The Cultural Conjunctions Shaping the Israeli Perception Toward the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

An Ethnographic Insight

Orel Scheinin

Campus Fryslân, University of Groningen

Bachelor Capstone Thesis

June 2023

Preface

"War is avoidable, Peace is in inevitable" -**Menachem Begin**

In the current 'world of nations', I believe peoples deserve the right to self-determination and autonomy by forming an independent state[1]. Therefore, as a peace and human rights seeker born in the state of Israel to a Jewish family, I could not help but engage with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I felt the obligation to understand better what role the group of people I belong to, Israel, plays in hindering or assuring Palestine, one of the only stateless people in the region, from achieving the right to self-determination and autonomy. This engagement triggered my urge to meet "the other side" and listen to **their** point of view. Therefore, I engaged with peace organizations in Israel and Palestine, abroad, and during my studies. Since then, I have learned a lot about the history, current problems, structure, and different motives underlying what is mainly known in Israeli society as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Having chosen a track in Ethnography as part of my studies, I came up with the idea for my capstone project. I wanted to investigate attitudes towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (and Palestinians) among Israelis while neutralizing my subjectivity, intuitions, and perceptions, so I could better understand and learn the Israeli standpoint on the matter. Therefore, my research is based on two main participatory aspects. First, participants from different political backgrounds chose the cultural conjunctions established in this research. Second, in-depth interviews based on the cultural conjunctions defined in the study took place to learn the conjunctions better.

I would like to thank Dr. Nicholas Q. Emlen, my UCF supervisor, for guiding me through this sensitive, packed, and complex project with professionalism, empathy, and outstanding sensitivity.

---

[1] Rosenberg, M. (2004). Country, State, and Nation

Abstract

In a reality of ongoing wars and disputes that have lasted for nearly 100 years, conflict and culture have become intertwined. Therefore, this ethnographic research aims to explore the *cultural conjunctions* in which Israelis' perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict takes shape. This research defines a cultural conjunction as any event, time-period, institution, or experience that shapes the Israeli understanding of their perception on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. To achieve this, the research utilizes participatory methods by involving Israelis who identify these conjunctions. Based on a survey that yielded 141 responses (*n=47*), 15 themes were identified, from which three predominant cultural conjunctions were established for the purpose of the research: *(1) Violence, (2) Culture & Education,* and *(3) Conflict Resolution Attempts & Representation.* In addition, five in-depth interviews provide insights into five additional themes and sub-themes that assist in studying these conjunctions. By deeply comprehending each conjunction, this ethnographic research addresses the challenges and difficulties in forming perceptions toward the "other side" in the context of conflict. Building on these insights, this study suggests takeaways optimize and improve existing conjunctions to alleviate what interviewees defined as *frustration, anger, sadness, and fear* regarding the conflict. This research and data disclosed in this study can serve as a framework for further research.

Keywords: the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; ethnography; culture; conflict resolution; violence; education; politics

Table of Contents

Introduction

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict profoundly affects the lives of millions in the Middle East. The conflict between the sides is saturated with disputes over land, religion, history, and above all - recognition. Through the years, these disputes begot deepening cleavages between Israelis and Palestinians which turned this conflict from an Israeli-Palestinian conflict to an Israeli-Arab in a broader context, drawing the attention of many. The Israeli and Palestinian narratives, at their core, as befits the nature of a narrative, are genuinely two points of view on what each side defines as the reasoning behind self-determination for their peoples, the right for recognition. However, when actions have taken place to materialize these narratives, clashes between the groups and from within affected millions and cost the lives of thousands, especially those of the innocents – pawns in the invisible hands of wicked politics and elites. The clash between the groups and its collateral damage resulted in a conflict embedded in the DNA of the people living in the region, inducing us to forget how to *"give the other side a face"*.

This study wishes to understand the *cultural conjunctions* that have emerged in Israeli society and their role in shaping the perception of Israelis toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (and Palestinians) from an ethnographic point of view. A cultural conjunction could be any event, time-period, institution, or experience that the 'average' Israeli is likely to encounter in their lives, impacting their perception of the conflict. First, the methodology section overviews the methods used in this research to establish these conjunctions. These methods include participatory survey and in-depth interview methods, constituting the primary data collected and generated for the goal of this paper. Second, a chronological literature review introduces the conflict, focusing on the pre-1947 War (the Independence War for Israelis and the Day of Catastrophe for Palestinians) to showcase how the narratives over land and existence, so to say, emerged in the conflict while focusing on the role of foreign influence on the parties. Then, the literature review briefly discusses post-1947 War events that impacted "the ground" in shaping the territory, status and the current political relationship between Israelis and Palestinians.

Third, the cultural conjunctions and related themes established in this research based on the survey will be introduced. Then, based on in-depth interviews, the conjunctions that account for the main interest of this paper will be studied. These cultural conjunctions are *(1) Violence, (2) Culture & Education*, and *(3) Conflict Resolution Attempts & Representation*. These conjunctions were formed based on nine themes generated from the survey responses: *(1) Wars, (2) Intifadas, (3) Terror Attacks & Abductions, (4) Ongoing Disputes, (5) Political Polarization, (6) National Days & Events, (7) Social Environment, (8) Conflict Resolution*

Attempts, and (9) Political Representation (see Figure 2). Drawing on the interviews, five additional themes and sub-themes were also studied in this research to better understand the cultural conjunctions' role within Israeli society: *(10) The Narrative of Survival, (11) Desperation, (12) Extremists, (13) Religion,* and *(14) Terminology* (See Figure 3). This section sheds light on Israelis' experiences, ideologies, criticism, standpoint, and outlook that often go hand in hand but occasionally differ from each other.

After that, the discussion section analyzes the conjunctions, themes, and sub-themes studied in this research. The analysis includes questions that arise from participants' experiences and highlights strongly related themes and conjunctions that stood out throughout this study. Moreover, other notions the participants shared regarding the conflict and its possible resolution will be concisely overviewed. Based on the analysis, this section suggests that no conjunction shaping the participants' perception includes a *'true' contact* with "the other side". Then, the limitations encountered in this research, such as the author's positionality and the challenge of conducting a study on a triggering topic, will be briefly discussed. Finally, this study overviews the main pre- and post-1947 War timeline events that shape the conflict. Then, by presenting the cultural conjunctions established in this paper, their related themes, and the analysis suggested in the discussion section, this study concludes how the Israeli perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is shaped in Israeli society, proposing possible immediate takeaways as a first step toward the matter at hand and further research suggestion on the topic.

Methodology

This study includes a literature review, a two-phased data collection method, and an analysis to answer the research question examining three conjunctions in Israeli society that shape the Israelis' perception toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The literature review mainly provides a background on the history shaping the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, first, by heavily focusing on the Jewish and Palestinian narratives until 1948. Second, a brief timeline overview introduces meaningful events that shaped the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from 1948 until today regarding its status, borders, boundaries, and politics. Moreover, further literature sheds light on the cultural conjunctions established and studied in this research.

The first data collection phase included a survey to have the three conjunctions established in this paper determined by Israelis (see Appendix 1). All 47 respondents were asked to meet the following criteria before filling out the survey:

1. The respondents identify as Israelis.
2. The respondents are at least twenty-one years of age.
3. The respondents have lived within Israeli society for at least ten years, accumulatively.

The survey did not define the term Israeli to ensure the inclusion of participants from different groups and backgrounds in the questionnaire. However, respondents had to identify as Israelis, which befits the group studied in this research. Moreover, the respondents were asked to be at least twenty-one years old with an accumulation of ten years of residency in Israel to better validate the participants' experience and perspective on the conjunctions shaping Israeli society. Then, the survey introduced the research topic to the participants and guided them to read the definition of cultural consciousness by Banks (2012, Vol. 1, p. 510):

English:

Cultural consciousness can be defined as the process of developing awareness of culture in the self, which can result in expanding understandings of culture and developing deeper cultural knowledge about other individuals and contexts. Culture in this process can be understood as the set of shared attitudes, values, beliefs, behavioral standards, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group. As noted by Geneva Gay, we may not be consciously aware of it, but our thoughts, beliefs, and behaviors are determined by culture that in turn influences our teaching and learning practices.

After reading the definition of cultural consciousness, the respondents were asked to choose three cultural conjunctions that shape the perspective of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in Israeli society, following three guidelines:

1. A conjunction could be any event, phenomenon, institution, time period, etc.
2. The respondents should choose conjunctions that collectively affect Israeli society (rather than conjunctions that affect them individually).
3. The respondents were given the option to elaborate on their choices.

Finally, data were collected to overview the participant's demographics regarding age, gender, region, and political standpoint on security (see Figure 1). The demographics show that out of 47 respondents, 55.3% define themselves as women, 42.6% define themselves as men and 2.1% define themselves as non-binary. The ages of the participants vary from 22 to 65, most of whom (65.2%) live in the center of Israel. In addition, 44.7% of the surveyed Israelis define themselves as left, or center-left from a political standpoint on security, whereas 31.9% define themselves as right or center-right. The others (23.4%) define themselves as "center".
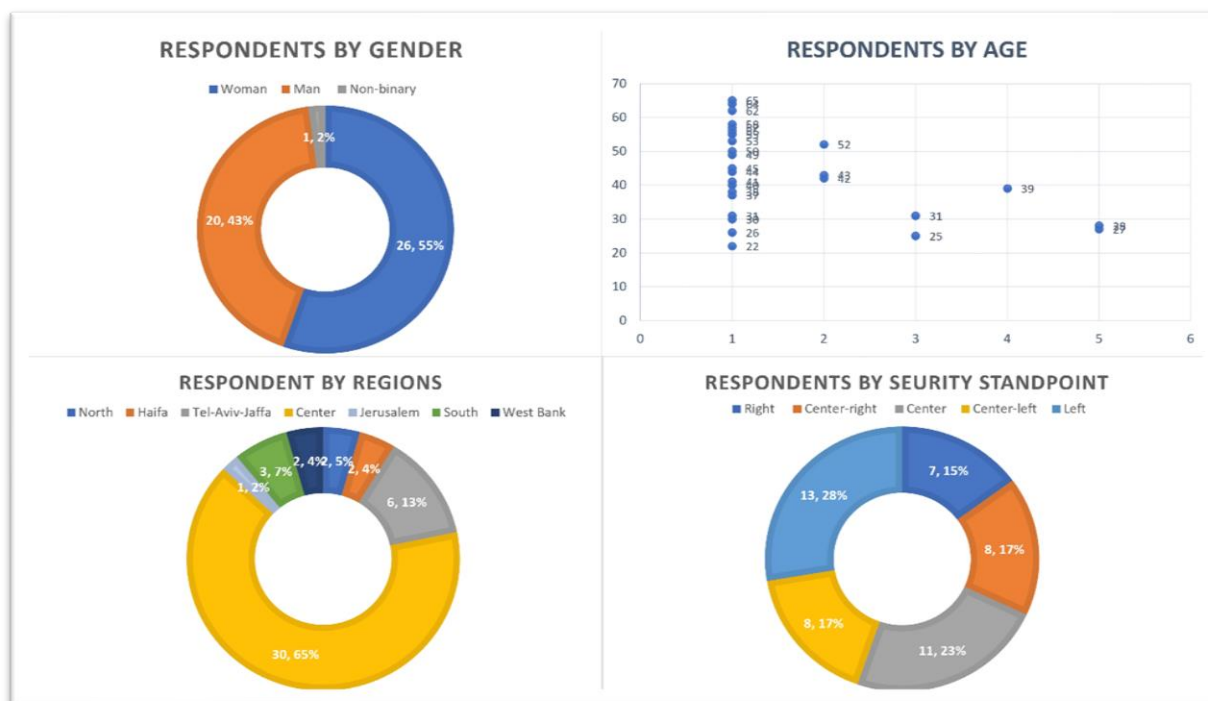

