

FRAMING PEACE AND VIOLENCE IN INTRACTABLE CONFLICT: TOWARDS AN  
UNDERSTANDING OF PERCEPTIONS IN PALESTINIAN UNIVERSITIES

by

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## THESIS ABSTRACT

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This thesis explores the perceptions of Palestinian university students on topics of peace with Israel and armed or violent conflict engagement strategies. By relying on Frame Analysis literature, this research describes how respondents currently frame these issues and what has influenced the formation of these frames. Using data gathered over a period of three months through a survey and focus group interviews, I identify four dominant frames of peace expressed by respondents. Data were collected from 260 survey respondents and 160 interviewees. I use the data to show different levels of desire for peace with Israel and support for armed conflict engagement based on the way that individuals defined peace. Respondents were pessimistic about peace with Israel and supportive of violent engagement with Israel. Participants who defined peace negatively expressed these sentiments more frequently. Interviewees expressed several grievances against Israeli policies that influence their opinions on peace and violence.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Frame Analysis.....	3
Background and Context .....	6
Project Overview.....	14
II. LITERATURE REVEIW .....	16
Overview of Frame Analysis .....	16
Frame Analysis in Conflict Resolution.....	20
Framing Violence and Armed Movements .....	26
Framing Peace.....	29
III. METHODOLOGY.....	34
The Survey .....	35
Group Interviews .....	37
Data Collection.....	38
Population.....	40
Data Analysis .....	40
Limitations.....	41
IV. RESULTS.....	45
Justification of Frame Analysis .....	45
Framing Peace.....	47



Chapter	Page
Peace as an Issue of Human Rights and Equality .....	50
Peace as an Issue of Freedom and Liberation.....	51
Freedom as an End to Fighting.....	53
Peace as a Loss or Concession .....	54
Framing Violence and Armed Struggle .....	57
Peace Frames and Violence .....	62
Views on the Two-State Solution.....	64
V. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.....	68
Further Research .....	76
Conclusion.....	78
APPENDICES .....	84
A. THE SURVEY .....	84
B. GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT .....	89
REFERENCES CITED .....	91

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
4.1. Violence for Defensive Purposes .....	47
4.2. Violence as a Last Resort.....	47
4.3. Peace Frames.....	48
4.4. All Respondents: Likelihood of Peace.....	49
4.5. All Respondents: Desire for Peace .....	49
4.6. Rights and Equality Frame: Likelihood of Peace with Israel .....	51
4.7. Rights and Equality Frame: Desire for Peace with Israel.....	51
4.8. Freedom and Liberation Frame: Likelihood of Peace with Israel .....	53
4.9. Freedom and Liberation Frame: Desire for Peace with Israel.....	53
4.10. No Violence Frame: Likelihood of Peace with Israel .....	54
4.11. No Violence Frame: Desire for Peace with Israel.....	54
4.12. Loss or Concession Frame: Likelihood of Peace with Israel.....	56
4.13. Loss or Concession Frame Desire for Peace with Israel .....	56
4.14. The PA Should Support Militancy .....	59
4.15. Violence Should be Used as a Resistance Strategy .....	59
4.16. Violence Against Soldiers .....	61
4.17. Violence Against Israelis on Occupied Land .....	61
4.18. Violence Against all Israelis.....	61
4.19. Likelihood of Two-States .....	65
4.20. Desire for Two-States.....	65
4.21. Change With Two-States.....	65

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
4.1. Frame Group Comparisons: Likelihood of Peace with Israel .....	57
4.2. Frame Group Comparisons: Desire for Peace with Israel.....	57
4.3. Frame Comparisons: Likelihood of Two State Solution.....	67
4.4. Frame Comparisons: Desire for Two State Solution .....	67
4.5. Frame Comparisons: Results of Two State Solution .....	67

# CHAPTER I

## INTRODUCTION

By any measure, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict appears to be extremely far from resolution. With the continuing stall of negotiating processes and growing skepticism that any viable two-state option exists, the future of this persisting conflict seems as bleak as ever. If and when there is to be a negotiation process that produces comprehensive peace in this region, there will have to be major shifts in the way that all parties involved, including intermediating parties, approach the process. For a real peace process is to occur, all parties to the conflict will need to understand the way that their counterparts understand some of the major components of peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Among these significant components are peace and armed or violent conflict engagement strategies.

In what follows, I attempt to explain the way that peace and armed, or violent, resistance have come to be perceived by Palestinian university students in the West Bank. Because these concepts are by no means static and continue to be influenced and transformed by various factors, a framework for exploring the current circumstances and potential future developments is necessary.

Before continuing, it must be noted that the scope of this project is relatively limited. My intention, especially when discussing issues of armed or unarmed resistance, is purely descriptive. Discussions regarding whether or not violent engagement is viable or advisable are beyond the scope of this thesis. Further, I do not seek to prescribe a final solution to the conflict. Instead, I focus on one of the

first steps of the resolution process- basic understandings of key peacebuilding concepts and conflict engagement tactics.

A central assumption that I begin with is that holistic peace, or peace that necessarily involves an end to both direct, overt acts of violence and hostilities, as well as systemic or structural violence that negatively impacts livelihood, can never be developed if it is not consented to by a significant majority of the people who make up each party.<sup>1</sup> In other words, if an agreement has not gained legitimacy of the populous, it cannot be expected to hold. Though agreements and handshakes of the leaders and figureheads are good and positive steps, they alone will not guarantee that just, or holistic, peace can be implemented. Rather, individuals living in conflict situations must understand peace with the other parties as positive and desirable (Lederach, 2005). Relevant to the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is essential to uncover the ways in which each party understands peace with the other, and the tactics that they believe to be most viable, whether violent or nonviolent. Operating with this knowledge will allow the mediating parties to design peacebuilding initiatives that can address each party's significant hesitations and concerns about the other party and the future of the relationship.

The goals of this thesis are three-fold. First, using the data collected, I will give a concise description of the way that Palestinians currently enrolled in universities in the West Bank understand issues of peace and violence. Second, I

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this thesis, I will use a few different terms to describe peace, such as true peace, holistic peace, or just peace. What I hope to communicate through this is that a peace agreement that does not include issues of freedom, security, and justice for all people in a relationship is something different than peace, regardless of the presence of direct acts of violence. In the Palestinian-Israeli context, it may be too early to talk in terms of holistic peace. However, many of the less direct forms

will discuss the factors that have influenced the formation of the conceptions of peace and violence based on information gathered in group interviews. Finally, I will comment on factors that may affect the future development the ways in which Palestinians frame peace and violence, both positively and negatively. This thesis is substantially descriptive but may prove valuable to Palestinians, Israelis, and parties wishing to act as intermediaries. If true, just, and holistic peace is ever to come to this desperate situation, new and broader interventions will be necessary. If such interventions are to be effective, they must operate with specific knowledge of how each party in the conflict understands peace with the other, and how they believe the conflict should be engaged, whether violently or nonviolently.

### **Frame Analysis**

Frame analysis is a method of understanding how individuals conceptualize various events, issues, and abstract ideas, and how those understandings eventually affect actions, responses, and thoughts. According to Goffman (1986) a frame can be understood as a means of interpretation that is employed, often subconsciously, to, “locate, perceive, identify, and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences.” (21). Similarly, Shmueli, Elliott, and Kaufman (2006), describe frames as lenses of interpretation that aid people in understanding complex issues in ways that are consistent with their values, beliefs, personal experiences, and world views.

Though it is rarely examined explicitly in the conflict resolution or peace studies literature, frame analysis offers a valuable lens to those engaged in conflict (Schmueli, Elliot, & Kaufman, 2006). In conflict, it is extremely helpful for all parties, including any intermediating party, to understand the way that all involved parties

are framing the conflict at hand, and the resolution process itself. Parties seeking to resolve conflict are essentially seeking to find a solution that is compatible with all existing and relevant frames held by the parties. In order for the divergent frames to be reconciled, different peacebuilding or conflict resolution interventions attempt to expand, shift, or completely transform the frames of each party. To accomplish these frame shifts, new or more accurate information is presented; parties make significant gestures, or highlight different impactful information. In other words, when the ways that two parties frame, or understand, the same issue are incompatible, real and authentic inputs are needed to reorient the respective understandings. Conflict resolution practices attempt to facilitate these shifts based on factual and relevant inputs.

While Goffman's work on framing and frame analysis deals largely with the processes by which individuals give meaning to events or issues, more recent work in frame analysis has focused on the framing processes of groups. Through what have come to be known as *collective action frames* (Gamson, 1992; Snow & Benford, 1988), groups develop common meanings for given issues and events that guide group decision-making processes and activity. This does not necessarily mean that every person in a group frames an issue exactly the same way. Instead, the more prevalent frames, or those that are more commonly implemented, emerge as the dominant frames. By analyzing the dominant frames of certain issues, circumstances, or events, the goal becomes understanding why a group acts the way that it does. In other words, group activity and movement is not thought of as

happening in a vacuum. Instead, group action is seen as a product framing processes that have been developed over a long period of time.

Relevant to the work at hand, it is important to first understand the existing frames for peace and violent, or armed conflict engagement methods, and what has influenced their formation. If a group understands peace in a negative light, they will be less likely to make peace with the opposing group (Curle, 1971; Lederach, 2005). Similarly, if violence, or armed resistance, is seen as a plausible, effective, or morally justified means of engaging in conflict, groups will be more likely to implore them (Moore & Jagers, 1990; Staub, 2011). It is necessary then, to discuss what impact different inputs have on the ways in which individuals frame peace and violence. It is important to note here that frames are often developed because of information that is either partially or completely fabricated (Gamson, 1995). Therefore, frame development does not insist that all information that contributes to frame formation be absolutely factual.

I chose frame analysis as the overarching lens of analysis for this project because of the malleable nature of frames. However, framing processes, as discussed here, should not be confused with ideologies, or ideological orientations. Oliver and Johnson (2000) make a very clear distinction between the two, defining an ideology as a combination of theories, norms, and values, while a frame is an interpretive lens used to make sense of issues. Westby (2002) elaborates on this distinction, noting that ideological disposition is one of the major factors in frame formation. Further, ideologies tend to be much more static and difficult to change, while framing processes are constantly evolving (Snow & Benford, 1988).



Therefore, it is essential in conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts not to mistake framing processes for ideologies. A desire for violent strategies in conflict does not necessarily indicate that an actor is ideologically violent or aggressive (Jacoby 2000). While this may be a possibility, it also may be that the actor has come to frame the conflict as one in which violence is permissible or acceptable or that violence has become framed as a viable, effective, or necessary.

### **Background and Context**

Before any thorough discussion can be dedicated to current framing processes among West Bank university students, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the background of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Because frame analysis asserts that the way issues and events come to be understood does not happen in a vacuum, it is important to understand how the current situation developed and the context in which the frames exist (Goffman, 1986). Obviously, as volumes have been dedicated to the history of this conflict, it will be impossible to give a complete historical discussion in this work. However, a concise overview of the major events and how these events have contributed to the current situation is possible and essential. For the purpose of this thesis, the historical overview will focus primarily on major events in the conflict's history as well as popular conflict engagement approaches. This approach will set the stage for a thorough description of how Palestinians currently frame issues of peace and violent engagement.

Undoubtedly, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict did not start with the creation of the state of Israel on almost 75% of historic Palestine in 1948 (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009), but it is perhaps the best place to start when discussing the

modern conflict. Shortly before the 1948 war, the United Nations General Assembly proposed a plan to divide the British Mandate of Palestine into two nations, one for the Jewish population on 56% of the land and the other for the Arab community on the remaining 43%, while Jerusalem and some of its surrounding villages were to be under the control of an international body (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009; UNSCOP, 1947). This plan was accepted by the Israelis and subsequently rejected by the Palestinians. Following the Palestinian rejection, Israel declared independence on the land allocated in the UN plan. The surrounding Arab communities retaliated by launching the war.

The effects of the war were enormous. When it finally ended, Israel had expanded its borders to contain about 75% of Historic Palestine (Biger, 2008), thus creating what is known today as the *Green Line*, or the armistice line of 1949, and forming the Gaza Strip and the West Bank. Control of the Gaza Strip was taken by Egypt, while Jordan occupied the West Bank, including East Jerusalem. Both sides suffered thousands of casualties, and the Palestinian diaspora was created. It is estimated that over 900,000 Arabs fled their homes for refugee camps in Egypt, Jordan (Transjordan at the time), Syria, Lebanon, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip (United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA), 2008).<sup>2</sup> These refugees and their families remain in the diaspora, with most lacking an option for citizenship anywhere despite the UN General Assembly Resolution 194 of 1948 that calls for the refugees of the 1948 war to be allowed to return at the earliest practical date or be

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<sup>2</sup> This statistic represents the number of Palestinians that registered in one of the refugee camps established after in 1948. It does not take into account those who fled their homes and did not enter a United Nations refugee camp.

compensated for the property that they lost during that time (United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), 1948).

In 1967, the region was swept up in another massive war, commonly referred to as the Six Days War. With the Arab armies from Jordan, Iraq, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon appearing to prepare to attack, Israel all but wiped out the Egyptian air fleet and the war began (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009). For several reasons, Israel was able to significantly push back the Arab forces in just six days. The result was the beginning of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Syria's Golan Heights, and Egypt's Sinai Peninsula. The Sinai has since been returned as a result of a peace agreement between Egypt and Israel that established relations between the two nations and a demilitarized region in the Sinai. As in 1947, all sides suffered thousands of casualties and the Palestinian diaspora increased significantly.

It is important to note that the basic engagement strategies of these two wars involved Palestinian dependence on the Arab nations of the region to liberate historic Palestine (Sahliyeh & Deng, 2003). However, the twenty years following the 1967 war saw the development of new strategies by both Palestinians and Israelis. Within a few years, Israel began developing settlements in the areas occupied in the war. Building settlements quickly became a means of creating *facts on the ground*, and a strategy for Israel to slowly expand into areas that they had recently occupied (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009). To those who have, and continue to, support a two-state option to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, settlements and the strategic creeping policies of Israel through settlement construction have been a major hindrance. The

Palestinian population instantly met Israeli settlements with resistance and they have continuously been sources and sites of violence since their building began.

During this time, Palestinians began to organize and develop new resistance strategies that were not entirely dependent on the Arab world. Most notably, during this time the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), led by Yasser Arafat, gained popularity and legitimacy in the occupied territories and the Palestinian diaspora. The PLO, along with organizations like the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, began to organize popular resistance initiatives based on the idea that armed resistance was the only means by which Palestinians could liberate themselves and attain their national aspirations. This is not to say that nonviolent tactics were not part of the Palestinian strategy (Abu-Nimer, 2003), but that the dominant understanding was that violent engagement provided the only viable solution to the Palestinians.

Another idea that gained popularity at times, especially with the Israeli left, was the notion that land could be swapped for peace (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009; Dajani, 2005). In other words, the proposal was that, if Palestinians were given land and a state to rule, peaceful relations with the Israeli state could be achieved. However, this notion was challenged strongly by members of each party. More hawkish Israelis opposed the idea primarily because they wished to expand the Jewish state farther into Historic Palestine, or because they believed that a Palestinian state would be detrimental to Israeli security. Similarly, many Palestinians objected to the thought of land for peace because they were fundamentally opposed to the idea of the Israeli state in Historic Palestine.

