of the research

process and ensuring your child is prepared for it by making sure they understand and including any other information they want to discuss with Neda. Should your child talk about personal experiences either during or after the group discussion that Neda believes may be harmful for your child she is obligated to follow this up by informing the necessary, responsible adult.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw your child from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. Neda will not interview your child unless you and your child have given consent. A copy of the information sheet and consent form that will be given to your child is enclosed.

Should you and your child consent to participating in this study, your child will be told the following: he can withdraw at any time before or during the discussion; he does not have to answer any questions, he does not want to and he can ask to have the tape recorder turned off at any time.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The purpose for which the information is being collected is Neda's university studies. Results of this project may be published but any data included will in no way be linked to your child. You and your child's anonymity will be preserved at all times. You will be provided with a summary of the research at the end of the project and you are most welcome to request a full copy of the results of the project should you wish, but please know the report will be in English.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the university's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Neda Mustafa
Nedamustafa@yahoo.com

Vebjørng Tingstad
Vebjorg.Tingstad@ntnu.no

Appendix C: Informed consent form for guardians

I have read the Information Sheet concerning this project and understand what it is about. I have also read a copy of my child's information sheet and consent form. All my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I am free to request further information at any stage.

I know that:

1. My child's participation in the project is entirely voluntary;
2. I am free to withdraw my child from the project at any time without any disadvantage to my child;
3. I understand that the research data on my child [(audio tapes and transcript) will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which time it will be destroyed, and that all personal information (names and consent forms) will be destroyed at the end of the study;
4. I understand that my child will be part of a group discussion with other children. The group will be asked to discuss the following topics: aspirations, life goals, education, religion, and different feelings including happiness, sadness, safety, danger, and strengths.
5. I give my consent for the researcher to notify the necessary adult should my child disclose personal experiences during or after the discussion of a nature that the researcher believes may be harmful to my child;
6. I understand that my child will not be interviewed without my child's consent;
7. I understand that only Neda Mustafa, her supervision, Vebjørng Tingstad will have access to the personal information of my child. I am aware that only Neda Mustafa, her supervision, Vebjørng Tingstad will have further access to the personal information of my child once the transcript is made;
8. I understand that the results of the project may be published but my anonymity and my child's anonymity will be preserved;
9. I understand that I have access to Neda should I need to discuss this project with her or discuss any issues that may arise from this project for myself or my child.

I give consent for my child to take part in this project.

.....
Signature of parent or guardian

.....
Date

Appendix D: Children and youth information letter

I am writing a report for my University work. It's like homework. My report is going to be about what your life is like at Jeel Al Amal. So, if you agree I would like you to tell me about different things in your life. Sometimes adults do not always know what children think so it will be interesting to hear from you! If the other kids want to talk to me and you do not want to, that's OK too. You still won't get into trouble.

We will be drawing, playing, and talking - sometimes with other children or alone. To get to know more about you I will give you a questionnaire that will ask you things like your name and your age and also about some things you like and some things you don't. It's not like a test there are no right or wrong answers. I just want to know more about you and your lives.

You do not have to talk to me if you do not want to and you won't get into trouble. If, when we are talking, you want to stop talking or if you do not want to answer any of the questions, that's OK too. When we are talking, I will put the tape on so that I can remember what everyone's said for my report. But at any time, you can tell me to turn it off and I will.

I will type the things on the tape and the only people to be able to see it will be me and my teacher, Vebjørn Tingstad. After we have finished with the words and the tape they will be locked away until after the report is completed then destroyed.

When I write my report, I might write about some of the things you have talked about but I won't use your name so people won't know they are your words.

If you have any worries after our talk you can come and talk to me. I will keep everything private but if I think that you might not be safe I might have to tell some other adults who can help me make you safe.

Your guardians have said it's OK for me to talk with you today but I won't talk to you unless you say it's OK. You can ask me any questions you like before you say it's OK to talk to you.

Appendix E: Informed consent form for youth participants

Neda has told me that:

- If I do not want to talk to her today that's OK and I won't get into trouble.
- She will be asking me questions about my life at Jeel Al Amal.
- There are no right or wrong answers and if I do not want to answer some of the questions that is OK.
- If I don't want to participate in all the activities, that's OK too.
- Anytime I want to stop talking that's OK. Anytime I don't want my words recorded, she will turn the tape recorder off.
- She is writing a report for her university studies.
- She will write about some of the things I've talked about but won't use my name. I agree that's OK.
- The tape and copy of my words from the tape will only be seen by her teacher, Vebjørng Tingstad. and that the tape and the copy of my words from the tape will be kept private.
- If I have any worries about our talk I can talk with her.

I agree:

It's OK for Neda to talk to me.

It's OK for me to talk to Neda during our talks and give her information about myself on a questionnaire.

I agree it's OK for Neda to use the tape recorder today.