Figure 1: Survey Demographics

To analyze the qualitative data, 141 responses were coded using the explanations provided by the participants in the survey. By the end of this process, 15 suitable-related themes were formulated to categorize the responses (see Appendix 2 and Appendix 3). Based on the themes, three cultural conjunctions were generated for this study: (1) Violence, (2) Culture & Education, and (3) Conflict Resolution Attempts & Representation. The conjunctions cover nine themes, comprising 72% of the responses (see Figure 2). In addition, other themes overviewed in the literature review section include the British Empire and the settlements. These other themes constitute 24% of the responses, leaving the themes of Media, the Army in Israel, Gaza Disengagement, and "Other" unreviewed by literature in this research, although mentioned since interviewees discussed them (media, army, and Gaza disengagement).
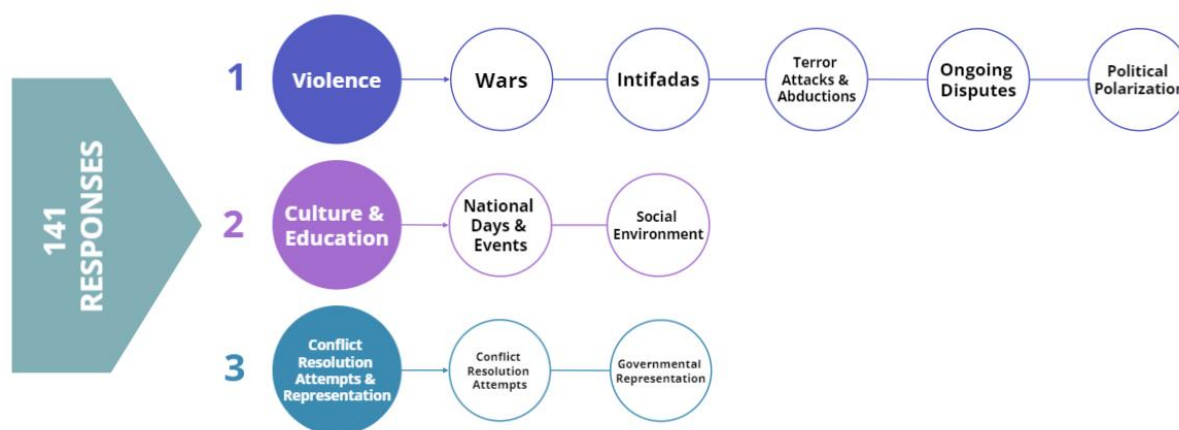
Figure 2: *Cultural Conjunctions & Themes established based on the survey*

The second data collection phase included in-depth interviews taken by five participants. The interview guide (see Appendix 4) was structured based on the cultural conjunctions, supported by a preliminary literature review of the Israeli-Palestinian, established and conducted in this research. The interviews are used to gain insight into the conjunctions shaping the Israeli perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict based on the participants' feelings, experiences, perspectives, and ideology. Hence, five additional themes and sub-themes were added to and studied in this research (see Figure 3). The interviewees for this research were selected on a voluntary basis using an extra survey attached to the first survey. Five participants between the ages of 25-35 were selected to gain insight from a group of people that, on the one hand, have some experiences to share but, on the other hand, can reflect on the conjunctions from a contemporary point of view. However, gender, regional, and political diversity were ensured: one participant is from Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, two are from the center, and two are from Jerusalem. Moreover, two participants identified as leftists from a political standpoint, one as canter-leftist,

one as center-right, and one identified as right. Two participants identify as men and three participants identify as women.
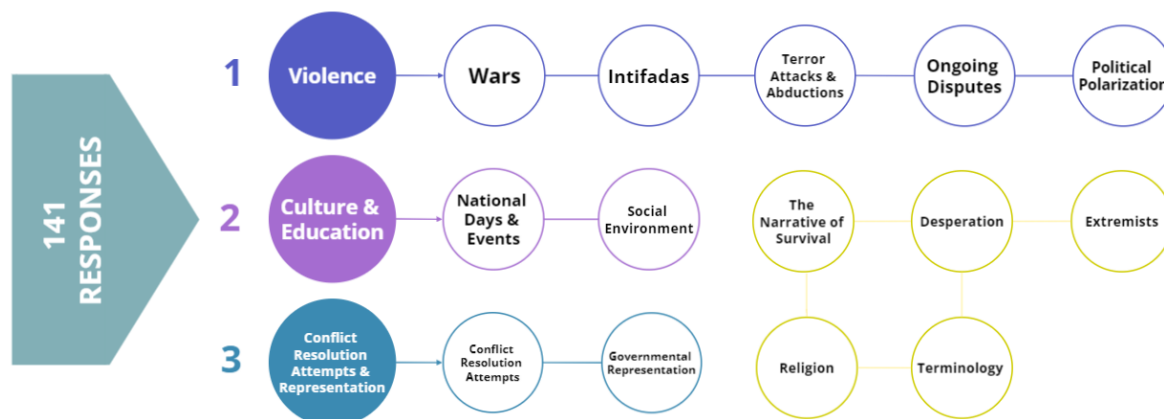
Figure 3: *Further Themes Established in the Research (in yellow)*

This research prioritizes the study of Israelis and their perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an ethnographic point of view. Therefore, to ensure the ultimate climate for Israelis to speak their minds and thoughts, the terminology used in this research and in the survey and interviews coincides with the public discourse about the conflict in Israeli society. Nonetheless, the readers of this paper are strongly advised to use the narratives and conclusions made in this research, question them, and pursue further research concerning any question at hand.

All data in this study were stored anonymously and collected in the native language of all participants (and the researcher), Hebrew.

The Scramble for the Middle East: 18th – 20th Centuries

The competition for power, goods, and resources in North Africa and the Middle East between foreign actors from the late 18th to the beginning of the 20th centuries begot the "Eastern Question", involving mainly Britain and France (Gelvin, 2020). Eager to determine the faith of the Ottoman Empire, the imperial actors did not exclude Palestine, a part of the Empire back then, from their plans.

The Middle Eastern Question

In an attempt to address the Middle Eastern Question, the diplomats Sir Mark Sykes and François Georges-Picot had discussed the division of the Ottoman Empire into zones of direct and indirect British and French control already in 1915-1916, before the Ottoman's Empire dismantlement in 1918 (Berdine, 2018; Gelvin, 2020). Although the Sykes-Picot Agreement was never implemented, it underlined the role of Britain and France, among other imperial actors, in the formation of the Middle East and its present geopolitics.

Figure 4: *The Sykes–Picot Agreement, 1916 for the Partition of the Middle East*
Source: Bickerton & Klausner, 2015, p. 46 (a page scan)

The Emergence of the Mandate System in Palestine: 1915-1922

In an attempt to secure lasting global peace after the First World War, Woodrow Wilson delivered the "Fourteen Points" speech in January 1918, in which he included statements concerning victory without annexation and the right for all people to self-determination (Wilson, 1918). Allegedly, all peoples who had lived under the German, Austro-Hungarian, and Ottoman Empire, therefore, had the right to govern themselves. However, some were considered incapable of doing so in the immediate future (Wilson, 1918; McTague, 1980). As European Allies were eager to find a way to uphold Wilson's Fourteen Points while acquiring territories and enjoying the spoils of their victory, the Mandate System, a new concept in international affairs, was introduced (Myers, 1921; McTague, 1980). The Mandate System constituted a legal framework created by the League of Nations after World War I between 1919 and 1925 (Crozier, 1979). The system granted foreign powers (called the Mandatory or Mandatory Powers) the right to administer former territories of the Ottoman Empire (called the Mandates) until they were ready to govern themselves (Myers, 1921; McTague, 1980). In April 1920, the San Remo Conference took place as part of the Mandate System plan (Yavuz, 2017). In the conference, an agreement regarding the division of the mandates between France and Britain over the Levant and Mesopotamia in the spirit of Article 22 of the League of Nations was reached (UN Geneva, 1920; Myers, 1921; Crozier, 1979; Yavuz, 2017; Karsh, 2020). Following the conference, as Allied Powers recognized the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, drawing on the principles outlined in the British Balfour Declaration of November 1917, Britain was granted a mandate over Palestine and Mesopotamia. In contrast, France was given a mandate over Syria and Lebanon. (Shlaim, 1987; Ginat, 2018; Karsh, 2020; Gelvin, 2020).

The Mandate for Palestine was officially given to Britain in 1922 by the League of Nations (UN. Secretary-General, 1947). However, the British had autonomy over the conquered Ottoman region already since 1917 (Ginat, 2018; McTague, 1980).

Figure 5: *The British and French Mandates in the Region*
Source: Bickerton & Klausner, 2015, p. 55 (a page scan*)

*the source from the book was reprinted by permission of the Putnam Publishing Group from The
Arab Awakening by George Antonius. Copyright © 1939 by G. P. Putnam's Sons.

The Mandatory Palestine Period: 1917-1948

The idea of Palestinian nationalism proliferated following the political separation from Syria, as reflected in the Sykes-Picot agreement and the Mandate for Palestine, together with the emergence of the Zionist[2] movement (Ghanem, 2013; Gelvin, 2020). Therefore, organizations representing the Palestinian inhabitants advocated for a homeland for Palestinians at the expense of Pan-Syrian ideology already during the 1920s and 1930s (Ghanem, 2013; Porath, 2020). On the contrary, Zionist Jews, mainly affiliated with the practical, political, and religious streams, advocated for a state for Jews in the Land of Israel (Erez Israel) in Palestine since the 1830s on the ground of religious and historical ties to the land (Cohen, 1951; Salehnia, 2012; Kemp, Ram, Newman, & Yiftachek, 2014; Krämer, 2008; Katsman, 2020).

Continuous Foreign Intervention

Nevertheless, the impact of foreign actors on Palestinians and Jews during the mandate period escalated the relationship between the groups and fueled the conflict taking shape. Although some might claim that Britain pursued either anti-Arab (or anti-Zionist) interests in historiographical terms of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, down the line, the Empire merely pursued a pro-British interest as they had strategic, economic, and ideological motives to control Palestine. In addition, to serve the interest of the Empire to control the region using the Mandate System, Britain priorly published the brief yet revolutionary Balfour Declaration, causing a severe impact on the Middle East until these days, and more specifically, on the tension between Jews and Palestinians (Shlaim, 1987; Shlaim, 2005; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). The British interest in the region included control over the Suez Canal and other Key-shipping routes in the Middle East, gaining the support of influential Jews to sway public opinion in their favor, having Jews contributing to the war, a religious motive to fulfill biblical prophecy, tactic advantage against the Soviet Union, and having a future ally, Israel, used as a buffer against the expansion of possible powers in the region (Shlaim, 1987; White, 2014; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015; Regan, 2017). As Ernest Belvin, the Foreign Secretary to the British government, wrote to the cabinet in 1949: "In peace and war the Middle East is an area of cardinal importance to the United Kingdom, second only to the United Kingdom itself.

---

[2] Zionism is a term that broadly defines the idea of 'Jewish nationalism' – the right of Jewish people to self-determination as other peoples. The idea was a product of the nineteenth century, underlying the formation of the Zionist Movement (Krämer, 2008; Gelvin, 2020). Different streams of Zionism, influenced by various schools, were established due to disagreements, debates, and disputes. The movements differing in perspectives and ideologies, included, but were not limited to Labor Zionism, Revisionist Zionism, Spiritual Zionism, and more (Rovner, 2014).

Strategically the Middle East is a focal point of communications, a source of oil, a shield of Africa and the Indian Ocean, and an irreplaceable offensive base." (Louis, 1984; Shlaim, 1987; Cohen, 2020).

Furthermore, the rising antisemitism in Europe, the rise of the Nazi regime in Germany, and Hitler's influence in the Arab world boosted the tension between the groups in the region as well (Ghanem, 2013; Herf, 2009). Following modern antisemitism, which started at the end of the 19th century, massive immigration of Jews from the Russian Empire began, mainly from Russia and Romania, in an attempt to escape severe poverty, persecution, and antisemitic riots (pogroms) (Fein, 1987; Gelvin, 2020). Of two-and-a-half million Jews escaping East Europe, 35,000 reached Palestine between 1882-1914 (also known as the First and Second *aliyot*[3]) (Alroey, 2014). Although Zionism was not central to the first (1882-1903) and second (1904-1914) waves of immigration to Palestine compared to its role in the third (1919-1923), fourth (1924-1929), and fifth (1933-1939) *aliyot* that followed, the factors that compelled Jewish emigrants to leave their countries of origin were considerably more significant than the appeal of Zionist ideology and the prospect of settling in the Land of Israel[4] (Alroey, 2014).

In addition, the international conference in Evian-les-Bains in 1938 gathered to discuss ways to help Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazi Third Reich. Out of 32 countries, only the Dominican Republic (and later on Costa Rica) agreed to increase their quotas. The conference and the countries who subsequently turned their back on the Jewish revealed the worldwide indifference to the Jewish refugee problem in Europe, marking 1899–1939 as the years with a high point in antisemitism in Western societies (Bernstein, 1996; Brustein & King, 2004; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). Moreover, before and during World War II, Nazi propaganda spread throughout the Arab world, increasing antisemitic sentiment and support for the Axis powers against the Allies. Although the antisemitic ideology could be perceived as applying to non-Jewish Semites such as themselves, Arab and Muslim leaders, intellectuals, and Political parties adopted and promoted antisemitic ideas and rhetoric that drew on Nazi ideology, including the belief in a global Jewish conspiracy (Herf, 2009; Nicosia, 1980; Nicosia, 2015). Arab leaders such as the Palestinian Haj Amin al-Husseini, the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem (who

---

[3] Aliya (sing.) - Jewish immigration to Palestine (or 'Land of Israel').
[4] "*Zionist historiography overlooked the story of the ordinary Jewish migrant to Palestine and stressed that of the pioneer—the one who dried the marshes and made the desert bloom. By doing so it created a false portrayal in which the olim—the immigrants to the land of Israel—were of a higher ethical..., This narrative was accepted without question among thousands of Jews all around the world and became an efficient tool of the Zionist movement and the Israeli leadership to receive moral and financial support…*" (Alroey, 2014, p. 239-240).

was elected deceitfully by the British-Jew high commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel), collaborated with the Nazis and encouraged attacks on Jews living in the Middle East (Herf, 2009; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). Parties influenced by the Nazi ideology were founded in countries like Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, and Palestine (Nicosia, 1980; Herf, 2009; Nicosia, 2015).