In December 1987, with settlement activity increasing, especially in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Palestinians collectively launched the first Intifada, or uprising. The first Intifada, which lasted about six years, was characterized by mass strikes, work stoppages, boycotts of Israeli products, demonstrations, and stone throwing (Abu-Nimer & Groves, 2003).<sup>3</sup> These movements were met with harsh Israeli retaliation, including road closures, arrests, and heavy military interventions. A vital turning point in Palestinian-Israeli relations was Arafat's speech at the United Nations in 1988 in which he, and the PLO, recognized Israel's sovereignty, accepted the idea of a Palestinian state within the borders of the 1947 armistice lines, or the Green Line, and renounced violent resistance (Bickerton & Kalusner, 2009). In return, the United States, followed soon by Israel, began to engage directly with Arafat and the PLO.

As a result of the new strategies of direct engagement, the leaders of the PLO and the Israeli government agreed to the Oslo Accords in 1993. Through the Oslo Accords, Israel recognized the PLO, under Arafat's leadership, as the sole representative of the Palestinian people, and the PLO officially recognized Israel's right to exist. The Oslo process also granted Palestinians sovereignty over parts of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, known as Area A, through the creation of the Palestinian Authority (PA) as the governing body. Area B was designated as the parts of the Palestinian Territories where the PA was granted administrative power but Israel maintained security control, and Area C remained under full Israeli control. Area C was the largest of these zones and has been the location for most

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<sup>3</sup> For a very good description of the first Intifada and its nonviolent elements, See Abu-Nimer and Groves in Abu-Nimer (2003).

Israel settlement activity. Further, and perhaps most important, Oslo laid out a plan for the future of negotiations. It was agreed that negotiations would reserve *final status issues* as the last criteria to be resolved. The final status issues were identified as borders of Israel and Palestine, the future of existing settlements the status of Jerusalem, and the future of the Palestinian refugees. Since the signing of the agreement, the Oslo process and its positive and negative effects have been extensively explored and debated. While these discussions are necessary, they are beyond the scope of this thesis. What is important for the purposes here is that the Oslo Accords were signed and that they did not result a Palestinian state.

Within the Palestinian territories, organizations opposed to the negotiation process with Israel became more prominent. Most notably and influential among these is HAMAS or the Islamic Resistance Movement. These organizations, similar to earlier notions explicitly held by the PLO, believed that freedom and liberation would only come through a commitment to armed resistance (Hroub, 2006; Milton-Edwards & Farrell, 2010). To these organizations, agreements became seen as impossible concessions because they necessarily demanded that Palestinians compromise on their rights.

The emergence of HAMAS is important because the movement became popular around the same time that the PLO, primarily represented by Arafat's party Fatah, began to embrace negotiation and engagement with their Israeli counterparts. The relationship between the two organizations represents the dialectal relationship of conflict engagement strategies throughout the past two decades of the conflict's history. The existence of a divergence between groups

supporting collaborative initiatives and those demanding armed resistance undoubtedly existed before the Oslo Accords. However, the difference was emphasized and made institutionally clear in the differing strategies of the organizations.<sup>4</sup>

For several reasons, the Oslo Accords did not result in lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. In the period of time following the agreements, several attempts were made by the Palestinians, Israelis, and international actors concerned with regional peace to complete a final negotiated settlement. Proposal upon proposal has been produced and all have failed. In 2000, following then Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's controversial entrance to the Temple Mount complex and the Dome of the Rock Mosque, the Palestinians launched the second Intifada or the Al Aqsa Intifada. Sharon's entrance to the Mosque, which is considered the third holiest site in Islam, came at a time when Palestinian frustrations were especially high due to the lack of progress on the conflict. The Intifada was characterized by violence, persistent armed struggle, heavy Israeli crackdowns throughout the West Bank and Gaza, and suicide attacks by Palestinians in Israel (Bickerton & Klausner, 2009). Where most of the conflict engagement in the first Intifada was focused on protest and demonstration, the second Intifada relied heavily on fighting. Throughout this time of fighting, scores of Palestinians and Israelis lost their lives.

In 2005, under Sharon, Israel unilaterally withdrew from the entire Gaza Strip, which many Palestinians received as major victory for their resistance fighters

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<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that this is an over-simplified description of the divergence of conflict engagement methods. For example, there are undoubtedly several Hamas supporters who support negotiation processes and PLO supporters that push for armed resistance. It is the leadership of each and their discourse related to conflict engagement that is being considered in this discussion.

(Bickerton & Klausner, 2009). Another effect of the Intifada was increased Palestinian support for Hamas, which was only helped by growing distrust in the governing Fatah party. This growing support was most evidenced in the massive parliamentary victory for Hamas in the 2006 elections. This was an indication that the Palestinians were putting more and more of their trust in Hamas and its stance on armed resistance (Gunning, 2010). Naturally, there are other things that contributed to the Hamas victory, including corruption in the other parties and the Islamic core of the Hamas party. The Hamas victory divided the Palestinian people, leading to factional violence in the Palestinian territories and resulting in a split between the Hamas controlled Gaza Strip and the Fatah controlled West Bank (Hroub, 2006).

The time period since 2006 has included more failed negotiations, increased settlement activity by Israel in the West Bank, missiles fired on Israel from Gaza, air raids on Gaza from Israel, and an entire blockade of the Gaza Strip that has rendered the people in Gaza with few resources and few means to rebuild the territory. Recently, in 2012, after a series of Israeli air raids in Gaza, Hamas fired the first missiles from Gaza that successfully reached the Tel Aviv and Jerusalem regions, hinting that they have the ability to further escalate the fighting. The Gazan factions and Israel are maintaining a very fragile ceasefire.

As stated earlier, the point of this historical overview is to give a sense of the evolution of Palestinian conflict engagement. As can be seen, the Palestinians have approached the conflict in several different ways. After losing two wars, which they fought alongside Arab armies, they turned to mass protests and demonstrations in



the first Intifada, fighting and aggressive attacks in the Second Intifada, and throughout the past few years rocket fire has become more popular. According to Sahliyeh and Deng (2003), Palestinian support for resistance and engagement methods has varied greatly over time. Their research shows a gradual downward trend in the prospects for peace and an upward trend in the desire for, or approval of, armed engagement strategies since 1995, shortly after the Oslo accords were signed. In other words, since the Oslo Accords more Palestinians have become pessimistic about peace with Israel while more have come to support violence, especially after failed negotiation attempts, the release of new Israeli settlement construction, and actions that infringe on the Palestinian economy. Today, the occupation of the Palestinian Territories persists and hopes that a negotiated settlement are dwindling by even the most optimistic of all involved parties.

This is the context in which the research for this project was conducted. The situation on the ground is not, by any calculation, fertile for peace. In this project, I seek to begin to understand how young Palestinians perceive peace with their Israeli counterparts, and which conflict engagement methods they currently support. Understanding these essential factors can guide those involved in this conflict in designing new initiatives that may allow for a true peace process.

### **Project Overview**

As stated earlier, I seek in this thesis to explain the way that Palestinians currently enrolled in universities in the West Bank frame peace and violent, or armed, resistance. This chapter has provided a brief history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, examined the historical-political context in which the data was

collected, and introduced frame analysis and collective action frames. In Chapter II, I will give an in-depth review frame analysis literature by providing the background of frame analysis and its common uses, followed by a discussion about frame shifts and their causes. Further, I will explore how parties to intractable conflict come to support or oppose peacebuilding or armed activities through a frame analysis and frame development lens. In Chapter III, I will further describe the methods used to gather the data for this thesis. I will explain the design an implementation for the survey distribution and group interview processes. In Chapter IV, I will report the data collected from both the surveys and the group interviews. Using this data, I will provide a thorough discussion about the different ways in which participants frame issues of peace with Israel and how they frame violent conflict engagement strategies. In Chapter V, I will offer some conclusions that can be drawn from the data and discuss their implications for the future of this conflict.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Overview of Frame Analysis

As previously discussed, a frame can be described as the way that people organize and make sense of a variety of inputs (Goffman, 1986). According to Goffman (1986), whose work provides some of the earliest discussion of framing and frame analysis, frames are used to, “locate, perceive, identify, and label” (p. 21) all events, ideas, and occurrences encountered. Frames serve as a system for organizing experience and guiding action (Benford & Snow 2000; Shmueli, Elliot, & Kaufman 2006). They aid in the process of identifying problems and their causes, making morally based judgments, and prescribing potential remedies (Gamson 1992; Entman 1993). Gamson (1989) suggests that a frame is a central method of organization and that facts become meaningful by being interpreted through, and embedded in, a frame. In other words, the different ways in which a variety of people can interpret the same data is explained by differences in frames.

Though Goffman’s (1986) original exploration of frames focuses primarily on the way that individuals form and utilize frames, much of the work on frame analysis has been carried to the collective level. Snow and Benford (1992) describe collective actions frames as sets of beliefs and meanings that influence group activity. Collective action frames cannot be simply understood as the sum of individual frames of a group’s members, and all individuals are not thought to frame issues in the same manner. Instead, frames are a significant part of the way that a group of people develops shared meaning (Gamson 1992). In the same way that

individuals use frames to understand different issues, groups implement collective frames to give meaning to things that affect the group as a whole (Benford & Snow 2000). Naturally, not all members of the group will frame everything in the same manner. Through several processes, the more pervasive frames will be emphasized.

Groups rarely share one exclusive frame for any given issue (Gamson, 1995; Klandermans, 1994; Snow and Benford, 1992), but different frames gain or lose support within a group through what Gamson (1985) defines as *oppositional framing* processes. When group members receive new information, whether through the media, a social leader, or through personal experience, frames continue to be molded and different frames may gain or lose permanence within the group (Gamson, 1992). The frames that are the most dominant are referred to as the primary, or dominant, frames (Snow & Benford, 1988). Oppositional framing is not necessarily an overt competition between group members that frame issues a certain way. Instead the various frames that exist amongst group members are in a dialectical relationship and are constantly shifting and changing in response to new inputs (Gamson, 1992; Snow & Benford, 1988). This is important because of the significant role that frames play in informing group movement. Because the ways in which a group frames key issues helps to guide its collective behavior, as frames gain permanence within a group, group activity changes due to the new filter that it perceives issues and events through.

Snow and Benford (1988) identify three primary tasks that collective actions frames fulfill: *diagnostic*, *prognostic*, and *motivational*. Each of these functions serves a different purpose in the process that groups use to give meaning to issues

and events. The diagnostic characteristic of group framing processes provides a descriptive lens for groups. Through this process, groups identify problems and attribute blame. Prognostic framing processes determine a group's response to an event and where the response should be directed. Motivational framing is the process by which groups are moved to implement the responses produced through prognostic framing processes.

It should be noted that these processes do not necessarily occur in order, and one framing process does not necessitate the others. Gamson (1985), in his description of *injustice frames*, discusses a few examples of groups that have clearly adopted an injustice frame in the diagnostic sense, and have developed a strong frame on their responses, but they have never developed the motivational frame required to spur the group as a whole. Further, Snow et al (1986), show that grievances alone are rarely enough to spur a group to action. In other words, the identification of an undesirable aspect of society by a group is rarely enough to cause a social movement.

It is essential that framing processes do not become confused with individual or group ideologies (Oliver & Johnson, 2005; Snow & Benford 2005; Westby, 2002). Oliver and Johnson (2000) draw a very clear distinction between frames and ideologies, describing ideology as the totality of theories, norms, and values and frames as simply an interpretive lens. Frames, however, cannot be isolated from ideology, but are strongly influenced by and derived from it (Snow and Benford, 2005; Westby, 2002). In other words, the way that issues are framed cannot be separated from the ideology of an individual, and the operating ideology of an

individual helps to explain the frames used to interpret any given issue. Where ideologies tend to be more concrete, and thus difficult to change, frames are fluid and constantly being transformed (Gamson, 1989).

Snow et al (1986), identifies four primary ways in which frames change: *bridging, amplification, extension, and transformation*. In frame bridging, individuals or groups change the way that they frame an issue or event based on something that is not necessarily connected to the issue or event at hand. In other words, bridging serves as a networking tool between groups with similar dispositions, but that have yet to adopt the same frame. Frame amplification occurs when a desirable value or belief that members of a group hold is highlighted or emphasized to make the frame more appealing or to hide a less desirable value or belief. Frame extension is the process of including a new element to a frame that was previously absent. Finally, frame transformation is a process in which the way that a group frames an issue or event completely changes into an entirely different frame of the same issue or event.

As explained earlier, frames are constantly changing based on several different inputs. As individuals receive new information, the way that they frame various issues either changes or is affirmed. Gamson (1989) identifies the media, popular wisdom, and common experience as the primary influences on frame formation. In other words, these are the three main inputs to which individuals are regularly exposed, and thus they shape the way that the recipient of the information frames key issues. As new information is received by the individual one of the frame shifts listed in the previous paragraphs is enacted.

## **Frame Analysis in Conflict Resolution**

While frame analysis and framing theories have typically been utilized in social psychology at the individual level and for studying social movement and mobilization at the collective level, they have a very important role in conflict resolution practices. Conflict is essentially the perception of incompatible goals, interests (Fisher & Ury, 1991), physical and psychological needs (Burton 1990), values, or beliefs between two or more parties (Deutsch 1973). More broadly, Lederach (1988) argues that conflict arises when one party's understanding of a situation, issue, or event comes into direct contact with another party that views the same situation, issue, or event differently. Augsburger (1992) adds that conflict emerges between parties that assume that they live in one social reality, and that the intensity of the conflict is related to the importance allotted to it by any of the parties involved.

Intractable conflicts, or those that are less likely to be resolved through peaceful negotiation practices (Kriesberg 1993), pose additional and substantial challenges for scholars and practitioners. Rouhana and Bar-Tal (1998) describe intractable conflicts as identifiable by their protractedness, centrality, violent nature, and perception of irreconcilability. In other words, intractable conflicts are far-reaching and deeply rooted conflicts that touch every part of the lives of the people involved, often involve the use of violence, and leave parties feeling that the conflict is irreconcilable. Mayer (2009) adds that intractable conflicts are structurally embedded, systemic and complex, rooted in distrust and power imbalances, and involve identity and value-based issues. Participants in these

conflicts are shown to develop strong societal beliefs that boost their respective narrative and position as just and right, and the others' as wrong and evil (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

Shmueli, Elliot, & Kaufman (2006), with these conceptions of conflict in mind, observe that a large part of conflict, and conflict escalation, results from divergent or incompatible frames. In intractable conflict, they argue that, "frame differences often exacerbate communication difficulties, polarize parties, and escalate strife" (p. 209). They continue, "Polarization is reflected in the parties' frames feeding stakeholders' sense that they are in the right and should not compromise" (p. 209). Therefore, it is essential for all parties to understand how all other parties to the conflict, including the intervening or mediating parties, frame the major issues, events, and situations relevant to the conflict.

Conflict resolution scholars and practitioners often refer to *reframing* when discussing resolution practices. Essentially, reframing is the process by which a participant adopts a new outlook on an element of the given conflict, or the conflict itself. Conflict interveners seek to design processes that will provide accurate and helpful information that will encourage parties to adjust the way that they frame relevant issues or events in a more constructive manner. Lederach (1998) describes reframing as the processes of relocating an understanding of a given issue based on new information. Continuing his description of conflict, as described above, Augsburger (1992), discusses resolution as the process of reframing one's view of social reality based on a more accurate understanding of the relationship at hand. By understanding the existing frames of each of the conflicting parties,



conflict interveners can design engagement systems that will address the divergence in existing frames held by all parties to a given conflict.

