

FINDING HOME IN MOVING GROUNDS

A STUDY OF YOUNG PALESTINIANS' RELATIONSHIP WITH RESISTANCE



ANDREA AMONDSEN NIELSEN

MASTER THESIS, GLOBAL REFUGEE STUDIES

MSC, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

SUPERVISOR: SIMON TURNER

1ST OCTOBER 2014

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1. Introduction

Much has been written about the making and sustaining of a Palestinian identity, especially within the Palestinian Diaspora, but also with regards to Gaza and the West Bank¹ (Said 1979, 1986, Peteet 2005, Nasser 2005, Feldman 2007) With this project, I hope to shed light on a specific part of the Palestinian identity I came across during fieldwork in Palestine². I suggest that there is a part of Palestinian youth's identity that is built in the idea of resistance, making Palestinian Youth (PLY) to some extent unable to separate their own identity from the conflict and the resistance fight. Furthermore I find it interesting to look into if an 'enemy', something to oppose of, indeed is the main motivation for the Palestinian national feeling, or if every day practices, social prestige and duty towards one parents also has something to say. It appears that phenomena like conflict and resistance have become things to rely on in a world where the concept of 'Palestine' seems to be as contested as ever.

The focus of this project will be young Palestinians and their relationship with the conflict with Israel and occupation of the Palestinian territories. As is well known by the general public, the ongoing conflict has lasted for so long, that most people have only heard stories about peace times from older family members like parents and grandparents. In other words, my informants have "experienced" Palestine through others' memory.

As youth, specifically people under 18, makes up for just under 50 %³ of the population in Palestine, a lot of hopes and aspirations are put upon the young generation. Organizations and events like Youth Peace Conferences (Haaretz:2014) are very much in the public mind of people both inside and outside Palestine. Focusing on the younger generation is interesting because so much faith rests on them and their ability – or chance, to finally create, if not peace, then a long-term solution to the situation. However, my hypothesis, is that these young people in Palestine, have a different relationship with Palestine than we, the international community, have so far thought.

¹Please see first appendix for further information.

² -

³ 48,14 in 2012 according to Unicef; http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/oPt_statistics.html

With this thesis I will investigate and test my hypothesis; are young Palestinians, more than having a strong personal relationship with Palestine *per se*, basing their (national) identity on something else, like *the conflict itself*? Has the conflict in fact been such a big part of their lives, that they are not able to imagine themselves without it? My suggestion is that conflict, with time, has become something so powerful, that the concepts of chaos and unpredictability is aligned with the concept of Palestine, when it comes to indicators of "home". Has the moving ground of conflict indeed become more of a homeland than the Palestinian territories?

Through my research, I wanted to investigate if my informants in fact got a sense of stability and familiarity from the conflict and occupation itself, as was my impression during my time there. I furthermore wanted to look into if living in a constant mode of conflict and resistance brings aspects of general education and empowerment with it. These two general topics will provide the underlying themes. Where the first one ties strings to the past, the roots and the inherent national feeling, the second theme focuses on the present strategies and daily lives and habits of my informants. In this way, the field of tension between now and then is always present, as is also the case in the lives of young Palestinians.

I was motivated by a bold thought I had had during my time in the West Bank during the fall of 2013, when peace negotiations had once again begun. Seeing many of my colleagues in the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS) have large parts of their life and identity connected to the conflict in many ways, made me wonder how they would feel if peace was ever to be achieved. One could argue, the occupation is one of the things Palestinians have been able to count on since 1948. The fight for Palestine is, as will be shown through the analysis of my interviews, practically the only steady, ongoing, reliable event in an average Palestinian person's life. I would suggest that it has become an institution. Seeing the resistance and Palestinian struggle as an institution is, I would argue, not a new thing, but in fact a concept that draws lines back to the exodus in 1948, where one's opportunity to fulfill oneself changed, according to Pappé. Before 1948, a system of clans and religious hierarchy would decide one's level of status in society.

However, after 1948, status was, to a larger extent, given according one's willingness to sacrifice one self in armed fight against the Israeli occupation power (Pappé 2009:177). In short, opportunities of social mobility in the Palestinian society have laid within the resistance for decades. Through my informants I understood, that being part of the resistance struggle does provoke respect in the community. The struggle therefore is an example of a status symbol within everyone's reach.

Much like Henrik Vigh's 8 year-long research about young men in Guinea Bisau navigating through a damned adolescence, this project will not find its focus in people who are powerful in the traditional sense. Either of the West Bank or Israel. Instead, it will, to a much larger extend, circle around young people, who as Vigh also emphasizes; "*constitute the bulk of the conflict-engaged in any war.*" (Vigh:2010). Even though the young generation in Palestine has experienced acts of war, this conflict is obviously more subtle and discrete. However, this does not mean that it is less nerve wrecking and difficult to navigate in. The young generation indeed has major struggles caused by a conflict whose beginning no one remembers, and whose end no one can imagine. My argument is that the conflict itself has become the common ground everyone navigates by whether they want to or not. Until recently it has not been very *comme il faut* to speak of Palestinians, and Israelis for that matter, as someone who actually rely on the conflict as a steady phenomenon in their lives.

The condemnation of the conflict is a part of the public reality, the top layer of the reality so to speak. It is what you hear when you first enter a conversation in Ramallah, Nablus or any other place in the West Bank. It turns out though, that there are more layers to the reality and that maybe the occupation is not necessarily the biggest problem for young people in the West Bank. Young girls especially told me directly, during my stay there in the fall of 2013, that their biggest problem was not the occupying forces, but that they could not leave the house on their own, and one of the informants interviewed in the spring of 2014 told me that "*the occupation is the least of my problems*" (Interview, Faiza:53). Faiza was the only one to put it like this, but this was the idea I got from other, less blunt, informants too.

For the reader to achieve the best experience, the following will be a short introduction to the structure of my thesis, which is overall separated in two parts, the first one evolving around the past, and the inherent national feeling, while the second focuses on present strategies and the thoughts on the future. Naturally, to achieve interplay between the two, it has not been entirely possible to separate the two spheres completely.

As part of the topic of the inherent national feeling, connected to the past, I introduce the topic of generations early on, with the purpose of exemplifying this tension. The older generations of Palestine have all experienced two Intifadas⁴. I suggest that this means, among other things, that this have brought them closer to a sense of peace than their children have ever been. This means, that the two group, have widely different points of origin when it comes to the resistance movement. I wish to question if affiliations with the resistance fight is also way for the younger to connect and associate with their parents, meaning that being accepted and recognized by the older generation is as important as fighting for peace. Within this topic I also touch upon differences between absence and loss. Furthermore I include theory and analysis of recognition, or lack of same, in general, and lastly some reflections on time frames; the 'eternal struggle' of Palestine and the normalization of it. In short, through the first part, I investigate, if being a part of the resistance struggle is more linked with a need for recognition from outside factors, and duty towards the past, than a desire to change Palestine.

In the second part of the thesis, more present-day and tangible topics will be assessed. This includes coping strategies in a place where continuity is never an option, habits and everyday life in the disorder of conflict, and to some extend an image of the way young people in Palestine have been forced to realize themselves in a context that has not provided the normal frame work. In the second part, I will try to describe and analyze how Palestinian youth have instead have found comfort and drive in an alternative conflict-setting; one that is usually seen as temporary, but is now going on it's 7th decade. Has the resistance over time become the place where young people of Palestine find comfort and equanimity? And if so, what does this paradox mean for the future of Palestine?

⁴ See first appendix for further explanation

2. Research purpose

With my thesis I aim at presenting a new perspective on the Palestinian national identity and especially the resistance struggle. On the 25th of July 2014, the Danish media Denmark's Radio (DR) brought an article that stated that 'Palestinians and Israelis need the conflict' (*Palæstinensere og Israelere har brug for konflikten*, ed.). An Israeli associate professor at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, Ofer Shinar, claimed that a large part of being either Palestinian or Israeli consists of *not* belonging to the other side, and that the cohesion in the Israeli society could collapse without the conflict (Olsen 2014). Without entering a discussion about the Israeli or Palestinian society per se, I will simply use this as a point of departure for creating a new perspective. Indeed it seems that along the way, the conflict did in fact grow into something bigger in the minds of the Palestinians, and that they, might have difficulties identifying themselves without the using their relationship with the occupation as yardstick.

With my thesis I wish to question old understandings of phenomena like struggle and resistance, as I believe these terms carry more importance in them, than we have been aware of previously. Can the resistance in fact be seen as a (societal?) institution, providing patterns for accepted norms and response patterns? How do we deal with the fact that the resistance movement, more than a dream of peace, provides a space for stress-release and a stabile point of navigation?

It should be clear that I am not suggesting that conflict is a positive concept. However, as the conflict in Palestine has become normalized, it also provides positive structures, as will be shown throughout this thesis; social coherence, intergenerational bonds, recognition and empowerment. To my informants, all these will become difficult to replace.

It seems that there are various images of how a solution should look, internally between Palestinians, and it has been this way for decades. I seek to outline how the youth of Palestine might have developed several layers of consciousness and feelings towards the conflict, some of them enthusiastic about finding an end to the situation, while other sides of them are not able to image what their home country without conflict would look like. I wish to enter a discussion about identity construction, and I hope I can shed light on some elements of the identity of Palestinian youth, that only

few have concerned themselves with, namely the affiliation with or sense of belonging in the conflict. It is my belief that a seemingly never-ending peace process could use every new aspect one can bring. Frykman and Gilje ask in their introduction to "Being There", how people "*shape something of their own from the reality that surrounds them?*" and later somewhat answer their own question "*The answer to such questions lies not only in how identities are constructed, but also in how they are lived*" (Frykman and Gilje 2003:10)

Palestine, the Israeli occupation and the conflict that has been going on for more than half a century is - and as I am writing this, much more than ever - a very discussed topic. I wish to contribute to this topic, by adding a new perspective, namely my hypothesis claiming that the conflict constitutes much more than a conflict in the minds and identities of young Palestinians. The project is entering this discussion at a moment where all the world's eyes are directed at Gaza. With the thesis I am not trying to point fingers at any side. It also should be noted that when mentioning 'Israelis', it is not a generalization, and that I am aware, of course, that the conflict as such is multifaceted. Same goes for the term of 'Palestinian'.

2.1 Research Question

Through the writing process I have been guided by the following research question:

In the Palestinian territories, where everyday life is characterized by an ongoing military occupation, how do young Palestinians relate to the concepts of conflict and resistance?

- **has the moving ground of conflict become home more than Palestine itself?**
- **what role does Resistance play in the making of young Palestinian's life strategies?**

3. Methodology

Before going into descriptions of how I made sense of my empirical data in the methodology, the following will consist of a small account of how the empirical material itself was collected.

3.1.Choice of method and description of data

The following chapter will be an introduction to the applied method. The choice of qualitative interviews will be explained and justified, and my focus points introduced.

Through semi-structured interviews, the project makes an attempt of defining the 'life world' of the informants. Kvale explains that this interview has the purpose of *"obtaining descriptions of the life world of the interviewee in order to interpret the meaning of the described phenomena"* (Kvale and Brinkman 2009:3) Furthermore, a month of participant observation was conducted within the West Bank in November 2013. Research interviews have the purpose of generating knowledge (Kvale and Brinkman 2009). I agree when they argue that this new knowledge should be *"constructed in the inter-action between the interviewer and the interviewee"*. In other words, there is an *"...interdependence of human interaction and knowledge production"*. (Kvale and Brinkman 2009:2). In the making of the interviews, the interdependence between the informants and I was something I became acutely aware of, for example as I was trying to take my interviews to a higher level of confidentiality.

3.1.1. Empirical data

To obtain knowledge about young Palestinians' relationship with the occupation and the resistance action, this project will find its primary source in 9 lengthy interviews made in March and April 2014. Eight of them in Ramallah on the West Bank and one made in Amman, Jordan. Moreover, 5 weeks of observation was conducted in the West bank. Secondary sources will consist of chosen literature mainly on the topics of national identity, recognition, empowerment and masculinity.

Many empirical observations for this project were made during the fall of 2013. As an intern with the Danish Red Cross Youth (DRCY), I participated in a partnership project with the Palestinian Red Crescent Society (PRCS) and the Jordanian Red Crescent (JRC). Over the course of 4 months I was with my Palestinian colleague Ahmed, every day, and during 4 weeks we worked together in Ramallah.

Since the PRCS head quarter is big and includes a big guesthouse, I spent practically all my time with young Palestinians working or volunteering with the Red Crescent and I was fortunate to be able to go on several field trips around the West Bank. The field trips were put together to be able to have meetings and monitor the various branches of PRCS. The work gave me an opportunity to make observations I would never have been able to make otherwise.

Also, the very hospitable nature of the Palestinians made it easy to engage in social activities like lunches and receptions etc. As I am not able to speak Arabic, all of my communication with volunteers and colleagues took place in English. This in some cases limited the number of people I was able to talk with, but at the same time, strengthened the bond I built with the ones, both male and female who spoke English. Most of the observations were made at head quarters of PRCS, but another place that became an important space was the space of the PRCS we would use whenever going on a field trip. It was often on these trips where no one had anything to do, where the good conversations would appear. As the focus was on the relationship between young Palestinians and the conflict, it seemed the obvious way to retrieve material was to through experiencing the relationship, and through lengthy interviews.

3.1.2. Legitimacy

I have been inspired by Frykman and Gilje's reflections on the role of the researcher. They claim that he or she is no longer naturally placed *next to* the topic of the research. Instead, one should look more like that of a participant and "*should as such use imagination and tuition, allowing themselves to be inspired and implicated by the specific situation.*" (Frykman and Gilje 2006:10). For this thesis I have been inspired by specific situations and allowed myself to follow my intuition. The thesis is not looking to present *nomothetic* knowledge in the shape of generalization, but trying to "*describe the specific that is deeply experienced and therefore universal(...)*The researcher seeks the unique and by the same token what is deeply communal in the singular" (ibid:11). In short, I trust the statements and emotions of my informants to be providing a useful image of the situation, even if 9 is not an vast amount of interviews.

3.1.3. Participant observation

Besides the interview, I base my research on observations. During last November, a month of participant observation was made possible by an internship in the West Bank. As a full-time volunteer with the Palestine Red Crescent Society (PRCS), observations were made in very different settings and locations. Many observations were made in the daily office at the youth section of PRCS, but also many valuable events happened on the road, noticing reactions to roadblocks, Jewish settlements check points or other limitations.

As DeWalt (2002) notices, participant observation is "a method in which a researcher takes part in the daily activities, rituals, interactions and events of a group of people as one of the means of learning the explicit and tacit aspects of their life routines and their culture". As an intern I got involve myself in the work of the PRCS first and foremost. As an 'employee', however, I was immediately trusted by most people, and it furthermore did not seem unreasonable whenever I would ask questions. As I was new to the term of field work, some basic skills came of much value. Terms like fitting in, 'active-seeing', informal interviewing and recorded, detailed field notes became essential⁵. (DeWalt 2002:17)

I tried to fit in; dressed in accordance with local standards, drank enough Turkish coffee to cover a life time, learned not to say 'no thank' you to sugar in my tea, and generally - even though I was obviously not from Palestine – tried to gain cultural knowledge and maintain my role as someone worthy of trust. This became my way of gaining access as Bryman (2012) points to. Especially on occasions when something unpredicted happened, like witnessing a fire by a check point or being approached by a settler outside a settlement, I would be considered 'part of the group', something that strengthened my position between the Palestinians because we, for once, were in the same boat, even if just briefly. Obviously, and inevitably, the field work became intensely personal, and it is not my intention to try to deny that. I am aware of the limitations this can have, including bias and presumptions. I would argue that these factors are very hard to eliminate.

⁵ Can be sent upon request; andreanielsen@live.dk

In total during the 5 weeks of work in the West Bank, several visits were made to five cities in the West Bank to observe and evaluate local branches' work with the program's goals and objectives. This provided a great opportunity to observe communication happening between different segments of Palestinian youth, interaction between younger and older people in Palestine, between male and female and between Settler and Palestinian. Furthermore, during my entire internship, I worked in a close partnership with a Palestinian colleague from Nablus, frequently asking him about condition and realities of people living in The West Bank. More than anything, normal life was observed.