Although the Jewish Exodus from the Arab and Muslim Worlds began in mid-1949, events in modern antisemitism in Europe and the rise of the Nazi regime have already led to the immigration of Jews to Palestine, among other countries. As a result, the Jewish population in Palestine has already increased by 80% between 1933-1936 (Kochavi, 1998; Beker, 2005; Ghanem, 2013; Meir-Glitzenstein, 2018; Gelvin, 2020).

The Arab community in Palestine felt cheated by Britain, who held the mandate for the region and supported the Zionist idea of establishing a Jewish state in Palestine. After the Second World War, it was clear to the Palestinian community that they should not bear responsibility for the crimes in Europe. Hence, among other reasons, they strove for full sovereignty over Palestine. On the contrary, in the face of modern antisemitism and under the Zionist influence, Jews were convinced that something should be done in Palestine to ensure their safety and security and compensate for the incomprehensive catastrophe of the Holocaust while addressing the Jewish refugee crisis (Morris, 2008; Shlaim, 2015; Krämer, 2008; Alroey, 2014; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015).

The Palestinian & Zionist-Jewish Leaderships

The cleavage between Jews and Palestinians has deepened; disputes over the narrative of land, immigration rights and limitations, and political representation have drastically increased the tension between the Palestinian and Zionist-Jewish leaderships throughout the Mandate period (Forman & Kedar, 2003; Sinanoglou, 2009).

Nonetheless, the failure of the Zionist-Jewish and Palestinian negotiations could not be explained only by the influence of foreign powers in the region, although its impact. By the time the mandate expired, Zionist leaders and organizations were oblivious to the native inhabitants in Palestine, whereas pan-Arabism idealists resent any idea of a Jewish state in the region. Hence, insufficient contact between leaders on both sides overshadowed possible understanding, credibility, and tolerance between the sides, and ulterior motives made negotiation attempts fall short of achieving possible long-term solutions (Nicosia, 2015; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015; Eisenberg & Caplan, 2020).

Eventually, to solve the 'economic and political' liability, as the British Prime Minister Clement Attlee called it, commissions suggested the partitioning of Palestine to Jewish and Palestinian states, such as the Peel Commission (1937), the Woodhead Commission (1938), and the Morrisson-Grady Committee (1946) (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). After the proposals went up in smoke, Attlee called on the newly established UN to resolve the problem of the 'twice promised land'. In November 1947, the United Nations introduced the Partition Plan (Ben-Dror, 2007; Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015).

The UN Resolution 181

On November 29, 1947, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 181. The resolution, known as the Partition Plan, urged a two-state solution: a Palestinian state and a Jewish state. The plan constituted a new peak in the history of the Middle East as the Palestinian-Israeli struggle became an Arab-Israeli conflict in the wake of the first Israeli-Arab War (Shlaim, 1987; Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007; Bickerton & Klausner, 2015).

Up until the official end of the Mandate for Palestine in May 1948 (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015), the relationship between the Jewish and Palestinian peoples was strongly influenced, although not exclusively, by foreign interests and powers. This dynamic has had far-reaching consequences on the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East, which continue to this day.

Israel & Palestine: 1948-Present

The First Israeli-Arab War 1947-1949

On May 14, 1948, based on the Partition Plan, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first Prime Minister, proclaimed the establishment of a Jewish state in the State of Israel. The day after, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq sent their armies and units to take over the region (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007; Shlaim, 2015). Israel outnumbered the Arab armies and won the war. The war lasted until the armistice agreements in 1949 (also known as the "Green Line"), agreements signed between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Transjordan, and Syria with the contribution of the UN. As a result, 750,000 Palestinians (approximately) had fled their homes or were forced to flee; Israel enlarged its territory, and the West Bank and East Jerusalem came under the authority of Jordan, whereas Egypt administrated Gaza Strip (Milton-Edwards & Hinchcliffe, 2007; Shlaim, 2015; Bickerton & Klausner, 2022). Moreover, following the Israeli Citizenship Law in 1952, people listed in the population registry and inhabitants within the Israeli borders since Israel was established until the law came to force were entitled to Israeli

citizenship. Therefore, approximately 21% of these days-Israel population are Palestinians[5] (also known as Israeli-Arabs or '48 Palestinians) (Ben-Zvi, 2019; Hoffman, 2019).

Figure 6: *Israel's boundaries in the aftermath of the 1947 War (1949-1967)*
Source: Bickerton & Klausner, 2015, p. 102 (a page scan)

---

[5] The law is heavily criticized for its light conditions favoring Jewish naturalization, while preventing Palestinians' right to become citizens of the state of Israel (Ben-Zvi, 2019; Carmi, 2003).

Since 1948, Israel has celebrated Independence Day, whereas Palestine mentions *al-Nakba* (the catastrophe) on the annual day the Israeli-Arab War broke out. Consequently, the divided narratives between the peoples have grown deeper; the liberation for one is the catastrophe for the other (Peace Research Institute in the Middle East, n,d; Hoffman, 2019).

The 1967 War

The Six-Day War broke out on June 5, 1967. Details of the war are being told in various books and literature and will not be repeated here. The vital matter to bear in mind in relevance to this paper is the war results. In the aftermath of the 1967 War, Israel was three times larger than in 1949[6], with territory including the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip (see Figure 7). The three areas mentioned, and the Palestinians living there, maintain under Israeli authority with varying statuses, under different laws and regulations (see Figure 8) (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015; Hoffman, 2019).

The Emergence of the Settlement Movement

In the aftermath of the 1967 War, Gush Emunim (Hebrew: גוש אמונים), meaning the Block of the Faithful', sought an opportunity to fulfill their ideology. Affiliated with the religious-Zionist movement[7], the organization marks the beginning of the Settlement Project. Gush Emunim promoted Jewish settlement in the West Bank, the Galilee, in Gaza Strip, and the Sinai Peninsula since its establishment in the 1970s, although in contravention of international law (Hoffman, 2019). With time, the organization transformed into organizations like Yesha, Amena, El'ad, and Ateret Kohanim (Weissbrod, 1982; Lustick, 1987; Don-Yehiya, 1997; Newman, 2005; Sasson, 2021). Until today, the organizations promote the Settlement Project without tender at meager prices, a system that paves the way for Jewish settlements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem. The organizations are sponsored by partners from the private sector and collaborators in the Israeli government, although deficiencies and illegal means were disclosed by the government and other entities (Rapaport, 2009; Hasson, 2010; Ofran, 2021; Sneineh, 2022; Hasson & Freidson, 2022; Hasson, 2023). From 1967 to 2017, the Settlement Movement established more than 200 Jewish settlements in the West Bank (which more than

---

[6] Israel returned the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in 1982 as part of the Peace treaty between the states (Gelvin, 2020).
[7] The Religious-Zionism stream was established in the early twentieth century. Combining the idea of Zionism and religious Judaism, the stream asserts the right of Jews to a Jewish state in the Land of Israel ("Great Israel") and revolves around three main pillars: the idea of the Land of Israel, the People of Israel, and the biblical of Israel (Kemp, Ram, Newman, & Yiftachek, 2014; Katsman, 2020; Religious Zionist Party, 2022).

100 of those are known as 'illegal outposts') in which more than 620,000 Israeli citizens reside (B'Tselem, 2019).

Figure 7: *Israel's Territory in the Aftermath of the 1967 War*
Source: Bickerton & Klausner, 2015, p. 170 (a page scan*)

*Martin Gilbert, Atlas of the Arab–Israeli Conflict (New York: Macmillan, 1974), p. 70.

Oslo Accords – 1993

In late August 1993, it was surprisingly disclosed that (at least) fourteen secret meetings between Israel and the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) had been held in Oslo, Norway (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). These meetings led to one of the most significant turning points in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, resulting in the Oslo Accords. The Oslo Accords was a product of Israeli and PLO officials talking, negotiating, and, most importantly, agreeing – on main points that would constitute a framework for peace between Israel and Palestine (and the future Palestine State). Although ongoing disputes, riots, and groups advocating against mutual negotiations from both sides, the Prime Minister of Israel, Yitzhak Rabin, and the President of Palestine, Yasir Arafat, who were against the recognition of each other's state in the past themselves, signed mutual recognition. The mutual recognition laid the foundation for the first peace accords, which were negotiated, led, and signed, between the representatives from the People(s), for the People(s). The agreement, among other principles, included the formation of three types of areas in the West Bank: Zone A (under complete Palestinian control), Zone B (under the joint control of Palestinian and Israeli authorities), and Area C (fully controlled by Israel), constituting the latest phase of the conflict between Israel and Palestine (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015; Zeid & Thawaba, 2018; Gelvin, 2020).
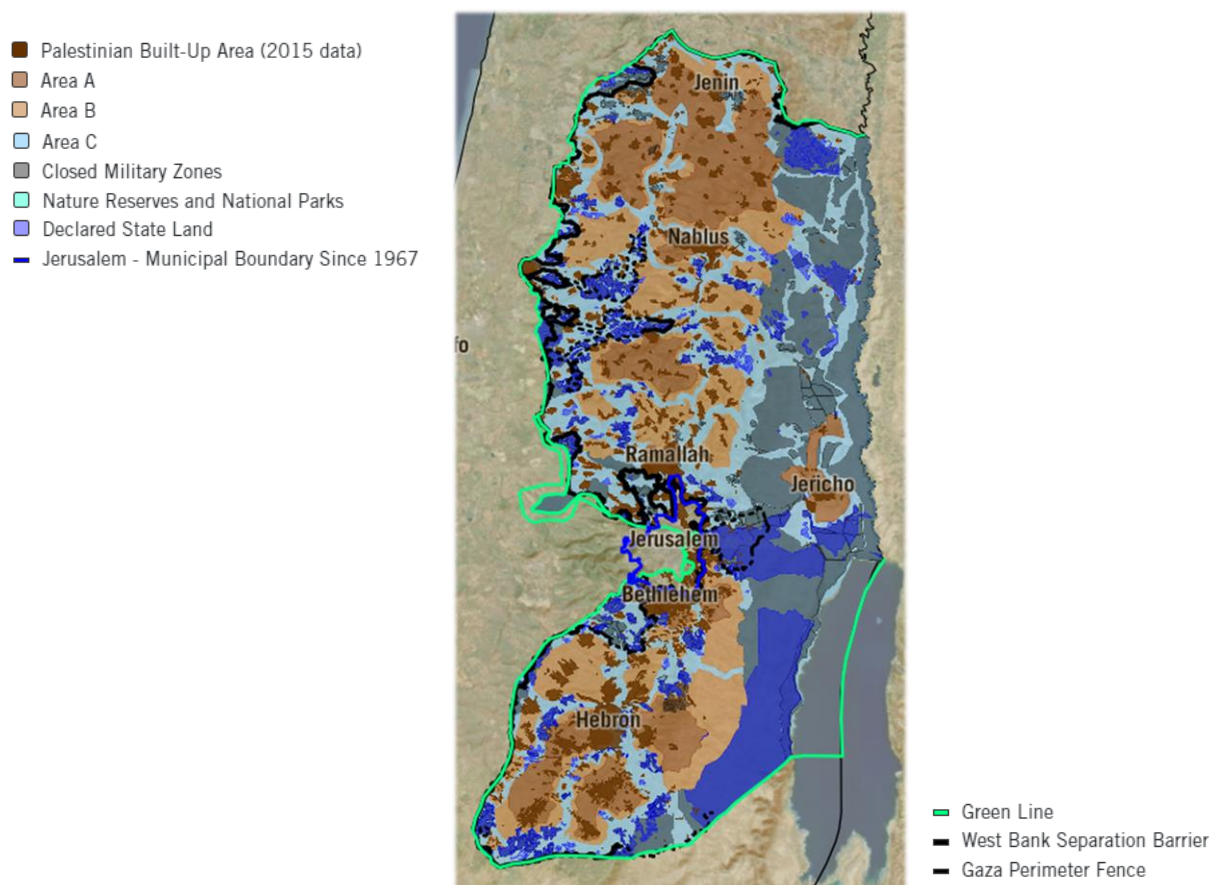
Figure 8: *A, B, and C Zones in the West Bank*
Source: (B'Tselem, 2015) B'Tselem Interactive Map

Palestine & Israel – 2023

The Oslo Accords are considered a significant collaboration between Israel and Palestine, a great step towards peace and a new era in the middle east. As Clinton called it: "A peace of the brave is within our reach" (Clinton, 1994, p. 120). However, the state of Palestine was never realized, and Palestinians remained subject to different laws, practices, and control of a foreign regime in the Gaza Strip, West Bank, and East Jerusalem (Dudeen, Lacirignola, Montanarella, Steduto, & Zdruli, 2001; Kelly, 2006; Alyan, Sela, & Pomerantz, 2012; Association for Civil Rights in Israel, 2023). The Oslo Accords was attributed to failure due to its deficiencies, implementation failure, and the role of political interests (Rothstein, 2006). Since then, negotiations and summits have taken place to reach the longed-for peace between the peoples, which were unsuccessful (Lewin, 2016). These days there are 6.9 million Israeli-Jews and 7.1 million Palestinians[8] (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2021; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022) in the region who relive a 100-year-old conflict sparked by disputes over recognition, land, tradition, culture, religion, and history, that lead to the constant reality of war and countless deaths and bloodshed of predominantly the innocents.