As mentioned above, frames are constantly being molded as the individual or group receives new inputs, most notably from the media, popular wisdom, and recent events (Gamson 1992). According to Curle (1971) conflict resolution, when the focus is a more just, equal, and peaceful relationship between two parties begins with the education of the parties while the conflict remains latent. Education, according to Curle, must be based on facts and truth in order for the resolution process to advance towards a more peaceful situation. In relation to framing and reframing, this suggests that the inputs that continue to shape the way that conflicting parties frame the issues central to the conflict should always be based on truthful and accurate information. When the goals of educational efforts become based on something other than a more just and peaceful reality, the information that is influencing the framing processes can become a tool to manipulate the party, which may lead to a period of unsustainable peace (Lederach, 1998). When a party is made aware of fallacies in the information that has shaped its understanding of the conflict, the result will undoubtedly be further mistrust and intractability (Mayer, 2009; Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

As intractable conflicts persist and parties become further entrenched in their understandings of the conflict and all of its intricacies, different issues central to the conflict begin to be framed as non-negotiable. Atran and Axelrod (2008) discuss the development of *sacred values* in conflicts that appear intractable. They describe sacred values as those that groups hold as central to their regular activity.

While sacred values are often tied to religious beliefs, it is not essential to their formation. Values become sacred because of the strong moral attachment that they hold for groups (Fiske & Tetlock' 1997), and infringements on them are interpreted as especially severe (Tetlock, et al 2000).

In conflict resolution processes, it is expected that all involved parties will have to make some very sizeable concessions that may be quite painful. If a member of a party feels that one of the concessions that the party may be asked to make compromises a value that is considered sacred, it will be interpreted as an attack on these values (Atran & Axelrod' 2008; Fiske & Tetlock, 1997). A person that perceives an action to be a threat or attack on their respective sacred values will likely respond with feelings of moral outrage, and moral cleansing (Tetlock, et al, 2000). Moral outrage is identifiable by harsh attributions against the offender, anger and contempt towards offender, and desire for strong retaliation. Moral cleansing refers to a process of strengthening ties to the value that the individual believes to have been challenged. In other words, when an individual believes that her or his sacred values are being threatened, he or she will likely become more intensely attached to the issue at stake and the conflict will escalate. Both of these responses will only serve to further entrench the parties and increase the intractability of the conflict (Atran & Axelrod, 2008; Augsburger, 1992).

Several scholars and practitioners have sought to prescribe tools and methods for resolving the moral and identity-based aspects inherent to most, if not all, intractable conflicts. Fisher and Uri (1991) suggest that conflict is best resolved if the parties refer exclusively to objective material in negotiations. In their view,

parties who are committed to jointly uncovering objective realities and utilizing them to find mutually agreeable solutions will reach better and more fulfilling results. However, sacred values are essentially subjective. There is no guarantee that some items or issues that are considered sacred by one person or group will receive the same designation amongst other people or groups (Augsburger 1992, Fiske & Tetlock, 2000). Sacred values are so important that they cannot be ignored, or treated like other elements in the negotiation. Fiske and Tetlock (2000) show that people respond the same, with moral outrage and more cleansing, when they feel that their most deeply held values are being ignored as when they feel that they are under direct attack.

While issues involving sacred values are the most difficult to resolve, Atran and Axelrod (2008) argue that they should be among the first issues to be addressed when engaging intractable conflicts. Their research indicates that issues involving sacred values may be effectively reframed if handled carefully and directly. They offer the following suggestions for potential interventions that may aid parties in reframing sacred values: 1) Refine the parties' respective platforms to exclude statements or positions that are based on false criteria; 2) Shift the context of the dispute to the future; 3) Prioritize values; 4) Show respect whenever possible; 5) Extend apologies for instances where regret is felt; and 6) Make sure that the people responsible for transgressions are the only ones identified as responsible. Through these interventions, they argue that the two parties can begin to see the major issues apart from their respective values, and can therefore begin to negotiate in a

way that will avoid the appearance of attack on sacred values while addressing the negotiable parts of the conflict.

Fiske and Tetlock (1997) maintain a similar argument. They believe that by using many of the interventions mentioned by Atran and Axelrod (2008), plus validating the signs of anger and frustration that arise at the thought of compromising sacred values, can ease moral outrage and moral cleansing and lead parties to a pluralistic understanding that allows for the possibility of maintaining moral and sacred integrity while addressing the issues of the conflict. Further, the process that they prescribe strongly supports collaborative brainstorming and solution generation that involves all parties working collectively to come up with options that would allow for mutually beneficial solutions.

Frame analysis has existed in the conflict resolution discourse for a long time, though it has not been thoroughly or explicitly explored. As shown above, understanding how parties to a conflict frame and reframe issues, strategies, or events central to the conflict can be very helpful in designing the resolution processes. Understanding how each party to a conflict frames peace with the other and violence as a conflict engagement strategy, both in general and in context of the existing conflict, are essential in designing a conflict intervention system. Naturally, there are several elements that affect the way that individuals and groups come to frame peace and violent, or armed engagement, and I will unpack many of them in what follows.

## **Framing Violence and Armed Movements**

Violence stated simply, is an action that causes harm to persons or their property. Violence can be either direct or indirect (Galtung, 1969). Direct violence is an immediate act to do bodily harm to another person. Indirect violence is largely systemic, or structural, and it exists in a more covert way that affects the victim that is not necessarily physical or immediate. It is often normalized in societies and is readily overlooked by those who do not suffer from it (Curle, 1971; Galtung, 1969; Jacoby, 2008). Some examples of indirect violence include discriminatory policies, rules or social norms that disadvantage groups of people socially, politically, and economically. My central focus in this section will be to look at the different factors that cause groups of people to support armed movements, or engage in direct violence.

Reychler (2001) identifies violent conflict as a system in which two interdependent parties, who experience the relationship as negative, have the means and opportunity to use armed tactics and view violence as the most cost-effective means of engaging the conflict. In other words, violent interventions are used when parties believe their opponents to be hostile and conclude that the best way to engage with that party is through the use of force. Similarly, Moore and Jagers (1990) argue that individuals come to support armed movements when they identify a grievance that they wish to see rectified, feel a sense of connection to the larger group that shares the grievance, attribute blame for a grievance to an opposing party, believe that violence in the situation is justified and will be

effective.<sup>5</sup> The longer that a conflict persists, and the more pessimistic that a group becomes about its eventual resolution, the more likely the group will be to support and resort to armed tactics (Gat, 2009; Staub, 2011).

According to Bartos and Wehr (2002) violence or force is a conflict engagement tool that is utilized by one party to coerce an opponent into giving in. Bartos and Wehr view these tactics as largely ineffective because they invoke a similar response that leads to a series of escalation in the violence. Staub (2011) holds a similar position that coercive action is largely ineffective, but becomes increasingly appealing to groups who view the other party as unreasonable, or do not see the other party as willing to work collaboratively. Violence, then, is often seen as a tool to be used when a group believes that a collaborative option to resolving the conflict does not exist. This is often because they are entrenched in their position, which they view as non-negotiable (Atran & Axelrod, 2008; Fisher & Ury, 1991) or because they perceive the other party as unwilling to negotiate (Bartos and Wehr, 2002; Lederach, 1998; Staub, 2011).

Similarly, groups tend to support violent forms of conflict engagement in cases of retaliation (Allred, 2000; Jacoby, 2008). In other words, groups are more likely to support violence if they believe themselves to be victims of aggression. According to Allred (2000), violent actions are utilized when one party believes that another has harmed them and either denies it or does not take immediate action to

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<sup>5</sup> This definition is notably comparable to Benford and Snow's (1988) description of the diagnostic, prognostic, and motivational framing tasks. Moor and Jagers (1990) definition of violent movement has a diagnostic element- defining the grievance and attributing blame, a prognostic element- supporting violence as a justifiable and effective means of engaging the identified issues, and motivational- relies on connection to a group and access to resources.

repair the damage. In response, the harmed party becomes angry and is likely to retaliate. Bartos and Wehr (2002), in their description of the negative implications of coercion, argue that attempts by one party to forcefully coerce another into agreeing with their position is met with similar tactics that lead to escalation and further violence. It follows that parties tend to show greater support for violent engagement tactics the longer that the conflict persists and the more attacks that they perceive to have been directed at them.

Burton (1990), taking a slightly broader view, describes conflict as a situation in which one party believes another to be infringing on their basic human needs. Included within the concept of basic human needs are physical needs like food, water, and shelter as well as psychological needs like security, control, positive identity, and connection (Allred, 2000; Burton, 1990; Staub, 2003). Oftentimes, when individuals or groups believe their needs are being attacked, they will respond with violence to defend those needs (Christie, 2006). Staub (2011) argues that parties will increase support for armed engagement when they are desperate to defend resources perceived as necessary to their survival, or relevant to their honor, pride, or other psychological needs.

It should be emphasized that the descriptions above rely on parties' subjective perceptions of a situation. For example, an individual may believe that his or her opponent is unwilling to compromise on a given issue and therefore support violent engagement. The individual's perception may not be built on fact or reality, but because she or he has come to believe it, she or he will continue to support violent tactics (Allred, 2011). As mentioned above, the ways that groups

come to frame various concepts are largely affected by media representations, popular wisdom, and recent history (Gamson, 1992). Through these mediums, it is possible for a group to become convinced that they have an enemy that should be dealt with forcefully. The leaders of a party in any given conflict have very significant impacts on the way that the members of that party frame violence. If the other group can be painted as ideologically opposed to peace, an immediate threat to their needs, as acting aggressively, or as unreasonable, it is likely that the group will more strongly support violence against the other party, regardless of the validity of the perceptions. As noted above, parties in intractable conflict tend to rely on one-sided or biased sources of information and reaffirm and strengthen commitments to their interpretation of history (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998).

### **Framing Peace**

Similar to violence, peace is an abstract term that is frequently used in conflict resolution discourse. Also similar to violence, defining the term has not been easy for scholars or practitioners. Peace is often spoken of rather lightly and incompletely (Christie, 2006; Galtung, 1979; Lederach, 1995). Peace tends to be thought of as an absence of direct and overt physical violence. This definition of peace is troubling to many peace theorists because it does not address indirect and psychological violence. Galtung (1969) describes situations in which direct violence is not being used but there exists significant issues indirect violence as a cold peace. Similarly, Curle (1971) argues that peace exists when one party repairs and restructures its relationship to another in a way that addresses structural discrimination and injustices. In other words, conflicting parties must address all



forms of violence that exist between the two in order to achieve a peaceful relationship. Schafft (2009) adds that peace cannot be ethically achieved or sustained unless proper justice has been served and proper reparations have been made. For the purpose of this section, I am mostly concerned with how groups in conflict come to frame peace, and how different events shape their optimism or pessimism on the topic.

A central issue to peacebuilding is the level of trust that the parties have in each other to enter into a conflict resolution process in good faith and to follow through on their agreements (Lederach, 1995; Mayer, 2009). The faith that parties have in their opponents to make and keep agreements made in conflict resolution processes directly affect their optimism in a possible peaceful resolution. If one of the parties enters into a resolution process without the intention or ability to authentically negotiate the issues, the process will likely fall apart and leave the parties at least as polarized as before, and if this is the case several times in a row, parties will decide to look for other means of conflict engagement (Lederach, 1998). Similarly, if a party fails to implement the terms of a given agreement, the process will be seen as a farce and a waste of time that they will wish to avoid in the future. If a group of people is to believe that peace is possible, they must have faith that they have a partner to work with (Staub, 2011).

Another issue in the development of peace frames is the level of existing structural violence (Bartos and Wehr, 2002; Christie, 2006; Curle, 1971; Jacoby, 2008). If a group perceives itself as being systemically oppressed, it will be less likely to believe that the other group is authentically interested in a peace

agreement (Schafft, 2009). Indirect violence or structural violence attacks the psychological needs of a victim, which are amongst the issues largely considered to be non-negotiable (Burton, 1990). If the conflict resolution or peacebuilding process does not take into account existing oppressive realities, it may be viewed as undesirable. Ignoring oppressive structures in peacebuilding may come across as an attempt to normalize them, thus extending and amplifying injustice. Further, an agreement will likely be unsustainable because the underlying issues will produce future grievances that could erupt into new sequences of violence. Parties that are truly interested in good-faith negotiations should take steps to correct the oppressive realities of their respective systems as a sign of goodwill. Policy changes show that the stronger parties are authentically committed to a holistic agreement that will allow for a sustainable situation. This will build their confidence in the other in their opponent's desire to make peace.

As discussed above, the way that a group comes to understand its opponents, derived largely from their representation in the media, popular wisdom, and recent history, affects the way that they frame different conflict issues. Cycles of emnification and dehumanization are regular in conflict and are detrimental to resolution processes. In intractable conflicts, parties tend to view their opponents as wrong, evil, or antithetical to their respective goals (Rouhana & Bar-Tal, 1998), and, therefore, believe that the prospects for peace with that group are miniscule. In order to effectively bring the parties into a viable resolution process, peacebuilding interventions need to be designed and implemented to change how each party perceives the other.

The most prevalent types of conflict interventions that seek to build new understandings of opposing groups tend to be based on Allport's (1954) *contact hypothesis*, which essentially predicts that the more direct interaction that one group has with another, the better each group will perceive the other. Since Allport released his hypothesis, scholars have identified several potential problems with it. While the hypothesis has not been entirely disproved, scholars now stipulate that contact should be frequent, specifically designed, and purposeful (Bramel, 2004; Brewer & Miller, 1996). The problem with these specifications is that they take a lot of time and can be rather costly. Further, in terms of peacebuilding, contact hypothesis alone is not able to fully account for structural or political issues that are controlled by individuals closer to the top of the hierarchy. Contact interventions tend to take place at the grassroots level.

This is not to say that contact-based programs should not be implemented in cases of intractable conflicts. If effectively implemented, these interventions can help groups to correctly attribute blame for problems, and to gain an accurate understanding of the people that they are in contact with. However, if there is a lack of political, or higher level, engagement, these interventions coupled with failure of conflict resolution processes could prove to further stagnate the parties to the conflict.

Lederach (1995) warns that peace is often presented to parties as a façade to allow a party to increase its relative power without the other's knowledge. He argues that conflicts with histories of false peace offerings become more intractable and more violent because the recipient of the offer eventually learns the intentions

of the party offering the peace and responds aggressively. Curle (1971) suggests that the use of peace for purely self-interested reasons almost inevitably causes future conflict that will likely be more violent and difficult to resolve because there is not trust in the relationship. Lederach (2005) observes that parties in intractable conflict develop a sense of pessimism about the potential for effective resolution of their conflict as a coping skill to prevent the disappointment that they have experienced the several times that they were told peace was close and then did not happen.

From the sources above, it appears likely that peace will not be fulfilled until the parties have reasons to believe that it is possible and will benefit them. To pursue peace that is less than authentic and does not address the systemic issues inherent to intractable conflicts will cause parties to lose faith in peacebuilding initiatives or conflict resolution processes, thus leaving the conflict more intractable. Conversely, peacebuilding initiatives steeped in good faith that show commitment to engaging all elements of a given conflict can produce a process that the parties can believe in. If a group cannot frame peace in a positive or desirable way, then it has no reason to work for it.

### **CHAPTER III**

#### **METHODOLOGY**

Thus far, I have provided the context for this thesis, as well as a description of frame analysis and frame development, especially in relation to peacebuilding and armed conflict engagement in intractable conflict, as the lens of analysis for this thesis. In this chapter, I will focus on the methods that were used to collect data and the processes by which they were implemented.

To gather data for this thesis, I utilized two tools: a survey and a series of group interviews. The survey was designed to identify and describe the different ways in which Palestinians frame issues peace and violent, or armed, conflict engagement strategies compared to nonviolent strategies. The group interviews were designed to allow participants who had completed the survey to elaborate on their responses in conversational setting, in which the major influences on frame development could be identified. The data collection tools were created to compliment each other, with the survey evaluating the existing frames and the interviews exposing the inputs that have, and continue to impact the identified frames. These tools were further complimented by participant-observation. I spent a lot of time outside of group interviews and survey distribution discussing issues of peacebuilding with Palestinians that enhanced my ability to understand the data and enabled me to write on the subject.