I agree it's OK for me to draw and to talk to Neda about the drawings.

..... (I agree) Day.....

Appendix F: Information sheet for adult participants

Thank you for showing an interest in this project. Please read this sheet carefully before deciding whether or not to participate. If you decide to participate we thank you. If you decide not to take part there will be no disadvantage to you of any kind and we thank you for considering our request.

What is the aim of the project?

Neda is undertaking this project as part of her Master's Degree at Norwegian University of Science and Technology. The intention of this study is to encourage the children and adults to give Neda their general ideas and views on their daily life and situation, both at Jeel al-Amal and in Palestine.

The research proposes to examine the changing views of children and childhood within the orphanage and the different techniques that are taught to them to use as individuals and as groups to overcome challenges. I am also interested in exploring the adult's techniques and methods of giving care to so many children and the tools used to deal with stress. The research will look at how these different components contribute to Jeel al-Amal's successful history of providing care to so many children through the years.

Who is participating?

Along with eight children of varying ages who have been chosen to be full participants and any others that want to be partial participants, this research will involve three adults who are actively involved in the children's lives and upbringing. Ideally, all adults who work with the youth on a daily basis will fill out a questionnaire and be observed in their daily activities.

What will participants be asked to do?

Adult participants will be observed by the researcher during the project to notice their schedules, daily lifestyles, and the social dynamics at Jeel al-Amal. This observation will be done by Neda as she participates in the activities and daily life. Notes will be taken by Neda but a top priority is for the participants to remain anonymous in the notes.

As a participant, you will take part in a questionnaire asking factual questions about your age, marital status/children, length of employment at Jeel al-Amal, roles, and free time. Questions asking for your opinions will also be on the questionnaire to gain a grasp of your feelings about your work and the situation of life here. These questionnaires should take approximately 5-15 minutes to fill out.

During the research, you will participate in one individual interview that will discuss answers given on the questionnaires, ideas about the organization of the institution, your job roles and your free time as well as any thoughts and feelings about the situation in Palestine. Each interview will be held in a comfortable space for you and is planned to last about 1 hour. These interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed by Neda.

Can participants change their mind and withdraw from the project?

You may withdraw from participation in the project at any time and without any disadvantage to yourself of any kind. Neda will not interview you unless you have given written and verbal consent. A copy of the information sheet and consent form that will be given to you is enclosed.

Should you consent to participating in this study, you will be told the following: you can withdraw at any time before or during the discussion; you do not have to answer any questions, you do not want to and he can ask to have the tape recorder turned off at any time.

What data or information will be collected and what use will be made of it?

The purpose for which the information is being collected is Neda's university studies. Results of this project may be published but any data included will in no way be linked to you. Your anonymity will be preserved at all times. You will be provided with a summary of the research at the end of the project and you are most welcome to request a full copy of the results of the project should you wish, but please know the report will be in English.

The data collected will be securely stored in such a way that only those mentioned below will be able to gain access to it. At the end of the project any personal information will be destroyed immediately except that, as required by the university's research policy, any raw data on which the results of the project depend will be retained in secure storage for five years, after which it will be destroyed.

What if participants have any questions?

If you have any questions about this project, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact either:

Neda Mustafa
Nedamustafa@yahoo.com

Vebjørng Tingstad
Vebjorg.Tingstad@ntnu.no

Appendix G: Adult participants consent form:

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick box as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet dated _____.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I voluntarily agree to participate in the project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalized for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Select only one of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognized. ● I do not want my name used in this project. 	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

Participant:

Name of Participant

Signature

Date

Appendix H: Questionnaire for adult participants

1. Age:
2. What is the highest level of education you have received?
3. What languages do you speak?
4. How long have you worked at Jeel al-Amal?
5. What are your roles/duties/jobs?
6. From which city or area are you from?
7. How often do you go see your family?
8. What is your marital status? Do you have children?

	I disagree	I somewhat disagree	No Opinion	I somewhat agree	I fully agree
I feel appreciated at work					
I appreciate my work					
I feel satisfied with my job roles					
I feel satisfied with my leisure time					
I feel I have the ability to make a difference here					
I feel I have an effect on the lives of the children					

Questionnaire for adult participants in Arabic:

العمر:

مستوى التعلي؟

كم لغه تتكلم؟

كم لك تشتغل في جيل الأمل؟

ما هي الواجبات او الوظائف الخاصه بك؟

من اي قريه او بلد انت؟

كل كم تقوم بزيارة الأهل؟

هل انت متزوج وهل عندك اولاد؟

	أنا أتفق	أنا موافق	لا رأي	أنا لا أوافق	أنا أعترض
اشعر بالتقدير في العمل					
انا اقدر عملي					
انني اشعر بالارتياح مع وظيفتي					
انني اشعر بالارتياح في وقتي الفراغ					
انني اشعر على القدره باحداث فارق					
اشعر أنا يكون لها تأثير على حياة الأطفال					