---

[8] 3.19 million Palestinian in the West Bank, 2.17 in the Gaza Strip, and 1.7 in the 1948 territory.

Cultural Conjunctions in Israeli Society

The previous section dived into how the narratives over land and, so to say, "existence" came to play between the Israeli and Palestinian groups through the decades until the 1947 War. Then, the main events that shaped the relationships between Israelis and Palestinians in the context of civic status and territory were briefly introduced. The following section wishes to investigate the role of three cultural conjunctions, namely (1) violence, (2) culture and education, and (3) conflict resolution attempts and agency, in shaping the Israeli perspective toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Methodology section).

Conjunction 1 – Violence

The first cultural conjunction is the biggest of all three established in this research, comprising 65 out of 141 comments (46%). The conjunction encompasses five themes: (1) wars, (2) intifadas, (3) terror attacks and abductions, (4) ongoing disputes, and (5) political polarization. The first four themes are strongly related to interactions with "the other side", whereas the fifth relates to violence within Israeli society. The participants did not touch upon the theme of "intifadas". However, three other themes were established in this section following the interview: the narrative of survival, desperation, and extremists.

1.1 Wars

Interviews show how this conjunction plays a dominant role in Israelis' daily life and their perception. as the reality of war seems to be very present. One participant argues that war brings two effects once it occurs: the first is to protect, contribute, and act, pointing to a sense of solidarity among the Israeli people. On the other hand, the interviewee says, it increases antagonism toward the other side. "Once in a few years, we have a war or an operation", the respondent adds: "I think we are one of the only countries that live in a mindset of a war every few years". Another participant shares a view on the theme of wars, saying that "from the Israeli society's perspective, everyone knows a person, or knows someone that knows a person who got killed either in war or a terror attack.". The interviewee added that a family relative, a 19-year-old, died while protecting her young brother from missiles lunch toward Israelis from Gaza Strip. "It shapes a certain opinion. Either to find any solution, also at the expense of land or that there might not be a solution – but I will hold on as long as I can, and whatever happens happens.".

1.2 Terror Attacks & Abductions

Interviews also show that the theme of terror attacks is highly present in Israelis' daily lives. For example, a participant shared how terror attacks catch her off-guard and push her to complexity. The interviewee explained how she got a phone notification on a trip to the Sinai Peninsula about a terror attack on a street in Tel-Aviv-Jaffa, half a kilometer from her home. "Most of the time, I do not think about the conflict. It is not coming to mind in my daily life. But then, such a thing happens, and it makes me feel a sense of antagonism.", she says. She continued sharing about the questions such a situation pushes her to ask herself, like: "To what extent the other side (Palestinians) perceives these acts as problematic, just as much as I believe Jewish terror is horrible?". It instills fear and fright, the participant adds. Another interviewee resonates with that, expressing how he was sitting at home the other day, thinking about grabbing a drink at a bar, and then he heard that there had been a shooting attack on Dizengoff Street (a well-known bars street). Another participant also shared how people sometimes fear walking the streets when vehicular attacks or stabbing attacks might occur. "You leave the house, and you do not know whether you will return or not..., an attack happens nearby your house, a bus explodes, so many people get hurt. Tomorrow, it could be you". The respondent added how the terror attacks shape how people perceive Arabs: "You try to tolerate and accept, but simultaneously you somehow 'respect and suspect' Arabs" (Hebrew: קפדהו וחשדהו). Another participant expressed similar feelings about possible interactions with Palestinians: "You won't walk down the street and suddenly engage in conversation with an Arab or Palestinian. You will distance yourself. There is some specific bigotry here, I will not lie.". Another respondent relates to the theme from another perspective, saying that Israel's choice to deal with the conflict in a violent way begets fear among the people as well, as any side loses people. "I am leftist, rational, and I believe that not 'all Arabs' want to hurt me. However, when I walk down the street two hours after a terror attack, I am also afraid. It is embedded in our DNA.".

1.3 Ongoing Disputes

Some participants also shared their thoughts about ongoing disputes that occur. An interviewee, for instance, believes that the sense of violence is strongly related to the army service experience, a mandatory law in Israel[9] (Security Service Law, 2022). Sharing about his service in Palestinian areas and Jewish settlements as a combat fighter, the participant explains how

---

[9] Military service in Israel is mandatory for men and women, at the age of 18: men are obligated to serve 32 months, whereas women are obligated to serve 28 months. Palestinians '48 (also: Israeli Arabs) are not obligated to serve, although they may volunteer.

interactions with Palestinians who threw stones and Molotov cocktails at him made him feel that "there is no partner" on the other side. On the other hand, he had an officer unwilling to discuss settlers throwing stones at him and his team in Jewish settlement areas. "It brings you to this state of mind – there is no solution.", he says. Another participant also mentions the disputes in the settlements, condemning Jewish terror and the settlers who throw stones at Palestinians and burn their fields, worsening the situation.

1.4 Political Polarization

Some participants expressed deep concerns about cleavages among Israelis that not once result in violence that fuels the tension. In his research, Eyal Lewin (2016a) overviews ten events that constitute a turning point in deepening the cleavages. Each of these events falls under one (or more) of four common categories, drawing on "Trouble in Utopia" (Lissak & Horowitz, 1989) within the contemporary Jewish-Israeli society: socioeconomic cleavage, ethnic cleavage, religious cleavage, and political cleavage. Participants unanimously argue that there is a colossal polarization between Israeli groups, saturated with hatred and estrangement.

Participants share how the statement of being "right-wing" or "left-wing" is "the hardest thing to say in Israel", as it relates to security, meaning "our existence and our lives.". As one interviewee explains, the left thinks about the right, and the right thinks about the left, that if the other side's perception were to occur, "we would be doomed". There is a strong feeling within our society that the other side intends to annihilate the other. Interviewees describe how the room for sharing thoughts and having discussions by itself does not exist, "merely expressing one's thoughts is considered violent in itself…; with 'your own' people, you are careful and consider with whom you can discuss certain topics.". Another interviewee claims that the government bears much responsibility. "They label anyone who thinks differently as a 'leftist' or a 'traitor', while they love the country in a different way…; The discourse is polarized and extreme, and it is no longer safe to speak, whether you are on the right or left side. It will take time to heal the tears and rifts here.".

Most interviewees mentioned the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli fifth Prime Minister, in 1995, claiming it to be a turning point marking a new rock-bottom for the cleavage between the "left" and "right" in Israel (Lewin, 2016a). Although he had expressed his objection to a Palestinian state and collaborations with Palestinian representatives before being elected Prime Minister, Rabin established himself as a trustworthy peace-seeker among the Israeli public throughout his political career. Rabin, for many, "walked the talk" as a true

peacemaker leader, holding peace speeches and promoting peace agreements, conversations, and negotiations with Israel-bordering countries and Palestinian representatives, let alone from within his party (Lewin, 2016a; Rosler, 2016). However, against the backdrop of the Oslo Accords, the Prime Minister was assassinated by a Jew at a peace rally in November 1995 (Bickerton & Klausner, 2015). "There is a significant polarization that began with the assassination of Rabin. Rabin was the closest thing (to peace) ...; from what I know, he was the one who advanced and pushed in that direction, and a Jew murdered him. It shows that even among us, between us, there was no one to talk to.". Another participant related to it, saying that "this is a good example of how far one can go when they believe that someone else's opinion threatens them in such a way.". Another interviewee believes that the left in Israel has been delegitimized ever since, "even in the current protests (against the government and judicial overhaul), you always have to think about what you say as a leftist to other Jews.".

1.5 The Narrative of Survival

A participant urges that the Palestinian and Jewish narratives are structured in a way that threatens each other's existence. They go so deep that people can not even imagine or grasp the idea of coexistence. "It feels like one side needs to go, to vanish. This is how this conflict will be solved.".

1.5.1 Jewish Narrative

A few participants draw attention to the Jewish narrative of survival (a sense of "victimhood"), as violence was a part of Jews' lives before, during, and after the establishment of Israel, still carrying the weight of the past with them (i.e., antisemitism, persecution, the Holocaust, and wars from 1948 onward). "There is a feeling that Israelis feel like they are in a survival…; they do not feel, consciously or unconsciously, like they can be compassionate or care to the other side…, when you feel in survival for your place physically or your life mentally, you cannot see the other side.".

A participant relates the survival mindset of Israelis to the well-known Hebrew phrase from the Talmud, "My people take precedence." (Hebrew: עניי עירי קודמין "). This motive entails that we are also important, but we first take care of ourselves. "We can't see anyone but ourselves.". She explains how Israelis tend to admit that the situation with Palestinians is non-humanist and simultaneously use this phrase to excuse it. "It is hard for Israelis to agree that Israel is non-humanist, but if it is to take care of yourself first, so it is for survival, legitimizing why we are non-humanist.".

1.6 Desperation

Frustration pushes people to resort to violence in different ways. For instance, a respondent argued that Palestinians are left with their backs against the wall as "they have nothing to lose", an approach that amplifies the "end justifies the means" motive, which feeds the motive on the Israeli side and repeats. Another claim adds to that, suggesting that both sides exercise violence, which is more institutionalized on the Israeli side than the Palestinian, but it is still violence. In the meantime, each side keeps building its own narrative, and no one breaks this vicious cycle. Consequently, the "there is no other choice" myth comes into play. "I feel like protesting against everything that is happening…, but it feels like there is no one to talk to…".

1.7 Extremists

The narrative, together with despair and frustration, beget a fertilized ground for extremists to step in and set the tone. "That is the problem, extremism from both sides. No one stops that…, the hate gains more weight by the minute, and the press constantly fuels it…, my whole life, I have lived this reality; this is insane. This reality is a product of violence, fear, and discomfort. As long as extremists are in charge, this conflict will not be solved.". A respondent shared. Another participant is certain that people in influential positions are convinced that violence is the solution.

Violence seems to be "a vicious cycle feeding itself.", as a few interviewees called it. Violence increases intolerance, alienation, and fear between the sides. This cycle perpetuates itself as each act of violence further deepens mistrust and reinforces negative perceptions. The lack of genuine dialogue and understanding fuels animosity and makes it harder to envision a peaceful resolution, let alone reality. The narrative of survival on both sides contributes to the vicious cycle effect, making it difficult to break free from it, rethink violence as a solution, and find a path toward reconciliation - not only between the sides but also between groups within Israel.[10]

Conjunction 2 – Culture & Education

The second cultural conjunction established in this research includes the themes of (1) national days and events and (2) social environment. This section includes the additional theme of "religion" brought by the interviewees.

---

[10] The intifadas were not discussed by the interviewees (see "Discussion").

2.1 National Holidays & Events

Most participants referred to the memorial days in Israel: The Holocaust Remembrance Day and the Memorial Day[11] (full name: The Memorial Day for the Fallen Soldiers of the Wars of Israel and Victims of Actions of Terrorism). Interviewees drew significant attention to the latter.

2.1.1 The Memorial Days

"Memorial Day(s) and Independence Day are a week-long period during which all the conflict floats on the surface...; We remember why we got here, we have a week to sit with it, and then Independence Day arrives." Interviewees argue that the narrative of "survival" and "persecution" (see section 1.5), finds high expression during the days of remembrance, with an emphasis on the Memorial Day. According to their claim, these days uphold a one-sided narrative of persecution, a situation that preserves a mindset in which the Israeli group is the only affected side. Participants simultaneously argued: "...we are indeed a very affected side; a small country, everyone knows someone who knows someone who is a casualty or has been severely affected by the conflict...; undoubtedly the previous generations, and it also resonates with us, that there are constant real threats." However, according to their claim, "it is difficult for us (Israelis) to break out of this awareness, it is deeply ingrained in our culture, personally and politically." For the Israeli side to be "less affected in the future, or not affected at all," the interviewees argue that the perspective needs to change and to include the other side's narrative, and to "understand the bigger picture: violence begets violence." A participant adds, "it is a narrative that dominates in this country in my opinion, and it lies with most political sides. It creates much antagonism to diverge from it. Anyone who diverges from this narrative is seen as 'not embracing this narrative'." However, another interviewee urges that the different narratives should be acknowledged separately. The opposing perspectives on this narrative are strongly reflected in public discourse about the Joint Memorial Day Ceremony[12], as noted by most interviewees. A few interviewees mentioned participating in the Bereaved Families Forum's Joint Memorial Day Ceremony (PCFF, 2022). According to them, the event holds a

---

[11] "On Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers, the citizens of Israel unite in memory of the state's fallen soldiers, whose sacrifice enabled Israel's existence…, it is always marked one day before Independence Day, emphasizing and symbolizing the connection between the sacrifice of the fallen and the establishment of the State of Israel.". (Knesset, n.d.).