## The Survey

The survey was divided into two distinct parts.<sup>6</sup> Part one consisted of sixteen questions concerning ways that participants understand and think about peace, first in general, and then in context of the Palestinian Israeli conflict. Participants were first asked to write, in one to three sentences, a definition of peace in their own words. Participants were prompted to define the term in general, and not in relation to the conflict. Next, participants were asked, based on the definition that they had written, how likely they believe peace with Israel to be. They were given the following options: *Impossible*, *very unlikely*, *unlikely*, *likely*, and *very likely*. Then, also based on their personal conceptualization of peace, respondents were asked how desirable peace with Israel is and given the options: *Very desirable*, *moderately desirable*, *neutral*, *moderately undesirable*, and *very undesirable*. The first section ended with a series of questions examining the perceived implications for different hypothetical situations: Participants were asked if they believed that a two-state solution, if implemented along the 1967 borders with Palestinian East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital, would make Israeli-Palestinian relations more or less peaceful. Except for the two open-answer questions, all of the questions on this part of the survey were multiple choice, and some left room for comments.

The second part of the survey consisted of twelve questions that sought to understand how Palestinians frame armed struggle, or the use of violence in conflict engagement. Participants were asked to answer a series of questions relating to situations in which they believe violence is justified, both in general and in the

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<sup>6</sup> To view the survey, see Appendix A

context of their conflict. To understand how violence, or armed struggle, is framed, participants were presented with a series of hypothetical situations in which violence may be used. For each question participants were asked to choose from the following options: *strongly agree*, *agree*, *neutral*, *disagree*, and *strongly disagree*.

The survey was designed and written in English and then translated into Arabic by a small group of people who are native Arabic speakers and also fluent in English. A number of challenges arose in the translation process because several of the words and phrases had to be adapted to take into consideration Palestinian culture. For example, the translators had an extremely difficult time deciding how to find a word to describe violent, or armed, resistance. The first copies of the survey that were distributed for comment by a few professors and students used the word that most closely to *violence* several times throughout the second part of the survey. The use of this word was met with a very strong and negative reaction. Respondents expressed that it was a biased term that had a condemning feel to it. After considering these strong responses, a term was suggested that means to struggle, or to resist, with force. The translators agreed that the word selected was the most unbiased way of discussing resistance methods that necessarily involve violent interaction.

I chose to develop a survey for this part of the project because of an interest in a standardized means for evaluating the different frames of peace and violence. Using a survey to gauge common frames of these issues allows for a discussion of collective framing processes because every respondent was answering exactly the same questions. Further, data from surveys is easily sorted and can be used much

more effectively to explore potential correlations. The open-answer question gave respondents more liberty in answering, but in a way that was still easily evaluated.

### **Group Interviews**

As stated, the survey was developed with the hopes of providing a clear description of how Palestinians students frame peace and violence. To understand how those frames were formed, and what influences continue to shape them, I designed a group interview process to supplement the survey.

The objective of conducting interviews was to create a conversational atmosphere in which participants could speak freely and candidly with each other and the discussion facilitator. To accomplish this, I designed a ten-question script that would guide each group discussion.<sup>7</sup> The questions on the script were very broad and were designed to start conversations. Participants were asked to explain how they view peace, how their views have formed, and how they believe Palestinians should engage in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. It was not deemed absolutely necessary that each discussion group answer every question, in fact, no group did. However, each group started the same way, and the script provided a process to move through in the conversation a structured way.

When designing the survey for this project, I decided early on that it would be beneficial if participants could explain their answers from the survey more thoroughly. However, it was essential that the medium used for further explanation allow for maximum expression in a way that felt comfortable and safe for respondents. By participating in group interviews, participants were enabled speak

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<sup>7</sup> To view the interview script, see Appendix B



more candidly because their in-depth responses were not tied directly to their responses on the survey.

### **Data Collection**

The data was collected in two basic steps. First, student volunteers distributed the survey, and after participants completed their survey, they were asked if they would like to participate in a group discussion that would allow them to elaborate on their responses.

The survey was distributed randomly to students from four different universities- An-Najah University in Nablus, Al Quds University in Abu Dis, Birzeit University near Ramallah, and Bethlehem University. Current students at each university volunteered to help recruit participants. The students responsible for distribution discussed the survey with each participant, explained how the results were to be used, and assured them that their names would not be recorded and that extensive care would be taken in order to ensure their confidentiality. Each participant completed the survey alone and returned the finished survey to the person who provided it. Those distributing surveys were carefully instructed to pass the survey out to people in different areas of campus to ensure that the sample was as random as possible. I was always present when surveys were handed out to make sure that the person distributing them was following proper protocol and to answer any questions that the aid was unprepared for.

Over a period of two months, 260 surveys were collected, 102 were collected at An-Najah University, 79 from Birzeit University, 43 from Bethlehem University,

and 36 from Al Quds University.<sup>8</sup> The number of participants selected from each university correlates to the relative size of each. For example, An-Najah University is the largest university in the West Bank; so more surveys were collected from that campus. Of all respondents, 129 were female and the 131 were male, and the ages of people polled were between 17 and 25, with an average of age of 20.

As noted, after the participants completed the survey portion, they were asked if would like to join a group interview. Each interview took between forty-five minutes and one hour, and would start once at least eight participants agreed to join. The interviews were conducted in Arabic, and translated into English. Before each discussion began, participants were again assured that their identities would not be revealed and that their involvement in the project would not be used against them. This allowed for a deeper level of candidness because of the secure feeling of being able to express their opinions anonymously. For each group, either the group facilitator or myself would take notes on the key points of the discussion, and whether or not there appeared to be general agreement or counterpoints to each point made.

Each group had a facilitator who was charged with asking for clarification and elaboration when necessary, as well as encouraging each participant to respond to questions. In order to protect confidentiality, interviews were not transcribed or recorded. Instead notes were taken to include key points, points of general agreement, points of disagreement, and how many people in each group agreed or disagreed with a response. There were twelve groups total, and each group

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<sup>8</sup> About 275 surveys were collected in total, but a number were immediately discarded for either not completing essential parts of the survey or failing to complete the survey.

contained between eight and twelve participants. In total, 105 students participated in group interviews to some extent. Of the interviewees, 62 were male and 43 were female.

### **Population**

Early in the design process, it was decided to limit the pool of respondents to students at universities in the West Bank for two primary reasons. First, students were more easily accessible and available. It was relatively easy to go to a university campus and meet with students in between classes. Second, and more importantly, the student population represents the upcoming generation, and the future determinants of Palestinian decision-making. They will be the ones who will decide how Palestine will engage with the conflict in the years to come. As the students transition to adulthood, they will become more influential in Palestinian society, and will become the primary influence on Palestinian policy. If they come to frame peace with Israel as a plausible and desirable outcome, then the chances of an effective and holistic peace agreement in the future will be more attainable.

### **Data Analysis**

After all of the data was collected and recorded, I analyzed it in several ways. First, after reading all of the open answer responses, I grouped the surveys into categories of similar responses. These groups represent four identifiably unique framings of peace. Then, I looked for differences in responses in the rest of the survey based on the framing categories to see if there was stronger tendencies to desire peace with Israel or to see how possible each category found peace with Israel to be. Next, I repeated the process for the second part of the survey to expose

variations in support for armed engagement strategies between the four different peace frame groups that I identified.

### **Limitations**

While the data collected will be useful in describing the formation of different framing processes among students in Palestinian universities, there are potential shortcomings to the methodology. First and foremost is the problem of translation. The survey was written first in English and then transcribed into Arabic. Participants responded in Arabic and their responses were transcribed into English. Two-way translation increases the chance for error, both in translating the survey and the responses. To mitigate this, each survey was read by one of three experienced translators. If the translation was unclear or questionable, a second translator was consulted. If disagreement remained, the third translator would be consulted and the three would discuss and agree on the appropriate translation.

Another limitation is the relatively small sample size. Extra care was taken to get a diverse and representative sample, but it was not possible in the process of this project to collect from the universities in Hebron or Jenin. While this is unfortunate, it is not debilitating. The universities that data was collected from are the biggest universities in the West Bank and are spread out in a way that includes people from all regions in the territory. The locations for data collection were carefully considered when designing the process. The two largest universities, An-Najah University in Nablus and Birziet University near Ramallah, were prioritized because they are the most recognizable universities in the West Bank. Bethlehem University and Al Quds University in Abu Dis were added because of their proximity

to Jerusalem and combined they attract students from the southern parts of the West Bank.

The relatively small sample size also makes it difficult to consider the findings conclusive. While the conclusions drawn give a clear picture of peace and conflict engagement frames, there is room for error based on the population size. However, the results remained fairly consistent between institutions. At the very least, this shows that more work is merited in frame analysis in the Palestinian Territories. Further, the data is convincing enough that it could be reasonably predicted that significantly increasing the sample size would render similar results, but this cannot be asserted definitively.

The group interviews present a small challenge. First, none of the groups answered exactly the same questions. While each group began with similar prompts, each group tended to drift in distinct directions, which makes the data difficult to analyze. However, there were enough common points and discussion topics that were discussed in each group to gain some general understanding. Also, regarding some of the interview limitations, there was not a systematized method of recording responses for the interviews. Notes were taken on each conversation to record popular points and points of disagreement. These notes allow for several general conclusions to be drawn and work very well in concert with the surveys that were collected, but a more systematic means of recording the conversations may have allowed for a deeper analysis and more specific conclusions.

Finally, something that cannot be overlooked is the effect of the researcher on the data collected. As a white American male entering Palestinian universities as

a visitor, my presence undoubtedly played a significant role in the data collection. Among Palestinian students, there exists a distrust and skepticism of Americans, largely due to the complicated political relationship between Palestine, the United States, and Israel. Many participants were uneasy about responding to the survey with a person from the United States present, because they feared that the information that they offered might be used against them. Due to this reality, there is a chance that opinions were altered, tempered, or excluded. These shortcomings were mitigated by the inclusion of, and reliance on, several Palestinians that aided in the design and implementation of this project. Before the survey was finished, it was presented to two Palestinian academics for their input, and then amended. When collecting the data, Palestinian students who could thoroughly explain the purpose of the project and answer any questions always distributed the surveys. I was always present, but I was never the person distributing surveys or inviting participants. The survey and interview process were legitimized by the Palestinian students that helped with the data collection process.

As can be seen, the data collection methods used in this project were intricately and intentionally designed in order to appropriately gather data to meet the goals set out for this thesis. Great care was taken to address all of the potential limitations to this type of research process, and with the help of several Palestinian academics and students, a survey and group interview process were designed to work in concert with each other to effectively show the how Palestinians currently understand peace and violence, and what factors they believe to have influenced

those frames. The following chapter will examine the data that was collected and some conclusions that can be drawn from it.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The previous chapters have set the stage for an in depth discussion about the way that Palestinian students in universities in the West Bank frame issues of peace and violent, or armed, resistance. In the last chapter, I explained the process by which data was collected for this thesis, and in this chapter, I describe the collected data.

#### **Justification of Frame Analysis**

As noted at the beginning of this thesis, there is an important distinction to be drawn between framing processes and ideologies (Oliver and Johnson, 2000). Frame analysis was chosen as the lens of analysis for this project because of the malleable nature of frames, relative to ideologies which tend to be much more rigid (Snow and Benford, 1988). If the data collected in this project had shown an ideological disposition against Jewish people, or towards any sort of conflict engagement strategy, then this thesis would require a different approach. However, a careful analysis of the data showed no overt signs of these ideological dispositions. Out of the 260 surveys collected, no respondent indicated a hatred of Jews or advocated for violence to be directed at Jewish people because of their ethnicity or religious background. Instead, desires for violence, both in the surveys and in the interviews, were motivated by issues of occupation, colonization, and self-determination.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> This is not to suggest that a long history does not exist of Anti-Semitism, or that there are not individuals that are ideologically opposed to the existence of Jews or Judaism. Anti-Semitism



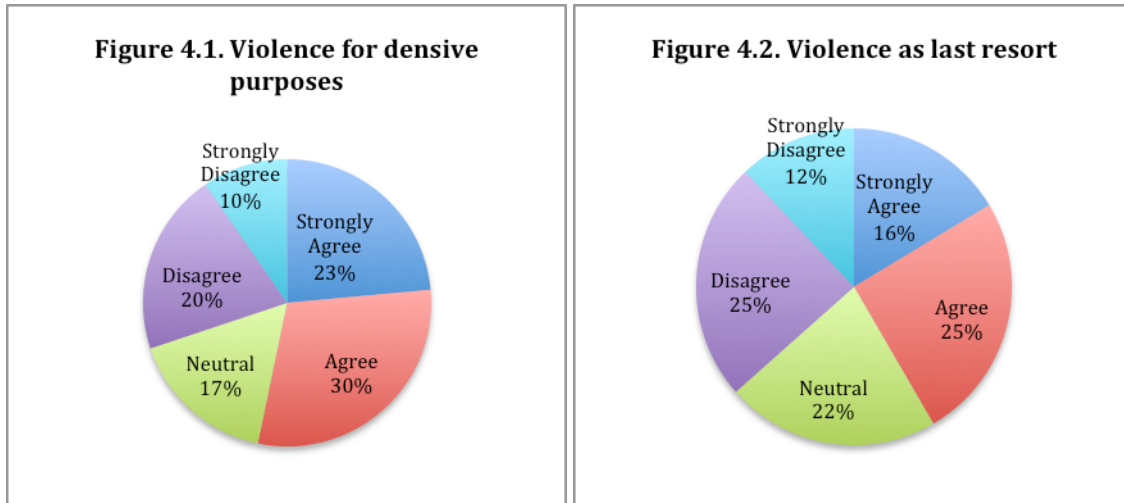
This trend was repeated in the group interviews. Throughout the interview process, most individuals commented that their views on peace and armed struggle have been primarily influenced by negative interactions with Israeli policies like settlements and land use restrictions, encounters with soldiers at checkpoints, and issues with perceived colonial activity in general. Most individuals who argued for more aggressive conflict engagement strategies went to great lengths to explain that the methods that were being advocated should not be interpreted as directed towards all Jews, or even a Jewish presence in Historic Palestine, but at the persisting occupation of Palestinian lands.

Finally, participants tended to frame armed conflict engagement as a last resort and as for purely defensive purposes. Two data sets from the survey sum this notion up relatively well. First, when participants were asked to what extent they agree with the statement, “Violence should only be used for defensive purposes, such as self-defense,” 53% of respondents indicated that they either strongly agree or agree while 30% indicated that they strongly disagree or disagree. The other 17% claimed to be neutral on the issue [See figure 4.1]. Similarly, when presented with the statement, “Armed resistance should be the last resort of a resistance movement,” 41% of respondents agreed, compared with 37% that disagreed, while 22% that claimed neutrality [See figure 4.2].<sup>10</sup>

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remains a serious issue, and to suggest different would be a major injustice to Jewish people everywhere.

<sup>10</sup> These statements do rely on a fundamental understanding of what constitutes violence. For example, there is an ongoing debate amongst Palestinians regarding the issue of stone throwing, and whether or not it is deemed violent or not (Abu-Nimer & Groves 2003). For the purpose of this project, violence was described as something that could potentially induce enough physical harm to require a person to seek medical attention.