Appendix I: Questionnaire for youth participants

Name-

1. How old are you?
2. How old were you when you came to Jeel Al Amal?
3. Do you have siblings?
 - Do they live here?
4. Do you play sports?
5. What are some of your hobbies?
6. What grade are you in?
7. What do you like about school?
8. What do you not like about school?
9. What is your favorite thing to do?
10. What jobs/chores do you have after school?
11. What do you want to be when you grow up?
12. Have you traveled outside of Palestine?
13. Have you ever been on an airplane?
 - If yes, when was it?
 - Where did you go?
 - How was it?
14. Can you tell me about a trip you've taken?

Questionnaire for youth participants in Arabic

الاسم:

1. كم عمرك؟
2. كم كان عمرك عندما دخلت جيل الأمل؟
3. عندك اخوه او اخوات؟
 - هل يعيشون هنا؟
4. هل تُمارس الرياضة؟
5. ما هي بعض هوايتك؟
6. باي صف انت الان؟
7. ما هو الذي تحبه في مدرستك؟
8. ما هو الذي لا تحبه في مدرستك؟
9. ما هو الشيء المفضل ان تعمله؟
10. ما هي الاعمال المنزلية او الواجب اليومي الذي تعمله بعد المدرسه؟
11. ماذا تريد أن تكون عندما تكبر؟
12. هل عمرك سافرت برى فلسطين؟
13. هل عمرك ركبت الطائرة؟
 - متى؟
 - لوين؟
 - وكيف كان شعورك؟
14. كلمني عن مشوار ا رحلة قد أخذتها؟

Appendix J: One-on-one interview guides for youth participants

Youth Interview Guide 1- Gaining rapport

Participant Code:

Site:

Interviewer:

Date:

Start time:

End Time:

Discussion topics:

- Daily life: hobbies, sports, jobs/chores/roles, schedule,
- School: subjects, grades, positives/negatives
- Religious: fasting, prayer, holiday celebrations,
- Resolution/Conflict: dreams, aspirations, fears, feeling safe, how to cope with stress

Possible Questions:

- How was Ramadan this year for you?
- Did you fast the whole month?
 - If yes:
- What did you do for Eid (holiday)?
- Hobbies
- Feelings towards school
- Favorite subject to learn about
- Tell me about what a normal school day is like
- Tell me about what a normal weekend day is like
- What jobs do you have here?
- Do you have family members that you visit on holidays?
- What is a normal day with them like?
- What is your favorite memory at Jeel Al Amal?
- What are some of the things you really like about living here?
- What would you change here if you could?
- Where do you go/what do you do to feel safe?
- What is something you're afraid of?
- What is a dream of yours?

Youth Interview Guide 2: Contextual/conceptual meanings

Participant Code:

Site:

Interviewer:

Date:

Start time:

End Time:

Discussion topics:

- Different subjects were discussed with the participants that were individualized to that participant based on previous data collection methods such as drawings, observations, and the group interview will be added based on their drawing/photography as well as dictation about their artistic pieces to better understand what they are trying to communicate with them.

Possible Questions:

- When you grow older, what would you like to do with your life?
- Where do you see yourself in 5/10/15/20 years?
- How do you feel about being Palestinian?
- What makes a person Palestinian? (Due to a high number of Palestinian refugees-this question can gain insight into what makes someone Palestinian- and the contextual bonds between people and land)
- Who do you look up to?
- What is your favorite thing about Palestine?
- If there is anything you could change about life, what would it be?
- What does freedom mean?
- What does peace mean?

Appendix K: Interview guide for adult participants

Participant Code:

Site:

Interviewer:

Date:

Start time:

End Time:

Discussion goals: To gain an understanding of their daily life with the children, how they provide care, how they discipline, the structure and roles inside the institution, their hopes for themselves and for the children as well as any fears or distress they may feel in the situation.

Possible Questions:

- Describe a typical day for you-
- How do you handle your attention and care with so many children?
- What are some positives about Jeel al-Amal?
- What are some negatives, if any?
- Do you get free time?
- What do you like to do with your free time?
- Why did you choose to work at Jeel al-Amal?
- What type of tools and techniques are taught to the children to help cope with the situation in Palestine?
- What life skills are taught to the children for when they age out?
- If you could change something about the institution what would it be?
- How do you deal with a stressful day?

Appendix L: Drawing and tour guide themes for youth participants:

- Everyday life
 - What do you do on a regular day?
 - What is your favorite thing to do?
 - Draw something that makes you happy.

- Home
 - Draw Jeel al-Amal
 - Show me your favorite place here.

- Love
 - Draw something you love.

- Freedom
 - What do you do in your free time?