[12] The Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF) is a joint Israeli-Palestinian organization of over 600 families, all of whom have lost an immediate family member to the ongoing conflict. Moreover, the PCFF has concluded that the process of reconciliation between nations is a prerequisite to achieving a sustainable peace. The organization thus utilizes all resources available in education, public meetings and the media, to spread these ideas." (PCFF, 2022).

narrative with which they see eye to eye, as the people participating in this ceremony accept the narrative of "survival" by the Israeli side but also see how the "other side also suffers from this narrative – a mindset of fear and difficulty to live on their side, just as it is difficult for us to live with terrorism and terrorist organizations. They fear the occupying people, the Israeli army, and the state of Israel. There is much suffering here for everyone; let us understand that this conflict is a problem for many people, not just the Jewish side." On the other hand, another interviewee argued that he understands the purpose of the ceremony, to create something that is "ours" (belongs to both, the Palestinian the Israeli sides). He says, "I understand the goal, but I do not want my fate to be linked to theirs.".

2.2 Social Environment

Interviewees primarily referred to educational institutions such as schools and youth movements they were a part of. However, interviewees shared their general perception of the social environment they grew up in concerning the subject. Statements regarding social cleavages (see section 1.4) are also mentioned by participants, describing how groups within Israeli society "no longer want to hear each other." One of the interviewees adds a suggestion on the subject: "I think one needs to be a 'big person' to put all this weight aside and reach dialogue. It requires putting aside everything you've been educated on and all the experiences from this conflict: lack of judgment, an open mind, and thinking differently about managing a life together (with the other side). It's not easy; it's hard. I don't think there is anyone who hasn't been personally affected (by the conflict) in some way. Achieving this requires more personal resources: it's a profound paradigm shift. In general, this curiosity about what is happening on the other side? What is their perspective? I believe criticism exists on both sides.".

2.2.1 The Education System

Interviewees referred to school along with the education system in Israel[13].

2.2.1.1 School Subjects

According to the interviewees, no proper exposure to conflict in schools exists. Some of them mainly refer to History and Civics classes, claiming that they teach the Jewish narrative one-sided and uncritically. They do not teach the Palestinian narrative or discuss the impact on the Palestinian and Arab groups in the region, although the topic is being discussed when it comes

---

[13] The education system in Israel is predominantly centralized. The Ministry of Education, a government body, sets the national curriculum, standards, and regulations for schools across the country (Noy, 2022).

to events prior to the establishment of the state. "We arrived here, there was a war (the 1948 War), we won it, we have a state - but there is their side, and we don't hear about it. There is no discussion about it in school - not with their narrative or with them (Palestinians)." Having read about the disturbances towards Palestinians and their displacement as part of the war as an adult, an interviewee said: "it frustrates me. These are things I didn't learn about in History and Civics as part of the history of the Jewish people as part of the establishment of the state." "There is no doubt that it shapes the prevailing perception in Israel today."

2.2.1.2 Memorial Days in the Context of the Education System

According to some interviewees, the way Memorial Days are addressed in schools "over-glorifies the dead soldiers.". The interviewees describe a feeling of insufficient criticism on the subject. "They ask us to remember those who paid the price for this reality, talk about them, on the one hand, but on the other hand, they don't want to understand how to stop and resolve it. They don't want to stop the growing number of casualties.". One interviewee circles back to the narratives mentioned earlier in the article. "It's harder to say that you don't do something that day (Memorial Day). For example, maybe not standing firm in silence (when the national sirens go off[14]), as opposed to not fasting on Yom Kippur; it threatens national security much more than religion; people perceive it as a threat to their existence - it undermines the 'Israeliness'; if I don't want to stand because of what this day symbolizes, and to commemorate the conflict this way, I'm like an 'internal enemy,' which is more threatening than an 'enemy from outside'. The respondent adds: "I think there is no critical perception. They strongly reinforce this narrative of the conflict; you learn about the fallen soldiers, and that's it. There is no discussion about what else could have been done. The state is perceived as a fundamental right of the Jewish people, and it can crush anyone who was here before us.".

2.2.1.3 Interests in Preserving the System

One of the claims generated from the interviews refers to the interest of people in key positions to preserve the curriculum the way it is, as the education system begets "the next generation". A participant claims that the Education System has the interest "to maintain the narrative in which we are entitled to the state, the state has been given to us, and we have done our best to deserve it – 'we behaved well.'". I don't think everyone wants to preserve the narrative. I think people in key positions want to preserve the existing narrative. They don't present the ugly side

---

[14] The Memorial Day opens at 20:00 with a one-minute siren that is heard across the country. "As soon as the siren is heard, Israeli citizens stop whatever they're doing, wherever they are, and stand firm to honor those they've lost." (Our Soldiers, 2018). (Another siren is heard across the country in the day after for two minutes) (Knesset, n.d.).

of the establishment process and the national pride in the state's foundation - the defining event in Israelis' and Jews' lives worldwide.". The interviewee criticizes the system and argues that if it is changing, it is changing for the worse as "we continue to feed the fear of Israelis.".

2.2.1.4 The Lack of Incentives

One of the factors influencing this conjunction, and more specifically, the theme of education, is the lack of people willing to engage in changing the education system. "Culture, in my opinion, is a significant factor, and education is the main thing... No people want to change the system; our drive as Israelis is to progress, not get stuck behind, and to ensure financial stability. In education, however, you feel that you are not progressing and cannot earn money. How duty-driven can a person be to raise awareness of the conflict, let alone, improve the system?" The interviewee also added that he doesn't understand why there is no change even with the existing resources invested in the system.

2.2.2 Non-Formal Education Institutions

The interviewees referred to the lack of information on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict also as part of their experience in their youth movements[15]. Four respondents referred to the youth movements in which they grew up. The respondents shared that there was no information or exposure to complex issues. "We always avoided it. I didn't receive the proper information, not even opinions. They didn't talk to me about it. I had to figure it out for myself.". one of the respondents said. Another respondent added that there was a very high level of hesitation around the subject, which in itself "shapes a certain perception when there is no confrontation with the issue or by putting it aside." One of the respondents argued that the youth movements also fall short in the way they mention the fallen soldiers, but not discussing a solution.

2.3 Religion

According to one of the interviewees, religion has a significant influence, as it has a "very central place in Israeli education and culture.". The interviewee explained that according to the Bible, Jews originated from Canaan (Biblical Israel), the land was promised to the Jewish people, and God granted them the territory. The participant concludes that, on the one hand, "in the modern world, there is no 'certificate' that this is really the case…, it is a kind of ambivalence. Thanks to the values of religion, we established a state. On the other hand,

---

[15] Four respondents participated in youth movements: three were in the Scouts and one was in Betar.

however, because of religion, we also believe there is no room for compromise, and every piece of land belongs to Israel and the Jews, Jewish settlements. I am very divided on the subject.".

The second conjunction is directly related to the social lives and environment of the participants. From the interviews, it appears that a lack of exposure to the Palestinian narrative and story leaves the participants with feelings of frustration and certain ignorance. One of the interviewees explains, "You don't learn much about it (the conflict) until you enlist in the army. Until the army, you encounter it as life circumstances or through the media. And then in the service, you "get a slap in the face" when you're 18, holding a gun in your hand and experiencing disorders, "ready for violence". You experience the real encounter with the conflict when you physically enter it, know nothing about it, and get stones thrown at your helmet as a soldier. One needs to shape their opinion through the first conjunction, violence, with no educational foundation leading up to it.".

Conjunction 3 – Conflict Resolution Attempts & Representation

The third cultural conjunction established in this research encompasses two themes of (1) agreement attempts and (2) Agency, mainly referring to governmental representatives of Israel (or Palestine).

3.1 Agreement Attempts

All participants expressed a lack of interest in addressing the theme for various reasons. Such reasons included the context of time: "In my opinion, it's not the discourse of my generation and more of our parents who were there and experienced it in their time.". Another reason seems to be related to knowledge: "I feel like I'm less familiar and knowledgeable about this theme. There were events, things that happened and didn't happen..."; "I don't have much information about it (agreements) at all."; "To be honest, I feel like it's something I'm not strong in terms of my knowledge. I feel like I don't have enough knowledge to talk about the agreements, like the Oslo Accords, to understand how it affects the narrative and perception in Israel." Another reason was the relevance of the theme: "I see less of its (the theme) connection to the conflict, it's bigger than a specific agreement at hand." Another reason seems to be the presence of the theme in participants' personal lives: "Maybe I don't hear enough, but as far as people who are willing to talk and make agreements - in my perspective, I haven't heard anyone talking about it in the government or on the media.".

3.2 Governmental Representation

The interviewees mainly referred to public representatives. A few also referred to Palestinian public representatives. Participants argued that the current government is not interested in resolving the conflict: "The current government, with the extremists, there's nothing to talk about at all - it might be that they understand that "not all Arabs are bad", but I don't think the solution will come from them. The government's discourse is radical, discriminatory towards Israelis, Palestinians, and Arabs - they want to promote agendas that do not match reality.". Another interviewee argued that the government believes in "Greater Israel" and "messianic approaches.". Participants claimed that past governments like Rabin's government (before 1995) were more relevant to the issue of resolving the conflict. "As someone who has lived in the country for over 25 years, I don't remember there being clear talk of peace in the last 15 years. There were attempts for dialogue with PLO representatives, but the word "peace" is not mentioned.". Another respondent resonates with it, relating to Rabin's government: I believe that Rabin's assassination also killed the peace. I have no idea what's going to be with our people, choosing leaders that avoid engagement (with Palestinians) and making things worse.". Some interviewees reflected on Palestinian representatives: "We proposed other solutions, and it feels like they're not reaching out. You can't just be on the side that wants to receive, you need to know how to give. Over time, it's harder to make concessions.".

Some participants expressed distrust in elected officials. "There's a competition among people to be elected, not really about performing. It results from how the country has grown (referring to social gaps between religious, ethnic, and geographical Israeli groups). They (the governments) serve this rift instead of promoting their party agenda…, it's difficult for me to add why they aren't "right" people. Right now, I'm trying to survive, make a living, and live my life.".

3.2.1 Mistrust in the System

Participants mainly referred to the 'political game' in which public representatives use the social cleavages mentioned earlier in this research (see section 1.4). The participants describe a lack of trust in the system and politicians. "There is a complete disconnect between the government and the citizens. They want control and power. The government promotes agendas and instills fear among the public to create a reality that suits them.". Another participant shares similar thoughts: "This is the arena of the civil-political game, and again, it's about 'right' and 'left'. I feel like we don't talk enough about how politics should look. We're focused on 'left' and 'right' (security wise), survival, existence, and less on the cleavages: religious-secular,

Ashkenazi-Mizrahi[16], Arab-Jewish, etc.". One interviewee added, "This is what we've known for the past 20 years, the same government. Bibi (Netanyahu, the current Prime Minister) was good at the beginning, and that's why I chose him. But today, you can't trust him. I believe that categorizing someone different from me as a 'traitor' is not okay. They instill fear in the population that is always in danger." Another interviewee adds, "I have a lot of difficulty with politics in the country; I feel a lot of hatred towards it." One of the interviewees linked the mistrust in the system to religion: "religion, in my opinion, has a lot of control. They are the public representatives and make the decisions that shape the country's and society's nature." One interviewee refers to the parties in the government and their perception of the conflict. "We saw in the last elections that Merez[17] did not pass the electoral threshold, and we need someone in our parliament who works and puts forward the idea of solving the conflict, not just managing it. Now we have a parliament in which no party identifies as left-wing. I currently have no representation in the parliament, not even in the opposition. Again, that's why it's existential, it's scary.".