3.2 The interviews

After introducing my choice of method and giving account of my observations, the following will describe my intentions with the interviews, and go into my actual method of making my informants enter discussions on topics I wanted to investigate. To gain empirical material, I needed an idea of my informants 'emotional framework' including what information they were providing when and why. Furthermore, I go into the dynamics of the interviews, the practical circumstances and present my interview guide. Subsequently, I introduce the challenges connected with the making of the interviews, and consider possible bias before finally giving a general account of my observations in the West Bank.

3.2.1. Approach to interviewing

When trying to get information from people about their life, the interview seems the obvious choice. It is very difficult to find someone who is a stranger to interview. Interviews are all over the media, and listening to and watching interviews in TV is a part of the daily routine in large parts of the world. Perhaps exactly because of that, the interview situation will always be a staged one, and interviews can in some cases say more about *"role-playing and adapting to social standards in the name of impression management – including how to appear authentic – than about how people really feel or what social reality is really like."* (Alvesson 2011:3) In other words, there are basic problems in questioning people about their reality, yet the qualitative, unstructured interview is one of the methods (after observation) that come closest.

The qualitative interview, sometimes referred to as the "*unstructured* or a *nonstandardized* interview" (Kvale and Brinkman 2009:16) was chosen as the main methods for gathering empirical material. As the topic of being Palestinian and relating to a conflict involves every aspect of life, it was crucial that the interviewees felt safe and able to speak their minds. This could not have been obtained through, say, questionnaires or strict interview guides. The qualitative method is usually used in research limited by (or made on the conditions of) the fact that the studies are based on natural conditions, open to constant change. In other words, through this project, I am trying to provide a glimpse of *reality* even if it will only be a snap-shot of a moving picture. The authenticity is already slightly tainted with the presence of the scientist, but reality has, so to speak, been allowed to unfold (Fog 2004:8).

From a constructivist or *interpretivist* perspective, it is not possible to obtain any kind of view of reality through interviews (or any kind of data collection), Mats Alvesson explains (2009:1). Both approaches claim that data will always ultimately be interpretations of reality, more than an actual "mirror of 'reality'"(Ibid.). However, the interviews were chosen relying on a belief that a collection of data through interviews will in fact "*provide a solid base for saying yes or no to various hypotheses and theories*"(Ibid.). Naturally the reader should take into consideration, that the conclusions of this thesis only present outlines and ripples. As Alvesson later explains, interviews are valuable to the extent that they disclose a "rich account of interviewees' experience, knowledge, ideas and impressions", and these can be documented and are discussed. (2011:3). As all interviews were open-ended, unstructured and aimed at authentic, and of course subjective conversation, one would call the overall position part of a romanticism or emotionalist tradition (2011:14).

In assessing various forms of interview techniques, it was estimated, that the most valuable form of interview would be that of Romanticism, which to Alvesson is not that romantic as one could think; "*what is being addressed is not only or necessarily emotions but also ideas, values, understandings of practices, efforts to reconstruct processes and interactions...*"(Alvesson 2011:14) The hope was to provoke or ignite what Spradley would call "a kind of speech event"; sharing useful and heavy information through a light conversation(Spradley 1979:55).

Alvesson introduces a 'localist' interpretation method (2009:21). Along postmodernist lines, this method does not see language as being able to communicate reality, but instead focus on the 'situation-specific context', basically all local details happening around the interview. In keeping a detailed journal, keeping a record on details and aspects around the interview, for example gestures and body movement of the informant, a somewhat localist perspective is intended to provide an understanding of the context certain statements were made. In all the interviews, it was the intention to let the informants decide what events, feelings and stories they wanted to focus on. This kind of interview is what could be described as a narrative interview. Narrative interviews, as introduced by Kvale and Brinkmann, "*center on the stories the subjects tell*" (2009:153). The interviewer can in fact ask questions about certain specific episodes or events (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:155) and

"...after the initial request for a story, the main role for the narrative interviewer is to remain a listener, abstaining from interruptions, occasionally posing questions for clarification, and assisting the interviewee in continuing to tell his or her story."

(Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:155)

In this way, the interview can become a *short story* where the informant focus on significant episodes (in this case, that often meant the period around the 2. intifada or the signing of the Oslo Agreement), a *life story* where the informant's baseline is his or her own life (many of the informants used the course of their lives to explain the significance of different temporary or permanent obstructions caused by the occupation) or an *oral history*, where the informant tries to cover the history his or her community (particularly common in the case of Palestine) (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:155). The goal was not to aim for either of these versions, rather I tried to read into why some informants would use either, when, and why. It was possible to see patterns as to what style the informants chose, and these seemed to be determined by the informants' gender and affiliation with me.

To uncover the informants' emotional categorization of events, phenomena and people, an extensive journal was kept during the period of making in the interviews. In this journal, a variety of factors were included; from body language including hand gestures, eye contact, excessive use of certain words due to nervousness, silence and general notions of how the atmosphere was and how it became that way.

3.2.2. Assessing informants' framework

As part of a phenomenological approach I was inspired by Goffman's concept of the *frame analysis*. With this approach he tries to place himself between structuralism and constructivism in the sense that Goffman acknowledges the individual's "*active and creative work in understanding what is going on*" (Jacobsen, 2013:158). The frame analysis is based on the assumption that there are several co-existing truths depending on the subject, person, who is experiencing⁶. During my interviews, one important purpose was to find out how my informants would *frame* certain events I would introduce. Most importantly for me was a decoding of my informants *social frames* that deals with how people interpret situations "*as expressions of human motive and intent*" (Goffman 1974:21). Furthermore, Goffman uses the term *keying*, to explain how people interpret the same situations differently, based on what 'key' they use to interpret them with (Goffman 1974:10). In this way, the same even could be interpreted very different according to different 'keys'. In short, the actors use *frames* or *keys* to make sense of the world (Jacobsen 2013:158). It is interesting to see which frames the informants put certain events in, and thereby which role the informant gives him, -or herself. It is the intent to make the framework work as a way to conceptualize the way my informants have very different experiences of the same situation⁷. To get an impression of my informants *framework*, during the last part of every interview, I would introduce with a story about an event that had happened when I was in a car outside Ramallah in the West Bank in the fall of 2013. I would usually say something along the lines of:

"Once, on the way home from a field visit, I was driving with two colleagues from Bethlehem to Ramallah. We were all tired, and in the back my female colleague and I were slumbering, while my male colleague was completely asleep in the front passenger seat. We approached a roundabout, where some IDF soldiers were parked on one side, while a few Palestinians were on the other side of the road. All of a sudden both of us got the sense of a horrible smell in the air. I looked at my colleague next to me and said "what is that smell?" I thought someone was burning tires. That moment my colleague, Ahmed in the front seat woke up from his doze and said "Close the windows!" We did, and then he looked at me, his eyes shining all of a sudden, saying "Tear gas! I missed that smell! I love it!"

⁶ Other scholars including William James, Alfred Schultz, Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckman also believed in the "plurality of realities" (Schiermer 2013:159)

⁷ The inspiration is mainly focused on Goffman's first notion of the *frame analysis*. Since 1974, the concept has, naturally, been revised and developed by eg. Chayko, 1993 or Stenros 2010.

The, rather lengthy quote is given here, for the reader to understand the way I was trying to make the distance between the informant and myself smaller. By giving some details about my work, going on a field trip with colleagues, I believe I made most of them feel safe enough to give their honest response. The reactions were very varied, but generally divided in two groups. One group would laugh and contribute with similar stories, while the other would look at me with a serious expression. I used it as a way to force my informants to relate to the fact that some young people find the action of a military occupation somewhat thrilling, and the reactions were a mix of consent and denial, with consent as the predominant reaction.

3.2.3. Interview dynamics

One cannot dissect the emotional map of Palestinian youth as such through one month of observation and nine interviews, and that has not been the goal. Instead, the goal of the project is, to some extent, verbalizing the value of 'described information' before boiling it down in the analysis. As Fog explains, that is exactly the purpose of the qualitative interview. She later elaborates and says that if the right interview persons are chosen, the result can be a "qualitative, non-statistical representativeness" (Fog 1996 in Fog 2004:13). In other words, Fog argues that even a small amount of information, can be of value and does in fact provide information and does contribute with a certain kind of representativeness. In short, research built on qualitative interviews has the purpose of finding and understanding the logic of the informant's statements (Fog 2004:11). Through an assessment of words, expressions and body language, I have tried to find some logic and test my hypothesis. Through all of the interviews (lasting up to two hours) the informants were given questions aimed at their personal relationship with the occupation of Palestine and their identity as young Palestinians. As the conversation evolved, and they became more comfortable with the situation, I was able to, so to speak, let them take over the wheel and steer the conversation wherever made sense to them. This also had an encouraging effect.

Often, it turned out, the informants felt more calm when they slowly discovered that I too, had some knowledge about the Palestinian situation. Knowing little things such as the dates of the intifadas or details about the Oslo Agreement seemed to create a certain solidarity or respect, that often moved the conversation to the "next level".

In some cases, it took a while to move up "the levels", often because the informant did not straight away feel comfortable, or did not immediately understand that their personal experiences were of great value to me. Most often though, the question was about building up trust in me, to let me in on personal opinion, feelings, dreams and fears.

It is important to mention that the aim was not to search for a *truth* as such. Finding the truth or even the *best* interpretation is not possible (Alvesson 2009: 40). Also, it is important to note that some limitations I as a person, a Dane, a woman to name some characteristics, faced during my research. As I could never be completely neutral and therefore tried to invest myself and my engagement in the encounters instead of trying to keep myself out of it. Jane Jorgensen explains it well when stating that "*...the person to who a research subject speaks is not the person an interviewer thinks herself to be*" (Jorgensen 1991:211). Summarizing the paradoxical fact that I will never know what the informants perceived.

The method gave useful dynamics, as it also provided insights on my informants' values; what they were proud of, and what they would not voluntarily enter a conversation about. Afterwards I have tried to measure the value of their choices. Measuring the value of something I basically tried to determine the significance of certain persons, events, things and relationships and catch the informant's perspective, the purpose being uncovering his 'emotional organization' of the world. In this case, this meant getting a new perspective on what relationship there is between the occupation of the West Bank and the identity and navigation options of the Palestinian Youth. Not surprisingly, the occupation has a significant role my informants' lives, however the answer turned out to be less unambiguous than that.

3.2.4. Practical circumstances

The interviews took place in hotel lobbies, offices, public cafés and homes. All informants felt comfortable doing the interviews in English and did not need a translator. 8 of the 9 informants were people I had met before, or relatives of those people. Thus 8 of the 9 had no obvious reasons to doubt my honesty and reliability. Practically, how informants were found was firstly through social media, contacting my co-worker, and people I had met more arbitrarily on the PRCS Head Quarter.

Furthermore, through some connections with the Danish Youth Council, I met some Palestinian young people, who were also able to connect me further. Essentially all the interviews were set up when I arrived in the West Bank and carried out over the next 10 days, meaning no time plan was made ahead. This was done, partly for practical reason and because of knowledge of the unpredictable situation in the West Bank, where time tables often has a different meaning than in Western Europe, but also because I meant for the interviews to have a certain level of informality as mentioned above. Lastly, a young man, as mentioned, approached me on the street of Ramallah with the idea of making me his language-buddy since he had an English exam later that week. I accepted in return for an interview, and he turned out to bring some very interesting perspectives on intimacy, paranoia and trust to the project. All but one informant accepted to be recorded, but all requested to be anonymous. All informants were between 20 and 28 years old (born 1986, 1987, 1989, 1990, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1994), and come from working class to upper-middle class families.

When all the data had been collected, the sifting and sorting out started. I chose to do this, mainly by going through all material systematically; notes, diaries and observations and by transcribing all interviews, before the actual analysis. I found this a good way to start the process of finding the 'items' (LeCompte 2000:148) I would later use in my analysis. As Lecompte recommends (2000:148), some of the main things I was looking for were, naturally *frequency* and *omission* of certain topics, which I could find in the transcriptions. However, as the topic is highly connected to how one feels about oneself and one's past, future and, well, *self being*, the personal diaries kept during field work have also come in very handy, remembering *how* people would talk about certain topics. The characteristics of my informants are important for the understanding of the topic of identity, which is why they are all introduced along the way.

3.2.5. Interview challenges

Firstly, the cultural challenges should be mentioned. As Kvale and Brinkman describe, there are several pitfalls when interviewing across cultures, hereunder differences in interaction, directness and questioning. Furthermore, one needs to be careful when using body language or referring to matters that could be considered taboo (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:144).

To overcome these matters, which could possibly interfere with the dynamics of the interviews, I, first of all prepared myself to let interviews be as long as they needed to. This had the natural downside of the conversations being very long, and – to say the least – slightly off topic for up to an hour. However, allowing the informants to share details about their interests, their travels or their families, made it possible for me to ask questions that would allow me to understand more about their hopes, fears and dreams, and details about their relationship with the occupation.

Fog quotes H.G Gadamer saying that more than a formal conversation, the interviewer should strive after a situation where you 'get talking'. This includes "...giving up control and indulging in the common logic, which is what a conversation is" (Gadamer in Fog 2004:26). As mentioned above, the informants - after an introductory presentation and the initial questions – decided where to take the conversation. This could raise the question of moral, since some conversations can become a "Trojan Horse" (Fog 2004:26), where the interviewee lets out more than he wanted to. In other words, there is a responsibility on the shoulders of the interviewer, and one has to be aware of one's position when it comes to e.g. using or misusing a person (Fog 2004:27). In this particular case, the aim of the project is to investigate affiliations (between the conflict and Palestinian Youth), which might not be welcomed by the interviewees. In other words, there might be a conflict between the aim of the research and the message of the person who is the catalyst of the research, leading to some ethical dilemmas.

Also, the importance of a possible gender-challenge was taken into consideration, as also recommended by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009:145). Even though Palestine in many ways is more modern than one could assume, there are still big differences as to what a young man and a young woman can do, which is why the questions to the male informants had to be asked in a slightly different way than the ones to the female ones. For example, it would not be appropriate for a woman to ask a man if he would marry a non-Palestinian girl, which is why questions regarding a future with a family, would always circle around having children, and not touch upon any romantic feelings. With the female informants, the gender gap was obviously not an issue (other issues will be elaborated on later). The need to establish the personal space between interviewer and interviewee is also one of the main reasons as to why a translator was eliminated as an option.

As funding would not allow a professional one, it would have to be an acquaintance, possibly of both the interviewer and informant. It was assessed that the translator could have gone slightly 'off script' disturbing the relevance of questions and answers and, moreover, actually disturbing the confidentiality. A translator might have eased the process of finding informants, but as mentioned, one should question the translators agenda (Kvale and Brinkmann:145). Because the aim of this project is to uncover and understand aspects of young people's identity, there was a need to eliminate what one could call 'standard answers', what Kvale and Brinkmann refer to as 'talk tracks' (2009:147). Naturally standard answers can serve a purpose even in qualitative research, but in this case, my experience in Palestine tells me, a torrent of words would very often contain a heartbreaking story of a distant family member and his hardships. These 'talk tracks', as the name indicates, represent stories that have been told many times before. Also usually not very personalized or relevant, often occurring when the informant can be considered 'elite', or an expert in the field.

The informants in this case, were not elite, or experts in a scientific sense, but naturally, they were superior on the specific topic of living with the conflict. As was mentioned "*we eat and breath politics!*" (Interview, Suha:70) giving them viewpoints they felt a need to promote. Instead what I was searching for was quite the opposite, which is one of the reasons I would always start out interviews by asking the informant about his own first memory of Palestine being different from other countries. On the other hand, I wanted to allow them the freedom to tell me what they found most important. In short, I tried to avoid 'standard talk tracks', but encouraging free expression. The solution to this, became long interviews where the informant was allowed to talk, and my attempt to encourage a reflection in my informants while at the same time reflecting over their choices in narrative styles as mentioned above. In certain cases, the interviews, instead of uncovering meaning, was in fact creating meaning⁸.

⁸ Concept mentioned in Kvale and Brinkmann 2009:158; Holstein and Gubrium in their book *The Active Interview* present their hypothesis that "all knowledge is created from the action to obtain it"

In his book, on interpreting interviews, Mats Alvesson introduces various ways of approaching the interview. He mentions the strict neo-positivism, that has to be tightly structured and will to some extent provide some sort of quantitative results as well. A strong neo-positivist interview is transparent and does not deviate much from the planned structure. (Alvesson 2011:12) Even though a more stringent structure would provide some quantitative data, it was more important to explore the various layers of the informants. Something only possible through a long and personal conversation. Moreover, another theme of Alvesson's, is the interactive rationalism, where the interviewer in the course of the interview lets the interviewee hear *"emerging interpretations and insights(...)returning transcripts of life histories to interviewees for their feedback, performing extensive member checks by sharing interpretations with participants..."* (Alvesson 2011:13) This method was used in solving the challenge of achieving confidentiality fast. I used it to help me increase the level of confidentiality, and, as mentioned, letting the informants know, that I had a clue about what they were talking about.