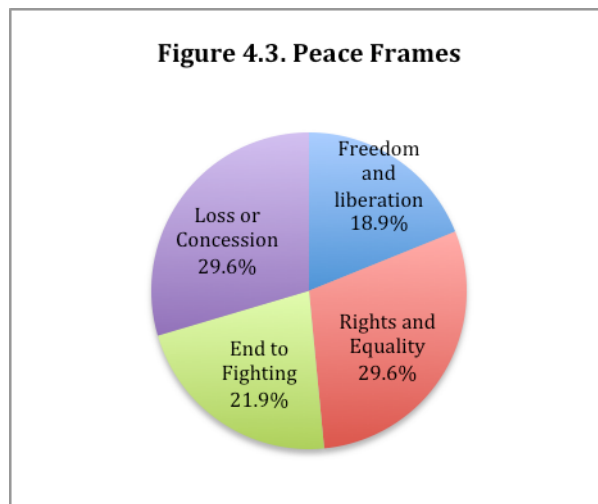
While I will spend significant time discussing how Palestinian students frame violent resistance, these two responses provide an excellent starting point because they illustrate that Palestinians are neither ideologically violent, nor do they hold a deep-seeded hatred for either religious or cultural Jews. Because Palestinians do not show signs of being ideologically opposed to Judaism or Jewish people, it is possible to analyze the rest of the data through a frame analysis lens.

### **Framing Peace**

In the first part of the survey, participants were asked to write, in two to three sentences, a definition of peace in their own words. This definition was used to organize, or sort, participants into groups based on similar definitions. Of the 261 surveys gathered, 223 were evaluated based on the way in which they defined peace.<sup>11</sup> The surveys that included definitions that were deemed helpful were separated into four groups based on similarities in the definitions. Based on the data, I considered these groups to represent the four dominant frames in Palestinian

<sup>11</sup> The other 38 responses were either left blank or contained answers that were very pleasant, yet unhelpful for this project. Discarded responses include those along the lines of “Peace is beautiful,” “Peace is very good.” These descriptions were deemed as analogies that, while nice sounding, did not provide a clear picture of how the respondent frames peace.

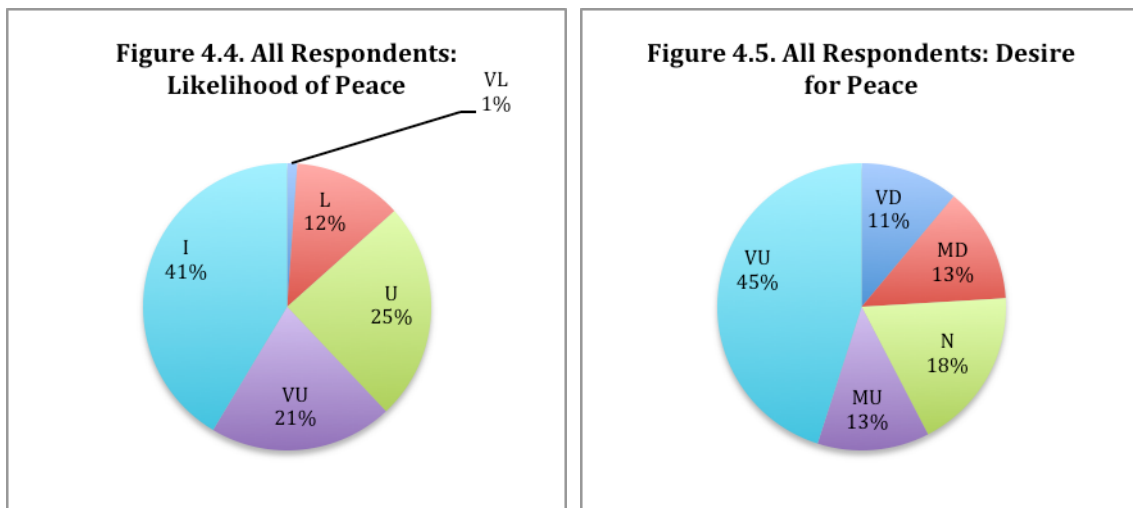
universities. I have labeled the frames that I identified as: *Human Rights and Equality, Freedom and Liberation, End of Fighting, and Loss or Concession*. Out of the total surveys that were evaluated for different peace frames, 29.5% of respondents fell into the Human Rights and Equality Frame, 19% into the Freedom and Liberation Frame, 29% into the End of Fighting Frame, and the remaining 29.5% Loss or Concession Frame [See figure 4.3]. Female participants were more likely to fall into the rights and equality frame or the end of violence group, while male respondents were more likely to be placed in the loss or concession group or the freedom and liberation group.



These framing categories are by no means perfect. It is very likely that participants, if presented with these four frames as options, would agree with more than one of the categories. However, inviting participants to write their own definition, the results indicate the more dominant frames because it is likely that the definition that each participant provided represents their best conception of peace. Further, separating responses into similar categories allows for a more in-depth discussion about the correlations between the ways in which respondents frame

peace and the degree to which they believe peace with Israel is possible, desire peace with Israel, and support different conflict engagement strategies.

Before the four peace frames are analyzed based on how likely and desirable respondents find peace with Israel, I will present the results from all respondents based on perceived likelihood of, and desire for, peace. Regarding the likelihood of peace with Israel, 41% of participants believe that it is impossible, 21% very unlikely, 25% unlikely, 12% likely, and 1% very likely [See figure 4.4]. Similarly, when ask how desirable peace with Israel is, 45% indicate that it is very undesirable, 13% moderately undesirable, 18% neutral, 13% moderately desirable, and 11% very desirable [See figure 4.5].



From just these two data series, it is apparent that young Palestinians do not believe that peace with Israel is either likely or desirable. This idea itself is accompanied by a strong sense of pessimism and skepticism. With this in mind, I will explain the four categories of peace frames and their distinguishing features, followed by a description of how the members of each of the frame groups compare

to members of other groups as well as the total sample in terms of perceived likelihood and desirability of peace with Israel.

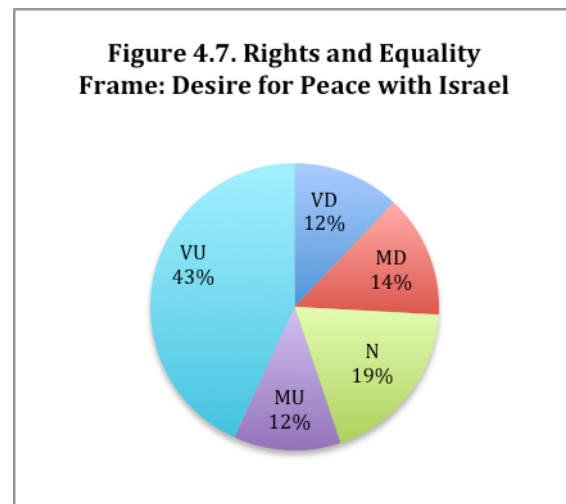
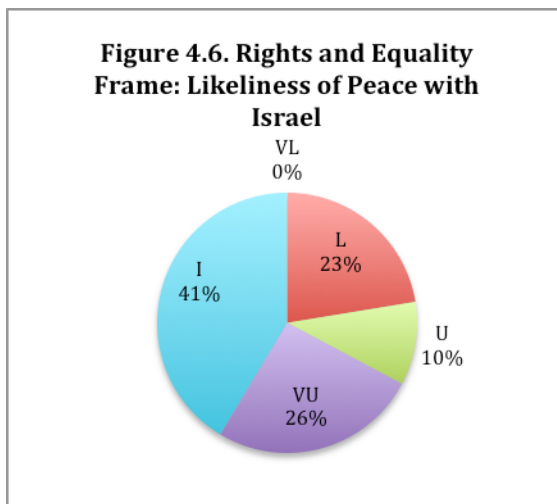
*Peace as an issue of human rights and equality*

This first group consists of respondents who included in their definition of peace a requirement of rights, equality, and/or respect for diversity. Responses in this group tended to approach peace as a state of being that involves universal respect for differences and an absence of racial or religious discrimination. For those in this category, peace was framed as a condition that exists when all people are safe, secure, and treated equally without preference for race or religion. Participants in group interviews corroborated the prevalence of this frame. In each interview there were participants who mentioned issues of inequality and rights violations. One young woman summed this view up very well by passionately stating, “Of course we want peace. We need peace. But, we do not think peace can happen with [separation] walls, division of our people, checkpoints, and regulations that do not let us worship where we want or develop our economy...” Peace framed this way demands high levels of equality and fair treatment for all people, and appears to stem from an acknowledgement of rights violations against the Palestinians by Israelis.

Of the total population sampled, 29.5% were placed this group. Of participants in the group, 59% were female and 41% were male. When asked how likely they believed peace with Israel to be, 41% answered impossible, 26% very unlikely, 10% unlikely, 23% likely, and none of the respondents indicated that they believed peace to be very likely [See figure 4.6]. When compared to the responses

from the entire sample, the same proportion of respondents in this frame understand peace with Israel to be impossible, while a smaller percentage indicate that it is unlikely and a higher percentage think that is likely.

Similarly, of respondents placed in the human rights and equality group, 55% answered that peace with Israel is either very undesirable or moderately undesirable, compared with 26% of respondents that found peace with Israel either very desirable or moderately desirable, while the remaining 19% claimed neutrality on the issue [See figure 4.7]. These responses are very similar to the total sample, only varying a few percentage points in each category.



*Peace as an issue of freedom and liberation*

Another category of peace framing that emerged from the survey responses is identifiable by an insistence on freedom and liberation as a prerequisite to peace. In other words, peace demands an active shaking off of any and all oppression and the destruction of any oppressive systems. This frame is fairly similar to the human rights and equality frame discussed above, but it is unique in its primary focus on sovereignty and independence. Many of the freedom and liberation group's

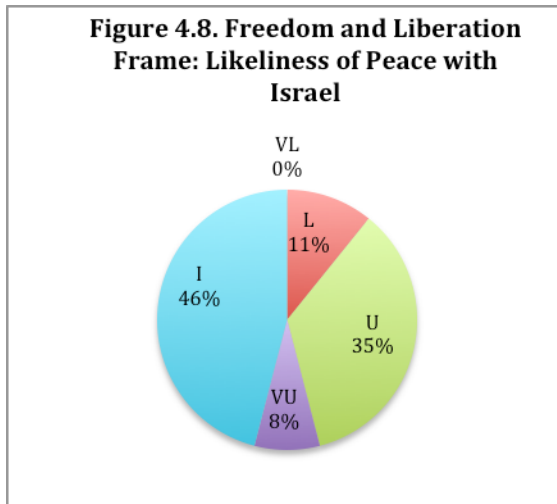
responses included statements about the necessity of ending the Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, the establishment of self-rule that is free from international intervention, and returning land to Palestinian control. Several interviewees alluded to the demand that injustices be corrected before any talk of peace is had.<sup>12</sup> There seemed to be general agreement in each group interview that peace was desirable, but that peacebuilding should not be the focus until the Palestinian goals of liberation had been accomplished. In six of the twelve group interviews, at least one interviewee discussed their displeasure with different peacebuilding projects, especially Israeli-Palestinian joint projects that focused on coexistence, dialogue, and collaboration because they are seen as tools that normalize the Israeli occupation, thus reinforcing the oppressive system. Framed this way, peace is good and should be desired, but not until freedom and justice is attained.

Of all participants, 19% were placed in this group. Of the respondents placed in this group, 62% were male and 38% female. Respondents in the freedom and liberation group were noticeably less optimistic than the total sample about the likelihood of peace with Israel. 46% of respondents answered that that peace with Israel is impossible, 8% very unlikely, 35% unlikely, 11% likely, and no participants indicated that they believe it to be very likely [see figure 4.8]. Participants that were placed in this category were 5% more likely to find eventual peace impossible and showed slightly less of a tendency to believe that peace is likely.

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<sup>12</sup> Responses concerned with ending the Israeli occupation become very hard to analyze because it relies on a very subjective understanding of what lands are actually occupied. Many interview participants wanted to make it very clear that they considered all parts of historic Palestine to be under Israeli occupation, while others consider only the West Bank and Gaza Strip to be occupied.

Participants' desire for peace, when framed in terms of freedom and liberation, was almost identical to the total sample. Of participants that emphasized freedom and liberation in their definition of peace 60% indicated that peace with Israel is either very undesirable or moderately undesirable, while 24% found it very desirable or moderately desirable [see figure 4.9].



*Peace as an end to fighting*

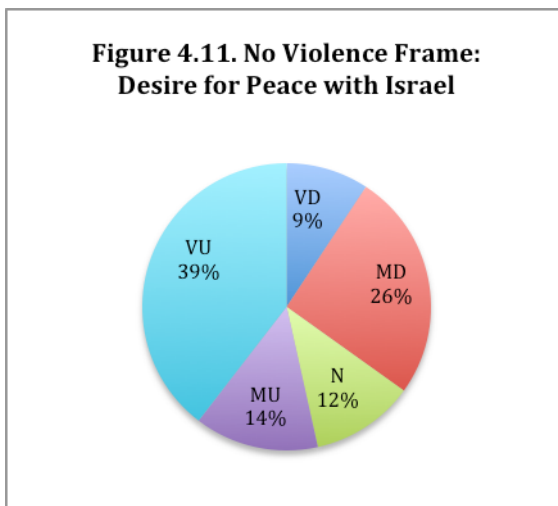
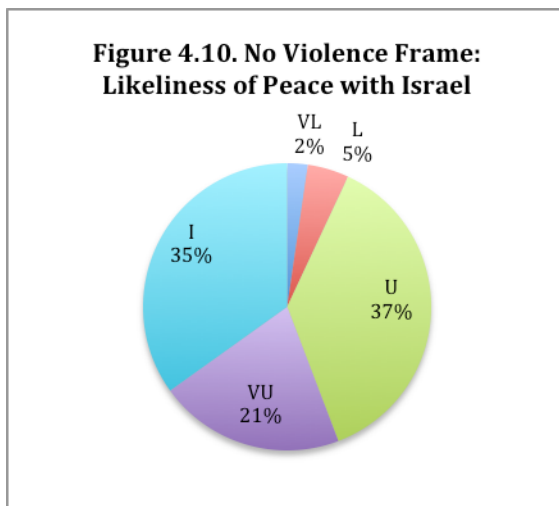
Another significant group of participants appeared to frame peace as simply an end to fighting. In the surveys, participants that were placed into this group defined peace as an end to hostilities, or a cessation of violent activity. Those that described peace as an end to fighting or hostility focused on direct violence, and not necessarily systemic forms of violence such as racial or religious discrimination. Participants in the end of violence group also highlighted issues of land appropriation as violence, especially in respect to Israeli settlement activity.

Of the total sample, 22% defined peace as a cessation of fighting or hostilities, and the survey results for the likelihood of, and desire for, peace with Israel are distinguishable from the rest of the survey. Sixty percent of respondents in this



group were female and 40% male. Of respondents who frame peace as simply an end to fighting, 35% indicated that peace with Israel is impossible, 21% very unlikely, 37% unlikely, 5% likely, and 2% very likely [see figure 4.10]. Participants applying this frame to peace with Israel were less likely to believe that peace is a possibility, and, at the same time, they were less likely to indicate that peace with Israel is impossible than the rest of the participants.

While only 7% of respondents that frame peace as an end to hostilities and violence believed that peace with Israel is either likely or very likely, 9% identified it as very desirable, 26% moderately desirable, 14% moderately undesirable, 39% very undesirable, and 12% claim neutrality [see figure 4.11]. Compared to the entire population surveyed, the group that framed peace as an end to violence and hostilities exhibited a significantly stronger desire for peace with Israel, as well as a slightly lower tendency toward finding peace undesirable.



*Peace as a loss or concession*

The previous peace frames that I discussed were fairly easy to categorize, and, in a number of ways, share some common characteristics with each other. The

loss or concession frame of peace stands out as, perhaps, the most unique and provocative of the frames that emerged from the data. To a significant proportion of respondents, peace has developed an entirely negative connotation. To those in this group, peace has become equivalent to surrender and admission of defeat.