3.2.2 Terminology

Some of the interviewees refer to the use (or lack of use) of the word "peace" and the zero-sum game mentality expressed in the "it's us or them" approach, which is also reflected in their social environment (see section 2.2). "I have no doubt that the choice of words by public representatives over the years has a significant impact on the narrative of perception. On the Israeli narrative. Why would a person think about it when it's (the word peace) not even mentioned? 'Peace' is a forbidden word; it's either 'us' or 'them'.". One of the participants identifies with this perspective: "There is a great escalation that began with the assassination of Rabin. Politicians who are afraid to talk about it and address the conflict are one of our problems. There is a cancellation of thought, of the possibility even, of coexistence in any way, regardless of the specific solution of two states for two peoples or one state for all its residents – just the thought that we will never live with two peoples, that's it. The 'it's us or them' approach is competitive, a who will take the 'throne', which in my opinion, is completely wrong. Again, a narrative of war and survival.".

Although the participants shared different opinions during the interviews, all interviewees unanimously expressed deep mistrust in the political system.

---

[16] 'Ashkenazi' – Jews who emigrated from Europe. 'Mizrahi' (also: Middle-Eastern) -Jews who emigrated from the Arab World.

[17] A left-wing political party that openly advocates against the occupation

Discussion

The cultural conjunctions established in this research seem to affect how Israelis perceive the Israeli-Palestinian conflict profoundly. There is no doubt that the first conjunction *violence*, affects the Israeli perception the most. First, the stand-alone Jewish narrative of survival explained by the participants seems to be over-fed by the reality the people find themselves living. In return, desperate people and extremists seem to feed on this opportunity and vice versa, fueling the tensions from both sides. Furthermore, as Rabin's Assassination example shows, this reality constitutes a fertilized ground for internal deepening cleavages that result in direct violence by the Israelis toward Israelis, which is reflected in mere discussions and low-key social interactions, supported by the second conjunction. It seems that the place of violence in the participants' lives challenges their existing order and pushes them to the narrative of "survival" and "victimhood", and reluctance from "the other side" as triggering events, like vehicular and stabbing attacks, seem to push the participants to fall short of their criticism on the same prevailing narratives that perpetuate the highlighted vicious circle of violence.

The second cultural conjunction, *Culture and Education*, sheds light on the participants' social environment. The participants expressed an absolute lack of space to discuss such a present issue in their life: neither school nor their youth movements provide such space, let alone the possibility of meeting "the other side". Interests of people in key positions and the improper incentives for the willing to engage with the educational system seem to hamper what could have benefitted Israelis during their youth, as students at school or in their youth movement, with a space of trial and error to construct perception, realization, or understanding, in conceptualization the conflict. Moreover, it seems that the lack of space to explore the matter highly affects the lives of Israelis outside of the educational institutions, as they describe the social climate as "heated", fed up, and overwhelmed by the topic, unwilling to discuss, hear, or share thoughts that might result in the first conjunction, *violence*, within the already-deeply-divided society.

The lack of access to such spaces seems to leave Israelis to: (1) confront with the topic *"through the first conjunction, violence, with no educational foundation leading up to it"* (2) lack a 'true' intergroup contact with "the other side" (or between themselves). As defined by Alport (1954), a 'true' contact can fully realize its potential, reduce prejudice and negative attitudes, and foster mutual understanding between groups under four optimal conditions: acquaintance, equal status, cooperation toward a common goal, and normative climate. Research shows that Alport's contact hypothesis is beneficial between groups in conflict and specifically fruitful in

the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Maoz, 2000; Hussain, 2018; Scheinin, 2023). The limited opportunities to meet Palestinians (or Arabs), however, urge the question of how many Israelis and Palestinians experience *true contact.*

The third cultural conjunction, *Conflict Resolution Attempts and Representation* urges urgent questions regarding the Israeli public's trust in its government and representatives in the parliament. The lack of interest and knowledge about the agreements leaves room for two important questions. The first is the space to explore the conflict and its fundamental themes as reflected in the second conjunction, and the second is the paradigm shift needed to render the experiences obtained in the cultural conjunction affecting the Israeli perception toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The cultural conjunctions and themes (and sub-themes) established in this research show how a reciprocal and positive relationship between the conjunctions, and more specifically between the themes behind the conjunctions, shape the Israeli conception toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (and Palestinians).

Unfortunately, the "set of shared attitudes, values, beliefs, behavioral standards, goals, and practices that characterize an institution, organization, or group" (Banks, 2012, Vol. 1, p. 510) in this regard, seems to affect negatively on the way the 'average' Israeli is affected by the cultural conjunctions defined in this paper, especially if one encounters the conflict in *violence.* It corresponds with frustration, anger, sadness, and fear, associated with the participants when hearing about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (see Appendix 4 and Figure 9).

Figure 9: *Five first feelings when hearing "the Israeli-Palestinian" conflict*

Feeling/Emotion	Responses
frustration	4
anger	4
sadness	3
fear	3
hope	2
complexity	1
indifference	1
uncertainty	1
instability	1
denial	1
ignorance	1
hopeless	1
overwhelmingness	1
helplessness	1
concern	1
Total	**26**

The findings point out that *true contact* between the groups in conflict (Israelis and Palestinians) and between Israelis among themselves is lacking. A *true contact* suggests a framework in which spaces to discuss the conflict will become accessible, and the likelihood of first encountering the conflict through *Violence,* let alone its impact, will be reduced. Mutual understanding, tolerance, and acceptance will have fertile ground to flourish and perhaps will increase *hope* which is poorly associated with conflict, among other negative feelings.

Limitations

Talking to interviewees about such a sensitive topic might feel usual as an Israeli. Israelis are born and raised in the same society, speak the same language, and share a similar understanding of themes and concepts rooted in semantic fields and terminology. On the one hand, such a thing is an advantage for a researcher. In contracts, as the topic is susceptible and comes with much weight, as this study has already shown, it could also disadvantage the research and climate in which participants take the interview. Therefore, a short anonymous feedback survey was sent to the interviewees to measure the credibility and safety the participants felt with the researcher during the interview (see Appendix 5). On a scale of one (low satisfaction) to ten (high satisfaction), it seems like the participants *felt that the researcher conducted the interview professionally, without biases or prompts* (9), and *felt comfortable to share whatever was on their mind, freely, during the interview* (9).

Another challenge in conducting the interviews was the "cuts" and "breaks" performed by all participants interviewed. Participants were likely to cut themselves off nonstop and talk over themselves. They seemed to struggle to explain an idea or share an experience clearly, in most cases, even simple ones. This experience raises questions about the notion that Israelis lack space to speak freely on the subject for various reasons that this research is unable to cover.

Conclusion

The Israeli-Palestinian 100-year conflict seems to be far from over. The Israeli and Palestinian groups before the 1947 War were subject to political interests, empires with international authorization, and powers that not only manipulated and exploited them but also played a significant role in pushing the groups towards a long road full of disputes over land and recognition. Until today, these narratives are expressed by the terms used to relate to the 1947 War: the War of Independence to one is the Day of Catastrophe (*Nakba*) to the other. The narrative of existence has now reached a new rock bottom. By the time methods and actions were taken by the groups to fulfill their narratives, thousands and millions of people paid heavy

prices before, during, and after the 1947 War: continuous wars in the region, war crimes, terror, displacement, refugees, and more. Other wars broke out and deepened the gap between the Israelis and Palestinians. One of the wars that serves as a central junction in the discussions on the conflict is the 1967 War. Following the status of Palestinians in the aftermath of the 1967 War, the 1993 Oslo Accords, in essence, was a beacon of hope thanks to the Israeli and Palestinian representatives at the time. This turning point is not attributed to the debatable Oslo Accords agreement but to the leaders behind it, Yitzhak Rabin and Yasir Arafat. Rabin and Arafat decided to cast doubt on the familiar narrative and habits, challenge the existing order, and "give the other side a face". The step that began to break down the reality of enmity and unfamiliarity between the groups found its expression primarily in mutual recognition letters between the parties, providing the first evidence in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for recognition and coexistence between the peoples. The eyes of the world were drawn to what was happening while a narrative of peace and hope for a better future took shape. However, despite the attempt of the Oslo Accords to be the first milestone in what was supposed to lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel went up in smoke. The vision of the Oslo Accords stopped for various reasons, and East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip remained under Israeli control. Their Palestinian inhabitants are subject to various laws and statuses under Israel up to these days. The groups continue to live the reality of enmity that began during the colonial period at the beginning of the previous century.

Under the reality of conflict intertwined with the daily lives of (predominantly) 15 million people in the region, this research studied the cultural conjunctions that shape and influence Israelis' perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from an ethnographic point of view. Therefore, the three conjunctions (1) violence, (2) culture and education, and (3) conflict resolution attempts were established in this paper, alongside fourteen related themes generated from the data collected from the group studied in this research, Israelis, through surveys and interviews.

The main part of the research investigated these conjunctions to understand (1) how they affect Israelis' perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in their experience and (2) why they believe these conjunctions are maintained in their current form in Israeli society these days. According to the survey and interviews, the conjunction with the most significant impact on the Israelis' experience is *Violence*, which refers to a reality saturated with frustration, anger,

sadness, and fear, as expressed by the participants. "everyone knows someone who knows someone who is a casualty or has been severely affected by the conflict" - a recurring motive in the interviews.

 The second conjunction, *culture and education*, shows a direct connection to the potential exposure of Israelis to the conflict through *Violence*: a lack of accessibility to knowledge and spaces for discussing the conflict leads to damages in various realms. On the individual level, one appears to lack space to shape a personal perception of the subject, leaving them to encounter the conflict through narratives of survival and warfare. The other one is the collective level, on which an Israeli comes in contact with their respective equal groups and subgroups. They experience polarization and deep cleavages, which do not allow a safe space for sharing thoughts and opinions, let alone the "hostile" and unsafe environment that is already deepening the polarization between the groups: "with 'your own' people, you are careful and consider with whom you can discuss certain topics.". The last dimension is between Israelis and Palestinians (and Arabs) in the region, where violence conjunctions and its related themes often prevail.

The third conjunction, *conflict resolution and representation*, also raised questions in this study. It seems that the lack of knowledge on the subject of agreements among the respondents strengthens the conclusions drawn in the second conjunction (regarding lack of access to knowledge and spaces for discussing the subject). Additionally, it appears that public representatives shape their careers, and thus the future of the country and its people, based on the fundamentals of the themes related to *Violence*. By doing so, they are maintaining the existing situation, whereas those who wish to take the path Rabin and Arafat took no longer seem to be a part of the political game, neither regarding its representatives nor in terms of terminology.

The discussion above raises urgent questions regarding the reciprocal relationship connecting several conjunctions and themes this research could not further investigate. Above all, the *violence* conjunction stands out, feeding on the deficiencies and flaws of other themes and conjunctions that hold the potential to reduce its major presence in Israelis' lives. Moreover, this conjunction shapes their perception of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the most. It emerges from the discussion that the second conjunction, particularly the *education system* theme, holds the potential to shift the paradigm or at least reduce the potential to have Israelis introduced to the conflict with no "foundation(s) leading up to it.". Nevertheless, more spaces enabling *true*

contact between the sides are severely lacking, mainly among Israelis with themselves. Safe spaces for discussing, let alone merely sharing thoughts safely and freely. At worse, access to knowledge and engagement would at least reduce the estrangement from the subject, potentially opening the floor for new questions, whatever they may be. However, further research on *true contact* and its potential to succeed between subgroups from the same group needs to occur in addition to other research alternatives this study suggests.

References

- Allport, G.W., (1954). The nature of prejudice. Addison-Wesley.

- Alroey, G. (2014). *An unpromising Land: Jewish migration to Palestine in the early twentieth century*. Stanford University Press.

- Alyan, N., Sela, R., & Pomerantz, M. (2012). Policies of neglect in east Jerusalem: The policies that created 78% poverty rates and a frail job market. *Association for Civil Rights in Israel*.

- Association for Civil Rights in Israel. (2023, May). *ירושלים המזרחית - תמונת מצב* . Retrieved May 30, 2023, from https://01368b10-57e4-4138-acc3-01373134d221.usrfiles.com/ugd/01368b_d9eecea1c6bf4038ac0f3931ff8f1d41.pdf

- B'Tselem. (2019, January 16). *Settlements*. B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Retrieved June 5, 2023, from https://www.btselem.org/settlements

- B'Tselem. (2015). *Conquer and Divide*. B'Tselem – the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Retrieved June 7, 2023, from https://conquer-and-divide.btselem.org/map-en.html

- Banks, J. A. (2012). Cultural consciousness. In *Encyclopedia of diversity in education* (Vol. 1, pp. 510-510). SAGE Publications, Inc., https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781452218533.n160

- Beker, A. (2005). The forgotten narrative: Jewish refugees from Arab countries. *Jewish Political Studies Review*, 3-19.

- Ben-Dror, E. (2007). How the United Nations intended to implement the partition plan: The handbook drawn up by the secretariat for the members of the United Nations Palestine commission. *Middle Eastern Studies*, *43*(6), 997-1008.