Even if the topic is very common, the hypothesis of this project can be slightly controversial for the average Palestinian, and (maybe even more) the average pro-Palestine person. Recently I was attending the showing of a documentary by the Palestinian filmmaker, Khaled Farrar, and in the debate following the movie, I asked a question about the normalization I believed it was portraying. The reaction of the (Danish) moderator was not exactly friendly, as he explained to me that what the Palestinians were doing in the movie (jumping the Separation Wall) was an image of resistance, not normalization. In this thesis however, I dare to suggest that the two have become highly intertwined with one another, and that resistance consequently has become such a big part of Palestinians' lives, that the thought of a 'peaceful' situation in Palestine is very hard imagine and move towards.

However, a suggestion that Palestinians identify themselves more with conflict than with Palestine itself could highly interfere with the friendly tone of the talk. Therefore, as can be seen in the transcripts, the questions to a large extent initially circled around the abstract term of being Palestinian, and around distant hopes and aspirations for the future. In other words, the topic, but not the hypothesis was revealed to the informants. Furthermore, all interviews circle around the topic of being in a struggle in life in general.

Moreover, due to the friendly and conversational tone, in most cases, it was possible to approach the topic of having not only strong ties with the conflict, but actually seeing it as something fixed instead of something temporary. Indeed it became natural to speak of the occupation and conflict as something permanent used to navigate from. As the goal was to create a space for open talk, a situation where the interviewee is "free to express him or herself authentically and will produce, rich and trustworthy talk" (Alvesson 2011:14), some of the interviews became very long and moved even very far from the intended topic. Especially to the young women interviewed, it seemed very important to them to position themselves as strong and independent women (maybe with an agenda of proving the common notion of Middle Eastern women as inferior or submissive, wrong). Thus, the interviews with the female informants all became slightly longer, probably also due to a tradition of more small talk and polite conversation between women.

This insight could not have been gained, had the interviews been strictly time limited. The interview guide (Second appendix), only made it out for 'conversation-starters', and should therefore only be seen as the very basis of the interviews, which very often moved beyond the themes for long periods. The questions were used as a way of getting back to the chosen topics. After the interviews, it was possible to identify some focal points in the relationship between my informants and the conflict and resistance:

- a feeling of duty towards parents when it came to resistance
- a feeling of empowerment through a taking part in resistance
- using rock-throwing as a form of anger-management/stress release
- a dazzling time perspective on peace in Palestine

3.2.6. Bias

A mentioning of bias is appropriate, as I have not been able to disregard this, in spite of my before mentioned attempts. In collecting data I made choices based on what could fuel my process of my analysis and on the options given to me by circumstances like network, time limitations in the field, limitations with regards to moving around in the West Bank, my gender and my age. Through the data collecting process I tried to keep a theoretical framework in the back of my head.

Lecompte notes that *"Tacit theories are identified to avoid bias in data collection, analysis and interpretation. Formative theories(...) to develop research questions and guide data collection"* (2000:147) However, as LeCompte also points out; *"People tend to record as data what makes sense to them and intrigues them"* (2000:146). In turning data into through results through analysis, my choices were more open, yet highly affected my personal interest.

4. Theory and analysis

The thesis deals with aspects of the major topic of identity making, creation of belonging and strategies of navigation. In specific, it circles around the extent to which young people of Palestine actually use the conflict with Israel in finding and creating their identity. Richard Jenkins explains, that – put very simply – we use identity for two things; to classify persons and things, and to associate ourselves (or attach ourselves to) something. He mentions a friend, a sports team or an ideology (Jenkins 2004:4), but the hypothesis of this project will be, that that something could also be a conflict, like the one between Israel and Palestine, and that this attachment is actually so strong, that much of the identity would actually be somewhat lost if the conflict should ever end. Frykman and Gilje note that more than ideas, identity is about ordinary practices (2006:11). In the first part of the following, I will assess how Palestinian Youth are shaped by their parents' and grand parents' loss of Palestinian territories. As mentioned, the first part of the analysis will first of all introduce the *nation thing*, and further discuss the *inherent* feeling of being Palestinian. I will try to dissect the national Palestinian identity by using different theories on the topics of loss, absence and recognition. After this first part of the analysis, the second part will move on to present and analyze strategies of the youth and practical relationship with everyday life.

As I have found it most useful and logic, the used theory will be introduced and used immediately after, which is why the reader will not find a traditional theory chapter. Several theories will be introduced and directly used as instruments in the following analysis.

4.1. Understanding the nation, and 'Theft of Enjoyment'

In the following part an analytic overview of the main theoretical aspects will be provided, and will work as an introduction to the following first section of the analysis. It will concern itself with the concept of what Slavoj Žižek calls the 'nation thing'. It introduces the theory, that national identities are created, for the most part, out of a feeling that the thing that makes us able to reach our potential as a nation has been taken from us.

The so-called 'Theft of Enjoyment', or theft of the 'thing' becomes what defines the nation. This is to explore the concept of national identity in general, but also to try to approach the vast topic of building an identity upon loss and absence. The following first paragraphs will give the pitch to the following long part concerned with 'being Palestinian'.

4.1.1. National identity as the 'Theft of Enjoyment'

Palestinians carry their 'Palestinianness' very close to their heart. Sylvie Mansour, a psychologist located in Beirut, did extensive research on the mental health of Palestinian refugees during the 1970's and 1980's. In a survey of adolescents, 92.15% answered 'Palestinian' first when asked "Who I am"(Mansour 1977:74). Even though the study took place around forty years ago, it is still relevant, since it says something about my informant's parents and their feeling of nationality. Through the following paragraphs I provide an introduction to what has been found the most relevant theoretical concepts of national identity building and sustaining.

In 1992, the Slovenian sociologist, psychoanalyst and cultural critic, Slavoj Žižek used the old Yugoslavic area to provide an image of how one can approach and understand (parts of) the concept of national identity. Even though some would argue that what constitutes a national community are common symbolic points of reference, Žižek argues that "*the linking bond between the members (of a given community, ed.) implies a shared relationship toward a thing, toward 'Enjoyment Incarnated'*" (1992:51). Žižek continues to elaborate on the nation "thing", explaining that it is the *something*, which is exclusive and accessible only to us, the members. However, he continues, the nation thing is constantly menaced by 'others', (1992: 52) with the Balkans as example, it is explained how Serbs and Slovenes fight over the historical 'right' to certain virtues. Furthermore, several categories including Jews, Catholics and Communists are drawn into the picture, trying to exemplify how different groups are trying to take ownership (or claim to be robbed) of different virtues and traditions.

4.1.2. Believing the 'nation thing'

The paradoxical existence of the 'thing' comes up, when it is explained how this nation thing exists only because it means something to people. It is in other words "*an entity that 'is' only in so far as the subjects believe in its existence*" (Žižek 1992:52). So even though Žižek argues that the substance connecting individuals in a community cannot be reduced to 'points of symbolic identification', he claims that

belief in the existence of the nation thing is all that is holding it together. A used example of the national thing existing in the same way the Holy Spirit, does explain the concept very well; to believe in the Holy Spirit is to believe in belief itself (Žižek 1992:53). In the same way that it makes sense for a religious person to believe in the Holy Spirit, the prophecies of Mohammed or the return of the Messiah, so it makes sense for a Palestinian to believe in the national 'thing' of Palestine. However, the older generation has a better basis for imagining the "heaven" of a free Palestine than the younger one, who is indeed forced more than anyone to believe in the belief itself.

The fact that the 'thing' only exists through out belief in it is not as important to Žižek as the fact that it has been stolen from us. The theft of the 'thing', or the 'enjoyment' gives us the feeling of being deprived of our right to reach our full potential, the people, the nation we *could* be. The real agony we have for this Other who stole our thing is partially that we are not likely to get it back, and partially the fact that it was, actually, never ours to begin with;

"what we conceal by imputing to the Other the theft of enjoyment is the traumatic fact that we never possessed what was allegedly stolen from us: the lack is original"

(Žižek 1992:54)

The problem seems to be that the other's enjoyment (or life,) always gives the impression of being better than our own enjoyment, which is why we resent it. One Lacanian thesis, however, is that our own enjoyment is 'ultimately the enjoyment of others' which in the long run makes our resentment of other's enjoyment (or, again, life or lifestyle) a resentment of our own enjoyment (Žižek 1992:57). In other words; we, as a nation, are not who we want to be. The problem comes when we realize, 1) that we have in fact never been who we want to be, and 2) that we have known this all along. The solution becomes blaming someone else, the 'other'. The 'enjoyment' only exists through an inherent feeling we have of it being left behind, or stolen from us. (Hegel in Žižek 1992:54). It exists through a negation, a minus.

In the specific case of the 'nation' of Palestine, as will be discussed later, the notion of something being stolen is quite physical, which makes it easy to understand and have empathy with.

However, according to Žižek, it is not only countries plagued with war or occupiers who feel as if something has been stolen from them; *"Every nationality has built its own mythology narrating how other nations deprive it of the vital part of enjoyment the possession of which would allow it to live fully."* (1992:54).

To summarize, according to Žižek, all nationalities are built on the notion that they are missing something. This something, the nation thing, has allegedly been taken by someone, the Other. In this way, a theft of enjoyment has happened, an imaginary castration has made them, members of the specific community, amputees, unable to live their lives to the full. However, the notion of enjoyment also exists by virtue of it being stolen or left behind, which is why blaming others (of the theft of enjoyment) essentially becomes a part of how we exist.

In a society as Palestine where all physical proof of a nationality has been, and is being taken away, national myths and symbols become very important. The feeling of being robbed of nationality is exemplified e.g. through the fact that there is an actual term; *Falafelization*⁹, which Palestinians use to describe the way the Israelis supposedly are claiming ownership of Palestinian identity through food (the term is used by some Jews to explain the way traditional Kosher dishes went through a change after the 1948 creation of the Jewish state in the Middle East). The feeling of having a nationality by virtue of wanting someone else's, and the notion of your 'thing' being because it is not their 'thing' is very relevant in the case of Palestine, which is why it has been introduced above.

Glenn Bowman treats an aspect of Benedict Anderson's "Imagined Communities" (1991) in his text about constitutive violence (2003). More specifically, he deals with what he calls the *nationalist imaginary*, which emerges when a community comes to consider itself as a 'we' *"through the process of mobilizing against forces its members recognize as threatening their individual and collective survivals"* (Bowman 2003: 319) I would argue, that this situation fits the Palestinian one very well, and he in fact deals with the issue of Palestine in the text.

⁹ The Palestinian documentary movie maker Khaled Jarrar brought the term up in a debate, about his movie, *Infiltrators* depicting the way Palestinians jump the Separation Wall. The discussion, however, somewhat turned into more of a lecture on the Israeli theft of Palestinian culture and the despair of everyday Palestinian life. <https://www.beitmidrashcc.org/?n=Recipes.Schug3>

Specifically, he goes into the topic of *constitutive violence* and argues that the national identity and nationalism is stronger when it is at risk. (2003:320-321). The thought of one's national identity fortified by being at risk, and seeing violence as something that creates or ignites, instead of being something that destructs, has been useful in the process of rethinking the meaning of resistance and conflict. The paradoxes are interesting; just as violence and opposition, framed as constructive is counterintuitive, the hypothesis of my informants finding home in the chaos is one that needs to be explained.

Through the following chapters, three main topics will be analyzed. First, the topic of different imaginaries across generations; our imagination clearly, according to Žižek, has an effect on whether the 'nation thing' is there or not. In the analysis it becomes clear that the idea of Palestine is indeed based on the things Palestinians imagine. However, in Palestine there is a very big difference between what the elder generation imagines, and what the young one does. There are, so to speak different ways to imagine the community of Palestine. In this first main part, I discuss the effects of this mismatch; it seems that the younger generation is in a situation where a safe choice is to behave according to outdated preconditions. Secondly, I will go into other ways in which the Palestinian identity *is* because it *is not*, and investigate what it means to find connection in *not* being recognized. Thereafter the second part of the analysis will follow.

Throughout the analysis, I will go deeper into the statements of my informants and draw relevant parallels to the theory. As analyzing will always be "*turning data into something it was not*" (Dey 1993:30), the reader should be aware, that any rash conclusions or far-fetched assumptions are matters of personal judgment and can not be a burden to any sources used. As mentioned, the topic of Palestine is much debated, but it has been my goal to obtain a fresh view of my data through my analysis and pass it on.

4.2. Analysis section one: Being Palestinian

After a brief introduction to the general mechanics of national identity, as mentioned, the first section of the analysis will explain and analyze the concept of being Palestinian.

I will go over the fact that the Palestinian identity to a large extent consist of *spite*, being a people even though they are not recognized as one. First the identity of the Palestinian is to a large extent characterized by the paradox that it is built on the impossibility of a Palestinian identity. In the following I will elaborate on my statement using points made by Tobias Kelly, Walid Khalidi and Samira Kawash. Hereafter the topic of generations will be discussed and the tension field between past and present will be outlined and exemplified though the concepts of absence and loss. To build onto the previous paragraphs, I will argue that this identity may in fact exist mostly through the absence of recognition and the common wish to be acknowledged.

Moreover, I will look the fact that almost 70 years of conflict have made young people give up on temporariness. I will go into a time frame connected to a prophecy from the Quran, saying that Palestine will be occupied until the apocalypse. This prophecy somehow ties together the past, present and future, creating a very real issue; should one sit down and wait for the end of time, or should one get up and make the best of it? This is a dilemma young people find themselves in; on one side tradition (and older generations) pulls them into a feeling of apathy and on the other side, it is possible to navigate through life without being stuck in the past. The purpose of the next paragraphs is showing that having a non-identity will make you search for something normal, lasting you can hold on to, my suggestion is, that that could be the resistance struggle. Also, when the concept of time Many national identities are built on the conception of being overlooked or subjects of conspiracy or discrimination. As Palestine is not the only national identity mainly built on the *absence* of something, relevant theories from other contexts will be brought in along the way.

"A land without people, for a people without a land". Such goes the sentence widely used about the Jewish establishment of the Israeli state in Palestine, often only used when describing Zionist ideology and motives. However, the fact is that the Palestine territories are to some extent still seen as a 'land without a people'. Palestinians can never have their identity verified in the same manner as someone from France can be verified as French or someone from the US can be verified as American, and so: "*the very impossibility of identity itself becomes an identity*" (Kawash 2003:46) and to some degree, the Palestinian identity becomes an identity partly – or maybe mostly - characterized by existing out of spite.

Khalidi argues that the national identity of Palestinians has grown in spite of, and perhaps because of the obstacles it has faced (Khalidi 2003:6), and characterizes this as being an identity-as-negation (2003:46). Still, this identity is held very dearly, and still it inspires love as any other nation (Anderson 2006:141).

Moving around on the West Bank with Palestinian colleagues and informants provides good insight as to why one could characterize the people living there as non-people. Many descriptions of the conditions in the West Bank have been produced and distributed, not least during the last months¹⁰ where the attention of the world has been directed towards Gaza and the Palestinian people because of previously mentioned re-emergence of war acts between Hamas and the Israeli military. Therefore, the following will not contain many descriptions of the restriction of mobility etc.¹¹. The fact that Palestinians do not have a national passport¹², limits their possibility of traveling, and furthermore makes their identity fragile (Kawash 2003:46). At any given time, they are subjects to suspicion, and control and always with the risk of rejection. There is, so to speak, nowhere where one can "rest" in ones Palestinian identity, whether one wishes to travel somewhere far, or simply go to the next village. The topic of movement is an urgent matter for most of my informants, and several have had to give up studies due to the unpredictability of the checkpoint rules. Khalidi goes so far as arguing that the checkpoints and the restrictions are one of the main things tying Palestinians together:

"The fact that all Palestinians are subject to these special indignities, and thus are all subject to an almost unique postmodern condition of shred anxiety at the frontier, the check point and the crossing point proves that they are a people, if nothing else does."