- Safety
 - Draw yourself as a superhero.
 - Draw something that makes you strong.
 - Draw something you are afraid of.

- Future
 - Draw your life in 10 years
 - Draw a place you want to visit.
 - Draw a dream you have for your future.

Appendix M: Photographs used during the group interview

All pictures were accessed on 20 June 2017. They were shown to the participants in the group interview randomly to gain an understanding of the youth's perspectives on subjects.



Most recent president of the PLO-
Mahmoud Abbas
Source: Financialexpress.com

Former president of the
PLO- Yasser Arafat
Source: Arabamerica.com



Child prisoner Ahmad Manasra
Source: Arab48.com

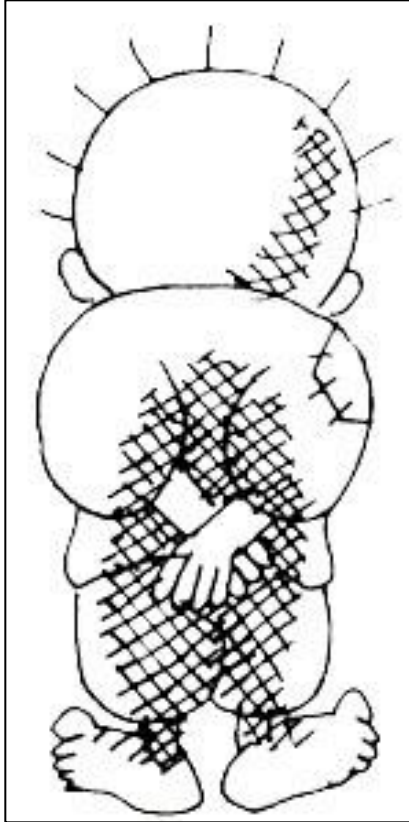
Deheisha Refugee Camp
Source: UNRWA.org



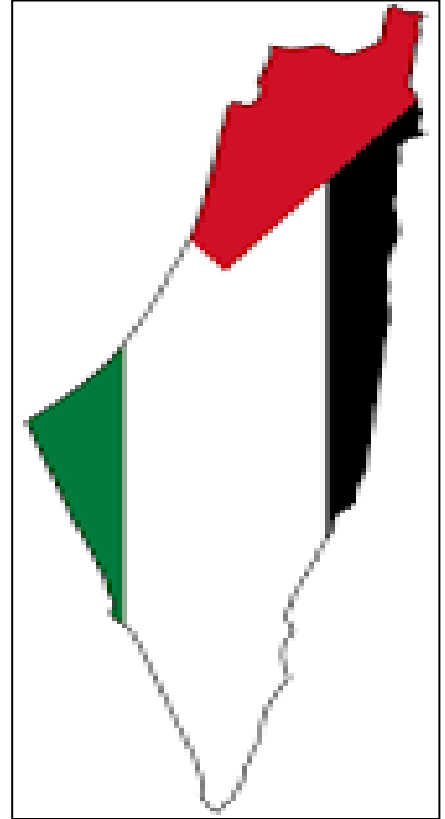
Palestinian female protesters
Source: albawaba.com

The Security Wall
Source: <http://mondoweiss.net>





Handala
Source: handala.org



Palestine and flag colors
Source: commons.wikimedia.org/



“Right of Return” key
Source:
wewillreturn.blogspot.no/

Palestinian “al-Nakba” refugees
in 1948
Source: Huffingtonpost.com



Palestinian refugee camp in 1948
Source: 1948.org.uk/



Palestinian youth holding a knife
Source: fatehmedia.net





Palestinian Ahed Tamimi protesting in front of Israeli soldiers
Source: Activestills.org

Palestinian boy throwing a stone at an Israeli tank during the first Intifada
Source: gettyimages.co.uk



Photo of Israeli police detaining a Palestinian youth and seeming to comfort an Israeli youth.
Source: www.dci-palestine.org



Funeral of *shaheed* (martyr) Moataz Zawahra in 2015
Source: gettyimages.ca

Haram al-Sharif (the Temple Mount)
Source: Activestills.org



Palestinian sling-shooting a stone
Source: israilblogu.com



Children at Auschwitz concentration camp

Source: NationalGeographic.org

Hasidic Jewish youth
Source: dailymail.co.uk



Armed Israeli settlers in the West Bank

Source: imemc.org

Pro soccer player Lionel Messi
Source: emirates247.com



Pro soccer player Cristiano
Ronaldo
Source: sport.net



Teenage boy crying
Source: newryspud.com





Geiranger Fjord in Norway
Source: Norwayadventures.no



Haifa Beach
Source: www.dreamstime.com



Eiffel Tower
Source: thisinsider.com

Teenage boys fighting
Source: colourbox.com



Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu
Source: mfa.gov.il

Former Prime Minister Ariel
Sharon
Source: timesofisrael.com