- Ben-Zvi, O. (2019, February 11). *מוזר שיש לנו מדינה ואין לנו אזרחים": חוק " - 1952 האזרחות, התשי"ב-1952*. משרד המשפטים. Retrieved May 18, 2023, from https://www.gov.il/he/Departments/publications/reports/roots_1952

- Berdine, M. D. (2018). *Redrawing the Middle East: Sir Mark Sykes, Imperialism and the Sykes-Picot Agreement*. Bloomsbury Publishing.

- Bernstein, R. J. (1996). *Hannah Arendt and the Jewish question*. Mit Press.

- Bickerton, I. J., & Klausner, C. L. (2015). *A history of the Arab–Israeli conflict*. Taylor & Francis.

- Brustein, W. I., & King, R. D. (2004). Antisemitism in Europe before the Holocaust. *International Political Science Review*, *25*(1), 35-53.

- Carmi, N. (2003).חוק השבות: זכויות הגירה וגבולותיהן. אוניברסיטת תל אביב.

- Clinton, A. P. (1994). The White House Ceremony. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *23*(2), 119-124.

- Cohen, M. J. (Ed.). (2020). *The British Mandate in Palestine: A Centenary Volume, 1920–2020*. Routledge.

- Cohen, N. W. (1951). The reaction of Reform Judaism in America to political Zionism (1897-1922). *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society*, *40*(4), 361-394.

- Crozier, A. J. (1979). The Establishment of the Mandates System 1919-25: Some Problems Created by the Paris Peace Conference. *Journal of Contemporary History*, *14*(3), 483-513.

- Dudeen, B., Lacirignola, C., Montanarella, L., Steduto, P., & Zdruli, P. (2001). The soils of Palestine (The West Bank and Gaza Strip) current status and future perspectives. *Soil Resources of Southern and Eastern Mediterranean Countries*, 203-233.

- Eisenberg, L. Z., & Caplan, N. (2020). Arab-Zionist negotiations during the Mandate: An unbridgeable divide. In *The British Mandate in Palestine* (pp. 269-284). Routledge.

- Fein, H. (Ed.). (1987). *The persisting question: sociological perspectives and social contexts of modern antisemitism* (Vol. 1). Walter de Gruyter.

- Forman, G., & Kedar, A. (2003). Colonialism, colonization and land law in mandate Palestine: The Zor al-Zarqa and Barrat Qisarya land disputes in historical perspective. *Theoretical Inquiries in Law*, *4*(2).

- Gelvin, J. L. (2020). *The Modern Middle East. A history.* (Fifth edition), Oxford University Press.

- Ghanem, A. A. (2013). Palestinian nationalism: An overview. *Israel Studies*, *18*(2), 11-29.

- Ginat, A. (2018). British Mandate for Palestine. *International Encyclopedia of the First World War, Freie Universität Berlin.[online] Berlin*.

- Hasson, N. (2010, November 4). כך מסייעת המדינה לעמותות הימין להתנחל במזרח ירושלים - תחקירים . *Haaretz* הארץ . Retrieved May 29, 2023, from

- https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/investigations/2010-11-05/ty-article/0000017f-e908-df5f-a17f-fbdeb6bd0000

- Hasson, N. (2023, May 3). עמותת ימין מקדמת הקמת שכונה במזרח ירושלים, בתמיכת משרד המשפטים . *Haaretz* הארץ . Retrieved May 30, 2023, from https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/politics/2023-05-03/ty-article/.premium/00000187-d8c5-d9b4-abaf-f8ff162f0000

- Hasson, N., & Freidson, Y. (2022, August 28). עמותת אלע"ד משתלטת על יעד נוסף, והרשויות יוצאות מגדרן כדי לסייע לה . *Haaretz*. Retrieved May 30, 2023, from https://www.haaretz.co.il/news/local/2022-08-28/ty-article/.premium/00000182-e0ab-dc3e-abf7-e0bfac1f0000

- Hoffman, V. J. (2019). *Making the new Middle East: politics, culture, and human rights*. Syracuse University Press.

- Hussain, N. (2018). *Giving the other a human face: a counselling psychology perspective on the potential benefit of an intergroup encounter intervention between Israelis and Palestinians in Cyprus* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Roehampton).

- Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. (2021, December 30). *Population of Israel 2022*. Retrieved June 5, 2023, from https://www.cbs.gov.il/en/mediarelease/Pages/2021/Population-of-Israel-on-the-Eve-of-2022.aspx

- Karsh, E. (2020). How San Remo Birthed the Jewish National Home. *Middle East Quarterly*.

- Katsman, H. (2020). The Hyphen Cannot Hold: Contemporary Trends in Religious-Zionism. *Israel Studies Review*, *35*(2), 154-174.

- Kelly, T. (2006). *Law, violence and sovereignty among West Bank Palestinians*. Cambridge University Press.

- Kemp, A., Ram, U., Newman, D., & Yiftachel, O. (2014). *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities and Challenges*. Sussex Academic Press.

- Knesset, T. (n.d.). *Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers*. Retrieved June 4, 2023, from https://main.knesset.gov.il/EN/About/Lexicon/Pages/MemorialDay.aspx

- Kochavi, A. J. (1998). The struggle against Jewish immigration to Palestine. *Middle Eastern Studies*, *34*(3), 146-167.

- Krämer, G. (2008). *A history of Palestine: From the Ottoman conquest to the founding of the state of Israel*. Princeton University Press.

- Lewin, E. (2016). The inevitable dead end of the Arab-Israeli conflict. *Cogent Social Sciences*, *2*(1), 1227294.

- Lewin, E. (2016a). The mental cleavage of Israeli politics. *Israel affairs*, *22*(2), 355-378.

- Lissak, M., & Horowitz, D. (1989). *Trouble in utopia: The overburdened polity of Israel*. State University of New York Press.

- Louis, W. R. (1984). *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

- Maoz, I. (2000). Multiple conflicts and competing agendas: A framework for conceptualizing structured encounters between groups in conflict-the case of a coexistence project of Jews and Palestinians in Israel. *Peace and Conflict: Journal of peace psychology*, *6*(2), 135-156.

- McTague, J. J. (1980). Zionist-British Negotiations over the Draft Mandate for Palestine, 1920. *Jewish Social Studies*, *42*(3/4), 281-292.

- Meir-Glitzenstein, E. (2018). Turning points in the historiography of Jewish immigration from Arab countries to Israel. *Israel Studies*, *23*(3), 114-122.

- Milton-Edwards, B., & Hinchcliffe, P. (2007). *Conflicts in the Middle East since 1945*. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

- Morris, B. (2008). *1948: a history of the first Arab-Israeli war*. Yale University Press.

- Myers, D. P. (1921). The Mandate System of the League of Nations. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *96*(1), 74-77.

- Nicosia, F. (1980). Arab Nationalism and National Socialist Germany, 1933–1939: Ideologic and Strategic Incompatibility: The Weimar Precedent. *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *12*(3), 351-372.

- Nicosia, F. R. (2015). *Nazi Germany and the Arab World*. Cambridge University Press.

- Noy, M. (2022, November 27). *מבנה מערכת החינוך, חקיקה מרכזית ונתונים כלליים*. The Knesset Research and Information Center (RIC). Retrieved June 4, 2023, from https://fs.knesset.gov.il/globaldocs/MMM/9bda3de0-dd37-ed11-8153-005056aa4246/2_9bda3de0-dd37-ed11-8153-005056aa4246_11_19791.pdf

- Ofran, H. (2021, December 25). *התנחלות במסווה של תיירות - סיפורה של עמותת אלע"ד*. *בסילוואן - שלום עכשיו* . שלום עכשיו Retrieved May 29, 2023, from https://peacenow.org.il/who-is-elad-el-ir-david-organization

- Our Soldiers. (2018, April). *What is Yom HaZikaron and how does Israel observe it?* Retrieved June 4, 2023, from https://www.idf.il/en/mini-sites/our-soldiers/what-is-yom-hazikaron-and-how-does-israel-observe-it/#:~:text=Yom%20HaZikaron%2C%20which%20goes%20by,honor%20those%20they' ve%20lost.

- Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics. (2022, July 7). *Number of the Palestinian Population*. Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS). Retrieved June 5, 2023, from https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_InterPopDay2022E.pdf

- *Party platform - Religious Zionist Party*. (2022, October 31). מפלגת הציונות הדתית . https://zionutdatit.org.il/en/party-platform/

- Peace Research Institute in the Middle East (n.d), *The 1948 War – Two Narratives*

- Porath, Y. (2020). *The Emergence of the Palestinian-Arab National Movement, 1918-1929 (RLE Israel and Palestine)*. Routledge.

- Rapaport, M. (2005, March 30). The selling of Lot 62 - Haaretz Com. *Haaretz.com*. https://www.haaretz.com/2005-03-31/ty-article/the-selling-of-lot-62/0000017f-df05-db5a-a57f-df6f53fb0000

- Regan, B. (2017). *The Balfour Declaration: Empire, the mandate and resistance in Palestine*. Verso Books.

- Rosler, N. (2016). Leadership and peacemaking: Yitzhak Rabin and the Oslo Accords. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, *54*, 55-67.

- Rothstein, R. L. (2006). *How Not to Make Peace:" conflict Syndrome" and the Demise of the Oslo Accords* (Vol. 31). United States Institute of Peace.

- Rubin, B. (1991). Pan-Arab nationalism: The ideological dream as compelling force. *Journal of Contemporary History*, *26*(3), 535-551.

- Salehnia, M. (2012). Political Zionism and Fiction: A Study of John Updike's Terrorist. *Journal of Language Teaching & Research*, *3*(3).

- Scheinin, O. (2023, January). *Role of Dialogue in Conflict Resolution*. Stichting COME. Retrieved June 5, 2023, from https://stichting-come.nl/role-of-dialogue-in-conflict-resolution/

- *Security Service Law*. (2022, March 24). מתגייסים. Retrieved June 2, 2023, from https://www.mitgaisim.idf.il/%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%A9%D7%99/%D7%96%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%99%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%95%D7%97%D7%95%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%97%D7%95%D7%A7-%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA-%D7%91%D7%99%D7%98%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9F/#/

- Shlaim, A. (1987). Britain and the Arab-Israeli war of 1948. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, *16*(4), 50-76.

- Shlaim, A. (2005). The Balfour Declaration and its consequences. *Yet more adventures with Britannia: Personalities, politics and culture in Britain*, 251-270.

- Shlaim, A. (2015). *The iron wall: Israel and the Arab world*. Penguin UK.

- Sinanoglou, P. (2009). British plans for the partition of Palestine, 1929–1938. *The Historical Journal*, *52*(1), 131-152.

- Sneineh, M. A. (2022, January 21). *How Israel's Absentees' Property Law keeps Palestinians from their homes*. Middle East Eye. https://www.middleeasteye.net/news/israel-palestinian-absentees-property-law-eviction-homes-explained#:~:text=With%20more%20than%20a%20dozen,to%20leave%20behind%20in%201948.

- *The Covenant of the League of Nations | UN GENEVA*. (1920, February). UN GENEVA. Retrieved April 25, 2023, from https://www.ungeneva.org/en/about/league-of-nations/covenant#:~:text=The%20Covenant%20constituted%20of%20a,achieve%20international%20peace%20and%20security%E2%80%9D.

- The Parents Circle – Families Forum (PCFF). (2022, March 24). *https://www.theparentscircle.org/en/pcff-activities_eng/memorial-ceremony_eng/*. The Joint Memorial Day Ceremony. Retrieved June 2, 2023, from https://www.mitgaisim.idf.il/%D7%9B%D7%AA%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%A8%D7%90%D7%A9%D7%99/%D7%96%D7%9B%D7%95%D7%99%D7%95

%D7%AA-
%D7%95%D7%97%D7%95%D7%91%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%97%D7%95%D7
%A7-%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%AA-
%D7%91%D7%99%D7%98%D7%97%D7%95%D7%9F/#/

- UN. Secretary-General (League of Nations. Council). (1947, April 18). *Text of Mandate [for Palestine] : note / by the Secretary-General: Mandate for Palestine (1922)*. United Nations Digital Library System. Retrieved April 26, 2023, from https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/829707?ln=en

- White, N. (2014). *Decolonisation: the British experience since 1945*. Routledge.

- Wilson, W. (1918). Fourteen Points Speech, January 8, 1918. *The American Presidency Project*.

- Yavuz, R. (2017). Effects of the Decisions of San Remo Conference on Syria and Iraq. *Tarih İncelemeleri Dergisi*, *32*(2), 565-600.

- Zeid, M., & Thawaba, S. (2018). Planning under a colonial regime in Palestine: Counter planning/decolonizing the West Bank. *Land Use Policy*, *71*, 11-23.