(Khalidi 2003: 5)

As barriers of free movement are quickly fading out (Khalidi 2003:5), for people of most nationalities, Palestinians are in other words more restricted than ever and Tobias Kelly, in an article about the Palestinian Identity Card, the *hawia*¹³, also argue that it is at the check points the *"texture of life in the West Bank is produced"*

¹⁰ Summer 2014

¹¹ For a short, overview, see:

http://www.btselem.org/freedom_of_movement/checkpoints_and_forbidden_roads

¹² See first appendix

¹³ See first appendix

(Kelly:2006). I have hereby argued, that an image of the Palestinian identity can be drawn not with the colors you see, but with the ones you cannot see. In other words, the Palestinian identity is more characterized by what it is *not*, than what it is. To some extent, I believe you can compare the *hawia* with the Palestinian identity itself. In his article Kelly describes the Palestinian identity documents as something that, instead of verifying origins, *"penetrate into the lives of West Bank Palestinians, not as a reifying abstractions, but as an unpredictable and unstable technique of governance, producing considerable anxiety from all those subject to their use"* (Kelly 2006:90).

When Khalidi portrays the Palestinian identity as a negation, meaning something opposite or contrary to something else, the obvious assumption would be that the Palestinian identity exists through the way it is not an Israeli identity. But in fact, I would agree with Khalidi as he argues that it is the identity *in itself* that is the opposite. The Palestinian identity *is*, because it *is not*. This paradox is complex, because it brings up many questions, mainly about how one connects to a country, when its national identity mainly exists through negation and spite (or, as mentioned above, because one believes in it). The Palestinian person is in many ways like the refugee who *"is the figure who lacks what the citizen has"* (Turner 2004:230). One tendency I noted when working and interviewing on the West Bank, is that this kind of identity, having an national identity against all odds, provokes a strong need to be noticed, there is a common want for recognition.

4.2.1. The question of recognition

After dealing with the topic of existing out of spite, the following will concern itself with the topic of recognition. For this topic, experts of Palestine are brought in to provide important aspects of recognition. Tobias Kelly and Walid Khalidi, are both experts on the Israel-Palestine conflict and bring us further into the context of Palestine. Later on, the topic of rumors are treated with the literature of firstly Gary Allen Fine and Patricia Turner along with Simon Turners work from Tanzania. Finally, examples on identity from Richard Jenkins and Ilan Pappé are used to shed light on specific and general aspects of recognition.

My informant Suha has lived outside Ramallah all her life, she took part in many clashes as part of the PRCS medical team, and she tells, with ill-concealed pride about the times she has been shot. She has her own opinions about most things, including

the future of Palestine, and to me at least, she is not afraid to speak it. As we talk non-stop for more than 2 hours at her office, she smokes a lot of cigarettes and the long stream of stories about herself and Palestine only stops when someone enters her little cubicle and asks for her help. As Suha has done outstandingly well at university in studies of Philosophy and English, she has been invited to several universities abroad to continue her studies. She has, however, declined all invitations, since a future outside Palestine is simply unimaginable and would, in a sense, feel like quitting.

All my informants, independent of gender feel a strong need to be heard. They all talk unstoppably about Palestine and themselves as Palestinians and they explain actions of violence with a desperate need for letting the surrounding world know that they exist. One of the ways the Palestinians have always used to make themselves heard has been rock throwing. In 1987 the first intifada started as a small uprising with rock throwing as the early outbreak of violence. Later, the intifada became more violent, and lasted 6 years, but the stone remained the symbol of uprising also through Yassir Arafat who stated, *"the stones will not settle so long as you remain occupiers"* (1993:10). During the second intifada rock throwing became even more normal, as Palestinians the second time around had even less resources. Several of my informants say that they know they are famous for throwing rocks in Palestine.

"I: Can I ask you why you think people throw rocks? It seems...

R: Ah, ok I feel like it's not useful and it's not...like it wont hurt anyone. It really wont. But it's just a way of resisting. Because there is nothing else to do. Because you want to show that you still exist."

(Interview, Majd:81)

Through the first intifada, the image of the young man throwing the rock at the Israeli army vehicles became one of the symbols of the impossible Palestinian struggle¹⁴. As Nachmani notes, *"an ironic reminder and re-enactment of the David-Goliath myth"* (2001:50), and the symbolic image of the underdog has indeed lasted ever since, most commonly used to accentuate the victim role in which the Palestinians have gotten the habit of seeing themselves in.

¹⁴ Other symbols that could be mentioned are the *kuffiah*, the traditional Arab male headscarf and the flag. Furthermore, symbols like the black smoke from burning tires, tying the ground to the sky ('sending fax to God') still occurs up until this day. During the intifadas it was also used as a message to fellow 'freedom fighters'; somebody is 'indefatigably continuing the uprising' (Nachmani 2001:73)

The symbol of both the key and the rock throwing is something worthy of much more attention than can be given here. Nachmani brings in Anthony Giddens for a comment and argues that symbolism 'is the stuff nations are made of', this due to the fact that Giddens think of practically all information exchanged between people "*involve an exchange of symbols*" (2001:53). The question of being heard by the outside world and feeling enable to get attention and recognition also comes up, when I discuss the Palestinian relationship with media with Suha. She tells me the story of a young boy killed by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). A story that became famous because vivid video footage was released, showing the boy, Mohammed al-Dura, dying while his father was trying to protect him¹⁵. Suha tells me an absurd story of al-Dura being portrayed in China as a Jewish hero;

"(...)there is a sculpture...a monument in a big square in China with Mohammed Al-Dura with a kippah and its raised by Israeli Jews. This..his name is Mohammed for God sakes! How come he has a kippah? Everybody in the world saw this video..everybody. And nobody has done nothing to that."

(Interview , Suha:63)

The story is absurd and impossible to verify, but it can serve here as a symbol of Suha and others with her, feeling that they are a non-people, with a non-identity and the feeling of being overlooked by the world. As Alan Fine and Patricia Turner explain in their book about rumor and race in America, rumors can have different functions and serve different purposes. They can fit into a need in society or work to strengthen "*strategic interests of individual narrators*" (Fine and Turner 2004:25). In this case, the rumors reinforce a collective feeling of misrecognition in society, and at the same time strengthen my informant's personal integrity. The way Suha tells me the story, of Mohammed with the kippah, it does not seem like she thinks it could be a false story. I am sure that she can hear herself that the story is unlikely. Yet, she uses it, pass it on to me, a foreigner. As I am part of the international community, we can compare the situation to what Turner (2004) describes from his fieldwork in Tanzania.

¹⁵ Ever since, the al-Dura incident has been discussed. One side has argued that bullets could not have been coming from the IDF and that the footage was forged. In 2003, The Atlantic called the story 'the Pietá of the Arab world', read the overview article here <https://www.theatlantic.com/past/docs/issues/2003/06/fallows.htm>

In that case, stories and rumors are analyzed as representatives of the "*attitudes towards the international communities*" (Turner 2004:228). In this case, Suha also passes the story on as a way of gaining my recognition, almost as a call of duty for Palestine, and a personal salute to Mohammed al-Dura. The example with Dura wearing the kippah is a harsh one, but is only one time out of many where the Palestinians feel their life and reality has been misinterpreted and overlooked. This frames the Palestinian identity as indeed a non-identity, their life a non-life. Another informant explains that a feeling a being forgotten by the outside world only adds to the feeling of non-existing. He denies the existence of a Pan-Arabic identity, and then explains about the Arab world:

"(...)ok listen, I'm Palestinian and I am proud of being Palestinian. But when I look at the Arab world, it's pretty much shit(...)If you look at Saudi Arabia, it's pretty much a different planet(...)hey look at him, he's Palestinian, he must be something like shit or whatever(...) Let them do whatever they want to do. Let them kill each other with the Israelis"

(Interview, Hameed:92)

Hameed clearly feels that no one is on the Palestinian side, and later he explains to me that the Israeli government teaches the Israeli people that they the Palestinians behind the walls, are "*animals living there, everybody shooting each other(...) they (the Israelis, ed.) have rumors everywhere(...)some (Israeli, ed.) children were signing rockets into Gaza*" (Interview, Hameed:100). Like Suha, he reveals to me some rumors that keep the Palestinians in the role of the uncivilized beast and Israel as the bully spreading lies. The *telling me* of these rumors has the purpose of gaining recognition of Palestinians as victims I would argue.

Jenkins (2004) uses a story from the anthropologist Robert F. Murphy to explain the feeling of being seen as someone on the margins of human-ness. As Murphy was battling a spinal tumor, paralyzing him, he experienced being seen as less than human, and he describes how other people "*neglected, or refused to continue to recognize, his full human-ness and individual self-hood*" (56). This situation describes how others' view and definition affected Murphy greatly. The alienation from others affected his own image of himself, and his sense of selfhood.

As Jenkins puts it: *"Our own sense of humanity, of who and what we are, is a hostage to the categorizing judgment of others"* The image of your self drawn by the public, becomes the picture you see and accept as the reality (Jenkins, 2006:54).

Few peoples have been the topic of as much debate as the Palestinians. Reflecting on the above notion suggesting that one's identity is in fact created, or to a large extent shaped, by external factors – and given that one of these factors is a practically unsolvable conflict, how big does the conflict play in their own identification-process? Pappé, an expert on the modern history of Palestine and the Palestinians, provides valuable knowledge on the Palestinian self-understanding. In his book from 2009, he goes over events and currents from the Ottoman Empire around 1800 to the first and second Intifada in 1987 and 2000. To him and other scholars focusing on the Palestinian identity and history, the event and phenomenon of Al-nakbah ('the disaster') and the Fida'i ('the warrior') are some of the most important, if not the most important phenomena defining the Palestinian identity.

Being Palestinian is connected to being someone who struggles in general, as opposed to someone who struggles *with a specific goal*. Pappé describes, how the struggle is at the center of being Palestinian; *"The fight itself was seen as a way of maintaining the National Identity – there was no need to succeed in anything but that"* (Pappé 2009:219). However, being Palestinian has also been largely connected to opposition and refusals for a long time. Said elaborates; *"They have been associated with being the 'heart' of the Middle East problem, with being terrorists"* and furthermore, and perhaps most problematic for the Palestinian case they have been invaded by *"the most morally complex of all opponents, Jews(...)"* (Said 1980:119). I would argue, that having a national identity built on negation, leaves room for affection for something else. My hypothesis is, that this other is the conflict situation and the cohesiveness and sense of vocation it brings with it.

4.2.2. Giving up on temporariness

After discussing the shared desire for recognition, the following paragraphs will treat the topic of temporariness. One of the main areas my informants generation differs from their parents and grand parents is in the way the conflict is viewed as either temporary or not. The younger, focus of this thesis, are giving, or have given, up on the idea of the conflict being temporary.

The following will analyze this topic, finding points of reference mainly in Liisa Malkki's concept of the 'pure' refugee, Illana Feldman's work with Palestinian refugees in Lebanon, and Edward Said's more general investigation of the Palestinian identity. Furthermore other scholars including Samira Kawash and Mureed al-Barghouti provide insights from their case studies in Palestine.

I meet Faiza in her mother's house in Ramallah. She normally lives with her husband in Nablus. *"Oh, yeah by the way"* she is married she tells me. She explains to me that she is teaching herself to call him her 'partner', as a part of breaking down old gender patterns. Her dream is to leave and come back with 'a name' and a career. Faiza is an example of the modern Palestinian woman, who is letting go of the temporariness. She compares the occupation with a disease and tells me that one should not accept, but acknowledge ones illness and 'deal with it'. Faiza is one of the few people I interviewed, who has been 'inside' Israel. Here, it dawned on her, that Israel is can not be moved, the situation is permanent:

(...) the bigger shock is when you get the permission to go visit the inside, the '48. And you see those big buildings and those fancy streets, and those women, half naked walking around Jaffa, Haifa and...just looking...they're not goint to go anywhere(...) I just stayed there and looked and where could this go – it's not going to go anywhere"

(Interview, Faiza:51)

For decades, the people living inside the West Bank, who fled after 1948 held on to their origins and stories of the old land. These people, who once lived in what is now the state of Israel tried to hold on to a sense of 'temporariness' (Kawash 2003:45). By holding on to their status as 'refugees' they held on to the notion of their situation as temporary, instead of falling into the category of non-people. Malkki also discusses this topic. She argues that more than holding on to the a state of temporariness, refugees in Tanzania refuse to become a part of the official society outside the camp (Malkki 1995:231), as part of a strategy to remain in the part of the 'pure' refugee, and probably as an attempt to keep all opportunities open. To some extent, this can be compared to the situation in the Al-Amari 'refugee camp' in Ramallah, which I will use as example in the following. As mentioned, it seems that people are now letting go of the notion of temporariness.

Only few people anymore remember having been to Haifa or Jaffa, or whichever city or area in old Palestine they may have originated from. In other words, the West Bank is the home my informants have known; *"The occupation has created a generations of Palestinians who are strangers to Palestine"* (Al-Barghouti 1998:60). When my informants explain to me how they wish for Palestine to look in the future, they are recollecting stories they have heard from their older family members. Indeed, what they seem to be longing for is really not a different situation, but a different period of time (Ibid:64).

On the outskirts of Ramallah one can find the Al-Amari camp, which resembles – and is – a neighborhood more than a camp. Here, people live as refugees, even though they technically are living inside what is now called Palestinian territories. There are different interpretations among my informants as to whether or not the kids of Al-Amari would claim their grandparents village as their own or not, but no doubt that these people were hanging on to the last thing they could call their identity, by refusing to blend in with the rest of the society. Through their refusal to blend in and become a part of what is now Palestine, they fight a fight most people have given up on, and hold on to their temporariness.

"Because it's not their homes (the camp, red.) And if they give this up, they don't have any right to go back(...). They want the camp because one day they want to go home"

(Interview, Hameed:90)

They are respected for this and some of my informants claim, that any child will refer to his home town as the one his family fled in 1948 (Interview, Suha:61). By keeping holding on to their non-home, and calling it a refugee camp, they too hold on to their non-identity. Also Said emphasizes this inherited belonging to specific cities within Israel, and claim that it adds to *"a genealogy of paradoxically Palestinian presence that sets itself against the logic of history and geography"* (Said 1980:121). The belonging to a certain village within the old territories obviously seems to have had a big importance for a significant amount of time, but it also appears that that time is ending with this generation, and that both the logic of history and geography is slowly catching up with the young Palestinians of today.

In her text "Home as Refrain", Feldman tries to conceptualize the Palestinian 'home' and notes that different 'layers' constitutes home. *"It is through this layering, the accumulation of narrative and experience, that home retains its potency in the wake of displacement"* (2006:13). I agree with the point of the layering, yet I would add, that the accumulated layer of experience is inferior to the layer of narratives transferred from older generations. As Feldman puts it *"the "told" occupies a larger place than the "touched"* (2006:17). Hameed explains to me that earlier, people did indeed use to say the name of their ancestors village when asked where they were from, but that this has changed with the latest generation. Now, according to him, people will refer to their origins as being the area of the camp:

"If you ask one of them where are you from, they will say I'm from the refugee camp of Al-Amari(...)Which is really weird(...)Maybe grand fathers, or like, grandparents try to love the country and to always say that I'm from that city and I'm from the '48 land, and not from here and one day I'll go back. But as life develops and as life goes on, generations change, hallas, they change ideas."

(Interview, Hameed:90)

As mentioned, other of my informants claim that the same children would in fact maintain attachment to their ancestors native place. Sadly, my Arabic skills did not allow me to go ask the children of the camp themselves, but even the fact that there are different accounts of their attachment to the old 'home towns' suggests that ideas, as Hameed says, are changing. More than 60 years later, affiliations with the old land are becoming impossible to maintain.

4.2.3. Absence and Loss

After an analysis of the topics of recognition and temporariness, the two are combined in a way in the following chapter. Outlining the differences between the two generations is not to say that the young generation does not care about the resistance, about the struggle. On the contrary, it is to clarify that Palestinian youth has a different starting point and motivation for being part of the struggle. They are not motivated by loss of something, but by their parent's grief and bitterness. The following paragraphs will treat the topic of generation gaps and the differences between absence and loss. I have found it interesting and valuable for my research, since it gives an image of how young people are affiliated with the ongoing conflict, and more so how they feel affiliated with the concept of the pre-1948 Palestine.

I will argue that the differences between the generations can be linked to the differences between absence and loss. As a historian, Dominick LaCapra specializes in treating topics such as how traumatic experiences, (as he refers to as 'limit experiences'¹⁶) and post-war trauma in order to create enhanced understanding and better historical literature about the same topics. His distinction between absence and loss has been useful to me, since it helps define the Palestinian Youth's motivation for detaching themselves from old traumas and moving forward.