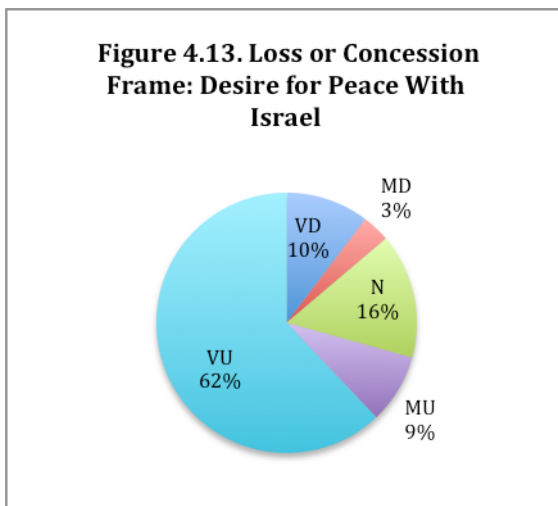
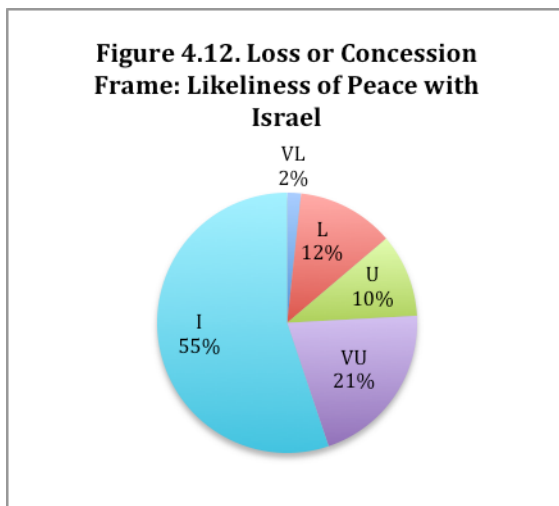
Respondents that frame peace as a concession emphasized the notion that to make peace with Israel would be to give up land and rights with nothing in return.

Interviewees highlighted a few basic roots of this frame. First, many interviewees discussed past peace agreements with Israel, most notably the Oslo Accords, as proof that Israel has no intention of making peace with Palestine. They exhibited a paralyzing lack of trust in Israeli policy makers to implement a peace deal, and they were adamant that Israel and Israelis reject any notion of peace. Second, many participants argued that to make peace would be to give up what they consider to be nonnegotiable rights. They argued that making peace with Israel would surrender both Palestinian land and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. Finally, many interviewees indicated that peace in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is something that is trying to be imposed on the Palestinians, primarily by the West.

Participants that defined peace as a loss or concession constituted 29.5% of the total population surveyed, making it equivalent to the rights and equality group, as the most prevalent frame identified in this study. Of the participants in the group, 57% were male and 47% were female. Of the participants in the loss or concession group, 55% believed peace with Israel to be impossible, 21% very unlikely, 10% unlikely, 12% likely and 2% very likely [see figure 4.12]. Compared to the total

sample, people who frame peace as a concession are significantly more likely to think that peace with Israel is impossible.

Because of the negative nature of the loss or concession frame, it seems reasonable to believe that peace with Israel would be completely undesirable for participants placed in this group. Not surprisingly, a higher percentage, 62%, indicated peace with Israel to be very undesirable and 9% answered moderately undesirable. What is surprising is that any participant that framed peace as a loss or concession, given its disposition and reliance on peace equalling defeat, would consider it desirable. However, 10% of respondents found peace with Israel to be very desirable, 3% moderately desirable, and another 16% claimed to be neutral on the issue [see figure 4.13]. While it is surprising that any of the respondents that frame peace negatively would desire peace with Israel, this group showed entirely less desire for peace with Israel than the other three groups identified above.



The following tables [table 4.1 and table 4.2] illustrate how members of the different peace frame groups answered the questions regarding the perceived

likeliness and desire for peace with Israel. The tables serve to illustrate once again that there is very little hope or desire for peace amongst respondents.

**Table 4.1. Frame Group Comparisons: Likelihood of Peace with Israel**

	Very Likely	Likely	Unlikely	Very Unlikely	Impossible
<b>Rights and Equality</b>	0%	23%	10%	26%	41%
<b>Freedom and Liberation</b>	0%	11%	35%	8%	46%
<b>No Violence</b>	2%	5%	37%	21%	35%
<b>Loss or Concession</b>	2%	12%	10%	21%	55%
<b>Total</b>	1%	12%	25%	21%	41%

**Table 4.2. Frame Group Comparisons: Desire for Peace with Israel**

	Very Desirable	Desirable	Neutral	Undesirable	Very Undesirable
<b>Rights and Equality</b>	12%	14%	19%	12%	43%
<b>Freedom and Liberation</b>	11%	13%	16%	14%	46%
<b>No Violence</b>	9%	26%	12%	14%	39%
<b>Loss or Concession</b>	10%	3%	16%	9%	62%
<b>Total</b>	11%	13%	18%	13%	45%

### **Framing Violence and Armed Struggle**

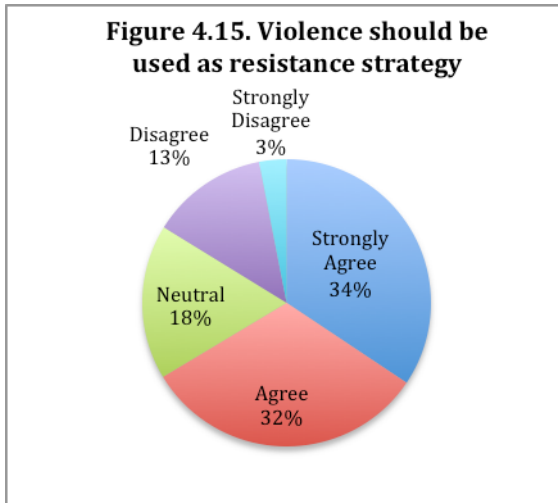
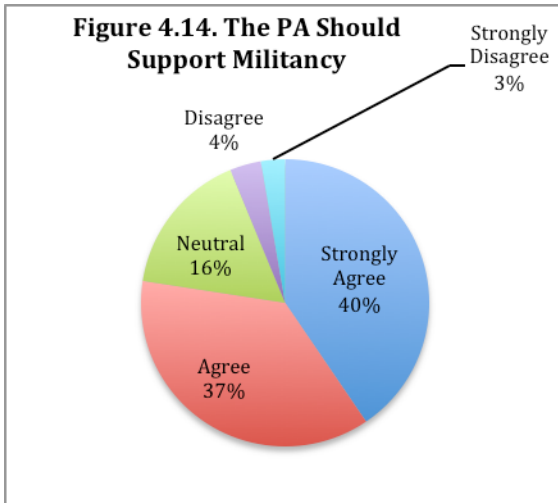
My second goal in this thesis is to provide a thorough discription of how Palestinians think about issues of armed struggle and violence. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the second part of the survey was designed to provide an understanding of how each respondent understands the use of violence and fighting as conflict engagement strategies. In this section, special attention will be paid to the variations in answers between the different peace frame categories discussed above.

As discussed earlier in this chapter, a vast majority of Palestinians frame violence as something that should only be used in cases of self-defense and as a last

resort [See figures 4.1 and 4.2]. Survey responses showed an overwhelming support for armed resistance as a conflict strategy. However, these tendencies, coupled with the figures shared earlier showing that respondents support the notion that violence should be reserved for either a last resort, or in self-defense, allows for a very interesting and important conversation.

When prompted with the statement, “The Palestinian Authority should support militant action against Israel,” only 7% indicated that they disagree, while 37% marked that they agree and 40% strongly agree, while 16% answered neutral [See figure 4.16]. In other words, over three quarters of respondents wish that the governing Palestinian body would take a more direct and active role in Palestinian armed resistance.

The prompt, “Armed struggle should be used as a resistance strategy,” was comparably received. For this prompt, 3% of respondents indicated that they strongly disagree, 13% disagree, 32% agree, 34% strongly agree, and the final 18% claimed neutrality [See figure 4.17]. Taken together with the previous statistic, it is clear that there exists a very strong support by Palestinian students to engage in armed struggle against the Israeli occupation.



The significant support for armed struggle combined with the strong notion that violence should be used only in self-defense and as a last resort implies that most of the participants believed that to engage in violent activity would be an act of self defense, and that no other interventions are currently viable. These notions were heavily supported in the group interviews. One interviewee summarized what appears to be the dominant understanding of violent resistance in saying, “We need to keep all options open for resistance. Sometimes we should do marches, boycotts, or other demonstrations, but if those do not work, we need to try other methods, including fighting.”

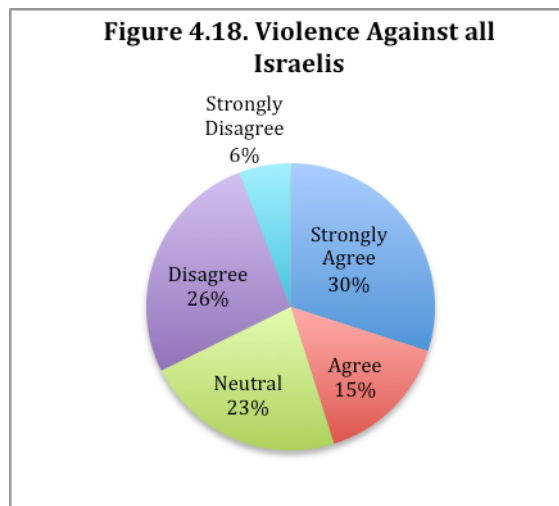
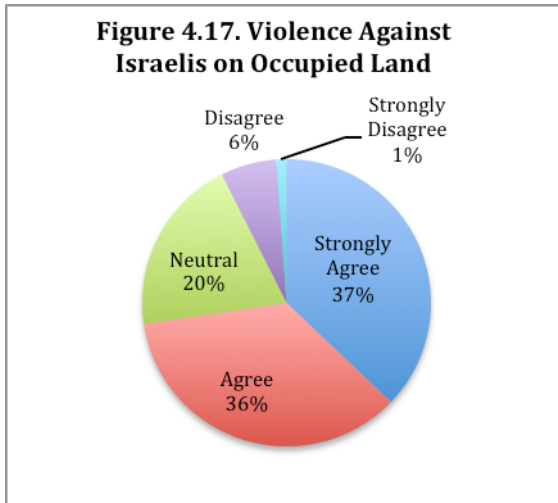
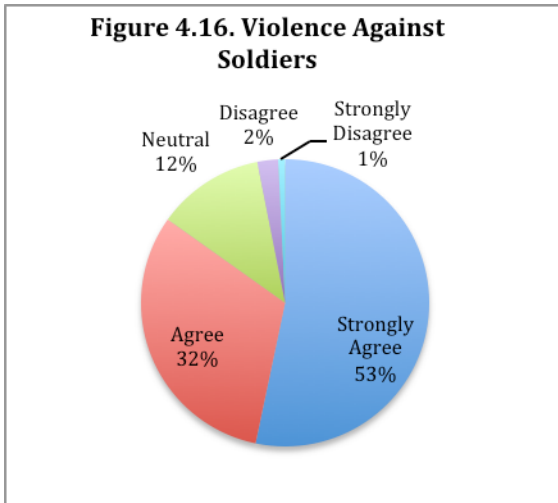
Interviewees frequently discussed past examples of nonviolent conflict engagement when expressing their support for armed engagement. The dominant perception in each interview group was that most interventions have been tried, and have all produced similar results. There appears to be a general agreement that nonviolent resistance has been tried, and did not work. The respondents gave extra attention to the strikes, boycotts, and demonstrations of the first Intifada, which was winding down about the time that most of the participants were born, as an example

of a time when nonviolent resistance was the preferred method of resistance. Because the end of the first Intifada did not produce an end to the conflict and the occupation in the West Bank persists and in some ways is becoming more extreme, interviewees simply do not believe that nonviolent movements will be effective.

In reference to reserving violence for defensive purposes, interviewees tended to take a very broad view of violence. For example, most participants agreed that Israeli settlements and land appropriations are violent acts, as well as Israeli policies that interfere with economic development and Palestinian sovereignty. These points were highly contentious and carefully debated in most of the group interviews. Debates were not necessarily concerned with whether or not actions such as land appropriations and debilitating policies were violent, as much as whether or not they warranted violent responses. It appeared that a slight majority supported armed responses, but there were a number of interviewees in disagreement.

The final issue that I explored concerns to whom violent activity should be directed. Respondents were asked to respond to statements about support for violence against Israeli soldiers, Israelis living on lands occupied after the 1967 war or settlers, and all Israelis. In respect to violence against Israeli soldiers, 53% indicated that they strongly agree, 32% agree, 2% disagree, 1% strongly disagree, and 12% selected neutral [see figure 4.18]. When the direction of violence is shifted to settlers in areas occupied after the 1967 war, the results changed significantly: 37% indicated that they strongly agree, 36% agree, 6% disagree, 1% strongly disagree, and 20% claim neutrality [see figure 4.19]. Finally, when the violence is

directed at all Israelis, 30% strongly agreed, 15% agreed, 26% disagreed, and 6% strongly disagreed, while 23% were neutral [see figure 4.20].



The most interesting of these data sets is the one inquiring about violence against all Israelis, especially in light of the group interviews. In the group interviews, there existed a near consensus on the use of force against soldiers, largely based on negative experiences with Israeli soldiers in their daily lives. Further, most people agreed that it is justified and necessary to forcefully resist existing and expanding settlement activity in the West Bank, though a significant number of interviewees dissented because, regardless of the disgracefulness of



settlement activity, they understood attacking civilians as unacceptable. However, the general notion was that settlement activity is violent, and as an act of defense, Palestinians can respond violently. When the conversations switched to violence against all Israelis, it appeared that the majority did not support violence. The major reasons given against violence in Israel centered on the chance of hurting civilians and children, and a sense that such efforts would not be helpful or successful.

While there is support for violence against all Israelis, it should be observed that it is significantly lower than the other two categories. Further, almost a quarter of the respondents claimed to be neutral on the issue. It would be interesting to see how those individuals would have responded if “neutral” would not have been an option. This notion will be further tempered in the next section when I discuss there interaction between the peace frames and violence frames.

### **Peace Frames and Violence**

In order to more thoroughly explore the way that violence is framed by students in Palestinian universities, I analyzed the support for different armed conflict engagement methods based on the peace frame categories identified above. In what follows I will examine the connection between the four peace frames identified above and support for armed conflict engagement. For the most part, analysis based on peace framing categories did not make a significant difference in the levels of support for violence. In most cases, all four frames fell within a few percentage points of the results of the total sample. However, a few interesting trends emerged from the division.

The freedom and liberation group, which is the one that is identifiable by an emphasis on sovereignty and self-determination as prerequisite to peace, differed from the other groups in two of the categories related to violent conflict engagement. First, participants in the freedom and liberation group show greater support for reserving violence for defensive purposes. Of the respondents in this category, 74% indicated that they either strongly agree, or agree with this notion, compared to the total sample, in which 53% either agreed or strongly agreed. The other three peace framing categories all fall within 5% of the total. Second, those who frame peace in terms of freedom and liberation, indicate that they are more likely to support the idea that the Palestinian Authority should support militant action. To this prompt, 86% of people in this category, compared with 77% of all respondents, agree or strongly agree. As I mentioned earlier, this combination of a high desire for violent conflict engagement strategies coupled with a belief that violence should only be used for defensive purposes indicates that the respondents believe that armed struggle today would be a defensive action, and therefore justifiable.