- *עניי עירך קודמין"? : על קבלת פליטים"* | *Sefaria*. (2020, February 13). https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/216801.4?lang=bi&with=all&lang2=en

Appendixes

Appendix 1 – Survey in Hebrew

Appendix 2 – Survey Responses (Hebrew)

See next page

צומת	נושאים	תגובות			סה"כ
אלימות 50 (**צומת I**)	**מלחמות**	ניצחון6הימים	מלחמת העצמאות	מלחמות	
		ששת הימים	שלל מלחמות ישראל	מלחמת יום כיפורים	
		מבצעים צבאיים ומלחמות	מבצע צוק איתן	ששת הימים	
		מלחמת העצמאות	צוק איתן	מלחמת ששת הימים	12
	אינתיפאדות	האינתיפאדה הראשונה	אינתיפאדה	אינתיפאדה שנייה	
		The second intifada from 2001	האינתיפאדה ה2	האינתיפאדה השנייה	
		האינתיפאדות	האינתיפאדה	האינתיפאדה השניה	
		איתיפאדה	האינתיפאדה 1	האינתיפאדה השניה	
		מאורעות תר"פ	אינתיפאדות		14
	פיגועים/חטיפות	פיגוע חבלני	פיגועים	פיגוע טרור	
		פיגוע טרור	לינץ' רמאללה	פיגועים	
		פיגועים	פיגועים	אירוע חטיפה	
		פיגוע טרור	חטיפת 3 הנערים	הפיגוע בפורים בדיזינגוף	
		אירוע חטיפה	תקופת הטרור והפיגועים באוטובוסים ומקומות ציבור	אירוע חטיפה	
		פיגועי שנות 2000	חטיפת שלושת הנערים	פיגועים/ מלחמות ישראל	
		פיגוע טרור			19
	סכסוכים	*Hamas shooting missles towards Ashdod and then the rest of Israel*	המרמרה	המהומות באוורה	
		הרשות הפלסטינית	אירועים ביטחוניים בתוך ישראל	ירושלים והר הבית בפרט	
		שליחת טילים			7
	קוטביות פוליטית	רצח רבין	רצח רבין	הסכמי אוסלו ורצח רבין	
		רצח רבין	רצח רבין	קיצוניות	
		רצח רבין	רצח רבין	אימותם/בידול לימין שמאל	
		רצח רבין	רצח רבין	ההסתה של הימין / ביבי	13
		רצח רבין			
סה"כ					**65**
חינוך ותרבות (**צומת II**)	**מועדים**	יום השואה	הקמת המדינה	דת ומדינה	
		השואה	קום המדינה	יום העצמאות	
		השואה	מדינה יהודית דמוקרטית	הכחשת הנכבה	
		יום השואה	יהדות	יום הזיכרון	
		הקמת המדינה			13
	סביבה חברתית	בית ספר	חשיפה בגיל הילדות, יחס הורים וסביבה	חינוך לשנאה	
		בית ספר	תנועות נוער	חינוך לטרור	
		חינוך חברתי	אלימות במגזר הערבי		8
סה"כ					**21**

ניסיון למו"מ / הסכמים ונציגי	הסכמים	אנאפוליס	הסכמי אוסלו '93	תהליך השלום עם מדינות הערביות הרחוקות איחוד האמאויות	9
		הסכמי אוסלו	קמפ דיוויד	בחריין	
		הסכמי אוסלו	הסכם אוסלו	השלום עם מדינות המפרץ	
		הסכמי אוסלו			
ציבור (צומת III)	נבחרי ציבור	הבחירות האחרונות בישראל (וההקצנה של העולם הערבי)	פוליטיקה	חמאס	7
		76גוש אמונים	דונלד טראמפ		
		בחירות לממשלה	Hamas winning the elections		
סה"כ					**16**
השפעת האימפריה הבריטית		תקופת שלטון הבריטים בארץ ישראל	החלטת החלוקה	הצהרת בלפור	3
התנתקות		התנתקות	תוכנית ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	13
		ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	
		תהליך ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	היציאה מעזה וגוש קטיף	
		ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	ההתנתקות	
		התנתקות			
התנחלות		ההתנחלות	הקמת יישובים יהודים באזורים ערבים		2
צבא		שירות צבאי	צבא	הטיול הגדול אחרי צבא	9
		חוק גיוס חובה/שירות לאומי לישראלים שאינם ערבים מונע נקודת	שרות צבאי בסדיר ובמילואים בשטחים	צבא	
		פתיחה זהה לי"עולם האמיתי" מערבים ישראלים	שלושת הלמדים		
		צבא	צבא		
תקשורת		תקשורת-חדשות	התקשורת	רשתות חברתיות	4
		כלי התקשורת			
אחר		טיפול בחולים מהרשות בבתי חולים ישראלים	הר הבית	חלוקת ממתקים	8
		ביטחון לאומי	למען שלום	דעות משפחה	
		ארגוני שמאל קיצון (BDS)	זכיית דנה אינטרנשיונל באירוויזיון		
סה"כ					**39**

סה"כ 141 תגובות מ- 47 משיבים

Appendix 3 – Survey Responses (English)

See next page

Conjunctions	Themes	Responses			Total
Violence (Conjunction No. 1)	**Wars**	*6-Days-victory (war)*	*The Independence War*	*Wars*	53
		Six Days	*The Israel Wars*	*Yom Kippur War*	
		Military operations and wars	*Operation Protective Edge*	*Six Days (war)*	
		The Independence War	*Protective Edge*	*Six Days War*	12
	Intifadas	*The First Intifada*	*Intifada*	*Second Intifada*	
		The second intifada from 2001	*The 2 Intifada*	*The Second Intifada*	
		The Intifada	*The Intifadas*	*The Second Intifada*	
		Intifada	*The 1 Intifada*	*The Second Intifada*	
		Jaffa Riots (Me'oraot Tarpa)	*Intifadas*		14
	Terror Attacks & Abductions	*Bomb Attack*	*Attacks*	*Terror attacks*	
		Terror attacks	*Ramallah Lynching*	*Attacks*	
		Attacks	*Attacks*	*Kidnap event*	
		Terror attack	*The three teenagers' kidnap*	*Purim Attack in Dizengoff*	
		Abduction	*The terror period in buses and public places*	*Kidnap event*	
		The 2000 Terror Attacks	*The three teenagers' kidnap*	*Attacks/Israel wars*	
		Terror Attack			19
	Conflicts	*Hamas shooting missles towards Ashdod and then the rest of Israel*	*Gaza flotilla raid*	*Huwara rampage*	
		The Palestinian Authority (PNA)	*Security events in Israel*	*Jerusalem and the Temple Mount specifically*	
		Rocket attacks			7
	Political Polarization	*Rabin's assassination*	*Rabin's assassination*	*Oslo Accords and Rabin's assassination*	
		Rabin's assassination	*Rabin's assassination*	*Extremism*	
		Rabin's assassination	*Rabin's assassination*	*Disputes/cleavage between 'right' and 'left'*	
		Rabin's assassination	*Rabin's assassination*	*The incitement of Bibi / the right*	13
		Rabin's assassination			
Total					**65**
Education & Culture (Conjunction No. 2)	**Historical Events / National Days**	*The Holocaust Day*	*The country's establishment*	*Church & state*	
		The Holocaust	*The country's establishment*	*Independence Day*	
		The Holocaust	*Democratic Jewish state*	*The Nakbah denial*	
		The Holocaust	*Judaism*	*Memorial Day*	
		The country's establishment			13
	Social Environment	*School*	*Childhood's exposure, parents' attitude, and environment*	*Hate education*	
		School		*Terror education*	
		Social education	*Youth movements*		
			Violence in the Arab sector		8

Total				**21**
Conflict Resolution Attempts & Agency (Conjunction No. 3)	**Agreement Attempts**	*Annapolis Conference* *Oslo Accords* *Oslo Accords* *Oslo Accords*	*'93 Oslo Accords* *Camp David* *Oslo Accords*	*The peace process with the far Arab states and* *UAE* *Bahrain* *The Peace with the Guld states*	9
	Agency	*The last Israeli elections (and the Arab World escalation)* *'76 Gush Emunim* *Elections*	*Politics* *Donald Tramp* *Hamas winning the elections*	*Hamas*	7
Total					**16**
	The Influence of the British Empire	*The British Mandate in Israel*	*The Partition Plan*	*Balfour Declaration*	3
	The Israeli Disengagement from Gaza	*Disengagement* *The disengagement* *The disengagement process* *The disengagement* *Disengagement*	*The disengagement plan* *The disengagement* *The disengagement* *The disengagement*	*The disengagement* *The disengagement* *The Gaza withdrawal and Gush Katif* *The disengagement*	13
	The Settlements	*The settlement*	*The establishment of Jewish outputs in Arab areas*		2
	Military (the IDF)	*Army Service* *Different starting point of Arabs and Israelis who join the army/do year of service* *Military*	*Military* *Army and reserve service in the territories* *The three "Ls" (שלושת הלמדים)* *Military*	*The 'big trip' after the army* *Military*	9
	Media	*Press-news* *Press and media*	*The press*	*Social media*	4
	Other	*Treating ills from the (Palestinian) authority in Israeli hospitals* *National security* *Radical left orgs. (BDS)*	*The Temple Mount* *For peace* *Dana International Victory in the Eurovision*	*Candy distribution* *Family's opinions*	8
Total					**39**

141 responses, 47 respondents

Appendix 4 - Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Introduction:

1. Introducing yourself
   a. *Name, student, focusing on the academic life*
   b. *Please make sure you are comfortable*

2. Explain the purpose of the research:
   a. *I am doing research in which I intend to understand the "cultural conjunctions"* shaping the Israeli perspective toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
      i. *Explain Cultural conjunction*

3. What will be the outcome of the research?
   a. *I am conducting this interview in order to understand these conjunctions better*
   b. *I am conducting this interview to write my bachelor thesis on the topic*
   c. *Additionally, I am planning to share the findings with CF and might publish the research*

4. What will be done with the data collected?
   a. *I am going to ask you questions about your experience. Please feel free to share anything.*
   b. *I am gonna ask you for your age, gender, region of residency, and political standpoint (security side). Is it ok if I use in my research?*
   c. *I will take notes of what you are, and as my project is ethnographic, I will heavily use quotes.*

5. Consent
   a. *The information I get during this interview will be used anonymously and it will be kept confidential. Meaning only I will have access to this data.*
   b. *Do you consent to the interview?*

c. *If at any point during or after the interview, you decide not to participate any more or you do not feel comfortable with me using your input, let me know before May 15, and I will delete the notes*

d. *Do you have any questions before we start?*

Questions:

Background information:

1. Age, gender, region of residency, political standpoint

Opening questions:

1. How are you doing?

2. Are you feeling OK with this interview?

3. Remind the participants: I know it might be a sensitive topic. Feel free to share whatever, I am here to listen to you and to learn from your experience and outlook.

4. Present the structure of the questions (open questions, share as much as you want). I am going to ask the same two questions on each conjunction:

   a. *How does the X conjunction, XXXX, shape the perception among Israelis toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in your experience?*

   i. *עברית: איך לדעתך, הצומת ה-X, מעצבת את התפיסה של ישראלים את הסכסוך הישראלי פלסטיני, מהחוויה שלך?*

   b. *How (or why) do you think the conjunction XXXX exists in its current form in Israeli society these days?*

   i. *עברית: איך, או למה, אתה חושב שהצומת ה-X, מתקיימת בצורה הזו בחברה הישראלית, לדעתך?*

5. *Before we start, I remind you of the three cultural conjunctions (violence, culture and education, conflict resolution attempts, and governmental representation. I am going to show you the table of responses I used from the survey to generate the conjunctions. You will see the themes as well. You can use the themes to elaborate or refer to them in regard to the conjunction, but you don't have to. Speak your heart and mind freely.*

6. Share the screen and show the responses table.

Key questions:

1. What are your first five feelings when you hear "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict"?
2. *How does the 1st conjunction, XXXX, shape the perception among Israelis toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in your experience?*
3. *How (or why) do you think the conjunction XXXX exists in its current form in Israeli society these days?*
4. *How does the 2nd conjunction, XXXX, shape the perception among Israelis toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in your experience?*
5. *How (or why) do you think the conjunction XXXX exists in its current form in Israeli society these days?*
6. *How does the 3rd conjunction, XXXX, shape the perception among Israelis toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in your experience?*
7. *How (or why) do you think the conjunction XXXX exists in its current form in Israeli society these days?*
8. Anything to add to the above?
9. Do you think that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict will be resolved?

   *Probes: any other themes, how themes affected people you know…

Closing questions:

1. How was it for you? What do you feel?
2. Thank you for participating.

Appendix 5 – Feedback Survey on the Interview

השתתפות במחקר: עיצוב התודעה הישראלית בנושא
הסכסוך הישראלי-פלסטיני

5 responses

Publish analytics

To what extent did you feel like the researcher conducted the interview professionally, without biases or prompts?
5 responses

To what extent did you feel comfortable to share whatever is on your mind, freely, during the interview?
5 responses

Thank you for your participation