LaCapra (1999) makes it clear that a distinction between absence and loss is crucial. His examples are post II World War Jews and post-Apartheid black people in South Africa, but to some extent the feeling of namely absence and loss can be used in the context of Palestine. LaCapra uses the examples of individuals in South Africa and Germany to explain, that both groups are left with losses that need to be addressed and mourned in order to '*create conditions for a more desirable future*' (pp. 697). This is where we return to the distinction between absence and loss; LaCapra points out that losses can not be effectively addressed if there are seen through a discourse of absence and vice versa (pp.698).

At the same time, absence is not properly recognized if it is seen as a loss. In the Palestinian case, it seems to me that there is a difference between the old and the new generation: the older one has experienced the *loss*; of their country, of the land and of their freedom, while the young one has simply experienced an *absence* of the same. Still, they express a sense of loss, even if it is not an actual loss, but a, from their parents, transferred one, a constructed loss, Palestine is something they *feel* they lost, but it is in fact something they never had, indeed bringing us back to Žižek's thoughts on national identity. LaCapra describes what happens when an absence is converted into loss, as, in my view, has happened in Palestine;

"(...)one increases the likelihood of misplaced nostalgia or utopian politics in quest of a new totality or fully unified community."

(LaCapra 1999:698)

¹⁶ in *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 2000

In other words, there is a mis-match, an understandable difference, of world-views between young Palestinians, my informants, and the generations before them. As the older generation has experienced loss, they are affected by this loss and have transferred this notion unto their children, while the new generation has only experienced absence, which is probably the reason they have given up on the idea of temporariness. It leaves my informants' generation in a limbo. To them, the country and freedom has always been absent. This becomes evident when talking to 23 year-old Faiza. We discuss the fact that some older people might find it offensive discussing that the occupation is a part of daily life for the young generations and even suggesting the Palestinians settle for the 1967 border;

"Yes, it's very offensive, because they (the older generation, ed.) know how it was. I don't know how it was. I don't know how the roads from Ramallah to Nablus would look like without the settlements. I only hope to, but it's true, how would it look like?(...)I don't know how that would feel, and it's kind of scary. For some. When you think about it for real."

(Interview, Faiza:51)

Even though Faiza is one of the most modern, so to speak, of my informants, she is still acutely aware of the fact that speaking about a normalization of the occupation is offensive to the older generation. I would argue, that this fact is one of the issues posing a major challenge in young people's lives. It almost comes down to a point where you can either respect your parents past, act accordingly and refuse to accept anything but a solution that brings back pre-1948 conditions, or respect your own future and start making the best of life in Palestine of today. Most young people in Palestine I would argue try to mix the two, even though it must be tricky.

During another interview, Tareq unknowingly confirms that the shift between feeling loss and feeling absence is happening now, in his generation. He tells me about his first epiphany of Israel:

"When I was a child, I thought that there is no Israel. Its ours, but it's like a temporary situation that we can't go to the lands of '48. I think that it's a temporary thing. Because my parents said to me this is Palestine, this is the map. Draw it."

(Interview ,Tareq:32)

What mostly happens is that the young generation, out of respect for their parents take on the feeling of loss on them, creating an, as LaCapra describes, misplaced nostalgia. When Tareq's parents ask him to draw a map that belongs to the past, they transfer their feeling of *loss* to him, even though his emotional base is *absence*. One can, as is also pointed out by LaCapra, one cannot lose what one never had (701).

In another interview, Hana explained to me that;

"When we are born, we know God in the sky and Palestine in the earth. This is the only thing we know. That there is God and there is Palestine. And the land. And that's it."

(Interview, Hana:32)

The transference of nostalgia, the melancholic longing for another time, does not only happen from parent to child. It also happens on a very societal level. Two examples of this is the circumstances around firstly Yasser Arafat's grave. Arafat wanted to be buried in Jerusalem, but did not get the permission by the Israeli authorities, so soil was brought from Jerusalem to Ramallah, where he was put down in Jerusalemite soil after he had passed away in 2004. Transference of the nostalgia happens since his last wish was for his remains to be moved from his monumental sight in Ramallah, *Mukataa*, to Jerusalem, once the city is again under Palestinian control, officially making his current grave a *temporary* one. The fact that the grave is a bombastic monument inside Ramallah city only helps remind people of the heavy duty that has been placed upon them.

Stabile geography and continuity of land are two concepts that have vanished from the life of all Palestinians (Said 1993:19). As the absence of a home has become a big theme in Palestinian history and identity, and especially the notion of the key: *"the house key has become the last symbol of a home, a reminder that, before Al-Nakbah, Palestinians had a different life"* (Sa'di 2002:181). The key could be mentioned in the context of misplaced nostalgia, as mentioned above. During my stay, I attended a workshop in the 'Danish House in Palestine'. Danish people and Palestinians were invited to come and have a talk about what represented Palestine in their minds, and school material was to be created on the basis of this workshop. Some schoolgirls had been asked to present something that for them represented Palestine, and the first one presented the key, almost ritually. As the key had been presented, the discussion could move on.

Several informants mentioned the key when making a reference to members of the older generation who allegedly still sleep with the key under the bed, ready to return to his land in now Israel. It should be clear to everyone, old as young, that the keys are never going back in the locks they turned 60 years ago, but the concept of the key has become something bigger, keeping even very young girls chained to the *idea* of going back, instead of letting them find or create their own symbol of Palestine. The key is an example of a barren symbol still teaching children to hold on to the victimized role, which some Palestinians feel have *also* been stolen from them. Hage (2003) quotes a Palestinian man saying that "(...) *the Israelis monopolize everything(...). They monopolize the land, they monopolize the water(...)* they also monopolize victimhood!"(78). This again touches upon the 'nation thing' as presented by Žižek, and the theft of Enjoyment.

4.2.4. Recognition of absence

Furthermore LaCapra describes how when distinctions collapse, also the distinction between then and now can fade and one can become unable to distinct living in the past, from living in the present; "*here and now with future possibilities*"(699). I agree with LaCapra when he later points out that a post-traumatic response, which is normal and unquestionable, becomes problematic or at best 'questionable' when it becomes a routine; "*a methodology or style that enacts compulsive repetition, including the compulsive repetitive turn to the aporia, paradox or impasse*" (699). In other words, when the concepts of then and now fade into each other, one's reaction to the past, can then become one's reaction to the present. When this is transferred from one generation to the next, it becomes hard to move forward.

In conclusion, the problematic difference between the young and the older generation is evident, and can be exemplified through the (mis-) distinctions between absence and loss. One of the main issues is that loss is most likely connected to an absence, while an absence is not necessarily connected to a loss (ibid:700). The conflation of the two, can, moreover, also lead to a loss of touch with time reality, which naturally makes is very difficult to move in a progressive direction (by this I mean participating in dialogue meetings etc). It has been briefly analyzed above why the notions of absence and loss are crucial when analyzing young people's relationship with the Palestine of today. Later, the link between the older and the younger generations will be discussed further.

4.2.5. Waiting for the apocalypse

Having dealt with the concepts of absence and loss, the following will deal with issues that make it very difficult separating the two. One of these is religion. Early in my time in Palestine I got familiar with a prophecy about the return of the prophet Jesus. My colleague explained that upon his return, the land would be given back to the Palestinians. However the way he explained it, the handover would be of a somewhat apocalyptic character, which to be honest did not seem to bother my colleague much. For the further work with the topic of the tension between accepting the conflict as eternal and trying to change things, I found Anja Kublitz' work on 'Liminal Becomings' (2012, part of her later Ph.D.) very useful along with Michel de Certeau's distinctions between tactics and strategy.

Living in between generations, and the fact that my informants are somehow caught between the old one and the young one becomes very clear in a conversation with Hana. We are talking about the words of the Quran, and if one day the prophet Jesus will return and free the Palestinians. It was very clear that Hana felt cornered; on one hand she wanted to be honest with me and express her pragmatic view on the words of the Quran and its prophecies for Palestine, but at the same time, she could not make herself say that she did not believe, since that would detach her from the tradition and the older generation's teachings:

"Ok, you ask me a religion, it's very...sensitive. I believe in God and the Holy Quran. But also the lines that are in the Holy Quran..there's a lot of ways to
I: ...to interpret?
R: ...to explain(..) But no, I can't take this like ok, I will sit down and wait until the end of the
life.

(Interview, Hana:34)

Here, the conflict between the expectations of the older generations and the need to be in the present become somewhat clear. Hana would never dismiss the words of the Quran entirely, but it does not seem that she acts according to it either. She somehow, has to fit her belief according to what arena she is in.

Suha is as always more blunt when explaining to me that what is 'wrong' with 'old people', she tells about discussions she has had with her mom asking *"why are we still sitting?"* when they could go out and make things better as she expresses it (Interview Suha:61).

She later refers to her mothers argumentation as she quotes her saying "*why – do you want to go alone? One hand doesn't clap*" (Interview Suha:62). While Suha and Hana are working to directly improve the situation, through work with the Palestine Red Crescent and the Fateh Youth Movement, their parents are no longer interested in struggle, but can be characterized as bitter and disillusioned, and the parents' bitterness turns into obligation in their children. Kublitz also compares generations of Palestinians in her article on Liminal Becomings across generations, and suggest that rather than seeing the old revolutionaries of a Lebanese refugee camp, and their children, who have become traditional Muslims as opposites, one should see them as substitutions "*as liminal becomings, that are repeated across historical generations* (Kublitz 2013:2).

I also felt the obligation towards the older generation present when I was talking to Hameed. We were talking about the feeling of being stuck in Palestine. A feeling mostly caused by a pressure to fit in caused by other Palestinians (Interview, Hameed:93-94). At some point, I want to clarify that the feeling of being stuck is in fact not caused by the occupation, and he confirms and explains that the most interaction he has with the occupation on a daily basis is if he has to go through a check point on his way to university. However, all of a sudden it is like he feels obligated to mention his father and how he was in prison, not connected to his own stories of being stuck (Interview, Hameed:94). I explain the sudden shift with feelings of guilt. Saying that the occupation is not in fact that big a part of his life, immediately brings up a sense of shame, causing him to put his father's suffering on the agenda. He is indeed a prisoner of conscience because he does not directly see the present absence of freedom as a loss. Rather on the contrary he feels stuck in what is left of the past.

Ilana Feldman did her research in Gaza before 2006, where the general opinion was that everything was better in the past. However, my informants generation is slowly starting to admit that the occupation has in fact not, exclusively at least, ruined their lives, and to some of them Palestine is not 'holy' and impossible to criticize as it might have been before – that is one of the other main differences between the older and the newer generations. It seems that my informants do not see themselves as actors in the conflict, at least not in a direct sense.

Being an actor in the conflict would mean having a *role* to play, and to most of my informants that is not an actual option (when I say a role, I mean a role in the actual political conflict). Instead, they see the conflict as little conflicts upon little conflicts. As an example, an informant explains that if someone is killed, young people will go out the next day and throw rocks. An informant explains to me that a young man was killed by the IDF,

"(...)after the funeral they went to the check points and started throwing stones and then they went home with like...ok, we did something for him"

(Interview, Suha:69)

My informants' experience with "revenge" acts, fits into what the French scholar, Michel De Certeau in his most influential work; *The Practice of Everyday Life*, would refer to as *tactics*. (De Certeau 1984:xix) Tactics differs itself from the term *strategy* that gives the subject, in this case young Palestinians an opportunity to generate change, since it is external from the thing it wants to change. Tactic on the other hand, one has to wait for; *"the place of the tactic belongs to the other"* (*ibid*:xix). A strategy offers a base, where one can change matters through planned effort and maintain the changes. De Certeau's concepts of tactics provide a framework for how Palestinian Youth are a part of resistance; *"(...) a tactic depends on time – it is always on the watch for opportunities that must be seized on the win. Whatever it wins, it does not keep"* (*Ibid*:xix).

Through all their lives and especially since the Oslo accords in 1993, my informants have not had a hope for peace. Instead, the little triumphs there have been have been either personal or based on isolated incidents like successful events to support the Palestinian case like release of prisoners from Israelis prisons, or public endorsement of Palestine from some international public figure. They have never felt part of a grand strategy, and do indeed feel that all they could eventually gain and have gained through peaceful protest or being active in for example PRCS could, and would, be taken from them if it somehow interfered with Israeli goals. So being part of the resistance struggle is not (for many reasons of historical and political origin) the same as being part of a united strategy. Instead the struggle consists of little outbursts of anger, as will be discussed later, and an everyday powerlessness.

4.2.6. Normalization of the 'eternal struggle'

The obvious reason why a sense of temporariness is getting harder and harder to maintain is of course the fact that the "temporary" situation has lasted so long, and that peace negotiations have never brought positive result with them (from the view point of my informants). The fact that the situation has slowly been normalized is evident. Good examples of this came up when I would ask my informants if they thought their children were going to grow up under occupation like they themselves had done. More than once it happened that people misunderstood my question and thought that I was asking if they would *chose* to have children during the occupation. Also Faiza related to the question in a different way that I intended. I asked about the future to get an impression of her image of the time horizon of the situation. Instead she talked about her choice between living in Palestine or not. Below, she explains to me that her husband does not want to have children in Palestine, but that she does not have the same reservations:

"For me it's like no, if I can handle it, they can handle it(...) He has a point, I know he has a point, it's not healthy to raise a child here, but this is who we are(...) I would rather give them another pass port, yes, but if they are born here, it's their destiny."

(Interview, Faiza:52)

Faiza is a declared atheist. However, still she brings up the concept of destiny when speaking about the conflict, something that is otherwise mostly linked with my informants' religious affiliation. Her statement makes it difficult to connect the notion of the eternal struggle to religious and traditional reasons, but made me aware that the idea of Palestinians being destined to suffer is instead *cultural*. The notion of 'eternal struggle' and the Palestinian people is a common feature in most interviews, especially with the informants who (according to my observations¹⁷) can be characterized as more traditional. To them, the role of Islam can be characterized as a rough guide to life. These people were often from cities north of Ramallah. These people deal with the 'loss of temporariness', meaning that there is no visible end to the conflict situation, through their belief in the words of the Quran. Religion becomes their way of finding calmness in the turmoil of the situation:

¹⁷ These observations entail how women dress more or less conservatively, and how some young men do not naturally shake hands with women. Also, it was easy to note the difference in awe and veneration when mentioning the Quran or Islam in general.

I: Do you have an idea when the occupation will stop?

R: I think...it will never stop(...)It is written in the Quran, the ehm, Palestine will always be occupied

I: Ok...so it is written in the Quran that Palestine will always be...

R: Yeah(...)But it will end after a long time, when the Messiah comes back.

(...) I: ok, so you knew this all along?

R: yeah

I: So that is something you will tell you children?

R: Of course.

(...) I: Ok ,but when he comes back, isn't that sort of..the end of the world?

R: yeah.

I: ah..ok!

R: Haha, it's complicated"

(Interview, Ahlam:6)

The above quote contributes to the complex image of the relationship between the conflict and the people. Here, it is clear, that religion becomes a strategy of coping with the situation. Later on Ahlam explains that she also has to be realistic, which is why she is involved with youth politics and fighting for better conditions in Palestine. However, she always has the words of the Quran to turn to. She knows that as long as Palestine is occupied, at least the words of the prophet Mohammed are still true, if nothing else seem to be.

4.2.7.An inherited timeframe – a burden or a gift?

The term of 'the inherited timeframe' will be used in the following to explain the way my informants have been raised to believe in the return of the prophet and wait for Palestine to be free. The following paragraphs will mainly draw upon examples of this and use Ghassan Hage, Safran and Hirsch to discuss (the lack of) imaginary prospects of Palestine.

Once in a café Ahmed, my colleague, another volunteer and I, were discussing the conflict and occupation. We were, as most often would happen, talking about how unbelievable the conflict and the occupation seemed to us Europeans. We were talking about settlements, international law, interference from the international community and peace talks. As these conversations would often end in silence and sighs from all members of the discussions, so did this one. The silence often meant that everyone sat puzzled by the scope of the conflict.

At some point, during my time there, I asked my colleague, if he thought that his children would also grow up during occupation. He was very calm when explaining me that he thought so. I asked if he believed that the occupation would end in his time, and he answered that he did not know, but that he knew for sure that it would end when the prophet of Jesus returned. And that would be the end of days. Afterwards he explained to me that in Islam, they believe that Jesus is a prophet who will return to set Palestine free. It was clear the way he said it, that he found comfort in that time frame, since then at least Palestine would not be occupied for ever. This prediction puzzled me and when I went back to the West Bank months later, I confronted my informants with the prophecy. Ahlam (below) were one of the ones who believed it also, or should I say, was not ready to dismiss it. All my informants recognized the time frame provided by the Quran, however, it varied how much trust or reliance they put in it.