The only significant variation in the responses from the different groups had to do with to whom violent action is directed. In terms of violence against soldiers, compared to the 85% of all respondents that either agreed, or strongly agreed, all four of the groups are within three percentage points. More variation begins to emerge in the next two categories. The loss or concession group, which is identifiable by its view of peace as very undesirable, shows much stronger support for violence against Israelis in lands occupied by Israel after the 1967 war, and

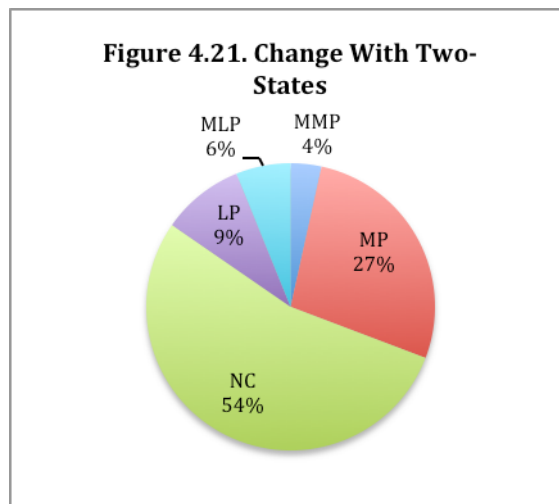
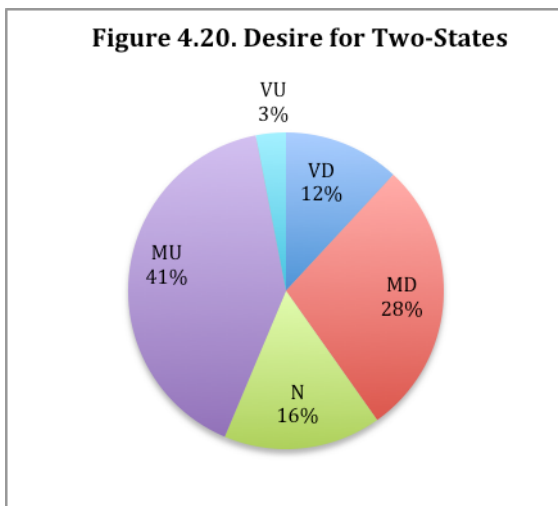
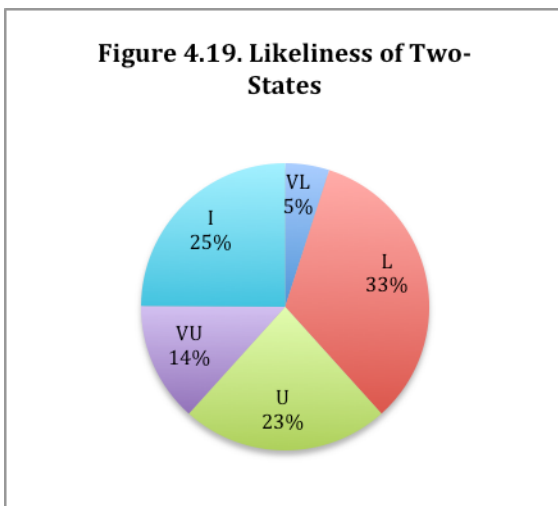
against all Israelis, while the other three framing groups remain closely aligned and more opposed to these types of violence. Seventy-seven percent of participants in the loss or concession group indicated that they agree or strongly agree with using violent tactics against Israeli settlers, while only 71% of respondents in the other categories answered the same way. When the topic is all Israelis, 58% of participants in the loss or concession group, compared to 43% or less of respondents in the other groups, selected agree or strongly agree.

### **Views on the Two-State Solution**

While the purpose of this thesis is not to endorse or promote one final solution over the others, a major part of the survey inquired as to the respondents' perceptions of peace in relation to different potential end results to the conflict. Survey respondents were provided with a hypothetical situation in which a Palestinian state would be formed based on the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the capital. Based on this scenario, participants were asked how likely they believe it to be, how desirable it would be to them, and the effects that it would have on peace between Palestine and Israel.

When asked how likely they perceive the two-state solution, 5% answered very likely, 33% likely, 23% unlikely, 14% very unlikely, and 25% believed it to be impossible [see figure 4.21]. When asked, given the same hypothetical scenario, how desirable a two-state solution is, 12% answered very desirable, 28% desirable, 41% undesirable, 3% very undesirable, and 16% claimed neutrality [see figure 4.22].

At first glance, these responses seem to contradict the findings reported earlier regarding perceived likelihood of, and desire for, peace with Israel. More participants responded in favor of the two-state solution that was presented than were interested in peace with Israel. However, when asked how the hypothetical proposal would affect Palestinian-Israeli relations, 4% answered that it would be much more peaceful, 27% more peaceful, 9% less peaceful, 6% much less peaceful, while the rest, and the majority, of respondents believed that there would be no change [see figure 4.23]. This shows that while many of the respondents desired a two-state solution, they did not necessarily equate it with peace.



Among the framing groups identified above, there was very little divergence in the perceived likeliness of the hypothetical two-state proposal [see table 4.3]. However, there were some significant differences between the framing groups in the expressed desire for the two-state arrangement. The rights and equality group and the freedom and liberation group showed a much stronger desire for the two state solution. Forty-five percent of participants in the rights and equality group, and 46% in the freedom and liberation group indicated that the two-state solution was either very desirable or desirable, compared to 36% from the end of violence group and 29% from the loss or concession group. Further, of respondents in the loss or concession group, 57% answered either undesirable or very undesirable [see table 4.4]. Regarding the perceived effects that the two-state arrangement would have on Palestinian-Israeli peace, all groups largely indicated that they perceived such a solution to provide no change. The rights and equality group was most likely to indicate that the two-state option would increase the peacefulness of the situation. From this group, 36% answered that the two-state solution would make the relationship either much more peaceful or more peaceful. The loss or concession group held the lowest opinion of the hypothetical two-state option. Of participants placed in this group, none of the respondents answered that the relationship would be much more peaceful, and 20% answered more peaceful [see table 4.5].

	<b>Very Likely</b>	<b>Likely</b>	<b>Unlikely</b>	<b>Very Unlikely</b>	<b>Impossible</b>
<b>Rights and Equality</b>	3%	31%	24%	16%	26%
<b>Freedom and Liberation</b>	3%	30%	32%	13%	22%
<b>No Violence</b>	5%	26%	30%	23%	16%
<b>Loss or Concession</b>	7%	31%	23%	10%	29%
<b>Total</b>	5%	33%	23%	14%	25%

	<b>Very Desirable</b>	<b>Desirable</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Undesirable</b>	<b>Very Undesirable</b>
<b>Rights and Equality</b>	12%	33%	20%	33%	2%
<b>Freedom and Liberation</b>	8%	38%	8%	38%	8%
<b>No Violence</b>	9%	28%	16%	44%	3%
<b>Loss or Concession</b>	7%	22%	14%	54%	3%
<b>Total</b>	12%	28%	16%	41%	3%

	<b>Much more peaceful</b>	<b>More peaceful</b>	<b>No Change</b>	<b>Less Peaceful</b>	<b>Much Less Peaceful</b>
<b>Rights and Equality</b>	5%	31%	54%	7%	3%
<b>Freedom and liberation</b>	3%	27%	62%	3%	5%
<b>No Violence</b>	5%	23%	54%	9%	9%
<b>Loss or Concession</b>	0%	20%	66%	9%	5%
<b>Total</b>	4%	27%	54%	9%	6%

In this chapter I have reported the data and described the different ways in which it can be broken down. I introduced and described the four groups that I identified, rights and equality, freedom and liberation, end of violence, and loss or concession based on the different ways in which participants defined peace. These groups were then analyzed based on propensity towards peace and desire for armed conflict engagement strategies. The next, and final, chapter of this thesis will be dedicated to an explanation of what the data may imply and how it may be interpreted.

## **CHAPTER V DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION**

In the previous chapter, I presented the data collected for this thesis. In this chapter I discuss the material, draw conclusions, examine the implications of these conclusions, and suggest areas in which more research is necessary.

One clear finding is that, although respondents generally view peace positively, they view it negatively in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Of the four peace frames that I identified in the previous chapter, freedom and liberation, equality and human rights, end of violence, and loss or concession, the first three relate to the different elements of just or positive peace as described in Chapter II. Based on their survey responses, 70% of participants framed peace in a way that corresponds with one of these three groups. Taken together, these groups come very close to Galtung's (1969) idea of positive peace, which asserts that human rights, equality, and freedom must accompany an end to direct violence for true peace to exist.

The general understanding of peace as positive, however, can only be carried so far. Regardless of the framing categories, when discussed in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, respondents did not view peace favorably. There exists in the data an overwhelming sense of pessimism and hostility towards the idea of peace with Israel. The majority of respondents believed peace with Israel to be unlikely, if not impossible, and very few respondents found peace with Israel to be desirable.

Much of the literature discussed in Chapter II helps to explain this divergence. One primary reason for this phenomenon is the failure of past attempts

to resolve the conflict. Bar-Tal and Rouhana (1998) argue that parties to intractable conflict become more polarized the longer the conflict persists. Similarly, Lederach (2005) suggests that failed attempts at peacebuilding influence parties to become less hopeful and more pessimistic about peace. Since 1994, when the Oslo Accords were signed, there have been several attempts by Palestinian and Israeli officials to come to a final agreement. Now, almost twenty years later, there has been very little, if any, progress on final status issues. Further, each failed series of negotiations has left Palestinians increasingly skeptical about the prospects of a peaceful resolution (Sahliyah & Deng, 2003). Overwhelmingly, the respondents showed little to no faith in Israeli or Palestinian leadership to reach an agreement that would provide a peaceful and satisfactory resolution. Interviewees expressed the view that they do not believe that the Israeli leaders have the slightest desire to negotiate in good faith.

Curle (1971), Christie (2006), and Jacoby (2008) suggest that central to the perceived likeliness of a peaceful resolution is the existence of structural or systemic violence. Survey respondents and interviewees collectively indicated that they perceive many Israeli policies as major hindrances to the prospect of peace. In the words of one interviewee, “How are we supposed to believe in peace with someone who takes our land and will not let us build normal lives?” Israeli policies of land appropriations for settlement building and the construction of the separation wall which stifles the Palestinian economy and restricts movement makes the notion of peace with Israel impossible for the respondents. Interviewees



fear that negotiations conducted while these types of offenses are carried out will serve to normalize the oppressive structures in place.

Finally, the concept of peace has largely become framed as a means of pacifying the Palestinians, instead of as an authentic offer of a holistic resolution to the conflict. Curle (1971) and Lederach (1998) both argue that offers of peace that are perceived by one party as less than authentic, or serving ulterior motives, will have very negative consequences for the future of the relationship. As historic as the Oslo agreements may have been at the time, interviewees largely viewed it as a farce. This is simply another instance that Palestinians point to as an explanation for why they believe that the Israeli officials are not serious about peace.

Accompanying the growing notion that peace with Israel is highly unlikely, if not impossible, is increasing support for armed tactics. As mentioned in the previous chapter, respondents tend to frame violence as a tactic to be used under fairly strict parameters. The data from the survey shows that most respondents support violence only when it is used for self-defense and/or as a last resort. Combined with the overwhelming support for armed engagement strategies, this indicates that Palestinians believe that they have reached an instance of last resort and that acting violently is equated with the defense of self and community.

Moore and Jagers (1990) argue that support for armed movements increases as individuals begin to perceive that they have no other viable option to remedy grievances. Both the survey and interview responses suggest that there is a strong sense amongst participants that Palestinians do not have an effective nonviolent option for conflict engagement. In the words of one respondent, "We

tried strikes, protests, and demonstrations, and we still have conflict.” Every interview group had members that talked extensively about the use of boycotts, strikes, and demonstrations from the First Intifada.

Violence amongst respondents was spoken of as a tactic to be implemented along with all other tactics that they have at their disposal. One interviewee stated, “Of course we should use strikes, boycotts, theater, and other nonviolent methods of resistance, but sometimes we need to be fighters.” Respondents indicated that they believe that every tactic should be on the table and effective ones should be implemented. This notion has enormous implications for the future of this conflict. If Palestinians continue to view nonviolent resistance methods as largely ineffective and costly, support for armed resistance will increase and the likelihood of another armed intifada will only escalate.

Support for violence tends to go up significantly when a group believes that it is either defending one of its basic needs (Burton 1990) or has been the victim of aggression (Allred 2000). The data shows that Palestinians believe themselves to be victims of several forms of direct and indirect violence. One respondent put it this way: “We think settlements, checkpoints, and walls are violence. If we continue to be humiliated and stolen from, we need to fight back.” Further, several survey respondents and interviewees quoted the popular catch phrase, “What was taken by force will only be returned with force.” Respondents exhibited a prevailing notion that the Palestinians are without a collaborative partner, and this reality leaves them with very few options.

At this rate, if significant progress is not made, there will likely be a third uprising at some point, and, given the newly shown military capabilities of the resistance group in Gaza, it could very well be longer and bloodier than the first two. Palestinians must be given authentic reasons to believe that nonviolent engagement will produce the desired results. If not, armed conflicts will arise and will continue to be detrimental to the future generation of Palestinians and Israelis alike.

The escalation towards armed conflict engagement can be seen by the relatively significant amount of participants that defined peace in terms of a loss or concession. About 30% of survey respondents framed peace in general in negative terms, even outside the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. These participants make up the loss or concession frame group described in the previous chapter. Respondents in the loss or concession group were, of the four groups identified, the most pessimistic about peace with Israel. They were also much more likely to support the use of violent tactics directed at all Israelis. For this group, a peace agreement would be equivalent to Palestinian surrender and a deadly blow to their national pride.

The longer that groups remain in conflict with each other, the more antagonistic they become toward even the slightest notion of peace with their counterparts (Curle, 1971; Jacoby, 2008; Lederach, 1988) and the more supportive they become of armed conflict engagement (Staub, 2011). With this in mind, it can reasonably be predicted that the Loss or Concession frame will continue to grow relative to the other three groups that I have identified.

Comments in the group interviews were much more closely related to the notion that peace is entirely negative than the survey responses indicated. One interviewee asked rhetorically, “What do you think? Do we give up? Do we say goodbye to our lands and Palestinian refugees? If that is peace, we do not want it.” To respondents who framed peace as a loss or concession, to make a peace agreement would be to give up their struggle and surrender what they believe to be rightfully theirs. Framed this way, peace becomes completely unacceptable.

Others believe that the Palestinians have already made the tragic and difficult concessions that should be required for peace. One interviewee commented, “We already gave them more than half of Palestine, but they want more. Our leaders gave up our land to make peace, and Israel used the peace to take more.” This sentiment aligns with Lederach’s (1998) argument that, when a group perceives a peace offer as a strategy to obtain selfish interests and disadvantage their counterpart, a common response will be aggression and outrage when the motives become evident.<sup>13</sup> The interviewees believe that the painful concessions that their leadership already made have been exploited, leaving the idea of peace to be almost unthinkable.

As the loss or concession frame group grows, there will be more pressure on Palestinian leadership to reject any attempt to negotiate an end to the conflict and to resume methods purely related to armed resistance. In recent years, the resistance

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<sup>13</sup> Whether or not the Israelis had alternative motives when making the Oslo Accords is a highly debatable. There is a lot of speculation about whether or not the Palestinian-Israeli relationship would look different had Rabin not been assassinated. However, it is clear that Palestinians overwhelmingly believe that the Oslo process has improved Israel’s situation and harmed their own. This is detrimental to any lingering hopes of a peaceful resolution.

movements in the Gaza Strip have significantly increased their armed capabilities, and they are now much more able to do damage inside Israel than before. If another violent uprising emerges, at this rate it will be more violent than the previous intifada, and the Israeli response will likely be even more aggressive. The situation will be tragic and will leave the Palestinians and Israelis even farther from anything that resembles peace.