"It will never stop(the occupation, ed.)...It is written in the Quran, that Palestine will always be occupied. That's why some religious people in Palestine say that they will keep occupying Palestine, but we have to struggle"

(Interview, Ahlam:5)

Ahlam says that she struggles to make things better, even though the Quran says that the Palestinian people will always be occupied. Ahlam wears the *hijab*, and comes from the northern part of the West Bank, known to considerably more religiously strict or traditionally bound. It seems that Ahlam finds a lot of calmness in the fact that the Quran says that the Palestinians will be occupied until the prophet Jesus returns, the Messiah and looks me straight in the eye when she says that she believe in the return of Jesus. This is way she is not actually fighting for a solution, but for a better way of existing in Palestine and at the same time being a part of Allah's plan. To me, it was always a paradox, when young people would express their frustration about their 'eternal struggle', and still completely dismiss the idea of leaving. Most often my informant would explain how they could leave for a short period, but never more since Palestine was almost physically part of them;

"I am not imagining myself outside Palestine for a long time. (...) Because being outside Palestine for a long time or even forever means that I...I take like, how can I say...It is meaningless to me because I can not live outside Palestine, it is part of my body, part of my history, I can not leave it."

(Interview, Ahlam:2)

Even if Ahlam is one of the informants who traveled the most, she is completely dismissive of the idea of leaving Palestine behind. When I ask her, however, how Palestine would look like without the occupation, she initially does not understand the question and answers with a confused *"eeh, excuse me?"*, but afterwards describes her image of a free Palestine in a way that gives me the impression that it is not something she has ever considered being possible. The way she describes the situation resembles the someone would describe a utopia, a dream;

I: ...can you describe, how would Palestine look like then (if it was free, red.)

R: Ehm, it would look like...you know, it looks like a really beautiful place and free of occupation and we can do a lot of things. We have our own country, our own products, or own...Our own everything."

(Interview, Ahlam:3)

Hage (2003) discusses the general inability to dream. In connection with a survey done at the Birzeit university, where several of my informants study, done during the first part of the second intifada, showed, that the students generally had an inability to dream, in the sense that they were incapable of *"visualiz(ing) a better future that their hopelessly miserable currents life offer(ed)"* (Hage 2003:79). Hage connects this to 'social death', however I would also connect it to the fact that young Palestinians have been taught to linger by the past. In fact, lingering to the past could be seen as the thing that has constituted their social life, as social life in Palestine to a large extend evolved around family. When Ahlam describe the utopia of the free Palestine like above, in my opinion, she is not describing her social death, but more what constitutes her social life; having a connection with other people through having a common dream and forming a united front against the occupiers ('social death' will, however, become relevant in a later context).

William Safran suggest, in his book about diaspora, that the 'home country' "*in its stark reality is never quite so good as its imagined form*" (Safran 2004:16), he even goes on explaining that "*often enough 'coming home' results in the replacement of in nostalgia by another – and it may give rise to a longing for the diaspora, which then appears as the 'real' home*" (Ibid.) The description as the real home as a utopia, fits Ahlam's description of a free Palestine well in my opinion.

"And you know, a lot of stories he told us about eh...about the place and how the prosperous places and eh..yeah amazing place it was in these lands."

(Interview, Ahlam:4)

It is as if Ahlam remembers *herself* what it was like to live in her grand parents time, she could be called something Geoffrey Hartman (in Hirsch 2001) refers to as a "*witness by adoption*" (Hirsch 2001:10). She naturally refers to Palestine with 'we', and especially after the word 'nowadays'. Palestinian youth have an intimate, faithful and conscientious relationship with their *parents'* and all older generations' memories, something Hirsch explains as "*an ethical relation to the oppressed or persecuted other for which postmemory can serve as model: as I can "remember" my parents' memories, I can "remember" the suffering of others*" (Hirsch 2001:10). I would argue that these 'adopted memories' are keeping the younger generation from having a positive relationship with the present. Their own stories are trivialized and belittled by the grand sagas of the previous generations.

In general, many aspects of everyday life events and artifacts contribute to the maintenance of an outdated identity. Not only through parents and societal reminders but also through modern media. Helga Tawil-Souri has done some interesting research on how video games, some released by Hezbollah, effect the children and youth of Palestine. The games were widely popular upon release, and widely copied and spread all over the West Bank. In these games, the young players get to target Israelis. A 12-year old informant lectures Tawil-Souri; "*In all the other games you can shoot Saddam Hussein(...)course all of us here now only play this(...) We get to shoot the Israelis.*" (Tawil-Souri 2009:215). In the video game *Under Ash* (the sequel to *Under Siege* from 2001) that came out during the second intifada in 2003, the player's character, Ahmed, is part of a re-creation of the events that started the second

intifada. In other words, the intifada is *relived* (Tawil-Souri 2009:217). The creators of *Under Siege and Under Ash*, a Syrian gaming company, advertises the games claiming that they all levels of the games are portraying event objectively, however also admit that

"we want the new generation, which doesn't listen to the news, to learn about the Palestinian cause. Part of the point is to keep the idea of resistance alive(...)we do not want the resistance concept to vanish"

(Tawil-Souri 2009:219)

The above provide a good example of what I would call 'adopted trauma', which is transferred not only through parents, but also through something that reaches much further. By releasing video games where children can practice their aiming skills at Ariel Sharon, at a time where the internet was rapidly becoming the main source of contact with the outside world, due to closure hours, the gaming companies hit a very profitable source of frustration. The games were very popular, and while some parents were mostly just happy to know where their kids were, instead of fearing that they were out throwing stones, an owner of a internet explained to Tawil-Souri, that the kids *"are a radical generation. They look for shooting. It is something inside them that they need to express and release"* (2009:221).

4.2.8.Paradox in the link to the parents

As shown above, the young and old generations have very different preconditions for relating to the occupation and resistance. However, the resistance ties the older and the younger generations together, since the struggle is something they share, something they have in common. To a very large degree, the link to Palestine is also a link to the informants' family; parents and grand parents: *"It's everything. It's the place where you belong, it's family, you know"* (Interview, Majd:78). The importance of the link to the ancestors while maintaining a realistic attitude about the future is one of the major paradoxes that will be discussed below.

As I explained above, with the help of LaCapra, generations are set apart by their different feelings about Palestine being under occupation, one feels loss, the other feels absence. For both however goes that they do not have a 'material intimacy' with what they believe to be their land¹⁸ and so, according to Feldman, "*people seek other ways of enacting and repeating connection, ways that(...)join a narrative articulation of home with a material relation with place*" (Feldman 2006:11)

Mohammed Dorai refers to parents' and grandparents' story telling as an "identity reservoir" (2002:92), story telling with the intention of making it possible for children living in Diaspora to find their way back to the old village, what Feldman (2006:12) refers to as "archives of memories". Majd's story exemplifies these concepts, this kind of memory-constructing. Her story provides the project with an impression of how much the Palestinian identity (adopted through memory) means to young people and their connection with their parents and grandparents. She expresses a strong sense of national duty, it is almost like a tribute to her grand parents;

I: Yeah, that's really interesting that you felt Palestinian, even though you didn't live here for a long time, and you felt it was a struggle to be Palestinian.

R: But see this is the thing. Because our parents, out grandparents they..I don't know, they rooted it in us that being Palestinian is a job, you know? You have to present yourself as Palestinian, you have to show people what it means to be Palestinian"

(Interview, Majd:79)

Majd who did not herself grow up in Palestine is one of the informants who articulate very strong feelings about being Palestinian. It is as if her long absence from Palestine makes her feel slightly guilty. Other informants are able to speak about events in an informal way, maybe even with a bit of humor, but Majd clearly does not feel eligible to, so to speak, take lightly on matters of Palestine. When I introduce her to the story of the tear gas, she completely dismisses it as a story of excitement, turns the conversation around explains to me how being exited is a cover up: "*It's not excitement. It's just telling yourself that, you know, it's fine, it's normal*" (Interview, Majd:85). Since Majd did not grow up in Palestine, and because she has heard tales from her family, who now live in Dubai, I got the feeling that she, more than my other informants, feels obligated to "over-perform" on her devotion to the homeland.

¹⁸ In this case, by their land, I do not necessarily speak of the pre-1948 lands, but also land behind the wall, the settlements and road controlled by check points within the West Bank.

Having lived in the US and Dubai, she might feel that she needs to compensate and defend her fellow Palestinian youth, when a foreigner is hinting at them actually showing excitement over the tear gas. Her feelings resemble the Palestinian diaspora in Denmark, described in Kublitz recent study (2013), during a remembrance of the day of *Nakbah*¹⁹ a woman explains that she remembers the day clearly, even though she was not born at the time (Kublitz 2013:106). In other words, there seems to be a connection between the younger and the older generation consisting of telling about the events of not just the *Nakbah*, but also other events and issues. Furthermore, I suggest that the connection is very connected to honor. As it is part of the Arab tradition to honor the elders of the family, it is somewhat unthinkable that Palestinian Youth would, so to speak, let go of the conflict and look for realistic solutions, as that in some level would be dishonoring the family. At some point I discuss the future with Suha:

"(...) I am one of those people who would go with the one-state solution, but I know that my Mom and Dad doesn't want that. They want the whole state, but they don't want Israel in it, you know? They are asking for the impossible. They are seeking for the impossible. I can't say no to them. I can't, you know, ask them not to dream(...)I know it's not going to happen in 100 years, but have a dream."

(Interview, Suha:70)

In this way, the parents of Suha keep her from actually putting faith and optimism in her own dream. Because of her strong obligations to her parents, she will not speak openly about her actual hope for the future. In this way, the link to the parents becomes a negative tie, when seeking a progressive atmosphere. As immigrants in a new country, will try to induce some tradition and rituals in their children even if they have fled their home country (Pedersen 2011:117), so does the older generation of Palestinians however, the difference being that re-producing the past in the way it is happening in Palestine in my estimation does not help tie stronger bonds to a nation of today, but one of yesterday.

¹⁹ *Nakbah* in Arabic, means catastrophe, and refers to the events of 1948, where the Palestinian people was expelled from their homeland.

4.2.9. In conclusion of the first section

In the first section of this thesis I have given an account of aspects of the Palestinian national identity. I have used theories by Slavoj Žižek and Bowman to explain how national identities can be constructed through theft and violence and compared their arguments to the situation in Palestine. Along the same argument, Walid Khalidi and Tobias Kelly were used to show how the Palestinian identity could be seen as existing out of spite. Furthermore, the first section has argued that young Palestinians are caught in a limbo between the past and the present. It has been my intention to show, how certain aspects of a Palestinian upbringing makes it very difficult for one to let go of the past, and how they seem to be somewhat stuck in nostalgia even though they have not themselves experienced the events of the past. Still these events have been adopted as their own, making it tough to dismiss the aspirations and beliefs of the older generation. The conflict have become normalized, but also, I have argued, the Palestinian youth feel like they have an obligation (by choice or accident) and a duty towards their history to not let go of outdated roles, patterns and symbols. Being part of the resistance is one of the strongest patterns of behavior passed on from parent to child and in Palestine, and furthermore, the present society is practically created upon the notion of remembering the past and living by it. These arguments have been brought forth in the above section. The following section will go into the concept of resistance and show how that it is not necessarily what we assume it to be. In fact, I will argue, that the generation of my informants have changed the concept into something new; something they use in building themselves. I argue that resistance have become as much, if not more, about navigating one's own future, than imagining Palestine's. Somewhere along the way, I believe, the young Palestinians have begun fighting for their own freedom instead of the one of Palestine.

4.3. Analysis section two: Strategies of Palestinian Youth

After treating topics of how youth in Palestine have an inherent duty, and to some extent need to be part of the resistance and struggle, the following section will treat how they have come to deal with it on an everyday basis, their strategies so to speak. Along the ways, some of these strategies have become important for them to realize themselves, and have in fact become parts of life, that would be hard to let go and replace. I will basically show how the resistance movement brings meaning into the lives of both young women and men in different ways. In order to discuss how Palestinian youth deals with being Palestinian and being a part of the resistance, I will go over different themes; first I will go into the concept of finding a 'drive' and a 'mission' by being part of the struggle, and will argue that that my informants more than fighting for peace are part of resistance for the *sake of resistance*. I have found great inspiration in Anja Kublitz' work on Palestinians, including her Master Thesis from 2000 about dialogue meetings between Palestinians and Israelis. In this section, I also draw parallels to an article she published on the creation of political platform. I later suggest that the old narratives of the Palestinian struggle are changing.

Secondly, I focus on my male informants for a bit to go into the topic of masculinity. As the Palestinian society is characterized by being rather conservative and gender-divided, it makes sense to separate the male and female strategies for a few paragraphs, even though I generally see the Palestinian youth as a whole. I explore the way the conditions of war or conflict fit young men well, providing a kind of 'crystallization of emotions' where issues are simplified and everyday life become more black/white. Especially during the time, where one's adult identity is formed. In this I use the experiences of the war photographer Tim Hetherington, who during his work as a photojournalist in war zones became very close to young men in conflicts both in Africa and the Middle East. His idea of 'Man Eden', would be a blasphemous reference if used directly, yet I have found a comparison of some aspects useful.

Furthermore, I use Raewyn Connell's theory on hegemonic masculinity, claiming that among groups of men, there will be certain dominant ways of masculinity. In Palestine, I will suggest, the dominant one between young men will be the one expressed through an engagement in the resistance struggle. Thirdly, I explore how the resistance struggle can be connected to the concepts of adrenaline and stress release, as I believe those are also worth including in the picture of masculinity.

Lastly, along the theme of 'finding oneself', this second part of the analysis will focus on how Palestinian Youth have managed to turn the conflict into something they use to build themselves. I go into participation in the resistance movement as a way for young women to realize themselves and become empowered in a society dominated by men. In the end of this chapter, I will suggest that the resistance in fact can be called an institution in the Palestinian society.

4.3.1. The Resistance Movement as platform

Palestine is a confusing and stressful place to grow up. Many times a day, people find themselves limited and restricted. Especially young people are constrained; in the way they behave, the way they speak and who they speak about, to name a few. If you happen to be a young woman, the restrictions are a major challenge if you wish to live a "modern" life; besides being aware of who you look at, where you go, how you dress and what topics you discuss, one very often face curfew and a pressure to marry in your early twenties. These are the internal Palestinian challenging conditions many of my informants feel stressed about, since they feel part of a generation and a new time where issues like these should not matter that much. Furthermore, there are the external challenges, the ones put on the Palestinians by the Israeli occupation. These issues however, seems to be of less importance on a day-to-day basis. Naturally, the limitation of movement strikes them all as being completely unacceptable, yet, as argued in the above part, the temporary has become the normal. Instead the youth have found ways to live in this permanent chaos they call home. The following section will explore how youth have several strategies of making a life for themselves in the context of resistance.

4.3.2. Finding a mission in Resistance

In her text from 2010, Anja Kublitz suggests that an event, which from the outside is a negative one, can constitute the basis for a constructive cohesiveness. In the following I argue that the aspects of the conflict, namely the resistance can represent such an event. Kublitz explains that the Mohammed drawings²⁰ "*created a "space for possible actions and a political platform for Muslims all over the world"*" (Kublitz 2010:107).

²⁰ The Danish so-called Cartoon controversy started a serious diplomatic crisis in 2005. I grew out of 10 depictions of the prophet Mohammed brought by the Danish newspaper Jyllands Posten. Almost 10 years later, all wounds are not mended (see also Bilefsky 2008).

As the most part of Muslims agreed that the Prophet was highly insulted by the cartoons, there was a sudden bridging of all other differences between groups within the Islamic community, creating a momentum almost like the one the US ignited when declaring the 'war on terror' after the 9/11 attacks in 2001. I argue that the occupation and resistance, towards it – ignited by the 2nd intifada - has become the main platform for possible personal recognition in Palestine (besides being an official way of fighting for recognition of Palestine), in the sense that it bridges many differences within the Palestinian community, and contributes to a feeling of unity and mutual connection.