In no way should the data presented in this thesis be interpreted as a sign that the respondents are ideologically violent or opposed to the existence of the Jewish people. While the survey data shows a widespread support for violence, information gathered in the group interviews pointed to relatively immediate and tangible issues that have led to the support for violent conflict engagement. None of the interviewees indicated that their support for armed resistance methods were informed by religious or ideological factors. Instead, interviewees pointed to specific negative experiences with the Israeli occupation and the effects of Israeli policy. In other words, the support for violence amongst respondents is a strong reaction to perceived injustices and identified grievances that have not been remedied.

I have stated multiple times that the respondents in this study do not believe that Israel has any desire to make what Palestinians believe would be a just peace agreement. If Israel is in fact willing to make peace with Palestine, then political leaders will have to take steps to actively show good faith. Interviewees expressed on numerous occasions that they do not believe that Palestinians should not have to make concessions until Israeli leaders show that they are serious about peace. Some

of the signs that interviewees noted that they would perceive as indication of Israeli authenticity were a cessation of settlement building, the release of political prisoners, more economic autonomy, and an easement of the blockade on Gaza.

One of the primary reasons that parties opt for violent engagement strategies is the perception of an absence of collaborative partners (Staub, 2011). Symbolic gestures serve as significant indications of willingness to collaborate. The data presented in the previous chapter shows that the population surveyed does not have much faith in Israel as a collaborative partner, which helps to explain the widespread support for violence. Symbolic gestures can begin to reverse these notions.

In Chapter I, I stated that I do not propose to promote or argue for one of the many potential peace plans, and I maintain that doing so would be beyond the scope of this thesis. However, the data collected on potential solutions merits comment. A central notion that this thesis hinges on is that peace must gain legitimacy from the people that make the up the parties order to be effectively implemented. Most of the political solutions to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have focused primarily on some form of a two-state solution based broadly on the 1948 armistice lines, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, the status of Jerusalem as the desired capital of both states, and the future of Israeli settlements in the West Bank. While the prospects of any two-state option are dwindling, the survey responses and the group interviews provide some interesting insights into the way that young Palestinians perceive such options.

Many of the respondents-- 38%-- believe that a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital, is either likely or very likely. Similarly, 40% of respondents found such a proposal either moderately desirable or very desirable, compared to 44% that found it moderately undesirable or very undesirable, and the remaining 16% claimed neutrality. However, respondents largely did not equate this proposal with peace. When asked what effect a two-state solution based on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital would have on the conflict, 54% answered that there would be no change, while 31% answered that the situation would become much more peaceful or more peaceful, and 15% said it would be less peaceful or much less peaceful.

The importance of the data regarding the two-state solution goes beyond showing support for or against such a political solution. The data shows that a political solution alone will not produce just and lasting peace. This notion, combined with the general skepticism that most peacebuilding initiatives implemented in Palestine are ineffective because they fail to engage many of the structural and political realities, should inform the design of future peacebuilding initiatives.

### **Further Research**

There are several issues suggested in this thesis that I believe should be further and more deeply explored. A central limitation to this study is the unfortunate exclusion of the Israeli views on peace and violence. The time and resources allotted for my research did not allow for a similar study among Israeli

university students. A similar study would be helpful in identifying similarities and differences in the way that Palestinians and Israelis think about these issues and could provide significant information for peacebuilding activities. Interestingly, several of the Palestinians that participated in the research wished to know how Israelis would respond to the same questions.

Another potential limitation to this research was the relatively small sample size and the exclusion of older Palestinians. It would be interesting to see if there is variation between the generations regarding peace and armed conflict.

The data collected for this thesis was very broad and relatively general, which led to fairly broad conclusions. Future studies should focus more directly and specifically on the many aspects that are influential in frame development for peace and violence. The data presented here is a good beginning for this process and allows for tentative conclusions to be drawn. However to get a more accurate and specific understanding of how Palestinians frame these issues, and what continues to shape their development, much more specific research will need to be conducted.

Finally, the literature connecting frame analysis and frame development to conflict resolution and peace studies is sparse. I have argued in this thesis, and basic conflict analysis and resolution discourse seems to agree, that understanding how conflicting parties frame issues central to the conflict and its resolution is helpful, if not essential. More theoretical work should be considered as it will expand the conflict resolution field and enable practitioners to be more effective as they design conflict interventions.



## **Conclusion**

In the first chapter, I argued that frame analysis offers a relatively optimistic lens for analyzing intractable conflicts. While the data that I collected does not lend itself to optimism and this conflict is, by any measure, likely to be far from resolution, there may be some reason for hope. Group frames are constantly changing as new information is introduced and spread throughout the group. Palestinians have not always been dynamically opposed to peace with Israel (Sahliyah and Deng, 2003), and throughout the history of the conflict support for different resistance tactics and conflict engagement strategies have changed and adapted to the dominant perceptions of the times. It follows that as Palestinians are presented with further inputs, the way that they frame peace and violence will continue to shift.

As discussed above, the majority of respondents generally, when not presented in the context of Palestine and Israel, frame peace positively in a way that involves an end to both direct and indirect violence. In other words respondents have a very strong understanding of what just peace requires. This provides a solid starting point for peacebuilding endeavors. Curle's (1971) model for peacebuilding suggests that sustainable peace agreements are more likely when the people involved in them are well-educated and informed about the conflict confront the issues. With 70% of the participants exhibiting a positive view of peace that includes freedom, equality, human rights, and an end to acts of violence and aggression, the potential to reframe peace in the context of the conflict remains

possible. If peacebuilding begins with the premise that true peace would satisfy these desires the idea of peace may become more desirable to Palestinians.

However, it is essential to note that the way that Palestinians frame peace and violence in the context of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict can still become more negative and antithetical. Every new settlement building, the persisting blockade of the Gaza ports, regulations that prevent true economic development, and restrictions on movement and access to holy sites, along with a myriad of other oppressive structures all but destroy the hopes and desires that Palestinians carry for peace.

Perhaps the most important of these is the growing sense of pessimism about the slightest mention of peace. The participants that made up the loss or concession frame group were more likely to believe that peace with Israel is possible, found peace with Israel to be less desirable, and were much more supportive of armed conflict engagement strategies. Further, based on the literature, it can reasonably be predicted that this disposition towards peace will persist and spread unless significant progress is made on the conflict.

Currently, it appears that aggressive conflict engagement strategies are most strongly supported. Given the growing pessimism of Palestinians and the widespread support for violent conflict engagement, a third Intifada seems very likely. Further, it is likely that the next armed conflict will be more devastating than the past two and will not bring the parties any closer to peace. If there is to be an eventual resolution to this conflict, the way that Palestinians frame peace and support armed conflict engagement will have to be understood and dealt with in

authentic ways. If Israel is interested in reaching a negotiated peace agreement they must show the Palestinian people that they are, in fact, a collaborative partner, and present the Palestinians with a nonviolent option through which to engage the conflict.

Making any of the symbolic gestures mentioned above could help to curb the Palestinian notion that Israel is unwilling to act as a collaborative partner. If Israel is serious about reaching a negotiated solution with the Palestinians, then Israeli leaders should make several symbolic gestures independent of negotiation. There are several issues that Israel could address simply to move close to compliance with international norms. For example, Israel could allow Gazan fisherman to operate further than just a few miles off of the coast, as described in the Oslo Accords. Further, Israel could allow more freedom of movement, especially to religious sites. These two issues are among several that should not be subject to negotiation. Similarly, Israel should halt its settlement program. Settlements themselves are symbolic because they represent unilateral decisions to build on land that was set aside for a negotiated solution. Continuing to build while asking for negotiations sends a message to the Palestinians that they are not truly willing to negotiate.

The Palestinians also need to perceive a nonviolent way to engage the conflict. If the Palestinian perception is that nonviolent conflict engagement will not be acknowledged or beneficial, then the support for armed resistance will continue to rise. It is more than likely that the Palestinians, regardless of the military capabilities in Gaza, cannot defeat the Israeli army. But, they do have the capabilities to cause Israelis physical and psychological harm, and if these actions

are the only perceived way to make progress towards a favorable end to the conflict they will surely be employed. Israeli leaders, especially those that are in favor of reaching a just peace agreement with the Palestinians, should engage Palestinian society on issues of peacebuilding.

The international community should also pay more attention to and reward different Palestinian nonviolent movements. One example of a nonviolent movement that has built momentum is the push to boycott Israeli goods that are made in settlements and companies that contribute to, or benefit from, settlement activity.<sup>14</sup> By supporting this initiative, the international community can put economic pressure on Israel to comply with international norms. Doing so is a vote in support of nonviolent conflict engagement. Naturally boycotting alone will not bring Israel to the negotiating table, but it is one very clear attempt by the Palestinians to nonviolently approach this conflict. If the international community is interested in supporting Palestinian nonviolent movement, it will consider joining this movement. Further, more information is needed about other nonviolent initiatives that are currently being implemented in Palestine. With more information, the international community can give more support to such initiatives.

Most of the suggestions in this thesis have focused on the imperative for Israel to change many of its policy and interactions with the Palestinians. While Israeli policies play an essential role in the way that Palestinians frame peace and

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<sup>14</sup> The Boycott, Divestment, and Sanction (BDS) movement is responsible for much of the progress that has been made on advancing such boycotts. The inclusion of BDS in this thesis is not a wholesale endorsement of the movement or its values. BDS is still forming and its positions on several issues are unclear to me and/or still developing. However, their work on how to put economic pressure on Israel's settlement program is thorough and deserves attention.

conflict engagement, they alone are not responsible. However, participants perceived Israel as primarily the cause of their support for violence and pessimism about peace with Israel. Further, as the stronger party and the occupying power, Israel must take responsibility for its significant role in the way that the Palestinian think about peace. This is not to suggest that there is not responsibility on the Palestinian side. Palestinian leaders can expose signs for hope in peace and can encourage new and innovative nonviolent conflict engagement strategies. One example of this is the Palestinian decision to seek international recognition in the United Nations. In November of 2012, one year after being denied recognition of statehood by the United Nations Security Council, the United Nations General Assembly upgraded Palestine to the status of nonmember observer state. While this change in status is largely symbolic, the Palestinian decision to pursue it shows a willingness on behalf of the leadership to expand on nonviolent political methods of engaging the conflict. With the status upgrade, Palestine now has access to the International Criminal Court (ICC). The Palestinian leadership should make claims against the Israeli occupation that do not comply with international norms. Successful claims will show Palestinians that their leaders are willing to engage the conflict and that the international community supports their cause.

It is clear that progress towards resolution is necessary if this conflict is going to be spared another devastating escalation. In order to avoid further militancy, there need to be significant and authentic steps towards collaboration on an eventual peace agreement. While the situation is desperate, and the data shows that respondents are jaded towards the idea with peace with Israel, there is hope for

the future if the will is there. As stated repetitively in this thesis, collective frames are constantly changing as new inputs are provided. If authentic and just peace is going to be established in this situation, Palestinians must be engaged on the issues that have influenced the negative framing of peace. While this will not be easy, it will be necessary if the goal is true and just peace.

**APPENDIX A**

**THE SURVEY**

**Opinions of Palestinian University Students on the Prospects for Peace with Israel**

**Gender (select one):**

**Male**

**Female**

**University Enrolled in:**

**Discipline:**

**Year of Study:  
(optional):**

**Political Affiliation(s)**

**Age:**

**Residence: City**

**Village**

**Camp**

**Part I**

1) Please select your religious orientation:

- Muslim
- Christian
- Nonreligious (secular)
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

2) On average how often do you attend religious services?

- Less than once a month
- 1-3 times each month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily

3) How often do you read your religion's Holy Book?

- Less than once a month
- 1-3 times each month
- Once a week
- More than once a week
- Daily

4) To you, how desirable is the adoption of Shari'a law by the Palestinians?

- Very Desirable
- Moderately Desirable
- Moderately Undesirable
- Very Undesirable

5) In your opinion, which of the following should be the top priority for the Palestinians? (Rank 1-6)

- End of occupation
- Internal governmental reform
- Reunification between the Gaza Strip and West Bank
- Economic development and growth
- Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation
- Increasing the influence of religion in society and national law
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

6) In a few sentences (1-3), please write, in your own words, your own definition of peace.

7) Based on the concept of peace that you described, how **likely** is peace with Israel?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Impossible

8) Based on the concept of peace that you described, how **desirable** is peace with Israel?

- Very desirable
- Moderately desirable
- Neutral
- Moderately undesirable
- Very undesirable

9) In a few sentences (1-3), please write, in your own words, your own definition of reconciliation.

10) Based on the concept of reconciliation that you described, how **likely** is reconciliation with Israel?

- Very likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- Impossible



11) Based on the concept of reconciliation that you described, how **desirable** is reconciliation with Israel?

- Very Desirable
- Moderately Desirable
- Neutral
- Moderately Undesirable
- Very Undesirable

12) What do you desire for a final agreement between Israelis and Palestinians?

- Two-states with full reconciliation with Israel
- Two-states with no reconciliation with Israel
- One state with Palestinians and Israelis together
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

13) How **likely** do you believe a two-state solution based entirely on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital is?

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Unlikely
- Very Unlikely
- Impossible

14) To you, how **desirable** is a two-state solution based entirely on the 1967 borders with East Jerusalem as the Palestinian capital?

- Very Desirable
- Moderately Desirable
- Moderately Undesirable
- Very Undesirable

15) In your opinion, what is the biggest hindrance to a two-state solution? (Rank 1-4)

- Settlements
- Refugees
- Jerusalem
- Economic dependence
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

16) How would a two-state solution affect relations between Israelis and Palestinians?

- Much more peaceful
- More peaceful
- No change
- Less peaceful
- Much less peaceful

**Part II:** Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with the following statements.

1) *Struggle* should only be used for defensive purposes such as self-defense or retaliation.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

2) *Struggle* should be a major strategy of a resistance movement.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

3) *Struggle* should be used when nonviolent movements have not been successful.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4) *Struggle* should be the last resort of a resistance movement.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5) *Struggle* should never be used.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6) The Palestinian leadership should support militant action against Israelis.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7) If the goal of a resistance movement is peace, violent tactics should be included in its strategy.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8) It is possible for enemies to make peace without violence.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9) Violent action should be used against Israeli soldiers.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10) Violent action should be used against Israelis on land occupied since 1967.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

11) Violent action should be used against all Israelis.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

12) It is possible for Palestinians and Israelis to live together peacefully.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

*\*Struggle in the Arabic version encompasses violence and armed resistance.*

## APPENDIX B

### GROUP INTERVIEW SCRIPT

#### Discussion Questions

*A Note to Participants: We wish to protect the identity of all participants in this study. We ask that anything that is shared in this discussion not be shared afterward. We will take notes on the discussion, but will not record names. No comments will be attributed to any individual.*

- 1) Please discuss your definition of Peace:
  
- 2) How likely is peace with Israel? (Is there general optimism or pessimism)
  
- 3) How desirable is peace with Israel?
  
- 4) What is the biggest hindrance to peace with Israel? (Settlements, Jerusalem, Refugees, Internal strife, Economic independence, etc.)
  
- 5) If these conditions were met, how would your opinion change? (In other words, what does peace with Israel require?)
  
- 6) Describe what methods of action should be, or are being, utilized in engaging the conflict (violent and nonviolent options):

When does something become violent?

Nonlethal? Retaliation? Self-Defense?

**7)** Do you believe that it is possible for Israelis and Palestinians to share the land? Please explain.

Is this more likely to be accomplished with two states or one?

**8)** How will this conflict end?

**9)** Can nonviolent action be successful in this context?

**10)** Please tell us anything else that we should know about your views of peace and violence as it relates to this conflict.

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