Ahmed was my colleague for 4 months. We worked together every day; we planned everything together, carried out workshops and other tasks, he would translate for me and we would share thoughts. In general he was a joy to work with because of his contagious enthusiasm and energy. One of the only things that could knock him out was the feeling of not being a part of the group and not knowing how to contribute to the work I, or our third colleague was doing. Once, in a heated argument – the only time we were ever in – he made it clear that he had not participated in our work that day because he "*did not have a mission!*". That time more than anytime, made it clear to me that 'being of use' and 'doing something' was a major theme and dream of Ahmed. Later during the interviews, the theme re-emerged and became a topic for further investigation. Suha explained to me that the strong desire for *doing something* comes from losing friends and seeing parents and family go to prison, and I feel this anger in Tareq too. However over the years, the wanting to do something has also become habit, even the clashes have become normal.

Instead of just being an expression of protest and chaos, demonstrations and (to a certain extent) rock throwing should instead be seen in a different light. Being active in the resistance should be seen as a platform where young people can see themselves in a useful, creative and appreciated role. Furthermore, it has become a place where my informants find calmness in knowing their role, fulfilling a mission. My impression is, that one of the worst things in Palestine is to be passive. Everybody wants to do something good. The occupation is an opportunity of doing something good. Even if it does not necessarily mean that you are working actively towards a solution for Palestine.

4.3.3. Changes in narratives allowing new strategies

For her thesis from 2000, Anja Kublitz did extensive research on dialogue meetings between Israelis and Palestinians. She dug into dominant narratives of her Palestinian (and Israeli) informants (2000:44). She describes how many of her informants look back at the time during what we now call the 1st intifada, with enthusiasm. She quotes them talking about the feeling of being "*a part of history*" (ibid. 53) and being able "*to do something for my country*" (ibid. 49). Even though Kublitz' interviews happened 14 years ago and her informants were, on average, 10 years older than the informants for this project, the stories about the, now, intifadas are the same. In 2000, Kublitz' informants told her about being able to act as a collective unit during the 1st intifada, and the same theme appears when Suha is discussing the feeling of being together during the 2nd:

"I have a lot of memories about the (second, ed.) intifada. A lot of memories. It was fun to be honest, somehow, because we were gathered. All the family was gathered."

(Interview, Suha:33)

Also Hana explains to me that in spite of the lack of food, during the Israeli closures, she remembers the 2nd intifada with some sort of pride in people's cooperation and care for each other:

"(...)it was a good and a bad thing(...) No food, no bread, no clothes, anything. Nothing. But the second thing...you can really see the cooperation between people. They were very helpful(...) The people were...they people were really cooperating in the 2nd intifada"

(Interview, Hana:33)

In the quote might also lie a comment from Hana about her wish for people to be less concerned with gossip and more open (Interview, Hana:15). She and her siblings have been the topic of much talk in their village since her parents divorced, she tells me, and in this way she is a person caught right between old and new tradition; being a part of a modern family that is still unacceptable to large parts of society. Kublitz describes how the intifada gave her informants the feeling of being part of a collective unit, and I would argue that this one of the main reasons Hana is very active in the resistance. The forum is one, where everyone is equal, and supposedly 'fighting' for the same, namely a free Palestine. Kublitz uses the retrospect to be able to interpret the (at the time of her research) present dominant narratives.

14 years later, the statements from Palestinians liking the feeling of being of use or 'having a mission' as several of my informants refer to it (Interviews with Suha and Ahmed pp. 67,109) is still interesting and very relevant, as it seems to be the main point of staying in Palestine;

R: "I'm always thinking about leaving. But leaving is not going to solve anything(...) I just can't leave, because leaving is going to be me chickening out(...)"

I: You don't feel like you would cheat on Palestine by leaving?

R: I would. But Palestine is already cheating on me."

(Interview, Faiza:48)

In a way, Faiza is in an unhealthy relationship with Palestine. She wants to leave, but she cannot make herself do it, because she feels an obligation to stay. Not with any concrete hope to make change, but because leaving would feel like cheating.

Kublitz argues, that a feeling of being in a prison developed in the Palestinians after the first intifada and the peace agreements²¹. Even though some of my informants remember the intifada(s) as a time of solidarity and cohesiveness, many of them do not remember the past before the intifadas, and therefore are not able to tell if the present is better than the time before 1987. Instead, their reality is, that Palestine was never free and that both intifadas have been mere intermezzos in an ongoing occupation. In other words, the dominant narrative has changed. A change in narrative happens because, *"the old narrative can no longer be stretched to encompass the new events.(...)when the social arrangements are so different that the old narrative no longer seems adequate"* (Bruner 1986:51,52) which is what has happened in Palestine. The narratives of the past, the temporary situation of being under occupation, can – as described above – no longer encompass the reality of today. As Loren Lybarger puts it *"conflicts can occur when opposing narratives (are, ed.) developed of the same common historical event"*.

²¹ Peace agreements refer to the agreements made in Madrid 1991, Oslo 1993 and Wye River Plantation 1998

Lybarger further argues that a period of social destabilization can be a catalyst for generations to form their own identity (Lybarger 2007:18), and I argue that the years between the 2. intifada, the so-called post-Intifada period, until now, can be seen as such a catalyst. The youth in Palestine see these new circumstances and have been adopting new models of behavior.

Therefore, the narrative about resistance is also changed: Kublitz' informants were old enough in 2000, to feel able to do something actively during the 1st intifada (Kublitz 2000:49), while most of my informants, in 2014, remembers the 1st intifada as something that gathered the family and the people, not as something that enabled them to change the future in any way. The time after the intifadas is not in the same way worse, since they have not experienced before. My informants have, in other words never had the feeling of being able to change their society as Kublitz' have (Ibid.:53). They have taken part of the resistance, but never seen any actual progress in the peace process. They have resisted, but, it seems, always with *resistance* as a purpose in itself. The narrative on resistance has changed into something else than it was to their parents; today it is not a conscious choice to a part of it, it is a burden, but at the same time, the youth have accepted the struggle (since leaving in out of the question) and adopted strategies that will help them gain personal satisfaction and social prestige.

4.3.4. Masculinity

For the young men the goal seemingly is to have a mission, to be able to feel confident, and masculine in the sense of not being paralyzed in decision-making processes. Raewyn Connell, an expert on gender and masculinity popularized the concept of *hegemonic masculinity*²² which' main argument is that men are naturally put above the feminine women socially. However, what I would like to focus on is a later point, claiming that there are hierarchies within the range of masculinities, so that any community will have a kind of masculinity that is considered "*the honored one, the top-dog so to speak, (this is, ed.) the hegemonic pattern of masculinity. And other forms of masculinity are by contrast less honored, more marginalized*"(Connell, Interview 2010). I argue that the hegemonic masculinity in Palestine is characterized by activity, determination and having a mission. One assumption could be that this

²² The idea of a hierarchy of masculinities grew out of homosexual men's experiences with violence and judgment from straight men (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:831)

very active, almost restless masculinity is a result of or a reaction to the how their parents behave nowadays. With one exception all my informants' parents are not active in resistance even though they used to be. The young generation are imitating their parents and are aware of their duty to resist, but the circumstances are not set the way they were, and a new form of masculinity has developed; one that does not necessarily involve violence and going to prison, but instead requires that the men are active and at least not just sitting. In this way, they get to see their children grow up (instead of being in Israeli prisons as some of my informants fathers were) and still enjoy a good position within the Palestinian community.

Sitting, being inactive I would argue, is seen as a taboo among my male informants, and to some extent also the decision of leaving. This is exemplified during my interview with Tareq, (who also lectures me slightly on how women are physically inferior to men). When we discuss the option of leaving, he is quick to dismiss the idea. As I ask him about his brother, who migrated to Norway, it is obvious, that Tareq focuses on other his brother's other, non-masculine qualities;

"I: do you feel that he is less Palestinian now that he lives in Norway, that he left the struggle behind?"

R: (...)He's getting his education and now he is going for the Ph.D. He's making a family(...)but he can't be supporting us as we are doing it here(...)

(Interview, Tareq: 19-20)

What I wish to show here is that as Tareq's brother has chosen to leave Palestine, his characteristics change. Instead of being someone who, as the other Palestinian young men *do* something, he becomes a family man who takes a long education. To Connell, masculinity is a matter of *practice* (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005:832) which is why her work is interesting in this context. Young Palestinian men *do* certain things, participate in certain events, often physical like going with the emergency team to clashes or throwing stones to gain masculinity and recognition among within their community.

4.3.5. Masculinity and nationalism

Danish anthropologist and expert on Hindu nationalism in Northern India, Thomas Hansen claims that *"(...) recuperation of masculinity, the overcoming of emasculation, lies at the heart of the quest for national strength and national self-confidence (Hansen 1996:138). He explains that cultural nationalism links the notion of death and self-sacrifice to the nation. This is done through a "discourse of patriotic sacrifice which posits national loyalty as the highest, ultimate(...) identity of an individual" (Hansen 1996:139).*

Cultural nationalism seeks to link the image one has of modernity as a situation of 'strength, security and plenitude' with the reality of modernization process characterized by loss and conflict (Ibid.). Hansen characterizes the Hindu nationalism as one that places emphasis on physical power and self-control, and furthermore control one's sexual drive and *"sublimate these urges to an unconditional dedication and service to an elevated cause"* (Hansen 1996:140) The tradition of sexual abstinence (at least officially) is very common in Palestine, due to the relatively strict Muslim traditions, and I would argue that there are elements of suppressed sexuality and putting efforts in being 'pure' and fighting for the cause instead. By legitimizing this abstinent, yet very vigorous form of masculinity, it becomes easier to accept that there are things you cannot do, including being limited when it comes to relations with the other sex, but also with regards to limitations of movement in the around the West Bank, restrictions on your seizing opportunities for creating a better life. As everyday is to some extent affected by self-control and asceticism, the environment of resistance (to my informant's represented in Fateh Youth Movement and Palestinian Red Crescent,) offers a free space, where one is allowed and expected to act. To balance an everyday life characterized by self-control, working for e.g. the Palestinian Red Crescent on the front lines becomes a free space, where my informants are not as restricted by societal norms as they normally are.

4.3.6. Building oneself through the resistance

In the following, I will argue that participating in the resistance can be a way for young Palestinians to "build themselves", as my colleague, Ahmed would have said. As strategies are slightly different, the next chapters will treat the topic of young men, after which I will explain ways the way young women build themselves by being a part of the resistance.

The war photographer Tim Hetherington was interested in the special bond created between young men in war, and the everyday life as a participant in conflict. With his famous portrait of young American soldiers in the Korengal Valley, Afghanistan 2008, "*Man Eden*"²³, he made a comment about everyday life at war and makes the viewer reflect over this topic. *Man Eden* was taken during Hetherington's stay with American soldiers while making the documentary "*Restrepo*" which was released in 2010. During a later interview, one of the soldiers explain how the war, is indeed a sort of Eden.

"filling sand bags on the side of a mountain, waiting to get shot at(...)telling bad jokes – it was a great place to be if you're a man. There are no social norms(...) Out there, it didn't matter how you dressed, how you looked, how much money you made, it didn't matter how hot your girl friend was. If you weren't filling sand bags, you were fucking wrong."

(Junger 2013)

In this way, war is a much more profound place in young men, than just adrenalin (even though I will later mention that that might also have something to do with the topic). For the young male psyche, this was the place to be. Even though the comparison between young Palestinians and American combat soldiers in Afghanistan seems far-fetched, there are some similarities than are worth assessing. In some ways, the situation of war can be compared with the situation in Palestine. Tim Hetherington describes how emotions are *crystallized* in war situations. How all excess emotions are boiled away and what is left becomes simple and filled with matter. He explains that even if one is the witness of often very complex situations, the reporting from war could still be "*induced with meaning and significance*" (Junger 2013).

This 'meaning' had Hetherington addicted he admits, and there are definitely parallels to draw to my male informants. Hetherington, who documented wars and conflict for about twenty years, argues that the war is part of the hard-wiring of young men, and it is clear, that being active in the opposition against the occupation is a way to become hard-wired and part of the hegemonic masculinity in Palestine.

²³ *Man Eden* is one of Tim Hetherington's most famous pictures from his year following American soldiers in the Korengal Valley in Afghanistan. It depicts 8 soldiers digging to fill sand bags on the side of a hill. Can be seen here: <http://www.magnumphotos.com/image/NYC116937.html>

Again, the point is not the liberation of Palestine as one would think, the point is much more practical (as often seems the case when it comes to motivation in general). Furthermore, Hetherington saw combat as a way of bonding (Junger 2014). He found that in an environment of combat and fear and hardness, the connection between young men becomes stronger, and that war is something young soldiers "*miss terribly when it's over*" (Junger 2014). My colleague Ahmed is the oldest of my informants and was old enough to be active in the second intifada. He has suffered from insomnia all the time I have known him, and he has an almost physical longing to go help, if clashes are under way;

There was one friend, he was my school friend. He is dead between my hands(...) Until now, if I'm at home and (...)I feel that something will happen that will be big, I really feel something changing in my body – like something...I should be there!"

(Interview Ahmed:107)

Ahmed clearly feels an obligation to be part of the clashes because of his sense of duty towards his friends. However, in the following I go over, how a connection with the frontline is also to a large extent part of an addiction to adrenaline. During our talk Tareq assures me (with slight pride) that he is not afraid of getting hurt during clashes and him and 'the guys' go there for the fun of it;

"it's like nothing to have the tear gas(...) it's nothing to have the bullets(...) Sometimes we take it as a game, really We...like...when there is a demonstration ok, lets go for it. Why it is, it's for the prisoners. OK, lets go (...)we will know that we will have tear gas, then it's ok. Ok, we'll have fun come on guys!"

(Interview, Tareq: 26)

Tareq, who strikes me as a very calm and well-grounded young man, in the above quote acknowledges that going to clashes with the IDF is a normal pass-time, and the way he presents it to me, going to demonstrations seem to be more comparable to a hobby than a way of protest. Also Suha is very honest when explaining why people go to be part of clashes, not to be a part of a common mission, but to enjoy it;

"Young people they really really like adrenaline rush. That's the number one reason I go with the AMS (emergency rescue, ed.) unit to help in clashes. Because I like the action. I really do."

(Interview, Suha: 61)

Just like Suha, Ahmed likes the action, and it was intense and heavy listening to his stories about the events from the second intifada. He would mention situations of him trying to save someone who ended up dying in his arms, and he would tell me about situations where body parts had been scattered on the streets. He kept the gory details to himself, but I was never in doubt about the severity of what he had seen. At a relatively young age too. Ahmed explains to me that living in Jordan is better for him and he mentions that when we were in Denmark (on a trip in connection with our project), he felt peace.

"I really like Jordan because it's stabile, I can think, I can go and sit here, I can walk around, and I can be out of my news (news on Palestine, ed.)(...) That's the situation I need. I really need the quiet life"

(Interview, Ahmed:107)

Ahmed, is currently neither living in Jordan or Palestine, but caught in a limbo between the two due to issues with his fiancé who is Palestinian, but not allowed back to the West Bank. The time of our interview, he is living with his uncle in Jordan. He knows it is good for him with the stability Jordan can offer, but at the same time is not able, as a Palestinian, to find a job he can make a decent living of. Going back to Nablus seems as the lesser of two evils. I ask him if he would then be able to say not to joining the medical team again, after realizing that it is only bringing more stress into his life:

R: No, it is impossible. For sure I will.

I: For sure you will?

R: Sure I will.

I: So it is kind of like smoking? So you try to stop, you know it's not good for you...but when you see it...

R: Jep. Exactly. You know when you're there, you feel something, and you have this feeling inside. You know, when I broke my foot in 2002(...)I was feeling that I was handicapped at home. I was crazy, like I wanted to be with the team(...) I went and took my sticks and went to the PRCS to the OP room and said, no I want to be with you(...)Because I made this disconnection with my feelings and my thinking.(...)

(Interview, Ahmed:107)

As have been my argument throughout this thesis, there is most often something else than the classic fight for the nation going on, when talking about Palestinian Youth's participation in what I call the resistance movement in Palestine. In the case of young men, it is a question of fitting into the right category of masculinity, while at the same time finding a place where one can feel of use.

4.3.7. Resistance as social practice

Ghassan Hage suggests that suicide bombing is a social practice. Analyzing suicide bombers is sensitive, yet Hage's thoughts are interesting, so they will in the following be used to briefly describe how and why one can understand young people's resistance as a social practice and furthermore compares the Palestinians with the Native Americans; up against a military force that is not even comparable with theirs. I would not dare to agree completely, but instead suggest a comparison to being a part of the resistance struggle as I would argue that this is a social practice that shapes the youth of Palestine and provide them with norms and ground rules.

Just as Hage suggests that suicide bombers are, or at least were made into, "*signs that Palestinians have not been broken*"(2003:74) I suggest seeing active practice in the resistance struggle as a social practice. I indeed agree with Hage's interpretation of violent acts; "*violence here has no function other than to symbolize the survival of the Palestinian will*" (Ibid.). Žižek finds, the idea of a practice important too, as he argues that the nation only as long as the before mentioned 'Enjoyment' "*continues to be materialized in certain social practices*" (Žižek 1992:53).

Instead of being acts of violence, I agree with Hage as he argues that throwing rocks at tanks, are instead a way to gain *symbolic capital* (Hage 2003:77). Fighting for Palestine, for the 'community' as Hage puts it, it not only an act that is "*conducive to solidarity but also highly masculine and competitive*" (ibid.). To have the courage to face the soldiers and the tanks is of great value, and will buy you recognition in society, the social world which Pierre Bordieu argues provides "*what is rarest, recognition, consideration, in other words, quite simply, reasons for being*" (2000:241). Doing something 'for Palestine' is almost always mentioned, as something that is compulsory to bring up, but no one explain their participation in clashes, demonstrations or any other activities primarily as being something they do to create a permanent solution for their country. Instead, their reasons are centered around the imminent presence. The resistance struggle and movement has indeed become one that resists, not the Israeli occupation but probably more what Henrik Vigh (2006) would call social death.

4.3.8. Avoiding Social Death

Vigh uses the term social death to describe the status that would over go his young male interlocutors in Guinea-Bissau if they did not manage to create a life for themselves before a certain age. Escaping the social death was crucial, since not being able to realize oneself socially by getting married and having a job, would mean that they became trapped in a youth-category which was much dreaded due to dynamics of status (Vigh 2006:33). To avoid being stuck in youth, one would have to have *dynamismo* or *Dubriagem*, described as a "*dynamic quality of attentiveness and ability to act in relation to the movement of social terrain one's life is set in*" (Vigh 2006:52), and covers qualities used analyze, plan and execute an active plan of one's future self with better opportunities (Vigh 2006:52) what Jenkins' would call achieving full human-ness.

Even though I would argue, that the use of the this *Dubriagem* is more of a long-term strategy in Guinea-Bissau, which I would not necessarily say it is in Palestine, the concept describes my informants process well. To "*see*" one's life, one has to be able to navigate through an "*opaque and changeable environment*" (Vigh 2006:52).

To find home, and reasonable living in the moving grounds of Palestine, one has to seek opportunities wherever they might be. For young men in Guinea-Bissau one way of escaping social death is engaging in violent conflict, while for young men especially, it could be throwing all your efforts into an almost symbolic struggle with a superior occupier. Being active offers better opportunities of getting a high enough status to be able to marry and will furthermore could give a young man the contacts he needs to find a job and be able sustain a family. In places like Jordan, he would need *wasta*²⁴ (Hart 2008:203), which he does not have and does not have the possibility of ever getting as a Palestinian. At the end of the our talk, Tareq tells me that during his week in Copenhagen earlier during the spring, he had been asked by some high school students what his dream was. He tells me that he answered that he wanted to live;

"(...) and they were like, you're alive, why do you want to live? But I said, am I living the same way you're living? Then they didn't answer me much more"

(Interview, Tareq:28)

As Vigh explains about his interlocutor in Guinea-Bissau, who can in some ways be compared to my informants in Palestine, they are not dying physically. They eat everyday and they have a somewhere to come home to every night. Still, Tareq's rhetorical question says a lot of about how he indeed feels about his opportunities of fulfilling himself, and his situation would more or less fit the way Vigh's describe social death as being when someone is *"unable to attend to his social needs and fulfill a process of social becoming"* (Vigh 2006:45). Just as war, a destructive event in itself becomes a *"terrain of possibility"* (31) for Vigh's interlocutors, so does the uneven fight in the resistance movement become one for my informants and other young people in Palestine.

In his text on young males in a refugee camp in Jordan, Jason Hart explores how a certain version of masculinity works as a way to reproduce conditions of the old homeland (Hart 2008:189). This masculinity was an idealized type in the Hussein Refugee camp in Amman, Jordan. Hart suggests that an idealized way of being a 'real' man, offered young men in the camp a short-lived, yet real feeling of empowerment.

²⁴ Arabic slang word for connections, also known as *"vitamin w"*.

In the same way I am suggesting that taking part in resistance of an every-day basis (posting images or messages on social media, participating in demonstrations and being a member of e.g. an emergency team) gives young people, not only men, a feeling of empowerment, a feeling of being able to mean something. Officially, they help others, but it is just as much about feeling you did something yourself as Suha explained above.

4.3.9. Empowerment of women

While young men achieve a sense of having a mission and ability to fulfill themselves in an unfulfilling environment, young women in different ways experience a sense of empowerment, which can otherwise be difficult to achieve in the Middle East. In the following I will argue that to be an active part of the resistance can mean a higher degree of empowerment of young women, which means that they might be more reluctant to accept the conflict to go on, since an end to the conflict might mean the end of an opportunity to be a part of the cohesiveness and influence the resistance movement have been characterized by since the intifadas. To analyze the notion of empowerment I find it appropriate to provide a small historical paragraph, since it is my belief that the idea of women's empowerment stems, partly, from the experiences of the first and second intifada. Amikam Nachmani and Ian Pappé, both what you could call pro-Palestine Israelis provide the historical insights.

Nachmani mentions a long list of how first intifada had a negative effect on women's position and claims that the "newly-emancipated Palestinian has a very short lifespan" (86). In spite of this I will argue, that the positive relics are worth mentioning, especially since it seems to me that the positive effects are what have stayed and grown since Nachmani wrote his text in 2001. As described, the first intifada brought much distress, it also did something else; it brought the women out of the houses to participate in the resistance struggle.

Nachmani quotes an Israeli officer saying that the women "*left the private domain and became active and instrumental in the public sphere*" (Nachmani 2001:49). From having a role as the 'national womb' whose main role lie in securing the upbringing of future male fighters, Palestinian women took to the streets and fought alongside their men.

As it was phrased; *"by smashing the chains of occupation, women were also shattering the shackles that bound and subdued Palestinian womankind"* (Nachmani 2001:80). Thus the women became a symbol of revolution during the 1st intifada, and it seems the feeling of women's empowerment through participation in resistance still sticks almost 30 years later. In fact, the resistance seems to be the only way in which women can become empowered. There is still clearly divided roles for men and women, as when Tareq explains to me (with a forbearing look in his face) that women should clearly not be part of rock-throwing, since they are naturally not able to run fast or throw rocks very far;

"You can see that the girls are like, if the soldier will be running back behind you, she will not be fast as a man(...)she will not be like throwing it (the stone, ed), and even if she is throwing it, it will be hard and difficult for her to run for her to run away"

(Interview, Tareq:27)

Women also became martyrs, but often because of the fact that they had been accused of immoral actions with other men, and therefore already feared to be killed by their own family. Still, having a *choice* of a heroic death, was more than had previously been possible for many women. (Nachmani 2001:81). It should also be mentioned that women did not in fact gain political influence, and that traditional gender roles are still practically impossible to circumvent.

Still today, girls' parents fear for their daughters' honor, and girls' participation in demonstrations are not something that happens in the open (Interview, Suha:61). Moreover it should be mentioned other forces such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad encouraged a very strict attitude towards young women who, due to joblessness, poverty and boredom of men got married very young, and had to give birth to a high number of children (Ibid. 82,83,84). The common Palestinian saying *"The Israelis beat us at the borders and we beat them at the bedrooms"* (Anthias 1983:70) was brought back up.

In sum, Palestinian women took on a new role during especially the first intifada, and even though genders in Palestine today are not exactly equal, in society in general, the notion of the strong Palestinian resistance woman seem to have stuck. This can be noticed when speaking to the women themselves, but is also shown through for example the big scale painting of Leila Khaled²⁵ on the a part of the Separation Wall, close to Bethlehem.

All my five female informants never wanted to leave Palestine for good. Faiza, who was what I would call the most modern, mentioned leaving, but always with the purpose of 'coming back with a career':

"I would come back with a good name, good career, with good experience(...) I want for me to literally specify what I want inside my circle. For a...to come back(...) to be someone who maybe other girls would look up to. Some one who's...yeah she doing this to maybe we can do something like that. To change.."

(Interview, Faiza:49)

Another female informant, Hana, studied law to be able to defend Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. Even though she can easily do something else, should there one day be no prisoners left, it is food for thought that a young person completely bases her choice of studies and career upon the idea, that lawyers helping prisoners out of Israeli will be needed for many years to come. This to say that the conflict indeed is something one includes when planning one's future in Palestine. Two of my male informants wanted to leave Palestine. They would not say that they would leave forever, but they were ready to leave if a good opportunity came up. All my female informants, on the other hand, never wanted to leave for good. As women, they had found their possibility to have an influence, to be empowered.

4.3.10. Resistance as institution

In the following, last paragraph, I elaborate on the topic of resistance as institution. As an institution can be a plethora of things, I should clarify that what I mean by it is what Jenkins would call a "*pattern of behavior*"(Jenkins 2014:160) and represent "*the way things are done*".

²⁵ Leila Khaled became one of the most famous female members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) during the years 1969-1970, as she was the first female airline hijacker. Even though Khaled was active long before the intifadas, she is still an example of the heroic and brave Palestinian woman.

As he further explains, institutions are a natural part of the human world "*with reference to which, individuals make decisions and orient their behavior*" (Jenkins 2014:160). Even though I have argued that being a part of the resistance is for the most part, to honor one's parents, to gain social prestige through a hegemonic masculinity or be empowered, in this last paragraph, I would like to propose that being resistance has also just, over time, become 'the way we do'.

The fact that conflict and the associated resistance have become normal life to my informants, changes the perspective of a solution, I would argue. Malkki explains that "*The refugee threatens the 'national order of things' by being 'matter out of place'*". For the Palestinians the national order of things have *become* being out of place. My informants do not find comfort in the thought of being in place, because they have no idea where that is. Out of place has, in other words, become home. Turner (2004) explain that refugees in Tanzania are seen as threats to the order, the people have worked hard to gain, but in Palestine one could see it the other way around; the people calling themselves refugees who live inside the West Bank are in fact the *keepers* of the orders; the only ones holding on to *how it should be*. When Hamlet stands before his famous dilemma; to be or not to be²⁶, we consider it a dilemma that stands between the restoring of cosmos, or on the other side lingering in the chaos. And we regard the restoration of cosmos as the right choice. To my informants, however, the chaos has been going on so long that no one has a clue how to act in a at state of cosmos. Chaos, in other words, has become the natural place to *be*. As my informants normally *are* in Chaos, the resistance has become a way of finding some sort of Cosmos.

There is a very distinct use of the concepts of 'inside' and 'outside' when talking to my informants. All informants use the word 'inside' when talking about the territories of Israel. However at the same time, they use the work 'outside' when talking about other countries which are not either Palestine or Israel. This leaves Palestine in a linguistic limbo. By arguing that resistance is an institution, the accepted behavior, I also argue, that resistance is the place that constitutes the Palestinian 'inside'. The resistance is indeed one of the only things, *not* in limbo.

²⁶ Shakespeare's "Hamlet" was first published in 1603 and circles around Prince Hamlet and his search for the revenge of his father, the king. It takes him on a chaotic journey with many casualties. However, in the end, an outside Prince takes over the thrown and restores Cosmos.

A developing concept yes, but never gone or invisible. As an institution, in society, it provides a pattern of recognized behavior it has raised my informants and maybe even made up for some of the Enjoyment they know have been taken from them. As conflict has become the normal, resistance has become the norm.

5. Conclusion

In the above analysis I have moved closer to an answer to my research questions which revolved around young Palestinians and their relationship with the conflict and Resistance movement in Palestine. The aim has been to treat major topics of identity making and strategies of navigation. In the first section of the analysis, it was concluded that young Palestinians are caught in a limbo between the past and the presence. They find themselves in a tension field between what is expected from them and what makes sense to do in order to create a life for themselves. Often, it becomes a balance where traditions are hard to ignore.

In dealing with relevant aspects of national identity, it was argued that nationalities often are build on a feeling of mis-recognition and victimhood and that this feeling of being a victim is reproduced in Palestine through stories told by the older generation as well as through aspects of society and symbols like the key and the burial monument of Yasser Arafat, which keep reminding the Palestinian people of their victimhood. Becoming a 'we' through the use of the past, these symbols and constitutive violence has been the way for many years. Furthermore, it is concluded that a question of temporariness divides the younger and older generations along with the notions of Absence and Loss. Melancholic longing within the older generations and within society makes the past omnipresent. The fact that the Quran says that Jesus will return and set Palestine free makes a traditional view upon the situation present, and by showing that also otherwise non-religious people keep the Quran in the back of their minds, suggest that there is a part of temporary culture, not just tradition, that keeps holding on to the notion of the suffering, waiting Palestinian.

Through an analysis of the interviews I took and literature, I have argued that Palestine *is* because it *is not*. Everyday limitations of movement and feelings of misrecognition by the surrounding world create this reality. It is further argued, that the concept of Palestine to a large extend is, because people believe it is. If the Palestinians' belief in their nation is what constitutes the nation itself, and an inseparable part of being Palestinian is resistance - as argued in the above analysis -, then logically Resistance must keep going.

However, I conclude that the character of Resistance is changing and that it is not exclusively about creating a 'better' Palestine anymore. This, I argue, should be considered in creating peace negotiations (along with a large number of other reasons, to be fair) as it seems urgent to understand why a large part of young people actually define themselves by being 'fighters' and 'strugglers', being a part of the Resistance. My informants are aware, that their homeland is not what it wants to be. However, this thesis claims that the new generation has also come to the realization that Palestine has never been what it is supposed to be, and that there are no signs of it ever *becoming* what it is supposed to be. This is one of the major reasons why Palestinian youth has changed strategy when it comes to life strategies.

In the second part of my analysis, I argue that the Resistance becomes a space that offers freedom and opportunity to fulfill oneself. For young men it is firstly about finding a mission and escaping an apathetic 'sitting' life, and secondly about fitting in to given patterns of hegemonic masculinity. For young women, the resistance offers empowerment and an opportunity to leave old gender patters behind, if not forever, than little whiles at a time. Being a part of political or practical organizations like PRCS or Fatah Youth Movement provides a 'mission', and having a mission makes your decisions easier and your life more accomplished. Moreover, they provide great networks.

Lastly I conclude that the Resistance has become an institution in Palestine. An institution in the sense that it provides the generally accepted patterns of recognized behavior. Young Palestinians are separating themselves from the feeling of the occupation being temporary and this has made way for a new perspective of resistance as well. This new form of resistance is one, which more than focusing on old narratives and Loss, deals with the current conditions, and within which one can work to improve his/her own life. However, this form of resistance is not likely to improve the situation of Palestine as such.

Writing about the Palestinians and the occupation will always be inspired or provoked to some extent by a sense of frustration, for the situation has become so prolonged. A rethinking of the Resistance movement should have been a rethinking of the *peace* movement, but the ties to the past and the thought of more than 65 years of being non-people makes it difficult.

I argue that a paradigm shift is happening in Palestine. From being Palestinian first, having to struggle as second, it now seems that one struggles first, for the right to be Palestinian. If one doesn't struggle, he/she is - besides from not being able to call him/herself Palestinian - very challenged in realizing his/her social being. Resistance has become an institution, dictating patterns of social behavior. The discussion on resistance in Palestine is indeed one of cultural patterns, which will not be easily changed.

How infected the topic of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process might be, I estimate that recognizing the nature of the Palestinian's relationship with the conflict would change the perspective of the discussions. It would be my wish for everyone to understand, that the conflict – to the young Palestinians at least – is in no way about religion, or Israelis or hatred or --, but about making everyday work and creating a social reality for themselves which they can be pleased with. This is one side of the coin.

The other side is naturally showing the relationship as highly problematic; if the conflict and resistance have become one of the only steady points of navigation in the lives of young Palestinians, how likely are they to start imagining their community without it?

What my thesis claims in concrete terms is that resistance has become a natural part of being Palestinian. More than the lands, it has become about reaching one's full potential under the given circumstances. The question is, indeed, what prospects this gives to a Palestine where no Resistance is necessary?

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